



MG Car Club—Florida

#73

June, 2007 NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS: by Ed Price

We had a nice tour around Central Brevard for our May outing. It was an almost poker run. I had some unexpected interruptions, and did not get to plan as much as I intended. Thanks to Dave Alexander for stepping up and helping set up the ride. There were cards and a fabulous prize for the high hand (won by Al Allen) followed by an alfresco lunch at Riverwalk Park. Every one said it was a nice day, not too hot, clear skies - a good MG day!



Have you ever noticed that all MG's have a distinctive smell? All of the MGs (and other British cars I have owned) have the same aroma when you slide into the cockpit. Is it the self changing oil/chassis rust proofing system? The petrol vaporizing system? The "smoke gets in your eyes" electrical self check system? The scent of slightly

damp carpet and soggy floor pans due to the all weather ventilation system? Or is it a combination of all of these things? Back in my younger, more impetuous days I owned a (gasp) Alfa Romeo. It was a wonderful little car, full of character, (and impossible to get parts for), but it did not smell like a LBC.

I enjoy the LBC aroma. It is another reminder that our little chariots are unique and special. So check your lighting system, put fresh batteries your flashlight and join us on our first "Prince of Darkness" tour of the season!

MAY EVENT: by Norm Ridgely

POKER RUN – On Saturday, May 19, Dave Alexander and Ed Price led a group of members on 38-mile poker run tour starting at the Rockledge Shopping Center through some very interesting areas of Cocoa, W. Rockledge, and Viera. The drive north along the Indian River Lagoon from downtown Cocoa to its exit on US#1 is always interesting as I see homes I've passed before but missed. It's also challenging with an east wind hitting 20 to 30 knots at high tide in the lower sections of the road. We had a total of 12 members: Ed & Pam Price, Al & Pat





Allen, Bill & Carol Frost, Richard & Jo-Ann Jensen, Dave Alexander, Christian Havneraas, Saul Klein, & Norm Ridgely, in 8 cars and covered the tour in about an hour and 45 minutes. The final stop was at Riverwalk Park on US#1 where the Frosts were declared the winners with the best poker hand. They received a new, never-used-before, still-in-the-wrap, chamois. The group then set about putting out food brought for the picnic, with Maryland Fried Chicken as the centerpiece. Ed & Dave had delivered a large table & chairs earlier to the park as

the pavilion had none. (Thanks!) Most everyone walked the boardwalk through the trees to the Lagoon, which showed how the shoreline is in its natural state. By one o'clock, all had left, having had a nice tour and lunch. We certainly missed all who were not there and hope to see you at the next events. (Lot's of photos on our website)

SAC & SPORTS CAR RACING

Oldies & Oddities

Strategic Car Power

By Preston Lerner (from Air & Space Magazine May 07)

During the cold war, while the fighting in Korea raged, the runways of Strategic Air Command bases in the United States were overrun with thundering hordes of powerful, high-speed, technologically sophisticated...race cars.

Between 1952 and 1954, the Sports Car Club of America held dozens of races on SAC bases. The spectacle of Ferrari 340s and C-Type Jaguars dicing at 170 mph against a backdrop of Convair B-36s and Boeing B-47s drew huge crowds to remote airfields. "It really helped get sports car racing off the ground in this country," says racing icon (and World War II flight instructor) Carroll Shelby, who competed in several of the events.

The SAC races were proof that war and politics make strange bedfellows. The SCCA, founded in 1944 by Eastern blue bloods, catered to the upper crust. SAC, devoted to long-range bombers packing nuclear payloads, reflected the militant temperament of its stogie-smoking commander, General Curtis "Iron Ass" LeMay.

LeMay worried that lousy living conditions were discouraging airmen from reenlisting, so he and his right-hand man, Lieutenant Colonel Reade Tilley, hatched a plan. LeMay was a racing fan who owned an Allard, a high-strung British sports car, and Tilley sometimes raced in SCCA competition. The two of them decided to stage races on SAC bases to raise morale and money for the Airmen's Living Improvement Fund, which would pay for furniture, TVs, and other goodies for enlisted men.

The timing couldn't have been better. Virtually all U.S. racetracks of the day were ovals, which weren't appropriate for sports car competition. Most SCCA races were conducted on circuits fashioned out of public roads closed for the occasion. In September 1952, a boy was killed and 12 spectators injured at Watkins Glen, New York, when SCCA president Fred Wacker, driving an Allard, veered off course on a start-finish straight that was in the town and plowed into the crowd.

A month later, desperate for safer venues, the SCCA ran a series of trial races on a circuit cobbled together from runways and taxiways at Turner Air Force Base in Albany, Georgia. The main event, the four-hour Strategic Air Power Race, was won by P-51 pilot John Fitch in a home-grown Cunningham C4R powered by a honking Chrysler hemi. An estimated 60,000 fans attended the event, which raised nearly \$50,000.

Buoyed by this success, Wacker committed the SCCA to a full slate of races on SAC bases the following year. The SCCA's SAC era officially began in February 1953 at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida. Fitch won again in his ground-pounding

Cunningham, this time before a crowd estimated at 90,000.

While the wide, right-angle runway circuits were fast and safe, they weren't very challenging. "It was a stopgap solution," Fitch says. Adds racer Bill Pollack, who competed at March Air Force Base in California: "Road circuits were more fun because there were more twists and turns and more changes of elevation." Still, fans showed up in record numbers. And so did drivers, including every top U.S. road racer of the era—Fitch, Shelby, Phil Hill, Phil Walters, Masten Gregory, Jim Kimberly, Bill Spears, and others. Tilley even managed to sneak in some seat-time in LeMay's Allard.

In February 1954, the Tampa Tribune published a letter from two MacDill airmen complaining that they'd volunteered to work at the races "in the sense that the Chinese volunteered to aid the North Koreans." Kansas Republican Errett P. Scrivner, chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, raised a stink, and SAC's racing program was shelved after the 1954 season—despite raising \$1.5 million (in current dollars) for the Airmen's Fund. "All we wanted to do was help a bad situation," an unnamed SAC official griped at the time. "You'd think we were trying to rob a bank."

As the cold war ebbed, SAC became increasingly irrelevant, and was finally disbanded in 1992. The SCCA continues to sanction sports car races all over the country, sometimes even on active airfields—but no longer in the shadow of LeMay's nuclear bombers.

MGCC-F – UPCOMING EVENTS:

Saturday, June 16th – 3rd Saturday – This will start our summer EVENING events in order to beat-the-heat. We will gather at the UBS Building, 709 South Harbor City Blvd., Melbourne (across from Jim Rathman Chevy) at 6:30 PM. We will then tour south to F.I.T., visiting the Botanical Gardens, which our Chairman Emeritus Jerry Keuper is credited for being the inspiration in the planning of these gardens. Then we will run north to downtown Melbourne to window shop, dine, and partake of your favorite ice cream delight at the Village Scoop.

SUNDAY, July 15th – (3rd Sunday) – We will gather at 3 PM at Frank & Helen Kingston's home on the south end of Merritt Island for a POT LUCK DINNER. It will be a late lunch/early dinner with good conversation. We will have a Honey Baked Ham to serve. Everyone please bring a dish to share. You can bring anything from a salad to a dessert. The address is 10595 S. Tropical Trail.

Saturday, August 18th – 3rd Saturday – We will tour to a new bird sanctuary at a very unusual location and then will retire to dine. This will also be an evening event. DTF.

Saturday, September 22nd – 4TH Saturday - FOX LAKE BRITISH CAR SHOW in Titusville. Please volunteer!!! We need a lot of workers for this event. This is our only source of funding so that we can keep our annual dues at \$10.00. Contact Dave Alexander (north area) at iamcaptain@mindspring.com or 321-728-0019 or Norm Ridgely (south area) at normridge@yahoo.com or 772-567-2231 and ask how you can help.

Saturday, Oct. 20 – Hosted by Danica Perhacs and Ben Stone in Vero Beach – Nominations for Officers and Board will be announced. Luncheon and top/tonneau repair session. DTF.

Saturday, Nov. 19 – Tour in Brevard County, then a luncheon meeting – ELECTIONS. DTF.

Sunday, Dec. 9– Another fabulous Bok Tower trip to Lake Wales, with an opportunity to visit the "Christmas at Pinewood" Estate. DTF

OTHER EVENTS:

1st Sunday of each month: Breakfast Club at Gleason's Restaurant, 4270 Aloma Ave, Winter Park.

July 16th/19th – MG 2007 (NAMGBR) Napa Valley, CA

July 23rd/27th – GT32 (NAMGAR) – Whistler, British Columbia

August 2nd/5th – MGs in Bennington, VT

September 7th/9th – Southeastern Fall GOF – MK XIV, Lake Chatuge Lodge, Hiawasse, GA. Great event in north Georgia mountains. Lyman Delk, Chairman, lilydelk@aol.com (SEE MORE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY OUR WEBMASTER)

October 12th/14th – Rendezvous 2007 by Big Bend MGs, Tallahassee, FL. This is an outstanding event with a great touring area. The sponsoring club has set up an "MG Rescue Squad" to render assistance and provide a car dolly within a 100 mile radius of Tallahassee. (SEE MORE INFORMATION AT www.bigbendmgs.com)

October 19th/21st EuroAuto Festival – Greer, SC (at BMW plant) – Great Show!! Factory tour.

April 11th/13th, 2008 – GOF XLII – Silver Springs, FL – www.britishcarclub.net

For questions on any of the above, call Norm Ridgely (772) 567-2231.

MEMBER PROFILES:

The Editor would like to do a member profile each month in the newsletter, or present a history of a member's car (such as Helen Kingston's in the March issue). Those interested, please contact Pat Ridgely. Phone and e mail listed at end of this newsletter.

FEEDBACK:

The Officers and Board members would like to hear from members concerning their views on current functions and events (likes, dislikes, etc.) and any ideas for the future. This is your club and we want everyone to participate and enjoy. So, please contact anyone on the list on the last page to have your voice heard. Thanks!

CLASSIFIED ADS:

Ads are free of charge to members, run for three months unless renewed and/or canceled by the member. Ads will be reserved to British automobile related items.

FOR SALE – 1964 MGB ("pull handle" roadster with the GTS Sebring flares) and 1965 MG Midget ("Special Tuning" front air dam all molded onto the body) by Tom Dobyns at 321-723-3388. Both need work to varying degrees. Call Tom for more information. ???

Send your ad to Pat Ridgely at pridgely83@yahoo.com or P. O. Box 651068, Vero Beach, FL 32965 by the 25th of each month for publication in the following month's newsletter. In your e mail, please reference MGCC-F ad so it's not considered spam.

We need as many articles written by members as we can get. Submit yours to Pat Ridgely at pridgely83@yahoo.com or P. O. Box 651068, Vero Beach, FL 32965. Thanks for your help.

Safety Fast !

Club Officials

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Pat Ridgely 772-567-2231 (Secretary & Newsletter Editor) [Email](#)

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Jerry Keuper Chairman Emeritus (In Memoriam)


MG Car Club - Florida


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