Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays from Bay State MGA Club!

As our driving Season here in the Northeast is winding down (or already ended) it is time to reflect on the year and prepare for the next. At least for me, 2014 was a great year for driving the MGA. The weather was a bit cooler and a lot less rain than in some previous years which allowed me to get the car out with the top down a lot more. I am sure many of you will recall the various shows and events in which we met up with our cars. The summer picnic did have a lot of rain, but we still drove the cars (they won't melt) but all the other events had good weather. I did drive the MGA on November 15th and will again if the roads are clear. Some of the events this year which the club sponsored or participated in were: Annual Spring Tech Session, Spring Driving Tour to Nashoba Winery in Bolton, MA, British By The Sea, BSMGAC Summer Picnic (and Tea at Geoff and Andrea Rogers', MG Day at Larz Anderson Auto Museum, BCNH Show of Dreams in Hudson, NH, and The British Invasion in Stowe, VT.

I received a call from club member Rob Morgan on day in October in which he wanted to discuss a problem he was having with his MG engine. He said that the oil pressure had been really great, around 60 psi. Then all of a sudden it became very low, but there was plenty of oil in the engine and there was no rod noise or any other indications that would create oil pressure loss. Some of the things we discussed included thin oil due to flooding carburetors, bearing wear, oil pump issues such as a clogged oil pick-up in the sump, and the oil pressure relief valve. I had seen a problem one time before where the oil pressure relief valve got stuck part way out which allowed the oil to be diverted right back into the sump. The oil pressure relief valve is located at the rear lower side on the left side of the engine. There is a large cap that holds it in place and can be accessed from underneath the car without too much trouble. Usually, once the cap is removed and the spring removed the plunger should be pretty easy to pull out with a magnet. The last time I found this problem I dropped the oil pan and I could see the end of the plunger part way back from its' seat even with the spring tension on it. By pushing on it with a tapered punch it came loose and was able to be removed. Rob came up with a much easier solution. By just removing the cap and spring, he was able to use a 1/4" pipe tap and engage it into the cupped end of the plunger and extract the plunger. He renewed the parts and now the engine has good oil pressure again. So, next time you encounter low oil pressure, particularly if it comes on suddenly, check your oil pressure relief valve as one of the items to make sure it is moving freely.

Another issue I have seen twice this year is called exhaust valve recession. This is caused by the hot exhaust gases passing between the exhaust valve and the valve seat. When it gets very hot the valve and seat "weld" and tiny bits of metal are eroded from the valve seat causing it to recede or get lower. This causes the valve lash (gap) to get smaller over time requiring adjustment of the valve lash periodically to maintain efficient engine operation. Eventually this can become so bad that the valves can no longer be adjusted to maintain valve lash and the valve will stay open causing loss of compression. This is typical of old engines, particularly those designed with "soft" valve seats. This is the case of all the MG engines built before unleaded fuel was mandated (around 1975). Unleaded fuel and ethanol fuels tend to run hotter than leaded fuels and

exacerbate the problem. Because we don't drive the cars as much as we do our modern cars it may take a long time for this problem to become apparent, but the ultimate solution is to rebuild the head with hardened valve seats and valves. I saw this yesterday on an old snow blower engine Don Tremblay had me take a look at to figure out why it was not getting compression as well as a used MGA 1500 engine that I bought. Perhaps fuel additives such as Re-Lead might help, but I think it will eventually turn into the rebuild solution anyway.

Stay tuned for the upcoming BSMGAC Annual Planning Meeting and enjoy the holidays. Be safe and stay warm!

Safety Fast,

Jack Horner
President, Bay State MGA Club

Ira Cohen's MGA: