



NCKCC News

Handcrafted Automobiles

June 2006

Volume 24 Number 6



This was the starting grid for the parade lap at Laguna Seca. As you can see NCKCC members were not shy. Note Dave Jones at front center, Steve Cameron front left and Vern Hance at 3rd left. I don't know where Chuck Latty ended up, or the identity of the other Cobras.

ACTIVITY NOTICES-

July 3, 2006 - Torchlight Parade in Benicia. Contact Chuck Maddux (707) 745-4361.

July 4, 2006 - Parade and show Morgan Hill. (See page 9 of May NCKCC News for details)

August 18, 2006 - Pacific Grove Auto Rally along 17-mile-drive. (See www.nckcc.com "HOTLINE" for registration form.)

WORDS FROM THE PREZ

Reflections On Mays activities.

May has been a very busy month! The first event was the MarqueMadness event at Laguna Seca. The week after that was the Springtime Reunion car show in Merced CA. and the Niles Spring Fling, both on the same weekend!

Planning for the September show has officially got under way also.

First I would like to thank all of you who participated in one or more of these events. Some turnouts were smaller than others, but a lot of fun was had.

MarqueMadness was a lot of fun and a learning process. There were many things one could do. From timed rallies, to wine runs, hot laps, parade laps, Photo rally, and forums for learning.

My experience consisted of the following; The first was a lot of work helping to set things up on Thursday. We also got to see those brave souls who wanted hot laps take their turn on the track. To my surprise there were not many truly "race prepped car" that took part in that. One experience that came out of that was one of our hostesses losing her brakes on the Cork Screw part of the track and ending up sliding

into the pea gravel run-out and into the tire wall. Fortunately there was minimal damage to her Audi TT roadster. But it was full of dirt by the time she came to a stop.

I saw her the next day and asked if she was alright. She said she was but was a little stiff.

Friday was the day Leanne and I did the wine tour. It was attended by a small, but enthusiastic group. We went to three of the local wineries and did indeed enjoy ourselves. Afterward, all went back to the track to watch some of the time trials for the upcoming race.

They were running three races that weekend. One was strictly Mazda Maitas. The next was the GT class which consisted of your GTO's, Mustangs, BMW M3, Porches, Mazda RX8, Chevy Cobalt SS, Mini's, and a scattering of other cars. The third class was the most interesting. These were the Proto-type GTs. Almost all of them looked alike, but were powered by different motors. All were V8 powered, so the noise level went up! Power was supplied by Pontiac, Lexus, Ford, Porsche, BMW, just to name a few.

There was also a educational forum that I attended on Fri. afternoon. We discussed what it was like becoming a club officer after being just a club member. Interesting indeed!

(Continued page 3)

Saturday was spent in anticipation of what was one of the reasons I went there for. To put my car on the race track! It was to be only for parade laps, but that was alright with me especially after our hostesses experience. I knew my car was not prepped for hot laps.

The time came for us to line up to take our parade laps. As the luck of the draw would have it I was chosen to be the first car behind the pace car. Not a bad spot actually. They said to follow his lead around the track and any directions he would give by hand. Mistake number one. Never be a pacecar driver and take off waving your hand out the window to "come on " to a cobra driver.

We entered the track at the portion that goes up hill to the cork screw. By this time he realized that I was matching him move for move and suddenly he slowed down and put his hand out the window for me to slow down. Mistake number Two. Pacecar drivers should be aware that cobra drivers don't like to slow down rapidly. He almost got passed!

In the cork screw turn, they had arranged for a photographer to take pictures as the cars came through. I have mine mounted on my wall, proudly.

It was on to the start/finish part of the track and down the front straight to the Andretti Hairpin turn where our MM hospitality tent and private viewing

stands were. Then through turns 3 & 4 near the overhead foot bridge. We started down that straight-a-way toward where we entered the track at turn 5. The last of the parade lap participants were just entering the track. I thought, "Man this next lap is going to take forever."

But to my surprise and chagrin we were all pulled off the track at that point. We were told later that the track officials cancelled the rest of our time because of a crash that had occurred in the race just before us that took longer to clean up than it should have. Apparently, they must keep to a strict timetable to get all of the days activities in before the sound ordinance, which I believe was 6 pm, arrives.

All were truly disappointed, but this was something out of the control of the MM personnel. They had to conform to Laguna Secas rules.

The rest of Saturday was taken up by the GT class race. It ran so long because of cautions that the race had to be called at 5:30 pm with the winner being the one who had made the most laps by that time. We were able to watch that race on a large screen TV in our Private tent. During the race we were treated to food and beverages, including wine and beer in out tent. There were drawings for various raffle prizes. Vern won a pair of bleacher cushion seats. Way to go Vern!

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Sunday was the main event race, the Proto-type GT,s . Leanne and I were among a privileged group that got to hold the line-up markers for the cars on the start/finish line. What a treat! The cars were so close you could literally reach out and touch them! Hope our picture made it into the newsletter. What a sight! (See page 5, 11 & cover)

After the start of that race I had had just about enough racing. I needed to begin the trip home so that I could have enough time to put my car away and the hit the sack to be at work at 3AM the next morning.

In retrospect, I would have to say I had a good time. For the average club member to attend this event though, I would recommend going on the weekend package. You can still go on a wine tour and one of the rallies, participate in the show and shine both days, and enjoy enough racing to satisfy your " need for speed". You would also be eligible for the dinner on Saturday night.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the Walnut Creek Art and Wine Festival.

UPCOMING AUTO EVENTS OF INTEREST

June 25, 2006 - Palo Alto Concours at Stanford, 7:00 a.m to 4:30 p.m. Concours Field; Sand Hill Road & Pastuer Drive, Palo Alto. <<http://www.paconcours.com>>

July 4, 2006 - Morgan Hill celebrates the 4th of July and the City's 100th Anniversary from June 30 to July 4th. Greg Hampton urges NCKCC members to participate in the Parade and Car Show. Registrations must be sent before may 24th by individuals but we can parade as a club IF you enter NCKCC (Northern Calif Kit Car Club) on the "Club Affiliation" line. See www.nckcc.com for info.

July 18, 2006 (Fathers Day) The Towe Auto Museum will hold the "River City Roundup" car show at the Towe Museum. Info? Go to <www.toweautomuseum.org>

July 23, 2006 - Pete Paulsen's 6th Annual "Hot August Nights" Rod, Custom, Truck, Motorcycle Show. Register 8 a.m, Show ends 3 p.m. Fee is \$22 before 7/16/06. Information at (209) 983-0271 or <www.petepaulsen.com>

July 29, 2006 - Arroyo Grande Car Sho Info? Check website: <www.arroyograndevillage.org/carsho.asp>

July ??, 2006 - Bethel Island 50s Bash Car Show in Bethel Island. Can't find the date yet, but suspect it is Saturday 7/22/06

August 20, 2006 - Pebble Beach Concours, 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tickets \$150 in advance, \$175 at gate. <www.pebblebeachconcours.net>

TOWE AUTO MUSEUM **CAR CLUB CAVALCADE**

by Steve Cameron

Have you been to the Towe Auto Museum in Sacramento? The museum, located at 2200 Front Street started as a place where the California Vehicle Foundation displayed a number of cars, mostly Fords from the collection of Edward Towe (pronounced like the "ow" in plow.)

Although most of Towe's collection was sold off in 1997 to pay disputed tax liens, the museum thrives today. NCKCC has a club membership to the Towe, and any club member in good standing can enter the museum free of charge.

One feature of the museum is its monthly *Car Club Cavalcade*. The museum allows member clubs to display select vehicles, along with a short essay about the vehicle. The museum has allowed NCKCC to show five or six of our cars from August 5 through August 26 of this year. Our goal is to select five or six cars that represent the variety and excellent workmanship found in today's handcrafted cars.

ACTION FOR YOU !!

The selection process must be completed before the end of June, so if you have an interest, and you can display a car under the conditions that follow, please let me know as soon as possible.

The conditions are as follows: 1) the car display will run from August 5 through August 26. That means all the cars must be delivered to the Towe at 10:00 a.m. August 5, and they cannot leave until 9:00 a.m. August 26; 2) each owner must sign a release of liability and leave a set of keys with the museum in case of an emergency; and 3) finally, we want to show the public both the variety of cars we build and the type of workmanship that will dispel any notions that kit cars are flimsy toys.

If you are interested, contact me immediately by email or telephone at nckcc@usa.com or (916) 399-9393. I will answer any questions you have.

East Contra Costa Historical Society
& Museum
3890 Sellers Avenue
Knightsen, CA.

CARS at the MUSEUM DAYS

1st SATURDAY

each MONTH

2PM. to 4 PM.

come with your car

or

come to see others

no fees - no prizes - "just fun"

MUSEUM HOURS:

APRIL - OCTOBER

Saturdays & 3rd Sunday each month

2 to 4 PM

info. 925-679-1025

LET'S GET THE TIMING STRAIGHT

By Chuck Honodel 4/06

I ordered my Vintage Speedster as a "rolling kit". That means that it came with a VW pan that was shortened to Porsche 356 Speedster dimensions and with swing axle rear suspension. A spaceframe of rectangular steel was welded in place. My 1972 pan was easily converted to the swing axle configuration. I specified an engine of 1776cc displacement using a standard VW crank with a piston/cylinder set of 90.5mm bore. With dual carbs, four-port heads and special exhaust system it provides enough power to cruise the interstate highways with a 3.88 ring/pinion differential ratio.

The engine was installed in the chassis when I received the car and the fan pulley was in place. It was built with a stock crankshaft pulley of unknown source and had a timing notch that might have been set to 0 or 5.0 or 7.5 degrees BTDC (VW used them all) when it passed the crankcase reference joint. The folks at Vintage gave me little confidence as to the true position of the timing notch since they did not do the engine buildup.

After I completed the car assembly I wanted to check the timing of the ignition so I had to establish the TDC of piston #1. John Muir in his book "How

to keep your Volkswagen Alive" describes a way to determine the TDC of your engine as it is being assembled with no cylinder heads and before installing the unit in the vehicle. This procedure was of no help in my case. So I built an insertable tool to do the job.

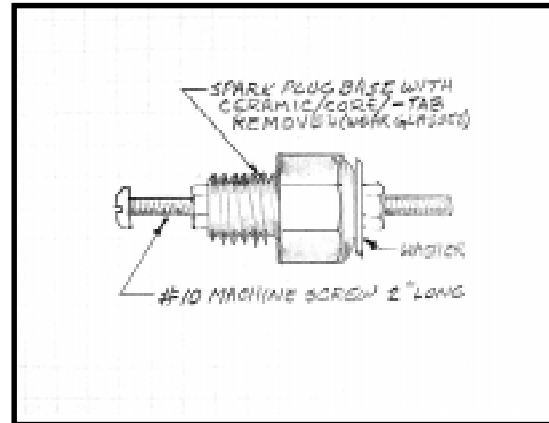
I took an old 14mm spark plug and broke the porcelain out of it (wear safety glasses) and inserted a long 10-24 round head machine screw through the plug base, holding it in place with a nut on both sides of the base. I then removed the #1 sparkplug (actually all four) and turned the crankshaft to a point about 20 degrees BTDC. Then I inserted this new plug tool (See page 7) and with the nuts loose on the machine screw, pushed the screw down onto the top of the piston. Then I ran the outside nut down to the top of the tool to roughly set the length and carefully removed the assembly. I then positioned the nut on the inside of the tool to rigidly set the screw (see the attached sketch). The 10-24 screw is a sloppy fit in the sparkplug base and requires the tightened nuts on both sides to produce a firm tool to stop the piston travel.

Now I turned the crankshaft back and inserted the piston stop tool and then slowly turned the crank to bring the piston up to the stop. I then marked the edge of the pulley with a sharp scribe at the case reference spot. Then turning the crankshaft all the way backwards counterclockwise I brought

the piston back up to stop on the tool again. With a scribe mark on the pulley at this point I could determine the exact TDC as half way between the two scribe lines. With the aid of a flexible ruler I placed a final scribe line at the TDC halfway between the first set of lines. With the TDC established I now had to determine how far to place a scribe line or paint dot at 7.5 degrees BTDC. A little math was used after I measured the diameter of the pulley. The circumference of the pulley is equal to the diameter x 3.1416. One degree of rotation on the edge of the pulley is equal to $1/360 \times$ the circumference measured and $7.5 \times$ this increment will mark the 7.5 degree point.

For example: If the diameter of the pulley is 120mm then the Circumference $C = 120 \times 3.14 = 377\text{mm}$ and $1 \text{ degree} = 377/360 = 1.05\text{mm}$. The 7.5 degree mark can be set at $7.5 \times 1.05\text{mm} = 7.85\text{mm}$ before the TDC scribe. This is an accurate determination and difficult to transfer to the edge of the pulley but a carefully positioned paint dot will suffice and give you assurance of a properly positioned timing mark. In my case the factory timing groove was in the correct position. I was now ready to set the proper timing with my 009 VW distributor installed.

But wait....I want to install a modernized breakerless ignition system with it's higher rev potential and minimum wear parts. What to do?...that's another story.



CAR OF THE MONTH **CHUCK LATTY - BECK** **550 SPYDER**

by Steve Cameron

The following information was derived from a story in the *Member Cars* portion of our website <http://nckcc.com/membercars.html>.

Sometime in 1984 Chuck Latty began his search for an original car. When he answered an ad for a 1955 Porsche 550, he found the car had been sold for a price in the six figures arena. At that point he realized that the only way to obtain the car of his dreams would be to build a replica.

After a little research he headed from his home in Michigan to Uplands, California to check out the Beck Development Vintage 550 Spyder.

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Although he wanted a test drive, Beck had sold his demonstrator and didn't offer test-drives of his personal car. However, he offered to take Chuck for a ride. "He tore around the streets local to his shop like a madman. I was in the



passenger seat with no seatbelt nor anything to hold onto while the vehicle executed some extreme maneuvers. To say I was favorably impressed by the performance of the car would have been an understatement."

In January 1985, Chuck bought his Beck 550 Spyder kit along with all of the options offered for it at that time. Beck's creation differs from the original in several ways: the body is made of hand-laid fiberglass instead of aluminum; the wheelbase is approximately 2.3 inches longer; the frame rails are placed about 1.5 inches further apart; the wall thickness of the main frame tubes is .125 inch as opposed to the original's approximate .080 inch; and the car uses more modern VW suspension compo-

nents. The engine of choice for the replica is a VW air-cooled flat four that offers relative affordability, reliability, and acceptable performance when properly built. The transaxle used is a VW 4-speed manual swing axle unit with the final drive ring gear flipped to the other side of the pinion gear to provide 4 forward speeds with the engine in the mid-ship location.

When asked about the expected build time, Beck said it should take, "forty hours if you know VW's". It actually took about 200 hours to assemble the vehicle.

Getting the vehicle registered and licensed in Michigan was a challenge. The Secretary of State's office in Lansing (known as DMV in CA) sent a green legal size sheet of paper with about 25 items listed on each side. Details requested, included bumper height and condition of glass along with 23 other things that each had to be checked and signed off by a State policeman before the car could be registered.

The Spyder was completed in September of 1986 and it has been on the road ever since. It currently has about 41K miles on it. Some years it has been driven as little as 200 miles and other years it has been a daily driver and covered as many as 6K miles.

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At about 23K miles Chuck installed a new more powerful engine so that the car would be as quick as it looked. The biggest difference between the Gene Berg 1776cc "Built" engine and the original stock 1585cc one is that the "Killer Motor" cost about five times as much and makes about 50% more HP.

May 2006 at Laguna Seca.

If you would like your car featured in our Car of the Month, contact Steve Cameron at nckcc@usa.com or call (916) 399-9393.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



We welcome one new member this month.

Charles & Teresa Hodge live in Fremont, (510) 795-9629, and purchased a Cobra by Shell Valley. It is powered by a 350 Chevy with Corvette heads and Muncie M-21 tranny. They are interested in road trips and social events. Charles discovered us on the Niles Spring Fling.

Chuck and Ronnie have had a lot of fun with their Spyder. The car has gone on many 900 plus mile roundtrips. It has run in track day events at Waterford Hills near Detroit and Gingerman Raceway near Kalamazoo. It has been driven on "Parade Laps" around Road America in Elkhart Lake, Waterford Hills, and in

Welcome Aboard and we look forward to seeing that completed car at our display events.

MORE PHOTOS - MAY EVENTS

Lower left: Spring Fever Niles Show. Lower right:

Leanne at Laguna Seca Race May 7, 2006



FOR SALE

COBRA Ford power, Jag rear-end. Silver w/ black interior. \$21,500 Call Bob Elster 707-938-3254 (1/02)

COBRA - VW KIT - 427 Snake body fits on your 3" shortened VW chassis. Two available; **reduced to \$2,200 from \$3,200** Call Wayne McAllaster (510) 656-5844 or E-mail 427medusa@sbcglobal.net (2/06)

FERRARI - TESTAROSSA Spyder. Based on 1989 Corvette with 350 V-8 engine and automatic tranny. **Reduced to \$12,000.** Contact Anthony Ramsinh (408) 268-6554 or e-mail aramsinh@aol.com (11-05)

MANX SR-2 - 1678 cc VW engine with 4-speed stick. New interior in 2002. Built in 1977 by present owner who has all receipts, etc. Includes a spare 1600 VW engine and extra parts. \$5,500. Call Don Wicks (707) 998-9383 or e-mail at dkwicks@mchsi.com (11-05)

MERCEDES 500K 4-PASSENGER. This all metal replica was built by H.T. Price with leather interior, 400cid Ford power, auto tranny, A/C, stereo/cassette, wood steering wheel. Call Diana (574) 277-3798. Write 51500 Orange Rd., South Bend, IN 46628-9419. (3/02)

MERCEDES 540K - Thoroughbred factory built. Datsun 240Z engine + 5-spd tranny. Mustang suspension. New paint, carpet, leather interior, tires & canvas cover. Only \$18,500. Vicki Cavaz (510) 769-1123 or Vicki1757@aol.com (9/05)

MERCEDES SSK (Gazelle) replica. 2.3 liter 4-cyl, 4-spd tranny. Excellent condition. **STILL FURTHER REDUCED** \$6,950 o.b.o. Norval Gryte 707-942-8215 or e-mail <gryte@calicom.net> (2/06)

PRICE REDUCTION!! Moving, must take loss to sell ASAP. - - - MERCEDES 500K - TWO Heritage turnkeys. Blue w/ black top & interior \$19,500 obo, and White w/ burgundy top & interior \$26,000.o. Also: MG-TD (Fiberfab) red w/ white hardtop & interior \$5,500. J.D.Cellars 541-862-7112 (9/05)

MERCEDES 500K- HERITAGE Kit. Complete with rolling chassis and Chevy 350 TPI engine. Moving, must sell ASAP. \$9,000 obo. Call for details. J. D. Cellars 541-862-7112

MERCEDES SSK (Gazelle) MUST GO. Kit is complete and includes all necessary parts from Mercury Bobcat to complete the car. Call Mark at (916) 723-4954. \$1,000 o.b.o.

MERCEDES SSK (Gazelle) Parts: 4 fenders (brown), windshield, radiator shell, bumpers, interior leather and top (tan), tail lights, supercharger pipes, doors (yellow), latches, hinges, etc. Tim 510-278-3085 (04/05)

PANTERA Factory built, only one known to exist. Red w/ beige interior, Chev engine \$35,000 Call Bob Elster 707-938-3254. (1/02)

"Cars for Sale" ads in the Kit Car Sun are for members only. Rate is \$10 for 12 issues.

The kit car industry on the Internet:

kitcar.com
and
cobracountry.com

- kit cars For Sale by Owner ...
- In 22 kit categories plus Cobras!
- Computer Aided show coverage
- over 1200 web pages
- Pro tips on motorcar photography

C. S. H.

661-251-2223

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - 2006

- May 4-7, 2006 - Marque Madness event at Laguna Seca raceway. See <www.marquemadness.com> for more info and history from 2005 event.
- June 3-4, 2006 - NCKCC Mini-Carshow at Art & Wine Fest in Walnut Creek.
- July 3, 2006 - Torchlight parade in Benicia followed by dinner at a nearby restaurant.
- July 4, 2006 - Morgan Hill 4th of July Parade and Centennial Celebration.
- August 18, 2006 - Pacific Grove Auto Rally along 17-mile Drive & dinner. Registration and staging of cars, 1-5 p.m. Friday. This is the weekend of the Pebble Beach Concours
- September 9-10, 2006 - NCKCC "Handcrafted Auto Concourse" San Leandro
- October ???, 2006 - Wine Tour. Details TBA
- December ??, 2006 - Annual Brunch at TBA

Shown below - Marque Madness participants at the BBQ



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