

# The Dipstick



“The Newsletter of the Tidewater MG Classics Car Club”

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

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Dedicated To Preserving The Marque Since 1973

February 2007

## MARQUE TIME

Frankie's Place for Ribs in Kempsville once again provided the location for our January meeting. We had another large turnout, but not too many MGs due to some colder weather. I even chose not to drive my '72B. I really wanted to since it finally came home just before Christmas (!) and I had missed the entire Fall driving season, but a smarter head (Beckey's) prevailed. My hats off to Scott Coogan and Modern Auto Body. They did a very nice job on my B. Not only did they repair the rear-end damage, but also took care of some rust coming through the front fender seams. It looks beautiful.

I must say it's a good job my MG is back because our other cars appear to be wearing out. In December, Beckey's Audi used AAA to be towed to the dealership due to a bad fuel injector. Then earlier this month AAA was called again to tow my Mercury from Cumberland to Richmond because of a cracked intake manifold. Many thanks to Terry Bond and Robin Watson who helped me get it back from Richmond. This was following AAA being called to tow Colin's Firebird to his house back in November. It will be interesting to see if I get a renewal notice from AAA this year, or if they'll cut their losses.

I was at work the other day talking to the Canon tech rep that assists us when necessary. Although he works out of the Atlanta office he lives in Crewe, VA. As with most of my conversations, talk drifted to MG's. I was surprised to learn that he owned a Midget. I was even more surprised to learn it was the one I took a picture of this time last year, covered in snow, spotted on Rt. 460. His wife also saw it and convinced him to buy it. That explains why it was missing the next time I drove Rt. 460.

February is the month for love -- the love of cars, friends, good times -- so here's to planning the upcoming TMGC events!

Safety Fast,  
Alan

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

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

**Feb. 7** Wednesday meeting at Tom & Marie Early's (see back page)

Feb. 7-27 University Motors seminars,  
[www.universitymotorsltd.com](http://www.universitymotorsltd.com) to  
download the PDF schedule

**Feb. 12** Dipstick Deadline

**March 7** Tuesday meeting at ??? (Volunteer  
needed)

March 10 TRAACA Swap Meet,  
[www.aaca.org/tidewater](http://www.aaca.org/tidewater)

**March 12** Dipstick Deadline

March 23-25 Historic Sportscar Racing at VIR,  
[www.virclub.com](http://www.virclub.com)

March 24 SCCA 2007 River to River Run, Regional  
Tour, [www.odr-scca.org](http://www.odr-scca.org)



Beckey & Alan Watson and their  
newly painted (again) B

# January Minutes

Michele Peters

Before I begin with the regular Minutes, I would like to take this opportunity to note that Cynthia Faschini's father passed away in December. Of course the entire membership send their sincerest condolences to Cynthia and Andy and their family.

We began our January meeting at Frankie's (Place for Ribs) at 8:14 PM on the 2nd. Robert and I really didn't get there "late" but we still had to sit in the back. Now, as I mentioned at the meeting, sometimes it was difficult for me to hear what exactly was going on up in front. I guess this goes to show how important the Secretary really IS in this club...

A motion was made by El Presidente to approve the November minutes, and, thankfully, no objections were made. In fact, the entire company was making motions to approve, as well as second the motions, with loud and vigorous affirmations. Well, I guess my little dissertation about objections to my Minutes in the November issue was noticed. It is nice to be noticed.

**New Members and Guests:** There were no new members or guests this month, which worked out very nicely, as there was no room in the back at Frankie's for any more people. In fact, they ran out of beer glasses and, uhm, something else (aren't I informative? But that's why I get the big bucks!).

**Vice-President:** J.D. was absent; no report from anyone else.

**Treasurer:** Jim Villers was present without Betty, who came later. He began telling us that we had a balance forward from November of \$2,336.41 when he was interrupted by a cell phone call. Now, I couldn't tell WHO he was talking to because I was TOO FAR AWAY to hear him, but some think he was speaking with his bookie... Well, anyway, when he finally got back to US, he noted that Becky came through this month and our receipts included \$795.40 from raffle and regalia but \$0 from dues. Disbursements included \$81.00 to Robin Watson for mailing and printing (again, I have no idea WHAT was being mailed and printed, and I am not about to presume...), \$718.24 to Becky Hassler for regalia, \$103.80 to Robin Watson for mailing and printing (Hey, wait a minute, didn't I just type \$81 for Robin Watson for mailing and printing?) and \$260.48 to Betty Villers for the Christmas party (which was very nice, indeed). Our new balance is \$1,968.29.

**Activities:** Beckey still has a few Pig Roast pictures to distribute. If you didn't get yours and you attended, see her. The "After Christmas Holiday Lights Top Down Cruise" at the Botanical Gardens on December 27 was a very cool success. Fourteen LBCs partici-

pated, as well as one GT (no top down). Unfortunately, Robert and I missed it again this year, but next year, next year... we really have Great Expectations!

The Holiday Party at Jim and Betty's was just delightful. I don't know about you, but I was amazed at Betty's Santas... she has so many varieties. And all the food was so delicious. Beckey reported that the gifts and the gift cards we brought enabled 19 children to have two gifts a piece, and every family received 2-3 gift cards. She read some of the thank-you notes that she received from the recipients, such as the single mom with twins, senior citizens, and another mom who has four children and was burned out of her home. It sure was nice of Beckey to arrange for us to contribute to those folks who really needed some help. Thank you, Beckey, for taking the helm on that one.

Our February meeting will be at Tom and Marie Early's house, 717 Vanderbilt Ave, Virginia Beach (428-5283). Be there or be square (Oh my gosh, how old AM I?). See this issue for directions. Beware however; Croatan Beach has lots of steps, so come sober. Parking will be in the neighbor's yard because there is no parking on the street.

We need a host for the March meeting... or else it's back to Frankie's. However, if that happens, I am reserving a table in the front, right here and right now, got it, folks?

**Clubs:** Mike reported that the MGA Register is looking for a treasurer and newsletter editor. If you are interested, don't call me. Also GT 32 is in Whistler, B.C. this year (whatever GT 32 is). See [www.GT32.com](http://www.GT32.com) to register on the internet.

**Historian:** Susan noted that she doesn't have her act together, again, and someday she might get the 2006 album finished, but don't hold your breath. Well, I guess you *could* hold your breath if you wanted to, but really, what would be the point?

**Newsletter:** We had Show and Tell at the meeting. Susan held up a copy of *The Dipstick* that was horribly mangled and in which the addressee was undecipherable. If you didn't get yours, this one was probably it. Mike Ash noted that it probably came with a note from the Post Office indicating that "We Care." In other Newsletter news, Susan is PDFing the issue now and it will be out soon.

**Membership:** Robin reported that we have 98 members. Privately, he explained the disconcerting confusion in his membership numbers from November. Yep, OK, Robin, yeah, that's right. I see what you did in figuring out your numbers, mmm, uhuh, yep, it sure makes sense to me. (Not!) BTW (that's "By the way" for the uninitiated), be careful in writing down your email addresses and be perfectly *clear*, and please check the email addresses in the Directory to see if they are correct. If they aren't correct, however, well, Robin didn't say what to do in that case... (you might try

emailing the correction to him)

The North American MGB Register (NAMGBR) selects one of its chapters each year for recognition of the NAMGBR's finest newsletter. **This year, NAMGBR selected TMGC's The Dipstick as Newsletter of the Year, and Sue and Peggy as editors! Congratulations ladies!** That's an awesome accolade afforded after articulate, amusing, and arguably artistic amblyopia. Hey, doesn't the Secretary, whose wit and wisdom is the SOUL of this newsletter, get any recognition? I don't suppose the NAMGBR names a newsletter Secretary of the Year.... well, maybe my faithful fans could sign a petition... and there's always next year.

**Technical:** Mark was absent. Mark, oh Mark. And I thought last November when you showed up and participated so nicely, that you had changed your errant ways, and seen the light... Well, the rest of us must not lose hope for Mark. Perhaps we can schedule an intervention for February...

**Old Business:** none

**New Business:** none

**Marque Time:** Alan and Beckey's B finally came home... *yea!* That is the happy news. On a more embarrassing note, Mike Ash made a fool of himself (hey, his words, not mine!) when he crunched the hood of his GT after propping it open with a broomstick and leaving it there while he raised the car on a lift... Anyway, I think that was the story.

Jennifer Ash told us about the Tale of the Well-Baked Birthday Cake. It seems their friend Charles, the chef at the Eastville Inn on the Eastern Shore, wanted to give his wife a surprise 30<sup>th</sup> birthday party and enlisted the assistance of some MG Club members. Jennifer told the wife that the MG Club wanted to rent the Inn for a party and had her bake a cake in the shape of an octagon. Of course, the poor woman was baking her own birthday cake (didn't anyone see anything seriously wrong with this?). She went to a lot of trouble to create a beautiful cake, a luscious baked Brie, etc. Not only this, but with the baking and the reservation of the Inn, and all the additional labor, the poor wife thought she and her husband were in for a nice profit from the MG club of about \$2900. After seeing friends and neighbors who she knew were *not* in the MG Club and realizing that this was actually a huge birthday party, for her, she was, of course, delighted. However, when Jennifer mentioned that the MG Club really *would* like to do an event at the Inn, the wife replied "Yeah, right!" A few days later when Mike and Jennifer dined at the Inn, they were surprised to find that their bill was \$2,000, compliments of the wife.

**Raffle and Regalia:** Mike Haag won the dirty TMGC glass. Jim Freeh noted that if Mike won again, maybe the glass could be filled with some interesting libation... Susan Bond won the MG hat pin (I think

Susan is now taking over Anita's coveted position as a "winner every month"), Ron Stuewing took the license plate holder, Olive Watson won the MGOC magazine, Jim Villers won the MG belt buckle and Olive won again, this time the MG stamp (We don't mind, Olive, that you win multiple times at every meeting because after all, it's very hard to be jealous of one so sweet).

We adjourned at 8:44 full of ribs and beer and fellowship, and not in that order. And BTW, if I got anything wrong in these Minutes, you got it... SUE ME!

## Membership and New Members

Robin Watson

**Total Membership: 98**

Membership is still at 98. As I mentioned at the January meeting, I am changing how I put the Directory together, from working on Excel to now using Publisher. I have already found out that a number of mistakes were made in this year's Directory with most of them being E-mail addresses. I would like you to check the Directory entry and also the Zip Code and Type of Car entry at the back of the book and let me know of any corrections that should be made for the club's record keeping. Wof101@aol.com or 721-9277.

## Officers and Committees

President	Alan Watson	426-2600
Vice President	J.D. Hawthorne	723-0630
Secretary	Michele Peters	482-1012
Treasurer	Jim Villers	481-6398
Editors	Peggy Craig	226-7755
	Susan Bond	482-5222
Membership	Robin Watson	721-9277
Activities	Beckey Watson	426-2600
Historian	Susan Bond	482-5222
Technical	Mark Childers	432-9155
Regalia	Becky Hassler	874-1477
Clubs	Mike Ash	495-0307
Webmaster	Mike Haag	mikeh@whro.net



## Party Orphans

Betty Villers has a couple of items that were "abandoned" at the Christmas party. They are a green wicker plate and two hot pads with purple butterflies.

# Christmas Lights at Botanical Gardens – Powered by Lucas!

Terry Bond

Photos by Jim Villers and Susan Bond

Well, Lucas was powering the record contingent of MGs on this year's Christmas light tour, and everything was working well.



Pete Olson decorated his B

There were 15 MGs present for the occasion, most gathering early for a wonderful dinner at the Terrace Café.



Chef Eddie and staff

The buffet was a nice surprise, and the food was absolutely fantastic. Chef Eddie was on scene to make sure there

was plenty to eat and that everyone was satisfied.

Our cars were conveniently pre-staged in a parking area near the light tour entrance so it was easy for us to move as a group. The team handling the light display at the gardens was especially accommodating and helped us to stick together for the tour.

It was a fabulous display and the weather was perfect! Unlike the Virginia Beach exhibit where they are limited to stand up displays on either side of the arrow-straight boardwalk, the Gardens have the



Becky & Chuck Hassler, Jon and Bobbi Suponski

ability to hang lights from all of the trees. There were times when we drove under spectacular canopies of lights.

The winding roadway, outlined with colored lights helped provide a variety that again, the beach doesn't offer. We



15 MGs and one mascot, the Terschak's dog kept thinking about those twisting roads, small bridges, and sharp turns and would have loved to take them at



Standing: Alan Watson, Chuck & Becky Hassler, Beckey Watson, Mike Knepler, Barb Taychert, Betty Villers, Barbara & Bob Ross, Terry Bond, Frank & Anna Worrell, Olive Watson, Jon & Bobbi Suponski, Pete Olson. Seated: Frank & Angela D'Angelo, Susan Bond, Robin Watson, Jim Villers. In front: Jack & Taylor Sumner



Gingerbread house

speed someday. But, the Christmas light tour was not the time and place to do that. So, we simply coasted along slowly in low gear and enjoyed one of the best light displays ever.

What a great assortment of cars too! In addition to Bs there were three GTs, and even an MGA. Everyone (except the GTs of course) was able to enjoy a “top-down” tour. (Well, I did have a sun roof).



Loved the spider web

Thanks to Becky Watson for again providing such a wonderful evening for us.

Enjoying the lights were:

- Frank D’Angelo and daughter Angela
- John and Lesley Terschak
- Pete Olson
- Susan and Terry Bond with grandkids Taylor and Jack Sumner
- Jim and Betty Villers
- Frank and Anna Worrell
- Chuck and Becky Hassler
- Jon and Bobbi Suponski
- Barb Taychert and Mike Knepler
- Alan and Beckey Watson
- Robin and Olive Watson
- Bob and Barbara Ross
- Anne Larson
- Bob Stein (prospective member we hope!)



Barbara & Bob Ross



Betty & Jim Villers



Olive & Robin Watson



### Saving Bobbett

Jon Suponski

*(Author’s note: This story is part fiction and part fact, the names have been changed to protect the author from Libel and/or drive-by shootings.)*

#### Part One, Discovery...

It was a dark and stormy night.....no it wasn’t either, it was a rainy Wednesday morning...really, March, 31<sup>st</sup>, 2004, look it up. I had just stopped by the heating and cooling repair shop to pay a bill.....again... I was turning to leave the parking lot when I saw her, far away across two empty lots in front of an industrial building. She was all by herself with no one else around. My heart skipped a beat....I eased on over for a closer look.

She was a tiny little thing, low to the ground, hunkered down against the cold rain, looking pretty forlorn. She had no top on and her skirts were torn. It was obvious that she had been abused and left for dead. But I could tell by looking at her that she still had a spark, that under her faded beauty her heart still beat.

I knew that I had to do something to save her. I looked around and spotted an open bay door on the building and headed for it. As I entered the door I was faced with a strange sight. A 1950s something GMC bus painted up to look like a log cabin. It had a peaked roof, a smokestack, a pair of steer’s horns on the hood

and a sign on the roof that read "Hillbilly Bus". (This is NOT fiction).

A second later I was greeted by a short, fat, bald, 70 year old hillbilly wearing blue denim coveralls, and a straw hat with a hearing aid in his ear and a cigar in a mouth with no teeth. He was rummaging around in the back of a 1940s pickup that had Hillbilly Bros. painted on the door.

"Hai!!!! Howeryalldoin," he said. At least that's what it sounded like. "WhyI'mdoinjessfine," I said putting on my best hillbilly. Sometimes you have to humor these people, besides if I'm lucky I'll sound like his lost cousin, Elmer, and he'll be nice to me. "What can you tell me about the little lady in red outside the building over yonder," I asked. "Why she belongs to Paul," said the hillbilly, "he's in the horse patrol!" "I see," I said not having a clue what a horse patrol was.

"How would I get in touch with this Paul?" "Oh, he comes around once in awhile," the hillbilly said. He's a fireman, he's in the horse patrol! "That's nice," I said still wondering what a horse patrol was. "Why... Are you interested in her?" said the hillbilly with a sneer on his toothless face. "I might be," I said "I used to have one like her when I was 13. She was my first."

"Well, you go over to that building over there," he said pointing across the lot, "and go in the front door and turn to your left and go in the business office and ask for Bobby Lee. Tell him we sent you. He'll be able to tell you more about her....."

Continued.....



Bobbi and Jon at the Light Tour



### Legislatively Speaking...

Terry Bond

It's open season again on Antique Vehicle Registration! Do you recall the buzz of activity last year when some of our representatives wanted to take a shot-gun approach to dealing with abuse of the Antique License plate? Well, they are at it again. Only this time, we've

worked hard to come up with a pre-emptive strike!

HB 1927 needs our support! Here is the essence of changes that will occur to the current law regarding registration and use of antique vehicles:

For info, the applicable existing statute is § 46.2-730 of the Code of Virginia.

D. Except as provided in subsection E of this section, motor vehicles and trailers registered with license plates issued under this section shall not be used for general transportation purposes, including, but not limited to, (i) daily travel to and from the owner's place of employment and (ii) carrying or transporting anything other than passengers, personal effects of the owner, show-related materials, and other antique vehicles being transported for show purposes, but shall only be used:

1. For participation in club activities, exhibits, tours, parades, and similar events; and
2. On the highways of the Commonwealth for the purpose of testing their operation, obtaining repairs or maintenance, transportation to and from events as described in subdivision 1 of this subsection, and for occasional pleasure driving not exceeding 250 miles from the residence of the owner.

*Except for vehicles for which license plates are issued pursuant to subsections B and C, no license plate shall be issued under this section to any applicant who (a) is not the registered owner of at least one other vehicle registered for general transportation purposes (b) cannot show proof that the vehicle is covered by a collector or agreed value insurance policy at the time of registration or that the vehicle has been inspected by the Department's investigative services to determine its worthiness to be registered as an antique vehicle, has not submitted an affidavit acknowledging his understanding of the provisions of this section in effect at the time of registration.*

*Except for vehicles for which license plates are issued pursuant to subsections B and C, all license plates issued under this section shall bear the legend: "LIMITED USE."*

G. Use of a vehicle bearing license plates issued under this section other than as specifically authorized in this section shall be punishable as a Class 3 misdemeanor, and the Department shall refuse to issue license plates under this section for any such vehicle for five years.

In this bill, the changes are:

Daily use is specifically prohibited (to prevent these vehicles being used as regular commuter transportation or for work purposes)

Transporting certain items is specifically prohibited (to help eliminate the use of pick-up trucks and similar vehicles as "work trucks.")

Pleasure use has been eliminated (this has proven to be impossible to enforce and has resulted in an increase in tag abuse).

Introduces new requirements to have a primary vehicle registered in addition to a hobby vehicle, and requires proof of special insurance and/or DMV approval to register the vehicle. (this is added in order to help eliminate tag abuse).

Provides for specific punitive measures for violation of the statute.

Ok, so now you must be wondering, how we got to this point and why we should support this.

Abuse of the Antique Tag has been increasing. We've all seen pick-up trucks on the road loaded with construction equipment wearing antique tags. We've all seen "beater" autos driven daily in rush hour traffic wearing antique tags. We've seen vehicles that bear no resemblance to what they once were wearing antique tags. I've personally seen everything from Dune Buggies to old pick-ups towing trailers full of landscaping equipment going to work every day. As a result, there are some legislators (Danny Marshall, Danville, Leo Wardrup, Virginia Beach) who would like to tackle the problem by eliminating the many benefits the antique tag brings to us. He has introduced HB 2465 without the benefit or courtesy of involving the key players (DMV, State Police, and car enthusiasts). His bill will require regular vehicle safety and emissions inspections for all vehicles made after 1932, implement an annual registration fee (this also enables individual localities to assess similar annual fees), impose specific annual mileage limitations and will lead eventually to bringing back personal property tax based on what the vehicles are thought to be worth (according to some auction report or out-of-whack price guide!)

Danny Marshall of Danville continues his assault on the car hobby! Knowing of his intentions, there has been a lot of work going on behind the scenes. A group led by Tom Cox, a newly elected national board member of the Antique Automobile Club of America, has been meeting to come up with legislation that acknowledges tag abuse and attempts to deal with it in a more favorable and sensible way, without punishing the vast majority of car enthusiasts who abide by the intent of the law. This group included representatives from car club councils, DMV, state police, and the legislature.

The proposed legislation is a consensus from that series of meetings. HB 1927 was sponsored by Delegate Morgan Griffith, house majority leader. It is currently in Committee.

We must acknowledge that the existing legislation is

difficult to enforce. As a result, tag abuse has become a serious problem. We can help the effort to deal with that, or we can hope someone else will do it. Hope is not a strategy.

It is important that each of us contact our representatives and indicate our desire to have them support HB 1927 and defeat Marshall's bill. HB 1927 It isn't perfect but is an acceptable alternative to potential disaster if we don't help to move it forward.

If you would like a sample letter or email to send to your representatives, let me know

### Notes from the Editors . . .

Susan Bond

Many thanks to all our contributors for making our job easier and for giving you so much to read while it is too nasty out to drive our cars much. We did have a lot more chances than usual this year — warm days up till a week ago — hope you were able to get out and drive. Now is the time to plan for the summer car shows. I have already booked rooms for MG2007 in California, now to book a flight. No, I don't think driving cross-country on a deadline is a good idea. If I ever get to make that trip I want to take my time and enjoy it, especially if I drive an MG. That means being retired. Sure hope I can still get in to and out of the GT then!



### MG Vintage Racers "Focus Event 2007" Set for Mid-Ohio

The MG Vintage Racers have changed their "Focus Event" for 2007 to VSCDA's (Vintage Sport Car Driver's Association) vintage race weekend at the Mid-Ohio racetrack in Lexington, Ohio, USA, on October 12-14. MGVR designates one vintage race event annually as their "Focus Event" where all MG racers are encouraged to attend and compete. Focus events have been held at various race tracks and with various vintage race organizations over the past 12 years with very successful results! At it all "MG Races" are added by the sanctioning body to their regular race groups. Plus MGVR complements the weekend with some of their own special MG awards and activities. Around 100 racing MGs - ranging from Pre-War MGs to MGB's - from all over North America are expected to compete - MG "Safety Fast" at speed! All MG racers and enthusiasts are encouraged to attend this special weekend of vintage racing and MG camaraderie!

For Car Clubs within traveling distance of this event, consider adding it to your activities calendar for 2007 - it will be a unique opportunity!

## The Skinned Knuckle Chronicles

Chapter 19: A thousand Grease Monkeys with a thousand keyboards....

By Mark Childers

It was either a Dark and Stormy or Black and Tan night, or maybe both. I don't rightly remember either weather or brew at the moment, but I do have a vivid recollection of a stream of well-thought out, pardon-my-French, *expletives-deleted*, following six jammed zerk fittings in what had to be among the worst-maintained pair of MGB kingpins in the history of the Little British Car Empire.

I pulled a zerk and squeezed some grease thru it to see how bad things were going to be. Sure enough, it was clogged to the point where the grease gun stalled, the hose was beginning to swell, and no amount of tugging would now get the zerk fitting released from the adapter at the end of the hose. I fired up my tiny butane pocket torch and held it an inch from the zerk to slowly heat up the innards. A tiny ribbon of steam and cruddy grease blew out followed by clean grease under near-explosive pressure. I probed the zerk port on the bottom with a jeweler's screwdriver and extracted some dry, powdery residue, then reinserted the zerk, only to find that the grease in the king pin had hardened too much to be pushed out of the end seals. I repeated the process five more times with similar results. Sure, I could have scrounged a half dozen good zerks from the parts bin, but I would have cleaned these out anyway for future spares, and what's more fun than compressed air, fire and flammable materials? I then loosened both bottom fulcrum nuts, and rotated the bolts to find, by pure good luck, the bolts and distance tubes had not seized, and the A-arm through holes were still round and had not elongated. There's little sense in greasing a seized fulcrum bolt, especially if it takes more work to grease than to replace.

When a kingpin is freshly rebuilt and lubricated even with the highest quality "right stuff," the new grease almost immediately begins aging as a result of moisture and dirt, and even products with Teflon additives eventually get smokin' hot at the molecular level when exposed to enough weight and motion over long periods. Bearing grease manufacturers use various combinations of vegetable, mineral, animal, synthetic, and hydrocarbon oil as the essential lubricant, with a thickener of lithium-soap or organic clay. These sticky binders hold the much slicker lubes in place, and don't create much friction themselves. Used exclusively over the life of a component, any good ball joint grease will do the job without issue.

A serious problem arises when lithium and clay-based lubricants are intermixed. By some not yet fully understood process, they combine to form a

thick, dry paste that encapsulates virtually all three types of lubricating agents, and a "magic bullet" additive to allow them to mix isn't likely to hit the market anytime soon. This phenomenon isn't something new, either. In my career in helicopters, which ended more than fifteen years ago, there were a number of warnings issued about the effects of mixing different MilSpec greases, and the French lost a couple of helicopters that turned out to be directly related to congealed grease in gearboxes resulting from mixing clay and lithium.

Back from my musings--I didn't want to do a complete rebuild of the front end unless it was really necessary, and the king pins didn't have any noticeable movement. By removing the steering rod ends, I swiveled the king pins back and forth, stiff and jerky at first, while squirting a steady stream of WD40 into the top most open zerk port. After a few dozen shots, there were some traces of the WD dripping out the bottom-most zerk port. I wiped off as much grease and crud as possible from the king pins, wrapped the brake line with a couple layers of tin foil, replaced the top-most grease fitting (so that I wouldn't have to burn my fingers) then, staying clear of the rubber seals, slowly heated kingpins from bottom to top with the Map torch set to a medium flame. In retrospect, I suppose my contractor grade hot air gun might have sufficed, and reduced the risk. If you do use a torch, an industrial spray bottle filled with seltzer water or diet soda works great to quell the occasional flare-up from the extremely flammable. Much better than water as they release lots of CO2. WD40 makes a great flame thrower... (just ask a certain club member whose identity has been withheld out of common decency). Some greases contain benzene that, when heated above 140\*f, releases a potentially carcinogenic out-gassing, so make sure there's lots of ventilation whenever the torch (or a hot tank) is used around the greasy bits. When the king pin got fairly hot, just on the verge of smoking grease, but nowhere near hot enough even for the casting slag to glow, I pumped synthetic grease into the top fitting until it started oozing out the middle hole, then installed a zerk in the middle, pumping that one until the nasty yellow residue ceased flowing, and clean grease came out the bottom hole. That done, I used the wet rag to cool the kingpin to room temp and started the process over top to bottom until cool, thick and clean grease came out of all the seals. The change in how the king pins felt while swiveling was immediately apparent, and the palpable clunk from the dry lower fulcrum was gone. I then put a jack under the springs one at a time, pulled the lower fulcrum bolts and spacers out for a quick inspection with the intention of chamfering a groove around the center of the distance tube and drill a small grease port to allow grease to get to the bolt, but noted that someone had already done the mod (see below). I made the owner promise to come back after a couple hundred miles to

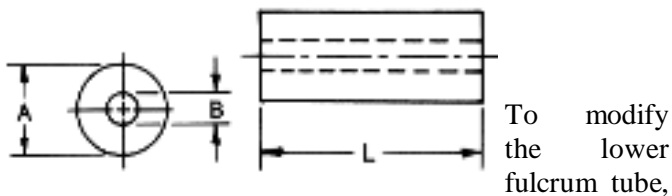


shoot another course of grease into the kingpin in hopes that more old residue might be forced out, and slow down the current, inevitable congealing process. The car steers easier now, and with regular greasing, the kingpins should outlast the driver...

When I grease anything from suspension components to wheel bearings, my tool of choice is a mid-priced, one-handed pneumatic gun sporting an ominous safety-orange warning of its ability to inject a potentially lethal dose of lubricant at 6,000 psi right through human skin. Hand pumps are no less dangerous, pressure wise, but most take two hands to operate when greasy, thus improving the odds against skin injection. I can only guess that any improved range of motion one's joints might experience following significant "inadvertent human injection" of lithium disulfide might be offset by some bizarre and serious side effects. Fortunately, general purpose greases don't contain a lot of toxic substances, but my take is that the MSD toxicity review is likely measured by skin contact, and at worst, sticking a freshly smashed greasy thumb into one's mouth, not so much toward compulsive eaters, or junkies looking for cheap thrills. And grease under pressure is just another good reason for always wearing safety glasses around anything that might get in your eyes. As an aside, the MSD sheet for my Dow Corning GP Bearing grease indicates that it contains an estrogen-mimicking chemical that may affect both the reproductive system and (if only by inference) those folds in the male brain that compel guys to enter Sears through Tool Country even when it's three minutes before closing and the sole mission is to pick up a frilly bed-in-a-bag with matching curtains for that surprise visit by the wife's great-aunt Matilda. That said, whether you have an pneumatic or hand-pump version, or are using grease to worry into a wheel bearing, wear chemical resistant gloves, and anytime you clear a zerk fitting with a grease gun, pay close attention to where eyes, fingers and palms may be, relative to the exit hole.

*Safety Fast! , Safety First!*

Lower fulcrum distance tube modification



To modify the lower fulcrum tube, use the edge of a grinding wheel to carefully cut a shallow 1/8" wide chamfer in the middle of the distance tube, going all the way around the entire outer circumference. All that is needed is to remove the hardened surface and provide enough depth for grease to flow under pressure. When chamfer is complete, drill a 1/8" (approx) hole thru the chamfer into the center of the distance tube. This will allow grease to migrate from

the zerk fitting, into lower bushing, thru the new hole, and into the inner diameter to lube the lower fulcrum bolt.



## Link of the Month

Terry Bond

Another one of the neat brochures collected at Hershey is from a company called Color Plus. They are easy to find on the web at [www.ColorPlus.com](http://www.ColorPlus.com)

This company specializes in leather restoration and care products. They have some great info on their website and also publish a brochure that gives lots of useful info about how to care for, restore, and preserve leather. Info on coloring, crack filling, softening, etc. is something that might be of use to an MG enthusiast. They also have the same kind of info for vinyl interiors and offer a great selection of products. They are located in Milford PA.

## Tidbit

Found on MGB Experience, submitted by Terry Bond.

An MG is never 'finished', if there is nothing for you to currently work on it is merely 'resting'.

## British Motor Heritage Center

Geoff Wheatley

I know that some of you have visited the British Motor Heritage Center in the UK where current owners of any British vehicle can spend a few hours looking at a very large selection of both pre and post war British cars that once were exported to almost every corner of the world. Sad to say today, this unique industry has simply faded away, gone but certainly not forgotten, as the readers of this excellent publication well know! I first visited the Heritage Center when it opened over ten years ago and since then have managed to spend a few hours every other year testing the local brew and reviewing the ever-changing selection of display vehicles. Apart from the cars the Heritage Center provides another unique service--they are able to provide Heritage Bodies for both the MG Midget and the MGB. These are brand new units built to the original factory specifications. They also are able to supply various quality parts, again built to original standards. For example you can obtain various items for the restoration of an MG or Triumph, Morris or Mini.

The restoration service started back in the late 1980s when they introduced new MGB bodies that

could be purchased by any owner who wanted to undertake a real restoration project with a new and completely authentic body. To my knowledge this was a first in the restoration business. Where else could you purchase a complete body for a vehicle that had been out of production for many years?

Today, these same units are being shipped all over the world and demand is still growing. In order to provide this service, thousands of obsolete production tools had to be recreated, thousands of original drawings had to be filed or simply reprinted and then transferred to computer storage. Included in the many services offered is a kit that enables any owner of a rubber bumper MG to convert back to the more attractive chrome bumper. I have seen a couple of these conversions and they are very professional. Each new body is zinc coated and electrophoretically primed. This involves submerging the complete body shell into an electrically charged tank of anodic primer. As to be expected these body shells are not cheap but if you want to keep your restored MGB or Midget etc., for the next twenty-five years this is the only way to go.

Another service available from Heritage is their records archive where you can trace the original production details of your post-war vehicle and obtain a certificate of originality. I have such details for a MGTD and a MGTF obtained at a modest cost.

For those readers who require more information on the various services at Heritage I suggest that they contact [www.bmh-ltd.co.uk](http://www.bmh-ltd.co.uk). This website can answer questions and provide additional information of the complete range of services available.



### Proper Tool Usage

From the internet, sent in by Terry Bond and Chuck Hassler

1. **DRILL PRESS:** A tall upright machine useful for suddenly snatching flat metal bar stock out of your hands so that it smacks you in the chest and flings your beer across the room, splattering it against that freshly painted part you were drying.

2. **WIRE WHEEL:** Cleans paint off bolts and then throws them somewhere under the workbench with the speed of light. Also removes fingerprint whorls and hard-earned guitar calluses in about the time it takes you to say, "\*\*\*\*!!!"

3. **ELECTRIC HAND DRILL:** Normally used for spinning pop rivets in their holes until you die of old age

4. **PLIERS:** Used to round off hexagonal bolt heads.

5. **HACKSAW:** One of a family of cutting tools built **10**

on the Ouija board principle: It transforms human energy into a crooked, unpredictable motion, and the more you attempt to influence its course, the more dismal your future becomes.

6. **WISE GRIP PLIERS:** Used to round off bolt heads. If nothing else is available, they can also be used to transfer intense welding heat to the palm of your hand.

7. **OXYACETYLENE TORCH:** Used almost entirely for setting various flammable objects in your shop on fire. Also handy for igniting the grease inside a wheel hub you're trying to get the bearing race out of.

8. **WHITWORTH SOCKETS:** Once used for working on older British cars and motorcycles, they are now used mainly for impersonating that 9/16 or 1/2" socket you've been searching for, for the last 15 minutes.

9. **HYDRAULIC FLOOR JACK:** Used for lowering an automobile to the ground after you have installed your new disk brake pads, trapping the jack handle firmly under the bumper.

10. **EIGHT-FOOT LONG DOUGLAS FIR 4X4:** Used to attempt to lever an automobile upward off a hydraulic jack handle.

11. **TWEEZERS:** A tool for removing splinters of wood, especially Douglas fir.

12. **TELEPHONE:** Tool for calling your neighbor to see if he has another hydraulic floor jack.

13. **SNAP-ON GASKET SCRAPER:** Theoretically useful as a sandwich tool for spreading mayonnaise; used mainly for removing dog feces from your boots.

14. **E-Z OUT BOLT AND STUD EXTRACTOR:** A tool that snaps off in bolt holes and is ten times harder than any known drill bit.

15. **TWO-TON HYDRAULIC ENGINE HOIST:** A handy tool for testing the tensile strength of bolts and fuel lines you forgot to disconnect.

16. **CRAFTSMAN 1/2 x 16-INCH SCREWDRIVER:** A large motor mount prying tool that inexplicably has an accurately machined screwdriver tip on the end without the handle.

17. **AVIATION METAL SNIPS:** See hacksaw.

18. **TROUBLE LIGHT:** The homebuilder's own tanning booth. Sometimes called droplight, it is a good source of vitamin D, "the sunshine vitamin," which is not otherwise found under cars at night. Health benefits aside, its main purpose is to consume 40-watt light

bulbs at about the same rate that 105-mm howitzer shells might be used during, say, the first few hours of the Battle of the Bulge. More often dark than light, its name is somewhat misleading.

19. PHILLIPS SCREWDRIVER: Normally used to stab the lids of old-style paper-and-tin oil cans and squirt oil on your shirt; can also be used, as the name implies, to round off the slots of Phillips screw heads.

20. AIR COMPRESSOR: A machine that takes energy produced in a coal-burning power plant 200 miles away and transforms it into compressed air that travels by hose to an Pneumatic impact wrench that grips rusty bolts last tightened 70 years ago by someone at GM, and rounds their flats off or twists the heads off entirely.

21. PRY BAR: A tool used to crumple the metal surrounding that clip or bracket you needed to remove in order to replace a 50 cent part.

22. HOSE CUTTER: A tool used to cut hoses 1/2 inch too short.

23. HAMMER: Originally employed as a weapon of war, the hammer nowadays is used as a kind of divining rod to locate expensive parts not far from the object we are trying to hit.

23. MECHANIC'S KNIFE: Used to open and slice through the contents of cardboard cartons delivered to your front door; works particularly well on boxes containing upholstered items, chrome-plated metal, plastic parts and the other hand not holding the knife.

24. DAMMIT TOOL: Any handy tool that you grab and throw across the garage while yelling "Damn it!" at the top of your lungs. It is also the next tool that you will need.

25. EXPLETIVE: A balm, usually applied verbally in hindsight, which somehow eases those pains and indignities following our every deficiency in foresight.

## **The Power of Advertising.**

Geoff Wheatley

I often look at the advertising pages of various Classic Car Magazines. OK, it's being a masochist, especially when the car you have always dreamed of turns up at the same time as the next mortgage payment and/or the winter heating bill!

The use of various standard phrases to describe a car makes for an interesting evaluation of the power of advertising. Example: "Very Rare Example of the Marque". Which really means nobody liked the car when it

was new, either. Another favorite is: "Older Restoration". This means that you would never know the car had ever been restored. How about; "Needs Engine Work" which is another way of saying that the power unit has been frozen for at least ten years and three previous owners gave up on the project.

"Uses No Oil", could mean that the oil seldom stays in the block for very long to check or, the famous "Rough But Restorable", which usually translates to the fact that the car is too bad to lie about. If you get excited when the copy reads, "One Owner", remember it could also mean that the owner has never been able to sell the thing! "No Time To Complete The Restoration", can relate to the fact that the seller has never been able to find the necessary parts. "Needs Interior Work", usually identifies the fact that the seats are missing or, worse still, are still there but unrecognizable. Other favorite terms are; "Low Mileage". (Third time around). "Multiple Coats Of Fresh Paint". (To cover the rust). "Clean Exterior". (It sat in the rain yesterday). "Prize Winner". ( Hard luck trophy three times in a row) "Stored 25 Years" (Under a tree in the back garden). "Easy Restoration". ( Parts will come off in your hands).

If the words "Good Investment" convinces you to buy, it might be that (The car simply can't depreciate any more).

Good hunting and if you find that gem in the barn after thirty years of hibernation remember despite what it may look like, at one time it did go but someone eventually gave up on the car!

## **Commuting Phobia**

Found on the internet

A recent college graduate took a new job in a hilly Eastern city and began commuting each day to work through a tiring array of tunnels, bridges and traffic jams. To make the task less onerous, he invited several of his co-workers to share the ride. He soon found, however, that the commute continued to get more stressful, especially the trips through the tunnels. He consulted the company doctor.

"Doc," the frustrated commuter complained, "I'm fine on the bridges, in the traffic, in the day and at night, and even when Joe forgets to bathe all week long. But when I get in the tunnels and I've got those four other guys crowded around me in the car, I get anxious and dizzy and feel like I'm going to explode."

Without further analysis, the doctor announced he had identified the ailment.

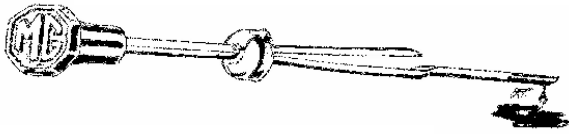
"What is it, Doc? Am I going insane?"

"No, no, no, my boy. You have something very common in these parts."

"Tell me! What is it?"

"You have what is known as Carpool Tunnel Syndrome."

# The Dipstick



## The Tidewater MG Classics

Susan Bond  
541 Forest Road  
Chesapeake, VA 23322

Affiliated with



North American MGB Register

North American MGB Register  
"Newsletter of the Year"

## FIRST CLASS

**Monthly Meeting**  
**Wed, Feb 7th**  
Tom & Marie Early  
717 Vanderbilt Ave  
Va Beach  
428-5283

7:30 - Kick Tyres  
8:00 - Meeting