

The Dipstick



“The Newsletter of the Tidewater MG Classics Car Club”

www.mg.org

Volume XXXV, Issue 2

Dedicated To Preserving The Marque Since 1973

February 2008

MARQUE TIME

This is being written in the midst of a winter heat wave here in Tidewater. It's been great encountering so many top down cars – not a common sight in early January! Speaking of going sans top, we had a very strong showing for the annual Holiday Lights trip on December 27th. Beckey Watson did another standup job organizing this excursion. I counted 16 MGs in the parking lot outside Franco's Restaurant – our huge convoy definitely made an impression on the ticket takers at the Botanical Gardens. And the press coverage in the Virginian-Pilot's "Party Crashers" section was an added bonus.

Sincere thanks to Craig and Joyce Cummings for hosting our January meeting on very short notice. We had a great turnout at their Williamsburg home on a cold and blustery night. Fortunately, there was an excellent beer selection and lots of piping hot chili to ward off the chill! Due to the weather, the number of MGs in attendance was a bit sparse. But what we lacked in quantity was more than offset by quality. Craig and Joyce's exquisite 1969 MGC-GT was the center of pre-meeting attention. But we were also graced with Chuck and Becky Hassler's beautiful 1980 Limited Edition "B" and Bruce Woodson's trusty 1948 TC. Hats off to these cold weather, MG-driving stalwarts.

2008 marks the 35th year of Tidewater MG Classics. Our Anniversary Committee is hard at work planning an appropriate event to mark this milestone – stay tuned for more details.

Hope to see you at Frankie's for the February meeting – try to bring your MG!

Cheers,
Mark Davidoski

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Check www.mg.org for the latest info!

- Feb. 5 Tuesday meeting at Frankie's Place for Ribs (see map on back page)
- Feb. 12 Dipstick Deadline
- Mar. 5 Wednesday meeting at Tom & Marie Early's
- Mar. 8 Central Virginia British Car Club's Annual Snow Ball Run
- Mar. 12 Dipstick Deadline
- Apr. 1 Tuesday Meeting at
- Apr. ? Sunday Spring Tech Session hosted by Frank & Debbie Linse
- Apr. 12 Dipstick Deadline
- Apr. 20 Sunday [WBCC Car Show](#), Williamsburg, VA
- Apr. 25-27 Winery Tour
- May 7 Wednesday meeting hosted by Jim & Betty Villers
- May. 12 Dipstick Deadline



January Minutes

Becky Hassler

A warning to all readers – This is NOT Michelle writing the minutes. SORRY! We hope to have her back to entertain us with next month’s minutes.

The 2 January meeting was held in Williamsburg at the lovely home of Joyce and Craig Cummings. The wind was feisty and pushed around the cars that were brave enough to cross the bridge-tunnel. It was good to see Bruce Woodson attend from the Richmond area. He brought two shirts to donate to the raffle.

Anyhow! Here’s how the meeting went. Our president, Mark Davidoski, called the meeting to order, asked for and got approval of the last meeting minutes. Jim Villers gave the treasures report with a balance of \$3,027.64.

Robin Watson reported that membership is at 95.

Susan Bond told us that the reporter who joined us for the Holiday Lights was from the Virginian-Pilot’s Daily Break sections. She does an article called Party Crashers. Her article on driving through the lights with us should have been in the Sunday paper, 6 Jan.

The February meeting will be at Frankie’s Place for Ribs in Kempsville.

I wrote something down about a Snowball Run on March 8th. I must have been on my 2nd glass of wine at this point because that’s all I wrote. Perhaps we can get more information about that next meeting.

Becky Watson suggested a Wicker Basket party for Feb/March time frame and is looking for volunteers to host. She also is looking to organize the spring wine run for 25-27 April somewhere in Bedford County.

Be sure to mark your calendars for the Williamsburg British Car Club’s car show at the Williamsburg Winery. The date is Sunday, January 20th.

May is the 35th anniversary of the Tidewater MG Classics. We would like to have a nice way to celebrate. More discussions about this at the next meeting.

With no old or new business, we raffled, then ate some delicious chili and topped it off with an ice cream cone.



Membership and New Members

Robin Watson

Total Membership 95

No change from last month.

Officers and Committees

President	Mark Davidoski	499-4647
Vice President	Bill Olcheski	467-4046
Secretary	Michele Peters	482-1012
Treasurer	Jim Villers	481-6398
Editors	Peggy Craig	226-7755
	Ron Struewing	479-0084
Membership	Robin Watson	721-9277
Activities	Becky 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	mikehmg@cox.net



CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Matthew Gresalfi! He was awarded the Tidewater Region AACA Restoration Award for 2007 at the TRAACA Annual Awards and Installation Banquet on January 12, 2008. As stated in the program, "...this award will be given annually to a member(s) of the Club who has completed, principally through their own efforts, the best restoration or significant improvement of an antique vehicle (AACA designated) in the past calendar year." His Midget received a first place trophy in the TRAACA annual car show in September.



DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS?
(Answer on page 9)

Holiday Lights 07

Becky Hassler

Chuck and I left the house in Yorktown early to be sure we wouldn't be stuck in traffic to meet everyone at Franco's Italian Restaurant on the 27th of December. We were the first to arrive but were accompanied immediately by one after another club member.

We filled the restaurant then filled our bellies. We paid our bills and gathered in the parking lot getting ourselves ready for the ride. We counted 17 MGs in the parking lot at one time! What an amazing turnout! We also had auxiliary vehicles to carry extra passengers.

Alan and Becky led us for the short drive to the Norfolk Botanical Gardens for their great display of lights.

It wouldn't be an MG event if we didn't have at least one car with problems. As we waited in line to drive through, it appeared that (d.y.) Tad Carter's car started to overheat.

I felt bad about leaving him behind as we all wandered through the lights. For the full effect, Chuck and I had the car radio tuned to the Christmas music station. All who could had their tops down for a panoramic view.

As we departed the Botanical Gardens, we were greeted by a thumbs-up from Tad, sitting in his car. Many of us returned to the restaurant for coffee and desert and more fellowship.

Happy New Year!



Above and below: MGs in the parking lot at Franco's



Colin, Mitchell, J.D. & Lara Hawthorne

Anita Edwards-Struewing & Ron Struewing



Rose & Donald Ladd

Alan & Becky Watson



Mike Knepler & Barb Taychert

Chuck & Becky Hassler



Russ Ripp & Lynda Northern

Bill & Issie Yoshida





Vince Groover



Jared Church

Betty & Jim Villers



Lena Watson



Sandy & Richard Hall



Kelsey & Craig Puryear



Frank & Morris Worrell



Joe & Mark Davidoski



Robin & Olive Watson

Linda & Jim Freeh





Staunton British Car Show

Becky Hassler

The 26th Annual Staunton British Car Show was held the weekend of 6-7 October 2007. Our club was well represented in the MG category with Doug Wilson taking a prize home for his MGB rubber bumper.

Last year was a washout with the rain keeping over 75% of the registrants home. The weather cooperated this year and made for a lovely day in the park.

The Shenandoah Valley British Car Club (SVBCC) holds this event at Ridgeview Park in Waynesboro. Oldies songs are blasted from speakers in the gazebo and at noon we are rewarded with an hour of James Bond movie songs.

After a great day in the park looking at vintage cars and listening to great car stories, the banquet finishes off the evening. The SVBCC members entertain us as they present the awards. This year Susan Bond was the winner of the "Caption Contest". If you have never attended this show, you should definitely put it on your calendar. It's a lot of fun!



Barry Tyson



Alan & Beckey Watson



Denise Starke
& Mike Haag



Becky & Chuck Hassler



Doug & Eiko Wilon



Donald Ladd



Matthew Gresalfi



Kerry & Frank Hurley



Morris & Frank Worrell



Tad Carter

MG 2007 and California Wine Country

Susan Bond

Photos by Susan Bond, Barry Tyson, Mike Haag

Ed. Note: This is Part One in a Three-Part installment series covering MG 2007.

Barry, Mike and I never just go to an event and come straight home. There is just too much neat stuff to see. MG2007 in California was no exception.

After a few days visiting my cousin in Montana, I met the guys in the San Francisco airport on Saturday. 3 elevator rides, a couple miles of walking and a train ride later we picked up our rental car, a 2008 Saturn Vue. (If you are thinking of buying one, don't get the 4-cylinder model, it doesn't like to climb hills.) Getting on the right highway to Oakland was no problem. Getting off was. I didn't print a map to the motel, I thought we would see those nice blue signs that tell where the food, gas and lodging are. Wrong. Good thing we had the AAA tour book with us, the scenery wasn't all that great.



Off to our first tour, the Municipal Rose Garden in Oakland. No signs. Eventually we lucked onto it. After parking the car, turning the front wheels into the curb and setting the handbrake on the 45 (at least) degree hill, we walked down the hill and found the garden in a little valley. Resembling the rose garden at Norfolk Botanical Garden, there were many different types, from rambblers to tree roses, and the blooms were beautiful.

Next stop: Jack London Square in Oakland.

Turned out to be a shopping area on the waterfront. Our real goal was Heinolt's First and Last Chance Saloon, Jack's hang-out when he was growing up and a favorite haunt when he was older. It appears many times in his books. It was built on pilings over the harbor and suffered greatly in the 1906 earthquake – step inside and be careful or you will slide downhill to the other end. But we sat carefully, drank a beer and soaked up the atmosphere.



Next day, Sunday, we took the BART in to San Francisco, the ride under the bay was interesting and fast. The AAA tour book had a great walking tour mapped out, and we followed most of it. First stop was

Union Square, built in 1850, with its Dewey monument, numerous fancy department stores and the opu-



Dewey Monument



Barbary Coast Plaques



Art Gallery

lent St. Francis Hotel which survived the '06 quake.

On to Maiden Lane, part of the infamous Barbary Coast. Brass plaques set into the sidewalk mark the Barbary Coast Trail. On the left was an art gallery designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, the prototype for the Guggenheim Museum in New York, according to the AAA book.

Chinatown was crowded and colorful. We witnessed a funeral procession complete with brass band, saw a tour group in a Model A Ford go by, and saw 2 banks built like pagodas. All



China Town



the shops were open and owners implored us to buy stuff.



We skipped the Sunday-silent financial district but admired the skyscrapers both old and new, then found St. Mary's square with its cathedral and statue of Sun Yat-sen. Looking for public restrooms and striking out, we finally figured out they are small kiosk-type one-stall self-cleaning

Vesuvio Saloon



facilities.

Jack Kerouac Alley featured the Vesuvio saloon where the beat poets would hang out. Across the street was City Lights, the first book store in the country to sell only paperbacks.

Washington Square, with its statue of Benjamin Franklin, not Washington, was also busy, with an art show and

lots of people enjoying the sunny day that had emerged from the morning fog. We caught a bus to Coit Tower, on the top of Telegraph Hill, for a fantastic view of the city, getting out just below the summit because we could walk faster than the traffic was moving. The Golden Gate bridge, Alcatraz, Lombard Street, Fisherman's Wharf, the bay with its bridge – we were so lucky it was a clear day and we could see it all.



Coit Tower



Alcatraz

Another bus trip to Fisherman's Wharf and we were in the middle of another shopping frenzy, this time mostly tourists. After a seafood lunch, we wandered along pier 39 to see the sea

lions, but the population was way down, only a few which did not migrate south for the summer. We also saw the old ferry dock, the liberty ship SS Jeremiah O'Brien and a submarine, and a few fishing boats.

By this time we had shed our jackets and were sunburned, the foggy morning had made us forget to bring sunscreen. Our noses peeled the rest of the week. But there was one last adventure that we



The Wharf

waited in line over an hour for – a cable car ride back to the BART station. The turnaround was near the Wharf so we walked, then stood around listening to buskers and watching the crew



Ferry Dock



Pier 39

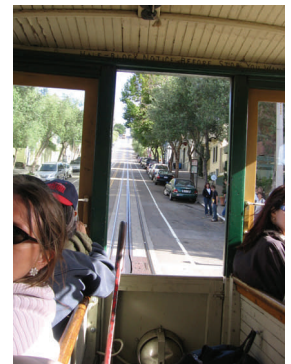
SS Jeremiah O'Brien



Submarine



Cable Car



Continued on pg. 8



Cable Car on turntable

Continued next month.



A little history on the MGTD

Geoff Wheatley

I don't think any one would ever dispute the fact that the MGTD was the most successful and, of course, popular MGT vehicle ever produced by Abingdon. The sheer production numbers speak for themselves at 29,664 produced between 1949 and 1953. That represents more vehicles than Abingdon produced in total before the Second World War.

Sure, the MGB set a new production record from 1963 through to 1980 but it had 17 years to achieve this while the TD had only three and a half years! Its predecessor, the MGTC, was really a prewar car tarted up to sell in a post war world. Apart from being a few inches wider it was simply a rehash of the ill-fated MGTB that was never offered to the public in any quantity simply because of the start of the war in 1939. No doubt it was a great improvement on the pathetic MGTA, which in reality was a collection of Morris Motors engineering parts designed for a family sedan. The TC was never designed as an export car, it was put together to fill a desperate need for a post war sports car. The original production run was estimated at around 4,000 vehicles. In reality by 1949 just over 10,000 had been sold with the vast majority going for export after 1946. With the steering wheel on the wrong side and a performance that certainly left something to be desired in a post war world with the One Point Five Riley out of the same Morris stable selling three to one against the TC.

It was suggested at one stage that the new MGYT Tourer might replace the TC but by 1948 it was obvious that this was not going to happen with sales for the YT about 50% of the original anticipation. Although the supply of new cars to the home market was

tight and any British purchaser could easily wait six months to get a Morris or Austin vehicle, the MG Y Tourer was one car they could virtually buy off the show room floor such was its export appeal! The theme of the day set by the British government was "Export or Die", and any motor manufacturer who did not meet the tough export figures set by the government faced a hard time. Steel was rationed and if you did not export you got no steel. It was as simple as that! The TC was an export car despite the fact that it had no export features, including the steering wheel on the wrong side as far as the US was concerned. However, it was realized that there was a growing market for the small cheeky sports car and in reality there were no real competitors. Triumph had yet to produce the TR Range and the best they could offer was a slow, cumbersome old fashioned under powered Triumph 1800. That bombed at the Earls Court Car show and never achieved any real following, especially when the XK120 hit the market! So, MG had a challenge, produce a modern sports car that still had the attraction of a classic vehicle. It is recorded that the first TD was produced in about sixteen days by a small design team who never put pen to paper or rather pencil to the drawing board. A MGYA chassis was reduced by five inches and the two halves were welded together. A TC body was then placed on the frame and chopped up into about five sections, which were welded together. The YA rack and pinion steering unit was added and of course the then new independent front suspension, which had been successfully, used the YA. If anyone cares to look at the underside of an MGYA and an MGTD they will easily see the direct association these two cars have. The rear axle was borrowed from the new Morris Minor while the engine mounts, clutch housing, dynamo, and sump were all taken from the MGYA.

The eventual body continued the classic style of the pre-war cars but was wider which in turn provided more room for the owners especially the American ones who were by design somewhat larger than their British colleagues! Having said that, it is interesting to note that one modern feature that had become popular in the post-war motor market was missing--direction indicators, although many US dealers soon offered this luxury to their customers. Also, within a short time they also included radios and heaters, luxuries that the British owner had to wait a few years for and even then as an expensive extra! The front opening doors were considered dangerous in several export countries and the car was given a poor review, but not in the USA as the sales figures show.

It has often been suggested that the TD would have been a more attractive car with wire wheels, after all it was supposed to be an English sports car. However, it was claimed by Abingdon that the steel wheels

would be safer and more reliable, not to mention easier to clean. In reality, it was simply a matter of cost. Wire wheels were about three times the price of pressed steel. Eventually towards the end of the life of the TD wire wheels were offered with some success but the real MGTD owner simply frowns on such extravagance. There is an interesting story about the offer of wire wheels. The MG TF was launched in the spring of 1954 with a poor reception from both the British motor media and the MG Dealers. This rubbed off onto the car and sales were, to say the least, slow.

Wire wheels were offered at virtually no extra price but this was not a great incentive. At the same time Abingdon was faced with a customer base who were not happy that the TD was being replaced. In order to fill the gap between the two cars and try to keep customers happy they offered the TD with a wire wheel option. However, this simply increased the desire to own a TD and reduced the already low appeal of the MGTF. For the first and only time in the history of the MG company they ran two sports models together in the summer and fall of 1954. By the start of 1955 the TD was out of production but any dealers who still had stock were able to sell without any difficulty. On the other hand, the TF dragged its feet until the 1500 engine was fitted and even then was never seen as a real competitor to the successful MGTD.

As we all know today, the MGTF is one of the most sought after cars in the MGT range but this is 2007 not 1954.



DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS?

Here is the answer to the question on page 2.

It is a picture taken from the Goodwood Race track where they have the old car races each year around September. It shows what they claim to be the first MG ever to win a race and is a 1927 14/40 MG.

The picture and answer was submitted by Robin Watson. Thanks Robin.



Notes from the Editors

Ron Struewing

Something that I would like to note for those that receive this publication via their computers is the fact that all internet links, such as the ones on the front

page, and email addresses, such as the webmaster on page 2, are active hyperlinks. This should make it easy to get to any other articles and websites listed.

Please continue to send in articles, pictures, news items, and links to be included in the coming months. Peggy and I are always looking for interesting and useful items to fill the pages. If you find yourself at an event, feel free to write an article and take pictures. Send your article to Peggy (email address on the website) and she will standardize the format and get it to me to include in a future issue. Pictures are always welcome. When possible, please label you pictures so a caption can be placed with it when printed. The easiest way is to use a brief name of the photographed object as a file name when saving. Also, high resolution pictures are good too since they will show good detail when resized for the newsletter pages.

You will also find many more photos archived on the club website than can fit in this newsletter. They will also be much larger when you open the files.

For those that missed the "Party Crashers" article in the Virginian-Pilot describing last year's Holiday Lights 07 drive at the Norfolk Botanical Gardens, the article is posted on the website. A link is provided below as well.

http://www.mg.org/Gallery/2007%20Archive/Holiday%20Lights%2007/Party_Crashers-MG.pdf

As always, we want to make this a great publication that is enjoyable and useful for our readers. If you have suggestions of new items to include, please bring them up at the monthly meetings.



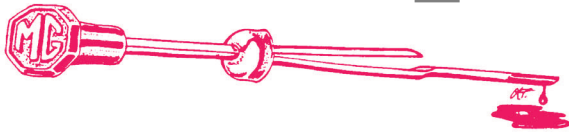
Caption Contest Winner

In case you missed it in the Staunton British Car Show article, Susan Bond was the winner of the "Caption Contest" Below is the photo and caption.



"You mean we could have taken the train to Clarksville?"

The Dipstick



The Tidewater MG Classics

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