



A-Antics



MG Engines and Values
Rowdie Gymkhana Photos
Gordie Bird's Garage Day
Wiltshire's Spring Tour



MICHIGAN CHAPTER OF NORTH AMERICAN MGA REGISTER

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History: The Chapter was established August 14, 1976. It was NAMGAR's first chapter. We are a low-key club, dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of our MGA's/ Anyone is welcome to join our chapter and they are asked to join NAMGAR as well.

Chapter Dues: \$20 annually (\$25 for printed newsletter)

Nickname: Rowdies

Motto: People First!

Rowdies Site: www.mgcars.org.uk

MG Web Site: www.mgcars.uk

NAMGAR Web Site: www.namgar.com

Past Chapter Chairmen:

1976-1980	Bruce Nichols
1981-1982	Tom Latta
1983-1984	Dick Feight
1985-1988	Dave Smith
1989-1990	Dave Quinn
1991-1994	Mark Barnhart
1995-1995	Herb Maier
1996-1996	Tom Knoy
1997-1998	Neil Griffin
1999-2002	Bruce Nichols
2003-2004	Bob Sutton
2005-2008	Gordie Bird

ROWDIES 2009 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH

28 - Day in the Garage, Sat, Steve & Donna Finch host, White Lake.

APRIL

11 - Kimber Birthday Bash. Sat. MG clubs annual kickoff at the Delhi Café, Holt. Dave Smith, host. Starts 11:30am.
"Happy Birthday to you...."

26 - Day in the Garage, Sun, Gordie & Tracey Bird host, Orion.
You Break It, Gordy'll fix it!

MAY

17 - Spring Tour, Sun, Philip Wiltshire host, SE Mich.
Picnic in the Park With Philip.

30 - Rowdies Gymkhana,
Curt Smith & Jon Burchwell host, Ypsilanti.
"Run What You Brung" as long as it's an MG.

JUNE

7 - Orphan Car Show & Meet, Sun. Show in Ypsilanti followed by gathering at Neil & Thelma Griffin, host, in Belleville.
Birth Certificates Optional

19/21 - Stradford Festival,
Fri-Sun, Philip Wiltshire's annual Ontario trip to see a musical. Good chance to test your repair skills with over 20 MG's driving to a foreign country and back on a weekend.

JULY

12 - Mad Dogs & Englishmen, Sun, Jul 12. Gimore Museum.
Fun in the Middy Sun!

13/17 - NAMGAR GT-34,
Mon-Fri, Hot Springs, Arkansas. Anyone up for a caravan?

25 - Pool Party, Sat, Steve & Cathy Holliday host, Oakland.
Swimming lessons included.

31 - Meadow Brook Kick-Off, Fri evening, Matt & Lisa Wigent host, Clarkston.
Cruise with the best of them.

AUGUST

9 - MG Tea Run, Sun, Holly Hotel, Holly, MI
But do I drive the TC or the TD?

15 - Rowdies Birthday Party, Sat, Dave & Phyllis Goeddeke host, Livonia.
If you think Cecil is old, check out some of the original Rowdies attending.

SEPTEMBER

12 - Lemon Creek Winery All British Show, Sat, Bruce Nichols host, Berrien Springs.
Great cars, good wine, and a Rockabilly Band to Boot!

13 - Battle of the Brits, Sun, Campus of Orchard Lake St Marys, Orchard Lake.
"And the winner is...."

23/26 - MG In The Poconos, Fall Regional GT NAMGAR
If you miss the GT, try this one...

OCTOBER

10 - Chile Meet, Sat, Mark & Marji Barnhart host, Prudenville.
Awards for the best "hottie"

11 - Ludington Barn Tour, Sun, Matt & Lisa Wigent host, Ludington area.
Nothing beats a beautiful Fall Color Michigan day for a drive in an MGA.

DECEMBER

5 - Rowdies Christmas Party, Sat, Bone Island Grill, Dave & Donna Quinn host, Jackson.
Let's Have A Party! Be sure to wash the salt off your MGA after driving here and back.

FEBRUARY 2010

13 - Rowdies Business Meet, Sat, Gordie & Tracey Bird host.
Show up or risk being appointed the new A-Antics newsletter editor.



Newsletter Editor's Rover-Nepotism Is Still Good!

MEMBERS PAGE

Rowdies Website:

Larry Pittman, Webmaster

<http://www.mgcars.org.uk/michiganrowdies/>

Mac McDonnells Database Report:

72 Active and Paid-Up Members

Welcome New Members:

Members Update:

It is with regret that we report that Cheri Fant passed away on May 4, 2009. Cheryl K Fant (nee Edick) Age 54 entered into eternal life on May 4, 2009, Beloved wife of Tom, daughter of Ernie and Nancy Edick, predeceased by her mother, Valera. Cheri is survived by her three step-children; Amy (John) Avery, Jeff Fant, and Kathy (Toby) Brzoznowski and grandchildren Jake, Luke, Ava, and Johnny. Sister of Karen (Rod) Niemi, Kevin Edick, and Ernie (Marilyn) Edick. If you wish to send Tom & Family a card his

address is:

Tom Fant

44493 Broadmoor Blvd

Northville, MI

48168-8630



Win \$50

The Rowdies will have a drawing at each meet for a gift certificate worth \$50 in merchandise from Jeff Zorn's Little British Car Co.

We hope to see some new faces at our meets and encourage you to bring a friend to join. All paid-up members are eligible for the raffle to determine each meet's winner.

Classified Ads

Personal for sale or wanted classified ads are free to all paid-up members. Commercial ad rates: Full page \$40 issue/\$200 year; 1/2 page \$25 issue/\$135 year; 1/4 page \$20 issue/\$110 year; Business Card \$10 issue/\$55 year.

Total ads may not exceed 12-1/2% (2 pgs of 16); ads accepted on first come, first served basis.

Deadline for submitting material for the next issue is: August 20th.
E-mail & Address Changes: Send to Editor.

Front Cover Photo: Orphan Car Show Group At Griffin's House, by Dave Quinn.

Rear Cover: MGA ad from Feb 1961 Sports Cars Illustrated. Submitted by Brian Beery



CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

If I was writing for Road & Track the headline might read "Sparks fly at Gymkhana." The reader would be drawn in expecting

to find the details of an intense angry battle between Rowdies around the cones but instead the article would describe the impromptu tech session into the dynamic doings of the dynamo on our editor's MG. Fortunately technical assistance is always close at hand at a Rowdies meet. Being a lot more capable with crayons than spanners, I have a great deal of respect for those who seem so natural with the latter. The backgrounds of the club's gearheads is wide and varied - auto shops, farms, aircraft industry, assembly lines, police, trucking, construction, sales, medical, education - and these gearheads bring experience from road racing, drag racing, rally cars, sporty club racing, muscle cars, and motorcycles. Isn't it great that our little MGA brought all this talent together.

There's little doubt that one of the great strengths of the Michigan Rowdies has always been its depth of mechanical talent. If you think about it for a few minutes, it is truly impressive how many of our core members are talented-hands-on-people. Right from the club's very beginning it had this depth - Twist, Hart, Nichols, Griffin, and more. Along with that, I've always been in awe with everyone's willingness to share that knowledge to keep our MGA's on the road. This is a tradition that

continues today and hopefully always will. That's why we've always said that driving an MG to a meet is nice but certainly no requirement. Run what you brung. In fact, it's the folks who are in the middle of a project that often get the most by attending a meet. Seeing completed cars is always an incentive. Better yet, tapping into the club's talented knowledge bank has kept everyone, at one time or another, from making an error during their restoration project. Believe me, there is a lot more beneficial information exchanged by face-to-face exchanges than you'll ever get by any other means. It's no accident that our talent pool has resulted in a club that takes pleasure and pride in traveling to MG events both near and far. My hat is off to those Rowdies who recently drove their MGAs to Key West, FL. Well done!

Sadly, John Twist has announced University Motors Ltd in Ada, MI will be closing its doors on July 1 after 34 years. John and Caroline's contribution to the MG community could fill a book. John's technical support has been invaluable to keeping MG's running all over the world. If you haven't done so, pay a visit to his web site: <http://www.universitymotorsltd.com/>. In the Technical Videos section you will find over thirty videos covering various aspects of the MGA and many more for other MG models. Thanks John for a lifetime of MG love and support.

Finally, speaking of things mechanical, I thought I would share this true Triumph story

CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER (continued)

as told by Triumph's VP of Public Relations in Classic & Sports Car magazine.

QUOTE:

"Emblematic of the company losing its way was the disaster of the Stag, a car that promised so much but was so plagued by cooling and other problems that it was withdrawn with fewer than 3000 sold. Mind-bogglingly, the pre-delivery routine included pouring Bar's Leaks sealant in the cooling system, recounts (Mike) Cook: There was nothing wrong with the engine, but it wasn't put together right. When the car came out it had a 9 lb pressure cap, but two years later it had an 18 lb cap. If they'd put the 18 lb cap in the beginning it would have spewed coolant out of every orifice. Two years later they had the engine bolted down properly and they realized that they needed higher pressure in the system, so the damn engine wouldn't boil over."

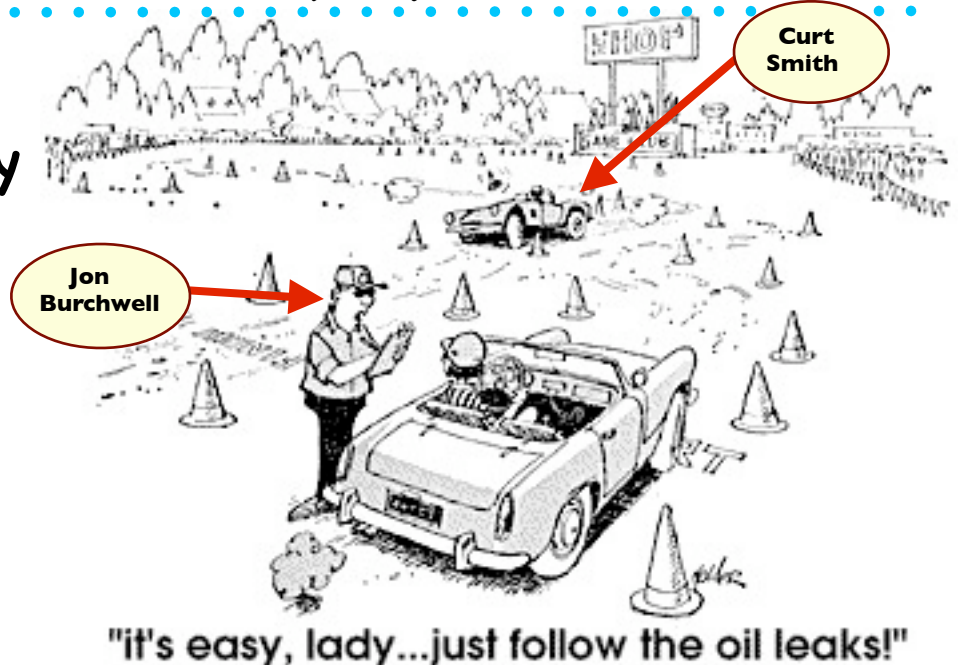
As one of those fewer than 3000 owners, I sadly recall my delight when I sold my 1972 Stag to a fellow Triumph owner.



Ed. Note: It seems Dave just needed more money to be able to keep up his Triumph Stag, according to this original British Leyland ad from 1970.

**A Typical Day
At A Rowdie
Gymkhana
Event!**

(see page 9 for story)



A TALE OF TWO ENGINES

The MGC was a 2912 cc, straight-6 version of the MGB sold from 1967 through to 1969 with some sales running on into 1970, and given the code ADO52. It was intended as a replacement for the Austin-Healey 3000 which would have been ADO51 but in that form, never got beyond the design proposal stage. The first engine to be considered was an Australian-designed six cylinder version of the BMC B-Series but the production versions used a 7 main bearing development of the Morris Engines designed C-Series that was also to be used for the new Austin 3-litre 4-Door saloon. In the twin SU carburettor form used in the MGC the engine produced 145 bhp (108 kW) at 5250 rpm.[3] The body shell needed considerable revision around the engine bay and to the floor pan, but externally the only differences were a distinctive bonnet bulge to accommodate the relocated radiator and a teardrop for carburettor clearance. It had different brakes from the MGB, 15-inch wheels, a lower geared rack and pinion and special torsion bar suspension with telescopic dampers. Like the MGB, it was available as a coupé (GT) and roadster. An overdrive gearbox or three-speed automatic gearbox were available as options. The car was capable of 120 mph (193 km/h) and a 0-60 mph time of 10.0 seconds.[3]

ENTER THE ROVER V8.....

MG began offering the MGB GT V8 in 1973 utilising the ubiquitous aluminium-block 3528 cc Rover V8 engine, first fitted to the Rover P5B. This engine had been used in the A-body platform Buick Special and Oldsmobile F-85 and was the lightest mass-production V8 in the world, with a dry weight of only 318 lb (144 kg), and was about 60 lb (27 kg) lighter than its 4-cylinder counterpart by the MOWOG (Morris-Wolseley Garages) foundry. Some improvements were made by MG-Rover, and the engine found a long-lived niche in the British motor industry. These cars were similar to those already being produced in significant volume by tuner Ken Costello. MG even contracted Costello to build them a prototype MGB GT V8. However, the

The heavy engine (209 lb heavier than the 1798 cc MGB engine) and new suspension changed the



vehicle's handling, and it received a very mixed response in the automotive press. The MGC was cancelled in 1969 after less than two years of production. Today the car is considered very collectible and the main causes of the poor reputation relating to handling have in the main been overcome by better tyres and subtle modification of suspension settings.

powerful 180 bhp (134 kW) engine used by Costello for his conversions was replaced for production by MG with a more modestly tuned version producing only 137 bhp(102 kW) at 5000 rpm. But 193 lb·ft (262 N·m) of torque helped it hit 60 mph (97 km/h) in around 8 seconds, and go on to a respectable 125 mph (201 km/h) top speed.

By virtue of its aluminium cylinder block and heads, the Rover V8 engine actually weighed approximately forty pounds less than MG's iron four cylinder. Unlike the MGC, the MGB GT V8's increased power and torque did not require significant chassis changes or sacrificed handling.

Only GT versions of the V8-powered MGB were produced by the factory. Production ended in 1976.

A TALE OF TWO ENGINES

MG never attempted to export the MGB GT V8 to the United States. They chose not to develop a left-hand-drive version or to seek US air pollution emission certification of the MGB GT V8, although the Rover V8 engine was offered in US-bound Rover models throughout the same period and beyond. British Leyland Motor Corporation management cited insufficient production capacity to support anticipated demand for the V8 engine in MGB GT, so they priced the MGB GT V8 high.[citation needed]

The MGB GT V8 was very warmly received by the automotive press, but British Leyland Motor Corporation was reportedly concerned that the MGB GT V8 would overshadow their other products, including the more expensive and less powerful Triumph Stag.



Recognize the engines above? They belong to two cars owned by Rowdie members. Perhaps the owners would like to give us a "shootout" report on the comparative performance of each car? Thanks to Wikipedia for the text. Ed.

GoBird's Day In The Garage



Hi Ken, here are the photos garnered from the event. Attendees were John Alexander, Brian Berry, Matt Wigent, Dave Quinn, & Dave Smith. Other than drinking all my beer, we ate pizza and adjusted my passenger door, mostly rebuilt a carb, and afixed Matt's valve cover with a new gasket. Weather turned out good for most of the day. Oh, we also identified oil leaks on Brians Jeep diesel. Gordie

Photos: Gordie Bird



“A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A FOOL”-or Notes On A Trip To A Rowdies Gymkhana

9:00 am- Hit the road in little red MGA with trusted wife at my side to drive to Ypsilanti for MGA car club gathering to run a "Gymkhana" course for fun with a 20 or so other members. The event is to start promptly at 11:00 am, so "don't be late". Mapquest lists the drive at 140 miles or 2 hours, 7 minutes (*ed note: this is for a modern vehicle*). I confess later to Kathy that I set the clocks back and we didn't leave until 9:20 am, but I wanted to have her backup my alibi when I lied to the other club members about why I was late. The car is running great, and it should be a wonderful day.

9:47 am- Notice ignition warning light flash on once. I convince myself it must be a rare misguided sunbeam that struck the light jewel at a precise angle to dazzle and otherwise confuse me. I whistle a happy tune and look carefully away from the light.

10:02 am- OK, OK, what is it with this damn flashing ignition light! There's not that much sun in Michigan over an entire summer for it to be doing this! Maybe if I think happy thoughts it will all go away.

10:12 am- Carefully open both eyes again to see ignition warning light casting a steady evil glow in my direction. Suddenly remember if generator fan belt breaks the water pump stops cooling engine-with dread I glance over at temperature gauge. Whew, it's still normal.

10:17 am- Pull off highway into vacant church parking lot. Slowly open bonnet while asking the Sister of Mercy statue looking down at me to pray for my dear little car. Look inside-fan belt intact, all blades on fan, no loose wires, and generator turns freely. Start on way again.

11:25 am- After mercilessly flogging same red MGA at 80 mph the rest of way, nothing blows up, and we pull into the site of the Gymkhana course. Kathy warns me since there were no potty breaks on the way, I will soon be "chopped liver" if no bathroom

found on site. Whew, bathroom present and accounted for.

11:26 am- Recount above tale of woe to all who will listen, especially to members of club known for diagnosing and repairing MGAs. Find members all seem to have someplace else to be until I accept that I will be the one to get all greasy and dirty doing the work as others cheer me on from sidelines. Gymkhana continues, as sounds of loud cheering and frivolity ensue from all members with unbroken cars, ie. everyone but me.

11:31 am- Steve Holliday offers fancy digital voltmeter to check generator output-figure problem is either bad generator or bad voltage regulator. Generator cranks out 27 amps! (or was that perhaps .27 amps? Hard to read in the gloom of an MGA engine compartment-probably not worth mentioning to anyone. More on this later). I officially declare the voltage regulator to be the problem. Does anyone have one along?

11:45 am- With perfect foresight and much to my surprise, I find a brand spanking new voltage regulator in a box in my trunk where it had been hidden years earlier. Quickly installed with Bruce Nichol's assistance. Car starts, warning light still glows. Bummer! Now what?

12:10 pm- Decide to call in Big Guns and ask for Chief Kahuna Neil Griffin to examine wiring sequence. Find old Haynes manual encrusted in grease in bottom of boot. Amazingly, the wiring diagram is still semi-legible. After multiple false starts tracing wires, Neil figures some wires provide juice (big fat brown ones) and another sucks juice out of generator (big fat yellow one). We push down the new voltage regulator relays and rub the big fat wires together and on various points on the car to see what will happen.

12:22 pm- Big Surprise! We watch smoke and fire erupt from the voltage regulator, generator, and all wires under the bonnet simultaneously. Heap Impressive! We burn many brave fingers pulling wires off anyplace attached, before brave warrior Bruce is smart enough to disconnect battery from whence all smoke cometh. We stand back to see if electricity in

the form of smoke is leaking from any other site on car. We smell plenty of burning plastic in a gooey mess dripping off shiny copper wires.

12:45 pm- Brian Beery is smart enough to look at generator and see shorted out commutator as the likely cause of the original generator failure. Other members and I remember voltage regulator could have read .27 volts output and not 27 volts. All members smack foreheads simultaneously realizing we just changed the regulator and burnt up most of the under-bonnet wiring for nothing. Bah!

12:47 pm- Good news flash: Bruce Nichols has a spare generator in his boot! He was saving it to use as a boat anchor if he ever bought a fishing boat. All happy, happy, and smiles again as I demonstrate Good Wenching technique with women in club, then get to work with wrenches.

1:30 pm- Spare generator is in place with fan belt tightened. Bill Weakley has offered his new roll of electrical tape, and Brian Beery has all the gooey wires sorted and rewrapped. I declare it a wrap, and fire up the engine. GENERATOR WARNING LIGHT GOES OFF! Hooray!

1:32 pm- Bill Weakley finds water spurting from around my water pump gasket area. Tightening bolts doesn't stop the leak. Screw it, we're all tired, I'm greasy, and it's Miller Time. We hit the restaurant in Depot Town. I order a 25 ounce beer, cold and frosty. Ah, all is right with the world again!

3:30 pm- With bellies full, thirst quenched, and bladders empty, Kathy and I head home to Grand Rapids. With one stop on the way at McDonald's to top up the radiator and grab a snack, we arrive home safely about 6:00 pm. How did the day go, you might ask? Absolutely perfect-a wonderful MGA outing as usual!
Ken Nelson



Pictures by Dave Quinn, John Alexander.

Clockwise upper l. to r.: Bruce Nichols, Steve Finch, Bill Weakley, Jon Burchwell, Jon again, Phil Wiltshire, Bruce Nichols & Ken Nelson, Stephanie Smith

Rowdie Gymkhana Times: FIRST PLACE WINNER RACING THE #8 MGA IS CURT SMITH WITH TIME 57.93 min. CONGRATS!
 2nd Dave Smith: 58.03 min MGB
 3rd Larry Pittman 59.79 min MGA
 4th Steve Finch 1.0154 min MGA
 5th Steve Holliday 1.0165 min MGB

6th Jon Burchwell 1.0173 min Midget
 7th Bill Weakley 1.0253 min MGC
 8th Bruce Nichols 1.0288 min MGA
 9th Neil Griffin 1.0600 min MGB
 10th John & Scott McMullen 1.0670 min Ford Ranger Truck
 11th Phil Wiltshire 1.0768 min MGB-V8

THE
HISTORIC
Holly Hotel



Afternoon Victorian Tea at the Holly Hotel...

Sunday August 9th 2009

It's time for our annual MG Tea Run. This year it will be held at the historic Holly Hotel, Holly, MI. No longer just an Inn, Michigan's Holly Hotel is a nationally-known American restaurant, listed on the United States Register of Historic Places. The hotel is the essence of award-winning regional and classical cuisine, with late Queen Anne Victorian architecture, and a loyal following since 1891.

We will enjoy a set tea of three elegant courses, served on traditional English china and steaming hot imported tea is served in fancy silver and ceramic pots. First course is served warm, consisting of English-style scones and muffins with Devonshire cream and flavored butters. Second course arrives minutes later with petite tea sandwiches, quiches and canapés. Third course is a "sweets" course of fruits. Pastries, cakes or tortes.

As previous years, the Tea Run divides into 2 parts. We will have an approximately 1 hour drive exploring the countryside around historic Holly followed by the tea at the hotel. The drive will begin at 2:15 pm at M59 / Milford Road intersection at the McDonald's parking lot north-east corner. Alternatively, you can meet us for afternoon tea at 4.00pm at the Holly Hotel. We have arranged special MG-only parking in Battle Alley, adjacent to the hotel.

The cost per person will be \$12, payable in advance to Ailene Butcher (248 685 8610) or Jan Tucker (248 676 0986). They need your cheque before July 10th 2009 as we have to make a firm commitment on numbers. Please send cheques to Ailene Butcher at 3103 Exeter Drive, Milford, MI, 48380.



248/634-5208 110 Battle Alley, Holly,
Michigan 48442



*Bring Your T-Type; or bring your MGA, B, or C.
Picnic Baskets are optional.*

THE TWISTY BITS TOUR

Sunday May 17th 2009

Philip Wiltshire

The rain was lashing down on the Friday evening before our tour. As I confirmed that the route was in place through the driving rain and standing water, I hoped that the weather forecast of a cool but sunny Sunday would actually come true.

We left home for the trip on a gloriously sunny Sunday morning. It was only 49 degrees but dry. So with this great start to the day, we hoped that our club members would think the same and participate.

Our little convoy of GT's (GT, CGT, GTV8 and A Coupe) arrived at the Meijer's parking lot just south of I94 on the Ann Arbor-Saline Road and was greeted by 10 MG's. Dale was our only Canadian member present, and was a little cool with the top down on his "B". We invited both the Windsor-Detroit and the NAMGAR Michigan Rowdie clubs for a joint event.

As the 10 am start time approached, more MG's arrived including a contingent of MGA's from the Rowdies. Gordy Bird was one of them, top down and in his short pants; definitely an enthusiast!!

We set off for our 50 miles 1st leg around some nicely curved roads. All roads are paved, although some might be classed in the "uneven pavement" category. We drove through much of the German-settled area of southeast Michigan. Then it got complicated; Jan took four phone calls from folk who had missed us at the start. Jan proceeded to navigate each of these cars by cell phone. They all caught us up by the picnic stop!. In fact one MGA (the Nelson's from Grand Rapids) were awarded the Tour's long-distance award. The Weakley's decided to start from the Meijer's parking lot, but one that is 5 miles from the correct one.

We stopped at the historic and restored 1835 Sharon Mill for our picnic lunch. The 20 car parking lot was totally filled with our cars. There were many wicker hampers in evidence and we enjoyed a splendid hour sitting on the grass and under the covered porch by the roaring Raisin River next to the mill.

Then we continued through the countryside for our 2nd leg. This was another 50 miles, ending up back at the Meijer's lot. Although the weather

remained sunny all day, the temperature only got into the 60's.

We finished the tour with 24 cars around 3 pm with no breakdowns. A good trip then; Ken Nelson just had to duct tape his ignition coil back on to cure a slight mis-fire in his MGA.

Pictured below Left to Right, Top Down: Kathy Nelson, Phil Wiltshire, Ailene Butcher, Steve & Donna Finch, Bill & MaryEllen Weakley, Bruce Read, Larry & Mitzi Pittman, Steve Holliday, John Moder, unidentified, and Gordy & Tracy Bird.

Pictures by: Phil Wiltshire, Ken Nelson.



Rowdie's Summer Pool Party

Cathy & Steve Holliday's-July 25, 2009

3463 Aquarius Circle

Oakland, Michigan

House: 248-693-1382

Cell: 248-884-1382

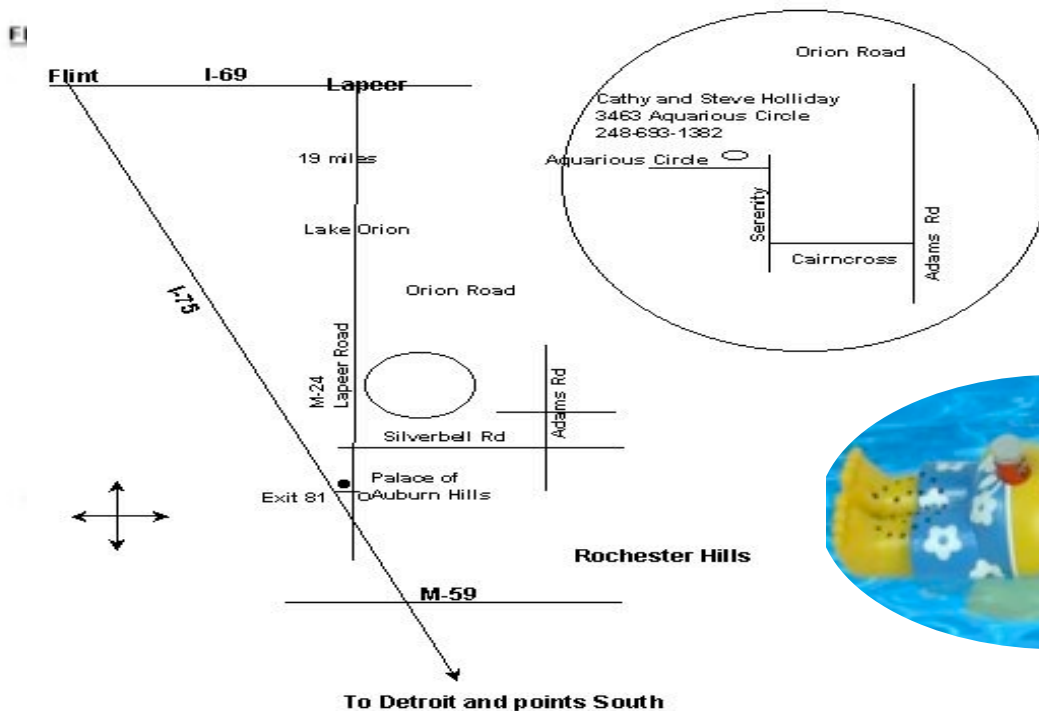


Bring a dish to pass

BYOB

Noon until Whenever

Pool's open ...



KEY WEST – SUNSET



THE LAST

By Larry Pittman

When Mitzi and I heard at GT-33 that the next Key West Regional GT would be the last, we decided we had to attend. We'd heard stories from fellow Rowdies and that just helped fuel the desire to go. We'd talked about going for a couple of years, but our 'A' was only finished just before the 2008 Key West Regional so 2009 was sort of our first chance to go with our car finished. Because it was to be the last, we decided to make a long drive of it taking our time to both get there and to get home. We left the day after Easter, a full week before the planned meet in Key Largo to caravan to Key West. This included a couple of days with my brother near Pensacola, FL.

We arrived in Key Largo about 3:00 pm which was also the check-in time for the Holiday Inn we were all staying at. I figured we'd be among the first to get there, but there were A's all over the parking lot already. We sure weren't the first ones there – we weren't even the first Rowdies there as Steve & Cathy Holliday and Bruce Read were already there. Cars were already being washed, so we joined the lineup for a wash. The next morning we all left for Key West doing a Poker Run along the way. We got our first card for the Poker Run at the motel and others at stops along the way. Fred & Cindy Skomp, the Regional GT hosts, were at the last stop before Key West to individually welcome everyone. That was a nice touch.

I don't know if it was normal for past Key West GT's or not, but there were 3 car shows scheduled during the week. The first was scheduled on the first day at a Yacht Club, the second on Wednesday at Hurricane Hole Marina, and the last one on Mallory Square on Friday evening. They were all very low key events with little or no advanced public notice of a car show taking place. Anyone who wandered by was invited to vote on the car they liked. I suspect the shows were set up sort of as a way for us to see things while at the same time offering the establishments a sort of perk to have all these old cars for people to wander by and look at. Mallory Square, the location of the final show, was right on the waterfront and the location of nightly crowds and local entertainment. For us, it was

also free parking to watch the Great Naval Battle of the Great Conch Republic Independence Day. The voting for each show was added together to produce one winner. The winning car turned out to be a beauty owned by Barb (Andres?). Barb is the sister of Bruce Woodson, NAMGAR's vice chairman. Her car had been in the family since new and was restored by Bruce.



Key West is an interesting place in many ways. Most local people we ran into were originally from somewhere else. For a place with as many tourists as Key West gets, there wasn't much "pushing" to make you buy things on the street. Granted, there were plenty of gift shops and tourist stops and trolley rides to get you to spend your money, but it was just very low key. Even the backstreets weren't bad. The Rally on Wednesday that involved driving all over the Island demonstrated that. The Rally required each car to get answers to questions as they drove to designated locations. The car that got the most answers correct in the shortest time would win. The questions mostly required you to find some obscure street and answer a question about some house on that street. For instance, one question I remember was: What time is it on the clock at the house at 1010 <blank> street. (The answer turned out to be 10:10.) Most of these streets were barely wide enough for one car, but the residents were pretty laid back (for the most part) about all these cars suddenly driving up and down their street. I don't remember who won this, but we finished about in the middle of the pack.

A Bocce Ball tournament was held on Friday morning. Teams of four were set up by drawing names from a hat. Mitzi didn't think she'd play, but decided at the last minute to give it a try. It was a single elimination tournament and her team

played in the finals for the big prize. However, her team was bested by a team that included the Rowdies own Jeff Zorn. Others on Jeff's team were Bruce & Bert Rauch and Carol Shamonsky. Their prize turned out to be a small plaque for each team member.

The week that the regional GT is held is also the week that the Great Conch Independence Day Celebration is held. As part of that, there's a parade on Thursday night and we were invited to be a part of it. The big deal for the parade is to hand out strings of beads as you drive by. There were beads provided by NAMGAR's George Merryweather for the event. Some who were more in the know than us like Bruce Read and the Hollidays brought their own beads. We spent over an hour lined up and waiting to start since the A's were among the last participants in the parade. The parade is billed as the longest parade in the world since it goes from the Atlantic Ocean on one side of the island to the Gulf of Mexico on the other side. It was dusk as the parade started for us and dark by the time it ended. As it got later and later, the crowds got noisier and noisier (did drinking have anything to do with that?), they wanted more and more beads, and they got closer and closer to the cars. What started out as a double row of cars at the beginning of the parade was a single row at the end because we wouldn't fit between the viewers anymore. A few 'A's had to drop out due to overheating, but we made it to the end with no problem. We started out with over 250 strings of beads and were struggling to find any more to hand out by the end of the parade. It was actually our first parade experience and one that'll be hard to beat.



The Sunset Cruise on Saturday night was a fitting end to a great week. We left just before dark for a cruise that included food, talk, water watching, sunset, and presentation of awards for various events held during the week. This Regional GT in Key West was to be the last, but there was talk of having one next year in Cuba!! I'm a little doubtful this will come to pass, but who knows?



I know there was a lot of behind the scenes work done by the Skomps and by George Merryweather and other NAMGAR folks. We were grateful for how well things were organized and how well things went off. It's too bad there's not another one to look forward to.

Most Rowdies left for home early Sunday morning. We were NOT among them. We had a long leisurely drive home and even stopped for a couple of days in Asheville, NC, to visit the Biltmore Estate. What a place! Stop and spend a day there if you ever get a chance.



Oh yeah – if you're wondering how the car did in terms of mechanical problems - Not too bad, actually:

- The first travel day was rain, rain, rain and the left side wiper blade just decided to pop off. Actually no big deal since we were driving slowly through a small town and it landed on the hood and it was easily retrieved and stayed there for the rest of the trip.
- I knew we had an oil leak and as we went south

and as the engine got warmer, it got worse. It looks like we have multiple leaks (is that a surprise?) and I'm still working on finding all of them.

- I have a cigarette lighter outlet installed under the dash. The wire from the ignition switch goes about 10 inches before the fuse. Well, a plastic protective sleeve came loose from that wire, it fell against sheet metal and we had smoke rolling from underneath the dash. A bit scary, but I got it removed before any harm was done and it has since been repaired.
- The day before the end of the trip, the tachometer started a loud squeal. This went on for a few miles and then the sound quit as it moved to 0 rpm. Later investigation showed it had locked up and also broke the cable. I've since replaced it and the cable with one I had from a parts car.
- There were a few other small problems not worth mentioning.

ALL IN ALL, THOUGH, A GREAT TRIP!

(Ed. Note: How could it be anything else in an MGA?)



Above: Bruce Read tossing beads during Parade in Key West.

Right: Larry Pittman, Steve Holliday, Mark and Cindy Michalak, Tom and Pamela Koch, Cathy Holliday, and Bruce Read relaxing after arriving in Key West. Missing are Mitzi Pittman and Jeff Zorn.

Technical Tip: Rebuilt Lucas generators are available thru Autozone for \$59 (+\$10 refundable core charge) as Part #15017.

Submitted by Steve Holliday (Ed. Note: They are listed under "Alternator" for a 1957 MGA. Autozone doesn't have a category for generators in their catalog. I ordered one and am awaiting arrival. See Rowdies Gymkhana notes)

Rowdies Birthday Party

Saturday August 15, 2009

at Goeddeke's in Livonia

15000 Lyons, Livonia, MI 48154 734.425.5254

Bring a dish to share and some good stuff for the Auction
(plus lots of cash)

BYOB



BYOMG



Exit I-96 at Middlebelt Rd. in Livonia and proceed North on Middlebelt one mile to Five Mile Rd. Turn right onto Five Mile and proceed East one half mile to Lyons St. (1 block west of traffic signal at Harrison). Turn right on Lyons and proceed South about 10 houses to 15000 Lyons on the East side of the street.

Here's A Partial Reprint of a September 2008 Article from Hemmings Motor News about the value and price of our MGA's. See what you think, and then email the editor giving your opinion and experiences with the price that our MGA's fetch on the Marketplace today.....

"It's been proven in the classic car marketplace that the increasing value of one car can pull up that of a similar model. In the world of British sports cars, the open Jaguar XKs and E-Types have for years been the gold standard. The "big" Austin-Healeys, long the popular mid-range choice -- especially in late six-cylinder 3000 MkIII form -- have gone from relatively affordable to big money in the last five years. And with the Healey's rise, so rises the price and popularity of its four-cylinder BMC stablemate, the beautiful MGA roadster, and to a certain extent, the equally charming MGA coupe. Introduced in the fall of 1955 and powered by the new B-series 1,498cc engine, the MGA 1500 roadster was joined by a closed-roof Fixed Head Coupe with wind-up windows in the fall of 1956. A double-overhead cam, 1,588cc engine with two valves per cylinder gave the competition-themed 1958-1960 Twin Cam roadster and coupe their name and surprising verve. In 1959, M.G. upgraded the standard model with a 1,588cc pushrod four-cylinder, as well as front disc brakes and other niceties, and called them 1600s. Among the last MGAs built were the 1600 Mk II "Deluxes," an unofficially named batch that combined the 1961-on 1600 Mk II's standard 1,622cc engine, recessed slat grille and horizontal taillamps with the Twin Cam's four-wheel disc brakes and center-lock Dunlop knock-off steel wheels. These special Twin Cam features were also available on 1600 models, often grouped with a close-ratio gearbox and high ratio final drive, as the factory's "Competition Suspension" option. The MGA set a sports car production record when the 100,000th unit, a specially painted and trimmed 1600 Mk II roadster, left the assembly line in 1962. The MGB, which debuted at the 1962 Earls Court Motor Show, would go on to outsell the MGA by more than five times, albeit over the course of 18 years. While many of the nice MGAs that have traded hands of late have done so at prices that would have raised eyebrows in the 1990s, this is not to say that the car that broke M.G.'s traditional mold is quickly rising out of reach. It's true that the low-production, advanced Twin Cam roadsters in perfect condition can command more than \$40,000, but most average-condition pushrod engine MGA roadsters, while more sought than the "civilized" MGBs, may still cost less than an off-lease Corolla or Civic, and MGA coupes are even better bargains. Add in ample performance, a reputation for durability, a healthy spares and supplies marketplace and some of the most dedicated marque fans in the hobby, and you'll find that the time to buy that MGA you've always wanted is now.

ENGINES

The MGA 1500's 1,489cc four-cylinder actually debuted in the 1953 M.G. Magnette ZA sedan. This cast-iron block and head unit had a 73.03 x 88.9mm bore and stroke and used 8.3 compression and two SU H4 carburetors to make 68hp (later 72hp) at 5,500 rpm and 77-lbs.ft. of torque at 3,500 rpm. The 1600's 1,588cc engine used a 75.39mm bore, and produced 80hp at 5,600 rpm and 87-lbs.ft. of torque at 3,800 rpm. Edging nearer the 100hp mark was the 1,622cc 1600 Mk II, which sported a 76.2mm bore and an 8.3:1 or 8.9:1 compression ratio to make 90hp at 5,500 rpm and 97-lbs.ft. of torque at 4,000 rpm. The Holy Grail to MGA enthusiasts is the thoroughbred Twin Cam's cross-flow aluminum head, twin H6-carbureted engine, which made 108hp (with 9.9-compression; later 100hp with 8.3) at a then-stratospheric 6,700 rpm and 105-lbs.ft. of torque at 4,500 rpm. Although their under-hood accessibility isn't as good as that of an MGB, MGA engines aren't buried under mounds of emissions control hoses or other complex addenda. The cast-iron engine blocks of all MGA engines are sturdy and readily available, and if needed, almost every mechanical component, from new pistons to gaskets to carburetors, is merely the swipe of a credit card away. The twin-SU carburetors can be a challenge to correctly tune, but when set, the stay set for many miles. The electric SU fuel pump is mounted under the rear of the body and can fail if contacts are dirty; modern replacements, while not correct, may be more reliable. Purists may object, but it's not uncommon to find later 1,798cc MGB engines swapped into MGAs for a useful increase in torque. Long burdened with a finicky reputation, most Twin Cam engines have long since had their bugs worked out, and driven with an understanding of their limitations, with properly set timing and a supply of high-octane fuel and lead additive, they represent an exotic and fun alternative to the Healey Hundred.

DRIVETRAIN

A four-speed manual gearbox with synchromesh on second through top gears was the only transmission available in the MGA, although beginning in 1959, close-ratio versions were available for competition use; clutches were eight-inch Borg & Beck units. They are delightful, directly mechanical short-throw transmissions, but difficulty in engaging gears and whining noises can indicate worn synchros as well as a clutch that isn't disengaging properly. Specialists like Quantum Mechanics Ltd. (203-459-9612, www.quantumechanics.com) will rebuild a tired MGA gearbox. Testing the input shaft bearing is as easy as depressing the clutch with the engine running and listening for a hissing sound. Pre-1959 1500s with leaking or movable gearbox output shafts are due for new tail bushings. The standard rear axle ratio of 1500, 1600 and Twin Cam models was 4.3:1, while 1600 Mk II cars used a 4.1:1 ratio. A number of optional ratios were available, including 4.555:1, 3.909:1, 4.875:1 and 5.125:1. Differentials are long lived if proper fluid levels are maintained.

SUSPENSION/ BRAKES

The MGA's rear suspension consisted of semi-elliptic leaf springs and Armstrong lever arm shock absorbers, while the independent front end sported double wishbones, coil springs and Armstrong lever arm shocks. Standard on later Twin Cams and 1600 Mk II models was a front anti-roll bar, a component that was optional on late-production 1500 and all 1600s. As expected, the hubs differed between MGAs equipped with standard bolt-on disc wheels, Twin Cam/Deluxe knock-offs and those wearing optional silver-painted wire wheels (chrome wires weren't available from the factory). The bronze bushings in the front suspension's lower trunnions can wear over time, leading to play and clunking, and will require replacement by a specialist. MGA 1500s feature unassisted 10 x 1.75-inch Lockheed drum brakes on all four wheels, which obviously aren't as fade-resistant as the front disc/rear drum combination used on 1600s/MkIIs or the race-inspired Dunlop four-wheel discs (with additional handbrake pad carriers on the rear calipers) of the Twin Cam/Competition Suspension/Mk II Deluxe models, a consideration in today's often inattentive traffic. Replacement brake components for standard models are common and inexpensive, although replacement Twin Cam parts will require deeper pockets.

INTERIOR

MGA roadsters and coupes all shared a two-seat interior with leather upholstery on the seating areas and Vynide leathercloth on the sides and backs. While coupes featured exterior door latches and roll-up glass windows, roadsters had pull-cord opening front the inside only, as well as removable flap or sliding side screens, which were stored in an envelope-style sack that hung behind the seats and covered the folded convertible top when it was stowed and tucked back under the rear deck. That top was made from Vynide or Everflex material. The MGA's trunk was mostly consumed by the horizontally mounted spare wheel which, in all roadsters and 1500 coupes, actually protruded through the trunk bulkhead into a carpeted enclosure behind the seats; later coupes, including Twin Cams, had the spare completely inside the trunk. As previously noted, open cars whose interiors have been soaked through the years can exhibit moldy carpeting and spongy floorboards. Upholstery kits in leather or vinyl are readily available, as are carpet kits and tops and tonneau covers. A check of the two six-volt batteries stored behind the seats (note whether the supports are acid-damaged) and the functioning of all of the electrical equipment, including instruments, lights, signals and the horn, is smart, because chasing down electrical faults is a time consuming, needlessly frustrating task."

So there's Hemming's report on our MGA's. I picture a pushrod MGA value at perhaps \$15-25,000 today. Is that your experience? Email me and let me know of the values of recent sales or purchases and I'll print a summary in the next Antics.....*Editor*

Thanks to Matt Wigent for the link to the Hemming's article above.



Start of a perfect day—Just set it in motion, throw out your cares, and fall in love with the road and all outdoors . . . because *you* drive the alert and responsive MGA '1600', it doesn't drive you. This is the fastest, safest pleasure machine ever to wear the Octagon, the most prideful in looks and actions. A big-hearted engine, sure-footed roadability, obedient controls and fade-free disc brakes make driving an affair of the heart. A test drive will reveal why this is the best known symbol of what a sports car should be. Your BMC dealer can arrange a perfect day for it. Is it a date?



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**Don't Miss Out On The Next Rowdies' Meet
Hop In Your MGA And Make It A Perfect Day Today!**