The 30th Year Can Am CONNECTION
WINDSOR-DETROIT

Vol. 33, No. 7 - Newsletter of the Windsor-Detroit MG Club **September 2011**

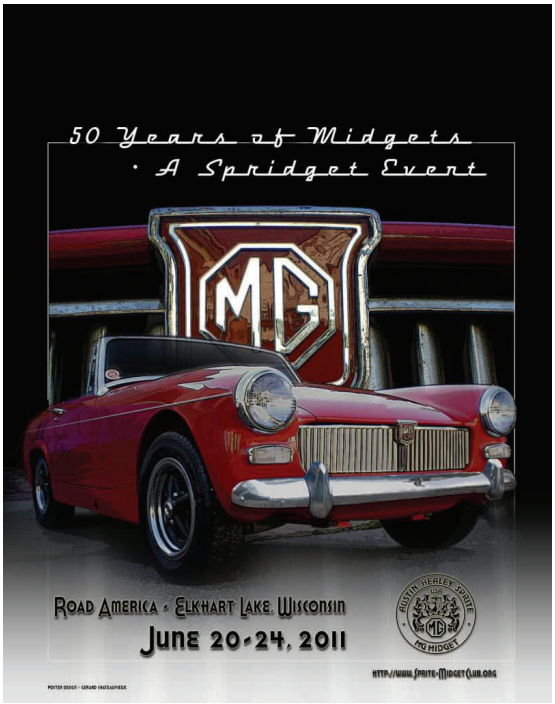
M.G. Midget 50th Anniversary Party in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin

- By Steve Swarin

In May of 1961, the MG Car Company introduced the "new Midget" reviving a model name that had been successful for the Company in the 1930's, and applying that name to a badge-engineered version of the Austin Healey Sprite Mk. II. In July of 2011, about 100 Midget and Sprite enthusiasts, including Bill and Mary Ellen Weakley and Steve and Ruth Swarin, gathered in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of this plucky little sports car.

This four day celebration included the usual events – scenic drives, visits to local landmarks, tech sessions, a car show, and a concluding banquet. The banquet speaker was none other than Burt Levy, the author of *"The Last Open Road"*. The unique feature of this Anniversary Party was Elkhart Lake with its lakeside resorts, its storied racing history, and track laps at Road America. The Weakleys and Swarins took advantage of all the events: Bill particularly loved the autocross and track time, while Steve also enjoyed the track and the opportunity to drive on the historic race course on the streets of Elkhart Lake. Both of their Midgets performed admirably in the 100 degree heat, clocking more than 1100 miles each on this road trip.

But perhaps the best part of the Party was the opportunity to get together with other Spridget enthusiasts, and put faces to names, share experiences and tech tips, commiserate on the quirks of our cars, and just hang out with people who love these cars just as much as we do.



More pics available at http://s1233.photobucket.com/albums/ff391/sswarin
[Editor Note] Congratulations to Steve Swarin for his "Best Bling" award.

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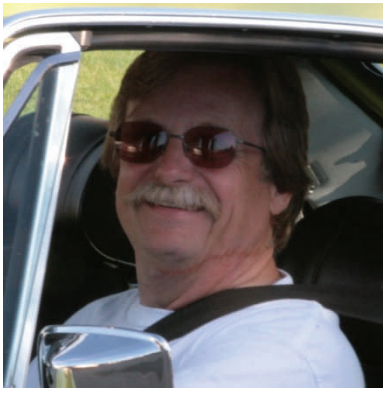
The Windsor-Detroit MG Club
The International Local Club

Presidentially speaking

Steve Finch - Stand-in Editor, Club President, Webmaster, & current holder of Video Library



This is the September Newsletter - September already? Where has the summer gone? Autumn happens to be my favorite time of year. Donna prefers Spring with all the new greenery and blossoms blooming. I prefer the fall colors, crisp evenings, bonfires and the return of college football. I fondly remember driving my then-new '74 BGT to Ann Arbor on football Saturdays to drink cider, eat donuts, participate in other quasi-legal activities, and cheer for my alma mater. I've been a bit blue the last three seasons but anxiously look forward to the return of the Victors. *"It's all about Blue baby—yea boy!"*

September also brings our big car show of the season, the Battle of the Brits at Orchard Lake St. Mary's on Sunday September 11. Since the return of the Participation Award Battle in 2007, the M.G.s and WDMGC have taken the Battle Flag four consecutive years. We need your M.G. registration to continue our winning streak. Any M.G., any condition, is welcome and encouraged to attend. As I write this the MGs lead the Triumphs in the Registration Battle by 95 to 78. But don't let that lull you into a sense of security. I wonder if we maybe getting sandbagged by DTSC. Register now to keep our four year Battle winning streak going.

This newsletter has member contributions from Steve Swarin, Rich Wagner, Rick Eisele, Rick Astley, Harry MacLean, Sandy Kuivenhoven, and David Stein. My thanks go to these contributors. The job of newsletter editor is made much easier by many members contributing interesting material. The value of this newsletter is enhanced by member's participating in its content. If you have a short story about something, an event, your car, something techy, something you saw or anything that could have general interest, please send it along. Pictures are always welcome and encouraged. You don't need to get too elaborate or polished - that's the editor's job. Come on. I know you have it in you. I also encourage and welcome contributions from those navigators or companions out there. Maybe a variety of chili recipes would make an interesting item. Send them along if you will.

Our Car of the Month is really special. WDMGC is proud to count Lee Jacobson as one of our members. Lee just finished the restoration of his 1938 MG-SA Tickford Drophead Foursome (SA2333). This car is one of only 57 MGSA Tickfords known to survive. If you got to the T Club GOF Central in Kalamazoo you saw it (I planned to go but missed it myself—business superseded). These luxury cars were intended not for motorsport as such, but rather the gentle British road rallies of the time, especially in the Concours D'Elegance which concluded many of these events. Performance was decent for a car weighing 3330 pounds, with a top speed of around 85 mph from a 2322 cc, 80 H.P. 6 cylinder engine with dual carburetors. Maybe we can talk Lee into bringing it to the Battle.

Well, that's all for now folks. I hope to see you at the Battle and at our next meeting at the Dominion House in Windsor on September 14. We will be raffling a new regalia item at the meeting.

To help ensure publication in the next issue, please submit items me by the 15th of the month. Email to Steve@WDMGC.com.

Alternative Dream Cruise 2011

Weather washes out the cruise, but not the adventure for twelve Club members.

- By Rich Wagner

If only it hadn't rained, it could have been a wonderful Dream Cruise this year. It wasn't raining when eight MGs gathered at the starting point with their tops down, but with the first sign of rain, we all had them up before starting out on the 55 mile drive. For awhile, it seemed as if the weather just might clear up but then the rains began. Soon the sky darkened and it turned into a downpour as the sky exploded in flashes of lightning. Windscreens quickly fogged up making it difficult to see the road; we certainly weren't enjoying a relaxing drive in the country this year.

Following at the rear of the group, the Astley's and Swarin's witnessed a bolt of lightning strike a pole and light up the electrical wires above. Exciting to see, but the drive could have turned catastrophic had the wires come down around them.

Still raining when the group arrived at the Dairy Queen in Holly, we decided to skip this stop since the small group was already together. This sure wasn't the day to have a Dairy Queen. The remaining 30 miles were wet but uneventful (you could still see what a nice country drive this can be). The roads had nicely banked curves, but useless that day. Many were flooded over and all were much too wet to drive through recklessly (as Adrienne calls it). I enjoy downshifting and then accelerating out of them, but never when they're wet.

Arriving right on schedule (at Christie's in Lake Orion), our umbrellas came in handy since we weren't completely soaked yet by the rain that seems to leak in from everywhere driving on days like this. Inside, everything was prepared for our group. There were more menu choices available at affordable prices than I had imagined, and also a sheet of specials that looked tempting. Service was very good and everyone seemed pleased with their selection. Just imagine what it must have been like working in the kitchen, preparing all these different selections at one time.

Three GTs and five MGBs began this year's drive. They were; Fran Lewis, Rick & Anne Astley and Steve & Ruth Swarin in GTs. The roadsters included Ron & Alice Hale, Bob & Mary Elliot, Larry Williams and Adrienne and me. A Facebook friend, Patrick Michel also came along with us in his 1969 MGB, but only to the Dairy Queen before turning back. We'll be offering this same drive and location again next year. Hopefully the weather will be better next year.

Seen In Reno at MG2011 and at GOF Central 2011 — M.G. #0885

- By Steve Finch

This 1946 MG TC S Type (#0885), the 634th car produced in England following WW II, was in deplorable condition when found in Indiana in 2005.

It was enthusiastically designed and built with this special body by Jack Smittle, family and several MG friends.

It is their representation of what the factory “insomnia crew” would have built to carry through the spirit of the 1930’s MGs, the golden years of MG production.

The B in the Woods

- By Rick Eisele

This whole story started in the late summer of 2009. I was helping sell off parts and cars that were stored in and around a barn in the woods near Chelsea. The property was owned by a man that used to operate a sports car repair shop in Ann Arbor, which he closed in about 1995 or 1996. He passed away and his widow wanted to clean out the barn and property so she could sell it. I helped for a couple of reasons. First, none of the other people involved wanted to take the time to list items on Craigslist and eBay. I didn't have a problem with that, so we agreed on what percentage of the sale would be mine, which I applied to the purchase of one of the cars in the group. Despite there being a couple of pretty nice Bugeyes, I wanted one of the MGBs that were there. As of mid-January, 2010, I sold enough for the owner that I have paid for the MGB. Yea!

Here is what I got from the deal. It's a 1980 MGB with a factory hardtop and overdrive. Having the hardtop probably saved the interior from being overrun by raccoons and squirrels, although it still smelled musty and needed a thorough cleaning and the carpets replaced. What else? The car had only 10171 miles on it. The last tag on the license plate expired in 1997. The woman that owned the property and the car had all the paperwork back to the original window sticker and purchase agreement papers from the dealer, Town Toyota in Greenfield, Wisconsin. Fortunately the dealer had it undercoated before it was sold. It was shipped to Michigan in about 1990 for the brother of the sports car shop owner and he had it completely gone through and checked for any problems. I got the Heritage paper for it, so the paper trail was as complete as I could get it.

The tires on the car had holes in the sidewalls of a couple of them that you could stick your thumb in. The right front tire is the only one that still held air. I couldn't check the battery because I couldn't get the right side door open and couldn't work at it until I got it off the trailer. I hoped that the old one was taken out before it was parked. I didn't want to think about what may be in the gas tank or carburetor float bowl or how much of the brake system I would have to replace. I sprayed some penetrating oil in the cylinders and let it sit for a while, then changed the oil before trying to turn it over by hand. Yep, it turned over, but the fan belts cracked a lot!

I think I found a good one. Even more so because the purchase price isn't coming out of my pocket!

Update, summer of 2011: As with many things in life, plans change. Things seemed to get in the way of working on this car, so I sold it to a friend. He now has it running and is taking it to a body shop to have the rusty right side dog leg replaced. He then plans on selling the car. I have since purchased a '63 MGB that will need a complete restoration and rebuild. As I am still working on the Bugeye Sprite I've had for about nine years, the MGB will have to wait until I get time to work on it. Maybe next year!?

MGBs With Leftist Tendencies

The long and the short of the story

Last year, when Harry Mac Lean and I were fitting new differential gearing to my MGB-V8 conversion, in order to have the car off the road for as short a time as possible and to save working under the car, I considered doing the job on a different back-axle and then swapping it out for the one in the car. I called Guy St. John to ask if he had an old back-axle I might borrow. He had just one and he was generous enough to offer it to me so long as I was sure I wanted a wire-wheel axle and that he got the same type back. Frankly, I thought that all MGB back-axles built after 1965 were the same, so it was news to me that there were wire-wheel and bolt-on-wheel axles, so Guy kindly and patiently took the time to describe the whys and wherefores of them to me. Coincidently, at about the same time, a copy of *Enjoying MG* arrived in my mail-box which included an article by Roger Parker that covered much of the same ground. What follows is a summary of the information that I learned from Guy and Roger, as well as some additional data I have put together that might help members understand any MGB tire to wheel-arch fouling problems they may have.

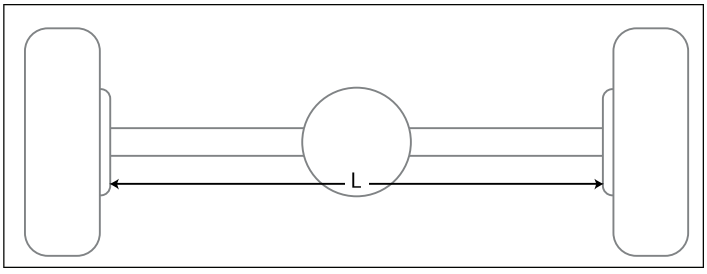
Simply put, whereas rear bolt-on-wheels are situated directly against the brake drum, wire-wheels sit on a conical section on a special hub that makes them further outboard by about $^{7}/_{8}$″ and allows them to flex a little without contacting the brake drum. To accommodate the longer hub and in so-doing keep the distance between the rear wheels (track) the same for both types of wheel, MG made the rear-axle length of wire-wheels cars about 1¾″ shorter than that for bolt-ons. That worked well until owners started changing things, like the type of hub and wheel and/or the tire: perhaps from a skinny cross-ply to a wider and more bulgy radial. Unfortunately, any problems arising are exacerbated by the fact that, for the whole 18-year production of MGBs, the rear-spring shackle attachment points were welded to the body slightly off-center, with the result that the back-axle is generally positioned, not centrally, but up to ½″ to the left.

For the 20-years or so that I've owned my roadster, it's always had wire-wheels, and I'd thought that it came that way from the factory. I had been perplexed that the

175/70-R14 radial tires I'd had fitted resulted in fouling of the left wheel arch as arrowed in the picture and, knowing of the left offset of the axle, I had put it wholly down to that. However, my conversation with Guy sent me running for a tape measure and I was surprised to learn that my wire-wheel car had the wider bolt-on wheel rear axle, and that fact was probably the major contributing factor to the tire damage. According to Roger Parker's article, I could ameliorate, if not completely resolve, this problem by fitting wire-wheel conversion hubs in place of the factory ones. These would apparently bring each wheel in by a little less than ½″, still leaving just a little space for some wheel flex. Come to think of it, fitting one to the left side only may restore my overall axle symmetry!

I then took the tape measure to my GT, which has fat 195/60 -R15 tires on bolt-on alloy wheels. How come those don't foul the wheel arch? The reason is that it has the shorter wire-wheel axle that brings the wheels in closer to the center of the vehicle. It turns out too that, unbeknown to me at the time, because of the left leaning rear-axle, the *right* tire of this car fouls the *inside* of its wheel-arch. As the picture shows, in this case the problem is not nearly as great. The contact point is the attachment bulge for the bump-stop, which can be "adjusted" with a hammer and, moreover, tire contact only occurs when the car is jacked-up with its wheels hanging — or when driving airborne!

So, I learned that my wire-wheel car has a bolt-on axle and that my bolt-on-wheel car has a wire-wheel axle. You



can check yours by running a steel tape measure between the flat areas of the brake back-plates, as shown in the sketch. The exact measurements depend on a plethora of variables and tolerances but for a wire-wheel axle, dimension L should be about 46¼″ and for an axle designed for bolt-on wheels, about 48″.

- By Rick Astley

Sparking Along - Your Guide to Ignition Systems

- By Harry MacLean

This article deals with the different types of ignition systems available for our MGs. Ignition systems can often be a weak point on any MG. Simply put, if you have no spark, then your car doesn't run. Several types are available - the original points style system, the optical system, the magnetic pickup system and the capacitive discharge system.

Points Style Systems have been around for years and are standard on most MGs . They have a cam on the distributor shaft and a mechanical block that opens and closes the points to create the spark from the coil through a coil wire to the distributor cap. From there, it is routed through the rotor which spins with the distributor shaft, directing the spark to each cylinder, through a spark plug wire to the spark plug. A condenser stores energy and helps the points create the spark. The time the points remain closed is called dwell, which is normally from 30 to 34 degrees.
Advantages - Can be bought anywhere and can be easily changed when they wear out, even on the road.
Disadvantages - Can wear quickly (10-12k miles) and ignition timing changes as they wear out.

Magnetic Pickup Systems are similar to a points style system but better. These have also been around for years. On the plate inside the distributor is a stationary magnet.. There is a piece mounted to the distributor shaft called a reluctor. As the shaft turns the reluctor breaks the magnetic field, sending a signal to the coil and providing a faster, stronger spark. There may be a box called an amplifier to further enhance the spark. A magnetic system that has no amplifier is a Pertronix system which uses a Hall Effect switch in the distributor. For those who want to retain the original look, a Pertronix system is almost undetectable, except for two wires.
Advantages - Consistent spark, timing remains constant, no moving parts to wear out, reliable.
Disadvantages - Harder to install, more costly, and if it fails it is unserviceable.

Optical Systems have also been around for years and is the stock ignition system on a 1980 MGB. Instead of a magnetic pickup, the optical system uses a light to break the field and send the signal to the Coil. This system always uses an amplifier. Crane is a popular brand of optical system.
Advantages - Excellent spark quality with more accuracy compared to a Hall Effect switch.
Disadvantages – Higher cost, harder to diagnose failure, if it fails it s unserviceable.

Capacitive Discharge Systems have an amplifier that stores the spark then discharges it very quickly. These systems create higher voltage, which it discharges extremely fast. Capacitive discharge systems are mostly used for racing applications, beyond the needs of the average MG owner in a stock or slightly modified car. MSD is a popular brand of capacitive discharge system.
Advantages - Extremely high voltage, very big spark, fast discharge time.
Disadvantages – High cost, can burn up a stock distributor cap and rotor, requires heavy duty spark plug wires.

When using electronic ignitions systems, should consider using 7mm or 8mm spark plug wires. The spark made by these systems can break down smaller wire and create current leakage.

You might consider using an electronic ignition system in your MG. Electronic ignitions systems are available for either positive or negative ground systems and are fairly priced considering the value.

Seen at GOF Central 2011 — 1936 M.G. PB Airline Coupe #0560

- By Sandra Kuivenhoven

Designed by H.W. (Henry) Allingham and built by Carbodies, Ltd., the Airline Coupe was one of the few independent car designs carried by MG dealerships as one of their own.

The engine is a four cylinder 939cc overhead cam design, with cable operated brakes. The body is steel skin over ash wood frame. The standard PB two seater is capable of an 80 MPH top speed, although the extra weight of the Airline Coupe body somewhat restricts that ambitious figure.

Despite the attractive design embodying the Art Deco "Airline" theme, the Airline Coupe did not sell well, perhaps due to its higher price than other then-available MGs. Fourteen PB Airline Coupes were built, of which six are known to exist today. An additional 36 were built on the PA, NA, NB, and TA chassis.

The current restoration was started in 2001 and completed in 2011. The current owner did all restoration work, including complete body tub rebuild. It is one of the very early entries on the worldwide Tripe-M Register carrying register number 11. The ownership history is complete since 1936 and the current owners are Lewis & Darlene Palmer since June 2000.

"And then it just wouldn't start…."

- By Dave Stein

How many times have I read that line (or some variant) in articles about classic cars! Being relatively new to the world of classic motoring, I had not uttered these words myself until recently. I decided to drive my MG TD to run a few errands. The car seemed a bit sluggish and I could smell raw gasoline. I decided I needed to look under the bonnet when I got to Home Depot. I opened the hood and peered at the carburetors – yup, still there. I could definitely smell gasoline. I had just rebuilt the carburetors last winter, so I didn't think it couldn't be too serious. I closed the hood, did my shopping. and hopped into the car to go home – "and then it just wouldn't start….

I could hear the fuel pump running and running - a bad sign. I opened the bonnet and gasoline was pumping out the top of the float bowl on the front carb. OMG! Realizing my problem was somehow related to the float; I grabbed a screwdriver and tapped the side of the float bowl to try to free up the float. No luck. I would have to take the carb float apart. I got the cover off and there was my beautifully polished new brass float sitting on the bottom of the float bowl. I used my screwdriver and pocket knife to work the float up and out of the bowl. A quick shake confirmed it – full of gasoline. I needed to drain the gas out of the float and reseal it so I could get home. I poked a hole in it with my pocket knife and got 90% of the fluid out. But, now I needed to plug the hole that I made. A bit of wood carved to the size of the hole would work. I looked about for a twig or something lying in the parking lot - nothing. I noticed the trees along the edge of the parking lot. There were wood chips under the trees - perfect! After a couple attempts and "design" changes, I had a carved sliver of wood jammed into the hole in the float well enough to get me home – I hoped. Now most of you are probably asking yourself "Why didn't the idiot just go into Home Depot and buy some sealant?" I guess for the same reason I own a car with Lucas electronics and SU carburetors – I like a challenge.

I hopped into the car, she fired right up, and I drove home without further incident. I took the old floats (never throw "old" parts away) and submerged them in a glass of water overnight. The next day, one of them had a little water in it, but the other was watertight. Of course I polished the watertight one before replacing my "customized" float.

So, be warned – just because it's a new float, doesn't necessarily mean that it actually floats. *Happy motoring!*

WANTED

Dead or Driveable

Your Car Picture

Let us have a picture of your car and some anecdotal information so that we can feature it in *Can-Am Connection* and the club web-site gallery.

Also Wanted

Pictures of members with their "ride" in their childhood or as young adults for our **The Young and the Reckless** feature.

WINTER AUTOMOBILE STORAGE

Looking for a secure, heated location to keep your summer car for the winter?

Several spaces are available.
Call early to reserve one now.
$600.00 for the full Winter Season.

All Brit' Car Cruise-In

Wednesday Aug 31st
5:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Kona Grill

30 E. Big Beaver
Troy, Michigan 48083
(1 mile East of I-75)

Come join your fellow British car enthusiasts!

Your event host: Harry Mac Lean: HMac3002@Yahoo.com

All English Battle of the Brits Car & Motorcycle Show

Sunday, September 11
Campus of Orchard Lake St Mary's at the corner of Orchard Lake and Commerce Roads in West Bloomfield Township.

- Register early to ensure that WDMGC wins the "Most Registered Award".
- Discounted T-Shirt given to all those registering before September 1st.

Quick links to DTSC web sites and forms:

On-line registration:	wdmgc.com/bobr
Mail-in form (pdf)	wdmgc.com/bobm
Flyer (pdf)	wdmgc.com/bobf

The Border City Mini Club and Jose's Noodle Factory Present

BRITISH ONLY CRUISE NIGHTS

We would like to invite all British car or motorcycle owners to the 2011 British Only Cruise Nights at

Jose's Noodle Factory
2731 Howard Ave in Windsor
On:
Monday September 26th
from 6 pm until ??

Hop in your British car, cruise on down and enjoy an evening of fun with awesome food, great cars, make some new friends, door prizes and 50-50 draw with proceeds to Transition 2 Betterness cancer research

For more info contact Wayne at
Bordercityminis@cogeco.ca

Club calendar

■ - WDMGC event
☐ - Organized participation by WDMGC members

August

■ Wed. 31 **British Car Cruise-in** - Troy, MI
See details page 8

September

■ Sun. 11 **Battle of the Brits** - Orchard Lake, MI
See details p. 8

■ Wed. 14 **Monthly meeting, Dominion House** - Windsor, ON

☐ Sun. 18 **British Car Day at Bronte Creek**, Oakville, ON
See details p. 8

☐ Sun. 25 **Orphan Car Show**, Riverside Park, Ypsilanti, MI

☐ Mon. 26 **British Only Cruise Nights**, Jose's Noodle Factory - Windsor, ON . *See details page 8*

October

■ Wed. 14 **Monthly meeting, Brass Pointe** - Farmington Hills. *See this page*

■ Sun. 16 **Autumn Colour Tour, Howell, MI**
Mark your calendar, details to follow

November

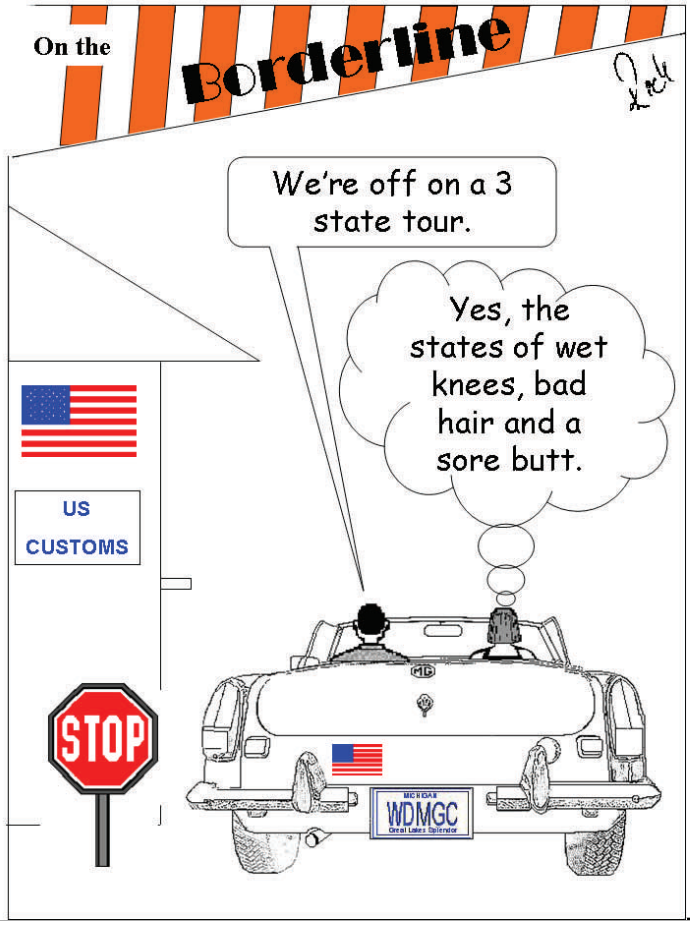
■ Sat. 12 **Night at the Races**, Northville Downs, MI
Mark your calendar, details to follow

Welcome to New Members

Heide & Thomas Basinger
Ypsilanti, MI
1974 MGB-GT

September Meeting at the Dominion House

Our next club meeting will be Wednesday September 14th at the Dominion House in Windsor. The meeting starts at around 7:30 pm but join us earlier if you plan on having dinner. Most people start arriving at around 6:00 pm.



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Triumph TR 2-3-4-250
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Austin Healey, Riley, Alpha-Romeo, Singer
1964-67 Ford Mustang, Models T & A

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Please let us know if for any reason you don't want your ad to run in future issues. If your ad has been running for 3 months and you want it continue to appear, please let us know as it may otherwise be removed to make room for later entries.

For Sale

1970 MG Midget convertible 75% restored. Body completely restored with a professional paint job. I have 90% of parts (purchased mostly from Victoria-British from 1995-2006) to complete restoration. Approx 60-75 pictures of restoration, paint and parts for review. Location Dearborn MI. For more information, questions or to view please contact: Dave 313-216-9946 davidhavener@yahoo.com *(11-10)*

1980 LE. Originally a collector's car. Excellent condition. Had 10k when I bought it in 1998. Have put an additional 6k on since. Stored every winter. Car runs great. New radio. Maintained by Guy St. John. $12,000. 734-432-0154(h) 734-634-9489(c). *(11-10)*

1974 MGBGT Burgundy, wire wheels, overdrive trans. Good glass and interior, an excellent parts car. $1000 OBO Harriet W. 734-449-2236 or knelson2236@charter.net *(11-11)*

1963 Yellow MGB. Engine is from a '74 with only 8-9K miles. The body is sound but the paint needs a little attention. $4,500. Call: Ed Pavella 313-565-4685 *(11-10)*

1979 MGB White with black interior and wire-wheels. 68,000 miles; Electronic ignition. This is a solid driver. Much has been rebuilt or replaced. The car is located in Detroit and can be driven home. Repair history for the last 14 years. Asking $7000. email contact: lapyke3@att.net *(11-10)*

1980 Triumph TR-7 Convertible, 2.0 liter 4 cylinder, 5 speed manual, replacement motor, new clutch and master cylinder, front caliber, rear brake shoes, subframe and sway bar bushings, rebuilt alternator. $1995 Cdn. Certified and plated in Amherstburg, Ontario. Contact John McDonald at mcdonaldjster@gmail.com *(11-11)*

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

Car of the month, September 2011—Lee Jacobson's 1938 MG-SA Tickford Drophead Foursome

The SA Tickford is the largest MG ever built. Just finished, this car took thousands of hours to restore. Lee did the majority of the work, done to the highest standards of originality possible. Advice from SA owners around the world helped tremendously with the details. Just 57 MG-SA Tickfords are known to survive. We have one in our club.