



A-Antics



Rowdie Racing Report
Member's Profile Section
Rowdies Business Meet
Cecil's B'Day Bash



Pictures of the Business Meeting.....



Pictures Clockwise from upper left: Gordie Bird, Steve Finch, Dick Grucz; Jeff Smith, Mac McDonnell, Curt Smith, Bruce Mann, Phil Wiltshire; Dave Quinn, Mac, Neil Griffin, Brian Beery; Kathy Nelson, Donna Quinn, Mark & Marji Barnhart; John Alexander, Mary Ellen Weakley; Stephanie Smith, Phil, Chari Smith. Pictures by Ken Nelson & Tracey Bird

MEMBERS PAGE

Members Update:

Rowdies Website:

Larry Pittman, Webmaster

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

Larry Pitman's Database Report:

68 Active and Paid-Up Members

Welcome New Members

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.

Send Email & Address Changes to Editor.

Deadline for submitting material for the next issue is: April 20, 2011



Letter To Members At Large:

Help Wanted!

I need a bit of help from the membership. If anyone has a complete MK II grill of the original chromed brass or the Moss replacement units of chromed stamped steel. I would like to know the weight in pounds and ounces of each one without bolts or nuts fasteners. To find a scale of this sensitivity, please go to your neighbor. If he (or she) is a marijuana dealer. They usually have a scale of this sensitivity. Bonus is that you get to know your neighbors and their Pit Bull.

FYI: for the MOSS plastic units I think it's only the shell that is plastic and the grill fin section inside is the normal stamped and plated steel unit. If someone has a Mk II plastic unit, I would like to confirm that weight too.

I will also be glad to get the same information for the 1500/1600 grill if anyone cares to send. Any help is appreciated. In a race car the headlights and grill are the single most important area to lose weight due to the pendulum effect on rotation thru corners. Thus even a pound is significant. If anyone wants a boring discussion on pendulum effect, they are welcome to bring a dozen beers over and ask me. The Rowdie Racing MGA started at 2015 pounds and is now down to 1600 pounds. Sadly, the driver has added some pounds to offset this gain.

Dave Smith

Rowdie Racing MGA # 49

MICHIGAN CHAPTER OF NORTH AMERICAN MGA REGISTER

Chairman Dave Quinn
2929 Wolhaven Lane, Jackson, MI 49201-8268
(517) 782-9749
dlqs2000@comcast.net

Treasurer Jeff Zorn
29311 Aranel, Farmington Hills, MI 48334-2815
(248) 489-1855
jzorn@mgcars.org.uk

A-Antics Editor Ken Nelson
3126 Brentwood SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506
(616) 957-3158
kenneth.nelson1@comcast.net

A-Antics Assist: Printing, distributing, &
database: **Larry Pittman**
larrypit@chartermi.net
Webmaster: Larry Pittman
larrypit@chartermi.net

Meets Chairman Mark Barnhart
101 Peninsula Dr, Prudenville, MI 48651-9461
(989) 366-8980
rowdie92@charter.net

Regalia Chairman Brian Beery
1769 Minnesota Ave, Marysville, MI 48040
(810) 488-1975

Membership Chairman Bruce Nichols
629 Portage Ave, Three Rivers, MI 49093
(269) 273-3118
nicholsbm@aol.com

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and not necessarily of NAMGAR or the
Chapter. Every effort is made to use
appropriate material. The editor reserves the
right to edit material for length and content.
No placement is guaranteed. The entire
contents are copyrighted, Michigan Chapter.
Permission to use is granted, provided you give
credit to both writer and the club.

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 (\$35 for
printed newsletter)

Nickname: Rowdies

Motto: People First!

Rowdies Site: [www.mgcars.org.uk/
michiganrowdies](http://www.mgcars.org.uk/michiganrowdies)

MG Web Site: www.mgcars.org.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 2011 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEB 2011

27 **Chicagoland MG Club Swap Meet** 8 Am - 3 PM <www.britishcarswap.info/>

MARCH

5 **Tech session** at the Milford Public Library
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

APRIL

1-3 **MGVR West Coast** Sonoma CA. Sears Point Race Track

16 **Kimber Birthday Party** Delhi Café, Holt. Dave & Chari Smith host for afterglo

25-28 **"Parrots In Paradise"** Key West Regional Meet.(contact Rob Camblin @ vice@kwbcc.com for info)

MAY

7 **Drive Your MG Day**

20 - 23 **Carlisle** Import Show

21 **Jackson Road Cruise** Ann Arbor <<http://www.jrcruise.org/>>

JUNE

4 **Rallye To Reno** -A drive along RT 50 starting in Ocean City, MD and cruising out to Reno with numerous other MGers (www.RallyetoReno.com for details.)

5 **Fort Megs** Perrysburg Ohio <<http://www.lebcc.org/>>

12-18 **NAMGAR GT-36** Reno, NV

17-19 **Stradford Festival**, Ontario, CA. Philip Wilshire host

25 - 26 **Sloan Car Show** Flint MI <http://www.sloanmuseum.com/car_shows.html>

27-29 **Put-in-Bay Road Races Reunion** <<http://www.pibroadrace.com/>>

JULY

8 **Rolling Sculpture Car Show** Ann Arbor MI

10 **Mad Dogs event, Hickory Corners** <<http://www.maddogsandenglishmen.org/show-registration.html>>

29-31 **Waterford Hills Vintage Races**

AUG

7-8 **Alden Sports Car Show**

20 **Rowdies Birthday Party** Lloyd and Janice Herring

21 **Grattan Vintage Races**, Belding, MI

SEPT

8-11 **U.S. Vintage Grand Prix**, Watkins Glen Int'l Raceway

10 **Lemon Creek Winery** British Show

11 **Battle of Brits**, Orchard Lake

25 **Orphan Car Show** Ypsilanti

28 **Namgar Regional GT** Solomon, MD

OCT

TBD **Color Tour** Host Dave and Donna Quinn

NOV

TBD **Day In The Garage** Neil & Thelma Griffin

DEC

3 **Rowdies Christmas Party**, Jackson. Dave & Donna Quinn host

FEB 2012
BUSINESS MEETING

18 Rowdies Annual Business Meet, Holt. Dave & Chari Smith



We want your MGA...
to be registered with NAMGAR!



Yearly membership is \$37.50 North America or \$52.50 International. The application form is available on-line at www.namgar.com or from: NAMGAR Registrar, 7522 SE 152nd Ave., Portland, OR 97236-4861



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

2010-11



Michigan Rowdies 2010 Regalia

Grille badge
with mounting clamp

\$25



Lapel Pin

\$5



Patch

\$5



Tee shirt

\$16



Cap

\$15

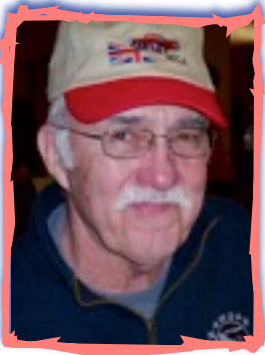


Key fob

\$5



To order: Call Phil Wiltshire @248-676-0986 or Brian Beery @ 810-488-1975 or email Phil at pwiltshire@comcast.net



CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

Where does the time go? It hardly seems possible the famous Abingdon MG plant was closed over 30 years ago. You may recall in spite of huge protests and marches after

the "Black Monday" announcement on the 10th of September, 1979, the historic facility was shut down in 1980. We have all seen dozens if not hundreds of historic photos of the Abingdon works in the good old days from the time it pumped out early M-type Midgets up to its final MGBs and Midgets. There was also a period when workers assembled Austin-Healey Sprites and 3000s, and for a time some Rileys. Many a visitor over those years dropped by to look at the facility that fronted Marcham Road. Some of the lucky visitors were there to pick up their new MG. How cool would that have been. Of course, as we now know any hope of converting it into a museum such as the Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg museum in Auburn fell to wayside when the factory was physically torn down 29 years ago, March 1982. Probably a few of you have a brick as a keep-sake. The bricks being the only positive outcome of the "Save MG" campaign. Thus the torch was passed to clubs like the Michigan Rowdies to preserve the MG name from total distinction.

Much of the equipment was sold at auction to other industrial concerns. Items such as clocks, signs, furniture, etc., were auctioned to private collectors. Interestingly, as reported by the magazine Abingdon Classics, several of the components used to produce the MGB and Midget - tools and jigs mostly - were simply stored outside in an industrial reclamation compound. They were later recovered, restored, and used as the basis for the Heritage body shells. The refurbished MGB jigs came in handy when it was time for Rover to introduce the RV8.

Thankfully MGAs were built structurally to last and there has been a handful of MG vendors that continue to supply parts, although not always with the close build tolerances we would like. Still given the decline and fall of the British motor industry and especially MG we can be thankful that our aging cars have become valuable collector cars yet still within the reach of most collectors.

On the other hand, if you've read or heard any recent auction results you know that cars like the Austin Healey 3000 have now reached a price tag that makes them too valuable to drive. What a shame. It's been 50 years since I logged any seat time in a AH 3000. It is a car by all accounts more complex in almost every aspect, be it the triple-carbs to tune or how the top goes together. And when is the last time you saw one on the road? It's been decades for me. The only picture that immediately comes to my mind is the road racer that Falvey Motors of Royal Oak ran for many years at Waterford Hills.

For me when it comes to cross-country touring nothing beats the simplicity and excitement of cruising in an affordable yet collectable MGA. We can thank the boys at Abingdon for that and the car's popularity. *Dave Quinn*



Ed. note: Indeed the Abingdon lads assembled other BMC cars at the plant. Here are some Riley RM series cars coming off the line next to MGTD's.



North American Council of MG Registers
Fourth ALL-REGISTER Meet
June 13-17 2011
MMM - MGT - MGA - MGB - MGC



... from the website... <http://www.mg2011.com>..... Headed to the 2011 All-MG event in Reno, Nevada next June?

Come along with everyone on a drive across Route 50 from Sea to Shining Sea. We'll be starting in Ocean City, MD on Saturday, June 4th and stopping at cities and towns on Route 50 all across America. Cincinnati, St. Louis & Kansas City are just a few of the places along the way. You don't have to start at the beginning, just join in anywhere along Route 50. There will be plenty to do and see, such as a trip to the top of the Gateway Arch in St. Louis or a drive to the top of Pike's Peak in Colorado. Set your own pace during the day and join up with the group each evening at the hotel and other stops. After MG2011, we'll continue to San Francisco to complete the trip (even though Route 50 now officially ends in Sacramento), dip our tires in the second ocean that month, and sightsee for a day

or so in the City by the Bay. For additional Information and a Map to see where the latest info on where people are coming from please click <http://rallyetoreno.com>



NAMGAR at Solomons Island



SAVE THE DATE!
Registration form available soon
September 28-October 2, 2011
Solomons, Maryland
HOST: Mid-Atlantic Chapter of North American MGA Register

WHAT 2011 Regional GT of the North American MGA Register
A driving event around the shores of the Chesapeake Bay in southern Maryland.

WHERE Hilton Garden Inn Solomons, Dowell, Md.

ACTIVITIES • Visit historic and operating lighthouses. • Cruise on an 1899 oyster dredge boat.
• Calvert Marine Museum – Discover the maritime heritage of the Chesapeake Bay



MGA Turn Signals Tech Tip-Lloyd Herring

Of all the Lucas electrical devices, the MGA (and TC, TD, TF) turn signal switch is probably the most unreliable, diabolical, and quirky unit ever contrived. Even in factory perfect condition, the pneumatic time delay is either too long or too short in a turning situation. In practice the switch won't stay set on or stays on for an indefinite (or infinite) period of time. It is this infinite time that can be fatal. Think about the possible results of driving thru traffic with your left turn signal flashing for a turn you don't intend to make. The diminutive flasher warning light on the left side of the dash is virtually invisible in bright daylight and is otherwise obscured by your left hand on the steering wheel.

What is needed is an audible reminder signal that tells you when your signal is on.

I have done a little research and found an inexpensive piezo alarm unit that can be clipped across your warning light that gives you a reminder that cannot be ignored; in fact it can be positively annoying. A volume control can be simply employed by applying a layer (or two or three) of tape on the face of the device. These units are extremely small and light weight and do not require screw mounting. Simply clip it across the warning light wires and let it dangle under the dash out of sight. They are polarity sensitive. The red wire goes to the positive, the black to negative. If you hook it up wrong, no damage done, just reverse the two wires.

I have a small quantity of these alarms to be given to anyone who I've sold on this idea. If you want one send me your address by Email, jann2043@att.net, and I will send one out to you. These are "no charge". I believe in this MG addition.



**Cecil Kimber
Proudly Invites
You To His
Upcoming
Birthday
Party With
Cake And All
The Trimmings!**



To be held at the Delhi Cafe at 4625 Willoughby St in Holt, MI (ph: 517-694-8655) on April 16, 2011. Start time is 11:00 am for tire-kicking and lie-telling with lunch off the menu from 12:00 to about 2:30 pm. After-party at Dave Smith's for further lie-telling if desired at 2401 Pine Tree Rd, Holt.

Rowdies Business Meeting Minutes February 19, 2011:

Hosted by Dave & Chari Smith

Chairman Dave started the meeting after a hearty repast was had by all. The following items were discussed and passed unopposed.

Election of Officers: Current officers agreed to run for another term. Voting turned out to be unanimous after no other member left the room long enough to be nominated to run for one of the positions.

Dues payment: It was presented by the board to make March 1st of each year the renewal dues date for everyone. Notices to be sent out by Feb 1st, Payment Due by Mar 1st, Delinquent members contacted by Mar 15th, and Roster finalized by Apr 1st. After Apr 1st a late member has to pay a \$5 late fee, and forfeits consecutive membership standing. After June 30th a first time member joining receives a 50% reduced rate.

Yearly Dues Amount: This item received lengthy discussion, and was tied into the question of color vs B&W printing of the newsletter, since the newsletter consumes a majority of our yearly budget. Dave contacted ViData Printing and the yearly cost for 6 issues of an all-color 20-page newsletter per member would be \$38. Limiting the color section to 4 pages (cover, back page, plus inside cover and inside back page) brings the price down to \$29 per member. Different options were reviewed, and the decision was reached to raise the price of printed newsletter member's dues to \$35 yearly starting in April, 2011 and print with the 4 color pages only. Members who receive only online email newsletters would have their dues remain at \$20 yearly. The Board could decide to print one all-color issue per year at no extra cost if the budget would support it.

Treasurer's Report: The income/expense items from last year were reviewed. As of 12-31-10:

| Income | | Expenses | | |
|--------|--------------|----------|----------------|-------|
| | Auction | \$327 | Newsletter | \$863 |
| | Xmas Party | 358 | Tech Manual | -85 |
| | Dues | 1,530 | Xmas Party | 778 |
| | Regalia | 509 | Meet doorprize | 193 |
| | Tech Manual | 460 | Misc Postage | 43 |
| | Total Income | 3,184 | Regalia | 828 |
| | Net Income | 513 | Total Expense | 2,671 |
| | Bank Balance | \$3,730 | | |

Webmaster's Report: Larry Pitman has changed the color scheme on the web page and added pictures from prior meets. He *may* try to arrange paying for regalia online at a future date.

Editor's Report: An ongoing mournful plea was submitted by the newsletter editor for more member submissions of stories, tech tips, movie or book reviews, meet reports, pictures, etc for the upcoming year. He especially requested any stories or experiences written either by or about some of the members' children or grandchildren in the club. This could include working on cars with the adults or going to a meet, etc.. The editors goal is to submit personalized items by all the members in the newsletter. Spelling and grammar will be cheerfully corrected by the editor. Scribble down notes on anything, even a used letter envelope. After all, it worked for "Honest Abe" years ago!

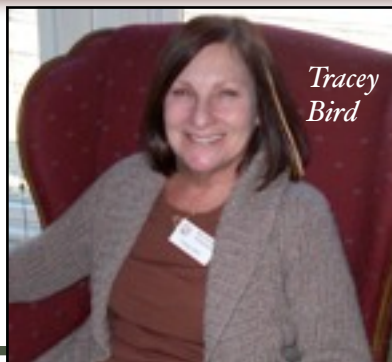
Regalia Report: Philip Wiltshire and Brian will look into the costs and options for procuring a new tent with the Rowdie logo printed on it; something similar to that of WDMGC's recent purchase. This would serve as a focal point to sell regalia and display our club's presence. Gordie Bird will look into a possible used tent. A tent, combined with regalia, will likely require a modern car to haul it to meets. 27 members had volunteered on the survey to help Brian out when manning regalia. Interest was expressed in offering Polo shirts, Hoodies, and Jackets with club logo if price can be kept reasonable. Jeff Zorn provided a photo and preliminary pricing for both a man and a woman's polo shirt, plus pricing for a hooded jacket. Donna Finch has located a local vendor for regalia clothing she feels offers a wide variety of quality items at reasonable pricing and we will be getting more details.

Membership Chairman's Report: Bruce Nichols discussed things he has been doing to attract new members whenever possible.

Meets Chairman Report & 2011 Events Calendar: Mark Barnhart offered up a tentative schedule of meets and after discussion by many members an initial club meet schedule was decided upon. See listing elsewhere in newsletter calendar.

Hosting a Regional Meet in 2011 and/or GT-40 in 2015: The Rowdies have already been approached by NAMGAR about hosting GT-40 to continue our every 10-year GT tradition. Consideration was given to hosting a Regional Meet this fall, especially if we did not do GT-40. Pros and Cons of these events were reviewed by all with much discussion. After a vote was called it was passed to host GT-40 with a significant majority signing an oath to either volunteer to work arranging GT-40 or offer up their first-born child as collateral. After this it was decided not to pursue a Regional meet this fall. Possible locations for GT-40 were discussed with an early consensus on Grand Rapids or Kalamazoo. A sacrificial chairman has yet to be decided upon for the event.

Respectfully Submitted, this 19th day of the Year of our Lord 2011, in the Second Lunar Rising, and by the Starship Enterprise's Captain's Log 1701;
Tracey Bird (as told to Editor Ken Nelson)



Put-In-Bay Races-June 2010

Dave Smith Looks At Last Season's Racing...

A fellow Michigan Rowdie, Bill Weakly contacted me this week and asked how I liked the Put-In-Bay Article in Classic MG. I told him that I had not received that issue, so he was kind enough to send a PDF, as #49 MGA seemed to capture an unfair number of the photos of this event.

2010 was not a banner year for the Rowdie Race Team, with a blowout of the driver's left knee in August. The year started off well enough with a kind offer to co-drive Chris Meyers MG midget at Mosport Park. The weather was fantastic and the Canadians put on a top notch event as usual. I was also very happy to see # 49 on the 50th Anniversary event poster with Jim Holliday's beautiful MGA Twin Cam. Several copies of this poster are now part of my vintage racing poster collection. Tom Hoan and Kim were our campmates, so all had a great time.

Rowdie Racing also added a second vehicle to the stable. A diamond in the rough 1967 AH Sprite autocross car was purchased locally in April. This is my first 1275 engine, and I can see why so many racers love it's performance. It made it's debut in the Rowdie Autocross, and did well, in spite of a terrible transmission and even more terrible brakes. MGVR friend & racer John McDonald came to my rescue with some no longer available tranny parts, and the new gearbox is awesome. The brakes have been sorted out, and the Momo seat and 5 point harness make this a snarly litte beast. It gave a better account of itself in the Mad Dogs & Englishman autocross in July against cars 35 years newer.

In June, I took #49 to Put-In-Bay, loosely sponsored by SVRA. My goal when starting vintage racing as a driver in 1996 was to experience every significant track in North America as a racer. The three early tracks that I read about as a teenager were Elkhart Lake, Watkins Glen, and Put-In-Bay. They all sounded

so mysterious and wonderful in the black & white grainy photos in what passed then for car magazines. With this years effort, I have now driven all three of these wonderful venue in my MGA.

Although the Put-In-Bay is not a road race, it is a absolutely wonderful event and I encourage all of you to experience this as a participant or a race fan in 2011. The atmosphere is great, and the beer is cold. The race photos in the article were at an autocross at the island airport. I pulled out a 3rd place finish in a tough field of cars & drivers.

The earlier mentioned knee blew out as I was putting the finishing touches on #49 for WGI. Timing is everything. The surgery went well, and my surgeon said that I used to have five lugnuts on the left, but now I can still clutch with four lugnuts remaining. Hopefully I can still get the body thru Tech and hit the track in 2011.

Have a great Holiday, and Chari and I hope to see all of you this year.

Dave Smith (see pictures on back cover)



Now Dave's "Rowdie Racing" Team Prepares for 2011...

Saturday February 12th was an exciting day at Rowdie Racing... Although a small step in the process, firing up the engine always seems to take on extra importance. I have spent a lot of time, working on the HS-4 induction system. The main goal was to eliminate flat spots during cornering and eliminating any cable bind. Throttle release MUST be instantaneous going into corners. The engine fired quickly and ran clean and strong and is 100% oil tight. All the numbers (oil pressure, voltage, EGT in synchronization) exceeded my expectations.

I have installed an OPTIMA Gel Battery, which took some refitting of the battery box, but is a great step forward. The conventional lead acid batteries were not able to contain the acid in the .9 G forces in the corners, so the bottom of the body in the corner took a bit of a beating. The old acid damage has been cleaned up, and hopefully this will now be a a low maintenance item.

The chassis electrical system has been checked out, and everything is working properly.

With Mark Barnhart's help I finally found a vendor that sells race quality front rotors. Today I will be taking off the Chinese rotors that a major vendor sells and replace them with a true race rotor. That will take a lot of pressure off me as a driver, as I was always waiting for the rotor fracture that would spin me into the Armco. The new racing MGB Rotors were \$130.00 a pair. The identically designed MGA Rotors are \$1,000.00 a pair. If that is not enough reason to switch to the more robust MGB spindle, I do not know what would be. It is interesting that rotor design has changed quite a bit since I started Rowdie Racing in 1996. Back then the hot setup was drilled rotors. At race temperatures exceeding 1000 degrees, we learned that the drilled holes did eliminate the

gas boundary between the pad and the rotor, but it also lead to microscopic fractures radiating out from the holes. The new design is a combination of dimples and slots. This design is just as effective for gas elimination, but does not cause hot spot fractures. Rowdie racing has stayed with the MGA brake shoe on the rear axle. Properly maintained, and with the Carbotech shoes, these are surprisingly effective and durable. Score one for the MG engineers in the 1950's.

I will stay with Carbotech matched pads and shoes. The cost is in excess of \$400 for a set but they are the only company that matches pad and shoe capability. That is really nice for even braking at 10/10, which I learned in Turn Two at the Pocono Race. Entering the corner at speeds over 110 mph and braking for the turn-in for the infield road course will challenge the best brake components and chassis balance. In road racing the braking zones are a great opportunity to overtake a faster competitor.

After some very clumsy work on my part to convert the COBRA seat for HANS compliance to go to the Glen, We finally had a solution. Chari found a vendor in Lansing in January that makes custom seats for Race Cars. It is a Father and Son operation. The work they did on my seat was amazing and BEAUTIFUL. It is ready to install, and another thing I can check off the prep list.

I had the tranny rebuilt for the Glen last fall, so that is good to go for Infineon. The last major project is to eliminate any gaps in the floor boards and transmission tunnel. The original tunnel has been converted into three separate pieces, so the transmission can be pulled from the cockpit quite quickly. This eliminates the need for an engine hoist at the track. Next item is to get the airline tickets in coordination with Don Holle and Mark. The car is being shipped by a commercial carrier and will arrive at Infineon on March 30th. That's all for now. Heading out to the Garage.

Rowdie Racing, ***Dave & Chari Smith***

Member Profile- Bill & Mary Ellen Weakley

THE EARLY MG YEARS....

I met Mary Ellen in 1966, the same summer I bought my '56 MGA from a high school friend. Mary Ellen and I worked at the same telephone company. She wasn't very impressed with the car, and it would be three years before we would get together. The A looked decent but was pretty worn out after over 100,000 miles.

Six month later, I was rebuilding the engine. I drove the A for three years while going to the University of Illinois. While there, I joined the Champaign County Sports Car Club, a very active all-marks club that is still active today. The A served admirably in both autocrosses and rallies.

In 1969, I graduated, got married and started a new job at Kelsey-Hayes in Romulus. With no garage at our apartment, I left the A at my parent's house in Illinois where my Dad drove it occasionally until someone stole the battery and radio. Then I got my letter from President Nixon inviting me to join the military. Rather than tote a rifle through rice paddies, I joined the Navy. After a year of moving from one training base to another, we ended up in Kingsville, Texas. My parents were towing the A there from Illinois when their car



suffered a blowout and loss of control ending with the A upside down. From there, the A was returned to Illinois to sit for another 10 years.

To quell my MG lust, I bought a '66 Midget. It didn't have a top, but that wasn't a problem in South Texas where it rains rarely and never snows. A friend and I started a sports car club in Kingsville and organized a couple

autocrosses on abandoned hanger aprons at the Navy Air Base. It helped that I was Assistant Public Works Officer for the base and had a group of Seabees available to clear the pavement. The Midget stayed in Texas when I left the Navy.

Once out of the Navy and settled in Michigan, I bought a '72 Midget as my second car. By then, we had two little boys who enjoyed riding in the Midget on the shelf behind the seats. I know, I would be jailed for doing that today. The Midget served as a daily driver year-round and handled the snow just fine.

One day, I checked out a '57 MGA for sale locally. The car had recently come from Colorado and was pretty complete, although it didn't run well at all. I had no intention of buying another car, but then I looked underneath and saw parts I



had never seen before, at least not without big rust holes. So naturally I bought it. I didn't do much to the '57, just got it running reliably. A couple years later, I sold it to a co-worker for 50% more than I bought it for.

The '57 got me in the mood to resurrect the '56, so I borrowed a trailer and hauled it to Michigan. By that time, I had built a heated garage and was ready to tackle the job. I got the engine running before we moved to Ann Arbor where the A was shoved into the corner of an unheated garage for a few years while we settled into the new house. I finally started working on the A by stripping it and repairing the frame. When our younger son Adam expressed an interest in owning a sports car, we found the '65 Midget that I have today. Adam drove it for several years until the engine blew and he needed a real car. With a replacement engine, it became my toy. Unfortunately, I rear-ended another car one night on a rain-slicked street. The



damage exposed some major bondo repairs and should have been enough reason to scrap the car. However, I'm not very good at that, so I picked up some used fenders and bonnet, repaired all the rust areas and got a new paint job. That's when I learned how bad old worn parts look on a shiny paint

job. So the Midget became my driver while I worked on the A.



moved to our current location with the intent of building on a sun room for Mary Ellen and a workshop for me. Of course, that took over two years, so the "A" languished again. Then there was the work to finish the interior of both new spaces. I have a million excuses for my lack of progress. My next excuse came along without warning.

One day while in a bookstore wearing an MG tee shirt, the store owner asked me if I knew anyone interested in buying an MGC. I told her I was in several clubs and would be happy to help her find an owner. So I gave her my phone number. I didn't hear from her, so when I was in the store several weeks later, I asked if she had sold it. When she said no, I asked if I could come see it. So my friend Gene and I went to look at it one night. It had been sitting in her garage for 5 years.



The battery was dead, the brake fluid was gone, we couldn't see underneath and she didn't have any details on the car, even whether the transmission was an overdrive. So naturally I bought it. I had in mind spending a few weekends getting it running and making a quick sale and tidy profit.

It took several months to get it on the road, but it turned out to have an excellent drive train with a rebuilt engine and a good overdrive transmission.

Clockwise from above: Bill and his first MGA; Bill in his MGC and son Adam in the Midget; Mary Ellen in the MGC.

There always seems to be something else to improve before I put it on the market, so four years later, I'm no longer counting on making that profit.

The "C" has been a fun learning experience. It is a very different driving experience from the Midget, something like a Buick Electra compared to a go kart. But as usual with MGs, the most interesting part of owning the "C" has been the people we have met. The first AMGCR newsletter we received had our names, but Mary Ellen noticed the name after ours as the same as someone she went to high school with in Illinois. So we contacted him and in fact it was. Since then, we have gone to two AMGCR meets with him and his wife in Auburn, IN and Asheville, NC plus several non-MG events.

So now I have three MGs to work on and a great place to work on them. What I don't have is time to do everything. Winter should be the time to accomplish a lot of work on the MGs while they are off the road. But a couple winters ago, I had the engines out of the Midget and the "C", so again the A was on the back burner. I have completed repairs to the A center body. After struggling with rotten fenders, I have just purchased a set of fiberglass fenders and will see what I can do with them. The engine needs to be put together, but the transmission is rebuilt, as well as the suspension and brakes. So mostly what is left is just lots of expense, paint, and trim. I'm hoping to drive it to GT-37..

Bill Weakley

Wiring Tech Tips

Electrical Tech Talk-by Barry Rosenberg (Peachtree MG Registry)-from Emerald Necklace MG Register, E-Chat, Nov 2010

I am sure that I have been thru this before but I think it needs repeating. The British car electrical system is as simple as it gets. It is extremely easy to diagnose and repair. To diagnose about 99% of the problems, you only need two tools. One is a good 12-volt test light, one with an "ice pick" probe and a long wire with alligator clip on the other end and a continuity tester. It would be nice to also have a length of wire with clips on both ends. With these simple things, you can find almost every problem that can occur. There is no need for any fancy, expensive tools to carry. Your car dies, the turn signals quit, I do not care what happens, these will help you find the cause.

Oh, you will also need a little knowledge and luck. Now, I am going to give you the knowledge, the luck you have to supply. As we all know, our cars are 12-volt systems. Some early ones are positive ground and the later ones are negative ground. Early cars with

good stereo systems are probably negative ground by now. Are you aware that the positive ground cars were better for electrical flow? Current flows from the negative terminal towards the positive terminal. With positive ground, current went from the battery directly thru a wire to some component and then to the chassis ground where it meandered back to the battery. On the negative ground system, current meanders around the chassis and then goes thru a ground wire to the component and back to the battery thru the wire. Some claim it is less efficient.

Now, that does not make much difference for this article other than to know which system you have. A test light allows you to check for current at any location it can reach. Simply attach the alligator clip to any ground and touch the end of the probe to the wire terminal you need to check. If the end of the probe is sharp, you can carefully pierce the wire to touch the copper strands inside if you cannot get to the terminal.

The knowledge you need to know is which wire to test. All the LBCs we are talking about here have used the same color-coded wire for the same purpose forever. There is no difference between an MGB, TR6, Jaguar XKE, Austin Healey 100-6, etc. between what

each color wire does on either car. Here it is in a nutshell:

Brown wire; Hot from the battery at all times

Black wire; Ground wire

Purple wire; Hot all times off the battery but thru a fuse, usually a 25-amp/50 surge

Green; Hot only thru the ignition switch and fused, usually a 17 amp/35 surge

Red; Hot only thru the main light switch. Controls dash/parking lamps

Blue; Headlamp wires

These are the main wire colors on British cars. Each has sub-color combinations; take for example the blue (*continued from prior page*)wires, solid blue takes current to a light switch, then blue/red goes to low beams and blue/white goes to high beams (or it could be vice versa, I never remember). Solid red goes from a the main light switch to a fuse, 17a/35 surge, at the fuse, it can go to side markers, front and rear parking lamps and a rheostat switch where it comes out as a red/white and goes to dashlights. Green wires come from the fuse box thru a 17a/35 surge fuse and goes to everything that works only with the key on. This would be your gauges, turn signals, brake lights, etc.

Let's track the green wire a minute. Current comes from the battery to the ignition switch as a brown wire. From the ignition switch, when turned on, power comes out as a white wire and goes to the fuse box. There it goes thru a fuse and turns into a green wire which goes to the temp gauge. It goes thru the gauge and comes out as a green with blue stripe and goes to the temp sending unit in the engine, which will ground it internally. This is quite a trip. I will talk about the voltage stabilizer shortly. But you can see how easy it is. It is very logical how the system works.

If we had talked about the fuel gauge, it would have come out of the gauge as a green with black tracer on it and gone to the tank-sending unit and then to a black wire to ground. Once you know the colors, the electrical system is simple. Purple is the same, from the battery in brown color, thru a fuse it becomes purple and goes to something like an interior light. There it goes into the light switch

as purple and comes out as purple with a white tracer. Then that goes to the light unit and comes out thru a black wire going to ground.

When something quits, let's say the fuel gauge, the first thing to do is test for current at the fuse with the test light. Make sure the key is on. If you have current there, then the next easiest place to test is at the tank unit. Again, ground the test light and touch the probe to the terminal of the green w/ black wire. If it lights there then you have current from the ignition switch thru the fuse thru the gauge all the way to the sending unit.

Now, turn the key off and take your length of wire and connect it to the green w/black wire terminal and a good ground. Turn the key back on and watch the gauge. If it goes up then all is good except the sending unit. DO NOT let the gauge peg itself, turn the key off before it does. You can now remove the sending unit, watch out for gas coming out if there is a lot in the tank (I know, you have no idea how much is in there, you just filled it up before finding out the gauge did not work) and see if it just a sunk float or if the unit is bad.

To test the unit, connect one side of your continuity tester to the place where the current comes in and the other to the unit housing. Lifting the float arm should make the tester register. Mine buzzes, yours may show something else. If the float was good, the unit will most likely be at fault, replace it. Using the same techniques, you can track almost every electrical problem on your car.

Quickly; let's say you have a car with an alternator and the battery goes dead overnight. First, charge the battery with a terminal disconnected. Once it is charged, very gently tap the terminal to the battery post and watch and listen closely for a little spark. If you get one, the something is either still on or there is a short. First thing I do is disconnect the alternator plug and tap the terminal again, no spark now, then most likely the alternator has a bad diode.

You can remove the alternator from the car and connect your continuity tester to the body of the alternator and then touch the other end to the terminals where the plug goes. If you look inside the cover, you will see that there is a part inside, called

a rectifier that has diodes in it. If you do not know, a diode is a one-way-valve for electricity. So with your tester connected one way, you should get a "buzz" and by reversing your wires, you should not. If you do get a buzz both ways, you have a bad rectifier meaning new or rebuilt alternator.

If, when you disconnected the alternator, you still got a spark, then pull the fuse from the purple wires. This is the only other place current can flow

with the key being off. Now test for spark again. If it is now gone, then check each item that gets power from the purple wire. Most clocks will not draw enough current to harm a battery overnight unless the battery is real bad or the car has sat a long time. You may have door switches for interior lights, etc. that you will need to disconnect one at a time. Each time you disconnect something, check for that little spark.

Member Profile- Mac & Joni McDonnell

It was a dark and stormy night, and little baby Mac was born an orphan. Never having known his parents, he goes on to say:

"I was first drawn to LBCs when a preteen. Second hand copies of Sports Car Illustrated and Motor Trend planted the seeds. At 15, my dad encouraged me to buy a couple of Healeys, a 100-4 and a 100-6. We thought it would be a breeze to combine parts from the two to create a road worthy driver. A doomed endeavor that nevertheless created a taste for British engineering that endures today. Many years with Chevy's and VW Beetles followed, as did college, marriage, and kids (Alison and Jessica). At the ripe old age of 33, I bought my first MGA. It had belonged to Tom Blackford, an early member of the Rowdies. The car came with his collection of **MGA!**s and **A-Antics**. I read them all, cover-to-cover, thinking I was looking for technical info but really just learning about "stay vertical" parties, Bad Axe, "Michigan Coolers" and the like. I joined NAMGAR in 1986 +/- . At the 1987 Univ. Motors Summer Party, while selling some MG books (displayed on my Tonneau), I met Rob Nortier who encouraged me to join the Rowdies. The rest, including my liver, is history.

Joni joined me and hence the Rowdies, in 1994. We have only been to a couple of GTs since then but enjoy the Rowdies meets and attend as often as possible. Along the way, we have had a blue

twinkie which I drove to the Indy GT while the paint was still drying, an MGC, a green 1500 (acquired from Dave Quinn), a Sunbeam Alpine. Presently I have two MGA Roadsters; both were purchased in the South and while they were not rust free, were solid starts for restoration. And start I did. One of these years I may even finish our pimped out 1600. In the meantime, it is still enjoyable to attend the Rowdies meets.

The vintage racing events are of special interest to me. I think all of us boys have a bit of a Walter Mitty side to us. Beginning with a trip to the Glen with Dave Smith, Ken Nelson and Mark Barnhart, I have been all over the country to these events. That includes Laguna Seca, Sebring, Mid Ohio and a second eventful trip to Watkins Glen in 2004. While I don't aspire to commit what it takes to compete in these venues, they are a real pleasure to enjoy the rolling history and hang out with friends. However, the local gymkhanas are another thing entirely. When I have a running A or can borrow, bum or steal one, I truly enjoy that brand of competition.

With both daughters out of college, we became empty nesters. So we recently sold our 2nd home in Harbor Springs and purchased one in Ft. Worth, Texas. While we are still very involved in our Cleanroom construction and distribution business, we prefer the warmer locale in the winters and Joni

can get back to her roots and relatives in that area. The home is modest but I made sure to get ample garage space (three stalls) so I guess I can have a project car wherever I go. Someday maybe drivers too!

Although lacking experience with other car clubs, we think the Rowdies are the best. The "People first" attitude prevails and it has been our pleasure to have the support and camaraderie of the membership for many years." **Mac McDonnell**



Photos clockwise from upper left: Mac's Twinkie; Joni with the ex-officio Quinn MG; "Ah, to be young again!"-Mark Barnhart, Dave Smith, Ken Nelson, Mac McDonnell at Watkins Glen in 1989; Mac's 1st MGA. Note the beautiful bodiwork in all the above pictures!

Put-In-Bay Race Pics June 2010



Here is an image, from behind, showing five cars that originally ran this event facing the start/finish line.



Pictures clockwise from above: Dave Smith tearing up the track in #49; “The Little Engine That Could” unveiled; lineup of some of the vintage racers; T-Types on the line. Note our own Steve & Cathy in the background. *Pics courtesy of Classic MG Magazine www.ClassicMGMagazine.com. Larry and Michael Sanata and Stu Kerr*

