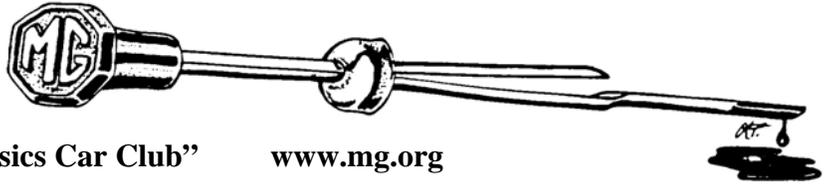


# The Dipstick



“The Newsletter of the Tidewater MG Classics Car Club”

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

Volume XXXII, Issue 2

Dedicated To Preserving The Marque Since 1973

February 2004

## MARQUE TIME

If you missed the January meeting, you missed some good food and great camaraderie. The turnout at Frankie’s was large for a January meeting.

I personally am thankful for Vince Groover and Frank Linse. My son Josh and I worked to get his MGA started for the first time in about 25 years. Replaced a bent push rod, unstuck the valve that caused the bent push rod, dismantled and semi-rebuilt the carbs, worked on the distributor, and finally got to the point where one cylinder would fire. While the compression in one cylinder was acceptable (about 75), another was about 25, and two were about 5. Not good! But, after repeated turning over the engine while attempting to start and squirting oil and WD40 into the cylinders, the compression kept getting better. Good enough so the engine should at least start. Called on the experts. Vince and Frank came over and after several attempts to start decided to adjust the distributor timing. But after 25 years, it was stubborn and didn’t want to turn. After a half-hour of hammer and screwdriver persuasion the distributor did loosen up but by that time it was not quite functional. They presented me with another one ready to install, even has new ignition wires, the following evening at the January meeting. Will let you know the results when my son and I install it. Let’s not rush these things.

Since I need new wood screws for the two TD bodies that I am resurrecting, decided that I would get stainless steel ... even though the cars will probably never be in elements that would rust plated screws nor will ever be taken apart again. After stopping at Tidewater Fasteners and learning that they do not carry stainless wood screws, went to the Internet. Ordered from BoltDepot.com in North Weymouth, Massachusetts on the 14<sup>th</sup>, had the screws the evening of the 16<sup>th</sup> via UPS ground. All nicely packaged and labeled in little plastic bags. If anyone wants to know “how many” of “which type and size” screw, bolt, nut, washer, et cetera and where they all go on a TD, I’ll be able to tell them by the time I’m done.

*Safety Fast!* Andy

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

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

**Feb. 3 Tuesday meeting at Mark & Wendy Hiby’s** (see map on back page)

Feb. 4-27 University Motors Seminars  
[www.universitymotorsltd.com](http://www.universitymotorsltd.com)

**Feb. 19 Dipstick Deadline**

**March 3 Wednesday meeting at ???**

March 6 TRAACA Swap Meet  
[www.aaca.org/tidewater](http://www.aaca.org/tidewater)

**March 19 Dipstick Deadline**

March 27-28 SCCA Evolution Driving School  
Pungo Airfield [www.odr-scca.org](http://www.odr-scca.org)



President Andy Wallach at the January meeting

# JANUARY MINUTES

Becky Hassler for Doug Kennedy

The meeting was held at Frankie's Place for Ribs and the food was great. The meeting was called to order at 8-ish. Doug Kennedy was not present so a reward of two moist towellettes was offered to the first person who would volunteer to take notes. I couldn't resist the offer and so here I am trying to read my own handwriting. I apologize up front for any omissions or errors to follow.

Visitors: We welcomed Kevin Montgomery and also Denise (a friend of Mike Haag).

Membership: Robin reported that three stragglers who expressed interest in retaining their membership have still not paid dues. Robin will follow up with a letter.

Treasurer's report: Receipts - \$88.00; Disbursements - \$665.89; Remaining - \$1794.83

Minutes: Approved!

Newsletter: Another great one hit the streets.

Regalia: Frank had plenty of regalia in the trunk of his car and if you wanted any of it, you had to hustle out to his trunk 'cause it was pretty chilly out.

Activities: There is still an opening for the activities director. Alan suggested an activity for April and called it the best of Boot, Bonnet, and Basket. More info to follow, but the jist of it is to bring the best decorated basket to this event to be judged. The basket can be made out of anything, i.e. paper bag, gas can, etc. This event is scheduled for 18 April at Alan and Beckey's. The April meeting is the 6<sup>th</sup> and the tech session is scheduled for 25 April.

Clubs: Peggy wrote a great article on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tidewater MG Classics but the photos and the name of the article and author didn't make it into The Sacred Octagon newsletter.

Old Business: none

New Business: none

Marque time: Andy did some distributor work which resulted in more pieces to the distributor than when he started.

An album with old photos was passed around for everyone to enjoy and reminisce.

Raffle: Mike Haag won the raffle.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45.

## Membership & New Members

Robin Watson

*Total membership 99*

Again, membership has not changed this month so we are still at 99 members. We do not have too much going on at this time of year, so I have not met with any possible new members. And because of the cold weather, working with Alan on his B and putting a new head gasket on my Toyota Pick up, I have not been able to stand on the corner with application forms in my hand.

## Officers and Committees

President	Andy Wallach	622-8315
Vice President	Alan Watson	426-2600
Secretary	Doug Kennedy	460-5037
Treasurer	Jim Villers	481-6398
Editors	Peggy Craig	382-7547
	Susan Bond	482-5222
Membership	Robin Watson	721-9277
Activities		
Historian	Susan Bond	482-5222
Technical	Mark Childers	432-9155
Regalia	Frank Linse	461-7783
Clubs	Mike Ash	495-0307



## Tech Stuff

## The Skinned Knuckle Chronicles

Mark Childers

I was just a greenhorn after-school shop sweeper, and pump jockey in training, all of thirteen and a half when Frankie Tolliver got a big mid-afternoon snootful of Cherry Heering and realized that it would soon be too late in the day or too early into his drunk to figure out what was wrong with Mrs. Gundaker's Morris Minor. Common sense told me that she had left the headlights on for the umpteenth time and it needed a boost, or maybe a new battery, but Frankie mumbled something about the "%^#@\$@ charging system" being on the fritz and told me to roll out the big charger and start it up while he untangled the rats nest of cables on his tester. Sure enough, the car fired right off, and I figured that everything was just fine. I was no Henry Ford, but I was mechanically minded when it

came to bikes and stuff, and I was a prodigy of sorts, or maybe just an idiot savant, who was able to name the year make and model of nearly every single car that pulled in or passed by. It impressed Frankie. “Hey kid, what’s that parked across the street?” he’d ask, and I’d say “’53 Hudson Hornet but it’s not the Twin H” or “’54 Ford Mainline”, or something like that, and he would whistle or clap his hands and say “Ain’t that somethin?” He even let me wander into his incredibly greasy service bay, and always gave me a coke in trade for bringing him a three-cent copy of the Mirror in the afternoon. One day he gave me a buck for helping him clean up the pit, and my mom gave me ten bucks worth of hell for ruining my pants and stinking up the dinner table. But I kept going back nearly every day.

My Dad’s tiny garage was cluttered but clean, with lots of tools. Unlike most neighborhood dads, he actually let me use them so long as I cleaned up, and put every one back (lest I lose a finger for each missing item). But to me it was just our garage. Frankie’s, on the other hand, had an illicit bar room panache, an atmosphere of cigar smoke, cheap booze, pinups, and war vets with stories from here to eternity. Funny thing, this retrospect stuff – my dad was a certified war hero, but quiet, and unassuming. He had won a Bronze Star, and a couple of Purple Hearts the hard way, found out only by stumbling over his service record when I was long out of high school. He never talked much about his years as a combat engineer company commander, landing on Anzio, rebuilding bridges and tunnels across the Alps after Monte Cassino, and later catching up with the German army in Austria. The guys at Frankie’s told amazing stories about wild fights, and liberty in Lafayette, Louisiana and Tijuana, and KP in nearby Fort Dix, while sucking down beers long before the sun hit the yardarm – it was drive-thru service on the road to perdition.

I thought Frankie should have just charged the battery and be done with it. But noooo...he had to open up that black box he called the regulator and he just had to show me how it worked. “See, this here relay controls this and that one that blah blah blah,” as he tossed back another swig. But his hands always stayed pretty steady, their nerves defying copious doses of ethanol and the toxic effects of years of scrubbing up in high-test gasoline. I watched as he clipped a wire on here and another there, and pulled a couple off of the generator; before I knew it the headlights got really bright. “Wow, whadja do?” I asked.

Frankie then made the biggest mistake of *my* life: he pulled a big fat stained book off the shelf, and opened it up. He explained the mysteries of the charging system. How to test a battery, how to read volt-

ages. Sure, after a minute or so I was drowning in information overload, but I was hooked for life. From then on, every time he had a car on the lift when I came in, I’d read a little about it while watching, and he sometimes let me help him out while I was keeping an eye on the gas pumps and sweeping the joint.

That greasy-floored Esso station was just one interlude in a long line of non-stop jobs in high school that compromised homework, sports and social life. Frankie lasted maybe all of six months when another grease-monkey moved in. The new guy was mean and hated kids. Rumor had it that he lived in the office because his wife had kicked him out, and the hoods who hung there were sported with ducks-ass haircuts, and wore leather jackets in the dead of summer.

With Frankie gone, I started hanging out with my dad whenever he was in his garage and I wasn’t on my way out to work. In my senior year, I was the proud owner of a then not-so-old and still fairly reliable five hundred dollar MGA coupe, temporarily pitted on the side of the road two miles from home at five thirty on a Saturday morning, on the return from a midnight fishing trip. The charging light had warned me that something went wrong and I knew if I pressed on, the battery would be too dead for a jumpstart. A fairly good roll of hand tools donated by my dad resided in the trunk, along with an owners manual, but the flashlight was dead, and not a street light was in sight. I popped the hood, and found the fan belt nice and snug. So, I took the book with me, and as dawn broke, I read while walking home to borrow a voltmeter, and to beg some help using it. Step by step, and with little more than a couple of hand tools, and some bits of wire, my dad and I figured out what was wrong--the generator armature was gummed up because I had squirted some belt dressing in it--and fixed the problem before lunch. We even adjusted the regulator so that I wasn’t always overdriving my headlights at night, or forever needing a boost on bitter cold mornings. Maybe Frankie’s wasn’t the best place in the world for a kid to calibrate his moral compass, but he got me to open the book and read before jumping in. And from that one little episode, I got a little closer to the old man who turned out to be a font of great stories about hardscrabble Illinois farm life during the Great Depression.

Oh yeah, Tech Stuff... well, here’s a little tip to help new wipers live to a ripe old age without scratching or glazing the windshield. Every once in a while, soak a cloth in windshield solvent and clean the blades until the black streaks all but disappear. It also makes a difference in old wipers, too.

## HOMEMADE FRONT SUSPENSION SPRING COMPRESSOR

Robin Watson

In case you had not heard, last November Alan had his 72 B knocked off the road by a Cadillac. The front end took a very bad hit to the point where the front cross member and the steering rack were bent and the body, along with a wheel, was wrecked. Well, we had a body that was provided by Gregg Coogan and a cross member and steering rack was found at Bob Stein's.

So the work started and we now have the wheels off the



Red B and the ??? B is sitting on wheels ready to move to Frank Linse's for some bodywork. I did make the mistake of taking the engine and gearbox out before working on the front suspension and found I did not have enough weight in the car to be able to remove the coil springs by using a jack under the coil pan. So I came up with a homemade spring compressor that worked OK. I used two old mower blades that I shortened and a 12" long piece of 5/8" all-thread (threaded rod). I locked two nuts on the bottom of the all-thread, and then I had a loose nut and washer, then one piece of blade. I then put the other blade as high as possible



4

in the spring. The next move takes a gentle touch! Put the threaded rod up through the bottom of the spring pan and just up to the top blade. Slide a washer on top of the top blade in place between the coils of the spring moving the rod up to catch the washer, then follow with a nut turning the rod to locate the nut and go through the nut completely with the all-thread. Now move the loose nut up to the bottom blade making sure the rod is sitting in the spring close to center as possible and start to tighten the nut holding the rod still with the two locked nuts on the bottom. I have attached a picture of the unit with the spring still attached. This picture was taken before I shortened the rod that I used on a front suspension unit on the garage floor. The rod is far too long to use on a spring still on the car.

## Notes from the Editors....

Susan Bond

I warned you! Those nasty tabs didn't want to behave last month. I have since downloaded and installed the service pack for Office 2002 and hope that solves the problem of the scrambled lists — but don't count on it. Windows likes to make everything as difficult as possible.

There aren't many activities planned during the winter, so there's not much to fill these spaces. Contributions gratefully accepted! You don't have to be a John Steinbeck to write a good article your MG friends would enjoy. We can help with the grammar and spelling, and any pictures you have can be included. Remember that Golden Quill award we won last year? Let's make sure we win it again!

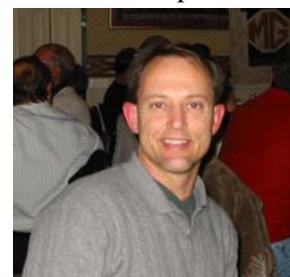
## January Meeting Pictures



Harry Watson, Vince Groover



Pam  
Groover



Mike Spruill



Jennifer & Mike Ash



Paul & Carmen Thiergardt



Norma & Carl Nagle



Barb Taychert & Mike Knepler



Chuck & Becky Hassler



Peggy & George Craig, Ceit Fisher



Mark & Debbie Childers



Mike Haag & Denise Starke



Jim & Betty Villers

Carl Fisher,  
Kevin  
Montgomery



# MG Models in the UK

Part 5  
Robin Watson

Well this is the last of the MGs in the UK that I have to write about for the moment. Models ZT and ZT-T represent MG's touring models, both the ZT and the ZT-T come with a range of six engines available includes two Turbo Diesels, that I will list at the end. The following is taken from the sales brochure.



MG ZT

“There’s more to MG than just sheer road presence though. These are cars born of passion, built by people who understand that to build an MG is to mould not just a car, but a lifestyle. And that means that both the MG ZT and MG ZT-T are equipped with engines and suspension that deliver outstanding dynamic ability, simply because MG would not accept anything less. Feed a MG ZT through a tightening radius and the combination of balance and grip will demonstrate that MG can be both a supple cruiser and a sporting thoroughbred. Just ask someone like Mark Blundell, who drives two MGs: a MG EX257 Le Mans car for business and a MG ZT-T for pleasure.”

I personally like the looks of both of these cars and feel that to own and drive a touring car with the MG logo would be great providing I could keep my B as well.

“The MG ZT and the MG ZT-T abandon all the normal trade-offs that make a sporting car comfortable. There’s a very fine line drawn between what makes a car perform well and what

makes a car comfortable if you have to spend long hours in the driving seat. Usually the trade-off is a simple one; if you want a car to handle it has to be stiff, and stiff generally means uncomfortable and uncouth. Not so for the MG ZT and MG ZT-T. You know in the first mile that they are heavily into performance, but the damping exactly compliments the rates of the springs, which exactly compliments that of the multi-link suspension, making for a supple, controlled ride. There’s a feeling of density—of weight—that soaks up through the places where you make contact with the car. The suspension subtly informs you of the road surface without letting you be assaulted by it, presents a tactile map of where there’s grip and where there’s slip without making the whole experience tiresome or wearing. Come the first corner and all that information suddenly gets translated into full colour, surround sound. Both cars share exactly the same dynamic cues; there isn’t any significant body roll to speak of, no slop in the suspension, no jelly or flab.”



MG ZT-T

Now a little about the suspension and handling (MG obsesses on precision). And with the option to uprate to sports settings, you can really tune the MG ZT to complement your needs. The front suspension uses rear-facing L-shaped lower arms with special bushes for accurate toe control. The entire suspension, left and right, rides on a peripheral subframe that’s rigidly



Inside MG ZT

mounted to the body to eliminate lost motion. Translation: sharp, accurate steering right through the working range. And to keep the car flowing down the road without a trace of float or heave, the MacPherson struts use gas-filled dampers and auxiliary rebound springs, and the anti-roll bars are uncommonly firm. At the rear, the MG ZT160, CDTi, 180 Sports Auto and 190 models use the renowned Z-axis multi-link system,

providing superbly constant handling and road holding with a controlled ride. On the MG ZT 190, 180 Sports Auto and CDTi models the optional traction control ensures that there is always grip, no matter what the conditions. Standard 18-inch alloy wheels run 225/45 ultra-low profile tyres. Their look speaks of serious grip and security. On the MG ZT and MG ZT-T, they speak the truth).



MG's for sale

	MG ZT 160	MG ZT 160	MG ZT 180 sports auto	MG ZT 190	MG ZT CDTi	MG ZT CDTi		
Engine type	1.8T	2.5V6	2.5V6	2.5V6	2.0 CDTi	2.0 CDTi		
Transmission	Man.	Man	Auto	Man	Man & Auto	Man & Auto		
CC	1796	2497	2497	2497	1951	1951		
Max. Power Ps	160	160	177	190	116	131		
@ RPM	5500	6250	6500	6500	4000	3500		
Max. Torque Nm	215	230	240	245	260	300		
@ RPM	2100	4000	4000	4000	2000	1900		
Max Eng. Speed	6750	6750	6750	6750	4900	4900		
0 – 60 Sec.	8.5	8.8	8.9	7.7	11.0	12.2	10.3	11.0
30–50 in 4 <sup>th</sup>	7.0	7.5	--	6.5	8.1	--	7.3	--
50–70 in 4 <sup>th</sup>	7.3	7.6	--	6.4	8.0	--	6.8	--
Top speed	132	131	134	140	120	118	120	119



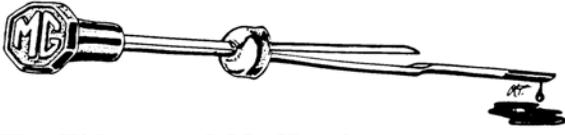
Robin and Alan Watson

## January Meeting Pictures



Debbie Eisenbath and Frank Linse

# The Dipstick



## The Tidewater MG Classics

Susan Bond  
541 Forest Road  
Chesapeake, VA 23322

Affiliated with



North American MGB Register

## FIRST CLASS

Monthly Meeting

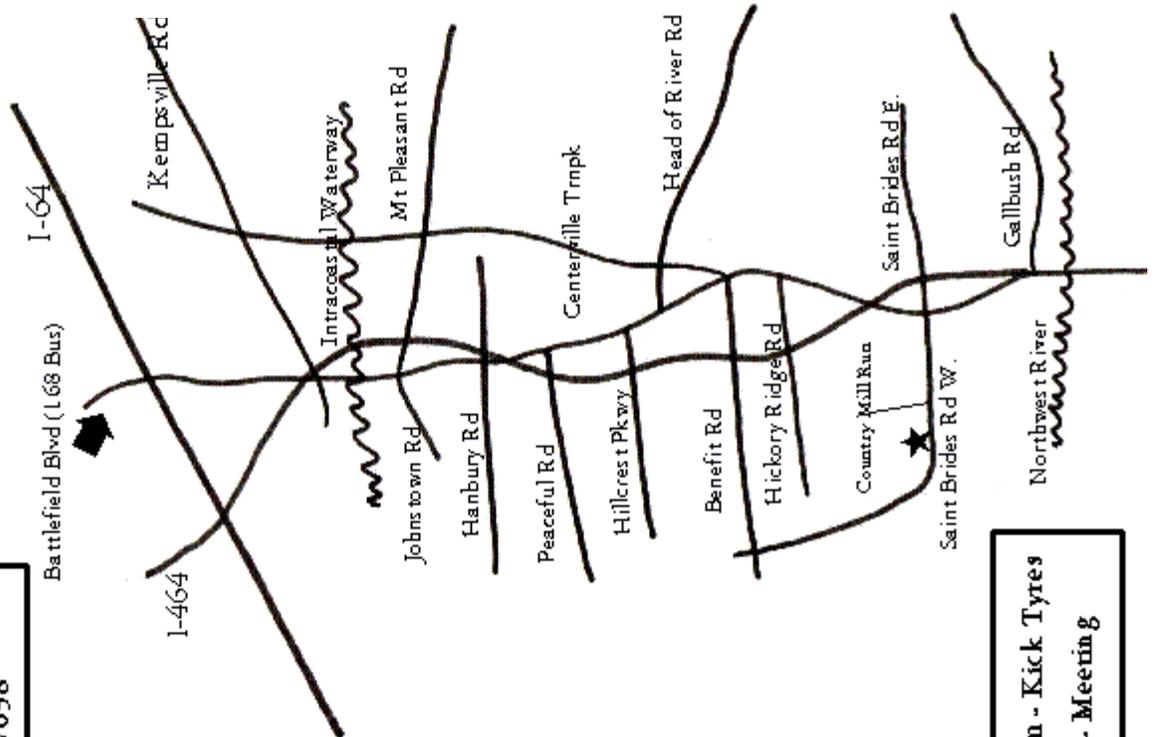
Tue, Feb 3rd

Mark & Wendy Hibby's

617 St. Brides Rd. W

Chesapeake

421-7038



7:30 - 8:00pm - Kick Tyres

8:00pm - Meeting