



# *Smoke in the Wires*

## *Monthly Musings of the Panhandle British Car Association*

August is wrapping up. We've had lots of rain, followed by even more rain this year. No major storms yet, however. We're all waiting for the letter 'I' to show up on the hurricane trackers before calming down for the end of summer. Still, we're running events and owners are getting things done.

I hear reports of cars changing hands--speculators trying to corner the market on non-running MGBs. Is there a market for non-running MGBs? How many would you need to acquire before you

created an artificial shortage that drove up prices? I don't know, but I suspect Bill Weeks would tell you that hoarding ten dead and two running MGBs is not enough to force the market.

I haven't made many events lately. While my Mini fits the LBC bill, every time I have the choice between doing an event and making progress on the Jag, I invariably spend my Saturday in the garage. I'm finally seeing the payoff. This past week, I finally

completed my engine assembly. It gleams at me from the engine stand. Sometimes I just walk out into the garage to look at it. I also have the carbs, transmission, heater assembly and powder coating all done. I'm in an electroplating frenzy right now, working on the suspension. Heck, any metal tool or utensil within reach is fair game, the results are so

cool. All I need to finish are the suspension, intake manifolds, clutch and the painting of the firewall and frames before I'm ready to bolt it all together. Still shooting for an October completion date . . .



The quality of aftermarket parts is an acute problem for classic car owners. As I discovered, this issue is second only to aftermarket owners. I've found very few nasty surprises in ten years of owning my E-Type—until now. This week, after replating my front brake calipers, I tried to fit the new seals and boots only to discover they were massively oversized. I called up the parts supplier and discovered that, no, they didn't sell me the wrong seals, rather, some

previous owner put rear brake calipers on the front. I sense an imminent and expensive brake upgrade.



If you haven't heard already, the major details of the Christmas party are finalized. On December 7th we'll convene at the Crown Plaza Grand Hotel. As always, Dirty Santa returns. I hope Midge Darby knows by now that rude-looking thing she initially 'won' last year was actually a bottle chiller! So start planning your gift-stealing tactics and look for further details here.



You may be surprised to hear that the car show planning committee has already met this month and started planning in earnest. If you volunteered last year, contributed, or ran an event and are willing to do so again, please step forward and let us know. The sooner we figure out what pieces we are missing, the better off we are. Our format is unchanged for the 2014 show with driving and touring events on Friday ending our red beans and rice mixer, followed by the show on Saturday. Minor details will change but otherwise our course is set. Just remember, Brits on the Bay is 25 & 26 April, a week later than usual due to the Easter holiday.

*Marc Cherry*

*Editor*

## MISSING THE MARQUE

**This Month's *The British Line* submission for *The Marque* by Richard Lewis**

### Working on Your Own LBC

Most of us who love LBC's have a long, and sometimes sordid, history with them, akin to taking up with a girlfriend whom you know will break your heart, but one's good judgment is overcome by a passionate, lustful craving that cannot simply be resisted.

Your loyal correspondent (YLC forthwith) is certainly no exception. His love affair began with a 1953 TR 2, a luscious, sensual creature whose throaty engine's siren song still resounded, even if, like Ulysses, one stuffed one's ears with wax. Without the knowledge of parents, YLC withdrew cash from his college fund (a minuscule hoard, as it was) in order to purchase the wench. Ah, what

delight, despite the parental disapproval! Never had he felt as fulfilled as on that first drive behind that throbbing powerhouse of an engine (in reality, a repurposed tractor mover). That thrill lasted most of those last college years, until a stoplight and a Buick, guided by a charming septuagenarian who no doubt had her mind on Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetal Tonic, drove the stake into the heart of that gorgeous voluptuary, albeit from the rear end.

Dependable and sturdy, the TR 2 had required a minimum of maintenance, and YLC was fortunate enough to be fathered by an enormously gifted aircraft mechanic, who, during school breaks, did everything of any magnitude to the car, while his son spent any available spare time with water skiing, beach going, and, yes, honesty forces him to admit,

girls. As a consequence, beyond learning how to change a tire, and even an occasional spark plug, YLC learned almost nothing of mechanics, even when in the presence of a master. Not only is youth wasted on the young, but so are brains.

However, soon marriage and a job required some kind of transportation and, combined with an insurance settlement and a wife who had been far more prudent than he in saving her summer job cash, plus time payments, all yielded up a brand-new 1959 TR 3A. Red, with a white top, enormous whitewalls, and red leather interior with white piping, made it a feast to look upon. So one arises to Asgard, Nirvana, Paradise, and all other places of ecstatic joy. What a lovely vision upon which to look!

Sturdy as she was, after a time, YLC decided he needed to do the manly thing and learn a thing or two about how to take care of this beauty. Having put a few thousand miles on it by driving back and forth to graduate school, he decided to clean the carburetors. Therefore, he unbuckled them from the engine and decided to take them apart for a cleaning. Will youth never learn prudence and judgment? It requires no great insight to realize that this was going to end badly, and it did. When it was time to leave with She Who Must Be Obeyed for a long awaited trip upon which she had looked with anticipation, the TR 3 was mortally wounded.

Realizing that he had played out his hand, even over-played it, YLC went begging, with the carbs in a paper sack, to the Triumph dealership for help in avoiding what was likely to be an explosion of volcanic fury. Saints that they were, they had her up and running the next morning, even refusing the bribe YLC had offered at the beginning of the negotiations. Surely their reward will be in heaven.

Fast forward to several years in the future, and even after some similar mechanical mishaps, YLC decided, in the interest of a father-son project, to purchase a very weary AC Sprite parked, no doubt for several months, on a side street in D. C. for the princely sum of \$250. Trailering it home to Frederick, Md., and starting to work on it in the tiny space allotted to us by She Who Must Be Obeyed, we soon had it reduced to tiny piles of what soon became unknown pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, having failed to label them properly.

Fortunately, son Tony inherited what had skipped a generation, his grandfather's mechanical talents, and, by hiring out only about half the work, we actually made the car run. And surprisingly

enough, it even looked pretty darned good, at least to us. Having spent only about ten grand on what we could have bought for about two, we had a working sports car. Eureka! And we had fun.

Subsequent years have seen similar episodes of bad judgment, including horribly expensive tussles with a Saab Sonnet, another TR 3, and a Spitfire GT 6, by a person who is almost unencumbered with natural mechanical talent, but who still enjoys working on LBC's, even if he has to do it three times in order to get it right once. No doubt, as one ages, he is sometimes less willing to climb under cars only to get a squirt of oil in the eye, or stick his hand into a greasy, filthy engine bay to get a knuckle skinned by a slipping wrench, but there is still a thrill in having done it yourself, and not always turning it over to some fellow who you know knows so much more than you do, and sometimes let you know that.

That thrill when the engine actually starts, and sings like a mezzo-soprano, or the brakes stop screaming like a banshee, and we did it, keeps us coming back for more.

Let's talk a bit about what has happened to PBCA recently, and what we have planned for the future.

## Recent

July 22- 17th Annual Pig Roast. The Schmitz, Jeannie and Tom, hosted a great event, which drew not only a crowd of PBCA members, but our friends from South Alabama British Car Club and the Marti Gras MG crowd. Everyone brought an array of sides and desserts to complement the porcine main feature. An additional treat was to view Tom's vast collection of what must have been hundreds of LBC model cars and auto memorabilia. The event was delightful and especially satisfying in that it brings us into contact with folks we see all too seldom.

August 4- PBCA Breakfast at Ace's Filling Station. Planned for Mama's Cajun Kitchen, we were disappointed that, like many restaurants, despite her great cooking of Cajun dishes, she closed the day before we were to show up. We moved quickly to Ace's, a Milton favorite, where we were treated to extraordinary service and great food. A poll of the dozen diners affirmed the desire to do breakfast on a monthly basis, so more news on that in the near future.

August 14- 6 P. M. PBCA Executive Board meeting at Sonny's BBQ. Finalizing event plans for the rest of the year and starting the planning for April's "Brits on the Bay" occupied the majority of the time. We will be sending out the events schedule for the remainder of the year immediately.

#### Upcoming

August 19- PBCA Regular Meeting-6 P. M. at Sonny's BBQ on Navy Boulevard. The usual mix of fun and business, with a program by Tom Schmitz.

Pie and Cake Bake-Off, lunch, and Bagdad and Milton Historic Area Drive. This event has been rescheduled due to logistical problems, but will be rescheduled in the very near future. More by email quickly.

August 24- Marti Gras MG Hosted Drive and Lunch at the Derail Diner, I-10 and Wilcox Exit. Our good friends at MGMT are setting this up, and it promises to be lots of fun at an interesting food locale and good driving terrain. Details, including time, soon via email. Catch it if you can.

September 7- 21st Annual Emerald Coast Car Show- Niceville, Fl. Registration 8-12, with awards at 4 P.M. There will be three British classes. A good show in the past, and this promises to be no less.

September 11- PBCA Executive Board meeting. 6 P. M. at Sonny's on Navy Boulevard. We will attend to

the usual necessary business and continue with planning for our biggest event, "Brits on the Bay," which we expect to be bigger and better than even last year.

September 14- Movie Night in Milton. More details on this event via email as they become available.

September 16- PBCA Regular Meeting- 6 P. M. at Sonny's BBQ on Navy Boulevard. Business and fun, with a special treat. Mike Darby will recount his "Out West" drive, along with his daughter, in their MGA. Many miles and adventures will be revealed.

September 20-21- Natchez, Ms. "Brits on the River" show. A great show in a charming town. Show up if possible.

September 28- PBCA Dog Days Rally and Lunch. 10:00 A. M., location to be announced via email. This event benefits the Pensacola Humane Society, and the past has seen generous donations of food and funds to benefit our animal friends. We hope SABCC and MGMT will join us.

Until next month, keep those keys in the ignition and drive your LBC.

*Richard Lewis*

President

### PBCA Officers for 2013:

<b>President</b>	<b>Richard Lewis</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Tom Matsoukas</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Marc Cherry</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Therese Hemmert</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Tom Schmitz</b>
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	<b>Richard Lewis</b>
<b>Club Regalia</b>	<b>Mickey Kay</b>
<b>Technical Advisor</b>	<b>Mike Darby</b>
<b>Webmaster</b>	<b>Mike A. Japp</b>
<b>Show Committee Chairman</b>	<b>Bob Henson</b>
<b>Show Committee Chairman</b>	<b>Tom Schmitz</b>

*Smoke in the Wires* is a publication of the Panhandle British Car Association  
Contact Marc Cherry [redshirt98@att.net](mailto:redshirt98@att.net) for questions or submissions

## PBCA EVENTS 2013 SEPT - DECEMBER

(Events in Bold and Underlined are PBCA Sponsored Events and/or considered Club Events)

(All Executive and Show Committee Meetings are open to all members)

(Watch for details and corrections in emails prior to events)

### SEPTEMBER

**Saturday 7 - 21st Annual Emerald Coast Car Show. Niceville, FL.** Regis. 8-12.

Awards 4 pm. There are 3 British Classes.

Wednesday 11 - Exec and Car Show Comm Meeting, 6:00 pm, Sonny's BBQ

**Saturday 14 - Dinner at the Wash House. 6:30 pm 17111 Scenic Highway 98 Point Clear, AL**

**RSVP to Therese Hemmert, Seating limited. See Emails**

Monday 16 – PBCA Meeting, 6/7 pm, Sonny's Bar B Que, Navy Blvd

Fri-Sat 20/21 - Natchez, MS, "Brits on the River" British Car Show. There will be a caravan to Natchez on Thursday (8/19) and possibly on Friday (8/20).

**Saturday 28 - PBCA Dog Days Rally,** 10:00 am. Start at Humane Society of Pensacola. Entry Fee: A bag of Dog or Cat Food donation to the Humane Society. SABCC and MGMG have been invited to join PBCA.

### OCTOBER

Fri-Sun 4-6 - Renaissance Euro Fest, Ridgeland, MS

**Saturday 5 – SABCC Annual Ice Cream Social,** 2:00 pm at Richard and Donna Cunningham's Garage Mahal, Daphne, AL.

Thur-Sun 9-13 "Classics at Galloway Gardens, GA - SEMGTR - MG T Series & all other MGs and Brit Cars

Saturday 12 – 7:00 pm. Henry Hensel's Annual Halloween Costume Party.

Costume, BYOB, a dish to pass. (PBCA members only please)

Wednesday 16 - PBCA Show Comm Mtg, 6:00 pm Sonny's BBQ

**Saturday 19 - PBCA Drive and Bonfire,** Manske's, Milton, FL Start drive at 4:00 pm.

Saturday 19 – Navarre Car Show. Regis 8-12, Awards 4 pm. **Two British Classes.**

Monday 21 – PBCA Meeting, 6/7 pm, Sonny's Bar B Que, Navy Blvd

Friday 25 – SABCC Car Show Welcome Party, Fairhope

**Saturday 26 - SABCC British Car Festival** , Fairhope, AL

Saturday 26 – Marine Corps League Car Show, Five Flags Speedway

**Tuesday 29 - 10:00 am Breakfast at Another Broken Egg, 721 E. Gregory, Pensacola**

## NOVEMBER

**Saturday 9 – 9<sup>th</sup> Annual PBCA Chumuckla International Airport Picnic.** Dick and Mitzi Maddux's hanger. Lunch catered by club. Desserts and BYOB recommended but not required.

Wednesday 13 - PBCA Show Comm Mtg, 6:00 pm Sonny's BBQ

**Friday 15 - PBCA Crab Boil Etc.** Manske's, Milton 5-6 pm Details TBA This will be an RSVP event due to the need to determine amount of crab to purchase.

Monday 18 – PBCA Meeting, 6/7 pm, Sonny's Bar B Que, Navy Blvd

**Saturday 23 - PBCA Blackwater Tour.** Milton. 9 am Breakfast. 11:00 am Tour Start. Location of start to be announced.

## DECEMBER

**Sunday 1 - PBCA Holiday Cake, Cookie and Pie Contest.** Bagdad Historical Museum. Meet at 10:00 am. Historical Tour of Bagdad, FL, followed by Contest and Lunch.

**Saturday 7 – PBCA Christmas Party.** 5:30 Cocktails, 6:30 Dinner. Pensacola Crown Plaza Grand Hotel, Dirty Santa Gift Exchange following dinner.

Wednesday 11 - PBCA Show Comm Mtg, 6:00 pm, Sonny's BBQ

**Saturday 14 – Lillian Christmas Parade,** 12:00 Noon. Lillian Community Center.

Monday 16 - PBCA Exec Comm and 2014 Planning Mtg, 6 pm, Sonny's BBQ

The meeting is open to all PBCA members and the 2014 Events Agenda will be planned. We will be looking for suggestions for activities for the next year and we need members ideas and input



# TOOL OF THE MONTH

By Marc Cherry

## UPS/FedEx Guy



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"Neither rain, nor sleet, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds."-- Henry Pankey, Vice President, USPS Delivery

Those days are clearly gone. Nowadays, the arrival of the postman doesn't bring a skip to your step because he's probably just bringing bills and junk. They're even threatening to stop providing that 'service' on Saturday. Lucky for us, we are capitalists and private enterprise has come to the rescue. Consider the UPS guy. EVERY time that truck stops in front of your house, the mood livens. And what about those other guys? FedEx has made themselves a legend in rapid delivery. Good stuff.

Santa comes once a year and might just bring coal.

These guys can arrive any day of the week and they always bring the good stuff. Only your wife's ETSY shopping can turn the arrival of our favorite shipping truck upon your doorstep into a bad experience. Better still, they've made a sport out of it. I can track my packages! I can track my packages on my phone! Give me an "Amen" from anyone who's ever started a project on good faith in the morning because the tracker said, "Out for delivery." Why? Because it actually shows up. However, the credit card bill from all of these deliveries still comes with the USPS guy. No wonder they've lost our love.

FedEx ended a moving cross-country in a British car nightmare and upgraded the story to a moving with a British car anecdote. It was October 2010, and we were driving cross-country in the E-Type and the Mini trying to move to Pensacola from Tucson. Ten miles east of El Paso (don't go there!) we stopped for gas. I opened the bonnet to check the oil and water only to discover that my new fan belt was clinging to life by about five strands. It was a quarter to three when I reached XKs Unlimited in San Luis Obispo, CA, as my usual east coast suppliers had gone home for the night. (3 pm works with mountain time versus eastern time too. ) Mike at XKs Unlimited promised to stop by FedEx with my emergency replacement before they closed. We limped back to a hotel in El Paso. At 9:30 am the following day, I was in the lobby of the hotel collecting my new belt. Cheap? No, but the \$50 air freight worked amazing and was cheaper than another night in El Paso or a tow truck. By noon, we were on our way again. Brilliant!

Now I'm in the middle of spending thousands on a planned engine rebuild. The UPS guy has been around enough lately that he's able to recognize my usual suppliers and the packages that contain car parts. After his initial "What are you building?" query, he now greets my wife with a cheery, "Here are some more car parts!" I'm practically doing him a service by providing him with job security. I certainly couldn't get those parts locally at NAPA, much as I love those guys. Not only that, the postal service won't deliver the niftiest of the chemicals my project requires. I mean, really, those things only cause cancer in California. There shouldn't be any problem sending them here. UPS Ground doesn't think so either.

# Distractions

## Convert a Drive-In Theater Speaker Into A Music Player

By Marc Cherry



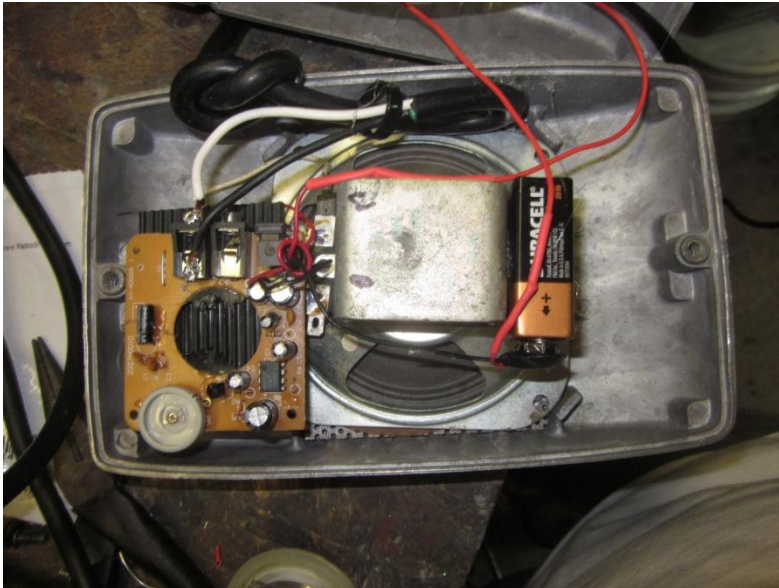
I love functional antiques and have limited space for antiques that only serve a decorative use. I've had this cool speaker unit from a drive-in movie theater in my small automobilia collection for some time. I've long been considering several methods of using this to play music from my phone or iPod. So I was happy to turn the drive-in unit from a decorative antique to a functional one, with little loss in overall value.

I stopped at the local Radio Shack and grabbed a \$14 speaker/mini amp combo and a couple of mini audio jacks. I kept my project costs well under \$20, not





including the cost of the cool antique speaker. The only modification I made to the speaker housing was to widen an existing hole on the window hanging bracket on the rear of the speaker to accommodate an on-off toggle switch. I opened up the new speaker/amp unit and disconnected the hopeless, tiny cheap speaker that came with it and soldered the leads onto the speaker and volume knob that had been with the original speaker for 60 years. I was not trying for hi-fi sound here, just a mellow mono sound that was appropriate for this device. I had already tested the old speaker and was happy with the sound.



I wanted to keep some of the heavy black cord that linked the speaker unit to the stand it hung on, when it once did its job at the drive-in. I had some heavy electrical cord and used it in lieu of speaker wire. At the end of a four-foot length I soldered in a 3.5 mm stereo plug so I could plug that into any standard audio device. On the other end, I tied a knot to hold it inside the speaker unit and soldered the wires direct to the amplifier. I turned up the amplifier to mid-range and wired the toggle switch into the battery circuit.

With the heavy lifting done, I secured everything inside the case using a hot glue gun. I polished the case with a buffing wheel, nickel-plated the speaker grille, and screwed it all together. Now I have a cool retro music player for the garage.

