

## UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS

Business Meeting – Dec. 14, 2000 (Thu) ..... 19  
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# THE OCTAGON

Newsletter of the M.G. Owners Club



*Terry Curren's 1978 Midget, a winner in the 2000 MGOC Annual Picnic. It was mistakenly omitted from results published in previous editions of The Octagon. (Photo by Terry Curren.)*

MGOC-OCTAGON  
If undeliverable please return to:  
9 Pomona Ave. El Cerrito, CA 94530  
email: [felix\\_wong@stanfordalumni.org](mailto:felix_wong@stanfordalumni.org)  
<http://home.pacbell.net/jensten>

December 2000

## 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 the 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 1999

**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

**Secretary:** Dan Shockey, 408-923-3927, [magnut\\_dan@hotmail.com](mailto:magnut_dan@hotmail.com)

**Corresponding Secretary:** George Steneberg, 510-525-9125,  
[j2george@pacbell.net](mailto:j2george@pacbell.net)

**Membership Development:** Doug Paris, 650-349-3778; Bob Stine, 650-349-5128, [RAStine@prodigy.net](mailto:RAStine@prodigy.net)

**Octagon Editor:** Felix Wong, 510-572-4257 work, 510-366-8355 home,  
[felix\\_wong@stanfordalumni.org](mailto:felix_wong@stanfordalumni.org)

**Octagoat:** Eric Baker, 510-531-7032

**Commercial Advertising:** Mike Jacobsen, 415-333-9699

### 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, 510-366-8355 home, [felix\\_wong@stanfordalumni.org](mailto:felix_wong@stanfordalumni.org)

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

**MGB 1969-1974:** Felix Wong, 510-572-4257 work, 510-366-8355 home,  
[felix\\_wong@stanfordalumni.org](mailto:felix_wong@stanfordalumni.org)

**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,

**M.G. 1100 Sports Sedan 1962-67:** Lora Lerner, 831-427-2642

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

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

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

## Business Meeting

December 14, 2000 (Thu) at 8:00pm

at

Bob Stine's house in San Mateo

3215 Llano St.

650-349-5128

Board Meeting at 7:30pm. 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. Happy holidays!

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# PLAN B

Phone: 1-800-927-0109

Fax: 510 352-2930

## Classified Ads

Ads are free to MGOC members and \$6.00 per month for non-members. Please send copy (and a check if a non-member) to *The Octagon* editor (Felix Wong, 38947 Bluebell Dr., Newark, CA 94560). Ads run for ONE month, after which they will be deleted unless you call. Your ad can be extended easily, but you **MUST** call *The Octagon* editor to renew! Any ad that appeared in the past can be re-run by notifying the editor.

For sale: **1977 MGB**. Recently restored. The mechanical work was done by Hillary Reddy. The engine was rebuilt. New clutch and roller release bearing. New stainless steel exhaust system. New rear leaf springs. New tires, top, tonneau cover and car cover. New paint job (red). Asking \$8000 or best offer. Located in Alameda. 510-523-7225 Les Clark.

**Wanted:** good used tube type **rear axle** for '74 MGB. Bill Fall Ph. 209-295-1510 or [ellabill@cdepot.net](mailto:ellabill@cdepot.net).

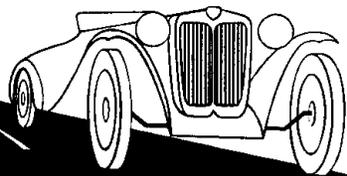
For sale or trade, parting out **'75 Midget**. No seats, gauges or front bumper. Windshield cracked. Also lots of Morris Minor body parts and misc., plus 3.4 liter Jaguar crank, new rod and main bearings and new rings and pistons. Bill Fall, 209-295-1510 or [ellabill@cdepot.net](mailto:ellabill@cdepot.net).

For sale: LH type **overdrive transmission** for 68 and later MGB. Complete from junk yard (untested). **\$450**. Dan Shockey, 408-923-3927, San Jose.

Complete **MGB/GT rear seats**, including rear and bottom cushions. Upholstery is black vinyl and is correct for 1970-71 (?) GTs. Also can be easily fitted to a roadster (okay for extremely young kids); I can show you how it fits on my '69. **\$60** or best offer. Felix Wong, 510-366-8355, [felix\\_wong@stanfordalumni.org](mailto:felix_wong@stanfordalumni.org).

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email: [mg@oconnorclassics.com](mailto:mg@oconnorclassics.com)

**Lucas electrics:** Marty Ray, 831-427-2642 home  
**S.U. Carburetors:** Westley Johnson, 415-826-2396  
**Bodywork:** Bill Weissberg, 510-658-4335

### COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING IN *THE OCTAGON*

Direct all questions about advertising to Mike Jacobsen at 415-333-9699. 2000 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, 38947 Bluebell Dr., Newark, CA 94560. Or, you may email contributions to [felix\\_wong@stanfordalumni.org](mailto:felix_wong@stanfordalumni.org). 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 call or write our membership secretary:

**George Steneberg**

9 Pomona Ave.

E1 Cerrito, CA 94530

**510-525-9125**

[j2george@pacbell.net](mailto:j2george@pacbell.net)

# Membership

New members as of Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> will be printed in a future edition of *The Octagon*. 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

**Dec 31, 2000-Jan 2, 2001 (Sun-Tue)**—SSTS Real Millenium Tour. A tour to Folsom, CA. Staying at the Lake Natoma Inn in old downtown Folsom. Call Verna Kelsey at 925-846-3356 or email [Verna@value.net](mailto:Verna@value.net).

**Jan 13, 2001 (Sat)**—**MGOC Annual Dinner**. See Page 8 for details.

**Jun 18-21, 2001 (Mon-Thu)**—GoF 2001 Napa Marriot.

## Minutes

**MGOC Business Meeting, November 9, 2000 (Thu)**

by Nina Barton, President

The meeting was called to order at 8:18 by Nina Barton. In attendance were Nina Barton, George Steneberg, and David Wright. *[Nina thinks Mike Zinn might have also been present.]* No Secretary, Treasurer, or *Octagon* Reports this month. No Regalia report.

### Old Business

George strongly recommends that we not increase the cost of the corresponding member's dues. This is a fee written into the by-laws, and since the club usually has extra copies of the *Octagon* printed to give out to prospective members, we can absorb the cost by using these extra copies.

### 2001 Officers

The nominating committee, consisting of David Wright, Dan Shockey, and Mike Jacobsen have elected the following members for consideration by the general club:

- Nina Barton – President
- David Wright – Vice President
- Dan Shockey – Secretary

## ❖ 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 MG Car Club 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 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!

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone number in case we have a question \_\_\_\_\_

### ❖ 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*

- Mike Jacobsen – Treasurer

It should be presented in ballot form in the next Octagon, with the proviso that the general membership can write in other members.

## Annual Dinner

David Wright and Nina Barton are looking for places to have the Annual Dinner. We will note the site and date in the December *Octagon*, and get a dinner reservation form in also.

Meeting adjourned at 9pm. There were not enough members for a quorum.

## Towers: Rover is still on track

*by Bradford Wernle of Automotive News Europe*

*Submitted by Bob Wall and Dan Shockey*

*Nov. 6, 2000*

WARWICK, England—Chairman John Towers and other executives at newly independent MG Rover Group say they are having fun planning a new generation of vehicles.

Freed from BMW's ownership, they don't have to answer to bosses in Munich anymore, and they can make decisions quickly and nimbly.

Towers and his company will need all the agility they can find to surmount the obstacles they face. In order to succeed, they must come up with a new business model.

MG Rover is a small company in an increasingly global car business. With plans to produce 200,000 cars a year, MG Rover doesn't really qualify as a volume carmaker.

Without the brand names or the right products to demand top prices, MG Rover can't compete in the premium car league either. And Rover plans to make all its vehicles—as many as eight different models—at its only factory in Longbridge, near Birmingham in the English midlands.

"The volumes are not economic. It's as simple as that," said Charles Moss, analyst for J.D. Power-LMC in Warwick, England. "When you go to a parts supplier with those limited numbers in mind, it becomes very hard for the parts supplier to give you good economies."

To get better economies, MG Rover needs a larger partner to help it develop a new-generation lower-medium car. Malaysian carmaker Proton has been linked with the MG Rover, but it denies that any deal is imminent.

Cracks have begun showing in Towers' management team. Two non-executive directors—Brian Parker, a British financier, and Terry Whitmore, an executive with UK coachbuilder Mayflower—resigned October 26. Both issued statements blaming their resignations on "intense media pressure." They said they still support Towers.

Towers, the man who put together the Phoenix consortium to win the

bidding for Rover in the summer, defended his company against criticism.

"No matter what the gossip column journalists are saying, we're on track," he said. "We've already invested £100 million (173.2 million euros) in new products and we will be building more products at Longbridge than ever before."

MG Rover's new structure has resulted in savings, Towers said.

"Previously we had to pay the overheads of the Gaydon test center, the engine plant in Warwick and the plant at Cowley," he said. "We have identified savings of £50 million a year just on travel and accommodation—we have become more compact and cost effective."

MG Rover is still negotiating the settling of its accounts with its former owner BMW. MG Rover would like to buy the engine plant at Longbridge. BMW still owns the plant, although 80 percent of the output goes to MG Rover in the form of five different engine types. If MG Rover loses to another bidder in the stakes for the engine plant, it faces the prospect of having to negotiate engine prices with an outside supplier.

Head of Product Development Rob Oldaker and his team are working on options in case a car manufacturer/partner cannot be found to help develop MG Rover's future lower-medium car. They are making contingency plans to develop a new car off a scaled-down version of the Rover 75 platform if no major automaker partner emerges.

MG Rover has a dowry of about £500 million from BMW, and doesn't have any debts. "The dowry gives the company breathing space to keep production running," said Moss. "But it doesn't give it enough to develop a new range of cars, which would require new engines, and would incur full development costs."

Three new MG sedans are being developed. These are sportier versions of the Rover 25, 45 and 75 and should go on sale next year. A station wagon version of the 75 has also been developed. The car was on display in the lobby of MG Rover's Bickenhill headquarters during October's Birmingham auto show. The company decided early it wouldn't spend unnecessary money showing cars at auto shows, a decision that drew some criticism.

"Consumers don't want to buy a car from a company that has to advertise the fact it is short of cash," said Moss.

But MG Rover will have a stand at this month's Sydney auto show in Australia, and may be at the Geneva auto show next year with the Rover 75 station wagon and possibly one of the new MGs.

Towers admitted the company has a job to do rebuilding the brand image of MG in Europe, where it is not as strong as Rover.

Kevin Howe and John Parkinson, MG Rover chief executive and marketing chief respectively, have been touring continental Europe to keep dealers informed of developments. Sales of Rovers have increased in most key European markets this year. The exceptions are the UK and Germany, the company's two largest markets.

# Official Ballot

for  
2001 MGOC Officers' Election

## Instructions

Complete the ballot for each office by either marking the box next to the candidate's name or by writing in the name of an MGOC member in the space provided.

Mail the ballot to:

George Steneberg  
MGOC Corresponding Secretary  
9 Pomona Avenue  
El Cerrito, CA 94530

*Ballots must be received by December 14, 2000 to be counted.*

## Candidates

*MGOC President*

Nina Barto n

---

*MGOC Vice President*

David Wright

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*MGOC Treasurer*

Mike Jacobsen

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*MGOC Secretary*

Dan Shockey

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## MG Rover Reveals First Details of MG Saloon Car Plans for 2001

*Submitted by Nina Barton  
Original Source Unknown*

Today, Thursday November 23, MG Rover released the first official photograph of a vehicle code named MG X10, one of three new MG sports saloon cars that will be launched in 2001.

The three MG sports saloons will be in production during 2001 and result in Longbridge manufacturing a total of eight different models.

Over 500 engineers are now based at Longbridge working on these and other exciting product programs. MG Rover has already invested over 100 million pounds in new product development since the Company was established in May 2000.

Kevin Howe, chief executive said: "2001 will be the year when the MG brand re-establishes itself as a leading global car brand with a range of sporty cars from the MGF roadster to an outrageous MG X10. MGs will be fun, accessible, have superb dynamics and appeal to a growing customer target group."

To ensure these objectives are met Peter Stevens, designer of such cars as the McLaren F1 as well as cars for Lotus and Jaguar, is directing the product design activities. His colleague and board director, Rob Oldaker, is ensuring the chassis will produce driving exhilaration and the powertrain develop appropriate levels of performance.

As a part of the development of the MG brand involvement in a range of motorsport activities will be established including participation in the Le Mans 24 hour race in June 2001.

## Mt. Hamilton Tour Report

*by Dan Shockey  
October 21, 2000 (Sat)*

When Bob Wall said he had the urge to lead a bunch of MGs up Mt. Hamilton, I jumped at the chance. I had long intended to drive that route and it is very near our home in San Jose. We had a great turnout with 13 MGs: MGBs, MGAs and Lora's 1100. Also a BMW tagged along. We had fun gathering and getting acquainted at the Jack in the Box. We had new members and some non-members participate. Two groups found the event from the Internet. Rick Green from the St. Louis area was able to join us in Mike Jacobsen's GT.

The weather dawned perfect with clear beautiful skies and crisp fall smells. The day before had been foggy and the day after we had a big windstorm. We scattered fallen leaves as we drove up the road we had all to ourselves. Bob planned a rest stop at a trailhead about half way up. It included the nicest port-a-potties I have ever experienced. We had fun taking photos and walking to the hilltop for a view.

The drive up seemed never to end and I didn't want it to. They estimate 365 turns but I am not sure how you would count them except the times your steering wheel crossed center. The road was a continual bend. At some points I could see shiny MGs going different directions on two switchbacks above me. No motorcycles or motor homes held us up but we had to watch for bicycles. I was grinning all the way up and back.

At the top was a great surprise, too. Great view, yes, and the observatory domes but also a wonderful Victorian era building and lots of history. We could clearly see San Francisco and other distant sites. We caught a tour of

*[continued on Page 13]*

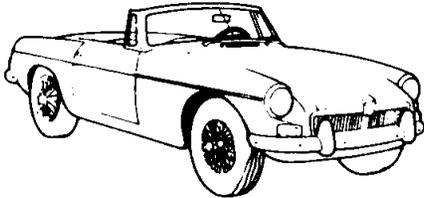


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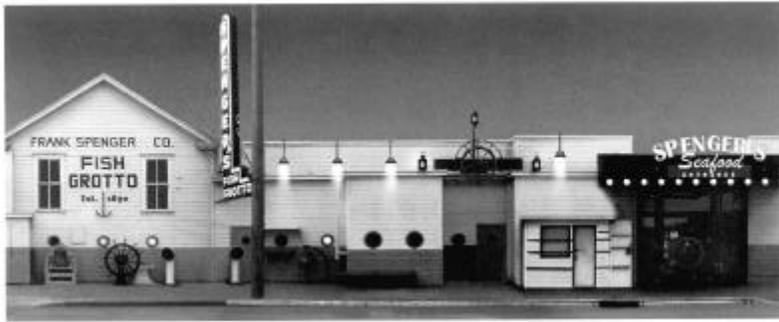
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Or

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Hot Apple Crisp a la mode, coffee, tea

Price: \$25.00/person

No-host bar

RSVP to:

Nina Barton (510-845-7212) or

[ninaba@mindspring.com](mailto:ninaba@mindspring.com)

David Wright (510-653-3831)

by January 9, 2001 indicating how many in your party

[Mt. Hamilton Tour Report continued from Page 7]

the original 1885 telescope and dome and the gift shop was open with many unique items. The wind was cold but we lunched in the sunny, sheltered central patio.

After group photos we head back downhill. The road was empty again and some of us got to really enjoy the trip down as we divided toward different destinations. No one had any problems that I heard about. I left my little cooler at the top but it caught up with me at the rest stop.

Really a great tour. Thanks to Bob Wall.

### Contest: The 2001 Burnt Spark Plug Award!

*Submission deadline is December 25, 2000 (Mon)!*

The MGOC Burnt Spark Plug Award is given annually to the member who submits the "best" story involving his/her MG, usually involving some sort of "problem", ill-luck, and sometimes, bravado and heroism! To "compete" for the 2001 Burnt Spark Plug Award, please send in your stories to the Editor (Felix Wong, 38947 Bluebell Dr., Newark, CA 94560). All stories will be published in future editions of *The Octagon*. We will select an entry and, at the next MGOC Annual Dinner (see Page 8), present the winning author with the prestigious Burnt Spark Plug trophy. Please submit your stories by December 25<sup>th</sup> and good luck to all!



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any coolant lost; though the bottle was filling up rapidly. So what's wrong? Oh – where's the fan belt? Ah, here it is. And here it is over here, too, as well as down there. The belt had shredded down to just strings in places. It must have gotten damaged yesterday when the generator bushing went away. Though I did look at the belt then, I didn't see anything wrong with it at the time. No problem – I'll just install my spare belt. As I walked to the back of the car, I remembered that I'd forgotten to put the belt back after I loaded the trunk – no belt after all.

I got back in the car to sit in the shade while I waited for the Highway Patrol (it's about 1:30 in the afternoon now). After about 10 minutes, a pickup pulling a trailer with a custom Beetle pulls over in front of me. It was one of the rigs I'd been playing highway leapfrog with, so they decided to stop. It was a mom, dad, and daughter moving to Fernley. They get out of the truck and the mom asks me "Is it a '60?" Wow. Yes it is, I tell her. "I used to have a '58," she says. I ask them if they have a fan belt for the Beetle, because they're supposed to fit MGs. Dad checks, but he doesn't have a belt – the Beetle is engineless and all the parts got moved in the previous trip.

But no problem, he says. He's sure that there's a car parts store in Lovelock, the next town, and they offer to give me a ride. I grab the thrashed belt and hop in the back of the truck. Lovelock is 20 miles down the road, and it does have an auto parts store. It was easy to spot because it was covered with going-out-of-business banners. But it was open, so I went in and told the counterman that I needed a fan belt for an MGA or early MGB. "A man after my own heart" he tells me. While he's looking up the belt, he tells me that he used to put Ford 260 V8s into MGAs and Bs, so I tell him about my MGB with the Buick 215 V8.

In no time, the parts guy and I are buds, but his books don't go back far enough for the belt. I hand him my ruined belt and he measures it on the gauge, making an allowance for the missing rubber. He then goes in the back and returns with a new belt. I offer to buy two of them, but he says it's the only one they have left. The truck-n-trailer folks were kind enough to give me a ride back to the MG, and I installed the belt. It fit! Then we all went back to Lovelock, and I bought a tank of gas for the truck as a thank-you.

The car was back to its 80-mph cruise again, but I'd burned up a lot of daylight replacing the belt. As I crossed Nevada into California, I started thinking about who I could stay with if I ran out of daylight. I was in Sacramento at 7:00, the system voltage was now down to 10½, and I know the car will start missing if I turn on the headlights. Luckily traffic was moving right along all the way to the Bay Bridge and through San Francisco. I turned on the parking lights the last five miles, and got home just in time.

The whole trip was 6194 miles, and except for the charging problem and the resulting complications, the car ran well the whole time. I got a regulator and generator the next week, and mailed the charger back to Denver. The next NAMGAR GT is in Minnesota, I think, but I don't plan on driving to that. But in two years (or three?) the GT is in Portland, Oregon. I've done that as a day trip before. Anyone else want to come along?

## On the Road to GT-25

Part 2

by Mike Jacobsen

*[Continued from the October edition of The Octagon. Part I ended with Mike making it to the NAMGAR event in Morgantown, West Virginia in his MGA. In Part II he chronicles the trip home.]*

For the trip back, there was an Indianapolis-bound caravan of five MGAs (and one Pontiac—Rick Green's MGA was still stranded at the painter's). West Virginia has the most sportscar roads of any state I've ever driven in. Lots and lots of smooth two-lanes, winding up and down through the valleys and across the ridges. We drove across the entire state on secondary roads, and crossed the Ohio River on a car ferry that held six cars—we made a full load. We used US 50 crossing Ohio, but it was slow going as Jack's car began acting up again. Between Athens, OH and Cincinnati the plugs, points, high-tension wires, and eventually the complete distributor were all changed. Nothing made an improvement for longer than 20 minutes or so. Finally, in Cincinnati, the others went on while Jack and I went to a friend's house. We planned to leave the car there overnight, continue on to Plainfield in my MGA, and come back tomorrow with a trailer.

Once at the friend's, we showed him the motor and told him all the things that had been changed. He takes a look, reaches in, and wiggles the low tension leads to the coil. One of the coil fittings is loose—bad rivet and internal connection. We'd never looked at the coil. Why should we? It got changed earlier in the week! Jack popped in the coil he'd purchased at the show, and the car ran fine. We drove back to Indiana that evening without any more problems.

I hung out in Plainfield a couple of days, just to visit and work on the car. The right-hand motor mount had collapsed, making more than a little awkward to change the oil filter, so the mounts got replaced when the oil got changed. I adjusted everything and aired up all the tires, discovering in the

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process that when I was loading the trunk back in San Francisco, I'd forgotten to return the spare fan belt to its home on top of the spare. No problem, I figured. I'd never needed a fan belt before. From Plainfield I drove up to an aunt's home in northern Indiana, before making the real start on my trip back home.

I left Indiana on July 28 at four in the morning, with the goal of getting to the home of friends in Denver that same day. The car ran well, and the storm that both the sky and radio had threatened me with all day never materialized. I got to Denver at about nine that night, after 1042 miles—a one-day record.

After spending the weekend in Denver, I headed out Monday. My route was to take I-70 through the Eisenhower Tunnel, switch over to Colorado's Route 9, and then catch US 40 for the rest of the trip to Salt Lake City. At least, that was the plan. Thirty miles out of Denver, the voltmeter (my car has some extra gauges) went to max charge. Turning on the lights made no difference in the reading, but in about one minute the voltage fell to 12 and the ignition/charge light came on. I pulled off into a gas station in Idaho Springs, thinking I could swap in my spare generator and regulator. I pulled the generator out of the trunk and discovered that the mounting ear on the front plate was broken off. I didn't realize that I'd brought that generator. No problem, though, I'll just test the generator in the car and see what's wrong with it. The shop manual tests indicated that the armature was bad. OK, I'll pull the armature out of the trunk generator and swap them.

Except I couldn't get the pulley off of the generator in the car. As near as I could see, the key was cocked in the pulley, and I didn't have any way to apply enough force to get the pulley past it. Fine, then, I'm close enough to Denver to drive back on the battery, so I'll just go back and find an auto electric shop to make the change.

I went back to my friends' place (and weren't they surprised!) and then spent an hour on the phone, calling electric places until I found one that would check out a Lucas generator. By then it was too late to take them the unit, so we brought it by Tuesday morning and picked it up that afternoon. It turned out that the keyway in the armature's shaft was all hogged out, and that's how the key got cocked at an angle. The pulley and fan were actually reusable.

Anyway, we put the "new" generator in the car, but there was no output. Finally we realized that the generator was polarized to negative ground. We changed that, and the system still went to max charge. Fine, now we'll install the other regulator. The "new" regulator wouldn't give a charge at all. It was as if the first regulator's cutoff wouldn't shut off and the second's wouldn't come on. We tried beating on the regulator and spraying the coils with WD-40, and I checked the wiring, but nothing made a difference. Too bad I didn't get a regulator instead of a coil at the GT. By then it was too late to do anything more, so I decided to take the complete car to the electric place and

let them look at it tomorrow.

I brought them the car Wednesday morning, and their pronouncement is that "Yep, it's the regulator" but they couldn't fix it and had no idea where I could get another regulator. Rather than have one shipped overnight, I decided that I'd just drive back in the daylight. (Wasn't it Joseph Lucas that said you should always be home before dark?) We charged the battery to within an inch of its life Wednesday, my friends loaned me a one-amp trickle charger, and I left at dawn Thursday morning. My original route was scrapped in favor of the direct line back via I-80.

When you're driving a long distance on the same road, certain cars begin to become familiar. I kept passing or being passed by some of the same cars, as we'd stop for fuel and food at different times. They could be pretty sure that it was the same blue MGA, as I probably had the only one on I-80 for hundreds of miles. By the end of the day, you're waving with each position change. It's kind of fun.

Traveling on battery power alone was fine until early afternoon somewhere in Utah, when I heard an ugly grinding noise from up front. I pull over to check and as soon as I stop I can smell something burning. I opened the hood to see that the generator was smoking! I poured some water on it and the water instantly flashed to steam. That's a safety tip: don't touch the generator, it's hot. There were brass filings all over the side of the engine—the generator had lunched its bushing, and that was the ugly noise. I did oil the bushing before installing the unit but maybe it needed more oil. Or I could have made the fan belt too tight for the first time in 26 years, too. Anyway, the thing to do was to take the back plate from the other generator and install it. I used some emery cloth on the armature shaft to smooth it out, and since the generator was only functioning as an idler for the fan belt so that the water pump would turn I left the brushes out too. I got the unit reassembled and was back on the road just as it started to sprinkle. Yes, it does rain in Utah in July.

I stopped in Wells, NV for the night. I yanked the battery out and placed it on the trickle charger, cranked up the AC in the room, and slept in a cool room for the first time in a week. I was in no hurry to get going the next morning, because I knew that I had plenty of daylight to use to get back to San Francisco. I guess I was on the road by 9:30. The charger was too small to get the battery all the way back up, but according to the car's voltmeter, it was close.

Hot August Nights was starting the next day, and I saw all sorts of cool cars on the road. Everything was hunky-dory until I was about 40 miles west of Winnemucca, where the temperature gauge started to unwind. I thought I'd burst a hose, but there wasn't any steam. I shut off the motor and coasted over to the shoulder. Once stopped, I got out and looked under the hood. (By now, I'm a pro at nonchalantly raising the hood on the side of the highway.) All the hoses looked good, and thanks to the overflow bottle, there wasn't