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Inter-Marque

Vintage Foreign Cars in the Upper Midwest

Monthly

AN E-MAIL NEWSLETTER

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it too!



Off to the races!

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EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS are sincerely invited. Send words and/or photos to the e-mail address above.

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British Iron Society of
Greater Fargo (701-293-
6882)

**Citroën Car Club of Minne-
sota** (www.citroenmn.com)

Jaguar Club of Minnesota
(www.jaguarminnesota.org/)

Lotus Owners of the North -
LOON (tlp50@earthlink.net)

Mercedes Benz Club of
America, Twin Cities
Section (952-829-0848)

Metropolitans from Minne-
sota (651-653-0352)

**Minnesota Austin-Healey
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Minnesota Ferrari Club
(LSand007@mn.rr.com)

Minnesota MG Group
(www.mmgg.org)

Minnesota MG T Register
(www.mnmgr.com)

**Mini-Sota Minis, Pizza
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(frozenquest@yahoo.com)

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Nordstern Porsche Club (www.
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North Star BMW Car Club
(www.northstarbmw.org)

The Regulars Twin Cities
Vintage Scooter Club
(www.minnescoota.com)

**Stella del Nord Alfa Romeo
Owners Club** (esolstad@
presenter.com)

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(www.twincitiesvwclub.com)

Vintage Sports Car Racing
(www.vscr.org)

Volvo Sports America Minne-
sota Chapter (612-789-
0851)

Z Owners Club of Minnesota -
ZOOM (www.zownersofmn.
org)

Clubs listed in bold are members of the InterMarque Council. We would like this to be as complete a listing as possible. Does anybody out there know whether that Morris Minor Club ever get off the ground? Send info/rumors/whatever on clubs not listed to andylindberg@earthlink.net. Thanks in advance. There is no charge for the listing.

Have a comment? Send Letters to the Editor to InterMarque Monthly, 923 St. Clair Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105 or andylindberg@earthlink.net. While mail cannot be answered personally, IMM will publish as many smarty-pants letters and responses as space permits.

A DAY ON THE HILL

A first-person account of Healey Hillclimb II

Words by Dave Meek; photos and captions by Andy Lindberg

Hats off to Tom Hazen and crew for holding a very successful Healey Hillclimb II. The event was held Saturday, September 13 at Afton Alps. Tom's excellent organizational efforts again left nothing to chance, except the weather. Mercifully, the rain didn't come and the event never looked back. Phil Vanner provided coffee and breakfast rolls for the masses. Thanks Phil.

Tom's greatest talent appears to be the number of volunteers he's able to muster to assist with an event. Too many volunteers helped for me to mention them all, but they included: Curt "skunk hat" Carlson, Steve "Autocross" Rixen, Gary "recognize that laugh anywhere" and Barb Ronning, Jack and Fran Stein, the Johnks, Mike "big pickup" Martin, to name just a handful. Participants arrived early to assist in setting up the course, sweeping the route, and providing trucks and trailers to haul the equipment. It's this great group of people that make these events so much fun and successful. It should also be pointed out that Tom and several others spent many days at Afton prior to the event making sure every thing was just right. The large investment in time and planning paid off in a perfect event.


There were several Healeys at the event, a Sprite and several big Healeys. More race cars ran than last time and it was interesting to see how well they made





Curt (skunk hat) Carlson and Paul (black flag) Weidner


it through the autocross course at the bottom of the hill (not their forte). Overall the car selection was about as varied as you can get, from a Volvo race car to daily drivers. I'll let you review the results list to see who ran what cars and what their times were.


For those of you that didn't make the event, here's a taste from one participant's eyes:


 7:00 AM – Leave for the event and enjoy the drive, I think the weather's going to hold.


 8:00 AM – I arrive early enough to make sure that I'm not late for the driver's meeting. Curt Carlson meets the cars at the top of the hill to sign waiver. I hurriedly sign and pretend I don't see the waiver clauses about giving up my first born and such. Curt gives me a green sticker for my shirt. I feel like I've won already.


 8:05 AM – Wow! There's, like, 30+ people here already.


 8:06 AM – Did someone rob MnDOT? The orange sea of cones reminds me of 494.

 8:10 AM – Grab a parking spot and go check out the facilities. Hey, there's hot coffee, rolls and cereal! Thanks Phil. The coffee is hitting the spot.

 8:15 AM – Everyone is emptying their cars like they're starting restorations right there in the lot.


 8:30 AM – I join in. Two folding chairs, cooler, tools, spare parts, extra fluids, seats, spare tire, towels and a kitchen sink fill an adjoining parking space. I pretend that this is going to make a difference.

 8:35 AM – Registration begins. Tom has provided numbers mounted on flexible magnets for the cars. This is getting serious. Tom has a color instruction sheet for us, he says it's important. I notice that no one is reading it. I marvel at the amount of color handouts Tom always has. Make mental tip to investigate ink company stocks.

 8:36 AM – It hits me. I've got number 13. Could this be the day my car dies? Well, if the engine is going to blow up why not halfway up the hill hitting 6000 rpm?

 8:38 AM – The Red Bull promotion car arrives. I don't want a Red Bull, I NEED one.



 8:40 AM – Slap numbers on my car and take a tour of the other participant's cars. Fast Al's Mazda looks impressive in sparkly orange. The Mitsubishi Lancer Evo driver (Salah Khuhro) is very serious about the course and

getting a good time. He gets me thinking about removing more from my car, trim pieces perhaps?



Course (co)designer Steve Rixen points out the sandtraps, the rough, and how you better not slice when you should be hooking.

☞ 9:30 AM – Tom calls on me to read the next paragraph. After some initial confusion (mine), five fellow drivers point out where we’re at on the driving instruction sheet. It’s mostly short words, and I thank my lucky stars. The paragraph is something

helmet manufactured in 1974. Is that a bad thing? Make mental note to buy a helmet. I notice that the real racers have their name, blood type and shoe size on the back of their helmet. Should I add my mother’s maiden name? I didn’t say that out loud.

🚗 10:50 AM – Cars are starting to line up in the first group. I look for any last minute items to remove from the car. I tune the radio to “LITE FM.” That should help.

🚗 11:00 AM – It’s time for staging and I’m getting close to the front. Somewhere I remember that this run isn’t timed. I consider taking it REALLY slow to memorize the course and be able to plan better for the runs that count.

🚗 11:05 AM – The car ahead of me disappears and Tom waves me towards the start line. “Take it easy,” I tell myself as I ease the car forward.

🚗 11:06 AM – Tom counts down as I try to lower my rate of breathing. “Go!” Tom yells and I hit the accelerator like a man possessed. I lurch forward into the course. I’m in second gear before the first tight corner appears. Body roll and screeching tires tell me that I’m not sticking with my strategy. Heck with that, this is more fun! Around the course I visualize MnDot workers leaping for safety on 494. Take that! Now I’m at the last curve and it’s up the hill. I’m in the wrong gear! Note to self: 1st gear on bottom, shift to second going up hill. I chug up the hill past the workers to the first of two chicanes. It looks like a scooter would have a tough time making it through. I make it though with all the grace of a capsizing canoe. Through the second chicane I spy the finish line. The “jersey” barriers leap into view and finally there’s Curt, skunk hat and all, waving me to the left to line up with all the other cars that have completed their first run.

🚗 11:07 AM – The adrenalin is still pumping through me as my hands

🕒 8:45 AM – White, souped up, rubber bumpered MGB’s are all over the place, V6’s, V8’s whatever it takes...

🕒 8:55 AM – Time to head to the driver’s meeting. Chug free Red Bull like I’ve been in the desert all week. It seems to mix well with the coffee and sprinkle donut. Who says drivers aren’t real athletes?

🕒 9:00 AM – Tom’s ready to start but we’re missing some drivers. Some are still in the lot still trying to lighten up their cars (cleaning the windshield, remove heavy bug corpses from the grill, etc.).

🕒 9:15 AM – Tom gets rolling with the meeting. Steve Rixen gives an overview of the course. It’s longer and more interesting than last time. Steve does a great job in balancing fun with safety in setting up a course. Tom announces that we have “jersey” barriers for safety. My mind starts to wander, why the name “jersey” barrier? Is it because hitting one is like hitting a jersey cow?

about not drinking beer and throwing empties at participants. Good idea.


☠️ 9:45 AM – Tom emphasizes safety again. I notice that between all the smiling faces, Salah (the Mitsubishi Lancer Evo guy) is serious, TOO serious about all this. I contemplate taking more things off my car and putting them in his.


🚗 10:00 AM – Still more safety stuff. Tom’s doing it right, get people thinking now so we can have fun in future years.

☞ 10:30 AM – Review schedule of the three groups. One group will drive the course, group two will man the checkpoints and corners and the third group will take continue to empty their cars out in the lot (or rest). After a group is finished the groups will rotate to either rest or working the corners.

🕒 10:45 AM – Everyone is everywhere at once. I’m looking at the helmets and pick out a purple, sparkly “disco”


shake taking off my gloves and the 1974 “disco” helmet. I definitely need to investigate another helmet but it does look light.


 11:15 AM – The cars of the first group are finished and it’s time to head down the hill. We follow each other down the hill and take the road behind the chalet and around the lot back to the starting area. Out of the blue, Tom mentions that there are more loaner helmets in a duffle bag in the lot. Alright, the helmet is so bad others are starting to notice. Sorry disco helmet, I’m trading up.


 11:20 AM – First timed run goes well as I don’t repeat the gear and rpm choice. Have they moved the chicanes closer together? We return to the bottom and it’s time to figure out which corner I’m supposed to be at.

⑥ 11:21 AM – I’m supposed to be at Corner #6, the first chicane. Good. I’m going to make sure a car can physically fit through them. Now I need to walk up the hill, where’s the Red Bull people when you need

them? Mike Martin drives up in his pick-up and we’re saved a trudge up the hill. People bail out at each corner. Thanks Mike!


 11:22 AM – We’ve got so many people at Corner #6 that we’ve assigned each worker a particular cone. I’ve got one of the tall ones. It looks like they’ve moved the cones back to where they should be. I inspect the chalk marks, no evidence of tampering there. “Course is hot,” I hear over the radio as an air horn blasts a single long note into the morning. This hillclimb thing is great, it’s like we’ve got a license to make noise.


 11:25 – During the practice run, a modern MINI hits a cone squarely sending it five feet into the air. “Did I hit a cone?” was the question from the car (Paul Weidner) on his return downhill. Double secret probation for him, if he hits another hill cone then he’s done for the day. I knew those chicanes were tight...


 11:30 AM – A Mini takes the hill and drives past corner #6. It barely needed to turn at all. That’s not fair! It’s Phil Vanner’s Mini, I wonder if he’s got any donuts in there that he



can drop off on his way down. A corner worker goes into the woods muttering something like, “better make sure the cones back here are okay.”

 11:45 AM – Stomach noisily reminds me that Phil did not have donuts for the corner workers at #6 at the ready in his Mini. I eye the sack of goodies Andy Lindberg is helping himself to. “Wow, it looks like you’re planning to man this corner all day,” I remark. Andy indicates that it’s for the corner workers. Tom’s organization strikes again. A banana and a handful of ChexMix and I’m speaking English again.

 12:05 PM – The double blast from the air horn indicates the course is open to two way traffic. I decide to add “air horn” to my birthday list. I hitch a ride downhill in an Opel Manta. I’m always surprised at how many different cars there are at these events.

 12:10 PM - Lunch is served in the Chalet. Hamburgers, brats and chicken are available hot off the grill along with a buffet of fixings and salads inside. It’s the best \$10 I’ve spent in a long time. In line, several of us are



again impressed with the event. What's next, live music?

Zzz 12:30 PM – Sated and a little bloaty, I wander towards a nice comfortable grassy spot to relax. I quickly fall asleep. Unfortunately, I pick a spot next to where the cars need to line up for the afternoon runs. Nothing like straight pipes to bring you back to the world. Now where's an air horn when you need one?

👁️ 1:00 PM – I head to my car and the piles of stuff I've taken out of it. I notice that I could remove the rubber from the windshield wipers and the rock guards off the headlights. I resist the temptation. I notice Salah getting prepped for his run. He's got the same steely look as "Iceman" in the movie TopGun.

🕒 1:30 PM – I walk over to the base of the hill to get a good view of the cars negotiating the lot of cones and beginning their assault on the hill. I notice a couple tramping on the golf green, obviously not golfers. I mention to them that we should try and stay off of the greens. Everyone is friendly as they quickly move off the green. Thank you.

🌸 2:00 PM – I try and explain to an observer that the low orange car is an Elva and not an Elvis or Elvira. I give up and wish I had the air horn again. The conversation turns to a new topic as the Porsche 924 destroys its clutch in an impressive display of blue smoke, ominous odor and the sounds of a high revving engine. I feel bad for the guy who has a long drive back to Eau Claire, WI. It counts as the first spectacle of the day. I mention that there's something wrong with the first car breaking not being a British car. "Like the Elway?" says the guy next to me. Time to change my vantage point.

🌸 3:00 PM – It's our group's turn again as I fire up the car. I approach the start line and there's a flurry of handheld

radio traffic. The Lotus Elan is in a ditch? It needs a tow? No one's hurt? Brian McCullough has a pickup and a tow rope. Now the Lotus is moving? Everyone's okay? I've got visions of Indy cars doing cartwheels into the stands. I concentrate on remembering my limited CPR training. "Annie, Annie, are you okay?..." It turns out that Aaron Courteau's Lotus suffered a broken suspension component and that's why he hit the hill. Spectacle number two.

🌸 3:05 PM - Suddenly Tom is asking me if I'm ready. You bet, let's go! I enjoy the runs. Rich Stadther and I enjoy an "extra run" due to course and timing errors. Not needed as accidents happen and Rich and I are just happy being outside making noise. It's just Tom ensuring that everyone is having a great time. Thanks Tom.



Aaron's Lotus on its first run. Beautiful car.

🕒 4:15 PM – I look at my watch and start doing "clock math" as I remember that we have guests coming over for dinner tonight. Let's see, work my corner until my stint is finished, I estimate that to be around 4:30 PM, then drive like a crazed weasel to Eden Prairie, let's say 45 more minutes. It looks like I'm going to be late. I decide to use the "stunned by an air horn" excuse and continue to stay.

🌸 4:20 PM – Bam! Paul Weidner hits another tall cone on the hill and is black flagged. He was well within control but just cutting the cones a bit close. The evil grin on his face tells it all.

🕒 4:25 PM – I'm manning corner #6 with Steve Rixen. Over the radio Tom announces that Brian McCullough is coming up. I notice that Steve moves uphill and puts more trees between him and the course. I do the same and then start to worry about what could happen to the treat bag. Brian does a good run but it still looks a little scary to us. I believe that he gets every last ounce of performance out of that MGB (Yes, one of the white, rubber bumper ones.)

🚗 4:30 PM – Group finished, I bolt for my car. I say good bye and thanks and begin developing a better excuse for being late.

👜 5:15 PM – I pull into my driveway and realize that my shirt, socks and pants are wadded up in a pile back at Afton Alps. My club name badge is on the shirt so there could be a chance they'll survive.

🚗 Sunday at Toby's – Gary and Barb Ronning hand me my pants, socks and shirt. Thanks! My wife, Kim, gets a lot of mileage out of me "leaving my shirt and pants" at an event. Tom Hazen mentions that he sent out the results via email.

📧 Later Sunday night at home – I check our email for the Hillclimb results. I don't see the email at first and then find Tom's emails are under the "Junk Mail" folder. I eye my wife suspiciously, is that a smirk?

I hope that give you an idea of what the Hillclimb was like. To sum it up, it was a perfect day in terms of weather, fun and most of all, no one hit a tree. Thanks to Tom Hazen and the army of volunteers from the Healey club for a great event!



Local Boys Enter Big-Time Rally



Don Piccard bought his first Morris Minor in 1955. He was selling cars in Texas and figured its power-to-weight ratio wasn't too far off his '55 Chev Del-Ray. Don worked corners for the SCCA and said the Minors could shut down a lot of bigger cars. On the right course.

Don was also into ballooning. His mother, Jeannette Ridlon Piccard, set the women's world altitude record in 1934. Don often flew with her, also loved balloons and stood by them as they fell from favor in the post-WWII era. He set several altitude records himself and founded the Balloon Club of America. He also pursued technical innovations and, in 1962, orga-

nized the first hot air balloon event. It was held as part of St. Paul's Winter Carnival.

Of course he needed a car to haul his balloon to events and races. So in 1966, he ordered a special Minor: a Traveller (station wagon) with the new 1275 cc engine and dual SU's. Minors never had this engine as stock; the biggest mill they were permitted was the somewhat fragile and somewhat anemic 1098. With the 1275 and a small trailer, Don travelled (note cheap pun) to events all over the country. For instance, he won the first Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta, today's biggest hot air balloon event.

Flash forward to 2002. Don still owns the Traveller. On a trip to Mexico (not in the Morris) he visits the Carrera Panamerica, something he remembers from his Texas days. He decides it looks like fun and decides it's time for the Mor-

continued on next page

What is La Carrera Panamerica?

"The modern Pan Am is a revival of the famous international race conducted between 1950-1954. Many of the world's most famous drivers, including world champions, came to Mexico to test their cars, skill, and stamina. The race was sponsored by the Mexican government to inform the world that Mexico had a new system of highways that stretched across the country -- from north to south -- for commerce and tourism. When the race was cancelled in 1955, its purpose had been accomplished." (from the race web site, www.panamrace.com)

Today's race runs from Tuxtla Gutierrez in the south of Mexico to Nuevo Laredo on the Texas



ris
to
make
the run.

Some poten-
tial problems arose. Some people thought Don is too old (77) for an event like this. Don does not. In fact, there is no record of Don even considering his age as an issue.

Another potential problem is his vehicle. It is, after all, a station wagon and some sporty car weenies might object to its participation. Don talked to the event authorities. They thought it's probably OK, but tell him he needs to bring documentation that the vehicle actually did leave the factory with a 1275 engine.

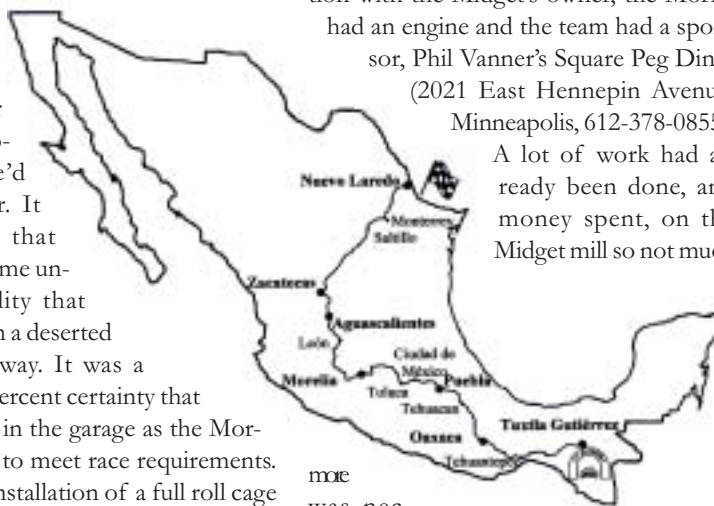
Back in the Cities, Don considered another potential problem, that he'd wreck the car. It became clear that this was not some unlikely possibility that would occur on a deserted Mexican highway. It was a one hundred percent certainty that would happen in the garage as the Morris was altered to meet race requirements. In particular, installation of a full roll cage would mean trashing the car's stock interior. And no telling what all the decals would do to the patina of its paint job.

Plan 2 began to take shape. First, a decepter Traveller was located and hauled to Brian McCullough's shop in Stacy. (BMC British Autos, www.bmcautos.com) Brian and Don began work, gutting the interior and repairing the rust holes. A full roll cage

was installed along with decidedly non-stock race seats, five-point harnesses, a fuel cell, and a large air tank for the semi horns. (About the horns: Don feels he may need something to move cows and spectators out of the way. These should do the trick, even if the cows are in the next county.)

The Morris arrived with the normal 1100 engine so a 1275 was needed. A quick scan around Brian's shop turned up a 1962 MG Midget whose restoration/modification had been put on hold while its owner started a new business. After a conversation with the Midget's owner, the Morris had an engine and the team had a sponsor, Phil Vanner's Square Peg Diner (2021 East Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis, 612-378-0855).

A lot of work had already been done, and money spent, on the Midget mill so not much



more was necessary.

In the meantime, Don located a navigator, Triumph TR3 driver Ed Ryan. Ed had never participated in an event like this so he spent fall weekends at the Healey Hillclimb and the Escape to Wisconsin Rally.

The team should be underway soon,

border. The distance is 3,200 kilometers, or 2,000 miles.

This year's race takes place from October 24 to 30. Each of the seven days consists of "transit" and "special" stages. The "transit" stages are run on regular roads with normal traffic. The "special" stages are three to sixteen miles in length and are run at speed. The Mexican Highway Patrol clears the roads (often in the mountains) and competitors take off at thirty second intervals. At the end of the week, the the winner is the car with the lowest elapsed time for the special stages.

Entries are limited to thirty from Mexico, forty from the U.S. and Canada, and forty from Europe and the rest of the world. Competitors in the Morris' class (historica A) consist of such fare as Mini-Coopers, Porsche 912s, Volvo 1800s, and other sub-two liter vehicles.

The race organizers note that the following Spanish words and phrases might be useful to participants:

- PELIGRO: Danger
- REFACCIONARIA: Spare parts shop
- TALLER: Mechanic workshop
- CURVA PELIGROSA: Dangerous curve
- DISMINUYA SU VELOCIDAD: Slow down
- CASETA DE COBRO: Toll booth
- VULCANIZADORA (or VULCA): Tire repair
- GRAVA SUELTA: Loose gravel

towing the Morris to Texas. For more info on the Carrera, try these two sites:

- www.lacarrerapanamericana.com.mx
- www.panamrace.com

They should have daily updates while the race is underway.

ELKHART LAKE VINTAGE FESTIVAL

September 19 - 21

This is the view
from inside a
Healey racecar.



photos by
Curt Carlson
& Liz
Stadther



Jeff Johnk and his
Healey head up the
straight

Bugeye driver April
Harayda tries on Liz
Stadther's Lotus 61



Free Spam!

Last minute
adjustments to
Rich
Stadther's
Merlyn 11A



Alfas and Healeys
and Volvos, oh my!



Winter Car Storage

Park Bus Company is again providing winter storage for British Sports Cars. Keep your pride and joy in the right company for the long winter

Keep your car or bike happy this winter with heated storage. We have a secure building that is dry, low humidity and heated as well. The building has full fire sprinklers, (your insurance company will love that). The cost for winter storage is \$400.00 for the season for British cars and \$250.00 for bikes. Larger cars will be price adjusted for their size. You can bring in your car anytime after October 15th, and it can stay as long as April 17th. There will be a \$10.00 per day charge for cars left after April 17th.

- To store your car you will need to:
1. Provide Park Bus Co. with a copy of your insurance showing comprehensive coverage for fire and theft in force throughout the storage period.
 2. Have a car that gets along with others. No leaking fuel lines or acid dripping batteries that will be a hazard to its roommates.
 3. A car cover to keep the dust off.

We will even have spring cleanup Tech Session on Saturday, April 10th, where you will be able to wash and wax your car, and have it checked over by an esteemed panel of MG experts prior to the start of the driving season.

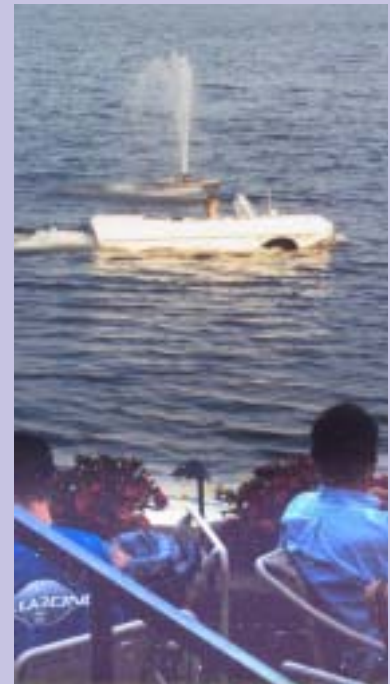
You can reserve a spot for your baby now. Call Dick Wallrich at:

Park Bus Co.
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We're located at the intersection of Hersey & Wydiff in St. Paul

Informal Inter-Marque Car Show,
Sundays, 5 - 7 p.m.

Toby's on the Lake



Make it at least once before the lake freezes over*

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* Amphicar not needed. Toby's parking lot accessible via paved roads as well as the lake.

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AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION



Gerty: 1966 Austin Healey Sprite. HAN8L63423. Signal Red includes Black hardtop. Black interior. Black soft-top. Completely restored and ready to drive anywhere. Gerty and I drove to Thunder Bay this spring and have been on numerous outings long and short. 1275 Engine; ribcase tranny; Flat-top pistons; 9.1/1 compression ratio; Kent 276 cam (mild race idles smoothly down to 1400rpm); engine completely new in 2001; K&N Pancake Air Filters with small ram air pipes; Crossflow radiator; Negative ground conversion with Bosch 60amp alternator; Kent electronic

optical ignition; 1-1/2" lowered and stiffened suspension (all new - not rebuilt springs and shocks (2003), front sway bar (5/8"); Adjustable camber Poly bushings in Lower A-arms, competition stiffened front coil springs. **Asking \$10,500**

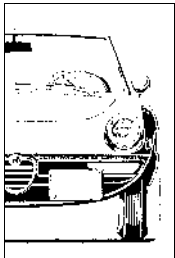


Gidget: 1973 MG Split Bumper Round-Arch Midget GAN5UD136256G British Racing Green (GN-25 light); Black interior, Black tonneau cover. Complete "frame-off" restoration completed in March 2003. Everything refurbished or new except seats, which are original and tastefully covered in grey cloth. This is a quality restoration for anyone with a trained eye. 1275 engine completely new but restored to stock. 600 miles on careful

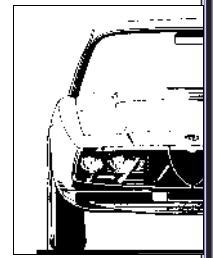
engine break-in. Front 5/8" sway bar. This car is restored to original specs with a few exceptions: Lowered 1" with all new - not rebuilt springs and shocks all the way around. Silicone brake fluid. Front bumper replaced with Bugeye bumperettes to complement the split-bumper look of the back. (original front bumper to go with car to restore to original look if desired). No top installed, original folding top bows blasted/painted go with the car and are also ready to install. (I put the top up on Gerty only about 10 times in the past 13 years) **Asking \$12,500**

Sadly, these two cars, which have been a part of my life for many years, must go. 5 cars (two in a single-star garage) are just too many. They have both been lovingly cared for and restored and I would trust them anywhere. They are both safe and reliable. Gerty appeared on the cover of the "*Healey Marque*" (national AHCA Magazine) in 2001. **Please help me find them a new home.**

Curt Carlson, 612-721-8667(h), 612-251-7492(c), spritemann@hotmail.com or mnhealey@earthlink.net



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ESCAPE TO WISCONSIN RALLY

September 27

by Dave Meek

Ed Solstad needs an award for some of the best driving events around. His tours and rallies exercise some of the best roads in western Wisconsin. Ed, always promoting the next rally, pressed a flyer into my hand at a recent event. The flyer had a picture of an Alfa corning hard on a wooded road. It got my heart pumping and I decided I'm in.

The "Escape to Wisconsin" rally was sponsored by the indomitable Stella del Nord Alfa Romeo Club. The flyer stated that the rally would be Monte Carlo Style. I wasn't sure what that meant but figured that champagne must be involved.

(Side note: My wife and I spend 30 minutes surfing eBay and the Internet looking for Alfas after seeing Ed's beautiful Giulia.)

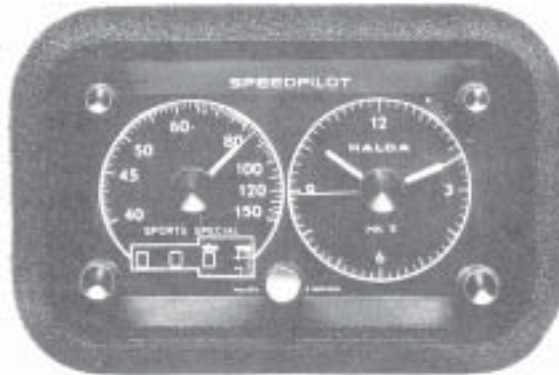
I started calling friends, family, neighbors and others in order to locate a navigator. My wife, Kim "eagle eyes" Meek, waved off being a navigator. She'd already completed more miles in the XK150 this season than any spouse should! I set out to find a replacement. What made this so difficult was the high bar Kim set. (Alright, I'm just trying to earn points here.) I called my old roommate. "No can do." I emailed my running buddy. "Nope, going up north." I even cornered my neighbor. "No way, I've seen you drive." At this point I got creative. I called my friend's ex-wife but it's "no" again. By Thursday evening I felt the pressure.

I wanted to drive in the rally and would have preferred another person holding a clipboard vs. myself doing both driving and navigating (cuts down on the number of four wheel drifts). Now that my regulars had bailed and my co-workers were beginning to avoid me, I seriously

considered going down to the Gas 'N Sip and asking strangers.

Out of the blue I got a call from Gene Berghoff. He's ripe for a drive or rally but needs to be back in town before 5:30 PM. Hmm, it looks like he's not an option but I gave Ed a call to verify timing.

Ed confirmed my fears but presented a great alternative. He needed checkpoint people (nothing to do with Homeland Security, I hoped) and gave us two early checkpoints so we could leave before the end of the rally.



Saturday morning I prepped the XK150 and packed supplies. Into the cooler went food, beer, sodas and bottled water. I checked the fluids in the car. Added half a quart of oil and topped off the radiator. Brake and clutch fluid looked good. It'd been awhile since I'd checked the carburetor oil, so I topped that off (more on this later). Checked tire pressures and we were ready to go.

The rendezvous point for the rally was Stockholm, WI. A tourist stop on the east side of Lake Pepin, it's right in the middle of some of the best rally roads around. Stockholm also has antique shops, cafes and other shopping. I highly recommend stretching your legs and walking around if you are passing through. It took an hour and a half to get there from Eden Prairie.

Ed set up shop between a bakery and a café. We had plenty of time so headed to the bakery for some chocolate/crème pastries. They were so good I wanted to skip the rally and just stay and eat. Ed holds the drivers meeting and groups scramble to their cars. The rally has begun. I notice one crew getting into a deep red BMW M3. I decide it would be a nice replacement for my rusty Maxima.

Ed is very organized and has a checkpoint envelope for us. It contains a set of rally instructions, a map with the rally route highlighted, a set of labels to record the times, and a cheat sheet with estimated open/close times for each checkpoint. We also receive a digital timer synched with the starting time. It looks pretty complicated so I hand it to Gene. Ed explains what we need to do and how to do it. I have no idea what he's saying as I'm contemplating a return to the bakery.

I give in and grab some Swedish donuts (this IS Stockholm, after all) before heading for the car.

Ed takes us to the first checkpoint and explains in detail what we need to do. Ed has the facial expression of a person trying to explain something to people who don't speak any English. Gene and I split the duties. Gene will run the clock and yell out the times when the cars arrive at the large orange sign. I will write the time down on a label and hand it to the navigator of the vehicle.

Ed takes off and Gene and I are left to our own devices. The first order of battle is to eat the Swedish donuts. Still warm from the oven, dipped in butter and then sugar, they are delicious. Gene, originally wanting just a bite, devours his like he hasn't eaten in a week. We check the estimated first arrival time. Do we have time to head back for more donuts? Krispy

Kreme has been dethroned as the king of donuts, but we resist temptation.

We set up the checkpoint sign which consists of a steel post that we push into the moist dirt and a two foot by three foot plastic sign displaying a giant checkmark. The road is lined with sleepy forest on both sides. Apart from a few bird sounds, everything is completely still. After what seems like hours (20 minutes, actually), we hear the sound of an approaching car. A blue Alfa drives up and Gene announces the time with authority. None of the cars have numbers on them and I'm supposed to ask them what car they are.

"Number One," is their response. I write down their time, add three minutes to compute their "out" time and then hand them the label. I decide that a blue Alfa would be a nice replacement for my rusty Maxima. I love that exhaust note.

Over the next ten minutes all of the cars roll through our checkpoint. Gene is always alert with the timer and I'm writing as fast as I can. While I'm handing a checkpoint label to one car, a Morris Minor blasts past but doesn't stop. Maybe they're just out for a drive but they did seem very serious. After the other cars have gone past, the Minor returns asking if they should have stopped for a time. "Yes," I answer, and hand them their label.

A short note on the Minor, it's a right hand drive, woody wagon that has been fitted with a roll cage, racing fuel cell and a rally computer. It sports a number and signage from the La Carrera Panamericana. (See page XM) The driver has a steely, determined look in his eyes, similar to my grandfather when we asked him about getting his Purple Heart in WWII.

We man the checkpoint until the closing time listed on our cheat sheet. We wait it all the way out because the number of cars that came through was more than we were told were running. Were there

late entrants or is this just Swedish pastry induced memory deprivation? I'd hate to close it down early and miss a car. Eventually, we decide to pack it up and head for the next location.

On our way, I notice that the Jag stumbles a bit upon hard acceleration. I recently had it tuned and it's been running better than my modern car. This bothers me and I mentally chew on it. A-hah, I know what I did! I forgot to put the carburetor dampers back in after topping off the dashpot oil this morning. We pull over. I'm not worried about getting home, just that I've wrecked something. I pop the hood. Sure enough, my dash pots are without the brass topped dampers. We find one behind the intake manifold but not the other. We insert the one and proceed.



As we resume driving, we notice several rally cars heading the wrong direction. Some may have missed an instruction. We press on and notice that the next checkpoint road name is not labeled on our map. It's just north of Maxville so we enter the hamlet and take a hard left. The road is narrow and seems to be made up entirely of asphalt patches. Hmm, this may be the wrong road. We're looking for a painted orange stripe, about a foot long by the side of the road. The stripe marks the checkpoint. We don't see it and proceed until we think we're at the next turn on the rally map. I turn the XK around and Gene checks the rally instructions. "It should be 1.34 miles from this intersection," he says. I zero my trip meter and head back. Sure enough, at 1.4 miles we locate an orange spray-paint mark that we missed coming the other way.

A little cocky now that we've got one under our belt, we set up the checkpoint.

Sign on the orange mark, chairs unfolded, cooler opened and beverages served. We're ready! This checkpoint is around a corner and down a slight hill. Participants won't be able to see it until they are on top of it. A few minutes later Ed arrives in his beautiful Alfa Giulia. I figured he knew our limited capabilities and expected to find the checkpoint unmanned. He tries unsuccessfully to hide his surprise that we found it.

A cloud of blue brake dust announces the arrival of the first car. It's a new Subaru WRX STI. The large Brembo brakes are impressive and brought the car to a near halt in a few feet. The driver has a huge grin on his face as I hand the timing label to the navigator. Up goes the passenger window and the car quickly disappears down the road with a high pitched turbo whine. I decide that a new WRX STI would be a nice replacement for my rusty Maxima. The all wheel drive would be handy come winter.

I notice that there are several couples running the rally. I hope for their sake it's not a first date. All of the cars do seem to be having a fun time. At this checkpoint, the fourth on the rally, the cars arrive in different order and not in the order they should. There will be plenty of stories to tell later. Gene and I wait 20 minutes past the checkpoint close time as the red BMW M3 hasn't arrived. Finally, needing to head back, we close up shop.

Normally we would head to the end point of the rally to drop off our equipment and relax. That location today is the Pickle Factory in Pepin. All of Ed's rallies end up at a local tavern for a bite to eat, a beer and the opportunity to compare notes with other teams.

Today, Gene and I head back to Minneapolis and enjoy the purring XK engine, the occasional thumbs up from other motorists and the satisfaction of a day well spent. I can't tell you who finished where but I can recommend the Swedish donuts when passing through Stockholm. If you have the opportunity to participate in one of Ed Solstad's rallies or tours you won't be disappointed. **See you there!**

OUR CARS



Randy Byboth (Quality Coaches) inserts a new wheel bearing

1963 Austin-Healey Sprite 1973 Triumph TR6

Since we last talked, the Sprite has gone from a three wheeled vehicle to four, back to three, and now at four (although only two are reliable). Following the episode where the front left wheel flew off on I-94, I replaced the wheel with a new one. In addition, new brake rotors were installed as one had developed a flat spot from skidding on the freeway.

So off we went, for about a week. Then a friend shook the wheel and said I needed to walk home. The bearing and wheel hub were dead. A new used wheel hub and bearing set and the front left wheel was ready to hit the road. But my friend shook the other three wheels and pronounced only one as healthy.

The other two will be acted upon next

spring as will the TR6's leaking master brake cylinder. Plus a lot of other things too numerous to list here.

Vintage Sportscar Flashcards



Jaguar XK120
 Roadster, Convertible, Coupe
 Great Britain
 Size: Large
 Front engine, rear drive; 6 cylinders (3.4 l)
 Similar: XK140
 Years: 1948-1955 (XK120); 1955-1957 (XK140)

* Multinational edition will be ready for Christmas.
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INTERMARQUE CALENDAR

INTERMARQUE SHOWS & EVENTS

- FEBRUARY 22, 2004** **All British Swap Meet & Auto Jumble** Wheaton, IL. Hosted by Chicagoland MG Club and the Chicago area British Car Union. Two buildings, 100 vendors, and over 900 visitors. Free parking and \$5/person admission. Info: chicagolandmgclub.com/swapmeet/
- JUNE 4 - 6** **Rendezvous 2004** Winnipeg, Manitoba. Date has not been confirmed as of October 15. Caravans to the event are being organized by the Minnesota MG Group (and probably by other clubs as well).
- JULY 31** **Ellingson's All-British Car Show & Swap Meet** Rogers, MN Organized by the Minnesota MG Group. **NOTE NEW DATE.** On the traditional date in August, the MGs are heading to Grand Rapids, Michigan for John Twist's University Motors Summer Party.

RECURRING INTERMARQUE EVENTS

- InterMarque Informal Car Show** Every Sunday, April 13 **through October**, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. Toby's in Oakdale. Come on out and bring your: MG, Triumph, Mini, Citroën, Jensen, Jaguar, Morgan, Alfa, Austin, Delorean, Mercedes, TVR, Riley, Ferrari, Bentley, Rolls Royce, Land Rover, VW, Fiat, Lotus, Alvis, etc. Located on Century Avenue off I-94 east of St. Paul.
- Test Days** Second Saturday of the month **through October**. Minnesota Highway Safety Center near St. Cloud. Get a taste of driving a road course, improve your driving skills or test your sports car. Entrants need a helmet and seat belt, plus a rollbar for open cars. You don't have to be a racer to enjoy the fun. Instruction is available for newcomers. Info: Bill Groschen 952-746-8880 or www.vscr.org.

INTERMARQUE RACES, RALLIES, & TOURS

- OCTOBER 18** **Minnesota MG T Register Fall Colour Tour** Deetails later. Info: www.mnmgtr.com
- OCTOBER 17 - 19** **Mid Ohio** Can't end your race season yet? Try this new event. Two and three day race entries are available, with the early bird discount applying through September 22. Info: www.vscda.org
- OCTOBER 18 - 19** **That Looong Race** Or if Ohio's too far, try this event at Blackhawk Farms Raceway in Illinois. Hosted by the Chicagoland Sports Car Club. Info: my.execcpc.com/~mcscc/info1019.html
- NOVEMBER 15** **Il Diavolo Rally** Maiden Rock to Pepin, WI. Hosted by Stella del Nord Alfa Romeo. Great gravel with lots of fine topography and such hard to find features as water splashes and sand traps. First car out at 10:00 a.m. with first car in at 4:30 p.m. Tulip diagrams. Brisk but not silly average speeds. No trophies but all participants receive the coveted "Mangia La Mia Polvere" (Eat My Dust) bumper sticker. Info: Ed Solstad esolstad@presenter.com
- MAY 8, 2004** **Healey Hillclimb III** Afton Alps, MN Hosted by Minnesota Austin-Healey Club. Info: Tom Hazen tom_hazen@adp.com 612-237-1883
- MAY 14 - 16** **Donnybrooke Vintage Revival** Brainerd International Raceway, Brainerd, MN Hosted by Vintage Sports Car Racing (VSCR). Info: Rich & Liz Stadther 651-698-1981 or www.vscr.org
- JULY 23 & 24** **Rally in the Valley** Paradise Shores, WI Hosted by Minnesota MG Group and Chicagoland MG Club. Call **NOW** to make reservations at Paradise Shores (1-800-657-4512). Info: Steve or Diane Rindt 715-832-8316 or sdrindt@msn.com or chicagolandmgclub.com/guests/ritv/ritv2003.html

MARQUE NATIONALS & UPPER MIDWEST REGIONALS

- JUNE 18-20, 2004** **Citroen Rendezvous** Saratoga Springs, NY. Info: members.aol.com/citq/
- JUNE 20-25** **Austin-Healey Conclave** San Antonio, TX Info: Bonnie Ayer 210-340-0377, Edie Lowery 281-469-2610, or Anne Johnson 713-664-6445
- JUNE 24 -26** **TRA National** Springfield, OH Hosted by Miami Valley Triumphs. (TRA is the national club catering

to Triumph TR2's, 3's, and 4's. Info: www.miamivalleytriumphs.org or www.triumphregister.com

JUNE 24 - 27

North American MGB Register Convention Parsippany, NJ Hosted by MG Car Club of Central Jersey. Info: Bob Cherzen rcherzen@optonline.net or www.mg2004.com

JULY 14 - 18

Vintage Triumph Register National Convention Richmond, VA. Info: www.vtr.org

JULY 20 - AUG 18

Rolls-Royce Centennial World Tour Baltimore, MD to Monterey, CA. Hosted by the Rolls-Royce Owners Club. Celebrates "the Meeting" of Charles Rolls and Henry Royce on May 4, 1904. Info: Peter Lind (707-967-8202 or bonpete@earthlink.net) or www.rroc.org/worldtour

SOMETIME, 2006

All MG Convention Location: TBD. Dates: TBD. Once every five years all of the national MG clubs (aka registers) hold their national conventions together. The last of these meets was held in St. Paul in 2001. The next is scheduled for 2006 and the MG Council of North America wants your input on location, types of events, etc. Rick Ingram, chief muckymuck of the combined MG groups' group, can be reached at P.O. Box 588, St. Joseph, IL 61873 or mowog1@aol.com. (Note: Triumph drivers need not write and suggest that the meet be held in Budapest. The MG people assure us that they already know what to do with Triumph ideas.)

REGULAR CLUB EVENTS

British Iron Society Informal gathering, **every Saturday** morning at Courtyard Cafe, 3105 North Broadway, Fargo, ND. Info: Don Carlson 701-293-6882

Mercedes Benz Club of America, Twin Cities Section Informal dinner and discussion, Lyon's Tap, Eden Prairie. Info: 952-829-0848

Minnesota Austin-Healey Club Pie With the President, **first Wednesday** of the month, 7:00 p.m. Bakers' Square, Highland Village, St. Paul. Info: Tom Hazen 612-237-1883 tom_hazen@adp.com or www.mnbealey.com

Minnesota MG T Register MG Luncheons, **every Tuesday**, 11:15 a.m. American Legion, 6501 Portland Avenue, Richfield. Info: Bob Figenskau 952-935-7909 or www.mnmgr.com

Minnesota SAAB Club Monthly Meeting, **first Thursday** of the month, 7:30 p.m., the Ground Round at the Har-Mar Mall in Roseville. Info: Chris Luick 507-252-1888 or www.mnsaabclub.org

Minnesota Triumphs Monthly Meeting, **second Thursday** of the month (**EXCEPT NOV. & DEC.**), 7:00 p.m., Fort Snelling Officers Club. Info: John Withrow 952-736-8391 or www.mntriumphs.org

The Regulars, twin cities vintage scooter club Semi-monthly gathering (weather permitting). **First and third Sunday** of the month, 2:00 p.m., Pizza Luce, Lyndale and 32nd in Minneapolis. Info: www.minnescoota.com

Stella del Nord chapter Alfa Romeo Owners Club Monthly Gathering, **second Monday** of the month, 7:00 p.m. Various locations. Info: Ed Solstad 612-822-0569 or esolstad@presenter.com

Twin Cities VW Club Monthly meeting, **first Wednesday** of the month, 7:00 p.m., West Side VW. Meeting usually lasts 30 to 45 minutes and attendees gather afterward at TGI Fridays on I-394. Info: www.twincitiesvwclub.com