

# The Dipstick



“The Newsletter of the Tidewater MG Classics Car Club”

[www.mg.org](http://www.mg.org)

Volume XXXI, Issue 8

Dedicated To Preserving The Marque Since 1973

August 2002

## MARQUE TIME

Mamma Mia! Ragazzi's Italian Restaurant provided a nice, intimate setting for the July meeting for all the TMGC "paisanos" who attended. Thanks to Barry for again subbing for the Secretary.

This period in mid-summer between the Spring and Fall car shows is an ideal time to work on our cars and correct any problems. Two years ago, while driving to Cleveland for MG2000, my car began making a squeaking noise when hitting certain types of bumps. Realizing that the front end of the car probably had never been worked on, I ordered all the parts required to do a front end rebuild over the winter to get the car ready for MG2001 in MN. However, buying another house and working on it to get it ready to move into took a higher priority over working on cars last year, and alas, that job never got completed. Two years later, and now looking at also rebuilding the front brakes at the same time, I am more determined to begin this project. Every time I drive the car, I think I hear another squeak or groan. Maybe my reticence at tackling this job is based on the uncertainty of never having worked on the front end of a car before, and visions of the coil spring flying through the air, ripping off the fender (or my head), and unintentionally creating a new skylight in the garage roof. I have been reassured by members in the club that this won't happen with an MG. Famous last words!

The delay of this project got me thinking on how long it takes to get things done. We have all been there, be it a project at home, work, or with our cars. It seems most projects take 2-3 times as long to complete as originally planned, and cost more than anticipated. For myself, the garage and FROG expansion has taken much longer than I have originally thought when I bought the house. Although Sue Bond designed it over a year ago, I have yet to start construction. The lack of a larger garage causes delays in the car projects I have lined up, creating the "ripple effect" we are all familiar with.

My own sad tale of delayed car projects follows. In 1995, I bought a '66 MGB for \$150. I found it in a field off Military Highway. I towed the shell of the car home, along with a truckload of parts. After some sheet metal work was done to preserve the body, it has sat at Scott Coogan's shop since. At least I think it's still there. I hate to see those storage charges! With a seized engine requiring a rebuild, and many new parts needed to complete it, I probably should have left it sitting to rust away back to nature.

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Check [www.mg.org](http://www.mg.org) for the latest info!

- Aug. 4 SCCA Autocross, Pungo Airfield  
[www.odr-scca.org/](http://www.odr-scca.org/)
- Aug. 6 Meeting at Paul & Carmen Thiergardt's (see map, back page)
- Aug. 10 Tech Session at Susan & Terry Bond's (see map, page 3)  
We just installed A/C in the barn so you can tech in comfort!
- Aug. 11 Drive out to Moonrise Bay Winery  
2:00 at Kellum High School  
(see page 5)
- Aug. 9-11 Roadster Factory Summer Party  
[www.The-Roadster-Factory.com](http://www.The-Roadster-Factory.com)
- Aug. 16 Ice Cream Social Hoedown  
Kellum High School at 6:30  
(this is a change of date, see page 5)
- Aug. 17 Khedive Auto and Craft Show,  
Chesapeake, 12:00-4:00  
Info: 482-4556, 543-6032, 340-1331
- Aug. 17 Sufferin' Suffolk Dash, TSD Tour  
Old Dominion SCCA  
[www.odr-scca.org/](http://www.odr-scca.org/)
- Sept. 1 SCCA Autocross, Pungo Airfield  
[www.odr-scca.org/](http://www.odr-scca.org/)
- Sept. 4 Meeting at Jim & Betty Viller's

(Continued on page 3)

## JULY MINUTES

In 1998, I bought two 1960 MGA 1600's to restore. I couldn't buy just one, it was both or none. I got one of them running, but unfortunately the engine smokes. Although the car is complete and solid, it requires a complete strip-down and rebuild. I refuse to do that until I get a proper garage in which to work. A storage facility with no power is not conducive to restoring cars. The other MGA has been sitting in Barry's garage these past 4 years. Have I got a deal for him!

These projects pale in comparison to some other car projects I have yet to do. In 1995, my '73 Corvette developed some minor engine problems, and it has been sitting ever since. What would have been a fairly minor, routine upper engine repair then now will likely entail a minor restoration, at the minimum, to get it back to where it was. Again, I refuse to work on it without a proper garage.

About ten years ago, my '48 Ford F3 truck quit running. It was used as a farm truck at my folk's house, and could have doubled as the county mosquito control truck, since the engine smoked so bad. It's been sitting neglected ever since.

The granddaddy of all my car projects though, is the '50 Studebaker Champion I bought in the early 70's for \$25. We literally had to drag the car for approx. ¼ mile before the right rear wheel finally broke free. My buddy remarked that that was probably the longest black mark ever laid down by a Studebaker! The next day I discovered the engine was seized after sitting for so long. After a few futile attempts at freeing it, the car was relegated to a pole barn on my mom's property, where it has sat ever since. It's a good thing they made cars out of thick sheet metal back then!

The sadder thing is that I naively think I'll get around to fixing these cars one of these days. Maybe when I retire. Yeah, right. Now that I have spilled my guts with my sad state of car projects, I encourage other members to write about their car projects. Share some of your stories, the good, the bad, and the ugly. Can anyone beat a 30-year project?

As an aside to wrap up, I was at NUWC Newport the week of 15 July for reviews and meetings. The last day we were there, I spotted a white, rubber bumper B in the parking lot of the building we had been working in. Later that day, while driving along Ocean Drive, which hugs the coastline around Newport RI, I was thinking how beautiful it was and how I wished I was driving my MG. With the ocean on the left, expensive mansions on the right, and gorgeous weather, it was a perfect drive for an MG. No sooner had I completed that thought, I spotted another rubber bumper 'B and an MGA parked along the road across from a beach. Eerie! I guess some other MG owners had the same idea. You just never know when or where you'll see an MG.

**Safety Fast! Mike**



Ciao baby. A large crowd of MG enthusiasts showed up at



**Ragazzi's**  
**Italiano Delizioso**

Ragazzi's Italian restaurant for the July meeting. Mike opened the meeting at 8:40 PM mean MG time with the rapping of the gavel after the MG enthusiasts in attendance had just finished a dinner of fine Italian cuisine. Mike was thankful to be in the air-conditioned Ragazzi's Italian restaurant since his home air conditioner was broke. Mike welcomed everyone.

**Membership:** Robin Watson reported there were three new members: Lee and Rosemarie Pease with their 1957 MGA roadster and Joseph Freeman. The club now has 107 members listed, 55 have renewed and 46 have not. He emphasized how important it was to update your membership renewal form when paying your dues, which were due on July 1<sup>st</sup>. It is important to list what registers, clubs and organizations you belong to, for affiliation purposes.

**Treasurer's Report:** Jim Villers reported: Balance brought forward from June 2002: \$2,126.95. Receipts: Total \$824: Dues \$790 and raffle \$34. Disbursements: Total \$196.38: Wallach (host) #1534 \$40, Smith (host)#1535 \$40, Robin Watson (postage & printing) #1536 \$58.15, Sue Bond (Newsletter) #1537 \$58.23. Balanced carried forward: \$2,754.57.

**Minutes:** Approved.

**Newsletter:** Susan Bond reported: She and Peggy Craig thanked everyone for their articles and contributions. The July Dipstick incurred extra postage due to the printer printing it on heavy paper. Many members liked the quality and photos. CHJ is the printer being used. Contributions are needed to keep the Dipstick successful.

**Regalia:** Frank Linse reported: Investigating and beginning to purchase new regalia: grill badges, MG glassware, clothes and caps.

**Activities:** Dan Kirby and others reported: This weekend Veterans Hospital Car Show, meet at Cosmos, July 13<sup>th</sup> - Saturday morning at 9:30. July 24<sup>th</sup> - Ice Cream Social run, meet at Red Wing park at 7:00 PM, August 10<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) Tech Session at Bond's, August 11<sup>th</sup> (Sunday) - Moon Rise Winery run, meet at Kellam High School at 2:00 PM and bring cheese and crackers. August 14<sup>th</sup> - Lucas Night Rally, August 17<sup>th</sup> - SCCA Time Distance Rally in Suffolk

**Archives:** Susan Bond reported: Looking for photos, MG / club related memorabilia for 1999 year book.

**Minutes** (continued)

Clubs: Mike Ash absent, reported to be at New England MG T Register GOF. NAMGAR GT 27, July 17-21.

Old Business: Frank Worrell investigated purchase of large fabric banner for TMGC membership tent at car shows. 5' X 30" in two colors \$107.55. Also reported on magnetic signs 3"X4" or 3"X5" and decals 3'X5". He contacted US Flag and Signal and Sign Master. If you have any design ideas contact Frank Worrell.

New Business: 30th Anniversary of club, committee. Peggy Craig and Anna Worrell volunteered.

Marque Time: Discussed 1970 MGBGT for sale in classifieds on our web site

Raffle: None.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:12 PM mean MG time. May be a new record for shortest meeting. Arrivederci, hopefully I can find my way out of Ragazzi's wine cellar before the next meeting. I found it while I was trying to find my way out. Boy, it's dark down here. Let see there is some Lambrusco, Chianti, Soave...

Barry Tyson

**Activities** (continued)

Sept. 14 TRAACA Car Show, Chesapeake City Park  
[www.aaca.org/tidewater/](http://www.aaca.org/tidewater/)

Sept. 15 TSSC Autocross, Little Creek  
[members.aol.com/odrscca/index.htm](http://members.aol.com/odrscca/index.htm)

Sept. 22 Brown's Island BCS  
<http://www.britishcarclub.com/>

Sept. 28 Wings and Wheels, Topping

Sept. 28 Mad Dog Days, TSD Tour, Wakefield Old Dominion SCCA  
[www.odr-scca.org/](http://www.odr-scca.org/)

## Link of the Month

Brown & Gammons in the UK has taken over supplying MGRover merchandise. You can view items for sale at [www.mgrovermerchandise.com](http://www.mgrovermerchandise.com).

# Tech Session

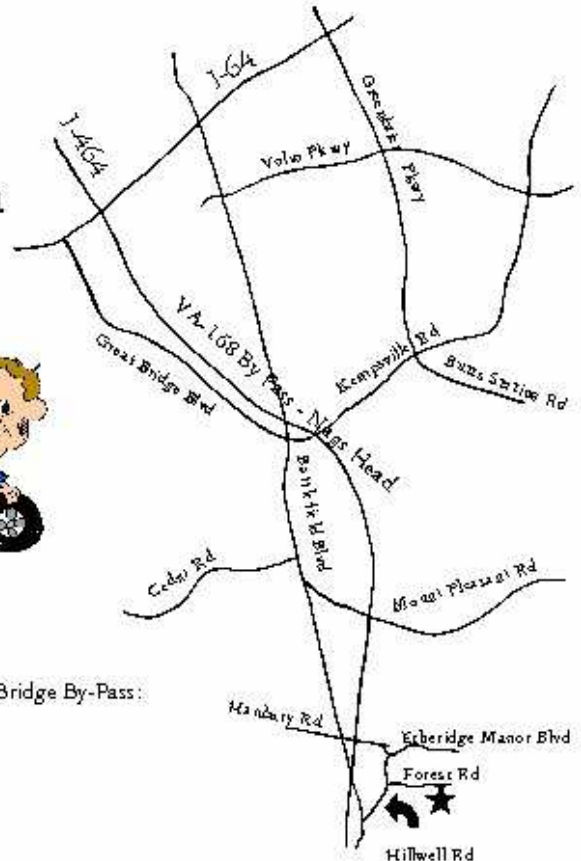
## Saturday, August 10th, 10am

Sue & Terry Bond's  
541 Forest Rd  
Chesapeake  
482-5222

News flash: the Bond workshop is now air-conditioned!



Take exit 29LB off I-64  
Going South towards Nags Head on I-68 Great Bridge By-Pass:  
Take Hanbury Rd East, Exit I-0B  
Turn right on Hillwell Rd  
Turn left on Forest Rd



# TECH STUFF

Mark Childers

Rumor has it that the night before the 1970 model MGB went into production, a couple of staffers from the engineering section got together over one too-many Guinness Stouts, and drew up the plans for the new collapsible steering column. When they returned to work the next morning, the soggy napkin on which the final elevations had been drawn was handed over to the draftsman who apparently missed a critical decimal point and a couple of crucial, albeit cryptic, specification notes splattered with Major Grey's Chutney.



As a result, the incredibly cheesy bushing at the top of the '70-'76 column is prone to wear and often develops significant up and down motion that can spoil an otherwise taut suspension system.

The fix is not exactly the easiest of jobs, but it's really not as tough as you might think.

First, disconnect the battery, pry the horn push off and remove the horn brush. Next, remove the nut behind the wheel (the 1" hex nut, not the one in the seat...) With a little persuasion, the wheel will come off; if you are lucky, you won't need explosives. Make sure you mark an index between the the wheel hub to the splines so as to facilitate reinstallation without having to do it all over again after you find that the steering wheel sits all cockeyed on your test drive... With the nut threaded onto the shaft so as to be just flush with the top threads, have a helper sit in the car and pull back steadily on the wheel while you somewhat more than gently, but carefully, whack the steering shaft/nut with a hammer. Hit it square, flat, and fair, lest you find the nut cocked and the shaft out of round. Holding a doublesided body hammer on the nut while striking it with a second is a safer way to go for the faint of heart or those without a spare steering column. With the wheel now off, remove the fascia (posidrive screws) and the stalk switches (posidrive screws tie the left and right stalks together). Next, remove the clip (may be either C clip or spiral ring) that sits inside the groove adjacent to the bushing, and pull the bushing retaining screws. The bushing will now come out. If you examine the bearing within the bushing, you will no doubt notice that there is a lot of up and down motion. Using a light hammer, peen the bushing around the circumference of the race until the motion is essentially undetect-

able. Don't peen it so tightly as to cause either binding or cocking. Hold the bushing in your hand and rotate it with every stroke of the hammer. Before reinstalling the bushing, grease the bearing (wheel bearing or chassis grease will do, just don't over do it or grease will eventually migrate out of the column...) Before reassembling, take a pair of channel locks and carefully worry the end of the column to make its diameter a bit smaller. Reassemble switches and while you are at it, make sure that the self canceling tab on the column is correctly aligned; and clean up the horn commutator ring with a pencil eraser, and make sure that all the harnesses are clear of pinch points before securing the fascia. Now put the tools away, and wash up. No beers until you come back from the test drive.

## ARCHIVES

Susan Bond

I am now wearing my "archivist" hat — I am organizing almost 30 years of club history in Print Shop, scanning photos and OCR-ing articles from the *Dipstick* into one album for each year. Hopefully, someday, I will be able to put it all on CD's so you can peruse it in the comfort of your own home. To lend some sort of order to the project, I am working my way back in time. The years 2000 and 2001 are pretty complete, tho I am always glad to get pictures for events I didn't attend. What I need are photos from the last century (I always wanted to be able to say that!) Your mission, should you chose to accept, is to find some photos for events in 1999. It is too hot out to work on the cars right now, so pull out those shoe boxes full of photos and find ones for these events in 1999:

I don't have any photos for:

Tech sessions, March, August

Soap box derby

Christmas party

Very few photos for:

Wicker Basket Affair

Race at the Base

Road Rallye (May)

Driver Days

Wings and Wheels

Boulders

If you have photos of any of these events and you can let me borrow them, they will be scanned and added to our official record. I can usually get things back to you by the next meeting. If you have a scanner and a CD burner, save them as TIF's at 120 dpi. (I don't have fast internet access so don't e-mail pictures to me, they would take all night to download!)



# VINEYARD DRIVEOUT

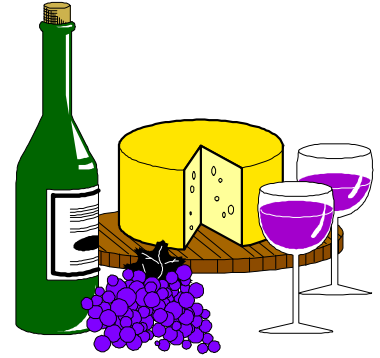
August 11, 2:00 at Kellum High School

Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon...

Join the club on August 11th for a visit to Moonrise Bay Vineyard! We will meet at Kellum High School parking lot at 2:00 p.m., and will convoy down the thirty minute trip through Pungo to Knotts Island. Please bring crackers and cheese, or fresh fruit, ready to share.

We will have a space in the actual winery set out for us to sit, nibble and sip, while we learn about the vineyard.

Contact Robin Watson (721-9277 / wof101@aol.com) or Alan Watson (426-2600 / beach723@aol.com) with questions or to R.S.V.P. We'd like to give the proprietors some idea of how many people to expect.



# ICE CREAM SOCIAL HOE-DOWN

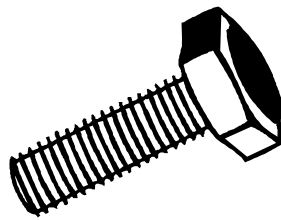
August 16, 6:30, at Kellum High School

Another chance to win FABULOUS prizes! Join us for the August Ice Cream run to the Virginia Beach Farmers Market! Meet at Kellum High School at 6:30 and we will caravan to the Market for their weekly Hoedown featuring a live band and a dance floor for the adventurous. Bergey's ice cream too!

## Parts Storage

Robin Watson

Since being in the Tidewater MG Classics I have heard of many places to store parts ready for the breakdown. I have even seen three clutch plates hidden behind the radiator grill on an Austin A40, parts stored by one gentleman in the Wind Screen washer bottle (not being used) and the spare battery compartment when the change has been made from two 6 volt to one 12 volt. However I just found one area (not recommended) while doing a valve job on my 73 MGB. When I removed the head I found



a spare bolt sitting on top of # 2 piston. Not only was the bolt in a badly burnt condition but it would have been quite a big job to get at if required on a trip!



July meeting

# Veterans Hospital Nursing Home Car Display

Susan Bond

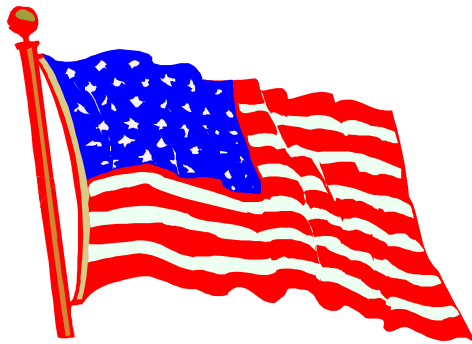
Don Finlay got the idea for an old car display at the Hampton Veterans Hospital Nursing Home when he drove his TR or Morris to rehab after heart surgery. The vets would gather round his old cars and ask questions and reminisce.



On July 13, 40 plus cars showed up to help Don at his third annual car show, everything from race cars to kit cars to MGs and Mustangs. He and Carol had

goodie bags for each vet who came out to look around. Drivers helped wheel vets or just walked with them, talking and joking and having a good time. Some knew a lot about cars and wanted details, some remembered cars they used to own, and others just wanted to know what each one was. It was very hot in the parking lot so they didn't stay out too long, but we all had a good time.

We then headed to Sam's, a seafood restaurant in Hampton, and had a great meal. As we were leaving we en-



countered a group of Tibetan monks with strange musical instruments leading a group of people down to the water. The paper said these monks have been on movie sound tracks and a follower said they were here to conduct a healing ceremony for 9/11. They had done a sacred sand painting, put all the sand in jars, taken it down to the water and poured it in while chanting, a very colorful and noisy ceremony.



The trip home was uneventful except for heavy traffic – reminded us why we usually avoid the tunnels during tourist season.

## Notes from the Editors....

A huge **THANK YOU** to all who have contributed to the *Dipstick*, we couldn't do it without you!!!! I have really enjoyed reading all the articles and hope you have, too. This month there was only one car show to report on but we still filled the pages. Thanks again!

If you happen to have any digital MG clip art, please let me know. I have gotten a few things off the internet, but when they are expanded to readable size in print, they look pixilated. There must be a source somewhere, I just haven't found it yet.

August will make up for the slow July – we have 2 runs and a tech session scheduled. I can't do anything about the weather for the runs, but can offer air-conditioned comfort at the tech session. We used to have a dehumidifier in the barn to prevent mold in the cars, but the thing was recalled, something about it being a fire hazard, not really a desirable trait amongst leaky British vehicles. So instead of replacing it Terry decided that an air-conditioner would do that job and keep the place cool as well. With it, the TV and the fridge, he has all the comforts of home – except plumbing. We are talking about a garage here so I don't think that's going to happen. But the coolers will be full and the grill warmed up so bring your maintenance and repair problems to the experts.

Susan



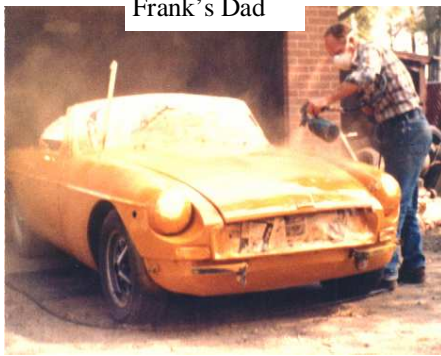
The July meeting at Ragazzi's



# My MG Story

Frank Worrell

I helped my dad buy and sell cars since my first car auction at age fifteen (really, if you count that time I helped paint a '62 Plymouth station wagon with house paint at age four.... but that's another story).



It started when "if I wanted a car at sixteen, I needed to make the money first". By the time I was sixteen I had bought, fixed-up and sold approximately fifteen cars--many being Mustangs (easy sale to my friends). Then a neighbor asked my dad to tune his early 60's Austin Healy Sprite. After a sneak ride around the block, we were hooked. At that time Sprites, Midgets, and Bs in need of repair could be found everywhere. From 1978 to 1983 we bought about twenty-five of those little British cars paying \$300-\$1200 and resold all for \$1800-\$2500.

In May '79, my dad bought him and me a '70 Midget for my graduation and his retirement from the Air Station as an aircraft mechanic. He had it most days--I had it most nights. We painted it Candy Apple Red Metallic and drove it to Florida on a dive trip that summer.



I met my wife, Anna, in August '80 while cruisin' the strip. She would come over and help me restore MGs helping with body work, interior, etc... Great helper. We got married in June

'83 and sold two MGBs the week before the wedding which paid for the honeymoon in the Bahamas, the wedding, furniture, and down payment on our first home. After I moved away from home I got into home construction more as a side hustle but still helped my dad paint cars.

In 1986 my dad found out he had cancer and asked if he could sell the '70 MG to pay doctor bills. I really loved that car with so many great memories but he badly needed the money, so we sold it in June '87.

My dad died July 4<sup>th</sup>. I hadn't driven one since till my friend Jim Simpson bought his '74 Midget in August '99. I helped Jim restore his and got the bug again.

Morris is starting young!



At my 20-year reunion I left a memo for all my schoolmates, thanking them for the money I made selling MGs to them back in school, and got to talk to them about the adventures they had with them.

I purchased my '78 MGB but it took a back



burner while I helped Jim with his. Two parts cars later and with Jim's help on the decision to change from rubber bumper to chrome, I'm almost there!

Many times I have wished my dad was still here to help with my project car and enjoy this great club. Thinking back, MGs have always been a big part of my life. I'm already teaching my 4-year-old son about this great little car. He calls it "our car".

## Win a TD!

Susan Bond

The Center in the Square Museum complex in Roanoke is raffling a '52 TD! Log on to these sites for details and pictures:

[www.freemgtd.com](http://www.freemgtd.com)

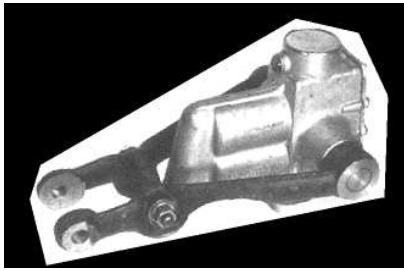
[www.centerinthesquare.org](http://www.centerinthesquare.org) (click the news button on the left to see the press release)

I visited the museum when AACA had a national meet in Roanoke and it was impressive, a real class act. The raffle will be drawn on October 12 and you can sign up for tickets from the web site or call 540-342-5700. Advance Auto stores also have tickets but I don't know if ones in our area are selling them. Tickets are \$1, with a \$20 minimum for mail or phone orders. Good luck!

# Shocking Tale

Barry Tyson

Here is a little story about the “core” MG shock I borrowed for restoration. In typical guy fashion, I haven’t sent it off yet. Too many other important things to do like playing my



guitars, drinking beer, and watching car races on Speed Channel. Anyway, July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend I was helping Jeff put a new radiator in his Miata in my garage on Saturday. After we finished replacing the radiator we had a beer to celebrate. I told him, “I think I’ll take a look at something in a box over in the corner.” We walked over and I found the box in my “park it anywhere storage area” and opened it up. I dumped it out on the floor. Jeff said, “What the H!!! is that? Is it dead?” as he stepped back abruptly. It did look pretty ominous in its crusty light brown coating, like a petrified body that had been buried in the ground for quite a while. I said, “It’s a shock absorber.” He said, “A what?” I said, “It’s an Armstrong lever shock absorber for an MG.” I continued, “Susan loaned it to me to send off as a core to be repaired to replace the weak front one on my MG.” He already does not understand why I would drive a “British” sports car that pollutes the air, that is not very fast, breaks down, overheats, leaks oil, and uses Lucas, “The Prince of Darkness”, electrical systems. All he did was shake his head and then he finally said, “I’ll stick with my Miata.”

He has no sense of adventure.

## Team O’Neil Rally Driving School

Dan Kirby

Earlier this year I was fortunate enough to fit in a trip to New Hampshire to attend a four-day rally driving school at Tim O’Neil’s school. Tim has a very successful SCCA ProRally driving record, and he has condensed his driving techniques into the four separate lesson plans taught at his school.

The school is located just outside Littleton, New Hampshire, in the Great White Mountains. This area is a natural vacationland, with hiking trails, geologic fea-

tures, camping, scenic railroads, and lots of tourist spots. There is an abundance of wildlife in this area, including deer, moose, and bears. This would have been a nice trip to bring the family on, but school was still in during my visit, so I toughed it alone.

The goal of this school is to teach students to drive in complete control on gravel and dirt roads. The higher the degree of control, the faster the driver can be under various conditions, resulting in quicker times. The cornerstone of the program is a driving technique called Left Foot Braking. This technique is used to manage the weight of the car, placing the weight on either the front or rear wheels depending on what effects the driver is trying to achieve.

The school is taught using front wheel drive, rear wheel drive, and all wheel drive cars, so that the technique and its effects can be demonstrated and learned in all car configurations. The typical ProRally cars currently in use are front wheel drive and all wheel drive. There are a few rear wheel drive cars, including Volvos, Mazda RX-7’s, Mustangs, various pickup trucks, and MGB’s.

On Day One, we ran front-drive cars around a skid pad circle. Using the left foot on the brake, with a constant throttle setting, applying more brake will transfer weight off of the rear wheels and onto the front wheels. This results in the car “turning in”, which is called oversteer. Oversteer is when the car turns more than the steering wheels would indicate. When the brake is released with the throttle constant, weight is transferred to the rear from the front, causing the car to go to the outside of the turn, which is called understeer. Understeer is when the car turns less than (or not at all) the steering wheels would indicate. The skid pad exercise results in steering the car around the circle using only the brake pedal, with very minimal steering activity. The better you get at it, the more confidence you gain, and the faster you go. This left foot braking skill is the foundation of Tim’s driving technique.

Once we were proficient at the skid pad, a slalom was set up using orange traffic cones. Instead of a constant circle, we now needed to turn both Left AND Right. As far as I am concerned, we’re WAY ahead of the NAS-CAR crowd at this point, since they only go Left... Piloting the car thru the slalom required a constant throttle, and a bit of brake and steering action. Approaching the turn, you transfer weight to the front, and turn in, then ease off the brake as the car comes around. Drifting thru the corners, completely in control is such a satisfying action, especially on a huge gravel road in someone else’s car.



Day Two started with a review of what we had already learned. It rained overnight and lightly during Day Two, so the surfaces and speeds were a little different. We were introduced to the Pendulum Turn on day two. This technique is used for slow corners such as intersections and U-turns where the car has to change directions in a minimal space. The pendulum technique essentially puts the car into a controlled fish-tale to swing the car thru the turn. For a pendulum left, you first turn the car right, then back left, which throws the rear of the car out and around the corner. The timing, placement, and actions required to induce this action are very difficult to get right, and require a great deal of practice. There is a cadence of six individual actions, which if followed correctly, result in a beautiful drift right thru the apex of the curve.

After lunch we were introduced to all-wheel-drive. The Audi's we had to work with were perfect for these roads. It is more difficult to induce oversteer in these cars, and as a result, the techniques are a bit different, although similar to the front drivers.

Day Three (Wednesday) was a rain-out for us. We spent the day touring the sites. I think this really helped my learning process, let things sink in a bit further. Plus New Hampshire is a beautiful place to visit, even in the rain.

Day Three, part II (Thursday) was sunny and beautiful. The facility has superior man-made drainage, so the roads were perfect. We again reviewed our lessons from Day One and Day Two, and then put the slalom in combination with a pendulum turn. These actions are difficult individually, and it was very challenging to try to perform them in combination. By lunch we were getting pretty good at both front-drive and AWD cars through this combination. Tim took us for a couple spins in an Audi 5000 Turbo Quattro. It's breathtaking to watch Tim's technique while standing on the side of the road. In the car it's incredible. The reassuring part of the drive was that he used the techniques we were learning. He executed them flawlessly and with a great deal of confidence, but the techniques were the same as our new ones.



After lunch, we were given a walk through a larger circuit that included "Junction City". This would enable us to put the pendulum to some practical application- no more cones. Now we had real

roads and blind corners to work with. We kept the slalom and pendulum cone section, too, for a total loop of about a mile. First front-drive, then with the Quattro's. Lots of control, lots of opportunity to mess up and be corrected by the instructors. We then got a special treat when Tim broke out his WRX Subaru ProRally car. This car is sponsored by the United States Air Force Reserves, and they spared no expense. Tim's driving technique is very impressive, and he took us each for a spin in that car. WOW.

I had to reschedule my fourth day for another date. Day Four includes narrower roads, with real trees, rocks, ditches, etc. It is a more realistic application of the lessons learned on previous days. I look forward to that class.

Team O'Neil Rally School was the most I've learned behind the wheel since high school. I now feel very capable on loose road surfaces, and I have a better appreciation for the ProRally teams I've seen tearing thru the woods.

Team O'Neil offers classes in car control from one-day to 5-day. They offer law enforcement classes as well as winter driving, and rally schools. Their facilities and instructors are absolutely top-notch. They are located in Littleton, New Hampshire. Visit their web site at [www.teamoneil.com](http://www.teamoneil.com).



Robin Watson, Alan Watson and Frank Linse at the July meeting

This is an article, written in 4 parts, by Bob McClaren's cousin for his local newsletter, and printed here with his permission. Thanks Bob, for sending it in!

## My MG Racing Adventure

Stephen H. Kelley

### Part I

My first significant recollection of little British sports cars dates to the mid 1950's in Jackson Heights, Long Island. I was a high school student at Trinity School on West 91st Street in Manhattan and each day I traveled to school on the New York City Subway system, or actually the IRT Elevated line which stopped at 82nd street in Jackson Heights. As I walked to and from the station I was regularly thrilled to see an MG TC less than a block from our apartment and often a bright red Austin Healey 100-4 just around the corner. Oh how I wanted one of those cars! Even just to ride in one! Especially the Healey! This would have been about 1953 or 1954. A number of years were to pass before I could ride in such a car but seeing these cars on an almost daily basis, and sometimes even seeing and hearing them drive by, kept my interest at a high level even though I may not have, at this early date, even had a drivers license. One of my high school classmates was Earl Hoyt and his parents actually owned an MG TD and I delighted in hearing him tell me about it and how to downshift and drive a proper line through a turn. Particularly, I remember a weekend several of us spent at Pete Davenport's house in Long Beach when we stayed up half the night talking about lines, drifting, every sort of sports car, and especially the exploits of our hero Sterling Moss.

After high school, I went to Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania. One of my best friends and fraternity brothers was Nick Housenick whose parents owned one of the country's oldest Ford dealerships, dating from 1903, in nearby Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania. Somehow they had traded in an ancient red Singer which was a little 4 cylinder British sports car which I got to ride in and even drive some. This was my first experience in a true sports car. Nick and I went to my first sports car race which was an SCCA event at Berwick, Pennsylvania. This race had been held annually there for many years I believe. I still remember a number of T series MGs racing there, some Jaguars, a 2 seat Ford Thunderbird (Really!!), and, I think an early 6 cylinder Corvette. I'd been to lots of stock car races by then but somehow I just knew that sports car racing was what I really wanted to do.

In 1958 I was back in New York, again living at home. I sold my dilapidated 1946 Ford and went shopping. On Northern Boulevard in Flushing I found my TD in a used car lot. It was a beauty to behold. It was a light blue color which I think was called Clipper Blue. It was nicely pin striped and had an eye catching white top and side curtains. I was hooked. I think the price was about \$1,100 and even at that I had to get a car loan, but quickly the car was mine. I loved every inch of it and the fact that, unbeknownst to me, the engine was already worn out, did not cause a problem for some time. I should have taken as a warning, the salesman's admonition not to drive it over 50 mph, especially when I discovered that when fully warmed up it had very meager oil pressure. But I was young, happy, drove it much too fast, tried heavy oil and various additives to boost the oil pressure and so on. None of these remedies really worked, but at 21 years of age, with no knowledge, no experience, and no one to advise me I did not worry too much. I just had fun driving all over Long Island in it and waving happily at all the other sports cars, of which there really were quite a few. And, at considerable risk to myself and others, I tried out all the driving techniques I would eventually use at Lime Rock and other similar places. Actually I had started all that much earlier in the family car and in my poor old '46 Ford.

I should perhaps describe my living situation at the time because that bears directly on how I was to handle the various engine troubles which were soon to come. We lived in a nice garden apartment but had no garage. We had to park on the street, which was usually very crowded, and it was not at all unusual to come home at night and have to find a parking spot several blocks from where we lived. It was also not unusual in the winter, to sweep several inches of snow out of the car; the side curtains were really not much help in New York blizzards. I had very few tools - and certainly no power tools, jacks, jackstands, or anything like that. And there was no place to work on the car other than the street. My parents were supportive of my efforts but my father had never been a do it yourselfer so he could not help or really even advise. Speaking of tools, one bright aspect was that in those days, one could walk to the local Sears store and actually buy Craftsman tools and *even Whitworth tools*. Even now I still have about half a dozen half-inch drive Craftsman Whitworth sockets dating from this era including one labeled "3/4 W" which fits the crankshaft pulley nut on Molly, my MGB, perfectly. I used the TD for every driving need and was working full time for the American Oil Company and commuting four nights a week to New York University on Washington Square to finish my degree. So, in addition to all the other constraints,

time was a big factor in my ability to do much with the beloved TD.

The first tragedy soon occurred. With misplaced courage I decided to drive the TD to Maine. Somewhere in Connecticut a loud clunking developed in the engine. I abandoned the Maine plan, limped back home and assessed the situation. Somehow, I correctly concluded that a rod bearing had failed. But how to attempt such a repair on the streets of New York? Especially with alternate day parking which required all cars to be moved at least once every 24 hours from one side of the street to the other to allow for street cleaning? My solution was to limp north about 50 miles where my Uncle and Aunt owned a home in Carmel, New York. He had a garage and space! I pulled the pan and the rod caps there, and with damaged bearing inserts in hand, went back to New York on the New York Central to Grand Central Station. Thence via subway to J. S. Inskip, the then well known importer and wholesaler of MG parts. I showed them my terrible looking bearing inserts and asked for new ones. I was asked about the condition of the crankshaft, and while I don't remember my answer, I do remember being authoritatively advised that there was no possibility the crankshaft could be good with such terrible looking bearing inserts! Of course they were right - but the prospect of removing the engine, then the crank, and actually doing something about it was absolutely overpowering to me. Where would I do such a thing? How? With what money? And so on. So, ignoring good wisdom, I purchased new bearing inserts, rode the New York Central back north and then hitch hiked to my Uncle's house. Successfully, I assembled the bits and pieces and got the engine running again, but with no better oil pressure than before. Of course I had accomplished next to nothing but to do more was just too intimidating to me.

The next disaster was the transmission case. For no reason I have ever found, while driving slowly in my neighborhood, I heard a loud "crack" near my feet. The transmission case had cracked! I do not remember where I did the work, but somehow pulled the transmission. I bought a new case at Inskip and decided I would simply remove all the gears and bearings from the old case and put them in the new case. To me it sounded simple enough - how hard could that be? So I did - in my bedroom, totally to my mother's consternation and disbelief. Somehow I got it all together and installed back in the car. But sadly it produced immediate grinding noises. The ultimate solution was a used transmission from a British car junkyard on Staten Island. As I remember, I had to wait weeks before they got one in.

For fun, I tried a rally or two and a few gymkhanas (which I liked better than the rallies), often with my sister Sue as co-pilot and navigator but I knew this was not really what I wanted to do. I also began going to local SCCA events at Lime Rock, Bridgehampton, and Montgomery. Montgomery was an airport course north of New York City and at all these places I had the opportunity to watch Walt Hansgen and Briggs Cunningham then in Lister Jaguars and later in Birdcage Maseratis, Lance Reventlow in his Scarab, Mark Donahue in his E Production Elva, Bob Grossman in an A Production Ferrari and many others. Sports Car Racing, then and now, was essentially road racing. In the earliest days in England, public roads would be closed off for a race, a few hay bales would be put up at dangerous corners, and the races would be on. Watkins Glen in upstate New York actually started this way and it was well into the 1950's before a closed course, dedicated to racing, was constructed there. It has always seemed to me that racing on a road course or a road type course is the ultimate test of an automobile and its driver as it involves left and right hand turns both sharp and sweeping, up and down hills, and straightaways. It really tests every aspect of an automobile's capability unlike other popular forms of racing. These races even begin with what amounts to a mass drag race to the first turn. I knew that this was what I wanted to do. But how could I get there given my current situation? Well, a life changing event was in the offing and that event opened some doors and smoothed the way for me to follow my dream.

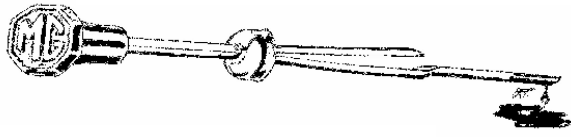
(to be continued)



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# The Dipstick



## The Tidewater MG Classics

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## FIRST CLASS



Monthly Meeting

Tue, Aug 6th

Paul and Carmen Thiergardt's

5232 Fairfield Blvd

Virginia Beach

497-0455

7:30-8:00pm - Kick Tyres  
8:00pm - Meeting

