

# The Octagon

The Newsletter of The Classic MG Club of Orlando

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The Classic MG Club of Orlando

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## President's Thoughts

Well, Covid got us again. Due to the upswing in new infections, we had to cancel this year's Christmas Party. Nancy and Richard Payne have hosted this event for several years. Due to Nancy's love of all things Christmas and Richard's willingness to take direction, this party has been the highlight of the MG social year for all members since its inception. Thanks, Nancy and Richard for all you have done, and we all hope that next year will allow us to pick up where we left off.

At the November Zoom MG meeting with sixteen members attending, we discussed our donation history to our club charity, Second Harvest Food Bank. Dodie reported that our last donation was in June 2020. I think that the needs are greatest when the times are hardest, and it may be the time to donate again.

On a scheduling note, it looks like we have a gap in February for a driving event. For your consideration, here are a few suggestions:

- 1) Drive to the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse Museum and then lunch outside at Down the Hatch.
- 2) Drive to Lone Cabbage Fish Camp for an outdoor lunch and air-boat ride.
- 3) Drive to Valiant Air Command Museum at the Titusville airport and lunch at the Dixie Crossroads in the Gazebo (screen room).

Please consider these suggestions and contribute any other ideas you have to the group.

Wishing you and yours a happy and safe Holiday season,

Safety Fast,

*Mike McCormick*



# Choo Choo

## Good-bye our Friend

*Jan Sevcech*

Richard "Choo Choo" Germano was a long-time MG enthusiast and a friend to many. Choo passed on October 21, 2020, after a short illness. To gather some personal reflections and collect some of his history, I spoke with two of his daughters, Christina (Tina) Germano and G. Holly Germano, and his workshop buddy, my husband, Rick Sevcech.

"Thinking back on my childhood, MG's were always a part of my memories," recalls Tina Germano. "My father, Choo Choo, was an avid lover of MGs. Dad included the entire family in his enthusiasm. My sisters, brother and I loved working beside him in the workshop behind our house. He had us bleeding brakes, polishing chrome, and getting our cars ready for the next MG show. My first memory of the entire family of six together in an MG was in 1976 at the Bicentennial parade.



**Choo Choo with his MGYT**



Judson (Little Richard), Choo Choo's great grandson, tries out the MGA Twin Cam for size

"We often traveled as a family to MG shows. Dad once loaded us all up for a long, long trip driving from Waycross, Georgia to Toronto, Canada for an MG show.

"On each of our 16<sup>th</sup> birthdays, we all received an MG. Holly's gift was a 1952 TD, Tina received an 1961 MGA, Heidi's present was a red TD (year forgotten), and Choo Choo, Jr. got a 1948 TC.

"As the years passed, our children and grandchildren joined the love of MGs like their Papa Choo Choo. Dad would take our children and our grandchildren into the shop and let them play in the cars . . . they could do no wrong in his eyes. He created a special place in each of our hearts for MGs. He will be forever missed."

G. Holly Germano also recalls her father fondly. "My funniest memory was with our first MGTD. It was red with red shag carpet! We went to St. Augustine for a meet and the three of us girls rode in the back compartment and Choo Choo Jr. rode in between Mom and Dad on a cover that Dad made for the emergency brake. We were pulled over by the police who informed Dad that we needed a bigger car!

"The other memory was with my MGTF. I was so proud to help Dad in the shop with my car. I remember taking the whole thing apart for the restoration and helping to put it back together. The



first color we painted was grey and we decided it looked too much like primer, so we had it repainted in black! I remember having to wet sand forever. And then, the never-ending waxing and polishing chrome. We took it to Jekyll Island for a meet during my first year in college. I remember being So PROUD of what we had done. We won 1st place in the TF division!!"

Rick Sevcech: "Though our paths crossed through mutual friends many times, we never officially met until after we became neighbors seven years ago. Choo Choo was very warm, kind, and generous. I only wish I'd known him sooner. I helped Choo Choo work on his MGs and other collector cars. We attended MG events together and other functions as well."



Holly's MGTf

## My Dad

*Heidi Germano-Bracewell*

would drive the station wagon, hauling an MG behind us, and Dad would drive a second MG. We would go from MG show to MG show. We went to Canada like a bunch of hippies in a caravan. My brother and sisters and I met a lot of wonderful people during that trip. We saw the wonders of the East Coast and Canada.

I remember Daddy would wake up early in the morning and get out the chrome polish and the rags. He would give us some chrome polish and we would shine that car up. Usually, it was the TC and often it won the first prize. When I think back, it was a real sweet time for our family. At that time, no one thought about wearing seatbelts and so in the back of the station wagon we would have a coloring contest, my dad driving and my mom helping us to feel entertained.

In between those trips, Daddy spent all his spare time in his workshop making sure his MGs were original down to the last drop. Every nut and bolt must be true. At MG shows, I remember table after table of scattered parts and my daddy bargaining for what looked like a dirty old piece of an engine.



Choo Choo's YA  
At GOF South 2019

Now I know all those scattered pieces were priceless to him. MG's were not just a hobby for my dad, aside from his children and his family, MGs were his passion. Probably, his sanity, too, as night after night after long days of work he would spend grueling the smallest to the largest part, little by little, taking it apart and putting it back together again better than it had ever been before.

When my Father became sick recently, he wanted to walk out to his shop and look at his beautiful cars. He talked about his connection to them and the story behind each one. He was Proud of his achievements, as he should be.

# Forty-Five Years

*Glenn Brazil, story and photos*

joking and smiling. This was a trait nobody should have ever taken as a sign of weakness. If you crossed him it was at your own peril. Most people considered him a friend and many would consider him in their "close friend" group. Some people live without ever knowing a best friend. God blessed me with a best friend in my early childhood. I had a best friend in high school. I had a best friend in my career. Choo Choo was my best friend. Sadly, except for my high school best friend, my earlier best friends have passed. Now Choo Choo is gone. I am ashamed to admit it, but I actually placed a phone call to his number and realized what I had done.

Forty-five years ago my job transferred me from Valdosta, GA to Brunswick, GA. I had a couple of MGA project cars. I was trying to get rid of them before the move. A colleague told me of a man who lived in Waycross, Ga. who messed with MGs. He gave me a phone number of a shoe store and the name Choo Choo Germano. I later met him at his shoe store at about 9 in the morning. He wanted to see the car. We got into his El Camino and went to inspect the car. The 1959 MGA 1600 roadster was a good project car and I had completed 90% of the bodywork and the car was in primer. I had not touched the engine at the time, but it was a complete car with wire wheels. I had lowered my price to \$300 (this was 1975, remember). Choo Choo knew of four or five MGs in small towns all around which he checked out on the way home. After about eight hours with Choo Choo, we were back at the shoe store. We argued all day about the price. I wanted \$300; he wanted to pay \$250. Our final negotiation was he would pay \$250 and give me a pair of Adidas Country running shoes which retailed for about \$35.



Al Moss, Glenn Brazil, Jan Gardner, Choo Choo Germano  
NEMGTR Gathering of the Faithful, Toronto, CA, 1978

We moved to St. Simons Island, GA in 1975. We learned that Choo Choo's family owned a house on Jekyll Island. Our families became good friends. I purchased my first TD. Choo Choo and Ken Debellis helped me restore it. We joined Choo Choo's family and 3 MGs from Orlando and 2 MGs from Tallahassee and all drove to Toronto for the national GOF. The next year we went to Connecticut where we gathered the TA Tickford, another complete TA, and most of another TA. All this was stacked on a single-car trailer and in the back and top of a station wagon. We looked like the Beverly Hillbillies. After he moved to Yulee, we would frequently convoy to car shows.

In 1981, with Choo Choo, several MG race enthusiasts attended the Sebring Grand Prix Endurance Race. Choo Choo took his MGA Twin Cam to race. When it came time to inspect his car the officials did not pass on his inspection. Reason: Unacceptable paint scheme. The shiny black Twin



At the Sebring Vintage Races 1981, from left: 2<sup>nd</sup> - Blair Engle, 3<sup>rd</sup> - Beau Gable, 5<sup>th</sup> - Tony Roth, 6<sup>th</sup> - Will Bowden with aviator cap, 7<sup>th</sup> - Dave Raymond, 8<sup>th</sup> - Choo Choo Germano in blue Nomex.

Cam had a red and white Georgia Bull Dog head painted on the entire bonnet. There's more. It had a Georgia Bull Dog's ass painted on the boot. The seats were also kind of ratty looking. Choo Choo pleaded for a chance to improve the car's appearance for a re-inspection. Officials agreed. We found an aircraft hanger with an open door and heard someone working. Choo Choo introduced himself to a young man hammering at something. He told him of his predicament. The man said he had some black Imron paint. He said he would let us use his equipment to paint the bonnet and trunk if we prepared and sanded the parts and cleaned up. Choo Choo gave the man \$100 and the race to the race was on. Choo Choo found some terry cloth seat covers on someone's car that he borrowed and installed in the Twin Cam. Soon the paint dried and it was back to inspection. Reluctantly, the approval was given.

Choo Choo has the record for most MGs at a NEMGTR Gathering of the Faithful. He entered seven of his cars at the GOF at Jekyll Island in 1982, a whole history of the marque on display - PA, YT, YB, TC, TD, TF and MGA. Just another of Choo Choo's unique adventures.

In June 2016, we went to the national MG-2016 convention in Louisville, KY. It was a real pleasure to accompany someone so knowledgeable of the marque. Many people knew him there. We took in the National Corvette Museum in Bowling Green while we were in Kentucky. We stayed at his Tennessee mountain cottage during the travel.

There are so many good stories and not enough time to tell them. I thank God for blessing me with a friend like Choo Choo Germano. Friendship is important to a good life. Old friends are great and can last a lifetime, but you can not just make an old friend. This relationship is based on a good relationship over a period of time. Cherish old friends; they are precious. Best friends are something very special. Choo Choo was something special.

# Choo Choo Germano

Consummate Host, MG Expert

*Glen Moore, story and photos*

On the weekend of November 4, 2017, a caravan of CMGC members made their way up the Florida Scenic Highway A1A, across the St. Johns River on the ferry, and on to Fernandina Beach. It was an overnighter for club members.

We stayed at the Amelia Hotel, right on the beach-front road. Choo Choo's hotel. Of course, the group was welcomed by Choo Choo, himself. Most of the day on Saturday was spent at Amelia Dream Cars, Choo Choo's shop. The building was near downtown Fernandina Beach and was originally the Oldsmobile dealership. It housed his



collection of MGs, ones complete and shining in their perfection, and ones undergoing restoration. The collection included cars from other manufacturers, some that were for sale, as Amelia Dream Cars was also operated as a classic car sales business.

Dream Cars held the largest collection of prewar and later MGs that existed in any one place, including: NA, TA (2), TA Tickford, TB (2), TC, YA, YB, YT (3), TD (2), TD Mk II, TF, MGA (3), MGA Twin Cam (2), MGA Coupe, MGB (2), MGC (2), MGC GT, and more.

Saturday night, the group ate dinner together at the Crab Trap, Choo Choo's restaurant, enjoying the entire second floor as a private room. As always, Choo Choo gave freely of his time, expertise, and friendship to others.

Thanks, Choo Choo, for your generosity.

*(More photos can be found on the editor's blog - [Click Here](#) )*





## **November Meeting Notes**

*Submitted by Jim McSweeney*

Call to order 7:00 pm

Attendees: Mike and Carol McCormick, Scott Buie, Lonnie Cook, Pete Rogers, Allen and Sharon Wyman, Richard Payne, Glen Moore, Mike Messina, Jim McSweeney, Dodie Beach, Carol Raley, Al and Kathy Cook.

### **Old Business**

Dodie gave Treasurer's Report, no new expenditures or income.

Discussion concerning helping our club's charity, Second Harvest. Dodie verified that we had given them \$500 in June. Several ideas were discussed how individual members might help.

Jim said everyone was very pleased with the overnighter at Tuckaway Shores. We had six couples attending including 4 MGBs and 2 TDs. Event was organized by Kathy Cook. (She got to meeting after this item was discussed.)

Mike and Scott discussed the Classic 24 and other vintage events upcoming.

NAMGBR was discussed with members saying we should just continue purchasing show insurance as we have in the past.

### **New Business**

The Classic MG Club Steering Committee will meet via Zoom at 7:00 pm on Thursday, Jan 7th, to discuss the CMGC views on the shape of future GOFs and the 2022 GOF. The Committee will then coordinate with the Jacksonville Club at a future date, most likely via Zoom.

Mike and Carol discussed Apopka Wildlife Drive to be held on January 23rd.

Glen discussed Holly Hill show for school supplies that had 300 cars on October 31st. Suggested we might want to participate in next year's show, which will be held on November 6th,

### **Future Events**

Lake Mary Picnic on Saturday November 21st discussed by Carol McCormick.

Richard Payne announced he had to cancel the Christmas Party due to the increasing number of COVID cases. He said perhaps a picnic later in the year at their home might be possible.

No Zoom club meeting in December.

The Tour of Lights will continue as planned, with the elimination of the dinner at Dubsdread, also due to COVID cases.

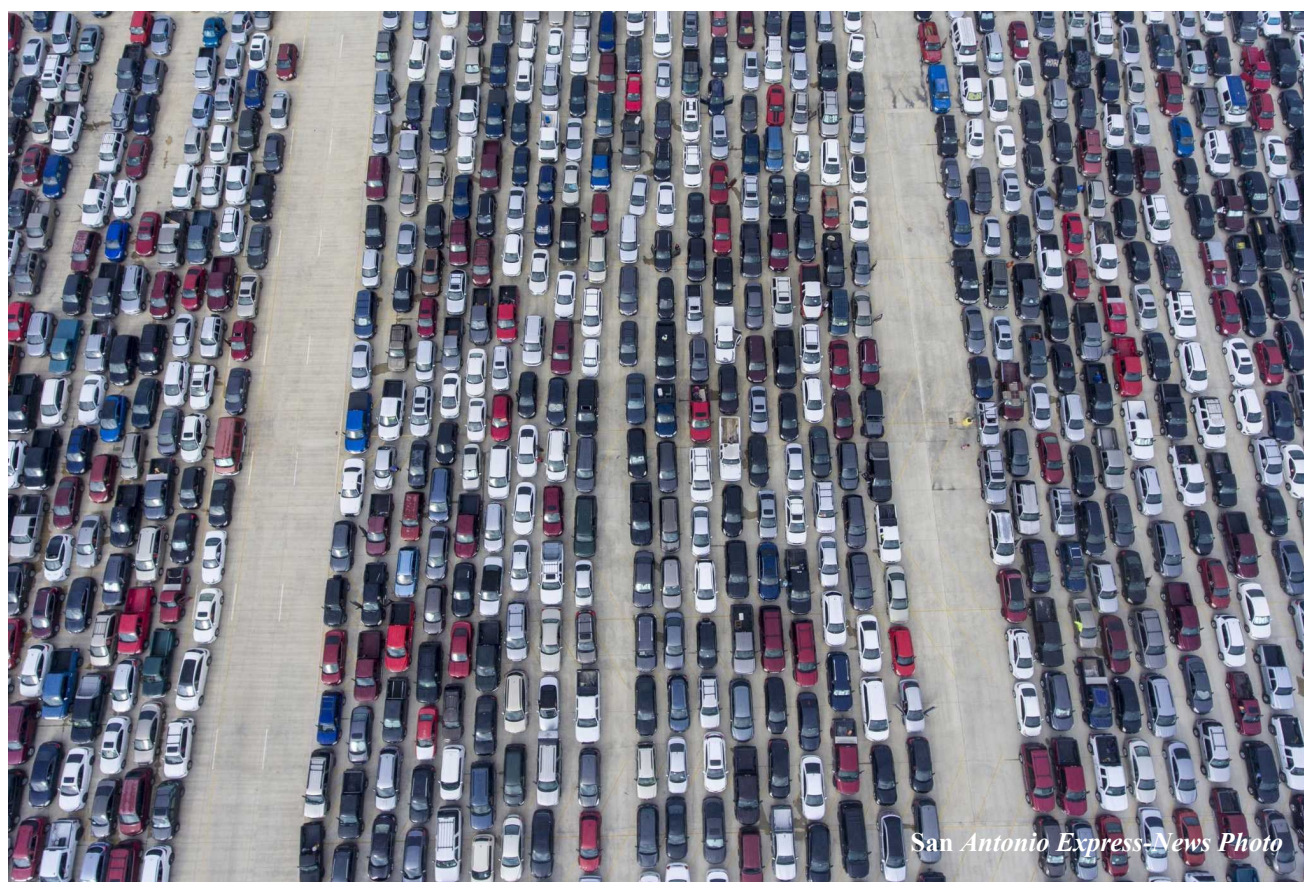
Meeting adjourned at 7:48 pm.

**There will not be a CMGC Meeting In December**

**The Tour of Lights will be held on the traditional meeting date**

**Make plans to drive your MG on the Tour**





*San Antonio Express-News Photo*

## Our Mission is Larger

With the adoption of the Second Harvest Food Bank as the club charity, the Classic MG Club of Orlando has expanded our mission past the celebration of one English car marque. Our mission now includes helping those in our community who cannot afford the basic food needs for their families.

The photo that accompanies this story is just a section of the lines of cars waiting at a food bank. It helps to visually explain the needs of our fellow Americans. In the United States, the number of people who are food insecure has increased from 30 million to 50 million since the beginning of the Pandemic - one in four children. The food needs, which are huge in normal times, have become exponentially larger. There is nothing more basic in life than having enough food.

In this season of Holidays, where many continue traditions of sharing large meals with family, we need to think of our neighbors who will face empty plates.

To the ways you contribute to others, consider adding a contribution to the Second Harvest Food Bank. Contact information is on the last page of this newsletter.





### Liberty Park in Lake Mary

Our 16 attendees, some unmasked for a brief group photo. We were delighted to see John and Jean Camichos and the weather was perfect this time.



## MG Calendar of Events

**Note** - Exposure to COVID-19 is an inherent risk wherever people meet. Please weigh carefully your personal risk before deciding to participate in our functions. CMGC expects all to adhere to CDC guidelines and take appropriate precautions. You alone are responsible for your health.

Stay healthy, for everyone's sake!

### December

- 12/12 CMGC Christmas Party, Clermont, Richard and Nancy Payne *Cancelled*
- 12/17 Tour of Lights, 6:30 pm, Maitland, Anne Plasschaert's home
- 12/? (Optional event - Tuba Festival at Winter Park, Marcia Geraci) *Cancelled*

### January

- 1/23 Lake Apopka Wildlife Audio Drive, Mike and Carol McCormick

### February

No events currently planned

### March

- 3/4-7 Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance, Cars & Coffee 3/6, Concours Show 3/7
- 3/20 St. Patrick's Day Planning Meeting, Lithia, Kathy and Al Cook

### April

- 4/10 All British Car Show, Winter Springs, Central Florida British Car Club
- 4/17-21 GOF South Mk 55, Gainesville, Florida, MG Classics of Jacksonville *Cancelled*



## Classic MG Club Christmas Party, Saturday, December 12<sup>th</sup> - 5 pm



Hosted by Richard and Nancy Payne  
20612 Angels Landing Ct.  
Clermont, FL 34715

Bring an Exchange Gift if you wish to participate.  
**PLEASE RSVP BY:** December 5<sup>th</sup> to [nancyq5@aol.com](mailto:nancyq5@aol.com)

All Meat, Desserts and Water or Soda, Coffee and Tea will be provided. (BYOB if you prefer other beverages.)

Please click the link below to see a list of side items. I will update the list as people respond so you will be able to see the items still needed.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/10hgawlk1zbiq3vBysgl4VGrfPa84KDHV2eDtCDEBI8/edit>

Please text me, Nancy Payne, 352-978-5022, with your Choice of side item or to RSVP. If your choice is taken, I will let you know and if you wouldn't mind choosing a different item I would appreciate it so we have a wide variety of sides. RSVP by December 5, 2020.

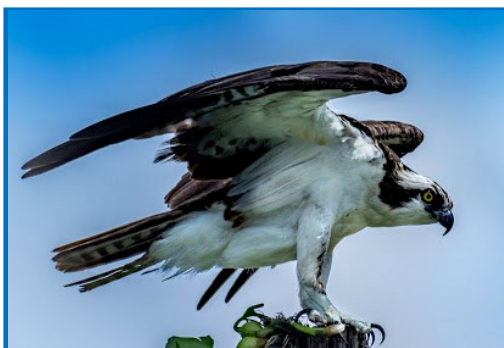
## Tour of Lights

Thursday, December 17th

We will gather at 6:30 PM for our annual Tour of Christmas Lights at the Plasschaert home at 1304 Wellington Terrace, Maitland 32751. Please park in the empty lot to the right of the house and meet us in the driveway for cider and cookies courtesy of Ann. Our neighborhood tour will begin at 7:00 pm. The Dubsread Dinner has unfortunately been cancelled because of the Pandemic. No RSVP is necessary for the Tour.



Please call Mike McCormick at 407-782-9887 if you have any questions.



## Lake Apopka Audio Wildlife Tour

Our day on Jan 23rd will begin at 9 am with coffee and doughnuts at Pavilion #3 in Magnolia Park, 2929 S. Binion Rd, Apopka 32703. We have this pavilion reserved from 8:30-4 pm, so if you would like to return after the drive, it will be available.

At 10 AM we will depart the park and drive 5 minutes to the beginning of the fabulous Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive at 2850 Lust Road, Apopka 32703. The drive is 11 miles long and ends at Jones Rd. in Apopka. It is about a 20-minute drive to return to Magnolia Park. General information about the St. Johns River Wildlife Management District, a map of the drive and a link to the Audio Tour are available at <http://www.sjrwmd.com/LANS>.

Please RSVP your attendance to Carol McCormick 407-257-1953 or [cmcarol17@gmail.com](mailto:cmcarol17@gmail.com).



# LAST SCREW IN

*Lonnie Cook*

This month's look at CMGC history is especially for those of us who are restoring an MG. Keep your eye on the goal and share the journey with MG friends.

Club member Anne Ariail bought her TF-1500 in 1965. Two years later, she gave it to Lester at their wedding. Lester says it's three-quarters Anne's, and one-quarter his. The car was in constant daily use until 2000.



Lester moved the TF to Will Bowden's "Ye Olde MG

Shoppe" in Oakland in December 2002 to start a total restoration under Will's tutelage. Club members often stopped by to lend a hand or give encouragement.

Lester worked tirelessly every Thursday for three years. Anne, an artist, stitched the seats and formulated the perfect paint color . . . "Anne's MG Red." They reached a major milestone on May 12, 2005, when, on the first try, the red beauty roared to life. That encouraged the couple to work even harder to reach their target completion date of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

They met their goal and invited the club to celebrate with a cookout at their home.

OH NO – Just before July 4<sup>th</sup>, Lester had emergency surgery so the party was canceled.

Like all dedicated MG owners, Lester and Anne bounced back. On February 18, 2006, they hosted the best restoration party ever! Their backyard was packed with MGs and friends enjoying burgers, hot dogs, beer, and a lot of tall tales. The "Last Screw In" festivities started in mid-afternoon by turning the ceremonial "last screw" in the car to commemorate the occasion. Lester proudly described the process. Anne showed her paint and interior. MG engines started promptly at 2:41 pm and drivers departed for a mini-parade around Mt. Dora.

A celebration with friends, MGs, and food (beer). It just doesn't get any better. Anne and Lester said it best in their heartfelt message to the club,



*"May you have as much love and fun in your life as you bring to ours.  
Fondly – Lester, Anne, Jodi, and Hank Ariail" (March 2006)*



# Classic MGs are in the News

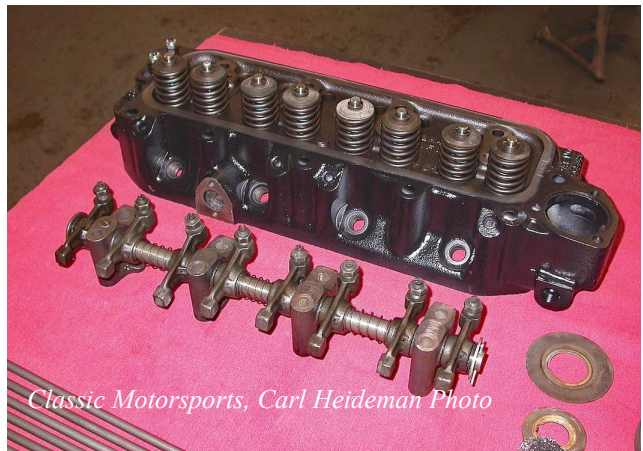
*Glen Moore*

I remember learning about sports cars through the pages of *Car and Driver* and *Road and Track* magazines that our high school librarian kept current on the shelves. Maybe I should have been studying other topics in the library, but there was much to learn in the pages of those magazines.

As with your *Octagon* newsletter, automotive magazines today have a digital version accessible online. One benefit of having content online is that it is easier to share with others. Recently, a couple of leading automotive magazines have reported on classic MGs. There is still much to be learned and enjoyed through reading these car magazines.

*Classic Motorsports Magazine*, with its world headquarters in nearby Ormond Beach, has covered our GOFs and has been a sponsor. Their print magazine is one of the few that still is on my subscription list. The online version of the magazine has had a few articles addressing MGs this summer.

MGB performance is the topic of one article: "How to Make an MGB Three Seconds Quicker in Six Steps." Author, Carl Heideman, describes appropriate modifications to the 1800cc MGB engine that result in higher power and performance. To read the article, [click here](#).



*Classic Motorsports Magazine* published an article on transforming an MGB into an MGZ in one of their 2018 issues.



It was then republished in their online magazine June, 2020, so it must still be news. The photo on the left and this article should have some familiarity to CMGC members, since the people featured in this story are active club members. Read the article: "MGZ: Zetec-Powered MGB" by [clicking here](#).





*Classic Motorsports Magazine, Zackery Mayne Photo*

An MGC is the focus of a third *Classic Motorsports* article: “An MGC Coupe That Recalls the Glory Days of Motorsports.” There were two MGC GT Sebring cars built by the competition department of MG Motor Cars. These cars raced at the 12 Hours of Sebring in 1968, one of the cars winning its class. A race shop in England built a faithful reproduction to these cars, which made it across the pond and eventually into Steve Simmons’ garage. To read the story, [click here](#).

If you follow the MG forums, you probably have met Steve Simmons. He often shares sound advice. Steve is an MG Nut. He must hold the record for the most MGs in a two-car garage - five. You can see his garage on his blog, which contains many interesting topics relating to MGs. His blog can be reached at [mgnuts.com](http://mgnuts.com).



*AutoWeek, Jay Ramey Photo*

*AutoWeek*, a long-time periodical covering automobiles and motorsports, published an article on a green MGB. Yes, the article is about the car in the photo above. It is green. You will understand when you read the article. The article could be titled: “Classic MGB Looks to the Future.” To read, [click here](#).

# MG Marketplace

## 1953 MGTD

Pete Rogers has a beautifully, newly restored 53 TD. Everyone knows Pete is a perfectionist and really does a beautiful job on his cars. Restored to all new, tires to top. Special Red exterior with a tan interior. All the extras installed are estimated at \$2500 in costs. Drives very well and the engine is especially strong. It has been rebuilt to a higher horsepower. A 3.9 diff has been installed for low rpm cruising. Car is offered at BEST OFFER. Call Pete at 352-406-1948 or email: [pfrslot@gmail.com](mailto:pfrslot@gmail.com).



**Wire Wheels** - A set of four (4) 60-spoke 15" painted wire wheels are offered by Pete Rogers. Like new. \$850. Contact Pete at the above email/phone number.

**1977 MGB** Excellent condition with only 59,000 actual miles. New tires & battery. Original sticker & journal of all service & repairs. Call John @ 352-406-2228 or e-mail [jeddmd@aol.com](mailto:jeddmd@aol.com)



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Contact the editor each month  
To keep your ad current.



*fighting hunger. feeding hope.*



Second Harvest Food Bank is the official charity of the Classic MG Club. Many people in Central Florida go to bed hungry every night. As a club, and as individuals, we can make a major difference in our neighbors' lives. The Holidays are a time focused on food and family. It is a time to help others.

Second Harvest is an efficiently-run charity with 97% of contributions going directly to help local people in need. Every \$25 donation can provide 100 meals for struggling families and kids.

Donate Online: [www.tinyurl.com/GOF-FoodBank](http://www.tinyurl.com/GOF-FoodBank)

By Mail: Checks payable to Second Harvest Food Bank of Ctrl FL, 411 Mercy Dr., Orlando, FL 32808

The MG Community is special throughout the world. Thank you for any support that you can give to the Food Bank and to your MG friends who may need help and a kind word.

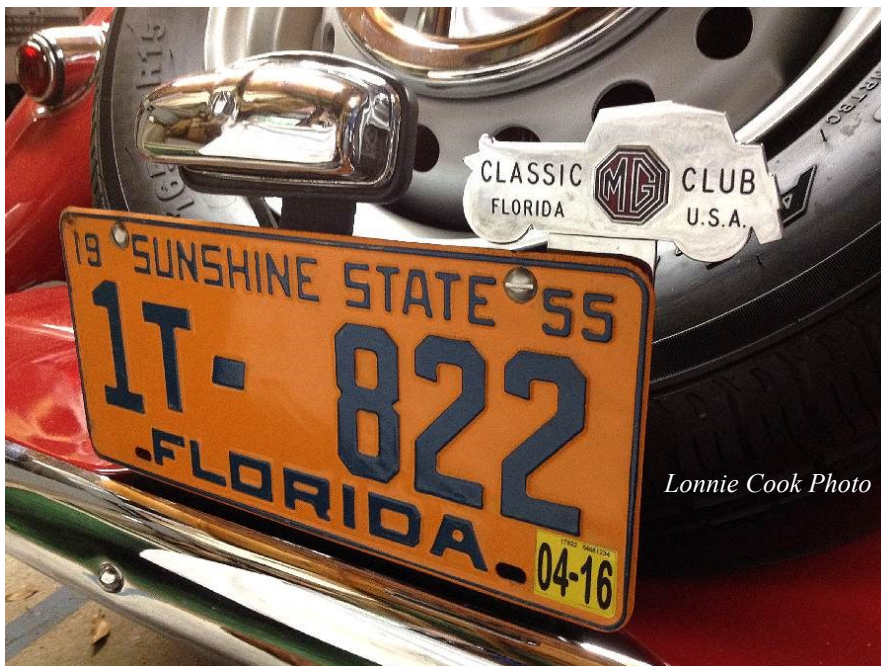
**The Classic MG Club  
of Orlando  
is an affiliate chapter  
and active supporter of:**



**NAMGAR**  
North American MGA Register



**North American MGB Register**



*Lonnie Cook Photo*

This Classic MG Club vintage badge was found by Lonnie Cook on eBay - seller from Arizona.

The license plate is an original 1955 Florida plate and is the legal license tag for Lonnie's 1955 MGTF. In Florida, antique cars built in 1977 or earlier can carry a year-of-manufacture tag rather than a newly-issued tag. A completed form, fee, and the tag must be sent to Tallahassee for approval. This tag was originally issued in Dade County (1) for a car weighing less than 2000 pounds (T).

[Tag Codes Explained](#)

