

## Val Howard-Hogue

My first recollection of British cars was from the British TV show "The Avengers". What girl did not want to grow up to be Emma Peel or Tara King? I was young enough at the time that I had to take a nap and then get woken up at 10:00pm to watch this show weekly on Fridays. This was followed by James Bond movies and his British cars! I was not sure I wanted to be one of "Bond's girls" as they usually ended up dead. My Mom claims that gasoline (leaded at the time) smelt so good to her when she was pregnant with me that she wanted to drink it. Talk about strange cravings?? This must have been a sign. My Dad owned a 1956 Ford T-bird which looked a great deal like the one in America Graffiti with port holes in the hardtop and a Continental kit wheel on the back bumper. We took the T-bird to many carshows, and my dad would look for any British cars expressly for MGs (TDs) that might be there. He had a real fondness for TDs.

When it came time for me to go to college, my dad and I looked at several makes of cars for me to purchase which included MGBs. He thought it would be fun for me to have a convertible. We looked at 28 MGBs that summer and found the "one" in mid-August which was two weeks before I started school. I figured out how to drive a stick in two weeks with help and instruction of course from my dad. What a cool dad to urge his daughter to buy a rag top and my MGB was so much better then driving my mom's 1970 Mercury Monterey Custom which was a land yacht. I was encouraged by my parents to join an MG car club, but there were none in Sacramento, CA at the time. There were some folks in contact with the local British car dealership that had an interest in forming an MG car club as well, so we did and the Sacramento Valley MG Car Club was born. My orange 1970 MGB and I have had a lot of adventures and I still have that MG which currently needs a full restoration. I met my husband, Corey, through the Sacramento Valley MG Car Club. We got married and bought a house, etc. but did not sell my MGB. In time, we bought more British cars and then moved to five acres with a small house and built a shop to work on the British cars.

I have held several offices in the SVMGCC over the years and I am currently the Treasurer and Membership Chairperson. Lawrie and Jane Alexander moved to the area around 1992 and they joined the SVMGCC, and it was here by Lawrie that I was introduced to the GoF West events. Corey and I helped Lawrie when he chaired a GoF West event in Lake Tahoe in 1993 at the Cal Neva resort to do the scoring for the car display. Corey and I have been to many GoF West events by now and I served as the event Register, Website, and most of the Printed materials creator for the GoF West Event in 2015. It was shortly after this GoF West event that a couple in our Club had decided to sell their 1953 MGTD and I purchased it. Now that I had a running TD, I had to master driving it and I did as it is a little different from a later model MGs. The engine was rebuilt by Skip Kelsey and a previous owner of the TD was Dan Canada (British Wire Wheel), so this added to the appeal of this particular MG TD.

In 2018, I was elected to the GoF West Steering committee in Lake Tahoe, CA. I have experience with organizing four Jaguar Club of North America Concourse for the Sacramento Jaguar Club and I was able to serve as a judge for these as well. I have organized numerous events for several of the places I have worked and some included car displays. I cannot imagine my life without British cars (the T-Bird included although it is not British) and the people and the experiences they have brought to me. That eccentric little girl grew up to be a car crazy woman who is living her dream. Thanks for coming along for the ride with me.