

THE OCTAGON

Newsletter of the M.G. Owners Club & the Peninsula T Register
The Northern California Centre of the M.G. Car Club



Photo Courtesy of Carl Brown

Carl and Diane Brown in their '70 MGB

March 2009

About *The Octagon* and MGOC...

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 MGOC holds a business meeting on the second Thursday of each month at an event known as the "Natter and Noggin" in the style of English clubs. *The Octagon*, our newsletter, is published monthly by the M.G. Owners Club. Opinions expressed in *The Octagon* are not necessarily those of the MGOC, its members, or Board of Directors.

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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 MG models.

MGB 1962-74: Marty Ray, 831-475-6204, martyray@cruzio.com

MGB 1974-1980: Ed Adams, 510-483-6821

MGB V8 Conversion: Tony Bates, 408-666-6174, Tony@BatesFamily.net

MGC: Kent Leech, 925-253-9757, kent@kentleech.com

MG Midget: Mark Hertz, 925-757-2070, damhertz@prodigy.net

MGA/Coupe/Twin Cam 1955-62: George Steneberg, 510-525-9125

Z-Magnette Saloon: Eric Baker, 510-531-7032, mgpb36@yahoo.com

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COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING IN *THE OCTAGON*

Direct all questions about advertising to Mike Jacobsen at 415-333-9699 or MikesMuseum@yahoo.com. 2008 rates are: monthly (yearly): full page \$25 (\$240), half page \$18 (\$175), third page \$12 (\$120), business card \$8 (\$75). All ads expire on January 1, and fees for a partial year will be pro-rated to that date. Deadline for ad materials is the 10th of the preceding month. The MGOC makes no claims as to the reputation or quality of work performed by businesses advertising in *The Octagon*.

MGOC FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Information on the MGOC finances is available upon request from the treasurer.

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 20th of the month preceding the issue in which you want them to appear. Please email all contributions to mgowners@gmail.com or send them to: MGOC, 7230 Silver Lode Lane, San Jose, CA 95120.

RECRUITING MEMBERS FOR THE MGOC

Have you helped recruit any new members lately? Bob Stine is in charge of new member recruitment and can send you flyers. The Club roster is available to members from Mike Jacobsen upon request.

MGOC.ORG

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

Forthcoming Events

MGOC Events in bold

- Feb. 15 – SSTS Rainy Day Tour, Marin County, Rod Schweiger
- Mar. 14 – **Open Tech Session**, [On the Road Again](#), Morgan Hill
- Mar. 17 – **St. Patrick's Day Tour**, San Rafael, Steve Lilves
- Apr. 5 – [April Fool's Rallye](#), Santa Rosa, [Empire Sports Car Club](#)
- Apr. 19 – **Mt. Hamilton Tour with Abingdon Rough Riders**, San Jose
- Apr. 25 – **Cheese to Wine to Wings Run**, Sonoma, Wayne Veatch
- Apr. 26 – [Pacific Coast Dream Machines](#), Half Moon Bay
- May 9 – **MGs by the Bay**, Danville Livery
- May 17 – [All British Meet at Woodland](#) (formerly Dixon), [UBSCC](#)
- May 17 – [Friendship Day](#), Redwood City, [Mid-Peninsula Old Time Auto](#)
- May 30 - Jun. 7 – [British Car Week](#)
- Jun. 22-26 – [GoF West](#), Squaw Valley
- Jun. 24-28 – [MG2009](#), Breckenridge, Colorado

From the Editor...

Rare is the MG owner who does not have a tale of woe, some story about when their MG broke down and left them on the side of the road. And yet, this month I spoke to just such an owner. Carl Brown and his wife, Diane, have been very fortunate to have had no major problems in the more than 30 years they've owned their MGB (interview on page 12). As it turns out, there is still a good story to be had absent "automotive adventures".

Apparently it is possible to just enjoy an MG; though in my family it's always been a love-hate relationship. Within the first three months of buying our 1974 ½ MGB new, my parents had brought it back to Peninsula British Motors for warranty service four times. And it was not all for trivial stuff either. Sure, there were new windshield wiper transmissions and distributor points (in the first three months mind you), but there was also a new fuel pump and an overheating problem.

A couple months later, my parents endeavored to drive the car from San Jose to LA. Clearly a mistake, as the fan belt broke about halfway into the trip. Of course, this simple problem was compounded by gas station mechanics that refused to work on anything British. They claimed that it was so unusual – that they knew so little about it – that they didn't want to touch it. And that was when my father bought an MG shop manual. Over the next ten years, my parents paid the mechanics at Peninsula British almost twice what they paid for the car new, just to keep it running.

Now our story may be an extreme case; but tales of MG frustrations are common, especially as our cars age (and sit neglected for long periods of time). It's nice, every once in a while, to hear a pleasant story about an MG with little trouble.

Jeremy Palgon

MG

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President's Ponderings...

Of Bailouts, Stimuli, St. Patrick's Day, and Other Things Green

Hello once again fellow members and welcome to the springtime edition of *The Octagon* and my monthly musings. Each month I struggle to come up with an idea or a theme for my short column, as our editor, Jeremy Palgon, will attest. More often than not, I find myself facing a near crisis, desperately needing an idea to bail me out and give Jeremy enough time to get the newsletter assembled and published. I sometimes fail and such is the case this month, as I am terribly late finally sitting down to pen something.

It seems to have been a rather dreary, long winter season; and everything has been grey: the weather, the headlines about the economy, and the faces of unhappy people wandering around. As I was ruminating on all this, and struggling to come up with a topic for my blabberings, uh, ponderings, this month, I looked to current events and suddenly thought, "Not grey, GREEN!" I thought about the stimulus package, the bank bailouts, and all the "greenbacks" the government is tossing around. I also thought about the green of the Irish and St. Patrick's Day coming up in a couple weeks.

Then, this past Saturday (you surely remember it as one of the few days it hasn't rained lately) I needed to drive down 880 to Milpitas for work and decided to take my MGB roadster (one of my sons had borrowed my truck). As I drove along the Diablo hills there was all that green again. I marveled at how bright and fresh the hills look at this time of year, knowing that in just a few short months they'll be the suede brown I am more likely to associate with them.

All this thought of "green" led me to begin thinking about the green fields and trees past which we'll be driving during the upcoming touring season, and it actually put a smile on my face. There's something fun and refreshing about driving past a green field in a classic British MG convertible – you can smell the trees, you can feel the air on your face, and the cares of the world, for a short time at any rate, fall by the wayside while enjoying the drive (and hoping your sometimes quirky car continues along faithfully towards your destination).

In thinking about all of those green fields, take a look at the Forthcoming Events here in *The Octagon* and you'll see a number of upcoming springtime tours, including a unique mid-week drive on St. Patrick's Day. Steve Lilves is organizing this green tour for those lucky enough to have the day off to enjoy it. As you'll also see elsewhere in the newsletter, we've got a new location for MGs by the Bay this year – and lots of green trees surrounding the show site.

The point is that after a rather lengthy, dreary winter, springtime is surely upon us. Like the programs from Washington and those promising so many new things, I'll make a promise too: This touring season is certain to be one of our most exciting in some time. Come on out and join the fun!

Regards,
Sam Gearhart

Open Tech Session

Saturday, March 14

Morgan Hill

Have an MG project you've been meaning to get to? Perhaps one you're a little intimidated to take on by yourself? Then bring your car down to On the Road Again in Morgan Hill and get a little help from your friends in the MGO. Marty Ray will be there to guide, teach, and help you learn how to attend to your car's problems.

Already on the agenda is a water pump and heater valve replacement on an MGB. These parts commonly fail in our aging British machines. If you haven't replaced them before, this is an excellent chance to see how it's done.

And if you don't have a project, why not come out and help your friends? They could always use a helping hand, and you might learn something too.

When and Where: Meet at 10 am at [On the Road Again, 16840 Joleen Way, Unit G4, Morgan Hill.](#)

Contact: Jeremy Palgon at 510-378-1821 or mgowners@gmail.com.

Directions to On the Road Again: Take 101 South to Morgan Hill. Exit at East Dunne Ave. and go Right on E. Dunne. Turn Left onto Joleen Way (2nd street), and follow Joleen to the end. Enter the parking lot and go straight to the back. On the Road Again is in the back on your left.

St. Patrick's Day Tour

Tuesday, March 17

San Rafael

Free on St. Patrick's Day? Why not join Steve Lilves for a North Bay tour? Steve has planned a scenic two hour drive from Terra Linda to Sausalito. Afterward, you're invited to celebrate St. Paddy's Day with a pint or a spot of lunch at the [Pelican Inn's](#) English pub. Best be wearing some GREEN!

When and Where: Meet at 11 am at the commuter parking lot just east of Hwy. 101 on Smith Ranch Road, San Rafael.

Directions: From San Francisco, go north across the Golden Gate Bridge on Hwy. 101, through Central San Rafael, and exit Lucas Valley / Smith Ranch Road. Turn right onto Smith Ranch Road and right into the parking lot.

RSVP to Steve Lilves at 415-924-3173 or slilves@sbcglobal.net.

ESCA April Fools Rallye

Sunday, April 5

Santa Rosa

The Empire Sports Car Club would like to cordially invite you to their 45th annual April Fool's Rallye. Rallymaster Bob "The Beard" Jenkins has devised a scenic and fun 35 mile route for this A-B type rallye.


A rallye is not a speed event. It's a test of a team's ability to follow instructions along the route while looking for signs and situations that fit the definitions of the rallye. There will be a brief rallye school at 11 am for all those new to rallying.

When and Where: 10:30 am in the [Charles Shultz Museum](#) parking lot, Santa Rosa.

Cost: \$15 per car. All proceeds go to charity.

Directions: Take the Steele Lane Exit off Highway 101, a mile north of downtown Santa Rosa. Go west on Steele and it will become Guerneville. Right on Range. Left on W. Steele. Right on Hardies, and left into the second driveway (museum lot).

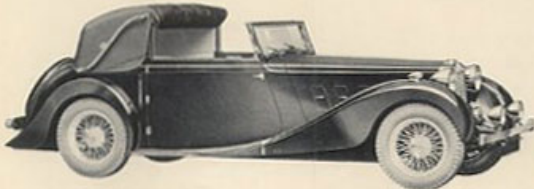
Contact: Bob Jenkins at 707-546-6867 or thebeard@sonic.net.

TWO  LITRE

Safety First

A REAR-ADMIRAL WRITES . . . Your Two-Litre has cured me of at least one inferiority complex. I had practically decided to give up driving—too many other fellows on the road, and I was out of touch with modern traffic conditions. But my wife persuaded me to try her new Two-Litre, and with great circumspection I did so. I don't need to tell you what a fast and lively car it can be. What I found so surprising

was the way in which I got the "feel" of the car at once. Within five minutes of taking the wheel I was driving with absolute confidence.



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The Cheese to Wine to Wings Run

Saturday, April 25

Sonoma



Wayne and Janet Veatch invite the MG Owners Club and the Sorry Safari Touring Society to join them for a tour from the [Sonoma Cheese Factory](#) (at the north side of Sonoma Plaza) to [Jonesy's Famous Steak House](#) at the Napa Airport, by way of a twisty, scenic route and the [Gustavo Thrace](#) wine tasting room in historic downtown Napa.



We will meet at the Cheese Factory around 9:30 am for no-host coffee and tea then depart at 10:00 am, in a westerly thence northerly direction, to downtown Napa. After tasting, we'll take a different, "southern", roundabout route to the Napa Airport. There will be no charge for the tasting, but don't get too carried away! For those not into wine tasting or having an interest in exploring, the tasting room is across the street from the new [Oxbow Public Market](#). There is a large adjacent lot for all of us to park together.

Bring a fun car and expect fine weather! If you fear rain or cold weather, bring one with a top, wipers, and heater. Enjoy the day with Wayne and Janet, their MGB, your good friends, and their fine cars.

We must give the tasting room and Jonesy's an estimate of the number of people coming, so please let us know if you are coming by April 20.

Where and When: Meet at the Sonoma Cheese Factory (located at [2 E Spain St., Sonoma](#)) at 9:30 am.

RSVP to Wayne Veatch at 415-821-1806 or veatchlaw@gmail.com.

Contact on the day of the event: Wayne's cell phone, 415-297-1807.

MGOC NEWS FLASH

MGs by the Bay at The Danville Livery Saturday, May 9

By Sam Gearhart

Hey fellow members, we have some exciting developments and news about our annual MGs By the Bay car show.

As many of you know or remember, this show began about 15 years ago as MGs at Jack London Square – the brainchild of a few dedicated members who sought a venue to gather all members and showcase our cars. Unfortunately, as a result of development in and around the Square, new ownership, and other circumstances, the MGOC sought a new venue and MGs By the Bay landed at the San Leandro Marina.

The Marina is a pleasant enough spot, provided it is not windy, cold, or foggy. However, aside from El Torito, there is not much to do there. As a result, attendance and participation declined over the past couple of years. So the Board of Directors undertook a search for alternative sites. The Alternative Site Selection Committee, chaired by Randy Grossman, has chosen The Danville Livery as the new site of MGs by the Bay.

Craig and Kim Kuenzinger have agreed to coordinate the event. They've already sought and received support from a number of merchants, most notably Rob Robinson, owner of [The Paddock](#) (an aftermarket sports car accessories and gift business). In addition, some merchants and restaurant owners have agreed to participate by offering gift cards, meals, or products as raffle prizes.

A few days ago I drove out to Danville for the [EuroSunday](#) car show. The parking lot was filled with Volvos, Saabs, and BMWs – and that was in the midst of a rainy, stormy Sunday morning.

Believe me, the venue is beautiful, with tree-lined courtyards for our little British beauties. There are many shops and restaurants to explore and visit during the show. There is ample room and, because of the Kuenzingers' efforts, we have the support of The Paddock and others. This is a show you do not want to miss!

We will have much more information in the next issue of *The Octagon*. In the mean time, visit The Livery's website at www.danvillelivery.com. I am sure you will agree that it is a beautiful spot for our show.

GoF West at Squaw Valley

June 22-26

In 1844 a group of immigrants crossing the Sierra range on their way west encountered a helpful Paiute Indian. He kept repeating the word Tro-kay, and the immigrants assumed he was repeating his name. He guided them through a pass along a river that led into the Sierra; they later named that river after him – the Truckee. What he was saying, it turned out, was “everything is all right” because he was concerned they might think he was hostile.

An area close by Truckee (only 10 miles away) called Squaw Valley became a winter sports area around 1913; but it wasn't until 1946 that it worked its magic on a young man named Alexander Cushing. When Cushing first laid eyes on Squaw Valley there was no road, no bridge, and no houses; but Alex saw potential for growth and success in an industry that, in the US, was relatively untapped. Alex's vision became reality and today Squaw Valley is among the world's best known resorts. Squaw Valley opened to the public on Thanksgiving Day, 1949, with a small lodge, a rope tow, and a chairlift that was billed as the “World's Largest Double Chairlift”. Today, Squaw Valley boasts the most advanced lift network in the world with Squaw's world-famous KT-22 ranking first among North American lifts year after year.

Last year the area was rediscovered by the Campbell and Long families when, looking into a place to hold the GoF West in 2009 in the Lake Tahoe area, they came across Squaw Valley. It's a special place, difficult to experience without falling under its spell. It is as if, by its very nature, the valley commands a relationship with those who set foot here. One can travel the world hiking, skiing, climbing, and exploring; Squaw Valley's beauty will still impress.

The 1960 Winter Olympics were held in Squaw Valley. These were the first Games held in the Western United States and the first to be televised. Following the Olympics, improved roads led to further development of recreation resorts in the Sierra Nevada. The completion of I-80 in 1964 made the trip up the hill even easier.

Now another major function will go down in the history of Squaw Valley – GoF West 2009. We will be staying at the Village at Squaw Valley, a set of newly constructed condominiums built in the same area as the original Olympic Village.

There is plenty to see in the area around Squaw Valley. You will have ample time to explore the old buildings in Truckee, and Donner Lake is a short drive away. Our rally will take you on a tour in some of the most scenic valleys in the area as well as to the shore of Lake Tahoe. If you want a longer drive, you can always take a tour along the lake to South Lake Tahoe to gamble. You might even win some money to supplement your 401-K funds.

Mike Campbell and Tim Kane, acting as chairmen of this event, are putting together a wonderful set of activities. If you need to contact Mike, you can email him at mlc226m@yahoo.com or call him at 619-425-0600. The phone number for the lodge is on the registration form. Be sure to call soon to get an early reservation.

We are looking forward to this event being one with spectacular scenery, great food, and wonderful friends like you! See you there!

– *Larry Long*

More information and registration form at Gofwest.com.



The MG Car Club Rocky Mountain Centre is thrilled and pleased to be hosting the North American MGB Register's annual meet, MG2009, in the Kingdom of Breckenridge.

Imagine mild summer days, cool summer nights, crystal clear blue skies, and twisty roads through mountains and valleys with unbeatable scenery and views that go on forever. Now imagine sharing all of this with more than 400 friends driving MGs. This dream will come true at MG2009.

More information and registration form at MG2009.com.

We want your MGA...

to be registered with NAMGAR!



Membership is \$30 per year. The application form is available on-line at www.namgar.com or from: NAMGAR Registrar, 7522 SE 152nd Ave., Portland, OR 97236-4861.



Members receive *MGA! Magazine*, the bimonthly magazine devoted exclusively to the enjoyment, care, and preservation of the **MGA, Magnette and Variants**; and an annual Get-Together in various locations in the U.S.A. and Canada.

Member Interview

Carl Brown owns a 1970 MGB roadster (cover photo) and a '66 MGB GT. *The Octagon* spoke to Carl about his earliest MG recollections, how he came to own his MGs, and an abundance of white cars.

When did you first get into British cars?

The earliest imprint of a British car on me, aside from the early Elvis movies (Spinout, Viva Las Vegas, Blue Hawaii), was back when I was in cub scouts in North Carolina. The den was at a public event and one of the older explorer scouts was going to give me a lift from the event to the clubhouse. I went out to the car with him, and it was this little sports car. I had no idea what it was at the time, but as I think back on it, it must have been an early Midget. I hopped in it. There was no back seat, just an array of gauges and toggle switches. It had this big sports car steering wheel, and a shifter that came out of the transmission tunnel. Sitting just inches above the pavement, I thought, "Boy, this is just the neatest little car I've ever been in." To this day it's a memorable experience. I can remember hopping into it, him driving off, and then having that neat sports car feel to it - grinding the gears and everything like that.

Did you get an MG when you started to drive then?

In high school I was a muscle car guy. I had a '66 Barracuda; and my junior year, I went to a '70 Barracuda. At the time, my Dad was in the military in Alabama at Fort Rucker (a warrant officer and helicopter pilot training school). MGs were very popular there. I remember a friend, a warrant officer, that had a brownish-orange MG. I'd admire the car every time I went over to his house. I remember well a British car dealer in Milton, Alabama - I'd drive by and see all those shiny sports cars lined up. This was in the early 1970s, when MGs were all over the place.

So when did you get an MG?

It wasn't until I came to California and met my wife Diane. We lived in the Sacramento Valley and got the urge to buy a TD. We loved the lines on it: the running boards, the long hood, the curvy fenders. We looked around and there weren't too many for sale in the Valley. We'd look in *The Chronicle*, and there were always some listed; but to go from Yuba City to San Francisco was like a world away at that time. It wasn't easy to get out there to look at them. We did look at one TD, but the owner had installed a Toyota or a Datsun motor. And based on that, I didn't want it. I wanted originality in my first go with a British car.

So you were in California looking for one, but still no MG?

Well, one thing led to another. The MG thing got put on hold. I got out of the service. We moved back to Alabama and wound up being there for about six months. Driving around one day, we passed an auto dealership and saw a white MGB parked right outside the showroom. We immediately turned in

and I thought, “That’s the car.” I always thought Diane would look great driving a little MG. At the time, we were looking for a second car and I just thought, “That’ll be a neat little car.” So we pulled in, and it turned out there was a guy who had just gotten out of high school. He’d pulled into the dealership to sell his car because he was going into the Navy in a couple of weeks. So we bought it (we cut out the dealership). It was like, “OK, let’s make a deal here”; and we bought the ’70 MGB right there – which we still have today.

When did you buy the car?

We bought it early in 1976. Diane drove the MG cross-country, back to California; and that’s where it’s been ever since. It was our daily driver out here when we lived in San Francisco, and I put umpteen miles on it. We lived in the Sunset and I was working two jobs; I’d drive to the City to Oakland, back to the City, out into Contra Costa, and back to San Francisco. So it was the workhorse daily driver.

Having had the car for over 30 years, have you done a lot of work on it?

We did some minor restoration work to repair collision damage in the mid-80s. In the mid-90s it needed some engine work (and had more bumps and dents); so it ended up being a down to the body shell, total sand blast, every nook and cranny taken apart and put back together restoration. After the restoration, the car only went out to club events; and I got the urge to want to really drive an MG daily again. So we bought a ’66 MGB GT from a fellow up in Santa Rosa, which is now my daily driver. The ’70 is in the garage and heads out on the weekends.

So your MGs have run pretty well for you?

Oh yes. You hear people talk about their problems. It wasn’t like we didn’t have our ups and downs with the car, but we never had real problems. I had the carbs rebuilt, but few problems other than that. It was always a well running car; we never really had a problem with it.

In high school you were into the muscle cars, and then you had the MG. What else have you driven?

Let’s see: I started with the ’66 Barracuda, went to the ’70 Barracuda, then a ’66 GMC van, another ’66 Barracuda, and a ’70 Volkswagen Beetle. Then I got interested in VWs and got a ’67 Beetle (which was a transition year for VWs), and sold the ’70. I drove the ’67 Volkswagen until we got the ’70 MG done. And then I decided to get rid of the Volkswagen and get the MGB GT. So I traded the ’67 Beetle for a ’66 GT. We also have a ’64 Ranchero, and a ’59 Ford panel truck that needs restoring.

Why’d you buy the first Volkswagen?

I bought the Volkswagen because I needed to commute out of the City to East Bay, and it was going to be economical. This was when the MG was under restoration for a few years.

It's amusing to think that you bought a 1970 VW as a commuter car in the mid-90s.

(laughs) I know. You know, my wife's 2003 PT Cruiser is the only car newer than 1970 that we've ever owned. It's pretty amazing when I think back.

So I forgot to ask, what color is your GT?

It's white. The '70 is Glacier White with black interior, and the GT is Old English White.

So they're both white...

Yeah, isn't that weird. My Ford panel truck is white. And I have a white '64 Ranchero. So my three main cars: the two MGs and my Ranchero are white. How weird is that?

Is this happenstance, or are you partial to white?

It just happened. You don't go out looking for white cars. It's just: there they are and you go, "wow, I like that." And when we repainted the '70 MGB we decided to keep the original color. In fact, the car is all original except for some later MGB seats we put in it for comfort.

It sounds like you and Diane have been through a lot with that '70 MG.

Oh yes. Diane drove it across country. It was our honeymoon car. We drove all over the Sacramento Valley and the Sierra. I can't imagine how many miles we put on that car, between weekend trips to San Francisco; and then we moved to San Francisco and I was commuting all over. It's been everywhere. No real adventuresome stories. No breakdown stories. It's always been an enjoyable experience.

That's fantastic.

It is. The thing I like about the Club is the people. You know, I didn't know anyone into MGs when I was going through the restoration. Diane's brother restores Dodge pickup trucks, and he let me store the '70 in his garage. And it took about seven years. You know how it is, you get into a restoration and you think you'll have it done in a few months. Seven years down the road you're finally putting the steering wheel back on.

At the time, we were doing it ourselves. We didn't have a network of MG resources and we couldn't find a mechanic. During the course of the restoration we moved to San Lorenzo, and I couldn't find anyone to rebuild a motor. I eventually found Skip Kelsey and Shadetree; and from there, this entire MG community was right at my doorstep.

I've met so many wonderful people. That's the neat thing about MGs, and the British car community in general. The people are so much fun. That's been the most enjoyable thing about getting the car done, meeting the people.

If you would like to be interviewed, please send an email to mgowners@gmail.com.

It Was a Dark and Stormy Night...

By Warren Pierce

OK, so it wasn't stormy; but it sure was dark. Kathy and I were on our way home to Aromas from Watsonville after fueling up the '72 MGB GT when the headlights flickered. "Gee, what's up with that?" I thought to myself. Another flicker, then nothing. I hit the headlight switch and the lights came back on. "Alright," I think, "we're only a mile from home; let's hope they stay on." Wrong. Again a flicker, then nothing; and this time the switch didn't work. I pulled to the shoulder of the road as far as I dared (because I couldn't really see where it was) and started to troubleshoot the problem.

No headlights, no dash lights, turn signals work, no emergency flashers. Note to self: the emergency flasher switch is on the far left of the console; the switch on the right is for the driving lights (which you don't have). So no matter how many times you hit the switch on the right, you won't activate the emergency flashers. Duh.

I carry an inexpensive Harbor Freight LED flashlight which is very compact and puts out a lot of light. I took the flashlight, popped the bonnet, and checked the fuses.

The fuses were all OK, so it was something else. But we really needed to get off the road, as we were halfway in the right traffic lane. It's a rural road so there shouldn't have been a lot of traffic. After 30 cars whizzed by, I figured it's only 200 yards to the Aromas Road turn off (where there are street lights and wide shoulders). So I started the engine, waited for the last of the cars to pass, and (holding the flashlight out the window) made for the turn off. Oncoming traffic was very helpful, flashing their lights at me to let me know my headlights weren't on. Thanks, I never would have guessed.

We made the turn but there were no street lights! Every street light on our route home was out. I know the road and there is no traffic; so we made it home using the flashlight as a headlight.

The problem turned out to be the switch, which is a newer Lucas switch. The terminal for the power had melted off. I had a new switch still in the box, but opted to use an old switch (as now I don't trust the new switches).

I've added a toggle switch with pre-wired leads to my spares; it will work to by-pass the headlight switch in case this ever happens again.

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Our MGB is Now Beautiful

By Lee Sheldon

After nearly forty years of miscellaneous bumps, whacks, and whams, our MGB GT was sadly in need of a full body “make-over”. Valerie and I wanted a quality body repair and paint job, but were not looking for a full concours restoration. I shopped around to see just how badly the bank account would be hit. Most of the quotes were in the \$7,000 to \$10,000 range, not including the miscellaneous parts that needed to be replaced; and the estimated down time was three to four months.

At various club functions we spoke with other members regarding where they had work done, if they were satisfied, and how much it cost. Surprisingly, one of the nicer paint jobs happened to coincide with the lowest dollar amount - a beautiful grey 1974 MG Midget owned by Mark Hertz. Mark referred me to MAACO in Antioch. Of course I had heard of MAACO, but I thought they were just a high volume, low cost, so-so body shop. Mark’s car definitely changed my opinion. In early November I took the car there for an estimate and got a quote of only \$3,000 for their top line paint job. Considering all the body work necessary, this was more than acceptable. The manager said if I could bring it in during December, which is a slow time for them, they could concentrate on the MG without a lot of distractions. MAACO completed the job in one month. They did find some additional rust repair which increased the cost to \$3,500.

During my search, I was fortunate to meet Dave Laughlin. If you have attended any of the various British car meets, you have probably seen Dave displaying a wide variety of MG parts. In addition to being a Moss distributor, Dave also does restoration of MGs. Even though I have owned MGs since the late 1950s, I have not met anyone more knowledgeable. Not only was the quality of his work excellent, he was able to disassemble and reassemble the car in an amazingly short time. His labor costs were quite reasonable and he even extended a discount on all the Moss parts. Today the GT is gorgeous with its deep, glossy yellow finish and its shiny new chrome. We will no longer have to park away from the rest of your beautiful MGs.



Lee Sheldon’s newly painted MGB GT

Photo by Lee Sheldon

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MGOC Business Meeting Minutes

February 12, 2009

The meeting was called to order by President Sam Gearhart at 7:03 pm. Also attending were Randy Grossman, Mike Jacobsen, Craig & Kim Kuenzinger, David Sarasua, George Steneberg, Bob Trencheny, and David Wright.

The December minutes were approved as printed in *The Octagon*. There were no January minutes to approve because of the Annual Dinner.

Reports

Treasurer's Report: Details on the transition to a new treasurer were provided. It was agreed that the board members would review the recently received financial statements before the next meeting. The new treasurer will provide quarterly financial reports for the officers to review and sign.

New Treasurer David Sarasua reported that Mike Jacobsen had done an outstanding job as treasurer, and all the books were in excellent order. At the next meeting David Sarasua will provide the board with a list of recommendations on how best to handle Club finances.

Registrar's Report: We have 265 members, and are almost current on name badges.

Secretary's Report: Bob Trencheny took over from Randy Grossman as Secretary.

Corresponding Secretary's Report: Nothing to report.

The Octagon: Nothing to report.

Regalia: A previous regalia order with a company in Wales was canceled by the company. We would like to find a new regalia company for lapel pins, key fobs, etc.

Web site: Nothing to report.

Past Club Events

Walnut Creek Holiday Parade: Kim Kuenzinger reported the Walnut Creek Holiday Parade was very well attended and the Club should consider participating next year. Kim will keep us posted.

Annual Dinner: Was well attended and everyone had a nice time.

Planning Meeting: A draft calendar of events was written and published in the February *Octagon*.

Upcoming Club Events

Tech Session: J.R. Boye is unavailable for the session on March 14 at On the Road Again. He will be attending his son's wedding.

St. Patrick's Day Tour: Steve Lilves will lead North Bay Tour on March 17.

MGs by the Bay: Kim and Craig Kuenzinger gave a short presentation on the Danville Livery, the new site for our annual show. The Livery is excited to host our show on May 9, 2009. The site provides several amenities that the Club has wanted for a several years, including trees for shade, a selection of restaurants, clean convenient bathrooms, and nearby shopping for spouses who don't want to spend the entire day at the car show. The Livery will provide electricity for a DJ. BBQs and outside vendors are not permitted.

KTVU Channel 2 contacted the MGOC through the Sorry Safari for details on MGs by the Bay. Kim and Craig will follow up with Channel 2.

A motion passed to keep the name MGs by the Bay for our annual show. Several other names were proposed.

Jack London Square contacted the MGOC through the Sorry Safari to invite us to hold our annual show there again. It was decided this would be discussed at a later date, following the show at the Danville Livery.

NAMGAR 2009: MGOC is putting on the NORCAL NAMGAR show in October 2009. This is a club sponsored event.

NAMGBR 2009: Is in Breckenridge Colorado. Several MGOC members are planning to attend.

Old Business

New Officers: Sam Gearhart recognized new officers David Sarasua, Treasurer; and Bob Trencheny, Secretary.

New Business

Non-elected Members at Large: Sam Gearhart asked Craig Kuenzinger and David Wright to be Members-at-Large. Craig and David both accepted.

Activities Director: Sam Gearhart asked Randy Grossman to be Activities Director. Randy accepted on the condition the position be re-titled "Captain of Fun".

Regalia Coordinator: David Wright agreed to continue as Regalia Coordinator.

Treasurer's Concerns with Club Accounts and Signing Authority: Treasurer David Sarasua to provide the board with a list of proposals on how best to handle Club finances and insulate the treasurer position from handling larger transactions. Proposals will include methods to limit the treasurer's sole access to the majority of club funds, and requiring two officers to sign large checks.

Next Meeting and Natter: The March meeting will be at 7 pm on Thursday, March 12, 2009 at The Englander in San Leandro.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Submitted by Bob Trencheny.

Classified Ads

Ads are free to MGOC members and \$6.00 per month for non-members. Please send copy (and check **made payable to MGOC** if a non-member) to MGOC, 7230 Silver Lode Lane, San Jose, CA 95120. Members may also email ads to the editor at mgowners@gmail.com.

Cars for Sale:

1947 MGTC right hand drive in excellent condition. \$35,000. Contact Member Larry at (415) 999-2362.

1958 MGA 1500. Original owners offers classic rebuild opportunity to MGA enthusiasts. Package includes several thousand dollars of new parts and all the originals are available. About 60% of the car is professionally refurbished. \$10,000 OBO. Contact Ron at (408) 242-4969 or Ronhaye@gmail.com.



1977 MGB with 54,000 original miles, overdrive transmission, original "Sandglow" paint and autumn leaf interior. Well maintained by third owner. Price \$5,900. Contact Member Ellis at Bovet177@gmail.com.



1975 MGB, 50th Anniversary Edition, 44,000 miles. White with Autumn Leaf interior, wire wheels, hardtop, original soft top (needs replacement), both tonneaus (as new), and tools. Running when parked in 1996. Interior has some sun damage. \$2,800 OBO. For basic info, contact Sam at SWG3@comcast.net. To arrange to see the car, contact Stephanie at BS2464@netzero.com.



1979 MGB with overdrive. Brooklands Green with gold LE type lower body stripe. In original unrestored condition. Just 34k miles! Has won more than two dozen 1st and 2nd place awards at West Coast car shows. Always garaged and never driven in winter. Drives as good as it looks. \$11,500. I also have a 1980 Triumph TR8 in similar condition. Platinum Silver. 86k miles. \$14,750. If purchased together I will sell both cars for \$25,000 and include an open four wheel car hauling trailer. Contact Member Frank Oglesby at (775) 322-5179 or flogles@sbcglobal.net.



Parts for Sale:

Electric Hoist suitable for attaching to a sturdy rafter in a garage and lifting an engine out of a car. \$150. Contact Member Viggo Riddersholm at (650) 341-9064.

MGA SU 1 ½" Carburetors: complete, completely rebuilt, and ready to bolt on and run. Fits MGA 1500, 1600, and 1622 by installing appropriate needles (which I will provide). Includes a pair of aftermarket polished stainless steel air cleaners. Compare at \$1200 for new or rebuilding your own at Apple Hydraulic for \$445. Asking \$500, satisfaction guaranteed. Contact Member Rod Schweiger at (650) 296-1108.

MGB Transmission set up for and used in MGA conversion to 5 Bearing MGB Block. Tranny rebuilt by Butch Gilbert less than 10K miles ago. Equipped with MGA tailshaft, includes custom built, balanced driveshaft to fit MGA. Runs smooth, quiet, shifts well. I updated to 5 speed so this is available. \$300.00. Contact Member Tim at (408) 529-4117 or moriarty@fastmail.fm.

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Club Meeting Natter & Noggin

March 12, 7 pm

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From Southbound I-880, take Davis St. exit and turn left on Davis. Travel 1.3 miles, then turn right on E. 14th St. Travel 0.3 miles, and then right on Parrott Street.



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