

THE OFF-SIDE UNDO



“A gentleman does not motor about after dark.”

Joseph Lucas

December 2022



Merry Christmas!



A SPRITELY ST. NICK

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DISTRIBUTOR QUANDARY

By Charlie Durning



While I had the transmission out of the GT for a transmission swap, I took the time to remove the distributor cap for an inspection. The cap had not been out for years and the engine was running great. The first thing that I noticed was an unusual amount of carbon smatter across the top of the rotor. HMMM... that's strange. For some reason, that peaked my curiosity. The cap looked great inside, except, I noticed that the witness marks on the inside of the cap showed that the rotor might be out of phase with the cap. Hmmm, that's strange.

The last time I had the cap off there was some strange burn marks on the cap. Apparently, the mark was from the rotor through the cap material to the terminal in the cap. What was strange is the engine ran fine. At that time I had attributed the burned cap to the way the cap was made. That cap was made such that the cap could be attached incorrectly. The replacement cap did not have that feature. So I replaced the cap and moved on.

Back to the issue at hand. What was found was that at TDC the rotor was about 15 degrees counter clockwise past the terminal in the cap when the coil fires. The rotor on a B Series engine turns counter-clockwise. Then the mechanical advance moves the rotor another 20 degrees farther away from the terminal. That means that the spark has to go about 1/2" from the rotor to the terminal in the cap.



This distributor has an Accuspark electronic conversion. There is a magnetic ring that goes over the cam of what was originally a points type distributor. That ring passes by a magnetic pickup that is attached to the mounting points for the points. That is a clever but flawed design. In spite of that “flaw,” the MG engine still ran great.

Bro Clay and I put on our combined heads together to come up with a solution. In the end, we could not come up with solution. We put the whole thing on hold for another day. Then that night my brain went “ding” and a light bulb with a great idea. Since I had a spare Pertronix electronic distributor in the gold mine, I decided to see how they solved the problem. Their solution was to replace the entire breaker plate with their own design that repositions the mag pickup.



Arching to side of terminal of old cap



Burned cap

Revised Mag Pickup Installed



Current vs. Previous



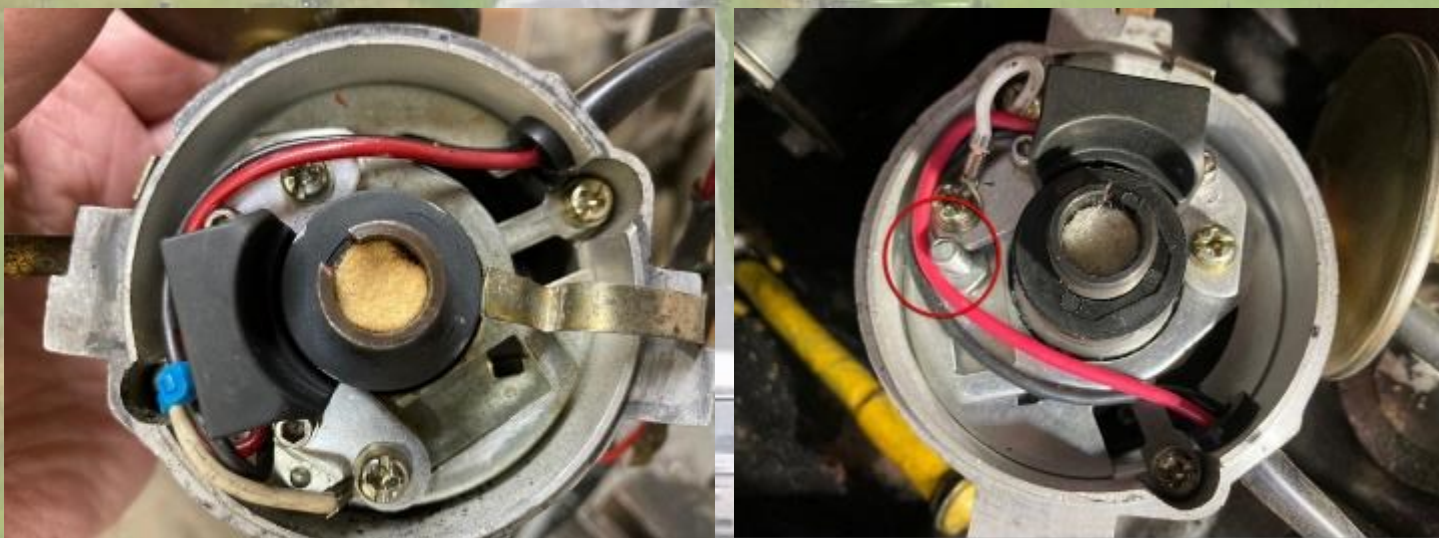
Petronix

Repositioning the mag pickup seems to be a viable way to solve the problem. In order to do that the breaker plate in my distributor would have to be modified. Then there was another “ding” and another light went off.

First was to remove the breaker plate and see how it could be modified. On the bottom of the breaker plate there is a pin that connects to the vacuum advance. That pin moves in a slot on the lower plate. There is enough clockwise movement in the upper breaker plate to get the rotor aligned with the terminal in the cap. Since my car runs best without the vacuum advance, why not pin the breaker plate in the full clockwise position and disconnect the plate from the vacuum advance? Though the position of the mag pickup is not perfect, it is a much better position now. I did contact Accuspark about this but the person I contacted was not helpful.

After a few weeks I decided to do a little digging. What I found was that Accuspark had addressed the problem of the mag pickup alignment. What they did was make a different mounting plate for the mag pickup. That moved the mag pickup clockwise enough for proper alignment. Problem resolved for their future customers. BTW I did convert the Morris distributor to the new relocated mag pickup. Works great.

Before & After



Fun and Games with a Lotus Europa

Or

How the Lucas Gods Always Win!

Part 3

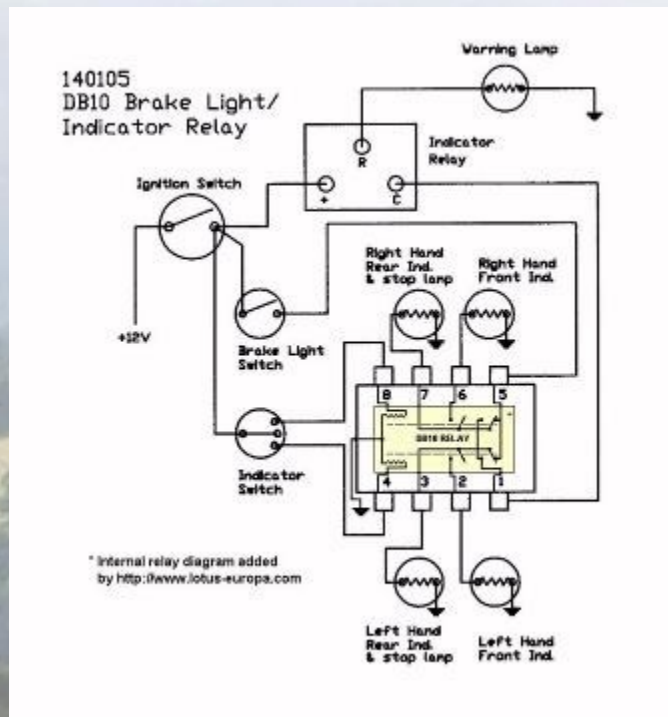
By Richard Greene



The next step was to see if I could differentiate the turn signal indicators to go from one central light to a left and right signal light. These are controlled by a central relay. A DTTP (double throw, triple pole) relay. This is controlled by the DB10 relay, which was, I believe, only fitted to Federal cars. The Lucas DB10 relay was fitted to a con-

siderable number of British cars in the 50s through to the 70s, and it's there to allow the brake lights to function also as turn signal lights. The DB10 Relay that is located up under the dash above the steering drive shaft controls the turn signals and the brake lights. The flasher relay unit is a black box, actually a steel rectangular box with 8 leads attached. It includes both the turn signals as well as the hazard relays. I wasn't able to follow it very far without achieving the "Lotus Position"

So after probing the wires, connectors, and fittings I was able to determine that I might have a ground problem and that the DB10 was fine. A replacement DB10 can be had that is solid state rather than relays but the cost is over \$130. A replacement could be built with 4 common relays but since I found that my DB10 was working I passed on making one. Also while standing on my head under the dash I determined that the PO has disconnected the hazard switch and wires were cut and hanging under the dash. What a rat nest! Further study was needed to find my problem. If a ground connection from some device is compromised, you can get reverse electrical flow through adjoining devices.



Tail lights, brake lights, and flashers share ground connections. So if the brake ground is open, the current flows through the brake light, then backwards through the other filaments, and backwards up through the turn indicators (which also have a shared ground), which illuminate when they find some other grounded wire. The indicator bulb acts as a “choke” or “dam” only allowing a small amount of current through, which is not enough to light the other side’s bulbs. Resistance through the other side’s bulb is relatively low providing an adequate ground path for the small amount of current being used. Enough juice to power the warning light but not the larger signal bulb. So you can get very strange cross-acting connections. Especially on a fiberglass car.

So if you are not familiar with this item of jiggery-pokery or the random wiring colors you may find yourself in a straitjacket very shortly.



THE PERFECT PICNIC

FROM HILDA LEVEL'S *THE PERFECT PICNIC*

Menu No. 11

Smoked Salmon

Veal Loaf & Cauliflower Salad

Polenta & Orange Cake

Gruyere Cheese & Water Biscuits

Smoked Salmon This can be bought from any good grocer. It should be very thinly sliced and eaten on French rolls, sliced and buttered.

Veal Loaf Chop very finely 3 pounds of veal taken from the leg, and four ounces of pork. Add three teaspoonfuls of salt and a teaspoonful of black pepper, a dash of cayenne and a pinch of powdered cloves; also a breakfastcupful of breadcrumbs. Beat up two good eggs and make the whole into a dough with them. Pour into a wetted mould. Cover closely and steam for two hours. Then, put the mould into the oven for a few minutes to dry with the door open. When cold, turn out, cut in slices, and decorate with sprigs of parsley and slices of transparent lemon.

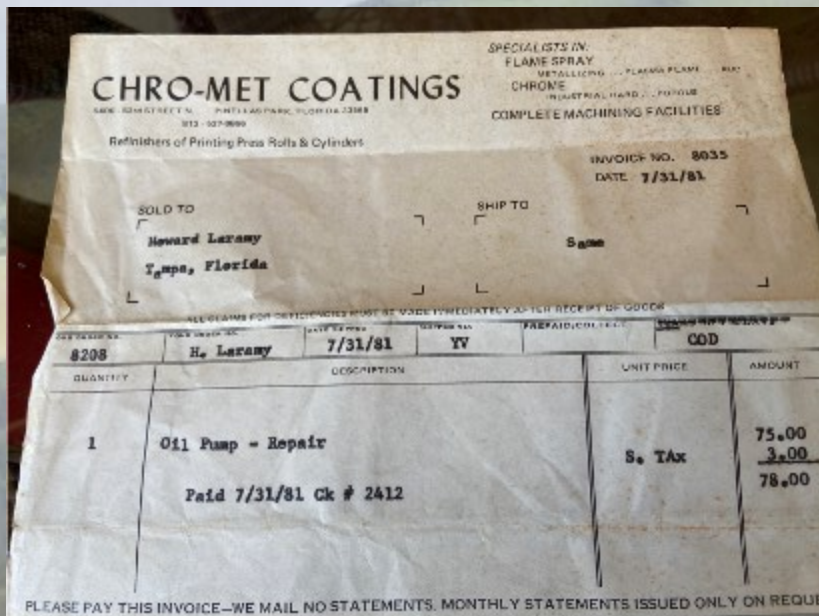
Cauliflower Salad Cook one or more cauliflowers in the usual way and then leave them in a colander to drain. Divide the flower into small branches and place these in a salad bowl. Season well with pepper, salt, and cayenne and pour over the salad the following sauce. Beat two eggs in a double pan. Add a small teaspoonful of salt, a teaspoonful of mixed mustard, two dessertspoonfuls of sugar, an ounce of butter, four tablespoonfuls of milk, and three tablespoonfuls of vinegar. Stir over boiling water till it thickens. Then pour over the salad or bottle and pour it over before it is served.

Note: No recipe was given in the book for polenta and orange cake, so here is a worthy substitute: [Orange & polenta cake](#) | [Fruit recipes](#) | [Jamie Oliver recipe](#)

A MORGAN STORY

By Howard Laramy

I was going through some old car receipts and found this invoice from 40 years ago from a chrome shop. I remembered what it was and decided to tell the story. In 1978, I was living in Tampa, FL. Soon after moving there, I made friends with a Mr. Franklin, who owned a machine shop that made quick-change rear-end gears for race cars. In a building out back, he had a collection of old Indy cars from the 30s and 40s, Ford Model Bs with overhead conversions, and even a 1.5 L supercharged Offy. In the far corner, I spotted a Morgan flat rad. He was impressed. He said most people think that's an MG. I said my sister had one when I was in high school, and I took it out one day and broke a tooth out of second gear.



Around 1980, I happened to be driving by the machine shop and coming out of the back building was a tow truck with the Morgan on it. I stopped and asked where the Morgan was going. Mr. Franklin said they were getting a divorce and that car was his wife's daughter's car from her first marriage, so it's going over to her house. The Morgan sat in the backyard for almost a year while I begged and pleaded for her to sell it to me. Mrs. Franklin's daughter was a 2nd Lieutenant in the USAF stationed in England and she had purchased the car from the Morgan factory Aug 3, 1953. Notice the car has the then-required one-year only USA bumper. About a year later, she was transferred to Minot, ND AFB and became ill and died around 1955. The Morgan was driven from ND to Tampa and placed with the Indy cars. So, it has been resting for a very long time.





I was finally able to buy the car from Mrs. Franklin. The price was \$3,000 and visitation rights. And she did visit while it was being restored. With the body off, the hard wood and metal was all in good shape. Only the plywood around the rear arches was delaminating. Marine plywood was added. The engine was frozen along with a broken clutch. Rats had eaten the Pigskin leather and the wiring. New wires, top and interior were ordered from Morgan Motor Works. About this time, my son was driving a Spitfire and needed a part none of our donor cars had on them. We found the

part at a British parts place in St. Pete and when we purchased it, this man asked if that was all we needed. I think I mumbled that I needed a set of pistons and liners for a Vanguard/TR2 engine. He said he had some. A customer ordered a set a few years ago and never came back for them. I bought them for 3 year old prices. After the Morgan was put together, painted, and running, the engine still didn't have enough oil pressure. I took the oil pump apart and measured over .010 inch clearance on the rotor. Specs call for .003 to .004. Back over to the British parts store. I had the pump in my hand and the guy said, "Oh, you have an early TR2 oil pump?" He sure knew his parts. Do you have one? No. Can you get one. No. What's wrong with it? It's worn out. Over .010 clearance between the body and rotor. And he suggested to me to have the rotor chrome plated. Plating adds .003 in to each side and that should bring it to specs. And chrome is so hard it will never wear out. I had it plated and here it is over 40 years later. My Morgan Plus 4 still holds 40 PSI oil pressure. I miss the days when people actually knew how to fix things.

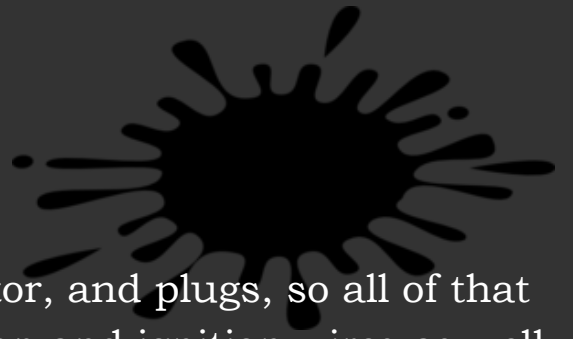


IF YOU GIVE A TR6 A LITTLE DRIVE...

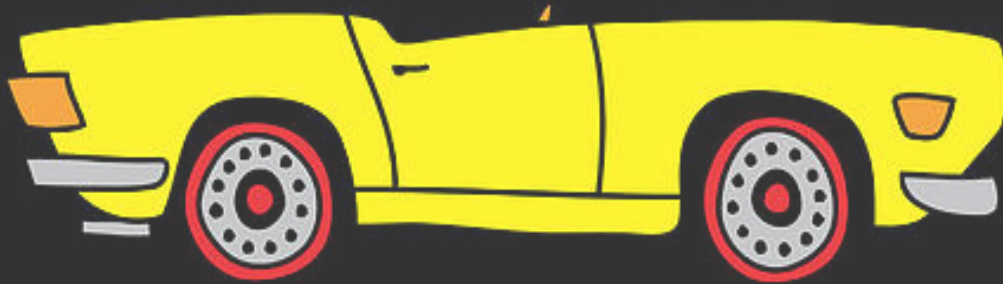
By Pat Cashman

Well, “If you give a mouse a cookie...” I’m sure many of you know that kid’s story. It’s how one thing leads to another. That’s what I have here. Barbara and I drove the 1974 TR6 down to Fairhope recently and completed the trip with no real trouble. Well, I will not mention how I let us run out of gas. I was the one who had to walk a mile or so to the gas station so no more of that. An intermittent miss plagued us on the trip though. Both of us thought it might be a fuel issue. Barbara the most. I thought an electrical fault. However, I did not want to open the fuel pump in the hotel parking lot in case the gasket tore, so we set out on home and happily, made it without further incident. When I did open the fuel pump, there was a lot of very fine powder rust. OK, so time for a new pump.





Fortunately, I already had points, a rotor, and plugs, so all of that went in. Next, I had to order a distributor cap and ignition wires as well. At this point, all should have been well, but then the heater water valve decided to blow while I was on the check out cruise. Since I had to order that, I might as well replace all of the hoses. After that was all installed, then, of course the radiator started to leak. So now, I have a new radiator, new fuel tank, new hoses, and all seems well. Guess I might as well order the new card board air deflector also. Oh, and now I have new kits for both carbs. Why not? What could go wrong? Sure seemed like a trouble free trip.



'TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE THE CAR SHOW

By Michael Carnell (*Just British Online Motoring Magazine*)

'Twas the night before the car show, but I was out in the shed.
My car wasn't budging – the danged thing was dead.
The battery and petrol had been checked twice with care,
The tires kicked too, to make sure they held air.

The plugs were all snugged up, tight on their leads,
While shop towels betrayed how much knuckles can bleed.
Once more I inspected the rotor and cap,
But that car was intent on a long freakin' nap.

When out in the street there arose such a clatter,
I sat up far too fast to see what was the matter.
Into the sump my head slammed with a bash,
Crunched back to the floor – I grew faint with the crash.

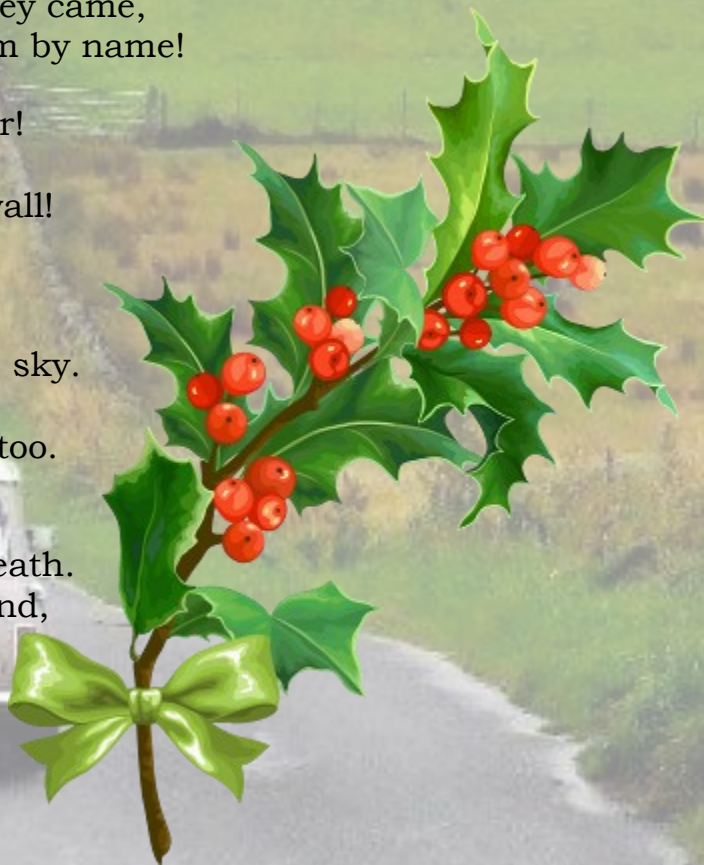
The lump on my forehead and ringing in ears,
Gave an aura of migraine, while nausea grew near.
But then what to my watering eyes should appear?
Why an old Morris tow truck with harsh grinding of gears!

There was a little old driver, so crazy and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be Dip Stick.
More bewildered than brilliant his mechanics they came,
And he laughed and he hollered, and called them by name!

"Now Austin! Now Triumph! Now MG and Jaguar!
On Healey! On Mini! On Morgan and Rover!
Get that car off the lift, and watch out for that wall!
Now back away! Back away! Back away all!"

As good money before a long shop visit flies,
And when met with a rebuild, bills mount to the sky.
So up to his full height sir Dip Stick he grew,
Despite a kink in his back, and I believe his leg too.

And then, in a fuse flash, I heard under breath
The swearing and calling for previous owner's death.
As I bandaged my head, and was fumbling around,
Down the first Castrol can came with a bound.



He was dressed all in Dickies, from his pants to his shirt,
And his clothes were adorned with gas, oil and dirt.
A couple of rags he had stuck in his belt,
And he left stains on the concrete wherever he knelt.

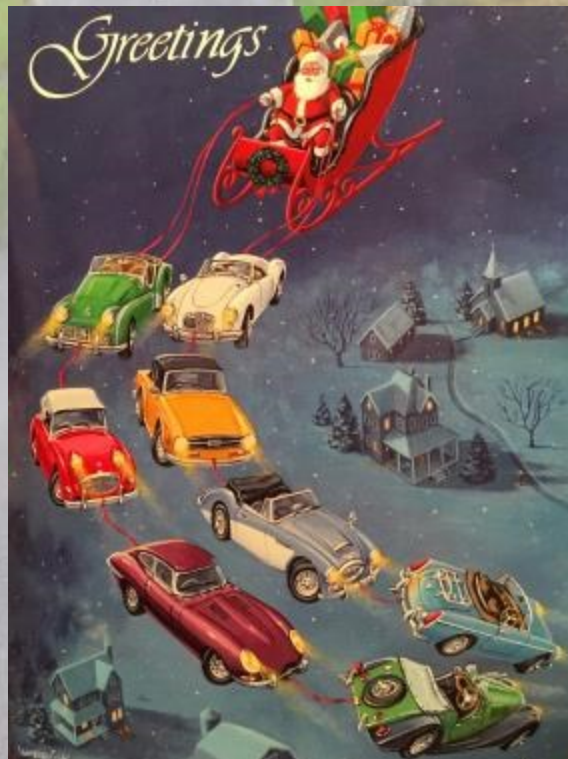
His eyes-how demented, his pupils how twitchy.
I offered to help him, but he laughed out of pity.
His crusty old mouth, twisted up like a bow,
And the stubble he wore had a good three days growth.

A slow burning cigar he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath.
He had a broad face and a nicely round belly,
You could tell he liked his chair right in front of the telly!

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself!
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.

He spoke very few words as he turned to his work,
And after tuning the SUs, he turned with a jerk.
Then he turned the key one and hit the starter,
Wow, she started right up as he hit the gas harder!

He sprang to his truck, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all zoomed, like shot out of a missile.
But I heard him call out, over a backfiring blast,
“Happy car show to all, and to all safety fast!”



Tech Session at Gene and Martha's

By Charlie Durning

First, I have apologies, I failed to take any pictures. Frankly, I was having such a good of a time that I just forgot. Age has its benefits, memory is not one of them. As a general overview, there were 31 folks in attendance. Of those, 2 were first time visitors, Jack and Kathy Orkin. Jack and Kathy were on their way from Atlanta to Texas and decided to stop by for a visit. We were honored the Jack and Kathy decided to take time out of their travels. Gene and Martha had a great spread prepared for us. I will say that the chili was GREAT. The day started out gloomy with a threat of rain. I believe that put a damper on driving the LBCs. However, Pres John did drive a Jaguar to the gathering. As a result, this time there wasn't much teching going on, basically the men told tall stories out in the garage while the women did what women do in the house. In the end, it was time well spent. Our thanks to Gene and Martha for opening their lovely home to us.

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 21, 2023 2023 Kick-off & Awards Meeting // Berry's Seafood in Florence, MS

Though we are still awaiting confirmation on the reservation, the prospective date for the annual kick-off and awards meeting is Jan. 21, 2023. For more information: John Turbeville (601) 940 – 5288

