



The Houston Star

MBCA | Houston Section Newsletter

July
2011

www.mbca.org/houston

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Sixth Annual Texas Mercedes-Benz Get Together

By: Joseph Middleton

On Saturday, June 11, 2011, Mercedes-Benz owners from Houston, DFW, Austin and even the Lake Charles, LA area went to Centerville, TX for the Sixth Annual Texas Mercedes-Benz Owners Get Together. The Houston caravan was small, but consisted of Arlynn Hausmann, Ali Durvesh, Joseph Middleton, and Gerry VanZandt.

Upon arriving in Centerville, we were greeted by Jim Potts from Sulphur, LA and the Sueings from Dallas. After greeting our guests, Gerry inspected his 1989 560SEC and found that he'd lost an alternator belt. The belt looked like it had simply exploded. After Ali Durvesh located a local auto parts store, Ali drove to the store and was able to find an appropriate belt. Other attendees and the auto parts store owner offered their tools and help to Gerry, and the new belt was installed and in action in less than 30 minutes.

(See "Centerville" on page 5)

President's Message

Hi M-B Enthusiasts;

The heat is on. It's once again time to check radiator hoses, coolant reservoirs and all fittings for cracks and any seepage as well as water pumps. No one here likes to be without air conditioning or stranded on the side of the road in the hot sun. Also, as precaution be sure to clear debris any areas accessing the radiator, it's amazing what damage a few leaves can do. The Motorwerks Tech session wasn't well received as a result of lack of attendance. If there's a more desired tech session topic please let us know to reschedule and show our support of this highly reputable and dedicated facility.

Please see in the newsletter for upcoming events right around the corner in June/July: Centerville Trip and Summer Social.

Hope to see you.

Damon Stith | President | [Mercedes-Benz Club of America](#) | Houston Section



Editor's Note

I don't say much as Editor. I mostly do my work and let the newsletter speak for itself. However, this issue of the *Houston Star* marks my one year anniversary as Newsletter Editor for the Houston Section, and I felt it would be appropriate to say something. Since that time, I know you have noticed the big and small changes that have come forth. For one thing, I am sure that you noticed the changes to the newsletter starting last year to bring it into line with the official MBCA Style Guide. It was a small change, but it really made a lot of difference presentation wise. You've also noticed the new feature articles courtesy of *Automotive Rhythms* magazine. I want to thank *Automotive Rhythms* founder and owner, Kimatni Rawlins for making his publications available to be published in the *Houston Star*. Perhaps the biggest difference is, well, we have **MORE** pages than we started off with. Until a few months ago, our newsletters usually stopped at 12 pages. Now, we have bumped that number of pages up to **18**.

I've done my job, but I can't and won't take all credit for this. I have had support from Club members from the Houston Section and from other sections within the South Central Region, members of the Board of Directors and even the NBO. I want to say "thank you" to all of you for your support in making this newsletter what it is today.

Joseph Middleton | Membership Chair and Editor | [Mercedes-Benz Club of America](#) | Houston Section

MBCA | Houston Section welcomes the following new members to the Club!

Welcome!

Flavio Grunewaldt of Houston, TX

Won Suk Ro of Houston, TX

Ramon Rodriguez of College Station, TX

Willkommen!

MBCA | Houston Section thanks these loyal Club members

Lars and Cindy Bengston of Houston, TX

Bill Brutscher of LaPorte, TX

Richard Cormier and Bruce Sebree of Houston, TX

Richard Frey of Houston, TX

Douglas Haberman and Kathryn Ley of Houston, TX

Paul Kwan of Houston, TX

W. and Ann McClellan of Houston, TX

John and Kay Redmon of Tyler, TX

Serve on your MBCA Board

Every September, MBCA | Houston elects and re-elects Officers and Board Members. This is **YOUR** Club. **YOU** should have a say in how things are run and perhaps most importantly, you should have a hand in running your Club. Fresh faces and fresh ideas are welcome and will help us avoid complacency and stagnancy. If you are a committed person and have a desire to serve in your Club, please step up by sending an e-mail with your name and the position which you are interested in holding to mca.houston@gmail.com. Please note that these positions are open to MBCA members **ONLY**.

While all positions are open for nomination, we currently have vacancies in the following positions:

Vice President
Board of Directors (Director At Large)
Activities Chair
Advertising Chair
Hospitality Chair
Official Club Photographer
Technical Chair
Website Chair (Webmaster)

Please send in all nominations to be published in the September issue of the Houston Star by August 20, 2011. Nominations will also be taken from the floor at the Members Appreciation/Election Dinner in September.

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Centerville

(continued from page 1)

The DFW crew arrived shortly after the Houston crew did, with Lee Ewing, North Texas Section President, Al Alabassi, and John Noble just to name a few. Then, Lone Star Section President Bryan Harter's Austin contingent arrived with perhaps the biggest surprise. Ed Rogers and Barbara Waite from the Lone Star Section arrived in a 1954 300S. The 300S was 24 years older than the next oldest car there, and was quite the showstopper.

Inside Woody's, we were greeted by owners Dudley and Diane Woods, and Gary "Captain Too High" Zaludek. Over the past six years, the Woodses and Gary have taken good care of our group, and this time was certainly no exception. The dining room was decorated with care with banners and decorations for our group. There was even a beautifully decorated cake for us, complete with a CLS on top.

After lunch, our group headed to Fort Boggy for the Show and Shine. It's always hot in June, but the drought made things a bit different. The lake at Fort Boggy was noticeably lower, so low that boats can no longer navigate the lake, thus the boat ramp was closed. The park rangers at Fort Boggy had a shade laden spot just for our group, and we were grateful for the spot. After the show and shine and voting, the winners were announced. The winner for the best Pre-1980 category was Lee Ewing's 1977 300D. The 1954 300S was not eligible since their owner did not attend the Show and Shine. The winner of the best 1980s category was John Noble's immaculate 1983 300D with only 30k miles. The best 1990s category winner was Larry Jameson and his 1994 SL600. This was the third year in a row that Larry has taken home this award. The winner of the best 2000s category was Bryan Harter's 2001 CLK.

After pictures were taken, Gerry Van Zandt hosted a mini tech session on the M117 engine. Gerry really knows his stuff, having rebuilt the engine in his 1989 560SEC in his garage. With the belt situation earlier that day, one can say that it truly was a hands on tech session.

As usual, the get together was well received by the attendees. Here's looking forward to next year!

Again, special thanks to Woody's Smokehouse, and the staff at Fort Boggy State Park for helping to make this event a success!

(See photos on page 6)



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Centerville Photos



See more photos at the following links:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.217560314945375.59977.178322852202455>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mercedes-Benz-Club-of-America-Houston-Section/178322852202455?sk=photos#!/media/set/?set=a.10150198711204372.316185.249724854371>

Technical Q & A

Question: The gear shifter in my 1999 S320 feels loose and sloppy when changing gears. It felt more precise when I first bought the car. Why has it become loose over time and is there anything I can do to fix it? Thanks.

Answer: The shifter is connected to the transmission with several pieces of linkage. There are bushings where these linkages meet which degrade and eventually fall out over time. This is not a safety hazard as they are still held together with clips, but the bushings are cheap and well worth replacing.

If you have any 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.

Summer Social at Peli-Peli

Ten MBCA members gathered at Peli-Peli in Vintage Park for our first Summer Social on June 18, 2011. Peli-Peli was recommended by MBCA member Ted Ankrum, and those in attendance did find the spot to be an excellent venue. Those in attendance included the Gloriosos, the Grogins, Marvin Boyd, Club President Damon Stith, Joseph Middleton, and of course, the Ankrums.

As we sat down to drinks, we were greeted by Master Chef Paul Friedman. Chef Friedman is from South Africa and has been in the restaurant industry for over 35 years. Chef Friedman told the story about the opening of Peli-Peli, which is his 58th restaurant to open up over the years.

Diners had a choice of soup or salad for an appetizer, fish, beef, chicken, or shrimp for an entree, and sticky toffee pudding for dessert, although some opted for the African Mud Hut, which is a molten chocolate cake served with vanilla ice cream.

With membership numbers of over 250, one would expect more than ten Club members to show up to an event. I know it's summer, but we had air conditioning and good food. What else could you ask for?

Nevertheless, those who were in attendance enjoyed themselves immensely. If you missed out, I feel sorry for you!

Special thanks go out to Ted Ankrum for stepping up to the plate and organizing this event. This is the first MBCA event planned by Ted. Remember, this is YOUR club, and we can't do the things you want unless YOU step up, too.

Wings and Wheels at Hobby Airport



Join us for Wings and Wheels at the 1940 Air Terminal Museum at Hobby Airport on July 16 starting at 11am. Admission is \$5. The museum is located at 8325 Travelair Road. Houston, TX 77061. For all inquiries regarding this meet, including RSVPs, please contact Joseph Middleton at editorjoseph@gmail.com.

DriverSource Tour



Save the date. MBCA | Houston will be visiting DriverSource on Saturday, August 27 at 11am. There will be refreshments provided by the Club and rare cars galore. Don't miss this opportunity to see one of Houston's premier automotive attractions.

MBCA and BMWCCA Fun Bowl



Let's bowl again, this time for fun! We'll meet up with the BMWCCA at Palace Lanes on Bellaire Blvd on Saturday, August 13 from 10am-12pm for a good time. Cost is \$10. Contact Mike Haney for more info. 713-298-4580, or mhaney@3dtriad.com.

Meet the W166 chassis ML



The all new 2012 ML (W166 chassis) will be rolling into a Mercedes-Benz dealership near you this September. Please see next month's issue for a road test review of the 2012 ML by Kimatni Rawlins.

2012 Mercedes-Benz CLS550: The Adjustment Bureau

By: Kimatni Rawlins of Automotive Rhythms

Have you heard of the “Blitzen Benz” of 1911 that broke a land speed record at 142.6 mph with its 200 horsepower 4-cylinder engine? How about the 1954 300 SL “Gullwing” reincarnated today as the SLS AMG super car? We can’t forget about the indomitable S-Class that has been the gold standard for large, luxury touring sedans and defines achievement for any proud owner. Then there is today’s retractable hardtop SL convertible and the big-body, pillarless CL-Class which both have attracted new blood to the brand. One after another, the German automaker has filled in the gaps and created vehicles for every type of driver in addition to new products that you would never have imagined coming to fruition. After all, Mercedes-Benz built the world’s first automobile 125 years ago; so this phenomenon didn’t suddenly manifest by chance. Currently, there are 17 Mercedes-Benz model lines with over 110 variations. Hence, you can say Carl Benz and Gottlieb Daimler were the founding members of the adjustment bureau, where causation is predetermined by prior experiences.



“Our job is to create the taste of tomorrow,” stated Mercedes-Benz Designer Hubert Lee. And the CLS is just that. After 170,000 (44,500 in the U.S.) worldwide sales and dominating the 4-door coupe field singularly for years, Mercedes thought it was time to unleash the second generation CLS. “This iteration incorporates everything the first model didn’t,” said ardent CLS owner and CSI Miami star Omar Miller. True indeed, it’s now more progressive, has stronger character lines, is more efficient, and has a roomier cabin and an amazing V8. It will go by three monikers for now: CLS 550, CLS 63 AMG, and CLS 550 4MATIC all-wheel drive. No V6 or diesel are in the plans right now. Mercedes feels the gasoline V8 is the true heart for this vehicle.



To understand what the 2012 CLS-Class was all about, team Automotive Rhythms ventured to the Bardessono Hotel in Yountville in Napa Valley, California where the Sun is happy, the wine endearing, the vineyards majestic and the vehicles unforgettable. For the drive, I choose a Storm Red CLS 550 and journeyed on the full-day test drive in the geothermally active Napa region. The curvilinear switchbacks and sometimes long vineyard roads were true testaments to the vehicle’s dynamism. I was especially enamored with the 4.6-liter biturbo V8 with its 402 horsepower and 443 lb-ft of torque from 1,800 rpm. This is a direct-injection powerplant that delivers 100% of torque 1,000 rpm lower than its predecessor, while still achieving 18 city and 26 hwy mpg (estimated). Impressive right? This is the interdisciplinary engineering -- performance vs efficiency -- Mercedes infuses in all of its vehicles.



I like using the steering wheel mounted paddle shifters on today’s performance cars so as to self control the vehicle’s rpms. Especially in “Sport” mode where each gear is held until redline before another quick upshift is needed. A 7G-Tronic Plus 7-speed automatic transmission handles the power transitions and comes with the aforementioned “Sport” mode for advanced driving and doubles the maintenance interval to 80,000 miles. In route to De La Montanya Estate Vineyards & Winery for lunch, there were a few instances when I was turning left and right within seconds as the road meandered like rattle snakes in sand. The electro mechanical speed-sensitive steering unit allowed me to keep both hands firmly on the wheel while focusing on the view ahead.

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Mercedes-Benz ascertained that the new CLS-Class was everything everyone conceived it would be. It's sleeker, with an SLS AMG reminiscent front end, has very powerful rear arches, sexy wheels and is branded with the AMG Sport Package. I don't think there was one journalist on the press trip that was not enamored with the enhanced silhouette of the CLS. When I lifted the hood to scope the new V8, I was astonished at how light it was. Of course its aluminum I thought, along with the doors, front fenders and trunk deck. The rear LED wraparound taillights connect the sloping rear, to the side panel, to the bumper and into the trunk deck. The upright radiator grille is separated from the hood so it will be a bit odd to you at first. This has to do with the new frontal crash requirements from NHTSA and also for pedestrian protection.

The 4-door coupe's fully active LED high-performance headlamps engenders something special and something the Germans do well. The CLS features 71 total LED bulbs in each cluster: 2 for the cornering lights, 16 for low beams, 8 for high beams, 10 for Night View, 13 for the turn signal, and 22 for the parking lights. Active curve and cornering illumination add to this incredible technology. LED lamps are the closest approximation you can get to daylight. As well, power consumption is only 20% of a typical headlamp and service life is longer.

Other active driver assistance systems in the CLS-Class are Active Lane Keeping Assist (ALKA) which uses radar to warn and steer vehicle back into its lane by braking the front outside wheel. Active Blind Spot Assist helps prevent you from moving into a pre-occupied lane. I did experience ALKA inadvertently and was tickled by its self adjustments.

The cockpit is business as usual for Mercedes. Satin finishes and gloss metal surfaces mix with lacquered woods and premium leather, of which the leather dashboard and covers for the multi-contour seat are hand stitched. COMAND, Mercedes' intuitive control unit, is operated within the dash-embedded LCD screen. I do think there are too many steps and separate buttons needed to perform one simple task such as changing the navigation's direction of travel to North or selecting a playlist on my iPod. Also, the turn signal lever and windshield wiper switch are close together as I kept mistaking one for the other.

Of course the brevity of our drive didn't give us nearly as much time and experience to exploit all of the CLS 550's attributes, but Mercedes is giving you a lot of car for the money. Expect to see the \$71,300 CLS 550 in dealerships next month. Oh, and there is no \$1,300 gas guzzler tax as on first generation model!



See more info at: <http://www.automotiverhythms.com/auto-reviews/test-drive/1549-2012-mercedes-benz-cls-550-the-adjustment-bureau.html>

Daimler Heritage: July 2011

125 years ago – on 03 July 1886:

The "Neue Badische Landeszeitung" newspaper reported on the public drive undertaken in the morning on Ringstrasse in Mannheim with the patented motor car developed by Carl Benz.

30 years ago – on 20 July 1981:

Airbag and belt tensioner became available as special options for the Mercedes-Benz S-Class (W 126) – the very first series production vehicle to offer such features.

North Texas Section DIY Tech Session

What: "Do-It-Yourself" Tech Session

When: Saturday, July 16, 2011

Where: Louden Motorcar Services

11454 Reeder Road, Dallas, 75229

Time: 8:00am to 12:00 Noon

Dress: Work clothes

Bring: Tools, Parts, Enthusiasm, Questions

Next stop on our 2011 "Do-It-Yourself" Tech Session season is Louden Motorcars in Dallas. Loudens opens up their fine facility to us and mans it with their knowledgeable technicians and provides hot coffee, friendly advice and an opportunity to make some new friends, meet a mechanic and learn a lot about your car.

Louden Motorcar Services has been servicing BMW, Porsche, and Mercedes in Dallas since 1977. Steve Louden, founder and president, has been associated with the automobile business since 1958. He spent ten years building and racing sports and formula cars, and another twelve years in a variety of management positions with the Ford Motor Company. This experience included four years of dealership assistance for service related problems.

The company has always striven for quality with attention to details. Steve Louden learned the importance of details from his racing days, and applies these same high standards to today's streetcars.

James Moir, Vice President of Operations and Service Manager, oversees daily operations and offers personalized and friendly service to every customer. You can always talk to someone with the authority to solve your problems.

Email our Technical Director Hyatt Cheek at mbcantx@gmail.com, or ring him up at: 214/327-6890 to reserve your spot for \$10.00, otherwise, its \$15.00 at the door, so, it's best to reserve by phone and stop by on Saturday; the earlier, the better. Autohaus' state-of-the-art service facility and parts department will open to us for four hours.

Legends of the Autobahn

WEST COAST SUMMER CONCOURS



LEGENDS OF THE AUTOBAHN CONCOURS RETURNS TO MONTEREY HISTORICS WEEKEND IN AUGUST 2011

After a very successful 2010 inaugural year, the Legends of the Autobahn: West Coast Summer Concours returns as part of the Monterey Historics Weekend in 2011 on Friday, August 19. Co-hosted by the Mercedes-Benz Club of America (MBCA), the BMW Car Club of America (BMWCCA), and the Porsche Club of America (PCA), Legends of the Autobahn has become one of the “must see” attractions of this world-renowned automotive weekend.

The one-day Legends event brings enthusiasts, owners, and aficionados of distinctive German cars together to view some of the finest marques in the world. Held on the greens of the beautiful Rancho Cañada Golf Club in Carmel Valley, California, Legends attracted an audience of over 1,000 to view the 250 cars on display in its first year. Organizers are expecting an increase in numbers for 2011.



“This year Mercedes-Benz is celebrating the 125th anniversary of the invention of the automobile and MBCA is celebrating the club’s 55th anniversary,” according to Laura Simonds, MBCA National Treasurer and an event coordinator. “With Mercedes-Benz as a featured marque at the weekend’s famed Pebble Beach Concours, this is sure to be an epic weekend for any Mercedes-Benz enthusiast.”

New, experienced, and non-auto enthusiasts are encouraged to attend for the fun and fervor of the show. For those interested in entering the Concours (1991 or older vehicles), a \$60 entry fee will apply. For those wishing to enter their vehicle in display-only corral (any vintage), a \$30 entry fee will apply. Spectators are welcome with no admission fee. There will be food, displays, and club booths where guests can enjoy the cars, mingle, get educated, and more.



Organizers of the event encourage MBCA members to arrange their own caravans for travel to Monterey in August. Hotel reservations should be made as early as possible as this weekend draws people from all over the globe to local hotel rooms. A good on-line resource for reservations can be found at www.resort2me.com. The San Francisco Bay Area Section of MBCA is planning a post-concours reception and dinner for all MBCA members and their guests. For details on the dinner visit the section website at www.mbca.org/sfba and navigate to the event calendar.

To register on-line visit www.legendsoftheautobahn.com/mbca. The discounted “early bird” registration deadline is August 1, and all registration closes on August 12. For more information, contact Laura Simonds at simonds1@pacbell.net or 650-592-7613, or Robert Schilling at res.mbca@offserver.com or 650-619-7550.

Mercedes Marketplace

2001 Mercedes-Benz CLK320

2001 Mercedes CLK320 Convertible (W208 Chassis) is finished in Brilliant Silver Clearcoat Metallic. Original Paint, no accidents. All the body panels are straight with no major dents/dings. This car was purchased by my mother about 4 years ago as a gift to herself for beating cancer. She typically drives her W126 every day, and the CLK only gets driven on the weekends. This car only has 58,700 miles on it.

16" Mercedes Benz Aluminum wheels, finished in factory silver, wrapped in a Matching Set of Goodyear Eagle LS H-Rated tires, the tires have less than 5,000 miles on them, and have plenty of tread left.

The black power fabric top opens and closes normally. The top is in great shape, and the car has always been garaged when not used.

The engine is the 3.2L 18 valve, Single Overhead Cam (SOHC) V6 (M112 - E32) with 218 hp. The engine starts and runs flawlessly. This engine is mated to a smooth shifting 5 speed automatic transmission. There are no leaks, funny noises, or fluid consumption. Car runs and drives great. The brakes work fine with no problem, no warpage, and no fading. Stops are straight and squeak free. The suspension is tight, squeak free and the car drives straight. We recently installed a brand new Interstate Battery (located in trunk), next to the full sized spare tire, which has never seen the ground.

The interior is finished in grey leather. Driver and passenger power seats both work fine with no problem with power tilt/slide for access to rear passengers. All power everything works. Dual zone climate control works fine with no problems at all. Nice condition inside for a 10 year old car. There is a trunk mounted CD changer.

The car has two keys, one original key as well as a new style chrome key.

This car hasn't seen the shop for anything since we owned it (except a flat repair) and I believe my mom has driven the car less than 5000 miles in the three years that she's had it. Texas Registration and Inspection are current.

Asking \$11,500 and entertaining all reasonable offers.

Email: weschain@gmail.com



Mercedes-Benz parts for sale

Location: SW Houston/Missouri City

Used and new parts for sale for Mercedes-Benz autos ranging from the 1960s-1980s. Parts include **Pagoda Euro headlights**, 2nd generation W126 SEL/SDL **velour interior parts**, M102 oil filters, 2 brand new W201 interior wood trim pieces, W201 right corner lamp, W201 front rotors & pads, plus more assorted MB parts. You can take it all home for \$2100 obo, or you can buy the parts individually.

Contact Angie for more info: 832-453-9698

Are you selling your Mercedes-Benz or Mercedes-Benz related items?

Fill this space with your classified ad.

Contact editorjoseph@gmail.com for info.

1983 Mercedes-Benz 380SL



For Sale

**1983 Mercedes Benz 380SL above avg.,
both tops, blue w/grey leather \$13,500**

713-557-2741

Hardtop for 1983 380SL or similar model

Selling a dark green hard top with an ivory headliner that I no longer need (a long story). Very good condition. I am very flexible regarding price, i.e., make me an offer.

Contact: Joe Fischer at: joe.fischer-vbj@sbcglobal.net or (713) 850-1128.

1998 Mercedes-Benz SL600 for sale

Converted to SL74 by RENNtech

Formerly owned by Marshall Field V.

35K miles

The modifications done by RENNtech and their cost are listed below.

520HP 7.4L V12 engine: \$32,000
Upgraded transmission: \$1,290
Lowered by 1 inch: \$800
Rear sub-frame modifications: \$1,950
14 inch front Alcon brakes: \$5,760
12 inch rear Alcon brakes: \$3,490
RENNtech rear muffler: \$1,790
RENNtech resonator bypass: \$1,140
RENNtech front and rear sway bars: \$1,135
RENNtech hiflow intake: \$1,245
Larger radiator: \$1,225
Vented hood: \$3,000
Recaro seats: \$6,700
Anti penetration glass: \$2,700



Any reasonable offer considered.
Contact Diana Chapman for more info.
chapmand49@yahoo.com



MBCA | Houston Section

Joseph Middleton, Editor

Officers

President	Damon Stith damstith@yahoo.com 832-265-6044
Vice President	Vacant
Secretary	Renny Keener rennyk@embarqmail.com 281-354-2057
Treasurer	Gerald Grogin gerrygrogin@att.net 713-667-8979
Membership Chair	Joseph Middleton editorjoseph@gmail.com 713-487-8197
Historian	Chuck Wyatt ctwyatt@sbcglobal.net 281-469-7428

Directors

Marvin Boyd	mwboyd@embarqmail.com 281-360-1766
Mike Haney	mhaney@3dtriad.com 713-298-4580

Regional Director

Charles Boyd	580-255-4040
E-mail:	cl.boyd@sbcglobal.net

Newsletter Editor

Joseph Middleton	713-487-8197
Editor's e-mail:	editorjoseph@gmail.com
Editor's Fax:	713-523-6341
Club Website:	http://www.mbca.org/houston

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<http://www.mbca.org>

2011 Upcoming Events

Wings and Wheels at Hobby Airport

July 16

MBCA and BMWCCA Fun Bowl

August 13

DriverSource Tour

August 27

Members Appreciation/Election Dinner

September

Board of Directors Meetings

July 5 and September 6

Board Meetings are **open to ALL MBCA | Houston Section members**. Board Meetings are held every 1st Tuesday of odd numbered months at 5:30 PM in the 2nd Floor Conference Room at Mercedes-Benz Greenway (3900 Southwest Freeway, Houston, TX 77027), unless otherwise noted.

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