

The FOGlight



The Official Newsletter of the Porsche 356 Florida Owners Group.

Fall 2024



**"Wrenching
on a 356"**



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Alan Winer	2013 - 2020
Frank Hood	2011 - 2013
Mike Davis	2010 - 2011
John Reker	2007 - 2010
Kirk Stowers	2003 - 2007
Rich Williams	1993 - 2003

The FOGLight is the official publication of the Porsche 356 Florida Owners Group (FOG). It is published quarterly. Send articles, photos and suggestions to: Robin Hoffman, FOGLight Editor at RobinCHoffman@hotmail.com

On the cover: Fernando Lopez and Chip Steward successfully do a generator swap at the 356 Reunion in Helen, GA. Photographed by David Witty.



Southwest Foggies met at the First Watch Restaurant in Lakewood Ranch on Saturday morning June 29th. It was a beautiful morning with "reasonable" temps for taking a drive in our favorite 356.
Photo by Pete Bartelli.

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Upcoming Events

October 19, 2024 – Oktoberfest Concours/BBQ/Swap Meet in Cocoa, FL
March 20 to 23, 2025 – Gathering of the Faithful in Melbourne, FL

Monthly Regional Meetings

If you are interested in suggesting or organizing a FOG statewide or regional event, contact Steve Hoffman, Events Chair, or your regional coordinator listed below.

One of the great benefits of owning a 356 is the opportunity to meet and socialize with a marvelous group of people – our fellow 356 owners. Since the long distances in Florida make it difficult for many members to attend statewide events, we have developed a system of local breakfasts and/or driving tours to keep our members in touch with each other.

Central Florida (Orlando area) Breakfast first Saturday of every month. Lunch tours occasionally. Contact Chris Edebohls at chris.edebohls@gmail.com or (407) 312-7329.

East Coast Florida (Vero Beach) Breakfast on the second Sunday of each month at 9 am at Panera Bread on 2001 Indian River Blvd. Contact Charles Weary at cweary1@gmail.com or (715) 661-2344.

Northeast Florida (Jacksonville area) Breakfast first Saturday of each month. Lunch tours occasionally. Contact Jim Voss at vossjax@bellsouth.net or at (904) 514-3038.

Northwest Florida (Panhandle area) Events vary. Contact Dave Jerome at dmjerome52@cox.net or (850) 240-3610.

Southeast Florida Breakfast first Saturday of every month. Contact Steve Bamdas at Steveb@rivamotorsports.com or Paul Raben at praben356@gmail.com.

Southwest Florida (Sarasota area) Last Saturday of each month at 9 am at First Watch Restaurant, 8306 Market St, Bradenton. Contact Fernando Lopez at (727) 417-1120 or mk2lopez@yahoo.com.

Welcome New Members

Rick Hartbrodt	Sarasota	1964 C Coupe
Tom Manger	Ft. Myers Beach	1965 C Coupe
Louis Frate	Jupiter	1961 S90 Roadster

President's Message

I would like to first say that I hope that our members along the West coast and the panhandle in the path of the latest storm are okay. As I am writing this, another storm is forming in the Gulf which hopefully will not repeat the destruction of Helene. It is tough to write a message when so many may have lost their homes or even their lives.



It has been a very busy summer for us. We have been working on where to hold next year's GOF and it has not been easy. As usual, trying to reserve a location with parking, the right room pricing, convenience of restaurants, amenities and the dates that will work. We wanted to get a location closer to the West coast which turned out to be a challenge. We looked towards Punta Gorda, but prices were high, and we felt that it was a little too far south. We looked at the hotel we held a GOF at in Bradenton a while back and it had such reviews that it made us reconsider; we passed on that one. When planning to use a hotel, Peggy and I feel the only way to be sure is to drive there and do some investigation. We drove to Mount Dora to look at the Lakeside Inn and found it would not accommodate a concours and parking was limited for our 356's. When we looked at a few of the rooms there was a musty smell, so again we passed on a location. Our next search took us to Lakeland. We found a nice hotel and decided to drive there to look at it. It was a very nice hotel, the rooms were very nice, but there was no onsite restaurant. Local restaurants were close but not that close. There was a shuttle that ran every fifteen minutes downtown but again that could be a hassle. It became a bit too costly when it came to the welcome parties and the awards banquet as all except food would have to come from outside sources. To complicate, the concours location would require us to deal with the city and permits.

We decided to go to a fallback location to see about the availability of dates as we were running out of possible locations and dates. As we were driving home from Lakeland, we contacted the hotel we used in Melbourne as a last-ditch effort to get a place for the GOF. I have to say it almost looked like we hit a dead end. When Peggy contacted them, they said they had no availability any time in the first three months of next year, but they would call back if a date opened-up. As the other members of the club that have organized the past GOF know it is not easy to put it together. Pricing must be affordable for the club without depleting the reserve and relying on sponsors that may or may not contribute to the GOF.

Peggy and I were sweating on the way home not because it was hot, but because of the thought of no GOF or a lackluster event. On the following Monday the hotel called and said they had an opening. We are pleased to say that we will be returning to Melbourne for the 2025 GOF on March 20 to 23.

Moving on, hopefully many of you were able to take your 356's out for the International Drive Your 356 Day. I was not one of those people. We had planned to attend a PCA picnic with the 356 the day before the Sunday drive. I took the car out for a quick trip to the store before the picnic, went to the store, came out and it would not start. This is the moment we have all gone through with our 356's. We say to ourselves what is it this time? Well, this time it was the fuel pump. I finally got it started with the help of my son and starter fluid and drove the quarter

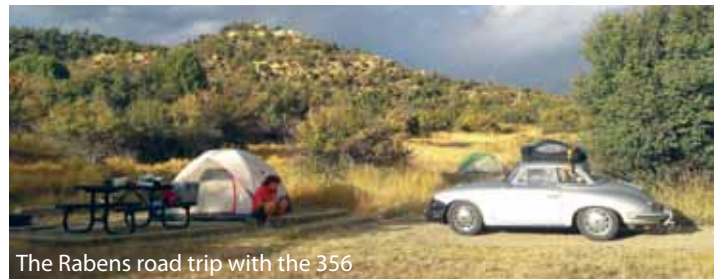
mile home. So, I did not drive on Drive Your 356 Day. If you did, hopefully you sent your pictures to Robin and onto the registry for publication.

Now, on to important club stuff. We have one more issue of the FOGLight for 2024 with Robin as Editor and no one has offered to step up and assist. I am asking again for an interested party to take over the position. If you are interested, we need to get together with Robin to see what is involved in putting the newsletter out. Please consider this request. We will help with putting the FOGLight together and we have reduced the number of issues to four a year from six. But do we need one person to oversee editing.

We have a club election coming-up next month as the terms for President and two Trustees are up for election/re-election. We will need three or more candidates for the upcoming election. I am willing to continue as President. We are hoping you will also consider running. If you are interested, please email me. As I usually say, this is your club, and it only exists with your participation and any effort put into the club is needed and greatly appreciated.

Thank you for being members of FOG!

Paul Raben
FOG President



The Rabens road trip with the 356

Desperately Seeking FOGLight Editor

- Only four Newsletters a year • Gather articles and photos
- Minimal computer skills required
- Contact RobinCHoffman@hotmail.com

Upcoming Club Elections

- Help run this great club • Enjoy working with others
- Minimal time requirement • Contact praben356@gmail.com

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FOG TWO Million Mile Mission

Drive Those Cars 2024

by Terry Cohen

Well, we finally are approaching the end of summer and the arrival of 356 weather in Florida. For those of us not fortunate enough to escape the heat to travel to cooler climes, it seems virtually universal that few miles were added to tallies. Certainly, that happened to me. I reached out to a lot of my usual stalwart contributors and alas, the numbers were meager. I suspect that some of our brothers and sisters have been having some great adventures in their 356s in other parts of the country and the world and I'm hoping not only for them to subsequently share those miles, but also the stories that go along with them.

I reached out to Glen Getchell for his miles, and he apologized that his car had not returned from Europe until August, but he still had over 1,000 miles to tack onto his total. I personally had planned to attend Cliff Murray's event at Riedlbauer's Resort up in the Catskills in early September, but as they say about the best made plans. I went to the get together in Helen, GA in mid-September and enjoyed seeing my FOG friends there having a good time and enjoying our cars on the perfect 356 roads.

So now for the interim update on standings year to date:

John Lovejoy III	10268
Mark Pribanic	5784
Jack Kasmer	5061
Todd Williams	5029
Glen Getchell	4569
Volker "Frostie" Schneemann	3900
Jim Spears	3829
Jerry Holderness	3712
Forbes "Toby" Anderson	3500
Paul Raben	3080
Bruce MacMillian	2362
Pete Bartelli	1598
Chip Reichhart	1395
Bill Cooper	1352
Michael Branning	1200
Andrew Dickson	1155
Steve Martin	1112
James Rowe	1058
Carlos Cendejas	833
Terry Cohen	822
Steve Bamdas	820
Richard Denham	806
Chris Sloan	725
Steve Hoffman	723
Russ Hibbard	671
Glen Long	656
Jim Shartzter	593
John Reker	583
Paulette Hilsman	565
Karen Walker	520
Matt Peckham	450
Daryle Higgenbotham	354
Jeff Wolters	342
Mike Koller	249
Katie Messer	227
Rick Riley	195

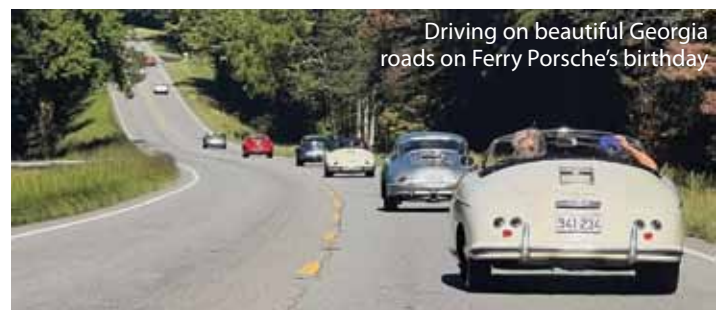
Louis Coury	184
Fred Trippensee	116
Craig Stoughton	86

Interestingly, our club's total mileage is just under 69,000 miles so far this year. That's about 2/3 of last year's total. So let that be an inspiration to all to get out and drive our beasts as often as we can to catch up with our total for last year. With the cooler weather and perhaps the return of drivers who have been separated from their cars through the summer, we will start cranking out the miles. I am certain the 356 Reunion in Helen will give us a healthy bump in mileage. I'm looking forward to seeing everybody in the near future.

So, Keep the 356 Faith and Drive Those Cars!!!



John and Alicia Lovejoy never miss a sunny day to drive their 1965 Outlaw.



Driving on beautiful Georgia roads on Ferry Porsche's birthday



Mark Pribanic needs no excuse to drive his 1958 A Coupe

A Speedster Tale

by Jack Kasmer (formerly known as Speedster Jack)

As I'm sure you all know I no longer have my Speedster and as time goes by my mind wanders to the adventures we once had, but those adventures are for a later date. Today I'm going to tell a tale of incredible bad luck, good luck and stupidity all in one afternoon. It is 100% true. I've got witnesses.

Here goes:

I bought my Speedster 25 years ago and immediately fell in love with driving it. But only locally, for as you know, Speedsters aren't weather tight, have no radio (not that you could hear it) and have small oil pump engines which don't tolerate freeway speeds.



*The Speedster,
25 years ago*

That being said, one Saturday I drove it to work. Saturdays were a short day and I'd have time afterward to cruise the town. Getting close to closing time I got a Weather Channel alert, **STRONG THUNDERSTORMS EXPECTED SHORTLY ...**

Uh oh! Being as the car was very new to me, I had never had the top up. I thought I was too tall to use it. But.. I had time. If I left for home immediately, I should just beat the rain. I got to the car as the black storm clouds were rolling in. I turned the key... nothing. Not even a click. No time to trouble shoot. Speedsters are tiny, I'll push start it. I got out and pushed it down the alleyway, jumped in, put it in gear and popped the clutch ... Success!! It started right up.

I turned left to start the 7 mile journey home and as I shifted into second gear, the freaking clutch cable broke. OMG!!

Side note: I have experience driving a VW with a broken clutch cable, it requires proper timing of shifts while blipping the engine and at stop lights using the starter to get rolling again.

But... I have 4 traffic lights between here and home and I can't get caught at one or I'm stuck. Plus, I can smell the heavy rain coming. This is bad. Well, I run my first stop sign, round the circle and head west. The first light favors me I can adjust speed to make it. Success! Next is the access road to the highway with a light 1 block away, I bulled my way onto the highway and just made the



*NOT Speedster Jack
but you get the idea*

light. Last is the hardest part, making a left turn at a light that doesn't favor me and with oncoming traffic. I'm swerving back and forth across 3 lanes trying to time light and traffic. I barely made it. I'm home free but driving as fast as possible to beat the storm. As I pulled into my driveway, the bottom dropped out of the clouds and I got a last second soaking, but I made it!

The above is only a lead-in to part II of this tale.

In my garage (not in my shed with lift and tools to make the job easier) I decide to replace the cable. Having never installed a clutch cable on a 356, I'd learn on the job. After a couple hours I got the old cable pulled and a new one run through and all I needed was to clip the clevis pin, adjust at the pedal and I was done!

Except... I couldn't get the clevis pin to go thru the transmission arm hole. I had tried everything, including lining up with a punch. And it wouldn't go. I slid in and out on a creeper to try again and again. No luck. I called my buddy and asked what I was doing wrong. He says it should go easily. By now I'm cussing mightily. I've got grease on my face and my t-shirt from hugging the tranny trying to insert the clevis.

My wife heard me and comes out asking "is there anything I can do?" My answer "%€¥\$&@!"

Back to the creeper and another hour of trying and cussing.

The wife comes out again, thinking I'm annoying the neighbors, and asks again if she could help. In exasperation I show her the clevis, give her a flashlight and creeper and describe what needs doing, knowing full well she won't have a freaking clue what to do.

The following is absolutely true....

She slid under the Speedster with a flashlight and with me thinking all kinds of mean thoughts about how she would just get greasy and fail in this endeavor that's way above her mechanical skill set. In what I believe was less than 1 minute she slid out. I knew she didn't know what to do!

Except she said "it's in."

And worse... Not a spot of oil on her clothes, nose or hands. Needless to say, to this day, if I am having a problem fixing something and she offers to help, I'm handing it to her.

That's my story and I'm sticking to it.



*The author's wife Trisha, triumphant
with her clevis pin success*

Drive Your 356 Day

FOG members across the country got out and drove their cars on DY356 Day. This is not just a local event, it takes place all over the world on Ferry Porsche's birthday – September 19, or the nearest Sunday. I hope you enjoy these photos that were submitted by our members.



Jerri and Bruce MacMillian drove their 1960 356B Roadster to Stonington Point, Stonington, CT. To get to there, they had to drive over a flooded road in Mystic, CT. Talk about dedication!



Todd Williams drove his 1953 356 in Clearwater, FL.



The Cohen brothers and their co-pilots stopped in front of Two Wheels Only campground in Suches, GA on their way home from the Highway 356 Reunion.



Mark Eskuche took this picture of his 1958 Speedster in front of a real hardware store in the small town of Friestadt, WI which was settled by German immigrants in 1839.



Bill and Debbie Cooper, Evan and Jule Silvi, and Janis Croft and Alan Winer went to the Valley Smoke restaurant in Ponte Vedra Beach for a late lunch on DY356 Day.



Chip Reichhart enjoyed an early morning drive on perfect 356 roads in Glencoe, Maryland.



DY356 Day at the "still in use" Seaboard Coast Line railroad station in Orlando, FL built in 1926. The Spanish mission style building remains mainly original as does "Rudy", Craig and Laura Stoughton's 1957A Ruby Red coupe.



Jeff Wolters took the 1963 356B S90 he has owned since 1972 to the St. Petersburg, FL pier.



Louis Coury took his 1960 356B super sunroof coupe named "Josephine" for a drive to the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse.

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If It's Tuesday, This Must Be Belgium

Article and photos by Glen Getchell

Chapter 2 "An Outlaw Named Isabella."

It was a dark and stormy night. Sorry, I'm getting ahead of myself. Last chapter we had met up with Gerhard our new German friend. We all met Gerhard for the first time at our first hotel. Rosemarie had planned out affordable hotels with safe parking for our journey and Gerhard, coming from Stuttgart, was to meet us at the first. It's called Ibis. Now Ibis is a chain of hotels. Some might even say cheap (but that's all relative). The Ibis have different levels of hotels, and they like to place them all in the same area. We arrived in Montbeliard, France in the rain (you will see that word a lot this chapter) with Frostie and Rosemarie. We immediately went to the Ibis only to discover we were at the wrong Ibis. Our Ibis was about a block away, but we just couldn't find it. It seemed like we made a dozen trips around the block but could not find this damn hotel. Every time we went around the block there was a gentleman standing on the sidewalk who would wave to us as we would drive by. By the third time around I had come to the conclusion that this guy must REALLY like 356's to stand in the rain watching two C coupes drive up and down the road. Eventually we saw the sign and aimed for the parking lot entry where the waving Gentleman was kind enough to get out of our way. The Gentleman was in fact Gerhard who had been waving to get our attention as in like "The hotel is here dumb asses". This would not be the last time we landed at the "wrong" Ibis in the right place.



Frostie and Gerhart at Dune Pilat

With now three 356's we were off through France on our way to Portugal. On this leg of the trip we had planned to rendezvous in the Bordeaux region with FOG members the Lovejoys (father and son) who were making their way from England. Now Frostie had scheduled a sightseeing trip to Dune Pilat, the biggest sand dune in Europe. My initial reaction was less enthusiastic, after all I live in Pinellas FL. If I want to see sand, I can look at my front yard, but I digress. We arrived at our hotel the night before the Dunes expecting to find the Lovejoys. But they were AWOL. A few texts later Jr. indicated that they were in Normandy but would meet us at the Dunes the next day. We arrived at the Dunes and I was impressed. It was absolutely nothing like my front yard, and is one "BIG" freaking pile of sand. While at the Dunes I could hear the distinctive sound of a lightly muffled 356 in the distance. Seconds later both Jr. and Sr. were playing in the sand with us. And despite the large size of the parking lot, Jr. was able to park Isabella (his very distinctive Outlaw C. Cab) right next to our little caravan of 356's. (Little did I know that in a few hours I would be cursing Isabella.)

After some play time and the mandatory removing of sand from our shoes we were off with now four 356's heading south to the Spanish border with a planned stop in Bayonne France for lunch. Always concerned about safe parking we located an empty gated parking lot, perfect! With the cars secured we started our walk to the city center to find a cafe. After what seemed like hours we continued our walk to the city center. Once there we discovered no one wanted to serve us as it was too late. Luckily, Gerhard is a "restaurant whisperer" and after pulling a waiter aside for a private talk we were seated. I don't know what he said, I don't care what he said, but it worked.

After lunch we hiked back to the cars. Eventually, after reaching the cars we had all four 356's roaring and ready to head out. We pulled out of the parking lot one by one as a ticket was required to get through the gate. 1, 2, 3 now it was Frostie's turn. As we all sat and waited, Frostie just sat at the gate. His ticket had disappeared during our hike and he couldn't get out without a ticket. The irony was the parking was free. We brainstormed and tried to trick the gate in numerous ways. Even some locals tried to help. Finally, the gate fell for one of our scams, and up it went only for Henry (Frostie's 356) to die. With everyone screaming "Go Go", the car sat motionless. Frostie had bricked it by forgetting to turn the fuel cock on. (As all of us have done this at one point or another, I feel it's OK to shine the light on him.) Henry eventually gained freedom just as it started to rain again. Frostie trying to make up time took off like a bat out of hell towards a giant traffic circle before I could even get in the car. Gerhard simply vanished as if using some sort of transporter device. Isabella accelerated to the traffic circle with Rudy following. At the traffic circle I was lost and went straight. Jr. clearly thought right was correct and went that way. As he pulled out from the circle Isabella started the distinct bucking and kicking of fuel starvation as she pulled away. I literally giggled and said to Mary "John forgot his fuel cock, too". When we reached the other side of the circle we were already questioning our decision and stopped. However, Gerhard and Frostie were already out of radio range. We instantly knew

we were lost. But a few seconds later that would become moot as Jr. was now on the radio making a “May Day” call. I responded I knew where he was and moments later I was parked behind a broken Outlaw named Isabella. In the rain.

Mary smartly stayed inside a dry Rudy while I went to help the Lovejoys. John Jr. said the fuel pump died and then as if by magic he pulled out a brand new one in the box like it was a rabbit. I was stunned at this magic trick. Now I carry nearly an entire 356 with me in the trunk, but even I was impressed. As I looked in the engine compartment, I could find no fuel pump (remember She’s an Outlaw). The pump is electric and it’s underneath the front. We all pushed the car to get the front wheel on the curb and Jr. started a dive under the car. I immediately said “Whoa, there cowboy. Back the trolley up” (or something similar). “You have done no diagnosing. How do you know it’s the pump? It could be wiring, a ground, a fuse, fuel line, ignition switch just to name a few.” Jr. stepped backed and agreed and started diagnosing which included laying in the gutter full of broken glass during pouring rain while I laid under the dashboard getting soaked. I called Frostie as we worked and he responded with “I’m warm and comfy, and I’m not a mechanic. How could me being miserable in the rain possibly help?” His logic was flawless. But misery loves company, and he wasn’t miserable damn it! I had to agree there was literally no good reason for him to back track to our location, but at least he now knew we were going to be awhile. John Sr. was acting like a surgical nurse handing Jr. tools until he realized that this sucked and decided to let the two “young” whippersnappers (in their mid to late 50’s) deal with it. He then went to talk to Mary and discussed their shared passion for Journaling. Sr. uses a computer while Mary uses an extinct hieroglyphic called cursive. At one point Jr. indicated he needed an electrical kit which he did not have, but I did. Now this requires me to take the spare tire out. With nearly a spare 356 in the battery box this means getting the tire out is no easy feat. I asked Jr. if he was sure because if I pull it out and he doesn’t use it, I would have to kill him. Nothing personal, it was just required. My spare tool bag is like a Samurai sword. It must see blood before it can be sheathed. After nearly 2 hours in miserable conditions the problem was finally diagnosed. A bad fuel pump. Go figure. As Jr. installed the new pump, he defiled my virgin electrical kit by removing the original 20+ year old wrapper, but thereby saving me from having to kill him.

Soon we were on our way as the sun (what little of it there was) was going down. We stopped for gas, where Jr. again performing a magic trick pulled a complete set of clean dry cloths out of nowhere. Now I had everything I owned packed, but I had no magic, and decided a complete unpack for dry clothes was not worth it. I was wrong. As we climbed the mountains in the rain, it got cold, Mary sitting in Rudy in the rain inconsiderately breathing had already caused more fogged windows than the “German engineered” ventilation system could handle. Now I have driven this car in snow and had heat. But not this day. I was wet, cold, hungry, and tired and the heater just blew “damp”. As we drove towards our hotel, I suspect Jr.’s mood was getting better being dry and knowing his problem was fixed. On the other hand, my mood was on the decline. By the time we reached the hotel, neither Mary or I were wanting to socialize but we were convinced to join the group for dinner anyway, which we were glad we did.



Mary and Gerhart at
Cathedral De Santa Maria

The next morning my mood had only slightly improved from the previous evening, but it wasn’t Isabella’s previous days break down that was causing it. There were clouds on the horizon, but this time they were metaphorical ones.

We pulled out that morning heading to Bilbao Spain to see the Guggenheim Museum. It is pretty well known that the building itself is the star, not the art, so after viewing the exterior of this magnificent modern building (a change from thousand-year-old cathedrals we had been viewing) the 356 clan headed towards Portugal.

Stay tuned for chapter 3 “Apple vs. Android, The “&”\$# Toll” and the 49th Annual International 356 Meet.”



A short break in Spain

356C Disc Brakes in a B

Article and photos by Terry Cohen

I acquired a 1961 Roadster about 2 years ago. It had been a racecar in the early 1970s and had 356C disc brakes added to the package. It was returned to a street car in the 1980s and has worn the disc brakes since. The braking is very good, but the emergency brakes never worked quite right and when it developed a leaking seal, it was time to dive in.

The problem is that there is a fundamental difference in the way the A's and B's had their bump stops oriented in comparison to the C's. The A and B bump stops are identical and are in a more vertical position. The rubber buffers are also shorter and hard. The C buffers are much softer and are located a little further back and oriented tilted forwards about 15 degrees compared to the earlier ones. The torsion bars in the Cs were softer and the buffers served as part of the dampening of the rear of the car. The problem is that they do not align with the rear suspension travel stop for an A/B which is a bracket welded to the inner fender well (see Fig. 1).

The solution is to use the bump stop bracket from an A/B in place of the C bracket. The problem with this is that the C rear buffer mount bracket (and subsequent 900 series cars) has a hole with a nylon bushing that holds the end of the emergency brake cable housing and aligns it with the mechanical emergency brake expanders inside the rear brake rotor. The A/B bracket has no provision for this. I procured a custom fabricated bracket for this purpose from Daryle Higginbotham from the Atlanta area which holds the e-brake cable in the correct position and takes a factory nylon bushing like the original (Fig. 2 & 3). It bolts on the 3 swing arm to axle housing bolts and then the A/B bump stop mounting bracket is secured on the inner side of that.

The final challenge with this set-up is that there is a vertical boss cast into a C axle bearing housing designed to support the C bracket. This is directly in the way of the A/B bracket (Fig.4). A minute or two with a die grinder and then cutting off about half of the bottom of the rubber buffer securing bolt and nut allows this to tuck into place (Fig. 5). Put everything back together and you are down the road!

Anyone interested in the super duper custom bracket can contact me and I will connect you with Daryle Higginbotham.

Legends:

Fig. 1 Malalignment and damage to C buffer in B car

Fig. 2 Custom bracket to hold e-brake cable

Fig. 3 Installed bracket with nylon bushing and proper B buffer

Fig. 4 Interference of cast boss with bracket base

Fig. 5 After grinding boss and hacksawing nut everything fits



Isabel's Adventures

Highway 1 Isn't Always Sunny!

Article and photos by John Lovejoy III

Arriving in LA on a sunny February day, I rendezvoused with my dear friend and first copilot David Kassel. We quickly found our way to Long Beach and John Willhoit's shop where Isabel was sparkling in the southern California sun. Freshly tuned up, suspension overhauled with new shocks, slotted rotors and M caliper brakes, she appeared to beam in the sun. After a recommendation for the best local tacos, we were off for a day in LA. We drove north to visit a private car collection which was spectacular. Heading into hills surrounding LA we drove the famous Mulholland drive where the car performed spectacularly, particularly in the curves, ending in Beverly Hills. We capped the evening off with a visit to the Comedy Store, unexpectedly meeting Adam Sandler.



Meeting Adam Sandler

The next day it was off to Paso Robles and a visit to a horse ranch owned by a friend of David. An early start has us on the road again heading into Dave's hometown of Palo Alto. A quick stop at Stanford University provided a lovely background for a photo opportunity. In the morning, I bid my farewells to David and his family and heading into San Francisco where I meet up with



Driving through the Chandelier Tree



I left my heart...

my wonderful wife Alicia. After a 3-day interlude for a medical meeting, we were off north again heading to the Redwoods but unknowingly heading into an atmospheric river! We drove through the Chandelier Tree and emerged in a torrent of rain as we headed into St. Helena and a few days in Napa County. After a tour including stops at Frogs Leap, Pride Mountain Vineyards, and Gargiulo Vineyards, Isabel was soaked! I removed her floor mats and hung them in the shower to drip dry and mopped up the floor pan. Two days later the weather finally broke as we headed south to Big Sur for a rustic overnight stay at the Big Sur Inn. Unfortunately, Highway 1 was still under repair from a mudslide so the next day we headed inland and back to LA for the literature meet. The lit meet was fantastic! Isabel was in her element with many 356 relatives at each open house and us encountering old friends and building new friendships. An amazing tour of California completed; we dropped Isabel off at Willhoit's Auto Restoration with dreams of an international adventure. Why not?



Rainy wine country



Big puddles in Big Sur

My First Highway 356 Reunion

Article by Joe Owen
Photos by David Witty and Joe Owen

The inaugural Highway 356 Reunion event was held in Helen, Georgia from September 18 to 22. FOG was well represented, and there were approximately ninety-five total 356 cars in attendance.

Having never been to this mountainous area of Georgia, I had no real concept of what to expect. Upon arrival in Helen, I found myself in a faux German town, with Oktoberfest in full swing. German food, beer, and even cuckoo clock stores added to the experience. The event centered around the Tanglewood Lodge, a few miles outside Helen on Highway 356. Just outside the lodge, there was parking that was exclusively for 356s. Inside the lodge were lots of welcoming friendly faces and plenty of snacks. Check in at the lodge was seamless and in addition to a terrific goodie bag, we were given a t-shirt and a booklet of maps and destinations that hinted at the fun to come.

Wednesday was arrival day for about half the participants; while there were many lodging choices close to the Lodge, including cabins within walking distance, more than a few of us opted for a nice hotel in town. Several of us attendees met for dinner at one of the many German restaurants available.

Thursday was just plain fun. A group of six of us decided to go on a long drive over mountains and through the woods to Clarksville, which is a cute town with a 'Mayberry' vibe. We ate at a lovely old time but hip restaurant, The Attic. While sitting at lunch, an older German man started chatting with our group and next thing I knew, we were at his home, looking at his original paint and original interior 1962 356B. What a treat that was! After that, we made our way back to the Lodge where we caught up with old friends and made some new ones before finding another large group to go out for even more German food. Interestingly, we had a pleasant surprise when we encountered a large Florida PCA group at the same restaurant.

On Friday I attended the only organized tour of the weekend to the Wolf Mountain Winery. It was a dramatic drive with lots of steep inclines, turns, and declines to reach the destination. The winery was gorgeous and the owner, Karl Boegne, opened up his garages for us to see his car collection, which included a black speedster previously owned by Olivia Newton-John.

On Friday evening we enjoyed a cookout at the Lodge, with at least 150 attendees and lots of great cars to admire. However, upon returning to the hotel I smelled and then saw a gas leak near one of my carburetors. Fearing a stuck float (or maybe

a worse scenario,) I called Fernando Lopez back at the lodge. I really didn't want to do so because he was already spending his vacation time fixing other people's cars at the lodge, but I figured that if anyone can diagnose and give me a chance at enjoying drives with my car for the rest of the weekend, it would be he! Sure enough, he said he would drive the 20 minutes to my hotel once he was done repairing yet another car. I can honestly say I may never have been happier to see Nando! Ok, maybe I have, but it sure was great to see his smiling face. Within one minute of me opening my engine bay, he realized the nut on the end of one of the banjos on the carburetor was loose, and with a quick twist to tighten he saved the day. We celebrated his accomplishment in the parking lot with a drink and a quick carb adjustment, and he was on his way – likely to rescue someone else.

Early Saturday morning, I went to the lodge for the tech quiz. I thought I had a shot at winning the quiz and getting one of the few trophies given out at the Southern Drive. Upon seeing Terry Cohen, Ken Ito, and Nando sitting for the quiz, I knew I was in trouble. Sure enough, those three finished with the well-deserved trophies. While the quiz was challenging and a lot of work for Pete and Ray to create, my most memorable part of the early morning had nothing to do with that. I happened to be wearing a Carrera Club shirt that morning, which Ken Ito asked me about. I told him the story of how it had been kindly gifted to me, then Ken divulged that he was the designer of the shirt and the four-cam car on the back was his! Certainly, one of those small world moments which we both enjoyed. I definitely picked the right shirt to wear that day!



The author (L) wearing his
Ken Ito (R) designed Carrera Club shirt



Huge turnout for
the Reunion



Beautiful Helen, Georgia

Outside the lodge, there were several groups getting ready for drives and other people talking about their engines. I opted for a drive led by the Campbells. With just five cars, knowing only our destination, I was welcomed into the group. After a lively country ride, we reached a well-known BBQ joint in Blairsville where the five of us parked together next to lots of motorcycles and pickup trucks. After a delicious lunch, three of the five cars stopped at an adorable country store before heading back.

By Saturday evening, I wanted a break from driving. There was a pig roast at the lodge and I opted for a ride to the roast in the back seat of Matt Peckham's Speedster. We got lots of friendly waves passing through the town of Helen. The party didn't stop with dinner and just like the other nights, there were plenty of laughs after the meal. Upon arriving back at the hotel, I encountered a young man who earlier that morning had asked me all about my car. His friends said it would make his weekend if I would take him for a drive. So of course I did! He told me he was so happy to see what a 356 was like. When we returned, there were at least 30 people out front taking pictures of him with the car; turns out they were employees at his advertising firm. He told me that the drive was the best part of his weekend. Our cars sure do bring attention!

The lodge was always a fun place to be near. Any questions regarding mechanical issues and car details were happily answered by fellow attendees. It was rather nice that there wasn't a concours so I didn't have to compete with Pete Bartelli. I toyed with the idea of bringing my Carrera 2, but had heard stories of rough roads and black bears. I opted for my '65 Irish Green 356C, which was perfect for the roads, but felt a little underpowered on a few of the steepest inclines, possibly because the last time I had a 356 on roads this steep, I was in Blowing Rock for the East Coast Holiday with my nearly double the horsepower C2. The drives around Helen were the best my Irish Green 356C has seen under my stewardship. The roads were clear and wide, and I didn't find any gravel roads other than the driveway to the lodge.



Fernando to the rescue



This Reunion was filled with great conversations and fun times with both new and old friends. This was a lovely weekend spent with hundreds of fun driving miles with your car supported by friends.

The two main organizers George Bryan and Darryle Higginbotham (along with their team) truly put together an inspiring event. The big takeaway from this event is that 356s are meant to be driven and they are a blast to do so. The camaraderie and passion on display at the Reunion over these little cars is unmatched by any other car club.



Great roads with awesome views



Admiring the many cars



Playing follow the leader

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*Pete Bartelli leads the charge driving his 1964 SC sunroof coupe
on route 356 in Helen GA. Photographed by David Witty.*