

Antifreeze lives, but Germans can't stand dead fish

Americans buy 200 million gallons of antifreeze every year. Actually, the proper technical term is "coolant," since a considerable portion of the stuff ends up in cars in the sun-belt.

Practically all of it is ethylene glycol, a chemical that has the happy property of remaining liquid at about 60 degrees below zero when mixed 40 percent with water. Prestone and Zerex are the two most popular brand names, together accounting for about 80 percent of coolant sold.

ALL THIS is the kind of thing I was learning at "antifreeze university" in Wyandotte, home of BASF

Wyandotte, which makes Zerex coolant. In fact, it was a thinly disguised sales pitch for Zerex-brand coolant. Regrettably, I was fascinated.

As it turns out, the ethylene glycol people, who normally would have a stable market until global warming gets really serious, are being threatened by a new chemical called propylene glycol — a near cousin, chemically, which has slightly different properties.

One is that it has a higher boiling point, which is of interest to engineers. The other is that it is less toxic, which is of interest to pet owners.

FOR SOME reason, common antifreeze is tasty to dogs and cats, and



auto talk
Dan McCosh

they tend to lap the stuff up. If it is left unattended when you change your antifreeze (some 40 percent of American adults change their own, in case you wondered — the most popular do-it-yourself car operation).

Both glycols are metabolized into a kidney-destroying poison. The process takes some time, which is some-

thing to keep in mind if you suspect either a child or pet has taken some — the fact that no effect is immediately apparent shouldn't stop you from a quick trip to the doctor. It takes a substantial quantity of either type to be fatal, but twice as much propylene glycol as ethylene glycol.

ALL THIS is something that never

occurred to me, but is typical of the kind of thing you worry about when you manufacture tons of automotive chemicals.

According to the BASF people, antifreeze is a relatively benign substance. It biodegrades relatively quickly, and in fact can be recycled, although no auto company approves of using recycled antifreeze in its cars.

In fact, ethylene glycol lives pretty much forever in a car's cooling system. The reason you have to change it every couple of years or so is that it is full of other chemicals that prevent corrosion in the car's cooling system and engine block. These wear out, and old coolant can

end up by taking out a water pump or cylinder head if left unattended.

AND AS if dogs eating the stuff weren't enough to worry about, there is the dead fish and the Mercedes.

It turns out that a good corrosion additive — tolyltriazole, if someone asks — smells a bit like dead fish. This upset the high-line German companies, mainly BMW and Mercedes, who were concerned that a leaky heater would turn their cars into something that would attract cats.

This is one reason why you get a special, BMW antifreeze without tolyltriazole at the dealer, if you know what's good for you.

Some employers bend for families

Continued from back page

"This basically says we value four employees' children," O'Connor said. "I can't imagine saying a better thing than that."

Steven Faine, administrator for professional and support services at Botsford Hospital in Farmington Hills, agrees.

Botsford began offering on-site child care four years ago when it built a separate child care building at the hospital. "We think it's one of the best in the state," Faine said.

Since the facility was built with child care in mind, it was designed to include special safety features and features built to accommodate small children.

THE FACILITY is staffed by 15 employees and cares for 50 children at a time. Botsford pays for 25 percent of child care costs.

"There's been a lot of talk about on-site child care, but they talk about it and talk about it. Frankly, I can't understand the reticence," Faine said.

Hospitals were some of the first companies to recognize the need for child care assistance, but it is surprising how few hospitals are doing

something to help their employees, he said.

"We still get calls all the time from hospitals interested in our program," he said.

"In health care, our work force is very finite," he said. Furthermore, a vast majority of the health care work force employed in the hospital are women of child-bearing age.

Men who work in the hospital also use the child care center, he added.

Faine said there are several advantages to on-site day care. An obvious advantage is that the hospital subsidizes the cost, but another big advantage is parents can visit their children on breaks and during lunch.

"I can't tell you how much this has done for morale — we even get a lot of positive comments from employees without children," he said.

Working is a burden not only for the parent, but for the parent's co-workers as well, he explained. A worried parent is more likely to be a burden to the workplace, he explained, and co-workers have to pick up the slack.

But the key reason the program was initiated, Faine said, was to retain and attract employees.

Restaurateur negotiating for Charley's

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agon has indicated it will interview existing Charley's employees for employment, he said.

If all transpires as planned, Sikorski said, Paragon will buy and convert East Side Charley's in Harper Woods, Fairlane Charley's in Dearborn, Meriwether's in Southfield, and Livonia Charley's.

The four remaining restaurants — Charley's in Toledo, Bloomfield Charley's, Northville Charley's and

Clamdiggers in Farmington Hills, would be reacquired by the C.A. Muer Corp.

Sikorski said the plan — if approved — would free Charley's Restaurants Inc. from all debt. The corporation owes suppliers, banks and the C.A. Muer.

Sikorski said he doesn't regret his foray into the restaurant business, but if he could change one thing, he would not leverage himself so deeply.

WHEN CHARLEY'S Restaurants Inc. first went into bankruptcy, he launched a chain-wide effort to refocus its customer base, improve facilities and change its menu. "It had a positive effect, but we were really behind the eight ball on the bank debt and the money owed to C.A. Muer."

Daniel Nye, vice president of operations for Paragon of Michigan, said last week that the sale of four restaurants — along with plans to

open an additional three — will nearly double Mountain Jacks' presence in the market.

Paragon of Michigan already operates 12 stores in Michigan, including Bloomfield Township, Farmington Hills, Troy and Southfield.

Nye said the four Charley's Paragon intends to convert to Mountain Jacks will employ about 400 — roughly the same number now employed at Charley's restaurants.

marketplace

Design Group of Royal Oak has received two Awards of Excellence from American Corporate Identity/7. Paul Schiebold of Birmingham, principal and director of Design, said, "It's quite an honor to have my work selected along with work from some of the largest corporate identity firms in the nation."

Hack Shoes in Southfield celebrated its 75th anniversary. The company originally was based in Detroit.

Vernon Buchanan, chairman and chief executive officer of American Speedy Printing Centers Inc. in Bloomfield Hills, has teamed up with Mike Wickett to form Total Performance Systems Inc. The company provides consulting and training services and offers hundreds of skills-building audio programs and video tapes at substantial savings.

Lapides Publicity Group of West Bloomfield received the Exceptional Supplier Service Award for its outstanding performance in the areas of service, results, accountability and respect.

Douglas A. Hardy, broker/owner of Century 21 Today, was honored with Centurian Award, the highest level of recognition awarded top-producing offices in the Century 21 system.

Gray & Kilgore Inc. of Troy won a Creativity '90 Award in a competition sponsored by Art Direction

magazine of New York City. The award was for a direct marketing project done on behalf of Franklin Fitness & Racquet Club in Southfield.

Sumitomo Rubber Industries hired DMB&B Bloomfield Hills for a special project. DMB&B will be assisted by Tokyo Agency International in Japan and other members of the DMB&B Worldwide group in 11 countries.

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★ **FREE ENTERTAINMENT** ★

Friday, June 28
• Sun Messengers 4 PM
• Detroit Blues Band 6 PM

Saturday, June 29
• Motor City Beat 4 PM
• Liberty 8 PM

Sunday, June 30
• Huron Valley Boys NOON
• The Regular Boys 1:30 PM

• The Fantastics 2:30 PM
• JC & the Zydeco Mob 4 PM

★ **KIDS DAY** ★

Friday, June 28, 10 AM-4 PM
• Mud Mania (mud-filled obstacle course) • Stage entertainment
• Canine Frisbee Disc Team Exhibition • Petting Zoo
• Pet show organized by Hilldale Veterinary Hospital
• Story Time with Southfield Cable 8's Uncle Drew • Kids' games

SPECTACULAR FIREWORKS DISPLAY
Saturday, June 29, 10:15 PM
• Includes American flag parachute drop and Desert Storm Welcome Home

★ **PLUS** ★

GAZEBO CONCERTS
Wednesday, June 26, 7 PM • Spirit of America Band
Wednesday, July 3, 7 PM • 1st Colonial Fife & Drum (Historicburgh Site - Civic Center Dr. & Berg Rd.)

THE NOSTALGIA BALL
Thursday, June 27, 7 PM (admission charge)

TRADITIONAL COUNTRY DANCE
Friday, June 28, 8-11 PM

TEEN NIGHT
Friday, June 28, 6-9 PM

COME 'N GET IT CANINE FRISBEE DISC CHAMPIONSHIPS
Saturday, June 29, 9 AM-12:30 PM

2nd ANNUAL SOUTHFIELD MINI GRAND PRIX
Saturday, June 29, 10 AM-6 PM (Prudential Town Center)

SHELBY STROTHER MEMORIAL BENEFIT SOFTBALL GAME
Saturday, June 29, 2 PM

ART SHOW AND EXHIBITION
Saturday, June 29, 10 AM-8:30 PM & Sunday, June 30, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM

BASEBALL CARD COLLECTOR'S SHOW
Saturday & Sunday, June 29 & 30, 10 AM-4 PM (admission charge)

'90s STREET DANCE
Sunday, June 30, 6-9 PM (admission charge)

SPLASH BASH & BARBECUE
Thursday, July 4, 1-7 PM (Civic Center and Beech Woods pools)

EVENTS ARE FREE unless otherwise noted

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