



Das Heimatblatt

Newsletter for the Alabama Section
Mercedes-Benz Club America

July • 2012

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STERNBLICK

(View through the Star)

James Roberts
President, Alabama Section MBCA

While Alabama Section has a great national reputation for being very active (four regional events the planned national event in 2013, two Eastern region officers' of the year, and two events almost every month) we have learned of three attempts to form new sections out of parts of our section and rather small number of active members.

Due to great support from the new ownership of Mercedes-Benz of Huntsville, our Board and other Alabama Section members in that area, this has become a very positive force for many Alabama Section activities in the Tennessee Valley area. We have already staged a car show in Madison, a visit to the U.S. Space & Rocket Center, and a lunch/meeting hosted by M-B of Huntsville where local members decided to start planning Alabama Section local quarterly lunch meetings on Saturdays at M-B of Huntsville. We will participate in a car show sponsored by the dealership on 21 July (see article).

Our 3-4 Nov visit to the Shiloh Battlefield will have a group leaving from M-B of Huntsville.

This is a great example of how the combination of local MBCA members and dealer enthusiasm with participation and commitment from them and Alabama Section leadership can have a very positive impact on local activities.

As you can see, our Alabama Section board has very active members from extreme north to extreme south of our very large geographic area.

We have had some interest in forming a similar local interest group in the Mobile/Pensacola area where we have almost as many members concentrated as in the Huntsville/Tennessee Valley Area. If you have an interest in this, contact me. The dealers in Mobile, Pensacola, Ft. Walton and Dothan are all very cordial and would probably be delighted to host MBCA events. What we need is input from our Gulf Coast members, since the events we have staged in

ALABAMA, MISSISSIPPI, GULF COAST

that area have attracted very few, local if any, non board members. Interestingly, while Board member David Rice lives in Mobile, Treasurer Brenda Brown and Board Member Pierce Williams have a second home in Orange Beach. Please feel free to communicate with any of them or Ken Kirchgesser (kfkirch@gmail.com) or me, if you would like to have more MBCA activities in the southern part of the section.

Of course, all members and guests are welcome at any of our sections activities, and we need everyone to participate in Startech 2013 on 18-22 May.

Monthly Membership Meeting

Where: Dale's Southern Grill, Hoover

When: 3rd Tuesday of every month

Time: 6pm dinner, 7pm 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

July

17- Stammtisch (monthly meeting)

21- Landers McLarty Car Show

August

21 - Stammtisch (monthly meeting)

25- Tennessee Valley Quarterly Meeting at Mercedes-Benz of Huntsville

September

14-15 - Concours at Bud's Benz

18 - Stammtisch (monthly meeting)

27th - Oct 3 - Starfest 2012

October

16 - Stammtisch (monthly meeting)

November

3-4 - Visit to Shiloh and Natchez Trace

20 - Stammtisch (monthly meeting)

MERCEDES-BENZ CLUB OF AMERICA

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Coming events

Landers McLarty *4th annual charity car truck and bike show*

*Huntsville, AL
21 July*

While the attached promo does not look like our usual Mercedes-Benz Club America announcement, the connection is that Mercedes-Benz of Huntsville is owned by Landers McLarty. The show will be directly across University Drive from Mercedes-Benz of Huntsville. They have been most supportive of the Alabama Section, MBCA and hosted us for lunch on our 23 June visit to the Space and Rocket Museum.

Note that there is a class for imported cars and another for micro cars. This one will be a special promotion. We would like to see a few of our Smart© owners to turn out for this., as well as Mercedes-Benz.

We will also try to have a meeting for our Tennessee Valley members concurrently.

What could be more fun than cleaning up your Mercedes-Benz and hanging out with other M-B enthusiasts to help charity? You might even win a trophy or money!

Concours at Bud's Benz and judging school

*Douglasville, GA
14-15 September*

We will join with our friends in the Peachtree Section for a concours at Bud's Benz Restorations in Douglasville, GA on 15 Sept. This will be a great opportunity to attend a judging school conducted by MBCA concours chair and former national president Pete Lesler. If you have been intimidated by the formal judged concours in the past, this course should help dispel those fears.

Concours d'Elegance 2012

by

Diana Quinn, Peachtree Concours Chair

On September 15, 2012 our annual Concours d'Elegance will be held at Bud's Benz in Douglasville, GA: This years Concours is open to all Mercedes-Benz owners. Do you have a friend or a neighbor who owns a Mercedes-Benz? Invite them to come and show their "baby" or just to come and view a spectacular field of cars.

This year's show will include a couple of new features of:

- A new modified judging class will be available to Pre-merger AMG cars that were built by Mercedes-Benz and then modified by AMG.



- Haggerty insurance will also be coordinating a "Youth Judging" program. Children and grandchildren of members between the ages of eight and seventeen are eligible to participate. The children will have an opportunity to learn - about the unique cars at the show and will do their own form of judging and present a trophy to the car of their choice. This program will be limited and children will be accepted as youth judges on a first come first serve basis. (Use the registration form in this newsletter to communicate the children's names.)

Cars will be divided into several classes as follows (when registering please choose the appropriate category based on these descriptions):

Concours

Cars in this category must be at least 25 years old and represent the most perfect examples of the Mercedes-Benz marque. These cars are in excellent original condition, or are restored to original show quality



6533 University Drive Huntsville, Alabama

July 21, 2012

Registration
8am-12noon

Info call
256
830-6450

4th Annual Charity Car Truck and Bike Show

Up To
\$10,000
Cash Prizes
To Registered
Participants

\$250 Cash will be awarded to 1st Place,
\$100 to 2nd Place, \$50 to 3rd Place to each
of 20 Judged Classes, based On
Minimum of 10 Participants Per Class.
If minimum number of participants not
met then \$125 for 1st Place, \$50 for
2nd Place, \$25 for 3rd Place.

Up To
\$10,000
Cash Prizes
To Registered
Participants

Entry Fee \$20.00



Judged Classes

Cars 1960 & Earlier
Chrysler 1961 - 1979
Chrysler 1980 - 1999
Chrysler 2000 - 2012
Ford 1961 - 1979
Ford 1980 - 1999
Ford 2000 - 2012
GM 1961 - 1979
GM 1980 - 1999
GM 2000 - 2012
Corvette 1953 - 1983
Corvette 1984 - 2012
Street Rods
Trucks 1960 & Earlier
Trucks 1961 - 1979
Trucks 1980 - 1999
Trucks 2000 - 2012
Micro/Mini Cars
Motorcycles
Import - All Years
Show Only
(All Vehicles)

No Pre-Registration

All Show Proceeds Go To



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF NORTH ALABAMA



Big Brothers Big Sisters
of North Alabama



Free Food

Drawing for \$100
every 30 minutes
from 10:00 - 1:30

Coming events

standards. They will be judged according to strict MBCA judging rules (undercarriages will not be judged) and by MBCA certified judges. A 100-point system will be used to determine the best of the best.

Street

Cars in this class are usually driven on a regular basis. Street cars should be driven to the event. Street cars will be judged to determine those cars that are in the best original condition for their age and mileage.. Engine and trunks will be judged, undercarriages will not be judged. Judging will be performed MBCA certified judges using the MBCA defined 100-point system designed for Street cars. Pre-merger AMG

Cars in this class are cars that are AMG modified Mercedes-Benz automobiles before Mercedes-Benz acquired AMG.

Pre-merger AMG cars will be judged to determine those cars that are in the best condition for their age and mileage. Cars will be judged against a modified version of the MBCA 100-- point Street car system that will take into consideration the AMG modifications.

Silver Star Preservation Certification

This is not a judged category but is designed to recognize and "Certify" cars 25 years of age or older that have not been restored or may be in progress of being restored. A Silver Star Preservation Class Mercedes-Benz must be driven to the MBCA event and have all of its safety items operating. It must have a fire extinguisher. All safety items will be checked and must be totally operational to qualify your car as a Silver Star Preservation vehicle: MBCA's Concours Chairman will use a point system has been designed as a guideline and qualification of 60 points or better in three of five categories to earn the "Silver Star Preservation Certificate".

Display Only

These cars will not be judged. Cars may be of any age or condition. They are for the enjoyment of all and will not be eligible for awards.

We are once again honored to have our MBCA National Concours Chairman, Peter Lesler, as our Chief Judge for our Concours d'Elegance. Join us Friday evening to attend a judging class, during which he will explain the 100-point scoring MBCA Autoshow system and will certify individuals as judges. You do not have to be showing a car to attend the judging class. We will meet for this class at 5:00pm on Friday evening, September 14th in the conference room on the 2nd floor at Bud;s Benz. A light dinner will be provided.

The schedule for Saturday, September 15th will be as follows:

8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m: Registration

9:00 a.m: Judging Begins

NOON: Judging Ends

2:00:- 3:00 p.m: Awards

A continental breakfast and lunch for two will be provided for all registered show participants. Lunch will be available for purchase for those who wish to come as spectators.

Awards will be based on the MBCA 100-point system. Cars will be further grouped where possible within the Concours, Street and Pre-merger AM G classes so that like type cars are judged against the same (e.g. Sedans, SL's, Convertibles etc.). Non-MBCA members are eligible for all awards except for the Peachtree Section Bud Johnson Traveling trophy award. **Event registration can be found on the back page of this newsletter.**

Directions to Bud's Benz from Birmingham:

Take the ramp to I-59 N/Interstate 20 E

Keep right at the fork, follow signs for I-20 E/I-59 N/ Atlanta/Gadsden and merge onto I-59 N/Interstate 20 E

Slight right onto Interstate 20 E (signs for I-20 E/Atlanta)

In Georgia take exit 30 from I-20 or Post Rd

Turn left onto Post Rd

Turn right onto GA-8 E/US-78 E

Turn left toward W Strickland St

Turn left onto W Strickland St

Bud's Benz, Inc. - Bosch Car Service

7773 W Strickland St, Douglasville, GA 30134

Coming Event

Visit to Civil War Battlefield in Shiloh Natchez Trace Parkway Tupelo Automobile Museum

3-4 Nov.

As we are in the sesquicentennial of the Civil War/War Between the States/War for Southern Independence/ Southern Rebellion/ Northern Aggression or whatever you call it, it was an immensely important historical event that resulted in significant change in American culture at enormous financial and human costs.

One of the greatest – in fact the largest single day loss of human life -- took place in April of 1862—just over 150 years ago-- near the village of Shiloh on the banks of the Tennessee River near the convergence of the Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee lines.

Union general Ulysses S. Grant had been able to navigate the Tennessee River to Muscle Shoals (Alabama) without significant resistance but he could not successfully hold land areas. Similarly New Orleans had been occupied early, but the central Mississippi could still be crossed by Confederate forces and goods. Grant's objective was to seize the north/south and east/west rail crossing at Corinth, Mississippi, to cut east-west and north-south rail transportation by the Confederacy. Pickwick Landing was the place his Tennessee River fleet could land his army for a quick march to Corinth.

Confederate General James Johnston understood the importance of thwarting this strategy and forced the Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee Confederates to attack Grants "Army of the Tennessee" (Union armies were named for rivers while Confederate armies were named for states or parts of states) as it was disembarking near Shiloh, Tennessee.

As the battle raged for two days with the Confederates almost pushing Union forces back into the river the first day, General Johnston prophetically proclaimed "I will water my horse in the Tennessee River or in hell tomorrow". He was mortally wounded in the battle which was the bloodiest to that time and saw more loss of American life than any other single day ever.

Today the National Park Service has preserved this place of valor as a memorial to those who fought and those who fell here. The states have erected monuments. Union ones are more numerous and grander than Confederate ones, because most were erected in the 19th and early 20th centuries as the South was still devastated by the loss of 2/3 of its total capital and 1/3 of its men. Tennessee lost more than any other state due to strong Union sentiments in the east. Losses for Tennessee were about equal Union and Confederate.

Battlefields are usually confusing unless you are a great historian, because as in this, one side overpowers the other one day while the other gets reinforcements the next day and changes from defense to attack and pushes back over the very same area. Fortunately the National Park Service has displays in the visitor center that give you some background and then guide you from different directions on different days.

The area is eerily peaceful now with carefully manicured grounds watched over by silenced period cannon and heroic gravestone type markers. Originally all the dead were buried here with Union in marked graves and Confederates in unmarked massive ditches. The fallen Union soldiers were later moved to the North, but Confederates remain. Many from Alabama, Memphis, and Nashville sections probably have relatives there, but probably just as many have relatives who served the Union.

Late fall in Shiloh is particularly beautiful with the turning leaves and still green grass.

Coming Event

Our plan is to set out from Birmingham, Memphis, Huntsville, and Nashville to meet at the "Catfish Hotel" restaurant adjacent to the park and the Tennessee River about 11:30 on Saturday, 3 Nov. We have a private dining area reserved for the Mercedes-Benz Club America where we will enjoy a great lunch, have a little intro to the park and the 3 sections to each other as well as the members to each other.

The park has extensive driving and walking tours for both history and nature enthusiasts.

Just down the road is the Pickwick (Tenn) State Park with another nice restaurant and beautiful views of Pickwick Lake which extends into Mississippi and Alabama, a marina, a golf course, and a well kept hotel. We will get an off season rate of \$68/ night for those who want to stay over after dinner.

For even more beautiful fall scenery on Sunday morning, Memphis and Birmingham and south drivers will want to take the Natchez Trace Parkway south to Tupelo to intersect I-22 or visit the Tupelo Antique Auto Museum. We understand that among their extensive collection is an 1886 Benz Patentwagen.

Nashville participants will not want to miss the Natchez Trace Parkway north. I've driven the trace from Nashville to Tupelo and can vouch for its beauty and serenity.

For more information contact:

Alabama Section: Jim Roberts: jertoosaver@bellsouth.net 800-228-2997
Bob Hinds: bobjanehinds@bellsouth.net
Memphis Section: Richard Rankin: laserboy1@aol.com
Nashville Section: Randy Bibb: rbibb@lewisking.com

Starfest© 2012

27 Sept.- 3 Oct.

As you know, Starfest will be held in Phoenix, Arizona on 27 Sept- 3 Oct. If you are like me, the promos in The Star might have left you a little cold. I can, however, tell you from personal experience that this is an event that is not to be missed by Mercedes-Benz enthusiasts.

Starfest© provides all the competitive activities that MBCA recognizes: Saturday will feature defensive driving with a special new MBCA Education Foundation program for teens and their families. This will be followed by an autocross competition and an evening banquet at the 5 star Biltmore Resort for some trophy presentations. There are dozens of classes, so whether you bring a 123 diesel or the latest AMG, you can be competitive.

The Biltmore will also be the setting for Sunday's judged MBCA concours d'elegence. This will be your chance to participate with some of the most beautiful and rarest Mercedes-Benz's that ever gather in one place. Gullwings are almost commonplace! Fear not, there are dozens of classes. I took third place with a daily driver 2000 S430 in 2010. Many of our Alabama Section cars are far better.

Monday and Tuesday are devoted to the "track rats" at Firebird International Raceway which is the home of the famed Bondurant Driving Academy.

Firebird has a proper NHRA drag strip for the acceleration runs. There are also three different road courses. There is a straight line acceleration competition as well as timed laps of the entire road course.

I will be instructing for this as well as for the Education Foundation's Safe Teens & Safe Families course.

Naturally there will be a final banquet and even a farewell breakfast.

Coming Event

Phoenix will still be very warm at that time of year. Personally I'm fascinated by the spectacular Sonoran Desert scenery with its giant Saguaro and Organ Pipe cacti between Phoenix and Tuscan. The red rocks around Sedona are spectacular as well as Oak Creek Canyon up to Flagstaff. Just north of Flagstaff, of course, is the Grand Canyon which is on everyone's bucket list. This is the ideal time of year to visit: not too crowded, and not yet cold enough for snow. The north rim closes by mid October due to snow.

Just east of Flagstaff is the giant meteor crater where the Apollo astronauts trained for the moon.

Yes, it is a long way, and you can fly to Phoenix nonstop inexpensively from Birmingham and rent a C-class there, but....driving your own star car the 1800 miles is a real pleasure, and west Texas even allows 80 MPH. I'm planning on taking the southern route via Dallas, El Paso, and Tucson, taking about 2 1/2 days, since I want to revisit Saguaro and Organ Pipe Cactus National Parks. The northern route is I-22 to Memphis and then I-40 all the way to Flagstaff, then south on I-25 or down Oak Creek Canyon.

Let me know, if you want to caravan. Going one way and coming back the other makes a great trip.

In Der Presse (In The Press)

Production begins on new GL

Now that the third generation ML is a year into its production, the new second generation GL started production on Thursday, 28 June. There was no GL before the second generation ML.

MBUSA President Steve Cannon, who was the "father" of the ML was one of the Daimler, AG dignitaries at the "Job One" ceremony. We hope to have him address Startech© 2103.

The New GL is also lighter and stronger as well as being a bit taller and longer than the first generation GL, so it should have improved fuel economy as well as improved performance. It is reported to go from 0-60 mph in 5.5 seconds. That was supercar performance 8-10 years ago!

Mercedes-Benz Sales Increase, Leads Luxury Sector

MBUSA announced an 18% increase in sales through May to 106,364 not counting sales of the Smart or Sprinter divisions. Mercedes-Benz dealers have sold four times as many of the Sprinter vans and trucks as all the Dodge dealers did when they sold them with a different grille.

The sales increase seems largely due to the addition of the C-coupe, freshening of the C-class, and the new Alabama built ML. The new GL should also add additional sales.

Through May, chief US rival BMW sales had increased 14% to 104,779. This does not include the Mini division. Last year BMW just edged out Mercedes-Benz in US sales as with Lexus a distant third after leading US luxury sales for over 10 years.

MBUSA reports an "amazing bump" in sales of the new ML which is lighter, stronger, more luxurious, and better performing while being more fuel efficient and costing no more than the preceding model. Sales of the ML are up 60% over 2011.

The new GL has similar construction methods and should therefore also out perform the outgoing model.

The next new vehicle scheduled for production is Alabama will be the next generation C-class which should begin full production next year.

Event Recap

1st Annual Derby Day

Mercedes-Benz of Huntsville asked Alabama Section to join them at the first annual Derby Day in Madison, near Huntsville the first weekend in May which also happened to be "Cinco de Mayo" this year.

The well preserved central part of Madison has recently received a restoration grant which has allowed nice new pavement, curbing, and planted areas as well as refurbishment of the historic center of town with its commercial district on the south side of the railroad. Remember, 150 years ago towns built up along the smooth, fast railroads rather than the bumpy dirt roads where a 19 mph double horse "trey" was the fastest long distance vehicle.



The MBCA & Mercedes-Benz of Huntsville displays at Madison car show



1940 Ford & Diamond T truck at Madison car show

Scores of nice people came by splitting their interest among the current and classic examples of Mercedes-Benz models on display. Many stated they already owned a star car and were most interested in joining the Alabama Section Mercedes-Benz Club America. Sometimes we would help M-B of Huntsville's Larry Richardson on explaining the features of the new cars.

A brief shower conveniently "washed" the cars for us, as Larry and I were able to squeegee and towel off all six cars in 20 minutes.

Plan to join us next year for a great time and great food as the event grows.

Aldridge Gardens

In our quest to visit the venues for Startech 2013, Alabama Section gathered at Aldridge Gardens exactly one year before this major national event.

Mid May is the optimal time for the flowering of the brilliant white "Snowflake" hybrid of the native Oakleaf Hydrangea as well as the colorful "French" Hydrangea.



The Aldridge estate with its forests and lake is now a Hoover City park.

First time participants were Bruce Webster and his son Ben in their 1972 300 SEL 4.5. Ben tells us that his daily driver is a 1985 300D turbo. Preservation and restoration of Mercedes-Benz cars runs deep!

Bruce Webster's 1971 280SE 4.5, Jim Roberts' 1978 280SE, and Bob Hinds 2008 C-300 at Aldridge Gardens

Event Recap

Visit to U.S. Space & Rocket Center

Alabama Section MBCA had a very special visit to the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville on 23 June. Of course, the center is on the bucket list of anyone who grew up or lived in the last 60 years of the space age as mankind has been able to explore extra terrestrial space.

Much of this research and development was done at N.A.S.A.'s Marshall Space Flight Center and Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville. The crowning achievement was the successful Apollo program that got astronauts safely to the moon's surface and back.

Alabama Section is very fortunate to have Will Powers who was a member of the team. My first cousin, Barney "Ace" Roberts was also one of as he says the thousands of Auburn grads who worked with Dr. Werner von Braun's German rocket scientists. Ace arranged for his neighbor, Heidi Wagner Collier and her friend, Jackie Dannenberg whose father and husband respectively were two of those German rocket scientists to be our guides. Alabama Section member Chad Stevens is currently working on missile systems for the defense department as are several other Alabama Section members.

Seeing an actual WW II V-2 rocket made it seem miniscule near the mighty Saturn V which is larger in diameter than a V-2 is long!

Jackie was accurate with the timeline and technical details, but Ace and Will were quick to embellish when she got to their parts. Will showed me how the Saturn V "computer" stabilized with its speed, yaw, pitch, and roll sensors with no memory in its 100 foot circumference. He agreed that this was the ancestor of the stability control that was adopted and refined by Mercedes-Benz for the stability control that Chad and I were able to experience on the track the previous weekend. Of course the cars have a lot more capacity in much smaller packages.

We also visited historical artifacts in another building with poignant photographs of Jackie's husband in the group that came to the U.S. with von Braun's team. Heidi's father arrived a couple of months later.



Chad and I paused over Werner von Braun's statement:

"A thousand expert opinions are not as valuable as a single objective experiment result".

Of great interest to MBCA members were von Braun's Virginia license plates from his Mercedes-Benz that he drove in retirement.

Mercedes-Benz of Huntsville hosted us for lunch and offered to host quarterly meetings for our members in the area. They also invited us to participate in their charity car show on 21 July. See the article and flyer for more info.

If you have an interest in technology (and what Mercedes-Benz owner does not) or in space travel, or in history, you must experience the U.S. Space & Rocket Center with those who were part of this amazing adventure and pinnacle of human achievement. This will definitely be part of Star Tech 2013. An added bonus in 2013 will be resumption of guided tours to N.A.S.A and the Marshall Space flight center. This has been off limits since 2001.

The mighty Saturn V rocket that took astronauts to the moon and back 8 years before this 1978 280SE was built.



Rocket scientists Will Powers (facing away) & Barney Roberts (seated) exchange memories with Heidi Wagner (behind Roberts) whose father was one of Werner von Braun's team of German rocket scientists. Liz Roberson is more interested in another exhibit.

GREAT CARS MAKE US APPRECIATE
THE JOURNEY, NOT JUST THE DESTINATION.



CROWN
Automobile

1800 Montgomery Highway • Hoover • 205-985-4200 • CrownAutomobile.com

Tell us something special about your car: _____
Total: \$25.00 per vehicle \$ _____
Please use one form for each vehicle registered.

Vehicle: _____ Model: _____ Year: _____ Miles: _____ Yrs Owned: _____
Concours _____ Street _____ Pre-merger _____ Silver Star Preservation _____ Display Only _____

Please check the category in which you wish to participate:

MBCA Member _____ No _____ Yes If yes, Membership #: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Address: _____

Youth Judging Children Names: _____

Name(s) of Member(s) Attending: _____

MBCA Peachtree Section Concours d'Elegance - September 15, 2012
Friday evening judging class - September 14, 2012
Bud's Benz - 7773 Strickland Street, Douglasville, GA 30134



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