

The Second part of the Fuel Tank Story

As you may recall from the results of the BSMGAC 2018 Spring Tech Session, Ira Cohen had a problem with the fuel tank he had purchased about 10 years ago. We were able to work around the problem by running a fuel pickup line into the filler neck and attach it to the fuel pump. He was able to drive home that way and then back to my house to replace the tank again on May 26, 2018. Between the tech session and the end of May I ordered two new tanks from Moss Motors. There was a problem though and the tanks were damaged when they arrived, so, Moss Motors sent me two more tanks. These arrived without any damage. They were of very good quality and were very close to original in appearance. I decided to replace the fuel tank in my 1960 MGA Coupe at this time since I had been getting rust particles in the fuel filter and it was becoming clogged and blocking fuel flow. I also was having some issues with the float bowl jets getting stuck open and causing the carbs to flood. When I first started this project I had the car running and driving (in the driveway) after it sat for about 25 years in the corner of the garage. When I took the tank out and cleaned it and painted it I did not see any obvious issues and I did not get any rust out of the tank when I drained it. There were also no indication that there was debris inside. After putting about 5 gallons of fuel in the tank and running it for a few weeks is when the problems started occurring. Apparently the new fuel sloshing around loosened all the crud. See the photos of what I found inside! Apparently someone had fun with this MGA at the beach.

I installed the new tank from Moss Motors and replaced the fuel filter (See Photo) and also installed Gross Jets to fix the flooding issue. I like to have a fuel filter that is clear plastic just before the carbs so I can see what is happening. The original design did not have a canister type fuel filter, just a screen at the fuel pump and a screen on the input of each float bowl. Since I have a solid state aftermarket fuel pump it does not care about small debris in the fuel. But, having the visible fuel filter helps diagnose issues with fuel supply to the carbs. I have not had any issues since I did these repairs (before the BBtS show). I actually got detoured while returning to my trailer and truck after the show and had to take Interstate 95 to get back to CT Route 85. I went the wrong direction the first time and did perhaps 15 miles at speed and then I went the correct direction and the car did 70 mph just fine for a number of miles. So, I don't think I am going to have any more fuel issues.

So, Ira showed up and we put his car back on the lift. It was much easier this time since everything had just been apart. We took out the other tank and put the new one in. Once we filled it with fuel we checked the sending unit again as we noticed that the contact was not tight on the new sending unit and we were afraid the internal wire may have broken. It was a bit dicy, but after fiddling with it a bit we had the gauge working correctly. We may end up having to replace it in the future if it acts up again. One thing we learned is that it is best to leave the straps loose around the tank (or loosen them once the tank is up) in order to get all the screws in place around the filler neck gasket and plate as the neck can be off to one side just enough to prevent the screws from aligning. We had to place a 2X4 between the tank and the rear spring to move the tank over about 1/4".

Now, I know what many are thinking: Why did I not clean the gas tank in the first place, just to be sure? Well, there is not good answer to that question, chalk it up to living and learning. I did save the old tank and will clean it out. The new tanks are not very expensive, so, they are a great alternative. It used to be that one had to take a tank to a professional (such as a radiator shop) to be cleaned out properly and sometimes repaired, but with the availability of quality replacement tanks today, it is probably not cost effective to have an old tank cleaned. You can do it yourself; there are many suggestions on how to clean and prep/coat a tank.

I feel much more confident with the new tank installed in taking the MGA Coupe on longer trips now.

Safety Fast,

Jack Horner
President, Bay State MGA Club

The old filter and a pile of rust from draining the tank Notice the sediment inside the filter:



Some of the other stuff found inside the tank including sticks, stones, and two syphon hoses!

