

Happy Holidays and a Rant against MassDOT

I want to wish all the BSMGAC members a Happy Holiday Season. Regardless of your religious beliefs and observance of various holidays, this is the season to think about family and others and give thanks for the many things given to us. Have charity for others less fortunate than ourselves and if you are in need, don't be afraid to reach out and ask someone for help. We probably won't have many opportunities to enjoy driving our MGAs for the next four or five months, but if you do keep your car ready and you get the opportunity, get it out for a drive. Remember when our MGAs were actually every day drivers and we drove them in the rain, snow, and ice! It really was not that long ago.

Now for my rant. Over the years I, and many others who love old cars, have purchased "basket cases" and even drivable MGs at low prices and the state of Massachusetts charged a tax on the sale price, whatever was on the title and bill of sale. Since 2009 MassDOT has changed that because we, as individuals, cannot be trusted. They now use the Hagerty price guide with a minimum of a car in "fair" condition. So, two years ago I bought a 1973 MGB roadster driver from a friend in the MGT Party for \$2000 and MassDot said it was worth \$6,500. So, I had to pay the tax on \$6,500. The car had been freshened up in the 1980s and had faded paint, a bad interior and top, rusted fenders, sills, and floors and although it ran well it really needed total restoration. You may have seen me drive this car to various events the last couple years, so, you may know what I am talking about. I know that Massachusetts is short on money, but do they have to use the old car hobby as a way to make up the deficit? If a dealer sells a car, MassDot uses the price on the paperwork from the dealer as the price, so, why don't they trust us old car people? Below is a picture of my MGA coupe. Hagerty has an average price of \$17,000. Does this look like a \$17,000 MGA? And yet, the Registry of Motor Vehicles does not care if it is a pile of parts, they charge a tax on what the car will be worth once you spend \$30,000 restoring it.

Please forgive my rant. I just needed to vent and prepare anyone who has not purchased a vintage car recently to be prepared for a shock when they go to get a title in MA. Dana Booth knows what I am talking about since he just purchased a 1955 Austin Healey 100-4 that has been heavily modified. Even though he paid a lot for this car, MassDOT said it was worth \$40,000 (a lot more than he paid for it).

Safety Fast and Happy Holidays,
Jack Horner
President, Bay State MGA Club

