

May 2004

# 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](http://www.flatwater.org)

## Calendar:

- May 5:** Gearjammers: it's on the first Wednesday of the month 6:30 or so.
- May 8:** Breakfast at Mahoney & Poker Run, 9 a.m.
- May 15:** Vehicle museum tour planned by Leo Thietje. More info later in month.
- May 18:** Cozmo's, 84<sup>th</sup> and Center in Omaha: the third Tuesday of the month. 7 p.m.
- May 22:** Gramercy Hill Car Show, 68<sup>th</sup> and "A" Sts., Lincoln. 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
- May 28:** Fish at Nehawka. It's on the last Friday of the month sometime around 6:30 or so.

## Make a note:

**June 11-12:**

### Heartland MG Meet in St. Jo, MO

See story page 4 and schedule page 6 for more information or go to [www.heartlandmg.com](http://www.heartlandmg.com)

## A Chair, Not A Throne : Membership 2004

By John Ulrich, Membership Chair

I'll admit I enjoy being your FAHC membership chair. I feel privileged to have contact in one way or another with every single member of the club, and equally privileged to serve them.

Last time I checked, Flatwater is all about people, cars, food and fun. I'll do whatever I can do to make that happen.

Now, about about the FAHC Membership Directory. First of all, I apologize for the errors and typos. (Is an error on a computer a "keyo"?)

I hate to make mistakes, but I did the best I could in the time I had. In reality, the pages marked "notes" are just a place to let you enter correct information.

I ran into Roger VanLaningham the other day. If you don't know Roger and his wife Kris, it's probably because they have TWO girls graduating from high school this year.

Roger had been reading the directory, and talked about the variety, and number of cars in the club. He is excited to meet people, do things and go places, when the nest is empty.

Armed with a quality newsletter, and quality web site, he and Kris should have everything they need to drive their newly painted yellow 1968 MGB to events. I hope the directory serves as impetus for others to become more active in Flatwater. It's fun to look in the directory, and hypothesize trends in LBC ownership.

My two cents worth are: Trend #1. The Triumph is gaining some ground in the club. Maybe it's because most of them aren't uni-bodies, and they haven't folded in half. (Not that they won't!) Maybe

John talks with Joe Kueper (right) about, what else, British cars at the Hope Center event May 2.



since there were fewer Triumphs than MGs to start with, people valued them more. Who knows?

Trend #2. The MGA is an object of lust for more and more people. Whether it's as graceful as a ballerina, or nasty as a linebacker, they just shout "Sports Car."

Trend #3. This just in! As of today there are two more Bugeyes in the club! Bill and Deb Ady, and Bryce Ady just joined, adding a 1959 and a 1960 to our numbers. That makes 16!

For a club primarily founded on Bugeye ownership, this is good news.

Trend #4. People are discovering how good a touring car the MGB-GT is, and how fast the Jensen-Healey is. (Just chase Dennis Stone for a day.)

I always get calls about people and cars. I'm happy to answer questions, and love to talk LBCs, but it shouldn't be a privilege enjoyed by only the officers.

Continued page 4

## Cars & Parts 4 Sale/2 Buy

► **For Sale:** 1984 BMW 633Csi, Classic daily driver \$4,250; 3 15"- 60 spoke wire wheels, with tires, off my TR3, would make great spares, \$25 each, Jeff Lemon [trsnmgs@aol.com](mailto:trsnmgs@aol.com) or 421-2823

► **For Sale:** MGB ribbed case transmission; Midget 1500 transmission; GT-6 frame; miscellaneous Midget and Triumph parts. Call Jerry Tessin at 991-2723.

► **For Sale:** 1953 MGTD. Ivory with Maroon interior, always garaged, beautiful condition and runs great! \$15,750 OBO. Call Lyle in Omaha at 402-333-5610 or via email: [lylehaugen@juno.com](mailto:lylehaugen@juno.com). (Sent in by Dave Barnes, who's seen the car.) Call Dave at 402-496-2442.

**For Sale:** 1980 Triumph Spitfire 1500. An original car, drives great. Pictured in spring edition of Victoria British Parts Catalog on page 98. Virgil Neu, 402-571-7564.

► **For Sale:** Jim Crook's selling a 1966 MGB. Price lowered to \$7000, black with red interior, wires, most everything rebuilt, very good to excellent condition. \$7000 or best offer. Check the club message board or For Sale section for contact info and photo.

*The following three items are all for sale by FAHC member Don Petrick -*

**For Sale:** 76 MG Midget, Maroon/Black, Weber, header, custom exhaust, Minilites with Yokohama. All new brakes, master, braided lines, cross drilled rotors, new gas tank, sending unit and electric fuel pump, electronic ignition, and clutch master. Excellent boot and tonneau. Has car cover, but needs top. NO RUST. 51m miles. \$4,550

**For Sale:** 4 - 13 X 5 Minilites with lug nuts and chrome caps for Midget/Bugeye. Brand new, still in the box. \$500.00

**For Sale:** New, never installed Weber 45 DCOE, ram pipes, K&N filter, manifold for 1800 MGB (early). B271 Camshaft, Camshaft lifters, Lube, Head gasket set and Stage 3 unleaded cylinder head with 1.625 inlet valves and 1.344 exhaust valves. Additional porting and flowing, double valve springs. \$1,750. Parts may be split up. Don Petrick, 12907 Kelly Street, Springfield NE 68059 402-253-2232, [donpetrick@charter.net](mailto:donpetrick@charter.net)

*Newsletter policy is that members get a free ad for three months; non-members once. Send ads by the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month to either address on the back page. ► means ad is new.*

### Attn Ron Sisol:

I blush to admit I lost your phone number. Please contact me again about working again on your car. 402-435-3905. Bob Shaw

## Changes in membership roster

Don and Ella Naimoli's e-mail is [dongee42@aol.com](mailto:dongee42@aol.com). He has a '57 MGA.

Renewing members Al and Debbie Bemis can be reached at 402-556-3101 in Omaha;

Renewing members Dave and Becki Barnes can be reached at 402-477-5382 in Lincoln;

Mike Howard's e-mail should be [acepilot59@aol.com](mailto:acepilot59@aol.com)

E-mail Steve Frary & Tricia Vanderslice at [tvsllice@aol.com](mailto:tvsllice@aol.com).

Please check your roster to make sure everything's correct. If you have any other changes, or need another roster, please let John Ulrich know.

## April Club Minutes Available on Website

Nancy Needham's well-taken minutes of the April meeting are now available on the club website: [www.flatwater.org](http://www.flatwater.org). Please look them over and let a club officer know if you have questions or comments.

## Show Your Club Spirit With a Club Shirt

Now that out-of-town trips are on the agenda again, show off your FAHC membership with your very own beautiful blue shirt with the club logo on the pocket.

Nic Bonnstetter (shown here) has got lots of shirts to sell in large (\$25) and extra-large (\$27) sizes.

Let folks know you're an FAHC member by calling Nic or Ron at 402-423-9138 (e-mail: [nkb@unlserve.unl.edu](mailto:nkb@unlserve.unl.edu)) and making arrangements to get an FAHC shirt of your own.



## New FAHC Members:

Doug and Nancy Taylor, Omaha, 402-556-8865, [tigerownerdoug@yahoo.com](mailto:tigerownerdoug@yahoo.com), '63 Sunbeam Tiger & '66 Mini Cooper S

Dennis and Debbie Kimberlin, Omaha, 402-496-9160, [kimberlinomaha@juno.com](mailto:kimberlinomaha@juno.com), 1975 Spitfire

# Everything you ever wanted to know about FAHC caravanning ... but were afraid to ask

By Jerry Needham and Barbara Rixstine

**A**t last! Nice weather's here and you're looking for some top-down time in that little British car you've stored all winter. There's no time like the present for road trips and your Flatwater Austin-Healey Club's got quite a few coming up, thanks to the work and commitment of its officers and members.

While it's tempting to just jump into the car and head out, a little planning makes the experience more enjoyable. Here's some tips for the next time you hit the road:

- Consider taking along a small cooler chest with icy soft drinks, and some common hand tools like electrical tape, spark plug wires, etc. (See list to right for ideas.) You'd be surprised how many parts are interchangeable.
- Follow the road rules set by the caravan's majority and please be ready at departure time(s) to keep the group on schedule. If it's an overnight trip, make double-sure everyone knows the departure plan for the next morning, the route to be taken and who all will be or not be in the caravan.
- Walkie-talkies are great. Both the leader and the last caravanner have one. Many common cell phone services don't work in unpopulated Midwest areas, but walkie-talkies should be reliable anywhere. If you use cell phones, know the leader's number and vice-versa.
- Gas up and, um, rest up before starting. Check the route with the leader. Many of our routes take us through beautiful but uncommercialized areas with limited – or no – food and/or rest stops. Think about it, do you want to tell your spouse you can't stop unless she's interested in, well, a **real** nature break? We thought so. Know the plan early so the surprises can be out of the way.
- We travel as fast as the slowest car. This means, if the slowest car does 55 at best, we go no faster than 55. (This is **not** the same as going as slow as the fastest car. If the fastest car did 75, and the slowest car did 55, how would the latter keep up?) If you really want to see what your car can do, take an alternative route for part of the trip and then join up with the Flatwater Bunch later.
- **Keep an eye on your buddy behind you.** We can't emphasise this enough. You are responsible for making sure that the guy behind you stays with the caravan. **Stop immediately** if you see the car behind you take a wrong turn or stop. Signal the leader, stop and stay.

**Keep that volume down and watch that Wagner stuff:** A National Public Radio news story reported that loud music is at fault in many road accidents. Worst piece to play? Wagner's "Die Valkyrie."



- Stay together. It's hard to show off all our cars when we're miles apart on the highway and it makes it easier to notice when someone behind you has stopped.
- Prepare but don't get carried away! Trips like these are why you have a British car. Have a good time!

## What we take when we travel

Now that you know some of the common caravanning rules, take some advice from FAHC members on what they take with them when they travel and don't have Dennis and Jane Stone to rescue them with a tow:

*Tim Creger:* I have a tool box with many of the items others mentioned below but also:

- flathead and one of those multi-head screwdrivers with 4 or 5 choices in tips),
- spark plug socket wrench - doubles as lugnut wrench,
- extra fuses for the fuse box,
- light bulbs for the dashboard instruments (if one blows, they all go out!),
- Vise grips, throttle/choke cable screw stops, hose clamps - 1 or 2 for each size of hose the car has,
- spare nuts for small bolts like on the generator, alternator, coil, distributor, etc.; and
- ear plugs -- for the passenger while I curse at the car during repairs.

*Jim Danielson:*

- Fix-A-Flat; Tow chain; Dennis or Jane Stone (see above).

*Barbara Rixstine:*

- The number of AAA towing and a book to read while it gets there;

*John Ulrich:*

A tin box (like the kind Altoid mints come in) of assorted fuses and electrical fittings, a cutting/crimping tool; a tube of blue non-hardening gasket maker; a flashlight; a fire extinguisher (always); and WD-40.

## "A Treatise on the Importance of Smoke"

by Joseph Lucas (uncredited, but from Yahoo! USA-TVR group, forwarded by Gary Lien)

All electrical components and wiring harnesses depend on proper circuit functioning, which is the transmission of charged ions by retention of the visible spectral manifestation known as "smoke".

Smoke is the thing that makes electrical circuits work. Don't be fooled by scientists and engineers talking about excited electrons and the like. Smoke is the key to all things electrical.

We know this to be true because every time one lets the smoke out of an electrical circuit, it stops working.

This can be verified repeatedly through empirical testing. For example, if one places a large copper bar across the terminals of a battery, prodigious quantities of smoke are liberated and the battery shortly ceases to function.

In addition, if one observes smoke escaping from an electrical component such as a Lucas voltage regulator, it will also be observed that the component no longer functions.

The logic is elementary and ines-

capable! The function of the wiring harness is to conduct the smoke from one device to another. When the wiring harness springs a leak and lets all the smoke out of the system, nothing works right afterward.

Starter motors were considered unsuitable for British motorcycles for some time largely because they regularly released large quantities of smoke from the electrical system.

It has been reported that Lucas electrical components are possibly more prone to electrical leakage than their Bosch, Japanese or American counterparts.

Experts point out that this is because Lucas is British, and all things British leak. British engines leak oil, British shock absorbers, hydraulic forks, and disk brake systems leak fluid, British tires leak air and British Intelligence leaks national defense secrets.

Therefore, it follows that British electrical systems must leak smoke. Once again, the logic is clear and inescapable. Sometimes you may miss the component releasing the smoke that makes your electrical system function correctly, but if you sniff around you can often find the faulty component by the undeniable and telltale smoke smell.

Sometimes this is a better indicator than standard electrical tests performed with a volt-ohm meter.

In conclusion, the basic concept of transmission of electrical energy in the form of smoke provides a clear and logical explanation of the mysteries of electrical components and why they fail.

*"A gentleman does not motor about after dark."*

*Joseph Lucas,  
1842 - 1903*



If you haven't made plans yet for the Heartland Meet in St. Joseph, Missouri, on June 11-12, do it now. (Yes, it's the SECOND weekend this year, not the first.)

This is one of the club's favorite events all year. We enjoy St. Jo and always take home some trophies from the meet. (Much to those Missourians' consternation!)

We usually go down on Friday, getting to St. Jo in time for the 5:30 barbecue and come back Sunday morning. See page 6 for more planning details.



*Cars parked on the grass at St. Jo. Just off to the right is the club's usual shady spot to rest and recuperate from the heavy work of showing a car. There's food nearby and several ladies use the time well - shopping.*

*Membership, continued from pg 1*

Keep your directory handy. Make a copy for your car, and one for your bulletin board. Call a member you've never met who owns a car similar to yours. Ask them about their car, and invite them to an event.

This is Flatwater's own version of the "Freedom of Information Act". It's your club, so make the most of it. See you on the road!



## A Memorial Day Thought

*(Sent to Barbara over the Internet)*

*Funny how a former eastern bloc country can see the USA and what makes us all tick, and western Europe has real difficulties with it. We rarely get a chance to see another country's editorial about the USA. Read this excerpt from a Romanian newspaper. The article was written by Mr. Cornel Nistorescu and published under the title "C"ntarea Americii" meaning "Ode To America") on September 24, 2002 in the Romanian newspaper Evenimentul zilei ("The Daily Event").*

### An Ode to America

Why are Americans so united? They would not resemble one another even if you painted them all one color! They speak all the languages of the world and form an astonishing mixture of civilizations and religious beliefs.

Still, the American tragedy turned three hundred million people into a hand put on the heart. Nobody rushed to accuse the White House, the army, and the secret services that they are only a bunch of losers. Nobody rushed to empty their bank accounts. Nobody rushed out onto the streets nearby to gape about.

The Americans volunteered to donate blood and to give a helping hand. After the first moments of panic, they raised their flag over the smoking ruins, putting on T-shirts, caps and ties in the colors of the national flag.



They placed flags on buildings and cars as if in every place and on every car a government official or the president was passing.

On every occasion, they started singing their traditional song: "God Bless America!" I watched the live broadcast and rerun after rerun for hours listening to the story of the guy who went down one hundred floors with a woman in a wheelchair without knowing who she was, or of the Californian hockey player, who gave his life fighting with the terrorists and prevented the plane from hitting a target that could have killed other hundreds or thousands of people.

How on earth were they able to respond united as one human being? Imperceptibly, with every word and musical note, the memory of some turned into a modern myth of tragic heroes.

And with every phone call, millions and millions! of dollars were put in a collection aimed at rewarding not a man or a family, but a spirit, which no money can buy.

What on earth can unite the Americans in such a way? Their land? Their galloping history? Their economic power? Money?

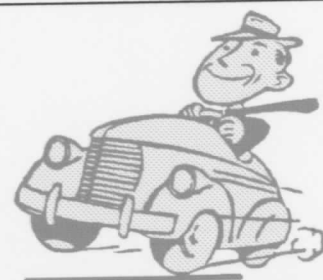
I tried for hours to find an answer, humming songs and murmuring phrases with the risk of sounding commonplace. I thought things over, but I reached only one conclusion.

Only freedom can work such miracles.

*Thanks to all our service men and women that give their lives and their time to fight for our freedom. Our thoughts and hopes are with FAHC member Frank Williams, wherever he is.*

## Road Trip to Elkhorn Sat., May 15

Leo Thietje has plans to take interested caravanners to an Elkhorn antique car museum. We'll hope for great weather and twisty roads. Watch for more info closer to date, but contact Leo at 402-721-8585 if you've got questions now.





*As more and more people join FAHC, more and more people ask about writing stories for the newsletter. I hope this answers the questions I've been asked. (And, yes, a picture of the editor finally makes the newsletter.)*

## From The Editor

By Barbara Rixstine

### Who can write for the newsletter?

Anyone can. It's a newsletter for members, by members, and the more members we hear from, the better.

### Does the fact that I can't spell disqualify me?

Not at all. Just let me know that you want me to check it for spelling. (I will, anyway.) Go for it.

### Does the fact that I'm not a good writer disqualify me?

Not at all. We're interested in your knowledge of cars, transmissions, paint or whatever, not your writing skill. Go for it.

### How do I know the deadline?

Generally you can figure on the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month for the month following (i.e. the 25<sup>th</sup> of June for the July newsletter.) Please let me know your plans, though.

### If I write once, do I have to write every month?

Absolutely not. Contributions are welcome whenever you want to send them.

### What about pictures?

Pictures are welcome and encouraged. I do not have a scanner, but John Ulrich is usually willing to help. Digital photos are great.

Please remember though, that some members have dial-up access and can't wait to download a newsletter full of great photos. One or two good ones are

preferable. If there's a lot of good ones, we'll put them up on the website's Events page.

### Format? Length?

The newsletter is currently done in Microsoft Word 97, so Word files that level or under are great. If you're on a Mac, send it as a Rich Text File (rtf) or copy it into an e-mail.

About 350 words is a good short length and about 650 to 700 is a good longer length. To find the word count in Word, just go to Tools and click on Word Count. Remember, if you're sending photos, those will take up space too.

### But Barbara, you don't know anything about cars.

Exactly right. I know nothing about cars. But our club president Jerry Needham is a "car guy" and he reviews the newsletter each month. I also am unafraid of asking Jim Danielson, Tim Creger, John Ulrich or other "car types" for expertise.

### Any tips for a would-be writer?

This is a car club newsletter. Story ideas might include some repair, restoration or driving tip you've uncovered, your car's history, an event you've been to, a car you remember or a car you brought home.

Because the newsletter is the item most often seen by new members and other regional and national organizations, I encourage articles and photos that put our best foot forward.

Let me say a few words about deadlines. To get info out on a timely basis, hold down a job and stay out of divorce court, I have to set and live by deadlines which are only slightly fidgetable. Please work with them and I'll do my best to work with you.

Got an idea for a story, but don't want to write it? Tell me what it is and I'll see if I can find a writer.

Members' stories are welcome and encouraged. I look forward to receiving yours.

## Our British Cars

By Gerry (and Chrissy) Conant

I got my TR7 in 1993, when I was in the US Navy, from a friend on my ship. He got it as a project from another shipmate.

This was my first experience with anything British. I remember sitting in it while it was still in his yard thinking about the open road. Many years and more money that I'd like to remember it still isn't done.

It needs a paint job but I enjoy driving it too much to take it apart to paint it. The paint job is in the near future.

So far some of the work I've done to the car includes ... rebuilt the engine with the higher compression European spec pistons, installed a fast road cam, added twin Dellorto DHLAs, TR8 alloy wheels with Yokos for autocross



Gerry's TR-7

and the front brake upgrade using Volvo calipers with Escort vented rotors that really makes it stop.

Before dropping the engine in last spring, the engine compartment got a paint job with the help of Dennis Stone. It's still a work in progress but getting closer to being finished all the time.

We also have Chrissy's car, a 1970 GT6+. Last year I wanted to get some machine work done for my brake upgrade for the TR7. A friend at work recommended a local machine shop and said to ask the guy about his GT6. While there I asked him if I could see it. It was in a garage behind the shop so we went to have a look.

After a few minutes of looking it over he admitted

he wanted to sell it for \$500. (I had been saving my change in a "Paint the TR7" fund and I just cashed it in that morning, it came to \$635.)

I thought it was car destiny. The next day, Joe Guinan met me there for a closer look at the car. With a thumbs-up from Joe I bought it.

It's stored away at the moment waiting for some spare time in the future, as our first priority (baby Grace) will arrive June 1<sup>st</sup>.



Chrissy's GT6

## Walnut Run April 17

Fourteen cars. Twenty-three antiquers. A beautiful sunny day. Planning by Brian and Jane Goldsmith.

All those ingredients created a memorable Antique Run for many FAHC members and their little British cars.

The editor didn't get to go, but John Ulrich did and took some pictures.

Thanks to Jane and Brian for a memorable, fun day and we look forward to doing it again next year!



Cars leaving the Goldsmith's. That's John and Terri O'Brien's car in front.



Cars lined up. That's Tim and Joy Clark's red-and-white Metro in front.

**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, 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](http://www.flatwater.org)

**Club officers:**

**President:**

Jerry Needham

402-291-7122 / [bugeye@radiks.net](mailto:bugeye@radiks.net)

**Vice President/Events Chairman:**

Marvin Marshall

402-733-6868 / [marshalldoc@yahoo.com](mailto:marshalldoc@yahoo.com)

**Treasurer/Membership Chairman:**

John Ulrich

402-421-9252 / [julrich@lps.org](mailto:julrich@lps.org)

**Secretary:**

Terry Buchholz

402-438-0466 / [TerryDrafting@aol.com](mailto:TerryDrafting@aol.com)

**AHCA National Delegate:**

Jim Danielson

402-464-3733 / [jdanielson2003@yahoo.com](mailto:jdanielson2003@yahoo.com)

**Officers At Large:**

Joe Guinan

402-727-8011 / [jlj@duganinc.com](mailto:jlj@duganinc.com)

Dennis Stone

402-397-2385 / [djstone@glx.net](mailto:djstone@glx.net)

**Webmaster:**

Ron Bonnstetter

402-423-9138 / [rjb@unl.edu](mailto:rjb@unl.edu)

**Newsletter Editor:**

Barbara Rixstine

402-464-3733 / [fahcmailbag@yahoo.com](mailto:fahcmailbag@yahoo.com)

**The Flatwater News is published for members like:**

Gary and Carol  
Lien of Omaha.

Dedicated  
Triumph folks, Gary and Carol have been members of Flatwater for at least two, if not more years. They drive a 1969 TR Vixen and are shown here safeguarding some Triumph parking spots at the fall show.

Gary's also volunteered to help Barbara and Ron keep the web site spam-free.

Thanks for being members, Gary and Carol!



**Champagne in Champaign**

13<sup>th</sup> annual Champagne British Car Festival May 28, 29 and 30, Champaign, Illinois. All celeBRITies are invited to this show which includes a Saturday scenic cruise to the Lake of the Woods Park Pavilion for a picnic lunch, an optional tech session and other self-guided tours, followed by a Pub Crawl (with a chartered limousine bus) and a car show on Sunday. If you want more information, contact Dick Brown at 309-662-3020 or [altmgb2@yahoo.com](mailto:altmgb2@yahoo.com).