



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!



**A Great Day at the
Brunch**

Photo: Andy Preston

February 2026



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.

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COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING IN *THE OCTAGON*

Direct all questions about advertising to

webmaster@mgocsf.org. 2026 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. 1st, 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*.

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 15th of the month preceding the issue in which you want them to appear. Please email all contributions to 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://www.mgocsf.org>

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MGOC & SSTS

St. Paddy's Day Tour, Sun., March 14, 2026



Date: Sunday March 14, 2026

Photos: Barbara Tapp, Andy Preston

Tour leaders: Andy and Marla Preston 707 529 1446

Meeting Place: Bagel Street Café, 208 Northgate One, San Rafael

Time: Meet at 9:30 and leave at 10:00 departure

Tour: This is a Marin/Sonoma tour where we drive some of our more scenic back roads, including ones that we've rarely driven before. The tour starts at the Bagel Street Café in Northgate One in San Rafael and ends up at Café Bellini in Petaluma.

Our first stop will be at the Marin French Cheese Factory where we can enjoy some wonderful cheeses and other refreshments. We'll be driving on some new roads and passing through San Geronimo, Lagunitas Forest Knolls, and the glorious redwoods in Samuel P. Taylor State Park.

We will leave the Cheese Factory and head out through the picturesque Chileno Valley and into Sonoma County countryside driving past old farms and ranches on our way to our lunch destination.

Our final destination and lunch stop will be at **Café Bellini, 100 S. McDowell**, Petaluma where we will eat in a private dining room. Lunch entrees need to be ordered beforehand from the list below and include water, lemonade and iced tea.

Cheeseburger or Veggie burger & fries
Chicken Club & fries
Fish and Chips
Cobb Salad w or w/o meat

Total Cost including tax and tip \$35 per person and must be paid beforehand.

RSVP by March 8, 2026 with your entrée choice and check made out to the MGOC and mail to: Marla Preston, 7305 Rebas Way, Rohnert Park CA, 94928

707 529 1446, marlapreston@hotmail.com

To pay through PayPal go to the website at: www.mgocsf.org and under Events click on St. Paddy's Day Tour; But please tell Marla that you have paid through PayPal and your entrée choice.



Click for sound! 🎧

March 28 & 29, 2026

Clovis British Auto Roundup

Presented by the Valley British Auto Club

Register on-line - ValleyBritish.ORG

You are invited to enter your BRITISH car or British motorcycle of any vintage, marque or condition in the 2026 Clovis British Auto Roundup. This, our 23rd annual show, has a great blend of things to do and see!

We tick over the show weekend on Saturday morning with a group rally tour on some twisty foothill roads. Sunday morning brings a great display of British cars and exploring vibrant Old Town Clovis, California.

The 2026 spring "Clovis Antique Fair" will be just north of our car show. Explore the antique shops and get lunch at an Old Town restaurant. "Entrants Choice" show winners will receive very nice awards and any entrant can drive away with some super raffle prizes.

Enter today! The members of the Valley British Auto Club sincerely thank you for your continued support of and participation in, our 2026 Clovis British Auto Roundup.

Show will go on rain or shine - Sorry, No Refunds !

See you there!

2026 Schedule of Activities

Saturday 28 - Group Rally Day

0930 - Meet at Best Western Clovis Cole Hotel (415 N. Clovis Ave at 4th Street) for group rally tour in the Sierra foothills. (Tour leaves parking lot at 1000 sharp)

1200 - "No Host" Rally Lunch at Bobby Salazar's Mexican Restaurant, (434 N. Clovis Avenue at 4th Street) across the street from Best Western Clovis Cole Hotel.

Sunday 29 - Show Day

0730 - Show Gates Open

0900 - Show Officially Begins

1100 - 1130 - Hand Crank Exhibition (Contact a VBAC official to part)

1230 - 1300 - Oil Spot Judging

1300 - 1400 - Charity Raffle

1430 - Awards

1500 - Show Ends

Thank you and see everyone in 2026!



From the Editor

Happy Ground Hog Day, MG-ers!

2 February 2026

That was a milestone event when I grew up in cold country. It meant the eventual end of winter and coming of spring. Cabin Fever and Spring Fever were real ailments. Spring comes early here.

Wow, we are into 2026 already. Another year of the newsletter (***the Year of Our Club 0069***). I believe a new editor would bring fresh thinking. I much appreciated the creative things done by Felix Lee, Bob Trencheny, Jeremy Palgon and Felix Wong. If this is something you would like to have a go at, let the club officers know.

I hated to miss the Brunch. Sounds like a goodly number of you didn't miss it however. I am excited to see what events the club sets for 2026 at the Planning Meeting. Always a fun time.

The MG club in Orange County has well-attended monthly meetings. That is something we gave up trying to do many years ago. Getting around the Bay is just too difficult on a weekday evening. I feel we have lost something important.

I purchased a motor and foot pedal kit to electrify my primitive sewing machine. They were inexpensive though I spent more to get a belt the right size. It is functioning but I haven't tried it "in anger" yet to see how useable it will be.

Hope to see you all soon. Safety fast!



Dan



Cartoon below by Brian Sonner of Placerville



Pedal Car?

February Comments

We are off to a good start in this new year. January kicked off with our first event, Marla and Andy's Annual Brunch held at the Moss Beach Distillery in Moss Beach. It was well attended and as always, the food was good and the camaraderie great. January also saw the planning meeting at Marsha Crawford's. We have a full calendar but there is always room for more, if you have something in mind it's not too late. Unfortunately, I picked up some kind of bug from one of the grandkids and Connie and I were unable to attend.

I'm scheduled for a tour in San Mateo County in April (which I'm going to have to move to May 2nd) and I'm mulling whether to work a picnic lunch or book a cafe. I would also like to return to Big Basin State Park again this year but need to find an alternate route. These are things I will hash out later.

Two events I would like to discuss. The first is the **Clovis Roundup**. I attended this for the first time last year and thoroughly enjoyed it. Old town Clovis is only three and a half hours away and is a picturesque area just east of Fresno. Arrive on Friday, stay for two nights, with the tour of the backroads and lunch on Saturday and the British car show and antique street fair on Sunday. Sunday afternoon you're off and on your way home. Fresno and the lower San Joaquin Valley in the summer is hot, dry and uninteresting to the traveler. That area in March is green and beautiful.

Polasky Street is blocked off for about four or five blocks for the street fair with a side street set aside for the car show. If you decide to go, the Best Western Clovis Cole is clean and within walking distance of some good

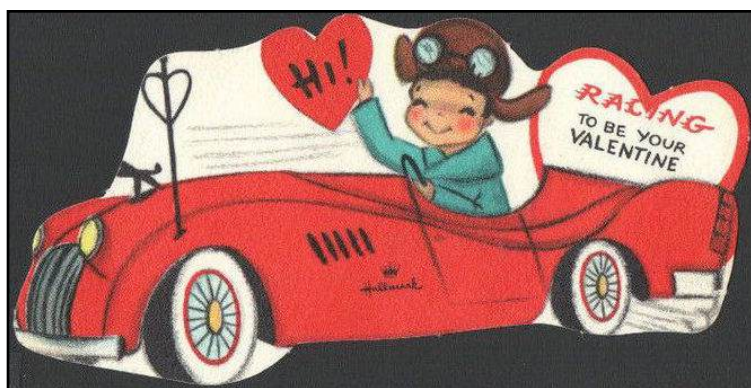
restaurants. I should also mention how surprised I was last year by the number of British cars heading back to the Bay area on my return.

The other event I wanted to mention is the **GOF** in Flagstaff. I signed up for this in September and am number 6 for the event. I was really looking forward to it but sadly have had to cancel. At the time, it was an open event and if I had problems or a breakdown on the road I could take the time to repair the car and eventually get home.

In December, my brother Tom won some prizes from the Miata Club of San Diego for a Miata tour from Rome to Barcelona, Zaragoza, Pamplona and Leon ending in Porto. I've been invited to join him and to catch my Rome flight I would have had to leave a day or two early and with any hiccup I would miss my flight. The two events were just too close.

Doug, color us Green!

Doug



Cartoon by Brian Sonner of Placerville

Wacky Arnolt, an American British Car Innovator

Story and photos from Terry Trovato, from ***The Spark & Spanner*** (April 2023), the South Alabama British Car Club

On a stormy autumn morning in 1938, when wiser boatmen chose to stay on land, Chicago industrialist Stanley H. Arnolt attempted to cross Lake Michigan in a tiny open vessel. It was powered by a Sea-Mite engine, one of his company's marine products. According to legend, as Arnolt finally approached the Navy Pier after a four-hour journey through treacherous waves and fog, someone shouted, "Hello, Wacky!"

The nickname stuck, and a headline in that day's Chicago Daily News read, "Wacky Comes Through in Fog: Crosses Lake in 13-Foot Boat."

Wacky he may have been on that day, but he went on to become a successful automobile dealer and innovator by creating memorable vehicles combining British mechanicals and Italian bodywork.

A fortuitous meeting with members of the Italian Bertone organization at the Turin Auto Show in 1952 resulted in four collaborative efforts between Arnolt and Bertone, involving running gear and engines

from the British car manufacturers MG, Aston-Martin, Bentley, and Bristol.

On the Bertone stand that day at Turin were two MGs that had been re-bodied by Bertone. America had just fallen in love with MG, and perhaps there was not enough capital or status for Bertone to acquire chassis from Lancia, Maserati, Ferrari or any of the other well-known Italian manufacturers. At any rate the two MGs would have to do.

Arnolt was immediately smitten by the two Bertone MGs and proceeded to place an order for 200 cars: 100 coupes and 100 convertibles. Two hundred cars may not have seemed that out of the



An Arnolt-MG Drophead Coupe

ordinary to him, but for Bertone it was a different matter. They built a very limited number of cars each year and asking for 200 in one order was a lot. Bertone company lore has it that Nuccio Bertone tried to talk Arnolt out of it. "Chassis from England, bodies in Italy, then shipping to Chicago – the cost!" Wacky Arnolt was not a man to be turned away. In very short order Bertone was bodying MGs and Arnolt was soon on Bertone's Board of Directors and had become a vice president.

The first effort produced was the Arnolt-MG, a four-seater Bertone-bodied car based on the MG TD chassis and XPAG 54-hp engine. The Arnolt-MG was designed by Giovanni Bertone, his son Nuccio, and Giovanni Michelotti. Of a planned production of 200 cars, 103 were actually produced between 1953 and 1954: 67 coupés and 36 convertibles.

Subsequently, however, MG informed Arnolt that it could no longer supply chassis and engines due to the demand for its own complete cars (as well as the replacement of the TD by the TF), so Arnolt had to start looking for a replacement.



The Arnolt-MG Coupe

Back in 1953 Arnolt had visited the London Motorshow and was impressed with the Bristol 404. Arnolt then struck up a deal with Bristol which agreed to provide its stripped-down 404 chassis with a Bristol 6-cylinder engine. They were to be shipped to Bertone in Italy to be clothed in a



The Arnolt-Bristol

Spyder body. The design was to be orchestrated by Franco Scaglione with coachwork by Bertone, and the Arnolt-Bristol was born. Once again 200 were ordered and 142 were produced: 140 roadsters and 2 coupes. The Arnolt-Bristols were to be built in Filton, England, as a powered chassis; the body was fitted by Bertone in Italy, and only final assembly, fitting of options, prep work and paint and upholstery were executed in Warsaw, Indiana.

The Arnolt-Bristol cars were available in four body styles: Competition, a stripped road racer; Bolide, a slightly better-appointed road racer; Deluxe, a better-appointed version of the Bolide (side windows and convertible top, instruments mounted in a housing in front of the driver, glove box set in the dash); and Coupé, with pop-up headlights. At least one open car was subsequently fitted with a removable hardtop. Prices as per a 1956 factory letter were \$3,995 for the Competition model, \$4,245 for the Bolide, \$4,995 for the Deluxe and \$5,995 for the Coupé.

Next, Arnolt set his sights on producing an Arnolt Aston-Martin. His goal was to produce a Bertone-bodied Aston-Martin DB2/4 roadster and sell it as an Arnolt-Aston. It was to be designed by Bertone's Arnolt-Bristol designer Franco Scaglione and the cars were to be fitted with Aston's 125 hp, 2580 cc engine. However, the production of Arnolt-Astons was stopped by Aston-Martin after only three cars were built.

Then, Arnolt created a racing team for the Sebring 12-hour race, and in 1955, at their first attempt, his special Arnolt-Bristol lightweight cars finished first, second and fourth in the Sports 2000 class, winning the Team Trophy, a feat which was

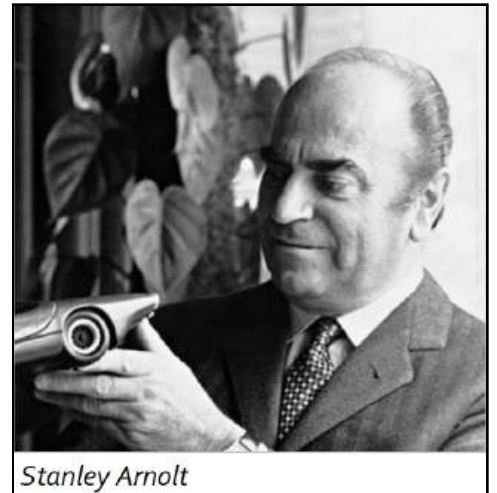
replicated in 1956 and 1960. The following year they took second and third in class.

Wacky Arnolt may not have made much money on the Arnolt-MG or the Arnolt-Bristol, but his Bertone-bodied Arnolt-

Bristols continued placing very well in subsequent races for several years.

Wacky Arnolt went on to become the BMC Distributor for the Midwest, handling the full array of BMC products, including Austin-Healey, MG, Riley, Wolseley, Morris and Austin, and all the while ran successful automobile companies in both the USA and Italy.

At the age of 54, he suffered a stroke, and subsequently two years later he died from a heart attack. It was the day after Christmas, December 26th, 1963. The creative innovator in British automobile history was no more, but his sought-after creations live on until this day, as exemplified by his 1954 Arnolt-MG Drophead Coupe which sold for \$247,500 during the recent Mecum auction in Kissimmee, Florida.



Stanley Arnolt



A very rare Arnolt-Aston

[That the shapely Arnolt MG Coupe was built on the humble T-series platform seems nearly inconceivable.-Ed.]

Used with permission. Sadly, Terry has passed.



**NORTH AMERICAN
COUNCIL OF
MG REGISTERS**

Invite

All MG Owners

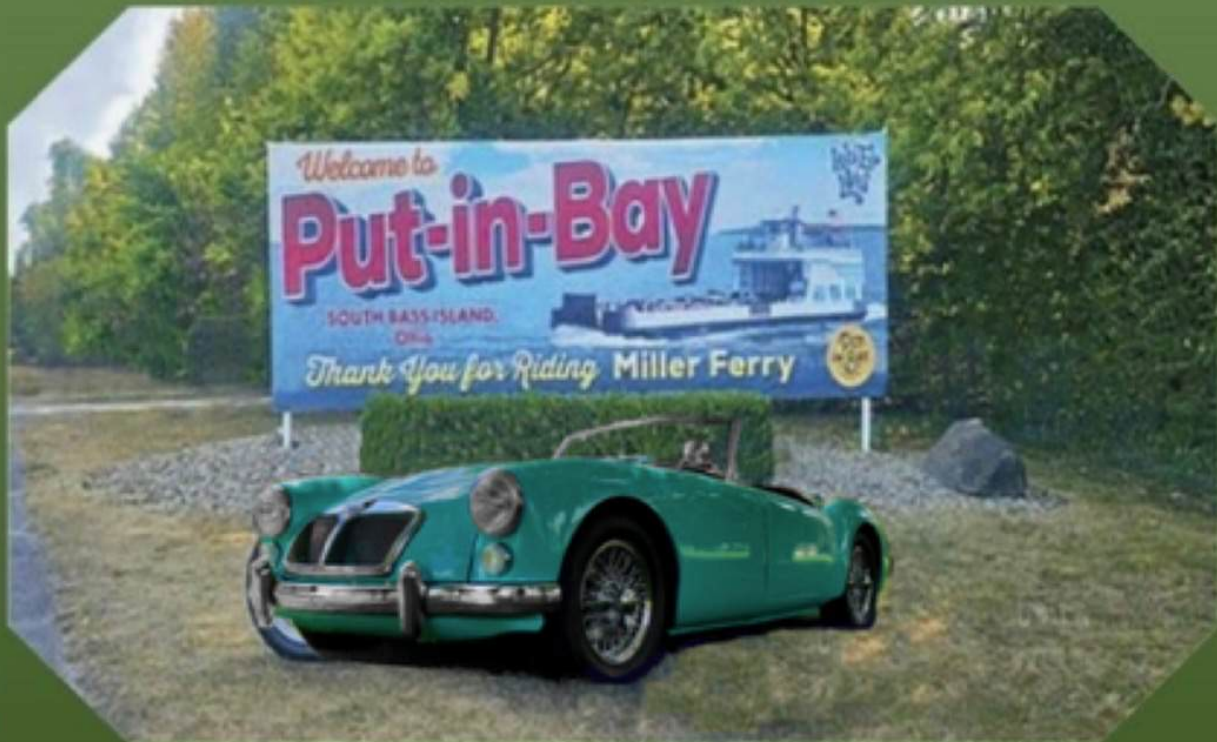
to join us in

2026

Sandusky Ohio / Lake Erie area
for the

ALL REGISTER MG EVENT

AUGUST 24-27, 2026





Hints and tips for M.G. owners

FOREWORD

These articles were written over a period of many years and appeared originally in the Octagon Car Club's monthly "Bulletin". Because the Club caters for owners of pre-1956 MGs only, the articles are confined to the types of SU carburettor (mainly 'H' series) fitted to those cars, but it is hoped that owners of other makes of car of the same era will find them useful.

When it comes to carburation, nothing is "set in concrete" and in preparing this booklet I have taken the opportunity to amend the text of some articles in the light of later experience and changing conditions.

Finally, if you find this collection of interest and assistance in dealing with problems, you have to thank my good friend Peter Jenniches who has badgered me for so long to produce it!

Donald Jackson

SU Topics edited by Dan Shockey

The Octagon Car Club provides a lot a great info on T-series MGs. Even though I have been keeping old SUs going for over 50 years, this "SU Bible" has much I found informative and of special interest to me. The authors explain some of the mystifying aspects of these carbs that were not really made to last for 70 years and for such great changes to our pump fuels.

Improve Cold Starting

Due to its design, the carb orifice is not an ideal shape, particularly under conditions of low piston lift. Some air gets in at the extreme edges without picking up its ration of fuel. (which is why an S.U. is not particularly good when it comes to cold starting). As you can see from the illustration (b) positioning of the jet as high as possible will throw fuel out sideways more effectively, which does a lot to improve matters.

Somehow we want to obtain the correct idling mixture with the jet almost, but not quite, at the end of its adjustment.

The first alteration you can make is to recess the needle in the piston 1/16", instead of having the shoulder 'flush' as the text book tells you. Also check that the float levels are not set too low - 7/16" absolute maximum on T2 lids (3/8" on T1s).

Having done this, now run the engine and adjust for correct idle as usual. Instead of the jet being set down 8 - 10 "flats", which would be normal with new parts, you should find you have reduced this by half, to 4 or 5 flats - still plenty for future adjustment. 2 or 3 flats would be even better of course, but eventually you would have to reposition the needle in the piston to restore the range of adjustment to the jet.

Incidentally, raising the fuel level, and the jet, both improve cold starting. When you pull the choke cable you will be moving the jet further than before, giving an even richer mixture which will help in this direction.

More Cold Staring - Tickler Pins

The S.U. carburettor - particularly types prior to the more modern 'HS' series - suffered from poor cold starting because dropping the jet by 1/2" or so didn't really give a rich enough mixture at cranking speeds. The tickler pin, spring loaded upwards, is used to push the float down before trying to start the engine but with the petrol pump switched on. A couple of seconds is enough to 'flood' the carburettor and provide that extra richness. They were fitted to MG cars, mostly at the factory's request.

Due to vibration the return springs on these pins are prone to wear away and in extreme cases the pin ends up actually resting on the float, causing flooding problems. It is worth checking this from time to time - if you can pull the pin upwards, you need to replace the spring.

Warped Carb Bodies & Effects

I've spent all yesterday fiddling with the S.U.s on my PA (a pleasant task!). However, even with the jets right up it seems to be still slightly rich and idles at about 1,200, nothing less. The needles are M6 which I think are the recommended ones.

Also, despite putting new seals and washers on, there is still a slight seepage of petrol from around the base of the jet - not enough to actually drip, but sufficient to make the spring and nut appear damp. What's wrong or much more likely, what am I doing wrong?

Answer

You have three problems, two of which could be related. Before doing anything about the lack of jet adjustment you should try to get the idling speed down to something nearer 600-700. This is not going to be easy, because the trouble is probably due to distortion of the carburettor body. Your carbs are made of zinc alloy which is very prone to warping with heat variation and you will find the bore, where the throttle disc is seated, is now oval instead of round. A 1" reamer might improve matters, but be very careful - replacement discs are expensive. The object is to get the disc to seat all round so that virtually no light can be seen through it when in the closed position.

This could be due to the fact that their carburettors are made of the zinc-based alloy used by S.U. in the thirties and forties. This material was beautiful to machine, but is most unstable where heat is concerned. With a two bolt mounting flange in contact with a soft gasket, residual heat from the inlet manifold allows the flange to 'bow', eventually causing an air leak midway between the bolts. At first this can be cured by further tightening of the bolts, but it only aggravates the condition and eventually you have to file the flange flat again.

Unfortunately, if you look closely you will find that the bore of the carburettor has become oval and a gap exists at the edges of the disc where it sits in the spindle.

In fact the whole bore of the carburettor has been distorted and a new disc is often a worse fit than the old one!

The only cure is to somehow resleeve the carburettor body and start again, or preferably obtain a later pair of carb bodies made out of die-cast aluminium which is unaffected in this way.

If you do have zinc-based alloy carbs, once you have got the flange perfectly flat again, use the thinnest possible gasket material when bolting them to the manifold, to reduce the tendency to distort in the future.

Fuel Changes - Affect on Needles

However, what has changed considerably is the fuel. If we have a petroleum expert among our members, it would be very interesting to hear from him how present day fuels compare with those of the early post-war years; but in any case I suspect the calorific value has risen considerably. All of which means that if our cars were to be put back into production today, S.U. would be recommending very much 'weaker' needles than were originally fitted.

So, let us look at the prospect of doing a bit of correction work for ourselves. Of course, you could change to the recommended 'weak' needle for your car, but here you have to exercise some care. It is not generally realised that the so-called weak needle was determined by S.U. as a correction factor for high altitude and not for fuel economy, so it starts off by providing only a slightly weaker mixture at low revs and gets progressively weaker towards maximum revs, which is not necessarily what we require. Had you fitted the 'weak' needle in your car 35 years ago, you would simply have lost power, particularly at the higher revs, albeit with some gain in fuel consumption. Whilst today's conditions suggest that you would not lose out at the top end, the 'weak' needle might not provide sufficient difference at the lower revs where it is most important for overall fuel economy.

Indeed, the recommended weak needle for the TC and TD (AP) actually goes richer at low revs before it starts to weaken off further up the range, so I would not recommend you try this at all.

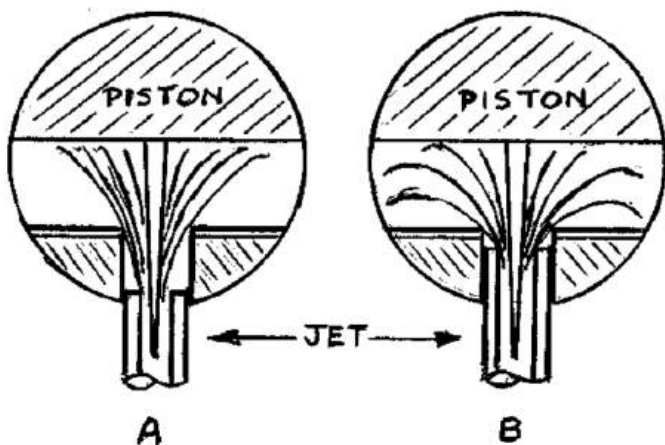
Optimal Jet Position

9. When doing a carburettor overhaul and particularly when fitting a new jet and needle, you could spend a little extra time profitably in ensuring that the jet ends up in its most efficient position.

If you follow all the written instructions on jet and needle assembly, you will certainly achieve a satisfactory result, in that you will be left with plenty of jet adjustment, up and down, not only to obtain the correct 'idle' setting when everything is new, but also to compensate for jet wear for many miles to come.

However, it is a fact that the lower the jet lies in the carburettor body, the worse is the mixture 'spread' across the bridge of the carburettor. Good 'mixing' of the fuel and air in the carburettor is one of the most important factors in fuel efficiency and an extra mile or two per gallon can be gained by attention to detail.

The two illustrations, hopefully, indicate the fuel pattern as it leaves the jet area (a) with the jet low down and (b) high up in the body.



Lean the Carbs

Then, all you have to do is change the needles to suit the new conditions. M.G. always followed a policy of carbureting on the rich side, to give an additional measure of cooling to the valves, believing, quite reasonably, that their cars were going to be 'hammered' from the word go! Petrol was not as good in those pre-war days as it is now, so you will find that the official "weak" needle is rich enough, in some cases too rich. 'P' types should be O.K. with 'S' needles or M9, 'TA's with 'M7'.

Float Lid Must be Vented

Less obvious and so easily overlooked, is the overflow pipe assembly. It is essential that the float lid is vented to the atmosphere. If you use long overflow pipes, use nothing less than 3/16" tubing and make sure that there are no kinks or restrictions in them. Don't block them up with excess metal polish either, which happened to one of our members!

Use That Serated Washer

7. More than once I have been asked to advise on a peculiar fault - the engine will start up alright but peters out after a short time, but then takes off again without warning, only to peter out again etc. etc.

No, not the fuel pump this time (although it might have been) but simply the fitment of incorrect washers on the overflow pipe banjo.

The float chamber must be vented to the atmosphere in one way or another and where overflow pipes are fitted, air can circulate through the two slots in the lid centre boss and pass through to the banjo by virtue of the extra clearance provided between the underface of the banjo and its fixing bolts (Note that the banjo can only be fitted one way up). If a plain fibre washer, which is a close fit on the bolt, is used, it will effectively seal off this deliberate clearance and all sorts of unpleasant things result. The correct washer is an internally serrated one, with a plain aluminium washer on top of the banjo and below the hexagon head of the fixing bolt.

Try Dropping the Needles 1-2mm

The suggestion that the needles are dropped 1 mm (or even 2mm if necessary) to restore some idling adjustment is quite in order and although it will affect the whole range, I doubt that it will be noticeable as far as performance is concerned. One or two 'flats' of the adjustment nut has a greater effect on the idling mixture than the rest of the range.

In any case, it should be noted that if the problem with achieving a weak enough idling mixture is due to a jet which is a little oversize, rather than a needle which is undersize at that point, then the corrective procedure of dropping the needle slightly will not result in a weaker mixture throughout the range than you would expect from any given needle.

Benefits of Weaker Needles

What sort of practical effect will these changes have? Well, better carburation at low engine speeds means greater flexibility and if you are not in a hurry, top gear can be used at much lower speeds. The weaker needles will also conserve your petrol at cruising speeds, as high as 4000 rpm, and average consumption figures of 38 mpg for 'P' types can be expected, 35mpg for 'T.As' and 'T.Cs', 32 mpg for 'T.Ds' and 35 - 38 mpg for 'T.Fs'. Of course, a lot depends on the usage - nothing but town and city driving will drop the figure by as much as 8 mpg, but if you think you are not getting what you should be, and you care to drop me a line, I would be pleased to help in any way I can.

Overflow Pipes

2. **Overflow pipes** appeared just before the war and were fitted to cars where it was feared that flooding might spill neat petrol directly on to a red hot manifold. Unfortunately, it was later discovered that they caused more serious troubles than they were intended to cure - notably syphoning once a bit of flooding did occur, and it was common practice at S.U. to cut the pipes very short (say about 2-3 ins long) to cure this. They were discontinued as a standard fitment about 1960 for this reason.

Needles to Try

Shown below is a chart covering the most common MG models, listing the standard and weak needles together with a suggested even weaker needle if you find you need to go a stage further. Note that in the case of the TC and TD I have substituted EU for the official AP, and for the TF I have made no further recommendation as this model has other problems which makes fine tuning virtually impossible.

If your car is not shown and you would like similar information, please drop me a line.

MODEL	STANDARD	WEAK	WEAKER
J2	1	M5	AC
P, PB	M6	S	M9
TA	AC	S	EW
TC, TD	ES	EU	EW
TF	GJ	GL	-

Damper Oil

1. **Dampers:** Most post-war SU carburettors were fitted with 'dampers' - the plunger attached to the oil cap on top of the suction chamber. This is, in effect, the equivalent of an acceleration pump, and to work satisfactorily it is essential to fill the hollow rod of the piston with the correct grade of oil. This should ideally be a straight SAE 20 engine oil, but an SAE 30 will also serve, as will SAE 20-50 multigrade. An SAE 5 or 10-50 multigrade will not do, and thin cycle oil is no use at all and should only be used on pre-war types not having dampers.

The complete document can be found at this address:

<https://www.triple-mregister.org/uploads/retro/SU%20Booklet.pdf>

Ghost Race Track: Hollywood Track & Movie Ranch

Compiled by Dan Shockey

In 1927, Paramount Studios purchased a 2700-acre ranch in the Santa Monica Mountains. Located between Malibu and the Conejo Valley, Paramount used the ranch to create a variety of large-scale movie sets. The site is now a National Recreational Area and easily accessible from Highway 101.

In 1955, Paramount decided to add a racing track to diversify the site. Motor sport was soaring in popularity and the only purpose-built closed circuit in California was Willow Springs. Temporary tracks on public roads had largely been abandoned on safety grounds. Most racing thus was on comparatively unexciting airfield and parking-lot tracks.

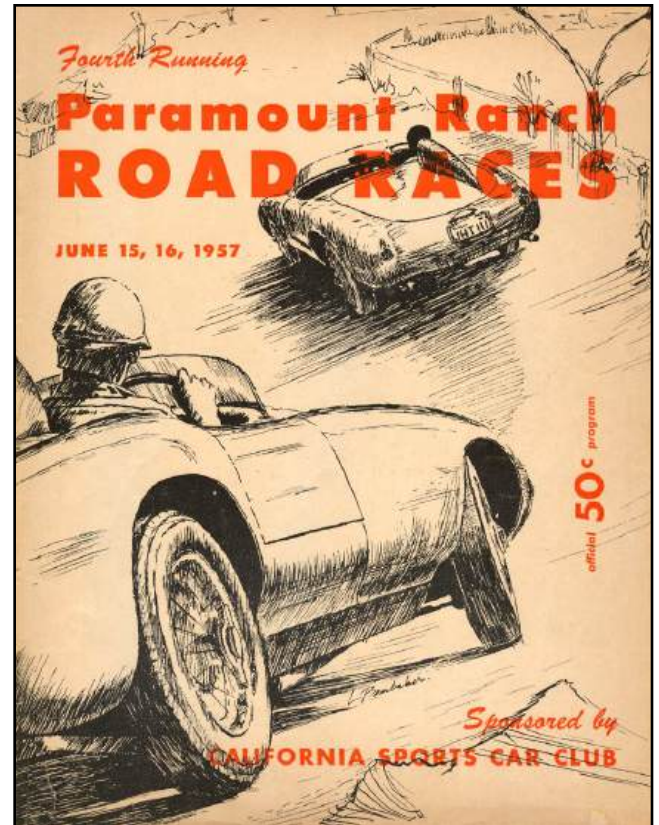
Paramount commissioned local drivers Ken Miles and Dick Van Laanen to design a 2-mile course. Miles and Van Laanen created a challenging figure-of-eight layout with eleven turns, a three quarter mile main straight and a bridge with underpass. The picturesque setting was enhanced with a lake between turns eight and nine.

Paramount Ranch Raceway opened for its first event over the weekend of August 18 and 19, 1956. Organized by the California Sports Car Club (CSCC), there were four preliminaries on Saturday followed



by five races on Sunday.

The main event, a one-hour contest, was won by Harrison Evans in a Ferrari Monza. Third place went to Richie Ginther who also won the under 1.5-litre class in his Porsche Spyder.



On November 4th, 1956, the United States Auto Club (USAC) held a 250-mile Stock Car National Championship race at Paramount Ranch. Sam Hanks took the win in his Mercury. Yes, stock cars used to run on tracks like this.

The final event of 1956 was another sports car race weekend over November 17 and 18.

The main 90-minute contest for modified cars was won by Ken Miles in his Porsche-powered Cooper Special. Driving the same car (nicknamed the *Pooper*), Miles also took victory in the 45-minute race for sub-1500cc Modified cars.

Higher quality cars and drivers arrived for the 1957 races. The opening weekend of the season took place over March 9 and 10. During the course of the meet, Paramount Pictures also filmed many of the racing scenes for the Cornel Wilde movie, *The Devil's Hairpin*. (See **The Octagon** about the fate of an MG special used for this film.)

Jerry Austin claimed victory in the big one-hour race for over 1500cc sports cars with his Jaguar D-type. In the under 1.5-litre contest, Bob Drake's Cooper edged out Ken Miles' Porsche to the win. On April 28th, the USAC returned to Paramount Ranch for a 100 mile Stock Car Race. On this occasion, Troy Ruttman's Ford took victory from runner up Sam Hanks.

Special Thanks to Dean Caccavo of the TC Mooring Guild, now living n Placerville

Sports cars were back on June 15. Chuck Daigh was crowned winner in the main race for over 1500cc modified cars. Daigh's Troutman Barnes Special finished six seconds ahead of Austin's Jaguar in the ten-lap race. In the 1.5-litre event, Jack McAfee took the win in Stanley Sugarman's Porsche.



The Sports Car Club weekend of December 7 and 8, 1957, was blighted by three serious accidents. There was a serious off during Saturday practice for Hugh Woods. Woods crashed his Chevrolet Corvette into the barriers at turn one. He fractured both arms, severed his right leg and did a substantial amount of damage to the barrier.

Later that day, during the ten-lap Preliminary for the over 2.7-litre Production car race, George Sherrerd crashed his Jaguar XK120 at the same



spot. The barrier had not been repaired and the exposed guardrail pierced through Sherrerd's car. George Sherrerd was killed instantly.

Further tragedy occurred during Sunday's finale, the headline one-hour race for over 1.5-litre Sports cars. Jim Firestone lost control of his Frazer Nash on the penultimate lap. The car hit the bridge parapet and rolled several times. Firestone was



ejected from the Frazer Nash and then hit by the car that fatally crushed his skull.

It would be the last time competitive motor sport ever took place at Paramount Ranch; the studio's insurers refused to cover any further racing. By this time, other permanent circuits had opened such as Riverside and Pomona.



However, the Paramount Ranch race track was still used for filming. Movies such as *Roadracers* (1959), *Spin Out* (1965), *The Love Bug* (1968) and *Herbie Rides Again* (1974) all had scenes shot on site.

In later years, the entire Paramount Ranch facility was taken over by the US National Park Service. The race circuit lives on as a popular model for slot car tracks with its relatively compact layout and especially its figure-8 bridge.

Unfortunately, many of the historic movie sets were devastated by wildfires in 2018. The fire destroyed the main attraction for visitors to Paramount Ranch, its western movie town. Only two buildings survived the wildfire: the chapel (used in *Westworld*) and the train depot (used in *Dr. Quinn*). The National Park Service plans to rebuild part of the western town. Visitors used to spend the day watching *Dr. Quinn* being filmed.

As for the circuit, some parts still remain, but the surface is in a very poor state and the bridge was torn down after the fire damage. The racetrack is overgrown with grass but you can still see the banked curves and part of the straightaway next to the main parking lot.



The property was the filming location for literally hundreds of movies, beginning with W.C. Fields. While Westerns were the most common films shot at the Ranch, a large-scale replica of San Francisco and a European village were built

Here is a list of some of the films and TV shows filmed at Paramount Ranch:

• **Movies:**

- "Gunfight at the O.K. Corral" (1957)
- "The Great Race" (1965)
- "The Apple Dumpling Gang" (1975)
- "The Cat in the Hat" (2003)
- "American Sniper" (2014)

• **TV Shows:**

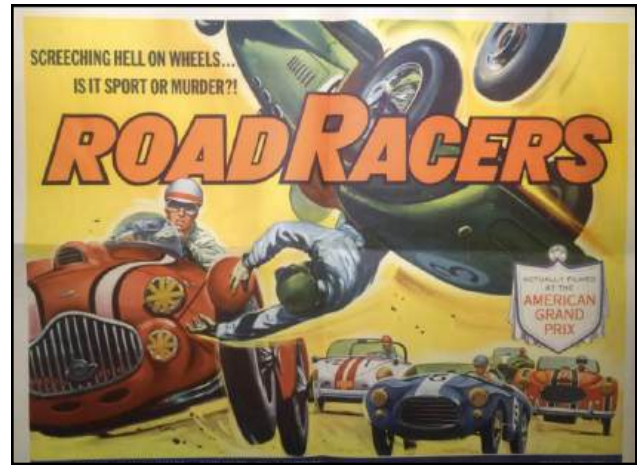
- "The Cisco Kid" (1950-1956)
- "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman" (1993-1998)
- "The Mentalist" (2008-2015)
- "The Bachelor" (2022)
- "Westworld" (2016-2022)

• **Classic Westerns:**

- "Gunsmoke" (1955 to 1975)
- "Have Gun Will Travel" (1957 to 1963)
- "The Rifleman" (1958 to 1963)

Club Activity:

Yes we actually did an event there once, where I lined up a tour by one of the historians. We



parked the TC's on the old straightaway. The track is only about 10 minutes from my house so I've been there many times. The western town burned to the ground in a wildfire, and sadly the racetrack bridge was also severely damaged and subsequently torn down. But some of the track is still there. One of our members did a meeting program about the track last year. He and I walked the track and took photos of all the turns, or at least where they used to be. This was before the fire so we had fun in the western town set.

Coverage of our tour there in 2009 is in this newsletter: (June 2009)

<http://www.tcmotoringguild.org/chassis/09JunMidget.pdf>

Steve Simmons, TC Motoring Guild



On the historic racecourse's straightaway, we get a detailed history of the track by NPS Ranger Tom.

These
photos
from the
TC
Motoring
Guild



Gene Olson leads Pete Thelander through the overgrown Bridge Turn. (See P. 10 for a look at this turn circa 1957.)

Track & Park Map

Ghost Track

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area -

Visit the ghost track anytime!

Ghost Tracks in The Octagon:

Moffet Field
11/20

Golden Gate
12/20
7/04

Cotati 1/21

Candlestick
12/21

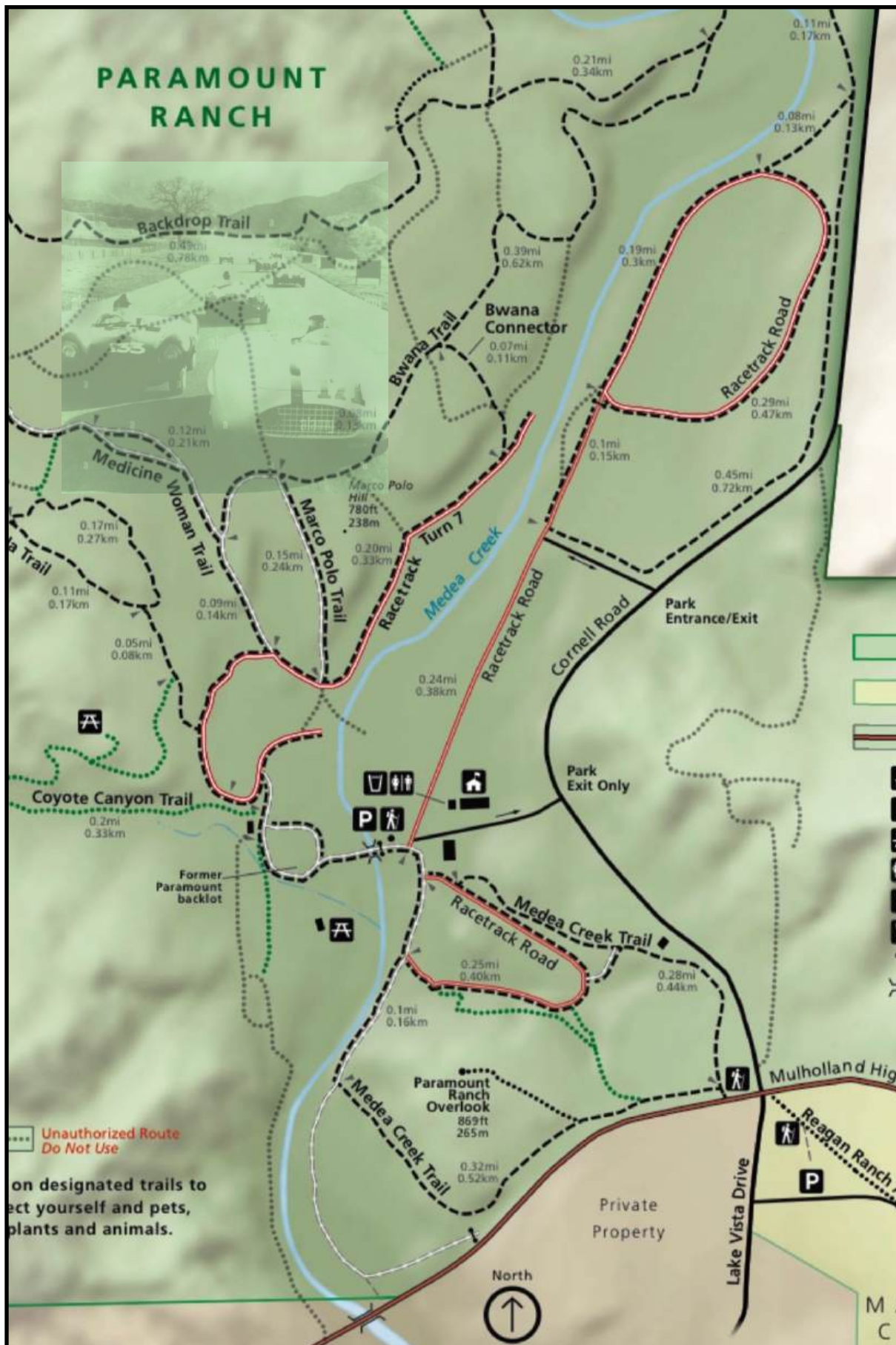
Vaca Valley 3/21

Fairgrounds 5/21

Santa Rosa 1/23

Reno 4/25

Paramount Ranch
2/26





Keep Planning for 2026!

WINTER



February TBD: SSTS Tour to Christ George Ranch and Sunol, Marja V.

Sun. Mar. 14: St. Pat's Day Tour, Sonoma Co., Marla & Andy Preston, Page 3

March 28-29: Clovis Roundup, Valley British Club, A fun event! Page 4

2026



May 11-15: GOF West, Flagstaff, AZ, Club caravan? Route 66!

May 17: Dixon All-British Meet

June 6: Brits by the Bay, Greenbrae

August 24-27: MG2026 All-Register Event, Ohio, page 9

MGs on Paramount Track



MGs racing at Paramount

Track layout by the great Ken Miles!



Annual Brunch 2026

by Andy Preston

First of all, many thanks to Marla for once again organizing the Annual Brunch which was a great success. It was held at Moss Beach Distillery which is proving to be the perfect location for most members in the Bay Area. The weather was wonderful: sunny with clear skies and perfect for MGs. There were 4 MGs; Doug and Connie Hollander in their MGB, Ray Davis and Kristy in an MGB GT, Mike and Elaine in an MGA and Ed and Rowena DeMayo in their V6 MGB. In addition Rod and Sue Schweiger arrived in Rod's spectacular custom made Hot Rod.

We had a good crowd of 38 members which filled the private side room overlooking the ocean. All of the tables were by the windows where the views are truly spectacular. The staff was wonderful and we were seated at 11:30 before the restaurant opens to the general public. Food was hot and delicious and everyone was served at the same time which was great. There was no shortage of champagne, mimosas or soft drinks.

In attendance were: Mike Jacobsen & Elaine Chan, Doug & Connie Hollander, Eric Baker, Don & Anne Scott, Ray Davis & Kristy, Rod & Sue Schweiger, Marcia Crawford & George Steneburg, Gary & Janet Germano, Ed & Rowena, Doug & Chally Flett, Barbara Tapp, Robert Paulson and friend, Steve & Gayle Lilves, David & Michele Bock, Jim & Anne Carlson, Marty and Naomi Rayman, Scott Shapin, Andy & Elizabeth Hunt, John & Sharon Hunt, and Marla, John & Andy Preston.

Ed DeMayo won an MG Grill badge for the Member driving an MG the furthest and all other MG members were given an MGOC window cling.

The "Burnt Spark Plug Award" was awarded to Felix Lee who was unable attend the brunch. According to Felix he was driving his MG TF to the November drive when he started to experience car trouble so wisely turned around and headed home to Los Altos Hills. He parked his car on his steep driveway and got out only to see his car slowly rolling down the hill. He chased after it and tried to slow it down by grabbing onto the rear bumper but had to give up and watched the car cross over a flower bed and come to rest in front of a wall. The only damage was to the front bumper until Felix looked down at his hands to find his right hand covered in blood. The sharp bottom edge on the bumper had sliced through two fingers on his right hand and Felix had to have 6 stitches in his forefinger and middle finger. Happily all wounds healed up well and Felix has learned he can't fight gravity.

Thank you to everyone who attended and made this a very successful event and once again many thanks to Marla for organizing it.



**Burnt Spark
Plug Award**

Photo: Barbara Tapp



Photos this
page by
Andy
Preston





Photos this page: Andy Preston

Burnt Spark Plus Award went to
Felix Lee who was not at the Brunch





Rod's Rod:
Rod and Sue in
their 1936 Hot
Rod that Rod
built himself!

Top photos:
Andy Preston

Lower photos:
Doug Hollander



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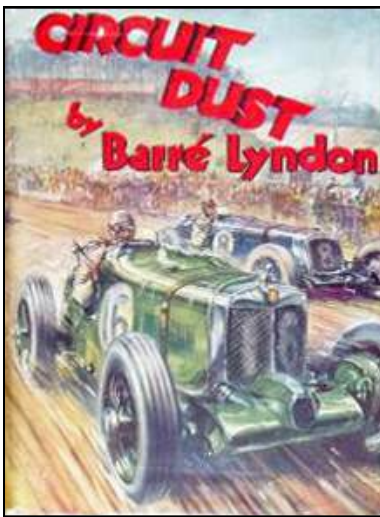
- You're covered 24/7 as the driver or passenger in any car¹
- Up to one tow up to 200 miles² and remaining tows up to 100 miles each
- Concierge and home lockout service
- AAA Mobile® app alerts you to nearby discounts wherever you are

Renew today at AAA.com/MyAccount

1 Roadside Assistance is provided by independent facilities contracted by AAA. Coverage in some circumstances and non-starting conveniences is included.
2 One tow up to 200 miles per household per membership year. Visit AAA.com/MemberHandbook for details about Member benefits, including any limitations or restrictions. Offers, terms, conditions and policies are subject to change without notice. Savings partners subject to change.



Circuit Dust interpreted by AI. The book is a true account of MG racing in the 1930s. I would never have guessed the sinister secret meaning of the account! - Ed.



"Circuit Dust" by Barre Lyndon is a hardcover book in English, published by John Miles. The novel follows the story of circuit dust, a mysterious and elusive force that seems to hold a key to unravelling the secrets of the world. With Barre Lyndon's storytelling prowess, readers are taken on a thrilling journey filled with intrigue and suspense. Perfect for fans of science fiction, mystery, and adventure, this book is sure to captivate and enthrall those who delve into its pages.



The Club
Gathers for
Brunch by
Marty
Rayman

Late-Model MGs: Great Opportunity?

By Dan Shockey

I see late-model, i.e. "rubber bumper," MGBs advertised at what seem to me good prices. These are often very original cars in very good condition – at least here in California. They often still have their original paint and interior. Think about it. These are 45 to 50 year old cars that are comfortable, look good and can run well. They even offer useful improvements over earlier chrome-bumper MGBs.

The last years of MGs were often bought as "second" cars and spent most of their lives in the garage. The 5-main-bearing MGB motor is one of the best-lasting of any make and the gearbox is unbreakable. Some even have overdrive – or you easily add it. That makes it a comfortable freeway cruiser.

You can replace the rubber bumpers if you choose, or paint them and lower the car for better appearance and handling. Parts are readily available at good prices. They are easy to work on especially compared to newer cars. The wiring diagram fits on a single page of paper rather than filling an entire book.

I will include some info on recent MGBs I have seen advertised. This is merely a sample. I don't know anything further about these specific cars or even if they are still available.

Late Midgets can be found as well. The chrome bumper ones seem highly prized and not as available as MGBs. The problem with the later ones is the 1500 motor that does not last well. And overdrive is not readily available. But in general the same factors apply as to MGBs. (Spitfire overdrives units can be found and there are conversion kits to 5-speed boxes. Or enjoy them as MOWOG intended!)

For further reference, see articles in the May, 2021, and January, 2024, issues of **The Octagon**.

Ads source:
Craigslist



MGOC Planning Meeting

Saturday, January 24, 2026, Kensington

Event Calendar

Call to Order: Andy Preston

Attending and introductions: Marcia Crawford, Mike Jacobsen, Bob Paulsen, Kirk & Amy Prentiss, Andy & Marla Preston, Rod & Sue Schweiger, George Steneberg, Barbara Tapp

Feb

- **SSTS tour to Christ George Ranch** collection 2/17 or around V-Day. Marja is contact. Bring your own Picnic lunch to a park in the Sunol area after the tour. Meet at Androtti exit from 580.

March

- **St Paddy's Day tour** 3/15. Finishes in Petaluma at Cafe Bellini which has added a \$125 room fee. Vote taken for Club to absorb that cost. Motion passed unanimously. Note from Marla about how good the Moss Beach Distillery is to deal with – going back in 2027.
- **Clovis Round-Up** 3/28-29 – Doug & Mike going.

April

- Doug wants to have a drive in the **San Mateo area**, date TBD

May

- **GoF West, Flagstaff AZ**, 5/11-15. Doug, Mike & Elaine going.
- **Dixon**, Sun 5/17
- **Friendship Day** at Redwood Shores 5/17
- Possible drives by Marty Ray, Bob Bundy, John Hunt

June

- **Brits by the Bay** in Greenbrae June 6, Sat – pre-1980 British cars only
- **Hillsborough Concours** 6/27-28
- **SSTS Juneteenth event** 6/20, by Stephen Guys in South Bay
- Possible drives by Marty Ray, Bob Bundy, John Hunt

July

- **SSTS Tune & Spoon** by Jim Brady in Lafayette, date TBD

Aug

- **Monterey Car Week** 10-16
- Mon – **Monterey British Car Show**
- Tue – Concours for Cause in Carmel
- Wed – **Little Car Show** in Pacific Grove
- **MG All-Registers event** 8/24-28

Sep

- **SSTS East Bay event** by Rob Brown, date TBD
- Attending the **Highland Games** this year is iffy due to time restrictions

Oct

- **Annual Picnic** in Tilden Park, date TBD – Marcia & Prentisses, same sandwich deal as last year
- **Blackhawk All-British** show, 10/19
- SSTS possible **Sierra (or See-Air-Ah) Tour** by Sue/Charles Schweiger

Nov

- **Sonoma Tour** by Andy & Marla, date TBD

Dec

- **Holiday Tea** at Mike & Elaine's on Sat, 12/5

Jan 2027

- **Planning Meeting**, George & Marcia's

At the end of the meeting Sue Schweiger mentioned the possibility of an overnight tour in the Salinas area and visiting the Steinbeck museum, Pinnacles National Park, Salinas River, Greenfield, Hollister.

Mike Jacobsen reporting



And now, for something completely different . . .



MG Photo Book

Grandkids electric Midget at left

Dogs a good match to this MG L2
Goodwood Revival at lower left



Classified Ads

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

MGA 1600 Engine & Gearbox: From running MG. Engine turns freely. Clean. Free to good home. Can help load into truck. Member Andy Preston, andypreston@att.net (Posted 12/25)

1967 MGB GT: Same owner since 1984. Cared-for California car. Very original Chrome wire wheels. Many spares. \$23,000. Tanya, tazzytoo@gmail.com (Posted 2/26)

1972 MGB/GT: Rebuilt engine & 5-speed gearbox. Ready for paint prep and paint. Member Ray Davis at iredavisiii@gmail.com (Re-Posted 2/26)

Enclosed Trailer for Rent: Enclosed car trailer for rent (16' x 8'). Trailer has integrated braking system and lights, 12 volt electric winch. Reasonable. Eric Baker (510) 517-2165

We list ads for 3 months. Advise if you want them extended. For additional ads, see prior issues of *The Octagon* or MGOCSF.org



The Toothpaste Run

I Love My MG!

I just drove 120 miles in the rain and fog. Some of it in the dark. Why? To get a tube of toothpaste, of course. I'm still smiling.

I bought my MGB/GT in 1979. It has 173,000 miles on it now, so you can tell that I've been smiling for most of my life. Every time I get in it, I'm transformed into that 21 year old. Sure, I've thought about upgrading time and time again. However, there is no car made today; no Porsche, no Jaguar, no McLaren that can take me back in time.

It's my Wayback Machine. Sure, it shows it's age. But so do I. My clutch foot doesn't work as well as it once did. But I do exercises every day just so I can keep driving my MG. Call me crazy if you want. I'll tell you, "You're right. Ain't it great?"

P.S. When I got home, I found that there was toothpaste in the pantry. I wonder what I can go get next weekend. I hear it might snow. Yippee!!! Hey, maybe I can drive to the Moss Beach Distillery?

P.P.S. I need a new MGOC window cling.

~Dan Neu, MGOC member,
North Carolina



At right: Still Going - Dan Neu at Sears Point, MGOC track day, October, 2004

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Join over 2,000 enthusiastic owners in the restoration, preservation, and sheer enjoyment of driving an MGA, Magnette, or variant of this noble breed. You'll receive six bi-monthly issues of MGA!, our full-color, award winning magazine, invitations to National and Regional Get-Togethers throughout the U.S. and Canada, plus a knowledge base and support group second to none. All this for just \$37.50 per year (North America), or \$52.50 (International). **Get more information at** <http://www.namgar.com>, or contact registran@namgar.com.

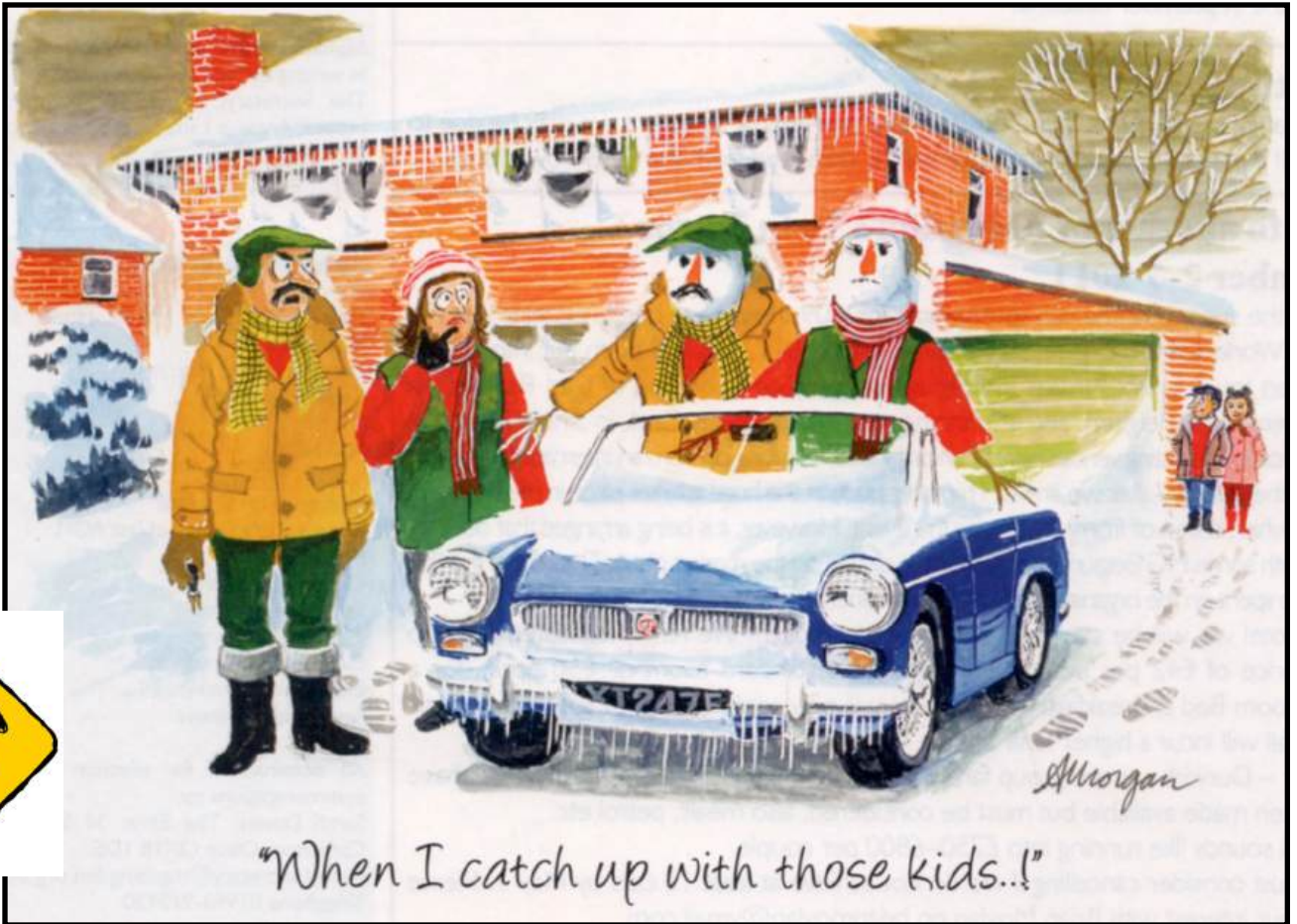



North American MGB Register



From **Safety**
Fast
magazine

MG Car
Club (UK)



"When I catch up with those kids..!"



Ed DeMayo,
Eric Baker
and Mike
Jacobsen at
the Brunch

by Marty
Rayman



**Ed DeMayo drove his green V6
MGB the furthest to the Brunch**