

Member Featured Car of the Month September 2011

Lois & Dave Gribler's 1972 MG Midget

By Dave Gribler

The Midget was acquired in the fall of 1981 as a replacement for a very rusty 1968 Austin Healey Sprite that had been sold to be parted out a few weeks earlier. The Midget was purchased from former club member Paul Wehner. Shortly after purchasing the Midget, Lois noticed a student in her middle school math class sporting a MG Car Club t-shirt. The boy turned out to be Clark Wolfe, the son of John and Linda Wolfe, who confessed that there was in fact an MG Car Club in Dayton. We immediately joined the club and began attending the monthly meetings at the Urban Suburban tavern in Kettering.

The car was used as a year round daily driver until 1988 when it was taken off the road for new rocker panels, door post skins and front fender patch panels. The car was stripped to bare metal and repainted in the same 1970's white Ford lacquer it sported when purchased. This work certified my complete lack of ability in the field of body work and cemented my distaste for prolonged rubbing with sandpaper in a circular motion. The refreshing work was completed in time for Joanne to take her very first ride in an MG at the ripe age of 3 days (yes, of course the top was down). Much shopping was done in advance of this event to find a child car seat that would fit on the rear deck behind the seats. A few months later the car was struck in the rear by a moron in a Chevy S-10 and required a rear valence transplant and another paint job; enamel this time. There may have been an engine refreshing and a clutch at about this time as well. The Midget was on the track at Indy for NAMGAR GT-14 in 1989, was driven to a win in the road rally at the University Motors Summer Party in 1995 and at Indy again for the first all MG meet in 1996. It was the only MG in the fleet until the MGA was purchased in 1986.

The engine was rebuilt in 2002 with new pistons, new cam and balanced and a refurbished gearbox installed. Joanne became proficient driving with a manual transmission in this car just after her 16th birthday in 2004. The Midget was removed from service again in 2005 for floorboards, rocker panels, front and rear fender patch panels and replacement of the poorly repaired rear valence. The color was changed this time to the original Snowberry (ow! that hurts my eyes! that white is really WHITE!) White. New chrome and rubber bits are also being installed. Reassembly is currently proceeding at an amazingly excruciatingly slow speed, having been interrupted for a



complete refurb of the MGA. The Midget's new carpets were installed this spring and the seats recovered during the summer. Installation of the new top is up next to be followed by the remaining exterior bits and light fixtures. A slight struggle is expected in getting it in running order as is the usual case with a car that has not been used for six years. Expect to see the Midget on the road for summer 2012 events. Lois is very anxious to have the car back as it is the first family MG and her favorite.

