

Keels & Wheels Concours d' Elegance

Lakewood Yacht Club in Seabrook TX

By Chris Kellner

CVAR members Tom Atlas and Chris Kellner take top awards at the 15th annual Keels & Wheels Concours d' Elegance at the Lake-

wood Yacht Club in Seabrook TX, May 1 and 2 this year." Keels & Wheels is a charity event supporting children's homes in the greater Houston area. The

entire event is staffed by volunteers and is "by invitation" only. It is one of the premier Concours events in the USA, showing cars and boats from private collections, museums, and individuals. For more information about this show go to their web site at www.keels-wheels.com

The story unfolds like this... Tom had taken his LOLA (known as the big yellow car by some of his friends) to the Keels & Wheels event a couple of years ago and told me on several occasions that it was a tremendous venue. He called me and suggested that I contact the event coordinators to see if they would be interested in my recently restored Two-Three Red Austin Healey for this years event. I told him I'd give it a try and much to my surprise they said the car was accepted; they would be delighted to have it on the field. When I told Tom, he said his Formula Junior Huffaker-BMC would also be there which meant I'd get a chance to visit with Tom and Devie too, many of you know that Tom and Devie moved to Chicago a while back so we don't get to them see as often as we would like...this was shaping up to be a really fun weekend.

Car placement started on Friday; lo and behold as I'm getting the Healey arranged on the field, I'm placed next to CVAR member Tom Murphy's excellent E-Type Jag, when here comes

Tom with the Huffy. Our cars were less than ten feet apart, this is really getting good. The judging of the cars took place on Saturday morning early so we had to be on the field at O-Dark Thirty to get everything ready, answers questions from the judges, if they asked, and generally be ready for the onslaught of people expected over the next two days. Each area of the event had a volunteer person that coordinated the car place-

ment, made sure that we had everything we needed, like water and so on. Our guys name was "Uzi", not kidding here folks, and he was a great asset to all of us in our section. Tom and I got our stickers indicating that the cars were judged so now it was show time. We were told that over the day on Saturday more than 10,000 people came through the show, the auction, and the classic wooden boats area of



the event. Tom was great with the children who came through with their parents; they all liked Tom's Huffy, probably because as little people they could relate to the size of the car. Tom would lift them up and put them in the seat saying "drive it like you stole it" they

loved it. While Tom was doing that I spent almost the entire day answering questions about the "little red racer". There was a lot of interest in the old Healey; seemed everyone owned one or knew someone who did. We were both exhausted when the show closed at 4:00PM.

Sunday morning came very quickly, and once again we we're answering questions about the cars, giving the little people some seat time in the Huffy, when our volunteer rep "Uzi" came over and told us that we'd both been chosen for "Best in Class" awards. He then took me aside and told me to be ready at 2:00PM for my "Podium Finish" award, one of 12 cars

out of 186 to receive this honor. Judy and I were completely overwhelmed. At 2:00PM we started out in the parade winding our way through the crowds to the big tent with the podium; when

our turn came up we went, Judy received the award from the Commodore of the Yacht Club and down we went out into the "Corral" where all the winners were gathered for the balance of the afternoon. There was amazing company for my little red racer in that corral; Bugatti, Delahaye, Ruxton, 1914 Mercedes "Targa Florio", Boss Mustang, Alfa Romeo 1750, and more...

It was a wonderful weekend for Judy and me, spending time with Tom and Devie as well as several other Healey people from the Houston area we've known for years and the little red racer who while being very happy to be back with her Group 4 buddies didn't mind showing off, just a little bit, with the Concours crowd all polished up and new. The award and the recognition... icing on the cake.

