



# A-Antics



SCX MGA No.25  
Santa Claus -  
Limited Edition of 25.

*Color Tour*  
*Winter Storage*  
*Rear Main Oil Seal*  
*LED Headlight Report*



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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](http://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 Kroy
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: December 20, 2019**

## Letters

### *Interesting Riley Facts*



It's a little known fact that there is nothing finer than to drive your Riley RME Saloon car down a winding rural road with the fall colors on display in all their glory. Here is another satisfied Riley owner finding his way home again after a day in the country. Ah, the luxury of fine British motoring!

**Sir Algernon  
BlueBottom**

### *Party Time*

Here are a few of the Party loving Rowdies sharing pictures on a stop-over driving home after the



Birthday Party at Nelson's in August. Bet they saved on the cost of hotel rooms!

**Anonymous**

### *An MGA Kind Of Road?*



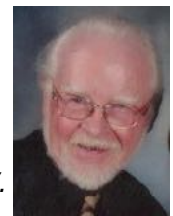
**Submitted by Dave Smith**

### *Remembering RB*

Many of the early Rowdies will remember R.B. Hart (Robert Bruce) and have wondered what has happened to him after losing contact with him since he moved to California. **Steve Mazurek** supplied the answer recently when he wrote in to the Antics:

While doing some research on an another matter, I came across the following obituary:

**"Robert (Bob) Hart, 77, who was born in Great Falls on Aug. 18, 1939 to Bruce and Gertrude Severson Hart, passed away on Dec. 23, 2016, in his sleep. Bob attended Great Falls schools, graduating from GFHS in 1957. He was a Boy Scout, a chevalier and a representative of the DeMolay. Bob was active in the Episcopal Church as an acolyte and counselor at Camp Marshall.**



**Bob attended Montana State College in Bozeman. He was a member of Phi Kappa Alpha fraternity and caretaker of their mascot, a bobcat named Pike. Bob and Pike could be seen strolling the sidelines at football games. After graduating from college, Bob taught Art at the high school in Walport, OR. He returned to Great Falls briefly before accepting a position teaching Art at Grand Valley State College in Michigan, where he met and married Joyce Jackson in the Episcopal Church of Grand Haven.**

**Bob had a lifelong interest in cars. He and Joyce belonged to the MGA car club. They made several enjoyable trips to Gymkannas and car rallies. Bob and Joyce had a daughter, Brooks Jackson Hart, in 1969. Bob left Grand Valley and accepted a position as a technical advisor at Moss Motor Company, a British automobile**



dealership, in Goleta, CA. Bob and Joyce eventually divorced.

Bob met and married Corinne Gantt in Santa Barbara, CA. They shared many years and several cruises together. Bob was an avid reader, a wonderful cook, and had a witty personality. He loved animals and was never without a cat or two.

He is survived by his wife, Corinne Hart; his daughter Brooks (Marvin) Baker of Portland; and his mother, Gertrude S. Hart of Great Falls. He is also survived by his stepdaughter and her two children, as well as several beloved cousins." From **Great Falls Tribune** on Jan. 29, 2017

**Steve Mazurek added:** R. B., as he was known, was an early promoter of NAMGAR and very influential in the early Michigan Chapter: one of the founding members. He was my first editor as Chairman of NAMGAR in 1983. He created the fundamentals of MGA! Magazine, moving it from basically a photocopied newsletter to a true printed organizational magazine.

I am unsure how many NAMGAR members will recall R.B., certainly many in the Michigan Chapter, but in the earlier days, he was a house-hold name for MGA owners across the U.S. I thought others might want to know. **Regards, Steve**

**From your editor:** "RB", for Robert Bruce, was indeed well known in Michigan and to me. He was one of my mechanical mentors and helped me rebuild my MGA engine in 1978, then later my Riley engine (although I've done both since again). My Rover also came from RB. He bought it from another professor at Grand Valley State University and drove it into the ground. When he moved to California to start working for Moss Motors his wife, Joyce Hart, was left here briefly to sell their house. She finagled me into buying their 2 Rovers for \$100 from them (one was a 'parts car' in a field, but both were ready for the junkyard). RB and Joyce's house at the corner of Gunnison and Veto streets in Grand Rapids was also the home of the original "stay vertical" Rowdie Birthday Parties. Fond memories! RIP. **Ken Nelson**

**Griffins & Dick Feight In The News**



Independent photos by Rosemary K. Otzman  
The oldest alumni at Saturday's Belleville High School Alumni Reunion are, from left, Jean Smith Hayward, age 96, class of 1940; Dick Feight, class of 1944; Millie Baker, class of 1944; Phyllis Smith Stein, class of 1945; and guest Thelma Griffin, wife of oldest male alumnus, Neil Griffin, age 94, class of 1943.

**Congrats To Larry & Mitzi!**

This past summer Larry and Mitzi Pittman celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with guests, children, and grandchildren. A great time was had by all, and we all wish them 50 more years to come. Below is a picture with their grandchildren.

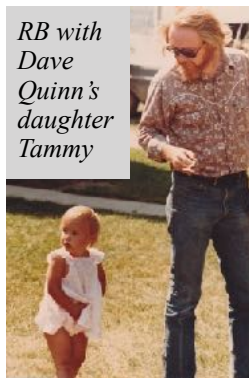


**Craft Projects Anyone?**

Dave Quinn sent in these 2 pictures of possible Christmas gifts for friends. A home quilt car cover, and a custom radiator overflow kit.



RB and Joyce Hart



RB with Dave Quinn's daughter Tammy



**Be Careful Out There**

This is a simple driving tip that brother Ron taught me circa 1964. I use it every day.

Local paper reports a Lansing citizen lost her life in a MVA on M-66 at Belding road. She was stopped on NB M-66 with the intentions of turning left into a business driveway. While stopped, her car was struck in the rear by a van. The impact caused her car to turn left in front of a SB pickup truck. The truck struck her car head on and she was dead at the scene.

Brother Ron told me to keep my steering straight ahead while waiting to make a left turn on a busy road. ONLY when making the turn will I quickly turn the wheel to the left and complete the turn. If ever struck from behind, my vehicle will go Straight ahead, and not into the opposite flow of traffic.

PS: I have been struck from behind at a Red light while the Lady approaching was moussing her hair. I am still here.

PSS: Chari was struck from behind while stopped on Cedar street to allow a pedestrian mom & toddler to clear the driveway that she was turning into. The teen driver fled the scene, causing 3K worth of damage to our car. Chari was able to avoid the pedestrians by not turning before moving.

Please share this tip with your loved ones.

**Trooper Dave**

**Book Reports Due**

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.

This recommendation got me to thinking about how the Rowdie membership can be of service to each other. We have all seen a book recommendation in other car newsletters. I do not recall if A Antics has ever offered this feature.

Should we have this offered in the Antics?

**Dave Smith**

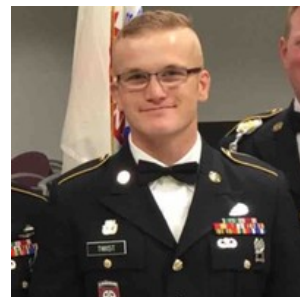
Your Editor agrees with the above. How about an informal service with members sending in an brief evaluation of books they've read that other members might enjoy? You send something in, and I'll print them in the Antics.

**Ken Nelson**

**Sad News**

Dave Smith wrote in with some sad news of John Twist's son: James Oliver Twist, husband of Emalyn, father to Charlie, Josie and Ben, and youngest child of John Twist and the late Caroline Robinson, died Wednesday, October 23, 2019. He will forever be 27. He was a Michigan State Trooper at the Rockford, MI post. He was a United States Army veteran, having completed basic training at Fort Knox, and was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, N.C. He made a dozen jumps.

James served one tour in Afghanistan in 2012, where he was deployed in the Kandahar Valley. James later entered the State Police Training Academy, graduating in July, 2018, Trooper #1615. He had nearly completed his B.A. at Cornerstone University. Full obituary is at <https://obits.mlive.com/obituaries/grandrapids/obituary.aspx?n=james-twist&pid=194270621&fhid=24032>



Condolences go out to John and the extended family from the Michigan Rowdies. A GoFundMe page is set up to assist with the funeral expenses if anyone wants to contribute <http://www.gofundme.com/f/twist>

**134th Michigan State Police Trooper Recruit School**

**ROWDIES 2019 EVENTS**

**December**

- 1 Rowdie Christmas Party - Chelsea Depot  
Chelsea, MI Host: John Alexander, Carolyn King,  
Kevin & Norma Peck-RSVP please  
(734) 665-068 or [king\\_alex@msn.com](mailto:king_alex@msn.com)

**Register Your MGA With NAMGAR!**



Join over 2,000 enthusiastic owners in the restoration, preservation, and sheer enjoyment of driving an MGA, Magnette, or variant of this noble breed. You'll receive six bi-monthly issues of MGA!, our full-color,

award winning magazine, invitations to National and Regional Get-Togethers throughout the U.S. and Canada, plus a knowledge base and support group second to none. All this for just \$37.50 per year (North America), or \$52.50 (International). Get more information at <http://www.namgar.com>, or contact [registrar@namgar.com](mailto:registrar@namgar.com).





## CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

by Bill Weakley

The leaves are changing, and the driving season is winding down. It's sad to think about putting the MGs away again, but it has been a good year for Rowdie events. I can't remember having bad weather for any events this year. On a

personal note, I have been thrilled to be able to drive my MGA to our events and a few of the Windsor-Detroit meets. I'm sure that some of you wondered if I would ever get my A on the road. So did I at times.

On the day before the Rowdie color tour, Tom Fant organized a shake-down tour with John Alexander, Kevin Peck and me. He led us on a nice route through the country north of Dexter and Chelsea, with a run down the always entertaining Hankerd Road, lunch at the Hell Saloon and a brew at the Inverness Inn. The Rowdie color tour was also great fun. Dave Quinn found some very scenic roads north of Jackson. There wasn't a lot of color yet, but the weather was great.

I have been very happy with the way my A is performing this year, with one exception. It doesn't sound as nice as I would like. The exhaust note is not even and melodic, rather kind of rough. The compression is even and the plugs all look identical. Everything I have checked on the carbs and ignition seems right, with the exception of the vacuum advance, which I now have discovered is not working at all. I thought it was working when I put it together. It doesn't seem like that would make it sound uneven. I have never had a stainless steel exhaust system before, so I don't know how much difference that makes. Otherwise, the engine starts easily and runs strong. I will soon have the winter to think about it and maybe tinker a bit.

I'm working regularly on my MGC, replacing the sills. Any of you who have done major rust repair know that it's always worse than you think when you start. Only when you have cleaned the work down to bare metal can you know where the real metal is and where there is just rust held together by paint and bondo. I had all the repair panels for the complete sill (four pieces per side) and the rear fender dog legs. It turned out to need additional patches in other areas including a partial floor replacement and the rear fender area above the wheel wells. All the previous patches were brazed on pieces of thin galvanized sheet metal. They just covered up the mess rather than really fixing anything. I'll include a before and after

photo of the left sill to give you a feel for what I am up against.

Even though the sill repair panels were all NOS pieces made in England, they still weren't perfect matches to the existing panels. So I have spent a fair amount of time just figuring out how to make things mate up satisfactorily. Most of it won't show, but some will. I have experienced this with all three cars that I have done sheet metal repair on. I don't know who to blame. Maybe it's just normal variation in manufacture of this type of stuff. Anyway, it is frustrating and time consuming.

There is a lot of cutting, grinding and wire wheel brushing going on. I am careful to use eye, ear and hand protection, but I still manage to scratch my hands. The other day, I managed to get a piece of metal in my eye and had to go to the eye doctor to get it out. It wasn't very comfortable. I think I may start using full cover goggles instead of the safety glasses with side shields.

I have been rambling on in these columns, mostly about the things I am doing with my cars and with the club. I would love to hear from you, our members, about what is on your mind. What are you thinking about the club? What do you want from the club that you aren't getting now? You can email anytime with questions or suggestions. If you have more to say, I suggest you write it up and send it to Ken Nelson, our illustrious newsletter editor. He would love to have your contribution, whether large or small (*Ya sure, you betcha! Send 'em in. Editor Ken*)

### *Chairman Bill*



*Before*



*After*



## *Color Tour 2019-Dave Quinn*

The last official drive of the season was well attended. The short notice and mid-week event did not discourage the Rowdies. It was a perfect MG driving day with temperatures near 70°; a temperature where most MGs seem to run their absolute best. Top down, plenty of non-stop sunshine; tree lined roads, cornfields, and best of all a really nice turnout. We had nine MGAs driven by Bill Weakley, Tom Fant, Jerry Jesion, John & Carolyn Alexander, Kevin Peck, Larry & Mitzi Pittman, Dave & Donna Quinn, Curt & Stephanie Smith, Jeff & Debbie Smith, plus Rowdies founder and all around good-guy Bruce Nichols and the sweetest navigator in the club, Robin, in their GMC.



At Klavon's late arrivals Ken & Kathy Nelson were able to join the Rowdies on their return trip from visiting Ken's brother in Ohio. The fall colors were just beginning to show up but there was lots of variations of colors when it comes to the MGs. Long gone are the days when the majority of the Rowdies would show up in red or white MGs. Dave & Donna received lots of thank you for putting together the drive which included time to share stories and kick tires.

*Dave Quinn*







*Photos by Dave Quinn, Tom Fant, Mary Ellen Weakley, Stephanie Smith*





## *Hagerty Hits Of The 50's-John Alexander*

This September morning early - 7:00 am and 54 degrees F - two intrepid Rowdies, John Alexander and Chairman Bill Weakley, ventured out to the "Cars & Caffeine" gathering sponsored by Hagerty Insurance at their Ann Arbor offices. The weather, although cold, was clear and the sun soon warmed everyone up. Although Bill and I were not the first to arrive, we did score the premier parking spots as is our right as Rowdies, next to the coffee and office entrance.

This was a new venture for the office and they were happy the weather was nice as there was a varied and interesting turnout. There was everything from a survivor Pinto (Ohhhh) to Lotus 7 and Evoke, various Detroit iron, Triumph GT-6 with home fabricated fuel injection (pretty neat installation but I didn't get a close-up photo), a Triumph Sprint (Right hand drive with a BMW 2002-like look to it. Never imported), a couple of 50's Alfas, an MGB, several Porsches, Fab Five Cobra, a TVR, a Sunbeam Tiger, old Volvos and our mighty steeds. Oh, yes. I forgot to mention the Triumph Stag steaming away in the corner of the lot. I thought Quinn would like to have a picture of that!

Anyway, this was a nice way to start a Saturday. There is to be another "Cars & Caffeine" next month, October 12th. Should be pretty "cool" too.

*Your Ace Reporter, John Alexander*





# Annual Christmas Extravaganza



*Ho, ho, ho, Come One and  
Come All Good Little  
Rowdies!*

Of 2019 is Here

And You're Invited!

The festivities begin at 1:00 pm for the Social Hour. Appetizers arrive at 2:00 pm.

We will feature our customary catered dinner from Knight's of appetizers (Stuffed mushroom caps & Swedish meatballs) and main course choices (Beef Stroganoff, Grilled Salmon, Au Gratin Potatoes, Steamed Veggy Medley – green beans, carrots and cauliflower, Mixed Green Salad w/choice of 2 dressings, Rolls w/Butter. To complete this repast will be Chocolate Chip Cookies and Brownies!

We will provide coffee and soda so remember to bring your own favourite beverage.

Once again, the club will be picking up the tab in celebration of the season, **so please RSVP!**

Following our dinner will be the famous **ROWDIE GIFT EXCHANGE** so all are encouraged to bring a "Wrapped Gift".

The deadline to RSVP for this year's party is **November 18<sup>th</sup>**. Please let John Alexander ([king\\_alex@msn.com](mailto:king_alex@msn.com)) (734) 665-0682 or your other hosts Carolyn King, Kevin and Norma Peck, know if you will be attending and the number in your party.

**The Chelsea Depot**  
125 Jackson Street, Chelsea, Michigan

From I-94: Exit 159 toward Chelsea. Turn North onto Chelsea/Manchester Road which becomes South Main Street. Continue North approx.. 1.5 miles to Jackson Street (immediately South of the railroad tracks) and turn right. You Have Arrived!





## ***LBCarCo's MGA LED Kit Headlamp Installation-Steve Mazurek***

At NAMGAR's GT-44 in Dubuque, IA, I stopped to talk to Jeff Zorn (LBCarCo.com) about his LED MGA headlamp kits. While not a fanatic regarding originality, I do try to make my upgrades minimally intrusive and keep the driving experience close to what I recall from the late 1950s. Jeff and I chatted for bit. He provided some references and considerations. I toddled off and talked to some people who had made the switch. The consensus was that the upgrade was a positive step, though no one provided an especially glowing report. The other reason I was considering the upgrade was I recently underwent cataract surgery, which literally changed my view of things. While positive in many ways, there were shortcomings, like a reduction in my night vision.

Before I left, I bought a headlamp kit from Jeff, with a promise that I would write an article about my experience.

My replacement was more complicated than just replacing the existing lamps. I also replaced the aged, cloth wrapped wiring from the main wiring harness to the headlamp buckets. While not a necessary step, if your headlamp wiring is using the old cloth wrapped wiring and it is cracked and frayed, now is the time to make the replacement. The expense is less than \$20.

What I focus on here is just the headlamp kit assembly and replacement.

### **Assembling the Kit**

You receive from Jeff two headlamp lenses and two headlamp LED bulbs. The lenses and the bulbs must be mated before headlamp replacement. Here's what I learned: all the parts can only be assembled and replaced in only one way, *EXCEPT the bulbs themselves. During the assembly the bulb can be inadvertently inserted into the lens upside down.*

Here is my recommendation for assembling the headlamp kit:

- Work at a time when you will not be distracted by anything.
- Work in an area that is clean and free from clutter.
- Have a general cleaning solution and wipes handy. One of my lenses was coated with light oil from the manufacturing process.
- Examine each lens when you remove it from its box and check to insure there is no foreign material inside the lens itself. One of my lenses had something that looked like packing material floating around inside: I just shook it out.
- Set the rubber dust excluders aside for the moment and do not remove the temporary mounting hole covers from the lenses.
- Now open the bulb box to expose the bulbs and remove any material covering them.

The bulb instructions would have you remove the bayonet mount from the bulb itself. Doing this disrupts the relation of the bulb to the mount and offers the opportunity to reinsert the bulb incorrectly. In addition, the instruction is misleading on the action required to separate the bulb from its socket. So instead:

- Take your first lens and place it in front of you, facedown, with the top oriented away from you. There is an arrow on the front of the lens which indicates up (top).
- Undo the wire bail that holds the temporary cap in place and remove the cap.
- Now take a lamp with its mount still intact and insert it into the lens mounting hole. *It can only be inserted one way.* It's a tight fit, so be careful. Once completed, the bulb will now be inserted into the lens properly.
- Now carefully route each bail wire around the lamp transformer and into the clasp.

The last step is to place the dust excluder between the lens and the bulb. It doesn't look like it will fit, but it does. For this, grasp the bulb transformer with two fingers and rotate it counterclockwise until it stops and gently lift it out. With your other hand, place the large end of the dust excluder over the mounting location and then re-insert through the small opening in the excluder and into the lens mount in the reverse of the way you removed it: rotate it clockwise until it stops. Voila! You're done and the bulb is correctly inserted in the lens. Repeat the process for the other lens.

### **Replacing the Headlamps**

At this point, installing the new headlamp assembly is the same as replacing a regular headlight. If you haven't done this in a while, here are some reminders:

- Don't forget to remove the screws, at the bottom, that hold the headlamp trim rings in place.

- Don't use a screwdriver to pry the trim rings off. You will damage the paint and, likely, yourself. Use a bodyman's plastic trim tool or some other plastic or wooden pry. Work carefully and deliberately. If they haven't been off for a while, it may take some time.
- So you won't lose the itty-bitty screws when removing the headlamp holding rings, have something magnetic handy to capture them, or you'll have to chase them around the floor.
- The new headlamp assembly can only be installed one way. There is a small arrow indicating "top" on the lens. Make sure it points up and the lamp seats before you re-install the holding ring.
- Do not return the trim ring. You will need to re-aim the headlamps.

### Aiming the New Lamps

The beam configuration is different than the normal seven-inch, tungsten sealed beam headlamp: adjustments will be necessary, if you want to be a good motoring citizen. If you have a certified headlamp adjustment tool, great! Otherwise, there are plenty of resources available that explain LED headlamp adjustment. The LED beam differs from the sealed beam in that the majority of light is directed down and there is a noticeable light drop-off in the vertical direction. The light is whiter, more intense and broader than a normal sealed beam. The objective is to illuminate the road, not the face of the oncoming traffic drivers or the interior of the car in front. That's why there is a high beam!

Since the MGA is a three-point adjustment system, remember that any adjustment on one adjuster will/may affect the others. Start with all the adjusters at least half-way out to allow some room. I used a technique I found on-line to make the first adjustments. Then late one night, while the trim rings were still off, I set out to find a road with no traffic and made the final adjustments.

Now the top of the beam terminates about three seconds ahead of the vehicle at a speed of roughly 35 mph. Near-by signs are well illuminated, while signs much further out are barely illuminated. My last adjustment was to raise the right lamp up and out ever so slightly. We live in a rural area, and there are all sorts of critters lurking along the side of the road.

When you've locked in your adjustments, go home and install the trim rings. Don't forget the screws to hold them in place.

### Trouble Shooting

About the only problem you can have is an incorrectly inserted LED bulb in the lens. If the beam looks odd, pull the front end of the MGA about five feet from a smooth wall where you can clearly see the pattern. The pattern should look like a bowl of light: flat-ish on the top and rounded on the bottom. If a beam is flat on the bottom and rounded on the top, the bulb is incorrectly installed and needs to be turned over in the socket.



Also, when you look at a bulb from the side, there are two filaments. The front filament is in line with the horizontal axis of the bulb: that's the low beam filament. The one that sits behind it and lower in the bulb, is the high beam filament. When inserted correctly in the lens, the high beam filament will be at the bottom.

### The Results

Without going into a lot of technical jargon about the differences between sealed beam tungsten or halogen and LED headlamps, I can say that LED light is much, much whiter. Reflective signs, road markers and painted striping with powered reflectant literally scream that they are there. The whiter light also helps dark road surfaces stand out a bit more. These LED lamps are not a match for the VW's Xenons, but since I don't drive as often at night with the MGA anymore, they are a reasonably good substitute.

On a recent overnight trip that ended up being considerably rainier than what we planned, the lamps were lit for the entire trip, day and night. If you are considering buying this kit to make you more visible on the road, the results are mixed. We had at least three encounters on state and county routes, during daylight, where another car decided we must have been a mirage and pulled in front of us. Apparently, we didn't show up on their cellphones.

On the other hand, the life of a racoon was spared last evening as well as some MGA body parts, because we were able to see the critter much more clearly with the LEDs than the sealed beam halogens that would have been in the car.

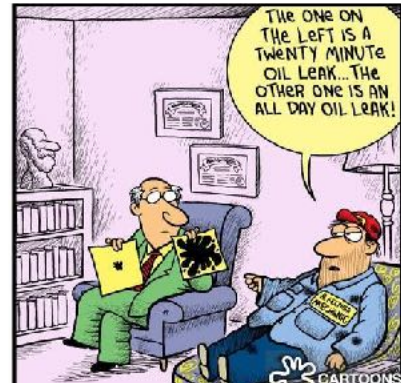
Aesthetically though, there is something un-nostalgic about seeing an MGA coming up the road with pure white headlights and yellowish trafficators and running lamps. It's eerily reminiscent of scenes from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

I guess I can live with it to see better while nighttime driving.

**Steve Mazurek**



*The following are 2 articles that discuss a fix for the perpetually leaking rear main crankshaft seal on the MGA "B" series engine. They avoid doing the complete machining work required with the Moss rear seal kit. If anyone has tried this fix, please write in with your results.*



## **Rear Crankshaft Oil Seal Modification**

### **Kent Prather - From MGA v45, n2 Tech Talk by Bruce Woodson**



Kent Prather of Prather Racing from Wakarusa, Kansas presented an informative Tech Session at a GT. The topic was modification of the 3 main bearing pushrod engine to accept a

positive rear crankshaft oil seal.

Kent gave credit to Barney Gaylord as the starting point of this modification. An early version of this conversion was also aired on Wheeler Dealers TV show. Kent has further refined the product and thoroughly explained the process to GT attendees. The job requires several machining processes and a few custom parts, which can make this conversion a significant financial investment. BUT, we've all been asking for a solution to these cars leaking oil, and Kent delivered a solution! If you are interested, contact Kent at [www.pratherracing.com](http://www.pratherracing.com) for more information, including a step-by-step procedure.

Kent also shared another very appealing alternative to that nagging rear crankshaft oil leak. He found that an o-ring can be placed in an existing groove on the crankshaft prior to assembling the engine. Note the black o-ring fitted in the photo is only for illustrative purposes. The correct seal as recommended by Prather is made of silicone and is red in color. Kent

very graciously shared that the red silicone o-ring is offered by APG and is part number S70226.

For more information, visit APG's website at [www.Callapg.com](http://www.Callapg.com). I do have a concern about the seal's lifespan in a street engine, but Kent was confident the o-ring will last, and for such a simple investment, I see no harm/no foul if it should fail. And should

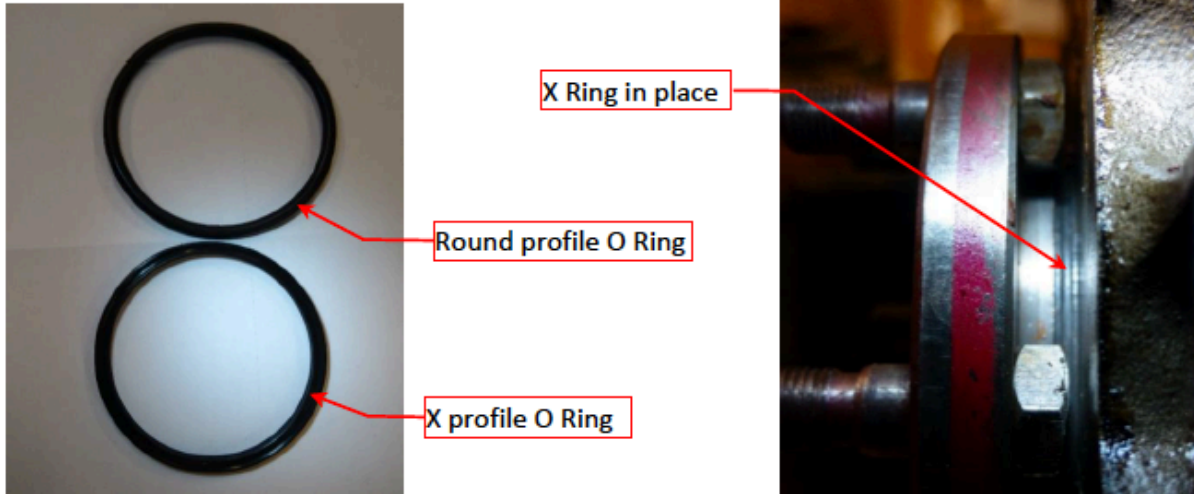
it should break apart, I see no chance of rubber bits getting through the oil pump strainer. Pieces should just float out the drain plug opening at the next oil change. If anyone has tried this o-ring addition, please let me know your results.



# Modifying MGA Rear Oil Seal-Bob Shaft

## MGA Rear Engine Seal

Thanks to, John Terschak MG Experience for the O ring dimensions



O rings from McMaster Carr. I bought 4 of each. I like the X profile best (in theory, it should act like a double lip seal) so I'm installing that first.

**Silicone** Trade Names: Silastic (Dow)

Recommended for applications requiring a wide temperature range and good dry heat resistance. Good weather and ozone resistance. **Limited oil resistance. Not normally recommended for dynamic sealing applications due to relatively poor tensile and tear strength and relatively low abrasion resistance.** Temperature range: -80° to +450°F.

**Fluoroelastomer** Trade Names: Viton (E.I. duPont), Fluorel (3M)

Excellent mechanical and physical properties. **Good resistance to petroleum products**, low compression set, and high temperature resistance. Wide spectrum of chemical compatibility. Good for vacuum service and low gas permeability. Temperature range: -15° to +400°F. \*APG stocks the Type "A" Grade Fluoroelastomer. Other Grades are available. Please inquire.

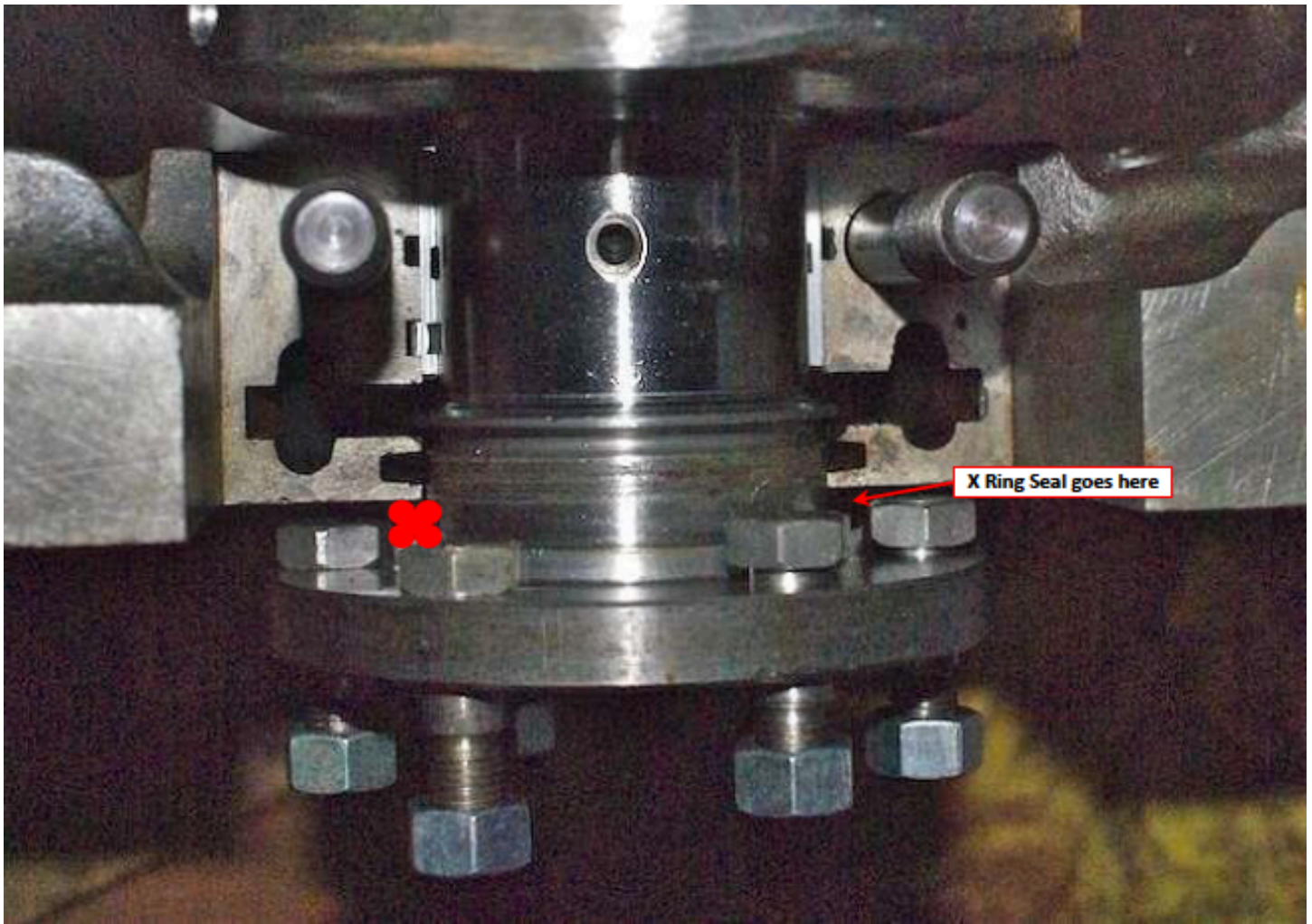
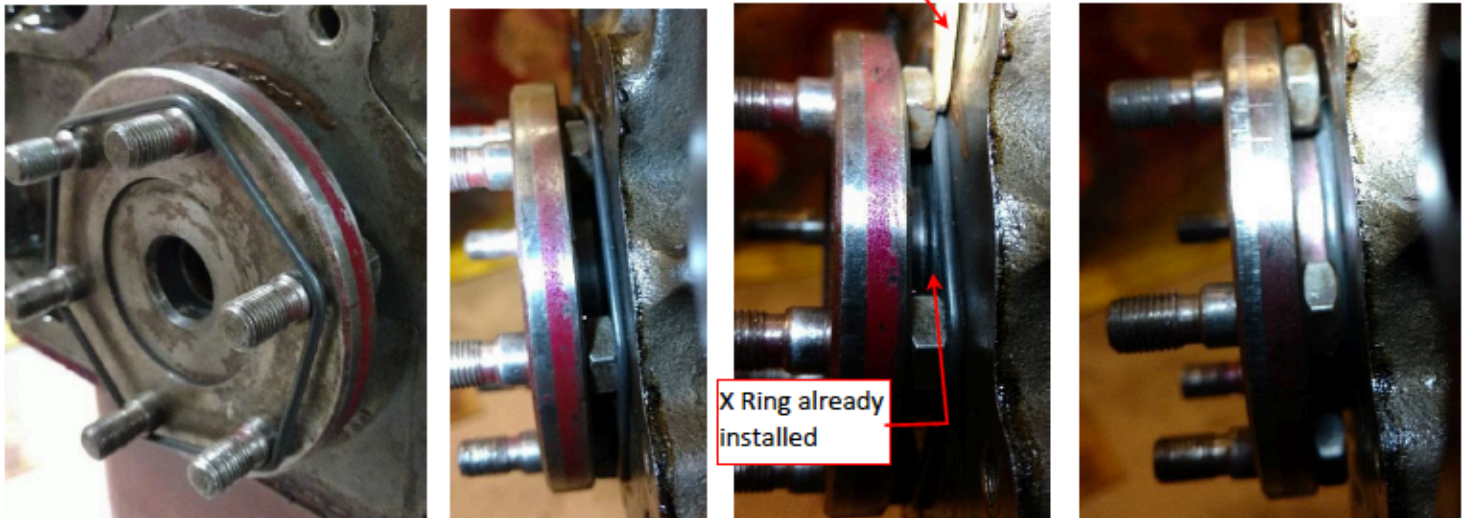
X profile <https://www.mcmaster.com/6540k253> Round profile <http://www.mcmaster.com/1288n186>

Remove rear adapter plate and clean the area around the crank flange.

1. Stretch the X ring by hand to loosen it up.
2. Stretch the X ring onto the flange bolts (it tends to twist so untwist it).
3. Stretch the X ring over the flange and on to the flange bolt heads. (the heads are probably too close to the rear bearing block for the ring to slip by so just let it set there)
4. Make sure the X ring is not twisted.
5. Press the ring past the flange bolt heads using a wooden Popsicle stick but not into the groove between the crank step and bearing block yet.
6. Once the ring is setting on top of the groove all around, check again to be sure it is not twisted and setting evenly all the way around.
7. Press the ring into the groove all the way around below the bolt heads. Be careful not to twist or create a bulge. I did under the 6 bolts first in a star pattern then between the bolts to be sure I didn't stretch one point and create a bulge in another.
8. Use a piece of string as a circular clamp, to insure the ring is fully seated. One wrap all the way around then pull tight. Remove the string. I then added the round profile O-ring on top of the X-ring.



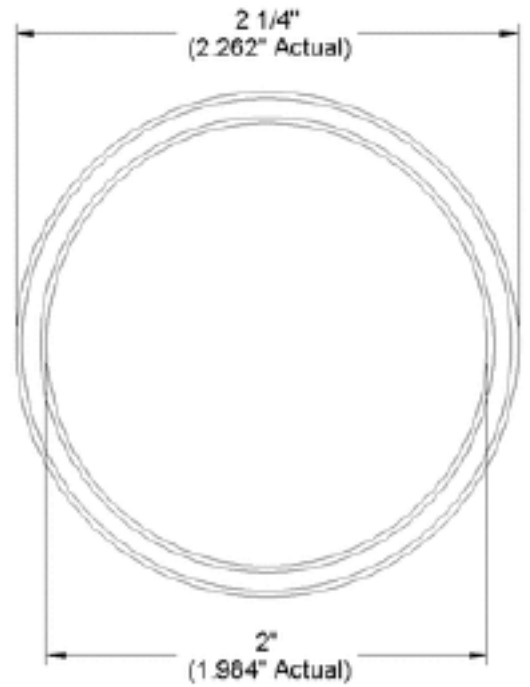
I added the round profile O ring on top of the X ring.



Also known as Quattro Seals and X-rings, these X profile O-rings have 4 points of contact for a better seal in dynamic applications than round profile O-rings. They also require less compression to make a seal, so they offer a longer service life. Made of Viton fluoroelastomer, these O-rings resist a wide range of chemicals, including benzene, butyl alcohol, and ethylene glycol. All are sized to the SAE standard AS568.

\$4.00 per pack of 1  
6540K253

Material	Viton® Fluoroelastomer Rubber
Cross Section Shape	X
Dash Number	226
Fractional	
Width	1/8
ID	2
OD	2 1/4
Actual	
Width	0.139"
ID	1.984"
OD	2.262"
Hardness	Durometer 75A (Medium)
For Use With	Acetic Acid
	Animal Oils
	Benzene
	Boric Acid
	Butyl Alcohol
	Calcium Hydroxide
	Citric Acid
	Diluted Salt Solutions
	Elemental Fluorines
	Ethanol
	Ethylene Glycol
	Glycerin
	Grease
	Isopropyl Alcohol
	Mineral Oils
	Motor Oil
	Petroleum Fluids
	Phosphoric Acid
Sodium Bicarbonate	
Transmission Fluid	
Vegetable Oils	
Specifications Met	ASTM D2000, SAE AS568, SAE J200
Temperature Range	-15° to 400° F
Color	Black
RoHS	RoHS 3 (2015/863/EU) compliant



<b>McMASTER-CARR</b> <small>Http://www.mcmaster.com                  © 2015 McMaster-Carr Supply Company                  Information in this drawing is provided for reference only.</small>	PART NUMBER <b>6540K253</b>
	X-Profile O-Ring



# Driven To Repair My MGA-by Dave Quinn

Donna and I attended the Honda S2000 owners Spring Fling in Shamokin Dam, PA this summer. A small community on the Susquehanna River about 60 miles north of the Harrisburg/Hershey area and 60 mile east of State College and Penn State University. We drove the MGA and logged 1,050 miles. Although the weather was sometimes sunny and warm, sometimes wet and sometimes cold we enjoyed meeting up with friends we had not seen since our last Spring Fling seven years earlier. Lunch was at Penn's Tavern built in the 1700s. We visited my parent's graves and stopped to see next-door neighbor Hilda, now 94. I thought this was an interesting photo taken by one of the S2000 owners who is semi-pro when it comes to camera stuff. *(Very cool photo! Sounds like a*



*great trip. More stories and pictures to follow, perhaps? Ken)*

Only a few pictures but none that would be of interest to the Rowdies... except for this wonderful couple. Oh, here's a shot of Penn's



Tavern also. The MG ran great on the flat lands of MI and OH but when we got into the western OH and PA hills it misfired and backfired. "Never had that happen before." And I mean it really backfired!! I cleaned the float bowls as best I could

and that helped some. I'm thinking that somehow the float setting got changed as it was a big issue on 'long' steep grades. Anyways I'll start looking into it today; check timing, etc. and hope to resolve it. *(I assume that with backfiring it means the mixture was too lean? Perhaps something from the gas tank blocking a filter, or the float needle sticking? Let me know what you find, and drive safe! Ken)*

Still have not resolved the backfiring issue. But the damn carbs are as clean inside and out as they will ever be. *(Could your fuel pump or fuel filter be partially blocked? I seem to remember that you have an aftermarket Chinese fuel pump installed on your car instead of our trusty old SU's. Do you think you should perhaps change back to the SU for reliability sake? Maybe you should let Donna have a look at it under the bonnet? I know this lady below was pretty handy with an MG. Ken)*



Actually I have a Tom Ball SU fuel pump on the car and another that I carry as a spare. Car starts instantly, idle's smooth, runs great till above 3,500. I'm hoping I solved it. I swapped the distributor cap off my original Pertronic's that failed due to a spike from a bad coil and it ran good up to 70mph on my M50 test this afternoon. Finger's crossed. The cap on my new Pertronic got wet when the heater control

valve crapped out. That cap had some water in it but seemed to work fine, but I wasn't pushing turnpike speeds till we went to PA. But, if you want to send that young lady over I'd be happy to let her help. *(Soon as she gets her car running she'll be on her way. Meanwhile, why not send out an email to the Rowdies asking for advice? Ken)*

### Dear Rowdies,

Any ideas are welcomed on what might cause an MGA to backfire above 3,500 rpms?

Last month we took a 1,050 mile trip in the MG to eastern PA, just north of Hershey. The car was running fine until we encountered the steep long grades of western OH and PA on the turnpike. Suddenly the car began misfiring and backfiring (something I've never experienced before). After checking everything I could think of I believed I had found the cause. Changing the distributor cap seemed to solve the problem on a number of test runs up to 4,000 rpms and beyond. Yesterday we took a 200 mile trip and the car ran perfectly until the last 5 miles. Driving up route 127 into Jackson last night at 3,800 rpms the car made two huge backfires. I couldn't believe my own ears.

**Spark plugs** - changed spark plugs on PA trip due to the misfire but there was nothing wrong with the four in there - a nice light gray color.

**Carbs** - cleaned float bowls, dismantled carbs, cleaned pistons, jet holes, tunnels within bowls, blew out carbs and holes with compressed air, added oil to carb dampers, cleaned the air cleaners, snugged up the inlet manifold nuts.

**Timing** - checked timing; all good

**Throttle linkage** - oiled throttle linkage

I know at least a few Rowdies are not fans of PerTronix but there are some who think they are excellent.

### My PerTronix History

05/15/13 purchased 1st PerTronix (D176600) & Echlin IC64 coil from Advance Auto. Timing set to 15 degrees BTDC

After 16,200 trouble free miles the 1st PerTronix failed along with Echlin coil. PerTronix technician said low voltage from the coil over time could cause a spike in voltage that would in turn fry the microchip and surrounding epoxy. The PerTronix distributor is not repairable.

09/03/17 purchased 2nd PerTronix (D176600) & PerTronix epoxy filled coil (40611) from Summit Racing. The epoxy provides extra vibration protection over oil-filled.

After 3,000 trouble free miles with the 2nd PerTronix the heater control valve above it failed and some water drained on to it. After drying the distributor cap it ran fine. Since the backfires I have

checked vacuum line connections, checked to ensure the coil is well secured and connections good, checked Pertronix's wire connections, called Pertronix's and passed their voltage and ground tests.

As an experiment I swapped the PerTronix cap from number 1 with number 2. I noted that cap from number 1 did not fit as snug as number 2, but that shouldn't be an issue; it is as tight as any other MGA cap fits. The cap from number 2 did not show any sign's of damage but recalling the water leak above it when I had a heater control valve failure on **Drive Your MGA Day** I thought it was worth trying and until last night I believed it solved the issue.

My Magnecor #4074 (blue 8mm) competition non-solid plug wires very flexible because the insulating jackets are made entirely of high-temperature aerospace silicone rubber and appear to be excellent.

I am hoping to resolve this before heading out to GT-44 in Iowa. Safety fast, Dave Quinn

*(One simple suggestion is to just put in your old distributor with standard points, etc and drive for awhile to see if that fixes it or not. Otherwise could something be blocking fuel delivery under load and causing a too lean mixture. I would first just eliminate the Pertronix completely for a trial, by using the old distributor. Ken)*

Thanks Ken, I would have been disappointed if you did not suggest that.

*(Hi Dave, Is the back fire in the tailpipe or carb? If it's the carb then it's timing. Changing the distributor cap is a big clue. Sounds like a cylinder misfired (did not ignite due to failed spark) this puts raw air/fuel mix into the exhaust the next cylinder to fire could cause the mixture to ignite in the exhaust. Make sure the points gap is correct. Also make sure the rotor and distributor post inside the cap aren't corroded or worn.... Meaning that gap is also correct. Also check the coil. Anything that could cause a weak spark. Spark has an increasing harder time jumping the gap as cylinder pressure increases. The driving conditions you describe sounds like heavy load on the engine. This could cause a misfire if any of the above conditions causes weak spark.*

*Side note: In my teens my cousin and I would travel up north a lot in his old Ford pickup, when we would pass cows in a field we would turn off the ignition then back on.... We would create a huge backfire to scare the cows. One time left the ignition off too long and blew the muffler wide open. Ahhhh the days of mechanical fuel pumps. Bob Shafto)*

Thanks Bob, points and condenser would have been my first thing to check but that is what an all electronic PerTronix distributor (thankfully) eliminates!



*(Dave, I haven't used the PerTronix but I still think it's spark energy. It seems like the key event is engine load (engine is working harder), cylinder pressure goes up under load and could snuff out a weak spark. Check all the connections again. Did you change the coil? The MGA coil is 30,000 volts and the PerTronix is 40,000 volts.*

*I think the PerTronix still uses a rotor so there are still two gaps to jump, one from rotor to cap post and another in the plug. Maybe the PerTronix is designed to use a 40,000 volt coil.... I don't know. Bob Shafto)*

Thanks Bob, I have both a brand new PerTronix complete distributor and a new PerTronix epoxy filled coil (as opposed to oil filled). My number one suspect right now is that a valve adjustment is needed; it's been 27,000 miles since I last did it. (where does the time go?)

### **Dear Rowdies,**

Thanks to all who replied so quickly: Mac McDonnel, Don Holle, Tom Fant, Bruce Mann, Ken Nelson, Dave Smith, Steve Mazurek, Philip Wiltshire, Allen Bachelder, Mark Barnhart, Bill Weakley, Bob, and Matt Wigent. I appreciate all the ideas, suggestions, etc.

I agree with those that suggested I do some basic stuff first to determine what's causing the fuel delivery issue under load. I skipped doing that at the beginning since the car is actually running swell – starts right up, no need to use the choke, idles perfectly, runs great under 3,500 rpms and no longer misfires. . . just those backfires. **Yet To Do – Valve adjustment.** Last done 27,000 miles ago..... I know shame on me – most likely the odds on favorite for tight or burnt valve!

**Compression test, hot**

**Try another rotor**

**Check for restrictions** between the intake manifold and carbs, such as a washer that should not be there

**Test using an old distributor** with points and condenser (I'm not in a hurry to do that but I do carry one with me all the time just in case).

Safety fast, Dave

*(I know I'm late to the party, but here are a couple more things to check -from Jeff Smith:*

**1) Intake Backfiring problems can originate in the fuel system.** *When the air-fuel mixture is too lean, the combustion process weakens and fails to properly burn the fuel. Too much unburned fuel then enters the exhaust system where the fuel ignites with a loud bang. A lean fuel mixture can be caused by a bad fuel pump or even a clogging fuel filter. Check the fuel system. You're running at high rpms, may not be getting enough fuel for one of those reasons.*

**2) Exhaust backfires can be the result of air leaks in the system.** *As oxygen content increases, it causes partially burned or unburned fuel entering the system to ignite loudly. The extra oxygen may come through a leak in the exhaust manifold gasket, an exhaust pipe sealing ring, or a damaged pipe.*

**3) This one's from a Camaro guy:**  
*hmmm I have another thing i would like to add to your 2 things... I had an engine in my old 77 camaro that started doing the things you are talking about and it was because **I wiped a cam lobe** on it... it would run fine at lower rpm but would pop and backfire at higher rpm. ez to check this .. take a valve cover off and watch the rockers as the engines runnin... it will be obvious if everything is ok. Jeff Smith)*

### **Dear Rowdies,**

My final report!! Rowdies, I am fairly confident the backfire issue was the result of a dirty inline fuel filter that I installed between the gas tank and the Lucas fuel pump. It has been 25,500 miles since I replaced it. Three or four of you suggested that. I am including an email from Jeff Smith that does a nice job of explaining it. The filter looked nasty. All the other screens down stream (fuel pump and both carbs) were very clean.

Thanks to Dave Smith we gave the old girl a valve adjustment yesterday. All 8 valves were a little loose, showing approximately .003" wear. Dave felt that was excellent given nearly 30,000 miles wear on the cam since it was last done. Seems the Valvoline VR1 20-50 oil I use is doing its job. A compression test showed 3 of the 4 cylinders at exactly 140 psi. Number 3 showed piston ring wear and registered 18% lower. A livable condition since I'm not going drag racing. I hope to have a problem free ride to the GT next month.

A couple of you made suggestions like check the condenser or check an issue associated with an original distributor showing wear. Rather than install a PerTronix kit, which eliminates the points and condenser, I elected to buy an entire PerTronix distributor at \$165. That way I remove all possible issues that can evolve from worn shafts, worn advancement springs, worn vacuum diaphragm, etc. Everyone I know that upgraded to an electronic system, either kit or complete unit, (Dave Smith, John Alexander, Curt Smith, etc.) have had good results with their upgrade. I receive no compensation in making this recommendation. And I can't fault the diehards like Ken Nelson who remain unconvinced.

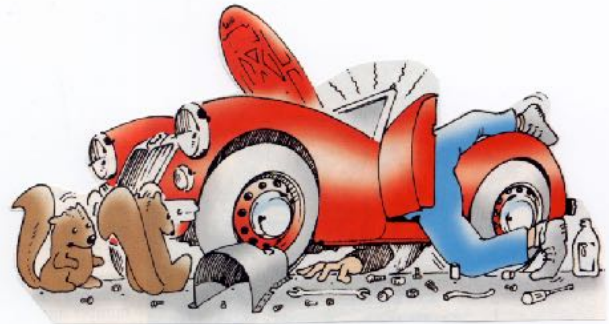
*(Even the diehards are delighted to hear your problem is solved! I should add that after*

checking the Pertronix by substitution of what the good lord originally put in the car (a relatively easy procedure), it was suggested by this diehard that "Otherwise could something be blocking fuel delivery under load and causing a too lean mixture".

Either way, I know the sense of relief in solving one of those blasted intermittent problems we often face. Good on you, mate! Ken)

PS from your editor-I now am facing a similar problem in Mr. Rover. It doesn't like to rev over 3500 rpm under load and is also intermittently 'waffling softly' through the tailpipe when pushed beyond that under load (Rovers never are crude enough to backfire-they merely waffle). I'm pretty sure it is a fuel delivery problem, but can't find any plugged filters outside the tank. However, there is a

wire mesh filter inside the tank that I need to figure out how to get to. So the journey continues from one car to the next. Story to be continued later.



## MG For The Future? - Andy Hoffman

Hi Rowdies,

Joanne and I are here in London and we stopped in at the MG dealer at 48 Piccadilly. Check it out - in the front is a sushi bar called the MG Roadster Cafe; in the back are MGs for sale. Also

check out this image of an MG concept car. Sadly, no version was on display on the showroom floor.

*Best, Andy and Joanne*





## *Winter's Coming-Here Are Some Storage Tips From Bruce Nichols*

We all know that storing a car is rough on them so a few tips to help minimize the effects, maybe in order.

Lets start at the top. Put the top up. Leaving it down will cause the top to shrink making for an interesting time in the spring. Also, mice will get in the top and chew holes through it. Take the tonneau and hang it up. The lift-a-dot fasteners have a hole in them and a few small nails in a floor joist in your basement will work. Do not leave it folded or rolled as mice will get into it and chew holes. Take the lower seats and place them in your house to keep mice from building nests in them.

The brakes and suspension will need a little winterizing. Do not leave the parking brake on. If a brake cylinder seizes it will be difficult to remove the drum. You may also adjust the brakes to the lowest position to keep the shoes from seizing to the drums. Spray a little WD-40 on the brake and clutch bleeders then get nipple covers at the local auto parts store and put them on the bleeders. This will help year round to keep water and dirt out of the bleeders. Grease the suspension. Don't forget the hand brake cable. Pump the tires up to 40 pounds or so and if possible roll the car a few feet several times during the winter. This will keep flat spots from developing on the tires. If you have wire wheels take them off and clean the dirt, rust and grease from the splines and chamfered face on the hub and wheel where the wheel meets the hub. I use a little kerosene and an old tooth brush. Be careful not to get kerosene in the front bearings. Wipe as much of the kerosene off and apply grease to all the splines and the chamfered faces. I usually apply grease to the hub then put the wheel on and remove it, rotate it 90 degrees or so to distribute the grease. Do this several times. Do not use the same grease that is used for suspension lubrication. It is too thick and in time gets hard, making difficult to take a wheel off. Use a light grease such as Lith-Ease (a light lithium grease), Sylglyde (a silicon grease) or Anti-Seize. This is an important maintenance to do. If you don't do it now make sure to do it in the spring. Lack of attention to this will in time aid in the seizure of the wire wheel to the hub.

Change the oil in the engine and make sure the antifreeze tests to 30 degrees below freezing. I change my antifreeze every three years when I change the oil so I can drive the car prior to storage. Put a gas line antifreeze in the gas tank when you change the oil. Use one that has isopropyl alcohol in

it. Methyl alcohol will mix with water but not gas, isopropyl will mix with both so you remove the water when you drive the car. Do this with the oil change. Fill the tank prior to storing.

Do not cover the car with plastic. This will trap moisture in the car. Leave the hood and trunk open a little to allow moisture to escape. If your storage area has a dirt floor cover the floor with plastic then pull the car over it. This will help to keep moisture from under the car. Cover your car (at least the top) with an old blanket or sheet. Leave the side curtains open for ventilation.

Critter control. Mice get everywhere. They have the ability to flatten their bodies, including the head, to a quarter of an inch so they will get in your garage or house and you don't want them in your car. The top, tonneau and seats are covered above. Some people use moth balls in tuna cans placed in various places in the car. I'm not in favor of this. I have had mice build a nest under the spare tire 6 inches from a tuna can full of moth balls. I have heard of people using charcoal but I have seen mice build nests in a bag of charcoal. The RV people use Irish Spring soap to keep mice away. I tried this ten years ago and it seems to work, plus the car smells nice. I put a tuna can under the hood on both sides of the bulkhead, one on each side of the passenger area then tilt the seat backs forward and two in the trunk. One of the two under the spare. I shave a bar of Irish Spring and put a little in each can. Take a piece of screen material, steel or copper not nylon or aluminum, fold once so it is doubled and place it over the exhaust and fasten with a hose clamp. I know, it sounds nuts but I have seen mice build nests in exhaust systems and several times in the head of an engine. Batteries will go dead so remove them and clean the case with dish detergent and water. Sounds crazy but if the case is dirty there is a electrical path through the dirt connecting the terminals. I have taken a volt meter and checked various spots on a dirty case and picked up voltages. In time this will cause the battery to discharge. Once or twice during the winter put a charger on the battery to make sure it stays charged.

If possible put the battery in the car and start it. Let it run for 20 minutes or longer to remove condensation in the motor and exhaust. Put the back axle housing on blocks (not a jack) and put it in gear letting it idle. This will allow the tranny and rear end gears to get lubrication. Do this with caution. If you change gears push in the clutch, then the brake.

***Bruce Nichols***

## *Were The Michigan Rowdies NAMGAR's First Chapter? Bruce Nichols tells the tale...*

Lately there has been a little concern or talk about the Rowdies being the first chapter of NAMGAR.

The following is as I remember it. At the beginning there were four Michiganders that drove to Harper's Ferry W. VA. For GT One. We did not know what to expect but looked forward to the weekend. GTs were short then as people did not have any expendable cash. Anyhow, we arrived on Wednesday night along with all the other participants. The hospitality was Len and Ruth Renkenbergers room.

Prior to this weekend I had several conversations with Mac Speers (chairman of NAMGAR and one of the founding members) about guide lines for forming a chapter or doing a GT. Mac and I had several brief conversations at the GT about guide lines and bylaws, none of which NAMGAR had. Mac said "Perhaps a benevolent dictatorship would work best for a year or two." That was it for conversation about chapters until the evening of the banquet (which took place in the local fire hall with the ladies aid society furnishing the food). After Mac had announced the winners of various classes he stated that 'Bruce Nichols from the Michigan Chapter will now tell us about the fall GT in Michigan.'" Four people from Michigan panicked (my wife at that time, Jan, and Steve and Diane Mazurek) we decided that OK we are a chapter. That took three seconds, and the next seven seconds we named a few locations, with Greenfield Village and the Dearborn Inn as the place. WOW! We planned a chapter and a GT in 10 seconds (try that today). I then got up and gave a pitch for the GT in September. We now had to go home and make it happen.

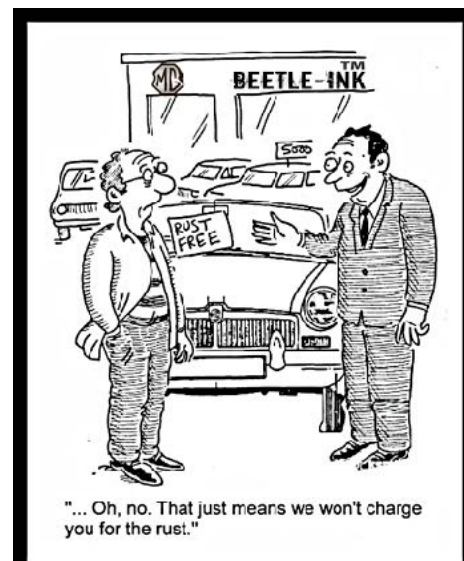
We had our first chapter meet on Aug. 16<sup>th</sup> of that year. It was more of an explanation meeting and assignment meeting. We did not know people but when they volunteered for jobs at the GT we were grateful. The GT was a success and so was our

chapter. If my memory is correct it was several years before another chapter was formed.

Our chapter has always been very active on the local level and the national (NAMGAR) level. We have had three of our members that have been NAMGAR's chairperson, Three (maybe four) have been vice-chair, NAMGAR's current vice-chair is Larry Pittman (it takes a good Rowdie to be chairman of vice), one member as GT advisor (prior to this position being part of the vice chair's duties), two members have been contributing editors, Ken Nelson is currently a contributing editor, two members have been editors of the NAMGAR newsletter, MGA. Two members have been registrars, one member as manager of advertising. NAMGAR's current Advertising Manager is Bruce Mann.

We have had one member as tech editor for MGA. Two members have been recipients of the Renkenberger Spirit Award and five members have been recipients of the Mac Speers Founders Award. I hope I haven't missed anyone, If I have I am sorry Please don't take the above as bragging about our chapter, I only wrote this so people knew how active and how our members are not afraid to get involved For more Rowdie history see Dave Quinn's 49<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History that he has put on a memory stick for your computer.

It is always 'People first'. **Bruce Nichols**





## *Membership in the Rowdies*

*by Dave Quinn*

Some random thoughts about membership in the Rowdies and the future.

The Rowdies history began August 1976 with a first year membership of 20. We joined seven months later. Most all were young with a few exceptions. Within a year the number doubled and continued to grow. By 1980 the membership totaled 104 – the peak year. Since the majority of the members were married, the actual head count was near 200. That made for some big turnouts, often at a member's home. In the decades that followed it was not unusual for 70 to 80 people from the Rowdies to attend a GT no matter what state it was in. As the club ended its second decade in 1995 membership totaled 72. When members dropped out there were always new members to replace them. At the start of the fourth decade we totaled 75, a number that would remain fairly constant.

We began 2012 at 71. Since then, there has been a small but steady decline, losing roughly 30 some members while adding back about 10. The number one reason - - an aging population. Over one-third of the Rowdies who dropped out sold their MGAs. Another third moved out of state; most going to Florida. Time marches on for all of us.

It has been my observation that car clubs are pretty much the same. If they are to last, there is a core group that are active and stay active. Then there is a middle group that is hit or miss when it comes to attending and/or contributing. And finally there is the group that is for the most part newsletter only members. No matter which group you fall into - - it's all-good.

I don't know what the final count was but we had a really good turnout of Rowdies at GT-44 in Iowa (*Ed Note: 29 in all*). We had a good turnout at the Waterford Hills vintage races – kind of a guy thing. By the way, there is another thing that I've noticed with clubs that last - - more and more I see the ladies stepping up and taking leadership rolls. Years ago we were ahead of the times with one of the Rowdies in the NAMGAR Chairperson position – Joyce held the top spot nationally and did a great job. Locally I would love to see one or two ladies take a more active roll in the club's future. Who will be first to volunteer? Why not you?

For some of us it is not getting any easier to work on our cars. We have those fleeting thoughts wondering how much longer we can do this. But the shot in the arm is when we attend an event and find a nice turnout of our friends. To restate the over-used statement, it is the cars that brought us together but it is the people that bring us back. As the club gets smaller and it likely will (currently membership is 49) it is important that we reach out and make an extra effort to welcome new members. It's easy to enjoy the company of people we have known for 20-30-40 years and overlook someone who has just joined. I know I am guilty of that.

In the early days of the Rowdies history there were a lot of 2-day meets that included sleepovers in motels and sometimes in tents. I miss those events (not the tents due to an aging body) and hope to see a few return. Day-in-the garage is another meet that in the past have been well attended. It is encouraging when a new activity such as the glider rides in Adrian is added to the calendar. We have lots of traditional events every year that are well attended but something new is refreshing. All it takes is for a member to take a little initiative, run it by the meets chairman, and put together the details.

When it comes to the future, and you may not agree, but I think the two-seat sports car is slowly disappearing into the dust. When I was growing up only two things were on my mind - - dating and sports cars. Magazines, movies, and any media you could think of showed race-car drivers, movie stars, and sports stars all showing off their latest sports car. Can you hear the 50s music playing in the background? Fast-forward. A similar appearing group of stars are now showing off Tesla's and fancy Crossovers. Sports cars no longer are the movers and shakers they once were. Still according to CarMax, the largest demographic of sport car buyers, 16 percent, are aged 20 to 25, with buyers age 45 making up the second-largest group, 11.7 percent. Though making up a small portion of the demographic, 0.2 of sports car buyers are 80 years old and up. We salute all the senior speed demons (especially Neil Griffin).

I continually run into young people who have never heard of MG. Is that a car? Sadly, they will never experience the raw emotion of driving something with maybe 100+ HP a few feet off the ground while having wind surround you with no power steering, no power brakes, no air conditioning,

no automatic top, and no dash screen to tell you what's happening. Luckily for us we have really small faint candles in the dash at night to keep us awake. Plus the moon over head for enjoyment. For me, that's all the more reason to appreciate and enjoy what we have. I came to this club looking for information about the MGA and came away with life-long friends. It's a car that continues to build good memories.

*Dave Quinn*

### Michigan Rowdies

The first chapter of NAMGAR, the North American MGA Register.

"It's the cars that get you there, but the people keep you coming back."



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## The Graying Of Car Clubs

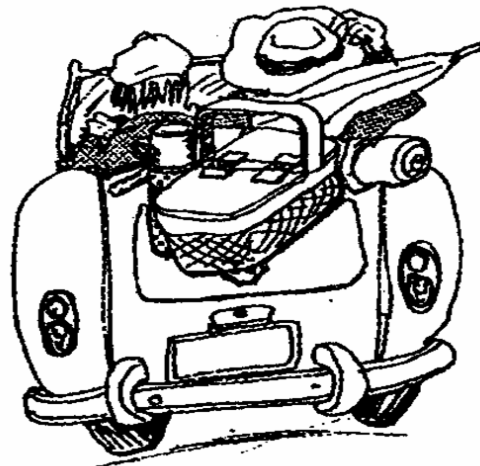
I have to throw my editorial hat into the ring to congratulate Dave, once again, for a concise, well written article that sums up my thoughts about NAMGAR, the Rowdies, and most other car clubs out there. Other groups as well have fallen into the declining gray-hair membership predicament, and I've seen the same thing in the small sailboat racing club I have belonged to for 40 years as well. The numbers there dwindled to near extinction in my fleet (16 ft Rebel sailboat-not even big enough to have its own onboard storage for grog) as more (and easier to master) hobbies intervened for young folks. Yet we've had a sailing upsurge recently, and I'm old enough to know when it's time to just enjoy life as it is and make the most of it. Plus I have a wonderful group of friends that I look forward to seeing most summer weekends as we race furiously around a 1 mile by 2 mile lake at 4 mph in a sailboat designed in 1947. With optimism, or just plain ignorance, I've bought a new set of sails for the boat and just put brand new tires and wheels on the 1954 Riley after rebuilding the transmission on my 1950 MGTD a year ago.

Now I'm in the process of rebuilding the front suspension on my 1966 Rover. Working on that 4,000 lb. car is more like working on a lorry (truck to us yanks). With 6 tire rod ends, 4 massive ball joints, 4 torsion bar bushings, 6 sway bar bushings, 4 sets of torsion bar radius link bushings, one leaky power steering box and idler arm, I have to question the sanity of even starting a project like this. I mean, it does run and steer safely; it just aggravates me when it clunks over the Michigan potholes. So I could delude myself into thinking that this and my other British cars will be an cherished investment into the future for years to come. But the truth is that I've just decided I like doing this, and that's reason enough to keep it up. As Dave says - - it's all good. I'll just live in the present for now, and see if I can break loose that rusty 3/4" sway bar fitting tomorrow, if not today. And look forward to seeing all my many good

Rowdie friends and NAMGAR buddies at the next chance possible.

On a positive note I'm also pleased to report that our son Matt just bought himself a slightly modified 1977 Jeep CJ5 to play around with. No doors or windows, just a roll bar and a flat gray primer paint job, a bit of rust, and more than one rusted-on bolt wherever something needs to be removed or replaced. Like the skid plate that covers up the drain hole for the upgraded 4-speed manual tranny and Dana transfer case someone installed previously. It'll need to be cut free and modified to change the oil and replace it. It's not an MGA that Matt's working on, but it's an old car he's fixing up and that can't be bad. Plus, on my last visit I went out with him as he bought a MIG welder and started welding up the seat frames, with a bit of instruction from me. He even gave me a high-five as I patched up one of the holes he burnt through on the frame. So "que será, será" Doris Day sang, and I think there's reason for hope yet for our old cars. Kathy and I are looking forward to seeing you all at the Christmas party again this year! Cheers!

*Ken Nelson*



Friends Forever