



The Houston Star

MBCA Houston Section Newsletter

**October
2005**

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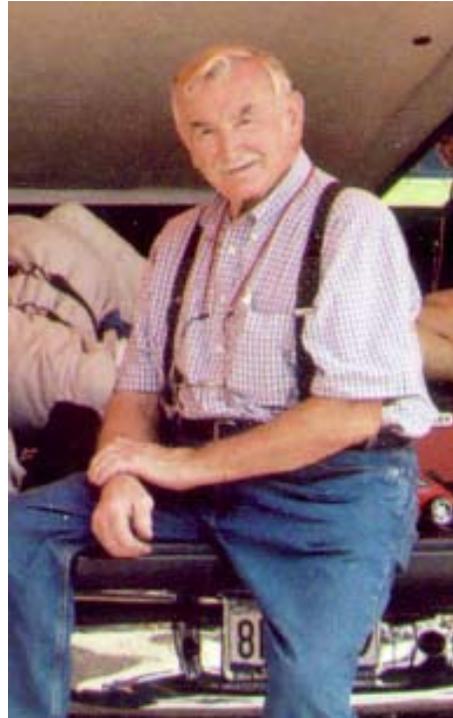
Upcoming Events

October 29
Oktoberfest @ TGA

November 5th
Election Dinner

November 13th
Fall Autocross

December 4th
Holiday Brunch



Helmut Holder

Member spotlight

Describing Helmut Holder in just a few pages is an utter impossibility, but I might be more than a bit biased. Helmut is far more than just my mechanic, he's a close friend, my crew chief during racing season, and a veritable wealth of knowledge on vintage Mercedes-Benz. Helmut's shop is the only shop allowed to perform mechanical work on my 1966 230SL for a reason. After going through several shops in Houston upon first buying my SL, I noticed that whenever a problem came up that challenged the shop working on the car there was always a call made to some old-

school German "specialist"... eventually I found out that it was the same "specialist" every time... I finally got his name and worked my way into his good graces and more importantly, worked my car into his good graces.

Helmut is a Master Mechanic, engine rebuilder, restorer and parts fabricator. He is a fascinating person whose skills go far beyond that of being a mechanic, he was a pioneer of radio controlled helicopters and a renowned glider pilot. Helmut is married to Mimi Holder, has five

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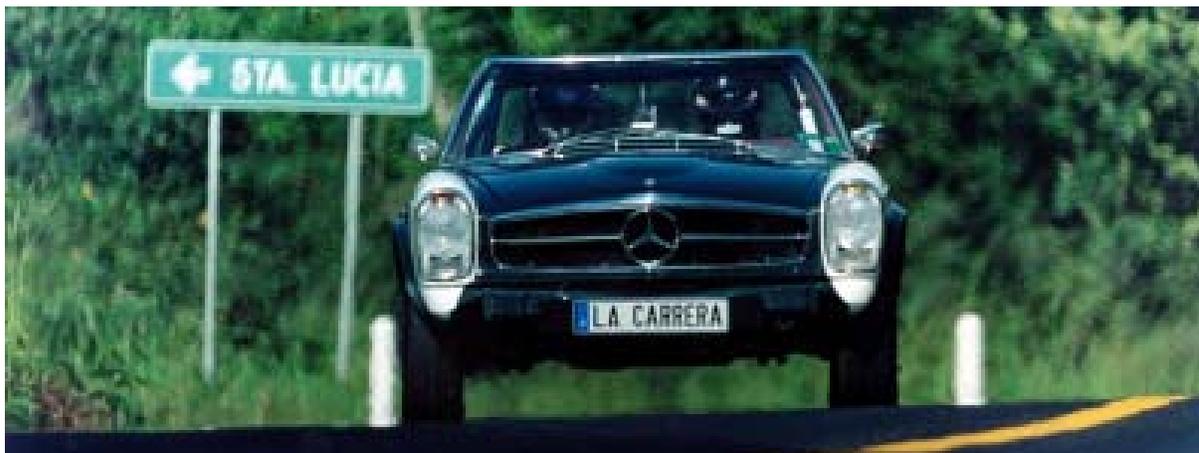
President's Message

Looks like most of us were spared from too much damage from Hurricane Rita, unless of course you were one of the many that attempted to evacuate... but I guess better safe than sorry. The hurricane did cause the rescheduling of a few events though. Please note that the Election dinner has been rescheduled for November 5th at Rudi Lechner's, and Texas German Autohaus' annual Oktoberfest Tech Session has been rescheduled for October 29th.

Due to rescheduling of events we haven't had an event to cover in this month's newsletter, so we're taking this opportunity to resurrect a newsletter feature from the past. We're doing a "Member's Spotlight" to let our membership at large get to know one of our more interesting members in the Houston Section. This time it's someone that needs little introduction anywhere, and is already well known to many members. Hopefully this will give the rest of our members a chance to learn a bit about Master Mechanic Helmut Holder. I'll admit being a bit biased in my writing, as Helmut is far more than just my mechanic, he's a personal friend, my crew chief when racing and a wealth of knowledge in many regards.

Aside from the events listed above, we've also got the fall autocross scheduled for November 13th at Kingwood College (in Kingwood of course), and the annual Holiday Brunch on December 4th hosted by our own Marjorie Russell. I look forward to see many of you at the upcoming events and wish to welcome aboard our future slate of officers and board members.

*Sincerely,
Mike Haney - President
MBCA - Houston Section*



(continued from page 1)

children, was born in Germany (of course), and is a former airplane mechanic and Mercedes-Benz mechanic. He moved to Houston in 1959 and first worked with Norman Scott when he was a Volkswagen dealer in downtown Houston. After gaining experience working for several Mercedes-Benz repair shops, he decided to open his own shop. Helmut's reputation became so well known that MBNA came to him and asked him to be an authorized dealer for them. His dealership was at the corner of the Southwest Freeway and Fountain view in Houston. Though he only had the dealership for a short time, he continued with the repair business.

For fifteen years Helmut Holder Motors, Inc. was located on West Alabama, then in 1985 Helmut sold his business and DBA. Helmut then acquired a 20,000 square foot facility at 1802 Afton where he still operates, focusing on repair and restoration of vintage Mercedes. After several years he regained the rights to use his business name. Currently Helmut's business does routine service work as well as complete restorations and engine rebuilding. One of his restorations was shown at a recent "Wooden Keels and Classic Wheels" concours level car show, the 190SL won a perfect 100 points! not an easy feat.

When I began racing in Mexico the only decision to be made about a crew chief was choosing the best way to talk him into the job. Fortunately Helmut's sense of adventure and love of travel helped grease the wheels. Helmut has been with me on each and every race. His machine shop and fabrication skills have saved the day on many occasions. He has redesigned significant parts of the car to keep it running cooler and stronger in the demanding 2100 miles of mountain racing during the annual "La Carrera Panamericana". His most recent "upgrade" was building the engine Mercedes "should have built", a one-off custom engine using the best elements from the era while still meeting race requirements.



Helmut rebuilding an engine for a 1966 230SL

He was able to give the engine bigger valves, thicker rods, better oil control and improved cooling. When it came to having custom pistons made Helmut was able to design a piston that would not only work with such a configuration, he went one step further and "tweaked" them even further before final assembly.

One of the interesting things one encounters when traveling with Helmut is that so many people know him,

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Helmut modifying suspension to work with an onboard computer

but it didn't take long for them to realize that Helmut knew more about their cars than they did, and they quickly made friends. You never know when you'll need someone with his knowledge and skills.

If you have a modern computer controlled Mercedes-Benz there are many fine repair facilities around, but if you've got a classic MB that needs parts repaired rather than just replaced, can't quite get the ol' girl running right or need a good evaluation of a classic you're considering purchasing then he's your man.

Mike Haney - President, MBCA - Houston Section



From left: Helmut Holder, Mike Haney and Gary Bartley

it's almost like the Kevin Bacon game where you know someone who knows someone that knows Kevin Bacon... except instead of six degrees of separation it's more like three. In Mexico Helmut quickly became one of the most indispensable "tools" around, helping tweak and tune the vintage engines of other teams. I still laugh when I recall the time in Zacatecas when Helmut walked up to a pair of extremely rare 300SLR's. Rather than drooling over these priceless cars as most do, Helmut began pointing out (in German) all the parts on the cars that were not "correct".

The German teams have a reputation for being somewhat aloof,

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Join us for the 11th Annual Oktoberfest at Texas-German
Autohaus on Saturday October 29th at 10:00am

3417 Edloe St. Houston, TX 77027
(713) 850-8282
www.T-G-A.com



We'll be talking about cars (brakes and alignment to be specific), but we're really going for the great German food and lots and lots of German Beer!

Event cost: \$5 at the door - for more information
contact: Charles T. Wyatt (281) 469-7428

Be part of the election of the Officers and Board of Directors for the Houston Section, MBCA

Join us for our annual election dinner to be held in the Hunt Room at Rudi Lechner's. Enjoy fine German food while we're nominating and electing Officers and the Board of Directors for the coming year. The process is open to any nominations, so you're invited to toss your own hat in the ring to help make this club a success for everyone.

Location:

**Rudi Lechner's Restaurant, Hunt room
2503 S. Gessner, Phone 713-782-1180
Saturday, November 5, 6:00 pm Cash bar , 6:30pm dinner
\$20 per person
RSVP: Alberto Gomez-Rivas - 713-780-4377**

Menu:

**Jagerschnitze, Veal with Hunter Sauce
Salad or soup
Cheese cake, Carrot cake, or Apple Strudel**

Slate:

**November 1, 2005 ~ November 1, 2006
Houston Section**

President	Chuck Wyatt
Vice President	Alberto Gomez-Rivas
Treasurer	Marjorie Russell
Secretary	Marvin Boyd

Directors:	Carol Bowen	Jim Johnson	Harry Ramirez
	Charles Rice	Steve Russell	Haskell Smith
	Richard Wilkins	Mike Walters	

Immediate Past President Mike Haney

Vice President's Message

Well its official, three people liked reading the curbside ramblings from the VP, so let's see what's new this month. Because of Rita's unannounced visit to the Gulf Coast, a few adjustments to our event calendar are worth noting such as the Election Dinner at Rudi Lechner's being rescheduled for November 5, 2005. We may have a guest speaker from Alex Rodriguez's Mercedes Benz Dealership in League City. They seem very upbeat in competing for sales and service business, so all those living in the Clear Lake area have a place to take their MB treasures in for some heavy service work, should that ever happen – God forbid! Well even though our Stars are machines, they do sometimes have a few glitches that need tender loving care. Hopefully, their service manager and sales manager will attend as we always like hearing about what's new and maybe some helpful hints about those nagging questions we sometimes get when something goes bump and grind during the night.

On the new product line, what about the new R series Touring Car? Wow, it is going to create some excitement, especially since it seems to be moderately priced. If your family size is over 5 people, this is certainly a candidate for trips, commuting, running errands or just plain pleasure driving. It has some impressive features that someone should cover in a MBCA/Houston test drive. One option that I would like to see is the planned hybrid diesel, but one will probably have to go to Europe to pick one up. After all, it is the Oktoberfest, isn't it?

Speaking of Oktoberfest, we have rescheduled TGA's Technical session to October 29th as Hans Richter had a conflict (one certainly hopes the Beemer Club of Houston didn't bounce us). TGA always has a great technical session, as everyone knows. This year should not be an exception as we all look forward to an informative topic, very good German food. One might even find some German beer if one is so inclined, but there will be an abundance of sodas, and water. Let us not forget about the Bavarian Music and really cool door prizes. Last year some folks got some nice German Beer steins, a pewter plate with the logos of all German Automobiles, etc. So set aside about 4 hours Saturday the 29th and join us around 10:00 AM and we shall celebrate Oktoberfest at TGA and chat with Hans and his staff.

On the Performance front, the F1 Manufacturer's championship is now decided. Although there was only two points between the Renault team and McLaren-Mercedes going into the last race in China, Renault came up with an ace-in-the hole engine and easily had their World Champion driver Fernando Alonso win the race. With the win Renault went from a 2 point lead to a 191-182 lead. The German Touring car championship was again dominated by the CLKs with an unprecedented 6 victories. Man those little coupes can really scoot! Hey! How about coming out to our Fall Autocross at Kingwood this November 15th? We plan to have a little car show as well as cleaning the carbon out of the engines as we approach blinding speeds of 60 MPH! It should be a fun afternoon with some great folks that would like to learn better techniques on how well that Mercedes Benz handles. Members will also present their freshly detailed cars in a contest to see how our highly experience panel of judges (randomly selected MBCA members) rate them in Best of Show, Best of Street, Show Class and Member's Choice. It might be fun, so bring some lawn chairs and some refreshments and get ready for a couple rather interesting events combined into one.

A guy walks into the local NAPA store and asks "can I get a wiper blade for this Yugo"?

The clerk replies "sounds like a good trade to me".

Have a great October and be safe out there.

*Charles T. Wyatt - Vice President
MBCA - Houston Section*

It's time for Oktoberfest!!

Most of us think of the German celebration of Oktoberfest as an ideal excuse to eat bratwurst, drink beer, and listen to polka music. Of course, all of us in the Houston Mercedes Benz Club also know that it is the time of year to visit our good friends at Texas-German Autohaus located at 3417 Edloe, just North of the Summit/Lakewood Church. Few of us realize, however, that Oktoberfest originated in honor of a celebration of love and marriage.

Dating back to October 12, 1810, when Princess Therese of Saxony-Hildburghausen was married to the Bavarian Crown Prince Ludwig (who went on to become King Ludwig I), Oktoberfest is now the world's largest festival. With the general public invited to share in a celebration with nobleman (something that just "was not done" in 1810), this royal marriage was like no other.

More than 40,000 Bavarians took advantage of this unique opportunity and attended this grand celebration which encompassed horse races, food, dancing and drinks. Crown Prince Ludwig's betrothal marked an important change in history, with the gatherings having been continued almost every year since and evolving into Oktoberfest - a celebration of Bavaria and being Bavarian.



Oktoberfest has grown a bit from the original 40,000 or so guests at the Crown Prince's wedding. Today, you will find more than six million (6,000,000) visitors from all over the world heading for Munich in September to enjoy this sixteen day festival beginning in mid-September and ending on the first Sunday in October.

Of course, Munich remains the world Oktoberfest epicenter, but in the United States, La Crosse, Wisconsin, seems to have become one of the major gathering spots for Oktoberfest celebrants. In La Crosse, you will find a plethora of traditional parades, pageantry and royalty, and more than enough bratwurst, brew, and world famous entertainment to take you abroad even if it is just a figment of your imagination. The La Crosse Oktoberfest 2005 is scheduled for this coming September 30 - October 8. For more information, visit <<http://www.oktoberfestusa.com/>> La Crosse's OktoberfestUSA web site.

Célébrez la Saison (Celebrate the Season)

It's not too early to start planning for the holidays! Mark your calendars for a special event to celebrate the holidays on Sunday, December 4 at Café Rabelais beginning at 11:00 a.m., including the famous Houston Section gift exchange.

Café Rabelais is a small French bistro located in Rice Village. The chef and owner have prepared a special menu just for us. Entrée choices include:

Salmon Filet wrapped in Parchemin Paper
Beef Filet Mignon in Bordelaise Sauce
Stuffed Quails served with Wild Mushroom Brown Sauce

All meals are served with appetizer, choice of soup or salad, dessert, and ice tea or coffee for a cost of \$35.00 per person. Vegetarian meal is available upon request and a child's dinner (under 12) will be available for \$12.00. Seating is limited to the first 50 people who RSVP to Marjorie Russell. Please send your check, made payable to MBCA, to Marjorie at 22 Thornbush Place, The Woodlands, TX 77381 and include your entrée choice.

More details will follow in next month's issue. In the meantime, please contact Marjorie if you have any questions at 936-321-2475.



Mercedes Marketplace

FOR SALE: 1993 Mercedes-Benz 500 SL

White w/Light Grey interior, 23,700 miles, 1-owner, M-B Dealer maintained - all records, Heated Seats, 6 Disc CD Changer (trunk mounted), Ceiling Lift for Hard Top + Floor Stand w/ Top Cover, Full Car Cover, New Michelin tires, always garaged, no accidents, perfect condition - interior & exterior, \$31,000.

Contact: Joe Moore (832) 813-7008

FOR SALE: 2005 Mercedes-Benz E 320 CDI

Brilliant Silver w/ Light Grey interior, 16,000 miles, I-6 Turbocharged Diesel, Overall 33.2 MPG since new, Full Leather Seating, Ventilated Seats, DVD Navigation System, Entertainment System w/Harman Kardon sound - single & 6 disc in dash CD changer, Electronic Trunk Closer, Parktronic system, Lighting Package, Sunroof Package, Rear Seat Package (rear seats fold down allowing full trunk access), no accidents/dents/dings, \$57,000.

Contact: Joe Moore (832) 813-7008

FOR SALE: 1981 Mercedes-Benz 380 SL

Blue exterior, Palomino interior, low (55,000) mileage. Soft top in great shape. Hard top comes with storage cart. Timing chain needs to be replaced, willing to come down on price to accomodate repair. This is a great little car in good condition - really is a rare find. Single owner with extremely low mileage. \$15,000.

Contact: Terhan Dial (713) 301-3842



MEMBERS: Marketplace ads for members cost \$5.00 for a text ad and \$20 for a picture & text ad. The ads will run for 3 months unless asked to repeat. ALL PICTURE ADS MUST BE PROVIDED IN DIGITAL FORMAT - NO HARDCOPY PHOTOGRAPHS.

NON-MEMBERS: Non-members may run text ads for \$10 or text / picture ads for \$25 per issue. ALL PICTURE ADS MUST BE PROVIDED IN DIGITAL FORMAT - NO HARDCOPY PHOTOGRAPHS.

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<https://www.mbca.org/mbca/addchange.htm>

2005 Calendar of Events

November - 5th 6 pm

Election Dinner - Rudi Lechter's on Gessner at Westheimer
Alberto Gomez-Rivas / 713-780-4377

October 29th

11th annual Oktoberfest @ Texas German Autohaus

November 13th

Fall Autocross @ Kingwood College
Mike Haney / 713-298-4580

December 4th

Holiday Brunch
Marjorie Russell / 936-321-2475

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