



# NEWSLETTER

Vol 39 #1 January 2021



**A sleepy volunteer rests early in the day while out promoting  
The MG Car Club races at Watkins Glen in 1959**

**Does anyone recognize this woman or car?**

# From The Editor:

**Welcome to 2021. How many of you, like me, never thought we would live long enough to see the 3<sup>rd</sup> decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We older, experienced types figured the atomic bomb would get us and that the year 2000 was simply inconceivable. Yet here we are still messing with old British cars and doing what we love. And hoping the younger MGVR members will carry on until the 22<sup>nd</sup> century.**

## In This Issue

**Hugh Francis grew up fixing cars and eventually served his time at Morris Garage in upstate NY. Back in the day it was there, at Morris Garage, that every MG enthusiast within hundreds of miles went to talk racing and buy their cars. I am lucky enough to know Huey and this month is a very deserving story about him by **David Cathers**.**

**A fun tale from the Zapata crew of Nashville tells the story of how they built the “third” 1961 Sebring factory MGA coupe. **Bob Coleman** recalls the tale of adventure and comradery.**

**Items For Sale. Those of you who want performance or racing pieces have to contact 6 time National Champ **Kent Prather**. Prather has done a complete inventory and told us he has enough parts to build a complete racing MGA engine.**

****Manley Ford** tells us about the very unique and wonderful races coming later this year at Put-In Bay.**

****Lou Schultz** goes back to the 60's borrowing his Mom's car to flat tow his MGA while taking care of his younger brother.**



## A Master Craftsman

Hugh Francis, Sherm Decker, Gordon Morris, and Morris Garage

By David Cathers

On September 30, 1957, a brief item appeared in the Oneonta Star, a local newspaper in upstate New York: “Hugh Francis has taken a position at the Morris Garage in Cooperstown Junction.” That was Gordon Morris’s Morris Garage – he was known as “Gord” or “Gordie,” and that’s how I’ll refer to him -- was then a thriving mecca for British car enthusiasts, and it is well remembered today. Hugh was just nineteen years old and new to imported cars. He already had experience with American cars working at the E. A. Francis Auto Shop, his father’s repair business in Westville, New York. As Hugh says, “As soon as I was old enough, I started helping and learning from my father.” Working with Gordie, and Gordie’s chief mechanic Sherm Decker, his innate talents quickly became apparent, and looking back more than sixty years, Morris’s son Clark says, “[Hugh] was the best mechanic my father ever had. He was a genius. He could do anything with a car.”



Hugh continues his work with MGs, and although there are other master craftsmen in this country whose skills keep our vintage treasures on road and track, few if any have experience reaching back to 1957. Hugh’s small shop, next to the house where he and his wife Donna have lived for many years, is in the same plain building once owned by his father. It’s on a long, straight stretch of two-lane country road, next to an airfield and surrounded by farmland. There are always a few “customer cars” in for service – seasonal tune ups or repairs

*Hugh Francis in 1962, in front of what was then his father’s shop, with the next-door airfield visible behind him.*

and restoration, and more are tucked under the wings of airplanes in the hangars next door, awaiting Hugh's ministrations. Hugh is a soft-spoken man but his expertise and deep knowledge become evident as soon as you enter the shop and talk with him about past and present projects. You realize what a perfectionist he is, still the "genius" so admired by Clark Morris, and, as you listen to his quiet speech, you see his kindness, generosity, and also his wickedly understated sense of humor. You happily entrust your car to him, as MG owners have been doing for sixty-four years.

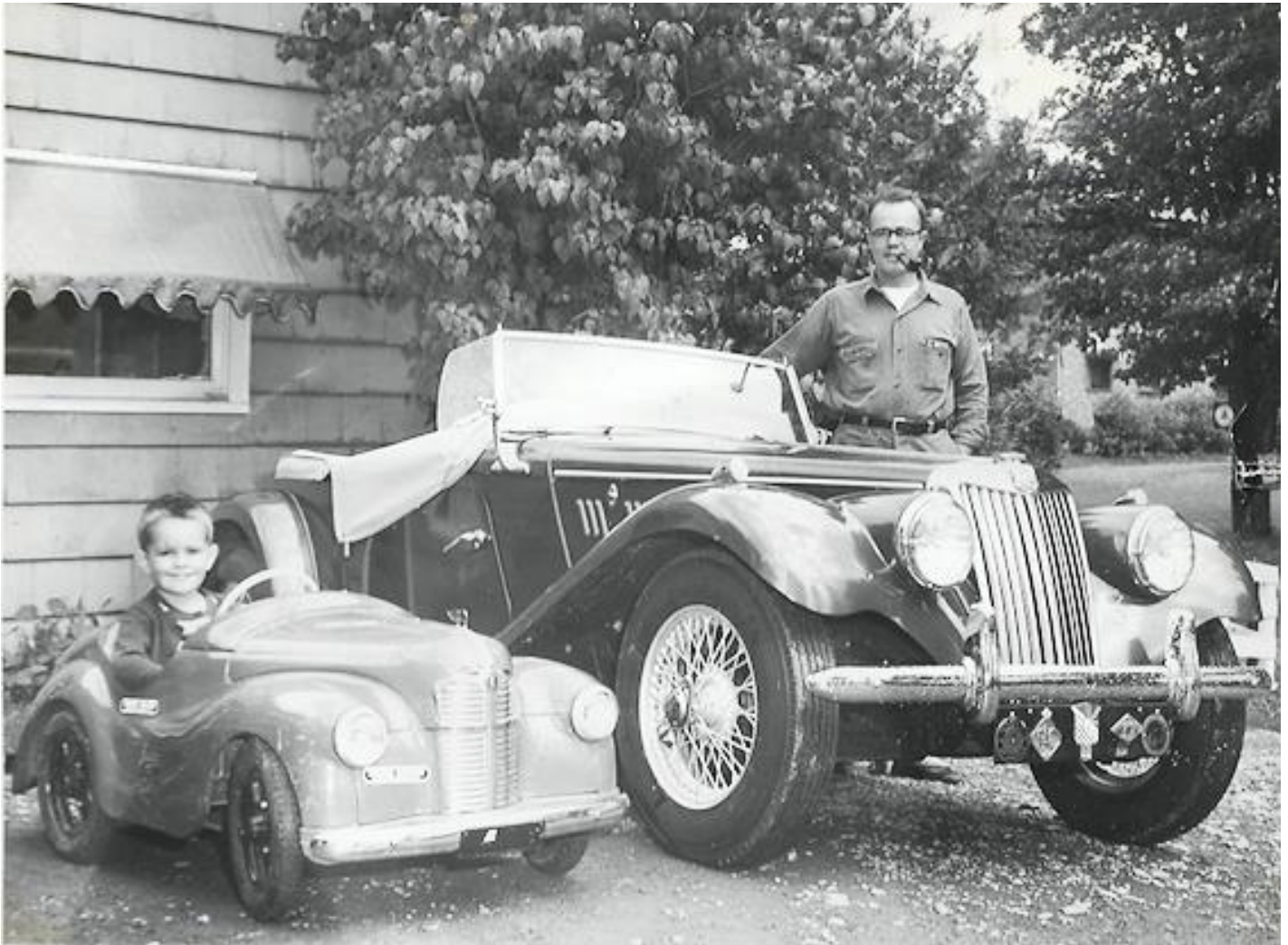
## **GORDON MORRIS AND MORRIS GARAGE**

Morris Garage was a franchised dealership and repair shop selling and servicing MGs and other British cars. It was owned by Gordie and his wife Octavia, known as Tavy/ They had the good fortune of being able to give their shop a matter-of-fact name that evoked the original Morris Garages of Oxford, England. *This* Morris Garage was located in Maryland, NY, a rural village between two larger towns, Oneonta and Cooperstown, and about 180 miles northwest of New York City. During the past year I've learned a good bit about Gordie and his shop, and for their very helpful assistance, my thanks to Michael Aikey; Joan Decker; Donna and Hugh Francis; Peter Gould; Clark Morris; Dave Nicholas; and Dan Suter.

Born in 1920, Gordie Morris served as a mechanic in the US Air Force during the Second World War, a crew chief working on B-25 bombers in Alabama, Georgia, and Texas, and disappointed that he was never posted overseas. It would make a good story to say that the Air Force had sent him to England where, like other American servicemen, he could have first seen and fallen in love with MGs, but that never happened. At war's end, he returned home to upstate New York and took a job servicing cars and trucks for a local phone company.

But this work didn't satisfy his love for *interesting* cars, and by the late 1940s he was devoting his spare time to fixing up and selling cars that he cared about, mostly MGs. At some point his part-time work became a full-time career, and Gordie and Tavy opened Morris Garage in a remodeled barn next to their home. It eventually had four service bays, minimal display space for new cars, and the MG octagon proudly placed above the door.

Gordy and Tavy worked together. As Clark Morris remembers, “She did the books. Dad did the wrenching.” Clark also says, “Dad didn’t go into business to make money. He just loved the cars.”



*Gordon Morris posed with an MG-TF in 1954, his son Clark in his “Austin” adorned with badges reading “Morris Garage Maryland NY”. Gordie routinely advertised in the Oneonta Star, and perhaps because of that the paper often published photos taken at his shop, like this one captioned, “Wanna race, Pop?” Courtesy Clark Morris*

It’s not exactly clear when Morris Garage began selling new British cars, but by 1953 it had acquired an impressive array of marques, becoming an authorized dealer for MG, Morris, Riley, Aston Martin, Bentley, and Rolls Royce, its inventory supplied by the distributors J. S. Inskip and Hambro. In later years Austin, Jaguar, Sunbeam, Rover, and Citroen were added, and Morris Garage ads told prospective buyers that the firm stood ready to ship cars worldwide. To promote car sales and publicize his parts and service business, Gordie started competing in the monthly sports car rallies, then popular in New York State. In April 1954, the Oneonta Star reported that a



Morris Garage MG-TF, with Gordon Morris as navigator and his friend Sherman Decker driving, came first in a rally run through the area's picturesque small towns. Although they had promotional value for Gordie, and were fun for their participants, these events were designed in part to counter the image of sports car owners as reckless fast drivers.



*Morris Garage in 1958, a red barn with the octagon above the door and cars for sale parked outside. Although the garage seemed small viewed from the road, a large addition sprawled out behind it. Francis Collection*

According to The Star's serious-minded report, the rallies' "objectives are to teach the wisdom of safe driving and to offset erroneous notions about sports cars."

Peter Gould, now the owner of an auto repair shop in Oneonta, NY, a shop he has named Morris Garage, worked for Gordie in the mid-1960s, and remembers his passion for the cars he bought, sold, and worked on. Gould also recalls Gordie's ever-evolving collection of classic cars, among them vintage Rolls Royces and Packards, and a car Gordie cared very much about, his 1933 MG K3. On August 3, 1957, the Oneonta Star published "Morris' MG K-3 Was Racing Pioneer," a feature article illustrated with a photo of a smiling Gordie Morris standing next to this vintage machine, said to have been owned in the 1930s by legendary racers Whitney Straight, Dick Seaman, and Miles Collier. Relying on information likely provided by Morris, the newspaper told readers that "Only 30 K-3s were built ... Gordie Morris, who has channeled his love of fast cars into a prosperous business...is the proud owner of an MG K-3 Magnette, Number 11." The article continued: "When revved up, the supercharger whine can be heard above the roar of the open exhaust. Today the sleek blue racer sits alongside the latter days models of the MG at Morris Garage." Gordie loved his classics, but he certainly seems to have understood that enthusiasts who would be irresistibly drawn to his shop to see the "sleek blue racer" might stay to buy one of the "latter day models of MG" he had for sale. He had a true talent for promoting his business.

### **Hugh Francis and Morris Garage**

Just a month after this newspaper article appeared, Hugh Francis joined Morris Garage. His father knew the Morris family, his older brother was a friend of Gordie's, and young Hugh was looking for a good job. And after years of helping his father repair Hudsons, he wanted to work on British cars. As he says today, "The cars looked interesting, different, well-built, and fun to drive." His first task for Gordie was cleaning MGA wire wheels,

and he found this such an onerous chore that he vowed never to own a car with wire wheels, a pledge he has kept to this day. He spent his initial six months or so cleaning and refurbishing used cars, and was then set to work servicing vehicles brought in for repairs. As Hugh now says, "Gord let me do pretty much what I wanted, as long as the results were satisfactory." His new employer was evidently a hands-off kind of boss, and although that was probably his way of doing things it suggests his confidence in Hugh almost from the beginning.



Gordie Morris's 1933 MG K3 Magnette, in 1958, parked alongside a pleasing but more prosaic Morris Minor convertible.  
*Francis Collection*

In September 1958, after just a year on the job, Gordie put Hugh on a bus to New York City for training at the British Motor School. This “school” was sponsored by Manhattan-based Inskip Motors, the distributor that supplied foreign car dealers throughout the northeastern United States. It was here that Hugh was first introduced to the then-new and somewhat temperamental Twin Cam.

Gordie later sent him to learn “service and repair techniques” at two other BMC schools, one called the Austin Service School and the other the Nuffield Service School. In his book *The MGA – “First of a new line,”* John Price Williams writes that “BMC... set up service schools in New York and San Francisco ... to train mechanics in the strange ways of MGAs and other British cars,” and this evidently includes the schools Hugh attended. Each one offered a “specialist’s course” that lasted for two or three weekdays of intensive training, a mix of lectures and hands-on sessions with various BMC cars and car parts, meant to hone the



students' technical skills and teach them new ones. From these schools Hugh earned certificates attesting that he was fully qualified to service MG, Austin-Healey, Riley, Morris, and other British cars. These were the imports he worked on daily. But he was also entrusted with the classics in the Morris Garage collection.

For instance, Hugh cared for Gordie's 1931 Rolls Royce Phantom II II Henley Roadster, his 1921 Bentley 3 Litre, various Chryslers, Duesenbergs, a rare Minerva, and Tavy Morris's 1938 Jaguar SS100. Eventually, when Gord decided to sell his MG K3, by then repainted dark green, it was parked behind the shop and hadn't been running for a long time. He recruited Hugh to apply his skills and get it running smoothly again, ready for market. running smoothly again, ready for market.



*Tavy Morris's 1938 Jaguar SS100 and (below) Gordie's 1921 Bentley 3 Litre, two of the vintage cars that the young Hugh Francis worked on. Francis Collection*



Hugh's immediate supervisor was chief mechanic Sherm Decker, best remembered today for his successes on the race track, recounted most recently in the September 2020 issue of Safety Fast! Sherm was also a fine teacher. A college-trained technician, he taught auto mechanics during his time in the service in the early 1950s, and later held a teaching post at Delhi Tech in Delhi, New York. He became Hugh's mentor: "I learned a great deal from Sherm Decker. He was a good and patient teacher. For instance, he showed me how to hone engine cylinders to increase piston clearance, polish cylinder heads and manifold ports, and tune multiple carburetors." Life at Gordie Morris's Morris Garage, however, was not just lessons and automotive tasks -- it was a good place to work. As Hugh says today, "It was a friendly, easy going atmosphere, with a lot of hijinks."

### **Morris Garage and Racing**

Of course, at Morris Garage, fast cars were always important. Gordie was not a race car driver, but Sherm Decker took up racing in 1955 and was winning races by 1956. Gordie ably supported him by working in the Decker pits. "Sherm could drive anything," Clark Morris recalled. Sherm's wife, Joan, now 90 and still living in Oneonta, remembers that "He loved to drive. He loved the cars." A gifted, fiercely competitive driver, Sherm raced for the next decade, starting in pushrod MGAs and then graduating to Twin Cams. Driving cars

prepared at Morris Garage, his successes at the track created good publicity for Morris's enterprise and brought in customers for both sales and service. Along with customer cars and classics, Hugh also turned his hand to competition cars. Working with Decker and also on his own, he overhauled engines, for instance



*Joan Decker, Sherm Decker, and Gordie's son David, the car owner, following Sherm's F Production victory in a stock 1500 cc MGA at the Watkins Glen GP, September 9, 1961.*

special rods and pistons, installing and polishing head ports, and fitting extra fuel pumps. He rebuilt transmissions with close ratio gears, installed competition clutches and brake pads designed for racing, increasing speed, reliability, and stopping power. Early in his career at Morris Garage he helped prepare MGA 029. Then owned by Spankey Smith, it won the Colliers Cup races at Watkins Glen in 1957 and 1958, with famed racer Bob Bucher driving. Hugh later prepared the Twin Cam that Bob Poupard drove to victory in the E Production Class at Watkins Glen in June 1961, and he also worked in Poupard's pit. When Poupard traded that car in for a new one at Morris Garage, Hugh bought it. Over the next few years he drove his Twin Cam in the



Keene Mountain hill climbs in Keene Valley, New York, collecting trophies and demonstrating both his driving ability and his considerable mechanical skills. He and Donna have owned this car ever since.



*Hugh with his ex-Poupard Twin Cam, after success at the Keene Mountain Hill Climb in 1965.*

In about 1960, four young men from Binghamton, NY, passionate about motor racing, found their way to Morris Garage. They called themselves the BARCboys, the Binghamton Automobile Racing Club, and one of them was Dave Nicholas, still racing his famed MGA Honey Bee with great success today. Nicholas recently told racer.com that Binghamton racers who wanted to go fast took their cars to Morris Garage. Gordie was proud of the successful race cars that he, Sherm, and Hugh prepared, and he commissioned the BARCboys' friend and guru Spankey Smith to make small dashboard plaques engraved with the words:

**“COMPETITION TUNED BY MORRIS GARAGE.”**



*One of the plaques that Spankey Smith made for Morris Garage still adorns the dashboard of the Francis's Twin Cam*



Gordie Morris died in 1975. By that time, he and Hugh were the only people working at Morris Garage, and the business had changed. It was no longer



selling cars but focused instead on servicing cars, for the most part MGs and Land Rovers. Tavy didn't want to continue the business without Gordie, and so over the next two years Hugh helped her close it down. Sherm Decker had left Morris Garage in the early 1960s to start his own import car service, and then took the Delhi Tech teaching post that he held for nineteen years. But he and Hugh remained good friends until Sherm's early death in a traffic accident in 1987. As Joan Decker remembers: "Sherm & Huey were always very close" Today, echoing Gordie's son Clark, Hugh's former shop mate Peter Gould calls him "a

*Hugh Francis in front of his shop, May 2020*

near-genius" capable of unbelievable attention to detail, who "could always figure things out" and make them perfect. Joan Decker remembers him as "a young kid, but very knowledgeable." And so, since 1977, this master craftsman has worked in his own shop, patiently, expertly, quietly, focusing on MGAs, and other British cars. This was a commitment that began sixty-four years ago when Hugh first worked alongside Sherm and Gordie in the sprawling red barn that was once Morris Garage.

*Editors Note: Growing up in MG lore at Morris Garage was an exciting time. Sherm Decker and Hugh tuned all the Morris Garage MG's including Spankey Smith's, driven by Bob Bucher, Hank VanDusen, Monte Allen, Bob Poupard, Gordy Ruston, George Valentine and mine. We were all proud to put the Morris Garage dealership sticker on our cars.*

**MORRIS GARAGE**  
**MARYLAND, N. Y.**

# Number 42

## History of a MGA Sebring Type Coupe, Tribute Car

by: Bob Coleman



The story began with a phone call from Jim Alcorn, a true MGA Twin-Cam aficionado. We had told Jim we wished to build a “tribute” car or replica-type vehicle, since none of the originals were for sale, the originals being the five factory coupes the MG Abingdon Competition Department prepared for the Sebring 12-Hour Endurance Races in 1961 and 1962. He was calling from California to advise of such a vehicle, located in Gallup, New Mexico. It was rough, but solid, and had a 1600cc pushrod engine, just like the two 1961 'works cars.' This was interesting and exciting, but Gallup was over 1300 miles from Franklin, Tennessee, with a driving time of nearly 20 hours. After considerable thought and consideration (at least 30 minutes), my good friend and soon-to-be-partner in this venture, devised a plan, as he always did.

Carl George, a/k/a The Chief, was an executive with the mammoth hospital company, Hospital Corporation of America (HCA). As such, he had access to many parts of the country, including California and the Southwest. His plan was simple in concept, but not so simple in execution. He would fly to Albuquerque, get to Gallup some way, make the deal, buy the car, and take it back to Albuquerque, where he had a friend who owned a horse barn and stable. He'd leave the car in his friend's barn, return home, and fly back at a later date. Then, he'd borrow a truck from the construction site at HCA's hospital, flat-tow the car to Shawnee, Oklahoma, Shawnee being about half the distance to Franklin,



where I would tow it back to Tennessee. Believe it or not, this worked, but not before some very anxious moments!

The Chief then sprang into action, all the while holding down his day job in HCA's Development Division (the division that buys and sells hospitals. He contacted Bernie St. Germain, the car owner, who was a railroad man, and away from home a lot. Bernie had

planned to restore the car, a 1959 MGA Twin-Cam Coupe, all the while acquiring many new parts and spares. But, like so many of us, he just never got to the task, and agreed to sell the car. Carl then went back to Albuquerque borrowed a truck, drove to Gallup, had a good meeting with the seller, and bought the car for a good price, including all the new parts and spares.

When his schedule permitted, he flew back to Albuquerque, carrying a metal tow bar with him on the plane. Remember, this was 1986. Again, he borrowed a truck, drove to Gallup, attached the car, drove back to Albuquerque, deposited it in his friend's barn, and flew home.

A fairly short time ensued before he had to attend a Board meeting at the hospital. He was, of course, dressed in his best business attire and, naturally, the meeting ran later than expected. He got the truck and headed for the barn to retrieve the car. So far, so good. But you'll get the picture if you ever tried pushing a 2000-pound car, with low tire pressure, all the while slipping and falling on horse manure. By then it was getting late, but he finally got underway. bought himself a Walkman to keep awake and headed east through the badlands of New Mexico and the Texas Panhandle. Somewhere in the middle of the Panhandle, catastrophe struck.

He didn't hear anything, but saw in the mirror that sparks were coming from behind the car. With a stroke of luck, he was fairly close to an exit, pulled off, and found a west Texas cinder block mini truck stop. Then, he realized the tire had gone flat, ruptured, ran off the outer rim, leaving only the inner rim to be riding on. Hence, the sparks. Now, he is under the car trying to get the tire wire detached from being wound around everything. He was still in his business suit, white shirt and tie, plus there were rats as big as cats, running all under the car. Fortunately, he was able to borrow a wire cutter from the little truck stop. He was a mess, and was running out of time to make it to Shawnee and back. But, make it, he did, depositing the car in the parking lot of a Holiday Inn, and talked the hotel clerk into storing the tow bar in the office. Thankfully, he had a spare tire and wheel to get him that far. He tried to grab a couple hours sleep, drove back to Albuquerque, and flew home. The car was now in Shawnee, and my turn!

I still had a day job, too, and wouldn't retire for another 10 years. Talking one of

my colleagues, our company CFO, into riding “shotgun” with me, we headed out. Mike Patterson wasn't too hard to convince, as he had grown up in Detroit, loved Corvettes, and was a certified gear head like the rest of us. We headed west for Oklahoma in Carl's van and some more used tires, arriving about 5:00 PM, CST. Panic struck when, at first, we couldn't locate the car in the parking lot. Then, we spotted it, looking like a British version of Christine, sitting all alone with no other cars near it. It was a mess, too, with at least two coats of faded paint over the original white, looking like a shark with no grille, and tires that looked to be the 1959 originals, and may have been. Then, we saw what looked like .45 caliber bullet holes in the rear fender, not knowing what happened. Turna out they were from the rivets that exploded from the outer rim tearing away.

The same lady was on the front desk, as when Carl had arrived. She said: I talked to your friend; seemed very nice, but he looked awful, and I don't think he got any sleep. Let me get this straight, she continued. Your friend towed this THING from Albuquerque, and you guys have come all the way from Tennessee to get IT?

Boy, it must be some kind of special THING! We simply muttered, yes, mam, it is. She



gave us the tow bar, and we headed back as far as we could get, before the black Oklahoma night overtook us. Before we left, we stopped to get gas and check the tire pressures on our tow car and the Twin Cam.

A young kid on his first day of work at a service station put too much pressure in one of the MG's tires, it exploded, rubber gashed his head above the eyes, and while his girlfriend was rushing him to the emergency room, another worker mounted another of the old spares we brought, all the while saying I told that idiot not to put too much air in those old tires. I had cautioned him, too. Then, Mike and I got the hell "out of Dodge" (Shawnee) as fast as we could, before suit papers could be served on us.

Our trip home was uneventful but, upon entering my subdivision, we thought it eerily quiet, with no one in sight. My wife contended it was because the mothers saw us coming with another relic in tow, and they locked up all their kids. I'll admit it was a sad looking thing, and the shark-looking opening, where the grille once resided, grew more "Jaws like," with each passing mile. I had sold my yellow TD, which the Florida Gang had dubbed Old Yaller II, so I had a vacant bay in my 2-car garage. The Twin Cam from New Mexico was now ensconced in its new quarters, awaiting the restoration to a Sebring Type Coupe.

I'll spare the gory details, because anyone who has undertaken such a project will understand, and have dozens of similar horror stories to relate. I have to say, though, I was dumbfounded that after putting it up on jack stands, checking the oil, plugs, fuel, battery, etc., etc., that long-sitting 1600 engine started up and warmed up to a pretty smooth idle, the cobwebs in the SU carbs notwithstanding. I don't think my partner believed me, when I told him I had it running. Then, the real fun began.

It was now late fall and early winter in middle Tennessee, and the nights were getting cold. After stripping off the 3 layers of paint, and setting off the smoke detector from the chemical fumes, I quickly opened the garage door, because everything was beginning to take on a fuzzy appearance. Once all the paint and crud were removed, a car with virtually no rust was revealed, thanks to the New Mexico climate where it had lived its life. Only the screw heads that held the wooden floor were rusted, but all that was removed in favor of new wood, as we wanted to maintain the (original) look as closely as possible. Having read about Bob Olthoff's Twin Cam catching fire from oil and grease on the exhaust tailpipe, a thin piece of aluminum was fitted to the underside of the wooden floor. After we had a rolling chassis, a roll cage and fuel cell were installed. Now, it was time to take it to our friends at Cumberland Motor Works for the final restoration and pre-flight.

Not knowing the factory cars weren't British Racing Green, we found a VW green we thought was. In the shade, it looked like BRG but, in the sunlight, it had a slight yellow tint. Not until Peter Thornley, son of John Thornley, the iconic General Manager at MG/Abingdon, told us in Atlanta the factory cars were NOT



BRG and our color was the perfect Brooklands Green, did we know we'd stumbled on the correct color for the car. Peter also asked which "works" car this was, and after we told him the history, he commented: "My dad would be proud." We were, too. The mechanical masters completed the job, but didn't install the engine that came with it. We saved it by installing another 1600, and this proved prophetic, as I promptly broke a crank at Road Atlanta on a subsequent outing. It was buttoned up, including a J. Alcorn close ratio gear box, a Comptune head, and sporting a beautiful wood-rimmed steering wheel, donated to the cause by Bill Davis. After a bit of a shakedown on River Road, aptly named, it was now ready for its coming out party at Road Atlanta.

It was almost 1-year to the day, when we finished the restoration and unloaded #42 in the red Georgia hills; I don't like to brag, but it was a big hit, crowd pleaser and conversation piece, with the amber signal light on top, the side lights to illuminate the numbers, and the so-called "beehive" taillights. I won the first ever MG Handicap Race, and the car took first place in the concours "most original preparation" class. As for the Handicap Race, The Chief has never forgiven me for costing him second place in his original black MGA. When the yellow and red striped caution flag came out, I slowed too much. I had either forgotten, or never knew, it merely meant there was oil or other debris on the track, and to be cautious. I overcompensated, allowing our friend, Blair Engle, to pass Carl for second place, and almost nipping me at the finish. Carl finished third; sorry, partner!

Over the next several years, the car gave us a lot of happy outings, along with the usual frustrations. We drove it in the rain and stayed dry. We drove it in the night race at

Sebring, and we shared the enduros, driving 50/50 laps. It was campaigned at Road Atlanta, Sebring, Mid-Ohio, Watkins Glen, Daytona, Topeka and even Memphis, the latter being, basically, a drag strip, with a little road course tied to each end. Here, the metal fan came off. Fortunately, it went down, and not up, through the bonnet. This was replaced by a plastic fan. No more originality for this item, and since we were not bound by FIA rules, no suitcase was carried either.

As I got too old, my deceptive speed caught up with me (I was always slower than I looked), and I sold my one-half interest to The Chief. I'm happy to say that ole 42 is still campaigning, directed and driven by V. Carl George. The car is much quicker now, and so is The Chief. It just returned from a successful outing at VIR, where I understand it was still a hit. This makes me smile.

One always gets in trouble by mentioning names, and leaving out someone(s). I'd be totally remiss, though, if I didn't mention some people who helped make

this project possible, and continue to support Carl and #42. I have to start with Greg Prehodka, the original “Joisy Boy” to us, and founder of MG Vintage Racers publication. He was (is) our friend, supporter, and tech advisor from the very beginning. Then, comes Ford Heacock, founder of SVRA, and his trusty associates – Joe Pendergast and Ralph Whaley who, by the way, is a walking encyclopedia on sports cars and all things automotive.

And where would we have been without the wild & crazy Florida Gang: Tony Roth, Beau Gable, Will Bowden, Blair Engle, et. al.

Now, this could never have happened, without the masters on River Road – James Dorris (JD), Charlie Norrod, Don Grammar, “Red” Grammar and Ken Nixon. JD is gone now, but our friend Ken (Nixon) is still with us, Carl and the car. Thank you, Ken! So, I must borrow from one of our greatest country songs, and say: God bless the boys, who fix the cars, at Cumberland Motor Works.

Of course, there's the original Zapata Team – Bill Parish, Bob, Carl, Fred Lieb, Bill Davis, Charlie Kates, Dave Rex and Mike Buhl. Mike was our beloved “Spatula,” who cooked up so much delicious food, wherever we went. We lost Bill and Mike way too soon. But, we know they are now drifting through the turns on that big road course in the sky.

Finally, so much gratitude has to go to our wives, family, friends and other supporters. A special thanks goes to my wife, Emily, who suffered through a year of my dragging oil, grease and other unsavory materials into her pristine kitchen. She did agree to attend a few races, but she overheated in Atlanta, and never went back. She did love Watkins Glen, though, as SVRA made provisions for side trips for the wives and guests.

To our Band of Brothers everywhere, press on, regardless!

*Bob began his vintage racing at Road Atlanta 1981, in a 1953 MGTD, thanks to Bill Parish. Carl, followed in 1982 at Mid-Ohio, in his 1950 MGTD.*

*Bill Parish opened the door for us in 1980, driving his 1953 MGTD at Road Atlanta. We lost him in 1998, and we still miss him.*

## FROM Manley Ford

Here is the latest press release announcing the opening of registration, featured marques and other information about the 2021 Put-in-Bay Sports Car Races event planned for September 21-24 at Put-in-Bay, OH. The 2020 event had to be canceled due to the pandemic like so many such events, but we are hopeful that by late September this year we will once again be able to put on a safe and enjoyable event.

Photos of both our most recent (2019) event and "back in the day" shots are available for download from my dropbox at [PIB races photos](#)



**Registration Opens for 2021 Put-in-Bay Vintage Sports Car Races; Featured Marques Include Volvo, VW, Saab, Turner and H-Modified Cars**

Put-in-Bay, OH 1/1/21 – Registration is now open for the 2021 edition of modern-day vintage racing at Ohio's historic Put-in-Bay. Following the cancelation of the 2020 event due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, a large percentage of entrants carried over their registration to 2021. Since then excitement has continued to mount for this fun-filled and relaxed event.

Beginning with a small "reunion" in 2009, today's racing- and non-racing entrants at Put-in-Bay enjoy several days of sports-car enjoyment in a relaxed and nostalgic setting where small-bore sports cars raced through the streets of this island enclave from '52 to '59 and once more in 1963.

For this year's event (September 21-24 with racing at the Put-in-Bay airport on September 22 and 23) race organizers have built on the enthusiasm for 2019's "Tin-Top" celebration to invite drivers of vintage Volvos, VWs and Saabs to come share the fun as official featured marques. The more-or-less annual Turner Reunion returns their event as part of the featured marque group. And finally, over the past year it seems the H-Modified crowd has caught wind of the goings-on at Put-in-Bay, so a contingent of Crosley/similarly- powered specials including several Berkeleys are expected to be on hand for the 2021 event. All entrants with featured marque status are eligible for discounted entry fees and special races. And, as always, there will be the usual array of entrants racing in multiple classes in four groups plus exhibition.

In addition to the on-track race entries there are also non-racing participant categories for *Heritage Street Cars* (qualified pre-'64 cars) and *Guest Street Cars* (generally post-'63 to '72).

The event is also the third leg of the 2019 "Great Lakes Vintage Challenge" whereby entrants in several production classes and in Formula Vee accumulate race-finishing points at the Waterford Hills Vintage Races, VSCDA's Au Grattan event and at Put-in-Bay. In addition to two full days of racing, the Put-in-Bay Sports Car Races event includes: tours of the original island course, several social events, a car show, rocker cover races, guest stories, and more.

Spectating at the races and many of the other activities is open and free to the public.

For registration and more information visit: [www.pibroadrace.com](http://www.pibroadrace.com) and feel free to click on the Facebook link to join us there where more than 1,400 enthusiasts keep current on all the latest Put-in-Bay Vintage Sports Car Races buzz.

**Coordinator, Media Contact:** Manley Ford [manley776@yahoo.com](mailto:manley776@yahoo.com) 734 502 2435

**Race Director:** Jack Woehrle: [jackwoehrle@aol.com](mailto:jackwoehrle@aol.com) 803 463 5388

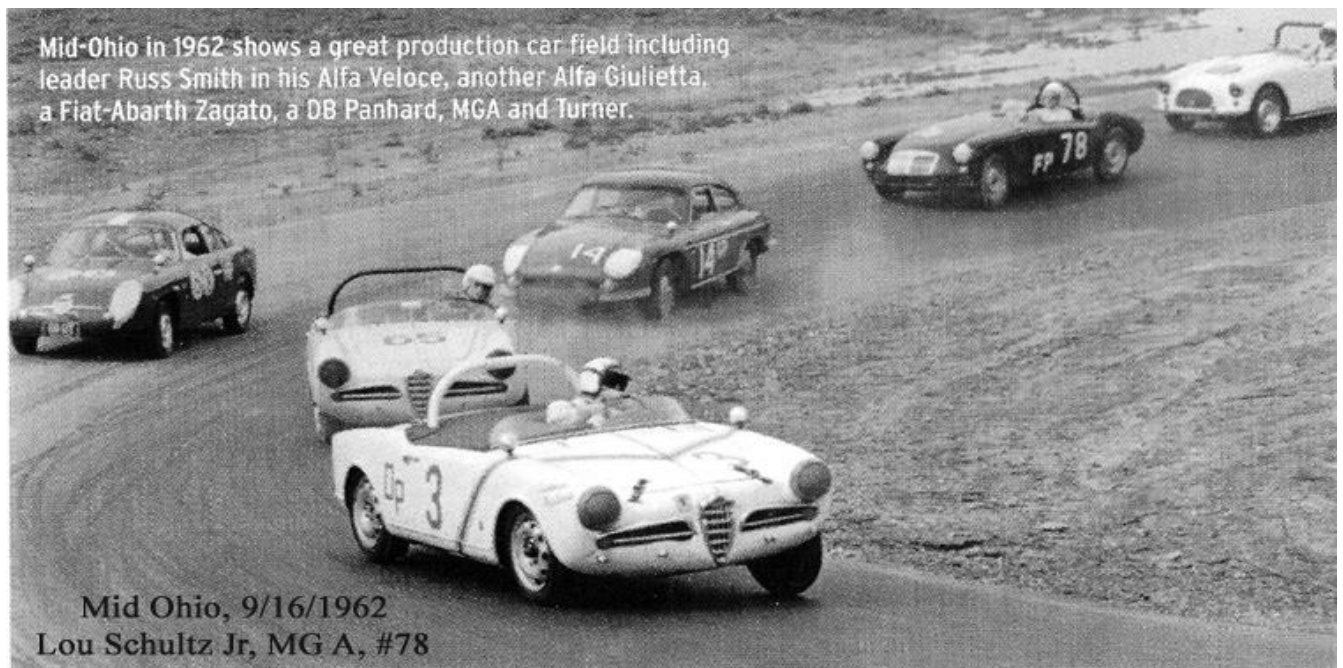
**Car Show Coordinator:** Rich Hahn: [putinbaytr3@yahoo.com](mailto:putinbaytr3@yahoo.com) 216 226 2323

## LOU SCHULTZ – Adventures in racing an MG

The race events were really not that exciting. The "Back" story may be more interesting. Why? ...as was our practice back then I had to borrow Mom's new 1962 Fairlane to flat tow the MG A. In this case I had to promise that my Crew Chief, 6 years young brother Ray, would make it to high school Monday morning.

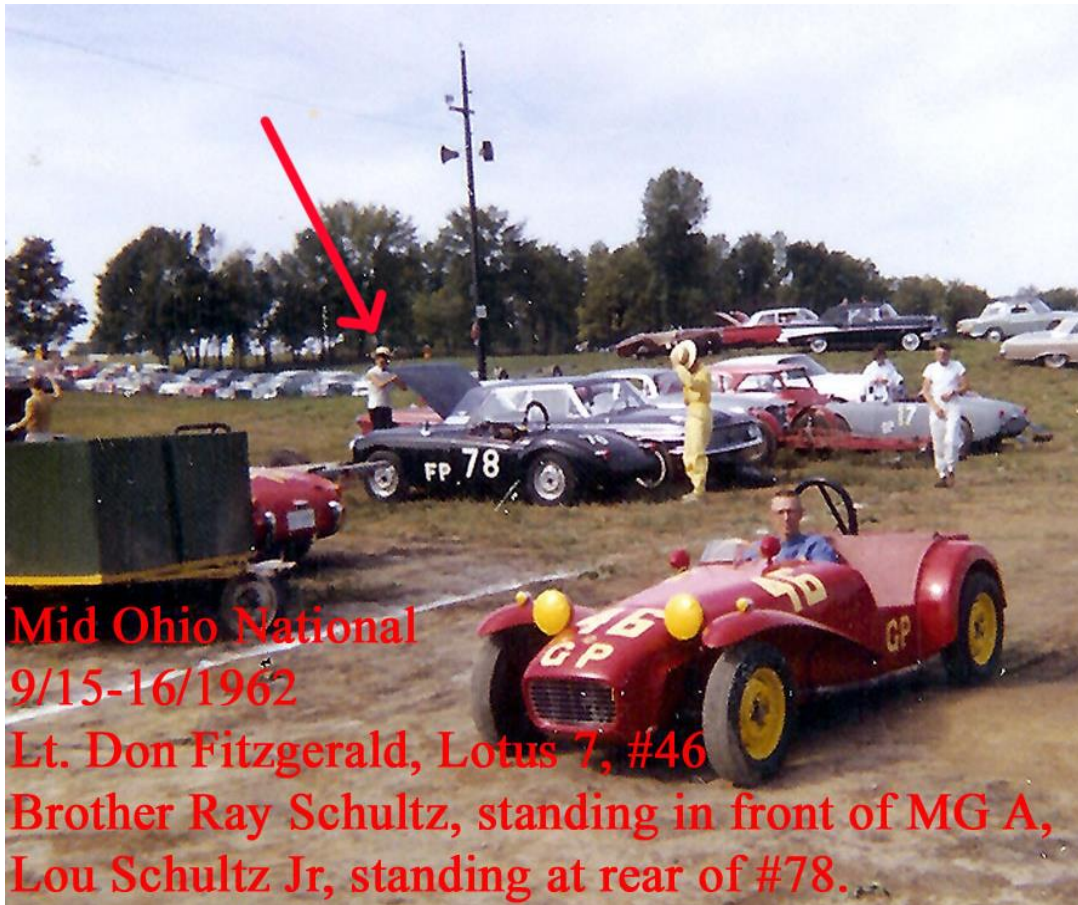
The Race: As I recall the SCCA weekend was coupled with the MG Nationals. Signed up for only the SCCA races. The MG race was late, the last race on Sunday. I Did pretty well in the first race. Just cruised around my first time at the track saving my tires. Mid Ohio's original layout was much tighter with severe elevation changes in the back portion. In general except for the elevation changes the MG and I liked the track layout.

For the Sunday feature I got up to fourth early on and was feeling racy until, as always, a Porsche passed me under braking at the end of the long straight. Drove carefully for a lap or two to close the gap. Shifting 500/700 RPM's higher I was DETERMINED to get that spot back. The plan almost worked. I was really close going down the straight, unfortunately I was going a lot faster into the braking zone then anytime previously. After passing the Porsche my car skidded sideways off the track. Back then there was no sand just 50 yards of slippery grass to the fence.



All seemed well after bouncing to a stop, no teeth missing, except the engine was running rough. Limped back to the pits where Ray found a spark plug wire and popped off the plug. It was now very late afternoon. Time to pack up and head back to Philadelphia thus missing the MG race.





**Mid Ohio National  
9/15-16/1962**

**Lt. Don Fitzgerald, Lotus 7, #46  
Brother Ray Schultz, standing in front of MG A,  
Lou Schultz Jr, standing at rear of #78.**

### **Back Story:**

Around 2005 during a late night internet cruise I found the colored picture of Don Fitzgerald in his red Lotus. Don was an Army Lieutenant stationed at the Philadelphia Arsenal. We became friends while racing at Vineland and Marlboro. After

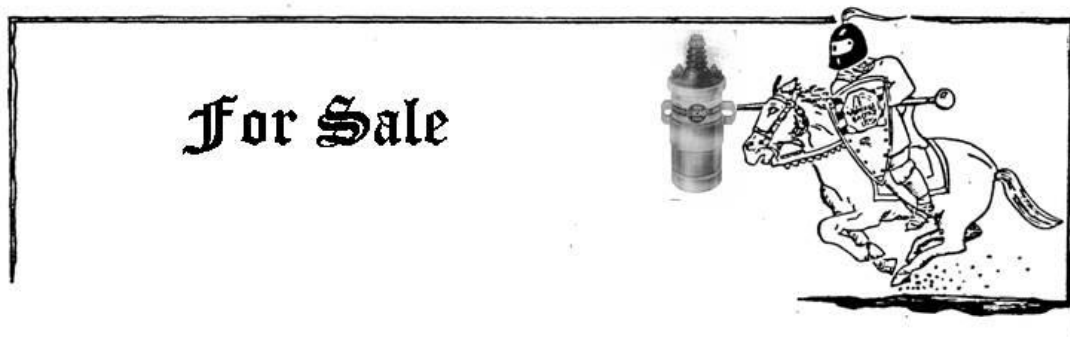
looking at the picture I noticed my MG in the background with Brother Ray and myself. I had just come in after the last Saturday last practice session.

What thrill to find the picture. I was then able to track down Don now retired from the Army.

The end of the story? Did Ray get to school on Monday? Well yes and...no. Ray and I took turns driving through the night. Exited the PA Turnpike about 7am Monday, still looking good to get Ray to class on time. After another twenty-five minutes we were a block from school only to pass...MOM (yikes), driving to work in the opposite direction. She was in my old beater '49 Plymouth Coupe. Both of us were startled. We both stopped mid street, we all waved, rolled down our windows then Mom said "Make sure he gets to school"! She drove away and I turned up Solly Avenue towards Father Judge High School. As we rolled up to school Ray said, I'm too tired to go in. Let's go home". Being the loving brother I was, we drove home.

As far as I know Mom never found out what happened that day. Ray and I both must have gotten "credit" for a job well done because we were able to borrow the 1962 Fairlane for two more races that year. A race at Watkins Glen and my last race at Marlboro November of '62.

P.S. Dec '62 I was Drafted into the Army and Don was reassigned to Germany



I'm giving up vintage racing as I'm getting older now, and my daughter Rachel is busy having babies. So I'm putting our racing gear up for sale. Also plan to sell my TD racer a little later - needs some fixing first. Greg Prehodka

#### Rachel's Racing Gear:

- Sparco driver's suit, red and white, medium, one piece quilted style, good condition.
- Racing shoes, Piloti, nomex lining, size 7-1/2, blue/black, good condition, with nomex socks
- Nomex underwear and balaclava.
- G-Force racing gloves, large, used but good, blue

#### My Racing Gear

- Custom one piece driver's suit. XXL, blue, Dunlop, VAS enterprises, USA, DuPont's aramid fiber. Almost like new, limited use.
- G-Force racing gloves, XXL, red, good condition



After 27 years of racing and 8 National Championships, Kent Prather is retiring from his racecar preparation shop. Kent is offering an extensive inventory of parts for sale. "I have nearly everything to build a proper MGA or MGB engine. Plus, plus, plus; Cylinder heads, Engine bearings, all you could need"

[www.pratherracing.com](http://www.pratherracing.com) 785-836-2265 [kprather@ksbroadband.net](mailto:kprather@ksbroadband.net)

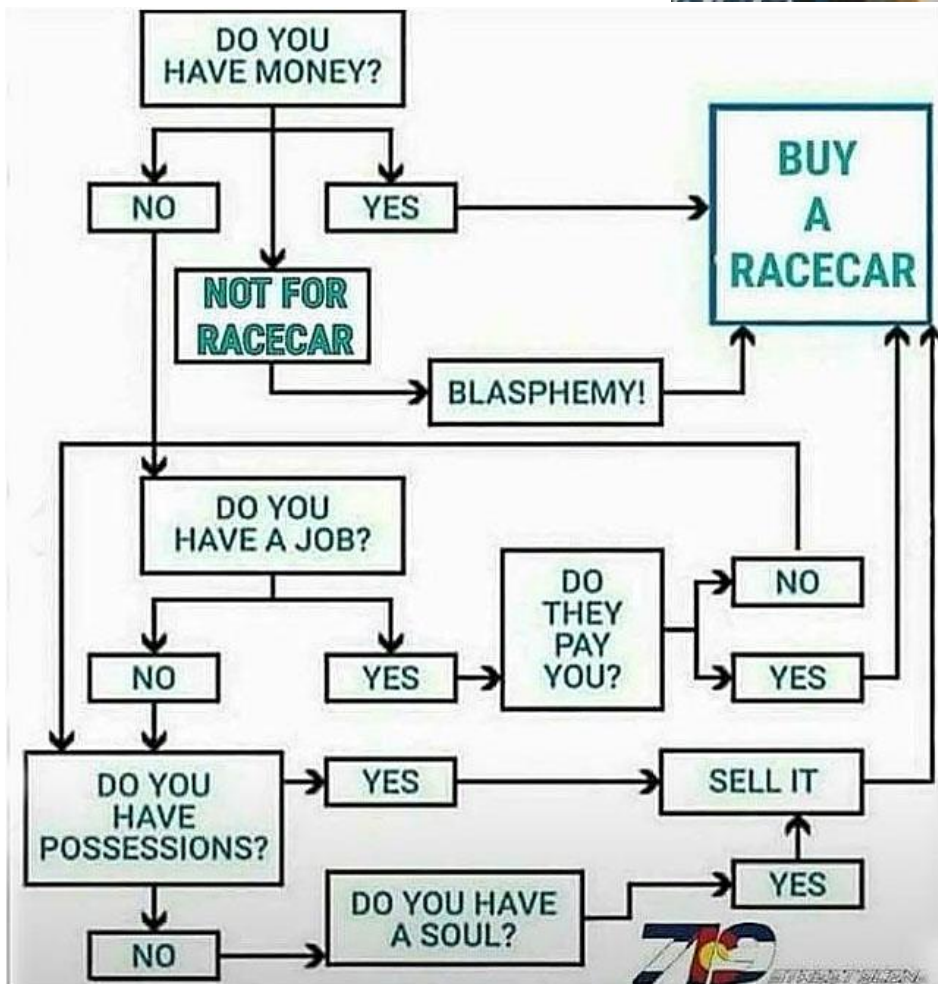


**Engine:** 1622 blocks, cranks, cylinder heads, valves, guides, spring sets camshafts, oil pumps huge selection of all the smaller parts/pieces necessary

**Drive Gear:** clutch; twin disc and standard pressure plates; competition and standard clutch master and slave cylinder standard ratio 4 speed, close ratio 4 speed

**Brakes:** Rotors, drums Dual master cylinders, rear brake cylinders, calipers

**Misc:** Engine bearings; Vandervell and others. Distributors, Mallory race and Lucas. Also 3 main rear seal kits





## INFO ON MG TC RACE CAR

I'm not an MG racer so I do not qualify as a member / contributor to your site. However, as a member of the TAB-C MG group, and an MGTC owner, I do monitor that site and occasionally contribute to it. I recently submitted a query about my car's history and its unusual brake drums that make me suspect it was once a race car .... likely in California. Is there a way to survey your membership to see if there's any early knowledge of my car?

I bought the subject car from Mr. Bob Satava in 2017. Bob and the car (T Register #34) were well known in Northern Ohio/New England area through the 70s/80s. My purchase came after 20+ years of detrimental barn storage. Bob bought the car from Joe Brown in Lindhurst, Ohio who reportedly bought it in California in 1951 (?). Bob's "valve job" 35 years ago found deteriorated sodium-filled valves, while my recent inspection also found a performance cam, a ported head, +.056" cylinder sleeves of a material that wore out my local shop's hones to achieve the .060 needed for new pistons. All of these modifications were reportedly done before Mr. Brown's purchase. The car also has unusual finned alloy brake drums with the fins sweated-on (movable with a hammer) and they are of a "magnetic" alloy ...likely ferro-stainless ... that makes them rather heavy.

All of these clues and Bob's insistence that the car kept up with MGBs in casual driving, make me suspect the car was once a race car. My question is if any West Coasters might have a recollection of the car or the brake drum provider. Car and drum pics are attached.

Thanks. Mike Long, Franklin, TN, USA

[myriley4@bellsouth.net](mailto:myriley4@bellsouth.net)

# # #

Forgive me for mailing you but I can only think of the BARCBOYS as the font of racing information for the MGA.

My Name is **Paul Leese** from England and I have a keen interest in the MGA. I own a 1600 pushrod engined 1960 MKi in good condition but I have also just purchased and currently restoring a 1959 twin cam. This car is ex US car and I am trying to find a little history behind it. The chassis number is YD3/1881 and was old english white. It must have been raced at some point as it has holes in the chassis where the roll bar was fitted.



Do you have any records of this car competing in the races that the BARCBOYS were involved in?? I see you are putting together a page with cars that raced which will be fantastic to see. All this has been inspired by a wonderful article I read in the UK MGCC magazine about the late great Sherm Decker....

Many thanks for any help that you can shed on this car.

**Kindest regards Paul Leese**    [paulandsusan1969@gmail.com](mailto:paulandsusan1969@gmail.com)

# # #

## **DID ANYONE ANSWER THESE LETTERS FROM OUR READERS?**

Hi MGVR

I have just purchased A 1949 MG TC – TC 9149. I believe it was Bill Hilt and later Bill Cowans car. As I bought it it has a supercharger, 5 speed gear box and Alfin brakes. I am trying to establish its history. It came to the UK in 2016.

Best wishes

David Foster    [daviddentsplus@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:daviddentsplus@yahoo.co.uk)

0044 7827 949490

# # #

I am looking for a billet crank and rods for my 1949 MGY that has a T series engine. If anyone knows, or has availability please contact me.

Don Martine

8313733388

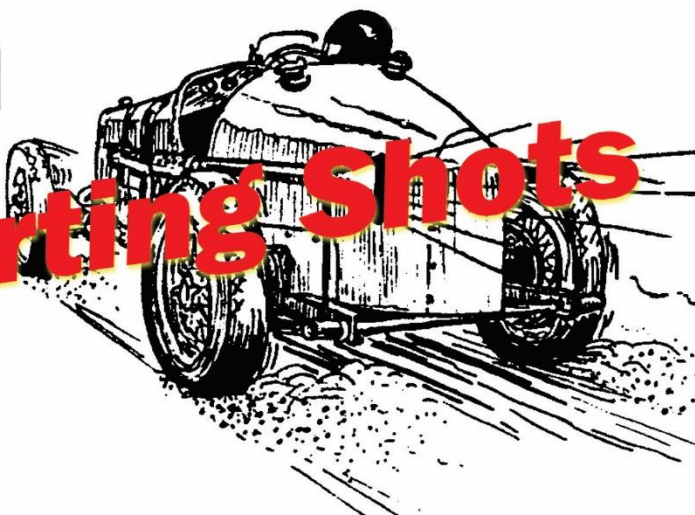
[don@martineinn.com](mailto:don@martineinn.com)

255 Ocean View Blvd

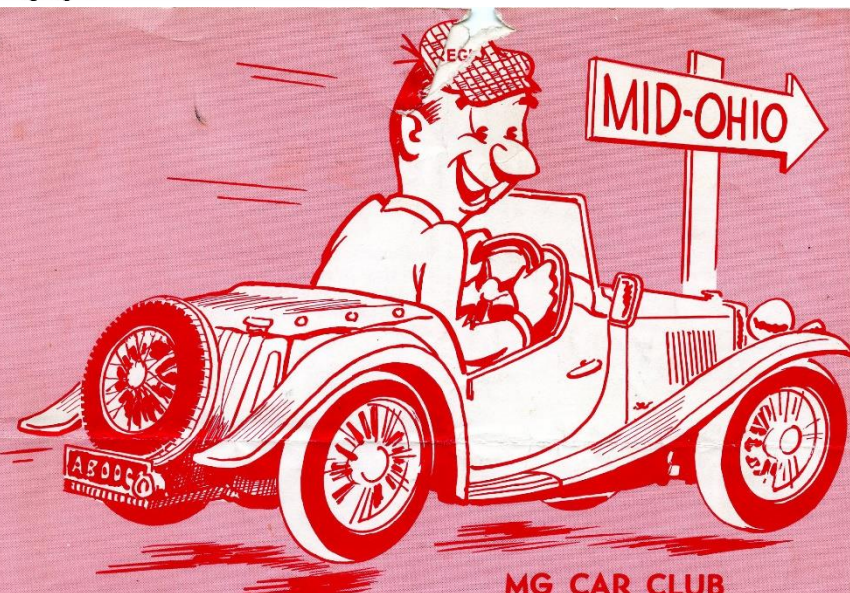
Pacific Grove, CA 93950




# Parting Shots



The race entry mailing to Lou Schultz that began his adventure at Mid-Ohio raceway long ago in 1962.



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