

**DISTRIBUTOR**



Mid-Atlantic Chapter, North American MGA Register

**February 2009**

**▲ Chili Party and Annual Meeting ▲**

Make plans to join us for our annual Chili Party and Annual Meeting at the home of Toby and Helen Fitzkee on March 15<sup>th</sup>. This is a potluck affair. Prepare a crock-pot of your favorite (and most secret) chili recipe to share with fellow club members and see who wins the members' blind taste vote for Best Chili of 2009. We also encourage members to bring an appetizer, salad, side dish, corn bread or dessert to share.

As usual, we will have our old favorite games, the "Car Parts Box" and "Kitchen Box" (where you try to identify the items by *feel*) and our "Collage of MG and Car-related Trivia Questions" for the tactile-challenged. Winners in each category will walk away with amazing prizes provided by the Chapter.

This is also our Annual Meeting when we elect or reconfirm our Chapter's officers and look to ensnare new volunteers for various tasks.

Directions to the party and the starting time will be included in our March 2009 newsletter.

**▲ Winter Romp 2009 ▲**

Don't let a little cold weather keep you and your favorite car inside all winter long – such hibernation isn't good for either one of you. The MG Car Club has invited us to join them on their 10<sup>th</sup> annual *Winter Romp* – a simple caravan to lunch with some of your best MG comrades.

This year they have decided to visit New Market, MD, which is up in the vicinity of Frederick. It's a great little town that boasts of a superb restaurant called *Mealies*, and a gaggle of neat antique shops all in the center of this historic and quaint village. They plan to stay off the interstates and instead take some wonderful Maryland back roads. The meeting point will be a Carderock Park, just off the Beltway on the Maryland side of the river. [Get additional information and directions at [www.mgcarclubdc.com](http://www.mgcarclubdc.com).] They will depart sharply at 9:45 am. Plan on being home safe and sound by 5 pm so you can enjoy your normal Saturday night revelries.

## ▲ **NAMGAR in Key West** ▲ **“The Last Sunset”**

2009 will be the last year for a 'NAMGAR in Key West' Regional. Join three other MGA's from our club and let's head south to sunny Florida. There will be scheduled events starting April 21<sup>st</sup> through the 25<sup>th</sup>. Our hosts, Fred and Cindy Skomp, are already hard at work making this last event even more special than the previous ones. We are returning to the Blue Marlin Motel where participants stayed 2 years ago. The entire motel has been booked by NAMGAR members and there is overflow currently available at the Hibiscus Motel, which is directly across the street. There is still time to register. Additional information about the event can be found at [www.namgar.org](http://www.namgar.org).

## ▲ **Abingdon New Year's Eve Party** ▲



Wow! What a party! We certainly had a great time bringing in the New Year with the Queen at the home of our host and hostess, Bill and Karen Marshall. England is five hours ahead of our time zone, and the ball dropped in Abingdon (home of the factory where our MGAs were built) at 7:00 pm our time! With the help of BBC, we all watched the fireworks celebration over Big Ben, wearing gala headdresses and making our own share of party noise. We celebrated the coming of the New Year and still were on their way home before midnight, tucked safely in bed before the crazies hit the roadways. What a fantastic way to bring in the New Year, with our MGA friends. A large gathering of 22 club members experienced the evening and a food extravaganza of everything from shrimp and meatballs to very special holiday desserts. All were beautifully displayed in the Marshall's festively decorated house.

An extra surprise of the evening was when we learned that Santa (Larry Newman) had recently visited Kelsey Kallapos and put a MGA rolling chassis with engine, etc. with no corpus delicti under her tree. Kelsey thanked Larry at the party by reading her "thank you" letter to him. Kelsey was also ready with her money to pay dues and become a new NAMGAR Mid-Atlantic Chapter member. Our President, Bill Marshall, then gave Kelsey another Christmas present by telling her that we were excited to have her as a new member and she didn't have to pay dues until she was 18. Kelsey became interested in MGAs after helping her dad restore his car. Kelsey explained that her goal is to have her car restored before she graduates from high school. As you can see those that didn't attend missed a great party. Thank you, Bill and Karen, for a very special night.

## ▲ T-Tech ▲

By John Wright  
Technical Advisor

It's always been hard for me to write any technical article without thinking of Bill Ludtke. Linda and I have known the Ludtkes since the early '70s, as I am sure many of you have. With Bill being a professional mechanic and me a full time hobbyist, I would often go to Bill for the inside scoop on a procedure, for a special tool, or for help in troubleshooting.

It wasn't too long before I'd call Bill and he'd say, "Uh-oh, whatdya got John"? I never really stumped him, and he always made me feel like the issue was worthy. In the process, I learned a lot along the way. His ego never needed to be stroked, as he was a friend whose only hope was that he could help you out of whatever bind you were in.

One particularly difficult situation I found myself in had to do with an OEW MGA Twin Cam roadster a friend had bought from up north somewhere. The engine would overheat constantly; in fact, the temperature gauge would rise steadily for as long as you drove the car.

I was getting a bit desperate when I phoned Bill. Did you do this, that and that too, he'd ask in so many words. Yes Bill, done all that but still it overheats, to the point of boiling in the block. He said, well, you must have a blockage in the cooling passages in the block. To which I said, cleaned all that out, seems OK. "John," he'd say, "you need to come over and get my 'special' tool." I could hear him chuckle on the other end.

So I did, and the contraption Bill had made up was a Rube Goldberg affair into which you hooked your air compressor and a water hose. A button controlled the air, and you used it by inserting the big end into the water passage through the thermostat housing (after removing the thermostat), turning on the hose and releasing 120 pounds of air pressure and water through the block.

After blasting, out came a handful of mouse nest and another handful of half-eaten acorns. Fixed that little problem. Bill gave me that tool a few years ago, and it hangs on the wall in my garage just so I can tell the story from time to time.

He always wanted to know about you and your family. "What's happening in the Wright household? Give me all the scoop. And how are the kids?" "Hello Lovely", he would greet Linda. I know that touched her. "How about Willie, Winnie and Scottie?" He knew them all, and they were always welcome guests.

Bill was a great friend and a great guy who was genuinely interested in you and your life. Always helpful and always smiling. And he knew, that we knew, that Martha made him complete.

*Editor's note: Thank you, John Wright, for your recollections of Bill Ludtke. He certainly touched the lives of all of those who knew him. He will truly be missed. [Article was originally published in the Chesapeake Chapter of the New England MG "T" Register newsletter.]*

## ▲ Petrol for the “A” ▲

[aka Ethanol Fuel (E-10) and Old Man Winter]

Winter season is upon us again. Turkey day is over and snowflakes will soon fly. By now, most of you have already topped off your tank and hung up your keys ‘till warmer days of spring arrive. Topping off after your last drive has always been a good idea to minimize airspace and prevent condensation of water vapor in older cars. But that full tank of fuel is not your father’s gas and may go stale in as little as 90 days. You see, in major metropolitan areas, gasoline companies are required to oxygenate their fuels in the winter season and they use up to 10% ethanol to do so – hence the name E-10 ( they used to add MTBE but that has been outlawed in most states ).

Like everything else in life, ethanol can be both good and bad. First of all, it can be found in most adult beverages and usually makes us feel much better after initial consumption (Pub Nights wouldn’t be the same with just soda or iced tea!). And ethanol makes your car feel better too – it raises the octane rating of lower grade gasoline by a few points and helps reduce knock and ping. Ethanol is a proven solvent that removes varnish and gum buildup throughout your fuel system. Lastly, ethanol bonds readily with water and helps remove it from your fuel. It’s even a renewable source of energy! So what’s not to like about it? Well...

It seems that after ethanol bonds with water in the fuel, the new mixture settles out to the bottom causing rust in the tank and corrosion in the steel fuel lines. Then it will continue to draw moisture out of the air until it is saturated. When enough ethanol settles out of the gas, we end up with two layers of fuel in the tank – a watery ethanol mix in the bottom and a reduced octane fuel above. This process is called phase separation. Now let’s get back to the varnish and gum that has been quietly dissolving from the insides of your tank. This will also settle out to the bottom and blend with the ethanol layer to form a “Springtime cocktail” that is certain to be the first slug of fuel coursing through the lines and clogging up your filter – if you have one. If not, it will merrily proceed to those twin marvels of modern engineering, the SUs. But wait! Aren’t there two miniature gas tanks on either side of the carbs? Something similar is probably happening there as well. And we have one more side effect to mention. Ethanol dissolves rubber components and turns them into nasty goo. Things like flexible hoses, diaphragms, gaskets, and bushings – at least we won’t have to worry about them drying out and cracking anymore. No doubt about it, there’s a party going on in your fuel system and your engine won’t feel the hangover ‘till that first startup next spring.

Enter “Better Life through Chemistry.” Nowadays, there’s a host of products called additives. They clean your engine, increase your mileage, and boost your horsepower. Why some may even improve your sex life! (an old car that actually **runs** is still a chick magnet ). Additives come in three flavors – cleaners, stabilizers, and anti-freeze. Most cleaners are high powered solvents made from petroleum distillates and many contain alcohols or their hygroscopic (water loving) cousins. Products that stabilize the fuel will keep it from going stale quickly, so there’s less chance of varnish and gum formation. They may also prevent phase separation in ethanol fuels. But some contain cleaners that are laced with alcohol. And anti-freezes are mostly alcohols or other drying agents that readily absorb water from your fuel (or surrounding air).

Many of these products have been around for years and most of them work as advertised. None of them seem to be harmful to your engine or that fresh tank of gas you just pumped in. But, let that treated blend of E-10 sit for a couple of months in an open fuel system that is vented to ambient air and problems start to show up. Members of the boating community were among the first to notice. Their engines didn’t start so well after the winter lay-up. Filters were clogged, carburetors needed repair, and fiberglass tanks were ruined

(ethanol attacks fiberglass resin, as well ) . Now most of us don't store our cars by the bay all winter long so we should experience lower humidity. But we do have vented fuel systems and many of us leave that same tank of gas sitting in there 'till the spring thaw. The same holds true for our biker buddies. This time of year can be a bit nippy –even in full leathers. So many bikes get stored for the winter with similar problems come spring.

How can we counter the effects of ethanol fuels?

- 1) Use non ethanol fuel when you find it – probably in rural areas or possibly in Summer
- 2) Keep your tank 90 – 95 % full with fresh 93 octane gasoline
- 3) Don't mix old gas with new – pump it out and dispose of it (burn it in your daily driver? ) then refill with fresh 93 octane
- 4) Use a fuel stabilizer that does not contain **any** type of alcohol – more alcohol in the mix will only compound the problem
- 5) Replace old rubber hoses with new ones – neoprene and Teflon are ok
- 6) Keep an extra fuel filter on hand
- 7) Install a water separator after the fuel filter – anyone remember draining a fuel bowl?
- 8) Drive that car whenever possible –MGs are fun even if it's cold. Besides, now you'll have an excuse to come in and warm up with a shot of ethanol in your *own* tank. When's the next Pub Night?

P.S. I am personally using STA-BIL - Marine formula and will be field testing various others this winter. If anyone has firsthand knowledge with E-10 and/or fuel stabilizers please send me note at [kkallapos@verizon.net](mailto:kkallapos@verizon.net) Maybe we can discover the best all around fix. The following fuel stabilizers do not contain alcohol – according to their MSDS:

STA-BIL - found at all auto stores and Walmart

STA-BIL - Marine formula [ found at Pep Boys and West Marine]

STARTRON - found at Walmart and West Marine

PRI-G - found at West Marine

*Editor's note: Thank you, Keith Kallapos, for this very timely and informative article. Bill Marshall also indicated that you can purchase unleaded aviation fuel WITHOUT the ethanol from local airports for "off road use only". This may be an option for filling up the final time before winter - but a \$5.00 per gallon, most likely not for everyday use!*

## ▲ Dues are Due ▲

Please find attached a Membership Renewal Form for 2009. Dues are once again \$20.00 for the year and checks should be payable to NAMGAR Mid-Atlantic Chapter. Please mail your check to our treasurer:

Martha Ludtke  
114 Wickham Terrace  
Winchester, VA 22602

As a part of our association with NAMGAR as an affiliated chapter, we are required to provide NAMGAR with our membership numbers as well as the number of chapter members

that also hold NAMGAR membership. If you are a member of NAMGAR, please indicate this and if possible, include your car's NAMGAR registration number.

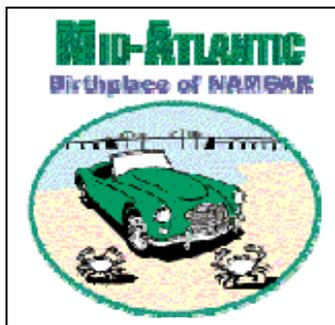
We want your MGA...  
to be registered with NAMGAR!



Membership is \$30 per year. The application form is available on-line at [www.namgar.com](http://www.namgar.com) or from: NAMGAR Registrar, 7522 SE 152nd Ave., Portland, OR 97236-4861.



Members receive *MGA!* Magazine, the bimonthly magazine devoted exclusively to the enjoyment, care, and preservation of the **MGA, Magnette and Variants**; and an annual Get-Together in various locations in the U.S.A. and Canada.

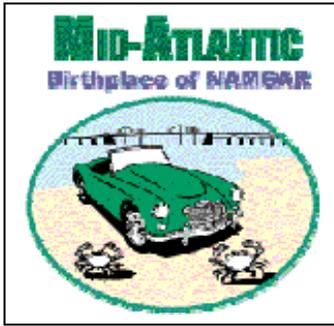


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***Mid-Atlantic Chapter***

Washington DC - Maryland - Virginia

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**Membership Application/Renewal Form**  
for the North American MGA Register  
**Mid-Atlantic Chapter**  
Washington DC - Maryland - Virginia

New Member       Renewal

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Car Information** (please complete to the best of your ability)

1<sup>st</sup> car

Style (coupe or roadster): \_\_\_\_\_

Model: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Color : \_\_\_\_\_

Chassis (VIN): \_\_\_\_\_

Body Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Engine Number: \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> car (if applicable)

Style (coupe or roadster): \_\_\_\_\_

Model: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Chassis (VIN): \_\_\_\_\_

Body Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Engine Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently a national NAMGAR member? : Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, NAMGAR Car Registration Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

NAMGAR, Mid-Atlantic Chapter dues are \$20.00 per year. Please make checks payable to "NAMGAR, Mid-Atlantic Chapter"

Print this form and send to: Martha Ludtke, 114 Wickham Terrace, Winchester, VA 22602