



The Dipstick



Dedicated To Preserving The Marque Since 1973

www.mg.org

Volume 51 Issue 2

February 2024

Activities Report,

“🎵 *The weather outside is frightening...* 🎵” SO LETS DO SOMETHING INSIDE! Our group will have its first activity (besides the regular meeting) on Saturday, January 20 with the forecast of sunny and 32 degrees. We'll convene at the Bier Garden German restaurant in Portsmouth at 11 for lunch and libations, then adjourn to the nearby Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Museum for an afternoon tour before we head back to our cozy homes. Here's a big "Thank You" to member Tim Lyke who made the reservation arrangements for the restaurant when I needed a local contact. Next month, our February meeting will be a Saturday breakfast at the home of Scott and Michelle Parker, starting at 09:30. Come hungry – it was a great event last year with plenty of tasty treats. Then plan on joining everyone for our March 6 regular meeting at the home of home of Scott and Anita Kampe in Chesapeake for our usual evening event. Maybe by then it will warm up!

In addition to the March meeting, we have an invitation to join other car clubs at a Cars and Coffee event in Williamsburg, thanks to member Eric Fee and the Rolls Royce Owners' Club. The event will be March 17, starting at 08:30 AM at the Topsy Beans Café in the Shops at High Street, 1430 High Street in Williamsburg, VA., as Eric discussed at the January meeting. Then fast forward to the April meeting and the annual Spring Tour April 26 through 28. Keep on rollin'!

Safety fast. (as always), Bruce Easley

Coming Events

TMGC Events

Feb 3 - Meeting at Parker's

Mar 17 - C&C in Williamsburg

Apr 26-28 - Spring Tour

2024 TMGC Meetings

Mar 6 - Kamp's

Apr ? - Huovinen's

May 7 - Mac Pherson's

Jun 8 - Watson's

TMGC Membership

Total membership as of Jan 15: 92

In December we received 3 late renewals and 1 new member:

Shayne McKean & Pam Morris
Suffolk, VA 1977 MGB

In January we added 1 new member:

Ted Dickson
Norfolk, VA 1974 MGB



Marque Time!

President's Message

Happy New Year! Wishing the TMGC family a very prosperous and healthy 2024. Well, the brave or you might say, crazy members ventured out to Gus and Georges for our first meeting of the new year. Disregarding a High Wind Warning, Flood Watch and impending doom, over 30 members enjoyed a night a food, fun and fellowship. We welcomed new members Shayne and Pam McKean-who own a new to them 1977 MGB. I think they enjoyed the night of hilarity with the raucous bunch. Given the nasty weather forecast abso-

lutely NO ONE drove their battle tested MG, which I think was a smart move because, oh my goodness, that drive home was absolutely insane. Pouring rain, strong winds and crazy drivers made that drive one for the memory bank! Glad everyone made it home safe and sound!

A huge thank you to Bruce Easley and Tim Lyke for coordinating the Tidewater MG Flash Tour. Several courageous members ventured out in the January cold and enjoyed a chilly drive and some good food, beer and laughs at the Bier Garden Restaurant in Portsmouth followed by an informative tour of the centuries old Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Museum. We all had a great time and it's always fun to get out the MGs in the winter months for good drive!

I want to take a moment to provide an update on our beloved Donald Ladd. He continues to have medical difficulties as he slowly recovers from a mild stroke and heart attack that occurred in late December. Recent tests indicate potential concerns with his thyroid and his mental faculties have been affected making this recovery very challenging. Please continue to keep the Ladd family in your thoughts and prayers. Wishing Don a speedy recovery and a return to his youthful and exuberant self! We definitely miss Don and Rose, they have been absolutely critical to the success of the club and hope to see them back in the fold in short order!

As you know, we were all saddened by the unexpected loss of Deb Linse last month, she and Frank have been the bedrock of the club for many years. The funeral mass for Deb will occur at Ascension Church on Thursday, January 25th at 1:00pm. Ascension is located at 4853 Princess Anne Road, VA Beach (near the Baxter Road intersection). Frank has requested that participants avoid sending flowers or making unnecessary donations and rather just support and celebrate Deb's fulfilling life.

Michelle and I will host our next club meeting on Sat, Feb 3rd. 9:30am kick the tyres, 10:00am breakfast with meeting to follow. Hop in your MG and venture down south through the twists and turns of Great Bridge and enjoy another great meeting with the crew. Well folks, that's all from the cheap seats here at the Parker abode. See you next month!

Safety fast.

Scott

TMGC Offices and Committees

President	Scott Parker	swparker619@gmail.com
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Meeting Minutes

Jan 9, 2024 By Michelle Parker

Our first meeting of the year was at Gus and George's Spaghetti and Steak House. We had a surprisingly good turnout for the crappy weather that night with almost 30 members present. No MG's were brought out though! Getting home was a bit sporty, but it was worth it to see everyone again and have a good meal.

President Scott Parker called his first meeting to order with a thanks to Gus & George's for accommodating us. He then welcomed new members Shane and Pam, who own a '77 MGB that had been his father's. He put a lot of work into it and it's on the road once again! It's safe to say, we are all looking forward to seeing it soon. The meeting minutes for November were approved, and a big thank you to Robert for filling in for me.

The Vice President's report was brought by Rob MacPerson with a perfect "Olcheski Shrug." Bravo! Then he said the year's schedule is pretty much set up with just a couple question marks on the particulars of the Spring Tech Session and the monthly meeting for April. The Christmas party for December 2024 was discussed and Jim Villers will be securing Princess Anne Country Club for us again. Thank you, Jim! Paul Fuquay brought up the amazing job Terry Bond does for The Year in Review for TRAACA's Christmas party and requested that he do the same for us. Anyone who's heard him knows it's wonderful. Paul may have sealed the deal for us by promising to provide the scotch.

Bruce Easley gave the activities report. We're staying close to home in January with lunch at a German beer garden and a tour of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Museum. The February Meeting at the Parker's on Saturday, February 3. The March meeting is Wednesday, March 6 at the home of Scott and Anita Kampe. TRAACA Annual Swap Meet will be on Saturday, March 9. Eric Fee brought us the information on the Cars & Coffee with RROC in Williamsburg on Sunday, March 17. All British cars from the area are invited, meeting at Tipsey Bean Café at 8:30 AM.

Treasurer Mark Davidoski, brought the Treasurer's Report. Our bank balance forward was \$2290.42. We had deposits totaling \$2472.00. Our expenditures included: \$125.00 to the Olcheski's for the November meeting; \$1427.67 for grille badges, printing, and engraving; and \$1867.99 for the Christmas Brunch; for a total of \$3420.66. Making our ending balance \$1341.76. While he had the floor, Mark was also asked to talk about his new purchase. He recently bought Mike Ash's 1950 Y-type MG. He mentioned that it used to be Jennifer's daily driver, I'm completely jealous! I was unfamiliar with what he was talking about, so I googled it just now. Oh my!

What a pretty car! I know I can't wait to see it in person.

The Membership Report was brought by Mike Haag. He began by thanking Mike Ash for doing such a splendid temporary fill-in for the past 4 years! He then was pleased to report that membership is currently at 91 members. The details of 130ish various MGs are on the website if you're ever curious.

Terry Bond gave the Technical Report mentioning that he has a couple articles in the works for the Dipstick. One is coming on a way to test the condenser and another on antique car registration; so, keep an eye out for those. Rob asked, and there is an index of Tech Articles that lists which issue in the Dipstick Archives to find them in. If you ever have a question, that may be a good place to find an answer.

Historian, Susan Bond, has all our history beautifully collected and on the website.

The Dipstick Editor Jim Villers says to get anything you have for the next issue to him by the 20th.

There was no Old Business to discuss. For New Business: Deb Linse's service will be held at Church of the Ascension on Thursday, January 25, at 1:00. Frank has asked for no flowers to be sent. If you feel that you would like to do something in her honor, it's suggested that perhaps donating to an SPCA would be an excellent idea as Deb loved cats. Also mentioned was Don Ladd and his current health concerns. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time as they work with his doctors to plan the best path for his health and care. Lastly, if you're in need of a name tag, let Mark Davidoski know, he'll get them ordered.

Marque Time: Terry Bond mentioned that The Roadster Factory had a devastating fire in December and is currently closed. Mike Haag said he sold his BMW, so now he now has enough space available to be able to work on his MGA.

Regalia With ...Rob? Well, it works, doesn't have the quite the same ring as Rose, but a huge thank you to Rob for stepping in and helping out! The winners were: Rob winning the car themed Christmas puzzle; Shane and Pam won the MGB picture mat; Paul won a club magnet; and Bill Yoshida won the \$35 50/50.

This meeting of Tidewater MG Classics was adjourned and we all heading out into the storm to make our way home. If you'd like to see what you missed, check out the YouTube video of the meeting at <https://www.youtube.com/@TidewaterMGClassics> . Once we have 50 YouTube subscribers we can go live with the meetings. With 91 members that should be easy, so log on and subscribe! Hope to see you for brunch at our house in February!



Bill Olcheski, Bob Stein, Terry Bond, Robert Perronne and Bruce Easley at the main table enjoying the good German brew.

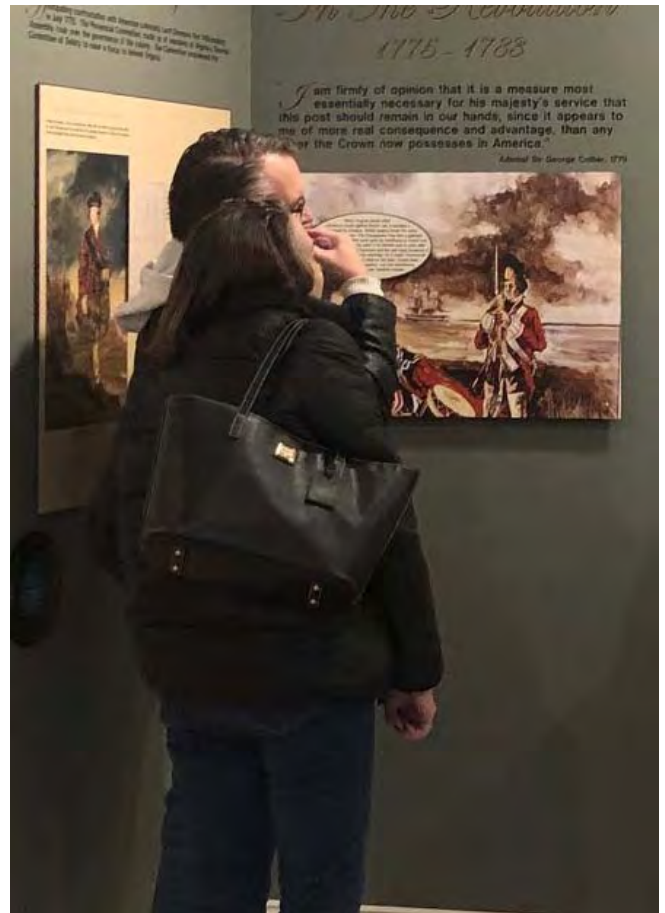
January Flash Drive!

by Mark Davidoski

Bruce Easley arranged our first 2024 TMGC-themed drive on Saturday January 20th. We met at the world famous Bier Garden Restaurant in Olde Towne Portsmouth at 11:00 sharpish amidst freezing but mostly sunny conditions. The beer selection is advertised as 300+ varieties from around the globe. We were not disappointed! But on to the German fare.....

The menu featured all of the German and Eastern European favorites from various schnitzel offerings and goulasch to classic sides like red cabbage, sauerkraut, spaatzle, and those big soft pretzels. Our lively and engaging party included President and Ms Parker, Robert Perrone (with sidekick Bill Olcheski), Tommy Keiningham, the Easley's and Davidoski's, Eric Fee, Terry Bond, Bob Stein and Tim Lyke, who had made our Bier Garden reservations personally.

Following a delicious lunch we headed a few blocks east to the end of High Street and the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Museum. This fairly obscure facility is in the former Ferry Administration Building that predates local tunnels and ERT fares. The self-guided interior tour is chock full of local maritime, military and social history. The shipyard is the oldest example in the Western Hemisphere, dating from 1767 as a British



Scott & Michelle Parker viewing an exhibit.

colonial yard. It is home to the very first dry dock facility in what was to become America; a dry dock that remains in use today. The engaging displays include much of the rich ship building and repair history of Portsmouth and Norfolk. The shipyard has figured prominently in most of the wars that our country has found itself in, including the War Between the States, as builder of the CSS Virginia (aka the former USS Merrimack,) and World War II, as a major part of the “Arsenal of Democracy.”

The frigid temperatures didn’t faze us - the museum parking area included three MGB-GTs, one B Roadster and a svelte 2.4 Liter Jaguar with its steering wheel on the “wrong” side. What a great way to welcome the 2024 driving season, thanks to the usual “outside the box” planning of our intrepid Activities Coordinator!

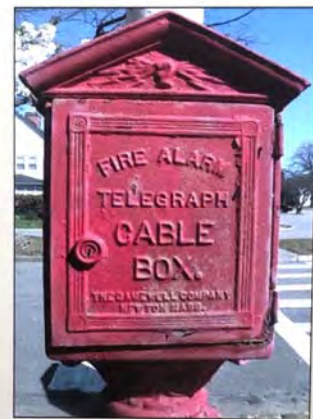
Gamewell Fire Alarm Board, c. 1901

This Gamewell Fire Alarm Board was a part of a sophisticated alarm system first used by the Portsmouth Fire Department at the turn of the 20th century. This alarm system consisted of three components: fire alarm stations placed throughout the city, a fire alarm register and a fire alarm board. To alert the fire department of a fire, the hook of a fire alarm box was pulled. This tripped a circuit, causing a bell to ring and message to be tapped on a paper hole punch register at the fire station. This alerted the fire department of exactly which alarm box was pulled so they could correctly dispatch help. In 1899, there were nineteen fireboxes in the city, which increased to ninety-seven by 1929.



The fire station at the base of the Municipal Building stood at the southeast corner of High & Court Streets. Horse-drawn fire trucks can be seen in front of the fire station.

Courtesy of the Portsmouth Public Library



A firebox remains in use at the Naval Station Norfolk

Courtesy of the Hampton Roads Naval Museum

An interesting fire alarm exhibit at the Museum

Tech Stuff –

Condensing the Condenser by Terry Bond

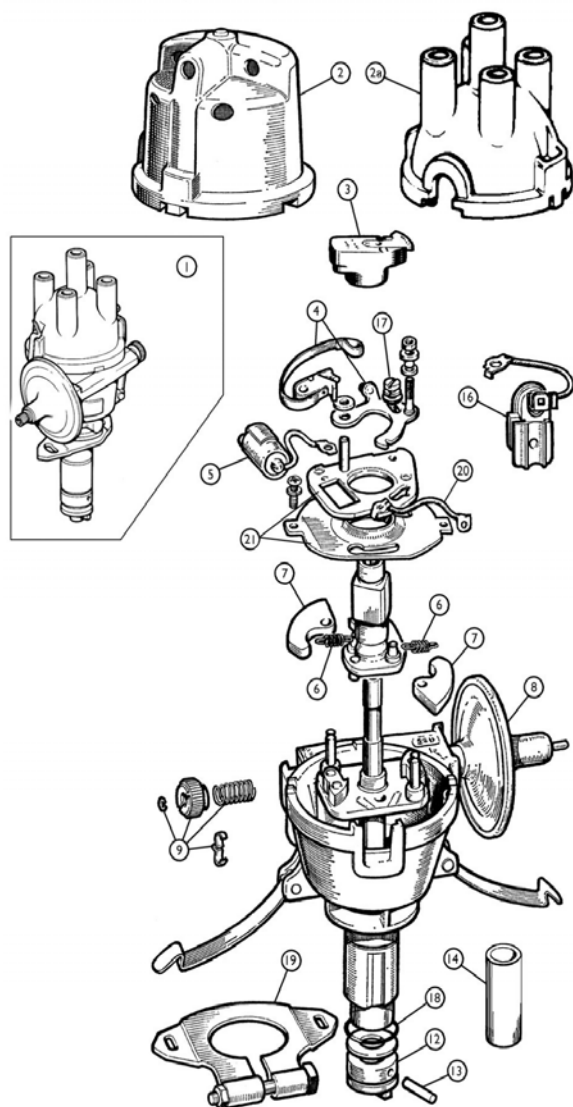
So, your LBC has started sputtering. You’ve lifted the bonnet and everything is still there, so what the heck?

These days, a frequent cause of ignition trouble is the little silver thing under the distributor (dizzy) cap called a “condenser.”

If you’ve just done a tune-up and replaced your old one because you “might as well” then you might want to put the old one back in to see what happens. A lot of “new” condensers made overseas (not England) have proven faulty right out of the box. I buy mine two or three at a time from a known source (NOT China).

First, a bit of over-simplified info on those little silver thingies with a wire sticking out. Disclaimer- I’m not an electrical engineer. All I know is + and – and that Jos. Lucas first name was Joseph!

The condenser’s purpose is to give the current a path to flow to when the points open thus reducing arc-



The condenser is #5 in this exploded diagram from the Moss web page; 25D4 Distributor used in 1962-1974 MGBs.

ing across the points making them last longer. A car won't run without a condenser and it is not because the points instantly arc so badly that they won't function anymore. The more complete and accurate answer is that the condenser allows energy (due to resistance in the windings as the current oscillates) to dissipate from the primary coil and by induction the secondary coil of the ignition coil so that it can provide an effective spark very quickly. My knowledge of magnetic fields in a coil is limited so I can't provide a more detailed explanation but can definitely tell you that without a condenser you can initiate one or two sparks by manually opening the points but if you do it very fast, it will quit producing enough secondary energy to produce a spark. During normal engine operation, a spark is required very quickly, and without a condenser, a coil can't do that.

While the points in your dizzy are closed, current (and the associated magnetic field) builds up in the coil. When the points open, the current is diverted to the capacitor due to the collapse of the magnetic field. The result is a rise in voltage across the capacitor. This produces a large voltage across the secondary (which is connected to the spark plug) igniting the fuel mixture in the cylinder.

The width in time of the voltage pulse is determined by the inductance of the primary of the coil and the capacitance of the "condenser". I know, those are big words designed to confuse you, but don't worry, it's not really essential at this point. The different values in those condensers are chosen for optimal ignition for the specific needs of a particular vehicle. That's why what seems to be the same part in appearance will have different part numbers. Just installing

a condenser that looks about right isn't likely to fix the problem. This is why there is no "universal" condenser.

If you remove the capacitor, the voltage will try to spike higher but will be limited by arcing at the contacts. But in addition the width of the resulting voltage pulse at the spark plug will be much shorter and the spark energy much lower. This can result in inefficient ignition (or none at all).

Make sense? Sort of? Think of your condenser as a sort of "regulator" for the current going to the

points. It “absorbs” the energy from the coil and prevents arching between the points each time they open. This also aids in the rapid collapse of the magnetic field in the coil itself.

So how do you tell if the darned thing is bad? First, look at the points. Is there any visible signs of metal being deposited on one side of the points? (note-if you have Petronics or other electronic ignition systems, you can skip all this and take a beer break.)

So, how can you test a condenser to see if it’s good? Simply checking it with a Multi-meter on its own will not give you a definitive answer (whether it is an analog or digital type). You should test the condenser while it is installed in the ignition circuit.

This only requires a test light. Remove the small diameter wire from the coil that goes to the distributor through the side or is connected to a terminal on the side. In some cases the connection to the points has a common wire that is also connected to the condenser. The wire has either a ring terminal or a female spade terminal. This is where you put the test light. One end of the wire is connected to the negative terminal of the coil and the other end (after the light bulb) is connected to the wire you took off the coil (at the negative or minus terminal). The plus terminal of the coil is where the wire from the ignition switch is connected. Next rotate the engine to open the points in the distributor. If this is too difficult, insert a piece of thin cardboard or card stock between the points. The arm of the points is spring loaded so you can move it to insert the card stock. If the points are not touching they no longer complete the circuit from the ignition switch to the points which are normally grounded through the distributor body.

Now, turn the ignition key to the ‘ON’ position but not trying to start the engine. Now go and look to see what the test light is doing. If the light is off the condenser is good. If the test light is on or lit, the condenser is shorted internally to the metal case or can. If the light is on the condenser is junk.

More info to help clarify how this all works - When the points are closed, current is flowing in the primary winding of the coil; the points are connected to ground. When the points open the current in the primary coil collapses and generates a magnetic pulse in the secondary coil. It is this secondary coil that generates the high voltage spike of electricity that is high enough to jump the gap in the spark plug. If there is fuel and air in the area surrounding the spark plug, that mixture will begin burning and for most purposes it will seem like an explosion. The purpose of the condenser or capacitor is to absorb the energy spike when the points open and if it is of the correct capacitance it will help to prevent metal transfer between the points.

If you are changing the points due to rubbing block failure and there is little to no metal transfer, use the same condenser with the new points. Don’t replace the condenser with a new one.

Just to be safe on the road, I recommend you either carry a few spare condensers, or follow someone else who does. It can be a simple roadside repair if needed.

Happy motoring - spring is on the way-

Safety first. Terry

My MGB GT V8 Story

Article & Images By Jim Villers, Tidewater MB Classics

*MY MGB
GT V8
Story re-
printed
from the
January
MG Driver
Magazine*

I have been a MG owner for 30 years and have owned or done major work on every model. I have known about the MG V8 for many years but have only seen one once. When I heard that a MG GT V8 was coming up in a local estate auction, I was skeptical, but the pictures were convincing and with 90K miles on the odometer, I had to have it.

The car came with some wonderful documentation, including a British Motor Industry Trust certificate. This is the only MGB GT that I have seen with an internal roll bar. When removing the gas tank, I also discovered a metal shield around the gas rubber filler hose. I assume that this car had a race history.

From the documentation, the car was purchased in 1984 by an Air Force member who had lived in the UK for many years and he imported it



Estate Ad

into the US in 1996. He bought the car from Malcolm Beer, who owned and raced MG V8s; a prior owner of the car was Barry Siddery-Smith, another MG V8 racer. I could find articles on the web of both Malcolm Beer and Barry Siddery-Smith racing MG V8s but none of the articles contained images of my car.

When I purchased the car, it had not been driven for 16 years and the



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fuel system and brake system needed major work, cleaning the gas tank, replacing all brake hydraulic components, and a good overall cleaning were required. After driving the car, I found why it had so few miles; the differential had a loud howl that required major work. Fortunately, the original ratio 3.07:1 gear sets are still available so



Engine-Serial

I was able to repair the differential.

Even with all of the history and documentation, I am still confused by the engine number stamped on the bell housing of the Rover V8; it is "E88511". This number does not match any Rover V8 serial number series that I can find. The chassis number GD2D1344G indicates that it was the 243rd car built, and the engine does not have a space for the engine number next to the dipstick. If anyone knows anything about the engine, I would appreciate the information.



The interior roll bar.

I need to express my enjoyment in driving this car. Even with the adjustment of driving on the right side and shifting with my left hand, the drive is smooth and quiet with excellent torque and acceleration at all speeds. It is not a "hot rod" but a comfortable spirited touring car. 



Jim and his V8.

1961 Springtown, PA Hill Climb

by Sam Kern (TMGC Member for at least 20 years)

Many sports car enthusiasts readily remember hill climbs having taken place at Hershey, Reading and Mount Pocono, Pennsylvania, but there was at least one more venue that has faded in memory because it took place a long time ago: the Springtown Hill Climb in northern Bucks County, Pennsylvania. There, this



sleepy little country hamlet saw organized hill climbs every Spring and Fall over about a 10-year period during the late '50's and early '60's. Springtown is located on PA-212, about 8 miles from my hometown of Coopersburg, 10 miles south of Bethlehem and 10 miles north of Quakertown. During that time the town's population would have been only about half of the 450 it is today.

The narrow and winding course was on Drifting Drive, starting about 1/8 mile north of the Salem

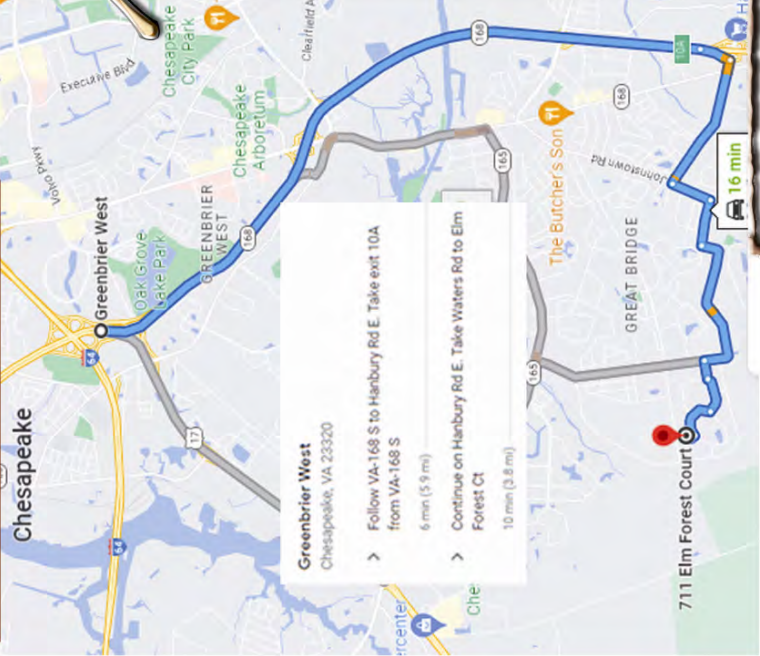


United Methodist Church situated along PA-212. At the completion of each run drivers took an alternative route from the finish line back to the start line, usually stopping at the Springtown Inn en route. The course was hard-wired to communicate between the start and finish lines.

The Warhampton Motor Club (my first club, mainly of Eastern Pennsylvania) and the Springtown Community Volunteer Fire Company co-sponsored the hill

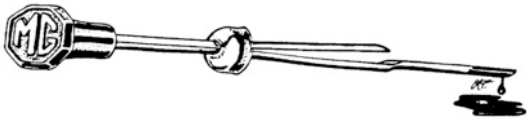


climbs under the auspices of the Pennsylvania Hill Climb Association. Springtown garnered national attention as can be seen in the accompanying Saturday Evening Post article. A consistent winner was a stripped-down Volkswagen with a Porsche engine. I can only believe the roaring engines managed to awaken more than one Springtown resident sleeping-in on a Saturday morning!

I took the accompanying photos during one of the many times I attended with my friends.



Monthly Meeting
Saturday, Feb 3rd
Scott & Michelle
Parker
711 Elm Forest Ct
Chesapeake, VA
23322



First Class

The Dipstick

Tidewater MG Classics

C/O Jim Villers
3133 Inlet Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23454

Affiliated with:



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North American MGA Register