



The Houston Star

MBCA Houston Section Newsletter

**April
2010**

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Technical Session

On a clear and breezy Saturday morning, 11 attendees gathered at Houston Biodiesel for the First MBCA-Houston Tech Session of 2010. Despite this being an event on biodiesel and it being held by the Mercedes-Benz club, only one attendee (yours truly) showed up in a Mercedes-Benz diesel. Another diesel did show up, but it was a brand BMW X5 diesel, and I think I've already said too much about it already. After all, this *is* the Mercedes-Benz club! On this day, the attendees would learn some facts about biodiesel and even a few myths would be dispelled. Chris Powers, the owner and operator of Houston Biodiesel began the morning with a basic introduction to biodiesel. Chris explained the different base stocks from which biodiesel can be produced, such as used cooking oil, unused cooking oil, animal fat, and plant material. Chris also explained the difference between biodiesel and waste vegetable oil, which are often confused with one another. cont'd on p 7

President's Message

Hi M-B Enthusiasts,

First, thanks for your support. We wouldn't be able to thrive as a section without everyone contributing in one form or fashion. I look forward to meeting more silent partners as the months roll on. Second, upcoming events: Cars N Coffee coming up quickly on the first Saturday in April (3rd) in the Uptown Square. The Bluebonnet run will also be around the same time frame (please see details or keep watch for updated email), look inside for details on the Autocross and Centerville trip. Don't forget Keels and Wheels the first weekend in May. As usual we don't have outside activities going on during the summer months with in being too hot. If you've a suggestion of an indoor event and would like to host, during that time frame please let me know.

Happy Easter,

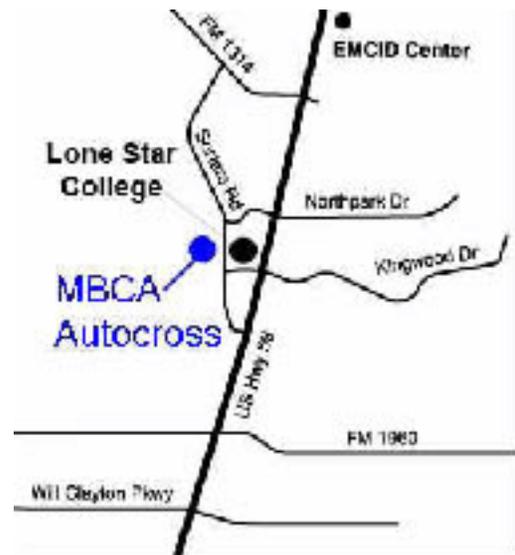
Damon
Houston Section

SPRING AUTOCROSS

Come join us at the Spring autocross on Sunday, April 25 and enjoy a Bar-B-Q lunch, with fellow members of MBCA Houston Section! Bring your blankets, lawn chairs and your family as we enjoy Spring in Houston. Autocross drivers should be there by 12:30 and the event begins at 1:00. A full spread of meat, sides and drinks will be available for you and your family to feast on as the drivers take to the course. Cost is \$10/person.

The event will be held at Lone Star College in Humble (Formerly Kingwood College). The cost per driver is \$10.00 for members. There is no charge for spectators! We must have RSVP's for all attendees to insure that we have enough food. Please RSVP or you may go hungry!

RSVP to Mike Haney at 713-298-4580 by April 20 if you plan to attend and let him know how many will be in your party. For more information on the autocross, also contact Mike . See you there!



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ANNUAL CENTERVILLE RUN

The Houston Section of MBCA has been invited to attend the Fifth Annual Texas Mercedes-Benz Get Together. The meet will be held on Saturday, June 5, 2010 in Centerville, TX with lunch at Woody's Smokehouse, and a Show and Shine at Fort Boggy State Park. A caravan of cars going to Centerville from Houston will meet in the parking lot of the Cracker Barrel located at 14765 North Frwy (located on the southbound I-45 feeder road just south of Airtex Dr.). The cars will assemble towards the rear of the Cracker Barrel parking lot near the hotel at 9:45 am and will depart at 10:15 am for a 12:00 noon arrival in Centerville. If you wish to have breakfast at Cracker Barrel or at the neighboring Whataburger, you can arrive earlier than 9:45 am, just be ready to pull out at 10:15 am. There will be reserved parking and a BBQ lunch in a room reserved especially for the group at Woody's Smokehouse located on the northbound side of I-45 in Centerville. After lunch, the group will head 4 miles south on Old Highway 75 to Fort Boggy State Park for a show and shine. Park entry is **FREE**. After the show and shine, awards will be handed out based on People's Choice for the best vintage model (pre-1980), best 1980s model, best 1990s model, and best 2000s model. For all inquiries regarding this meet, including RSVPs, please contact Joseph Middleton at 713-828-4303, or via e-mail at "Jmiddle122 at aol dot com."



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Annual Bluebonnet Run Stan tuned for date

Technical Q & A

Question: I have a 1982 300DT with almost 230,000 miles. Lately the car has been making a clunking noise in the rear, especially when turning. The CV joints were inspected and not found to be faulty. What else do you think could be causing this clunking? Thank you.

Answer: Clunking from the rear could be a few things. The first and easiest thing to check is that nothing is loose in the trunk. This is often overlooked and you want to start with the easiest thing first. Be sure that the spare tire and jack are secured and that nothing else is rolling around in the spare wheel well. Next check the plastic sway bar links for each wheel and replace if they are worn out. They are cheap and fairly easy to replace. If that doesn't appear to be the problem you will want to inspect the drive-line including the differential mount, center drive shaft bearing, and the two rubber flex disks. Good luck!

As always, if you have questions, please send your requests to the Houston Star or contact me directly. I can be reached at Saleem@JohansenUSA.com or call me at 281.883.3792.

Annual Bluebonnet Run

This year the Bluebonnet run will take place on Saturday, April 3. We will assemble in the parking lot of Gander Mountain (19820 Hempstead Hwy, Houston, TX, 77065) at 10 am. This year our stop will be the Destination is Messina Hof Winery (<http://www.messinahof.com/>) to have lunch at the restaurant. The tour is optional. Lunch will be \$15.00 per person.



RSVP to ramirezsharry@hotmail.com by 3/31.

March Technical Session

With waste vegetable oil, modifications have to be made to the car to run the oil as a fuel, and there are no quality standards for waste vegetable oil. Biodiesel on the other hand is simply a drop-in replacement for diesel fuel. No heater lines or extra fuel system plumbing is necessary to run biodiesel, and ASTM and EN standards exist for biodiesel to ensure a product is dispensed that meets stringent standards. You just fill up and drive on. This is a good thing because the number of nice examples of older Mercedes-Benz diesels has dropped in recent years. This is partly due to the fact that many nice examples were purchased by those (without technical know-how) who wished to fuel their cars with free waste vegetable oil and hacked up straight bodies and destroyed strong engines in the process. This has even prompted some owners of older Mercedes-Benz diesels to not sell their cars to those who may want to run the car on waste vegetable oil, but that's another topic for another day.



The group was shown how biodiesel is made by producing a liter during the session using used cooking oil as a base stock. At times, it felt like being back in a High School science lab with the mixtures and chemical reactions (and crazy color changes) taking place within the beakers and graduated cylinders atop the table. Even though Chris uses a vendor to supply him with the biodiesel he sells to customers, we were also shown a homebrew reactor that Chris uses to brew biodiesel for personal use in his W140 chassis Mercedes-Benz Turbodiesel and in the diesel engine powered forklift used at the facility. His reactor is simply a 55 gallon Kenmore Electric water heater found at any Sears's store. Chris estimates that when one makes their own biodiesel, they only have to pay about \$1.00 a gallon. That's quite a deal if you have the time and resources to do such. Chris explained the benefits of biodiesel such as a 78% reduction in CO2 emissions and a 50% reduction in exhaust particulates, aka the black smoke you see when a diesel engine is revving hard. Another benefit is that the cetane rating of biodiesel is 53,

Technical Session continued

which is high when compared to ultra low sulfur diesel fuel which has a cetane rating of 40-45 in most places throughout the nation (Mercedes-Benz recommends using diesel fuel with a cetane level of at least 40-45 in most places throughout the nation (Mercedes-Benz recommends using diesel fuel with a cetane level of at least 40). The only drawback concerning tailpipe emissions from engines running biodiesel was an increase in NOx emissions. Chris was quick to point out that the findings regarding NOx emissions were based on nearly 15 year old data and new test results may have different results. Other drawbacks included the lower energy content of biodiesel, which may result in a slight loss of power and a slight reduction in fuel economy, the tendency for biodiesel to gel at higher temperatures than regular diesel fuel (though that depends on the basestock and concentration percentage of the fuel) and the inability of biodiesel to be used in many newer diesel applications. Many newer applications cannot use biodiesel due to the risk of damaging the engine and fouling up emissions related compo



nents. However, some newer engines can run up to 5% biodiesel (B5) without damage or voiding their warranty. Older diesel cars and trucks/buses are able to run 100% biodiesel (B100) without risk of harming their engines. The only problems they would encounter would have to be changing the fuel filters and rubber fuel lines after the first few tankfuls due to biodiesel's solvent properties, which makes biodiesel a good fuel system cleaner. High concentrations of biodiesel will cause clogged fuel filters as it cleans dirt from the fuel tank and will uncover holes (and causes leaks) in old rubber lines that were originally plugged by sediment before the cleaning process took place.

There was a lot learned from Chris at Houston Biodiesel, as many found out there's more than what meets the eye to biodiesel production. There's not nearly enough space in this newsletter to tell it all. I think it's safe to say that the attendees were satisfied in finding out what happens behind the scenes and beyond the filling pump.

I'd just like to close this article by saying "thank you" to Chris Powers, for opening up your doors and taking time out to educate our group on biodiesel.

-Joseph Middleton

AMG unveils new 5.5L V8 biturbo - will debut in new S 63 this summer



AMG today unveiled another chapter in its °AMG Performance 2015 with the newly produced 5.5L V8 biturbo engine that will enter the lineup in summer 2010. The new engine will make its debut in the upcoming S 63 AMG.



AMG says that the new 5.5L V8 biturbo engine makes between 544-hp to 571-hp with a maximum torque of 590 lb-ft to 664 lb-ft. In the new S 63 AMG with the new AMG SPEEDSHIFT MCT 7-speed sports transmission the 5.5L V8 biturbo engine will help return a fuel-economy of 22 mpg, an improvement of 25 percent when compared to the current S 63 AMG.

Mercedes Marketplace

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As original as minor repairs will permit. New Alpine radio purchased, but not yet installed. The black soft-top is original and has totally clear plastic window. The hard-top is removable. I can provide a rack for vertical storage of the top. I also have a new, high-quality car cover. **Asking \$18,000**. Call: 713-850-1128.



1967 Mercedes 600

This car was reportedly originally owned by the President of Dole Pineapple. Unfortunately I do not have any documentation.



Due to the varied unexpected turns life has taken, it has not been run for about 8 years, and we are thinking about finding a new owner. I had stopped using it because the drive shaft carrier bearing was noisy. I purchased the bearing, but never got around to having it installed.

The car has the optional cooler/armrest between the front seats. The upholstery is black leather.

According to published information (Robert Nitske), M-B only made 138 units in 1967. I have seen where the 600 is going for up to \$35k. I am asking \$28K or a reasonable offer.

Bob and Gail Supina 281-239-8583 See more at: <http://www.pcube.biz/Cars/MB600.html>



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Moving?

In order to change your address, go to the web site of the MBCA at:

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

Going green

Remember if your email has changed from that which you gave to MBCA when you joined or you just want to make sure you receive the future electronic editions send your preferred e-mail address to damstith@yahoo.com.

2010 Upcoming Events

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May 1-2

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June 5

Board of Directors Meeting

5:30 PM of 1st Tuesday of odd numbered months at the Mercedes-Benz Greenway dealership 2nd Floor Conference Room

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