



Golden Gate Austin Healey Club, Inc. Vol 13, No. 10 Nov/Dec

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One newsletter is issued for Nov/Dec, and one for Jan/Feb. The Jan/Feb issue will be issued about January 1



*Santa on the Bay
December 3
See page 11*

Event Report

by Loren Parks

The third annual Fall Colors Tour departed Auburn at 9:30am on October 29 with 14 Big Healeys and a BJ9. The weather was splendid and everybody was sober, but both were subject to change. We motored along some beautiful winding roads to the Sierra Starr Winery near Grass Valley looking in vain for signs of leaves turning into the reds and yellows that characterize fall, but an unusually late summer precluded all but a few precocious varieties from cooperating.

Our host at the Sierra Starr Winery was Jack Starr—son of the founders. Jack obtained a BA in Recreation at CSU Chico, where he said he learned to drink wine before he learned to make it. Jack poured wine for us to taste as we moved around the property, interrupted occasionally by two friendly dogs who barked at Terry Parsons to throw another fetch stick. Jack told the history of how his parents got into the wine business, how the vineyards were developed, how they make wine, and how the new wine processing building was constructed. Great care has been taken to use environmentally friendly materials and processes, and to achieve temperature control in an energy efficient way. See the web site: www.sierrastarwine.com.

From Sierra Star we motored to the South Yuba River State Park in Penn Valley to tour the Bridgeport covered bridge and associated sights including the Kneebone family cemetery, the rebuilt Shell gas station, a barn full of old equipment, and a museum and gift shop. The Kneebone family pioneered the area and, contrary to popular belief, is not connected to the Thighbone family.

Continued on page 2

The Bridgeport covered bridge ▼



Let them eat cake

The Fall Colors Tour (continued)

The bridge is one of only 9 covered bridges left in California. It is the world's longest single span wood truss covered bridge. The bridge was first constructed in 1862, and is currently 229 feet long. As luck would have it the bridge was closed to foot traffic the day before we arrived on grounds that it is unsafe. The prospects for the State coming up with funds to repair it are not good.



Enroute to Starr



Jack Starr tells the winery story

After a picnic lunch some of us pulled up to the original (reconstructed) Shell gas station and store for a photo. Phil Foster received imaginary money for pumping imaginary fuel.



"I can't believe it. Only one guy in this group would play fetch."



Jack "punches" the top layer of grapes to the bottom to facilitate fermentation.

We motored on to the Double Oak Vineyards & Winery where Bob and Ginny Hilsman provided a tour and tasting. We were impressed by the knowledge and dedication they have poured into their craft. They make some fine wines including rosé, chardonnay, zinfandel, cabernet sauvignon, and merlot. At the conclusion of the tasting our group queued up to purchase wine, so it was a good day for Bob and Ginny. See their web site: www.doubleoakwinery.com.



The closed entrance to the bridge



Lunch at the State Park

Following check-in at the Northern Queen Hotel in Nevada City we made our way to Rich and Carol Buckley's home for dinner and socializing. As usual, the food and hospitality were superb. The view from their back deck is breathtaking—mountains, forest, and a lake. By the end of the evening anyone who didn't drink enough wine for the day was simply negligent.

Continued on page 3



Pump boy Phil Foster and Steve & Karen Thomas

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Fall Colors Tour (Continued)

Sunday morning we had a brisk, standup breakfast of coffee, bagels and doughnuts outside on the hotel grounds. At about 10am the group divided into those who wanted to drive directly home, and those who wanted to take a 10-mile side trip to visit the scenic town of Washington before driving home.

Thanks to Bob and Sharon Altieri, and Rich and Carol Buckley for another excellent tour. We are fortunate to have such meticulous planners among our group, and look forward to next year. 



Bob Hilsman, owner of the Double Oak Winery, pours for Ari & Tico Cortes



**Happy Birthday
Phil Foster**



The Double Oak Winery



Tour organizers and hosts. Rich and Carol Buckley, Sharon and Bob Altieri.

- Participants**
- Marty Allen & Sandy Merritt
 - Bob & Sharon Altieri
 - Gary & Harriet Anderson
 - Rich & Carol Buckley
 - Phil & Sue Foster
 - Tico & Ari Cortes
 - Len Hartnett
 - Roger & Donna Hawk
 - George Henke
 - Rich & Lynn Kahn
 - Doreen McCammon
 - Loren & Diana Parks
 - Terry & Linda Parsons
 - Robert & Marie Louise Sardemon
 - Ted Shelton & Sandy Tallerico
 - Steve & Karen Thomas



Loren & Diana Parks, Steve Thomas



Stand-up breakfast on the grounds of the Northern Queen Hotel

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The California Autumn Classic ends with a great event!

by Bill Meade

The California Autumn Classic had its final show of a nineteen-year run with the 2011 tour and concours. A record turnout of cars, beautiful weather, an enjoyable tour and reception plus a delicious Italian welcoming dinner, allowed the event to finish on a high note. Eight regional British car clubs have been the co-sponsoring clubs of this event for many years.

Seventy cars gathered on Saturday, October 15th, for a tour to the restored Casa Grande Mining Museum in New Almaden. The weather provided a fantastic Fall day and the back roads route passed through beautiful country estates and the scenic Calero Reservoir.

The Sunday show was expanded to cover four blocks with nearly two-hundred cars and seven area British car clubs represented. Awards were given in a drive-up presentation at the new Third Street Promenade. Cars drove up to the front of the new fountain and a beautiful 12" silver plate was presented and photograph taken which each winner receives.

The Autumn Classic first started in 1993 at Pasatiempo Inn in the Santa Cruz mountains. This weekend's British sports car event was founded by Bill Meade, a member of the Santa Cruz British Motorcar Club and the GGAHC. The original goal Bill had was to create a multi-marque show that catered to daily drivers rather than trailered show cars and to recreate a casual event similar to sports car club gatherings of the 1950's and 60's.

Bill had done his own restorations with his MG's, Midgets, Triumphs and Austin-Healeys but found he could never win a first because a "trailer queen" car would always show up and overshadowed the well restored daily drivers. With the new show, trailered show cars were not included. In addition, first place trophies were awarded to every make and model giving everyone, from little, inexpensive Sprites to expensive Jaguars, the opportunity to take home a first place silver award.

Presenting over twenty first place trophies was only one of the innovations started by the Autumn Classic. The event included a tour for participants, a group dinner, and door prizes. This was a real multi-club, weekend long event. Today some of the new, extended touring events are combining these elements and charging participants hundreds or thousands to participate.

In 1998, the event was moved to San Juan Bautista to obtain more car parking. The little historic town made a great backdrop for the classic cars and the weekend gathering continued to grow. Cars were coming to the event from all over the state of California and in 2001 the name was



The tour—70 cars at the Calero Reservoir



Casa Grande Mining Museum in New Almaden



Jim Walton—class winner Nash Healey

Continued on page 5

The California Autumn Classic (continued)

changed to The California Autumn Classic to reflect its statewide nature. In 2008, the show was moved to Morgan Hill to provide wider streets, be more central to the San Jose area and give more hotel and restaurant options.

The California Autumn Classic started at \$10 per car nearly twenty years ago and had increased to a still modest \$36 fee in 2011 to cover the basic costs. The other difference from most car shows was this event donated all its profits to children and animal charities each year. Over the years, well over \$25,000 has been donated to those in need.

Bill Meade, event Founder and Organizer, said two factors have brought the event to a close. After organizing the event from the start, Bill wanted to step back and let another British car enthusiast take the lead organizing. he tried to find a local British car club that was willing to assume the position of organizer but unfortunately, no club felt they could take it on. An effort to get several clubs to join together to produce the show also never went anywhere.

Sadly, many of the admirers of the classic British sports cars are getting older and less active in club events. It's a natural progression for classic cars to become popular as the age group that remembers them recaptures happy memories from the past. As that age group moves on, it's also a natural progression for their favorite cars to slip into the past. As much as we like to think everyone will always want old British sports cars, the reality is likely different. The demise of the California Autumn Classic is partially the result of older clubs not having new, energetic members to do the continuing and tiring work of event organizing.

The final blow to the event came this year when the Morgan Hill Downtown Association, at the last moment, decided they would no longer put any money into the event which was required to close the streets. This decision dumped an additional \$4,000 expense onto the event, which is not financially feasible.

Bill said, "Its been a long run of many great shows but the time has come to retire the Autumn Classic event and name. Perhaps someone will start another exclusively British, year-end show in the future but the California Autumn Classic name is now a part of history."



GGAHC Entrants

AH 100

George Henke
Luther Gentry
Larry Panozzo
John Trifari

AH 100M

Phil Foster
Bill Putnam
Bill Meade
Richard Magno

Sprite

Nancy
McCroskey
Greg Trewin
Rod Hill
John Carey

Jensen Healey

Terry Parsons

Nash Healey

Jim Walton

AH 100-6

David Nock
Steve Cloyes
Jim Passafaro
John Turney

AH 3000

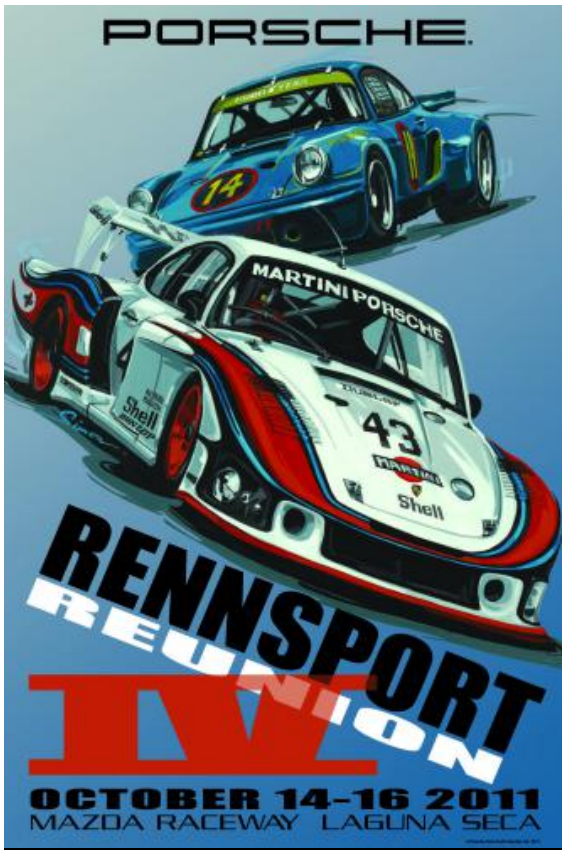
David Cross
Roger Hawk
Dan Sekella
Marty Allen
Don Newman
Dennis Gilroy
Richard Kahn
Bill Marsh
Ted Shelton
Robert Blair
Jorge Quintero
Denny Paul



Bill Mead (right) presents Jim Silva with Best of Show Award for his MG Arnolt



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PORSCHE FANS GATHER FOR REUNION

by Michael Dufort



Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca was the venue where Porsche staged its fourth Rennsport Reunion. Flexing their muscles, racing clans featuring some 300 racing Porsches celebrated the stunning success and charisma of the Porsche Marque in its purest form. Along with historically significant race cars, there were legendary Porsche drivers old and young including Herbert Linge, David Hobbs, Richard Atwood, Jurgen Barth, Derek Bell, David Donohue, Vic Elford, George Follmer, Dan Gurney, Hurley Haywood, Patrick Long, Arie Luyendyk, Jackie Oliver, Scooter Patrick, David Piper, Chip Robinson, Vern Schuppan, Danny Sullivan, and Walter Rohri to name a few.

Hosted by Porsche Cars North America, Rennsport Reunion IV assembled a wide variety of Porsche's most historic racing models from the nimble 550 Spyder of the mid-fifties through the mighty 917 and 956/962 of the seventies and eighties to the RS Spyder



and cup cars that are racing today. Special tribute was paid to the numerous racing versions of the Porsche 911 and their countless victories at race tracks around the world. Comedian/collector Jerry Seinfeld and Porsche Engineer Norbert Singer shared Grand Marshall duties.

In addition to a parade and concours d'elegance on Saturday and numerous other activities, the event also saw the North America premiere of the **2012 Porsche 911 Carrera** (photo at left). Unveiled last month at the Frankfurt Motor show, the new generation type 991 model will be available either with a 3.4 liter, 350 horsepower or 3.8 liter, 400 horsepower six-cylinder boxer power plant when it goes on sale early next year.



Activities were capped off Sunday afternoon with the Rennsport Reunion Cup, which celebrated the various generations of 911's through the years. Nearly 35,000 spectators were on hand over three days, enjoying autograph sessions with 50 plus legendary Porsche drivers, German music and food in the Biergarten, museum quality display cars and

Continued on page 7

Porsche Rennsport IV (continued)

plenty of on-track racing action. Following a favorable response from the event's first visit, prospects of a return to Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca for a fifth Rennsport in three or four years appear to be good.



Promotional photo of co-host Jerry Seinfeld



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Robert Blair's 1965 Austin-Healey BJB

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The Unser Racing Museum

by Loren Parks

During our recent RV trip around the country we spent several days in Albuquerque with friends, where we took in the annual Balloon Fiesta and the Unser Racing Museum. I knew nothing about this museum prior to arrival; I simply entered *Automobile Museums Albuquerque* into Google and it showed up. Our friends knew nothing about it either, so the four of us visited the museum on a Saturday afternoon to explore.

The museum consists of two buildings, one of which houses exhibits of race cars—primarily those driven by the Unser family, a racing simulator, and a gift shop. The other houses classrooms for the charter school the organization founded, an exhibit of more race cars, restored American classic cars, an exhibit of Unser family awards, and an automotive art exhibit. Within a few minutes we discovered that a friendly fellow signing autographs was Al Unser himself. He immediately consented to a photo of the two of us. As you can see, Al looks great at the age of 71. And, since this is a family act, his wife escorted us to the second building after we had completed the tour of the first. The Unser family are unpretentious, friendly people with a lot of pride and a story to tell. The museum receives between 10 and 15 thousand visitors annually.



Museum entrance

The Unser family documents four generations of automobile race drivers. All three brothers in the first generation raced. One of the brothers—Jerry—had four sons including Jerry Jr., Louie, Bobby and Al (the second generation). All four raced; only Al and Bobby are still living. The third generation produced five race drivers, and the fourth produced two (they are currently active). These are Al Unser III and Jason Tanner (Al's grandsons). Additional family members have been active in engine and car design and development, but did not race.



Al Unser and me



Al's 1987 Indy winner

The Unser family won many races, the most famous of which were the Indianapolis 500 and the Pike's Peak Hill Climb. Al Unser is one of three drivers who won Indianapolis four times, the last of which he won in 1987 just five days before his 48th birthday anniversary. His brother Bobby won Indianapolis three times, and Al's son (Al Jr.) won it twice. You can read about the Unser family and museum online at www.unsermuseum.com.

The museum is beautiful; exhibits are professional and interesting. Points of interest include (1) four generations of race cars, (2) Indianapolis 500 cars, (3) Pike's Peak cars, (4) antique cars, (5) winning pace cars, (6) racing simulator, (7) awards, (8) library, (9) racing uniforms, (10) original artwork, (11) interactive kiosks and videos, (12) racing memorabilia, and (13) a gift shop. If you happen to visit Albuquerque, a visit is highly recommended.

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Unser Racing Museum (continued)



This 2001 Starz Superpak G-Force was one of the first designs to simulate an inverted airplane wing, which causes downward force on the car. It has revolutionized racing.



Al Unser's four Indianapolis 500 winner's rings



Diana with old Pike's Peak racers



Awards



Race cars, race cars, race cars



"Driving" the Indianapolis 500 race simulator



Pace cars



Honey, I shrunk the race car



Racing engines



1936 Hudson Deluxe 8 Business Coupe



1929 Model A Fordor



▲ Racing art ▼ Think pink



Editor's Column

Loren Parks
Chico, CA



This is the last newsletter of 2011, and a good time to acknowledge the contributions of our members this year. Some never imagined themselves as authors, but nevertheless generated articles for all of us to enjoy. Without contributors, this newsletter would be boring indeed!

- **Marty Allen.** Marty's Minute, various event promotions, and lots of photos.
- **Bob Altieri.** The First Annual Nevada City Foreign Car & Motorcycle Show.
- **Michael DuFort.** The 2nd Annual Sonoma Historic Motorsports Festival, and Porsche Rennsport 4.
- **Ken Freese.** Seventh Annual Pacific Grove Concours Auto Rally.
- **Len Hartnett.** Annual Tech Session, and Annual Ice Cream Social.
- **Rich & Lynn Kahn.** Healey Rendezvous 2011.
- **Nick Klein.** Conclave 2011.
- **Bill Meade.** Tour of the Kirkham Collection and the Byington Winery; The California Autumn Classic.
- **David Nock.** How to set up a Healey Tour.
- **Dan Sekella.** The California YOM Plate Program.
- **John Soderling.** Healeys, Hot Rods & Detroit Iron (in Danville), and The Danville Concours.

At Rendezvous 2010 in Eugene, Oregon, I asked Reid Trummel "what is your greatest challenge as editor of Healey Marque?" His answer: hustling articles. I concur. Thanks to all of you who have responded to my invitations to contribute, and please let me know if you have an idea for an article and the willingness to prepare it.



Calendar of Events

Contact Jim Morton to list an event:

Themortons@starstream.net. For a more complete list www.GoldenGateHealeys.com

December

Saturday, December 3, 12:00pm—3:00pm. **GGAHC Event.** Annual Christmas luncheon cruise and all-Club meeting, including election of officers, on the San Francisco Bay. See page 11.

Call for nomination of Club officers

An election will be held for officers of the Golden Gate Austin Healey Club for 2012 during the Annual Christmas Luncheon Cruise and Business Meeting on December 3. If you would like to run for office, or to nominate someone for office, please contact:

VP / Secretary

Lee Bardellini. (510) 582-6246

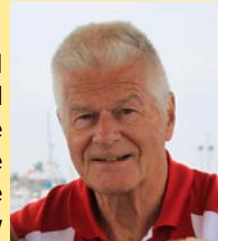
HeLeeEsq@aol.com

Elected officers include President, VP Events, VP Membership, VP Secretary, and VP Treasurer. The newsletter Editor, Web Master, and Delegate at Large are appointed by the elected Board of Directors.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Nick Klein, VP Membership

Another year of Healey memories will soon be tucked away. The year was filled with exciting outings with still a few more to come. For me, personally, it was the trip to Colorado Conclave although some of my fellow travelers would probably rather forget it.



With 2012 fast approaching, the time for renewing your GGAHC membership is not far off. I will mail notices to remind you in November. Dues will remain \$25 and you may pay by check by US Mail, or by PayPal on the web site.

The Board requests that you submit your dues before the end of the year so that we do not have to interrupt sending you the always entertaining and informative Healey Happenings. Please do not combine GGAHC dues with those for the Austin Healey Club of America for logistical reasons.

Hope to see you on the Bay for the Christmas Party or on the road next year. Have a very nice *rest of the year*.

GGAHC Event Announcements



GGAHC Christmas Luncheon Cruise and Annual Meeting

by Marty Allen

Christmas may not be something that you want to think about in mid-September. However, your Healey Club has been thinking about it. Back by popular demand, and for lack of any other creative idea, we will return to the high seas for our annual Christmas Party.

At this point in time, you need to do two things. First, mark your calendar for **Saturday, December 3rd, 2011**. Secondly, you will need to send a check NOW, to guarantee your reservation. Last year we filled the entire cruise ship. Reservations will be on a first check, first reserve basis.

Now, about the event--the high seas will actually be San Francisco Bay. We have chartered one of the Commodore Dinner Boats for a wonderful Christmas Lunch while sailing the bay. If you have never done this before, it is a wonderful experience. If you have joined us before, then please join us again. And of course you will have fun while seeing all your Healey friends, and simultaneously priming your tummy for the weeks to follow.

The ship leaves the dock at 12:00 PM, and boarding begins at 11:45am. The boat, unlike United Airlines, sails on time. The boat will return to the dock at 3:00 pm, leaving lots of time for after-cruise parties or driving home. Directions will be sent later, but the boat will leave from Alameda.

You will be served a multiple-star dinner, somewhere between one and five stars. Dinner will start with a Caesar Salad with Shaved Parmesan and Croutons, main entrées include Hand Carved Prime Rib, Champagne Chicken, Roasted Rosemary Potatoes, Boring Vegetables and Wild Rice Pilaf. Dessert is Chef Selection, so it will be whatever is on sale that week. And, for those of you who like to have an occasional drink, a steady flow of beer, wine and soft drinks are all included in your lunch price.

Your contribution for this wonderful event is \$60 per person for members, and \$75 for nonmembers. Larger contributions are always welcomed, since your Healey Club is underwriting part of the cost. More details will follow, as we get closer to the event.

To reserve your places on the boat, please make your check payable to GGAHC Xmas Cruise and mail it to:

**GGAHC Xmas Cruise
c/o Dan Sekella
1410 Mohr Court
Concord, CA 94518**

Boarding begins at 11:45am at the
Commodore Cruises dock, located at
**2394 Mariner Square Drive
Alameda, CA 94501**

***Please include a note indicating the names of those
who will attend.***



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Healeymarket

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



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