



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 lovely morning in Buellton



Dan Shockey and his
PA at GOF car show
by Andy Preston

July 2022

Don't Forget!
MGs by the Bay
July 16

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.

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CLUB ADVISOR PROGRAM

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

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COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING IN *THE OCTAGON*

Direct all questions about advertising to **Mike Jacobsen** at 415-333-9699 or 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. 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.

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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The 28th Annual

MGs by the Bay

Saturday, July 16, 2021

BON AIR, Greenbrae

BON AIR

GREENBRAE

EST. 1952



401 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.

Registration: \$25 by July 1, \$30 at the gate

Time: Entry opens at 8:30am, Show starts at 10am

Popular Vote Awards Presented at 1:30pm

Event T-shirts: Order in advance

Free entry and parking for spectators

See registration form at www.MGOCSF.org

Photo: Kirk Prentiss

From the Editor

Happy July 4th, Fellow Americans,

4 July 2022

The newsletter is done except for my column. (That guy is always late!) I sip my coffee reflecting on the **Gathering of the Faithful** last week. It was either too hot or too cold, some events a bit disorganized, and the Motel 6 room was very crowded with three of us guys sharing it. But we had a great time with many fun memories.

This was the 50th **GOF West** event and its age is showing. Most of the original organizers are gone, the numbers are way down, and it is hard to find folks to take it on. They do not plan to hold the event next year but have a group signed up for 2022. It felt to me like the end of an era. However there were many first-time attenders and many younger folks.

I was surprised to win the small pre-war (WWII) class. They put Eric Baker and his beautiful PB in the Premier class since he had won the class within the past 3 years. The other two cars were TAs. One had a flathead Ford V8-60. Bill Traill rode with me on the challenging Rallye (we came 6th) and Marcia Crawford rode shotgun for the round-up funkhana. Yippie yi yi yo!

A couple active in the Vintage MG club here had a garage fire that totaled their Chevy Nomad and her mother's TD. However they bought back the TD which still



Dan hanging out with his first car, a very sporty baby-blue single-seater. I couldn't decide between wire and disk wheels even then.

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APR09

runs. I have been helping them get the TD restored. My brother-in-law painted it for them. Dash, instruments, interior, top, etc., still need replaced. Be sure you have a generous amount of insurance on your baby with a company with a good reputation.

I hope to see you soon.

Dan



Marcia ropes 'em!



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Black Star Pirate BBQ Run

Saturday, August 27, 2022

Meet at 9:45am

As Lou Reed said, "Do you want to take a walk on the wild side?"

Disclaimers:

- Road contains many speed bumps and pot holes
- Drive is a narrow lane
- You park on a dirt and/or gravel parking lot
- Limited bathroom facilities – only one toilet
- Limited shade, you could sit in hot sun
- No reservations – High risk of long lines

What you can also expect:

- Funky bohemian atmosphere
- There's a reason why you have long lines, the BBQ food is amazing
- Often have live music in the afternoons
- See a unique part of the Bay

<https://www.blackstarpig.com/>

Who is in for MG car optional road trip?

This tour will happen with one or many. RSVP is encouraged, but not required.

Meet at Keller Beach Park, Point Richmond at 9:45 am with 10:15 am Point Richmond Tour start. We plan to end at 11:00 am lunch at Black Star. Stay as short or as long as you like.

RSVP & Questions: If you have any questions, please call John Hunt cell: 925-330-7849 or e-mail me at:

huntsails@comcast.net



★ BLACK STAR PIRATE BBQ ★



Marin MG Tour & Cricket Match

Sunday, September 25

- Marin historical driving tour (Discover new fun facts about Marin)
- Gourmet deli lunch pick up at Woodlands Market
- Enjoy afternoon picnic & cricket match in Piper Park in Larkspur

Meet: 9:15am at Mill Valley Safeway (across from Mill Valley High) Starbucks in shopping center; 1 Camino Alto. Depart 9:45am!

Tour Leader: John Hunt, call 925-330-7849 or e-mail at: huntsails@comcast.net

More Info: See next issue for all the particulars

Join us for a Marin food, history and British

sporting adventure



Many prints and jigsaw puzzles are available with art by Kevin Walsh. We encourage you to support his work.

BMW i3 Radials on an MG TC! - Update

MGOC member Steve Lilves decided to try these. How often does a new radial tire appear that will fit a tall narrow (2.5") wheel? Steve Simmons of LA has considered them but feels they are a wee bit smaller than the normal TC bias tires and don't look 'right.' Form vs function? The BMW guys complain about short life of these tires on their cars, only about 20,000 miles, but they would last longer on an MG, I think.

"I have them all mounted, but I'm trying to do the brakes, so I haven't driven on them yet." - Steve Lilves (See **The Octagon**, March 2022)



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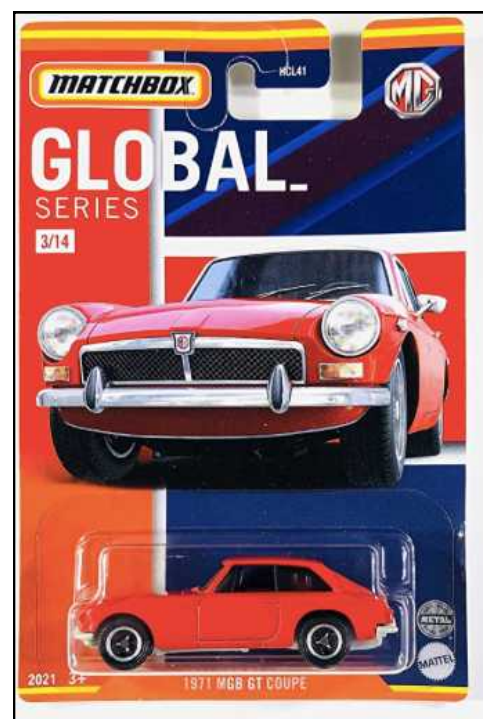
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Lilves photos

**New Matchbox MGB
now available:
(Try Amazon)**





President's Ponderings

We Need More Cars

Yes, we need more cars for **MGs by the Bay**. So if you've been thinking about it and haven't yet decided, PLEASE join us. If it's not running put it on a trailer. We want to see YOU and your car. You'll find lots of fellow MG enthusiast who are eager to help you solve any problems you might have with your car. So this is a good place to talk to people and get whatever help you need. There will be MGs from Pre-war to late 70s on display. So it's now time to get your treasured MG out of the garage and on the road.



GOF West 2022 (Gathering of the Faithful)

Many of us drove down at the end of June for **GOF West** 2022 to Buellton and had a wonderful time over the 4 day event. In fact between MGOC and SSTS there were around 30 of us maybe more. Marla and I just drove back yesterday (July 1) so like many of the others are a little tired but that's OK. There'll be a larger write up on the event in next month's newsletter. But I must congratulate Dan for taking First Place in the **Pre-War class** at the car show in his **1935 MG PA**. Well done, Dan.

Annual Picnic

Remember that our Annual Picnic is coming up shortly after the car show. It's on August 8 at Tilden Park and we have reserved a private picnic area for the club. This is always a fun event so I encourage everyone to attend. It's also one month prior to George Steneberg's 90th Birthday so we'll be celebrating that as well. BTW, George has been a member of the club for the longest time and joined shortly after the club was formed in 1957! George also has a car that was built in the same year as he was born, a 1932 MG J2. Way to go George!

Hope to see you at the car show,

Andy



Reflections from Joe's Celebration of Life

On Joe Huffaker, Sr., by MGOC member John Hunt

A great car builder and more importantly a fine gentleman and family man. Besides leaving behind many great cars, victories, good times and memories, he also helped make the world a better place. Understated and modest, he struck me as a person who like his actions to speak for his values and character.

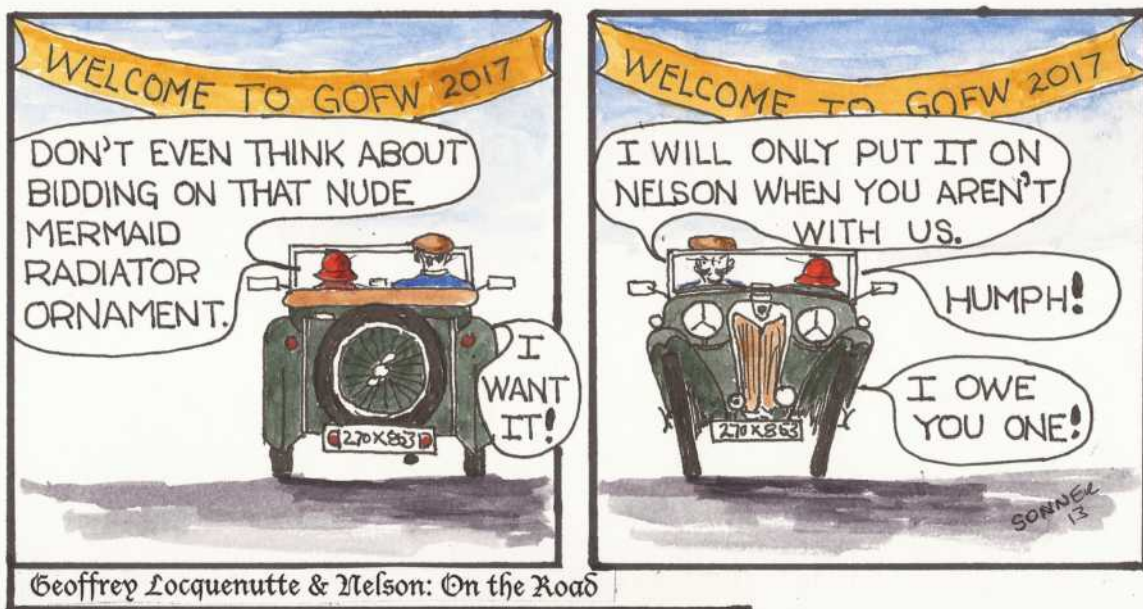
Several themes emerged from his celebration of life at this speed shop at Sears Point. Do the best you can whatever you are doing. Do it right and don't rush. Reminds me of great UCLA coach John Wooden's motto, make each day a masterpiece. Joe created a learning environment in his shop, where it was okay to make a mistake, learn from it and move on; don't dwell on it. Because of this, a number of young people got their start in motor sport and life. One person told a story how Joe put him in charge of building a Jensen Healey race car at a young age and how that trust and success gave him self-confidence in everything he did in life moving forward from college, family and career. In short, he was a mentor to many.

Another theme was Joe the family man. He never took his work home. What happened at the shop stayed at the shop. In other words, he was there for his family by focusing on them and helping them have a good time.

In terms of cars, there are many we can review. Here are a few highlights. One was the Genie. In early 1960s, this car had a very impressive power to weight ratio; it could go zero-to-sixty in four seconds. A stock MGB takes 12 seconds. I believe the Genie was even faster than Ferraris of the day.

In a very simplified summary, to win racing you must have two things, an excellent and well-prepared car and a great driver. Lack one of them and you can't win. You can see this watching F1 today. Joe and his team, along with driver Terry Visger's MGB race car, number 11, were national SCCA champions three years in a row: 1975, 1976 and 1977. This driver and car also held a lap record that stood for years at Road Atlanta in Georgia.

He was one cool gentleman! May his legacy in life and cars inspire us.



Come Back to the Beach in an MG!

Tres Tiempo!



Friday - Sunday
October 14 - 16, 2022

They say that once Labor Day is over and all the tourists have gone, the Monterey Peninsula's weather is glorious. So make it a weekend trip to the home of the AT&T Golf Pro Am, Pebble Beach Concours d' Elegance, Laguna Seca, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Cannery Row, Carmel by the Sea, Monterey Jazz Festival and the home of your hosts, Steve and Vicky Kellogg.

Our Weekend will start Friday evening at the Crown and Anchor British Pub in downtown Monterey.

The following morning, We will take a leisurely tour on the 1.7 Mile Drive, Cruise on Scenic Drive in Carmel and stop at the Starbucks at the Crossroads in Carmel for an extra jolt or Bio Break.

We then head south on Highway One to Big Sur and its iconic views and sites of the coast. You'll have a lunch at Big Sur Restaurant of your choice. You can then head back up the coast at your leisure as the afternoon itinerary is up to you.

In the evening, Vicky and I would like to invite you to our house for a Central Coast themed Dinner where we'll regale the days' events.

On Sunday, you're be on you r way back home.



The Sea Breeze Inn
There are 16 rooms reserved at the Inn.

- 3 x Standard Queen Rooms (\$161.20/per night)
- 3 x Standard Queen Cottages (\$163.63/per night)
- 3 x Standard Queen Deluxes w/kitchenette + fireplace (\$183.20/per night)
- 3 x Standard Double Queen Rooms (\$183.20/per night)
- 1 x Deluxe Upstairs King w/kitchenette + fireplace (\$199.20/per night)
- 2 x Deluxe Two Queen Cottages w/kitchenette + fireplace (\$199.20/per night)

Make your reservations before October 1st to insure you get the above rate.

Where is the Inn?

1100 Lighthouse Avenue
Pacific Grove, CA 93950

831-372-7771

Refer to MGOC/Sorry Safari when making your reservation.



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<http://crownandanchor.net>

Please RSVP to:

Steve and Vicky Kellogg

Call 408-355-4125

Or

e-mail: stkellogg@verizon.net

MGOC (Zoom) Meeting at 5:00 pm, Mon. Jun 13, 2022

MINUTES - Submitted by: Mike Jacobsen

Call to Order: Andy Preston at: 5:10pm

Attending: Elaine Chan, Marcia Crawford, John Hunt, Mike Jacobsen, Steve Kellogg, Mark McGothigan, Kirk Prentiss, Andy & Marla Preston, George Steneberg

Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings:

March 5, 2022: Approved

REPORTS

President's Report: Opening remarks. Main topic is MGsbTB.

Vice President's Report: Kirk Prentiss: Nice to be seen.

Treasurer's Report: Marla Preston:

Account	June 13, 2022	March 5, 2022
Checking	11,354.27	12,319.16
Savings	9,896.84	9,821.59
Total	21,251.11	22,140.75

Since our last Treasurer's report we have had a few new memberships and have paid for the MGs by the Bay awards.

Secretary's Report: Mike Jacobsen: Report on GT-47 – It was well-attended, a nice drive out & back on US 50, and everyone seemed to have a great time.

Registrar's Report: Steve Kellogg:

165	Number of Regular Members
40	Number of Regular Family Members
205	Total Regular and Family Members
8	Number of Corresponding Members
5	Number of Corresponding Family Members
13	Total Corresponding and Family Members
218	Total Membership

Corresponding Secretary's Report: George Steneberg: His was the only car at Bon Air 70th due to a car show in San Rafael at the same time.

Members at Large Reports: Mark McGothigan, John Hunt, George Steneburg.

- Mark: Working on outlier events for later this year.
- John: T-shirts won't have prices until the order is in. The vendor is a middleman. He doesn't print the shirts.
- George: Sold his Magnette.

Regalia Report: Andy Preston: NTR

The Octagon Report: Dan Shockey: I have chosen to follow existing formats rather than innovate. Familiarity has value for club continuity. With on-line reading, I don't feel that format matters very much. But I would appreciate input from others on form and content. Does it meet your needs? Does it inspire? Thanks.

Website Report: Steve Kellogg: Mike isn't getting the MGsbTBay registrations.

PAST EVENTS: Corinthian Yacht Club by Bob Bundy

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 27 - July 1 GOF West, Buellton. 50th Anniversary. (2023 may be in Stockton)

July 15, 10:00am Envelope stuffing MGsbTB, George's Pub, 9 Pomona Ave

July 16 MGs by the Bay, Bon Air, Greenbrae

Aug 6 Annual Picnic Tilden Park, George and Marcia

Aug 16-21 Monterey Car Week

Sept 27 Marin drive and cricket match, John Hunt

Oct 1 Sonoma Raceway CSRG w/MG corral??

Oct 14-16 Back to the Beach, Steve and Vicky

Nov Sonoma Tour, Andy and Marla

OLD BUSINESS

MGs by the Bay: See attached Outline.

- George & Marcia have to leave early. What to do about the show supplies?
- Mike to send out reminders to past attendees.
- Mike to ask Sacramento United British about sending MGsbyBay info to their mailing list.
- Mark will bring the music – British rock-n-roll.
- George requested that the club find a new home for the club items he's been storing.
- Mike to send an update on registrations after he picks up his mail.
- Mike to ask Lynn Bryant where Ken is now and what size tee Ken would wear.

NEW BUSINESS

BUSINESS RESOLVED ONLINE SINCE LAST MEETING: None

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Ken Gittings is not doing well.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, July 5, 5pm

Meeting adjourned at: 6:12



MG K3 Magnette Children's Car, ca. 1930's



GENE PONDER COLLECTION

Gene Ponder Auction – Sotheby's, Sept. 22-24

Tucked away on the outskirts of the East Texas city of Marshall is a gearhead's oasis: A series of state-of-the-art shop and garage buildings dotted across a manicured estate. Housed within is the Gene Ponder Collection, an eclectic assemblage of 140 cars, motorcycles, and boats, as well an enviable and expansive selection of automobilia. Ponder—a serial entrepreneur—built and sold not one, but two highly successful Marshall-based commercial cabinetry manufacturers, allowing him to indulge in his lifelong passion for exciting automobiles.

Also on offer is an impressive survey of MGs spanning 1927 to 1971—with rarities such as a 1935 MG PB Airline Coupe taking center stage. Automobilia lots range from mascots to classic signage, juke boxes to fuel pumps, neons to wall art, and much, much more. No matter your interest, there is truly something for everyone to discover in the Gene Ponder Collection.

Gene had three MGs when he and Patsy married 26 years ago, and their first home had a garage that held only six cars, but that soon changed. He built another garage with two more stalls, and then remodeled the garage to double the size. Before long they had to relocate most of his vehicles, which at that time amounted to the largest MG collection in the world, to a separate car museum in town. "We have always had a car inside our house, usually in Gene's office," Patsy said. "He had double French doors installed in his office so he could change the car whenever he wanted to 're-decorate.'"

Note the Moss TD pickup and the Al Moss TC! Fun to look at all the cars: <https://rmsothebys.com/en/auctions/gp22>

Cheap Trix

Paul Rollins

Portland Triumph Owner's Association

Low-cost sound insulation.

Well-known sound insulation products like Dynamat® reduce sound intrusion by dampening the vibration of the panels. These products also serve as a direct barrier to heat and noise via their physical characteristics. Their essential structure is a thin, dense sheet of rubbery or bituminous material, with an adhesive coating. Often this has an aluminized or vinyl top surface. They do a good job, but they ain't cheap.

I have had good experience with an alternative material made for roofing repair. One of the brands is U.Seal Instant Waterproof Repair Tape (there are other, similar products). The composition looks a lot like the expensive, auto-specific products, but the price was a lot lower—about \$1 - 2 per square foot. <https://www.homedepot.com/p/USEAL-USA-Band-6-in-Aluminum-Foil-Self-Adhesive-Repair-Tape-8872AF6/202086180>

Because it comes in a 6" x 25 foot roll, it is, for me, a lot more practical to install, with less waste. I have used it on floors, firewalls, side panels, in the doors, and even on the fiberboard

panel in front of the Spitfire fuel tank. It really sticks well on clean surfaces when pressed down firmly. A seam roller for vinyl-floor installation or similar tool works well here.

Think ahead, save time and trouble. Time is money, and a lot of time can be wasted wrestling with stuck bolts and nuts. Before reassembling a component, I think about when it will need to be removed next time. In particular, I think about the fasteners being rusted stuck. Now is the time to apply a bit of anti-seize. <https://permatex.com/product-category/lubricants/anti-seize-lubricants/> is one of several compounds readily available. This protects threaded fasteners from rusting together. As I reassemble a car, most bolts and nuts get this protection. It is a cheap investment in saving time and aggravation in the future. I do not use it on safety-critical fasteners, like lug bolts or nuts, brake calipers, and the like. On spark plugs I use a copper-based anti-seize, which is even more important to me on aluminum heads.

Member Notes

Update from Dick McClure:

In a weak moment, I sold my Airline Coupe to Wayne Carini, who bought it for his daughter Kimmy, who is autistic. She loves the car. I still have my TD, the 1955 MG Special that raced at Pebble Beach, and the 1955 ZA Magnette. My favorite is the ZA!

Dixon from Tom Doyle:

To recap, there were 4 MGCs in attendance at the Dixon show, 2 of which were from the UBSCC. Other than Gettysburg, PA, in 2018 this was the most MGCs I have seen in one place and the most I have seen with California plates. But the most important thing is that I am happy my MGC is running great and made the trip with no issues. Even got 24mpg on the way up the hill.

I went yard sailing this weekend and bought a book of classic car advertisements and encountered one for a 1964 MGB. I thought since the MGB is celebrating its 70 anniversary your readership would enjoy this. It a little "Bond" but it still is quite amusing. (See page 21.)

Update from Mindy:

I'm still working a ton. We announced our pending SPAC / IPO transaction a couple of weeks ago. I'm not sure I'll be able to make **MGs by the Bay** this year.... expect to be dealing with the SEC to finalize our public company transaction this summer. It's a long process.

From Jennifer O.:

Great story on Pat Moss. I had registered for the GT in Colorado Springs. Unfortunately I concluded it was going to be too expensive, with the gas, the hotels, and the meals. In the end, I think only 3 cars convoyed from BC. I was feeling so sad about missing the GT that I considered flying to Colorado Springs.

Driving in Kilts from Dan Shockey:

I was thinking the kilts might be cool to drive in - though they are likely wool. (Photo at right.)

Perspective from Kirk Prentiss:

If you are going traditional, then summer weight wool is actually quite pleasant. Or a PV kilt is also cool. Both allow for expanded ventilation so your kilted-drive should be exceptional!



Trip plans from Jim Carlson:

We are planning on driving the TD to the **GOF** on Monday. My son is visiting from New Zealand and is also going to attend so I will have an extra driver.

Pics from Bob Bartley:

Here's a couple of pics of our '52 TD.

Thanks again for the lead on the MGA rear end swap, I'll contact the guy as soon as I have the extra \$\$.



Help Celebrate George's 90th Birthday!



MGOC Annual Picnic Saturday, August 6, 2022



11:30am-12:00pm: Club Meeting

12:00 -2:00pm: Picnic

Tilden Park in the Berkeley Hills, the Padre Picnic Area

The park is reached via Canon Drive, Shasta Road, or South Park Drive, all off Grizzly Peak Boulevard in Berkeley.

Come enjoy a day in a lovely park with old and new friends who share a love of MGs. Bring a picnic lunch or your favorite meats for grilling. George will fire up the BBQ*. MGOC will supply charcoal, ice, drinks and cups. * If the park permits fires this year



Mike Jacobsen's GT Adventures:

Friday, June 3:

The GT starts on Monday. I'm out early to visit family & friends. In Grand Junction tonight.

Saturday, June 4:

I'm in Denver now. We got across in three days, as planned. Only one mechanical issue: the Twin Cam shorted out its points. Turned out that the insulating washer around the points spring post had cracked. It was hard to find and hard to fix. If you have a pushrod motor, no problem to change the points & insulator. If you have a twin cam motor, you can only reach the distributor through a small access panel in the left front wheel well. Pretty awkward, but Scott, the owner, managed it.

My favorite shot from yesterday's drive: Yeah, the other two cars had bimini tops. That's all the weather gear the green 1600 brought, so he better hope for no rain.

This is Scott working on his Twin Cam distributor. Yes, he has his hand on it behind the tire!



The Twin Cam photo is slightly edited.





Keep Planning for 2022

SUMMER

Influence them early! This "Lindy Cap" - as my father calls them - is just the thing for an aspiring sports car driver.



Sat., July 16: MGs by the Bay, Bon Air, Greenbrae
July 28-31, Club T MG Rendezvous, Florence, OR,
madownsilver@gmail.com

Sat., Aug. 6: MGOc Annual Picnic, Marcia & George
Sat., Aug. 27: Black Star Pirate BBQ Run, John Hunt

FALL

Sept. 3-4, Highland Games, Pleasanton, MG display, Kirk Prentiss

Sun., Sept. 25: Caravan to cricket match, John Hunt
Oct. 1, CRSg Vintage Races, Celebrating MGB 60th anniversary, Club corral & track lap

Oct. 14-16: Back to the Beach, Carmel, Vicky & Steve Kellogg

1952 MGTD \$19,000

My wife and I have driven the car around the western U.S. and greatly enjoyed it. The car has electronic ignition, LED rear lights, turn signals, emergency flashers, seat belts, an Al Moss rear crankshaft seal, an MGA ring and pinion, and a second fuel pump. The car has not been driven extensively for the last 3 years due to my and my wife's age.

The car is in Klamath Falls, OR. I am asking \$19,000, but will consider offers. I can be reached at 541-882-4488, ask for Bill, or atwvanmoo@gmail.com.



Have an unused cigarette lighter in your dash? I spotted this on Amazon. I think it would work for your 12V power outlet as well. - Dan



In keeping with the James Bond theme

Le Mans MG Success, 1960

By Dan Shockey, Taken from **Safety Fast**, August, 1960

*In June, many turn their hearts toward romance but sports car fans turn their attention to the great 24 Heures du Mans race in France. (Also a great romance?) MGs have often been entered at this race but with minimal success in the overall standings. It had already been long since a production road car could compete with the pure racing models in this race. Even meeting minimum speed requirements were often a challenge, requiring special bodywork and even an occasional 'drag' along the long straightaways. (See **The Octagon**, August, 2020, and April, 2021. MG's closest chance at an overall win at Le Mans came with the K3 in 1934. The 1100cc MG of Baumer and Ford was in 2nd place behind an ailing Alfa Romeo when it was struck by another racer. Martin and Eccles came in 4th overall in that race in another K3.)*

From Safety Fast:

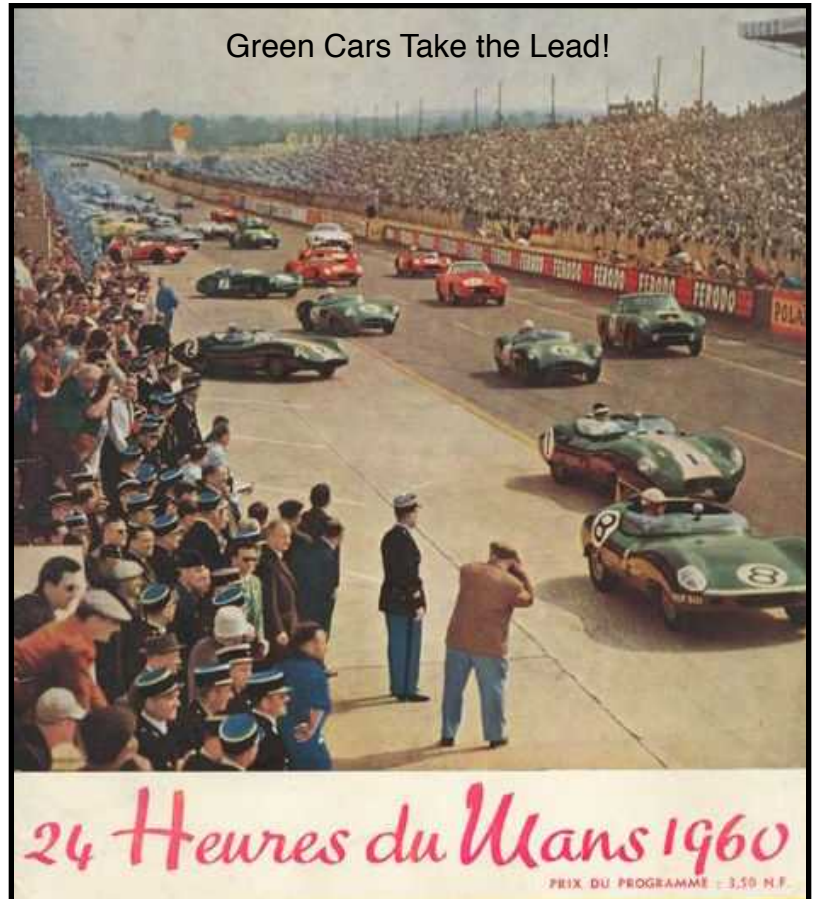
In 1960 one MGA Twin Cam was entered for the French classic. The MG won its class at 91mph and finished in twelfth place, the third British car in the order. Also of interest to MG fans was the Sprite that finished first in its class. This "MG Midget prototype" ran with unusual sports racing type bodywork. This is the story worth telling of how these two entries became class victors.

This was the MGA Twin Cam's second appearance at the Le Mans race in the hands of Ted Lund and Colin Escott. They drove it well for 19 hours in 1959 before a collision with a large dog put it out of the running. (*The MGA – sans hardtop that year – had been in 8th place overall at the time with a strong prospect of moving into 7th. We were denied a fantastic finish by a dog loose on the circuit!*) The car, owned by Ted, is a standard 1959 MGA Twin Cam chassis fitted with a 4.1:1 rear axle, close ratio gearbox and a 20-gallon fuel tank. The engine was bored out from the standard 1588cc to 1762cc. This put the car into the same class with the 2-liter (2000cc) Triumphs (TR4 prototypes), AC Bristols, an Osca and several Porsches. The compression ratio was 9.9:1 and 2" SU carbs were employed.

The body could be described as a collection of oddments. Lund obtained one of the aluminum bodies used at Le Mans in 1955 but it was so battered he had to replace the front wings (fenders) with standard steel ones. He modified a standard MGA Coupe top by extending the rear portion down the tail, and fitted standard coupe doors, replacing the glass windows with Perspex. The result of all this was not perfectly light, but it was sturdy and reasonably efficient aerodynamically.

The Sprite (Midget prototype), too, was an odd mixture. Back in 1959 Donald Healey had taken a standard Sprite chassis from Abingdon and reworked it for the Nassau Speed Week in the Bahamas, where it gained a class win. This car was subsequently driven at Sebring in March of 1960, when John Sprinzel won its class in the 12-hour race. Chassis modifications included fitting wire wheels and disk brakes all round, a close-ratio gearbox and a high ratio rear end. The engine was bored out from 948cc to 996cc with flat-top pistons gave a compression ratio of 10.5:1. (Us gear-heads love to read the specs!)

The body of the Sprite started life as a "Falcon" fiberglass shell, as sold in Britain for fitting to homemade specials. It had also acquired a crash (roll) bar, a large glass windscreen and other modifications to comply with Le Mans regulations. Very little of the original Sprite remained. The body was on the heavy side and not even particularly aerodynamic but there was a reason for its use. The typically over-complex French regulations forbid the entry of GT cars under 1000cc. For the Sprite to run at all, it had to be made quite clear that it was entered in the Sports category. It seemed like unjustified temerity to pit such a shape



against the sleek Panhard racers in the same class.

These, then, were the cars: both obtained from the Abingdon works as standard chassis, modified to no great extent, their engines bored out, and fitted with bodywork that would have won no prizes for elegance. But they did what they were intended to do – complied with the strict and complex regulations for Le Mans. So to the story of the race itself...

The MG Team

The MG team was presided over by Major Arnold Pownall, chairman of the MG Car Club NW Centre, and his helpers were all private individuals whose services were given voluntarily and enthusiastically.

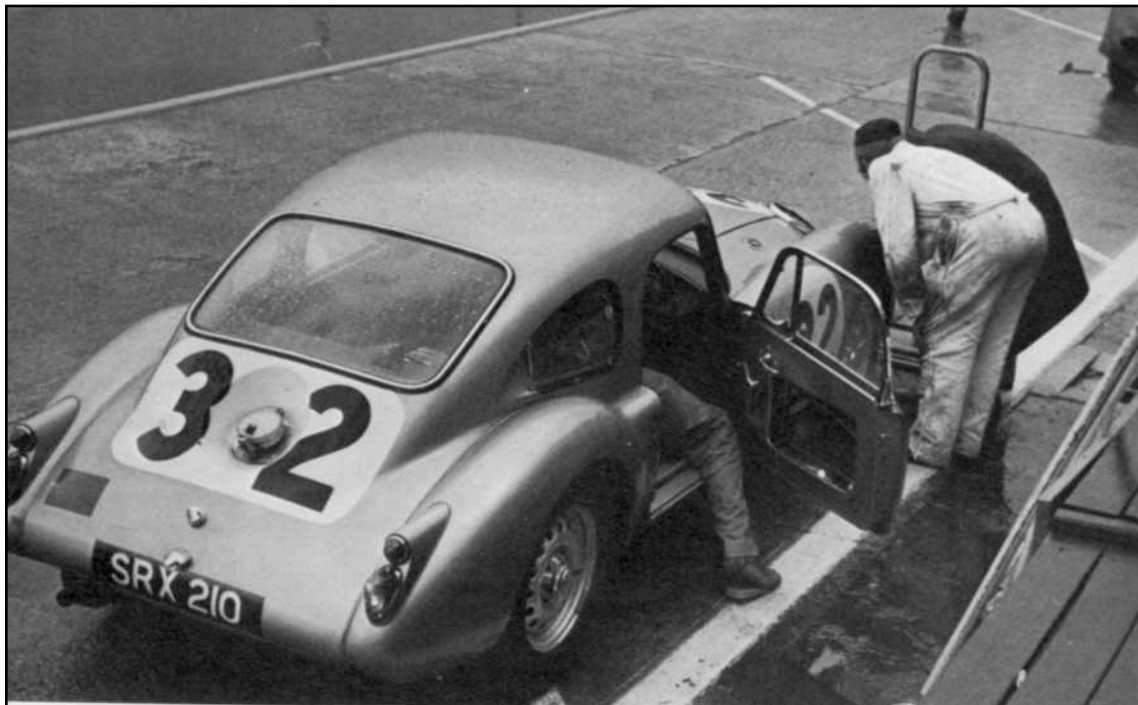
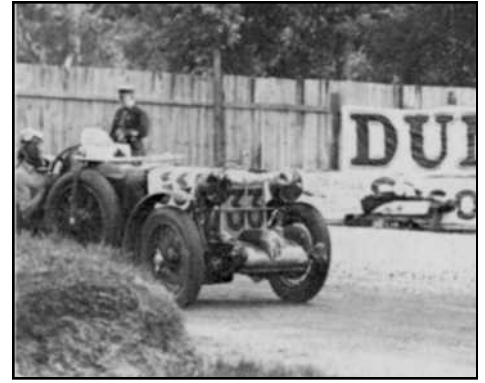
Having returned a best practice lap of 5min 8sec. (97.75mph), the MG boys decided on a steady 5min 10sec for the race, and this they adhered to until the torrential rain started in earnest on Saturday night, when the drivers discovered that the windscreen wiper was acting the fool. It is an actual fact that the wiper was the only component that gave trouble on the entire car, and it was responsible for two pit stops that were the only unscheduled ones made in the full 24 hours, occupying a total of 13 minutes. *(Not exactly true. Ted Lund had fitted some of his own driving lights, Lund Lamps, that gave problem and the crew demanded they not be used again.)*

The second stop provided a cure of sorts, and the MG went on, although so heavy was the rain that, by eight o'clock on Saturday evening, the lap time had extended to 6min 4sec. These freak storms at Le Mans have to be seen to be believed, for they start in a completely localized form and advance around the circuit, making a straight line of rain across the track that might have been drawn with a ruler. Ted Lund described his encounter with the storm this year: "Everything was going nicely at 6 o'clock and I entered the Dunlop bend after the pits at my usual 116mph on a dry track. Halfway round I found myself suddenly dicing on a wet road. The windscreen was blotted out by the torrents of water, and immediately steamed up on the inside, too. Thanks goodness I knew the bend well enough to keep the steering wheel in the same position until the screen cleared, but for several seconds I was driving absolutely blind. It was a bit exciting."

Adventure at White House

Hardly had Ted Lund recovered from this experience when another little divertissement was laid on for his special entertainment. He was tailing one of the Chevrolet Corvettes into the notorious White House bend when: "Whoof! Without warning the Corvette slid in front of me, clouting first one bank then the other. The track was littered with bits and pieces, while just behind me was the E Type Jaguar, closing rapidly on my tail. Well, there was a gap of sorts in the middle of all the Corvette debris, and somehow both the Jag driver and I slid through that gap together, but both of us were fairly busy for a while."

The K3 in 1934



In the pits.
Photos from the
Safety Fast
Magazine, 1960

Photo above -
the 2nd place K3
at Le Mans in
1934



One snag was that the MG encountered was the fact that no official list of starters was issued by the organizers. This meant that they were never quite sure which cars constituted the opposition in the 1601 to 2000cc sports car class, for some of the Porsches were under 1600cc, some above, and they were uncertain of the exact class position. It was just a question of keeping going as best they could with a defective wiper, and blessing the end of the rain when it came. After that, Colin Escott celebrated with a lap that only just missed a 100mph average. It was actually completed in 5min 2sec. (99.46mph).

Not until many hours after the race had ended did the MG pair find they had won their class. By that time, a rival marque had claimed a 1, 2, 3 victory in the class.

The Sprite Boys

The Sprite team was also an amateur one, though backed up by Donald Healey's two sons, Geoffrey and Brian. One driver was John Dalton of Derby, well known in English races. The other was John Colgate of Oyster Bay, Long Island.

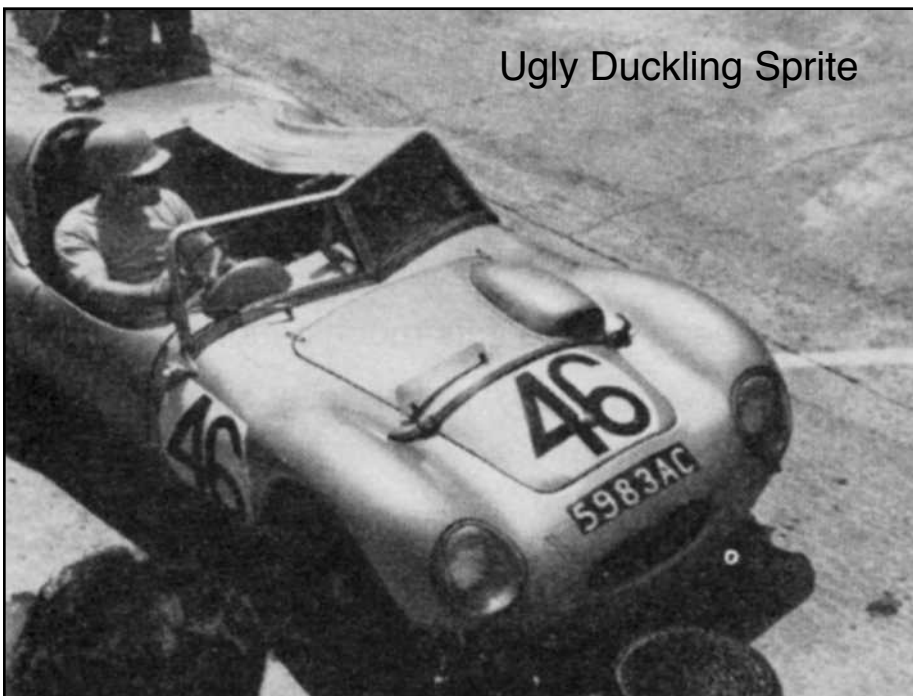
Practice was not too encouraging, for the best lap time was 5min 35sec (89.9mph) – fast enough, goodness knows, but the Panhards were getting around a good deal faster. However, the Sprite boys decided on 5min 40sec for the race itself, leaving the rest to luck and reliability.

By the end of the second hour, the Sprite lay second in class, although almost a lap behind the leader. Then the rain started and, through the downpour, the Sprite gained steadily in Colgate's capable hands, sticking like a leech to the flooded track. By eight o'clock on Saturday night the little (Midget prototype) was only 4 seconds behind its rival, and midnight found it more than a lap ahead. Thereafter it ran consistently on, and the lads in the pits asked themselves if winning a class at Le Mans could possibly be as easy as this. Really, it was all rather boring.

The boredom ceased abruptly less than two hours from the finish, when it was suddenly discovered that the engine had developed a serious oil leak. It was difficult to trace (actually the oil was escaping from around the filter - familiar to MG owners), and gave rise to considerable concern. Le Mans regulations, after all, stipulate a minimum of 25 laps between refills of oil or water, and it looked as if the Sprite would not last such a period without topping up. And then the oil found its way onto the clutch, which started to slip, so down went the speed.

But the good work of the previous night now paid dividends, for the Sprite led its class by some four laps and, even at reduced speed, still maintained its position. As the hands of the clock came round to register 4pm once more, Ted Lund spotted the faithful Sprite and eased his MG a little, for a happy thought had just occurred to him. This, after all, was an occasion, and deserved to be concluded with a suitable flourish.

So the MG and Sprite came down the straight for the last time together, and the two Abingdon-built cars crossed the line side by side to win their respective classes in one of the most testing Le Mans races ever held. Both cars had covered over 2000 miles, and both were still going strong.



Ugly Duckling Sprite



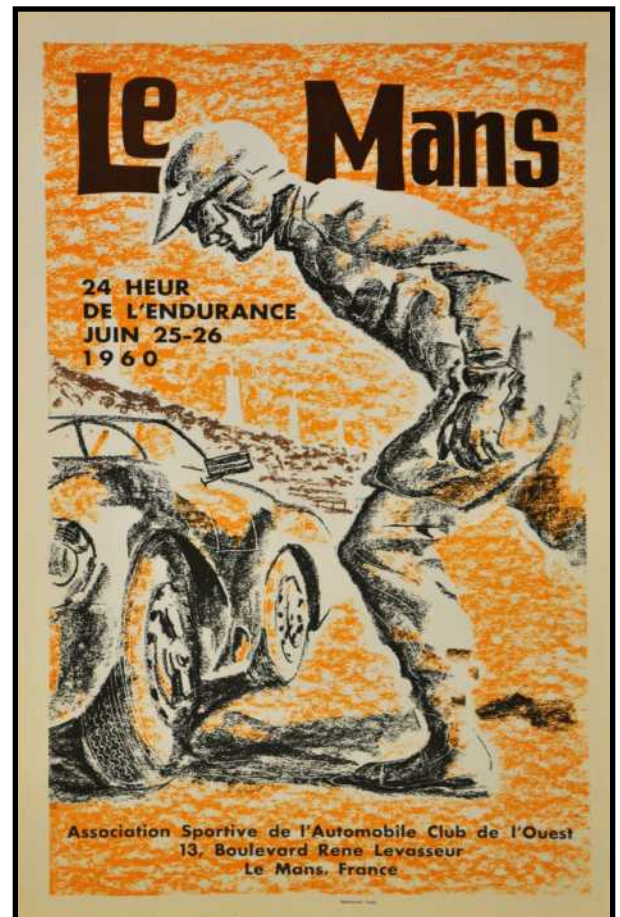
The MGA completed 261 laps averaging 91.12mph. It finished in 12th place of all finishers and 7th in the sports car class. The Sprite completed 245 laps at 85.62mph. It was 16th of all finishers and 9th of all sports cars.

There is just one afterthought, inspired by a glance at the previous results of this race. The Sprite, had it existed in 1949, would have beaten the 2-liter Ferrari of Luigi Chinetti. The MG would have won the race in 1950, beating the 4.5 liter Talbot Lago! Such is progress.



A model of the 1960 Le Mans Twin Cam. The MG raced again in 1961 (below) - with a smaller grille and without the Lund Lamps!

Poster featured - a foot race? Reminds me of the MGB being dug out of the sand bank



From the Abingdon Rough Riders:

“Element” Fire Extinguisher

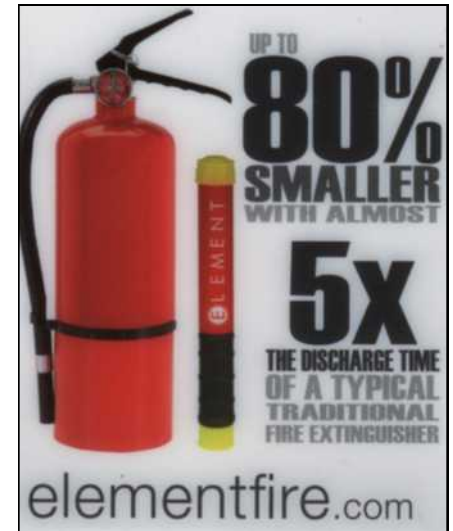
Doug Pelton is selling a new and vastly superior fire extinguisher for our cars. I have always used Halon extinguishers, and they are great for cars, but not so much for the environment. They are also big, expensive, deplete while sitting and pretty unavailable. Common ABC extinguishers will make an absolute mess of your car too. Always carry one – Phil Marino once had a fire caused by a float sinking in a carb and an overflow of petrol. Cost \$5,000 for repairs and that was 25-30 years ago.

The new one is called **Element**. It is the size of a road flare, is harmless to humans and lasts for 50 seconds – longer than chemical ones. Doug has them for about \$79 each and will give a 10% discount for a while.

Have a look at a Youtube demonstration at Jay Leno’s site:

[Element Fire Extinguishers - Jay Leno's Garage](#)

As we entered the garage through the side door, I’m immediately aware of the smell of burnt wiring and a smoke-filled garage.....! My heart drops into my stomach, something is really wrong. As I rushed to the MG, I can see that the engine ignition coil is smoking, and in fact had exploded! I had closed up the garage last night but left the MG Ignition key “on”. I don’t even want to think about how close I had come to setting the garage on fire. I could have lost the MGB GT, our MGA and our Model A, which were all parked in the garage at that time, not to mention the entire (detached) garage and our house.



Classified Ads

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

MGB Parts: New Al head, complete, professionally ported, non-smog. \$1300; Chromed (not polished Al) valve cover (used), \$100; Pair SU carbs, rebuilt by Dave Pelton, unused, 2nd Pair SUs, rebuilt then used. Both from 1967 MGB. Lots of other parts. Member Ken Gittings, Also valve cover racers! 341-206-5871 (Re-posted 6/22)

Midget tow bar/trailer hitch assembly: Located in Vallejo. \$225 or Offer. Member Michael Illes, 510-333-2905, euro_lifestyle@hotmail.com (Posted 5/22)

1934 MG PA Roadster: Ground-up restoration. Beautiful. Cycle fenders. 2nd place at Concours. Too many MGs. Have swept wings as well. In Colorado. \$25k firm. Randy Coppleman, mowogl@cox.net, (Posted 6/22)

1934 MG PA Airline Coupe: Restored. Show winner. In Chicago area. Contact Dan for information. (Posted 7/22)

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

Submitted by Tom Doyle

С ЛЮБОВЬЮ ОТ М.Г.

(from MG with love)



"He pockets the Walther PPK, toes the accelerator and in seconds loses the Maserati in the convolutions of the Grande Corniche. Once again, MGB triumphs over SPECTRE... and every other marque in Europe!" There's a Double-O Section in this country, too: men who dream of action and excitement—and find it in MGB. Excitement in mastering the thoroughbred that thrashed all other GT entrants at Monte Carlo. Action in a 1798 c.c.

engine (110 mph top) braced by an all-steel unit-construction body. Your MGB fairly begs to be driven hard and skillfully. No push-button job, this! Four-speed stick shift keeps you in control, up and down hill, mile after mile. Aviation disc brakes on the front wheels impose fast, fade-free stops. (Very useful when there are road-blocks.) Comfort? Convenience? Just look: English leather upholstery. Bucket seats. Snug space for two hangers-

on in back. Padded dash. Trunk room. Tight-fitting convertible or stowaway top—take your choice. Economy? Low initial cost. Up to 30 mpg. Obstinate endurance. Invisible maintenance. Pipe dream? Not at all. Your MG dealer wants you!



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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

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North American MGB Register



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

From **Spark & Spanner**, the Southern Alabama British Car Club



You might recall Ed. posting a photo last month of a young couple who used his brother's MGB for their engagement photos. This picture is "Part 2." At Ed.'s suggestion, the couple posed for a shot of what MIGHT happen if one drove one's British car to get engaged. However, since this particular MGB was restored by the late Stuart Waddington, the photo is obviously staged.

By Brian Sonner of Placerville

