The Can Am CONNECTION

Vol. 24, No. 2 - Newsletter of the Windsor-Detroit MG Club March, 2004

WhirleyBall - What-a-Ball

Club Members Prove They can Drive, but Just Can't Score Goals at the Same Time

Unable to drive their MGs during the frigid winter this year, Windsor-Detroit MG Club members got together January 24th at the WhirleyBall rink in West Bloomfield, Michigan to drive around indoors in dodgem cars. Playing WhirleyBall, a game in which a whiffle ball ball is scooped up in a basket like bat and hurled at a target, all from the comfort of an electric car seems pretty leisurely and easy; but not so. First of all it's not easy scooping or catching a ball while on the move, let alone hit a target. While our teams were scoring maybe 3 goals per session, more experienced teams in the adjacent rink were invariably scoring in the double digits. Secondly its more strenuous than many of us realized until we found ourselves massaging our aching muscles the next day.

Some of the impacts were pretty severe too, one driver reported that after one collision his fellow player's glasses landed in his car!

Our picture shows: Steve Holliday (#19) , Philip Wiltshire (#20) , Fran Lewis, (#7) Vicki Bade (3) and Jeff Zorn (#16) all scrambling after the same ball. More pictures can be seen on page 7.

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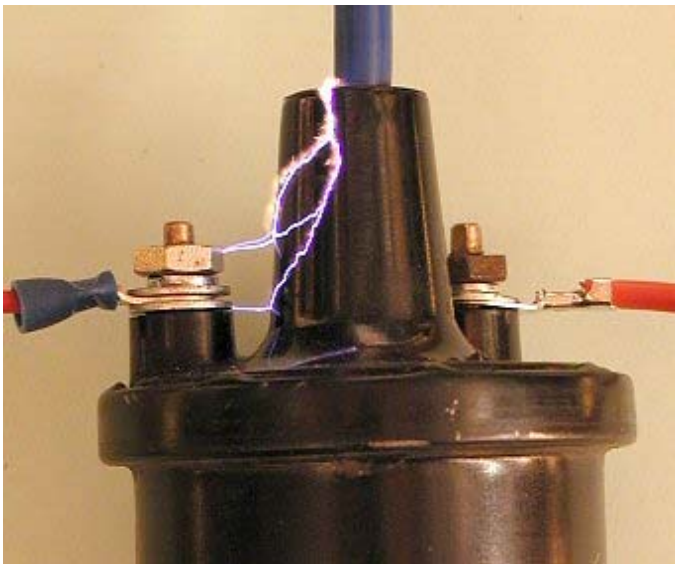
The Windsor-Detroit MG Club
The International Local Club

Rick Astley—Editor

Last summer I described some of the travails that beset us when my wife and I drove our 1970 MGB to Washington DC. One problem was the nearly new coil that decided to arc over and cause the engine to miss. It was hard to spot in daylight, especially since in all but the earliest MGBs, the coil is mounted nose down. Furthermore, a coil always tends to arc to the terminal nearest to ground potential, which is that facing toward the distributor and thus the back of the car.



For the purposes of an MGB Electrical web site I write, I decided to try to capture a picture of the failure by wiring the coil up in my workshop. It was no easy feat to get it on film (actually a digital camera) but the result in the picture here shows just how far a surface spark can travel. Quite surprising when you consider that the spark, in the hot and high pressure environment of the engine, sometimes has trouble jumping a 25 mil plug gap.

Last month I reported on a Beltronic instrument that measures vehicle performance and which, given the weight of the vehicle, is also able to calculate horsepower. A couple of people e-mailed me asking if I knew the formula. I don't know what Beltronic use but I did find something on the web which, when converted from metric is shown below.

$$BHP = Weight\,(lb) \times 0.5 \Big/ 0-60\ Time\,(Seconds)$$

To test it I plugged in the numbers from ten old MGB road tests using either the test weight if given or the curb weight + 170 lb (to account for the weight of a driver). Compared to the claimed BHP of the engine the results were all within 10%. Two results were exact, while the rest were evenly split either side of the manufacturer's number. Based on that I would say the formula gives a reasonable estimate.

Mileage Awards. This year we would like to revive our annual mileage awards. Please let Jeff Zorn know your mileage as of March 1st and again on December 31st this year. Jeff will tally the mileage and at next year's hibernation party, we will award a grand prize to the member that covered the most miles in a single car and further prizes to the runners-up. All participating members will receive a certificate. We take your data on trust but there are some rules:

- Members who have won the grand prize in the last 5 years are ineligible.
- Only British cars built before 1984 are included.
- Mileage must be covered in a single car.

Jeff can be contacted at the club e-mail address or by phone, details of both are on the left.

Presidentially Speaking

By Philip Wiltshire — (Outgoing) Club President

Hello everyone,

I was at a friend's house the other day and was browsing through his MG pictures hung in his den. One picture was poignant for me; the end of MG Abingdon in 1981; the picture of the subsequent leveling of the factories in favor of a nice light industrial unit campus. We are getting close to that 25-year anniversary.

I knew when we visited the new Abingdon light industrial campus and took pictures of our cars next to a brass plaque commemorating MG at the site, that a replacement sports car from somewhere in the World would be a long time coming.

So, I hope that you managed to get to the Detroit International Auto Show. There is always a great selection of current and future models on display. When I visit this and other shows, I always tend to look for the "next" MG. That car would have to have ageless body styling, reasonable performance and be excellent value. It does not have to drip oil but that's a nice retro touch.

At past events the only replacement MG contender for me proved to be the Mazda Miata or MX5 depending on which continent you are from. I know my sister wanted an MGB and wound up with a Miata…… So, back to this years Detroit Auto Show. There on the Pontiac stand was a vehicle based off of their new Kappa platform, the Solstice pictured left. If GM manages to produce this little convertible true to the vehicle shown, and for the sticker price at the show, we may, at last, have a worthy American contender?

For those of you who attended the Whirlyball event in January – sorry. Sorry I t-boned or rear-ended you. I think I got most people. Perhaps we can make this an annual January event. It's always good fun and afterwards, when driving along Detroit's Interstate highways, the odd moves that other drivers make do not seem so bad.

As I write this, the Hibernation party is almost upon us, we hope to see you there.

Safety Fast

Philip

In a few words…

by Lise Brown — Club Secretary

First I would like to thank the membership for your vote of confidence in allowing me to continue as Secretary for 2004. The WDMGC is a great organization to belong to, and it is truly a pleasure and an honour for me to contribute in whatever capacity I can. Along with the minutes of the Annual General meeting, I have added a few thoughts for you to ponder over the next days, weeks and months as the club celebrates its 25th anniversary; with a little extra effort we can make it a banner year.

Annual General Meeting - minutes

The following is a summary of club business that took place during the hibernation banquet, February 21, 2004.

Elections

As per club bylaws, the President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary are elected positions, and elections are held every year at the Annual General Meeting, which coincides with the hibernation banquet. Regrettably, Philip Wiltshire decided not to run for re-election as President, largely due to an increasingly demanding schedule at work. However, he did agree to be nominated for the VP position. The nominees for this year's elected positions were: President, Ralph Poupard; Vice-President, Philip Wiltshire; Treasurer, Jeff Zorn; Secretary, Lise Brown. As no other candidates came forward, the nominees were voted in by acclamation.

Philip Wiltshire hands over the gavel

Treasurer's Report

Jeff Zorn reported that the club's financial situation was quite healthy, boasting $7000 plus

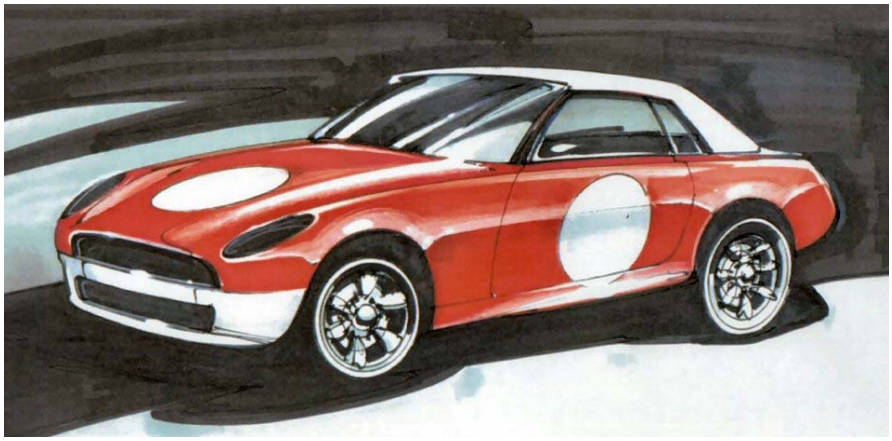
(Continued on page 6)

Alive and Well in Longbridge

by John Zajac

Pardon me for blowing my own horn a bit, but I thought I would write to the Club about my participation in the "Design the New MGB GT" competition held by the *MG World* magazine. Participation which took me to Longbridge, the current home of the MG-Rover car company and source of all the new MG cars on sale every else in the world but the U.S. and Canada.

Over the last few years, I've struck up an e-mail friendship with prominent MG historian and author, David Knowles. I saw the notice for the competition in *MG World*, which David writes for, but I had thought they would only entertain entries from designers themselves, "from their own hand". But David, who knows of my industry background as well as enthusiasm for MG, encouraged me to "subcontract" the actual drawing, and put forth an entry regardless.



To be brief, I had a designer from work who was willing to toss out a few sketches under my suggestion, the talented Sid Ramnarace, and we set to work. The design was clearly to be something derived from the feeling and spirit of the original, which was not such a horrible thing for a designer, as the original was such a clean, elegant design and the new one would try for that "timeless" quality as well.

The designs you see on these pages were part of a presentation, which included roadster, fastback GT and wagonback "four door" GT versions. The idea was to be just as innovative as the original, which was the first "hatchback", by combining the wagonback liftgate feature of the original, along with rear-hinged rear access doors for the +2 rear seats. My presentation noted that the promise of rear seats in the original B GT was, er, "not fully realized".

The design was meant to be reminiscent of the original, yet be completely contemporary. I compared the original MG B to the 911 Porsche, which came out at the same time in 1962, and which had the Type 993 final air cooled engine, original body version replaced by the new Type 996 water cooled engine, Boxster derived bodystyle in the late Nineties. It was still a 911, just up to the minute. This proposal was analogous.

Well, the competition was keen, and seven finalists, in the end, were chosen and invited to Longbridge, near Birmingham, where current chief of MG-Rover Design, Peter Stevens would choose the winner, and who would be spirited away for quick drive in the 320 hp MG SV supercar.

For many reasons (timing, costs, pressing issues), I dithered about going, but my wife Nancy and many supportive friends insisted that I attend, and so I went to England to meet with my fellow competitors and various MG representatives, which burned up the lion's share of my remaining air miles.

I arrived at London Gatwick mid morning of November 12th, took the train to Victoria Station, and transferred to Euston Station, where Virgin (!) Trains runs a near non-stop service to Birmingham. I had anticipated that the whole business might take as long as eight hours, but from touch down to arrival at the hotel, it took about four hours and I was at the hotel in Birmingham before three in the afternoon.

Thursday, November 13 was a somewhat gray, dreary day, but I was in a buoyant mood, leaving the hotel for the MG-Rover Visitor's Centre in plenty of time for some tire kicking before the 11:00 am start of festivities.

We were ushered into a conference room at the Centre, where introductions were made and the day was laid out for us. We would "pitch" our designs in turn, and then have a brief lunch. The party would then take a factory tour while David Knowles and Peter Stevens would evaluate the proposals, announce the winner, and then we would all glower in envy and he took his ride

in the new MG supercar – something which had eluded everyone else except for MG insiders. Peter Steven's introductory included a key thought for him. MG designs from the TF to the MGA to the MGB each represented huge leaps in design direction, and he was very much interested in a design which had that same forward thrust. The pronouncement was a clear signal about his preferences, and an "evolutionary" design like mine was swimming upstream.

The rest of the entries were done by young and hopeful design students or recent design grads. I could tell they hadn't been fully vetted into their profession, because despite hearing 6 presentations, the terms "design language" or "gesture" were not uttered, the only word close to jargon was "proportion", which was pretty mild, afterall.

My presentation was last, and I made a point that my proposal was meant to be a system, that is, to meet the needs of the customer, the limitations of the manufacturer and the heritage of the marque. My point of view was not as a designer, per se, but as a vehicle planner, which is my profession. I pointed out that owners of sports cars did not tend to trade in their cars every year or two. The cars typically become members of the family, and that while any design ought to be modern and contemporary, it ought to have a long shelf life, as the customer will tend to keep it long, and car companies themselves tend to build sports cars for long life cycles.

We had pleasant lunch, and there was little, if any, competitiveness among anyone at the table. I know that I felt like a winner just being there, as I assume everyone else there did as well. I did notice, though, as the other competitors were all in their twenties, they huddled together at one end of the table, chatting away, while us "gray beards", Peter Stevens, David Knowles, Kevin Jones from MG-R, and myself talked among ourselves.

Our after lunch tour started out with a look at the plant's collection of historic vehicles, MG's from Abingdon as well Austins which were built there, and a look at Herbert Austin's preserved original office. The only photograph in the office, by the way, was that of Mr. Austin's close friend, Henry Ford, another man from Michigan who did well in the car business.

The plant itself was similar to many plants, if you're familiar. Due to all the upheavals in the plant's business and ownership, you see parts trays with Land Rover, Austin, MG and other markings. The plant itself is clean, and busy. The Just-in-time philosophy is evident by the rapid dispersal and delivery of small batches of parts at all times (and be mindful of the rapidly moving trucks with the flexible, easy opening sides for rapid unloading of precious vehicle components).

After a quick tour, we were brought back to Visitor's Centre for the news of who ended up at the top of the heap. Peter, in keeping with his announced direction, picked a forward looking and aggressive design by Christian Quarre, of France, to be the winning entry. All the designs, as Peter was quick to point out, were excellent and worthy, but he had to pick one, as that's what competitions are about. Christian's was very powerful and in keeping with today's directions, and I must confess, mine does look a bit "flat" in comparison.

We all then assembled for various picture taking, congratulations and anticipated for the arrival of the MG SV, the 60,000 GBP, 320 hp, carbon fibered, beast created by MG's X-Power operation. It came snarling up with a distinct V8 bark to its bite, in bright blue, and after many pictures and a bit of to do, Christian was whisked away to his reward.

In the meantime, David had been asked to sample a quick drive of the equally new MG ZT260. This confection is the MG ZT sports sedan (Saloon) stuffed with the Mustang GT's 260 hp SOHC V8, driving the rear wheels. Prior to knowing this, I had asked if David wouldn't mind dropping me at my hotel. Well, given his assignment to make a quick assessment, he offered me a perch in the navigator's seat, which I promptly accepted. Off we went, and I was sure, with the burbling V8 merrily moving us along, that I had at least secured second place in the competition.

(Continued from page 3)
in the club account. A more detailed financial report is published on page 10 this edition of the Newsletter and on our website.

Awards recipients for 2003

The following is the list of honourees for the club awards as presented at the hibernation banquet: Lucas Night Rally winners, Ralph and Kathi Poupard; Lucky Lucas Award, Dale Brown; Rookies of the Year, Jim and Carolynn Cox; Hard Luck Award, Mike Derderian; Navigator of the Year, Sue Hunt; Certificate of Appreciation, Anne Astley; "Door" prize, Fran Lewis; and Founders' Award recipient, Jack Renaud. Hearty congratulations to all winners.

Volunteers needed

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all club members that there are many ways for you to participate in the administration and organization of club activities in a non-elected capacity. Volunteers are always needed and most welcome.

2004 marks the 25th anniversary of the club; what better reason do we need to boost members' enthusiasm, promote participation in club activities and increase the number of club sponsored events throughout this year and beyond? If you would like to contribute in any way, be it to an existing activity or the establishment of a new one, please contact the club or one of the members listed on the inside front page of the newsletter and on the website

Awards 2004

The task of identifying candidates for the club awards has always fallen upon the few who make up the board of directors. While we believe that all recipients, past and present, have been most deserving of the honours, we sometimes feel that there may be others in the club we might have overlooked. Therefore, in 2004 we will be enlisting the help of the entire membership in identifying candidates worthy of the club awards, and would ask that you keep this mind throughout the year as you witness the trials and triumphs of your fellow members. In an upcoming issue of the newsletter we will provide you with further details on the awards, as well as the nomination criteria and procedures. Our intention is to make the entire awards process more inclusive and rewarding for everyone.

Thank You!

We gratefully acknowledge the following individuals and businesses that donated prizes for the hibernation banquet raffle (if you donated a gift but forgot to sign the form on the gift table, your name may not be included below.) Many thanks once again for your generous contributions.

Individuals: Thomas and Gloria Burke; Ralph Poupard; Sue and Adam Gucfa; Barb and Barry Jones; Marty and Sue Hunt; Elvin Davis; Jeff and Jan Zorn; Rick and Anne Astley; Dale and Lise Brown

Businesses: The Nisbet Inn; The Kildare House; Kurley's A.C.; Walkerville Brewing Company; Union Gas (John Brown); A-1 Collision (John Cipparrone); Cross Canada Auto Body Supply; Guy's Garage (Guy St. John); Tyco Electronics (Rick Astley).

We would also like to acknowledge our membership as this year's prize table included assorted gift items purchased through club funds.

Lise Brown

Hibernation Banquet 2004 It was a Party!

By Lise Brown

Although the hibernation banquet may have started out as an event to mark the end of the driving season, when our little British cars (and some drivers perhaps) went into hibernation mode, over time it has become our first major event of the year. And if the 2004 edition of this event is any indication, our silver anniversary year promises to be a great one indeed. That's right, 2004 marks the 25th anniversary of the Windsor-Detroit MG Club, and you'll hear more about that in upcoming club news.

As you know, this year's party was held at the Windsor Yacht Club, and I can't say enough about how well we were treated by the club management and staff during the planning and hosting of our event. This venue is certainly one we will consider again in the future. . I'm sure I speak for everyone there when I say dinner was truly splendid. Visually speaking, the pièce de résistance was of course, desert: A wedge of Manhattan style cheesecake topped with a paper thin slice of oven dried apple, plated with a berry coulis and a dusting of cocoa in the shape of the MG logo.

The first order of business after dinner was the presentation of awards, followed by the election of club officials. As we waited for the band to set up we proceeded with the raffling of door prizes and table centerpieces, and what great prizes there were: everything from

Guy St. John chose a hat and British "brolly" as raffle prizes

first rate motoring essentials to fine art! Indeed, the tables were teeming with fabulous and varied donations from members and associated businesses. Our thanks go out to all donors. Of course, the biggest, the oldest and the most anticipated prize of the night was also the last. Yes, I'm referring to the door prize, and this year's (un) fortunate winner was Fran Lewis. And Fran, remember the rules…

While the prize donors have been acknowledged separately, I

(Continued on page 9)

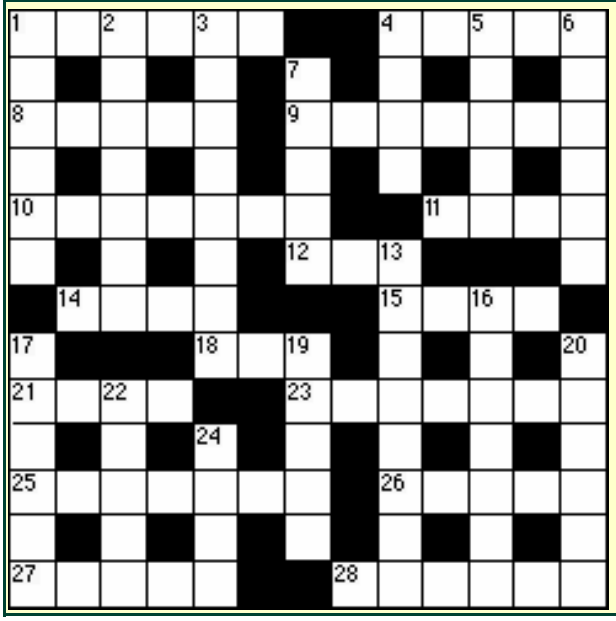
More WhirleyBall Pictures

Photos by Jan Wiltshire

Above: No spousal favoritism here. Matt Bade (#25) rams his car into wife Vicki's (#10). Cheryl Wolfe (#24) and George Barton (#16) ride in to join the fray.

Below: Doug Butcher (#19), George Uridge (red car) and Kevin Wolfe (#14 yellow) join those above as Ailene butcher (#9 bottom right) goes for the ball.

The Windsor - Detroit MG Club Crossword



Across

1 Canada meeting place
4 Break down for salvage
8 Hit the road
9 Art of paper folding
10 MG logo shape
11 Vent
12 Under or over steer
14 Town crier call
15 Run in neutral
18 Day before a holiday
21 Oil (job)
23 Certain Sprites
25 Human traffic light ? (4-3)
26 Covered with black-top
27 Lazy girl?
28 Grooves a metal surface

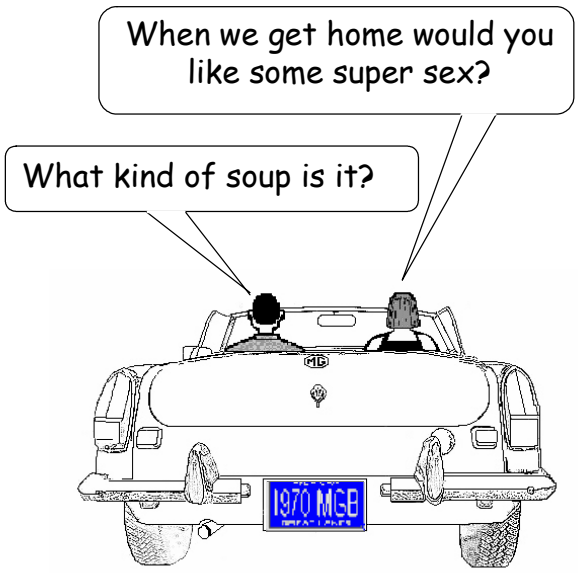
Down

1 Trafalgar's admiral
2 Dusky
3 Crank up
4 Thin spacer
5 this earth, this —, this England
6 See 22 down
7 Canadian dollar coin
13 Length of an airfoil
16 Break in a journey
17 Dover has white ones
19 Hard and dark wood
20 Remarks made in undertone
22 & 6 down. US meeting place
24 So be it

Solution page 10

On the Borderline

Not to suggest that our members are getting on in years, but it's more than their hearing that's fading……



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Name That Car

Can you identify the MG illustrated below? A clue — the date is 1951.

If you said an MGA, go to the back of the grid. This is actually an MG TD special built in January 1951 for that year's Le Mans race. This TD had an especially tuned engine, a higher rear axle ratio and of course the all enveloping special body that gave the car an estimated top speed of 116 mph on the Mulsanne straight.

Unfortunately the engine dropped a valve and holed a piston during the race and so didn't finish. However, the effort convinced the designer of the car Syd Enever (seen in the suit behind the car) of the need for a chassis frame that took full advantage of streamlining by allowing the driver to sit lower in the car. The result, of course, was the MGA, which appeared four years later bearing an uncanny resemblance to this TD special.

Photo and information from an article by Malcolm Green in *Enjoying MG* — used with permission.

Fran Lewis receives the "Door" prize from Philip Wiltshire and Ed Fleming

(Continued from page 6)

would like to thank the following individuals for their contribution to evening's success: Philip Wiltshire for his great emceeing; Rick Astley for all the legwork associated with the pilsner glasses; Anne Astley for having to deal with 20 rolls of red cello-wrap, among other things; Lyn Turner and Sue Hunt for their help with set up and display; Marty Hunt for gracing the room with his works of art; Elvin Davis for preparing car ID cards and for his entertaining brainteasers; Roli Sylvestre for doing the regalia thing once again; Dale Brown for the awards presentation slide show; and Bryan and Bonnie Brown for sponsoring our event at the Windsor Yacht Club. Finally, thanks to all who came out and joined in this event, I can't imagine a better way to come out of hibernation!

Here's hoping to see you at the next event. — *Lise Brown*

Sue Hunt accepts the Navigator award from Philip Wiltshire

We all thank you too Lise, for organizing a great party! — *Editor*

Classified Advertisements

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1977 MGB Newer top, solid front-end, looks and drives great. Some extra parts. Asking $6,200 or best offer.
Call 313-565-5635. (S.E. MI)

1975 MGB, Tahiti Blue/Black interior; engine rebuilt by John Twist. $7,500.
Rich Wagner 248 624-9573

British Car Posters & Ads
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Call Marcia Greiner 248-348-1473

1975 Midget. 44,000 original miles. Burgundy exterior completely restored to factory original color in 2000. Interior black leather, nearly flawless. New radiator (2002), new tires (2000). Near Windsor, Ontario. Serious inquiries only: kdawson1222@cogeco.ca

1966 MGB . New rack & pinion, new shocks, new rear springs, recent front end rebuild and new tires. It's a good daily driver. Clean and solid. $4,000
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MG Automobilia for sale. I have a selection of items for sale including many books and framed art. I can email a list and pictures of any items of interest. markmason7@hotmail.com

For sale '57 MGA project car. Open to any reasonable offer. Call Don Shearer 252-5108 any time after 4:00 pm or email,"m1kk1d66@mnsi.net

Please let us know if for any reason you don't want your classified ad to run in future issues. Please also let us know if your ad has been running for 3 months and you want it to continue to appear, as it may otherwise be removed to make room for later entries.
Contact the editor if you wish to respond to an e-mail-only contact, but have no access yourself.

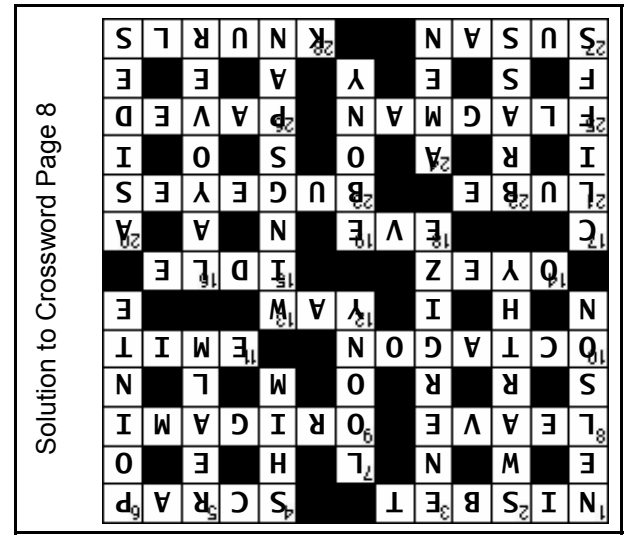
2003 Financial Report

Jeff Zorn — Club Treasurer

Balance Sheet W-DMGC	Dec 31, '03
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Windsor-Detroit MG Club	7,752.63
Total Checking/Savings	7,752.63
Total Current Assets	7,752.63
TOTAL ASSETS	**7,752.63**
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Equity	
Opening Bal Equity	2,030.60
Retained Earnings	2,754.89
Net Income	2,967.14
Total Equity	7,752.63
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	**7,752.63**

W-DMGC Profit & Loss	Jan - Dec '03
INCOME	
Foreign Exchange - Hibernation	-154.84
Foreign Exchange - Membership	-298.73
Foreign Exchange - Other	-31.94
Foreign Exchange - Regalia	-50.40
Hibernation Party Receipts	1,523.00
Membership Fees	5,107.50
Regalia Sales	1,529.00
TOTAL INCOME	7,623.59
EXPENSE	
Bank Charge	5.00
Can-Am Connection	
Postage	1,936.39
Can-Am Connection - Other	115.66
Total Can-Am Connection	2,052.05
Dues and Subscription Expense	86.62
Hibernation Party	
Awards	61.00
Dining-Food	1,603.13
Prizes	139.17
Hibernation Party - Other	300.00
Total Hibernation Party	2,103.30
Meeting Expense	109.72
Name Tags	454.86
Office Expenses	7.41
Printing and Repro. Expense	199.57
Regalia	-371.37
Supplies	9.29
TOTAL EXPENSE	4,656.45
NET INCOME	**2,967.14**

Solution to Crossword Page 8



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one: 248..349..3649
email: guystjohn@comcast.net

Hours: M – F 8:30 – 5:30
Saturday By Appointment

624 Carpenter Avenue
Northville, Michigan, 48147

Calendar of Events

Bold Text Indicates Windsor-Detroit MG Club Events.

March	
Wed 10th	**Monthly Meeting — Nisbet Inn**
April	
Wed 14th	**Monthly Meeting — Brass Pointe**
Sat. 18th	**Kimber Birthday Bash** Note change of date More details next month
May	
Wed 12th	**Monthly Meeting — Nisbet Inn**
June	
Wed 9th	**Monthly Meeting — Brass Pointe**
Sat 19th - Sun 20th	**Stratford Festival**

Please Welcome our Newest Members

- **Sam & Faye D'Alfonso -** Flat Rock, Michigan
  1957 British Racing Green MGA
- **Mike & Debbie Grimm** - Plymouth, Michigan
  1973 Black Tulip MGB-GT
  1974 Damask Red MGB
- **Bryan & Bonnie Brown** - Windsor, Ontario
  1980 Forest Green Triumph TR7
- **Bob & Cindy Quinn** - Canton, Michigan
  1976 Red MGB

FROG

Hours
Mon - Fri 8:30-6:00
Sat 8:30-5:00
Sun 10:00-3:00

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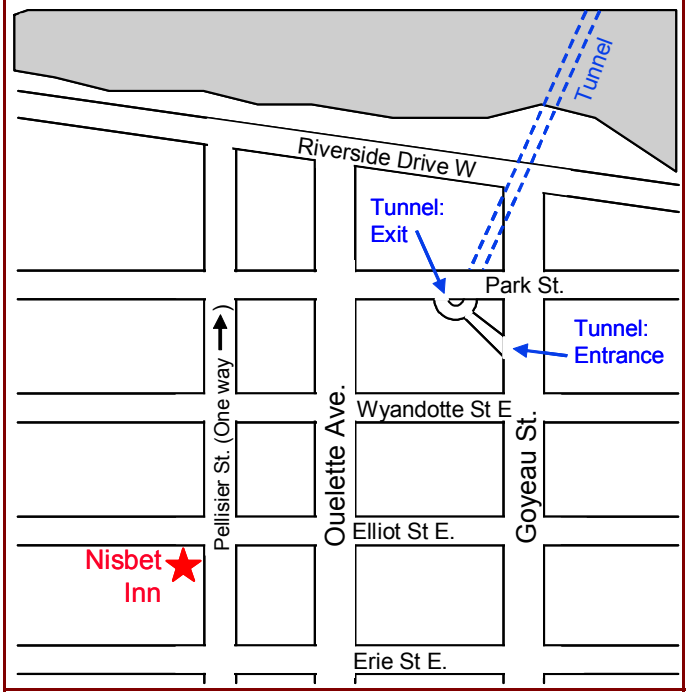
Monthly Meeting

March 10th — The Nisbet Inn,
131 Elliott Street West, Windsor, Ontario

The meeting proper does not start until about 8:00 PM, but members start to arrive at The Nisbet Inn from late afternoon onward.



THE NISBET INN

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