



MG Car Club—Florida

#98

AUGUST 2009 NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS: by Dave Alexander

INVOLVEMENT

“To engage the interests or emotions or commitment of: to become involved.”

We need you and your ideas, after all this is your club too. I have to admit I was becoming a little bored with the tours ... Then I remembered why I do this- Put the top down, let the wind flow past your face, look at the stars and spot the position of the moon ... Yep that's some of the reasons. I bet you can come up with a few of your own also. Last but not least we spend time with some really neat characters – your fellow club members. Come join us and remember what it is all about- four wheels, our “Little British Cars” and some wonderful “motoring” memories being made. Let's continue to have some fun together - Please stay involved.

THIS MONTH'S EVENT – AUGUST 15th (3rd SATURDAY)

August 15th (3rd Saturday) – We will all gather at Frank & Helen Kingston's home at 10590 South Tropical Trail, Merritt Island, for a social evening of conversation, dining, tire-kicking, and the viewing of 2 DVDs: “Inside the Octagon MG: 1921-1945” and “Inside the Octagon 2 MG: 1946-1980.” The time of arrival should be at 4 PM. The first DVD will start at 4:30, to be followed by dinner, with the 2nd DVD following dinner. Frank will be barbequing his famous “Bone-In Chicken Breasts.” You can have them mild or spicy. The guests are expected to bring veggies, salads, or desserts. (Please call or e mail Helen to coordinate what you're bringing so we do not just have chicken and 50 lbs of potato salad – thanks.) Sodas, tea, or coffee will be provided.

JULY EVENT – FOR EARLY RISERS

July 18th dawned bright and early and not hot. Around 9 o'clock, 15 of our members gathered at the Harbour City Diner for a great breakfast. We had 9 MGs in the parking lot, one BMW, and one Ford truck. Attending were: Richard & Jo-Ann Jensen, Ed & Pam Price, Tom & Ritva Bowman, Saul Klein, Linda Knoblock and her friend, Mitchell, Bill Frost, Dave Alexander, Ken Gregory, Dan Cleary, and Pat & Norm Ridgely. Dan brought his newly restored 1952 TD with a bright red paint job; nice car, Dan. As usual, there



was an overabundance of food and also camaraderie. Everyone had a good time and we pulled out about two hours later. It was starting to warm up by then.

NO REACTION -- ?

In last month's newsletter (July), the October event was offered as a possible OVER-NIGHTER. The Saturday event would be our participation with other clubs in the Timeless Wings & Wheels Museum at the New Smyrna Beach airport, then going to Daytona for the night with a speedway tour on Sunday.

Also in July's newsletter, a tour to Stuart was outlined with the main purpose of visiting a dyno shop to evaluate your engine's performance.

A request was made that those interested please call either Dave or Norm. As this is written, we have not received one call. The club tries to plan events that we think and hope many members will have an interest in. (There are only so many drives one can do in Brevard County.) Some tours, such as the two above, take advance planning. So, if you have an interest in either or both of the above please pick up the phone now and call or e mail Dave at 321-213-7051 (iamcaptain@mindspring.com) or Norm at 772-532-4265 (normridge@yahoo.com). We would really appreciate it. Thanks.

FLORIDA TECH PRESIDENT'S FACULTY BAND

FIT is planning a statue honoring their founder and first president and our Chairman Emeritus (In Memoriam) Dr. Jerome Keuper. FIT's president Anthony J. Catanese plays drums with his all-faculty band in a benefit performance, Friday, August 14, from 4 to 6 p.m. at the university's Gleason Performing Arts Center. All proceeds will benefit the fund for the statue of Jerry. Refreshments will be available for purchase. The name of the rock 'n roll band, TWITCHY, is an acronym for the names of its original faculty players. The suggested ticket donation is \$20. The Gleason center is located on University Boulevard, near Babcock Street. For more information, call 321-674-7190. Afterwards, we could then go to dinner. Hope to see you there.

HOMECOMING PARADE AT FIT – SATURDAY 10/17/09

Our club has again been invited to participate in FIT's Homecoming Parade. Last year, their 50th anniversary, we had a great turnout. It is the 3rd Saturday of the month, our usual meeting day. We are also invited to attend a Bar-B-Q following the parade on campus as guests of the Alumni Association. We will meet at the staging area at University Park Elementary School (500 West University Blvd.) at 10 a.m. The parade starts at 11 a.m. Please call Dave or Norm to sign up. Thanks.

MISCELLANEOUS

CLUB BADGES, Ts, POLO SHIRTS, & NEW CAPS – Anyone interested in any of these items can purchase by contacting Al Allen at 321-259-6957 or patalallen@msn.com

For those members who wish to obtain a list of the current membership roster, please e-mail Helen Kingston (hjk@cfl.rr.com) and she will send it to you. We encourage our members to get together outside of our club events; that way they can contract with one another for a casual drive or tour some place that interests them. Or plan to go together to another club's function, such as the upcoming GOF in Crystal River.

MGCC-F UPCOMING EVENTS

August 15th, 4 p.m. at Kingston's. See page 1.

September's event will be planned and discussed at the Kingston's. Bring ideas! (like a drive and stop for dessert???)

October 3rd - Tour to New Smyrna Beach to participate in the Timeless Wings & Wheels Museum at the New Smyrna Beach Airport (9 a.m. to 2 p.m.) We will leave the McDonald's in Rockledge at 8 a.m. (There are three "NOs" involved in this show: no smoking, no coolers, and no REGISTRATION FEE. They will be selling food and drinks to benefit their museum. Peoples' Choice Awards will be given. (Check it out at www.timelesswingsandwheels.com for more info)

This will be followed by an overnigher to Daytona for those who wish to participate. On Sunday we will take a tour of The Daytona 500 Experience and a possible drive on the track. We are anticipating getting comp. tickets for this. As set out earlier in this newsletter, please call or e mail Dave or Norm.

October 17th – FIT Homecoming Parade and lunch at FIT. (See above for more info)

November 7th, 2nd Annual Brit Bash at Wickham: A Celebration of British Motorcars. This is our annual car show. To volunteer, call Danica Perhacs at 772-770-0083.

BRIT BASH 2009 INFO (click)

[Registration Form \(click, fill out, print., then mail\)](#)

Saturday, November 21st – Third Saturday – This will be our club's Annual Meeting and Election of Officers and Directors. Details will follow.

December – A Holiday Party is in the planning phase. Should you have any ideas, please contact any officer or director.

OTHER EVENTS:

1st Sunday of each month: British Car Breakfast Club 9:00 a.m. at the Golden Corral in Altamonte Springs. It is just south of SR 434's intersection with SR 436 on the east side between Costco and Robb & Stucky.

September 25th – 27th – Southeastern Fall GOF Mk XV – Hiawassee, GA – www.semgtr.org

October 16th – 18th – EuroFest 2009 – Greenville, SC

October 30th – November 1st – SBCC Annual Car Show – Chattanooga, TN

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

MY FIRST MG (and the one I actually bought years later) by Tom Bowman

Just so there is no misunderstanding, "my first MG" refers to the first MG I ever saw, not one that I ever owned, drove or even sat in. It was just before Christmas, 1950, I was 12, and our family had just arrived in San Francisco for the first time in any of our lives except for Dad, who had started a new job there and had taken advantage of the 1950 Christmas break to drive the rest of us from Pittsburgh, PA to San Francisco.

The MG was probably the first thing we saw in San Francisco in the daylight. We went down to the hotel garage in the morning to retrieve the family car (1950 Buick Special with Dynaflo, and I never did forgive Dad for buying such a slug of a car, although a few years later the one-speed automatic slush-box did make learning to drive and passing my exam easier (and passing other vehicles harder). We were all stunned to find one of the oddest and most beautiful cars we had ever seen, parked right next to the Buick. But, what is it?

It was clearly designed to carry only one or two people and very little else, with pretty minimal weather protection. Beyond that, almost everything about the car was a mystery, such as what

make it was, where it came from, who made it, etc. We didn't have a clue beyond the initials "MG" showing up on the radiator grill and elsewhere. Could that be the name of a make of car? Just two letters?!! We speculated that maybe General Motors was building cars in some foreign country, besides Vauxhalls in GB and Opels in Germany which we were vaguely aware of (and Holdens in Australia, which we probably weren't) but we didn't think any of them would have looked anything like this beauty. Maybe they were turning their GM initials around to make MG for some arcane reason that only a corporate lawyer would understand. But how could that be? This car was drop dead gorgeous! (Especially compared to our Buick, which was the model with mammoth buck teeth hanging down over the front bumper; a styling faux pas that only lasted for one model year. Dad didn't have much of an eye for aesthetics, at least where machinery was concerned. Machinery was his life, but what it looked like was pretty irrelevant as far as he was concerned.)

I should mention that foreign cars in general were not entirely unknown to our family. When English cars first started showing up in dealerships over here after the end of WWII, in response to the desperate need by the Brits for foreign exchange to pump some life back into their seriously faltering economy, Dad had come home one day in 1948 or so driving a Ford Prefect that a Philadelphia dealer had given him to "try out" in hopes that we might want to become a two-car family. Mom wasn't too keen about driving a tiny foreign car, though, and the issue became moot shortly after that as Westinghouse decided to transfer Dad to a new division they were opening in Pittsburgh, and after we moved there I don't recall ever seeing a foreign car in that area during the two years we lived there. (On the other hand, several Renault 4CV's were spotted in those years during trips to visit relatives in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, where (of all places!) there was evidently a Renault dealer who must have been able to satisfy a certain amount of pent up demand during the immediate postwar years when there were long waiting periods for delivery of most new domestic cars.)

However, the MG TC (that's what we eventually learned it was called) clearly represented a whole different mindset and worldview from the Renaults and Anglias and Prefects and Hillmans and Singers and the rest of the first wave of small utilitarian European imports. It was gorgeous and exciting and fun!

I think the TCs at first were also mostly imported privately by individual returning war veterans and other military personnel who were posted to GB in the months and years immediately following the end of hostilities. There has been some interesting commentary and speculation in the enthusiast press in recent years about the role of the military Jeep in generating enthusiasm among returning veterans for the open air, rough riding, no frills approach to motoring epitomized by both the Jeep and the MG.

As the days and weeks passed, I soon learned that the San Francisco Bay Area in 1951 was a hotbed of sports car activities that most of the rest of the country was still pretty oblivious to. Going places with the family on the weekends was actually fun because of all the British and Italian cars on the road, soon to be joined by the Swedish, French, German and other makes. Those were the glory days when we Americans were able to buy any cars we wanted (and could afford) from anywhere in the world and import them to the U.S. with no hassles about safety features, emission controls, or what not. (Although I bought a Volvo PV-544 in Sweden once and the shippers had to replace the original headlights with relatively feeble made-in-the-USA lights to meet U.S. requirements, which were concerned that headlights bright enough to let the driver really see where he was going would blind oncoming drivers. The shippers put my original headlights in a box and in the trunk, and I put them back on the car soon after getting home. I don't recall any oncoming cars ever flashing their lights at me to complain that mine were too bright, so I assume the requirement was in response to some lobbyist greasing some politician's palm to assure sales for the feeble lights that our domestic headlight manufacturers were putting on our cars back then.)

A favorite Saturday destination for us in those days was a very large (by the standards of the day) supermarket in Redwood City that stocked most of the sports car and racing magazines of the day.

They shopped; I sat on the floor in front of the magazine counter and read as many of the car magazines as I could in the time available. (Skipping Motor Trend, which only covered domestic makes, and Mechanix Illustrated, which I soon had a subscription to since their auto writer, Tom McCahill, was about the best there was back then and he knew the imports well, even the oddball makes from places like Spain, So I sat and read frantically and hoped my parents would have trouble finding what they wanted. Fortunately, Redwood City was a long drive from home and they planned ahead and managed to fill the Buick with groceries each time, and besides they shopped slowly, so these trips filled up a lot of time as well as the Buick. And I was always happy for any other opportunity to go places with them, because I was invariably able to spot interesting and exotic cars along the way.

The Sunday paper was also a high point each week because of the full-page ad for pioneering San Francisco foreign car dealer Kjell Qvale that always featured Rileys, as well as other new and used foreign cars. (Continued next issue – will be in 3 parts)

MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS:

Members are invited to submit interesting articles about their MG or MGs and themselves.

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

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:

Weber 38 DGES "Outlaw" carburetor. Includes manifold for MGB installation. Used approximately 1000 miles. \$375 or best offer. Contact Ben Stone at 772-770-0083.

1976 MGB - I regret that I must sell my 1976 MGB. I wish to find a new owner that is able to take care of her better than I can. I purchased her about 4 years ago in Central Oregon. I was pulled behind a motor home for the majority of her miles. The odometer shows 92000 miles but the speedo has not worked for about a year. She has a new clutch, rebuilt carb, and new front tires. I am asking \$4000 for her. The body is straight and would make an excellent restoration car. Please call Dave Duda 321-394-1776 daveduda1@yahoo.com

Ads are free of charge to members, run for three months unless renewed and/or canceled by the advertiser. Send your ad to Norm Ridgely at the link below 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.

Safety Fast !

Club Officials:

David Alexander 321-213-7051 (President)

Frank Kingston (Vice-President)

Pat Ridgely 772-567-2231 (Secretary)

Helen Kingston 321-773-1455 (Treasurer)

Saul Klein 321-269-0236 (Webmaster & Director at Large)

Al Allen 321-259-6957 (Director)

Ken Gregory 772-633-0873 (Director)

Christian Havneraas 321-543-0453 (Director)

Danica Perhacs 772-770-0083, britbash@comcast.net (Director, Show Chairperson)

Norm Ridgely 772-532-4265 (Director at Large, Newspaper Editor)

Ed Price – 321-632-2207 Past president

Jerry Keuper Chairman Emeritus (In Memoriam)

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For Club Info- Please email Dave Alexander [email](#)



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