

Got Gas?

By Rick Cogbill
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BUR-R-R-A-P-P!

The lunchroom windows vibrated as Beanie clamped his hand over his mouth in embarrassment. “Gosh!” he mumbled. “Did I do that?”



Basil sighed as he picked up his scattered playing cards. “Well, I can assure you that blatant expulsion of esophageal gases didn’t come from my direction. Beanie, your fast-food diet will be the death of you.”

“If it don’t *deafen* us first,” grumbled Tooner, rubbing his ears. “That belch must be close to a world record.” He eyed the crumpled wrappers on the table in front of our apprentice and shook his head. “Three burritos, two litres of Coke, a double cheeseburger and mega-fries; I don’t know how you can stomach it.”

Beanie looked glum. “Actually, I haven’t been feeling that well lately...”

It was time to end this dietary dialogue. “Speaking of gas; we need a few gallons of diesel fuel to get Herman’s truck going for him.” I handed Basil the keys to the shop truck.

Long-haul Herman was a local trucker who brought us his personal vehicles for servicing. This time his son had borrowed the family pickup, a 2005 Chevrolet Silverado 1-ton dually with a 6.6 L diesel engine. Being a new driver, he’d made the mistake of filling it with gas instead of diesel fuel. Now it wouldn’t start.

Basil soon returned with the full can of fuel. “Here’s the diesel, and I’ve also got something for our other ‘gas’ problem.” He tossed a bag to Beanie. “I stopped at the health food store and picked up a few things. Take these and I’ll guarantee you’ll be feeling better in no time.”

While Beanie went off to read the ingredients of Basil’s home remedy, Tooner and I tackled Herman’s truck. First we drained all the gasoline from the fuel tank and put in a few gallons of diesel fuel. I cranked the engine while Tooner bled the system, and it didn’t take long before it was up and running. “Hmm. Don’t hear any loud noises,” said Tooner. “Looks like Herman got off easy this time.”

“Could be.” I shut the engine off. “Let’s take it for a run later, just to be sure.”

But when Tooner came back in an hour, the truck wouldn’t start. “What the...!” He wasn’t impressed, and directed some choice phrases in the Chevy’s direction as he filled

the fuel filter with fresh diesel and bled the system again. It fired right up and ran beautifully. “Okay,” he growled, “I’m goin’ for a drive. I’ll call you on the cell if I have any trouble.”

But the only trouble we had while he was gone was the moaning and wailing of The Bean. “Basil,” he gasped, “what’s in those supplements? I can’t get six feet from the washroom without having more cramps!”

“Patience, my boy; patience. It’s just a little purge recipe to clean out your system. You’ll be feeling better in no time!”

An hour later, it was Tooner doing all the moaning, due to the fact that Herman’s truck was still giving us grief. The test drive went well, but after sitting for a while, it wouldn’t start without repriming. I found him huddled in front of the computer, reading service bulletins to see if he could find a solution. “What’s the bad news?” I asked.

He sat back with a sigh. “Well, it’s possible the injector pump has been damaged by lack of lubrication, or maybe the glow plugs got cooked. But if Herman is telling the story straight, the truck didn’t run long on gasoline. I think it’s something else, something like...” His voice trailed off as he shrugged in defeat.

“Something like a vapor lock?” Basil sauntered over, munching a triple chocolate donut. He wiped some crumbs from his goatee. “If you have any gasoline remaining in the system, it will heat up and cause a vapor lock. Just as our tenacious apprentice is applying full diligence towards the total purification of his gastrointestinal system, so must this fine piece of machinery be further cleansed from its current defilement.”

Tooner blinked twice. “Huh?”

“He means we’ve got to purge it some more,” I explained.

Basil sighed. “Correct. I suggest that you put in a fuel additive, fill the tank completely with new diesel fuel, and tell Herman to go on a very long drive. I think you’ll find his problems will be over.”

He was right about the truck, but Beanie was a wreck as his body adjusted to healthy food and filtered water. He felt better physically, but his enthusiasm for eating was gone. As he gnawed on a cantaloupe during coffee break one day, it suddenly dawned on him that Basil was eating as many donuts as he ever had. “Hey, how come I have to eat healthy, but you don’t! Aren’t you the big health food nut?”

Basil smiled. “No, that would be my wife. She’s been after me for years to eat healthy, so I thought I’d try the new diet out on you first to see what happens.” He added three sugar cubes to a fresh mug of coffee. “And judging from your gloomy disposition, I think I’ll stick to my present regime.”