



Golden Gate

Healey Happenings

Tom & Claudia Gano's BN1

Golden Gate Austin Healey Club, Inc.

Vol 13, No. 8

September 2011

In This Issue

Event Reports	
Marin-Sonoma Tour.....	1
24 Hours of LeMONS.....	4
Danville Healeys & Hot Rods.	7
Ice Cream Social.....	8
Pacific Grove Rally.....	12
Editor's Column.....	9
Calendar of Events.....	10
Event Announcements.....	11
HealeyMarket.....	14
Newsletter/Club Info.....	14

Event Report

Marin-Sonoma Tour

by Loren Parks



If you were to guess what kind of event resulted in consumption of 10 bottles of wine, 17 bottles of champagne, 8 lbs of cheese, two French bread baguettes, 2 lbs of grapes, 2 boxes of chocolates, plus lunch, you would be unlikely to guess a driving tour. But the Golden Gate Austin Healey Club lived up to it's reputation for fine cars, appreciation of the California wine culture, and wonderful people on the First Annual Austin Healey Wine, Cheese and Champagne Tour.



This tour of Marin and Sonoma Counties on August 14 was organized by Club President, Marty Allen.

Marty Allen warns that anyone who eats the oatmeal raisin cookies before arriving at The Cheese Factory shall suffer consequences.

The 23-car group assembled at the Strawberry Shopping Center near the intersection of Highway 101 and Tiburon Blvd. in Marin County, quaffed a load of Starbuck's coffee, received a briefing by Marty, and picked up goodie bags containing (a) driving instructions for those who get separated from

Continued on page 2

▼ **Waiting for Phil & Sue Foster, who ate the cookies.**



BYINGTON VINEYARD & WINERY



Tour of the Byington Winery and the Neal Kirkham Auto Collection
September 10
See page 10



FALL COLORS TOUR
OCTOBER 29
IT'S GOING TO BE A HOOT!
SEE PAGE 10

Marin Sonoma Tour (continued)

the group, (b) information about the tour stops, (c) two oatmeal raisin cookies, (d) a pair of the cheapest plastic wine glasses that China can make, (e) a package of nuts complete with calorie count, and (f) a package of mints to keep your breath fresh in case you have a conversation with the Highway Patrol.

The trip started with a mountainous drive through Mill Valley and over Mt. Tamalpais, finally flattening out at Stinson Beach. Fog prevented a view of the ocean until then, but subsequently dissipated as we drove north to Point Reyes Station. Along the way Phil Foster's car quit, and he called Marty to report the problem. We all stopped along the road, and David Nock drove back to help him. After a brief wait the rest of us proceeded to Point Reyes Station, then east to The Marin French Cheese Company (Cheese Factory) where we consumed wine, cheese, bread, and grapes as fast as we could before Phil and Sue and David and Jerri arrived. But they arrived promptly, Phil having resolved the fuel pump problem before David got there using a tried-and-true method—beat on it.

After about an hour at The Cheese Factory we drove to Cornerstone Sonoma—an eclectic collection of shops, wineries and a gourmet café set amidst nine acres of garden installations created by the world's leading landscape architects. Lunches had been pre-ordered to avoid delay, so we got right down to munching and wandering among the shops. The weather warmed up as we moved inland, but the temperature remained in the 80's—just perfect for a day of driving.

From Cornerstone Sonoma we drove about 20 minutes to Domaine Carneros—a 138-acre wine grape plantation and winery that specializes in sparkling wines. The estate was founded in the late 1970's by Claude Taittinger—the President of Champagne Taittinger. We had tables on the outdoor patio, and the champagne (Oops, *sparkling wine*) flowed freely. A lot of cold water was served simultaneously, which was very important considering the heat and the drive home to follow. The retail price of a 1.5 liter bottle of the sparkling wines we drank was \$47, but because we're special we were offered a 15% discount on a case quantity. I didn't see anybody buy it, but maybe I missed the transactions.

During the visit at Domaine Carneros, David Nock displayed an award received by the GGAHC for greatest participation by any Healey Club at Conclave in Colorado Springs.



▲ Driving through Olema

▼ Scenes from The Cheese Factory



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Continued on
page 3

Marin-Sonoma Tour (continued)

This is a “movable award” which is held by our Club until someone outdoes us at another Conclave. Considering that Conclave will be in Louisville, Kentucky, next year, we’re pretty sure to lose it. Incidentally, nobody in our Club remained at the Awards Banquet long enough to receive the award; they had already retired in anticipation of a 6:30am departure the next day. The award was shipped, which was just as well because it is so large (including a massive wooden case) that nobody could have taken it home in a Healey.

Some seldom-seen Club members joined us on this tour, for which we regulars are grateful. Some drove considerable distances to participate; Don and Cathy Newman even drove from Lake Tahoe, spending the night before and the night after the drive in a hotel. Now that is dedication! Thanks to Marty Allen for his superb tour organization; we look forward to a similar tour next year.



▲ Lunch at Cornerstone Sonoma

▼ Scenes of Domaine Carneros



PARTICIPANTS

Marty Allen & Sandy Merritt
Mike & Linda Allen
Cully & Julie Anderson
Lee & Susie Bardellini
David & Cindy Cross
Phil & Sue Foster
Ken & Marshal Freese
Len Hartnett
John & Terry Kent
Nick & Sandy Klein
Steve & Kim Korbay
Tim & Kathy Marshall
Nancy McCroskey
Jim & Steve Morton
Don & Cathy Newman
David & Jerri Nock
Loren Parks
Terry & Linda Parsons
Marie Louise & Rob Sardeman
Steve Thomas
John Trifari
John Turney
Jim & Maurita Walton



▲ Some of the Colorado Conclave trippers reunited

◀ The Club participation award (Conclave)

24 HOURS OF LEMONS

Where Halloween Meets Gasoline

by Loren Parks



Yes, this is about racing automotive lemons, defined as "any new vehicle that has a substantial problem that isn't fixed within a reasonable number of attempts, or that has had a certain number of days out of service." This already-subjective definition has been stretched, twisted, run through a blender with rancid seaweed, and forged into a play on the title of a famous race—the 24 Hours of LeMans. The organization running these events is staging 24 races this year around the country, including two at Infineon, one at Thunderhill, and one at Buttonwillow in Southern California. (www.24hoursoflemons.com)

It is promoted as endurance racing for \$500 cars. "It's not just an oxymoron, it's a breeding ground for morons. It's where Pintos and Maseratis battle to lap a Le Car. It's where first-timers dice with Normex-soiling pros." It's not just for rich idiots, it's for all idiots.

I attended the event on August 6 at Thunderhill Raceway, and learned first-hand what this event is like. There are no speed competition classes—everybody competes against everybody else.

Are there prizes? Oh yes. Over the course of the year the organization will reward wins for marque, nationality, all-girl teams, the Harold Stassen Memorial Sticktuitiveness Trophy, the Albert Gore Jr. Carbon Neutral Cup, and other such venerable honors. At each race the Winner on Index of Effluency receives \$1,501, the winner on Distance gets \$1,500, and the Organizer's Choice gets \$500. There are also awards for decorations and themes, hence the wild and crazy stuff that we enjoy.



My grandson Alex with Lemon #7

DRIVE IT LIKE YOU PAID \$500 FOR IT

- No, you don't need a previous comp license
- Yes, we'll show you where to get all the safety stuff
- No, we aren't impressed by your suit patches
- Yes, the rulebook is short and in English

The car: \$500 or less. Period

The Team: Four to six people with judgment as bad as your own. They'll help you build the car, race it, break it, fix it, race it some more, then break it again.

The Reason: You always wanted to go racing. Or you're bored with the racing you're doing. Or you're a garden-variety nutcase. Frankly, we don't care; we'll put you and your \$500 heap onto the track with the rest of the whackjobs.

The Bottom Line: Two days of wheel-to-wheel competition for \$500 per team + \$100 per driver. (Take that, fancy-pants club racing.)

Here's what you need:

- A car that cost \$500 or less
- Safety equipment [we'll help you find it]
- Three to five buddies with equally questionable judgment

Here's what you don't need:

- A rich dad
- Talent, wisdom, or personal hygiene
- A serious bone in your body

Here's the rest:

- This is serious racing. Suits and cages required. Rosaries optional
- We pick the grid based on who we think will be the most fun to hang out with. Impress us.
- Whiners are specifically prohibited in LeMons. Seriously. It's Rule 2.4.

Beneath the veneer of good times and craziness, there are some serious rules and racers. Safety is paramount. Every car and driver is thoroughly checked for safety equipment before being allowed onto the tarmac. Drivers who are observed breaking a rule are black-flagged and required to pull into the penalty area in the pits. Penalties vary from oral admonishment to expulsion from the race, with intermediate actions such as putting brain-teaser puzzles together with a

Continued on page 5

24 Hours of LeMONS (continued)

resultant loss of time on the track. During the first two hours the penalty area was busy. For example, one guy passed another car during a yellow caution flag, and another bumped a competitor's car.

Within the first two hours there were about a dozen spinouts, at least as many off-track excursions, two engine fires, and some other mechanical failures. Compared to just about any other car race, these vehicles are slow on average. The range of vehicles is remarkable; the most prevalent marque was Porsche 944, of which there were five. The low sound level of the cars is also noteworthy because mufflers must be intact.

Not all applicants are accepted because of track capacity constraints. So who gets accepted? Here is an excerpt from the web site. "Boring applications like 'we are four guys who love to race, and we have done (blah blah blah) driving before' don't give us much to work with. You might get in and you might not. Applications like 'Choose us because we'll wear beaver costumes in the paddock and our car is entirely coated in birch bark' give you better odds."



Porch Racing. Get it?



Continued on page 6



▲ The Playboy car is covered with centerfolds



Michelle & Jayme—drivers on the four-woman team "Ladybug"



The drummer always sits in back



▲ A rare car—the Lloyd Alexander



▲ ARGHHH!

24 Hours of LeMONS (continued)

Regardless of your proclivity for watching car races, you can't help but have fun observing the creativity and humor of this event for awhile. It's best to get there before the race starts to get up close for photos. About two hours of observing the same cars circumvent the course was enough for me. But the participants are really into the sport; they have a chance to drive a clunker car as fast as it will go in a marginally competitive environment. Racing in this event isn't as cheap as the promotional material would have you believe. Just take a look at the car trailers, tools, safety clothes, tires, RVs, and other equipment needed to support a car and you know that significant money is being spent.



▲ “Hey, Elmer! What’s in that black hat on the top of your car?”
▼ “A pair of wacky wabbits. Just say *abracadabra* and they pop up!”



Did you think the space shuttle program ended? Not here.



“Hang on, Alice. Only 23 hours to go!”



“Ya know, Ed, sometimes this car drives like there’s a pile of turds on the trunk”



▲ Some days a guy just feels like plaid

The Hard-eze car. ▶ No comment.



Now THIS is a proper spoiler!



◀ Need help? Call (800)-Ladybug



Healeys, Hot Rods & Detroit Iron

by John Soderling



What do you have when you mix Healeys, hot rods and Detroit iron? You have a little British invasion of Danville's Hot Summer Nights car show held on July 21th. This was the first of Danville's several Hot Summer Nights this year and three gorgeous Austin Healeys and four other LBC's were there strutting their stuff along side hundreds of hot rods and Detroit iron. A crowd of over 1,000 mingled among the 300 pre-1975 classic cars parked along 12 blocks of downtown Danville, CA. Golden Gate Healey Club member cars included:



Dick Glass's 1953 Healey Blue /Old English White
Steve Cloyes' yellow/black 100-six
John Soderling's Colorado red 100-six

As always the Healeys attracted more than their fair share of admiring crowds wanting to tell stories of the Healeys they owned or their dad or boy friends owned. Listening to these conversations and stories is part to the fun of showing an Austin Healey. And yes, the ladies do **I-o-v-e** the sexy lines of Gerry Coker's body work! So get your Healey out to a local classic car show in your area and bask in the compliments, stories and envy from admiring car enthusiasts and lovely ladies.



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The Annual Healey Ice Cream Social

by Len Hartnett

At Vacaville Foster's Freeze, August 28



Len Hartnett



Donna & Roger Hawk



Jorge Quintero



Don Newman



Cathy Newman



George Henke



Steve Darling



◀ Jim Walton

Shade seekers ▶



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Kirk & Roberta Polson



Bill Putnam

Editor's Column

Loren Parks
Chico, CA



Newsletter Facts

(Probably more than you want to know)

The newsletter received a minor facelift this issue including elimination of many border lines, reduction of the margins to provide more useable space, greater use of background color, and revised format for the Calendar of Events.

The newsletter is e-mailed to 153 Club Member households, plus printed copies (black & white) are mailed to six members who do not receive e-mail. When I began this job in 2008 the Club was spending over \$900 per year to print and mail about 30 copies in booklet format (in addition to e-mail deliveries), but thanks to a campaign to encourage electronic distribution and eliminate the booklet the newsletter now costs about \$100 annually. Elimination of printed booklets also eliminated restrictions on newsletter length and format. In effect, the tail was wagging the dog.

In addition to Club members, the e-mail version of the newsletter is sent to a variety of other people including our advertisers, legacy people (e.g., Gerry Coker), and about a dozen other Healey Club officers and newsletter editors around the country including Healey Marque. Our Club's activities are mentioned occasionally in Healey Marque as a result. Also, several of our newsletter contributors have been invited to republish their Healey Happenings articles in Marque.

E-mail is not perfectly reliable, so please let me know promptly if you fail to receive it by the first of the month. Some of our members have waited five or six months without letting me know about missing issues! In case you didn't know, the newsletter is posted on the web site with a three-month lag.



Calendar of Events

Contact Jim Morton to list an event:
Themortons@starstream.net. For a more complete list www.GoldenGateHealeys.com

September

- ◆ September 10. **GGAHC Event**. Tour of the Byington Winery and Neil Kirkham Auto Collection. See p. 10
- ◆ September 11. Chico Concours d'Elegance. www.chicoconcours.com.
- ◆ September 18. **GGAHC Supported Event**. Danville Concours. See page 11.
- ◆ September 24. Ironstone Concours at Murphys. www.ironstonefoundation.org. Entry deadline Sep 1
- ◆ September 25. Cole Valley Fair in the heart of San Francisco. *Cars on Cole* is a vintage car show with no entry fee, catering mostly to local entrants. www.cviasf.org (415) 317-2074.

October

- ◆ October 15-16. **GGAHC Supported Event**. California Autumn Classic in Morgan Hill (British Car Show). See page 11.
- ◆ October 29. **GGAHC Event**. Fall Colors Tour. See page 10.

December

- ◆ December 3, 12-3pm. **GGAHC Event**. Club lunch cruise and annual meeting on the San Francisco Bay, just like last year. Details forthcoming.



William Holden with Nash Healey in the movie *Sabrina*



Byington Winery & Kirkham Auto Collection

Saturday
September 10



Fall Colors Tour

October 29-30

The Golden Gate Austin Healey Club and the Santa Cruz British Motorcar Club are sponsoring a tour of the Byington Winery and the Neil Kirkham Auto Collection. Please assemble at 9:30am at one of these two meeting points:

- ◆ Fins Coffee, 1104 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
- ◆ The parking lot behind AG Ferrari Foods, 295 Main St, Los Altos, CA 94022. There is a Starbuck's across the street.

Depart at 10am for a drive through the Santa Cruz Mountains; the groups will meet at Byington Winery in Los Gatos at 11:30am. We will have a tour of the winery and then a picnic on their beautiful grounds (bring a lunch). Byington will provide tables, chairs, linens, umbrellas and glasses for our group. You are encouraged to buy wine for the picnic, but no other alcoholic beverages are allowed. Bring non-alcoholic beverages of your choice. The normal admission fee of \$10 is waived for the first 30 people who RSVP.

After lunch we will drive to Neil Kirkham's home for a tour of his fabulous car collection, which includes The Yellow Rolls Royce from the movie of the same name.

A head count is needed. Please RSVP Nancy McCroskey

nmccroskey@aol.com

Please provide your names, your car's make/model/year/color, and indicate if you will give permission to share your email address and information only with other people attending the event.

This year's tour will feature new roads, two different wineries, a picnic lunch in Bridgeport (on the Yuba River) and dinner at Richard Buckley's house.

Like last year, we will meet at the Holiday Inn Express in Auburn just behind In-n-Out Burger, located at 130 Grass Valley Highway, Auburn, CA 95603 (the intersection of I-80 and Hwy 49—go north on 49). Meet at 9:00am and depart at 9:30 am. We will not go directly to Nevada City, so you must start the tour in Auburn. Those who wish to spend the preceding night at the Holiday Inn Express (Friday night, October 28) must make their own reservations there by calling (530) 887-8787. There is no group rate.

A block of rooms is reserved for Saturday night October 29 at the Northern Queen Inn (400 Railroad Ave., Nevada City, CA 95959; telephone 530-265-5824) for \$80.00 per room plus tax. You must mention GAHC and **reserve by October 6**. You have a choice of queen or double beds. A complimentary continental breakfast will be provided on Sunday. There is a 48-hour prior-to-arrival cancellation option.

Picnic lunch and dinner will be provided. Although the Club subsidizes this event, there will be a cost per member which is yet to be determined. Please sign up via e-mail if possible:

Bob Altieri boba9366@comcast.net, 530-265-9366
or
Richard Buckley writerbuckley@yahoo.com,
530-265-3966



Danville Concours d'Elegance Sunday, September 18

Join your fellow Healey owners for the 7th Annual Danville Concours, when the streets of historic downtown Danville will overflow with the sights, sounds and smells of classic, sports performance and exotic automobiles. This will be Old Town Danville at its finest, for a full day of classic vehicle displays, fine food, wine tasting including some of the finest Napa wines, a silent auction, raffles, kids' remote race car corral and French-style Concours judging in a relaxed environment. This gathering of Cool Cars for A Cause is designed to raise funds for Parkinsons research and patient care.

Last year we had 13 Austin Healeys and two Nash-Healeys entered. It's time to register now at

www.danville-delegance.org/register.aspx

(register for the Sunday Concours only)

Be part of a great day of GAHC gearhead camaraderie and help support Parkinson's research. Please contact John Soderling at

BigHealey@astound.net

Or (925) 934-0925

to let him know that you have entered the Sunday Concours. Also, if you wish to join the Sunday brunch at the Basil Leaf Café let him know so that space will be assured. The price is \$19.95 for adults and \$10.95 for kids.



California Autumn Classic

British Sports Car Concours and Tour with Welcoming Dinner on Saturday

Saturday and Sunday, October 15th and 16th in Morgan Hill, CA

(Just 10 minutes south of San Jose off of Highway 101)

This show is for *regularly driven* (non-trailerred) classic two-seater British sports cars.

The California Autumn Classic brings back the nostalgic fun of relaxed, friendly sports car club events of the 1950's and 60's. All Classic British sports cars (2-seaters and their jumpseat derivatives) are invited to participate. There will be 26 silver trophies for all marques. The event is held on the main downtown street of Morgan Hill. There are many restaurants to choose from for lunch and many quaint shops to enjoy.

<http://www.autumnclassic.100mregistry.com/>



SEVENTH ANNUAL PACIFIC GROVE CONCOURS AUTO RALLY

by Ken Freese



The Pacific Grove Concours is one of the spin-off events of the week-long automotive orgy known as Monterey Auto Week. Marsha and I participated with our BJ8 in the August 19 Rally associated with the Concours. Cars gathered on Lighthouse Avenue in Pacific Grove at about 1:00pm in no particular order. Lighthouse is a broad avenue, so there were four parallel lines of cars on the hill. Austin Healey attendance included Club members Phil and Sue Foster (BN2), Roy Vogel (BJ8), Nancy McCroskey (Sprite), and Rick Magno (100M). There were two additional Sprites and at least one other BN2. Approximately 215 cars of all makes and descriptions participated.



Waiting for the tour to begin provided a fine opportunity for social interaction, which generated the following tales.

- A woman brought her red Morris minor convertible, *Molly the Minor*. She used to have a Bugeye Sprite, in which her son loved riding.
- Jim Parkinson dropped by to tell stories of the good old days as one of Southern California's first BMC dealers. He raced all the 100S's for the distributor to help them move off the show room floor a few days after the race.
- We talked to the owner of a Ferrari 365 GTC who had unpleasant memories of damaging a Healey in 1962. The Healey was making a turn behind a fallen tree in Palo Alto. After the meeting of Healey and American iron, the Healey was seen for weeks in the neighborhood with a half-secured top.
- A very nice lady sitting in a 1922 Wills Sainte Claire was not the original owner, but she knew a lot about this advanced American roadster. It had a V8 with single overhead camshafts. The cylinder



Continued on page 13





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Pacific Grove Rally (continued)

heads were not detachable, however and there were lots of “ease of service” complaints back in the day.

- A woman with a 1968 Firebird convertible had backed into a post on her driver’s training drive many years ago. The family used their inheritance to restore it in their father’s memory.



▲ Freese car (left) and Foster (right)

After a short drivers’ meeting that encouraged keeping a tight formation, we left for Carmel via the 17 mile drive. I was behind a group of Corvettes. They were so loud I couldn’t hear my own engine. No worries; I kept up just fine. A group of spectators along the route had rating signs to flash, and we got more 10’s than the Vettes. The drive up the hill of Carmel’s Ocean Avenue is supposed to be like the Mille Miglia with the spectators crowding us and planting hand prints on the cars as we go by. This year was slower than previous; there was some stop-and-go. At one point a Shelby GT-350 was in front of us and had to lay a small patch of rubber to get going. The crowd judged my big Healey’s squeal of rubber significantly better.

From Carmel, we were free to return to the Chautauqua House in Pacific Grove via any road we chose for awards and BBQ. A BN2 got an award for best paint, which was Healey blue over white. Unfortunately the car was rear ended very close to the BBQ site by a 1926 Oldsmobile. The BBQ featured free wine tasting and I put all my raffle tickets into winning the Introduction to Racing Day by a Laguna Seca school. I missed out. Phil, Sue, Marsha and I left the BBQ to check out the RM Auction and Russo/Steele Auction but that’s another story.



▲ Nancy McCroskey & Sprite



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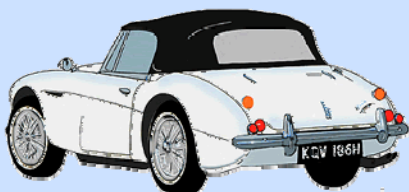
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Healeymarket

GGAHC members may submit Healey-related items either wanted or for sale without paying a fee.



For Sale

1959 Austin Healey 100-6

Restored 10 years ago in a frame-up restoration. Everything fixed or replaced. Receipts for everything. Car has 11,000 miles since restoration. It has been driven in club rallies, shows, and parades. Upgrades: 3000 engine, HD8 carbs, front disk brakes with servo, 72 spoke chrome wheels, alternator, 5 speed transmission, BJ8 clutch and pressure plate, lightened flywheel. Lots of pictures available. Car is midnight blue over white. Original restored hardtop, soft top and tonneau (in white). Need the space to start another car. \$38,200

Jerry Costanzo (916) 652 4537

See more photos at

<http://tinyurl.com/6yxxv65>

Miscellaneous Healey Stuff

- ♦ Very nice BJ8 grill (\$50);
- ♦ About 90 assorted issues of Healey High-lights and Chatter from 1985- 1996 (asking \$25 + shipping).

Rich Kahn

tahoehealey@hotmail.com

or call at [530 577-7615](tel:5305777615)