A-Antics

GT-44 & 'Ol Man River

Over Lubricated

Rowdies In The Sky

Battery Tips and Tricks

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: $25 annually ($40 for printed newsletter)

Nickname: Rowdies

Motto: People First!

Rowdies Site: http://www.mg-cars.org.uk/michiganrowdies/

MG Car Council Site: http://www.mg-cars.org.uk/mgcouncil/

NAMGAR Web Site: www.namgar.com

Past Chapter Chairpersons:

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
2009-2015	Dave Quinn

MEMBERS PAGE

Rowdies Website: Larry Pittman, Webmaster

http://www.mg-cars.org.uk/michiganrowdies/

Larry Pitman's Database Report: 49 Active and Paid-Up Members

Deadline for submitting material for the next issue is: October 20, 2019

Letters

Interesting Riley Facts

A gift to Neptunus Rex, a Riley automobile, about to be launched from the steam catapult of HMS Hermes aircraft carrier

And Thar She Blows!

Unbeknownst to many an automobile enthusiast is the fact that Riley Saloon cars make excellent launch vehicles when at sea aboard a British aircraft carrier. Here is another satisfied Riley owner crossing the equator for a vacation to a seaside ocean spot, % the British Royal Navy. ***Sir Algernon BlueBottom***

Trabant Anyone?

Stephanie Smith sent in a picture of an interesting car at Cruise Night in Ypsilanti and wrote: "Attached are photos of a 1982 Trabant that a gentleman had driven to the Ypsilanti cruise night. He brought the car here from Germany. He said it was in his in law's basement. He has only had it here since June. In order to have the car shipped to the United States, he had to get it running and he did. Notice in the photos where the gas tank in located! *(Ed note: All the better to not need a fuel pump to go bad)*. Another commentary on the internet explained the Trabant this way:

"This is the car that gave Communism a bad name. Powered by a two-stroke pollution generator that maxed out at an ear-splitting 18 hp, the Trabant was a hollow lie of a car constructed of recycled worthlessness (actually, the body was made of a fiberglass-like Duroplast, reinforced with recycled fibers like cotton and wood). A virtual antique when it was designed in the 1950s, the Trabant was East Germany's answer to the VW Beetle — a "people's car," as if the people didn't have enough to worry about. Trabants smoked like an Iraqi oil fire, when they ran at all, and often lacked even the most basic of amenities, like brake lights or turn signals. But history has been kind to the Trabi. Thousands of East Germans drove their Trabants over the border when the Wall fell, which made it a kind of automotive liberator. Once across the border, the none-too-sentimental Ostdeutschlanders immediately abandoned their cars. Ich bin Junk!"

Stephanie Smith

1982 Trabant pics: "Worst Car Ever"- But does anyone remember the Yugo?

Over The Top Perhaps?

I am generally not one to criticize the choices others make in modifying their cars. To each his own, and all that. But even I have my breaking point. Check out this nasty customization of a perfectly good Rolls Silver Wraith. Not only is it listed on Hemmings (for $75K no less) but it was the "Find of the Day" in a Hemming's email newsletter. It's too shiny to be a rat rod, too expensive to be a joke, and way too weird to be taken seriously!!

Dave Quinn *(Bill Weakley says: It might look nice with the additional optional lighting package though)*

(continued next page)

Bruce Mann Likes This One

Not one to be content with the Trabant or Rolls pictured above Bruce puts his vote in for a Weismann Roadster MF3 in British Racing Green. "Nice car. Pretty

neat roadster. MG, modern style." ***Bruce Mann***

Corvettes Are Red

Dave Smith writes: **"**Recently I was given a recommendation to read the "All Corvettes are Red" book by James Schefter. The Local Library was able to find this obscure book in 10 minutes and had it available at my local library in a few days. I am sure most libraries can do this for our membership too. The story is in part, how GM developed the intended 1993 Corvette to honor the 40th Anniversary of Corvette. However the Story is actually how the Largest car manufacturer in the world went about this project. The story is well researched and documented And is very interesting into this little known phenomenon of the industry. ***Dave Smith***

Don Holley replied:

Greetings from New Mexico! Regarding Dave's email about "All Corvettes are Red" (the rest are mistakes), Dave didn't mention that, possibly because he hasn't had time to read the whole book yet, it is a fascinating read because it tells how Generous Motors management tried to kill the Corvette when GM was losing money hand over fist selling its other offerings. The C5 Corvette only survived because the dedicated Corvette people in GM begged, borrowed, and stole for nearly five years to keep Corvette alive for the birth of the C5 in 1997.

I bought the book in 1998 and recently reread it. An Albuquerque friend bought the first new 1998 C5 sold in New Mexico and made me drive it up to Santa Fe and back to put the first 100 miles on it. What a thrill! I bought my 2000 Vette in '05 to scratch my Corvette itch.

If you have ever longed for Corvette ownership or wondered how it survived GM's blundering management in the '90s, find this book. The author had total access to the birthing of the C5 and tells a great true story.

Don Holle, *Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and only member of the New Mexico subchapter of the Rowdies*

ROWDIES 2019 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 2019

8 Battle of the Brits - Gathering of the Faithful
Camp Dearborn, Milford, MI
Detroit Triumph Sportscar Club

8 Cars on the Green
5221 Church Road, Dixboro, MI
Eastern Edge of Dixboro Villager Green

15 Orphan Car Show Riverside Park Ypsilanti, MI
Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Museum

21 Zal Gaz Grotto Charity Car Show - Ann Arbor,
2070 W. Stadium 11am-4pm. See page 13.

24-27 Put-In-Bay Road Races
Put-In-Bay, OH
Click on website for online or paper registration

October

TBD Rowdies Color Tour
Host: Dave & Donna Quinn (517) 945-1267
2929 Wolhaven Ln., Jackson, MI
Date Weather Dependent via email

December

1 Rowdie Christmas Party - Chelsea Depot
Chelsea, MI Host: John Alexander & Carolyn King (734) 665-0682

CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

by Bill Weakley

It's been a busy couple of months. I hope you have all been enjoying the summer and driving your MGAs. Right before the GT, Mary Ellen and I hosted the MGC annual event in Kalamazoo. We came home in the MGC on the 8th of July and left in the MGA on the 9th for the GT. We travelled with Curt and Stephanie Smith, Steve Holliday, and Dave and Donna Quinn. We enjoyed visiting Dubuque for the first time, an interesting, historical town. We had been to Galena before and looked forward to going back.

I also got a kick out of meeting and talking with David Hobbs. He was very open and friendly and talked me into buying his book, which I read and really liked. He has had an unusually long career in motorsports, in the cockpit and then in the TV commentary both. I think I have a video tape that was made from a Super 8 movie film I took of him in a Formula 5000 race at Road America in 1970. Far too many racers from that time didn't have long careers or long lives. Up until recently, he was a regular commentator for the Formula One races on TV.

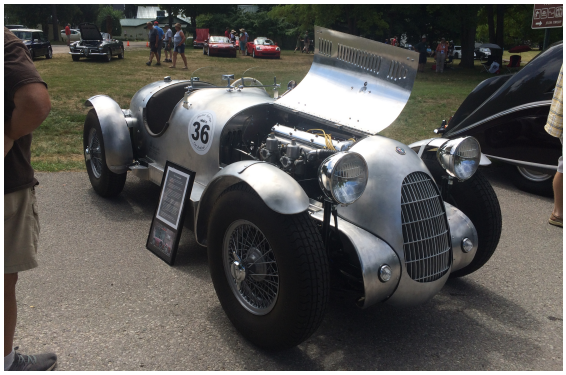
Some of you may remember that I struggled last year with keeping oil in my newly rebuilt MGA engine. The piston rings would not seat, causing major oil fumes from the draft tube, and the rear crankshaft seal was leaving puddles of oil at every stop. By this spring, I had pulled the engine four times and finally seem to have solved these problems. The 1,000 mile round trip to Dubuque used only a couple ounces of oil. So I am extremely happy with it for now. The other big success for that trip was my little trailer. It pulled so easily that I had to check the rear view mirror every so often to be sure it was still back there. The trailer made it possible to carry actual suitcases, lawn chairs and spare parts while retaining the spare tire in the trunk.

We missed the glider ride day, but I hadn't planned to go up in a glider anyway. I was glad to hear that the weather cooperated this time. Instead we went with the Windsor-Detroit MG Club to Ye Olde Carriage Shop in Spring Arbor. This is an amazing museum, so I hope we can arrange a Rowdie tour of it soon. The core of the museum is the collection of cars made in Jackson. There are examples of 20 of the 24 different makes plus a number of other interesting cars. In addition, the walls are covered with auto memorabilia, one room is all pedal cars, and another is all Coke memorabilia.

We attended the Alden Classic Sports Car Show again this year. The weather was great, and of course the area is beautiful this time of year. Attendance was down a bit from the last time we were there, but there was still a nice mix of cars. There was a hand-built special that is patterned after a pre-war Alfa racer but uses Jaguar running gear, the AJ Special.

Although I didn't see any other Rowdies, ex-Rowdies Dennis and Erica Ferguson were there with their MGB-GT. We met John Alexander and Carolyn King in Traverse City for dinner on Sunday. They were there to attend their grand-daughter's concert at Interlochen which was at the same time as the Alden show. We spent Monday touring the Leelanau peninsula and finished with an outdoor big band concert. I certainly recommend the Alden show as a great destination. The only drawback is that accommodations are pricey anywhere near there this time of year.

Chairman Bill



Quinn Gives 'Thumbs Up' To 2nd Annual Rowdie Adrian Glider Meet!- ***by Stephanie Smith***

August 3, 2019…Up in the sky, it's a bird, it's a plane, it's a UFO, no it's **THE MIGHTY QUINN!**

Dave Quinn said "I just wanted to send proof that I made it and went up. We got lost going there (I know we may live the closest)and ended up Dundee. Still it was fun, and even if most of the Rowdies were gone when we finally found the place, we had a great time and want to thank Larry Pitman for a Rowdie meet that was not on my bucket list but was really fun!"

Stephanie Smith then wrote about Dave's arrival as well..."Dave showed up at the very end of the meet. He had stopped for lunch which gave him the courage to soar! Can our editor inquire how DQ left Jackson and drove through Dundee to arrive in Adrian! Give that man a map!!" Editor Ken thought "Perhaps just a little too much 'courage' at lunch time led to a few wrong turns? But he did think this could perhaps allow Dave to be entered in the next run-off for the Jack Shaft Spiral Award.

But Dave wasn't the only Rowdie to enjoy soaring in the clear blue skies over Adrian, MI and it appears that all the attendees had a great time and beautiful weather. Stephanie said "I enjoyed the ride last year so I had to fly again!" She goes on to report, "Many thanks to Larry Pittman for organizing another exciting glider outing for the Rowdies. We arrived at the Adrian Soaring Field just before noon. We were immediately greeted by Larry Pittman and Jerry Jesion. A few minutes later, a staff member appeared and told us they were ready for participants.

Larry missed the opportunity to have his turn to glide last year due to threatening weather so he was eager to be first in line. Tom Fant and Lynn Combs soon joined us. Jerry said he was there to observe so Lynn signed up to be second. Last year was my first experience gliding and it was a blast. I had decided I would take advantage of another opportunity to take to the sky. It was just as much fun as last year! I was third to go up.

New comers Justin and Lori Mero arrived with Lori eagerly anticipating a chance to soar. The wait was well worth it! Lori took off making it seem like the Rowdie ladies were quite the adventurous members. Word had it that the Quinns were planning to attend this fun event. After taking a few wrong twists and turns, Dave and Donna arrived. The Adrian Soaring Club was still willing to take customers up so Dave decided to give it a try. Curt and I stayed to root Dave on to a successful ride. The other Rowdies had left for home.

It was a fantastic day to take to the sky and the evening was even better as the Quinns and Smiths drove out to Jerry's Pub in Brooklyn to enjoy dinner and spirits!

(continued next page)

Thanks again to Larry for organizing a fun event. The Adrian Soaring Club is a very accommodating organization and treated us well. I highly recommend their services. ***Stephanie Smith***

Pictures by Stephanie Smith, Dave Quinn

Slightly Over-Lubricated or…The scoop on how BMC and BL dreamed up the cars we all love - by Dave Quinn

I have a huge collection of sports car books and articles purchased during my near 60 years of British sports car ownership. Several trace the downward spiral of BMC after the dreaded hand of British Leyland descended on Abingdon. We have all read about the numerous issues that included labor strikes, out-dated products, mismanagement, federal emission regulation impacts, tough safety standards, quality issues, and more. All of which lead to the BL collapse and subsequent nationalization. Finding some new information about those times is rare. However, some came to light for me buried in the bowels of the March 2018 issue of Britain's Classic & Sports Car magazine in a story about how the color "lilac" was selected to celebrate the millionth Morris Minor. They produced 350 examples of this car. Here

is a snip from the article that I thought the Michigan Rowdies might enjoy! ***Dave Quinn***

after they had finished lunch. But things did not go as planned, and in the end the lilac was chosen primarily as the result of what was evidently a slightly over-lubricated meal. These were not unusual at BMC, where high-ups had their own dining room and unlimited alcohol on tap.

Many decisions, often capricious, seem to have conformed to a practice that might be termed 'Management by Agreeable Luncheon'. A classic example was when Alec Issigonis, probably after the odd one or two of his favourite Dry Martini cocktails, emerged from lunch and decided that he couldn't stand the sight of Austin 1800s in white with a black interior. Without consulting the sales department, he issued an edict cancelling that particular colour combination, despite the fact that apparently it accounted for 60% of 1800 orders at the time.

This sort of management ambience contin-

(Continued on next page)

ued into BL times, according to Ray Bates, an ex-Triumph engineer who joined the board in 1970: "The attitudes I encountered were Victorian. I was entitled to eat in the Longbridge executive dining-room – a great honour. There was gin, scotch or whatever you wanted. I remember [director of engineering] Charles Griffin saying to me: 'You're the junior member, you'll have to carve.' It was like sitting in a gentleman's club, watching the world go by…"

Returning to the Million, Field explained how the plan to have the directors choose the colour went awry: "Unfortunately, they came down after lunch, and were in no state to make up their mind. All of them went except Donald Harrison, who asked me if they'd chosen a colour. 'No,' I replied. 'Have you?' When he said he hadn't, I asked him what he wanted me to do. 'Please your bloody self,' he said. So I chose the colour. It was generally acclaimed. You have to remember that this was a time when women were beginning to have more influence in colours being chosen."

(story continues-see next page)

Order Yours Today!

*Hey Ken, Could you run this in the next Antics? The shop we used to get our Rowdie T-Shirts from closed, but I found a supplier that can do heat transfers. This company is called Arrow Printing, and is very close to us. The heat transfer process is what is used to put "**Michigan Rowdies**" on the sleeve, and the car silhouette on the front of the shirt.*

Their prices are very reasonable and they will do the "***Michigan Rowdies***" on the sleeve and the car image on the left front of the shirt. The cost to members is $15.00 tax, title, and out the door.

If any one is interested please email me ***(Bruce Mann)*** (bwmann@att.net) and I will consolidate the orders and place them once we have enough interested parties. The amount of inventory we have on the heat transfers is:

Rowdies White "Michigan Rowdies" (50), Rowdies Black "Michigan Rowdies" (29), White Car 1500 (13), Black Car 1500(3), White Car 1600 (13), Black Car 1600 (9), Mk2 Black Car (12), Mk 2 White Car (21). They can be different color shirts, blue, black, white, yellow, on and on. There are pics on the regalia part of our web site (https://www.mg-cars.org.uk/michiganrowdies/regalia.htm).

Members would choose shirt color and size and transfers from the list of remaining ones and order through Bruce as above. And we would sell them with the transfer on the front of shirt and the sleeve for $15. No tax. I would bring to next meet unless they want to pay for shipping. Easy peasy!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21st 11 am-4 pm
ZAL GAZ GROTTO CLUB - 2070 W. STADIUM, ANN ARBOR, MI

A benefit Car Show, proceeds to go to Fisher House Michigan, for the building of a "Fisher House" in Ann Arbor where Veterans & their families can stay while the Vet is in treatment at the VA Hospital. Your mission: help us build it!

All makes and models welcomed!

* Trophies
* 50/50 Raffle
* Pub Food
* Adult Beverages
* Music

Attendance Free - donations APPRECIATED

Car Registration only a suggested donation of $15 - Wow!

'Dubuque or Bust'-GT44 Report

We all got to GT44 in Dubuque, IA under our own power, although a few hitches occurred along the way. Several groups of Rowdies travelled on the road together for help in case of breakdowns or acts of piracy. No one reported any.

Bruce & Willy Mann, Larry & Mitzi Pittman, Ken & Kathy Nelson, and Greg & Mary Poffenbarger travelled via the "one if by land and two if by sea" Paul Revere method and opted for both by crossing Lake Michigan on the good ship SS Badger from Ludington to Manitowac before driving across Wisconsin on to Dubuque. Larry had some distributor trouble in Michigan on the way which was solved by Greg lending him his spare distributor. I should mention that Greg & Mary drove all the way from Texas and back to the GT without any problems, and won First in Class with their 1960 1600 wire wheel roadster to boot. Congratulations!

Tom Fant & Lynn Combs drove on their own and also won First prize with his 1960 1600 none-wire wheel roadster. Way to go for them also! Larry & Mitzi Pittman received a Fifth place award for their 1500 wire wheel roadster, but I believe that was all the hardware that our group brought home with them.

Two other groups of Rowdies travelled together. Lloyd & Janice Herring, Todd & Connie Binsz, and Forest & Leslie Johnson came as a group. In addition Donna & Dave Quinn, Curt & Stephanie Smith, and Steve Holliday came and went as a group. They had the distinction of Curt's car suffering a flat tire with no spare. That caused a bit of a delay on the way home, but they were still able to take a detour to LeClaire, IA and visit the home of American Pickers.

Besides the Rowdies mentioned other attendees were Bruce and Robin Nichols, Bill & Mary Ellen Weakley, Dave & Chari Smith, Diane & Steve Mazurek, and Allen & Florrie Bachelder for a total of 29 Rowdies if my math is correct. Apologies if not. Dave Smith also brought his well-known #49 race car to Iowa.

I think all of the Rowdies had a great time in Iowa, even though the weather was pretty hot, making an air conditioned pub a great place to socialize. Still not as hot as Richmond last year though. The "Ol Mississippi" provided some highlights, with an excellent Marine Aquarium and Museum across the river to visit. A day trip to Galena provided some needed shopping time for many of the attendees. Another favorite was a trip to "The Field Of Dreams" nearby, where the movie was filmed and the corn still grows. Dave Q. and Curt S. both took a turn at home plate batting, and you can ask them to tell you if it was a strike out or not. British race car driver David Hobbs was the featured speaker at the Thursday night BBQ which took place at a local vineyard. At the awards banquet it was announced that Colorado Springs will be the site of GT45 and a nice presentation was given by the club.

Finally, **Dave Quinn** offered his synopsis of the GT as follows:

"We are back from an MG drive to Dubuque, Iowa. Wow, was that a HOT one. Every day in the mid to high 90's and no A/C. Still we had a great time.

I got to spend a good deal of time with David Hobbs. I even shelled out $70 to buy his 300 pg. book about his life as a race car driver and TV announcer.

One of our stops was at the Pickers in LeClaire, IA. Pictures below.

I have to give a shout out to my lovely bride, Donna. She was on the side of the road and still smiling after waiting 3 hours in unbelievable heat with Stephanie Smith, while we guys tried to find someone to repair a wire wheel flat after Curt's inner tube blew out at a seam. Of course it was on a Sunday when everything is closed and the only MGA that was carrying a spare had left our little group to see a brother hours before and was several hundred miles away. Thank goodness for friendly people in small town America . . . Clinton, IA who came to our rescue with assistance and advice.

We had a nice turnout of MGAs from all over the country for this national meet. Here's a shot from the NAMGAR site (below).

I am certainly glad to be home and have no plans to leave the comfort of my A/C home any time soon." ***Dave Quinn & Ken Nelson***

(Continued on next page)

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Free Limo Service


Hotel Julien Parking Lot


Ken Nelson


At The Car Show


Cecelia Bruce & Dave


#99-Nelson
#100-Quinn

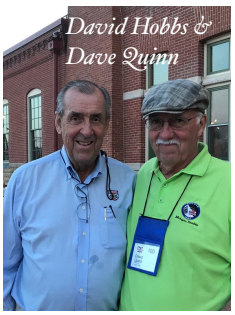

Tom Fant


"Ol #49"


Bruce & Robin


Forest Johnson


Mary Ellen & Bill


David Hobbs & Dave Quinn


Todd & Connie Binsz


Diane Mazurek


Kathy & Ralph Poupard, Bill Weakley, Kathy & Ken Nelson


Donna, Chari, Kathy


Laura Magnuson, Laura Casey, Willy Mann, Mitzi Pittman


Butch & Judy Smith, Willy Mann & John Casey photobombing


Bill Gallihugh, ?, Steve Mazurek


Donna Quinn

Mad Dogs & Pickers

In addition to the reports on GT-44, Waterford races, and the Adrian Gliding meets in this issue we also had the Mad Dogs and Englishmen event to report on. Adding to that was a surprise visit to the American Pickers shop that the Quinn's, Curt & Stephanie Smith, and Steve Holliday made on the way home from GT44. The Pickers shop is in LeClaire, Iowa but Mike and Frank weren't in on the day our travelers stopped by. Still, it made for a nice photo op, so here are some pictures of our intrepid group.


At The Pickers

Lots Of Good Pickin's


LeClaire, IA

And below are some interesting cars from the Mad Dogs meet.

Pictures by Stephanie Smith, Dave Quinn, Mary Ellen Weakley, Ken Nelson


Jowett Jupiter for sale

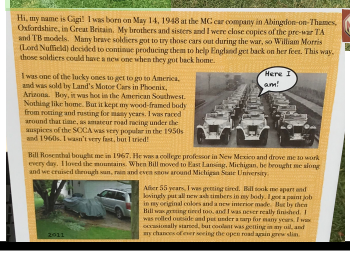

1938 MGSA Tickford Drophead

Editor's 1950 MGTD


1946 MGTC Special


Sunbeam Talbot Convertible


Ken & Melody Klemmer's 1948 MGTC




Austin Gipsy 4wd


Big Cats


Lotus Europa

Waterford Race Meet Report-John Alexander

As Zero Mostel might have said, 'A funny thing happened on the way to the Glider meet…' or so I was told by John Alexander. But let's have him tell the story in his own words.

"Ken, I contacted several locals to get together a convoy to Waterford for the Vintage Races the end of July. Those participating were Chairman Bill Weakley in his MGA, his son driving dad's MG Midget, Jeff Smith in his Red MGA, Andy and Joanne Hoffman-Will with their black beauty Morgan 3 wheeler (the MGA's 6V batteries were Kaput!-*see article on page 16*), Tom Fant and his MGA, and me in my A forming quite a parade. We assembled in a McDonalds car park, had a spot of coffee while waiting for Jeff. We departed at 10 am as a group.

Andy and Joanne had an afternoon planned so only wanted to go partway. They were to leave us at South Lyons. Well they certainly got the flavor of a British Car Outing.

After approx. 2 miles with me in the lead, we stopped to be sure our group was intact, then turned onto Pontiac Trail to begin our journey to the race track about 50 miles away. After 5 miles or so I could see Bill and his son behind me but no one else so I pulled over to wait for stragglers. We waited for 5 minutes - no one appeared. I sent Bill and son on their way while I retraced the route to see what had happened to half of our entourage. I kept driving and driving, expecting to see them around every curve. Eventually, I saw 4 people looking into the engine compartment of Jeff's car. Everyone was accounted for.

What Happened?

When we turned onto Pontiac Trail, Jeff went about 75 feet and pulled over. Andy and Tom, like good chaps, stopped to see what happened. Ah, the old broken accelerator cable trick. To the rescue with the rolling parts department of one who regularly travels to Key West, Tom pulled a new cable out of his boot and we all watched Jeff install it. He did a good job as the car started and ran.

While we were all staring intently into the dark spaces, Joanne noticed 3 hawks (probably vultures) circling overhead. Conversation: "What are they lookin' at?" "They're watching the guys leaning on their shovels watching one worker working." "And a woman supervising everyone." Joanne had the last word. The moral of this experience is "Always carry the parts that will break."

Off we went to Waterford to see a great day of racing. One of the bugeye competitors had been a competition driving student of mine back in the 1970's. He didn't win but wasn't the slowest, either, so my job is done. A side note: Boy, did he ever get old!

There were a number of Rowdies at the track. Bill Weakley, Tom Fant, Bruce Mann, Jeff Smith, Curt Smith, Dave Quinn, Brian Beery, John McMullan, Steve Holliday, Mark Griffith, Jerry Jesion, Bob Shafto and me. I think a group photo was taken with Bruce's camera. The camera will show if I've left anyone out of the count for which I apologize".

On the road reporter for "The A-Antics",

John Alexander

"How many MG riders does it take to fix a broken throttle cable? One guy to do the work, two guys to observe, one guy to take a picture, and one woman to tell them that they are doing it wrong." (Yep, they're all there in this pic!)

Finally Giving Up Dual 6-Volt Batteries For A Single 12-Volt-Andy Hoffman

This year, I pulled my 1960 MGA out of storage as I always do, but when I pulled the starter knob, not a sound was heard; no turn of the starter. [Ugh.] I got a jump start, brought the car home and drove straight down to the Interstate Batteries store in Ann Arbor to get two new 6 Volt batteries just like I did 5 years before and 5 years before that (17HF, 360 CCA). The store was closed. [Ugh.] I called the nearest store in Plymouth and was told that Interstate had discontinued making 6-volt batteries. [insert different expletive here.]

I began my search for another supplier. The compartment for each 6-volt battery is 7 1/2" Wide (3/8 inch less if you want to reuse the J-Bar hold downs, which I did), 7 3/8" Deep, and the dead battery 6-volt battery was 8 1/4" Tall, weighed 26 pounds, cranked out 320 CCA and usually cost me about $125-150 each. Now that they are phasing out, I would expect their prices to go up. They are! I looked at Tractor Supply, U.S. Battery and Antique Battery but couldn't find the size to fit the compartment. At Powerstride Battery I found what I wanted but they were charging $230 each and decided I didn't want them that much. That settled it; it was time to go 12-volt.

I now found myself in the situation that it seems so many MGA drivers have already gone through over the years. I even hesitated to write this story when Dave Quinn suggested it; I must be the last one to make the switch and everyone else already knows all the ins and outs. But Ken Nelson encouraged me on, so here is my story.

As a professor at U of Michigan, I did what all academics do; I started doing my research. I checked the trusty Barney Gaylord with his "MGA With an Attitude" offering advice on the topic: https://mgaguru.com/mgtech/electric/et203.htm Bottom line – there are 12-volt batteries that fit but they are "only available in Europe and the Eastern Hemisphere but not in North or South America."

When talking to a group of Rowdies on a ride to the Waterford Vintage Car Races, I asked who had switched over to a 12-volt battery? Everyone raised their hand and gave me advice. I placed a post on the NAMGAR Facebook page (I have found Facebook to be really handy for things like this, despite its many shortcomings) and I emailed the Rowdies list server. I got Facebook comments from 22 NAMGAR members and emails from 4 Rowdies.

Here is what I learned, maybe it will be useful to have it all in one place.

1) Some people use a Group 26R Battery (R is for reverse poles – positive on the right for positive ground, though I'm not sure what difference the orientation of the posts makes since the battery has to be mounted sideways and therefore could be turned either way). These batteries are 7 3/4" Wide, 6 1/2" Deep, and 7 1/8" Tall, with 540 CCA. Depending on the Brand, they run about $125 and weigh about 30 pounds.

2) Some people use a Miata Battery (conveniently coded #Miata in the O'Reilly's computer system), which is 7 1/2" Wide, 4 7/8" Deep, and 7" Tall, weighs 25 pounds and cranks out 320 CCA.

3) Others told me they used an Optima Battery, for which there are Red Tops and Yellow Tops that come in many different sizes and are somewhat pricey, ranging from $200 to $300. Then I found this video questioning the quality and value of these batteries and decided to move on: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Never+Buy+This+Car+Battery

I ended up getting the Miata battery because it is an AGM battery and the 26R is lead acid – I am tired of adding distilled water to the cells each summer. Also, the batteries would have to be mounted sideways and the Miata battery is a thinner 4 7/8" deep versus 6

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1/2" deep for the 26R, giving me more room to maneuver around the battery during installation.

And it is in the installation that MG owners really got creative. One MG driver wrote that "I put a 12-volt battery in the trunk (boot) in a marine battery box over thirty years ago and connected with a Healey cable." Another wrote "I'm a bit amused at the search for period correct batteries. Years ago I didn't care; just wanted to get my 57 coupe to work in the winter. Got out the torch and made a big battery mount to replace rotten original. Put in the biggest limo battery Sears had." When someone jumped into the conversation to ask "Any advice on securing the battery?" answers included "big zip tie," "flat rubber bungee," and "my 1600 with 13,000 miles since restoration and fresh off the Iowa trip overhangs my tray and there is nothing that holds it down. Only cables to battery, so not to be concerned. Just bend down the back edge and repaint and it will be fine." And another wrote that "I did mine back in 1978 when I first restored my car and at that time my battery had been tied to the chassis bar by clothesline since everything else was rotted away!"

Then someone asked "Would judges consider a 1x12v battery configuration versus 2x6v making a difference in a concours/GOF? What about positive/negative ground?" to which Dave Quinn answered smartly "If judges have time to dig into the MGAs battery box they have too much time on their hands. 12 or 6 makes no difference to + or - as long as the generator knows the difference."

I wanted to minimize irreversible surgery (I tend to lean towards the purist side) so I built up the bottom of the passenger battery bay with a 1 inch thick piece of cedar (5/4 stock) to handle the weather, added a second piece of 1 inch stock to lengthen the platform by 1 inch to match the longer battery and also raise it up, added aluminum angle brackets to cradle the battery, painted it all black and replaced the existing rubber pads. That tray assembly slid snugly into place and rested in the compartment. To hold the battery and tray down, I turned the existing J-Bar hold downs straight up and made a top bracket out of simple aluminum flat stock, painted it black and attached a foam strip. This worked because (a) I had the extra room on the sides of the Miata battery and (b) the battery was raised so that the battery was higher than the threads on the J-Bars. Though some suggested it, I decided not to switch from positive to negative ground at this time (maybe I just felt lazy). The only surgery I had to do was relocate the ground by drilling a new hole in the tube frame. I doubt the loss of balanced weight matters – instead of 26 pounds of battery on either side, I now have 25 pounds on the passenger side only and the car is 27 pounds lighter. If it does, I'll eat more ice cream to increase the weight on the driver's side of the car.

I am happy with my result, which is easily reversed, secure, clean and, of course, well researched. Thanks to everyone for their help! ***Andy Hoffman***

Battery Maintenance-Dave Smith & Greg Prehodka

While at Mid Ohio recently, Rowdie Racing had a premature failure (3 years) of our motorhome lead acid battery that powers the 12-volt lights, refrigerator etc. Fortunately, the race team nearby ran a generator 24/7, and allowed us to plug in. The beer in the fridge was frosty cold all weekend.

I interviewed the Technician at Wonch-Deka to see what should be done to extend a lead acid battery that sees seasonal use. In the off season the Rowdie Racing battery had been stored in heated storage with a maintenance charger. The battery should have lasted at least 5 years.

Chris said that some maintenance chargers go into a sleep mode, even with the green LED remaining illuminated and must be unplugged to reset. I did not do that, and thus shortened the battery life. Chris states that motorhome and trailer storage batteries (and MG with lead acid batteries) will live longer if discharged and then given a regular charge in November, February and April. The regular charge will mix the acid and keep the plates in working order.

Before storing and charging your battery, the cells should be checked and topped off to the bottom of the split ring with **distilled water**. Distilled water is the most mineral free

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liquid for this process. Tap water may not be a suitable substitute.

Dissimilar metal corrosion occurs when your copper coated cable ends are tightened onto the lead terminals. This is an unavoidable situation but does cause resistance which affects the electron flow and recharging process. At least annually, use a brass brush on both surfaces to restore clean metal before attachment.

Many batteries have side terminals only, which are difficult to grip with a battery charger wire end clamp. The usual solution is to thread a steel bolt into the side terminals and then grab the bolts with the charger positive and negative end. This is not an acceptable practice by battery professionals. The thread in must be lead to prevent false readings to your battery charger. These lead adapters are available at any major battery wholesaler or retailer. If your battery has side and top terminals, simply use the top terminals to connect your charger.

Why recharging is better than maintenance charging - by Greg Prehodka

I worked at Delco Battery (General Motors) in NJ for five years. Concentrated sulfuric acid (1.800 gravity - really nasty stuff) was delivered to the plant for making the car batteries. They cut it with "***city water***" (mineral level not known) to about 1.200 gravity (an exothermic process by the way).

Even if a battery just sits on a battery maintainer charger, the acid layers sort of just stagnate in the cells. It is good practice to "***mix up the acid***" every now (*maybe twice a year if the battery is not in use*). You do this by electrically draining the battery at least partially *(you could just leave the headlights on for an hour or two)*, and then give it a full power re-charge to bring it back up to full charge.
The charging process creates small bubbles on the positive and negative plates in the cells *(giving off a mixture of flammable oxygen and hydrogen gas I might add)* that effectively stirs up the acid around the plates and in the cell, thus mixing it up. And this is also why you should **never** top up battery water to the top of the battery cells. Once the charging process starts, all the small bubbles effectually raise the acid fluid level. This can then create an overflow of acid out of the battery top.

Battery Myths-Dave Smith

Chris added that one often heard myth is that adding baby aspirin to a cell will restore the battery. This does not work. The cell only works with uncontaminated acid.

The second myth is that the modern Polymer cased battery will go dead if set on concrete. This is also not true but does have a basis from the early days of batteries. The early batteries were wooden case design. If set on concrete the wood absorbed moisture and then swelled, which did damage the battery. The modern Polymer case does not absorb moisture.

Hope this information helps you to have trouble free motor home use or MG motoring in the future.

Greg Prehodka and Dave Smith

Devices for the Prevention and Reversal of Battery Sulfation - Rick Astley 2017

Most classic car owners know the lead-acid battery can permanently fail if allowed to fully discharge, and to prevent that happening a trickle — sometimes called a float or maintenance — charge should constantly be applied during any prolonged storage. The deterioration is usually caused by sulfation (also spelled sulphation). Sulfation, which is a coating of lead sulfate crystals around both the positive and negative plates, is a normal product of battery discharge. It occurs as sulfur from the sulfuric-acid and water solution which combines with the lead in any lead-acid

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battery. Indeed, when a battery is fully discharged, all the sulfuric acid is theoretically combined with the lead and only slightly acidic water is left as an electrolyte.

Even when your car is not using any current, the battery will self-discharge over time and so sulfation occurs. However, there are two types of sulfation: one, called soft sulfation, is normal and reverses when the battery is charged and the other, called hard sulfation, is not reversible and can occur when a battery has been allowed to remain in a low state of charge for weeks or months. Hard sulfation will prevent battery operation. Many of us remove the battery from the car in winter and store it in a warmer environment like a basement. While this may seem like TLC, the higher the temperature of a battery, the faster it will self-discharge; in fact the self-discharge rate will double for every 18°F/10°C increase in temperature. Keeping the battery trickle charging is therefore even more important in this case.

The reason some go to the hassle of removing the battery is that, should a battery crack open because of freezing, then not only is it ruined but a dangerous sulfuric acid solution, albeit much weakened, could seep elsewhere in the car and garage. Freezing of the sulfuric-acid/water mixture is, however, almost impossible in a charged battery in which the temperature would have to fall to below -90°F/-68°C before it would freeze; a natural temperature not found on this planet. On the other hand, because the electrolyte in a fully discharged battery is mostly water, it can freeze at temperatures that are considered normal during winter in many climates.

I am sure some of us have found that, even though we have gone to the trouble of trickle charging a battery over the winter months, it nevertheless has been found to have failed anyway. Research in the last decade or so has shown that the prolonged single direction of current into the battery during trickle charging, while helpful, does not altogether prevent hard sulfation occurring. However, short duration voltage pulses mixed with an overall steady charge, have been proven to considerably decrease the occurrence of hard sulfation and moreover, can remove it too. Soon after this became known, electronic devices that condition the battery with charge and discharge pulses applied thousands of times a second became available.

I first saw such devices and was given one for testing, some years ago, but they were expensive and unproven. Mine seemed to work okay but I wasn't able to do any true comparative testing, so I could never really judge the device's efficacy. Independent tests have now shown them to be both effective for the prevention and reversal of hard sulfation, and competition has lowered the price considerably. As was stated previously, self discharge occurs more quickly in warm weather and if you own any vehicle that has a lead acid battery, not just a car but perhaps a mower, boat or golf cart, that is sometimes left unused for days or weeks in any season, then a desulfator can increase battery life considerably, perhaps even doubling it.

Two types of device are now generally available. The first fits permanently across the battery. When the vehicle is in use with the battery being charged by the much more powerful generator and its normal loads — such as lights and ignition — discharging it, the device is overwhelmed and does very little. When the vehicle stops, the device comes into action, pulse discharging the battery, storing that energy and then pulsing it back as a charge. It does this thousands of time each second, keeping the battery working in an non-stressful manner and so preventing sulfate build-up.

The second type of desulfator is combined with a trickle charger and is ideal for those who want to provide a maintenance charge to the battery while it is in storage but do not want to have two separate devices hanging off it. Desulfators use very little battery power but are not 100%

efficient so that if a non-charging type is connected across an inactive battery for a long period, it will itself discharge it. To prevent this happening, some will stop working when the battery voltage falls to between 12.4V and 11.5V, depending on brand.

Desulfators work at high frequencies and to prevent signal attenuation, most manufacturers recommend that they be connected directly to the battery because the signals diminish if they have to travel down long wires. To simplify connection, they are usually provided with ring terminal connectors that make installation to the battery terminals very easy. One disadvantage of permanently connected desulfators is that, because they work at high frequencies, they can in rare cases interfere with entertainment systems or even disrupt sophisticated electronic systems found on all modern cars.

A desulfator, together with trickle charging, can rescue a battery that has seemingly reached its end-of-life because of hard sulfation. The process can take 3-weeks, so be patient. Most manufacturers provide instructions for doing this. In summary:

• If the battery is used in a vehicle that is used every day then hard sulfation is unlikely to occur.

• If the vehicle is inactive for several days at a time, rather than months, then a desulfator connected across it will extend the battery's life.

• If the vehicle is in storage or otherwise not used for months at a time then it will need recharging, using either a separate trickle charger and desulfator or a combined trickle charger/ desulfator will provide the best protection.

• If the battery is a gel type, as installed on small self-starting walk behind mowers for example, then while a desulfating device will also protect it, you will need to verify whether the battery is a 6V or 12V type before ordering.

Do you need a desulfator? At 68°F/20°C, a new modern battery, left idle, will lose about 0.1% to 0.2% of its charge per day due to self-leakage. As it ages, that figure will rise to about 1% per day. Sulfation is considered a problem once the battery falls below 80% of capacity. A new battery with a discharge rate of only 0.1% per day is unlikely to sulfate even after being idle for 26 weeks. Nevertheless, a desulfator, together with an integrated or separate trickle charger will keep the battery active and should slow the rate at which the batteries ages and moves toward the 1% day discharge rate. Note that, once the battery ages and discharges at the 1% per day rate, sulfation becomes a problem in less than 2 weeks.

RickAstley