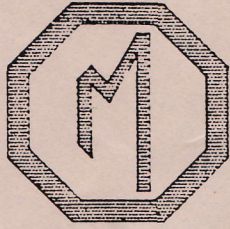
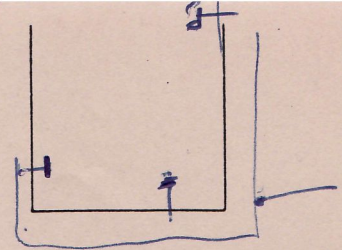
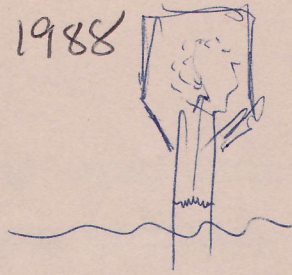
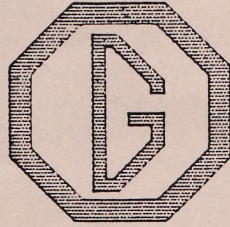


LA. MG C.C.
P.O. Box 641095
Kenner, La. 70064

August 1988



MORRIS



AZETTE



TO:

JOHN & KATHIE WINTER
2029 GENERES
HARAHAN LA 70123

88-01

A

The Official Newsletter Of
The Louisiana Centre Of The
MG Car Club



FOR SALE

- 1971 Midget, blue, wirewheels, good condition but needs mechanical work \$900, Chris at 468-9012
- 2 Bugeyed Sprites, dismantled and/or parts 368-6674
- MGB hardtop, black vinyl, \$150 obo, Mary 394-7297
- Two new painted 14" MGB wirewheels, Ray 392-6295
- many MGA parts for sale, Bill Netherland 1-886-5814(Bush LA)

WANTED TO PURCHASE

- MGA or MGB cylinder head, used but not cracked, \$100 Kevin Gambino at 834-8297
- 1971 Midget parts needed; ignition switch, seat tracks, pushrod for slave cylinder, windshield, Call Robert 468-9065
- 1975 Midget parts needed; engine and transmission, call Rene at 341-7259 or 347-9389
- Midget w/o engine, call Doak 367-3120
- Console for 1979 MGB, Nick 682-2657

FREE

1979 MGB roadster body shell, wrecked in front left, no motor, tow it away, its yours. Call Jimmy for info, 885-6849

THE LOUISIANA CENTRE OF THE MG CAR CLUB

NEWSLETTER AUGUST 1988

PRESIDENT JIMMY BRUNO
885-6849
VICE-PRESIDENT ROGER GIBSON
536-4193
TREASURER/SECRETARY MICHAEL CENAC
469-1882
MEMBER-AT-LARGE JOHN WINTER
738-5169
NEWSLETTER EDITORS BOB HUGHES, MICHAEL DELACERDA
831-7713 738-3246

New Membership - \$25 first year
Regular Membership - \$20 annually
Correspondence(outside 50mi radius) - \$10 annually
Call anyone above for an application, or join is for a
monthly meeting.

CLUB REGALIA AVAILIABLE

MG Club T-shirt(cream colour) - - - - - \$ 7.00
MG Anniversary Sport Shirt (red) - - - - - 12.00
LCMGCC Cloth sew-on patch - - - - - 2.00
LCMGCC Window decal - - - - - 1.50
MG Car Club lapel pin (large -limited quant) 3.00

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MINUTES JULY MEETING -

- Ken Hughes passed away last month
- Change in date for trip to Biloxi to Aug 20-21
- Jimmy announced details for garage sale
- Kevin Gambino(guest speaker) has some British Car parts for sale
- Kevin answered car questions from membership
- Cliff Hughes finished his "A"
- Tom Snook needs therapy, he's retaining his "A". His wife is complaining about bolts all over the kitchen table & Tom refuses to let anyone else touch his "precious" bolts.
- R J won 50/50 \$9.00

C A L E N D E R O F E V E N T S F O R 1 9 8 8

AUG 30 - - - - - GENERAL MEETING
 SEP 11 - - - - - AUTOCROSS AT BELL
 CHASE NAVAL AIR STATION
 SEP 24 - - - - - ANNIVERSARY PICNIC
 (SEE INSIDE FOR DETAILS)
 SEP 27 - - - - - GENERAL MEETING
 OCT 8 & 9 - - - - - Memphis British Car Show
 Contact Jimmy Bruno
 OCT 15 - - - - - UNO Anitque & Classic Cars
 OCT 22 - - - - - N.O. Austin Healy Club's
 British Car Day
 OCT 25 - - - - - GENERAL MEETING
 NOV 6 - - - - - EE REYNOLDS MEMORIAL RALLYE
 DEC 10 - - - - - CHRISTMAS PARTY

OUT NEXT GENERAL MEETING WILL BE HELD AT 7:30 ON
 AUGUST 30TH AT SHONEY'S, 3410 WILLIAMS BLVD, KENNER.

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PAST EVENTS:

AUGUST 20 - Trip to Gulfport - This trip was cancelled because no one wanted to go! Thanks to John Winter for driving over to scout it out for us.

August 27 - MG parts sale - A great success. About ten members brought their and set them up in Jimmy Bruno's driveway. Probably 30 customers came by for browsing and buying. Just about everyone bought something. There were a lot of MG enthusiasts enjoying the day. Each person selling something donated 10% to the club. This was just enough to pay for the drinks and advertisements in the newspaper. The profit from the lemonade stand was confiscated by Tracy and Katie Bruno. We had seven new members join the club; WELCOME to the club! Everyone had such a good time, this will be an annual event.



DRAWING BY LEO BESTGEN

BOILED IN OIL

PERHAPS I AM the only person who remembers this, but a few years ago the car companies, acting in as much concert as they can muster, signed on for the War Against Maintenance. They were going to make things simple, as I recall, so we could all take care of our cars at home, for fun and profit, and quit paying outrageous sums to the professionals.

There were, if memory serves, even little consumers' books, showing how to do that and that and encouraging the owner to tackle the small stuff, at least.

I was lying on my back in the driveway, hot oil flowing copiously up—well, down I suppose too—my sleeve when it occurred to me that the war is over and we, at least I, have lost it.

Oil is capricious stuff. Nothing in daily experience is so invasive (and if that isn't a word, don't you bother to tell me; that's what mothers are for). The hotter it is the better it flows; so first, you can remove the drain plug with your fingers

and get scalded, or you can do it with the wrench and drop it into the drain pan and either scald yourself now or wait a few hours and merely get your nails engrained with grime. Then, when the oil has cooled, or after that first gush, oil flows like cold molasses; that is, oil will drip from the engine for the rest of the afternoon.

That's merely nature at play.

In the works of man, the factories locate the oil filter so it's the width of the drain pan, plus 2 in., from the crankcase drain. This means you can't drain the engine and the filter at the same time, nor can you loosen and remove the filter while the crankcase is draining.

Next step, the filter bolts to the engine at an angle: When it's loose, oil flows out. But not all the oil, so when you unscrew the filter all the way, there's enough oil in there to run up your sleeve and splash all over the driveway.

This is also because the filter is located behind things and above things. There's

no straight, upright route in and out. Rather, the filter must be threaded through a thicket of exhaust pipes, suspension struts, brake lines and such.

That's half the job, getting the oil out.

The second part begins with the same lack of foresight. I'm dealing with my wife's car and my truck. Each has a basic engine, in production for 25 years. You'd think that's enough time to notice a few basics.

Wrong. The car's oil filler is atop the valve cover, sited directly beneath the air-intake hose. The filler is covered with a twist-off cap, except you can't twist it off because it's under the hose, and when it's loose, via two fingers of two hands, it won't come clear. Get the cap off and shoved to one side and you can't pour oil in directly, as the hose is in the way. If the cap was atop the back of the cover, not the front, none of this would be a problem. But it's not.


My truck fills with a push-on cap, no twists needed, and it's next to the air pipe. The cap goes on a tube that comes from the valve cover. If the tube was vertical, which it could be, oil could be poured in directly. Instead, the tube is a few degrees off horizontal, just enough so oil will flow into the engine, but only if you stand there keeping the can tipped just right, and we already know how quickly oil flows.

I could go on and on; for instance, when I was miffed at the failure of a radiator hose on what was for me a new car and the parts guy said, "But those hoses are *two years old!*" conjuring a vision of hoses being molded to the beat of pterodactyl wings.

Or when I discovered that my wife's car and my middle son's car (both from F**, by the way) have radiators you aren't supposed to open. This is because there's a catch tank instead of a vent.

But there is no provision, of cap or filler, for the catch tank. When I asked the service writer how one adds coolant, he said it's a sealed system, as if the evaporation of even factory-installed water was outside his ken.

But that begins to sound like the ravings of a malcontent, which I hope I am not, and not merely the pained cries of a man who once again has spilled hot oil on the driveway and himself.

But I'm a fair man. All I want is the power to require that those who design our cars qualify for the job, not just by going to school, but by also having to change their own oil. 

PART 3 OF WEEKEND RACERS

"Guys get killed sometimes," said Tony, turning the ribs. "Brain fade is probably the main reason. Racing requires so much concentration—and I mean intense concentration—that it's real easy to get into something you can't get out of. I know a place on one track where I have time to look down at my gauges for a second instead of looking in the mirror to see what's coming up behind. If I don't look then, I may not have a chance again until the next lap. If you take a chance and look when you shouldn't, you and another car can get more intimate than you want to be.

"Team 20 is real careful. Anybody who isn't had better find another sport. I don't mean we won't stick our noses in when we see an opportunity on the track. We will. But I can't say I'm scared out there. I know I have to be careful. Now, airplanes, they scare me. I do not like to fly at all."

Fear can be a curiously selective thing. A man who races at 140 miles per hour, a speed reached by Team 20, gets white knuckles in a commercial airliner, and a stunt pilot panics while scuba diving. But if it's not some macho game of facing down fear, what is it that sends these guys to tracks around the South, spending money they don't always have in order to go in circles at what, by professional standards, are modest speeds?

The answer depends on who you ask and how seriously you take their response. Life gets kind of slow in the hot little towns of Virginia and the Carolinas. There's not much to do out in the pine flats—not much that's exciting, anyway. Team 20 perhaps does not know that things are slow in Farmville—except for Sandy, who does know. These are, on the whole, deeply local people who have not encountered the careerist urges and driven lives of people in the big cities.

In small towns like Farmville, careers are rarely outlets for combativeness and the competitive instincts. A job is just a job. Tony works hard for Universal Leaf, spending long weeks on the tobacco markets in Rocky Mount and South Hill, Virginia. But it's just a job. In Farmville, you have to make your excitement.

And—a cliché because it is true—there is something in these parts that makes for speed and violence. Come a warm summer evening, with the air still and honeyed and fields turning smoky and indistinct in the distance, and a lot of

guys hereabouts think about pushing the pedal down and hearing the motor scream. On summer weekends, the South rattles and howls with dirt-track racing, stock cars, drag racers, and sports cars, all tuned beyond reason and going fast.

For decades, racing has started with drag racing, and it certainly did for many drivers in Tony's general age group—late 30s, early 40s. When it came time to shave, boys just naturally gravitated toward grease, and clattering old junkers, and midnight drags on moonlit roads. Aside from girls and a little beer, they thought and talked about nothing but bad-ass 283 Chevies tweaked till they shrieked. All that mattered in existence was mag ignition, Isky three-quarter race cams, a pair of Carter AFBs, maybe a C&W stroker and milled heads, solids—all the totemic modifications few could afford but craved till their teeth ached.

Southern males of the mid-60s, Tony's generation, knew what these things were and how they worked, just like thousands of kids in dozens of states who endlessly circled Burger Chefs in the sprawling camaraderie of a teenage Saturday night. And they went by themselves onto winding back roads and wound those old mills tight, knowing every click in the rising clatter, watching trees picking up speed in the headlights, feeling the wind rushing like water, sliding like damn fools around curves, and generally yelling something fierce at existence. Well, you get older, but you never quite lose it.

THE ROAD ATLANTA public address system blares, "All group-three drivers should be on the starting grid. All group-three...." Cars begin to lurch past, jerking and slowing, jerking and slowing. A race car isn't fit for polite company. In first gear, at enough RPMs to keep it running, it will go too fast for the paddock. The drivers goose them and clutch them, goose them and clutch them. A yowling airplane roar comes from the track, the noise used in WWII movies to indicate a dive-bomber. Practice laps. A driver definitely wants to know the track's dips and peculiarities, which way the turns go, before trying it seriously. Team 20, in a group other than group three, is still lying beneath the cars with grease up to their elbows.

Sandy, 37, is the most complex of the three—dark, sardonic, somehow abstracted from things and watching from a distance. She is dedicated to racing,

and to Fletcher, but she is dedicated because she has decided to be. Fletcher can't help it. Sandy doesn't have a lot of illusions about people or things. She is tough enough not to be dominated by Fletcher, yet she is genuinely unhappy at seeing a wounded possum crawling all bloody from a highway. At the same time, she is low key and oddly deferential. I ask how long she has been in racing.

"Since 1980, when I met Fletcher. Anybody who knows Fletcher for more than half an hour works on his car. I like racing, and I guess I'm not cut out to be a spectator. I have to participate....Yuck!"

She is taking apart Fletcher's car's spare rear end, which proves to be full of sand and crud. Before now, she has just not had time to disassemble it. Something else was always more pressing: another hazard of low-budget racing.

Like most of Team 20's major parts, this rear end came from a junkyard. Some of the cars these parts come from haven't been built since the late 60s. "God, this is awful," says Sandy. "I don't operate this way, I really don't."

"These cars seem to break a lot. Why?"

"Old. Poor quality to begin with. We overstress them. They weren't made for this." Succinct, no illusions. The spare rear end will have to do if it is needed.

Tony and Fletcher get their cars running and sail out onto the track for practice laps. The other cars come back around past the stands, but Tony doesn't. Fletcher comes off a late lap into the hot pits complaining that the rear end sounds wrong. He doesn't know what happened to Tony. Sandy jacks the car up and begins unbolting the differential. Three teeth broken on the pinion gear. Old, poor quality to begin with. She starts putting in the spare rear end.

A half hour later, the tow truck brings Tony in on a nylon strap. "She started running rough," he says. "Lost oil pressure, so I put it on the grass." A narrow stripe of oil forms on the asphalt as the car moves. "Don't look too good, huh?"

They put it up on jack stands. It couldn't be a thrown rod. Just *couldn't* be. All that sweat and work and money, that beautiful engine. It couldn't be a rod.

The pan drops. Tony shoves it out from under the car and it rattles, not a good sign. He reaches in and pulls out half a rod, a blackened bearing insert, two bolts torn in two, half a rocker arm, a fragment of piston, everything but a partridge in a pear tree, and all of it bad.

PART 4 NEXT ISSUE!

1988 MGCC 11th ANNIVERSARY
PICNIC

Saturday, September 24, 1988
Metairie Playground**

TIME: 12:00 noon til dark

Drinks, Games, Music, Trivia test, Fan belt throw, creeper-kana. Members provide their own food. Free to members and family, \$2.00 per guest.

** (Same as last year - all the way to the end of the road, past the big building)

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ANNOUNCEMENT:

A 10% discount will be given to MGCC members from Sports and Classics on regularly priced items. A few times a year they mail out a sales brochure with some great prices. No discounts on sale items. Example: Amoco tops \$119, including zip out window style. The latest sale brochure will be available at the meeting. Place orders with Kevin or Burke at 203 655 8731.

The best \$20.00 investment I made in my MG

What can you buy for your MG that cost \$20.00? Not much. You can't buy a new top or new carpet. New tires will certainly cost much more than \$20.00. Electric cooling fans are \$60 to \$70. A pair of new sun visors run \$35.00. Come on, think. I'll give you some clues. It comes with optional windscreen decal, a pretty brown and white cloth patch and a T-shirt. Bet you've guessed by now. That's right, your MG club membership. In a little over one year, I've learned more, done more, made more friends and enjoyed my MGB MORE than I ever dreamed possible.

Why I even did a brake job (with help). Even changed a rear wheel bearing oil seal (with help). Would you believe I even rebuilt my carburator (with help). All of this (WITH HELP) came from MG club members. Real people that have given me so much help. And that doesn't even count the picnic, rally, tours, crawfish boil, Christmas party and on and on. Like I said, the best \$20.00 investment I made in my MG was joining the MG Club.

Roger Gibson
1980 MGB