



The Toilet Bowl - Leading into Turn 7

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VSCDA Sprite/Midget Series @ Grattan Michigan

August 15 and 16, 2015

Greg Cory

Many of you may know I've been vintage racing for several years. Some of you may remember the presentation we (Phil Foster, Dennis Adair and myself) gave at Lake Tahoe about how to get into the sport. My introduction was through my brother Mark, who has been running with CVAR for nearly 15 years with his white #160 Bugeye. He dragged me over to the Dark Side six years with a teal Series I Midget (#118). Mark is a frequent front runner in Group 2, and the newbie brother has been gaining ground consistently, now running within 2 seconds of Mark (that is when everything works).

Some may also remember an earlier article about running with VSCDA in the Midwest. For the past four years Stan Mason with VSCDA has organized a three race Sprite/Midget series that has gained in popularity and patronage every year. There were enough participants in 2014 that in the final race of the season (always at Grattan) the group was able to enjoy a separate start in the feature, accomplished by lagging the main part of Group 2 by about a third of a lap. It was great fun to charge the first turn with peers, once and forever settling the argument of who has the best reflexes, if not power band.

This year was a 'blow out' with 25 Spridgets showing up for the main event in Grattan, all being able to pad-dock together (Pic #1). Stan always sets up the Cape Works (Pic #2), in honor of the pub that was the favorite watering hole of the early Healey factory workers, and pays homage to the Queen and her loyal subjects.

Beer and bratwursts are the default sustenance offerings for the weekend, supplemented by home grown other food tidbits from drivers' families, many of whom are fortunate to live within a three hour radius of the track. The absence of nearby lodging and/or off-site food venues means there is an active social life well into the witching hours. No one goes hungry, or thirsty, over the course of the weekend. ▶



**HAPPY
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Day!**



►► This year the registration for Group 2 was oversubscribed. Besides the 25 Spridgets there were nearly 40 other cars, meaning a crowded field of +/-64 cars. The series ran with 55 cars at Blackhawk Farms two years ago and it was no fun. When one does the math that means there is only 185 feet of track per vehicle, and at average speeds each car is covering @ 110 feet per second, meaning always fighting for clear air. Ergo, the Spridgets got their own event on Saturday. Qualifying on Friday was for all of Group 2, with a separate Spridget event, and a combined event, on Saturday afternoon. The Sunday feature was also combined, but the typical attrition among 50 year old + British engineered vehicles saw a smaller field of +/- 35 cars.

Grattan is often referred to as 'everyone's favorite' in the Midwest. It is a 2 mile, 10 turn, hilly experience that makes you work VERY hard. It starts with a 3,200 foot straight, a sweeping banked right hand experience that Spridgets can take at speed in 3rd, plunging into a slight off camber downhill acute angle right hander setting you up for a 2nd gear reverse camber left that makes you sure you will slip off into the pit lane full of cars waiting for the next event. Surviving a late apex full drift in 3 you slingshot out of turn 4 into another downhill full throttle chase, culminating in a blind leap of faith over a rise setting up for turn 5 and 5a, a right/left sequence that forces a second gear shift as one approaches the turn 6 'toilet bowl'. Aptly named, the toilet bowl (Pic #3) is a steeply banked left hander that allows an upshift to 3rd for turn 7, and if one is brave enough, to 4th before hitting the 'bus stop', turn 8, a reverse camber downhill hairpin that requires 2nd. Momentum cars like Spridgets drift to the outside with one or two wheels in the air and power uphill to an absolute blind slight right hander taken at full tilt in 3rd, not quite getting airborne before settling into a depression that sets one up for the straight. It is a very technical track, which rewards those fortunate to have a lot of seat time there, as well as strong shoulders: This one is not for sissies, and a 15 lap event seems to drag on *forever*.



The Spridgets carried their flag very well over the weekend. There was one blindingly fast square body who handily outran the overall Group 2, to include several cross flow Lotus Super 7's. (We all wanted a peak under the hood.) Most, but not all of the Spridget group made it to the main event, but the weekend was not without incident. Dawn Fisher, a usual fixture at these events, drives a Super 7. Last year she unfortunately provided a pyrotechnic display by catching fire in turn 9. This year, with a beautifully restored vehicle, she had a repeat performance, albeit of lesser consequence. While the rescue team was dealing with her, a bugeye caught a wheel in trench in turn 5a, rolled over twice, went end over end twice, and came to rest in the weeds (Pic #4). Apparently this also was a repeat performance from two years ago. We may not see that car again, except for the unscathed roll cage.

The other excitement for the weekend was yours truly. I was gridded 7th out of @ 35 cars for the Sunday feature, and was the 3rd Sprite behind Bugeye Dave Williams and the mystery man in the fast box Sprite. (Mark was out with axle leaks.) So, I thought I had a chance at the podium for a class finish. Intervening cars were the Lotuses, Minis, and an Elva. I gave an extra tug on the straps and took to the field. Half way around on the pace lap I reached over to turn off my auxiliary fan, and mistakenly turned off the fuel pump as well. Ergo, I coasted to a stop before the green flag dropped.



By the time I realized the mistake the field was three turns ahead of me. So, I picked up the pace and was able to eclipse the entire field (sans leaders) in about 10 laps, close to my original positioning. I thought I had the Go Pro footage suitable for video of the week! Then the 'O s...' moment arrived. I got bumped by a Mini on the rear quarter panel at the worst possible spot. Given I was in the middle of the fastest turn on the track (turn 9), fully loading the suspension to the outside, just going over the lip into the depression, the tap was enough to tip me over onto the roll bar. Bad stuff happens when things go bump, in the night or otherwise. (other photos - (Page 3)...take your pick).

We slid a good distance down the track in a shower of sparks, ending up with dirt and asphalt up my nostrils, still on the track, but intact. For some unknown reason no one threw a red flag so the race continued and I sat for 20 minutes suspended upside down worried about cars playing 'whack a mole'.

There was no serious impact so I walked away without even sore muscles. All the safety equipment did what it was supposed to do, but the brand new helmet is toast. The Go Pro bit the dust. My 5 seconds (literally) of fame was well chronicled by a sports photographer and was posted on the VSCDA webpage before we left the track that day. The entire series is posted on my Facebook page for those who have interest. ►

►► Besides my ego, the only serious damage appears to be sheet metal, all of which is replaceable. Our intent is to rebuild over the next year. My brother's shop in Arkansas (Nostalgia Racing and Restoration) will be focusing on the latter activity, with me substituting seat time for knuckle busting.

We will keep you posted... 



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The Saga of Midget # 118

The history of the car is known back to the mid 1980's. At the time it was owned by a 'Chas' (Charles) Gordon and raced with RMVR. The color was white. Charles was an engine builder and had a company called Scotland Yard. By 1990 it had changed hands to Jack Knopinski and co-owned by Jim Hegy out of Aurora Colorado. By then it had been converted from the original 1098 CC engine to a 1275 CC with actual displacement of 1310 CC. It still sported a stock 'ribcage' transmission.

It was subsequently purchased by Joe Pizzi in the Denver area in 1998 who repainted it a GM aquamarine which it still sports. Computer Car took over the engine work and Joe had rebuilds/refreshers done in 1999, 2000, 2002, and 2003. Joe, which I learned at Blackhawk Farms one year, got tired of changing axle seals and sold the car to a young man (Will Corry) in Durango. By that time the car was running a 14:1 compression ratio and a new close ratio gear box. Will auto crossed it for a year, but succumbed to the siren song of marriage and sold the car to Tom Seemeyer out of the Phoenix area.

Tom raced the Midget, and his father raced a beautifully prepared MGA, throughout the country for several years, running not only the RMVR tracks but also Hallett, Blackhawk Farms, Road Atlanta, etc., and the car was pretty well known throughout the Midwest. They were bitten by the bug very badly, and had an RV (so the family could come) and the custom built 37 foot enclosed trailer. They must have been quite a sight trying to navigate the pits at most tracks. The recession hit both hard, and I acquired the car from Tom in 2009 as a rookie. It was 'as sold' by Joe, with a usable but tired engine and a few spares. Tom had a fresh custom Prather engine available but it was out of my price range at the time.

I ran the car during my novice year, but in the first year without an "X" I sucked a valve at Blackhawk Farms, laying down enough smoke to eradicate every mosquito within three zip codes. Curtis Farley has been doing the engines ever since, and they have been reliable and quick.

As noted in the CVAR article my brother Mark enticed me into the sport after several years of trying. Since he drives a similarly prepared Bugeye we have tried to minimize brain damage and be efficient in the amount of gear we need to carry. Mark now has the Prather motor that Tom had built, and we have a fresh spare Farley engine for when (not if) something breaks. We have a spare close ratio gearbox that we can share. Both cars have quick bleed systems for the clutch, A/N hoses, etc. I sport a 4:55 limited slip rear axle and Mark swaps back and forth between a 3.9 and a 4.2 depending on the track. We both run double bearing rear hubs and hardened axles. We have yet to fix the perennially leaking rear axle seals, but are beta testing a new hub design that we hope will be a long term solution.

We have done a preliminary assessment of the damage from the rollover and are pleasantly surprised. The frame appears unmolested (but will be checked), the mechanicals are sound, and the damage is merely sheet metal, for which we have spares. Nostalgia Racing and Restoration (Mark) will start the work this winter, and I will exchange my race time for aiding in the process. I may skip 2016, but the intent is to be back in the saddle for the following season.

We will take this time to potentially do some modifications. The chassis will be soda blasted and repainted, various parts powder coated, and generally freshened up. We may go to a full sized battery rather than rely on the small gel cells, which are expensive and all too often run out of juice mid-session. Recent discussions about rule changes may allow switching to rear disc brakes as many Sprigeteers are complaining about rear brake shoes delaminating.

All switches will be placed to enable being turned off while strapped in (I could barely reach the master while inverted). We may redesign the roll bar: It looks great, and met the technical specs, but while sliding upside down and watching sparks go by it occurred to me there was nothing between my head and the front of the car. Fortunately I was headed backwards most of the time, but had I been sliding forward there was little to keep Michigan farm soil from being stuffed up my nostrils. And lest we forget, no matter how hard one is nestled in with straps, they stretch, and the body is 97% water. Gravity takes hold.

Stay tuned....

We will keep you posted on the progress... 

Drive to Adobe Road, Saturday, May 7th

Come join us for a great drive on the scenic coastal roads of Marin and Sonoma Counties during one of the most beautiful times of the year. Here are a few highlights:

Earthquake Trail. Our first pit stop will be the Point Reyes National Seashore HQ in Bear Valley. Enjoy a 20 minute stroll, where you can stand directly upon the San Andreas Fault, where the 1906 earthquake split a fence and separated the segments by 16 feet!!

Adobe Road Winery. Our next stop is my absolute favorite winery, and we will have an exclusive tasting of their exquisite yet reasonably affordable wines. These are definitely special event wines. Check them out at adoberoadwines.com.

The headquarters for TRG-AMR (The Racer's Group, Aston Martin Racing). Get up close with the GT sports cars that will be racing at Laguna Seca. Kevin Buckler, owner of Adobe Road, is also an accomplished sports car race driver (personal wins at 24 hours of Le Mans and the Rolex 24 at Daytona), the director of TRG--a potent sports racing team, and the director of Aston Martin Racing for North America. Check it out at trg-astonmartinracing.com.

Rancho Nicasio. We'll return to the old roadhouse for a casual outdoor lunch before heading back home.

Please let us know you're coming and reserve your spot. We will need an accurate headcount for the tasting and, to protect the club's coffers for next year, we'll need to cover our costs. Please send a check for \$20 per person to cover the cost of the wine tasting to Tim Murphy, 900 Reichert Ave, #430, Novato CA 94945. (Lunch is still on your own dime). Please include your email address so you can be notified about the starting point and the route.

This is going to be a great drive through beautiful country, with some keen special interests along the way. Join us for a beautiful day on the west coast. Save the date and sign up now.

Pictured Below.

Earthquake Fence
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Donald Healey's - 100 Coupe - ONX 113

The 1953 Austin-Healey 100 Coupe, registered ONX 113, was the much loved everyday car of Austin Healey founder, Donald Healey, who used it extensively over a 10-year period. Healey had asked chief designer, Gerry Coker, to produce two variants of a coupe on the four-cylinder Austin-Healey 100 platform, in order to explore the possibility of producing a coupe for series-production. At the time the car maker only produced convertibles. A red car, 'ONX 113', and a blue car 'OAC 1' were produced.

The red car is, by common consent, regarded as the prettier of the two and it was the one that Donald Healey subsequently commandeered for himself. The car was used for continuous development and, when the 100S competition program came on stream, Donald had the 100S mechanicals, including engine, gearbox and disc brakes, installed. The car effectively became a 100S Coupe, making it totally unique.

The blue car still survives and became the test bed in period for the later six-cylinder engine for the subsequent 100/6 model.

In 1972 the car was purchased by collector Arthur Carter who assembled the greatest collection of Austin-Healeys, including Works and customer 100S models, Works Sebring and Rally 3000s, competition Sprites, one of the three 4000 MKIV Healeys and road going models.

James Knight, Bonhams Group Motoring Director, commented, "As an Austin-Healey owner myself, I am a committed and avid fan of the marque. I have handled some of the most important Healeys in my 30 plus year career but have always wanted the privilege of representing Mr. Carter's legendary 100 Coupe. That time has now arrived and I will enjoy every minute of bringing ONX to market.

"What I find most exciting is that, although serious Healey collectors were aware of the car, many collectors in the more general market did not know that Healey produced a 100 Coupe – and one as special as this example. It was no secret that Mr. Carter owned the car, but it appeared rarely, and at Club meets at that. It is a dark horse – under the radar of many – that is ready to grace the world's most prestigious concours and other historic motoring events. There is no doubt the car will attract the attention of world's great collectors".

Sold for £639,900 - (US \$915,516)

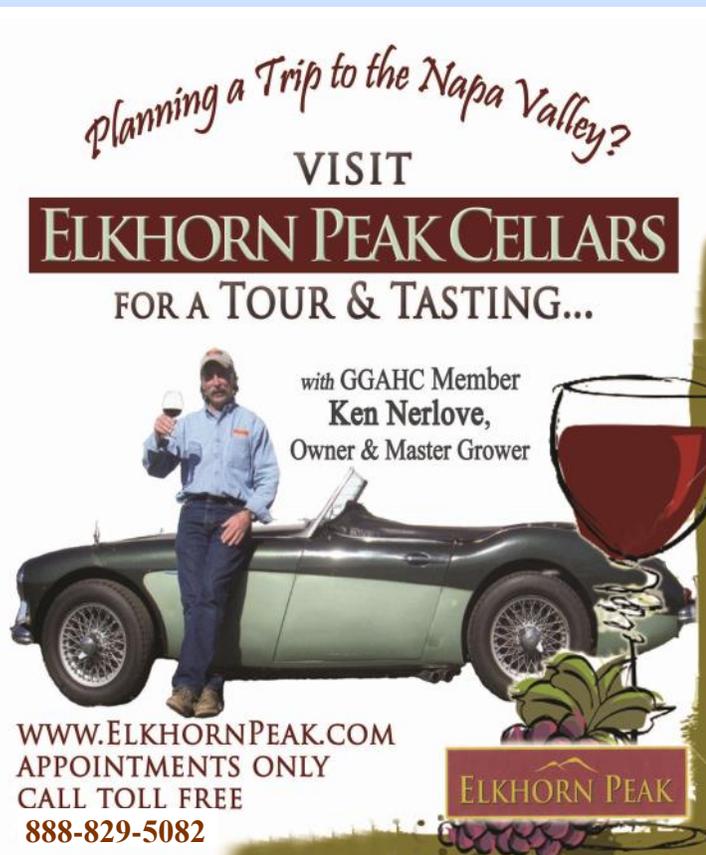
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Kahn's Konsiderations

Rich Kahn
GGAHC President

March 2016 Healey Happenings

How lucky are we?

At times when politics are in the toilet and terrorism is a constant threat those of us lucky enough to have Healeys have an escape from reality.

We can go into the garage and just look at the beauty of these cars.

We can turn wrenches and polish the car.

Even cleaning wire wheels can take your mind to a happier place.

For me, and I do need distraction these day, it is Healey related things.

As we move forward with the 2017 event there is an overwhelming number of things that need attention.

I have a great board working with me on this, but they can only do so much.

We will need your help.

Please step up and volunteer when the time comes and specific requests are made.

To help get your Healey in running order for the upcoming season, Dave Nock is holding a Tech Session on March 19th.

Now you have no excuse for missing our Season Opener on April 2.

Once again, Dave has put together a fun day.

You won't want to miss it!

In the meantime, polish your baby and be happy you own one.

When you own a Healey you are part of a family.

Calendar of Events

Contact Dennis Gilroy to list an event: Gilroy.crew@gmail.com. For a more complete list see www.GoldenGateHealeys.com. *You are advised to verify the dates of events that are not ours.*

March 6th: Blackhawk Museum - Cars & Coffee

March 18th: Monthly Pub Night - Morgan Hill

March 19th: **GGAHC** Dave Nock - Tech Session

April 1st - 3rd: David Love Memorial Vintage Car Road Races
Sonoma Raceway

April 2nd: **GGAHC** Season Opener [Tentative date]

April 24th - 28th: California Mile

May 7th: **GGAHC** West Marin Wildflowers

May 15th: UBSCC Annual All British Motorcar Show & Swap Meet

May 15th: San Jose Country Club Concours d' Elegance

May 28th - June 5th: British Car Week

June 1st - 5th: Yosemite Healey Week

June 12th: Inaugural Alameda Point Concours d'Elegance

Please see Golden Gate Austin Healey Club website for event details:
<http://www.goldengatehealeys.com/site/index.php/events/>

From the Editor



Mike Sonneman
GGAHC Newsletter Editor

Keep those Biographies coming your fellow members want to learn more about you...

Don't be shy...

I'm still waiting for some strange and funny stories that people have experienced while driving their Healey's...

I would also like some stories on how couples met each other and how long they have been together...

Please feel free to forward me any stories you may have to share...

Please include a photo if possible, it would be a great complement to your story...

Thanks

WE'VE GOT A TICKET TO RIDE



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The United British Sports Car Club
<http://www.ubscc.org>

May 15, 2016
Dixon Fairgrounds

Yosemite Photo Op

We have all had some unique experiences with admirers of our Healey's, One particular incident stands out...

We were on a tour of Yosemite National Park many years ago when David parked in a no parking zone.

Of course he had good reason, a real photo opportunity. The front of the car facing the camera with Half Dome in the background.

While he was engrossed in taking the photos, two tour buses had come and started to offload their passengers. One man came up behind David and asked if he could take a photo with the car.

David said yes, of course.

When the man was done, another stepped up to do the same. When David turned around, he saw the entire bus load of passengers lined up.

He had not realized that he had apparently given permission to all of them once he said yes.

When we saw another bus pull in, we jumped in the car and re-joined our group. Apparently there are many photos of our car in Japan!

David and Jerri Nock



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◆ Greg Stroop — Moss customer for 42 years

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Golden Gate Healey Tech Session

"Preventing those roadside failures"

March 19, 2016 Starting at 10am

British Car Specialists 2060 N Wilson Way, Stockton

This year we are going to look into preventing those embarrassing road side failures, which may cause those notorious road side Tech Session we all have been a part of at one time or another. Over the years there have been various things that I have helped out with on the side of the road during a club tour or meet. Some of these could have been prevented with knowing what to look for prior to the trip.

We will be looking at brakes, suspension, cooling, electrical, carburetors and other common problems. What to do to prevent them, what spares to carry, and what to do if you find yourself in that situation on the side of the road.

So don't let this be you...



So if you would like to donate your Healey to be the subject of this Tech Session on preventing Roadside Failures. Contact me ASAP.

RSVP David Nock @ British Car Specialists
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As there will be no Rendezvous in 2016, GGAHC has committed to support the AHCASC (So. Calif. Club) 2016 event.

They have just contracted with The Redwoods in Yosemite - <http://www.redwoodsinyosemite.com> to host their annual gathering next year in June, 2016. The Redwoods in Yosemite has 120 independent cabins for rent in a community near to the historic Wawona Hotel.

"Yosemite Healey Week" is scheduled for June 1-5, 2016.

Since Yosemite books up quickly, often a year ahead of time, planning had to be done earlier than normal. Although not all the details have been worked out yet, it was imperative to get the venue locked up.

It is equally important that you also make your plans early and book your accommodations NOW, as space will not be guaranteed after July 31, 2015.

As indicated on the attached form, special fees have been negotiated for that week, which includes waiving the standard \$75 cleaning fee.

The event registration form will be available in the fall, once the event details are worked out.

Experiencing Yosemite in a Healey is spectacular! We hope to have a good representation from GGAHC - as we did in Morro Bay last year.



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Contact Mike Sonneman for advertising rates.

Healey Happenings is published on the web site with a three-month lag.

The Golden Gate Austin Healey Club

is affiliated nationally with the



Healey Happenings is the official publication of the Golden Gate Austin Healey Club, and is published for the benefit of its members. Material which appears in Healey Happenings represents the opinions of the authors and does not express the positions of the Golden Gate Austin Healey Club unless specifically noted. We do our best to assure accuracy, but cannot be held responsible for omissions or errors.

Healeymarket

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



For Sale: 1956 Austin Healey 100-4 BN2
57,800 miles. Asking Price \$39,500.

Vance Williams: (925) 280-9880



For Sale: 1959 Austin Healey 100-6
W/Hardtop, 80,000 miles, 29,900 or Best Offer.

Rick Johnson: (415) 722-1053



For Sale: 1967 Austin Healey 3000 MKIII BJB
89,000 miles. Excellent condition. Runs great.
Asking Price \$51,500

Ken Painter: (831) 295-2142

For Sale: New black vinyl grain "ragtop" for a '64-'66 A.H.
Sprite. Only \$200. Pickup or can ship from 95066. Also a new
distributor cap for a mini-cooper Mk.3 for \$15.

Terry Parsons: (831) 438-8345

For Sale: Austin Healey 3000 BJB & BJB Convertible
Top Boot. Victoria #11-479 BL - Never Returned Still In Original
Box - \$125 w/Free Shipping.

Jorge Quintero: (925) 768-5507