

Hi!

The DB people in our group continue to keep busy! On 8/22 – 8/23/09, the Barham family hosted several DB folks on a “DB’s Drive Around Mt. Diablo Tour.” Travis and I had found back roads that would allow us to drive our DB’s all the way around Mt. Diablo over a two day period.

We gathered early on Saturday morning, 8/22, at Gene and Vicki Stadelhofer’s house in Alamo. After doughnuts and a driver’s meeting, we took off for Walnut Creek, about twenty minutes away, to visit the Shadelands Ranch Museum. Touring together were Travis, Sharon, and Jennifer Barham in the Barhams’ ’26 DB sedan (six volt car)(unfortunately, Julia Barham had other obligations this weekend, since we changed the original tour dates—see below); Herman and Barbara Boone in their ’33 DB four door sedan; Jim and Delores Hebb in their ’26 DB sedan (12 volt car); Bob and Timber Vincent (’36 DB pickup); Tom and Elaine Gong (’35 DB coupe); and Mike, Suzette, Laura, and Allie Sordello (’22 DB touring). Also touring with us were Roger Gong and daughter Leah in a just purchased Ford pickup, and Tom Barham driving a trouble truck with trailer!

Upon arrival at the parking lot of Shadelands, Mike Sordello needed to use trouble truck tools to fix an unruly bolt/nut combination in the bell housing of his DB. Making sure he had what he needed, the rest of us toured the Shadelands house.

The house at Shadelands Ranch is a Colonial Revival home completed in 1903 by then 79 year old Hiram Penniman. Hiram, and his second wife, Carrie, raised four children. In 1896, the youngest daughter, Bessie, married Albert Johnson, the son of a wealthy Ohio businessman. In 1902, Hiram built the Shadelands house for his unmarried daughter, Mary, to provide for her future security. Ironically, Mary died of influenza in 1909, only two years after Hiram’s death at the age of 83. After Carrie’s death in 1914, Bessie and Albert inherited the ranch. Although they owned several mansions, including Scotty’s Castle in Death Valley (!), they frequently returned home to Shadelands. Following Bessie’s untimely death in 1943 (Albert had an accident in which he ran over her!), Albert formed the Gospel Foundation of California to administer Shadelands and his other assets. The Ranch continued as a fruit and nut ranch until 1948. The Foundation eventually deeded the property over to the City of Walnut Creek, and the house and grounds are now administrated by the Walnut Creek Historical Society.

The tour was extremely interesting, and we were sorry to have to leave, but we needed to proceed to our next stop, about 35 miles away. We left Walnut Creek and traveled through the Town of Clayton, and then out Marsh Creek Road. This was all back country slow roads, perfect for DB’s. Although the weather was hot, it was not blistering and the DB’s did very well. We took the cutoff for Antioch and arrived about lunch time to partake of lunch in a shopping center. We chose to go to Taco Bell as did most of the Gong family, and were back to the DB’s by about 1:00 p.m., taking off for Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve.

The Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve is part of the East Bay Regional Park District. From the 1850’s to the early 1900’s, five coal mining towns thrived in the Black Diamond area: Nortonville, Somersville, Stewartville, West Hartley, and Judsonville. As the location of California’s largest coal mining operation, nearly four million tons of coal (“black diamonds”) were removed from the earth. People from all over the world were drawn to the area’s five mining towns; as many as 900 miners, some as young as eight years old, labored in hundreds of miles of underground workings. Coal mining operations in the area ceased in the early 1900’s as rising production costs, cheaper coal mining production costs (open pit mining) in Washington state, and the increasing use of oil as an energy source made coal mining here less and less competitive.

In the 1920's underground mining for sand began near the deserted Nortonville and Somersville townsites. The Somersville mine supplied sand used in glass making by the Hazel-Atlas Glass Company in Oakland, California, while the Nortonville mine supplied the Columbia Steel Works in Pittsburg with foundry (casting) sand. Competition from Belgian glass sand and the closing of the steel foundry ended the sand mining by the late 1940's. Altogether, more than 1.8 million tons of sand had been mined.

We were here to tour the Hazel-Atlas Mine. Entrance to the tour is via a concrete portal dated 1930. Standing outside in about 95 degree heat, the cool flow of 55 degree air was welcome as we entered the mine. Once inside, we learned the "rules of the tour:" we each had to wear a hardhat, and we each had to have our own flashlight. We learned how to get out of the mine in case something happened to incapacitate our guide, a student naturalist studying geology at Cal State East Bay. Then we were off to the left of the mine entrance to see slides of miners, townspeople, etc. to set the stage for our tour. The presentation was in the first of many "stopes" that we would see, huge rooms (like 200' by 200' by 200') blasted out to get at sand for the glass company. We got to travel about 1000' back into the mine, at one point being almost 200' under the surface above our heads. The park district employs two miners to pick off sandstone that is fractured (so it doesn't fall on visitors!), and we saw fossils, an earthquake fault, and mining equipment. It was FANTASTIC! Our tour was almost twice as long as planned as we asked engaging questions that our guide was very interested in answering!

When we returned to the entrance portal, we turned in our hardhats and flashlights, thanked our guide for the wonderful tour, and once again were on the road in our DB's. We traveled along California J2 from Antioch to Tracy, our destination for the evening. Because we had so much enjoyed the mine tour, spending more time than planned, we had only about a half hour to freshen up before heading to Kinder's, a BBQ establishment about a half mile from our lodging for the night. We were joined for dinner by Jim and Francine Reid, and Jack and Jackie Guilliland, who couldn't partake of the day's activities, but wanted to enjoy some fine DB camaraderie and a white elephant auction with Roger Gong acting as auctioneer (after we sang happy birthday to him!). We had rented Kinder's out as a "private party" (in other words, they closed the place down to everybody but us!) so had no qualms about active and loud bidding. Roger's artful auctioneering netted \$136 for the newsletter and the website expenses of this group! Thank you one and all!

Our first day's mileage was about 65 miles and most were tired and ready to retire for the evening. But on Sunday, everyone was up bright and early to enjoy the complimentary breakfast the hotel offered. Roger and Leah had departed the night before for other Sunday obligations. The DB's ran well along Grant Line Rd. to get to Patterson Pass Road. Patterson Pass is much less traveled than the Altamont Pass, most of it being two lane road. But there was just as much to see along Patterson Pass Road, with a huge PG&E substation and windmills being "up close and personal!" The Hebbs had carburetor problems about half way up the pass; Jim's best guess was that his carb was freezing up, locking the metering pin in place, so that he had no power when needed. So, we just took our time, stopping and letting things thaw out before moving on. At the summit, the view was phenomenal; you could see out over the whole Delta. Once over the top, it was all downhill to our next stop in Livermore, the Duarte Garage.

F.H. Duarte built the garage in 1915 at a strategic site on the Lincoln Highway, then the only U.S. highway that connected the East and West Coasts. He sold gas and oil in addition to making repairs. But in 1927 with the completion of the Carquinez Bridge, the highway was rerouted to what is now Interstate 80, making a dent in Duarte's repair business. The garage eventually became a machine shop and operated until the city of Livermore bought it in the 1970's to use the land around it as a park. In 1976, the Livermore Heritage Guild began its lease of the garage to use it as a museum. It houses many interesting pieces of antiquity, all in various stages of repair/restoration by members of the Guild.

Next it was time for lunch, once again enjoyed at a shopping center for its variety of places to eat. After a nice break, it was back to the DB's again, but not before seeing the group split. The Hebbs followed the

Gongs back to Stadelhofer's, along with the Boones. Each of them had long trips to get home ahead of them. The Barhams, Vincents, and Sordellos proceeded to visit a firehouse in Livermore that lays claim to housing the longest continuously lit light bulb in the world! When we arrived no one was home at the firehouse! We rang a doorbell several times to no avail. Mike Sordello could see the lightbulb from afar, looking through the windows of the garage door, and we were just thinking that was as close to viewing the bulb as we could get, when up came the fire engine! We got to see the bulb and talk with the firemen as well. If you want to see what we saw, go to www.centennialbulb.org--yep, the bulb has its own webpage!

We headed for the Stadelhofer's, watching the Vincents peel off to their house on the way. After helping Mike and Suzette load up, we headed back to the Barham estate, savoring the memories of this trip. The tour of the Hazel-Atlas Mine was fantastic, and we may do that tour again in a couple of years (the Park District is continually expanding the tour reach back into the tunnels of the mine). My special thanks to Travis and Jennifer Barham. Time constraints required that I drive and plan the tour route myself; Travis and Jennifer had never driven the route, but because of our hosting duties, drove the lead DB! They did a remarkable job under the able driving of Travis, navigating of Jennifer following our maps, and occasional cell phone communications from me in the trouble truck! My thanks also to all who attended; we had to switch the tour date from October to August and many were not able to tour with us because of prior commitments (including Julia Barham as mentioned above). And then there was the heat to deal with as well. I think in the future when the Barhams are going to host a tour, we will stick with the date announced in the March newsletter no matter what!!!

Travis and I already have some ideas for future tours, so stay tuned. One would involve a tour by the Livermore Heritage Guild of Guild administrated buildings in and around Livermore that are not generally available for viewing by the public; another involves touring the Tracy/Stockton area under the able leadership of Dan Mills and David Woldstad, including a stop at a chocolate factory and the Hagin Museum in Stockton; and another would be based in Manteca (Travis and Julia are already taking the '24 DB touring for rides on Saturdays to scout out things to see). So, stay tuned!

But be advised that we are always interested in your tour ideas as well, so if you'd like to host a tour, please let us or Donn Marinovich know and we'll help you with it!

In late September our DB group attended the Galt Antique Auto Festival. Once again, a very enjoyable afternoon, relaxing among some very unique and beautiful antique automobiles. But this year's meeting in Galt involved something more for our group than just enjoying the old iron that appears at this function each year. There is interest among several members of our group in exploring two things: becoming a "chapter" of the National DB Club is the first. We have done fine without National DB Club "Chapterhood" for over 20 years. But "Chapterhood" is purported to bring to us one very valuable benefit: liability insurance through the National Club for tour planners, tour participants, etc. Unfortunately, so far we've not seen any of those sorts of benefits materialize from the National Club (they can't seem to get answers to some very specific/basic questions we've asked, like "Who is covered on a tour? All participants, or only those that are members of a National Club Chapter? If only members of a National Club Chapter, what do we do about guests touring with us for the very first time?"). No one can predict the future, but my guess is that we'll abandon the chapter designation because it won't bring us any benefit! But we'll see.

The second thing decided at Galt was that our group needs to become much more streamlined in how we put out the newsletter, pay for tours and the website, etc. It seems that anyone who puts on a tour always runs short of money because of not anticipating costs for this or that. And I know our family always comes up short on this newsletter, and the web page gets no funds other than what we generate at our tour Saturday night white elephant auctions. We have no "Treasury" from which to draw funds in order to reimburse people for all their hard work and "tour hosting" duties, or Roger Gong for web page sponsorship, because the money that people send in each year doesn't even cover the costs of the newsletter.

What we discussed is that we think if we deliver the newsletter electronically (as much as possible--some people don't have internet access) and do a couple of other things, we can save a few bucks and take care of things like the web page, tour \$\$\$ shortages, etc. with the money people send in each year. So, look for a finalization of that in the first newsletter of the new year! In that newsletter, you'll be given the opportunity to sign up as a member of the Northern CA Dodge Brothers and Sisters (which may be by that time a Region of the National DB Club) just like always. There will be ways spelled out in the first newsletter of 2010 allowing you to keep abreast of what we're doing without any cost at all. But if you want to participate on tours, etc., we'll be looking for "dues/contributions" of \$15 for an individual for a calendar year, or \$20 for a family for a calendar year. (Nine families have already signed up at the Galt Festival.) If you'd like to sign up early and have the designation "Charter Member" by your name on the roster (like those nine families), please forward one or the other of the above amounts (\$15 Individual/\$20 Family) to me before 12/31/09. More details to come in the March, 2010 newsletter!

Next year's tour calendar has the potential to add a very special tour opportunity. Details still have to be finalized, but it looks like we may do a four day tour in southern California. Many of you will remember Ken Sobel from southern California who has joined us on some of our northern California tours. Ken is a phenomenal magician. He has already scoped out touring large car collections in southern California (the Nethercutt Collection, and the Peterson Museum) and is investigating our ability to view Jay Leno's automobiles. Additionally, because of his magician skills, he is a member of southern California's Magic Castle, a "magician's only" club where top notch magician's hone their skills before other top notch magicians. Ken has invited us to be his guests at a Magic Castle performance while in southern California if we can make this tour happen. More information will be forthcoming on this early next year, so look for it!!! Seriously consider reserving time for this, because it probably won't come around a second time! Most probably it will be in the mid-to-late April timeframe.

Our next and final get together opportunity for the 2009 Tour Season is the Sonora Christmas Parade, hosted once again by Donn and Sherrin Marinovich. This is a parade down the main street of the City of Sonora in the gold country, and it takes place annually on the Friday after Thanksgiving (this year, Friday 11/27). It is a well attended parade, with observers three and four people deep along the parade route. Please contact Donn and Sherrin to let them know you are coming at 209.533.3663 or e-mail them at dcmmlid@mlode.com.

There are a couple of For Sales listed below for your consideration.

This is our last newsletter of the season, and we want to take the opportunity to wish you all a wonderful holiday season. Have a great Thanksgiving, and celebration of the Lord's birth in December. AND, enjoy all that college football on 1/1/10!!!

Tom and Sharon Barham
(and Travis and Julia, and Jennifer, too!)
315 Strand Ave.
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
925.250.7494

FOR SALE:

Complete long block engine, about 1920, about \$500, call Jim Reid for more info. at 209.744.8871.

Greg Medico in Mesa, AZ (480.807.6868) has a '22 DB sedan he is restoring. He has a lot of extra stuff that came with it that he'd like to sell: complete '25 DB drivetrain (complete engine, transmission, rear axle); two starter/generators; fan assembly; two starter buttons; connecting rods; one front headlight can; one cylinder head; front axle (hub to hub); 4-20" solid wheels; water pump assembly; etc.

