

# THE OFF-SIDE UNDO

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“A gentleman does not motor about after dark” Joseph Lucas

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## Midget Rendering Party

By Charles Durning / Photos by Donna Durning

Ants! I hate ants!! Especially red ants!!! In digging through the classifieds on Craigslist I found a Midget that was destined for a date with the crusher. It was a bargain. In looking at the pictures there was a good reason for its ultimate fate. Now a rational thinking person would have said good riddance, not me. I looked past the tatty body and saw the heart of a beautiful lady. In reality I couldn't let a 1275 engine, rib case transmission, and a 3.90 diff suffer an undignified death at the jaws of a shredder.



One Forlorn MG Midget

After weeks of wrangling the seller and I came to an agreement on price. So I set out to Grenada at 5am on a Saturday since I had to be back for a tech day at Gene and Martha's house by 11. After missing a couple of turns I finally arrived at the resting place of the poor dejected Midget. She was full of leaves, hay, and ANTS. All 4 tires were flat and rotted off of the wheels. And oh the rust, I needed a tetanus shot just to be within a mile of this car. The shift lever didn't move and I couldn't tell if the engine would turn. In spite of all that I could tell she had a beautiful heart. Several hours later I arrived, with my "field

find” in tow, at the EMC tech session. The Midget was an immediate hit. EMC members swarmed over her rusty hulk like ants. Did I say ANTS? Some were saying what a POS but others could see her hidden beauty. Some even laid claim to her component parts. There was even a suggestion of a full restoration. HMMMMM, no.



Newly adopted Midget arrives at home

Once back to the house Brother Clay and I proceeded to prepare the Midget for its ultimate fate. The first challenge was to get her off of the trailer. With 4 flat tires she wouldn't roll. Then a thought occurred that I have 4 Morris Minor wheels without tires. That ought to get her rolling. Then I discovered the rear brakes were locked up. Not a problem I would use a puller to get the rear drums off.



Midget on stilts

Well that didn't work. After some serious ruminating a thought occurred; drill some small holes in the drum faces and use a seal extractor and a hammer to get the drums free. It worked! Now the car would roll. The next challenge was to clean out all of the trash, UGH. The big stuff was easily extracted after donning some gloves. Did I mention red ants? Those things hurt. For the smaller stuff I got out the shop vac. That is when I found the car was writhing with RED ANTS. Out came the ant poison and we called

it a day. The next day the seats were removed and the rest of the dirt leaves and dead ants were removed. All in all the leaves, dirt, and dead ants filled a 33 gallon trash can.

On Monday the Midget rendering party was announced for the following Saturday morning at 10am. Sloppy Joes were promised for all who attend. Brother Clay and I started to attack the Midget at 8am, Keith Anderson joined in at 10 and then Brother Gene and Steve Whitlow arrived at noon, just in time for lunch.



The rendering staff

I wanted to salvage the engine, trans and diff. Keith wanted the front disc brakes for his Bug Eye Sprite, and Clay, Gene and Steve just wanted to take out some revenge on a poor, helpless, LBC. All



Let me see Larry, Moe and Curly?

accomplished our goals. In the process we used a saws-all, cutting torch, chisels, hammers, and various sockets and wrenches. The greatest emphasis was on the hammer and torch. Poor Steve I could see that he was tearing up over the loss of another midget. He hugged and kissed the poor LBC as it gasped its last breath and finally passed away among friends and one loved one. At least she didn't die alone in a field. Its donated organs will bring new life to some deserving LBCs. Next week its rusted remains will

be off to the crusher for a proper burial. Its hulk of a body will come back to us in the form of a Japanese car or a washing machine. I'm sure it will live a long and useful life in its reincarnated form.



In the end it was a very moving experience

All parts went to good homes. Keith harvested the coveted entire front suspension for his Bug Eye, I got a 1275 that turns, a trans of unknown condition, and a great looking 3.9 diff. Clay, Gene, and Steve got the satisfaction of beating up a rusty hulk with a bug hammer. The day was time well spent. I give my thanks to Clay, Gene, Keith, Steve, and mostly Donna for putting up with our mania.

R.I.P Little Midget

PS. For your enjoyment you can catch the excitement of the Midget Rendering Party here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvpO9ZTOwMA>

## **2014 EMC / Deep South Alfa Romeo Club Christmas Party**

Wow! What a crowd! The 2014 was one to top all recent co-club parties. The turnout of guest was a veritable who's who of car fanatic's from all corners of the state. Pat and Barbara's garage in Vicksburg was just about full to the rafters with revelers from the EMC, DSAR Clubs as well as Porsche and Mercedes club members. Jim Albritton made the gathering with a nice sampling of his canvases. If you're interested in seeing his work check them out at <http://fineartamerica.com/profiles/jim-albritton.html>.

If you missed out on all the fun you can catch a glimpse of Donna's video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTzNVzYEMtk>

HO HO HO! And Merry Christmas to all!

### **Other Exhaust Rattles**

Royce and Sherry Boyer sent in a note just before Thanksgiving. Missing but not forgotten they'd been exercising the Sunbeam Tiger on a regular basis, enjoying the very pleasant weather.

John Turbeville has been in search of new volunteers to replace the chicken wagon. He returned from the far north returning with a Mercedes to support his chicken greasing habit.

Clay Johnston and Charles During have turned into a very developed assault team. Within days after the November Tech Session they had yanked the engine out of Bro. Clay's MGB for a look see at a couple of niggling issues. The engine is now up at the machine shop getting the once over. Fingers crossed it'll be back in shape for spring.

On Veterans Day Keith Anderson went over to John Turbeville's shop to play with cars. They removed the remaining rear fender and worked on the wooden rotisserie for his 1969 TR6. It now holds the car upright on its side without the aid of an assistant or prop. It was lifted up and mover dollies were placed under the supports making it able to roll about the shop. Now working on the underside should be a breeze with easy access.



John in the tub

On December 20<sup>th</sup> fifteen or so EMC members and friends gathered in Flora for a trip up to a LBC (and Alfa/Mercedes) bone yard out in the far reaches of North West Madison County to the small community



A forlorn GT6 in Kearney Park

of Kearney Park. Several brought trailers in hopes of a returning home with a gem. Although a few offers were extended no deals were struck and all trailers returned home empty. All did enjoy the trip looking over perhaps 20 to 30 orphans that'll soon be off to the crusher.

That's it for this edition of the Off-Side Undo. The EMC's January 17, 2015 meeting will be a great time and we hope that everyone within reading distance of this e-mail will make plans on attending. Some important decisions regarding the leadership and direction of the club will be discussed along with the 2015 calendar so we'd like everyone's input. We've sent out feelers in pursuit of a new editor of the OSU and web-site person for the EMC beginning in 2015. This will open up new opportunities and we hope that others will step up to take a role with your EMC.

Merry Christmas and a Happy Motoring New Year in 2015!

The EMC

### **Upcoming Events**

**January 17, 2015 - EMC 2014 Awards & 2015 Kick-Off / Jackson MS** - We had such a great time at Sal & Mookie's the last 3 years that we decided to revisit for 2015. Don't forget to bring your party hats along with awards for those that generated memories for you in 2014. Be careful what you wish for as a few of those awards that were so sought after in 2013 will be passed along and who knows you may be the lucky recipient this time around. New awards are always welcome! The fun and frivolity begins at 11:30am. Lunch will be from the menu. For a good time, Contact Gene Johnston (601) 201 - 0801 or John Turbeville (601) 940 - 5288.