



# THE OCTAGON



Newsletter of the M.G. Owners Club  
The Northern California Centre of the M.G. Car Club



North American MGB Register



*Since 1957!*



Jim Ward's lovely 1974 Midget at the Holiday Tea

# January 2024

Photo from Andy Preston

# About *The Octagon* and the MG Owners Club

The M.G. Owners Club, formed in 1957, is the Northern California Centre of the M.G. Car Club, formed in England in 1930. The Peninsula T Register was formed in 1973 and is now an informal sub-group of the MGOC. We receive a copy of the MGCC's *Safety Fast*, available to members on loan from the Corresponding Secretary. The club is also associated with the North American MGB Register, the North American MGA Register, and the New England MG T Register. *The Octagon*, our newsletter, is published monthly by the MG Owners Club. Opinions expressed in *The Octagon* are not necessarily those of the MGOC, its members, or Board of Directors.

## DIRECTORY of MGOC OFFICERS for 2024

President: **Kirk Prentiss**, [kirkprentiss@gmail.com](mailto:kirkprentiss@gmail.com)  
Vice President: **Andy Preston**, [andypreston@att.net](mailto:andypreston@att.net)  
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## CLUB ADVISOR PROGRAM

Feel free to call these members, who have volunteered to help with purchase, repair, and restoration of various M.G. models, etc.

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MGB V8 Conversion: **Tony Bates**, 408-666-6174,  
[avbates@yahoo.com](mailto:avbates@yahoo.com)  
MGC: **Tom Doyle**, 530-546-9924, [wtdoyleii@gmail.com](mailto:wtdoyleii@gmail.com)  
M.G. Midget: **Christian Rowcliffe**, 415-359-6319,  
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MGA Coupe: **Andy Preston**, [andypreston@att.net](mailto:andypreston@att.net)  
MGA & Twin Cam: **George Steneberg**, 510-525-9125,  
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Z-Magnette Saloon: **Eric Baker**, 510-531-7032  
[mgpb36@yahoo.com](mailto:mgpb36@yahoo.com)  
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Pre-war Midgets-Magnas-Magnettes: **George Steneberg**,  
510-525-9125  
PA/PB Midget 1934-36: **Eric Baker**, 510-531-7032,  
[mgpb36@yahoo.com](mailto:mgpb36@yahoo.com)

## COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING IN *THE OCTAGON*

Direct all questions about advertising to **Rick Anguiano** at 209-617-8492 or [webmaster@mgocsf.org](mailto:webmaster@mgocsf.org). 2024 rates are: monthly (yearly): full pg. \$25 (\$240), half page \$18 (\$175), third page \$12 (\$120), business card \$8 (\$75).

All ads expire on Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>, and fees for a partial year will be pro-rated to that date. Deadline for ad materials is the 10<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month. The MGOC makes no claims as to the reputation or quality of work performed by businesses advertising in *The Octagon*.

## MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS TO *THE OCTAGON*

Your stories, photos, tips, questions, and anything MGOC-related are always welcome in *The Octagon*. Please make your contributions by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month preceding the issue in which you want them to appear. Please email all contributions to [magnut\\_dan@hotmail.com](mailto:magnut_dan@hotmail.com) or send them to: Dan Shockey, 12632 Edith Dr., Garden Grove, CA 92841

## RECRUITING MEMBERS FOR THE MGOC

Have you helped recruit any new members lately? The club roster is available from Steve Kellogg upon request.

## MGOC.SF.ORG

Upcoming events, MGOC history, photos, membership forms, *The Octagon*, and helpful links are posted on the Club Web site at <http://mgocsf.org>.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

MGOC Annual Brunch!	3
From the Ed	4
MGOC Planning Meeting	5
George's Pub Room	6
President's Ponderings	7
Board Meeting Minutes	8
Tea Party Report	9
Rebuilding an MGB Rear Suspension	10-11
Debumping the MGB and Midget	12-17
Keep Planning for 2024	15
My Sports Car Journey	18
Cooling System Clean-out Tool	19
Walter Kilik Remembered	20
CycleKarts!	20
MG Mitten Art	21
Damper Oil;TC Hardtop	22
Classifieds; Oosten Monte Carlo J2	23
Member Notes; New Member!	24
Survivor Instinct Ad	25
Back Page: Cartoon, Airline in Snow	26



# MGOC Annual Brunch

and it's a *Champagne Brunch*

*Sunday January 21, 2024*

*Limited to 40 people*



Flier from Andy Preston.

Our Annual MGOC Brunch will be held again this year at the Historic Moss Beach Distillery at Moss Beach. We will be limited to 40 people only so sign up early. It will be a *Champagne Brunch* and held in a private room overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Their *Brunch* is rated #1 in the Bay Area.

12:00 Noon, Sunday, January 21, 2024; **please arrive no later than 11:45 to be seated.**

Moss Beach Distillery, 140 Beach Way, CA 94038

\$40/person (MGOC members) and \$55/person (non members) paid in advance.

Your *Brunch* will include; Fresh baked pastries, cup of seasonal fruit, your choice of one from 4 entrees, Coastal Crab Cake Benedict, Grilled Salmon, California Coastal Omelet (with or without Prawns), and Pork Chop and eggs, Tea, Coffee, OJ and of course Champagne and Mimosas. Please advise Marla of your entrée when you sign up.

**RSVP by January 14, 2024** with your entrée choice and check made out to the MGOC and mail to: Marla Preston, 7305 Rebas Way, Rohnert Park CA, 94928 707 795 3480, [marlapreston@hotmail.com](mailto:marlapreston@hotmail.com)

To pay through PayPal go to the website at: [www.mgocsf.org](http://www.mgocsf.org) and under Events click on Brunch Payment and select your entrée.. But please tell Marla that you have paid through PayPal and your entrée choice.

# From the Editor

California Cold Greetings, MGers!

30 December 2023

Hope you are enjoying the holidays. We are but it is a tough time for many folks. A time we think of those loved ones who have gone ahead.

Allan Chalmers got me thinking about mid-winter driving back in Illinois and Indiana. It truly was an adventure driving a roadster in that climate. Locks would freeze, doors would freeze shut. One day I found ¼" of ice covering my TR3. I would try to throw something over it if I knew it would freeze but sometimes that also froze to the car. The country roads would have two tracks in the snow where the American cars and pickups drove and the TR could only fit in one of them leaving the other wheel in the deep snow in the middle. (Early 70s.)



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But we had fun driving in the snow and ice, too. The TR's heater didn't do much so I bundled up in long underwear and insulated pants on top. I felt that I stayed healthier always dressing for the weather. But it was a challenge to drive in my big insulated boots.

So we have it easy here. No excuse not to enjoy a drive even on New Years Day. Make it a tradition to start the new year right!

Happy trails, happy 2024!

**Dan**



Y2K was  
24 years  
ago!



**A Tire to Remember  
A Tire to Forget...**



5



# MGOC Planning Meeting Saturday, January 6, 10:00 a.m.

*Please join us!*

We need your help to plan our events and activities for this New Year. Everyone is welcome - especially new members and anyone who has any ideas for new or old events. All ideas are welcome and there are lots of people who are willing to help you.

**Date:** Saturday, January 6, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

**Location:** Marcia Crawford's home at 150 Purdue Ave, Kensington

**Event:** The club will provide tea and coffee, donuts and pastries.

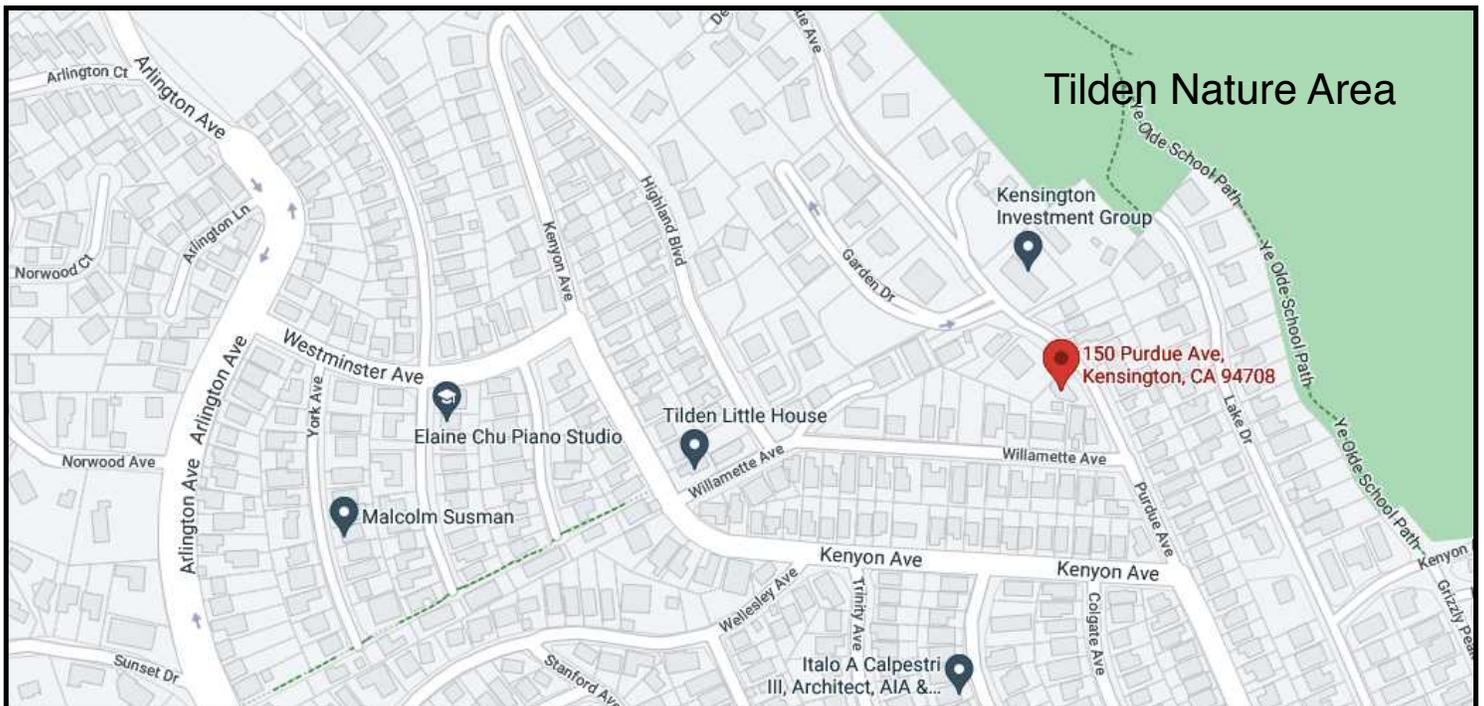
**Please RSVP** to Andy Preston 707-795-3480, [andypreston@att.net](mailto:andypreston@att.net)

**Directions:** Take I-80 or 580 toward Golden Gate Fields. Exit at Albany/Buchanan. At light turn east (toward hills). Follow Buchanan east. Buchanan curves right and becomes Marin. Cross San Pablo Ave. and continue east on Marin thru several lights. Cross The Alameda (round fire house on your right) and continue to Marin Circle (fountain in middle) and around to The Arlington (only divided road).

Continue on The Arlington to stop sign. Continue three blocks, then turn right on Westminster. Turn right on Kenyon (at top of "T") and continue around and up to Purdue. Turn left on Purdue Ave and continue a short way to 150 Purdue, a white colonial house on your left. Continue to find parking



Deal for the GOF West



# George's Pub Room MG Collectables Sale

This was held in time for Christmas on December 10. He still has many boxed MG models for sale. Contact George or Marcia if interested. Contact George at 510-526-8951.

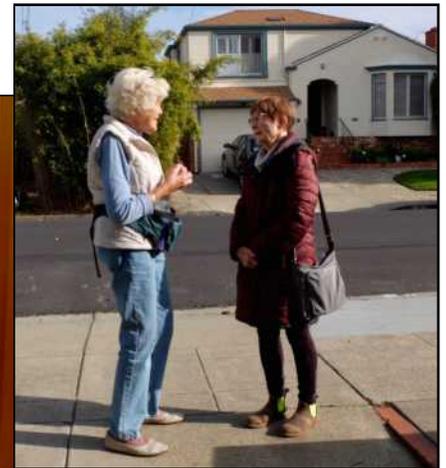
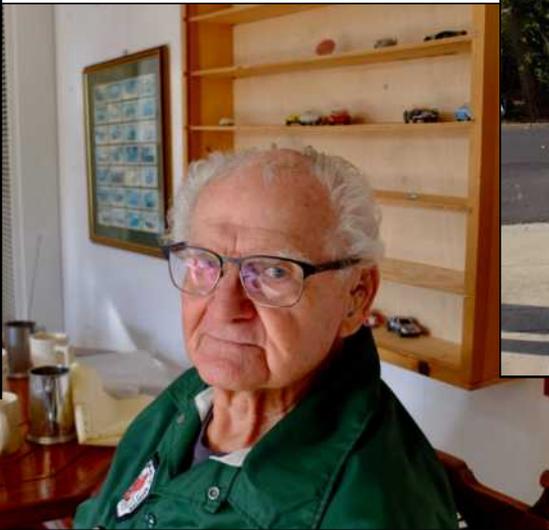
## Report from Marty Rayman:

Of course I bought some things. Irresistible. Just what I needed to add to my dust collectors; three for me & one item for our grandson.

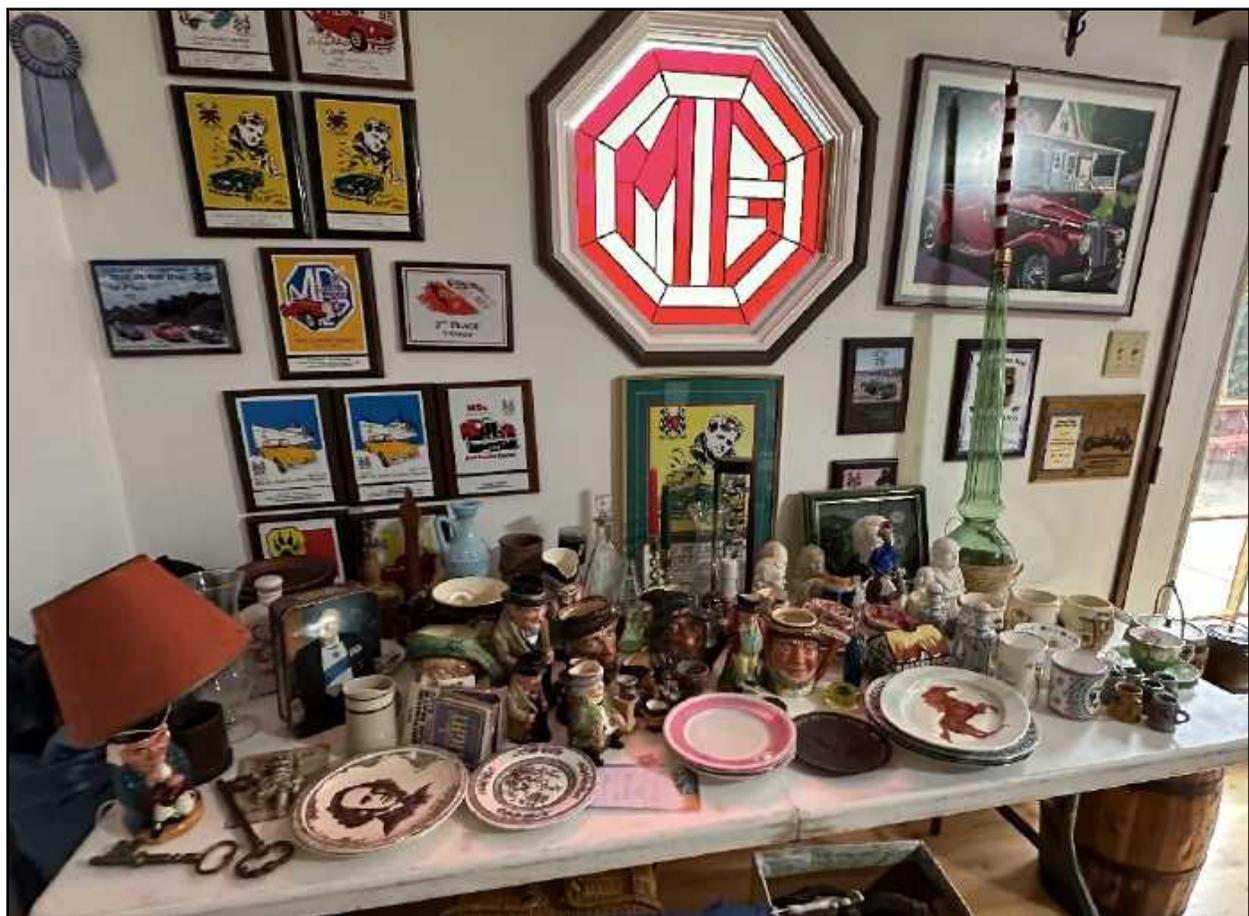
Thanks Kirk for letting us know about this. It is a fine collection, well displayed.



George's MGs for sale.  
The J2 is tiny!



Marcia and Naomi  
above  
Rayman pics



# President's Ponderings

It's a wrap for 2023! I think the demands of the Holidays caught up with Amy & I as we closed out the year with covid. BLUAH. As I write this we are turning the corner on it though, happily! Frankly, I was ready for the year to close so that we could get on with the new one.

Twenty twenty four; those numbers sound big! So let's begin big and have a huge turnout for our annual planning meeting on Saturday January 6<sup>th</sup>. As master of ceremonies for this event, Andy is ready to have large numbers of volunteers to fill up the annual event calendar. Please don't disappoint! Remember, an event does not have to be grandiose. A simple meet up, drive on a favorite back road and maybe end up somewhere for lunch. Done and dusted; it's really just that simple.

We are fortunate to live in an area that there are endless opportunities for back road outings. Of course if you have something big in mind that would be wonderful too. It's early enough to get the jump on a multi-day event if you have something exciting in mind.

Whatever you choose, please DO choose to lead an event. Your efforts are what make this a truly great car club.

Happy New Year to everyone!

Kirk



Kirk at Dickens Faire top. How Kirk feels above.

Cartoon by Brian Sonner

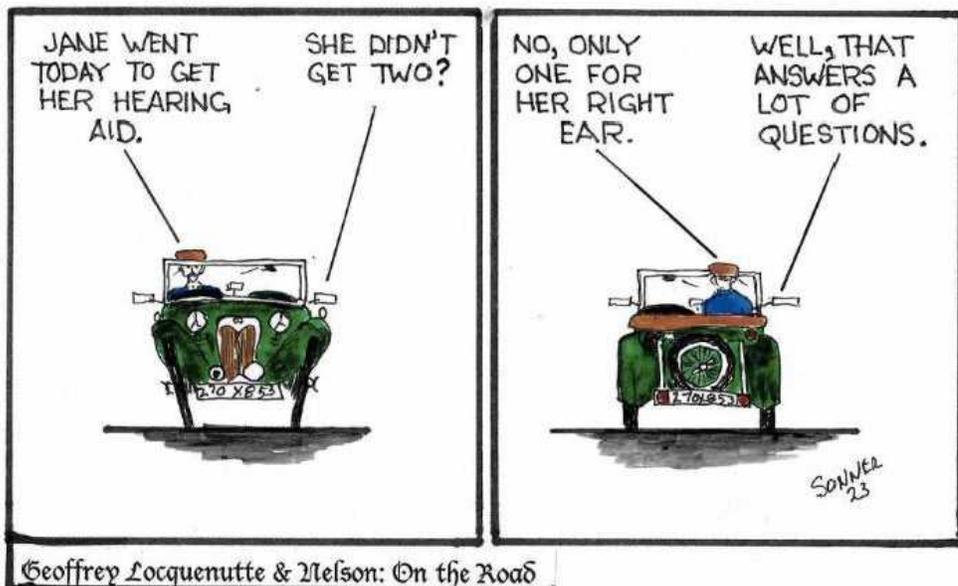
**2024 Officers**

**President: Kirk Prentiss**

**Vice-President: Andy Preston**

**Treasurer: Marla Preston**

**Secretary: Mike Jacobsen**



Watch for dues mailing

# MGOC Board Meeting

## 12:30pm, Saturday December 2, 2023

**Call to Order:** Kirk Prentiss at: 1:05

**Attending and introductions:** Elaine Chan, Marcia Crawford, Mike Jacobsen, Steve & Gayle Lilves, Mark McGothigan, Kirk & Amy Prentiss, Andy & Marla Preston, George Steneberg. (More people arrived later.)

**Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings:**  
August 5, 2023: *Motion:* Mark, *Second:* Amy

### REPORTS

**President's Report:** Kirk Prentiss: Present and happy to be here.

**Vice President's Report:** Andy Preston: Working on cars – MGB front brakes and E-type gearbox.

**Treasurer's Report:** Marla Preston:

Account	August 5, 2023	December 2, 2023
Checking	15,580.51	15,245.37
Savings	9,922.00	9,922.00
Total	25,502.51	25,167.37

There has been little change since the last Treasurer's report. We have paid web hosting fees and have had a few new members join.

**Secretary's Report:** Mike Jacobsen: Nothing to report.

**Registrar's Report:** Steve Kellogg: Report by email.

167	Number of Regular Members
49	Number of Regular Family Members
<b>216</b>	<b>Total Regular and Family Members</b>
9	Number of Corresponding Members
3	Number of Corresponding Family Members
<b>12</b>	<b>Total Corresponding and Family Members</b>
<b>228</b>	<b>Total Membership</b>

**Members at Large Reports:** Mark McGothigan, John Hunt, George Steneberg: Nothing to report.

**Regalia Report:** Andy Preston: 1 sale. If you want to order a clothing item from the new regalia area of the website, first select male/female and then restrict the search to items that are available singly.

Otherwise you could select something and then discover the minimum order is ten items.

**The Octagon Report:** Dan Shockey: Absent

**Website Report:** Rick Anguiano/Steve Kellogg: The website is “doing what it’s supposed to do.”

**PAST EVENTS:** Sonoma Tour: Though held on a Sunday, there was little traffic. We lost a few people due to mechanical issues but everyone made it home somehow. Lunch was outstanding with everyone being served at once and just a few minutes after being seated.

**UPCOMING EVENTS:** MGOC events in **bold**  
SSTS Holiday Luncheon December 8, 2023

**Planning meeting** January 6, 2024, 10am, Marcia and George – Info in the *Octagon*.

**Annual Brunch** January 21, 2024, noon, Moss Beach Distillery, Marla Preston – Info in the *Octagon*. Since mimosas are included with the Brunch there was a discussion about having attendees sign a waiver to acknowledge this. Having all attendees sign a waiver was approved. Steve Kellogg and Steve Lilves will get examples from other clubs.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

### NEW BUSINESS

Elections – The incumbents were unanimously re-elected.

Several members will come pick up things from George's garage and store them for the Club as George needs to clear everything out for work on the house.

**BUSINESS RESOLVED ONLINE SINCE LAST MEETING:** None

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** None

**NEXT MEETING:** TBD

Meeting adjourned at: 1:22  
Submitted by: Mike Jacobsen

**Thanks, Mike!**

## Holiday Tea 2023

Andy Preston

The Holiday Tea this year was held at the beautiful Spanish Revival home of Elaine Chan in San Francisco. Many thanks go out to Elaine and Mike Jacobsen for hosting and making this a wonderful event and a great start to the holiday season. It's a lot of hard work opening up your home to guests and as always Elaine did a spectacular job.

In attendance were Elaine Chan and Mike Jacobsen, Marcia Crawford and George Steneberg, Amy and Kirk Prentiss, Marla and Andy Preston, Gayle and Steve Lilves, Connie and Doug Hollander, Mark McGohtigan, Bill Bilier and Jim Hart.

Elaine seemed to bring hot appetizers from her kitchen all the time and everyone bought a dish to share so there was more food than we could eat so we all ended up taking some home. Many folks brought tea and tea pots to event, well it is called the Holiday "Tea" to share and there were teas I've never tried before and I'm a diehard tea drinker. The Hollander's brought a silver tea pot that would have been at home on Downton Abbey and had been polished to a brilliant shine.

I always enjoy talking to new members and Jim Hart showed up in his beautiful 1974 MG Midget (see the cover photo) regardless of the overcast and rainy day. He did most of the restoration on the car himself and it was great talking to him and exchanging war stories about restoring cars.

It was great seeing everyone but more especially a big THANK YOU to Elaine and Mike for putting it all together.

Happy New Year.



# Rebuilding an MGB Rear Suspension in 8 Hours

by Steve Strubic, Arizona Club

I worked on Alice the 1975 MGB like a madman for the last couple of weeks before the British "Wheels on the Green" show October 30<sup>th</sup>. I went from a rolling, painted shell of a car (albeit with engine and transmission) to a complete, functional vehicle in two months! I never want to do that again... but it was all worth it, as Alice made it onto the field and looked like a million bucks. Thankfully, I didn't spend that much. 😊 But this is the story of a last-minute major rebuild three days before the show.

Wednesday evening, Alice was ready and I took her for a test drive. Everything was working, and I was humming along at about 45 MPH. I went to slow down to turn right – and the car darted heavily to the right and I thought the back end was going to come around. It was a scary feeling I had never experienced before. Something was very, very wrong. I drove home gently and parked her for the night. My brain went into panic mode; She was not safe to drive, and I didn't need this kind of problem right before the show! I went to bed scheming of how to attack the problem.

### 10:00 AM

At about 10 o'clock Thursday morning, I jacked up the rear of the car and started my inspection. Nothing looked terribly amiss with the U-bolts, but I was able to move the axle back and forth a bit more than I thought was okay. I decided I had no choice but to go forward with a rebuild. Fortunately, I had purchased all the bushings I would need long ago.

I started by jacking up the driver's side of the car, removing the wheel and supporting the axle. I had a jack stand whose head fit right into the bracket for the front leaf spring support. That gave me access to the bolt while supporting the car. I then placed my jack under the leaf spring just in front of the U-bolts so I could support the spring while removing the nuts. As I didn't have replacement U-bolts handy, I was extraordinarily careful to not break the bolts while removing the nuts. Thankfully, they all came loose with application of heat and penetrant. I then supported the axle with another jack stand and slowly lowered the jack to allow the spring to come loose. It took a little prying – everything was basically glued together after 47 years – but it did come free. I removed the U-bolts and bracket and cleaned them up, including chasing the threads.

(These pictures are all of the passenger's side, but you get the idea. I completed the driver's side and took pictures of the passenger's side once I knew what I was doing.)



### Page 1

### 1:45 PM

Now that I had all the correct parts, it was time to reassemble. The front bushing went in first with a little lubricant, then the bolt and flat washer, and then I cinched it up with the new nut and washers. The rear shackle was a bit of a challenge, though. I had a hard time getting the bushings to fit into their holes. I had to scrape and clean out the hole, as it had rusted somewhat, and I was finally able to get the bushing in place and accepting of the shackle. I was then able to fit the spring and shackle permanently.



### 2:15 PM

With the spring in place, I installed the top and bottom spring plate bushings and U-bolts. I jacked the spring up to mate with the axle. I had to hold the bottom plate where the damper link attaches out of the way, as I didn't remove the damper or its link. Once the axle was centered on the spring, I was able to push the bottom plate into position



and tap the U-bolts down. It took a bit – but I got all four nuts started on the U-bolts and was able to cinch them down by working incrementally on each once until they were all snug. Surprisingly, this didn't take very long. I love it when a plan comes together.

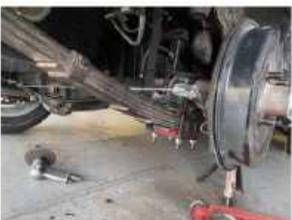


### 2:30 PM

I replaced the check strap by applying heat to the bottom bolt, then a cutoff tool, and was able to remove the nut without damaging the fitting. I broke the top bolt off since I could replace it easily. I had new nylon check straps (highly recommended over the rubber ones) and the strap fit without much trouble.

### 3:00 PM

I refit the wheel and lowered the car. The driver's side was done. I was in a hurry, but I took a 15 minute break before starting on the driver's side.



### Page 3

### 10:45 AM

Once the spring was clear of the axle, I worked to move the spring from its rear shackle. They came off with some persuasion, but the shackle was left intact. I cleaned up the shackles and chased the threads for easier reassembly.



### 11:30 AM

I moved on to the front bushing. This is held in place by a long (7/16 3.5" grade 8) bolt with a spacer inside the bushing. I ended up having to cut the bolt free as it had seized to the spacer, which is typical. I heated up the bushing to give a little extra room between the spring and the bracket, then cut it free with a 4" cutoff wheel. The spring was free at last!

And I identified the root cause of the wayward behavior; a large chunk of the front bushing was missing. The front of the spring was able to move 3/8" forward and backward.

### Scaaaary.

### 12:15 PM

Once the front bushing was removed, I cleaned up the eye and pushed in new Prothane polyurethane bushings. These are easy to press in by hand as they come as a split bushing. I applied the supplied lubricant to the outer and inner surfaces, hand-pressed them in and inserted the spacer. This was ludicrously easy. The same was true for the rear bushing. Having already cleaned up the shackle, everything went together like I knew what I was doing.



### 1:00 PM

I headed to the hardware store to buy two grade 8 new front spring bolts, nuts and washers, and all new lock nuts (14 in total – 8 for the U-bolts, 4 for the shackles and two for the check straps).

### 1:30 PM

I headed back to the hardware store to buy two longer front spring bolts. I am glad the store is less than 10 minutes away. I shall not speak of this again.

### Page 2

### 3:15 PM

It took me less time to do the passenger's side because I knew what to do. The U-bolts were a challenge and I had to cut one of the nuts to get it to loosen. I had more of a struggle with the rear shackle as the gas tank was close to the shackle. There was just enough room to be able to carefully apply some heat and ever so cautiously remove the bolts. Then it was a fight to get the shackle out as the bushings were stuck pretty fast. It took about 20 minutes, but it finally came free and I was able to drop the rear of the spring. However, I was incredibly lucky and the front bushing's bolt came loose from the spacer, and I was able to drive it out relatively easily. I suspect this had been worked on previously as the bushing was intact.



### 4:30 PM

I cleaned up the shackle and spring, hand-pressed in the new bushings and refit the spring to the car. At least I didn't have to make a third trip to the hardware store.

### 5:15 PM

I fit the axle to the spring and cinched everything up. I am missing the bottom centering plate on the passenger's side and will replace it once I find one.

### 5:45 PM

I replaced the check strap. Again, I broke off the top bolt as I didn't want to apply heat near the fuel pump.

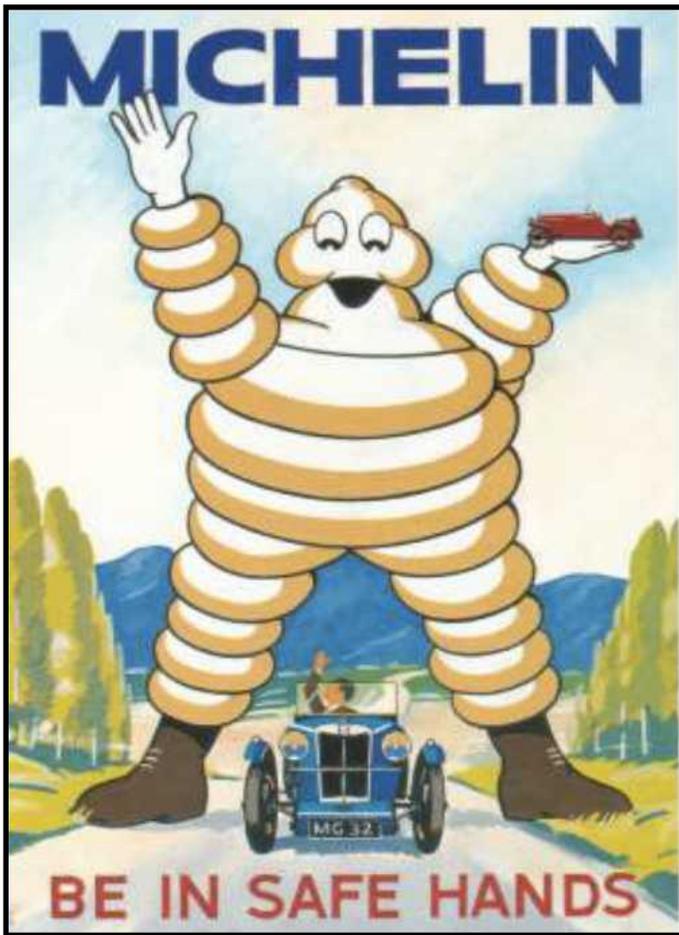
### 6:00 PM

I refit the wheel and lowered the car. Job done!

This was an 8-hour job, right down to the minute. And it was a success. A test drive (after cleaning myself up) proved the car stopped straight and well even under hard braking. It was an exhausting job; you may have noticed there was no mention of lunch anywhere in this timeline. I worked straight through with just a short break. I suppose my trips to the hardware store count as breaks too.

This is not a job to be undertaken lightly. It is hard work and normally this would be done by dropping the rear axle and springs, rebuilding the assembly, then refitting the whole thing. I was desperate and was glad it was even doable. I am impressed I was able to do this in a day. Now, I need to do the same to the front suspension – it's okay, but I can tell the bushings need to be replaced. At least I have more time for that job!

### Page 4



Next year will be the 90th anniversary of the introduction of the K3; not much respite for this 89-year old machine as Teifion Salisbury pushes hard at Mallory. in 2024

Art below by Stev Bridger



# Debumping\* the MGB and Midget

By Dan Shockey, with sources indicated

That is a proper word, isn't it? Of course, the rubber-bumper MGB and Midgets are proper English sports cars. I used to dislike the rubber bumpers but do not mind them now, especially if the front of the MG is lowered a bit. However if you want the look of shiny chrome bumpers, there are inexpensive options to get there. It can be done even without cutting and welding and repainting.

## No-Cut Option

This can look pretty good, surprisingly. I did it with a 1979 Midget that I had. It still had lovely original red-orange paint. Once you remove the bumpers, note how heavy they are with their steel backings. All that weight at the far ends of the car does not help ride and handling. One other option, by the way, is to keep the soft covers but remove the heavy steel backing. The soft covers can be painted to match the car that is a more modern look, like the RV8 versions of the MGB.

With the bumpers removed, you can see what needs filled and replaced. At the front, The traditional MG grille is apparent by its absence. There are the two large rubber-bumper supports coming through the grille area. These can be cut off or you can thin the grille in those areas and leave them. The kits use these to mount the chrome bumpers. They do add some support in case of an accident or provide mounts for driving lights or a badge bar.

The best way to thin the grille over the supports is to replace the center material with a mesh screen. The mesh also better hides the supports and any wiring behind the grille. You can often find a good grille at a swap meet or on eBay. Once I found a one-piece aluminum replacement for \$10 that I used on my BGT in place of the Leyland style recessed 1971 grille.

Next you will notice that the holes for the indicator lights are too short and too wide. There are suppliers for sheet metal and fiberglass splices for those holes that allow you to mount the turn-signal lights. Or you can make your own adaptors or use a different style of lamp, such as from a Mini. Lots of room for creativity for MGs! You have already changed it from original. (See page 17.)

For my Midget, I used TD or Bugeye (or Big Healey) style bumper over-riders mounted to those bumper supports (without a cross bar). I flattened a tube to mate to the rounded back of these. See Figure 3.

You can use the RB (rubber-bumper) front valence (the panel under the bumper that is usually bent badly from curbs) or buy a new or used chrome bumper valence. One guy used the extra square holes in the RB valence as brake cooling ports.

## Moss Kit

Moss supplies a kit for the MGB conversion which includes everything except the grille which you can buy separately. This may be the best way to go but you can do it on the cheap if you buy the parts used and can make some adaptors as needed. Dixon in May is the best swap meet in the Bay Area currently.



*For classic looks, lower the ride height with a suspension kit and add Moss' chrome bumper conversion kit.*



Below: Glued-in or screwed-in filler section

## Rear Conversion

At the rear, the conversion is straight-forward except for the large gaps below the tail lamps. This is the most noticeable area to fill. You can buy sheet metal pieces to fill these gaps. They are intended to be welded in but you can mount them with glue or homemade brackets. There is an extra body seam when you do. That seam can be filled later if and when you repaint the MG. One source provides these filler panels with folded edges that are intended to be mounted without welding. You will need to paint them to match the body. But you may need to paint the new valences and other brackets anyway. You can get the paint matched and even put into spray cans. You could make these fillers yourself (steel or fiberglass, even plastic) or cut them from a scrapped body. Or even 3D print them, I suppose.

The rear bumper can be replaced with Bugeye style over-riders as well.

There are other ways of replacing the rubber bumpers, either for a retro look or for a more modern look. There are vendors for panels that fill the bumper space with other looks, generally without bumpers. See also *The Octagon*, issues April/2023, March/2023 and July/2023.

The later MGBs and Midgets do offer some nice features not included in the earlier cars. (See *The Octagon*, May/2021.) And many of them were purchased as second cars and not driven hard and put away wet like the earlier cars. So you see really nice cars with original paint even now all these years later.

## California Emissions

A problem with the MGs after 1975 in California is the requirement for smog testing that requires an original look to the emission controls. However we have found that the catalytic converter can be empty and the car will still pass. This lowers the exhaust back-pressure and keeps that source of high heat out from under your bonnet that is right under your leaking carburetor. The catalytic converter is likely to be empty anyway after some years of use. I have known folks who swap out the entire system or just the carbs every two years for testing but of course I cannot recommend that. And there may be other options for cars that are not driven for regular use.

I hate seeing these RB cars go to the scrap yards when they can be saved and made to look like the earlier MGs. We need these less-expensive cars to draw in the younger enthusiasts.

\* 'Debumpering' to be added to the New Oxford English Dictionary in 2075



Author's '79 Midget above. Bill Hiland's Super B below during assembly. Shockey photos.



## Reference Material



1979 MGB at left, owned by Bill Hiland.  
Shockey photo.  
RB MGB above owned by Steve Strubic.  
Strubic pic. Name of "Alice"

Fortunately, there are a number of specialist that offer a chrome bumper conversion kit and this makes life a little easier, but it generally still requires painting and welding. However, the bumpers are mounted to the existing rubber bumper mounts and at first glance, the finished product is quite convincing and it is quite difficult to spot the fact it is converted. The kits generally run towards the £400 level though, as the three main items of expense are the grille and bumpers. Unfortunately, the experience of many is that the re-production items do not last as long as the originals, and are also poorly shaped and finished with sharp edges and problems in getting the grille to sit square in the nose.

At the front, however, it is possible to get away without painting and welding as it is at the rear if you don't mind a slightly non-standard look, and the same comments apply to the Sebring valences. Several of the kits available are comprehensive and even include the piece to fill in the front wing aperture. The pieces to be fitted under the rear light units are also easily available as separate items to be welded on, or if you are replacing the rear wings (both lower half or full rear wing) then generally the outer half of the cone is already there, requiring only the inner half to be welded on. In my case, as I was having both lower rear half wings done, I only needed one cone piece which I cut in half to fit thus saving me a few pounds!

### Creating the front Sebring look

Many buyers of the r/b cars will have differing opinions on whether they like the look, but, if like me, you bought a r/b GT because it is the lowest in pecking order (read cheapskate!), then you may want to consider losing the rubber bumpers. The mass of the bumpers is fairly significant, as much as 40kg (88lbs) and so improvements in not just acceleration, but also handling are effected, since weight is lost from each end of the car.





# Keep Planning for 2024!



## WINTER

Mon., Jan. 1: New tradition - Drive Your MG Day!

Sat., Jan. 6: MGOC Planning Meeting, in Kensington, page 5

Sat., Jan. 13: Sorry Safari Planning Party, Ray Davis host

Sun., Jan. 21: MGOC Annual Brunch, Moss Beach Distillery, Marla Preston, page 3



## 2024

Sat., Feb. 10: Drive Your Triumph Day. Join 'em!

April 21-24, MG2024, Katy, TX, NAMGBR annual event (east side of Houston)

July 15-19, 2024: NAMGAR GT-49 at Mt. Hood, Oregon

Oct., 2024: GOF West, Folsom, CA



Here is another option. The front bumper can be mounted upside-down and a cut-down grille added. Leyland could have done this.

Photo from the MG Experience site.

V8 conversion is optional!

**Modifying the bodywork**

On my 1980 MGB GT I fitted a front chrome grille second hand, and used Mini indicator units instead of the standard MGB c/b units. The apertures were filled with mesh to allow air to the brakes. It would be possible to return to the rubber bumpers (if I still had them) in a short time, or even add chrome bumpers.



**Front of MGB GT r/b modifications:**

The valence I used is a c/b one, but one could use a r/b valence, except that there will be bigger apertures visible where the bumper stay arms (fitted to 75-77 cars) fitted through the body to the inner arch – these I have used for the brake ducting.



The position of the indicator lights is at the legal minimum height, and slightly inboard to get the right look.

You will need to rout out a hole for these light units, which I bought from Midland Wheels Supplies in their Mini lighting section and were the cheapest I had seen them at around £10 for a pair. I ordered the clear units and had to buy some orange bulbs to fit. The hole is not very big and the unit has three self-taping screws and you can see in the photo how the units protrude, but it was easy enough to wire into the existing indicator wires.

Fitting the grille required the standard three top brackets obtainable from any reputable MG Supplier, but first the grille needed modifying. I drilled out the rivets holding the inner piece (in my case the aluminium slats, but the same applies to the black plastic honeycomb) and then mounted in a piece of Halford's mesh, which is both screwed and riveted to the frame. A new badge sorted the die-cast upright piece, although I was in two minds whether to fit this or not. I used silicon sealant to glue the badge in.



It is necessary, in my opinion, to fit this mesh, as it does two things. It slims down the thickness of the grille to allow a closer mounting (see below) but it also, in the case of the mesh I used, hides all the chassis rails and wiring etc to give a clean look.

However, as I have not removed the chassis rails and bumper mount plates the grille sits forward (see Photo), and not flush with the surrounding metalwork as on a standard car. However, it is not too bad since the grille is not so thick with the modified piece of mesh replacing the thicker slats.



**Indicator Light Adaptors  
(Fibreglass - per pair)**

**£18.00**



**Repair Panel, Corner, Below Taillamps**  
**\$38.99**

PART #	APPLICATION
457-980	MGB -74.5 (Chrome Bumper)

QTY  ✔ In Stock

[ADD TO CART](#) [SAVE TO MY LIST](#)

⚠ WARNING: Cancer and Reproductive Harm. www.P60Warnings.ca

Moss rear filler piece at left

# Reference Material

## Rubber Bumper Conversion (Front Bumper Only)

£143.50

Bolt on panel to replace front rubber bumper.  
No cutting or welding needed. Includes all  
brackets and fixings



## Rubber Bumper Conversion (Rear Bumper Only)

£123.50

Bolt on panel to replace rear rubber bumper.  
No cutting or welding needed



<https://www.rps-ltd.info/mgb-products/>



<https://mossmotoring.com/mgb-chrome-bumper-conversion/>

### Moss conversion kit above

So any attempt at debumpering or swapping to chrome bumpers will result in gaps around the front indicator light units, and under the rear light units.



With no filler panels, it isn't horrible but can be better



(Photos - Jim McGlynn)

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## MY SPORTS CAR JOURNEY #1 THE MG MIDGET

by Jim Robison

"I can give you a lift home, if you don't mind riding in a sports car." Those were the first words I spoke to my future wife. The car was my new 1962 MG Midget. It had a 948 cc, inline 4-cylinder, pushrod engine, pumping out a whopping 46 HP with a 5500 redline. It was identical to the Austin Healey Sprint Mark II, except for the more elaborate grill and the side strips. (The Sprite "mark I" was the iconic "bugeye sprite" and there was no MG counterpart.) By-the-way, the "full size" MG sports car at the time was the MGA 1600 Mk II (1622 cc). All MGs, including mine, had a 4-speed manual transmission, which will become important later in this story.

Lori and I started dating, which included drive-in movies in her parents Chrysler

300 or rallies and autocrosses in my MG Midget. I don't remember any time-speed-distance rallies in those days, just gimmick rallies where we usually got lost. After several bad experiences, I vowed to never enter another rally in my life. I would focus on autocrosses. One day, after an autocross, I suggested Lori learn to drive the stick-shift. She enthusiastically agreed.

We started in an empty parking lot, where Lori quickly got the hang of it. She was doing fine, and we continued onto side streets. We then agreed she might as well drive all the way home, and we headed for the freeway onramp.

Traffic was brisk on the freeway, and we were in the left lane. Suddenly, all the cars ahead slammed on their brakes. Lori reacted by doing exactly what she had always done in the Chrysler, she slammed her left foot to the floor. Unfortunately, the left peddle in the MG was not the brake pedal, it was the clutch pedal. We were flying toward a bunch of

stopped cars at probably 60 miles an hour with the clutch pedal fully depressed and no braking whatsoever. We were both in full panic mode. If I said (yelled) anything (I don't remember) it would have been "STOP!"

To be continued...

Lifted from the Triumph Travelers newsletter. Bay Area folks with common loves and struggles.

Drive Your Triumph Day on February 10. Join 'em!



## Pierre's Wisdom

Pierre Fontana

### Simple Tools

Some of my tools are older than many of you, but they served me well. As simple as some are, they are just functional.

For many young customers on low budgets, I had to cut corners. Some of their treasures had seen a better time, and overheating was a problem on ill-maintained cooling systems. Sending a radiator to be cleaned was over their budget, so I devised a solution: I would run a strong cleaner in the system, let it soak for longer than the can required, and then I "HARD FLUSHED" the coolant backward and up the radiator filling port.



All photos courtesy Pierre Fontana

This must be done outside, as makes a mess. Remove a heater hose going in the block, attach the contraption to the hose, clamp it down, and connect an air hose to it. Make sure the radiator cap is off, turn the water hose valve open, and water will start running out of the radiator. Use around 30 psi in your air hose, like airing up a tire. Start pressurizing the system, take your time, and the radiator will act like Old Faithful in Yellowstone Park.

This will blow out old deposits in the radiator tubes—I said it would make a mess! I have seen lots of rust coming out. When it runs clear, remove the air pressure, open the bottom drain plug, and shut off the water. This technique helped many of you. When you have an old clunker running critically hot, it will help (and can't hurt).

*Pierre Fontana is a technical advisor for SABCC.*



Not recommended for a round TR heater core out of its case. Ask me how I know. - Dan

## Walter Kilik Remembered

I heard from Carole Kilik that Walter passed away on Christmas Eve. He had broken his hip and was in the hospital where he caught pneumonia and died. I think he was in his 80's. Walt was a long time member of the SFPMGTR (San Francisco Peninsula MG T Register) and the MGOC. He and Carole own a 1953 TD that belonged to Carole's aunt. Carole says they are going to have a memorial service at some point. I will send the information when I get it.

Jim Carlson

All human beings are unique but Walter was one of the more obviously so. A Canadian, Walter was here working in Silicon Valley. He marched to his own bag-piper. (Many march to their own drummer.) Walter was always working on a home project. His house reminded me a bit of the Winchester house, always under construction. He was drawn into the MG world through working on and driving Carole's TD.

I had moved to Illinois and was startled one day to hear Walter's voice on the television. I didn't recognize the man I saw - he had grown a beard - but couldn't mistake his voice. He was featured on Antiques Roadshow with some violins they had inherited.

Walter and Carole became good friends and attended our wedding. They opened their home to me when I came back from Illinois and needed a place to lodge a couple days.

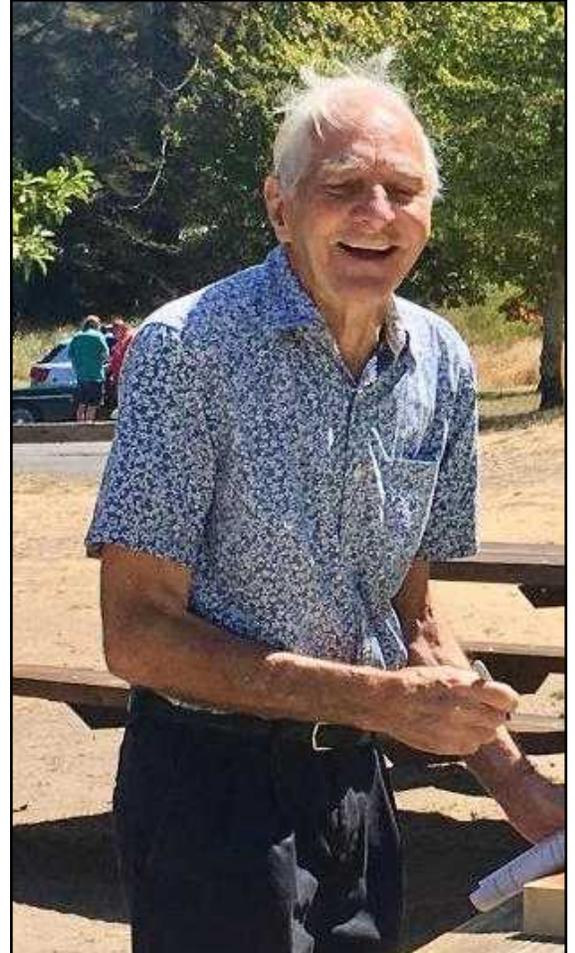
There is a hole in our world with Walter gone.

Dan Shockey

I remember Walter from the picnics and brunches. There was always a discussion between George and Walter who was the longest MGOC member. It was always fun to see them together.

Andy Preston

*At right: Walter at our Annual MGOC Picnic in 2019. Thuy' Nguyen photo.*



Have you seen the home-made cyclekarts? They use motorcycle parts and race on renegade race tracks hidden across the country. See Road & Track, Aug./Sept. 22 issue.

Look like fun. No easier to get into for aging seniors, however.

<https://www.roadandtrack.com/car-culture/a40848496/driving-the-cyclekart-a-pint-sized-throwback-death-wish/>

# MG Mitten And The Art Of Selling Accessories

Cartoonist Dave Deal Brought A Zany Edge To Peddling Car Covers

If there was anything that postwar American driving enthusiasts loved as much as their little British roadsters, it was dressing them up. Overnight, an entire cottage industry arose, catering to owners' needs to bedeck their sports cars with driving lamps, bumper overrides, sheepskin seat covers, and any number of other items to make them even more fun to live with—and to make them stand out in gatherings with fellow enthusiasts. Many of these sellers also offered all the gear needed to go racing, which back then wasn't much more than a helmet and some seatbelts.

MG Mitten was one of the pioneers in the field, and one of the most enduring, too, mailing out catalogs and parts from its Pasadena, California, warehouse from the early 1950s to the mid-1980s. Running the ship was founder Marion Weber, who greeted her customers with a breezy little commentary each month in the ads she ran in *Road & Track* and *Sports Cars Illustrated*, later *Car and Driver*.

The "Mitten" part of MG Mitten was a car cover, offered in a variety of fabrics for a range of sports cars. The cover was Weber's first product, launched in 1952 after a car cover she'd made for her husband's MG TC left his car club buddies clamoring for copies. The Mitten was followed by Healey Huggers, Porsche Parkas, Fiat Frocks, Jaguar Jackets, and other tailored covers with similarly alliterative names, all manufactured by a company called Covercraft International. She added to the catalog a variety of gear from other suppliers, items like wooden shift knobs, driving gloves, sports jackets, steering wheel covers, SU adjusting tools, and much more.

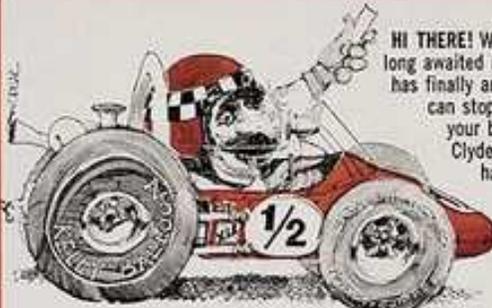
from Hemmings dot com

*Marion Weber's*

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MG MITTEN CAR COVERS fit neatly & easily; protect against sun, dust, soot, smog, birds, leaves, & dampness. Double-stitch seams, elastic hems. Available in 3 attractive fabrics:

	Duricon	Blue Max, Golden Mink
Alfa Spyder, Fiat Spyder, AM, TR, Datsun Roadster, MG (except 1100)	\$22.50 ppd	\$29.95 ppd
Alfa Sprint, Porsche, Toyota, VW, Datsun Sedan, Opel Sport Coupe	\$27.50 ppd	\$36.95 ppd
Camaro, Corvette, Mercedes, AKE, Mustang, Volvo P-1800	\$30.50 ppd	\$41.95 ppd
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We tailor covers for all cars including antiques, race cars & dune buggies. Over 350 patterns in stock. Send for our catalog.



**DURICON** is sturdy cotton drill, permanently water repellent, mildew-resistant, machine washable. Mist green color.

**BLUE MAX** has same features as Duricon plus soft flannel lining for maximum protection of car's finish. Sky blue color.

**GOLDEN MINK** is sturdy cotton drill coated with DuPont Hypalon. Permanently waterproof. Russet gold color.

SPECIFY MAKE, YEAR, MODEL, BODY STYLE & FABRIC.



**CAR GREST KEY CASE** genuine, tooled English leather key case, holds four special keys inside, with additional key ring outside for car keys, groovy... Most imported and domestic car emblems available. Chests are beautifully enamelled. **\$2.25 ppd**

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**BELL 800TX HELMET** covers ears, offers maximum protection. Sizes 5 1/2 to 7 1/4 ..... **\$37.00 ppd**

**BELL MAGNUM**, has all assets of 800 TX plus even greater impact absorption. Maximum protection. Sizes 5 1/2-7 1/4, only ..... **\$49.00 ppd**



**CARRY CHANGE** for the parking meter in this all newly designed, combination KEY FOB, coin container. Beautiful, stitched, BLACK ENGLISH LEATHER, with enamelled car crests and various motoring emblems. You might even hide some of your hard money in that pocket ..... **\$1.75 ppd**

## John Twist on Damper Oil

For the twin SU carburetters, **John** removed the suction chambers and float bowl lids, cleaned everything and made necessary adjustments, noting that the key with these carburetters is ensuring that each functions exactly the same as its mate. A surprise to many of us was his choice of 90-weight gear oil for the carburetter damper pots. **John** explained the heavier oil provides additional resistance, resulting in a higher velocity of air and thereby improving acceleration.

## Hardtop for TC?

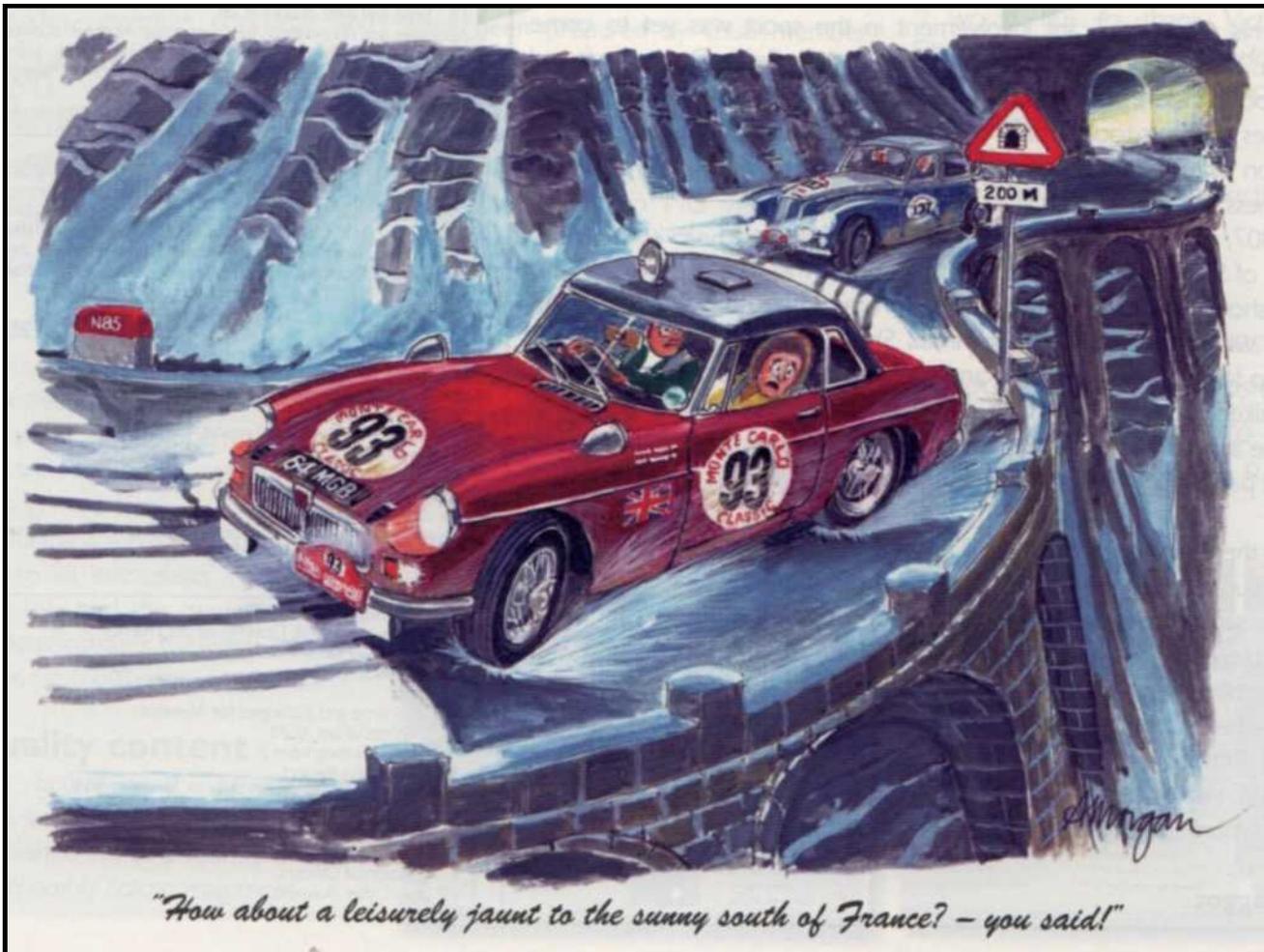
It doesn't look so bad as I might expect. Bit square from the back view. Your thoughts?



hardtop 1.jpg



hardtop2.jpg



Cartoon from  
**Safety Fast**  
magazine



In January, I think of those rugged Monte Carlo rallies over the snow and ice capped Alps. This is Dutchman Willy Oosten in the 1936 Monte, mounted in a tiny MG J2. Willy finished the rally, in 52nd place. - Dan

His J2 is now in Oakland! Owned by the Loeser family.



## Classified Ads

Ads are free to MGOC members and \$6.00 per month for non-members. Some ads picked up from other clubs.

**1956 MGA:** On a 1962 Mark II Chassis - Red. Wire wheels, 4 speed transmission. 1622 engine, leather seats, tan soft top, luggage rack. (Posted 12/23)

**1933 MG J2:** Cream Cracker colours. All original parts. Purchased in England 1965, shipped to SF 1965. Frame-up restoration. 847 CC engine, is one of only 2,083 made. 18" wire wheels, leather upholstery, soft top and badge bar. (Posted 12/23)

**1953 MG TD MK II:** Almond green. Total body-off restoration. 1250 engine with larger valves, 1.5" SU carbs, 5 speed transmission, soft top & side curtains, tonneau cover, luggage rack, badge bar, fog lights (Posted 12/23)

If interested please contact George Stenberg at: 510-526-8951  
or [j2george@pacbell.net](mailto:j2george@pacbell.net)

**MG TF:** Mechanically perfect and reliable, 15k miles on rebuilt engine, Ford 5-speed, red paint – won 2- place at GOF. In Orinda. \$20,000, SSTS member Bill Oldham. Text or email: 510-917-0877, [Orindabill@gmail.com](mailto:Orindabill@gmail.com) (Posted 10/23)

**MG TF-1500:** Same family since 1956. Engine & gearbox from 1967 Volvo P1800. MGA rear axle. Wire wheels. Partially dismantled. Located in Oakland. Non-member Burr Nash. \$4000 cash. [Campfork1946@yahoo.com](mailto:Campfork1946@yahoo.com) (Posted 12/23)

**MGB Parts, Parts, Parts:** *Free MGB Driver* and other magazines. Lots of early MGB parts. Let me know what you are looking for. These are from Ken Gitting's collection. Many are ceramic coated. Member Lynn Bryant at [Lynnberta@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Lynnberta@sbcglobal.net)

We list ads for 3 months. Advise if you want them extended. For additional ads, see prior issues of *The Octagon* or [MGOCSE.org](http://MGOCSE.org)



# Member Notes

## Great find from Barbara Tapp:

A rally car perhaps. I think it's 1971-ish.

## Museum Tour by Bob Bundy:

I will come to the Planning Session in January but would like to nail down a drive/visit to Al Engel's Museum in Richmond asap. Al suggests an earlier rather than later visit. Thinking that if there is inclement weather we can have the option of driving alternative cars to the event (my top is in the attic) and forgo the drive afterwards. There is a lot to see in the museum and I am sure Al will have some interesting stories to tell. I will plan a modest drive afterwards around Pt. Richmond and the Richmond waterfront but will ask Al about a food truck to his museum or we bring picnic lunches as I believe there is good seating inside. Will talk with Al about a February visit is ok with everyone. Thoughts? Suggestions? Is this a go?

## Thoughts from Andy Preston:

I suggest a February date because we have Moss Beach in Jan and St Paddy's Day drive in March. It would make a good event for a rainy day as well. I think the picnic lunch would be a good idea if there are tables to sit at inside. Maybe you can make it on a Saturday; it's always fun!

## From Marcia Crawford:

Many thanks. You do an incredible job with the Octagon, I always want to sit down and read it from cover to cover, even the tech stuff that I don't understand.

## Practical MGB from Marja:

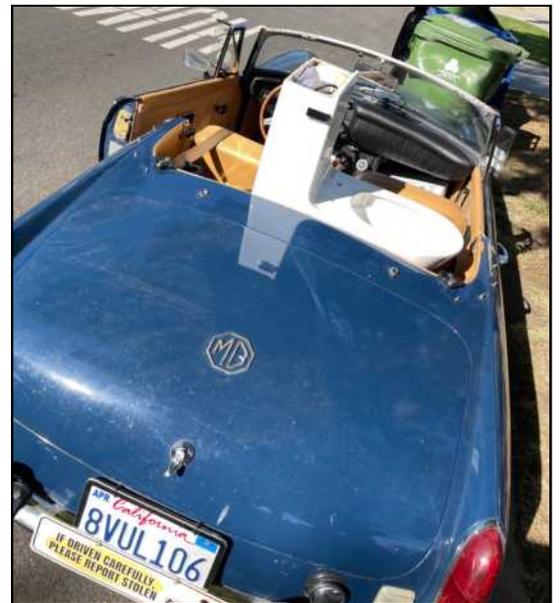
This photo from the California Melee site. (An MG feature for us seniors and for long tours.) Note bumper sticker.

## UK Mag from Tom Doyle:

Do you subscribe to the UK's magazine "MG Enthusiast"? It a bit expensive at £84.99 but it has some good articles and provides a good overall MG resource. I have been downloading it from the library in Incline Village, NV and enjoy reading online.

## Bring a Trailer from Don Scott:

Very nice 1963 MGB sold for \$24,000. That seems about right to me. As unique and preserved as this car is, it will need an infusion of money and labor to make it a car that can be enjoyed. I don't think it's a car you will just hop in and go. I thought the iris blue '65 MGB that I bought ten years ago for 6k was a "hop in and go" car. It had failing seats, some rust, and some other needs that were calling out loudly enough that I ended up spending a lot of labor and money to make it half way decent. (The MGB appears to have a Northern California history)



# New Member!

Welcome Keith Langan of Rohnert Park with a 1947 MGTC and a 1971 MGB

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## North American MGB Register



MGOC *The Octagon*  
320 B Monterey Blvd.  
San Francisco, CA 94131-3141



The art below is by Richard Wheatland. It is entitled Tyre Change and shows a worker from The Old Forge Garage helping a lady driver change a flat on her MG PA Airline Coupe. With snow on the ground it must be kind of cold and a lady from the Holly Cottage is coming out with cups of hot tea to warm up the driver and the mechanic. The card has no published details but is copywrite'd to NEBS (no idea what that stands for). Used with permission of the artist. Richard does a lot of railroad scenes.

I buy another MG,  
and then she asks,



**“ARE YOU GONNA SELL  
THE OLD ONE?”**

