

# EXHAUST NOTES

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2009

## Drive a '54 Austin for only \$1395

See the extra value these Austins offer you in every price range.



**New Austin A-30 two-door sedan** delivers up to 40 miles per gallon, sets your operating costs, 1954 and more. You get the prestige of an English car and all the features of a car for only \$1395 at cost of parts, including all Federal taxes. Fast road model available for slightly more.



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**New Austin A-49 sedan** gives you up to 40 miles per gallon. 1954 and all the extra operating costs. Model shown sells only \$1395, including all Federal taxes. Britain's most famous motor car including heater and heater optional, and sells for \$1749 at cost of entry.



**New Austin-Healey 100** is world's fastest sports car under \$1000 or it has almost every road race entry you can think of, including roadster, or alternative open wheels and performance at 100 miles per hour. Price is only \$1949 including heater and all Federal taxes. Model shown is a 1000 cc model.

## PRESIDENT'S NOTES

I hope everybody enjoyed their Christmas & New Years holidays, The Gulf Coast Austin Healey Club hosting the annual Christmas Party at Roger & Edie's new home with a great turn out. This is always a yearly highlight for the club with our Healey friends old and new.

As some of you know our current meeting place is going to be closing in the real near future (I have been typing this for a year now), we need to locate a new meeting place for our Saturday breakfast. The MG club is also looking for a new meeting place. We have touched on sharing a venue with common guest speakers and car functions. We'll bring up ideas at next breakfast.

This year looks to be a very busy for our club, lots of activity for Round up. Our club is hosting it this year, I'm sure you have received save the date letter from Mike & Anne Johnson. We spoke about having a tour/learn session for the month of February at my favorite machine shop in the downtown area. Lets firm up the details. We'll need to get a head count. This should be an interesting lesson on how an engine is rebuilt. Then a tech session with breakfast in March to get our cars ready for Roundup. (There will be more tech sessions in 2009).

Do not forget to pay your annual club dues, There are lots of things for 2009 this may be are busiest year ever for the club, stay tuned for all the details next month I will update all activities for the club so you can mark your calendar.

**See you at breakfast**      *Vince Barnell*

**President** -Vince Barnell  
txhealey@sbcglobal.net

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**SAVE THE DATE**

April 17 – 19, 2009

The GULF COAST HEALEY CLUB of Houston  
will be the host club for

**TEXAS HEALEY ROUNDUP 29**

Mark your calendars today for this exciting event.  
Roundup will be held in SALADO, Texas, at the historic Stagecoach Inn, (254)947-5111.  
More information and event registration forms will follow.



Mike and Anne Johnson  
Gulf Coast Healey Club  
713/664-6445  
[masprite@sbcglobal.net](mailto:masprite@sbcglobal.net)

## Keeping It In the Fast Lane

by Ron Redding

5R Restorations

Some things that man puts together are never meant to be taken apart. I currently am working on an Austin Healey BJ8 which has the HD8 type SU carburetors. These carbs are attached with four 5/16 24 nuts each and due to the design of the BJ8 they are nearly impossible to get off. The float bowls are positioned between the two carbs and it is very difficult to get a 1/2" wrench in between to remove the lower/inner nuts. There are many other situations on our cars, such as brake master cylinders on chrome bumper MGBs. The retaining bolts are accessed from under the dash through a blind hole.

It would be easier to remove these if you could use a smaller wrench which would give you more access room. The simple answer is to use a jetnut. These nuts come in the standard sizes we use from Pegasus Auto Racing. The nut will fit the standard fastener but has a smaller hex head thus allowing you to use a smaller wrench or socket.

This is what they look like –



<http://www.pegasusautoracing.com/productselection.asp?Product=MS21042>

## Vendors Corner

This section is for new vendors that you have tried and have had good success with in your dealings related to the Healey cars, related services parts or repairs:

This month vendor is Totally Stainless out of Gettysburg Pa: <http://www.totallystainless.com/> Check out their web site for stainless steel fasteners and components, they are very professional, quick very responsive emails, their pricing is very good since they have not raised their prices since 2006. All items come shrink wrapped packaging - I highly recommend for any stainless steel product

*What we will be forced to drive Soon!*

### Smorvette



## Members Activity

**This is a new section for all our members to tell us what they have been upto in recent months, The club activity has been slow so this tells me everybody has there hands full doing other things besides Healeys:**

Time is flying by just to let everybody know it has been 4 years this January since Bertie Edwards moved to Washington State, she now has relocated to a townhome in the city of Bellingham with her sister who moved from the east. It sounds like they are having a blast enjoying each other company and playing with the grandchildren. They are snowed in at the moment with the big winter storm. The club needs to finish up the Dave Edwards award which Bill Elliott has a good start.

On a sad note Dick Langer informed me that one of his colleagues, friend and Healey enthused pass away of a heart attack, before Christmas. Warwick Ray was from Australia. Many of you may not remember him. He worked with Dick at Chicago Bridge & Iron. He was an engineering wizard when it came to mechanical working things. He made it to our meetings for about a year while Dick was getting his Healey restoration completed. Warwick always had a keen eye for Healeys and racing with a taste of traveling the world. He will be missed.

# Uncorked 2009

[www.HuntWines.com](http://www.HuntWines.com)

*The uncorked for 2009 will be on wineries instead of the specific wines as a number of them offer different kinds of wine.*



*Happy New Year!*

**Christopher Wirth**  
**Winemaker**

[chris@HuntWines.com](mailto:chris@HuntWines.com)

Hunt Country winemaker Christopher Wirth has over 25 years' experience in the wine industry, mostly in California and Oregon. It is his passion for cool climate wines and for his native upstate New York that brought Chris back to the region.

He studied winemaking at Santa Rosa Junior College, and worked with famed winemakers Julia Iantosca of Lambert Bridge (formerly at William Wheeler) and Kevin Hamel of Preston Vineyards.

In 2001 Chris moved to Oregon to pursue his passion for Pinot Noir. There he worked for Elvenglade Vineyards, a small producer of premium wines, and consulted for Raptor Ridge and Owen Roe wineries. He became enraptured not only by Pinot Noir, but also by Pinot Gris and Pinot Blanc! He recalls, "One of my oenology professors would simply say, 'Wine should be fun.' I take winemaking seriously, but at the end of the day, whether paired with food or all by itself, the purpose of wine is to bring enjoyment to family and friends."

## Side Glances

A Sprite Called Walter: On the simple pleasures of driving fast in a slow British sports car.

By Peter Egan, Editor-at-Large

Road and Track Magazine

Some people love public speaking, but I confess I am not one of them. An invitation to speak at a car event or awards dinner fills me with dread and generates odd nightmares for months in advance. Luckily, I've perfected several clever ways to get out of this duty. Sometimes I disguise my voice and assume the accent of a Russian count, and when people call I tell them, "Mr. Egan no longer lives at this address. He vanished quite suddenly several weeks ago while taking the waters at Lourdes. Opus Dei is calling it an act of God. I am not allowed to say any more than that." Other times I just wear a fake nose, glasses and moustache outfit and pretend to be someone else until the heat's off. Even Barb is fooled, and sometimes calls the police. Actually, it's the times she doesn't call the police that trouble me most...

Anyway, most of us who go into writing do so because we're rather slow-witted and it takes us all day to compose a coherent sentence — and another day to edit that sentence and make it slightly more coherent. We believe, as Ernest Hemmingway once said, that "the job of a writer is to write."

I hear this quote quite often, particularly after playing guitar with our garage band. People frequently come up to me after a gig and suggest I stick to writing, or "keep my day job." Many of these people are drunk, but you still have to admire their sincerity.

So I try to write more than speak. Or play guitar.

A few months ago, however, I got an invitation I could hardly turn down. Deb and Mike Korneli called from the Vintage Sports Car Drivers Association and asked if I could speak at the Elkhart Lake Vintage Festival, an autumn vintage race where the Austin-Healey Sprite would be the featured car.

Hard to refuse this one. Road America is my favorite race track, and the fall festival is always a fun, low-key weekend. Also, I've owned six Bugeye Sprites, and started my racing "career" in an H-Production Sprite. At one time in the early '70s, I had three of them in my garage at the same time.

So asking me to get up and talk about Sprites is about like asking a Zeppelin pilot to speak on the benefits of hydrogen. I have a reasonably good grip on the subject, and figured maybe I could handle it.

Off to Elkhart.

Barb and I drove to the track on a lovely weekend in September and arrived to find that we had a genuine Bugeye Sprite at our disposal, offered to us by a gentleman named William Severin Thompson. The Sprite, we were told, was named "Walter."

Why this particular name?

Well, it seems that jazz great Walter Maynard Ferguson and his band visited the Dream Farm for a party in the spring of 2006, after doing a concert nearby. Ferguson, a lifelong Jaguar buff, was intrigued by the Sprite and took a ride around the farm in it (there are pictures), so Thompson named the car in his honor. A few months later, Ferguson died at his home in Ojai, California, at age 78.

But there was more history to Walter than just the Maynard Ferguson connection.

I looked over Thompson's white 1958 Bugeye and quickly realized it was that rarest of all earthly objects, an unrestored, nearly stock low-mileage street-legal race car from the '50s. The somewhat thick roll-over bar (made from well casing pipe) was still decorated with fading tech inspection stickers from Road America — starting with the June Sprints in 1959!

And there were more stickers, going all the way to 1967. The car had also raced at such bygone venues as Wilmot Hills, Meadowdale, Lawrenceville and others, and the odometer read just 19,000 miles.

Thompson said the original owner, J.P. Whitaker from Davenport, Iowa, told him 10,000 of those miles were accumulated flat-towing the car to races. He said he never had a DNF while racing, but "went through" the engine twice as a preventative measure.

Thompson lifted the bonnet and there was that swamp-water green original Austin-colored engine, still with its original copper-tipped sparkplug wires. Overwhelming. The smells and sight of an original Sprite engine bay are to me what those tea leaves were for Proust — a sensory blast from the way-back machine. The years spun off into space and I was a 21-year-old again, just out of the Army, a skinny bearded guy in a work shirt and Adidas running shoes, contemplating my newfound low-budget racing future.

No one but me noticed this miraculous transition, by the way. Everyone else thought I continued to look fairly old.

A short test-drive in the Sprite only amplified the flashback effect. Fold yourself into what turns out to be a remarkably roomy (legwise, at least) cockpit with simple, comfortable bucket seats that are a bit upright and non-lumbarish for my current back condition. Turn the key, pull on the choke and the "S" button and the engine is running instantly, with that sweet, hollow 4-cylinder sewing machine idle, with a hint of snarl when revved.

It's an almost pre-war British sound, right out of *Brideshead Revisited*, or any BBC drama in which a vicar goes missing or a veterinarian makes house calls. It's not a sound associated with tires that are more than 4.5 inches wide.

Nice short-throw clutch and gearbox, the latter shifting with a well-oiled industrial-age click, smooth acceleration from the willing little 948 engine. I'd driven quite a few Sprites — three of which I'd restored myself from the ground up — but never one with quite the same smooth, bedded-in feeling to its mechanical parts. Vincent motorcycle guru Sid Biberman once said that the moving parts of machines "have a memory of working together," and, once you change them around, they're never quite as happy. "Walter" was living proof of that.

On Saturday afternoon, Barb and I led a gaggle of Sprites and other vintage sports cars on a commemorative parade lap of the old historic road circuit, then did a pace lap for the Sprite-Midget Challenge the next day. Thompson said he thought our vintage Michelin X tires had been purchased in about 1963, so I hesitated to drift the Sprite through the Carousel on a hot pace lap and feared our slow pace would have the

As I drove that pace lap at Road America, I tried to imagine what it must have been like to race this almost stock Sprite at the June Sprints.

By 1973, when I started racing my own H-Production Bugeye, the rules had changed and many modifications were allowed. I had a hot hand grenade of an engine, with 13.5:1 compression, a ridiculously high-lift cam, ported head, hogged-out carbs, etc. The chassis had low, stiff racing springs, competition shocks, front disc brakes, a Panhard rod at the rear and fender flares to accommodate wide tires. It was a harsh little nasty screaming shoebox with the life expectancy of a firecracker. It blew its head gasket about every 18 minutes. And our races were all 20 minutes long.

Yet Mr. Whitaker had raced "Walter" for eight years without a DNF, and with only two "freshenings" of the engine. And now, almost 50 years after the car's first race, it still ran like a watch.

Maybe in our constant club-racer quest to make our cars faster, safer and "more reliable" we had pushed for rule changes that simply accelerated the rate of entropy. Every class of production racing does this, of course, until it finally brings on its own demise. Or metamorphoses into some generic, tube-framed parody of its former self, as "stock cars" have done.

In any case, it was fun to finally get to drive a car that went back to the original spirit of post-war American sports car racing, when you could look at a Healey beating an MG and say to yourself, "That's a Healey beating an MG." Or vice versa. Or you could go to Daytona and say, "That Ford is beating the Chevys." And at Le Mans, you could note that real Jaguars were somehow managing to outlast real Ferraris.

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I guess that's what I still enjoy most in any form of racing — machines we might actually buy, showing us what they can do. As with bicycle racing in the Tour de France, the results are more interesting when there's no doping.

So it was fun to drive Walter just for the pure innocence of the thing; my first drive in a steroid-free competition sports car. We were a little slower than the other vintage race cars, but we drove all week-end on the same head gasket. Something I'd never tried before.



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# ***GULF COAST HEALEY CLUB***

## **2009 Club Calendar**

### **January**

- 10 GCHC Monthly Meeting - Otto's**
- 15 Toad Club at the Richmond Arms on Richmond at Fountain View—7:00pm**

### **February**

- 14 GCHC Monthly Meeting - TBD**
- 19 Toad Club at the Richmond Arms on Richmond at Fountain View—7:00pm**

### **March**

- 14 GCHC Monthly Meeting - Otto's**
- 19 Toad Club at the Richmond Arms on Richmond at Fountain View—7:00pm**

### **April**

- 10 GCHC Monthly Meeting - Otto's**
- 17 - 19 Roundup 29 Salado, Texas**



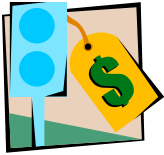
New trailer hitch cover with an Austin Healey Logo. This black hard plastic cover is 4" X 5" in size. This cover is manufactured to fit any standard 2 inch hitch receiver. This will accent your vehicle while keeping the receiver area dry and protected. The cover accepts the same locking pin (sold separately) as you would use to attach a trailer.

Contact Bob Relick if interested (rrelick@comcast.net). \$12 + shipping (GCHC

### Possible Restaurants for Saturday Breakfast Meeting

Below is a list of possible new restaurants for our Saturday Breakfast Meeting when Otto's finally closes. Take a look and let us know if you have ever been to any of these restaurants and add some yourself if you know of any which will work for us.

AAA Restaurant - 2526 Airline near 610 North & I-45  
 Harry's Cafeteria - Near West Gray  
 Humble Café - 200 E. Main Near Hwy 59 and FM 1960  
 Spanish Flowers - 4701 N. Main  
 Stracks - Louette near Kuykendahl  
 Texas Cafeteria - N. Shephard @ W. 24th (Recommended by Bill Rister)  
 West Gray Café - 415 W. Gray  
 Yale Street Grill - 2100 Yale (Heights)



# FOR SALE

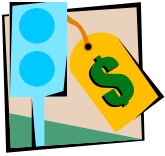
My name is Tony.

I have a 65 Sprite that I don't know what to do with. I got it as a gift and have only put a little money into it. Its complete and, with very little work, will run. Either way - my cell is 713-992-0673. email is [ASNICHOLS@ALDINE.K12.TX.US](mailto:ASNICHOLS@ALDINE.K12.TX.US)

Please give me a shout or email with any suggestions or feel free to pass my info out to whoever you feel would be interested. Thanks for your time.

This car is complete with lots of extras. It has all new brake lines -pre bent and fitted- just waiting to be put on. They were not needed but they were a good deal. Has two new seats and two extra seat covers. Full carpet kit- never installed. Two sets of rims--> 4 wire rims with single lugs & 4 stock rally rims with 4 bolt lugs. The single bolt lugs have been already installed on the front. The rear has the 4 lug rims on it. The axles for the conversion are in the trunk. The tires on the wire rims are brand new w/ no miles on them. Carbs were rebuilt a year and a half ago. Started 8 months ago but the battery has died since. Break lines are dry because I was planning on putting the new lines on. Rear end has a small (very small) leak in it. The top is shot. My father's goats had their way with it. It is only on because it helps keep the weather out of the inside. The car has a cover over it as well. I was told that third gear grinds but I never found it to. I'm sure I have left out some stuff so if you have any questions gimme a shout. 05/08





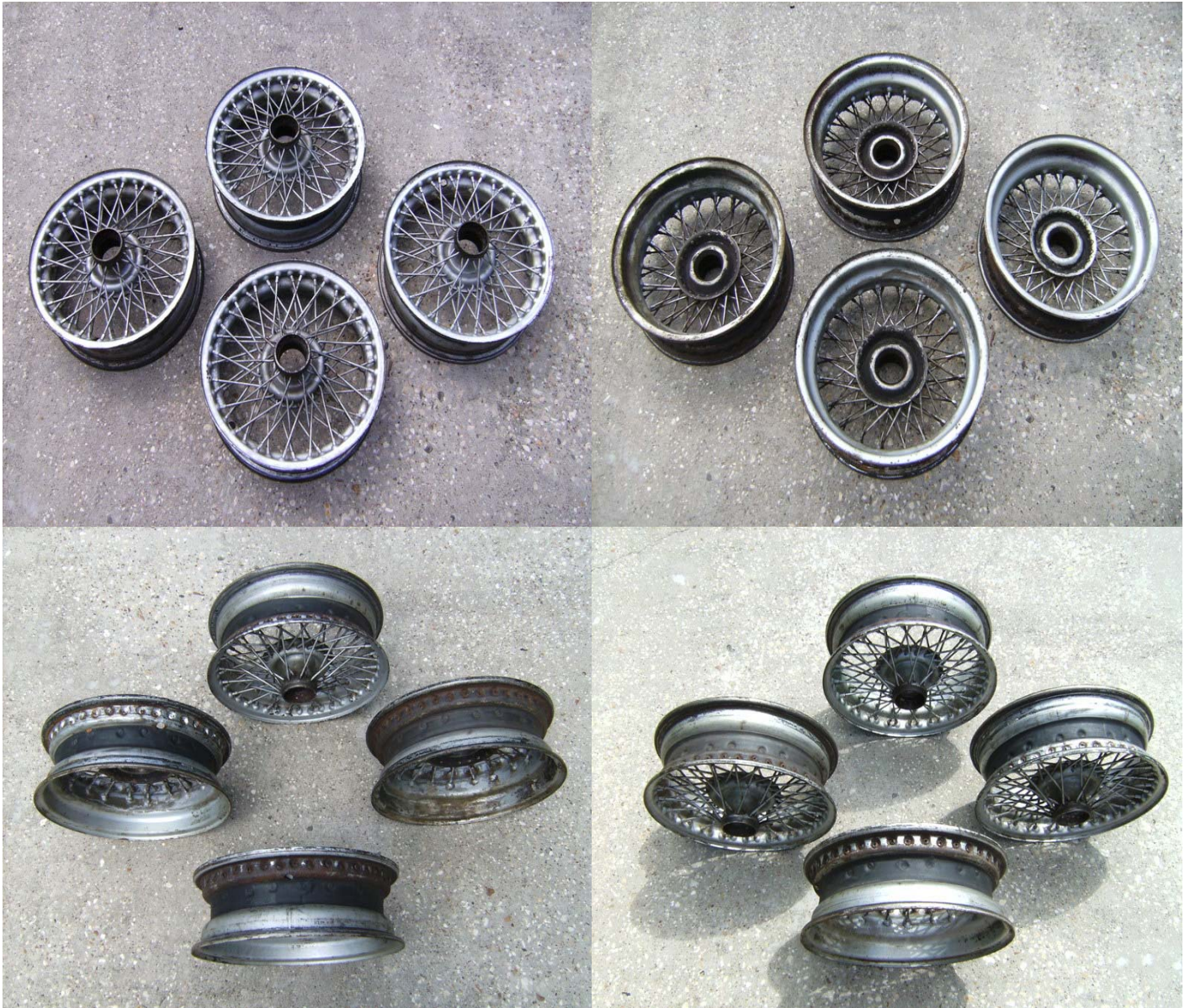
# FOR SALE

## 15" Wire Wheels

Set of four 60 spoke painted wire wheels - Small amount of surface rust

No broken or loose spokes - Good spline grooves \$200

Contact- Bob Relick, 713-875-5757, rrelick@comcast.net



**NEXT MEETING:  
SATURDAY,  
8:30 AM  
JANUARY 10  
OTTO'S BARBEQUE  
5502 MEMORIAL @ RENICK  
HOUSTON**



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