



# THE OCTAGON



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



*Since 1957!*



**Holiday Tea on December 11**

Marin Tour pic by  
Marty Rayman

# December 2021

**Dues are  
due!**

# 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 MGOC holds a business meeting 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 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 2021

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Vice President: **Kirk Prentiss**, [kirkprentiss@gmail.com](mailto:kirkprentiss@gmail.com)  
Treasurer: **Marla Preston**, [marlapreston@hotmail.com](mailto:marlapreston@hotmail.com)  
Secretary: **Mike Jacobsen**, 415-333-9699, [MikesMuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:MikesMuseum@yahoo.com)

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Member-at-Large: **George Steneberg**, 510-525-9125, [j2george@pacbell.net](mailto:j2george@pacbell.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.  
MGB 1962-74: **Steve Lilves**, 415-924-3173, [slilves@sbcglobal.net](mailto:slilves@sbcglobal.net)  
MGB 1974-1980: **Ed Adams**, 510-483-6821, [AdamsEddie77@yahoo.com](mailto:AdamsEddie77@yahoo.com)  
MGB V8 Conversion: **Tony Bates**, 408-666-6174, [avbates@yahoo.com](mailto:avbates@yahoo.com)  
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M.G. Midget: and Overall Auto Technician: **Craig Kuenzinger**, 925-934-3130, [mrcraigk@aol.com](mailto:mrcraigk@aol.com)  
MGA/Coupe/Twin Cam 1955-62: **George Steneberg**, 510-525-9125, [j2george@pacbell.net](mailto:j2george@pacbell.net)

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)

S.U. Carburettors: **Craig Kuenzinger**, 925-234-3313, [mrcraigk@aol.com](mailto:mrcraigk@aol.com)

## COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING IN *THE OCTAGON*

Direct all questions about advertising to **Mike Jacobsen** at 415-333-9699 or [MikesMuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:MikesMuseum@yahoo.com). 2022 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, 10 Willis Rd., Scotts Valley, CA 95066.

## RECRUITING MEMBERS FOR THE MGOC

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

## MGOCSE.ORG

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

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# Holiday Tea Party



1-4pm, Saturday, December 11  
115 Pinehurst Way  
San Francisco



Come to the annual Holiday Tea for food, tea, and possibly even coffee and soft drinks. Bring a snack to share, your favorite tea, and even your favorite teapot to brew in.

When: 1pm to 4pm, with a brief MGOC meeting at 12:30pm

Where: 115 Pinehurst Way, San Francisco 94127 - cross street Kenwood

We will collect new, unwrapped toys for the MGOC holiday toy drive. So please bring a toy if you can.



Holiday dress not required



# From the Editor

Merry Christmas!

29 November 2021

'Tis the Season again. My father says, "As you get older, the holidays get closer together – but the bathrooms get further apart!" The hills were nicely seasonally green in the Bay Area for the Marin Tour.

I was able to go to the MG swap meet in Orange County recently. It was rather late arranged so the event was small this year, disappointing for the vendors, I fear. But I had a good time and found a few things I can make use of. One was a nice original steering wheel for the MGA, hard to find a good one after all these years. Only \$25!

I am still trying to find things after moving. It is time to go through everything again to try to get them organized. My "Dan Den" (genus: man cave) is still a disorganized mess.

I hope you can make one of the upcoming year-end events, the Holiday Tea, the Planning Meeting and the Annual Brunch. These are fun events and a time to get to know folks with similar passions (MGs, tea, fine dining, conversation).

Oh, and Happy New Year as well!



## Dan

Above: Dressed for the Dickens Faire

More art by Kevin Walsh

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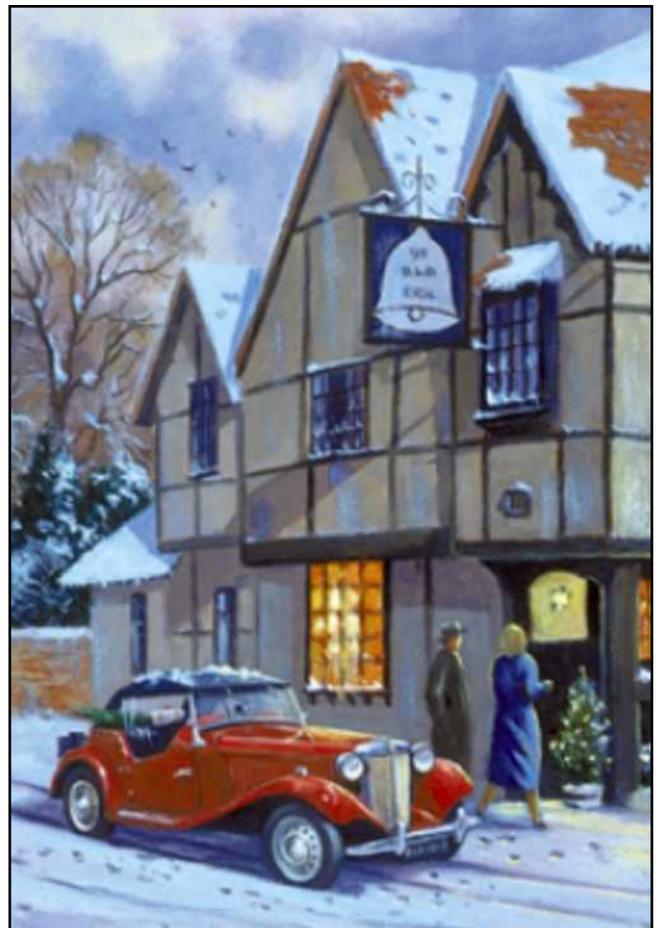
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# *MGOC Annual Brunch*

*and it's a*

## *Champagne Brunch*

*Sunday January 23, 2022*

*Limited to 40 people*



After a 2-year hiatus we'll hold our Annual MGOC Brunch again this year but it will be limited to 40 people only. So sign up early. It will be a **Champagne Brunch** and held again at the Historic Moss Beach Distillery in Moss Beach. We have a private room overlooking the Pacific. The **Brunch** is rated #1 in the Bay Area.

**12:00 Noon, Sunday, January 23, 2022**

**Moss Beach Distillery, 140 Beach Way, CA 94038**

**\$30/person (MGOC members) and \$50/person (non members) paid in advance!**

Your **Brunch** will include: Fresh baked pastries, cup of seasonal fruit, your choice from 3 entrees; Salmon, Skirt Steak, or California Coastal Omelet (with or without shrimp for vegetarians), tea, coffee, OJ and of course champagne and Mimosas. **You must select your entrée in advance with your payment.**

**RSVP by January 15, 2022** with your 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 Announcements click on "read more" under the **Annual Brunch 2022**.

# Member Notes

From Marty Rayman:

What a delectable, juicy, issue of **The Octagon**. I am having so much fun driving the MGA & keep thanking you all for your help. OMG, the motoring on those Marin roads was a delight.

Bob Bundy & I will be putting together a Spring MGOC drive to end at the Corinthian Yacht Club in Tiburon. We love sharing these byways with the other Mgers. Cheers, Marty

Projects from Andy Preston:

I just read your article of putting the MGB motor and type D overdrive into your MGA. All I can say is WELL DONE! You're going to love the OD which is the one I have in my 67 B.

I bought a factory AC unit for the E type recently on eBay and have been playing around with that.

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My E type originally came with AC but over the years one of the POs removed it. Andy



New roof rack with cargo!

Re: Roof top luggage rack for BGT – and new paint, from Kirk Prentiss:

If not now, then when?! It does work very well and was worth the risk. Cheers, Kirk

Threat! from Zelda Davis:

I want to thank you for faithfully sending me the newsletter every month. I enjoy the reading. Don't be surprised, once Covid is under control—we may drive up to one of your events! Zelda, Southern CA MG Club

MGB in Pick-Your-Part:

A 1973 MGB has arrived in the LKQ Pick-Your-Part Yard near LA. Section: SM. GHN5UD318600G. Rostyle Wheels. Looks complete. Orange with black interior. 13780 Imperial Hwy, Santa Fe Springs, CA



# President's Ponderings

## When does Thanksgiving end and Christmas start?

I hope that everyone had a great Thanksgiving and didn't over indulge too much and if you did, good for you. It seems that before we have time to recover we're into Christmas and the Holiday season. I remember that there was always a week or more between Thanksgiving and Christmas but not anymore, they just flow together. Although I have to admit that we've already bought our Christmas tree and done some shopping for me; and it wasn't car parts! And I'll be putting up the Christmas lights later today.

## Holiday Tea

I hope you can join us for The Holiday Tea that is once again at Elaine's charming Spanish Revival house at 115 Pinehurst Way, San Francisco. This is always a fun event and a great way to meet new members. I encourage all members especially new ones to show up. See the flyer for more details.

## Planning Meeting

Obviously due to Covid, events this year have been somewhat limited but we hope to get back on our normal schedule of events in 2022. We start off on Jan 8 with our very important Planning Meeting that is at Marcia's delightful house in Kensington at 150 Purdue Ave, Kensington. We need your help in planning drives, tours, places to visit, car shows and anything else you can think of. We especially need more events in the east and south bay. This meeting sets the calendar for the year so please help us out. If you can't attend but have some ideas please contact me directly; all suggestions are welcome. See the flyer for more details.

## Annual Brunch

Marla has already been busy and scheduled our signature Annual Champagne Brunch at Moss Beach Distillery for January 23. This is a fabulous venue overlooking the Pacific with wonderful food and free champagne. This year they are limiting seating to 40 people so sign up early; the club sponsors the lunch so cost is only \$30 for members and \$50 for non-members.

## Annual Dues are due

This is a great segue into my next topic that is 'Annual Dues.' Over the last 18 months the club has waived annual dues because we have been operating on a limited schedule of events, which we hope to change next year. We have kept the dues at \$25 but they are now due by the beginning of each year, so by Jan 1, 2022. You can send a check made out to MGOC to Steve Kellogg (Registrar), 4096 Sunset Lane, Pebble Beach, CA, 93953, or go you can pay by PayPal at the MGOC website [mgocsf.org](http://mgocsf.org) under 'Announcements'.

## Thanks to everyone

I'd like to thank everyone who has been involved in planning and organizing events over the last year and especially Dan Shockey and Steve Kellogg. Dan is our Editor and who has continued to publish one of the best club newsletters with limited input and materials. **Thank you Dan, Well**

**Done!** Steve is our Registrar and Webmaster and continues to operate behind the curtain like the Wizard of Oz doing a lot of work without much acknowledgement. **So Thank You Steve.**

I'd like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holiday Season and a Happy New Year and remember MGs love to be driven especially at Christmas.

**Andy**

## 2022 Officer Election

**President: Andy Preston, Incumbent**

**Vice-President: Kirk Prentiss, Incumbent**

**Treasurer: Marla Preston, Incumbent**

**Secretary: Mike Jacobsen, Incumbent**

Please clip & mail or email your vote to Mike Jacobsen

[MikesMuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:MikesMuseum@yahoo.com)

320 B Monterey Blvd., San Francisco, CA 94131-3141

# MG Midget – 60 Years Young!

By Dan Shockey

This Year of our Lord 2021 marks 60 years since the launch of the MG Midget in 1961. The club does not have as many owners of this model as I think we should. I think Midget owners sometimes feel neglected by MGA, MGB and T-type folks and have tended to club together with Sprite owners who have likewise been neglected by Big Healey clubs.

Mechanically the Midgets are more similar to the Mini as well. I am always surprised by how much smaller things are for these cars when I see parts at swap meet. Engine blocks, heads, bumpers, you name it, they all seem so small. It does seem something of a different world but one I want included.

Most of you know that the Midget grew from the Austin-Healey "Bug Eye" Mark I Sprite. (Known as "Frog Eye" in Britain.) The Sprite was originally to be built at the (former Austin) Longbridge factory but that was changed, apparently due to the success of the Mini and to over-capacity at Abingdon. This turned out to be fortunate both for the Sprite and for MG. The Mk. I Sprite was supposedly fully tested when the production came to Abingdon but fully-loaded testing of the early cars resulted in severe cracking and drooping of the rear of the car. MG engineers took the design in hand and strengthened the rear of the car. For the first time, an MG production line ran backwards as the first 200 or more cars had to be disassembled and strengthened.

MG had rather abandoned the true "Midget" size sports car when the TA replaced the PB in 1936. The T series cars were still called "Midgets" but were in fact a larger size vehicle. The MGA was never called a Midget, leaving room for a smaller, less expensive sports car.

Healey soon developed a "long front wing" design modification but planned to keep the original rear design with its lack of a trunk. This happened just as the new MGB design was completed by Don Hayter. Dennis Williams was able to essentially replicate that design scaled down for the new Sprite. At that time, Syd Enever convinced management that an MG version would be beneficial and that the Mk II Sprite would make a marvelous MG Midget. MG changed the rear suspension at that time to half-elliptic and extended the side members for that.

MG always charged more for the Midget than Austin did for the Sprite, even though there was little difference in car or cost. To many buyers, the MG name was worth the difference. The Midget did offer a nicer grille and chrome side and bonnet strips.



A quarter-scale model sits in the drawing office where the new Midget was developed



BMC Photos

# MG Midget

Despite the success of the MGA, sales fluctuated as the economy and competitive market changed, and MG had already considered the possibility of producing a less expensive sports car for the lower end of the market. This was done partly as a result of the success of the Sprite that was often advertised along with the MGA. There was still much of an Austin-Morris split within the BMC organization that was a disservice to MG and to BMC itself. MG thought that the Triumph TR2/3 became a success in North America primarily because production of the MGA was delayed for over 2 years by the 'Austin' men.

Let's look specifically at the new MG Midget in the 1961 motoring scene. A press release dated 30 June 1961 was entitled, "New Magic in a New Midget." The text began by stating that after a gap of 25 years (since the PB Midget), there was a new Midget with displacement of under 1000cc. The release went on to emphasize that the new Midget was well-finished and combined safety with speed, with good handling, light steering and a comfortable ride. The new car was within the means of the young or young-thinking person who wanted a good-looking fun sports car at a low price. Particularly in Britain the costs of owning a car increased considerably with engine size.

Road tests soon pointed out that the new Midget – like the Sprite – combined small size, sharp rack-and-pinion steering and a well-chosen set of gears in a smooth gearbox for a car capable of a high rate of speed over winding and narrow roads. Midgets came originally with narrow bias tires that would break away easily in a controlled manner. The Midget was seen thus a great first car for the budding racer.

The Mark I Midgets had side screens and a stow-away top. The seats were small and thin allowing room for large drivers. The doors held a lot of maps and stuff since they didn't have wind-up windows. The whole car was light and simple as a result. I worked with a man in the mid-70s (in Indiana) who loved the earlier more-basic Midgets. Like the MGA roadster, the early Midgets even lacked outside door handles.



BMC Photos



Midgets and Sprites were assembled on the same lines at Abingdon

Mk. I Midgets (and Mk. II Sprites) have drum brakes all around and rather limited power. For 1962, Midgets and Sprites received a larger engine (1098cc) and front disk brakes as the Midget began to "grow up." Later the Midget received a 1275cc engine and upgraded gearbox. It never got the super-hot engines offered in the Mini-Coopers and never got an overdrive gearbox like the Spitfire did. But a 1275 Midget is a quick and fun car, equally suited for zipping along country lanes and around city traffic. It is also easy to park in congested neighborhoods. The factory offered an attractive hardtop, the best looking was the earliest version, I think. Accessory firms offered hardtops as well including sloped roof versions that made the Midget a mini GT car.



Factory Hardtop

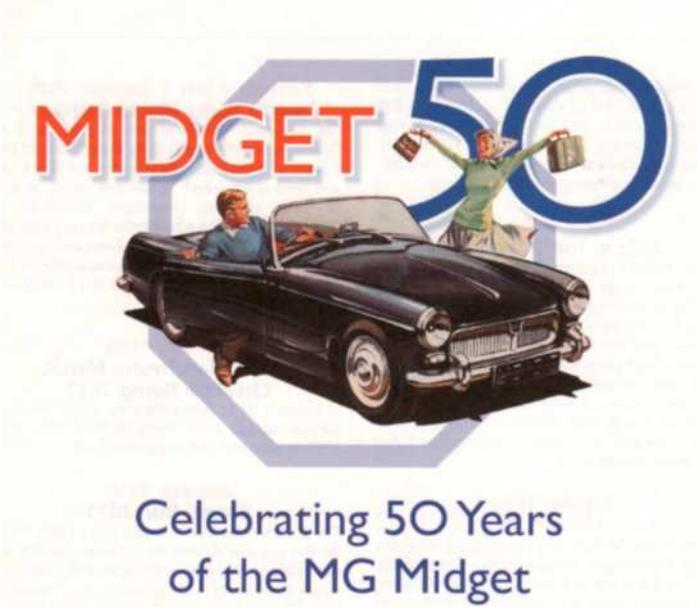
Special racing versions were created for the Sprite/Midget, often a more competitive car class-wise than the MGB. Some were extra lightweight or with streamlined bodies. Healey created a "Super Sprite" with a tuned engine but MG did not produce such a Midget. Some thought that the fastback 'coupes' would have made a nice production Midget. MG built the Sebring Sprites after all. But these were special alloy and plexiglass roofs held on with glue and rivets. A steel and glass version would have been top-heavy as well as a tight fit for many drivers.



A Dick Jacobs Midget

We have a few beautiful Midgets in the club. Unfortunately a great number have been scrapped, particularly the later rubber-nose versions with their problematic Spitfire 1500cc motors. The Bugeye Sprites have remained popular however. The Midgets are very small cars at a time when even the

larger sports cars are becoming uncomfortable for the aging sportscar enthusiast. But they take little room in the garage, are easy to tow (for convenience) and offer great fun. Consider adding one to your garage!

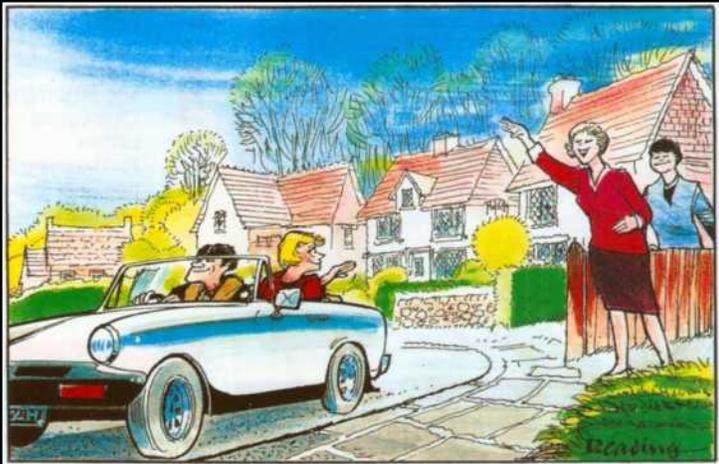


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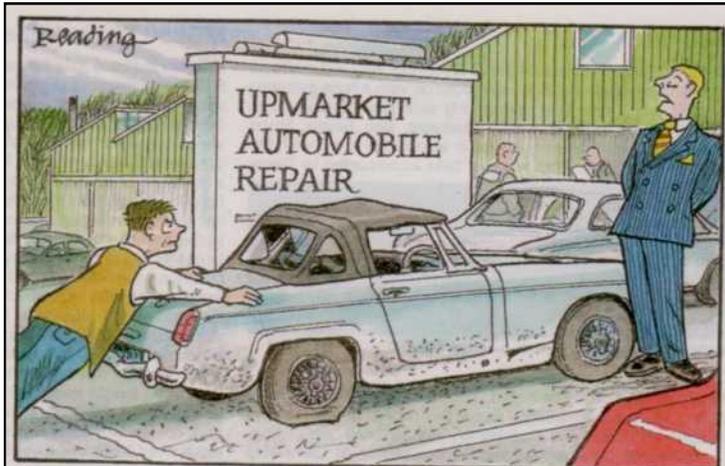
## The Midget Through Humour & Myth



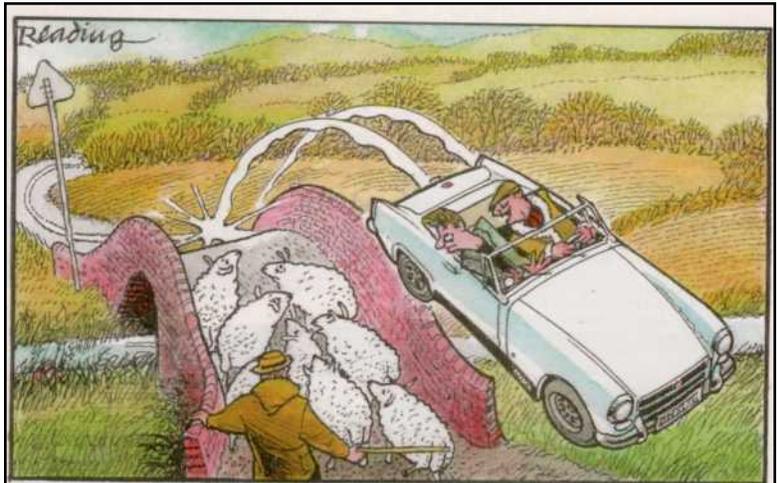
"NO I DON'T WORRY ABOUT HER, YOU CAN'T GET UP TO MUCH IN A MIDGET, AT LEAST MY HUSBAND COULDN'T"



"I'LL DO A BIT OF SHOPPING DAD, WHILE YOU'RE TRYING TO GET OUT"



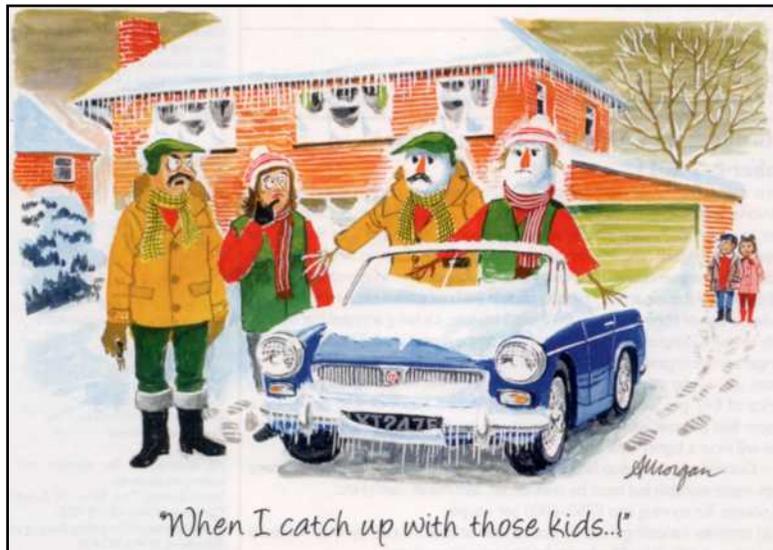
"I'M AFRAID ALL I KNOW ABOUT THIS MODEL ARE SOME RATHER UNKIND JOKES"



"REMEMBER, ONLY TRY THIS WITH ONE OF THE BIGGER ENGINED MIDGETS"



"THAT SPORTS EXHAUST WAS WELL WORTH THE MONEY, LISTEN TO THAT LOVELY DEEP RUMBLE"



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

# Welcome New Members!

## Clay Pace of El Cerrito with an MG TBD\*

I've never had an MG (my brother had a TR6 though) but I have thought it might be fun to have a Sprite or a Midget to putz around with. Looking forward to some shows when things open back up a bit. Thanks for the warm welcome. – Clay

\* Neither a TB with a TD motor, nor a TD with a B motor, but To Be Determined

## James Pierson of San Rafael with a 1953 MGTD

Great to connect! I grew up with a Huffaker built MGC in the family garage, which the adults were sufficiently afraid of as to never let us drive it. Sadly, that one got away. Recently, I came upon my one owner '53 TD which had been garaged since 1969. As my first T-series, I am excited to connect with a local community who might help revive this old survivor! - JP



Pierson TD

## Michael Wardley of Salinas with a 1953 MGTD, 1958 MGA and a 1979 MGB

... and 9 other really cool cars. "I have always had a passion for nice old motor cars. Of course, it has evolved into a weird fetish. The Jeep is probably the funniest, followed closely by the Alfa Romeo or MGA, but they all have a story, It's a story of paradise lost and paradise found. My wife Colleen said, 'You can have as many as you like, cars, not girlfriends.' I think she figured cars were a less troublesome and a safer bet." - Mike

p.s. – "Being a Brit, I know that nearside is the curb side and the offside is the middle of the road. I think people were confused by your newsletter."

Note: I am duty bound to point out, in very small print, that the purchase of one more old car may result in an ugly divorce, firearms incident or both...



TD named Rose



MGA named Ida



MGB named Ivy

**Annual Dues for 2022 are due by January 1**  
**Still only \$25**

Watch for the return mail envelope or go on-line to  
[MGOCSE.org](http://MGOCSE.org)

# An MG Christmas!



## "Through the Town"

BEN Card 2021  
by Kevin Walsh  
features M Type  
Midget

Below: In a  
period art style,  
the cover of  
**Sacred  
Octagon** from  
1988.  
Artist not  
identified.

Those are  
big dogs!  
- Mike J.



## Original Owner, 1962 MGA

From Don Scott: My friend Chris's 1962 1600 MK II. Owned by her since new in July 1962. Chris and her MGA were featured in the **San Francisco Chronicle** on January 6, 2017. Here is a slightly condensed version of the **Chronicle** article.

*Chrisula Asimos is a native San Franciscan who has lived in the Bay Area all of her life. She has worked as a psychologist with a focus on depression and suicidal states, spending many years in Psychiatric Emergency and working suicide and crisis intervention. She enjoys the sense of calm and well-being she feels while driving her classic cars on the open road. With the engine purring and the car powering across the hills, all is right with the world.*

When my father gave me a 1940s Dodge Coupe at age 16, he taught me the basic rules of owning a car — check the water and tire pressure regularly, have the oil changed every 2,000 miles and always put it in neutral at a stop. Following these basic rules has proved essential in maintaining my classic cars in their original condition for nearly six decades.

Having always dreamt of owning a red sports car, I bought a brand new MGA 1600 MKII in 1962. The car is red with black leather upholstery and a gray convertible top. The MGA has been raced extensively in the U.S. with considerable success. The car has appeared in movies, most famously with [Elvis Presley](#), who sings while sitting in a red 1960 MGA.

Continuing my love of British cars for their attractive design and racing potential, I bought a new Jaguar 3.8 MK II sedan in 1965. What a beauty, with soft curvy lines and that iconic chrome cat resting on the hood.

I remain the original owner and driver. An original car is something special, having not been restored or modified. For me, keeping a car original is a commitment to preserving the historical artistry and design. It hasn't always been easy to maintain that commitment.

I recall two events that could have drastically altered the original condition that I've worked so hard to maintain. A few years ago, I was planning to drive my MGA to Sacramento. I was in the car, ready to go, when I decided not to get stuck in traffic in the MGA. I went into the house and then I heard a big bang. When I looked into the garage again I saw my car rolling down the driveway and across the street, headed straight for the hillside ravine. I forgot to engage the parking brake! I almost lost the car, but fortunately, it got lodged in a big clump of oleander and no damage occurred.

Another time as I was driving home from Berkeley in my Jaguar, I came to an intersection and stopped. When I tried to shift into gear, the clutch gave out. Two young men helped me push the car out of the intersection, but we ended up on the railroad tracks. I called for roadside assistance, learning from the locals that a train was due in about 15 minutes. I informed AAA that a tow truck was needed ASAP, and thankfully, they came immediately. Barring any future near-disasters, I hope to continue driving my original classics for many years to come.



Photo: SF Chronicle



# Keep Planning for 2021

## WINTER



Sat., Dec. 11, MGOC Holiday Tea, Elaine and Mike, San Francisco

Sat., Jan. 8, 2022. Starts 10am, MGOC Planning Meeting, Marcia and George, Berkeley

Sun. Jan.23, 2022. MGOC Champagne Brunch, Moss Beach Distillery, see page 5

## SPRING-SUMMER



from Andy Preston

March 22, 2022: Clovis Brit Car Round Up

June 6-10, 2022. NAMGAR GT in Colorado Springs

June 19-23, 2022. NAMGBR MG2022 in Peterborough, Ontario, Toronto-Ottawa, Canada

GOF West will be in Buellton near Solvang. Think Split Pea Soup. Dates to be announced.

## A Good Deed in an MGA?

Hello! I am hoping that you can help me. My father turns 80 this next year on Jan 15th 2022. He has been sick for the past 15 years (part of the 1% that will have shingles / shingles pain forever) and it has greatly changed his quality of life. For his birthday a few family members are flying in and we are going to take him to lunch in Lafayette - which is about all his energy can handle. My parents live in Alamo, CA.

When he came back from Vietnam, he got an MGA and he has always talked about it. I am still trying to figure out the color and year but I think it was green. I've thought about trying to get him one over the years but as his health got worse it didn't seem like the right present. I was hoping to see if there was anyone that has an MGA that we could ask to take him for a short drive on that day. I of course would be happy to pay them or donate to a charity of their choice. I know it would bring a huge smile to his face which is what would mean the world to me.

Thank you for considering this or pointing me in the right direction for where to find the right option.

With gratitude,

Katie Marston Day, 760.207.1898, [kmarston@me.com](mailto:kmarston@me.com)

Anyone with ANY color MGA who can do this family a big favor?

# MG Success in Major Road Race, 1966

From *Safety Fast*, July, 1966

By Peter Browning, condensed by Dan Shockey

In 1966, the *Targa Florio* was the last of the great European road races. Run on regular roads along the north coast and mountains of Sicily, the race was probably the most punishing series of hairy road sections anywhere. Other than one 4-mile 'straight' (the coast road), the Targa is bend after bend after bend. The race in 1966 was 10 laps of a 45-mile course. The corners offer steep camber, rough-cobbled gutters and a very broken road surface.

For those geographically-challenged, Sicily is a very large island off the east coast of Italy. It was invaded by the Allies in WWII as a stepping-stone to the invasion of Italy. A large number of Americans have their roots in Sicily.

Practice for the race comes on the days leading up to the event. The roads are open for regular use and the local towns take the opportunity to do belated (and worse than useless) road repairs. Most the teams use rental cars for their practices. That must be rough for the local Hertz agent. For their route testing the British Motor Corp. team used an MGB that had just finished 12 hours at Sebring – along with a rental car.

The BMC team entered two MGBs and a very special A-H Sprite. The two MGBs ran in the GT category (tourers with hardtops), stock production cars – competing with race cars – except tuned to the standard factory stage six level. They had standard inlet and exhaust manifolds and 1.75" SU carbs, 10:8:1 compression and a full-race camshaft. They produced a modest 107hp. The Sprite was fitted with a fixed fastback hardtop and a hotted-up 1293cc motor that produced 109hp. The lightweight Sprite produced the 12<sup>th</sup> fastest practice lap of all 90 entries.

The MGB competed in the 2-liter GT class while the Sprite competed in the 2-liter sports prototype class. The MGBs were the only "same as you can buy" cars in the race, even with stock bumpers, and were driven to the event from England! The cars were entered without bumpers but the organizers decided both cars must have them. Fortunately BMC was able to borrow bumpers from two spectator MGBs. (No lightweight substitutes!)

BMC drivers came from two camps, Aaltonen and Makinen were Swedish rally drivers while Andrew Hedges and Clive Baker were circuit racers. John Rhodes and John Handley completed the team.

The 90 entrants were dispatched at 20 second intervals with the slowest cars first. The race became almost impossible to follow as a result. BMC was one of the few teams to have any idea of where their cars were placed during the race.

At the end of the first lap, the two MGBs held the lead in class over a Ferrari. After two more laps the MGBs had a 5-minute lead over their nearest competitor. Then the "daddy of all storms" stuck, washing mud and stones onto the circuit. The rally drivers had a great advantage in these conditions. Aaltonen in the Sprite actually passed a Ferrari 250 LM on one of the twisty downhill sections. However at some point he clouted a curb, bending the rear spring shackles to a horrible angle. A rear axle broke later as a result. Clive Baker, driving at the time, changed the rear axle in a highly-dangerous spot on the route, with minimal tools in 21 minutes.



Continued page 20



# MGOC Planning Meeting Saturday, January 8, 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 8, 2022, 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.

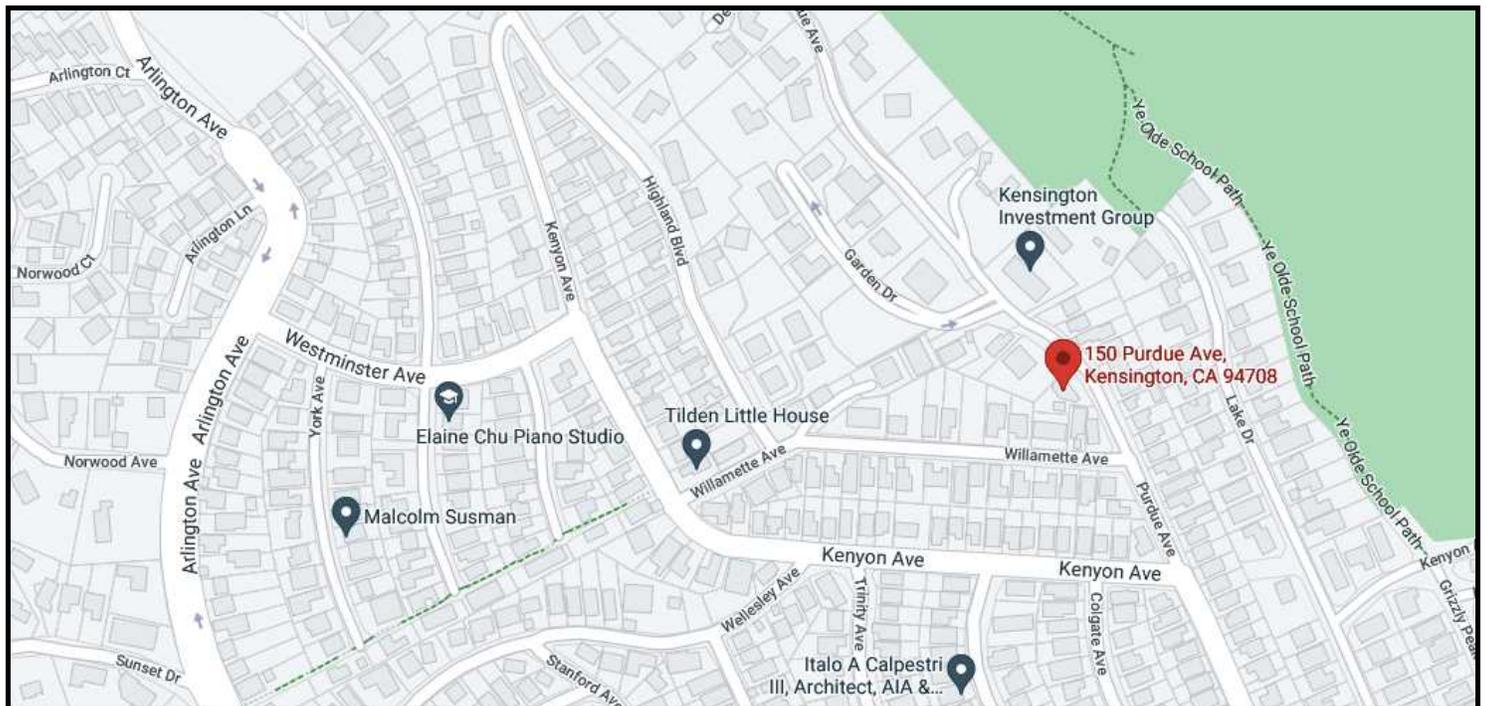
**Please RSVP** to Andy Preston 707-795-3480, [andypreston@att.net](mailto:andypreston@att.net)

**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



# Marin Tour: Mt. Tam to Rancho Nicasio

from Andy Preston

***It was a dark and cloudy night and the wind was blowing up a gale, and the captain said to the mate, "Spin us a yarn."***

Well it wasn't quite that bad but when we left Rohnert Park to drive down to Mill Valley for the start of the drive, it was dark and cloudy morning with ½ mile visibility. It was drizzling and the roads were wet. I thought this is going to be the worst tour ever. However as we approached Mill Valley the skies began to clear and the sun was breaking through; maybe it would be a nice day after all.

We had 15 cars and 26 people which I think is a perfect number. The most popular car was the MGB GT and we had As, Bs, TDs and even 2 Alfas, a BMW and a few moderns. Our fearless Editor Dan drove up from Garden Grove, Orange County to join us. Thanks for making the drive, Dan.

As we left the parking lot the skies cleared and the sun began to shine. The drive up the mountain was wonderful with rays of sunshine streaming through the trees and waterfalls cascading down the mountain side. There were signs of previous rockslides that had been cleared up. Everyone made it to the top without problems which just goes to show how reliable these little British Cars can be; which never ceases to amaze me. We were practically the only people in the enormous parking lot enjoying the wonderful views.

The drive down the mountain was even more spectacular with panoramic views of the redwoods on the mountain sides with the Pacific in the background. The final descent to Stinson Beach didn't disappoint either as we enjoyed the entire coastline directly in front of us. As I've said before you have to be really lucky with the weather on Mt. Tam and we were lucky.

Thanks to the recent rains the countryside was turning green again and made the drive to Rancho Nicasio a real pleasure as we drove through the rolling hills. The restaurant was expecting us and we sat in their large dining room at a long table. All the food had been pre-ordered and was served in a very short time and delicious. The staff couldn't have been more pleasant. It's always risky organizing a drive in November but when the weather is great it's wonderful to just get out there; so thanks to everyone who made the effort to join us. Until the next time!

Photo: Barbara Tapp





Photo: Naomi Rayman



Photo: Barbara Tapp

Photo: Dan Shockey



Photo: Andy Preston



Photo: Barbara Tapp



Near the end, the Lancia, overall GT category leader, holed its fuel tank and was passed by both MGBs. However the leading Porsche won the race ahead of the Lancia on the course – but behind the MGB - so that the Lancia was credited with a class 2<sup>nd</sup> place (11<sup>th</sup> overall) – completing the race sooner. The 2<sup>nd</sup>-place MGB, in front of the Porsche onto the next lap, was credited in 16<sup>th</sup> place despite a 54mph average compared to the Lancia's 52mph. Ludicrous, of course.

But the BMC team was satisfied with the results, 1<sup>st</sup> overall for the entire GT category, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> places in the 2-liter GT class, and 9<sup>th</sup> overall for the leading MGB. Despite its axle change, the Sprite finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in class behind much-larger Porsche and Ferrari race cars, and 20<sup>th</sup> overall.

Even with the atrocious storm, the winning MGB averaged 56mph for the race, beating the 1961 (5 year earlier) winning time and posting a faster time than the Ferrari, Mercedes and Maserati racers of the Collins-Hawthorn-Fangio era (1950s).

They did do it in an MG! In this grueling race, the MGBs outperformed and outlasted in the GT class a Ford GT40, a Porsche 911, a Dino Ferrari, a GTO Ferrari and a 250 LM Ferrari.

Stand tall. Your humble MGB and Midget/Sprite have winning racing pedigrees in the toughest European races.



## Classified Ads

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

**1949 MG TC:** 5-speed; New tires and wheels; VW steering box, Original parts & spares; owned for 50 years. \$19,000. Member Jeff Stobbe, (831) 475-6233 or [cjstobbe@live.com](mailto:cjstobbe@live.com) (Posted 11/21)

**Estate MGBs:** 1973 MGB/GT and 1974 MGB Tourer. Rough, non-running condition. Have titles and keys. In Hayward. Pam Delaney 425-346-1828 (Posted 12/21)

**MG TA Tickford:** Member Bill Hiland is selling his very special coach-built MG. Fewer than 40 are believed to still exist. Finished in the 'Cream Crackers' paint scheme, the MG is in excellent condition. In Morgan Hill. \$75k. (409) 314-2675, [bill.otrc@gmail.com](mailto:bill.otrc@gmail.com) (Posted 10/21)

**MGA Parts:** As a service to members, I am passing along a source of MGA parts, including gearboxes, engine, radiators, rear end, disk wheels, fenders, door, removable hardtop, axles, hubs, and a new short tonneau. In Modesto. From flier at Dixon. 209-765-8989 (posted 10/21)

**MG TD for sale:** 32,000 original miles with new paint and interior. It's red. Purchased new by Carole's uncle who let Carole drive it to University. It's a Vancouver, BC, car. Rear end pumpkin was switched which allows you to go 65mph easily. We drove it 1000 miles recently with no problems. Member Walter, (408) 768-0214 (Posted 08/21)

**TD Luggage Rack** Great shape! Member Marty Rayman, 415-250-6299 (Posted 10/21)

**Enclosed Trailer for Rent:** Enclosed car trailer for rent (16' x 8'). Trailer has integrated braking system and lights, 12 volt Electric Winch. Reasonable rates. 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 [MGOCSE.org](http://MGOCSE.org)**



Photos: Barbara Tapp

Below: Marla settles up by Marty Rayman



**Register Your MGA With NAMGAR!**



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 [registrar@namgar.com](mailto:registrar@namgar.com).




**North American MGB Register**



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



## On the Streets of San Francisco

From Member Don Scott:  
I didn't see those bands. Saw  
others like Jefferson Airplane,  
The Animals, Big Brother and  
the Holding Company.



On Mt. Tam on the Marin Tour. Photo: Amy Prentiss

