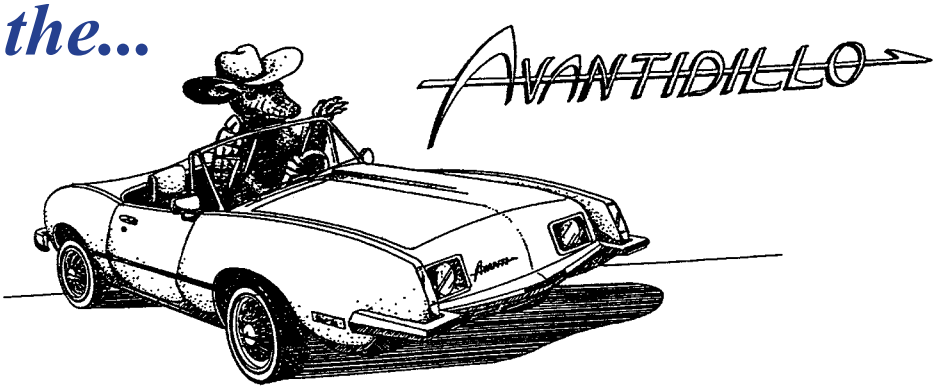
The re-return of the...



October 2014
Volume 2014, Number 1

For those of you were part of the Houston area AOAI chapter in the mid-80s, you'll recognize the masthead above as that of that club's publication - Avantidillo. At one point, the Houston-area chapter of the AOAI had over 50 members with monthly meetings. I truly believe that we can attain those same, if not greater, numbers with a larger geographical range from which to operate. So, what say we get started?

In this issue...

October 2014 - Shall we try again?
Engine Swap on Matt's 1982 Avanti

October 2014 - Shall we try again?

Who: YOU, as an Avanti owner or current or past member of the AOAI!
What: Setup Meeting for local Avanti Owners Association Chapter
When: Saturday October 25th, 2014 - 11:00am
Where: DeLorean Motor Company, 15023 Eddie Drive, Humble, Texas 77396
Can't find it? Call 281-650-5533

Engine Swap on Matt's 1982 Avanti *text and photos by Matt Pautz*

Earlier this year my 1982 Avanti developed a mechanical knock from the engine of unknown origin. With only 57k miles on the car this was a disappointment, but not one to miss an opportunity I decided to take this misfortune and turn it around by installing a more modern and substantially more powerful chevy 350 small block to replace the tired and anemic 305. I chose to start the engine build with a post-1982 350 CID engine block as those cores came from the factory with a hydraulic roller cam which is a big improvement both in noise and durability over flat tappet cams, and a one-piece rear main seal, which was a substantially better design than the earlier 2-piece rear mains that tended to leak. A fuel economy minded camshaft from Comp Cams, and Dart Iron Eagle Vortec heads were tasked with coordinating the valvetrain. Lastly the long block was topped off with an Edelbrock performer intake manifold and Rochester Quadrajet E4ME computer controlled carburetor.



With the long block in hand from the machine shop a small band of merry men set out to perform a heart transplant on my Avanti. Headquartered at the Beatty household garage, Steve Ewbank, Joe Beatty, Tom Ossowski, James Espey, Dave Boratyn, and myself began work to pull the old engine. James and Steve jumped right in and got the exhaust and transmission detached while the rest of us fiddled ➲



up top disconnecting all the brackets and accessories. Thankfully the rust cooperated and we had the engine out in the first weekend.

After cleaning up the engine bay and using POR15 to rust proof the frame components in the engine bay we started the process of prepping and installing the new engine. The new engine and all the brackets were detailed and painted following the original Studebaker Avanti 289 V8 color scheme, semi-gloss black engine, red/orange fan, and chrome air cleaner and valve covers. Although the engine swap should have been an apples to apples swap (all small block engines have the same external dimensions), the use of the Vortec-style heads (which uses a special intake design) and some of the aftermarket bits meant that we spent a bit of time making everything fit just so. Joe's fabrication skills came in handy as we have to modify the factory throttle bracket to work with the different intake.

Finally ready to fire up the engine, we tried and tried and tried, but could only get it to back fire through the carb. After going through the plug wires, making sure everything was in the right order, we realized we (I) had make the rookie mistake of putting the distributor in 180 degrees off TDC. A couple minutes later and we had the engine fired up, it was running quite rough, but it was enough to get it onto the trailer and to Ripley's for a custom dual 2.25" exhaust.



Once back from the exhaust shop we found a faulty ignition module on the HEI was the source of the rough running, so swapping the ignition module to a high performance unit from Davis Unified Distributors, MSD ignition coil, and re-gapping the spark plugs to 0.060 made it spin like a top. Joe and I hopped in the car and after a short cruise it was clear this was a completely new Avanti experience. Designed with a very flat torque curve in mind the engine should be making around 400 ftlbs of torque and 300 peak hp, twice the engine specs of the original 305 CID engine (and it still gets 20 mpg).

Many thanks to all the club members that got their hands dirty on this project. It was a real team effort and I learned a lot as I hope others did. Thanks to all of you another Avanti cruises on.
