

"And we're gonna get married!"

By Mary Ellen Doris



Isn't there always some crazy story that goes along with a big event or a beautiful photo? Well, let me tell you the story behind the delightful photo that graces the cover of *MGA!* this month.

The story begins with a "Will you marry me?" Our daughter, Karen, and Peter Kearns planned a late August wedding at Alyson's Orchard in Walpole, New Hampshire. They are both very 'out-doorsy' people and loved the idea of having the ceremony outside, overlooking a valley at the orchard. Great, that was set. "Okay now, how would you like to arrive to the ceremony, hay wagon...carriage...limo?" the wedding planner asked. Karen mentioned that her parents owned an antique sports car, maybe they could arrive in it. The planner loved the idea. Great, done!

Back home, Ken, my husband, was thrilled with the idea, letting him ease his conscience a bit as he vaguely recalled making Karen the promise that the MGA would be her car when she grew up! It was so easy to make that promise as she

pretended to drive herself and her brother around in this heap of an unrestored car when she was sporting pigtails and missing her front teeth... all while the tires were fused to the garage floor.

So, now we had a plan.

Ken and I did plan to use the car all summer, but we wanted to make sure that on August 23rd, it was in tip-top condition. We went to GT-39 in Ottawa in June and the car was fantastic. We actually turned down a weekend long photo shoot in NYC which had the 'A' being driven over the 59th Street Bridge while being filmed by helicopter. It was to be driven by a very famous model (clue-her husband is a big time football player). The production company wanted the car for three days, making us very nervous after hearing horror stories resulting from a similar arrangement. In the end, we declined the offer, to keep the car wedding-ready.

Early August rolled around bringing the 'Vintage European Car and Motorcycle Display' – a car show to benefit a local

Church that we have participated in for many years in our village. It's a very casual affair with only "People's Choice" awards being handed out. Some spectacular cars arrive for the event so we were thrilled when a fellow committee member wanted our car to be placed right in front on the lawn where everyone would see it first. We would be 'bumping bumpers' with a Lotus Elan and a Morgan, nice company.

Was it the gurgling sound that we first heard or was it the screams of the folks jumping out of their lawn chairs, but surely it was the 'shush-shush-shush' of Toro's most powerful lawn sprinkler-head right below the passenger seat that got our attention. Yep! Someone in the Church forgot to turn off the sprinkler on that hot August day. It seemed like hours, but it really was a few minutes before the system was turned off and the lawn chair people were back sipping their wine. Our luck - to be placed over the only in ground car wash. However, the car was fine and started up ... all was good.

The polishing and primping of the car began two weeks before the wedding and that is when Ken realized that the directional and flasher lights were no longer working. Ken would be driving the A, by himself, to Walpole about four hours away, making those lights necessary. Sure he knew the classic Drivers-Ed hand signals, but he didn't think that anyone on the road today would know what those crazy hand gestures were. Trying to solve the problem, he found the flasher relay wasn't working and installed a new one which proceeded to short out again. Darn! Then he recalled the geyser incident and replaced the passenger side light and flasher unit and a second relay. So, with 'over-nighted parts' and lots of time in the garage, Ken started humming...."We're goin' to the Chapel and we're gonna get married' All was good.

He set off, by himself, for the 180 mile trip, off the Island onto the Ferry from Port Jefferson, through Connecticut and into New Hampshire in a wild rainstorm, cursing the windshield wipers which had

not worked since sometime in 1968. Ken was thrilled that his handiwork held, though, and all systems were working. What could go wrong now? Well, did I mention that it was raining? Ken was using the GPS to make sure that he didn't miss his exits in the growing mountain fog. So, he was most surprised when our "Brenda" – the GPS-witch, placed him on a boat launch ramp just feet from a lake. An angel must have whispered in his ear telling him to stop right before disaster ALMOST struck.

The sight of the MGA coming over the hill, knowing that the next day it would be taking my wonderful husband and cherished daughter down a country lane into the arms of her beloved, was something that I will not soon forget.

Ken and I have travelled our own journey through life and made many memories in the MGA, but the top of the list will be seeing Karen and Peter set off on their own life's adventure in our A... but... no, it was not their wedding present! •