



THE SQUARE RIGGER
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CHESAPEAKE CHAPTER
OF THE NEW ENGLAND MG T-SERIES REGISTER
SUMMER 2011



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Chairman's Comments

Part of this TSR issue reviews some of the fun that CCNEMGTR members had over the weekend of May 6-8, participating in the 2011 Mini-GOF. We enjoyed a good turnout, and fortunately the weather held out with only a threat of rain. Along with the rest of our members, I truly appreciate the skillful work done by Ginny and Jim Bradley in planning and carrying out the event. Thanks also to Nancy and Steve Woodall for hosting the Saturday lunch at their Garage Mahal.



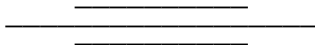
As most of you know, I had a minor mishap on the tour through Great Falls when I snapped the short axle on my 1952 TD. Fortunately I was able to get it off of the road and back to my garage with the aid of fellow members. I'm grateful to those who helped and have offered to assist in the repair. I'll keep you posted.

Our club has purchased a new computer and software which should help in speeding up the awards process at this weekend's Original British Car Day (OBCD). Additionally, we have a new tent, which is not only long overdue from a cosmetic viewpoint, but does not require half a dozen people to erect it. The 34th Original British Car Day (OBCD) is following on the heels of a very successful 2011 Mini-GOF. I hope our enthusiasm carries forward to the show.

One final note: please welcome our newest members, John Debelius, as well as John and Elizabeth Edsall, who have recently joined us.

Safety Fast!

Shaun English



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Editor's Corner

06/01/2011

Origins and Purpose

The Chesapeake Chapter of the New England MG-T Register was organized during the summer of 1971 by Register members in the Baltimore-Washington area where local interest in classic MGs was high. Its purpose was and still is to encourage the maintenance, preservation and enjoyment of T-Series and other vintage MGs. We welcome new members who share our interest in these unique cars. Membership in our parent organization, the New England MG-T Register, Ltd., and payment of modest annual dues are the only requirements. Membership application forms can be found, along with previous issues of this Newsletter, on our Chapter's website: www.chesapeakechaptermgclub.com

Our Newsletter is circulated electronically on a quarterly basis to Members who possess email capability, and by regular mail to Members who do not. The electronic version contains color photos, whereas the regular-mail version is in black & white. In any event, the full color version is always available for subsequent viewing on and downloading from our website.

We're always on the lookout for stories, technical submissions, anecdotes, jokes, cartoons, photographs and other contributions of interest to MG fans. In addition, we seek to encourage fullest possible participation by Members in Chapter events, mention of which can be found in further pages of this Newsletter.

John Wright Steps Down

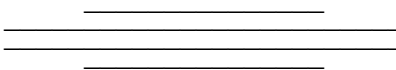
Since October 2004, our friend and colleague John Wright has served expertly as our Chapter's Technical Advisor/Editor. He has instructed and entertained us not only on how best to care for our cars, but also on how to prepare for and respond to the unexpected. John and Linda have decided to relocate to the West Coast within a few months in order to be near their son and his family. Close friends can expect to hear more about their plans as time goes on. Happily, they intend to retain their Chesapeake Chapter membership, and we have no doubt that John plans to keep in touch. Nevertheless, we will miss his regular contributions on these pages.

Our Cover Page

We trust members will like the layout on this issue's cover page. We thank those who responded to our invitation to submit photos, and **we have it in mind to repeat the process in the Fall issue — assuming that members who did not submit photos of their T-Series cars for the cover of this issue can be tempted to do so for the next.**

MG Quiz Feature

Page 9 of this issue contains Question No. 5 in our series of tests of Members' knowledge of MG lore. If you don't know the answer off the tops of your heads, don't be shy about doing a little research. Four Members responded to our Quiz question in the Spring issue, with answers that covered the topic satisfactorily. □



Recent Chapter Events

We're pleased to report that MiniGOF 2011, which took place in Alexandria, VA and vicinity over the weekend of May 6-8, was a fine success, thanks to a substantial member turnout and excellent planning on the part of the organizers.

For a full report, see page 6. □

Upcoming Events Sponsored by Others

(For details, click on the blue [links](#))

MG2011/GT-36

A rallye headed for NAMGAR's big event at Reno, Nevada (June 13-17), begins at Ocean City, MD on June 4 and will pause at cities on US 50 across the entire USA before terminating Only God Knows When at San Francisco & Sacramento, CA .

www.namgar.com/events/category/mg2011/
and
[www.namgar.com/events/article/mg2011/rallye to reno 2011/](http://www.namgar.com/events/article/mg2011/rallye_to_reno_2011/)

Annual British Motorcar Gathering

Hosted by the Keystone Regional MG Club and Lanco MG Club at the Fritchman Reservoir Park, Hellertown, PA on Sunday, June 12.

www.keystonemg.com

Brits by the Bay

This show, sponsored by Triumphs Around the Chesapeake (TRAC), will take place at the Carroll County Farm Museum, Westminster, MD on Saturday, June 25. www.tracltd.org

British Invade Gettysburg

Sponsored by the Lancaster County (PA) MG Club, this show will take place at Gettysburg on Sunday, July 17. www.lancomgclub.com

22nd Annual Taste of Britain British Car Show

Also supported by the Lancaster County (PA) MG Club, this show will again take place at Rothsville, PA, on Sunday, August 28. www.lancomgclub.com

Virginia Scottish Games

To be held at the Great Meadow, The Plains, VA, on the weekend of September 3-4, this festival customarily includes an antique and British car show. www.vascottishgames.org/

Labor Day Economy Run 2011

Welcomes all British cars, modern and vintage. Conducted by Triumphs around the Chesapeake, Ltd. at Mt. Heron High School, Ellicott City, MD, on Sunday, September 4. www.tracltd.org/EconoRun/ER-11/EconoRun11.html

Hagley Museum Car Show

On Sunday, September 18, an impressive display, selected by invitation only, of more than 600 antique and restored cars dating from the early 1900s to the 1980s. Venue: the Museum grounds near Wilmington, DE.

www.hagley.lib.de.us/events.html

MGs on The Rocks

Mounted by MGs of Baltimore at its usual venue, The Rocks State Park near Jarrettsville, MD, on Saturday, September 24. www.mgsofbaltimore.com

Fall Carlisle Collector Car Exhibition and Swap Meet

To be held at Carlisle, PA, for five days beginning Wednesday, September 28.

www.carlisleevents.com/cc/events/fall-carlisle/

NAMGAR at Solomons Island

This regional GT event will take place in southern Maryland from Wednesday, September 28 to Sunday, October 2. www.mga-midatlantic.org/solomons.html

30th Annual British Car Festival

Sponsored by the Shenandoah Valley British Car Club at Ridgeview Park, Waynesboro, VA, from Friday, September 30 to Sunday, October 2. www.svbcc.net

ACA Eastern Nationals

The Eastern Fall Meet, a regional show mounted annually by the Antique Automobile Club of America, will take place at Hershey, PA for four days starting on Wednesday, October 5. www.aca.org/Calendar

Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show

Will take place Saturday, October 5, at the Rockville, MD Civic Center Park.

www.rockvillemd.gov/events/carshow.htm

Hunt Country Classic

Willoughby Farm near Middleburg, VA, remains the traditional venue for this show, put on by the MG Car Club (DC Centre) on Sunday, October 9.

www.mgcarclubdc.com. □

Upcoming Chapter & Chapter-Related Events

The 34th Original British Car Day, Sunday, June 5, 2011

Members will have received email notices that our annual flagship event will take place next Sunday (June 5) at its usual venue, LilyPons Water Gardens. We look forward to decent weather, an impressive turnout, and seeing you there!

Tour of Vintage Restorations Ltd. and Historic Downtown Union Bridge

The date of Saturday, August 20, has been set for this interesting series of events in historic Union Bridge, MD. Held under the aegis of Vintage Restorations, Ltd., a full-service antique and classic car restoration shop specializing in British cars at Union Bridge, MD, it will start with a 10 a.m. doughnuts & coffee session, followed by a tour of the shop and its many restoration projects in progress, an open discussion of T-Series MGs, their history, technical and restoration/service techniques, and ending with a Question & Answer session. Also on display will be large-scale, ride-on trains currently under construction. These trains are in 3¾" scale, and can pull ten cars with 20 people on 7½" gauge track.

Around noon we'll gather for a special tour of the Western Maryland Railway Historical Society Museum. It's located in the **Union Bridge Station**, built in 1902 as a stop on the Western Maryland Railroad. After the museum tour we'll dine at The Buttersburg Inn, which serves up home-cooked food just like your mom or grandma used to make. Following lunch, all are welcome to take a walking tour of Union Bridge, visiting the Country Store and other points of interest. In 1994, the town was added to the National Register of Historic Places as the Union Bridge Historic District.

So plan on taking a drive through scenic back-country roads and be sure to include this event in your summer MG driving activities. We look forward to seeing you in Union Bridge in August!

Advertisements

Note: Chapter Members are encouraged to submit classified ads free of charge to the Editor via email or snail mail at one of his addresses shown on page 2. Photographs are accepted. Also, please remember to let us know the results of your ad and/or whether you want it to appear again in the next issue of the Newsletter.

TO SWAP:

Would like to trade two (2) MG TD/TF brake master cylinders for one (1) new MG TC brake master cylinder. Local transaction. No mailing, please.

Richard Embick
5805 Brookview Drive,
Alexandria, VA 22310 **Tel. (703) 971-2196**

FOR SALE:

TD: A pair of 7" Lucas 700 semi-sealed headlights for a left-hand drive car. They need interior cleaning. Please make me an offer.

Bob Cole
Tel. (610) 388-0898

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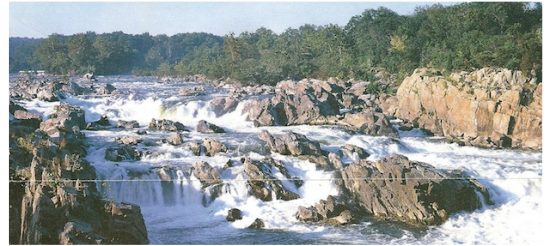
410-775-0500



MiniGOF 2011: The Potomac River Run

MiniGOF 2011, held over the May 6-8 weekend in Alexandria and elsewhere in Northern Virginia, was a rousing success. Participating were some 40 members and their spouses, who together assembled 14 T-Types and half a dozen other MGs and other vintage British cars to help us celebrate the weekend. (Including our Chairman's pretty Austin/Healey 3000, substituting for his ailing TD.)

Our full schedule of activities and events, thoughtfully put together by Jim and Ginny Bradley, began with a morning run headed north from the Hampton Inn on Friday, May 6, via the George Washington Memorial Parkway to Great Falls, VA, where we found a nice lunch waiting for us at a local Irish pub. Afterwards, we drove on to visit the Virginia side of the Potomac at Great Falls National Park. We then did a return-run back to Alexandria for an informal dinner and neighborhood car show at the Bradley family home. Our MG caravan covered over 50 miles during what was quite a full day.

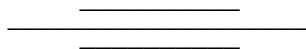


The next morning (Saturday, May 7) saw us running again, this time south on the G.W. Parkway past the entrance to Mount Vernon, then along scenic country roads linking the historic sites of Geo. Washington's Grist Mill and Distillery, Woodlawn Plantation, Pohick Church, and Gunston Hall. Reaching Steve and Nancy Woodall's home in the Fairfax County countryside around mid-day, we took in Steve's impressive carriage house and car collection, held a modest Chapter car show, and were treated to what had been advertised as a picnic lunch, but tuned out to be sumptuous feast. Needless to say, by this time we were really enjoying ourselves. At the Awards Dinner in Old Town Alexandria that night, we dined in style at historic Gadsby's Tavern, entertained royally by the music and droll commentary of the redoubtable John Douglas Hall, dressed and speaking in the style of an early 19th century gentleman, musician and raconteur. By the time we got back to the motel, our second day had been even fuller than the first, and our cars had covered a further 60+ miles.



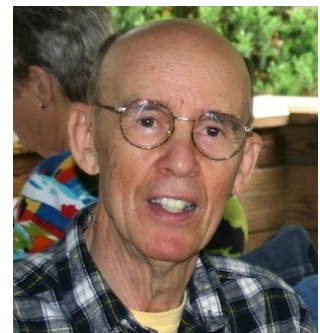
On Sunday morning (May 8), Jim Bradley led a small group of us to the Tucker Car Museum in Alexandria, where — surrounded by lots of 1940s memorabilia and exotic car parts and assemblies — we experienced the rare sight of three pristine Tucker sedans up close. Our verdict was unanimous: not only are they extremely rare; they were also also very beautiful.

Obviously, a great deal of time, planning and imagination went into making this MiniGOF a success. We all owe a huge debt to Jim and Ginny for having masterminded what all agree was a very memorable event. We also commend Dale and Eleanor Lindsay for setting up and supervising our hospitality room at the Hampton Inn, Milton Babirak for leading our run to Great Falls on Friday, John and Phyllis Williams for helping with dinner and street closure on Friday night, John Hambleton for helping to plan and lead the Saturday run, Steve and Nancy Woodall for their gracious hospitality on Saturday afternoon, and Lin Snider for once again doing the Emcee honors at Gadsby's Tavern later that night. Finally, we need to applaud our many colleagues, some of whom came from afar, who turned out to make MiniGOF 2011 a genuine success. □



MiniGOF 2011 Gallery





MiniGOF May 7 Car Show Awards

<u>MG TC Category</u>	<u>MG TD Category</u>	<u>MG TF Category</u>	<u>Other MG Category</u>
1. P. Tucker	M. Babirak	J. Bradley	1. S. Woodall
2. J. Williams	B. Sieling	T. Carolan	(1934 MG PA)
3. M. Collum	N. Wilson	R. Cattaneo	2. H. Giffin
			(1938 MG VA)

Congratulations to the lucky winners!

“Stump the Chapter” Quiz

Answer to Question No. 4

(Spring 2011 issue)

Q. What was the nature of the connection between the MG Car Company, Ltd. and an organization known as “the Pavlova Works”?

A. Our thanks to Chip Old, Charley Howard, Bill Seabrook and Milton Babirak, all of whom provided essentially correct answers.

The Pavlova Leather Company, which had operated a tannery at Abingdon since 1863, was well known for its bookbinding, glove, and other specialty leathers. In 1929 its owners sold a sizeable portion of their Abingdon plant known as “the works” (land, a large building, plus a number of industrial sheds) to the MG Car Company managed by Cecil Kimber. The arrangement proved to be mutually beneficial, with MG acquiring a much enlarged factory area, and Pavlova becoming for many years the primary supplier of MG upholstery materials. The Pavlova tannery, operating from its facility just north of the MG factory, outlasted the MG Car Company, remaining in production until 1989. □

Here’s Quiz Question No. 5:

Speaking of the MG plant at Abingdon, none of us will have trouble figuring out where the accompanying photo was taken. But how many of us can specify the precise model of the Midgets lined up in the alley? And who can estimate the year in which the photo was taken?



MG Vintage Racing

The Legacy of Cecil Kimber

If you Google “Cecil Kimber,” you’ll find him described as an automotive engineer who served as the driving force behind the production of MG cars, starting in 1921 and continuing through his tenure (1928-1941) as Managing Director of the MG Car Company, Ltd.

All true, more or less, but nowhere near the whole truth. Kimber was a man who possessed exceptional managerial talents. Some might even say he was a managerial genius. Although his grasp of automotive mechanics actually was limited, he combined sound technical instincts with a keen understanding of automobile design and production. He was an industrial visionary who knew how to organize, supervise and lead. He also knew how to spot engineering talent and inspire those who possessed it. He understood the importance of innovation and constantly sought to encourage it. He had an eye for marketing, along with the go-getting talents of a crackerjack salesman. In addition, he was blessed with a flair for publicity and public relations. He devoted all these qualities to the development of a fledgling automobile company that within a few short years would not only find great success in the UK, but would go on long after his death to produce many of the world’s most popular, reasonably priced and beloved sportscars.



Kimber was in the forefront of those who were quick to capitalize on the British public’s fascination with what they had come to call “sportscars” and “motor sport” — e.g., hill-climbing, rallies, car shows and, especially, road-racing. (The latter requiring not just zooming around in circles, but drivers who really knew how to drive on open roads.) He saw this as an effective way to establish MG’s reputation as a maker of purebred sportscars. For him, “Safety Fast” was not an empty slogan. It told the world what Kimber wanted them to remember about his cars. And his inspiration worked. MG sales responded positively, even as the Great Depression lingered.

All this took place despite growing jealousy and resentment on the part of Lord Northcliffe (AKA Sir William Morris), founder of MG’s corporate parent, the Morris Motor Company, and Kimber’s boss and erstwhile mentor. In 1935, in a jab aimed at Kimber, His Lordship induced his corporate Board of Directors to withdraw from factory-sponsored racing. Amazingly, the MG racing *mystique* lived on and flourished — not just in Great Britain and across The Channel, but also, in the aftermath of World War II and for many decades thereafter, throughout North America and around the world.

Sadly, Kimber never lived to see the great postwar success of the MG *mystique* he had done so much to create. Forced in 1941 to resign from MG under spiteful pressure from Lord Northcliffe, he would meet a tragic end in February of 1945 in a freak railroad accident outside a London railway station.

Dead, but hardly forgotten. It should come as no surprise that Kimber’s name and memory are honored repeatedly to this day in connection with myriad MG sportscar racing and related events in Great Britain, all over North America, and in many other parts of the world.

[For further details on Kimber’s long association with the MG Octagon, please refer to the September 2009 issue of this Newsletter, pp. 5-6. See also the MG historical fact sheet at: <http://www.cars-and-autos.info/mg-cars/> — Ed.] □

The Second East-West Challenge: March 31-April 2, 2011

Sears Point-Infinion Raceway, Sonoma, CA

By Bob Schoeplein

In responding to our Editor’s request for a report on the MG Vintage Racers’ East-West Challenge, I anticipated that some interesting California T-Types and Pre-wars would be there. I was right. Our adventure began with a

new, specially designed 18-wheel transporter pulling out of Rochester, NY on March 26. Loaded in its double decks were Chris Meyer's MGA (CT), Dick Power's MGA (NY), my MGA (VA), and Dan Leonard's No. 409 TC Special (Parkton, MD). The rig was bound for Sears Point-Infinion Raceway, located 12 miles south of downtown Sonoma, CA and 17 miles northeast of the Golden Gate Bridge.

For anyone interested in sportscar racing, Infinion is breathtaking — literally. The road course is carved into the lush green (in April) hillsides, and the grandstands for the single NASCAR event each year ripple up the hillsides along the course. Only 15% of the course is on anything that could be called "level". The balance is up and down steep hills, through blind apexes on the far side of the crests of those hills, and diving turns down into the valleys. There is no real "straight", only sweeping downhill esses. This most challenging course would take us newcomers a year to learn properly.

We had 33 racing MG entrants: 16 from California, 2 from British Columbia, and 15 from east of the Mississippi and Eastern Canada. We were missing our Eastern "T" hero, Manley Ford (OH) — arguably the fastest TD driver in the U.S. Manley's tow vehicle and enclosed trailer were blown off the road in New Mexico by a passing warp-speed 18-wheeler. Manley, fellow traveler Lou Merchant (MGA), along with their trailer and race cars, were OK, but damage to the tow vehicle precluded their making it to the race. California spectators missed seeing what a TD really can do (and also what Lou can do with her MGA). Manley invariably races his TD up front with the fastest As and Bs.

In a quick-brush overview of entrants, we had on the grid a 1933 L-Type single seater, a 1934 N Special, plus a 1934 NE Magnette (1 of only 7 ever made) — which I in error thought was a single seater because the driver took up three-fourths of the narrow cockpit. They were joined by Dan's TC Special, the Johnny Von Neumann TD Special, two additional TDs, a TF-1500, 13 MGAs, 10 MGBs, and 2 Midgets: 33 MGs, in all.

As for Dan Leonard's TC Special, we should let him tell us about its history and his racing experiences. [See Dan's contribution below. — *Ed.*]

MGVR cars were given four more practice and race sessions than other cars, culminating with the All-MG race at 4 o'clock on Sunday afternoon. Our MGVRs had lots of track time to play with one another. I had a wonderful



dice with the 1934 NE (**No. 24**), whose flat-out speed almost matched my Honeybee. (**No. 76**) True, the NE has a 1,271cc ohc 6-cylinder engine vs. a 1,622cc on an MGA, but the skills of the NE's driver, Pete Thelander (CA), really made the difference. From the rear Pete looked like Barney Oldfield, sawing on the oversized steering wheel to control his beast, as the NE would take unanticipated 3-foot "jumps" either to the left or to the right at critical moments. From my perspective in the rear, it was a display of daring greater than wingwalk-

ing. My first concern was with Pete's skinny 19-inch wheels, which would lean way, way out or way, way in on turns like they were about to collapse. Or sometimes they pointed cross-eyed at each other. I'd seen such cross-eyes before in '20's and early '30's racing Bugattis; a car's wheels look like they aren't connected to anything rational. After that session I came in with rubber marks on my right rear fender higher than I ever had before. Pete's NE must have "jumped" as I passed, and his 19-inch tires must have been an additional 6 inches off the ground!



I also had fun with Bill Angeloni (**No. 56**) from hometown Sonoma and his TF-1500. Bill and I were equals on most of the course, but my larger displacement and contemporary tires gave me just that little bit of an edge. Bill's qualifying times were almost identical to mine, and we were gridded next to each other for the Feature All-MG Race. We had our helmets on and couldn't communicate. My son Marc was my crew chief, and I asked Marc to ask Bill if he had a close-ratio gear box. Marc returned and said, "No." So I sent Marc back to ask him if he had an "1800" under that TF hood. I could see Bill shaking his head with laugh-

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ter. He turned to me, shook his head “no”, pointed to himself and me and gave two thumbs up. I think I jumped Bill at the start, I don’t remember, but I then had him in my mirrors about 50 yards back for 4 or 5 laps. Believe me, that is motivation for keeping the right foot down hard. Then he was gone. I heard later and saw on photos that he had taken a dangerous turn too fast in an effort to catch me at his best opportunity to pass. The TF did a 180° spin, and Bill fell back too far to catch up.

I can’t say I had a dice with Don Martine’s 1950 TD Von Neumann Special (Pacific Grove, CA), because Don and his car (**No. 11**) are so much faster than my car and me. Don drives at the edge, and two or three times in the MG Feature Race his TD Special took off-course excursions. So we would race together briefly as Don repassed me, and I had fun trying to keep on his tail. The Von Neumann today is an invaluable one-off. John Von Neumann in 1950 was the best known British car dealer in Los Angeles. He took a showroom TD, stripped the body, and had a killer XPAG engine built up by his mechanics, who were largely LA hot rodders and dry-lakes regulars. The frame was shortened 6 inches and significantly lightened. Then a special aluminum body was fabricated to look like a TD at first glance. There are differences: the two doors are hinged in the front and open from the back. Also the shortened frame is most noticeable in the missing parcel area behind the seats. This killer car was untouchable for 2 years. Then Ken Miles immigrated from England and landed a mechanic’s job with Von Neumann. What followed were the MG R-1 and then the MG R-2 Flying Shingles designed by Miles. The Flying Shingle (nominally a TF) was transported from Seattle to a place of honor in an open garage across from our MG paddock. What a beautiful piece of work! I spent half an hour studying it. It was a worthy successor to the Von Neumann TD. These two famous MG-T Specials are outstanding cars for their era.



The other two TDs at Sears Point-Infinion had their own race, together with two MGAs with comparable lap times. That’s what our racing is about: we’ll always find a group of cars with our own times and have fun pushing each other to see who will be first in our own group.

But who won the All-MG race to conclude the weekend? Here again we had four cars in the first two rows that were evenly matched. Their drivers pushed hard and traded the lead throughout the race. Harry Gentry (Knoxville, TN) took the checker in his MG Midget (!), nosing out Scott Brown (CA) (**No. 41**) and Ed Lamantia (CA) in super-fast MGAs. Scott and Ed apparently are known in California circles as “the Evil Twins” because their cars are painted an identical deep British Racing Green and they race each other for top honors. Close behind in fourth was Jim Lamantia (CA) in an MGB. The three California drivers obviously know Sears Point-Infinion well, as their blazing average speed and lap times attested. Winner Harry Gentry was something else again. How can a Midget beat the best in the West? Go Tennessee!



Bedlam after the race! Lots of hugs and laughter and ice-cold beer! Still more Sonoma wines uncorked, especially for the crews (I had twelve members in my crew!). But then it was time for us to take down our tent and gather our goodies. We loaded our cars in the transporters as the sun began to set over the Golden Gate Bridge. No, that’s not poetic license. The sun really sets over the bridge. We were very tired, very happy puppies. Ain’t life great, or what?!!!! ☐

The Second East-West Challenge: March 3-April 2, 2011 **Sears Point-Infinion Raceway, Sonoma, CA** By Dan Leonard

A brief report on my streamlined 1949 TC “Special” (No. 409) appeared under the title “Off to the Races” in the Fall 2010 issue of *The Square Rigger*. It was based on a lengthy article (with 45 photographs) carried in the internet technical forum, *BritishRaceCar* (BRC). Members can view that article by clicking on www.britishracecar.com/DanLeonard-MG-TC.htm

The initial owner, a Bell Helicopter executive, had bought the car new (No. TC/7576; Engine No. XPAG/8265) in 1949 with a view to racing it. Finding it heavier and with a higher center of gravity than he desired for that purpose,

he modified it by stripping the original TC body (retaining the instrument panel) and fitting a lighter, radically streamlined body and seats made of aircraft aluminum. A December 1954 article in *Road & Track* described the result as “very potent.”

After the original owner’s death in an auto accident (not involving the TC) in the late 1970s, the car was owned, underwent further racing modifications, and was raced by other MG enthusiasts until 2008, when I managed to acquire it. I’ve had a considerable amount of additional racing preparation done on it by Merryman Modifications in Hanover, PA, and I’m still in the process of sorting out a few suspension idiosyncrasies. Today, the car weighs in at 1,500 lbs., compared to the stock TC’s weight of 1,630 lbs. I’ve raced her in the Pittsburgh (PA) Vintage Grand Prix, the Jefferson 500 at the Summit Point Raceway (WVA), the Speedwell at the Mosport International Raceway (Canada), and at one or another of the other tracks mentioned below.



Bob Schoeplein has done a nice job in describing the action and atmosphere a few weeks ago at Sonoma’s Infinion Raceway. I would add only that we had an outstanding race vacation in California. The weather was great, even though it had rained for almost an entire month prior to our arrival. Our MGVR group stayed at The Inn Marin, a beautiful old resort hotel located just 10 minutes away from the track. The rate was only \$99 per night under special MGVR arrangements secured by Jim Wissenborn, a Californian racer who also set up an awards banquet at which lots of prizes were given to deserving MG drivers. I received a plaque from the Pebble Beach Sports Car Club (a great group) for their choice of my TC Special as their favorite pre-1950 MG.

The track was extremely difficult to learn, with lots of elevation changes and blind turns. Unfortunately, my TC Special was not at its best. I had had some suspension work done before our trip, and it handled terribly. Infinion has no straights, the closest thing to one being a downhill with very fast sweeping bends. A terrifying drive with a non-cooperative suspension! I felt my Special might leave the road at any moment during the sweeps. Needless to say, I finished in the rear of the group, but I did have some spirited racing with the other T-Types.



Flashback: My interest in auto racing began quite a few years ago, about the time (1961) when I acquired my first car, an MGTD. A few years later, when I had acquired some spare time and saved a bit of money, I bought a BMW M-Series roadster in which my wife Vicki and I would travel to vintage races. I also started racing that car in events at the Summit Point Raceway (WVA). Those track events also entailed some classroom sessions and training runs at speed accompanied by an instructor. Very basic race training, but it was more than enough to whet my appetite. At one point, Vicki, observing some T-Series MGs racing

at Summit Point, asked why I didn’t prepare my venerable TD for that sort of competition.

That started things. In 1999, I took the TD to Merryman Modifications, and by 2000 it was ready to go. In the meantime, I had taken a 3-day course at a Skip Barber racing school, bought an enclosed trailer, loaded it with tools, got myself a racing suit, helmet, shoes, socks, gloves, etc., and then bought a new BMW X-5 for towing work. I can recall sitting on the grid at my first event at Virginia International Raceway (Danville) and thinking: “I’m scared to death!” Then I remembered the die had been cast; I was committed! After the first few turns, the fun part began. Even today, however, there can be moments when the whole business still seems terrifying.

Overall, I’ve probably averaged around eight vintage races a year with either my TD or (after 2008) my TC Special in such places as Watkins Glen (NY), the Pocono Raceway (PA), Mosport International Raceway (Canada), Lime Rock Park (CT), Road Atlanta (GA), Summit Point Speedway (WVA), and Motorsport Park (NJ). And no, in case you’re wondering, I’ve never raced both cars at the same track on the same day. In 2006, I won a Collier Cup at Watkins Glen in my TD, and in 2008 I placed first among T-Series cars in another Collier Cup race. □



I’m really looking forward to the next East-West Challenge event three or four years from now. I’m sure any MG fan would enjoy hobnobbing with fellow enthusiasts during an MG-oriented vacation on the West Coast. □

[* For information on Collier Cup competition, begun in 1985 and conducted under the auspices of the Sportscar Vintage Racing Association, please click on www.svra.com/] □

**Most of us know what Dutch Courage is.
 Here's a glimpse of what we might call Dutch Genius.**



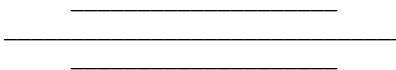
Actually, it's called Tiger-Stone (Tiger-Steen in Dutch), a paver-laying machine that produces brick roads. The roads in a lot of Dutch towns are paved with bricks. The bricks are dropped through a front-end loader into an angled trough. Workmen help spread them in the trough as they drop into a forming jig. As an electrically operated crawler moves forward along a prepared underlayment of sand, all the bricks are packed tightly, held together by gravity, and deposited via a sloping ramp onto the underlayment. More workmen follow along to inspect and make final adjustments wherever needed.





And have you heard what they came up with recently for ships? Ships ranging from motor boats to canal barges to ocean-going vessels of all sizes, including naval craft? They've perfected a system whereby compressed-air bubbles circulated through holes in the sides and undersides of hulls will significantly reduce friction when moving through the water. Shipowners are ecstatic over the fuel-saving prospects, estimated at 10-15%. The devices can either be built into the hulls of new ships, or added as "after-market" systems to ships already launched.

We imagine canoe and kayak owners need not apply. ☐



Dilled White Cheddar Cheesecake



One of the big hits at MiniGOF 2011!

Ingredients:

18 Ounce package of cream cheese
1 Envelope of Hidden Valley Dill
Seasoning Mix
3 Tablespoons of sour cream
1 Block of white cheddar cheese,
shredded

Mix all ingredients together, and pack
into mold, lined with plastic wrap.

Refrigerate for several hours, and
then unmold onto a serving tray.

Serve with crackers.

☺ *Courtesy of Nancy Woodall*

Enjoy until it's all gone!



THE END

