



The British Connection

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President's Message

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Hello all. I hope this month finds you healthy. We have found a new road to take a drive to or through. We have owned a boat for most of the 15 years we have lived here in Florida. Not the same boat, but in true car family style, 5 different boats. I mention this because we just sold our current boat that we had owned for 6 years. And true to gearhead style, we still owed a small sum of money to a bank.

Well, the buyer took the boat without the title, and I promised to bring it to them, as they had come from Jacksonville to see it, test it and buy it. So, when the title came, we set off for Jacksonville. We drove up I-95. No, that's not the road.

My plan was to come back down US 17. I wanted to stay beside the river (St. Johns). We (I) got off of I-295 on the wrong street, looking for something to have for lunch. We got off on Florida 21. After finding lunch, we headed south on 21. I quickly figured out we were going the wrong direction. In typical male fashion, I'm not turning around. I looked for a road going east, as I figured we would eventually run into US 17. The road I picked did go east, but then turned south. We wound up in Penny Farms on Florida 16. That was good as we then headed a short distance to Green Cove Springs and US 17. I was on the right track. Coming into town, I could see the bridge over the St. Johns River straight in front of me. Instead of turning on 17, I went straight across the bridge. We hadn't been across that bridge in a while, and we always enjoy that view. We were almost to the "new to me" road.

As you get to the east side of the bridge on 16, the road goes to the north or south. I just came from the north, so that leaves only one option. I turned to the south. If you stay on 16, you go back to I-95. We turned to the south on county 13. It may be 13N or 13 A. It follows the river, a very pleasant drive. Not sports car curvy, but just pleasant. It's close to the water, and just a nice drive. You come out on Florida 207. So, you can go into Palatka and down US 17. Or continue exploring other roads in the area. You could run the route backwards, but I think it is prettier in this direction.

Happy travels
Doug

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Remember the Chevy Vega?

Until the early 1960s, automobiles moved by rail were carried in boxcars. These were 50 feet long with double-wide doors. Inside was room for four full-sized sedans on a two-tier rack - two raised up off the floor on a steel rack and two others tucked in underneath them. This protected the cars during transport but wasn't very efficient, as the weight of four vehicles was far less than the maximum weight a boxcar that size could carry. When 85-foot and 89-foot flatcars came into service, it was possible to pack a total of fifteen automobiles in one car on tri-level auto racks. But it still didn't approach the maximum allowable weight for each flatcar.

When Chevrolet started designing Vega during the late 1960s, one of the main objectives was to keep the cost of the car down around \$2,000 in circa-1970 dollars. At the time, the freight charge for moving a loaded railroad car from the Lordstown, OH assembly plant to the Pacific coast - the longest distance cars produced at Lordstown would need to travel - was around \$4,800. Since the Vega was a subcompact, it was possible to squeeze three more cars on a railroad car for a total of eighteen, instead of the usual fifteen. But that still worked out to around \$300 per car - a substantial surcharge for a \$2000 car. If only Chevrolet could get more Vegas on a railroad car, the cost per unit of hauling them would go down.

Chevrolet's goal was to deliver Vegas topped with fluids and ready to drive to the dealership. In order to be able to travel nose-down without leaking fluids all over the railroad, Vega engineers had to design a special engine oil baffle to prevent oil from entering the No. 1 cylinder. Batteries had filler caps located high up on the rear edge of the case to prevent acid spilling, the carburetor float bowl had a special tube that drained gasoline into the vapor canister during shipment, and the windshield washer bottle stood at a 45 degree angle. Plastic spacers were wedged in beside the powertrain to prevent damage to engine and transmission mounts. The wedges were removed when cars were unloaded.

The Vega was hugely popular when it was introduced in 1970; however it quickly earned a reputation for unreliability, rust and terrible engine durability. When the Vega was discontinued in 1977, the Vert-A-Pac cars had to be retired as they were too specialized to be used with anything else. The Vert-A-Pac racks were scrapped, and the underlying flatcars went on to other uses. I also remember the Chevy Nova, which had poor sales to Mexico, because in Spanish, Nova means "no go."

(Continued on page 3)



This is how they were shipped.



(Continued from page 2)

The engineers at GM and Southern Pacific Railroad came up with a clever solution. Instead of loading the cars horizontally, the Vegas were to be placed vertically on a specially designed auto-rack called the Vert-A-Pac. Within the same volume of an 89-foot flatcar, the Vert-A-Pac system could hold as many as 30 automobiles instead of 18.



FOR SALE

Send me your car related “for sale” or “wanted” items for this space. Ed



Celebrations

By: Gene



Happy Birthday

Joyce Heckathorn 9/7/20
Linde Richardson 9/7/20
Bill Shivelle 9/7/20

Happy Anniversary

Roy & Anita Elworthy

2020 ABCC Upcoming Club Activities

Do you have an idea for an event? Contact Doug at pbullard@hotmail.com

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UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 4-6, 2020 Sahlen's Six Hours of the Glen. Watkins Glen, NY www.imsa.com

SEPTEMBER 6, 2020 Austin Healey Conclave. Cristal River, FL – <http://www.healeyclub.org/> **Canceled**

SEPTEMBER 9-13, 2020 2018 U.S. Vintage Grand Prix. Watkins Glen International - Watkins Glen, NY - www.svra.com

SEPTEMBER 11-12, 2020 Northeast Grand Prix. Lime Rock Park, Lakeville, CT - www.imsa.com

SEPTEMBER 11-12, 2020 Brits of the Shoals. Rogersville, AL. – <http://www.shoalsbritishcars.org/>

SEPTEMBER 12, 2020 Atlanta British Car Fayre. Norcross, GA - www.atlantabritishcarfayre.com/

SEPTEMBER 17-20, 2020 Southeast British Car Festival. Dillard, GA - <https://pmgr.clubexpress.com>

SEPTEMBER 17-20, 2020 "C" Event of Brutal Aggressives MK XXXIX. Dillard, GA- <https://www.mg-cars.org.uk/amgr/>

SEPTEMBER 22-25, 2020 Put-In-Bay Reunion Road Race. Put-In-Bay, OH - www.pibroadrace.com

SEPTEMBER 24-27, 2020 Fall Historics (HSR), Road Atlanta, Braselton, GA - www.hsrrace.com

SEPTEMBER 24-27, 2020 The Heacock Classic Gold Cup. VIR Alton, VA- www.svra.com/

SEPTEMBER 25-26, 2020 Memphis Euro Fest. Bartlett, TN - www.memphisbritishcars.org

SEPTEMBER 26, 2020 Brits on the Beach. Ocean Grove, NJ - www.pedc.org/

SEPTEMBER 26, 2020 Meeting of the Marques International. Carlisle, PA – www.meetingofthemarques.com/

SEPTEMBER 26, 2020 MGs on the Rocks. , Street, MD - <https://www.mgsofbaltimore.org/mgs-rocks-british-car-show/>

SEPT. 30 – OCT. 4, 2020 Fall Carlisle. Carlisle, PA. – www.carsatcarlisle.com

OCTOBER 1, 2020 Festivals of Speed. Mission Inn Resort, Howey-In-The Hills. FL - https://www.festivalsofspeed.com/js_events/missioninn/

OCTOBER 1-2, 2021 40th Annual Fall British Car Festival. Waynesboro, VA - <http://www.svbcc.net>

OCTOBER 3-4, 2020 SCCA SOLO II (Autocross). Daytona International Speedway, Daytona Beach, FL – <https://autocross.cfrscca.org>

OCTOBER 9-10, 2020 AACA Eastern Division Fall Car Show. Hershey, PA. – www.aaca.org/meetinfo

OCTOBER 9-11, 2020 Watkins Glen International. Watkins Glen, NY - www.imsa.com

Note: If you are planning on attending any of these events please check their website for updated information before you go.



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