

# Member Featured Car of the Month February 2009

## Dave McCann's '74' Red MGB

by Dave McCann Sr.

My interest in MGs started in High School, when an older neighbor bought a TD. I drove this car to my Junior Prom. When I was in college my fraternity big brother bought a brand new MGB. I drove this car frequently. I never had the opportunity to get a British car to play with until my son bought an MGB in 1995. That brought back a lot of old memories and I started looking in classifieds. I came across this red 1974 MGB in the summer of 2000. It was a joint purchase between the two of us.



The car, as purchased, had a problem: It would not run at a constant speed although it accelerated just fine. The first thing I did was to change the oil and the **spark plugs**. That didn't make any appreciable difference in the tune, so I took the car to D&S Auto in Springfield. Bill Stitsel (the S in D&S) used to work for Fountain Imports when they sold MGs. What's the first thing Bill did? You guessed it. He changed the **spark plugs**. And, of course, his brand of **spark plugs** didn't work any better than mine had and so did not improve the situation. Over a period of a year I took the car to several good mechanics, none of whom fixed the problem. Eric Jones in Delaware, started by changing you know what?" **The spark plugs.**" This time the distributor cap, wires and other related parts were also changed--Still no improvement to the running of the car. Other mechanics worked on the car and made similar changes (i.e. the **spark plugs**), with similar results. The engine was even rebuilt (although that was for unrelated reasons) without improving the constant speed operation of the car. Finally, a solution! At one of John Twist's Summer Parties we were talking to Bob Connell (Bob has a British Car Shop in Indianapolis) and he agreed to take a look at the car. He looked at it there in the parking lot of the event hotel, and suggested a solution, but not before a bystander with very good intentions asked, "Have you changed the **spark plugs**?" Bob looked at the vapor recovery return line attached to the carburetors and said that it shouldn't be hooked up if there was no longer a charcoal canister in the system. With this change, the car ran great and has run fine ever since.

Early on, I took my MGB to a local tire place to get a look at the under side of the car, but they were afraid putting it on the lift might break the car in half. I drove it across town to a friend's welding shop, to see if he could do anything with it. The next time I



saw it, there was little between the firewall and the battery boxes. He had made a brace structure out of square steel tube stock that connected all four corners of the car and then installed new floor pans. I then added the Sebring cowl to the front of the car, after seeing Mike Maloney's. The next problem to be tackled was the brakes. This was all within the time in which the tuning had been looked at by several people. Until the other problems were solved, it wasn't always clear that the tuning problems hadn't been solved.

The car was trailered to several events in the first couple of years, before we got around to fixing the brakes to the point that the car could be driven more than a few feet at a time. (That may be a slight exaggeration, but at times we were lucky to get on and off the trailer undamaged). The car isn't perfect (far from it), but has been driven to Gatlinburg for MG2006, and it towed the 'supply' trailer to Richmond, Virginia. From there the trailer was taken to Key West Florida behind my son's 1964 MGB. We added the umbrella and table, after taking the Tom Ball tour. There are other things I'd like to do to the car, but I now have a 1969 MGB/GT in the driveway that is commanding more of my attention.

#### The McCann Clan



