



A-Antics



Photos-Dave Quinn, Bruce Mann

Fall Color Tour Report
Member Profile
Technical Tips
Bruce Mann's Restoration



Picture of Rowdies Fall Color Tour October 8, 2011



*Picture
courtesy of
Dave Quinn.*

People left to right and rows from top down: Top Row-Bruce & Willy Mann, Steve Finch, Carlene & Herb Maier, Curt Smith, Deb Smith, Gordy Bird, Bruce Nichols, Bruce Read, Jeff Smith, Chari & Dave Smith (“Smiths to the left, Smiths to the right, Who Knows Which Go Home Together Tonight?”)

Bottom Row-Donna Finch, Stephanie Smith (here we go again with the Smiths), Tracey Bird, Donna Quinn.

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

A-Antics: Published every other month.
Opinions expressed are those of the writer 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

MG Web Site: www.mgcars.org.uk

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

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

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: Dec. 20, 2011**

Letters To Members At Large:

Dave Smith wrote to Dave Quinn & Ken Nelson about remembrances of GT-30;

Hey, lets stop at the GT-30 Mackinac City Hotel and pound some beers and then go over the Mighty Mac. I am sure the hotel bar is ready for another large infusion of cash. Probably has never had a three day run like that since we were there. I still remember the bartender saying "OH, we out of beer" Oh, we are out of bourbon. Oh, we are out of wine. etc.

I would love to hear my 1275 at 6K for 5 hours trying to keep up with the MGA convoy.

Hope all is back to normal from your west coast saga.

KEN: I just read the MGA! Magazine today. you are one heck of a writer. That trip to Sweden article was Great. I really loved the part about your infinite wisdom on American

iron had Kathy's eyes glazed over in anticipation of the next tidbit. TOOO funny. The Mike Ash stuff is top notch as usual too.

Leaving on a Jet Plane this afternoon from Flint, MI. Sioux Falls airport is only about 30 minutes from Brookings SD where the kids now live.

The Sprite continues to rise from humble beginnings. All the gauges now work, and the new tranny is fantastic. I hate the sound of grinding gears. I also redid the seats for appearance and comfort. I trailered it up to Oscoda last month, and while Chari was doing her convention thing, took several day trips to Tawas City, Alpena, Cedar Lake and Prudenville. Also had a short visit with Mark & Margie that was cut short when the black clouds began dragging on the ground, and the branches began blowing out of the trees. We headed east on M-55, but did not outrun the storm until nearly back to Lake Huron.

TT you soon. Dave Smith

Dave Quinn wrote in:

Every now and again I try something new that actually works. I wanted to replace the rubber grommets on the carb float bowls; a simple repair when the carbs are off the car. On the car, the rear bowl is very difficult to undo and redo due to the tight quarters. I discovered it's an easy task using a 9/16 crows foot wrench by itself. It saves pulling off the carbs.

Notices:

The Rowdies extend their condolences to Bob Samyn and family on the death of his wife Naoma on 4-21-11 after a 10 year battle with recurring bouts of cancer.

We also are saddened to report on the death of Tracey Bird's mother in October this year. The Rowdies extend their condolences to Tracy and Gordy and family.

Ken Nelson is recovering from shoulder surgery and learning how to type with one finger again while he looks forward to the day when he can start the MGA with the hand crank again.

New Members:

Welcome to new member Andy Hoffman. Andy has a 1960 MGA Roadster and lives in Ann Arbor where he's a professor at U of M. Address is: 751 Brooks St., Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Phone: 617-285-0920

Email: ajhoff@umich.edu



ROWDIES 2011 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOV

5 **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 host



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

Note the recent selling price for an MGA reprinted from the November 2011 issue of "Hemmings Sports and Exotic Car" Magazine in the column to the right



MG

Year: 1957

Model: MGA

Condition: Restored/#2

Reserve: None

Selling price:

\$51,000

Average selling

price: \$35,000

The quality of this car's eight-year-old restoration work was evident, with its still impeccable finish and nicely detailed interior that was just beginning to lose its freshness. The car was redone in its original colors, with the addition of chrome wire wheels, which were not offered by the factory. The strong selling price exceeded even Gooding's estimate, though it's still a less costly alternative to something like an Austin-Healey 100/4. Then again, the car that preceded it across the block, a 1963 Ferrari Superamerica Coupe Aerodinamico, might have made its selling price seem like small change.

Michigan Rowdies 2010 Regalia

Grille badge
with mounting clamp

\$25



Currently Sold Out

Lapel Pin

\$5



Patch

\$5



Tee shirt

\$16



Key fob

\$5



Cap
\$15



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



CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

Both the temperatures and leaves are falling and the driving season is wrapping up. Although records show I drove the MGA 3,000 miles this year it does not feel like it. It feels like I spent 3,000 hours working on it - rather than miles driving it.

I lost springtime driving waiting for a valve job after a head gasket failure due to a defective fitting gasket, which intruded into #3 cylinder. I took advantage of down time to replace a scratched windshield. And I installed stealth matte film on the metal dash area directly below the windshield. The dash area on a white car produces more windshield glare than my prior red car ever did. The film cuts down reflection in the windshield. I ordered enough material to do a second car and I have a pattern, so if anyone is interested in trying this, let me know.

I installed new trunk seal rubber from Macgregor but water still leaks in, primarily, I believe, due to the channel for an unknown reason being bent inward. In any case, it was late June before I could hit the road and discover that I needed to replace the battery and generator. I spent the next two months sorting out issues with my new cruise control. Gordie Bird and I installed it in early spring and were testing it when the head gasket blew so further testing was postponed.

Hunting down electrical woes can certainly test one's determination. I wrote a 7-page in-depth article on the installation which I plan to post on our club's website. To the best of my knowledge the cruise is working fine now; however, I wanted to hold off posting the article until I log several hundred miles. The short story is the real break through on the cruise discovery came when a North Carolina MGA owner assisted me. He had an identical cruise installed on an identical car with 1500 wiring. I found him via the UK's MG Enthusiasts website. He offered to try to duplicate my issues while using an oscilloscope to analyze things. To his surprise and everyone else's, he reported getting voltage spikes of 150 volts for a few microseconds from various areas of the car; for

example, the turn signal switch. He commented, "I'm not surprised now that a modern electronic device would have fits living in that environment. These modern circuit boards are not set up to handle that." I installed a 1uF capacitor on Directional Indicator Relay Box terminals #4 and #8 to solve that issue.

Another issue surfaced when vapor lock symptoms appeared after driving any distance in the hot months of July and August. Hunting down stalling issues when the car is otherwise running great can certainly test one's determination as well. I had Bruce Nichols and many others racking their brains for things to check out. I believe I solved the issue when I discovered the vacuum advance unit was terminal. I replaced it with an early MGB unit that I happened to have in my parts bin. It had a slightly different code. My original 7-17-10 was replaced with a 5-13-10. In case you were wondering about the code breakdown: the 1st number is mercury vacuum starting advance, 2nd is mercury vacuum at full advance, and the 3rd is total degrees of distributor ignition advance which doubles at crank; i.e. 10 = 20 degrees. How did I get so smart on this subject? Here is the source: <https://www.britishvacuumunit.com/Services.html>.

Like you, I am waiting until Springtime 2012 to get driving again. Donna says I put all the miles on the car this year test-driving it!

Dave Quinn

(Ed. Note: Let's all remember to thank Chairman Dave for organizing a great fall color tour this month and remembering to order up a beautiful day with great colors!)



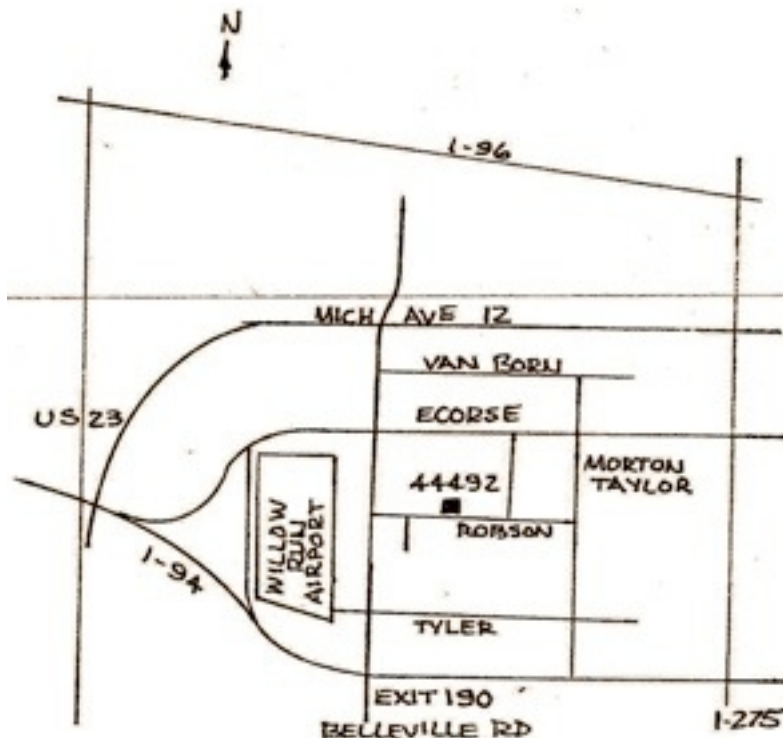
Announcing Neil Griffin's Day in the Garage - Nov 5, Sat.



44492 Robson Rd.
Belleville, MI
734-697-7419



The event starts about noon, and lasts until everyone leaves. Dish to pass not required, but welcomed. Thelma's home-made chili and fresh cider provided.



We will be constructing a plywood box that can be bolted into the empty left hand battery tray and that will be very useful for permanently storing your "traveling parts" for future use. All materials will be available at a nominal fee.

Rowdies Christmas Party

**Festivities start 2:00 PM, Saturday, December 3, 2011
at the Bone Island Grill**

Davis Catering buffet dinner served at 3:30 PM. Slow roasted hand pulled turkey, honey glazed roast ham, mashed potatoes & gravy, stuffing, sweet potatoes, green beans, tossed salad, macaroni salad, appetizer trays & desserts.

The deadline to sign-up is November 20th. This is our largest attended event each year. It is catered. You must let Dave Quinn know if you plan to attend and how many will be with you.

The cost is \$10.00 per person. Children free.

Each attendee, including children, is asked to bring a wrapped gift for the *fun* gift exchange. Bring your favorite beverage or buy drinks from the adjoining bar. Coffee & pop provided.

Bone Island Grill, 4614 Francis St, Jackson, MI. 517-783-2144.

Directions from I-94. At exit 142 take US-127 south 6.3 miles to the M-50 exit. Drive west on McDevitt about 1.5 miles. McDevitt makes a 90 degree right turn and becomes Francis St. The Bone Island Grill is immediately on your left. Use the entrance door on the left for our rented hall-type area.



Stephanie Smith's Color Tour Report...

The day started with fog in our area but as we drove west to meet with the Rowdies, the sun began to shine upon us. As we continued on our route, we realized that the weather gods were smiling on us as we arrived at our meeting place.

Cars rolled into the McDonald's parking lot one by one and drivers eagerly gathered to get their hands on the driving directions from Dave Quinn.

It was great to gather and chat with Bruce Nichols, Tracey and Gordie Bird, Dave and Chari Smith, Bruce and Willie Mann, Herb and Carlene Maier, Steve and Donna Finch, Jeff and Debbie Smith, Bruce Read and our super hosts, Dave and Donna Quinn. After using the facilities and tanking up on breakfast and coffee, the Rowdies caravan headed out of the parking lot.

Six British cars were winding around the country roads that promised bright fall colors. We followed the lead car, Dave and Donna Quinn, through many twists and turns throughout the country side. There were five MGAs, one Sprite and an MGBGT along with a few non British cars taking up the rear.

The tour kept this small caravan of cars driving steady for over 45 minutes before allowing a quick opportunity to relieve the group of their early morning coffee at a golf course along the way. (The Rowdies did behave themselves and used the indoor facilities.) This also allowed an opportunity for a group photo.

As we approached the winery, a small plane was arriving for a landing while we were turning into the drive way. What a great planner our president, Dave Quinn, is to arrange such an exciting welcome for the Rowdies. Soon we were inside the Chateau Aeronautique Winery. Many of the Rowdies participated in wine tasting and great conversation. Yours truly had never participated in such an event and found myself feeling the effects of the wine! I was very pleased when it was time to leave and head for the restaurant for a meal to control the results of the sipping of the wine!!



*Pictures by
Bruce Mann.*



The restaurant proved to be a great choice. The service was efficient and the food was wonderful. It was a great finish to a warm and colorful fall day. It's always difficult to leave a great party but that fall sun would soon be gone and the Rowdies knew we had to get on down the road!

We motored back with Bruce Read following us home. It was nice to continue to take the colors in on the back roads. We stopped for a stretch at a Dairy Queen to end our fun day. Many thanks are in order to Dave and Donna Quinn for planning such a wonderful drive. I am certain it took many hours to put together this tour. The roads were great with very little traffic so we could take in the sights. Your hard work is deeply appreciated.

Before I end this story, may I suggest that we help our Editor, Ken Nelson, with more contributions to the newsletter? He threatened me with a self destructing email in order to get an article. Please help this man so he doesn't have to go to such extremes!!*

Roving Rowdie Reporter, Stephanie Smith

** (Earlier a very deep male voice was heard to say... "Stephanie, this message will self destruct in 30 seconds, but listen closely as it includes your new assignment, should you choose to accept...."*

"Stephanie, you have been chosen for a very special mission. It involves minimal, if any, danger; but is critical to the success of our organization. Having read this far, you have indicated a willingness to write an article for the A-Antics about the color tour that you just attended. It need not be brief, for brevity is but for the weak of heart; have go at letting those lofty words fly, and send me an epistle worthy of a Shakespeare, or a John Donne. Now, stand back while this email self-destructs, since it is written in disappearing font." Cheers,

Your Team at "Mission Impossible Journalism"

YOUR ARTICLE COULD BE IN THE NEXT ISSUE. WRITE EARLY, AND WRITE OFTEN! Your editor needs your stories and pictures! THANKS!

Member Profile From Jeff & Deb Smith...



From a few years ago, don't we still look like this?

It sounded so innocent. "Jeff, it's time we put seatbelts in the MG", she said. "Yeah, I think you're right, let me order them", I replied. So started our dark and sordid tale of another MG restoration.

We had met some time ago, at a small college in Michigan called "EMU". Yeah, it's a school, not the bird. There she was, in philosophy class, so young and beautiful. And on crutches. A careless driver had smashed into her Camaro, hurting her leg. I knew I had to take a chance, because she couldn't run from me. After talking with her several times before class, I worked up the courage and asked her for a date. To my surprise, she said "Yes"! Even after getting to know me, she stuck with me, and we're still together to this day...

After graduating high school in 1972, I bought my first MGA. It was short-lived, however. My brother, who worked at a body shop, did the bodywork. A friend and I "rebuilt" the engine (didn't know you had to R&R such things as cam bearings...), and some of the suspension. The one unique thing about this MGA: it had a factory aluminum (or is that aluminium?) removable hardtop. Well, driving to town one chilly evening just before the final paint job, I lost traction around a curve. After a brief spin, the car slammed into a tree putting a big "U" in the rider's side, ruining that hardtop. So it goes...

In 1975 I enrolled at Eastern Michigan, and met Deb. She was majoring in Fine Arts, while I was still trying to figure out what "Major" meant. We both found gainful employment before finishing school. Deb got into sales at the local cable company, and stayed on with a promotion to sales manager, while I went to work at Ford.

In '77, I saw an add for a 1960 MGA! I was driving a Dodge Dart, so that MG sounded (but didn't look) good. I talked Deb, and myself, into letting me get it. I went to look it over, paid the owner, and "drove" it home. When I look back, it was pretty amazing that it started, let alone ran for the twenty mile drive.

Deb and I got down to the work of restoring our "new" MGA. The archeological analysis showed it had five or six coats of paint, the last one with a paint roller coating everything, including chrome. We never did figure out what the original color was, but did find Alamo Beige and Gray in the various layers. Breaking down the engine revealed a cracked #4 piston, the top half separated at the piston pin. We worked on it as often as we could, and even got a small oil-burning furnace to heat the garage. Never mind the roof leaks, we were just renting!



Why won't it go?

The engine went out for a professional rebuild. Deb and I stripped paint, she can tell you all about the finer points of reconditioning the boot. Deb used the metal dashboard as a pattern on a walnut board. I used all of my "skills" to fashion the walnut into a dashboard. We towed the MG to (now) my brother's shop, where he performed his magic: grinding, patching, straightening and priming. He painted the engine compartment and fender seams with the finish

color, so we could put the engine back in. Chariot Red, not Alamo Beige!

Back to the rented garage, install wooden dash and new wiring harness. Over to the mechanic's, reinstall engine, refresh brakes and suspension. Engine in, drive to the body shop, put the fenders, boot, bonnet, and finish paint on. Back to the rented garage, new carpets and leather seat kit.

Early fall, '80. Shiny red paint, chrome wire wheels and new tires, stage II ½ engine rebuild, fresh interior...WOW! This MGA was a thrill to look at and drive! At this time, pre-Michigan Rowdies for us, it seemed like a one of kind car, and it was the Only red MGA we had seen up close!



Somewhere around this time I met Neil Griffin, and he took me under his wing. In short order, Deb and I joined the Michigan Rowdies, and attended as many club events as we could. Some of the most memorable ones included the road rallies in Bad Axe hosted in the early '80s by Bruce Nichols, and the Carnival of Cars show at the Packard Proving Grounds with the club. We got to drive on the banked oval track there, but only up to 50 miles per hour.



R.B. Hart and Dave Quinn

During the first few years of driving, the Walter Mitty in me came out often (hey, it still does!). I imagined the MG to be a powerful race car, and myself to be racing almost every time I got behind the wheel. This resulted in a speeding ticket not long after the restoration, a cracked crankshaft, one broken clutch, and a club first, a cracked differential cage. Minor setbacks. Neil scratched his head about the last one, but just happened to have parts he could sell me.

Deb also got behind the wheel, and learned how to drive the manual transmission. I made the grievous mistake of trying to teach her, which almost ended our relationship. Soon though, she became proficient and took the car out whenever she got the urge.

I was laid off from Ford in '82, and went back to school to get my degree. Deb was now marketing manager, and helped me with school expenses. Her company was sold, and her former boss recruited her to be Director of Marketing at a cable company in Upstate New York. Absence does make the heart grow fonder, and since I couldn't live without her, I finally proposed to her the next fall. She accepted (the challenge?! I guess coming back to civilization, even to be with me, was better than living in the middle of nowhere.

We were married in late summer of 1984, and I graduated with a B.S. in December. I immediately used that BS, er, B.S., and landed a job in Ann Arbor, where we rented a little house with a garage for the MG. Deb began as manager/buyer for a shoe store in Plymouth, and for a while drove the MG every day for work.

We still attended club meets as often as we could, until my career took me to the long drives and high pressure of high tech companies in Southfield and Troy. Sad to say, we let our club membership lapse in the late '80s.

Calley, our first daughter, was born in 1990, and our first house purchased in '91. The MG only came out for an occasional drive. Our second daughter, Erin, was born in '95. The MG was officially a second-class citizen, and rarely started. We bought our second house in 2000, and during the move put the MG into storage for a few years.

Then, another life changer happened. I hired into a company right here in Ann Arbor in '06, and immediately got 1 ½ hours of my life back each day, and a savings of almost \$250 a month in gas. My daily drive went from 65 to 3 miles! The kids were older, so we got thinking about the MG and rejoining the club.

In the summer of '07, I checked out the car, and "all" it needed to get back on the road was new battery, brake pads and shoes, oil change, and some fresh gas. After a few cranks, it fired up! Sure, it wasn't fresh. The carpets were turning to dust, you could see the road through the floorboards, the tires were (25 years) old, but it rolled under its own power. I took it for a spin, with a smile on my face.

I called Neil to let him know we were still alive and ready to rejoin the Rowdies. He was hosting a meet, so I attended, rekindled old friendships, and made new ones with members I hadn't yet met. That's truly one of the best parts about owning an MGA, the comraderie and fellowship of the club members.

Deb and I attended several meets, and I drove the MG until the fall of '08. That brings us full circle to "Jeff, it's time we put seatbelts in the MG" and our second restoration.

I checked the frame at the place the seatbelts are mounted, and found...rust!



It was well past time for a frame restoration, so I did the math. I figured it would only take about a year for the restoration, and wouldn't cost too much. A phone call to Neil to discuss my plans, and all I heard on the other end was snickering. "It's going to take a long time, Jeff". "No Neil, I think I can get it done in a year". More laughter, and I thought, "what does he know, all you have to do is take it apart, get a few new parts, and put it back together". Neil is a very wise man, experienced in the ways of MG restoration. The uninitiated tend to be overly optimistic.

Undaunted, I began my quest in the fall of '08. Purchased a replacement frame from Mark Barnhart. Took it, with many other parts, over to Neil's the next summer at his invitation. Sandblasted

parts over three of the hottest weekends of the summer. Neil did the last bit of welding, and more, on the frame, and painted it. I didn't know there were so many parts on such a little car, but they all came off and got cleaned up. The part Deb liked best was the Walker's Shortbread cookies that came with all the parts orders from LBCarCo (there were lots!). This went on much longer than I'd care to admit, or, as Neil would put it, "A long time". Engine painted, transmission, rear axle, suspension, brakes and more rebuilt onto the "new" frame.



Body up, there's Neil!

Then came the big day: hoist the body off the original frame, lower it onto the completely restored frame and running gear. I had scheduled some friend's help, but they got busy that day. Then, when I looked out of the garage, I saw Neil driving up. He evidently wanted to make sure this job was done right. I still had several hours of work before hoisting the body, and there was Neil all over the place, with spanners swinging! I think he got more done in one day than I had in several weeks! Daylight was getting short, but we were ready. Deb and Erin came out to help, while Neil directed. The body came up, old frame dragged out, new frame rolled under, and the body set down! Neil, we couldn't have done it without you, thank you friend.

It only took a couple of more months of weekends to finish. So, after telling club members I would be driving in another month every time we went to a meet, the MG was finally finished in a mere 2 ½ years. Not so long. The seat belts are installed. Right on (my) schedule.

Jeff Smith

Tech Tips

Engine Oils, ZDDP and What History is Telling Us!

Reprinted from Columbia Gorge "MGAnnouncer"-Oct 2011-By Keith Ansell

Four years ago the cam manufacturers and engine builders knew something was wrong. At first the oil companies denied that failing engines had anything to do with the oil. Then a few companies started manufacturing oil specifically for our cars while others continued to deny there was a problem. Well now the votes are in and most oil companies are now accepting that the "New and Improved Oils" are not for our cars.

Today we can find "High Zinc" oils from many companies. Even many of the companies that were in complete denial now have products for us. I've seen product costing from \$2.29 to \$12.95 a quart. It can't be denied now that we need high ZDDP oils. The additives that we were using are now not necessary so we no longer have to worry about compatibility of extra additives with the oils.

"Now the rest of the story".

First: We have to use a dedicated high ZDDP break in oil on new engines for as much as 1,500 miles. Forget this and we have many pictures of dead cams, tappets and destroyed engines to prove it is necessary.

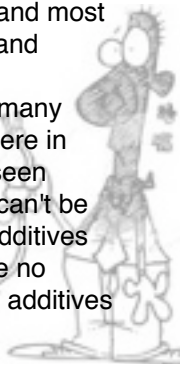
Second: Older engines that were broken in years ago

with high ZDDP oils will not fail in a catastrophic way within a year or two or maybe even more using newer oil.

Third: Flat tappet engines built before 1980 not using high ZDDP oils will experience a shortened life. What we don't know yet is if the engine life going to be 80% or 20% shorter.

Fourth: Should we use synthetic or conventional high ZDDP oil? Synthetic oil is better, it clings longer to cold engines for more lubrication at startup, it lubricates better and lasts longer. The newer high ZDDP conventional oils are less expensive and are usually very good. If Zinc is at or over 1200 ppm in synthetic or conventional oil it shouldn't hurt our engines. What to use? My personal view is a few dollars more for the best synthetic won't hurt and will probably save me a lot of money on a rebuild down the road.

Conclusion: Today we now have oils that are formulated for our cars. We no longer have to worry about adding extra ZDDP additives as these new oils are complete out of the bottle. What brands to use?? Joe Gibbs and Redline have the most experience with the synthetic oils. Brad Penn and Joe Gibbs were a couple of the first to offer a conventional oil specifically for our cars. These are just three of the manufacturers that are now supporting our cars. It's taken four plus years but we now have oils that are right for our cars!!



Ethanol, friend of nature (Not!) and enemy of MG.

Submitted by Keith Ansell

I'm not going to start a fight by discussing the nature of ethanol, the world economy and food supply but I am going to share what we have been finding in the way our beloved British cars are reacting to the ethanol in our fuel.

First was that we found fuel filters were filling up with a reddish brown clay like material. What this is, is every bit of rust that ever started to form in our fuel systems. The ethanol seems to loosen this stuff from the gas tank and the lines that in the past did no damage. I have heard that in some drastic cases that fuel leaks in gas tanks and fuel lines are starting to appear as the rust is pulled from where it formed. Fuel filters are cheap and should be changed more regularly now. Fuel tanks will start to leak sooner and may need to be lined.

Ethanol absorbs water, a good thing, sometimes. Most fuel treatments contain mostly ethanol to remove water from the fuel system, it works, to a point of

saturation. Then the water drops out of the gasoline and sits in the bottom of the fuel tank. Water (in the air) plus iron (our gas tank) plus a little oxygen and the bottom of your fuel tank starts to rust out! If you run through a gas tank of fuel every 30 days or less this shouldn't happen as separation and saturation doesn't get a chance. If your car sits, hopefully always with an almost full tank, you will now need to add a fuel stabilizer before you put the car away. It actually may be a good thing to always add fuel stabilizer whenever you fill the tank. It will cost from about \$150 to \$300 to have your fuel tank cleaned and lined and it's probably something we all will eventually have to have done to all our cars.

Next we found that any flexible fuel line that hasn't been changed in the last 10 years or less becomes brittle and either breaks or cracks. The first trouble we saw was that the fuel lines from the car to the carbs began to fail in the engine compartment because of the ethanol plus heat. Then the lines to and from the fuel pumps started to leak under the car. This can lead to some dangerous conditions of pumping fuel out of broken or cracked lines whenever the ignition was on. We have

actually reached up to check these fuel lines and had them come apart in our hands they were so brittle! We had one customer wonder why he only got about 7 miles per gallon on a trip from Seattle to Portland. The outlet hose from the fuel pump had cracked and he was pumping his fuel on the road!

We are now finding that on the smog control cars, built from 1969 to 1980, the fuel lines to and from the vapor separator (a small tank usually found behind the right rear tail-light) have failed. The first sign of a problem here is a fuel smell at the rear of the car in the boot, or in the case of a GT in the interior. This is especially noticeable when or just after filling the tank. One line leads from the top of the gas tank, to remove vapors, into the bottom of the vapor separator tank. The other flexible line comes from the top of the vapor separator and connects to a steel line that goes forward to the absorption canister in the engine compartment. These lines have dedicated steel covered flex lines with screwed fittings. The steel flex lines are safer in the event of a rear end impact but can easily be replaced with modern rubber fuel lines by a competent

shop. The original style steel flex lines are also available from your local MG repair shops.

Next we need to understand how this affects the running of our pre-ethanol cars. In a few words, less mileage, less power and poor running overall. By retuning to the “new, improved fuel” we can recapture most of the running performance. We can’t do anything about the reduction of mileage. The other big problem is that ethanol boils at a much lower temperature and this causes fuel starvation whenever we get caught in traffic on a warm day. This is mostly noted by the car missing when we start driving away from a stop. As we get up to speed, cooler fuel makes it from the tank to the carburetors and the car will start to run acceptably, until the next stop. Be prepared, E-85 (15% ethanol) fuel is on the way (today it is only 10%) and it will require some new tuning and put more water in the bottom of our fuel tanks. Fuel without ethanol is available at marinas. Ethanol fuel plus being on the water was proving very difficult for boat owners and now non-ethanol fuel is available at selected marinas.

THINKING OF REPLACING THOSE OLD LEVER-ARM SHOCKS WITH MODERN TUBE SHOCKS? YOU MIGHT WANT TO RECONSIDER TUBE SHOCKECTEMY!

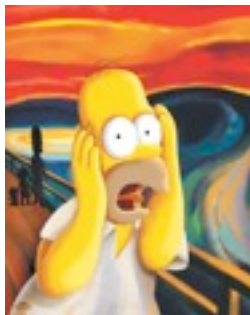
By Simon Dix, MGB/MGC Registrar – MG Club Of St Louis (Reprinted from “eChatter” Emerald Necklace MG Register, Inc August 2011)

So, I haven’t done an article for a while and if you haven’t done any projects recently I can’t believe you don’t have any to do. Either you, or your MG are just resting I think the saying goes! My latest project with my 72 MGB

—Scarlettll has been to remove the tube shock conversion that was on the car. It had been there when I had bought the car and was just a slight negative since I had read online at MGExperience.net on several occasions the various pros and cons espoused on the tube shock conversion versus original lever arm shocks. Although I would have preferred the stock lever arms to be there, it wasn’t that much of a problem to start with since I had a whole interior to install first before I’d even know whether I liked them or not. Given that I’ve got past quite a few things with the car now (no, it’ll never be done), I’ve been able to drive it quite a bit and have some 3,000+ miles on it since the engine rebuild.

All this time I have found the shocks to be quite harsh on any bump. On several occasions it’s been enough that the seat belt has caught to hold me in my seat. One other experience I had seemed to send the entire rear end

into the air as I went into a corner – that was way more exciting than it should have been.



So my approach to this was to acquire some shocks and see if I could refurbish them. If not, then I’d have a core to use with Peter Caldwell of World Wide Auto Parts in Madison, WI who has a great reputation of making the Armstrong lever arm shocks even better than new. On the rear I had nothing from the original setup and on the front the tube shocks used the original lever shocks as a mounting point but I had no idea whether there was anything left of these to be refurbished – any valves in there? I managed to get both front and rear shocks via eBay that were reasonably priced including the shipping (they’re heavy) and then there were a couple of really good articles covering refurbishing the front and rear shocks in the North American MGB register The Driver magazine. These even had the pictures that I tend to need and find so helpful. So I had everything I needed to get started so I thought I’d see what shape my eBay shocks were in and decide what to do next after that.

As a starting point I could tell that the front shocks I acquired had quite a bit of play in them in that the arms would move 1/4 to 1/2 inch of travel without any resistance. Then there would be some resistance. As such I thought I’d see whether I could just add some oil to the shocks and work them a bit and then see if they were leaking. A leak would likely mean forgetting my refurbishment and using them as a core. I was also a little nervous about opening

up the back of the shocks, as was described, and not damaging the gasket. The shock cover gaskets are not an available part. There is quite a bit written on what oil to use but hydraulic jack oil is a 3rd or 4th choice and I had some of that lying around so I decided to use it. I was able to add quite a bit of oil through the fill hole and then worked the arms a little bit and added more until it seemed they were full. This took up much of the slack/travel in them and no leaks were evident. However, leaving them a few days and working the arms again revealed a little bit of the slack coming back.

I reviewed the front shock refurbishment article again and noted one of the last steps was to remove the valve and carefully holding the shock with the open valve hole level and working the arms through full motion to get all the air out. I used the pictures and the details to safely remove the valve and shims and sure enough working the arms caused a few air bubbles to be released. I kept slowly working the arms until no bubbles could be seen when moving the arms. At this point I replaced the valve and tightened things up and worked the arms again – no slack and no slack several days later. Great, I cleaned up the whole shock, painted the arms black and put them aside as they were ready to be used.

The rear shocks I got were from a late rubber bumper car and so the connector links were longer than needed for the chrome bumper 72B. I got new links from Moss and was able to remove the old links from the shock arms using 2 hammers to pop the taper fitting end of the link out of the shock arm itself. Put one hammer behind the fitting and whack the other side and the thing just pops out after a few whacks. Working the arms of the rear shocks there was no slack in them but I decided to top them off and remove the valves and work out any air. They took just a little oil and very few air bubbles were found. Looking good, I figured these were now already for install and removal of the tube shocks.

I decided to start with the front end and the most difficult thing I was expecting, based on research and conversations, was removal of the fulcrum bolt. I put up one side of the car onto a jack stand and removed the wheel to have easy access. I then brought in a floor jack and raised the A-arm/spring pan so the shock was lifted about 1 inch above the bump stop. The castle nut undid easily, after removal of the cotter pin, and I put the nut on backwards to allow me to hit on it to back out the bolt without damaging the threads. The bolt moved easily, which I understand is not typically the case. I have read about having to cut these bolts out so you may need research this.

I then removed the tube shock and the old to make way for my replacement. It's just 4 bolts that secure

the shock to its mount. Since the fulcrum bolt came out so easily I thought I'd be done pretty quickly with this change. Ha, how I should have known there would be a surprise!

The surprise was basically my own fault and a case of the —might as wells! I had new fulcrum bushings that I have never got around to installing on the 77 and decided to use these. I still haven't figured out the why, but using the new bushings I was unable to get the arms of the shocks close enough such that the hole for the cotter pin in the fulcrum bolt was accessible. I tried various things and despite what should have been better judgment, the brute force approach of tightening the castle nut simply resulted in stripping the bolt, Duh! Not going to be done as fast as I thought and, yep, should have bought some



spare

bolts and stuff for this job.

So once some new bolts and castle nuts arrived I went at this again and took the easy way out and just used the old bushings. Back at square one I used some anti-seize on the bolt and tapped it home through the arms and bushings having brought the kingpin into place to be between the shock arms. The fulcrum bolt has a flat sided head which aligns to the shock arm to stop it spinning so watch for that as you get this flush to the shock arm. I then tightened the castle nut firmly and then backed off just enough to allow me to insert and fold over the cotter pin.

The other side front shock replacement went according to plan and I did find that having the floor jack positioned on the front edge of the A-Arm seemed to work the best and brought the kingpin nicely up into alignment. Bolstered with the confidence of success on the front end I decided to dive in to start on the back as well. It was my suspicion that the back shocks were the majority of the ride problems I was experiencing.

First things first, the removal of the tube shock.

Relatively straight forward as the tops used one of the mounting points of the original lever arm shock. The bottom end used the mount point for the shock link but the plates on the bottom of the springs/shackle had been reversed left side and right side and flipped upside down. Some PB Blaster and some brute force for the big nuts on the bottom mount and the tubes were gone. I wasn't quite sure what was going to stop the rear end basically falling to the ground as my mind and prior experiences haven't involved much around suspension.

Still the stuff was all there and the rear leaf springs were of course what kept things where they are supposed to be. Next up was switching of the lower plates. I marked with white-out the position of the upper part of the shackle on the axle tube and proceeded to remove the first plate. The last bolt came with a bit of a surprise in that it popped off and the spring came down about 1/2 an inch or so. The springs were still under a bit of tension. After a quick telephone consultation I proceeded to remove the other side plate but this time used a bottle jack to prevent the spring coming down and this worked well. I was able to switch and invert the plate to its correct position for the stock shock setup. I did the same on the other side using the bottle jack to raise the springs back up to the position they were in when I removed the first place and this worked as well. No doubt this is probably not the correct way to go at this but it's how I was able to get through my process.

With the plates correct I could install the shocks and connection links. I mounted the first shock using the bolts and locating holes and tightened them up fully. I then put the end of the link arm into the shock arm and got the bottom of the link arm into the hole in the plate. With everything in place on both ends I tightened things up properly and repeated this on the other side—done.

So, would all this make a difference or was my problem the springs or something else? Oh yes, this fixed things right up! Just outside my house is a concrete road with the usual gaps/joins every X yards which makes the perfect test track for this kind of thing. As soon as I was out there I knew immediately the work had been worthwhile. Infinitely smoother ride and no bumps causing the seat belt to catch me as had been the case before. The 72 rides as smooth as the 77 does and life is as it should be. No need to wince in anticipation of some bad road or pot holes as had been the case before. So no doubt there are people out there with tube shock conversions that work for them. Most likely the shocks I had were bad but they were NAPA brand and the correct part number based on a cross reference of suitable tube shock choices for an MGB. Still, for me I am much happier with the original Armstrong shocks and I won't be changing back to tubes. In this case, unlike the 77, this had nothing to do with originality and everything to do with comfort and for me and my car that's what has been accomplished! Safety Fast!





Our Michigan Chapter will be hosting GT-40 in 2015. Here is your Rowdie GT-40 Selection Committee at work. Ken & Kathy Nelson, Marji & Mark Barnhart, Donna & Dave Quinn; plus Bruce Nichols, and Dave & Chari Smith (not pictured) recently visited Grand Rapids, evaluating that city as a potential location for GT-40. While there they visited the Frederick Meijer Gardens, which were most impressive. Unfortunately, they had not eaten lunch before arriving, and wish to extend their sincere apologies to Fred and his staff at the Gardens for snacking a little on the attractions that were exhibited. As you can see, it won't happen again since they picked the bones quite clean!



Bruce Mann's MGA-It's "A" Family Affair Revisited, or The Saga Continues

Refer to the earlier story in July-Aug 2012 "A-Antics for the initial tale, and.....Here We Go!

It is now the 20th of October 2011, 2 ½ years into this restoration...

That is a long time but certainly worth the wait. Some times frustrating but, all in all, it is all about quality. We have the hood painted, as well as the trunk lid, doors, front and rear fenders, and the dash. The body is all welded and has been fitted numerous times to assure a good fit.

The transmission and engine are in and most of the parts are installed on the engine that should not interfere with the assembly of the body to the frame. We have installed the insulation, carpet, seat belts and some of the wiring harness (new) along the side to the rear lights.

The engine and trunk bay are sanded as well, and

all the release rods removed and repainted. The luggage rack has been reworked and re-chromed and is ready for installation.

The entire interior has been redone in saddle tan leather which will look nice with the red. My son, Tim was responsible for getting the interior done.

Kyle, Connor and Willy helped with installing the carpet. It was a fun project. My daughter Candace helped in picking out the color Red. I made numerous trips to Knight's Auto on Pontiac Trail, in Walled Lake. We used a base red from Ford/Mazda and added Maroon to assure a deeper red. Finally we got it. Tom Shipley is painting the car; some of you may remember him as he was a Rowdie and owned T&W for a number of years. He currently has a '72 MG Midget.

We are hoping to get the car back in early November, yes of this year.

To Be Continued.....



Pictures clockwise from upper left: Willy Mann working on interior; Connor and Kyle Mann doing floorboards; Willy puts in a headlamp; carpet attached; newly painted bonnet with chromed latch- Abingdon never had it so good! See next page as well...



Pictures from Bruce Mann's Family Sweatshop Garage. Clockwise from upper left: New Carpet; Solid body; Daughter Karen displays rebuilt engine; "Da Boys"-Connor Mann, Tim Mann, Kyle Mann, Jake Woods; Curt Smith & Neal Griffin; Kyle sanding trunk; gorgeous red trunk after painting.