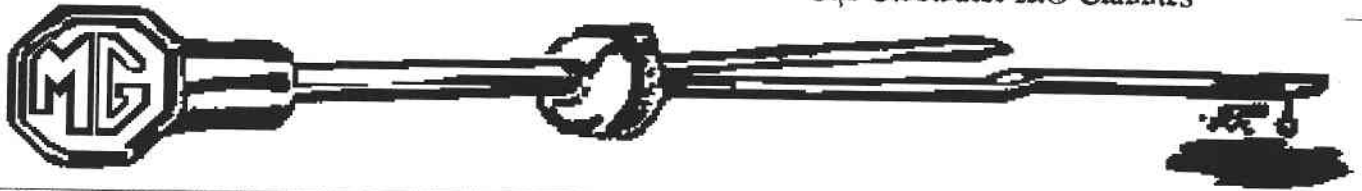


# The Dipstick

The Tidewater MG Classics



April 1995

Volume XXXI Issue 3

## Marque Time

**POTLUCK MEETING:** Thanks to Shelly Pellegrino for hosting the March Meeting at her lovely home on Little Neck Road in Virginia Beach. This was probably the first time that two consecutive meetings were held in the same location. How did our "POTLUCK" meeting work out? From the conversations I had before and after the meeting, I think that the potluck meeting was an excellent idea and should be repeated every few months. The number of dishes nearly overflowed the serving table as about thirty members added their favorites to the collection. The aromas filled Shelly's home and lead to a very brief (near record?) meeting. The business portion was over almost before it began, with the main topic of the discussion being the aromas from the adjoining room. The club members did a good job of sampling all of the treats.

**FUTURE MEETINGS:** We still have one or two open dates on our meeting calendar. See Peggy Bradford or Betsy Kennedy and sign up for a turn. Think how nice your neighborhood would look with twenty or thirty Abingdon Classics lining your street.

**CENTRAL VIRGINIA MG CLASSICS CHILLI COOK-OFF:** Nine adventuresome members made the trip to Midlothian, VA for the Richmond Rascal's annual chili cookoff. What a great turnout. There were more chilis to try than there was power outlets for the chili pots. Of the 16 different chilis to taste and vote on, Tidewater MG Classics, specifically the Keeler's, made off with two of the three top prizes. Greg Keeler came away with first place and Johanna Keeler came away with third place. (Ed note: Mom & Dad are real proud of them) We surely "Kicked the Rascal's Tail Lights" in 1995!

**TECH SESSION:** I saw a fair number of members at the Feb 26 session at Frank Linse's. The day was beautiful for so early in the year. I had visitors from out-of-town but did manage a couple of hours at Frank's. Some work actually got done even though the first tech session of the year is often a good tyre kicking time. Hopefully, some of us will be readying our cars for sssssSPRING!

The Dipstick is the official newsletter of the Tidewater MG Classics.

President	Bob McClaren
Vice-President	Frank Linse
Secretary	Doug Kennedy
Treasurer	Bob Miller
Dipstick Editor	Doug Squires

Buy lots of regalia, drive them MGs, and bring a friend to the next meeting on April 4. Please don't forget to bring your rain gear.... it inevitably rains when the club goes to Andy and Cynthia's !

No TRIUMPH jokes or put downs this month... I'm trying to change my image a bit. So in parting, let us pause for a moment of silence for those poor souls who don't own MGs.

*Safety Fast!*  
Bob

Bob McClaren  
President



*The Tidewater MG Classics is a club dedicated to the preservation, appreciation and maintenance of the MG Automobile, and the fellowship of the club members.*



## Meeting Minutes (February Meeting)

Many thanks to Charity Shettle for taking the meeting minutes for Doug Kennedy.

Please excuse the boring presentation of the minutes this month. We had a stand-in Secretary whose qualifications fall far short of what the club is use to. With that in mind.....

The meeting opened at 8:00 by the president, Bob McClaren. Shelly Pellegrino was thanked for hosting the meeting for the second month in a row (and a new member at that) and J. D. Hawthorne was welcomed as a new member.

No corrections were needed for last month's minutes as published in the Dipstick so a motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes "as is". (Good job Jennifer!)

Doug Kennedy was not here AGAIN and took many hits! (Sorry - "they" made me write that!)

Activities: A reminder about the Richmond club's chili cook off on Sunday March 5th.

Membership: There are about 153 current members (families? They were talking faster than I could write. I'm lucky I can read my own notes) If anyone has not received their Dipstick call Mark Childers. Some members names were dropped by mistake.

Regalia: New can coolers are in and look great. Interest was shown in wine glasses with MG etched on them. Paula will be checking on them.

Old Business: Peggy has a dowel that goes to the chair back and seat that was raffled off at the last meeting and won by "the new guy".

New business: Nametags. Where are they? A suggestion was made that permanent ones with the club insignia would be nicer and could be worn to car shows. Everyone would purchase and be responsible for their own tag.

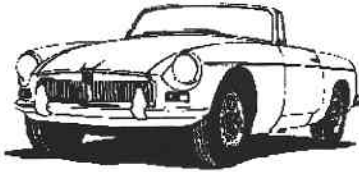
End of legible notes. Doug, please come back!

### NORFOLK AZELEA FESTIVAL 1995

Don't forget the Azelea Festival from 24-30 April 1995. The Most Honored Nation this year is Great Britian.

There is a parade on friday night in downtown Norfolk, followed by a car show saturday morning at the Botanical Gardens.

Anyone who is interested in participating, and has not already signed up, should give Bob McClaren a call (490-2114) for additional information and guidance.



"Is there any old Business?"

"No, Vince isn't here."

# Membership Notes

Mark Childers & Debbie Goodwin  
 5013 Carnation Av  
 Virginia Beach, VA 23462  
 473-1757 or Dig Pgr 626-9686

The 1995-96 annual membership drive will kick-off with the June meeting. With equal measures of participation and luck, it should be a distant memory by August. Please take the time to fill out an application, and don't forget to include any changes to your vehicle collection so that I can fully update the registry. A special thanks to Shelly Pellergrino who graciously opened her home to us for two consecutive meetings. While attendance has been pretty good lately, here are still a number of members whos faces we'd love to see from time to time. My regrets to anyone who was omitted from the mailing list over the past few months due to a database glitch which has since been de-bugged.

We still have many unclaimed membership rosters. They will be available at all meetings and functions. Any out of town member who has not received a roster, please call us before 10:30 pm and a copy will be mailed the next morning. A complete list of new and prospective members not on the current membership roster will appear in the May Dipstick. In closing, for those prospective members who have not paid their membership dues (\$7.50 half-year) please do so within 90 days of receiving your first Dipstick.

# Activities

Activities Chairman:  
 Peggy Bradford 464-0543

Here's the latest list of activities. Call Peggy to sign up for any of the ones still needing a sponsor.

Apr	23	SCAVENGER HUNT/RALLY/GOLF TOURNAMENT	Sponsor: The Kennedys & Groovers
May	Late	DRIVEOUT	Sponsor: _____
Jul	Late	PICNIC	Sponsor: Chris & Phil Eller
Sep	Late	PIG ROAST/CAR SHOW	Sponsor: _____
Oct	Late	DRIVEOUT	Sponsor: _____
Dec		CHRISTMAS PARTY	Sponsor: _____

### Meetings

Tue	Apr	4	Cynthia & Andy
Wed	May	3	John & Janet Wessel
Tue	Jun	6	Mike & Sally Murphy
Wed	Jul	5	Rolf Graeber
Tue	Aug	1	Bill & Libby Keeler
Wed	Sep	6	Doug & Betsy Kennedy
Tue	Oct	3	Jim Villers
Wed	Nov	1	_____

Tech Sessions are held on Sunday from 10:00 until..... Host chooses a date.

7	May	Bob McClaren
??	Jul/Aug	_____
??	Nov	Terry & Sue Bond

Activities from other area Clubs: 21 May - Richmond British Car Show at Stoney Point

A member about selling his favorite car:

"Really stupid offers will be entertained.."



"Don't let lack of a membership application keep you from signing up a new member. I'll accept applications on scraps of paper, or even written on a \$10.00 bill."



About Jags:  
 "I'd rather take the TF than the Jag..."

About Volvo's:  
 "I wouldn't drive a Volvo to Portsmouth..."

# MG LINES - Intro of the MGF

You may have read that a new MG is in production for the european market. I recently pulled the following description off of the internet from an englishman who saw the MGF and received a sale's brochure.

1.8 Litre K-Series Engine, all-alloy, 16-valve twin-cam  
 Multi-point fuel injection, Variable valve control will also be available  
 Optional electric power steering  
 Driver airbag, passenger airbag optional  
 4-wheel disc brake, optional ABS  
 Folding Hood ?!  
 Electric windows  
 Alloy wheels  
 Optional Leather Seats  
 Colors: Red, white, charcoal, BRG, Interior: Red or Black  
 Cost in US Dollars: High \$30,000s!!

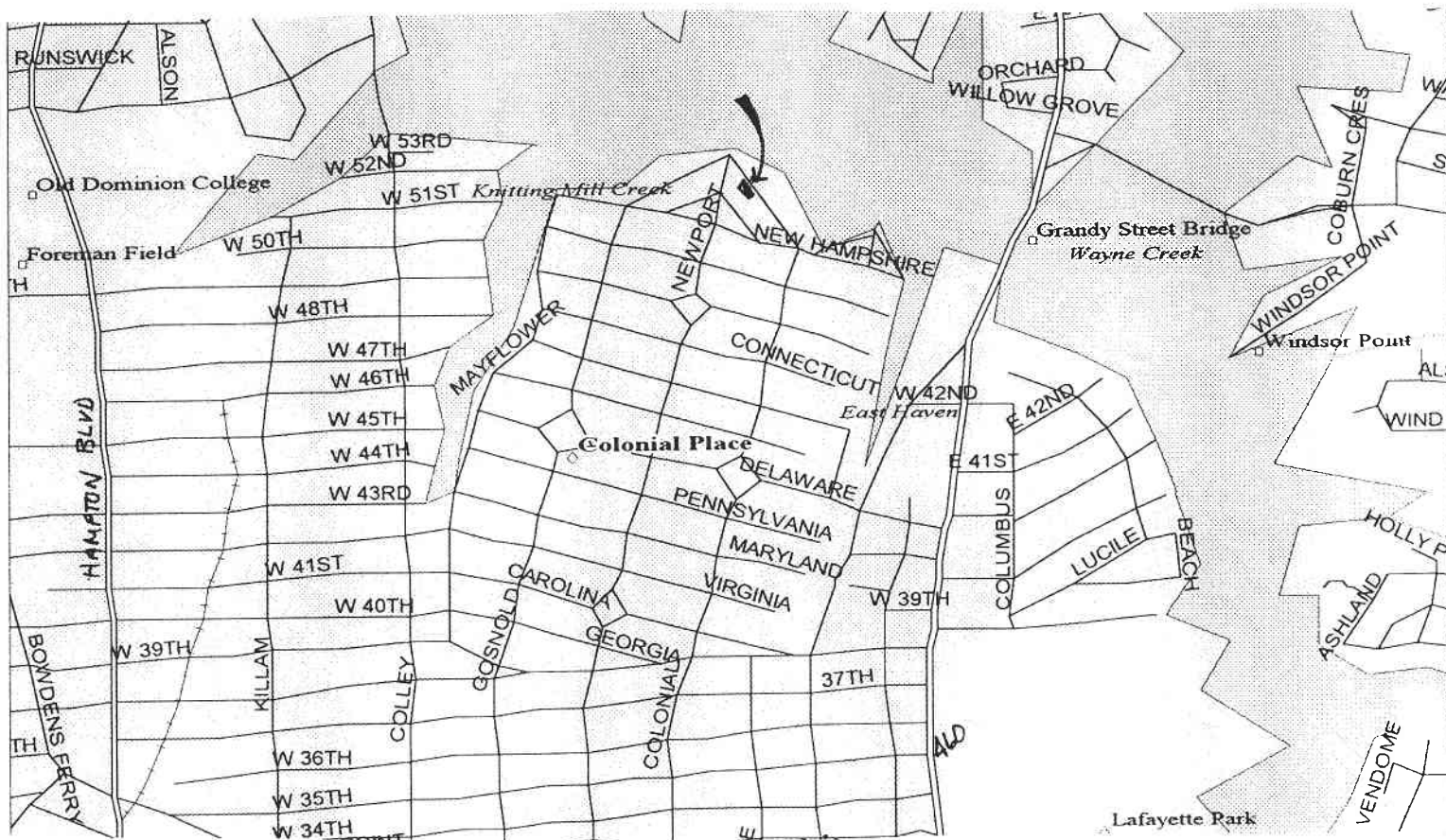
Thanks to Doug Kennedy for providing this info from the files of INTERNET

Also worth mentioning is the brochure's description of the unique automatic traction control for the rear wheel drive car "Accelerate, and the power is finely controlled by the weight being transferred onto the drive wheels, giving outstanding traction"! As opposed to accelerating and the car's weight being transferred to the front wheels? Nice sounding BS!!!

Lastly, although there is a lot of speculation as to when this car will be offered in the US, it is not US crash-test worthy at this time and only if it meets with incredible success will it be mass marketed to the US. Apparently, the slowdown in sales of cars such as the MR2, Miata and Del Sol has kept this car targeted at low european production.

## Next Meeting

Tue Apr 4, 1995 Kick Tyres: 7:30 PM. Buisness Meeting: 8:00 PM.  
 Hosted by: Cynthia & Andy 545 Mayflower, Norfolk 622-8315



## INTERNET SURFING and THE CRACK OF DOOM

*By: Doug Kennedy*

Last week, I participated in a fascinating discussion of the MGB "Crack of Doom", introduction of the MGF, and suggestions for installing a Nissan 5-Speed in a Midget. What made this discussion so great was that it took place over a few days between MG lovers from all over the world. By now you've probably heard and read so much about the internet that you're either a somewhat experienced net cruiser or couldn't care less. Well, regardless of your interest there's a tie to the wonderful world of MG on the internet that may increase your interest. If you've got a personal computer you're seconds away from experts, cars and parts for sale or wanted, and countless pieces of MG trivia. By subscribing to a service that will provide internet access (I use InfiNet, an inexpensive local provider from the people who publish the Virginia Pilot and Ledger-Star) you can hunt around for a zillion sites covering automobiles. Rather than turn this into an article for techno-geeks, all I'll cover are the most popular sites I've found. If you're familiar with the internet give them a try. If you don't have internet access, but would like to give it a try, call and I'll try to lend a hand.

The newsgroup "rec.autos.antique" is a worldwide spot for people interested in antique cars. If you're interested in other marques besides MG, this is the place. This newsgroup allows you to read posted messages and reply directly, or post your own. I posted a message on this newsgroup looking for MG owners in eastern Virginia and received e-mail from two local MG owners who I've invited to our next meeting.

Another site to visit is on the World Wide Web (WWW) through "<http://www.team.net/sol/>". This site is for lovers of British cars. The WWW is graphical so all you have to do is use your mouse to point and click on any subject that interests you to bring up related documents and pictures. You can also view files related to british parts suppliers and mechanics. These are located in the "Monster File" and are submitted HONESTLY by car lovers. The reviews are painfully honest, both good and bad. I'll try to more completely review the contents of this site in a future issue of the Dipstick.

Lastly, an incredible site to visit is to e-mail "[majordomo@autox.team.net](mailto:majordomo@autox.team.net)". In the body of your message put "subscribe british-cars-digest" This is a location specifically for British car lovers that is very active. You will automatically be e-mailed all the correspondence from the day before. This means every day you receive 30-50 messages from British car lovers for you to read and if you choose, respond to. In the last week, there has been coverage of the MGF's introduction from someone who saw it at a european auto show, the best adhesive for carpet sets, correct British car jargon (participants are referred to as SOL "Scions of Lucas"), diagnosing a troublesome gas gauge, how to prevent or correct the MGB crack of doom on doors, transmission swaps for the Midget, and suggestions for correctly applying Waxoyl. Every day, there's at least one topic of interest to both the beginner and MG trivia buff.

So that's the quick and dirty overview. As the internet grows, so too will the amount of MG information available. Give it a try. Just like one of our meetings, you'll find people at the sites mentioned above who are friendly, waiting to help you out, and have probably suffered that nagging electrical problem that makes you wake up in a cold sweat the night before a drive-out!

## Up-Coming Activities

### **SPRING MYSTERY RALLY** **SUNDAY APRIL 23** **12:00 Noon**

Take a break from your spring cleaning to join us for the Spring Mystery Rally. Why is this a mystery? Well, as this newsletter goes to print the Groovers and Kennedys are still narrowing down their 319 ideas to produce one memorable rally.

Okay, so this is a nice way of saying we've been putting off getting this rally together. But here are the details so far:

**Starting Point:** Putt-Putt Golf and Games  
 4816 Virginia Beach Boulevard  
 (Behind Western Auto, Between Aragona & Kellam)

**Finishing Point:** Mystery destination in Hampton Roads complete with great views, food and refreshments.

**When:** Sunday April 23, 12:00 Noon

**Format:** "Innovative" 18 Hole British Staggered Start followed by a fun rally gathering clues as you head to the mystery destination.

**Cost:** LOW, LOW Special "Greens Fees" starting cost. Finishing point refreshments and food will also be available for purchase.

**Prizes:** Fabulous expensive prizes (okay we're lying) and a special \$1,000 consolation prize to anyone who does not reach the mystery destination (must be present at mystery destination to collect consolation prize).

**Questions/Ugly Weather Decisions?**

Call the Groovers at 497-6904  
 or the Kennedys at 460-5037



*Safety first!*

Have you gotten a great deal from a local shop that has worked on your MG? I want to hear about it. Drop me a line.



## From Morris to Montego - From Midget to Metro

Part 2 of a 3 part series by Mark Childers

Last month, 1933 ended with the demise of the M-Type Midget....

The J-Type Midgets were the next darlings of the sports car set. Armed with an improved version of the legendary M-Type drivetrain and suspension, the J's were even faster, and more nimble than their predecessor. And they were possessed of timeless beauty, as well. Several body styles were offered, in addition to a number of one-off works and privateer racers.

The year 1935 brought about corporate changes which shut down the Abingdon design shop, directing the Morris-Wolseley firm of Cowley to draft plans for the now-famous TA-Midget of 1936.

Nuffield Group acquired the booming MG Car Company in 1938, and one year later announced its departure from motorsports racing. By the time war was declared in 1939, the flagship MG-WA, a big six cylinder reminiscent of the early Cowley-based cars, available in both open and closed body styles, was discontinued. At the same time, the new, larger T-Type was unveiled. Fitted with a 1292cc Wolseley engine, synchro trans, softer springs, fluid damped shock absorbers, and - much to Kimber's disdain - hydraulic brakes. He preferred cable actuated shoes because he felt that although Loughheed's hydraulics were more efficient, they were not yet totally reliable, although he finally gave in to persuasive engineers during the final draft-approval meetings. The *Safety First!* motto appears to have been more than just market hype.

The smaller TA was succeeded in early 1939 by the TB. Fitted with a high-rev, destroked engine, it saw the shortest production run of any MG model to date. Like the WA, the TB fell victim to the war in Europe. Emerging anew in 1947, wider and longer, and a bit lighter, the TC sold quite well; for the first time, more T-series cars were sold abroad than in Great Britain. A million GI's had been assigned to units in wartime England. By the time they'd made it back to the farm, Pop's old Model A Ford paled beside the memory of watching a TA tearing down a country lane, and rounding curves like it was glued to the road. There were some MG's in the US before the war; possibly fewer than twenty. MG archives account for only 11 direct-export T-types through 1940, compared to a whopping 47 registered in Malaya in 1939! By 1949, there were 1820 TC's on the road in the US (and 179 in Malaya...)

Given a few years of post-war recovery, and quantum leaps in materials technology, the MGTD made its debut at the Bristol Auto Show in 1949. Stronger, and far more stable thanks to a box frame, wide body, and an independent front suspension developed for the Series E Morris-based 1947 MGYA Saloon. The TD lost some of the 'purist' appeal of the earlier T-series cars, but on the whole was one of the best all-round sports cars/ sports racers ever built. Several four seater versions were built, as were 100 Bertone bodied, TD-chassied, MG-Arnolts, all done up in Emgee Red with Biscuit leather. Built on spec for the Chicago Nuffield Group in 1952, the deal saved Bertone from the auction block. For "Wacky" Arnolt, they presented quite a storage bill: the last car didn't sell until 1959! *Authors note: The styling was certainly ahead of its time, as the Arnolt re-emerged, virtually line-for-line in 1962, as the stunning Alvis TD-2.*

The Y-Type cars were introduced in the spring of 1947 as the YA Saloon, a pre-war design with updated mechanicals, and the export-only YT, a 2 door convertible tourer fitted with folding windscreen, twin SU's, a TC cam, and weighing in 170 lbs lighter than the YA. Only 377 YT's were built and delivered. An additional 133 unfilled YT orders were cancelled following the model termination notice from Abingdon.

In 1951, a one-off works body, fitted to a TD chassis for the LeMans race, would enjoy a resurgence a few years down the line..... its lack of racing success would soon be overshadowed by sales records. Late in 1952, The Nuffield Group merged with Austin-Vanden Plas to form the British Motor Corporation, and MG was again at the short end of the economic stick.

The MGZA (later ZB) Magnette was first offered in 1953 to replace the YA/YB/YT line. Derived from a Wolseley design, the roomy and comfortable unibody provided a test bed for many mechanical and driveline components destined for the 1956 MGA. The ZB was discontinued in 1959, and the model-line underwent an extensive redesign which resulted in a Mark III designation for 1960 thru 1963.

At about the same time that the new Healey 100 hit the market, TD sales were on the decline. That swoopy one-off body shell which was so admired at LeMans got a second look, and BMC engineering was given the go ahead to smooth out the next generation MG, codenamed EX-175. However, in the interim, a hasty offering had to be made to satisfy potential buyers. The TF, sporting new headlamps, a smooth, and well-rounded, if not over-octagoned appearance, made its debut in 1954. The TD engine was later upgraded to a relatively powerful 1466cc twin carb Wolseley unit, but on the whole, the TF fell short of buyer expectation. Unlike the TF, though, the next model was met with open arms....

The MGA made its appearance in 1956 as a sleek little roadster fitted with a 3-main 1.5 engine, twin SU's and a 4-speed gearbox which was originally designed for a column shifter. The hybrid shifting mechanism fit the average hand to perfection, and was an instant success with the sports car crowd. MGA production figures for 1957 alone (23,000) exceeded MG's total pre-war output! Various models, including Twin Cams, LeMans Specials, Coupes, 1600cc Deluxe/Mark II's, and several racebred variants such as the Elva, made a lasting impact on motorsports enthusiasts around the world.

To be concluded in the next issue of The Dipstick: BLC Triumphs over MGB...

By: Doug Squires  
Dipstick Editor

## A Final Thought

This is the second MG I have owned. My first, was a bright orange 76 MGB that I purchased from my Commanding Officer, while assigned to a Coast Guard Cutter here in Portsmouth. His wife (a congressional aide in Washington) felt that as a Commanding Officer, he should drive something larger than an MGB, (she bought him a BMW) so he sold it to his favorite (his only) Yeoman for the sum of \$1800.00. Almost daily after that, while we were at Special Sea Detail, or wherever about the decks he would run into me, he would ask about "The B". When I departed PCS, he bid me farewell, and told me to take care of "his" car. Well, I moved from Virginia to the barren, frozen tundra of Maine, where I discovered the british didn't make very good heaters. After my first winter of frost bite, I decided I liked warm and dependable more than fun and stranded, so I sold my B to a local for \$1800.00. Like my Captain before me, I instantly regretted it. I guess it gets in the blood after a while.

One day shortly after buying our home here in Portsmouth, Jeanette said it was about time I started looking for a "B". Claiming she was tired of listening to me wimper every time I saw a great looking "B" go by (or any "B" for that matter), I better go get one so she could get some peace. We all know she missed the "B" as much as I did, and noticing the weather here was a lot nicer than in Maine, she was ready to do some cruising.

On a cold December day in 1993, I was summoned to a local junk yard by a buddy who was looking for vintage mustang parts. Upon arrival, I saw the most beautiful sight I had seen since I married the woman of my dreams: A very neglected, very cheap MGB! I now had a mission! But first, I had to get it home, and hope Jeanette had the same vision of the future I had. One other small problem I had to overcome - I'd never done anything like this before. Where do I start? Where do I get parts? In the past, if I needed the oil changed, I took it to someone. That was all about to change.....

Next month, hear Jeanette's reaction... Was it love at first sight?



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The Tidewater MG Classics



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FIRST CLASS MAIL