



# Das Heimatblatt

Newsletter for the Alabama Section  
Mercedes-Benz Club America

May • 2010

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## STERNBLICK

*James Roberts*  
*President, Alabama Section MBCA*

Our cup runneth over with great events. The Indy Car "Grand Prix of Alabama" was a huge success with over 85,000 in attendance. We were able to meet several Mercedes-Benz owners who were not members, so this was a great opportunity for us.

We are working very hard preparing for our concours d'elegance, factory tour, and social events including the fundraising gala at the Barber Museum with Bobby Rahal, Mario Andretti, and other Legends of Motorsports on 20-24 May at Heimatfest.

We need as many of our members as possible to participate in this great event and to help us with staging it. The Legends of Motorsports group is giving us great publicity, so we need to be sure we put on a great event with them.

On 19-20 June our friends in the Porsche Club have again invited us to join them at their "driver education" event on the Barber Track. They are offering a special "taste of the track" for those who are interested but do not feel ready to commit to this.

I will be a senior driving instructor for this, so you will be able to ride with me if you wish.

Starfest is 23-28 Sep in Winchester, VA this year with track events at Summit Point, WV. This is the closest that Starfest has been to us in the last 6-8 years, so start making plans to attend. These are fantastic events with every type of automobile competition as well as scenic drives, technical session, and great social events with prominent Mercedes-Benz speakers.

To add to the experience we are joining with Peachtree Section to organize a "Startrek" through the Smoky Mountains with beautiful drives, interesting sights, and great dining for the week leading up to the Friday start of Starfest.

Follow developments for this unique experience here and on our website at [www.mbca.org/alabama](http://www.mbca.org/alabama). Webmaster, Carl Cullison is constantly adding information on both "Heimatfest" and will soon start with "Startrek", so check the site frequently. You will also find Das Heimatblatt and a calendar as well as registration forms.

We are at 67% e-mail for the newsletter. This is great, but our friends in the Peachtree Section tell me that they are at 80%. I don't think our section is any less computer literate than our neighbors.

If you are not receiving this by e-mail, we don't have a valid e-mail address for you (there are sometimes mistakes from the national office). Please send your correct e-mail address to [jertoosaver@bellsouth.net](mailto:jertoosaver@bellsouth.net).

## Monthly Membership Meeting

Where: Dales Southern Grill, Hoover

When: 3rd Tuesday of every month

Time: 6pm dinner, 7pm meeting

Dales Southern Grill in Hoover is 1/2 mile south of the Vestavia location and is south of I-459 and 1/4 mile south of the Alabama 150-US 31 intersection on the left

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### May

8 - "The Allure of the Automobile" High Museum of Art, Atlanta

18 - Alabama section monthly meeting/dinner

20-24 - Heimatfest: concours d'elegance, track, social events, vintage racing, factory tour

### June

15 - Alabama section monthly meeting/dinner

19 - Driver education on the Barber track with "A taste of the track"

### July

20 - Alabama section monthly meeting/dinner

### August

17 - Alabama section monthly meeting/dinner

### September

19-23 - Appalachian Startrack Alabama to Virginia

24-28 - Starfest Winchester, Virginia/ Summit Point, WV

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## das Heimatblatt

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RHIANNON SCHLANGEN

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# Special opportunities

## Sonder Gelegenheit (A Special Opportunity)

What: Allure of the Automobile  
Where: High Museum, Atlanta, GA  
When: Until June 20

The High Museum of Art in Atlanta is having an art exhibition that is of special interest to automobile enthusiasts especially Mercedes-Benz enthusiasts.

Dubbed "The Allure of the Automobile" this gathering of 18 award winning (e.g. Amelia Island, Pebble Beach, etc. ) outstanding cars from the 1930's -1950's gives us a glimpse into the very special cars that inspired generations of designs as well as the general public.

Don't expect any Model A's or any other plebian transport among this collection of coach built Deussenberg, Pierce Arrow, Packard, the prewar French coach built cars including Delage, Talbot, and Bugatti with significant models from Porsche , Jaguar, Ferrari and Cadillac.



Above: 1955 M-B 300SLR & 1955-57 Jaguar D Type  
Below: 1937 Mercedes Benz 540K



Mercedes-Benz is the only nameplate with two complete cars, and what magnificent ones they are! The 2009 Pebble Beach winning 1937 540K is striking with its all independent suspension and significantly lower stance that emphasizes the sensuous curves of the bodywork. It makes the Deussenberg look like the truck that it is. The 540K could easily outrun the car that August and Friederich Deussenberg built to sell and thus support their racing efforts.

The M-B Classic Center sent a 300SLR that competed in the Mile Miglia in 1955. I always thought the Jaguar D-type was the most beautiful race car of the era until I saw one paired with the 300SLR!

Tickets are \$18 with parking in the adjacent deck another \$12.

The High Museum is just off I-85/I-75 at the Peachtree street exit. It is about 2h 15 min from Birmingham.

The exhibit will be there through June. It is well worth a visit – even if you are not an art connoisseur.

## Classic Car Caravan and Showcase at the High Museum May 8, 2010

**Schedule: 10am caravan start  
Showcase until 1 pm**

Special discounts available on May 8th

- \* \$5.00 of walk up tickets High Museum 10 - 5pm
- \* 20% off select restaurants/viewing areas 9 - 2pm

See 50 classic cars cruise up the Midtown Mile on Peachtree Street, and then park in front of the High. You'll get a chance to get up close to these rare classic cars and talk to their owners. WYAY True Oldies radio station will broadcast live, and several viewing locations along Peachtree Street will offer special discounts and promotions.

For more information visit [www.high.org](http://www.high.org)

# Coming events

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## Mercedes-Benz Heimatfest Lotus Legends Ferrari Festa

Thursday, 20 May

A parade of race cars and selected club cars (i.e. from the 50's, 60's, 70's, and 80's) will depart from the Barber track at 4:45 to drive 14 miles to the picturesque Mt. Brook Village. Simultaneously the other club cars will assemble in Mt. Brook Village (near the host hotel) to welcome the "rallyeists" and racers who should arrive by 5:15.

Mt. Brook Village was started in 1928 to emulate a Tudor style village built in a circular form with parking around a "roundabout". The half timbered architecture gives it a European look. It is picturesque but it is no more authentic than Vail is of Switzerland.

We will retire to Avo, a new restaurant in Mt. Brook Village where we have reserved the balcony overlooking the race cars and our cars. We will need a head count for this.

Friday, 21 May

We will have a number of activities available:

1. The racing enthusiasts will want to go on out to Barber Motorsports Park to see the historic cars practice and to see them up close in the paddock. Our car corral/ concours/ hospitality area will be open.

2. While you are there, be sure to visit the Barber Motorsports Museum with its unequaled collections of motorcycles and Lotus race cars along with other great collections including the Surtees World champion Ferrari and the infamous 250 "GTO" LM. We can arrange

discounted tickets if you order them from us (\$12/day or \$25 for 3 days).

3. You will be able to drive the Formula One approved Barber Track in your own car from 12-1. The track touring groups will assemble in the car corral/ concours area at 11:30.

4. Please keep in mind that you will have to obtain your car corral pass from [www.barbermotorsports.com/hmp.php](http://www.barbermotorsports.com/hmp.php). You will need to let them know that you are with the Mercedes-Benz Club America/ Lotus/Ferrari concours to get the special discount that we have arranged with the promoters (\$25 for Sat or Sun, \$10 Fri or \$45 for Fri, Sat, Sun).

5. There are 5 scenic drives of varying lengths to different types of areas. These are included in your concours registration. You may drive them together or individually.

6. A shopping tour of the unique establishments in the Mt. Brook area will be lead by one of our board members. The large shopping center nearby has upscale major chains including Sak's 5th Avenue.

Registration will officially begin Friday evening at the host hotel Drury Inn and last from 5-7. We will also have a reception at this time that will include hot finger foods and non-alcoholic drinks. If you are a guest of the hotel then you

will receive one free ticket to the reception per room. If you are not a hotel guest we are to collect \$10 each. Liability concerns prohibit their serving alcohol to non guests but they don't mind if you bring your own.



Covered bridge featured during a scenic tour

Saturday, 22 May

Saturday will be a repeat of Friday for the track events, drives, and perhaps more shopping. You will have another opportunity to drive the track at 12-1.

I will be racing my Lotus 47 in the event. Bobby Rahal also has one of these very rare (12 produced) cars, so I will have to pit local knowledge of the challenging Barber track against his talent, experience, and money. I would be honored to have everyone visit my paddock area on any of the 3 days. My area is easy to spot because the trailer is painted the same red/gold/white as the race car, and I fly German, British, and Alabama flags.

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RSVP for the Thursday dinner at Avo and/or the Friday dinner at Brio by e-mailing [jertoosaver@bellsouth.net](mailto:jertoosaver@bellsouth.net)

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On Saturday night there is a gala dinner in the Barber Mo-



Barber Motorsports Park

# Coming events

torsports Museum with Bobby Rahal, Mario Andretti and other human Legends of Motorsports. This is a fundraising event for the Barber Museum and for Paul Newman's charities for children with life changing illnesses. Tickets are \$250 per person and dress is business casual. Out of respect for this event we will not plan an evening event for Saturday.

## Sunday, 23 May

Sunday is the day for the car concours d'elegance at Barber Motorsports Park. Mercedes-Benz, Lotus, and



MBUSI Factory

Ferrari will have the prime positions.

The park opens at 7:00 am. We will be parking the concours cars by 8:30am with judging starting at 9:30. The track drives

will be 11-12.

Mercedes-Benz USA will bring one of the new models (certainly an E-class Cabriolet and perhaps an SLS) to show us and be with us at Barber.

You will be able to view the racing from the

conours area. After the racing event ends at 4:30 (I will be in the first race Sunday at 12:00 and the last one at 3:45 and the judges will want to watch these two), we will have time to relax a bit before dinner a Brio, another great restaurant.

## Monday, 24 May

We will gather at the MBUSI Factory at 8:15am (I 20 W / I 59 S Exit 87: Mercedes Drive—you can't miss it).

The special factory tour that we get is over two hours, so we will finish around 11am. This will allow those who wish to eat in the associates dining area. It's cool to see 800 people with Mercedes-Benz shirts together! We will then go back to the museum which contains the 1885 Daimler Motorcycle, and the 1886 Daimler and 1886 Benz which were the first automobiles ever. There are also other historic Mercedes-Benz cars as well as a history of the company. This is really the history of the automobile.

We are looking forward to making your visit here enjoyable. We hope this gives you a better idea of what to expect. If you have questions don't hesitate to call me at 800-228-2997.

MBUSI factory tour/museum participation requires registration in the concours d'elegance at the Legends of Motorsports race

legends of motorsports  
car corral activities

### Legends Car Corral Package

- \$45 Three-Day Pass
- \$25 Single Day for Saturday or Sunday
- Includes Paddock Access
- Includes Parking Pass to the "Legends Car Corral"
- Parade Laps for select Car Corral participants
- Includes Access to the "Legends Car Corral Hospitality Tent"
  - » Tech talk from Legends participants
  - » Guest Speakers
  - » Door prizes
  - » Snacks and refreshments

# Legends of Motorsports 21-24 May 2010

## Registration for Heimatfest & Legends & Festa

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse or guest: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration fee: \$20 1st car + \$15 for 2-4 cars**

<u>Car(s)</u>	<u>Model</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Do Not Judge</u>	<u>Silver Star Preservation</u>
1.	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Your registration for Heimatfest includes concours d'elegance, the Mercedes-Benz Factory tour on Monday and drives on Friday & Saturday.*

**Discount passes are available to the Barber Motorports Museum for 12.00/day or \$25 for 3 days.**

**Admission tickets are required to enter the park and park in the car corral area. These can be purchased at [www.barbermotorsports.com/hmp.php](http://www.barbermotorsports.com/hmp.php) or 800-240-2300. You will need to say that you would like to be in the Mercedes-Benz or Lotus car corral in order to receive the discounted rate of \$10 Friday, \$25 for Saturday or Sunday, or \$45 for all 3 days. This will also give you the "fan zone" parking pass where the concours will be held.**

**On Thursday afternoon there will be a rally of race cars and club cars from the Barber track to Mt. Brook Village (about 20 miles) with police escort. We will want a few street cars to represent each club**

### Dinner Reservations:

Thursday dinner at La Dolce Vita # \_\_\_\_\_

Friday reception at Drudy Inn (\$10/ea.) # \_\_\_\_\_

**Note: There will be no charge for one Drury Inn guest per room**

Sunday evening dinner at Brio # \_\_\_\_\_

**Host Hotel:** Drury Inn & Suites Southeast located at the Colonnade at the intersection of U.S. 280 and I-459. The discounted rate for Mercedes-Benz Club and Lotus Club participants is \$84.99 + tax for 1 bed, \$88.28+ tax for 2 beds. Contact them at: [www.druryhotels.com](http://www.druryhotels.com) or 205-967-2450

**Reservations must be made by April 21 to receive the discounted rate**

**Factory Tour:** Visitors to the factory must be registered in the concours and have a photo id. Additional rules for the factory tour can be found on our website [www.mbca.org/alabama](http://www.mbca.org/alabama)

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes I would like to participate in the MBUSI factory tour

Additional person joining me on the factory tour: \_\_\_\_\_

Total for concours entries \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total for museum passes \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total for Friday reception \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

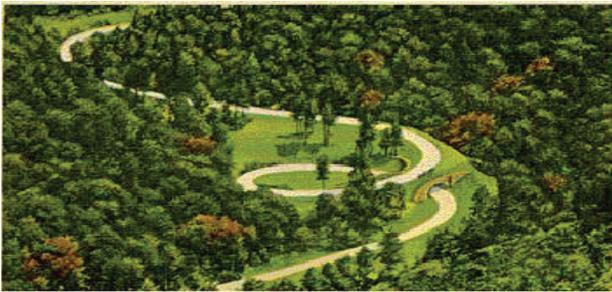
**Total registration fee:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this completed form with check or money order payable to: Alabama Section, MBCA, 739 St. Andrews Parkway, Oneonta, AL 35121. Call 205-274-4706 for registration questions, for other questions call 205-933-9333 or 800-228-2997

# Coming events

## Caravan to Starfest

For 2010 the biannual MBCA gathering Starfest, will be held at Winchester, VA and Summit Point WV on 23-25 September. There are all types of driving events including autocross, acceleration runs, accident avoidance, driver education and timed laps of the renowned Summit Point Road Course, as well as road rallies that will cover the beautiful Potomac and Shenandoah Valleys and the adjacent mountains.



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...there will be many interesting diversions including the notorious "Tail of the Dragon"...

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Of course there will be a concours d' elegance for all MBCA classes, great tech sessions, and social events each night featuring leadership figures from both Mercedes-Benz and MBCA. This is an infrequent opportunity to meet Mercedes-Benz enthusiasts from all over North America who share your passion for the world's oldest automobile manufacturer and the wonderfully engineered and designed cars that we are privileged to own.

In order to enhance the joy of this experience, the Alabama Section and Peachtree Section are organizing a caravan of Mercedes-Benz enthusiasts for the drive from Alabama and Georgia through Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia.

Plans are just developing, but for Mercedes-Benz enthusiasts from south and west, no trip to Alabama is complete without a visit to the Mercedes-Benz US International Factory in Vance which is 25 miles southwest of Birmingham.

After this and assembling in Birmingham at the world class Barber Motorsports Park and Museum as well as Atlanta, we will be taking in some beautiful scenery in northeast Alabama including Little River Canyon National Park with a road with more curves than the "Tail of the Dragon", and northwest Georgia, the two

groups will merge in Chattanooga which has been a "tourist town" for well over a hundred years.

As the caravan proceeds up the wide valley between the Cumberland and Blue Ridge ranges of the Appalachian Mountains via Knoxville, TN and Roanoke, VA there will be many interesting diversions including the notorious "Tail of the Dragon" which makes US129 in Tennessee and North Carolina the twistiest US numbered highway, Smoky Mountain National Park, and other interesting sights.

At Roanoke, VA it is only a short distance to the Blue Ridge Parkway which is like a 450 mile long national park that follows the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains. This runs into Shenandoah National Park which continues this challenging drive all the way to the Potomac River.

Those towing trailers or those who don't relish thousands of curves or who just want to move faster can continue up interstate 81 which is very scenic as well. You will still be in Virginia for 350 miles!

We will make arrangements for overnight accommodations and for evening meals together as much as possible to let all the participants get to know each other. Along the way we will try to coordinate with the local sections at sights and at evening meals.

If you have been on any of these great distance drives with MBCA, you know what a great bonding experience and, just plain fun these events are. If you haven't you owe it to yourself to take part in this infrequent opportunity.

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For more details contact:

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Daryl Williams: [dwilli3038@aol.com](mailto:dwilli3038@aol.com)

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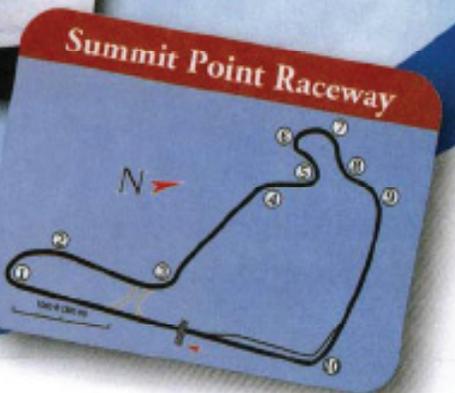
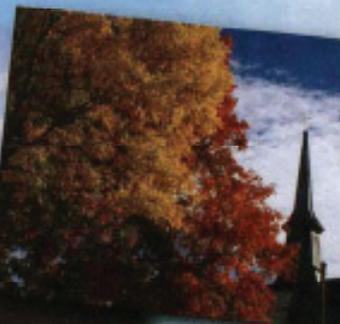
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Check the STARFEST® 2010 website often for the official schedule and updates • [www.starfest2010.org](http://www.starfest2010.org)

# Event Recap

## IndyCar Race at Barber

As the photos indicate, we had a very large number of star cars at the 9-11 April IndyCar Race at Barber Motorsports Park. We actually overfilled our MBCA reserved spaces. We were able to meet a significant number of Mercedes-Benz enthusiasts who did not know about MBCA.

Many thanks to MBCA board members Bob Hinds, Manny Sousa, and Dodie Roberts for helping ZOOM manager Alan Thacker and me get all the car club cars parked. Mercedes-Benz numbers were exceeded only by BMW in this corral.

Porsche, however, had a company sponsored hospitality area and their own car corral. I've heard reports of up to 1000 people there!

The nicest thing about the event, according to several that I talked with was that everyone was very nice and honored chairs that people left overnight to mark their places. In spite of crowds much larger than expected everyone got along very well. Many of these had never been to a race of any kind. They all had a great experience.



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## Management

### Daimler, AG selects new MBUSI president

Markus Schäfer has been selected to be president of the MBUSI production facility in Alabama by Daimler, AG.

Herr Ing (engineer) Schäfer began his career with Daimler in 1990 as a trainee. He has served as operations engineer, planning engineer, and production officer at the large assembly plant at Sindelfingen near Stuttgart where most of the sedan and SL production for Europe and North America takes place.

Prior to 2007 he was vice president of engineering for the Alabama plant. From 2007-2010 he was director of strategy for car production of Mercedes-Benz.

On July 1, Herr Ing Schäfer will replace Ola Kaellenius who has become managing director of Mercedes-Benz AMG, GmbH.

The Alabama facility seems to have become an important step for Mercedes-Benz executives. Remember Daimler, Ag president, Dr. Dieter Zetsche got the Alabama factory running and into full production in 1993-98.

## Sales

### Sales increase

The 4 May edition of the Birmingham News reported that Mercedes-Benz orders are up again in 2010 continuing the strong upturn in the last quarter of 2009.

Sales of the M-Class SUV have increased 23.4% and the GL-Class SUV showed a 53% increase over last years sales.

Mercedes-Benz as a whole has shown a 25% increase from 2009.

There are styling changes coming for the R-Class that should also increase its sales.

## Business

### Daimler in global alliance with Nissan-Renault

In a deal first reported in November 2009, Daimler announced a global alliance with Renault-Nissan.

An obvious visible result will be the use of Mercedes-Benz four cylinder engines in the infinity G-series cars. The benefit seems curious, since these cars compete with the C-Class.

The sharing of technology will extend over the next 5 years and will include Renault's assistance with the next Smart.

Both Mercedes-Benz and Renault-Nissan officials said that in addition to reducing development costs they were also motivated by looming stricter fuel economy standards.

## Reviews

### GL diesel gets high marks

The 19 April issue of Autoweek reported a spring break trip from Detroit to Pensacola on one fuel stop.

They figured 25 mpg with its 25 gallon tank should result in a range of 600 miles. They therefore planned a fuel stop in Franklin, KY. Diesel is

20-40 cents per gallon less there than anywhere else on the trip. This was also halfway (550 miles).

They were heavily loaded and

cruised at 75mph. In this less than optimal situation they got 24.5 mpg which was still better than the EPA's 23 mpg rating.

I have noticed that this is the case with most Mercedes-Benz models while most American cars fail to achieve their EPA ratings.

The Autoweek editors were impressed with the comfort, performance, and fuel economy of the GL 320 Bluetec diesel.



2010 GL diesel

### S400 hybrid: great car and a bargain!

Autoweek's 19 April "green" issue reported on the S400 hybrid is not only the smoothest and most refined hybrid they had ever driven but also that even with its unique lithium ion battery that is guaranteed for the life of the vehicle, it is the only hybrid that actually costs less than the conventional car (\$550) on which it is based.

By comparison the Lexus LS hybrid carries a \$44,000 premium this makes the cost of the S400 hybrid \$20,000 less than the Lexus LX hybrid!

Autoweek had reported that they barely noticed when the gasoline

engine cuts out and restarts at traffic lights and that it was noticeably the smoothest hybrid in transition from starting to acceleration to regenerative braking.

Interestingly our "green" media fails to report these shortcomings in the Toyota and domestic hybrids.

Mercedes-Benz states that the S400 H gets 19 mpg city and 26 mpg hwy. Autoweek stated that they would much prefer driving the S400 hybrid than the Lexus LS hybrid on a daily basis. That is, of course, no surprise to those of us spoiled by driving behind the star.

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