

SHOP NOTES King Midget Maintenance and Restoration

M-11 Folding M2 Tops *By Bob V.*

MIDGET MOTORS BUILT MODEL 2S for five years, making numerous changes along the way. Good changes, and most of them were needed. One rather glaring shortcoming they did not fix was the top frame.

Look at the fine fellow, top right, who has impressed his girl by driving his King Midget to the top of a sand dune. In Athens. From the passenger seat.

Next, see how he put the top down, shed his shirt and drove down to have a closer look at his girl. And she shed some garments as well. But ... where's the top frame? Oh ... that's an earlier M2.

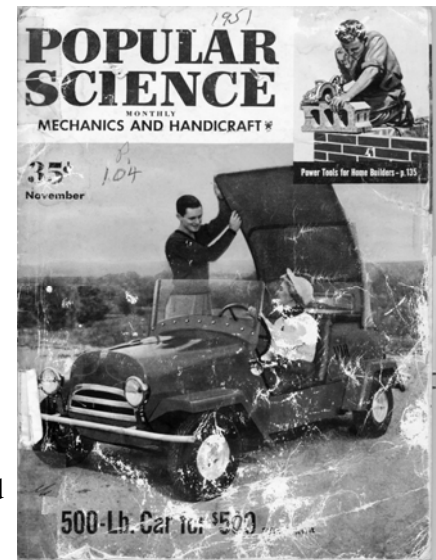
The next photo explains the Athens sand dune. Perhaps they got the car up there using the ramp in the background. But ... how'd they get those two kids and a whole picnic setup to the "beach" and still no explanation for the missing top frame.

The raggedy cover of *Popular Science* November, 1951, that Dick Laws saved all his life shows a fine young man "folding" the girl's M2 top, but not the next step in the process.

Despite many publicity photos showing a folded top, Midget Motors rarely mentioned that *only the fabric folded*. The frame? Leave it home and hope for nice weather. Or maybe pull that folded canvas over your head like a tarp?

Claud Dry wrote to me on February 13, 1956, noting a folding top was among the objectives for the design of the new car that we know as the Model 3. "The top we plan to use is very much along the lines of the one shown in the drawing which was returned to you as we can make this fold without too much difficulty."

The drawing in question showed what in automotive terms is called a "three-box" design (hood, passenger compartment and rear deck) as opposed to the Model 2's "two-box" arrangement. The shorter passenger compartment made for fewer awkward bows to get stowed away. And that's the way the M3 was built.



SHOP NOTES King Midget Maintenance and Restoration



Conventional wisdom said the longish old M2 top simply could not fold in any reasonable manner.

About a decade ago, the late Denny Jasper defied tradition and made the top on his M2 fold neat and tidy. Lee Seats duplicated the feat in a top he made for Roxanne Hicklin's M2 (above). He was going to draw up plans to enable others to make folding tops for their M2s, but two people upstaged him.

Scott Olene set about making a simpler folding top and he succeeded. Pretty neat!



Paul Gerhardt came up with the slickest design of all. Easier to fold and neater than the Model 3's top design. (Next page)

M. Modifications

SHOP NOTES King Midget Maintenance and Restoration

Note that Paul left the header bar mounted atop the windshield rather than folded away with the canvas.

None of these folding tops involve any fancy materials or methods not readily available to Midget Motors. It sorta makes you wonder why those clever fellows from Athens didn't figure it out themselves!

The answer, I suppose, relates to a common flaw of these three folding tops. They all hinge from just behind the seat, leaving top bows either exposed or covered with top fabric when the top is up. In the automotive paradigm of the day, exposed top bows were verboten.

Still, having broken all the other "rules" of automotive design, Midget Motors might have done well to use a folding top like one of these on the Model 2.

We're working on plans for a folding top for the new Model 2. □

