



# *The Houston Star*

MBCA Houston Section Newsletter

**September  
2007**

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## **GarageTown Texas**

On Saturday, August 18th, members of the Houston Section of the Mercedes-Benz Club of America enjoyed an informative and interesting presentation by Steve Martin of GarageTown Texas at their facility in the Champions Forest area northwest of Houston.

For those who were not able to attend, GarageTown is the physical manifestation of the condominium concept applied to space for the equipment and possessions one might otherwise keep in rented storage space. By that we intend to say recreational vehicles, watercraft, special interest automobiles (!) and the like. Steve explained the benefits of ownership over renting, including tax and

equity benefits. The individual units of each facility are monitored for security and fire, have their own electric meters, owner controlled air conditioning and heating and 220 volt power. The clear height of each unit is 18 to 20 feet which allows for automobile lifts and extensive storage possibilities. The units range in size from 15 feet by 40 feet up to 30 feet by 60 feet at some locations.

GarageTown USA, the parent of GarageTown Texas, got its start in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho which has become a playground of the affluent like Lake Tahoe and Jackson, Wy. That is not to say buying in is an

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## President's Message

Well the dog days of summer are still here and with one tropical storm and dodging a hurricane, we are lucky so far. The heat is quite warm and it might not be a bad idea to check the cooling systems on our stars. The hoses and coolant levels need to be watched closely to make sure they are in good working order and replace those hoses if they look suspicious. Nothing worse than having a breakdown on the road due to a broken hose. Then we can sit back and enjoy the summer driving in our favorite Mercedes.

Let's see, on the event front is a social gathering in September and everyone is invited to come out and have some good Mexican food, some good conversations with fellow Mercedes Benz owners and an evening full of fun. So come on out and enjoy a great evening. October is our annual Oktoberfest and Hans Richter always puts on a great event. Every year, he has some good technical information, some great German food, German beer, and German music. So check out the next newsletter for the exact date and time. He has hosted this event for twelve consecutive years and each one is better than the last. We will have a ball! November is our Fall Autocross and our host Mike Haney will have a challenging course to test our driving skills and there will be Bar-B-Que for everyone. Even if one doesn't want to compete, there are always a few folks who just enjoy pulling a chair and sharing time with each other while watching the rest. A few bring their cars out just to let folks take a look at them. We have had a couple that have made it to a car show or two including Marvin Boyd's vintage Mustang GT. He also has a couple of Benzes that will deserve a good look or two. We also have fun runs at the end of the timed runs and everyone is invited to try the course just for the fun of it. With the course our driving skills get a good work out and it is gratifying to know that one can handle the care in tight situations. That leaves December with our annual Christmas Brunch. It is always fun because of the gift exchange and again there is always a good meal and great conversation. So plan to make these events as everyone always has a good time.

This will be my last President's Message as we have new officers being elected in September. It has truly been a pleasure serving as President during the last two years and I have met some great folks and made a lot of new friends. So thanks for the memories....

Chuck Wyatt

*President, MBCA Houston*

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expensive proposition considering the amenities, location, and equity opportunity.

Our host was very enthusiastic but gracious. We were given a short presentation on the history and philosophy of GarageTown in the comfortable and attractive club house then the group toured some examples of the spaces available. Some were fitted with optional floor finishes and mezzanines. Since the space is owned, the occupant is at liberty to configure the interior in a manner that best serves his or her purposes.

While commercial retail activity is not allowed by deed restriction many owners use there space in association with a business - either to store equipment, inventory, and record documents or as a work shop or preparation site for their product. Since the facility is climate controlled and monitored many find it ideal for keeping their archived business documents.

In addition to the recently completed facility on Louetta Road just off of State Highway 249 that we visited this month, GarageTown Texas has plans to build similarly sized projects in The Woodlands, Sugar Land and in the Clear Lake area near Ellington Field. Based on the apparent success of this concept this author believes that other developers will follow GarageTown's lead in this type of real estate product. If you store anything of value for an extended period of time garage condominiums might be of interest to you .



*Our hosts put out a very nice mid-morning snack selection for the group in one of their air conditioned garage units.*



*Richard Wilkins' 250SE and Buzz Warner's 450 SLC fit nicely in one of the larger units with room to spare.*

(continued from page 3)



*A member and a guest of the Houston Section consider the possibilities of having a large climate controlled space at their disposal.*



*Guests Betsy Warner and Norman Sandoz relax in the attractive club house area.*



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## MBCA Houston Fall Affair

All MBCA Members keep Saturday, September 22, 2007 - 7:00 PM open for the best Enchiladas, Chalupas, Margaritas and all your favorite Tex-Mex specialties. The best you will ever taste in Houston.

Sylvia's Enchilada Restaurant  
12637 Westheimer  
@ Blocks West of Wilcrest

Hopefully some surprises will be at hand.....

More details to follow in next month's newsletter



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# ELECTION SLATE

The following is the election slate at this moment. If anyone is willing to help out and join the Board of Directors, you are more than welcome to place your name in nomination at the election dinner. If you don't feel you can help out, come voice your ideas about the club's events, and vote for who you would like to implement those MBCA Houston Section events.

James Sandoz  
Albert Angulo  
Marjorie Russell  
Marvin Boyd

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Vice President  
Treasurer  
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Chuck Wyatt

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Harry Ramirez

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Mike Haney  
Harry Ramirez  
Charles Rice  
Steve Russell  
Damon Stith  
Richard Wilkins  
Chuck Wyatt

The above slate will be presented for election by the membership at the Fall Social, September 22, 2007 (See Article on page 8). Any member in good standing who wants to be elected to the Board can indicate his/her intentions at the Fall Social.



## Gas or Diesel.....why choose?



Are you torn between petrol and a diesel? Wanted the performance of a petrol engine but the economy of an oil-burner? Sound familiar? Well, the solution to all your problems just might be on the way, in the shape of... the Mercedes DiesOtto engine!

OK, enough of the American-accented advertising spiel. But this DiesOtto could be a biggie.

Due to premiere in Frankfurt inside a large luxury concept called the F700, Merc reckons the DiesOtto could give the responsiveness of a 3.5-litre V6 petrol engine with the frugality of a tiny diesel-burner. But how? Hold on, here comes the technical bit. The DiesOtto is, at heart, a 1.8-litre four-cylinder petrol engine with twin sequential turbochargers and direct injection. The clever bit is that Merc engineers have incorporated both the conventional Otto cycle and a sparkless, diesel-style combustion. On start-up, the engine runs in standard petrol mode, with spark plugs igniting petrol injected directly into the cylinder. But once the engine is warm and cruising, it switches to a more efficient 'diesel mode', raising the compression ratio and deactivating the spark plugs. And because it runs on petrol, the DiesOtto boasts lower emissions than an equivalent diesel engine.

Merc is keeping quiet about exactly how it has managed to create a variable compression engine, but the results are impressive. The 1.8-litre engine puts out 238bhp and 295bhp of torque, and Merc reckons it'll return 40mpg in a car the size of an S-Class. Wedge it into a hatchback and it could return 70-odd mpg.

Merc says the DiesOtto could see production in 2012. Petrol or diesel? Enjoy the choice while it lasts, good sir.

# Mercedes Fall Affair

September 22, 2007  
7:00 PM

Sylvia's Enchilada Kitchen  
Every enchilada's a winner!

12637 Westheimer  
(Half a block west of Dairy Ashford)

**Price:** \$20 per person at the door, cash bar

**RSVP:** Gerry Grogin - 713-789-7100 or 713-667-8979

**Menu:** Choice of Enchilada Dinner or Fajita Dinner  
Appetizer  
Dessert  
All for \$20 which includes gratuity and tax



# Your car's belts aren't only under the hood

My car had developed a strange sensation in which I could feel a wobble in the front. When I would let my steering go at about 15 miles per hour, the steering wheel would slightly move back and forth. Well, since I was down to about 3mm, I was due for a set of new tires anyway, so I ignored the problem for a bit until I could get around to it. Well, that wasn't in the works. On the way back from downtown Houston on a blisteringly hot Saturday afternoon, I got to enjoy an empty Westpark Tollway. When exiting, I suddenly felt a severe vibration in the front. Hmm. I got off and took a look and could see nothing suspicious. Back on the road to Sealy I went. What I noticed was that the vibration would only occur from about 50-65 miles per hour. The rest of the time it was smooth driving.

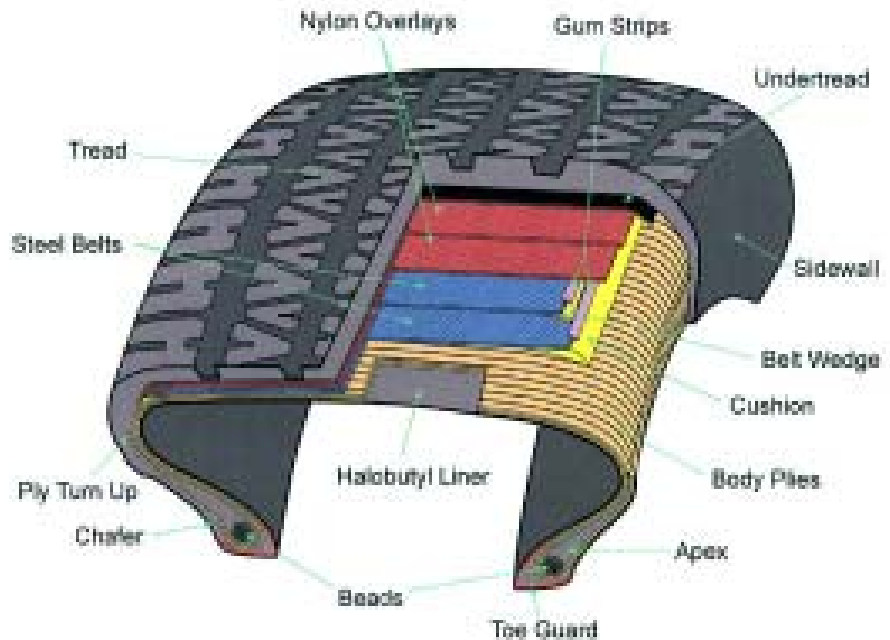
I took the car to a local shop that specializes in Porsche and Mercedes-Benz vehicles and told him of my symptoms. I told him I figured that I had lost a wheel weight. They put the car up on the lift and there were no missing weights. Hmm..... He then spun the wheel and saw something suspicious. He took the wheel and put it on the balancing machine to spin it and it was obvious what had happened. You could literally see the treads on the left half of the tire were staying straight during the spinning, but the right side was wobbly, like if you would draw a wavy line on the tire and then spin it to see it going back and forth. It was a broken belt. He told me about tires they sold that they have had good success with, so I left there with my broken belt tire while they were going to look up a set for me and call me back with a quote. When I got home I changed to the

spare tire and took the car for a spin. Wow, the car felt so much smoother it was incredible. Apparently the tire's construction was, well, deconstructing for quite a while before finally doing something drastic that hot Saturday afternoon. It occurred slowly, so like weight gain, I had hardly noticed it until it was no longer there when I put the spare tire on.

Now I have new Kumhos, which come highly recommended by other Mercedes-Benz owners. I made sure and kept the speed rating so I ordered V-rated tires as specified for my car. Remember, the speed of the speed rating is not necessarily what's important. If you never drive over 100 MPH that doesn't mean you can get an S-rated tire. The construction of the tire makes the speed rating, but it's also the construction of the tire that affects the feeling and handling of your car and what Mercedes-Benz engineers had in mind when they engineered your car's suspension, so make sure you only use what's specified on your car's B-pillar when buying replacement tires.

Here is a good check for broken belts in a tire. Drive at 15-25 mph for several hundred feet. If the steering wheel wobbles, there is a tire with broken belts on the front. That's the test I experienced but at the time I didn't know what it meant. If the seat vibrates, there is a tire with broken belts on the rear. Maintaining the speed below 30 mph is important. We all have the tendency to accelerate through this speed up to cruising speed, but for the test, don't do it.

A broken belt in the tire cannot be compensated for by rebalancing, and rotating may make it worse (sorry) replacement is the only solution. Good thing for me I was due for tires anyway, and I was even more fortunate that I didn't have a blow out. So, pay attention to what your car tells you, it might save you if you do.



# Mercedes Marketplace

## For Sale:



### **1986 Midnight Blue 560SL**

Overall EXCELLENT condition.....only minor spruce-up appropriate. 118k miles; recently tuned to perfection at MB North....now "purrs". Both hard and soft tops in fine condition . H.T. Carrier included. Garaged for past 12 years when not in use. For past 5 years, left garage only for "exercise runs" to insure battery charge. Price: \$12,000 or reasonable offer.

Contact Quent McGlothlin at 281-433-2734 (cell) or 281-370-1726 (home).



## For Sale:

Free, you pick up: Recent M-B sales brochures including: 1997 Full Line (including 1998 SLK); ;2001 C-Class 2002 Full Line; 2002 M-Class; 2002 SL-Class (last year for the R129 chassis); 2003 E-Class (all new model that year); 2003 SL-Class (fold out mailer) 2004 CLK-Class; 2005 "Who Cares About Being First" (general passenger car brochure); 2005 CLK-Class; 2007 Full Line "Have Fun Window Shopping" (a mailer that may become collectable); 2007 R-Class; Set of three mail-outs for hands free communication, navigation, and Sirius satellite radio from 2004; and, an added bonus, 1998 BMW R 1200 C brochure. All are free but you have to come get them from me either at my office in the Uptown/Galleria area or near my home in Seabrook. Also, I can bring them to the next Section event at GarageTown Texas at your request. First come - first served. James 713 751 9546.

## For Sale:

**1979 450SE** - 116 Body style, 145,000 miles. Driven regularly, current inspection and registration. Selling due to health problems. Great for restoration. Garaged in Humble. For photographs, email [kiwigrey@hotmail.com](mailto:kiwigrey@hotmail.com) or call 281-812-5872.

# Mercedes Marketplace

## For Sale:

### **1968 MB 250S**

Rebuilt engine with oversized pistons. Chassis repaired – suspension, etc. Repaired items – A/C compressor, new expansion valve, transmission, front/rear brakes, fuel tank relined, 15,000 miles on rebuilt engine. Body needs painting and upholstery repair. Records available. Engine runs super. Some tools included

Make offer. Call 281-483-1309



## For Sale:

### **1967 230S**

Anthracite gray with red MB-Tex, automatic, working AC, power steering. 93,XXX miles. Excellent original condition. Service records since 2002. Known history. License and inspection current. Must see. \$7,500.00 or best reasonable offer. Call James at 713 751 9546.



**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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Sealy, Texas 77474

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Web Page:	<a href="http://www.mbca.org/houston">http://www.mbca.org/houston</a>

#### ***Moving?***

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

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

#### ***Going South?***

Don't miss out on the **fun** when you are in the **sun!** For \$15 you can upgrade your club membership to a Second Section, and enjoy the full benefits of club membership at your second home. Call the MBCA National Business Office at 1-800-637-2360 to upgrade today!

## 2007 Calendar of Events

### Mercedes Club Fall Affair

September 22

### TGA Oktoberfest

October

### Fall Autocross

November

### Holiday Brunch

December

### Board of Directors Meeting

5:30 PM of 1st Tuesday of odd numbered months

Open to all members; MB Greenway

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