



DELEGATE MEETING 2023 CONCLAVE REPORT

Conclave 2023 - Crystal River, Florida May 21-26

After a three year delay, the Tampa Bay AH Club was able to host our first ever Conclave in Florida. Their planning initially started in late 2018 for a mid-May 2020 projected meet date, but all their work and efforts, to that point, were black flagged six weeks before the start of the event when Covid-19 reared its ugly head and shut much of the world down for over two years. In the meantime, planning started for Enclave 2022 in PA, when we were all 'sure' Covid would be a thing of the past and the world would be 'right' again. Covid lingered on, but somewhat normal life returned enough to host Enclave, which was very successful. Sometime in 2022 the Tampa Bay AHC decided to step up to the starting line again to resume their Conclave planning for a May 2023 event date. Needless to say, this was a great relief for the VP Conclave!

With four new members, including three former members of the Midwest Region, and our current National Secretary, Edie Lowery, they joined Co-Hosts Bill Borja and John Opp on the organizing committee. Planning was soon back up to speed with weekly Zoom meetings, with this all-Florida team again getting down to business. As with any Conclave, 'the 5,000 details' are a lot to plan and keep track of.

The event had a great easy-going feeling. The Plantation Resort had a closeness of a compound set among tall trees, and surrounded by the canals and waterways of the spring fed Crystal River, where aquatic life, including the famous manatees, was not far away. While the gathering of Healey friends was somewhat subdued in numbers, this possibly added to the feeling of a large family reunion. Parking was close to the rooms and walking to the pool side Tiki Bar was not an excessive hike; other events were literally across the narrow parking lot. Yet, the city of Crystal River was just a short drive, offering a variety of amenities and restaurants, including ones that served great Gulf seafood. The rally took us on a scenic route away from the river and waterways. The visit to Bill Emerson's Healey museum home was beyond belief, with large numbers of rare things Healey that we didn't know existed. It was an exhibit of a life time of Healey passion. I think some of you know what that is all about.

The gymkhana and manatee-themed funkhana were very well attended with everyone having a great time. The car show was more private on the nearby golf course with Bruce Gearns winning BOS Big Healey with his gorgeous Florida Green over OEW 100. Ric Anderson won BOS Sprite with his spectacular red and white factory hardtop Bugeye. The Long Distance Driving Award was easily won (because of distance driven) by Irene Medzyk in her PH 1 BJ8 with her husband 'Chief Naginator' and

riding mechanic, Harry Harami, driving coast to coast from Salinas, CA to Crystal River and then back home. Whew, what a test of a successful marriage! Congrats! The Atlanta Chapter won the DMH Trophy and the Midwest Region won the Edie Anderson Award. Congratulations to the award winners for all events.

Every Conclave is unique and special in so many ways and Conclave 2023 in Crystal River has provided many great memories to add to the Healey event scrapbook. Very special thanks goes to the Conclave Florida organizing team for all your voluntary time and dedicated service, Co-chairs Bill Borja and John Opp, with committee members Edie Lowery, Bernie Bowersock, Price Lindsay, Bob Brown and indispensable local team members Joe and Martha Chretien. Huge Healey hugs to all of you!

Latest news: the main reason that Conclave in Florida was held in May was to avoid holding the event during traditional hurricane season, June through November. This foresight was very apparent this year as Hurricane Idalia made landfall about 40 miles NW of Crystal River on August 30th. Crystal River incurred major storm surge flooding to the city and surrounding coastal areas. The Plantation Resort had flood damage, but (as of this writing in late September) it doesn't sound catastrophic. They are open with limited services. The flooring in the 82 Degree Bar and Grill restaurant has to be replaced, but the kitchen is open and serving al fresco on the outside patio. It sounds like they lost the well-used poolside Tiki Bar, as a more permanent structure is now being built. It could have been so much worse as an eleven-foot storm surge was predicted. We hope the local population of manatees fared well. They were helpless victims too. When a place you have visited experiences a catastrophe, we feel it.

Conclave 2024 – Elkhart Lake – Road America - Sheboygan, WI September 15-20

Sometimes, when the embers of an idea have seemingly been extinguished, all it takes is a little kindling and a new spark to reignite the flames of a concept, which may then grow to a roaring fire. This is the case of Conclave 2024. The Conclave VP was contacted by the Wisconsin Chapter before Covid about the idea of hosting Conclave. Some Conclave planning guidelines were sent, but not much materialized at that time. A long-time Wisconsin Healey Club member was approached at Enclave last September about the possibility of exploring the concept of a Wisconsin Conclave again. At that time, there was still a lot of interest from some key members of the Wisconsin club, but a reticence existed from other club members and some officers that they didn't have the 'manpower' to pull off a Conclave with their small club membership.

Meetings within their club and Zoom meetings with the VP Conclave followed, which answered questions about key points of the organizing process. This led to the Wisconsin AHCA Delegate contacting Healey clubs in the central Midwest states to see if any individuals or clubs would be interested in committing to provide assistance. They received good response to their manpower concerns. This became enough for the Wisconsin Club to approve going forward hosting Conclave. These are big decisions of responsibility for any club contemplating hosting an AHCA national meet, so some hesitancy is probably to be expected.

This written report will not go into extensive detail about the concept of the Conclave 24. This will be covered in the verbal report at the Delegate's meeting from Mike Swanger, the Wisconsin Club delegate. He will present a video their club has prepared and talk about the exciting activities they are planning. That report and event details will then become part of the permanent record for the meeting. It promises to showcase areas of Healey activities that haven't been included in a Conclave and related activities for many decades. It will be one to look forward to.

Conclave 2025 Possibility

During my tenure, as VP Conclave, I and the AHCA have been quite fortunate that many area clubs have stepped up to host Conclave or Enclave. But, there was always the thought that this good luck may someday run out and extra work 'beating the bushes' may be necessary to find a suitable venue and willing individuals or clubs to help out in a joint venture to host our yearly national meet. We are at that point where this may now be necessary. In my verbal reports at the Delegate's Meeting over the last few years, I have mentioned a couple locations that were investigated over the internet as possible Conclave sites. Along with other Healey club members, we visited one area, Santa Fe, NM, on the way to the Big Bear Conclave in 2021. The other location that I thought might be a good venue for a Conclave, but had not visited, is Branson, Missouri.

After getting home from Crystal River, I made plans to go, on my own, to Branson for an exploratory visit in early June. I knew that the Nash Metropolitan Club would be holding their national meet there at that time and I wanted to see how a car event navigated the busy scene at Branson and its famous 'Strip'. Flatwater Healey club member, Brad Swiggart, is the President of the national Metropolitan Club and he organized their event. He was also willing to help me, as needed. Brad's insight into the area was very useful. He set me up with a contact from the Branson Convention and Visitors Bureau that he had used for his club's event planning.

For anyone that has been there or heard about Branson, you are probably aware that it is an area that has a huge number of different types of attractions. The famous Rt. 76 'Branson Strip' is known for many of these attractions. The Branson/Ozarks area is a gorgeous part of SW Missouri with forested hills, surrounded by lakes. All of this would definitely qualify Branson as a great destination for a Conclave.

The first of two days with the Branson CVB contact were spent visiting three different possible host lodging sites, each with different locations within the Branson area and each possibly providing a different 'feel' for the type of event Conclave could be. One was an 'out-in-the-country' stunning high-rise hotel resort, spa and convention center, located on a hill overlooking Table Rock Lake. Another was a contemporary design high-rise hotel with attached convention center located in the heart of the historic Branson town area. The third was a large hotel, with adequate convention facilities, located a stone's throw from the Branson Strip. As with any venue search, each property had its own set of 'pros and cons' as to its viability.

The second day was spent exploring a few of the many area attractions. Obviously, this could only give one a limited insight into the area, but gave a good general feel about what is there. It has literally something for everyone, but it would be impossible to do everything in the span of a week.

Branson is a family vacation playground that is a destination of 8-10 million people a year. It is a very busy area in the warmer months.

One other area that would need to be addressed is the organizing committee. Since there are still some major questions to be answered, a proposal is not yet appropriate to be presented to the AHCA Delegates. At this stage, no regional clubs have been approached about hosting or assisting in planning for a Conclave 2025. Some basic financial concerns need to be settled first to see if we go forward.

As of this writing, (October 1st) based on the numbers that have been quoted by the three possible host lodging sites, a Conclave in Branson is still highly questionable. We hope some of those questions and areas of concern can be addressed in the coming weeks before the Delegate's Meeting in November. We are working to see if it is going to be feasible to go to Branson for some Healey fun. A more complete report should be available at the Delegate's Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Neil Anderson

VP Conclave

neilandcustom@gmail.com

815-757-1911 cell