

# UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS

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# THE OCTAGON

Newsletter of the M.G. Owner's Club



*Blast from the past: Joanna Adler's 1980 MGB LE at the 1999 Palo Alto All-British Car Show. Her Car had traveled cross-country several times!  
(Photo by Felix Wong.)*

MGOC-OCTAGON  
If undeliverable please return to:  
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**August 2001**

## About *The Octagon* and MGOC ...

The M.G. Owner's Club, formed in 1958, is the Northern California center of the M.G. Car Club, formed in England in 1930. We receive two copies of MGCC's *Safety Fast*, available to members on loan from the Corresponding Secretary. The club is also associated with NAMGBR, the North American MGB Register, and NAMGAR, the North American MGA Register. The MGOC holds a business meeting on the second Thursday of each month. We gather socially on the third Thursday of each month, at an event known as the "Natter and Noggin" in the style of English clubs. *The Octagon*, our newsletter, is published monthly by the M.G. Owner's Club. Opinions expressed in *The Octagon* are not necessarily those of the MGOC, its members, or board of directors.

### DIRECTORY of MGOC OFFICERS for 2001

**President:** Nina Barton, 510-845-7212, [ninaba@mindspring.com](mailto:ninaba@mindspring.com)

**Vice President:** David Wright, 510-653-3831

**Treasurer:** Mike Jacobsen, 415-333-9699, [MikesMuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:MikesMuseum@yahoo.com)

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**Commercial Advertising:** Mike Jacobsen, 415-333-9699,  
[MikesMuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:MikesMuseum@yahoo.com)

### CLUB ADVISOR PROGRAM

Feel free to call these members, who have volunteered to help with purchase, repair, and restoration of various M.G. models, etc.

**MGB and GT 1962-69:** Felix Wong, 510-572-4257 work, 510-226-7721 home, [mgoc@felixwong.com](mailto:mgoc@felixwong.com)

**MGB 1974½-1980:** Ed Adams, 510-483-6821

**MGB 1969-1974:** Felix Wong, 510-572-4257 work, 510-226-7721 home,  
[mgoc@felixwong.com](mailto:mgoc@felixwong.com)

**MGC:** Kent Leach, 510-254-5748

**M.G. Midget:** Kingsley Klarer 707-226-1955

**MGA/Coupe/Twin Cam 1955-62:** George Steneberg 510-525-9125

**Z-Magnette Saloon 1953-58:** Marty Ray, 831-427-2642 home,  
[martyray@eudoramail.com](mailto:martyray@eudoramail.com)

**M.G. 1100 Sports Sedan 1962-67:** Lora Lerner 831-464-3795

**T-types:** George Steneberg 510-525-9125

## Business Meeting

Aug 9, 2001 (Thu) at 8:00pm

at

Bob Stine's house in San Mateo

3215 Llano St.

650-349-5128

Board Meeting at 7:30p. All are welcome!

### Driving Directions:

From Highway 101 north or south, exit at Hillsdale in San Mateo. Head east. Turn right at Los Prados St. A few streets down, turn right on Bahia St. Almost immediately, make a left on Llano St.

## Natter 'n' Noggin

There is no Natter this month due to the Annual Picnic.

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# PLAN B

Phone: 1-800-927-0109

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## Classified Ads

Ads are free to MGOC members and \$6.00 per month for non-members. Please send copy (and check if a non-member) to *The Octagon* editor (Felix Wong, 3516 Dickenson, Fremont, CA 94538). Ads run for ONE month, after which they will be deleted unless you call. Your ad can be extended easily, but you **MUST** contact *The Octagon* editor to renew! Any ad that appeared in the past can be re-run by calling the editor; new copy is not required.

For sale: Recently re-newed pair of **MGB reclining highback** seats w/ headrests. Features: marine-grade black vinyl, white piping, and new cushions, diaphragm, and hardware. **\$600** o.b.o. Also, recently re-newed pair of door panels for early MGB. Black with white piping and mounted on marine grade plywood. \$150 o.b.o. Call Chris at 415-740-9869.

**Chrome 14" wire wheel** for MGB. A couple of broken/rusted spokes. **\$10.** Felix, 510-366-8355, [mgoc@felixwong.com](mailto:mgoc@felixwong.com).

**Rear MGB GT seats**, circa 1970. Black vinyl, good condition. **\$45.** Felix, 510-366-8355, [mgoc@felixwong.com](mailto:mgoc@felixwong.com).

### Why Your *Octagon* Was So Late this Month

The Editor's computer literally crashed (as in, fell 3 feet), requirement replacement of the internal hard drive. Many hours were spent reinstalling software and trying to restore backed up files. Unfortunately, quite a bit of data was lost as data was last backed up in early July. The lesson here is to back important data up frequently. The Editor apologizes for the delay.

## Attention!!

Have your MG painted by a fellow sports car lover with 11 years experience. High quality rubbed out polyurethane finish at reasonable cost. I do bodywork, rust repair and welding. Fast turn around time. References and examples of my work available. Call for an appointment for a free estimate. Andy Schank 510-236-5232

**Pre-war Midgets-Magnas- Magnettes:** George Steneberg, 510-525-9125

**PA/PB Midget 1934-36:** Eric Baker, 510-531-7032

**Lucas electrics:** Marty Ray, 831-427-2642 home, [martyray@eudoramail.com](mailto:martyray@eudoramail.com)

**S.U. Carburetters:** Marty Ray, 831-427-2642 home, [martyray@eudoramail.com](mailto:martyray@eudoramail.com)

**Bodywork:** Bill Weissberg, 510-658-4335

### COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING IN *THE OCTAGON*

Direct all questions about advertising to Mike Jacobsen at 415-333-9699 or [MikesMuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:MikesMuseum@yahoo.com). 2001 rates are: monthly (yearly): full pg. \$25 (\$240), half page \$18 (\$175), third page \$12 (\$120), business card \$8 (\$75). All ads expire on Jan. 1st, and fees for a partial year will be pro-rated to that date. Deadline for ad materials is the 10th of the preceding month. The MGOC makes no claims as to the reputation or quality of work performed by businesses advertising in *The Octagon*.

### MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS TO *THE OCTAGON*

Your stories, photos, tips, questions, and anything MGOC-related are always welcome in *The Octagon*! Please make your contributions by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month preceding the issue in which you want them to appear. The editor's address is: Felix Wong, 3516 Dickenson, Fremont, CA 94538. Or, you may email contributions to [mgoc@felixwong.com](mailto:mgoc@felixwong.com). Preferred electronic text formats include ASCII text or any version of Microsoft Word; preferred image formats include TIFF, GIF, JPEG, PICT, and BMP.

### RECRUITING MEMBERS FOR THE MGOC

Have you helped recruit any new members lately? Bob Stine (650-349-5128) is in charge of new member recruitment and can send you flyers.

You can cut out this coupon and give it to prospective members

## YOU'RE INVITED TO JOIN THE MG OWNERS CLUB!!

For a sample copy of our monthly magazine, *The Octagon*, and a membership application, please contact our Registrar:

Mike Jacobsen  
320 B Monterey Blvd.  
San Francisco, CA 94131-3141  
415-333-9699  
[MikesMuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:MikesMuseum@yahoo.com)

# Membership

We are looking to seeing everyone at future meetings and events of the MGOC and having your stories, photos, and tips printed in *The Octagon*!

## Calendar of Events

MGOC (which is us!) events are in **bold** type. Abbreviations (if used): CSRG – Classic Sports Racing Group, SSTS – Sorry Safari Touring Society, HMSA – Historic Motor Sports Association, ESCA – Empire Sports Car Association

### General British Car Events

*Aug 18, 2001 (Sat)*—**MGOC Picnic**. See Page 12 for details.

*Sep 9, 2001 (Sun)*—Palo Alto All-British Field Meet. Stanford Soccer Stadium across the street from the Stanford Shopping Center.

### CSRG Vintage Race Schedule for 2001

*September 8-9, 2001 (Sat-Sun)*—Thunderhill

*October 13-14, 2001 (Sat-Sun)*—Sears Point

*November 10-11, 2001 (Sat-Sun)*—Thunderhill (their season finale)

## Minutes

*MGOC General Meeting, Thursday, July 12, 2001*

*Submitted by Mike Jacobsen*

The meeting was called to order at 8:15 p.m. at the home of George Steneberg in El Cerrito. Attending were Nina Barton, Mike Jacobsen, Steve & Sandra Mighetto, George Steneberg, and David Wright. The previous meeting's minutes were approved as published in *The Octagon*.

### Treasurer's Report

The Club checking account is being recharged due to the membership renewals. No major expenses since the Jack London Square show.

### Secretary's Report

No report; the Secretary was absent.

### Registrar's Report

Approximately two-thirds of the membership had renewed by meeting

## ❖ MGOC Regalia ❖

Description	Qty	Each	Total
<b>MG Owners Club Regalia</b>			
Pennant – Red "MG Owners Club", cream canvas, 9½" high by 17" long		\$10.00	
Grille Badge – MGOC logo, 4" high, mounts with one stud through grille		\$30.00	
Patch – 3" diameter, embroidered black MGOC logo on white		\$6.00	
<b>MG Car Club of England Regalia</b>			
MG Car Club Grille Badge – 3" dia., mounts with studs through grille		\$45.00	
MG Car Club Grille Badge – 3" dia., mounts with bracket to badge bar		\$45.00	
Key Fob – Black leather fob with cloisonne MG Car Club logo		\$10.00	
Lapel Pin – ¾" by 1" enamelled metal MGOC badge		\$6.50	
Outside Window Decal – 5" by 5½" brown & cream MGCC logo		\$1.00	
Inside Window Decal – 2½" by 3" brown & cream logo; reads "Member"		\$1.00	
Inside Window Decal – 2½" by 3" brown & cream logo; reads "Member" and "Marque of Friendship"		\$1.00	
Round Mug – British Racing Green with gold MGCC logo and rim		\$10.00	
Octagonal Mug – Octagonal green mug, cream interior, gold MGCC logo and rim		\$12.00	
<b>MGs at Jack London Square from Posters &amp; Plaques</b>			
Dash Plaque – 1999, black on gold, MG TC		\$2.00	
Dash Plaque – 1998, blue on gold, MGB/GT		\$2.00	
Dash Plaque – 1997, red on gold, MGOC logo w/ "Britain Meets the Bay"		\$2.00	
Dash Plaque – 1996, green on gold, MGA with Jack London		\$2.00	
Dash Plaque – 1995, white on black, MGOC logo and Tribune Tower		\$2.00	
Poster – 1999, features a blue MGB roadster and the JLS History Walk		\$5.00	
Poster – 1998, features a yellow MGB/GT with the yacht Potomac		\$5.00	
Poster – 1997, features a red MG TF with "Britain Meets the Bay"		\$5.00	
Poster – 1996, features a green MGA with Jack London		\$5.00	
Poster – 1995, features a red MGB, a Union Jack, and Amtrak bridge		\$5.00	
<b>Total Amount Enclosed</b>			

### ❖ "Ship To" label - please print!

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Phone number in case we have a question about your order \_\_\_\_\_

### ❖ Ordering Information

- ♦ All prices include tax, and shipping is FREE! Some items are stocked from England and may have a long lead time; we will notify you if the delay will be more than three weeks.
- ♦ Make checks payable to "MGOC" – sorry, but we cannot accept credit cards or cash.
- ♦ Send orders to: **MGOC Regalia, 5518 Thomas Ave., Oakland, CA 94618-1752.**

# MGOC Regalia!

Our club has MGOC regalia that is available for purchase by anyone. Below is a sampling of available regalia; more items are listed on the order form on Page 17. Please contact David Wright at 510-653-3831 for more information.



Key Fob

Pin

*Key Fob – \$10; Pin – \$6.50*



*Octogonal Mug – \$12*

*Round Mug – \$10*



*Pennant – \$10*

time. This will be the first year that we actually track Associate memberships, as well as Full and Corresponding memberships.

## The Octagon

No report; the Editor was absent. It was noted that the meeting location appeared different ways in the newsletter.

## Past Club Events

David Wright reported that several members made the trip up to Napa for the GOF car show.

## Upcoming Club Events

*Pelican Inn Tour – 7/15* This event is being organized by Jon Parkinson. Meet at the Park-n-Ride lot at the Lucas Valley Road exit off of Highway 101 in north San Rafael before 10 a.m.

*The Annual Picnic – 8/18* This event is being organized by Dan Shockey and Nancy Shane, and will be held at Alum Rock Park, in San Jose. Additional details will appear in The Octagon.

*The All-British Car Show – 9/9* We will have a rendezvous point for those that wish to caravan into the Show so that we can all park together. As in years past, the gathering spot will be the Sears parking lot, at the corner of San Antonio Road and El Camino in Mountain View.

## Old Business

### Jack London Square Show

Mike Jacobsen presented the results from the show survey. This year had the fewest responses of many years. Generally, people like the bagpipers, wish to see more vendors, and want the cars in a smaller area.

Due to comments received, a change will be made to the ballots for next year. The ballots will contain a note advising people to consider whether the engine is displayed in any car before they vote.

The remaining raffle items will become prizes at the Annual Picnic.

## New Business

A new regalia item was discussed: a patch for the Jack London Square show, with “rockers.” The patch would be suitable for sewing on a jacket or shirt, and would be appropriate for any year’s Jack London Square show. Rockers are small patches that fit around the larger patch. There would be a new rocker for each year’s show. The result is a patch that can be updated to show how many times one has been to the Jack London Square show. This item was tabled and will be returned to at a later meeting.

## Next Meeting and Natter

The next meeting will be held at Bob Stine’s house in San Mateo at 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 9, 2001.

There will be no Natter in August because the Annual Picnic would come two days later.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

## Upcoming Event: MGOC Annual Picnic

*August 18, 2001 (Sat)*  
Alum Rock Park, San Jose

We have reserved the Live Oak picnic area, a small, secluded site overlooking the creek near where we can park the cars all together. There is a restroom located in this picnic area and it has running water. It is located on the Mineral Springs Loop Trail.

The 720-acre Alum Rock Park, San Jose's first and largest park, is best known for its natural, rugged beauty for bicycling, horseback riding, hiking and picnicking. The park is nestled within the Alum Rock Canyon in the foothills of the Diablo Range. Dedicated in 1872, Alum Rock Park is California's oldest city park.

The unique east-west canyon and its steep sides contain many delicate plant and animal communities. Black-tailed deer, brush rabbits and quail can be seen while red-tailed hawks and turkey vultures ride the air currents overhead. Trees such as the California black oak, bay, madrone, and California buckeye are abundant. Penitencia Creek is lined with big-leaf maple white alder, and western sycamore. Wild honey-suckle vines, the arroyo and red willow add to its lush plant life.

From 1890 to 1932, the park was a nationally known health spa with 27 mineral springs containing seven different minerals. Without a doubt, this was the park's most popular period. For a quarter, you could ride from downtown San Jose to the park on the Alum Rock Steam Railroad. You can still trace the route of the railroad and see its stone bridges and embankments. The park charmed its visitors with mineral baths, an indoor swimming pool, a tea garden, restaurant, and dance pavilion.

Time: Advance elements will arrive by 10:00 a.m. and get the charcoal started. Come as early and stay as late as you can.

Bring: Camera, picnic items, food to grill if you wish. The club will provide soft drinks and a hot fire. There is fast food at the Berryessa exit from I-680 if you prefer.

Directions: From I-680 in north San Jose, take the Berryessa exit East. Turn right (south) at the first stoplight, Capitol Ave. Turn left (east) at the first light, Penitencia Creek Road. Penitencia Creek Road ends as it goes into Alum Rock Park. Follow the road all the way to its end and park with the other MGs.

Contact: Dan Shockey or Nancy Shane, 408-923-3927, or any officer.



*Nina Barton and her British Racing Green MGB GT at the MGOC Annual Picnic in the San Mateo County Memorial Park.*



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## Primer for this Year's Annual Picnic

**Pics from the Past**  
*August 21, 1999 (Sat)*  
*Photos by Dan Shockey*



*A beautiful red MGA among the other MG's.*



*More roadsters!*

## Useful Tools: Check Valve Bleeder

*By Mike Jacobsen*

Have you ever finished rebuilding a brake cylinder only to have to go find a volunteer to help you test the hydraulic system? You know, someone to “push – stop – let up” on the pedal while you work the bleed screw. It got so that no one would come into my garage if I was working on the brakes, just in case they might get “volunteered.” Or worse, have you ever rebuilt a cylinder on the side of a road when there’s no one around to volunteer? I have the solution for you. No, it’s not a long stick to work the pedal while you’re by a rear wheel cylinder. It’s a check valve that slips over the bleeder that you can operate unattended.

The whole tool looks like a rubber hose with a clip on one end. (The clip secures the hose to the bleed screw.) Using the thing is simplicity itself: make sure that the master cylinder is topped off, loosen the bleed screw, attach the hose using the clip, place the other end of the hose into a suitable container (as they say in the manual), and pump the pedal a few times. Close the bleed screw and go to the next one, and when you’re finished bleeding the system, give it a test. You still need to make sure that the master cylinder doesn’t run dry, and you’ll also have to judge when the bubbles are out of the system without watching the fluid leave the cylinder. I’ve found that in practice it’s not much of an issue – you can tell from the feel of the pedal when the air has been eliminated.

Check valve bleeders, or one-man bleeders, are available at any auto parts store for about \$6. Get one and toss it into your road kit. And after you’ve had it for awhile, visitors may even begin returning to your garage.



*Check valve bleeder. (Photo by Mike Jacobsen.)*

## Useful Tools: Stepped Feeler Gauge

by Mike Jacobsen

Since our cars don't have hydraulic valve lifters, since they (may) have ignition points, and since there are just simply a lot of fiddly adjustments, you have to have a feeler gauge to adjust everything. Most feeler gauges are made up of a stack of metal blades of differing thickness, with each blade having its thickness etched on its surface. That's all well and good, but when you need to set something between fifteen and seventeen thousandths of an inch, that can mean checking to see if the 0.015" blade fits in the gap, but not the 0.017" blade. Two blades, taking twice as much time. If you mix up the blades in use, more time gets wasted. What to do? Why, use a stepped feeler gauge, of course.

A stepped feeler gauge is made up of blades with (surprise!) steps on them. Each blade will be marked with two sizes, typically 0.002" apart. The tip of the blade will be the thinner of the two sizes, and the remainder of the blade is the thicker size. It's easy to see and feel the spot on the blade the size changes, so in use there's no problem. To use the gauge, you just pick the blade whose larger size is bigger than your clearance. For example, if you need a 0.015" valve clearance, use the 0.015 – 0.017" blade. When the blade only slides in as far as the step, your clearance is correct.

The stepped feeler gauge that I have is marked "Blue Point FB-322" and I think that I bought it from a Snap-On truck. If you can't catch a Snap-On salesman, try looking at Sears or a large auto parts store. I've seen the gauges there, but not consistently.

side of the highway waiting to get into Sears Point RV parking. This was Wednesday morning and the NASCAR Dodge/Save Mart 350 Winston Cup race would be held on Sunday. These must be serious race fans!

The rest of the drive up 121 and 12 was enjoyable, passing through pleasant wine country scenery.

In Sonoma we pulled up outside the Sabastiani winery parking lot on 4<sup>th</sup> Street. After a little discussion with GOF officials our group as given permission to park in the parking lot and we were free to inspect the vast array of T-Types and earlier MGs assembled there for the GoF car show. All very impressive, long rows of immaculate TCs, TDs, and TFs as well as some of the larger prewar SA series cars and some MGAs and Bs.

Club members that I observed showing their cars were:

George & Pam Steneberg – J2 & TD  
 Nancy Shane and Dan Shockey – PA  
 Jennifer Steneberg – MGA  
 Ferdinand & Gretchen Schoch – MGA & TD  
 Bill Dinehart – MGB

A most enjoyable show.

Tour participants were:

David Wright – Non-MG  
 Ted Tome – MGB  
 Nona Barton – MGB GT  
 Dan Hampshire – MGB  
 Trevor Redman – MGA  
 Robert Burns and Ivanita Schellele – MGA  
 Eric Baker – Non-MG  
 Barbara Garrett – MGB  
 Doug Garcia – MGB  
 Bob & Sue Luebbert – Non-MG.

A very fun event.



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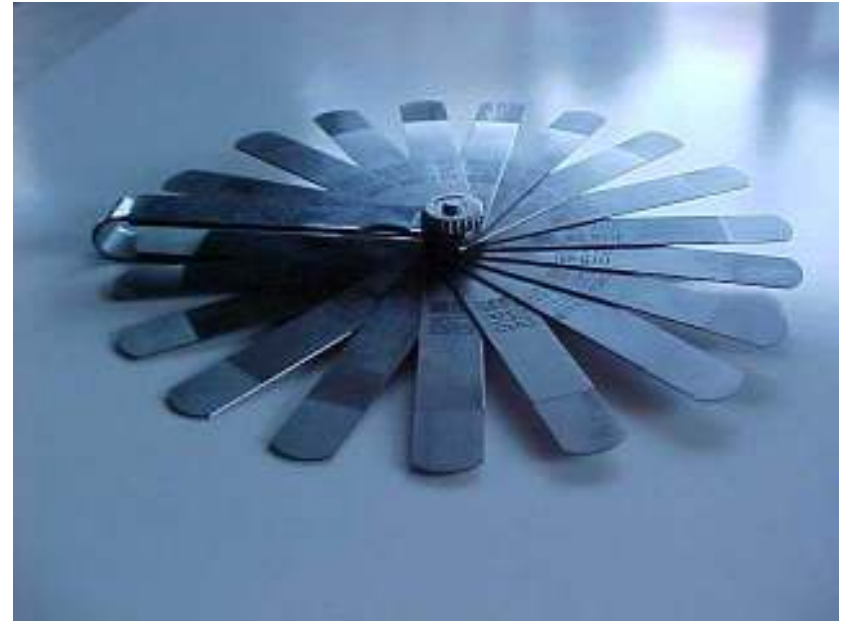

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*Gear wrenches. (Photo by Mike Jacobsen.)*



*Stepped feeler gauges. (Photo by Mike Jacobsen.)*

## GOF West Tour Report

*by David Wright*

Wednesday, June 20<sup>th</sup> saw a fine group of members and friends enjoy a pleasant tour to view the 2001 Gathering of the Faithful in Sonoma. This year's gathering was held in the large parking lot of the Sabastiani Winery on 4<sup>th</sup> Street in downtown Sonoma.

Most of us met at Denny's Restaurant in Emeryville and we left reasonably on time at about 8:45am. We were a mixed group of MGAs and MGBs with a few non-MGs also (for a total of 10 cars).

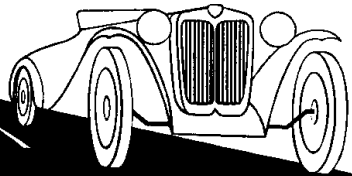
We journeyed via I-80 and Highway 580 over the Richmond–San Rafael Bridge, up Highways 101 and 37 to the Sears Point Raceway entrance a short way up Hwy 121. All very ordinary freeway driving and happily free of the heavy commuter traffic that could have been experienced at that time of day.

At Sears Point Raceway we paused to regroup to meet up with Ted Tome and his red MGB.

Then we went up Highway 121 past very groups of RVs lined up on either

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## Useful Tools: Big Gasket Scraper

by Mike Jacobsen

Sooner or later, you'll have a job where you have to scrape off an old gasket. It might be the paper gasket from the timing chain cover, the cork gasket from a tappet cover, or maybe part of a cylinder head gasket. Regardless, some pieces of the gasket are certain to be tightly bound to the metal, despite the use of solvent, paint remover, and your Great Uncle Harry's Secret Dissolving Fluid. It is now time to resort to mechanical means, and that means a gasket scraper.

I don't mean one of those little paint-scraping razor blade holders, either. I mean a big, tough scraper, the kind that you have to keep away from the kids. For really stubborn gaskets you want a tool with a sharp edge and a handle that gives you a lot of leverage. Mine is from Sears and is almost a foot long, with a tip that's an inch wide. As purchased, the tip was pretty sharp, but a little time with a sharpening stone gave it a knife-edge. The tool is much easier to use than a razor blade scraper because it's so stiff (no flexing at the scraping edge) and because it has a large handle that's easy to grab. I could even tap it with a mallet, but that's never been necessary. A scraper gives you more control and doesn't work as quickly as a power sander (for example), so don't give in to the power tool temptation or you'll be removing metal along with the gasket. By the way, don't use a wood chisel as a gasket scraper or you'll ruin the chisel, the part's mating surface, or both.

My scraper carries Craftsman part number 45498, and I found it in a Sears Tool & Garden store in Indianapolis, Indiana. I've never seen one of those stores in California, but I'd expect that the tool department of any Sears could get one. You can also find a similar item in larger auto parts stores, though the handles don't tend to be as nice. Get one or the other anyway, and stop breaking razor blades and gouging your parts.



A gasket scraper. (Photo by Mike Jacobsen.)

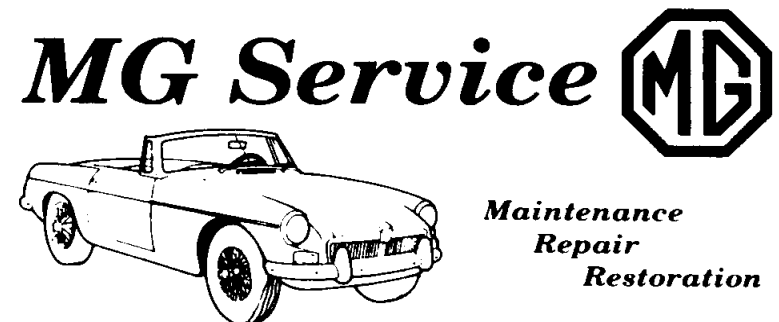
## Useful Tools: Gear Wrenches

by Mike Jacobsen

I have a box that contains a small selection of supplies and tools that I've put together over the years. The box lives in whatever MG I'm currently driving. The contents aren't the result of serious study, but instead are all the things that have stopped the car sometime in the past. This is the small stuff that's fairly easy to change, like fuel pump points or the condenser, plus the hand tools to replace them. I hadn't made any changes to this kit for years, but on the GT-25 trip I discovered a wonderful addition. Friends, I have two words for you: Gear Wrenches.

A Gear Wrench is a combination wrench with a ratchet built into the box end. The wrenches are thinner than the traditional ratcheting box end wrenches, and the whole thing has the cross section of light-duty wrench, almost like a tappet wrench. The ratchet mechanism only needs about 5° of swing to "click over," so it will work in a small area. For example, I was able to use the box end of a Gear Wrench to loosen the MGA's generator bolt that attaches to the adjustment strap – the wrench easily fit under the fan belt. There's no toggle on the ratchet, so you have to turn the wrench over to change direction. Because of this, the usual bend or offset at the box end is lacking.

So far, I've seen the wrenches sold under the Sears, Snap-On, and Ace Hardware labels. One side of the wrench says "Gear Wrench" and the other side says the brand name, so I think that one company makes all of them and sells them to the various retailers. Depending on the store, the wrenches are available in short and long lengths, English and metric sizes (sorry, no Whitworth), and small and large sets (four or eight wrenches). Get a set. You can thank me later.



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