

# The Morris Gazette

British Motoring Club - New Orleans

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## *BMC-NO is affiliated with:*

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If you are a member of these or any other national register or club, please let us know.

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## President's Message

Well folks, another busy year shaping up. As you read this we have just had our ever popular Middendorf's cruise and feeding frenzy. Fifty three people showed up, along with 16 British Cars. As usual, the thin fried catfish was delicious. Our car show is fast approaching. I urge everyone to get their cars out, clean them up, and enter the show. It does not matter if your car is a show stopper or not, taking part in your club's biggest event of the year is what its all about. Even old clunkers (like my Spitfire) can get attention from people interested in some original part and how it attaches, or some upgrade to make the car more reliable on the street.

As president, I now have this bully pulpit available to preach another of my favorite subjects. If you are a serious enthusiast you should join the national organization for your marquee. All the national clubs hold regional and national conventions. These are usually multi-day events featuring more activities than just the car show. I have attended many of these events and always find the people very friendly and helpful.

The VTR S.Central Regional will be April 25-28 in Granbury TX. I will be there. July 3-6 is the 11th NAMGBR National Convention at Grapevine TX. With the National event being so close to home, all you serious MGB owners should consider attending. Frazer Rice is planning to attend the NAMGAR National at Charlottesville VA July 17-21 with his MGA.

And lets not forget the Pensacola Show April 20. This is a "local" show for all marquees. We usually have groups convoy over on both Friday and Saturday mornings. Our club has won their participation trophy many times and we should do it again. OK, lets get Gooooooooooooing.

Harold O'Reilly

**EXTRA! EXTRA!**  
Kevin Gambino has been forced to

relocate his shop and is having a moving sale. For the last couple of weeks in February, he will be unloading new and used parts, cheap! Drop by & see if you can pick up some bargains!



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## January 29 Minutes

The meeting was called to order by new president Harold O'Reilly at 7:25. Guests present included Martin, owner of a 57 MGA, and Jacob, owner of a 75 TR6.

**Past Events:** Butch Frutos reported on the Christmas party. The Driftwood Country Club was not as warm and personal as someone's home, but it was a fine place for a party, with plenty of parking. Roger Gibson reported on the Scavenger Hunt. (See page 4)

**Upcoming Events:** The Middendorf's run is coming up on February 17th. It was noted that Mimi's, the convoy meeting place on the North Shore, has gone out of business, but the North Short convoy will continue to meet there. Now it will be the parking lot where Mimi's "used to be", where the Piggly Wiggly "used to be" before that! (Ever notice how often we use the phrase "where (fill-in-the-blank) used to be" in giving directions?)

The Pensacola show will be coming up April 20. Details for convoys will be worked out later. The VTR Regional will be in the Dallas-Fort Worth area this year April 25-28. Harold O'Reilly plans to attend. The National MGA show will be in Virginia this year and Frazer Rice plans to go.

**Car Show:** The volunteer sheet was discussed. Several positions were filled, but we still need people for several more jobs. Contact any board member to volunteer.

Bill Harris has been hustling donations of catalogs, brochures, and discount coupons for auto related items for the Goodie Bags. If your business or employer has a gross of promotional items they can donate for the Goodie Bags, contact one of the officers. Lubriport Labs has donated advertising flyers for the club. Several members took them to post around town. The T-shirt design was displayed. This year's shirt will be navy blue with crossed British and American flags. They should be available for purchase at the Middendorf's run. Cliff Hughes reported that Peak BMW would be marketing the new Mini. Peak might be able to provide one for display at our show, but they may not arrive in time and the entire allotment is already sold out.

**Other News:** Central Louisiana SCCA does autocross racing at Tanger Outlet Mall. Jerry Masterson has invited our club to come race with them. They are a smaller group and each driver can get more runs into the afternoon. Delta SCCA in New Orleans had 105 drivers at their last meeting, including Keith Vezina's daughter, Kim. Keith said it was VERY scary! Only one British car participated, a BRG Bugeye Sprite. Cort Musgrave Jr. suggested that members in the market for a car check out the car lots at Bridge House and Volunteers of America. A friend of his found a Triumph GT6 at Goodwill. Frequently, after a car sits a few weeks at their asking price, they will let it go very cheaply if you make an offer.

**Member Projects:** Harold O'Reilly reported that the KISS principle (Keep It Simple, Stupid) applies to British cars. For some time he had been fighting to get his car to idle correctly. The engine would race for no reason and nothing seemed to help. While working on something else, he re-routed the throttle cable. Now the car runs fine – there was a twist in the cable that caused it to bind. Moving it was all it took.

Several members discussed replacement tops. Alden Upholstery, Harold Artigue Trim Shop, and George Tortlige were all mentioned as having done good work on different member's cars. Gambino's will put a top on but only if the top comes with the snaps already on it.

Cliff Hughes reported that he has sold several car parts on E-bay. He sold a differential for \$300. He said that shipping is not always expensive if you shop around. He shipped 2 fenders to Pennsylvania for \$75 using a company that he found on the Internet.

Fran Talley won the 50/50 for \$22. Cathy Greensfelder, Jim Jones and Cliff Hughes won t-shirts. §

### **Scavenger Hunt** by Roger & Carol Gibson

On a cold and windy Sunday January 20, 2002, twenty two brave souls turned out for the first semi-annual Scavenger Hunt.. This event will rotate with the Poker Run. Several British cars were present and two had their tops down: who else but Mike Brown and daughter Becky. Roger Gibson had his top down but he only had a few blocks to drive. The rest were "Tops Up".

The idea of the Scavenger Hunt was to see who could gather the most items on the official list and thus collect the most points. Each item was assigned a point value. For example, a pine cone was worth 5 points and you could bring in up to 5, an egg had 5 points and there was no limit on the number you could collect, a business card was worth 1 point for each different card with no limit( Bill came in with 318 ), a Hooters Chicken wing was worth 10 points but a Hooters Girl was worth 50. No one collected on the Hooters Girl but several tried. And there were many more items on the list.

With mixed feelings at the beginning, everyone was off to find, by any means, the items on the list. The items could be purchased, picked up at your home, at a flea market, garage sale, borrowed, stolen, etc. In other words, there were no questions asked about how the items were obtained.

We were scheduled to finished at the Cafe Du Monde at 4 pm. I really didn't know what to expect. But promptly at 4 pm, everyone arrived, and much to my surprise, they had bags full of stuff. After using the honor system (top three scoring items were verified by me) a total

was made and here are the results. First with 655 points was Harold O'Reilly, Second was Bill and Sally Breithoff with 614 points and Third was Richard and Sue Denneau.

A good time was had by all, and we will do this fun event again. By the way, ask Mike Anderson to show you his Hooter Girl. §

### **DORSET MADNESS #3: A British Street Rod** by Jim Jones

An attempt to operate the gear shift lever from the top cover of my 1949 Austin Dorset's Marina transmission has consumed all my thoughts for the last few weeks. The Marina transmission was chosen because it had good gear ratios for the MGB engine, fits the size requirements for the Dorset's "X" frame, and its bell housing fits up to the MGB engine block with the use of a Marina engine backing plate. I really like the Dorset's original long gearshift lever and I have been willing to go through a lot of trouble in order to accomplish the task.

Three used transmissions were involved: an Austin Marina, a standard Triumph Spitfire, and a "3-rail" Triumph Spitfire transmission in all.

The standard Spitfire transmission (A freebie with a busted tail shaft housing donated by a club member - Thank you, Phillip) was used to see just how similar it and the Marina transmission actually were. I determined that the cases had the same interior dimensions. This would allow the installation of the Marina gear set into a Spitfire case. Why would I want to do this?

This is where the Spitfire 3-rail transmission comes in to play. (This unit I purchased on an E-Bay auction). The unit's control tower is removable and its front end is positioned directly over the transmission's top case opening. Between the control tower and the case is the 3-rail housing. It moves the selectors via three rails or rods, one for 1st & 2nd, one for 3rd & 4th, and one for reverse, not just the one rail like many other British designs. Shifting could be accomplished from directly over the transmission case. This would place the gearshift lever's base as far forward as possible. It will probably be within 2 1/2 inches rearward from its original position.

The 3-rail housing could be mounted to the Marina transmission case, but the Marina case is too tall and the selectors could not reach the gear set.

I completely disassembled both the 3-rail box with its short height case and the Marina box. I proved to myself that the Marina bell and tail shaft housings would fit up to the Spitfire box. Next, I checked that the Marina gear set and bearings would fit the 3-rail Spitfire box.

One more thing was left to do. I set the 3-rail housing in place on top of the transmission case and all the selectors mated up properly with the Marina gear set!

Four studs at the top of the 3-rail housing's top opening will allow the mounting of a fabricated unit to hold the gear shift lever housing cut from the old control unit and its associated parts. The no longer needed top front portion of the Marina tail shaft housing will be removed.

A small amount of modification to the Dorset's original long gear shift lever's bottom end or the welding of a Spitfire gearshift lever bottom end to the Dorset's lever and the job will be

done! A bonus is that I will gain a reverse light switch.

A method of making a reverse lock out device (It was originally located in the unused 3-rail and Marina control unit shift lever holders) is yet to be determined, but several ways of doing just that are in the works.

The shift pattern will be like a Midget or Morris Minor, except that reverse will be: lift up, push far left, and push forward. I can get accustom to that.

Many thanks to Peter Brauen for coming up with the concept. A rebuild kit has been ordered. Soon the combined transmission will be ready with its long gearshift lever.

Keep'um running. Warm weather is on the way! [bmcno@i-55.com](mailto:bmcno@i-55.com) §

### **Jamie's Healey** by Terry Trovato, EMC

They say God moves in mysterious ways, and it must be so. Without what must have been His divine guidance, and the power of the Internet, I would never be able to spin the story I'm about to tell, about finding a long lost dear deceased friend's Austin-Healey 3000. But first, a bit of background.



The year is 1963. The setting, the Kappa Alpha fraternity house at the University of Kentucky. There are approximately 45 of us in the chapter. We sported what later would be known as the "preppy" look: Blue blazer, button-down collared oxford cloth shirt, repp silk tie, starched 100 percent cotton khakis and Bass Weejuns. And our British car of choice was the Austin-Healey. We had seven of them in the chapter. Fred DeSanto and Barney Sutton had 100-6s, and Jim May, William Wood, Charlie McGuire, Jamie Taylor and I had 3000s. Seven Big Healeys, four of them black, three with factory hardtops.

As we graduated one-by-one and went our separate ways, our daily-driver Healeys became more undependable and troublesome, and each of us, save one, slowly sold or traded away our once-prized pieces of British engineering. Only Jamie Taylor saved his, one of the four black cars: a 1960 Austin-Healey BT7; black exterior with red interior.

After graduation Jamie became a Kentucky "gentleman farmer" except he worked his rear end off each day from sunup to sundown. A native of Georgetown, Kentucky, he returned there to run his family farm, which was blessed with a white-columned antebellum home and 1,000 acres of prime bluegrass, which featured a herd of Black Angus cattle, corn, soybeans and tobacco. One day in 1976, Jamie decided it was time to store his beloved college car, so he simply drove his Healey into a shed on the farm not much larger than the car itself, turned off the ignition, and walked away from it. And there it set for the next 20 years.

One early morning in late May 1996, Jamie was operating a large piece of farm equipment on the side of a hill. It had not been as stabilized as he thought. It flipped over, pitching him off, and then rolled over on top of him crushing and killing him instantly. The phone lines started buzzing almost immediately with this horrendous news and all of the old fraternity brothers



began assembling for the funeral. I was some 750 miles away in Mississippi and, because of prior commitments, could not attend.

As I sat thinking of my dearly departed old pal, I couldn't help but reminisce privately about our fleet of KA Healeys and Jamie's car stored in the shed. I had a chance to see his car one summer in the late 1980s during a fraternity reunion party at the farm. Jamie had hired "Johnny White and the Elite Band" from Durham, North Carolina, a black Soul/R&B/Carolina Beach Music outfit that played our kind of music from the 1960s. On one of the breaks, Jamie had grabbed my arm and said "Trovato...come here and see my old Healey." We opened the shed door and there it sadly set, with four flat tires and covered with several inches of dust. "...I'm going to get it restored one day," he admonished. But, working as hard as he did every day at the farm, he just never got around to it.



As his estate was being settled Jamie's widow, Cathy, decided to sell the Healey in its decrepit state, along with an old Packard and Lincoln in similar condition which were also stored on the farm, and all three were dispersed of shortly thereafter.

Fast forward to the present. In late July 2000 I started casually surfing the net for a Big Healey, thinking of all of the great fun I had with my college car. There on one of the British car classified sites was listed "1960 Austin-Healey 3000, black with red interior, Harrodsburg, Kentucky." The seller had included the car's VIN number in the ad. Could this possibly be Jamie's old car, I thought aloud, since Harrodsburg was not that far from Georgetown.

I called Cathy and asked, "Whatever happened to Jamie's Austin-Healey?" She related the story of the sale. I told her there was one posted on the net that sounded like Jamie's car because the year and color scheme were identical. "If it will help, I still have a copy of the paperwork on the car and I'll read the VIN number to you," she said. It was a perfect match. I couldn't believe it—Jamie's old car up for sale. I contacted the seller and related the story to him. He added that the name "Catherine Taylor" appeared on the title as the seller of the car in 1996. It was still for sale so I bought it on the spot. Most of it was "in pieces" and the body was in primer. What a great thrill to find one of our original fleet of seven Big Healeys from the KA house some 38 years later.

It is my intention to restore the car to its original color scheme and drive "The Last KA Healey" with great pride, knowing that once the task is completed Jamie no doubt will be smiling down from Heaven knowing his wonderful old car is on the road again and one of his old pals is at the wheel. §

## Jaguar Club of New Orleans Show

JCNO is pleased to announce that we're holding our annual Concours d'Elegance in conjunction with the British Motoring Club - New Orleans, 12th Annual British Car Day on March 23, 2002.

All Jaguars entered in the BMCNO show may also be



entered in the Concours for \$15 in addition to the BMCNO car show entry fee. We cordially invite all Jaguar owners to compete! Entry forms are available on-line at <http://www.bmcno.org/Show02/JCNOreg.htm> and will be available on site. Of course, all Concours Jaguars will continue to be eligible for all awards associated with the BMCNO show.

The Concours d'Elegance is a Jaguar Club of North America sanctioned event and participating cars will be judged by Official JCNA Rules, with results going towards the JCNA national standings. For more info please call Wayne Henry at (985) 863-3110 §

### **THIRD BRAKE LIGHTS** by Mr. Goodspanner

Adding a centralized third brake light to your British car is not a bad idea. Supplementing your existing brake lights is a particularly good idea if your car's brake lights are small and/or placed low on its rear wings.

One note of caution: When wiring in the third brake light, do not connect it to one of the existing brake lights. This will cause the third light to flash on and off during signaling when the side to which the connection has been made is selected. This is because electrically the brake system and the turning signal system use the same bulb filament on either side of the car. We have all seen this occur while driving down the road after "Joe Handy Guy" in front of us installed his third brake light without reading the instructions.

The third light wire must be connected all the way up front to the brake light switch in order for the light to function properly. Use at least the same gauge wire as is connected to the brake light switch now. You do not want to have any burning wires. Adding an in-line fuse would not be a bad idea.

The third light need not be permanently installed. You can utilize a quick disconnect so that you can remove it for car shows and such. Remember that the third light will need a ground wire. It can be terminated at most any metal part of the car.

On cars with fixed glass rear windows, the light assembly must be flat against the glass. Otherwise, the red light will bounce off the glass and light up the interior of the car at night. For cars with drop tops, I suggest that you mount the assembly behind the rear plastic window. The front center of the boot lid would be a good place. Just fabricate a lightweight bracket or clip to hold the assembly in place between the boot lid and the boot gasket.

Be Seen & Be Safe! [bmcno@i-55.com](mailto:bmcno@i-55.com)

*You know you've owned a British car too long when*

Your divorce settlement specifies who gets custody of the British cars.

### **Newsletter submissions**

Electronic submissions are greatly preferred. Email to [MorrisGazette@cox.net](mailto:MorrisGazette@cox.net) or bring a diskette to the meeting. (MS Word or plain text preferred.) Bring written articles to the meetings, or mail to P.O. Box 73213 Metairie LA 70033

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