



# Das Heimatblatt

Newsletter for the Alabama Section  
Mercedes-Benz Club America

December • 2010

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## STERNBLICK

(View through the Star)

*James Roberts*  
*President, Alabama Section MBCA*

**W**e had a nice group for our Perdido Key- Pensacola, Florida- South Baldwin County Alabama event. The restaurant, lodging, visit to Centennial Imports and the drive were all great fun. The interest is great for more frequent Gulf Coast events. We are planning a March visit to Bellengrath Gardens, Mobile, and perhaps a circle of Mobile Bay as well as a summer event in the area.

The MBCA National Board of Directors meeting in St. Louis was very interesting. I was able to present Alabama Section's bid for Startech 2013 with support from Directors Frank Cozza, Greg Magnus, and Bill Hopper. They seem to be favorable to our proposal over that of the Classic Center in Los Angeles.

After I returned home I got a request from national Treasurer Laura Simonds who chairs the Leadership Committee to serve on this committee to help other sections and the national MBCA with developing present and future leaders. These people are so talented that I feel very humbled to be asked to join them.

Like it or not, Alabama Section has a high profile with the MBCA leadership.

We are well into the holiday season by now, and we are looking forward to seeing you for a holiday luncheon at the beautiful home of Nancy and Ed Jones. Carol Wadley and Nancy Jones are preparing a memorable meal for us to enjoy as we visit with friends and make new friends. This has proven to be one of the major events of the year for most MBCA sections.

Fröhe Weinachtien, und  
viel Glück im neuen Jahr!  
(Merry Christmas and much happiness in the New Year)

**ALABAMA, MISSISSIPPI, GULF COAST**

## Monthly Membership Meeting

Where: Dale's Southern Grill, Hoover

When: 3rd Tuesday of every month

Time: 6pm dinner, 7pm meeting

### **There will not be a December meeting**

Dale's 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

### December

- 18 - Feiertagsfest (Holiday luncheon) 1-4pm  
More info on page 3
- 21 - NO STAMMTISCH  
No monthly meeting in December

### January

- 15 - Eisreise  
More info on page 3
- 18 - Stammtisch (monthly meeting)

### February

- TBA- Tech event at Classic Car Service  
Fultondale, Al

### March

- 15- Stammtisch (monthly meeting)
- 25- Südstammtisch-- Mobile  
(Southern quarterly meeting)
- 26-27- Bellengrath Gardens and Mobile

### April

- 9-10- Car corral at Indy Car Grand Prix of Ala
- 19- Stammtisch (monthly meeting)

### May

- 17- Stammtisch (monthly meeting)
- 19-23- Heimatfest (MBCA Regional event)

## MERCEDES-BENZ CLUB OF AMERICA ALABAMA SECTION [www.mbca.org/alabama](http://www.mbca.org/alabama)

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**Birmingham, AL**  
205.933.9333  
FAX 205.933.9338  
[jertoosaver@bellsouth.net](mailto:jertoosaver@bellsouth.net)

Treasurer, **CARL CULLISON**  
**Oneonta, AL**  
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[cmculli@otelco.net](mailto:cmculli@otelco.net)

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[porgal@charter.net](mailto:porgal@charter.net)

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*Member-at-Large*, **DAVID RICE, Mobile, AL**  
251-665-4582, [drice2009@att.net](mailto:drice2009@att.net)

*Eastern Regional Director*  
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### das Heimatblatt

EDITOR

RHIANNON SCHLANGEN

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# Coming events

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## Eis Reise (Ice Trip)

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*When: 15 January 2011*

*Cost: \$5 per person*

*Depart: 8:30am from Barber Museum*

**I**t has become a tradition to do a "Polar Bear Run" or "Eis Reise" during the winter to have a relaxing driving activity following the hectic holiday season. Initially this was done the Saturday after Christmas. The last couple of years the New Year landed on the weekend like it does this year. We have also joined with other car clubs and even met with some from Atlanta. Sometimes this has created its own traffic jam and become so slow that it wasn't even fun. Last year it was so cold on the appointed date that the British Club cancelled and moved it back. The German clubs protested that the whole point was to brave the elements, so MBCA, PCA with a few other cars went anyway encountering a tiny bit of snow—just enough to be exciting but not dangerous. I'm proud to say that the stability of our star cars prevailed so well that we did not hold up the Porsches.

This year the "official" polar bear run will proceed down US280 to Columbus, GA as a "rolling car show" (i.e. slow like a cruise) on 8 Jan. Anyone—even a football hating true car enthusiast like me knows that in Alabama you don't schedule a drive at the same time as the National Championship football

game that an Alabama team (Auburn this year) has a chance to play in any more than you would plan a wedding on that date. Even NASCAR knows better than to schedule a race on Mother's day (If mama ain't happy...).

After consultation with the Porsche Club, "Ve haff ein plan!". We will meet at the Barber Museum at 8:30 am on 15 Jan. They are usually nice enough to allow us in to use the facilities and sometimes they even let us drive around the track.

We will take the fun challenging roads toward the mountainous eastern part of Alabama with the plan to stop for lunch at Mt. Cheaha—the highest point in Alabama. The temperature may not be the coldest in the state, but the wind chill at the summit makes it seem to be. Fortunately there is a nice warm restaurant there. Its food is not remarkable but the view is unforgettable.

We will have a fun trivia/ automobile quiz and may even reward those willing to brave the cold with open tops. Last year Carl Cullison won by driving the entire route with his top down on a day that has a high of 23°F. Carl said he didn't even get cold in his SL500.

Even if you keep the top and windows closed it is a great drive and a lot of fun with kindred spirits. If you are not a football fan, you can celebrate the fact that it's all over except the Super Bowl. If you are a motorsports enthusiast then you can anticipate the Daytona 24 hour in two weeks!

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## Holiday Luncheon

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*When: 18 December 2010*

*Cost: \$15 per person*

*Where: Ed & Nancy Jones's*

**N**ancy & Ed Jones along with Carol Wadley have graciously opened their beautiful home in the Greystone Legacy community of Birmingham for a holiday luncheon on 18 December from 1-4pm. Nancy always decorates this magnificent home beautifully for the holidays, and Ed's collection includes Mercedes-Benz, classic Lotus street and race cars, as well as the Chrysler finned cars with emphasis on imperial and the Chrysler 300 "letter" series.

This is a great time to visit old friends and make new friends as we sample the holiday fare that Nancy and Carol have created. Please send your reservations in, so they can prepare.

### Directions to Ed & Nancy's House

From US 280:

- Turn North onto Hwy119 (towards Lake Purdy)
- 2.5 Right onto Saddlecreek Trail
- 0.6 Turn left to stay on Saddlecreek Trail
- 0.8 1st left onto Saddlereek Circle  
1st right onto Saddlecreek Drive

Arrive: 3567 Saddlecreek Drive,  
Birmingham, AL 35216

# Coming Events

## Heimatfest 2011

*When: May 19-23*

*For registration info:*

*[http:// section.mbca.org/alabama](http://section.mbca.org/alabama)  
or call Jim Roberts at (205) 933-9333*

Join us for Heimatfest (Home Festival at the home of Mercedes-Benz in North America) on 19-23 May 2011 in Birmingham, Alabama.

We will again join in with Bobby Rahal's "Legends of Motorsports" upscale vintage racing celebration at the Barber Motorsports Park in Birmingham, drive unique and challenging roads, stage a concours trackside, cheer Alabama Section's Ed Jones and Jim Roberts in their vintage races, and, of course, visit the Mercedes-Benz US International Factory in nearby Vance, Alabama.

Heimatfest has been designated a Regional Event by MBCA, so there should be star cars from not only the Eastern Region but also many other regions as well.

Festivities will begin on Thursday with a 15 mile police escorted drive from the Barber Track by race cars and selected club cars to the English tudor village of Mt. Brook. This upscale suburb closes the streets for the vintage race cars and our club cars to stage a show while the members enjoy a "soi-ree" among the quaint shops and restaurants. We reserve one with a great view of the cars as well as great food.

Friday consists of scenic drives of several challenging and lightly traveled roads in the area as well as escorted shopping tours of the unique establishments in the area. These continue on through Saturday. We will have a welcoming reception on Friday.

The racing starts on Saturday as Indy Car champion Bobby Rahal brings his very exclusive Legends of Motorsports group to the beautiful and challenging Barber Motorsports Park's F-1 approved track that stages a very successful Indy car race each April. Of course, Formula One is the pinnacle of international motor racing. In 2010 Rahal was able to entice 28 historic F-1 cars to the event. That is more than the entire current field. He manages to get many other significant cars from past eras that you don't see at many vintage races.



Elton Stephens in parade from Barber to Mt. Brook Village

This event encourages visits to the paddock area to view the cars up close and to talk with the drivers and crews. You will get a warm welcome at Jim & Ed's places. Our area is reserved at trackside where the other spectators can admire our wonderful Mercedes-Benz cars and we can enjoy the comfort of a hospitality tent.

Those who want air conditioned comfort can choose between the paddock club in the tower for a bird's eye view of the track and the world renowned Barber Motorsports Museum. This houses the world's largest motorcycle collection numbering 1400 machines from 300 manufacturers from dozens of countries as well as 50 Lotus race cars- also the world's largest collection—and many other cars.



Car corral at Barber Motorsports Park

# Coming Events

The museum will be granting special visiting privileges during the event.

On Saturday our participants will get to drive the Barber Track at the lunch break.

Saturday evening features famous speakers at a gala for our participants along with the racers benefitting the Barber Motorsports Foundation as well as other charities.

Sunday brings us the feature races as well as our MBCA concours. You can choose among a judged group, a group judged by the MBCA entrants, or a non judged group. We will also feature a Silver Star group for cars 25 years or older. This is awarded for preservation—not for points. This is a great time to show off your car or to visit with friends, or watch the races which take place just a few feet away.

We gather again on Sunday evening for another social event and to go over last minute instructions for our visit to the Mercedes-Benz Factory on Monday morning.



Members take a lap around the track at lunch

On Monday morning Mercedes-Benz US International will host MBCA for a very special tour of the only place in the world that the ML, GL, and R class are produced. The facility is also being prepared for North America production of the C-class beginning 2013.

The visit includes lunch in the factory dining room with a visit to the branch of the Mercedes-Benz Museum and Visitor Center.

Photography by: Rhiannon Schlangen & Manny Sousa

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270 Yeager Parkway, 35124  
205-664-5757

# Holiday Luncheon

## 18 December 2010

Name (s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail registration with \$15/ per person to:  
Alabama Section MBCA, 2301 Arlington Ave S, Suite 200,  
Birmingham, AL 35244

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# Eis Reise (Ice Trip)

## 15 January 2011

Name (s): \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Car(s) : \_\_\_\_\_

Please send \$5/per person & entry form to:  
Alabama Section MBCA, 2301 Arlington Ave S, Suite 200,  
Birmingham, AL 35244

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# Event recap

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## Perdido Key

When Perdido Key, Florida (between Pensacola and the Alabama line) Chamber of Commerce President, Pete King, approached Alabama Section about staging an event there due to the loss of visitors resulting from the oil spill, it was the beginning of a great symbiotic relationship. We had been planning for an event in the area to bring the things we do in MBCA closer to our Gulf Coast members. Our largest concentration of members in the coastal areas is around Mobile and Pensacola and Baldwin County. Mr. King pointed out that the towns of Lillian, Josephine, and Elberta were originally German, so even our cars should feel right at home.

When I outlined the opportunity Brenda Brown and Pierce Williams immediately volunteered to check out and coordinate restaurants and lodging. Judy and Glenn McMillan are Ft. Worth Section members with a vacation home in Pensacola. They enthusiastically volunteered to lay out the driving route and printed up beautiful instructions with annotations of points of interest. As they led the parade of striking Silver Star cars, in their SLK Judy would point toward the points of interest.

If you think this area is nothing but the beach and golf courses, you are missing a lot. Of course, this is the value and the enjoyment of events like this: you really get to learn about things that are not in the major guide books. This is a really scenic pastoral area. I wish my 1978 280 SE had an iPod that would have played Beethoven's "Pastorale" symphony. I think an 8-track might have been a option, but its original Becker "Europa" radio could still find the local NPR station. Now, if they would return to classical music rather than talk it would be nicer. I suppose we could just go to satellite.

In addition to driving our great cars or admiring them as we did at Lost Key Golf and Beach Club (the locals refer to it as "Lost Ball" due to numerous water hazards), socializing and eating are major parts of MBCA events. Brenda and Pierce had found great places for a Friday welcome at, "Sunset Grille", where the proprietor drives an ML and whose brother wanted to practice his German with Heinz Neunzig and me.



Some of the cars and members at Lost Key Golf and Beach Club

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## Event recap

After our car show on Saturday we had a great lunch and intro to each other suggested by Bob Hinds at the elegant Lost Key Club.

Glynn and Judy McMillan then led us to Centennial Mercedes-Benz where manager Ben Herring enthusiastically welcomed us and showed us around the dealership and offered to host evens there. We also look forward to their participation in Das Heimatblatt.

After our drive through the idyllic countryside we returned along the very busy beach road through Gulf Shores and Orange Beach with miles of gleaming high rise condos, and, of course, the snow white sand and emerald water. It is amazing how quickly this area is restored after several hurricanes and now the oil spill. It changes from year to year but in this "off" season it is so very pleasant that it is easy to see why people love the area so much.



Pouring over the map of Josephine  
L to R: Heinz Neunzig, Elaine Reddy,  
Jim Roberts, Bob Hinds, Sterling Reddy

Our final feast was the Perdido Key Oyster Bar. By this time the group had really bonded and had a really great time with the newfound friendships. Along the way we also found some new members. A usual, the cars bring us together, but the people keep us together.

Be sure to join us at Bellengrath Gardens and Mobile in March and back perhaps just a bit north of the coast in summer. Now, put on Beethoven and visualize your Mercedes-Benz guiding through Spanish Moss draped forests with views of the bayous and waterways—oh that is your Alabama or Mississippi license plates...

Photography by: Judy McMillan

## Member review

### Not everyone wants a track car!

Article & Photography by Robert Hinds

Many Mercedes-Benz owners, including Jane and me, appreciate the Sport and AMG versions but prefer to own the "luxury" versions. Take the C Class—that Jim Roberts wrote about in the August 2010 Das Heimatblatt, the C300 is available in Luxury and Sport models, the C350 and C63 AMG only in Sport versions. So there is a C car for everyone.



In 2008, we bought a C300-Luxury sedan for a multitude of reasons. We preferred the traditional grill and hood star (yes, either grill can be exchanged.) That year, the burled walnut interior trim was only available on the luxury model as was the cashmere interior. Our choice of the Palladium Silver exterior with the Cashmere interior is quite handsome and makes the car look more upscale, see photo. We loaded it up with most of the available options so it provides the traditional Mercedes-Benz luxury experience.

During the 2009 Heimatfest I had the opportunity to drive our C300 at speed on the Barber road course. That session proved that even without the Sport or AMG features, any Mercedes-Benz is a high-performance car. I followed an AMG model that quickly accelerated faster on the straits but I was closely behind it on every turn, I was duly impressed. For driving on American roads any Mercedes-Benz has way more handling ability then is necessary at sane speeds. So unless you intend to drive on a track, check out the luxury versions of the model you are interested in buying, you will be pleasantly surprised how well the newer Mercedes-Benz cars perform.

### Daimler stock observations

**S**L Market Newsletter publisher John Olson (former MBCA Secretary) makes some interesting observations about Daimler, AG stock since ailing Chrysler was given away: in March 2010 Daimler stock had doubled in 12 months to 43.5. Eight months later it is bumping on 70!

John attributed this to several factors, including retreat from the NYSE, divesting Chrysler, new business innovations (the ML and its production facility in Alabama is one example), and especially sales growth during a recession have pleased investors in Europe and Asia. Daimler stock is still available in the US as DDAIF. Lest you think the current price is unrealistic, Olson points out that BC (before Chrysler) Daimler-Benz stock was selling in the 80's. Rise in Chinese and Russian sales of 98% & 55% respectively in September vs. 1 year ago continued in October with worldwide sales up 18% to 1,327,027 so far in 2010. CEO Dieter Zetche has raised target earnings from 6 billion Euros to 7+ billion (\$10 billion).

As good as the outlook for Daimler stock is, the value of older MB cars is even more promising. While we all know the 2 seaters and open cars have held their values during the recession and are now rising significantly as American collector car values drop as are some British marques (e.g. Austin Healey), what about sedans? These have traditionally not been good investments, but John Olson points out that many of them—especially the "special" 300 series plus the 4.5, 6.3, and 6.9 "S"- class sedans are turning upward as numbers shrink. In addition he points out their practicality. I can attest to this as I have used my 1978 280 SE as a daily driver until I recently placed it on collector car insurance to prevent its being "totaled" due to a minor accident. I can still use it for our many MBCA activities—even Starfest or Circle of Lake Huron, or just to drive for fun on the weekends. I will probably drive it as many or more miles per year than it has averaged (170,000 miles in 33 years= 5151 miles/year).

The nice thing is that there are well cared for sedans available now at very low prices. Pick a solid example of one of these very special large engined sedans from "finback" through the 116 (like mine but with the large engines) and drive your "penny stock" portfolio for untold pleasure.

### SLS GT-3 wins at Nürburgring

**T**he SL Market Newsletter reports that the just homologated SLS GT3 posted its first major overall win in the 16 Oct VLN endurance race on the 14mile classic "Nordschleife" (north course) of Nürburgring which is considered the greatest and most challenging race course in the world (many consider Barber Motorsports Track second only to the 'ring).

In appalling conditions SLS GT3 drivers Thomas Jäger and Christopher Haase (their names translate to "hunter" and "hare") won from their seventh starting position after an early lap collision with another SLS. They prevailed over a field of more than 30 Porsche GT3 R's , BMW Z4 GT3's and Audi R8 LMS.

In the final VLN race on 30 Oct the other Schneider/Mameron SLS finished third.

The SLS GT3 is the latest factory prepared customer production based race car for Mercedes-Benz AMG. It represents the first true commitment to intermediate level (even though this is club racing, you can't call it "grass roots" racing) racing since Paul O' Shea used to race his 300SL Gullwing on Sunday and then drive it to work on Monday to help sell cars—in 1957.

Porsche has been producing "customer" race cars that have been very successful for many years-- often winning races and championships against full factory teams from other manufacturers. It's nice to see Mercedes-Benz address this market. Perhaps in 20 years I can afford an SLS GT3 for vintage racing-- or not, since the street version seems to be an instant collectable.



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*For more details about these and other trends contact: SL Market Newsletter  
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and registration information.

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Alabama Section  
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Suite 200  
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