



The Central Texas Micronuts Car Club

By Bruce Fullerton

Given the fact that we're coming up on our fifth anniversary, you could say that some things were just meant to happen. It was in the late Summer or early Fall of 1999 that Terry Sayther and his wife, Debbie Stuart, got this brilliant idea to form a microcar club in Austin, Texas. Terry is well known around these parts and beyond for running an award-winning independent BMW service shop. He recently added MINI warranty and non-warranty services to his lineup given the fact that Austin has no MINI dealer. His guys can make your MINI go *really* fast, too. At the time, he was the proud owner of several (8 or 9 1/2, if memory serves) BMW 600's. You couldn't bring up the subject of Isettas without the mailman, UPS delivery guy, customers at the upholstery shop, you name it, ask "Do you know that guy out there off of Ben White Boulevard that has all those Isettas?" Or, "Hey, I saw someone driving a yellow and white Isetta towing one of those tear drop trailers last week. So you know him?" Yep. Terry gets around.



Earlier in '99. We got to talking about Isettas at work one day. Within all of 48 hours, one of the guys comes strollin' in and announces that a friend of his lives next door to a guy with a beautiful red Isetta and baby blue Messerschmitt. Enter Carl Jensen. Besides my wanting to see an Isetta in the flesh again, Carl was kind enough to invite me over to measure his car so I could make sure that an Isetta would, in fact, fit in the back of the Z-71. The thought of driving from Austin to Sturges, Mississippi to pick mine up and finding out that it didn't wasn't exactly my idea of a cheap thrill.



Next, while surfing the Internet, this site called *Isetta Source* pops up in the search results and the two words "Austin, Texas" jumps off the page. Enter Robert "Bubba" Mace. Talk about luck! Another Austin owner with a car in almost identical (bad) shape as mine who had purchased his car on

almost the same day and was at the almost the same early stage of restoration. Knowing that someone else is in the same boat as you will get rid of buyer's remorse real fast, or give you a double dose. What I didn't have in the way of tools, like a media blasting cabinet, Robert did. Or Carl did, or Terry did. I had a few spare parts Robert needed along with two extra hands. What I mean is, it's not like I had four hands to begin with and left the two I wasn't using at Robert's house or anything like that. Hmm ... that sentence needs work. Anyway, we combined parts orders and saved a small fortune on shipping. Then came putting the whole body-off-frame experience on paper in the form of "Two Guys From Texas" ... nine times.



Thanks to Debbie Stuart's savvy and effort, the Club's monthly newsletter, *A Little Car News*, was born in 2000. (That's the Debmeister in the striped poncho and shades standing to the left of the Isetta.) It was a fun, informal, one page document mailed to members and interested parties that updated everyone on what was going on in Microland, announced shows, meetings, members' projects, etc. Today, the newsletter is primarily distributed via email and has grown in content. *ALCN* not only covers Texas micro news but receives news and requests every month from folks around the US who have asked to be added to the mailing list. Many of them send us pictures and background on their cars for publication.



Three Micronuts have Web sites, Robert Mace's *Isetta Source* being one of them. It's arguably the most comprehensive indexed Isetta site on the Web. Where Robert digs some of this stuff up is beyond me. *Terry Sayther Automotive* has a great site that covers all aspects of his business plus racing and project news. The third is *Isetta Tech* whose primary focus is the nitty-gritty on restoration topics, parts/service suppliers and resource materials along with a couple of galleries, Isetta lore and general nonsense thrown in to prevent visitors from dozin' 'n droolin' at their keyboards. All of the Micronuts newsletters since September 2003 are posted there in the Articles section. URL's for these sites are listed at

the end of this article as well as an email link to request to be included in the newsletter mailing list.

No, the Micronuts haven't grown into a corporate behemoth and have no immediate plans to have a professional sports stadium bearing their name. The club still meets the second Thursday of every month at a popular Austin eatery, Rudy's Barbeque. Head count ranges from 7 or 8 folks to a record of 20 at one gathering. Subject matter runs the table with this bunch. Sure, we've discussed the sad state of affairs regarding repro brake cylinders, those pesky invoices printed in German, over-complicated Metro components and Don Garlits airing out his black WynnsJammer AA/Fueler at San Antonio Drag Raceway back in '65 (got that one on a Super-8 home movie) but you never know what might be in the drinking water on any given day.



For instance, one evening, members Janie & Andy Amescua announced that one of their sows had a new litter of piglets. *Road trip!* The following Sunday found a quorum of Micronuts in McDade, Texas at the Amescua's country spread. After examining Andy's newly acquired Crosley wagon, still on the trailer, it was out to the pigpen to

check out the products of the blessed event. Watching the seven piglets shnoot it out for one of Momma's six hookups was entertaining to say the least ... better than a fumble on a goal line quarterback sneak. Next came lunch time (for the humans) and, you guessed it, homegrown ham. In the scheme of things, Andy & Janie's place might not be your first choice of spots to hang if you're a pig. Here today, sandwich tomorrow. Throw in some homegrown vegetables, five or six different kinds of homemade cookies and a big pitcher of ice tea and you've got one of the more well-fed car clubs around. In the scheme of things, Andy & Janie's place might not be your first choice of spots to hang if you're a human being on a diet.



Club events have included three Central Texas Microcar shows and co-hosting duties at the 2002 national meet in Duncanville, Texas that Ray Morey did such an outstanding job of pulling together.

Thanksgiving weekend 2003 saw the Micronuts in their third Chuy's Children Giving To Children Parade which benefits the Operation Blue Santa program in Austin and gathers almost half of the 45,000 or so toys given to children in the Central Texas area each Christmas. Many of you may remember that Chuy's Tex-Mex Restaurant was the venue where the Bush twins were popped for underage margarita drainage a while back. But that's another story ...

As with any other group, the Micronuts have a diverse cross-section of members with backgrounds in architecture, biochemistry, commercial airline aviation, ground water hydrology, farming and ranching, spelunking, high-tech sales, computer chip manufacturing, engineering and on and on. What's the car population look like? Between the Micronuts and their associates we have 5 BMW Isettas, a Velam Isetta, a BMW 600, a Messerschmitt, an Inter, a Berkeley, a Crosley wagon, a couple of Metros and numerous other rides running the gamut from Renault Dauphines to Matras. Whoops! Forgot the Rolls and the Vespa and the '55 Jag and the '89 Countach and the Corvairs and the ...



Terry and Debbie, known for their BMW racing adventures, entered their 1958 BMW 502 sedan in the 2002 Carrera Panamerica and placed third in their class. If you're not familiar with this event, it's not exactly held on Interstate-quality highways. Or pavement. Nobody has any concept of what asphalt and guard rails are over a large area of the course. The Carrera begins at the southern tip of Mexico with the finish line at Laredo, Texas. We're talking about cars sliding off roads into rocky gulches, potholes big enough to break shock absorbers (ask Terry) and traffic control, or lack thereof, through some of the small towns along the way that produced two totaled Mercedes Gull Wing coupes. (It hurts to type that, much less read it.) To finish this race is to win it, regardless of where you place.



Well, time to get busy and plan that cookout 'n cruise over at Bubba's house. We'll also get busy on a follow-up article if, and when, our engineering team comes up with a viable retractable stadium lid based on a massive Isetta sunroof. At that time,

we'll announce rules for the "Name That Stadium" and T-shirt design contest. And you can make book that it won't start with "Minute Maid" ... BF

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Isetta Source: www.whirlingpool.com/isetta

Isetta Tech: www.isettatech.com

A Little Car News: bmw57isetta@hotmail.com for requests to be added to the mailing list, submit pix, news and/or comments.