



February 2004

Flatwater News

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

Calendar:

Feb. 5: Gearjammers
(note: this is a new night in a new week)

Feb. 14: Breakfast at Mahoney State Park and Valentine Dinner/Dance

Feb. 15: ENWICC Chili Feed at P.O. Pear's on the Lake, near Malcolm. More info: call Jim Danielson at 402-464-3733.

Feb. 27: Fish at Nehawka

Events have elastic start and end times. Breakfast at Mahoney starts about 9. Gearjammers and Fish begin at about 6:30.

Gearjammers Moves to First Week of Month

Gearjammers closes on Wednesdays through the winter, we found, and an informal poll of Gearjammers "regulars" resulted in keeping the meeting there but moving it to the first Thursday night of the month.

The next Gearjammers night is Thursday, Feb. 5. See you there!

No Cozmo's in February

Still a little cool, say the Stones, so see you in March!

New Officers, Bylaws Voted In Jan. 17

By Barbara Rixstine

FAHC members at the holiday party on Jan. 17 were able to help usher in some changes for their club.

A new president – former club president and long-time member Jerry Needham – was voted in and former president Marvin Marshall was elected to the vice-president/events coordinator position.

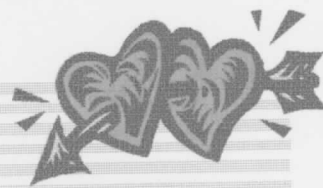
No new officers replace treasurer and membership secretary John Ulrich, secretary Terry Buchholz or national delegate Jim Danielson. Joe Guinan and Dennis Stone were elected as Members-At-Large. (All officer information – title, phone number and

e-mail address, can be found on the back cover of this and every issue.) In addition, new bylaws (included in this issue) were passed. More information on those is elsewhere in this issue in a story by Terry Buchholz.

John Ulrich and Bev Bohlke's house was crowded with lots of members – many at their first-time club event. (Thanks for coming! We hope to see you at other events in the future!)

As always, there was plenty of good food and the chance to catch up with "car friends" on their latest achievements.

LBCs & Hearts Can Mix... If You Know How



You know how it is. The Little Woman waits patiently all year for you to finish the restoration, the carburetor overhaul, the woodworking or whatever you're doing on your car(s) and then one day rolls around when you can make it all up to her – Valentine's Day. This year you can mix cars and hearts. Choose one, choose both.

Breakfast At Mahoney:

First of all, Valentine's Day is Saturday, Feb. 14. Treat your sweet to the breakfast buffet at Mahoney State Park. It's only \$5.95, there's a great view and with any luck you can talk cars with Don Petrick. (He lives close by.)

Dinner/Dance in Omaha:

Follow that up with a dinner/dance in Omaha at Nancy Needham's school in Omaha. Dinner is from 6 to 7:30, with dancing (with music by Complete DJ) from 8 to 11:45 p.m. Door prizes and a raffle are part of the package. \$15/ea, which includes a New York steak dinner and two drink tickets. It's at St. Mary's School, 5301 S. 36th St (36th and "Q" St in Omaha). Take I-80 to Exit 52/Rt 75 South (Kennedy Fwy/Bellevue) to "Q" St; go Rt-West to 36th St.

The Needhams and Marshalls attended this last year and think it would make a great club event. For more info, call Nancy Needham at 402-291-7122 or call the school at 402-738-9533.

Want a great Valentine's Day present?

Hint: Nic Bonnstetter's got several club shirts left. Give her a call at 402-423-9138 or an e-mail at nkb@unlserve.unl.edu and find out what sizes are still available. A great gift that shows your club spirit and isn't hard on the pocketbook!



A Few Words With . . . The President

By Jerry Needham

Marvin Marshall says...

Gee, I never thought it would be so easy writing a column introducing my replacement. My long-time friend and lifelong member of Flatwater, Mr. Jerry Needham, was elected your new president at the After-Christmas Party. It is my pleasure to introduce him.

Jerry is a past President and VP of our club. I know of no one who is more qualified than he to steer the boat. (O.K., O.K., Jerry was a USAF Captain, and that boat thing was a bad pun. But if I can't go out with a groan, what's the fun?)

On a serious note, I have thoroughly enjoyed my six years in your service. Thank you. It was exciting to watch this club grow from a small band of regulars into the regional powerhouse it is. I'm confident Jerry will carry on this tradition and improve upon it. With the help of the other officers, and YOU; the members, we will continue our success. Again, good-bye and thank-you one and all! Now go drive those cars. Marvin

Jerry Needham says...

A funny thing happened on my way to the post-Christmas party -- I became your new club president. Here I thought all along that Been There, Done That, Got the T-Shirt, really filled the square. But during the party at John & Bev Ulrichs' house (thanks again, folks) someone (Marty Klein, where did you disappear to?) suddenly tossed my name into the ring.

Before you could say, "Wham, bam, gentlemen & ladies, start your engines," the election was history and I became president once again.

On behalf of all the new officers, we are deeply honored that you selected us to our very important positions.

Flatwater is a tremendous organization thanks to your efforts and we promise to keep you involved, informed, working as a team and playing active roles more than ever.

You've elected a terrific group of officers to help me with club organization and thanks to the outstanding job of the previous officers, it will require very little effort to keep the club going in the right direction.

We'll minimize formality, but will hold monthly business meetings with accountability to the members through minutes and concise reports.

Barbara Rixstine agreed to continue her great work in getting info out to all through the club newsletter, either via email or snail mail to those who wisely refuse to be tied to a PC.

We have a first-ever set of club bylaws to guide us and include these with this newsletter for your information.

Things can always be improved, but much work went into these, the club officers approved them and they will guide our efforts for the time being.

My sincere appreciation to all the other officers who really helped Flatwater to grow and continue as a fun organization that folks want to belong to and enjoy.

Speaking on behalf of all of the new officers, we look forward to serving you and carrying on the rich tradition just passed to us.

Now let's shake those winter doldrums and start thinking about getting those cars out on the road and making this one of our best and most successful years ever.

Jerry

Legislative Update

By Barbara Rixstine



Two bills of interest to car owners and operators have been introduced in the Nebraska Legislature.

LB 1024: Motor Vehicle Lights

Introduced by Senator Cudaback, this legislation changes and eliminates provisions relating to acetylene headlights, and repeals some sections relating to both cars and motorcycles.

The major provision of the bill eliminates the language: *Auxiliary driving lights shall be turned off at the same time the motor vehicle's headlights are required to be dimmed when approaching another vehicle from either the front or the rear.*

LB 1039: Registration of historical vehicles

This bill, also introduced by Senator Cudaback, changes provisions relating to historical vehicles and repeals some language. The language changes as follows:

Vehicles with modifications or deviations from the original specifications may be permitted shall be registered under such classification if such modifications or deviations are of historic nature and characteristic of the approximate era to which the vehicle belongs or if they could be considered to be in the category of safety features.

More info? Go to www.unicam.state.ne.us and type in the bill number which interests you.

Car Trivia

Leo Thietje sent the following trivia questions and answers in hopes others will enjoy finding out new information too:

Where and when was the first parking meter installed?

Oklahoma City, 1935

What was the first automotive magazine?

"The Horseless Age"

1895

Where did the 120 come from in the Jaguar XK120?

120 mph top speed

What is a balaclava?

A race car driver's head cover.

What sports car did Kaiser make in the '50s?

Kaiser Darrin

What is the largest production automotive engine ever produced?

The 824 CID Pierce-Arrow, 1912-1918

What automaker never discloses the horsepower of its engines?

Rolls-Royce

How much horsepower did the MGTC have?

54

What kind of car did 007 drive in "Dr. No?"

1957 Chevrolet

What two automotive words when used together spell the same thing both forward and backward?

Race car

Have other automotive trivia you'd like to share? Send it to the editor at: fahcmailbag@yahoo.com



Hope Center Event Set for Sunday, May 2

By FAHC member Don Petrick

We were made aware of the Hope Center last fall. Carla and I decided then that we could find some more time in our lives and resources for the Center.

We felt that the best way to be representatives for the Hope Center was to let as many of our friends know about the cause and ask them to participate in our efforts.

The Hope Center is a youth center located in Omaha's near north side neighborhood. The vision for the Hope Center took root in the heart of one man, Pastor Ty Schenzel.

He brings a special parent/supervisor role to these children. The center offers its 500+ members a place to belong. Youth and teens, 7-17 years of age participate in sports, music, computer classes, art and theatre. They have limited funds to bring these opportunities to reality.

Through inkind contributions from major corporations, the center is able to serve the children daily hot meals, purchase computers, sports equipment, and more.

They have a indoor swimming pool, but can't afford to operate it. Their current plan is to turn a parking lot into a new indoor roller skating rink. This facility is showing the youth that skills and education, along with goals, will move them to a better future.

The idea is to organize a car show with the Flatwater Austin-Healey Club and Her Majesty's Royal Nebraska Patrol. We'll get together for a couple hours and let these youth see a bit of auto history they haven't been exposed to and allow club members to tour the facility.

After the car show, everyone is invited to our home for socializing to include food and refreshments. The weather will be great, the children will really enjoy it, the food will be fantastic, and maybe we can raise some money for this program.

From its humble beginning in the heart of one man, the Hope Center has become a place of hope for children and youth in North Omaha...a place where kids go to grow.

Want to host an event? Got an idea for an event?

As the FAHC club's new events coordinator, Marvin Marshall is the person you want to call and work with if you have an idea for an event or want to host an event of your own. Give him a call at 402-733-6868 or send him e-mail at marshallmcc@yahoo.com.

Don't forget to check out the events already planned - they're up on the club website: www.flatwater.org. But coming to events is the best way to find out about other events.

Websites of interest:

Besides our own website --- www.flatwater.org - club members have suggested some other internet sites of interest:

Gerry Conant recommends: www.mgbexperience.com/misc/nicedrive.html which he says is supposedly the inspiration for Rush's song, "Red Barchetta."

Jim Danielson's earmarked Gerards Garage: www.gerardsgarage.com/FS_garage.htm
And, of course, there's the national Austin-Healey Club of America page at: www.serve.com/AHCA

Keep these handy for later in the year: Heartland MG Show - www.heartlandmg.com and Kansas City All-British Show - <http://kcallbritish.tripod.com/>

As you come up with websites you think others would enjoy, please let the editor know and I'll forward them on.

My Winter Car Project (or, How I Spent \$700 on a \$50 job), by the owner of Spot the Sprite *(name withheld to protect the ignoramous).*

I tend not to write things down that should be written down, choosing instead to just count on my rapidly fading memory. I seem to recall back in September at the annual FAHC Meet and Greet that it would be my winter project to swap my Bugeye's original differential gear set (4.22:1 ratio) with one from a 1970 Midget I had acquired just for that purpose (3.9:1 ratio).

The reason for this seemed so clear to me at the time - I had installed a new zippy 1275+ cc engine from the same Midget (rebuilt to my exacting standards, of course), and matched it up with ever popular Datsun 5-speed tranny.

Once I got to drive my car with this new combo it became apparent that the majority of my driving needed a lower gear ratio to A) keep me from wearing out the clutch system by shifting through three gears at every stop light, B) allow me to cruise at 60 at wonderfully low revs, and C) keep me from winding up in jail because I thought I could beat the kids driving the Hondas with spoilers.

So, once fall driving season was over (first week of December this year - yea!) I put the car up on blocks and set to work. OK, let me back up a step. I visualized putting it up on blocks. I read all the literature I could find on this swap (mostly internet web sites), and called my favorite Bugeye "Been There Done That" guy, John Ulrich. John's got a great way of explaining things so that I can understand them. Mostly I understood "easy", "quick", and "cheap."

Now, don't misunderstand me here. John did not lead me astray. He was spot-on with his description of the work, time, and cost. I just am a lousy judge of my skills, abilities, and budget! I originally budgeted \$50 for this project, since I

already had the Midget rear end sitting in the parts pile (long since paid for by selling other parts), and the only thing I could think of spending money on was a set of gaskets, o-rings, and oil. Man, I am so naive sometimes. Gaskets and o-rings: \$5.

Once I found the time to get started on the project, I saw the club note from Don Petrick on the set of extra Minilite wheels he wanted to sell. The price was right, and I even had Jim and Barbara offer to serve as intermediaries for the purchase and transfer at December's Fish meeting.

Of course, I could have always just not bought the wheels, but here was a situation where I was gonna have the rear wheels and hubs/axles off for the gear exchange, I knew I would have to do that operation anyway to go with wider wheels, and I thought: "Why do this operation twice, going through two sets of gaskets and o-rings, when I could just do all of it

at the same time and save money in the long run?" Funny how I rationalize spending money by saving money. New minilite wheels and chrome nuts: \$455.

The old wheels came off, and after doing some significant measuring, I find out the 1-year old tires with only 200 miles on them won't fit the new wheels. Well, a quick trip to my local favorite tire dealer found that they would just barely fit, so the exchange was made. I dodged a \$300 bullet but

spent \$55 on the tire swap from old wheels to new. Hey, that price included chrome valve stems. Gotta have that bling-bling, right?

Next step, longer studs on the hubs to take the new wheels, and, after initial fittings, 1/2 inch spacers to get the deeper offset minilite wheels to not rub on the interior fender arches. Nouveau mechanics take note: it takes someone with the right knowledge and machines to do this job right.

It also takes someone with a good banker. Turns out I couldn't just find longer 3/8 inch studs to match the original 3/8 inch studs.



Anonymous writer with daughter Helen at Mahoney State Park last year, prior to getting the good idea to swap differential gears. Oops, sorry, Tim. Did I give too much away? Editor

The smallest studs available locally were 7/16," so here we go with new bigger studs, which, of course, took an extra measure of machining of the hubs and brake drums to accommodate. Studs, hubs, and brake drum work: \$160.

Once I got the rear axle hubs out (note to self: look more closely at diagrams in workshop manual), I noticed the rear axle locator bushings needed replacement. This was on my list of future projects, but since it required much of the same work I was already in the middle of, why not? New locator arm bushings and machinist's time to remove old ones and install new ones: \$74.

Let's see, am I getting any closer to my original goal of swapping the differential gears? Yup. I finally get to the point where I can do that. The whole operation of removing the old "pumpkin", cleaning, sealing, and inserting the new "pumpkin", took about an hour. I didn't spend anything on this part, other than a dollar or two on hand cleaner (Hey, Bob Shaw, I'm out!). This is a greasy job for most cars, so be prepared.

Now I'm ready to go back in with the rear axles and get things back together. I just happen to glance at the teeth splines on the end of the right hand side axle and see two teeth chipped.

Closer inspection finds that this is not the original axle, and so I start to worry. Back on the phone with John Ulrich, and he offers me a set of axles he no longer needs.

John is such a great guy, for only the promise of a ten-year membership in the national Austin Healey Association I can have the axles for free (what a persuasive membership chair he can be!). Gas to John's place: \$5.

Alright, the end is in sight. I have not yet finished the job as of this writing, but seeing as I am but an hour or two of turning wrenches from being done, I am hoping to escape with what little money I have left. Total bill so far: \$680.

With my luck I will have at least another \$20 in tools I wind up misplacing that will be needed for the next job. I can't wait to see how the new paint job goes next fall...

Long Strange Trip: Bylaws for the Flatwater Club

By Terry Buchholz, Secretary and Barbara Rixstine, editor

The annual meeting on Jan. 17 produced new bylaws for the Flatwater Austin-Healey Club and resulted in two changes in officers.

Bylaws

The club officers passed a set of working bylaws, the first the club has ever had, the night of the 17th, just before the club meeting and 'After Christmas Party.'

Announcement of the passage was not without prolonged discussion, and the set passed was not the only set possible or explored, but the dust has cleared and it's time to move on.

Members should receive a set of bylaws with this newsletter. Also, a copy of the bylaws is available on the website.

Now this is important for two very important reasons: Members said they wanted to have more input. Now you have to have a way to participate.

Exactly how all this is to work -- changing and amending the club bylaws -- is not exactly clear at this point. First everyone needs to have a look at the bylaws to see what they think, before any changes are to made. Officers will make an announcement of next steps soon.

Election

This was also the first year that club members had nomination choices and the chance to vote on the officer slate.

Jerry Needham was elected president and Marvin Marshall vice president/events coordinator. John Ulrich remains as treasurer/ membership coordinator, Terry Buchholz as secretary and Jim Danielson as national delegate and Joe Guinan and Dennis Stone were elected as Members-At-Large.

Thanks in large part go to Bev Bohlke, Terri O'Brien and Marilyn Meiers, who counted and re-counted the ballots several times to determine the successful candidates. I hope all of you will offer special thanks to these volunteers.

In conclusion, I would encourage all of you to look over the bylaws -- either in print or off the web -- and contact your officers with letters or e-mail on what changes you might adopt.

Oh, and remember this club belongs to all members now more than ever, so your input is no longer requested...but expected.

**Got a story about your car you'd like to tell? Send it to: fahcmailbag@yahoo.com --
Pictures appreciated, but not needed. Thanks!**



Miscellaneous Sputterings

By John Rued

Here's a fact you won't hear on Hannity. John Kerry won Iowa on a coin toss. I know. I was there.

Three politically ignorant yet Republican Bellevue-ites ventured across geographic and political boundaries to learn something about the caucus process. The venue for study was Glenwood Township, a sleepy little precinct with four eligible delegates.

Our caucus broke into five groups: Dean, Edwards, Kerry, Gephardt, and the Undecideds.

Thirty-three participants mandated each group attain a minimum of five voters for viability. Dean, Gephardt, and Kerry had ten. Edwards had three. The Undecideds had two.

Each group was allowed a couple of minutes to make a case for their candidates. The "Dean" group: weak and disjointed; something about being anti-war and outspoken. The "Kerry" group: weak and predictable; the only one who can beat Bush. The "Edwards" group: even weaker; something about growing up in a mill. The "Gephardt" group: teamster-centric; strong and impassioned talk about that "sucking sound" of jobs going to China.

The precinct was allowed 30 minutes to reorganize into viable groups. "Edwards" made no attempt to woo the undecided; "Edwards" broke camp and joined "Kerry." "Dean" lost two voters who didn't know they had to stick around for the called vote. The "Undecideds"—a management couple working for Union Pacific—couldn't fathom the teamster point of view and accepted Kerry over Gephardt.

The vote was taken. When the smoke cleared, Dean, Kerry, and Gephardt each had one delegate. Interestingly, Kerry and Gephardt were in a two-way tie for the lead—and the fourth delegate.

The chairman spoke: The extra delegate would be decided by a coin toss. The sublime accusations that the toss could be tainted were silenced with the realization that three impartial Nebraskans would be more than willing to help Iowa—and the nation—select the next Democratic presidential nominee.

Long story short: The coin was tossed, the call made, and Kerry won Iowa. The less than homogeneous group unified and rallied around their overarching Democratic cause and we left very pleased with our participation.

So what does this have to do with Flatwater? I think we live the caucus concept. The "party" is the club. The "groups" are many: the cars, the shows, the autocrosses, and the dinners all have their advocates.

And even though each group may have specialized agendas—agendas that bring spirited discussions about the direction of the club—when it comes time to rally, we rally in support of the club.

Flatwater is that organization that best represents the collective membership and unifies us all in our one common interest—the preservation and enjoyment of the British sports car.

All members are welcome and encouraged to submit newsletter articles. These may be edited for space and/or content. E-mail articles to fahcmailbag@yahoo.com or send them to: Barbara Rixstine, 1310 Idylwild Dr., Lincoln, 68503-2040. Thanks!

Owners Manual: Club Website

By Barbara Rixstine

www.flatwater.org

Webmaster Ron Bonnsetter has worked long and hard to put together, in my opinion, one of the best club websites out there.

But we still have members who aren't using the site to its best advantage. Here's some of what you can do at the site:

Download the newsletter. It's really simple. Click on the "members only" button. You'll be taken to the newest club newsletter—no password needed. Once the newsletter's on the screen, use your home printer to print a copy with full-color photos! You'll have a hard copy you can staple together and saved the club printing and postage costs.

Find out events. There's a full 2004 event list you can peruse to see what's next week, what's next month and so on.

Get on the discussion board. Got a question? Want to share a tech tip you've found? Click on "messages" and follow up.

Look at members' homepages. Most popular page, I think. Know a car but not who owns it? Know an owner but want to see his/her car? This is the place. Set up your own page by e-mailing Ron your info and your photos: rjb@unl.edu.

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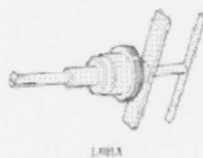
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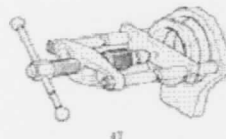
Call: John Ulrich, Membership Coordinator, 6845 S. 44th St., Lincoln, Nebraska 68512



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British Leyland Special Service Tools (and their modern equivalents)...

Submitted by Greg Lemon, with permission of the artist.

Membership Renewal Update

By John Ulrich,
Membership Coordinator

I got a call from the editor today, and I need to bang out 250 words on the progress of renewals. Barbara said I could whine and plead if I wished, so here goes.

As of January 26, about two-thirds of the members have sent in dues for 2004. With a March 1 deadline, that isn't too bad.

Many have even sent a completed membership form with their money. Wow, what a concept!

But seriously folks, you have to know how much I appreciate that darn paperwork. Even in the computer age, there is great virtue in being able to leaf through my three-ring notebook, and find the form YOU filled out as a double check to what's on the screen of my iMac. (Yes, school teachers use Macs!)

Now, the whining and pleading. Pleeceeeeeease send me your dues with completed forms ASAP!

Barbara as newsletter editor, Ron Bonnstetter as web master, and I as membership chair, spend lots of hours keeping track of everyone. We want to

make sure our mailing lists, e-mails, web pages and membership rosters are accurate and up to date.

Please don't wait until the deadline has passed. It's easy to process a renewal, but a real pain to do the "remove and reinstate" two-step. (Or is it a tango?)

We'd like to publish the 2004 FAHC Membership Directory in March. Driving season approaches, and as they say, "you can't tell the plavers without a program."

Membership

dues

forms money

addresses

Flatwater Austin-Healey Club of Nebraska
A chapter of the Austin-Healey Club of America
1310 Idylwild Drive
Lincoln, NE 68503-2040

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The *Flatwater News* is published monthly. Members are welcome and encouraged to contribute news and/or technical stories. All submissions may be edited for length and content.

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

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Barbara Rixstine/ fahemailbag@yahoo.com

The Flatwater News is published for members like:



Doug Buchanan, shown here with his 1969 MGB at the 2003 FAHC All-British Car Show in Lincoln. You can often find Doug at the Elkhart Lake Races, actually whipping along the track in his 1971 Triumph GT-6.

Doug and wife Dawn live in Omaha and have been members for several years.

Thanks for being members, Doug and Dawn!

Correction: Last month's Flatwater News featured Rod and Melody Chvatal on the back cover, not Paul and Harlene Garnhart. The editor regrets the error.

Car Wanted:

Jim Danielson's looking for an MGB roadster, steel bumper, daily driver. Must have a solid body.

Give him a call if you know of one for sale: 402-464-3733 or e-mail him at jdanielson2003@yahoo.com.