



Flatwater News

A publication by and for the members of the Flatwater Austin-Healey Club of Nebraska
Find us on the web at: www.flatwater.org

November 2004 Calendar:

Nov. XX: Gearjammers:
Replaced by Jackson's
Pub

Nov. 11: Pub Night
Jackson's Pub Hwy
31 Gretna (see story this
page)

Nov. XX : Cozmos
Cancelled until Spring

Nov. 13: Breakfast at
Mahoney State Park,
9:00 or 9:30

Dec. 3: Fish at
Newhawka

Remember: Due to
conflicts with the holiday
season the scheduled club
fish at the Windmill in
Newhawka for November
and December is
consolidated into one
event on the 3rd of
December.

Loess Hills Run A Beaut! by Greg Lemon

Beautiful fall weather, great turnout and a well planned route made the Loess Hills Run a wonderful end to the driving season events for the club this year. Twenty-five cars and even more club members (counting passengers, spouses and such) participated on a day that started out a little chilly but turned *(continued page 7)*



Loess Hills Runners on a Rest Stop at Ft. Atkinson State Park (all pictures courtesy of Jerry Needham)

NEW PUB NIGHT BEGINS IN NOVEMBER

by Barbara Rixstine

It's not a new event, it's just an old event in a new place on a new date.

The gathering that used to go to Gearjammers will now convene at Jackson's Pub in Gretna, the second Thursday of each month, at 6:30 p.m. Next Pub Night event: November 11.

Jackson's is a very informal pub which offers sandwiches and pizza and, of course, beverages both alcoholic and otherwise. There's a pool table for the restless and a popcorn machine for those who find it a necessary complement to their beer. Clean, roomy bathrooms. (At least the women's bathroom is.) No dining hall, it's find-your-own-seating, just like at Nehawka, by pushing tables and chairs together as needed. It's in a new building, put up in conjunction with the Runza Hut, right off Highway 6/31 in Gretna.

With the Cozmo's event on temporary leave until spring, many thought it important to revive a mid-month event throughout the winter so we can talk about what we're doing with our cars next year. Come spring, when Cozmo's night returns, we can talk about moving Pub Night, if necessary. Hope to see you there Thursday, November 11.

Cars & Parts 4 Sale/2 Buy

*****For Sale:** Fiberglass panels for Austin Healey 3000 Series. NEW, Contact Steve Stevens at 402-291-3917

*****For Sale:** Various British parts Triumph and more, see Flatwater Website Message Board for details, Greg Lemon 402-421-1623

►For Sale: 5 project MGAs for sale, could make one car. Too many projects, won't get to these. Will work with buyer to transport. Jim Danielson, 402-464-3733.

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**** means last month for the ad ► means ad is new. .*

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Secure the hood in the upright position before attempting repairs--Contributed by Joe Kueper

Letters From the Editor

by Greg Lemon

A trunk lid. Many people that have seen my car have politely noted that the fit of the trunk lid is not the best. Naturally to the owner's critical eye it looks much worse than it does to the casual observer.

I have contemplated painting the car for some time, but various "gumption traps" (read "Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance" by Robert Pirsig for more on gumption traps, fixing mechanical objects, and life in general) kept me from getting started. Did I have enough space? Did I have enough money? Did I have enough time? Do I have enough skill to tackle the job? Once it came apart and the paint came off would it ever get back together or would it languish in the garage, in boxes, unfinished for years? (For sale: 54 Healey 100, ran when parked, believed to be complete) Once painted would I be scared to use it and obsess over every new stone chip?

Having answered one question with a positive last year (stall and a half addition to the garage) it seemed like the scales were tipping towards painting the car. But I was still concerned about my ability to tackle the task with a regular job, a wife, and kids vying for my attention.

I thought about selling the car, finding something else that needed less work, basically taking on a less ambitious project. The Healey has bad panel gaps and nary a smooth panel on the whole body, a decent paint job will involve much more than just sand, prime and paint.

Which takes me back to that trunk lid. For want of a more impressive term, it bugs me. It shouts at me to be fixed. The old Healey whispers "don't leave me this way, I deserve better".

One day as I studied that lid once more in the garage I made up my mind. I don't know if I can handle a whole car, but surely I can handle a trunk lid. We will see what happens from there.

Bed, Breakfast and Bentley

by John Ulrich

At the conclusion of the KC All British show this year, Bev and I were invited to head down into the city, and spend the night with friends Stephen Morris and his wife Biebie. Their beautiful home is located South and West of the Plaza, in an area known for it's architectural excellence and history.



Stephen and Biebe Morris's 3.5 Liter Bentley

Some of the Flatwater members have met Stephen at Heartland or All-British. You may recall his MGB built on a Heritage Body Shell to steel dash specifications. MG could only dream of sending a car that fine out their factory. Stephen also won the AC class this year at All-Brit with his AC Aceca. This car is essentially an A C Ace Coupe, with the 2.2 liter Bristol straight six giving it "leisurely performance" at best.

If you stopped by Absolute Body and Paint last Spring or early Summer, you probably noticed Stephen's latest Project. The exotic shape in the corner was no less than an AC Greyhound. This was AC's "large" 2+2 coupe, with an occasional seat that could actually be used, well.....on occasion. Despite the Greyhound's all alloy body, it was still more car than the Bristol, (or sometimes Ford) engine could move with any kind of authority. Stephen's sensible solution is an aluminum Buick V8,T-5 transmission, narrowed Thunderbird rear end, some serious Wilwood brakes, and air conditioning. Stay tuned!

Upon seeing the Bentley, you are immediately taken by it's sheer presence. Not size, (although it's not small) but presence. This is a 1935 3.5 liter "coachbuilt" car, so the chassis was sent to Park Ward for an aluminum over ash four door body with front "suicide doors" and a sunroof. The rear doors are hinged conventionally from the "B" pillar. It was finished in British racing green, with black wings and top. Of the 2500 some Bentleys built in 1935, about 1100 ended up with this body configuration.

A "walk around" gives you an appreciation for the engineering triumphs and technology of the day. The straight six pushrod engine features an aluminum block and sump (engine turned) and a cast iron head. The only thing the fan belt turns is the fan, as the generator and water pump are all gear driven, and oiled with the rest of the engine. Through a system of levers, rods and perhaps a chipmunk or two, the car has mechanical power brakes. (Don't ask) The shock absorbers are adjustable by a small lever on the steering wheel, and an automatic oiling system allows you to lube all the chassis points, (and your garage floor) from the comfort of the drivers seat. Of course the car is right hand steer, but it is also right hand shift. The four-speed transmission has synchros on third and fourth only, so double-clutching is the order of the day. It is also very practical to go from first to third, and let the torque of the engine just pull you along.



Front view of the Park Ward 3.5 Bentley

This engine was shared by Rolls and Bentley, and is the immediate (*Bentley, Continued Page 5*)

Cleaning up in Sports Car Country or How I Spent My Summer Vacation by Jerry Needham

It was supposed to be the long hoped for trip to visit several old Air Force friends living in Florida who I'd promised for several years to come see someday. However, within days of my retirement following nearly 39 years of government related work, Charlie, the first of several hurricane-strength storms to hit the state, swooped across the Caribbean and up the Gulf coast, making landfall about a hundred miles south of Tampa-St. Petersburg. Swinging right through the center of Charlotte Harbor, Charlie dealt a critical blow to the Punta Gorda-Port Charlotte area. It then left a wake of destruction and chaos across the state as it headed northeast, finally exiting into the Atlantic again just north of Daytona Beach. Several of my friends were seriously affected by the storm, causing me to alter the purpose of my trip to one more of assistance than merely a fun-in-the-sun reminiscence visit.

Departing Omaha in late August, I had no idea of what was to come. Enroute, I learned that a second full-blown hurricane named Frances was drawing a bead on the Sunshine State, delaying my entry a couple of days until I could determine its path. I drove east of the eye's predicted path and on Labor Day drove our British wannabe Miata south on I-95 through Jacksonville in 65 MPH winds and unbelievable torrents of rain from contributing squalls on the hurricane's periphery. The car handled well, most notably with nary a leak, and followed a very straight path down the interstate. It drove in great contrast to the flotilla of SUVs around me swooping all over the highway, like giant kites in the gusts, continuously assaulting the nearly imperceptible dashed lines normally defining the driving lanes. Besides the steel-toed boots, eye and ear protection I hastily packed back home, I also included a pair of weather channel capable walkie-talkies. On this day alone they proved their worth, providing constant updates of precious weather information on current conditions of wherever I drove during the storm.

Just after 11 PM, I finally arrived at my first destination, Deland, a town of about 21,000 about an hour due north of Orlando. The town was eerily dark, with the Miata's headlights providing the only illuminating disturbance to the blackness. Many large oak and eucalyptus trees were down everywhere. Their limbs and trunks having taken out numerous power lines and poles and causing me to drive erratically through the streets to avoid them. I found a pickup truck to follow and used his wheels to gauge the depth of the water before me on the many flooded streets. To my friend's delighted surprise, I finally somehow found his candle-lit house in the darkness and after a few minutes of small talk, I retired to a very welcoming bed.

We spent the next powerless and showerless week in trees, on roofs and in yards, chain-sawing branches and main trunks, hauling debris and simply trying to put some order to the havoc caused now by two hurricanes that devastated the area. We cut up massive fallen oak trees we found laying against houses and through roofs. I nearly cried as we hauled huge oak logs to eight-foot walls of debris we built at curbs, considering how precious a commodity they would be for fireplaces back home.

I then traveled and performed similar work in Ormond Beach, just north of Daytona, then to Titusville, near Cape Kennedy, which itself suffered serious damage to some of the Shuttle facilities. Following a drive across state, I remained for a couple of weeks in the Port Charlotte-Punta Gorda area, where I found the worst damage of all. For any of you familiar with the area, Rt 41, the Tamiami Trail is a store, restaurant, hotel and mall-lined thoroughfare through the center of both towns. I didn't see a single building without some damage and many of them were totally destroyed. The good news is that although I also saw many damaged vehicles, the several LBCs I saw all seemed to have been spared. I did take a day off in this area, playing in a softball league game and pulling a hamstring muscle stretching for a fly ball just beyond my reach. All those days working and no injuries; one day off and wham! (*Continued page 5*)

Florida (continued)

Following the injury, I took a full week off, driving 300 miles south to Key West (just clearing the Miami area as Hurricane Jeanne was approaching) to visit youngest son Christopher, who lives there working as a jet ski tour guide. Wow, what an ideal location for a convertible sports car! And according to some of the locals, it was one of the first times in memory that people fled from Miami to Key West seeking refuge from a major storm.

Back up to Port Charlotte for a few more days before heading to Ft Walton Beach on the panhandle, where Hurricane Ivan hit just two weeks earlier. We drove down the main road on the Barrier Islands, although a dune buggy would have been far more appropriate on the sand-covered highway. Most surprising was that the huge dunes between the road and the hotels were brand new, having been created from sand removed from the many hotels lining the beach and now nearly devoid of sand.

I finally headed north out of Florida, through fully blooming cotton fields of Alabama, a

kaleidoscope of fall colors landscaping the hills of Tennessee, and rain throughout Kentucky, Illinois and Missouri, arriving home to a very thankful wife. It was truly a trip of a lifetime and one with many images that will remain vivid in my mind forever. I helped a couple of families in a very small way, but the devastation from four major storms was unbelievably enormous and much work still remains. After an entire week of no showers due to a lack of power to run well pumps, I now savor showers more than ever. And although I somewhat acclimated myself to the hot and humid conditions, air conditioning never felt so good as when I became reacquainted with it once power was restored. The entire experience certainly makes me appreciate many things from daily life that I previously took for granted.

Florida is a great place to visit and I definitely will go back, but probably never to live. I think I prefer the Midwest, in spite of its hot summers, cold and snowy winters and even an occasional twister. But there's much to be said for the friendly people and open, often winding, LBC-welcoming roads we can find here in our part of Nebraska and Iowa. As the song says, there certainly is no place like home.

Bentley (continued from page 3)

predecessor of Bentley's own famous 4.5s, seen in "blower and normally aspirated form. No matter, the 3.5 pushes the car forward with that great unseen hand everyone talks about. It isn't fast, but there is a feeling of endless torque all the way up to the top speed. Stephen says when everything is balanced and bushed in the front end, the car will cruise at 70 all day long. The ride quality around town is comfortable, and the brakes are up to the task. There is just enough gear whine to make you remember this car is 70 years old.

For the four of us that beautiful morning, the driving experience was truly greater than the sum of the parts. The car exudes class and civilization, but doesn't shout "Look at me". We also shared an appreciation of the attention to detail, craftsmanship, and mechanical innovations in a car of that era. There was also that wonderful Park Ward body that still is exciting to the eye. But most of all it was a way to cement friendships in a beautiful car that was fulfilling its very purpose, to be driven.

How Many Were There? This Month

AUSTIN HEALEY (including Jensen Healey)

<u>Model</u>	<u>Years</u>	<u>Total Built</u>
100/4 BN1	53-55	10,030
100/4 BN2	55-56	4,604
100/6 BN4	57-59	10,246
100/6 BN6	58-59	4,150
3000 MK I (BT7)	59-61	10,825
3000 MK I (BN7)	59-61	2,825
3000 MK II (BT7)	61-63	5,095
3000 MK II (BN7)	61-63	355
3000 MK II (BJ7)	62-63	6,113
3000 MK III (BJ8)	63-67	17,712
Sprite MK I(bugeye)	58-61	48,987
Sprite MK II	61-64	31,665
Sprite MK III	64-66	25,905
Sprite MK IV	66-71	21,768
Austin Sprite IV	1971	1,022
Jensen Healey	72-75	10,501
Jensen GT	75-76	511

MGB Body Faults & The Dreaded Door Skin Tear

by Joe Kueper

I bought my 1980 MGB new and made a pledge to maintain it in impeccable condition so it would look great forever!!!!!! Despite my meticulous attention things happened. After many years, rust appeared on the dog legs behind the lower corner of the doors. The culprit here is a design defect which allows dirt and moisture to collect and cause rust because there are no drain holes. Dirt and moisture also collect at the bottoms of the front fender clogging drain holes. This can be avoided but, who removes the under fender access panels each year for inspection and cleaning. All in all these few body faults are not too bad for a thirty four year old car.

However there is one more frequent and irritating offender, "the Dreaded Door Skin Tear". This tear in the door skin starts just behind the wing window and makes its way down the door in front of the side mirror. This happened on my '80 "B" when a young garage apprentice hooked the mirror with a shop light cord as he was walking by. The skin on my '79 came to me pre-torn and my friend Doug got his '77 "B" torn when a passenger tried to adjust the right side mirror. The offender seems to be an inherent weak spot in this area of the skin that gives way when pressure is leveraged on the mirror and its mount.

All the articles I read on the subject recommend a door skin replacement. Being financially impaired, I took another route. I have a MIG welder and so I simply welded the crack and refinished the area. However not two years later the skin tore again, next to the weld, when I was adjusting the mirror. This time I fabricated a reinforcement piece for a stronger repair.

I made a simple triangular bracket that is 2&1/2 inches on the top and 1&1/4 inches longer than the tear (about 3 inches in my case). Next I folded the top 1/2 inch over and hammered it flat to double the strength. Finally I bent the piece slightly to conform with the inside bend in the door. To mount the bracket I drilled three each 3/8 inch holes in the door skin. Two were drilled 1/2 inch on either side of the crack on the top of the door and one at the very bottom of the crack. The bracket is then clamped in place and welded first through the holes to simulate spot welds and then down the crack to seal up the skin. Finally grind the weld smooth and finish with your favorite filler and touch up paint the area in the normal fashion. Also paint the inside to prevent future rust.



The whole process can take less than a day including breaks for refreshments and socializing. It only took me two and a half hours to disconnect and move the wing window out of the way, make the bracket, welded it in place and then fill, prime and paint the area. We are so happy with the results, we are going to fit the brackets to both doors of Doug's project MG as a preventative measure. If you want to tackle your own repair and have questions or need help just contact me. JOE'S GARAGE is a haven for DIY do it yourself shade tree mechanics. (402) 592-3132 E-mail joesbcgarage@msn.com

Original Auto Art contributed by Jim Dresser

If you like what you see below you can commission you own car done (in watercolor) from William Bisbee, 111 Kern St. 50703 Waterloo, IA 319-233-8078, reasonable Prices.



WEBSITE TO WATCH by Greg Lemon

There are a lot of marque and make specific websites out there. Some are more content rich than others. Barb Rixstine recently pointed out a newly discovered site for Sprites, the Spritespot. <http://www.spritespot.com/>

The site is devoted to Spridgets, shorthand for Sprites and Midgets, and covers everything from Bugeyes to rubber bumper Midgets.

One thing that distinguishes this site from many others is that it has an active forum with lots of interaction on issues maintenance restoration to engine swaps. Definitely worth a look.

Loess Hills (continued from page 1)

but turned out to be an excellent day for driving as the brilliant fall sun warmed the landscape. The pictures below tell the story.



Slow(!) Curves Ahead



Lined up and ready to start at OJs



"Maybe if we all stand around and look at it a little longer it will fix itself"



Orange MGBs at home in the fall colors

Flatwater Austin-Healey Club of Nebraska

A chapter of the Austin-Healey Club of America

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The *Flatwater News* is published monthly. Members are welcome and encouraged to contribute news and/or technical stories, but the editor reserves the right to edit all copy for content and length. Please send as electronic files on Microsoft Word, if possible.

Previous issues are available on the club website at www.flatwater.org

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Halloween Party Picture (from Newhawk Fish/Halloween party October 29th)



Jerry Needman (pres.) a man who rides tall in the saddle, contributed by Greg Thomas