



# Side Curtain News

VOLUME 43, ISSUE 1

MARCH 2022

Proud chapter of the  
Austin-Healey Club of  
America since 1979.

## Gateway Healey Association St. Louis, MO



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### Rumblings

We did have a meeting in February! So it seemed time to put out a newsletter! Spring is coming!

### Wash Up—Tune Up is on Saturday April 16th! Bring a dish.

I am inching closer to trying the engine. I am waiting on a choke plate. I have my temporary fuel system set up. I figured out the throttle linkage. But maybe unconventional. I reversed the ball-joint on the pedal shaft lever to get it to clear the intake manifold. The throttle works ok but it is not according to the diagram. I did not see another way. Perhaps someone can tell me if I am wrong. I don't trust the way it was. Also see the picture below. Is this piston supposed to be down before starting the engine? I can push it up slowly but it slowly drops back down. I hope to have the plate in this week and start it next weekend.

My goal is to get it on the road by the end of the year. I have most of the stuff to do it. The question will be getting it painted. We will see.

I am looking forward to a good year!

Phil Ellerbrock, GHA SCN Editor



Me and my better half  
Elizabeth



*Is this piston supposed to be down? There is oil in the suction chamber. I just want to make sure it is right before I start the engine*



GHA Meeting: 4th Tuesday of the Month, 7 PM at Keith Bester's  
115 N Sappington Road, Kirkwood MO 314-821-2372



Don't forget to visit the Gateway Healey Association Web-Site at  
[www.gatewayhealey.com](http://www.gatewayhealey.com)

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## Febrruary Meeting Minutes—Ron Varley

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 by President Sean Dowell.

Members and guests attending: Keith Bester, Jim Cravens, Dennis Dowell, Sean Dowell, Phil Ellerbrock, Dave Massey, Bob McElwee, Lou Salini, and Ron Varley.

Treasurer/Membership report: So far for this year 20 National Club memberships and one local club only membership have been renewed.

The following upcoming events were discussed:

2/26/22 Cars & Coffee at Gateway Classic Cars in O'Fallon, IL (a great place to visit anytime per Dennis Dowell)

4/16/22 Wash-Up Tune-Up at Keith Bester's starting at 11:00am. Bring a dish.

4/17/22 Forest Park Easter Car Show (Gateway Healey will not have a club display this year.)

6/5/22 European Car Show to be held again this year at Mini of St. Louis

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.



**Events calendar in the St. Louis Sports Car Council Gateway Relay at-**  
**[www.stlsc.org](http://www.stlsc.org)**



**Attendees:**

Keith Bester, Steve Nelson, Joe Krekeler, Lou Salini, Steve Hurst, Dave Gueberc, Jeff Homsher, Dave Massey, Jim Reiter



If you are planning on attending a RUMP please email Jim Reiter at  
[j-reiter@sbcglobal.net](mailto:j-reiter@sbcglobal.net)



## *Sean Dowell's progress on his big healey*

*March 2022*



Sean is not a man of many words but these are the latest on Sean's teardown of his Healey. Last time he showed the removal of rear body sections and working on the front steering alignment. This time he is showing the removal of the interior.

He had indicated during the last GHA meeting that he is hesitant to take the vehicle out of driving condition. However with the removal of the driver's seat he may be getting close to the point where he is committed to





## *Sean Dowell's progress on his big healey*

*December 2021*

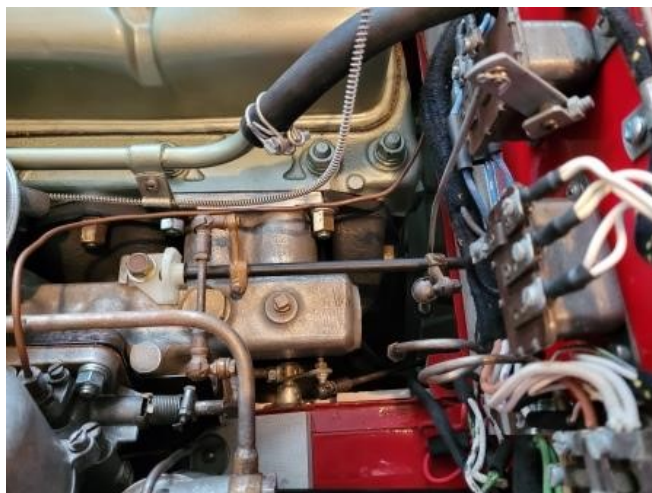




## Phil Ellerbrock's 1959 BN6 Progress



*Getting the engine ready for its first start*



*Figured out the throttle linkage. Not like the article I published in the last edition.*

### Section A.37

#### THROTTLE CONTROL LINKAGE

To prevent the throttle linkage being strained and the throttle levers working loose, the linkage may be adjusted to allow the toe board to act as a positive

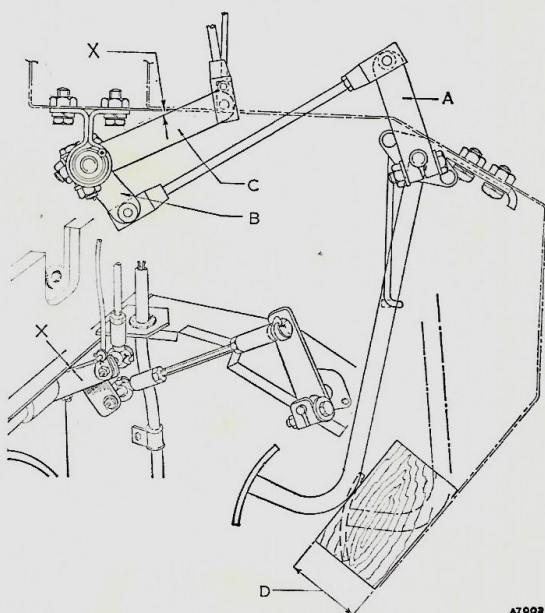


Fig. A.30 Adjustment of the throttle control linkage.

A.25

### A

#### THE ENGINE

stop to the accelerator pedal when the throttles are fully open.

Slacken the pinch bolt on lever "A" (Fig. A.30). The illustration shows the linkage layout for L.H.D. cars. On R.H.D. cars lever "B" is on the right-hand side of the accelerator relay shaft. Place a wooden block "D"  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. (63.5 mm.) thick between the pedal and the toe board. Push the pedal down to retain the block against the toe board. Adjust lever "A" in relation to the pedal cross-shaft to obtain a clearance of  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. (1.59 mm.) at point "X" between lever "C" and the body flange (Fig. A.30). Tighten the pinch bolt on lever "A".

The carburettor control levers must then be set as follows.

Slacken the pinch bolt on levers "A" and "B" (see Fig. A.31).

Set lever "B" at approximately  $45^\circ$  as shown and tighten the pinch bolt, ensuring at the same time that the throttles are not being held open by the idling adjustment screws.

Adjust the length of rod "C" to bring lever "A" parallel with lever "B" (Fig. A.31).

With the pinch bolt of lever "A" still slack, press rod "D" downwards  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. (3.2 mm.) to tension the pedal return spring slightly, and then tighten the pinch bolt on lever "A".

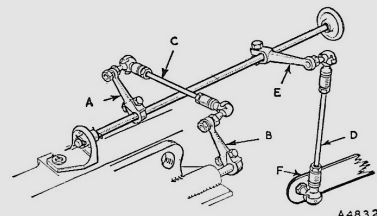


Fig. A.31 Adjustment of the carburettor control levers.

Depress the accelerator pedal fully and check the travel of lever "E". This must be such that it is at least  $20^\circ$  short of the vertical position when full throttle is reached on the carburettors. Adjust rod "D" as necessary to achieve this position.

When the accelerator pedal is fully depressed check that the carburettor throttles are being fully opened.

**NOTE.**—After the linkage has been set it will be necessary to check, and adjust if necessary, the throttle switch operation on cars fitted with overdrive (see Section G.12, "Throttle switch adjustment").

*It is actually fairly well described in the Workshop Manual Section A "Engine" at the very end.*



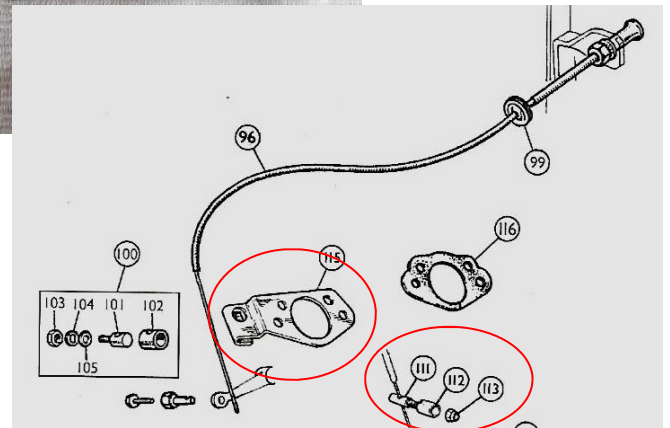
## Phil Ellerbrock's 1959 BN6 Progress



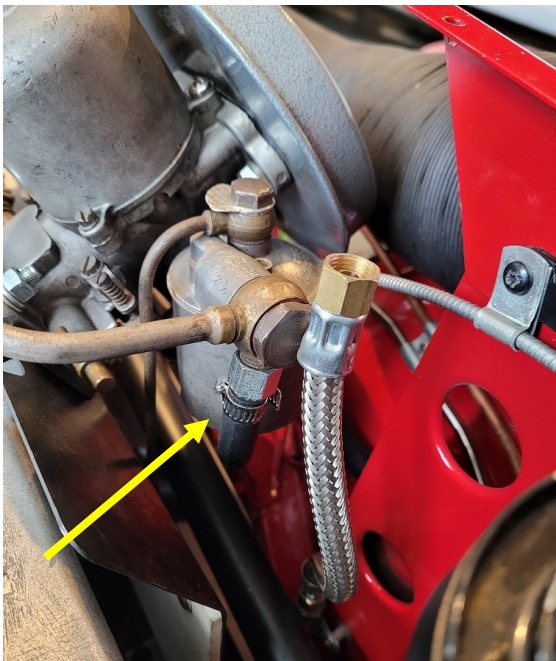
*Pedals are in the right positions*



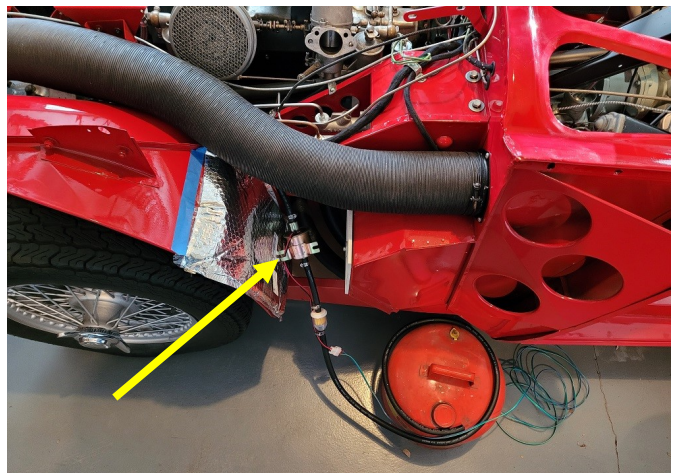
*Choke plate is messed up! And I don't have the trunnion assembly.*



*Ordered a new plate and trunnion assy from British Car Specialists*



*John at BCS recommended Joe Curto (see article from Autoweek) to get a female fuel fitting that would go on a rubber fuel hose.*



*I hooked up a temporary fuel pump, no more than 3 PSI, to a small tank of gas. This should allow me to try to start it without filling to the fuel tank.*



## ESCAPE ROADS

## Carburetor King

*One man perseveres at a dying art*

British carburetor specialist Joe Curto jokes that he's at "the vanguard of a dying industry." Working out of a 2500-square-foot shop in his hometown of Queens, New York, Curto is one of North America's top rebuilders of SU and Stromberg carburetors—which haven't been fitted to a North American production car in at least 20 years.

Like most careers, it started by accident. Although he grew up in unlikely sports car territory, Curto fell in love with the MG TD. "When I was 17 I bought my TD—which I still own. I learned how to repair it because I couldn't afford a mechanic." Joe then became a certified aircraft mechanic, a career he continued when he joined the Navy at 18.

After the service, Curto started repairing British sports cars out of his parents' garage in 1973. He graduated to his own shop because "I liked the work and it provided a living." However, Joe says he "was getting tired of climbing under cars and had little room to bring them inside."

Meanwhile, Curto noticed that *Hemmings Motor News* was starting to expand its advertising of parts and services for old cars. "I decided to do carb stuff," via mail-order, "because that was something I figured people couldn't do themselves and they could easily stick in a box and send by UPS."

He decided to service every variety of SU and Stromberg, but parts were scarce 20 years ago. Often he'd wait weeks for a shipment, only to find that the parts were sometimes wrong.

Curto remembers, "I'd have to make throttle shafts to fill my two-week backlog." As a result, he'd have to produce a larger quantity than needed in order to achieve a low per-unit cost. Then, he'd have the challenge of selling off the balance of the run.

Although Curto buys some parts, he now manufactures many items, including jets, seals and throttle shafts. The parts he produces are bought by shops, catalog vendors and individual customers.

Once Curto gained a clientele, it was only logical to take in other bench work. And be-



JOE CURTO forges ahead in a dying field, with the help of a stash of hand-made parts.

**Carburetors were something people could simply stick in a box and send by UPS, says Joe Curto.**

cause Curto retained his giant collection of shop manuals and aftermarket catalogs, he had the resources to tackle virtually any British car subassembly. Now he also rebuilds electric and mechanical fuel pumps, Lucas wiper motors, turn signal switches, trafficators (semaphore turn signals) and brake and clutch hydraulics. "I'll do anything I can put in a box and ship," he says. In addition, Joe likes the challenge of creating custom carburetors, and, when time permits, he'll take on some complete car restorations.

When asked if he's worried about the future, Curto says that "While the overall market actually gets smaller, there are also fewer guys repairing these things. My business keeps growing because more people find out about me." And even with a shrinking market, Curto is sure he'll have enough work to keep him busy—and happy—well into the 21st century.

—Jonathan A. Stein

## THE FUTURE

March 21 & 23-25

The 1930s: Easy Streets  
& Rough Roads  
Reno, Nev.

The National Automobile Museum (The Harrah Collection) hosts a symposium looking at the automobile and 1930s American society. The keynote speech is by former Chrysler vice chairman and now Exide Corp. CEO Robert A. Lutz. Contact the museum at (775) 333-9300 for more information, or visit its website ([www.automuseum.org](http://www.automuseum.org)).

## THE MARKET

JAMES G. MURPHY AUCTION,  
KENMORE, WASH.

Date: Dec. 4, 1999

Car: 1971 Plymouth Hemi-Cuda convertible. Blue over blue vinyl, buckets, pistol-grip four-speed, 426-cid 425-hp Hemi V8. 32,119 original miles. Correct serial number (BS27R1B315367). No dents, no rust. One of two convertible Hemi-Cudas built in '71, said to be the only one remaining. Overall, in decent, unmolested condition  
Results: Sold at \$410,000



This was reputed to be the last remaining car from a once-large collection owned by a convicted drug dealer. Well-hidden, it was the only car the Feds hadn't located and seized. They cleverly let the felon out on parole, and he made a beeline to his beloved Hemi-Cuda—with the Feds following him. The James G. Murphy auction company specializes in business and heavy-equipment liquidations, so the Hemi-Cuda made its way to the block amidst a procession of backhoes, Caterpillar tractors and Peterbilt trucks. The car was sold, via telephone, to an anonymous bidder in the San Francisco Bay Area. Although it brought twice the pre-auction estimate, muscle-car collectors didn't seem surprised as prices for ultra-rare cars like this one have been skyrocketing recently.

—Keith Martin

Believe it or not, this guy is still in business. Strongly recommended as still the SU king he is located College Point NY. See [www.joecurto.com](http://www.joecurto.com)





Registration is open for Enclave 2022, [www.enclave2022.org](http://www.enclave2022.org) to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Marque in the scenic Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. The four-county region is famous for its resorts, natural scenic beauty, 150 lakes including Lake Wallenpaupack, and quaint, historic towns. We are fortunate to have a commitment from Blair Harber to bring not only the first production Austin-Healey (#138031) but also two pre-production cars: AHX12 and AHX14.

Your week's festivities will begin on Sunday afternoon registration followed by that evening Welcome Reception at the Kalahari Resorts Convention center and the kickoff of the weeklong Hot Wheels racing competition.

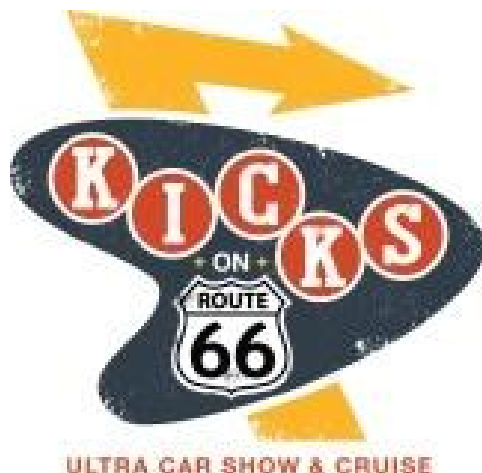
- Monday you will be experiencing the beauty of the Poconos with our Mountain Rally, followed by Tech Sessions and the ever-popular valve cover races in the evening.
- Tuesday will be another action-packed day at Enclave 2022 with the Funkhana, Concours Judging, Tech Sessions, English Tea, Barbeque dinner followed by the entertaining and rewarding Charity Auction festivities. Please consider bringing an item(s) to be auctioned off during the charity auction.

Wednesday we will kick-off the day at Pocono Raceway. You will have the opportunity to drive, ride, or watch NASCAR-type stockcars navigate the 2.5 mile "tricky triangle" with the StockCar Racing Experience, followed by parade laps in your Healey. We have negotiated discounted pricing if you purchase by January 30, 2022. The Stock Car Racing Experience and Ride Along's can be booked on-line at <https://877stockcar.com/austin/> Our popular Car Show will be held Wednesday afternoon on the streets of historic Stroudsburg. The vibrant downtown is home to museums and galleries, murals and music venues, wineries, and restaurants to please every palate for a casual late lunch, or early dinner.

Thursday will be the day for testing your driving skills with the Gymkhana, finals of the Hot Wheels competition, Tour of Pocono Organics - North America's Largest Regenerative Organic Farm. [www.poconoorganics.com](http://www.poconoorganics.com), and our annual Awards Banquet.

Our headquarters for the week will be the Kalahari Resorts [www.kalahariresorts.com](http://www.kalahariresorts.com), a full-service vacation destination including meeting & convention facilities that combine America's largest indoor waterpark for all ages with the magic of Africa, family entertainment centers, luxury spas, adventurous restaurants and convention centers that deliver beyond expectations, and all under one roof. Whether you are 3, 93 or anything in-between, there is something for everyone!

Go online to register for Enclave 2022 at our website at [www.enclave2022.org](http://www.enclave2022.org) and to see the other events planned to celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Austin-Healey Marque. See you in the Poconos the third week of September 2022! BE THERE!!



**Saturday**

**September 10, 2022**

**Edwardsville, IL 62025**

We want to let everyone know that we will be back for our 3rd year continuing with using the second weekend of September. There will be a lot more updates as we move forward, with some very interesting items we are trying to finalize.

Please set aside this date. We look forward to your participation.

The show continues to be open for cars, trucks, motorcycles of all eras and types.

**CLUBS:** We will again do show field grouping with clubs and, again, encourage all groups that they are welcome to have a tent adjacent to space. PLEASE add us to your 2022 event calendar.

**SPONSORS & PROGRAM ADVERTISERS:** We have yet to establish our offerings but you are welcome to express your interest in being on the potential supporter list.

**SHOW FIELD COMMERCIAL DISPLAYS:** We have yet to establish our offerings but you are welcome to express your interest in being on the potential supporter list.

Jeff Kennedy

Car Show Chair

[jkennedy.design@gmail.com](mailto:jkennedy.design@gmail.com)



To AHCA Members:

Minutes from the 2021 AHCA Fall Delegates' meeting have been posted on the AHCA website ([healeyclub.org](http://healeyclub.org)). To access, follow the steps listed below.

Log in to the AHCA website

Select "Members"

Select "Documents" which takes you to the document library

Select "Delegates Meetings" (be sure the "folder" symbol is open)

Select "Minutes and Documents (13)"

Select / download the file labeled "2021 Fall Meeting Minutes" (the second entry in the list)

Please contact me if you have questions.

Edie Lowery

AHCA Secretary