

THE OCTAGON NEWS



Volume XLVII No. 2

November 2019



Fall Tour Article and Pictures
Making Sense (?) of British Number Plates

From the Driver's Seat

Diana Hodges

As we approach the end of the traditional driving season and our cars are being put away for the winter, I find myself reflecting on the year that has passed. Fitting, since this is also the same month that we celebrate Thanksgiving. As someone who grew up around cars, I understand that cars can be more than just a hobby. For some, cars are a touchstone to the past – a recollection of younger days. If you ask him, For example, Sam will tell you that the reason he still has his first car, his 1990 Chevy Beretta GTZ 'Monique', is because, "it's too nice of a car and in too good of shape to get rid of. No one will give me what it's worth to us as a car." Despite his protests, I'm pretty sure that somewhere in that walnut of a brain of his, when he's driving that car, he's still a 20-something who's invincible to the world, not a 50-year old who had two retina detachments. Cars can make us instantly younger, and that's not necessarily a bad thing. Having something that keeps us young and that's



Southwestern Ohio Centre -- MG Car Club
P.O. Box 20032, Dabel Branch
Dayton, OH 45420-0032

Club Membership Information

Membership dues for the Southwestern Ohio Centre of the MG Car Club are eighteen (\$18.00) per year, payable during September and October. On January 1st. the names of delinquent members are removed from the roster. See **Carole Looft** for further membership information.

MG Car Club Monthly Meeting

The Southwestern Ohio Centre of the MG Car Club meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at **Bennett's Pubical Family Sports Grill**, 67 South Main St, Miamisburg 45342, at 7:30pm. The next meeting will be:

Wednesday, Nov 20, 2019

MG Car Club Officers

President.....**Diana Hodges**
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Upcoming MGCC Events

Nov:

8 – Tongue Twister Day

20 – Meeting at Bennett's Pubical

(3rd Wednesday because of Thanksgiving)

Dec:

6 – Holiday Party at the Gribblers'

16 – National Chocolate-Covered Anything Day

No Meeting...Happy Holiday

Jan:

8 – National Bubble Bath Day

22 – Meeting at Bennett's Pubical

See meeting minutes for other area activities!!

relatively affordable isn't a bad habit to have. Having old cars can also provide us with a sense of accomplishment when we solve that nagging problem. Sam will also deny this, but he was having an issue with the brakes on said Beretta. He was having a sticking brake and I kept telling him to replace the soft lines. He was throwing parts at it, callipers, pads, rotors, in part because I think he just wanted to, but after he'd thrown an almost entirely new brake system at it, I asked if he'd replaced the rubber lines? To this day I hold that victory over his head. I know I lost big-picture because the car has a completely new brake system, but he gave me bragging rights by asking for my opinion and that having solved the problem.

It doesn't seem like it, but I've been attending MGCC event for close to 20-years. Sam and I met in 1997 and he started dragging me to events in 2000 or 2001. One of the things that I'm thankful for with this group is the camaraderie with others

who share a common passion. I have vivid memories of chatting with members past, of Bill Hammond telling me the story of how he and his friends drove a Pierce Arrow up the library stairs when they were in college, and dozens of other similar stories. As I started out saying, owning vintage cars is more than just about the cars. Long after the cars are put away, it's all the memories that came from interacting with people and the feelings of accomplishments that will get me through the cold dark months of winter. So, with Thanksgiving around the corner, I ask you, what are you thankful for?

Welcome New Members

Carole Looft

Glenn & Lynda Hamilton
53 Monterey Road
Oakwood, Ohio 45419
937-477-3298
Glenn.hamilton@wright.edu
1953 MG TD

Membership Renewal Time...*Still* Not Too Late

Carole Looft

It's not too late to renew your membership for another year of MG Car Club fun! Dues remain at \$18.00 for members who receive their newsletter via email. However, if you wish to receive your newsletter through the U.S. Postal System, please add an additional \$10.00 to defray rising printing and postal costs.

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Therefore, dues for members receiving mailed newsletters will be \$28.00. Remember...you must be a paid-up member to vote for new officers at the September meeting. You can bring your dues to the meeting, or you can mail your renewal to:

MG Car Club SW Ohio Centre
P.O. Box 20032. Dabel Branch
Dayton, OH 45420-0032

MG Club Fall Tour

Skip Peterson

Photos by Ron Parks, Dave McCann Sr, Dave Smittle, Skip & Jennifer Peterson, and Lois Gribler

Rally master Ron Parks assembled a very nice, 180 mile, 2 day drive to the area of Hocking and Fairfield counties to see more of Ohio's treasured covered bridges. Space was limited to the first 12 people to sign up but Ron later relented and allowed 18 people and 9 cars to join the caravan. (The previous sentence is totally untrue.)

We gathered on a cloudy and brisk Saturday at the Xenia Station bike hub and the attendees included; Ron & Linda Parks, Terry & Carole Looft, Skip & Jennifer Peterson, Tony & Janet Shoviak, Dave & Kim Smittle, Dave & Lois Gribler, Ryan & Emerson Looft, Dave & Rachel Johnson, Dave McCann, Sr. and Famous Dave McCann Jr.

There were two MGB roadsters, two MGB V8's (one factory & one mod), two MGC GTs and one Magnette. The others machines included the Johnson's Miata and the McCann's Edge.

We rolled out Rte. 68 to US 35 east and traveled 32 miles to SR 753 and eventually to US 22 East. We saw a house fire across from our rest stop at a mini mart and then traveled on until we saw the Hannaway Covered Bridge. Unfortunately, with no parking available, this would have to be a drive by. Terry Looft clocked 62 mph as he waved at the bridge. Refer to previous parenthesis.

It was a quick 1.7 mile drive to the next stop, the Johnston Covered bridge where we assembled the cars for a photo op. We had to block a Ford Taurus to make a clean picture. 3.2 miles further and we were stopped at the Mink Hollow covered bridge. I think someone took a photo of it, and we also found that it can be rented for private parties. New summer picnic location?

It was time to head for the Hampton Inn in Lancaster and get ready for a cold beer or two and head to dinner.

Parks had scoped out the Ale House 1890 and he scored. While we couldn't all sit together, they scrambled and got us all seated within an hour. A farm-to-table restaurant, the food was great and the ambiance better. They offer an extensive array of craft beers, wine and cocktails and the menu also has great variety. A slight rain was hitting our cars as we drove back to the hotel. A few gathered in the lobby for after dinner beverages and we all had to set our clocks back one hour.

Sunday dawned sunny but chilly and during breakfast at the hotel we learned that Ron Parks had been holding out on us. There is a Fairfield County brochure that identifies and locates all 17 covered bridges in the county! We could have spent 2 or 3 days here seeing bridges. All cars fired up in the brisk winds and we were off to see the Rock Mill covered bridge. Rally master/photo dog Ron Parks arranged the remaining 6 cars for a photo with the bridge in the background. The Johnsons and Ryan Looft did not spend the night. At this point, the group broke up to head home, taking various routes. I'm happy to

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report that not a single repair was made, we didn't have to pull off the road for any breakdowns and the only reason bonnets went up were to check oil and water! Kudos to Ron for putting this together.



Drivers meeting at beginning of tour



Chasing MGs (as viewed by Skip and Jennifer)



Carole and Jennifer point at Johnson Covered Bridge



Rest stop



MGs at Johnson covered bridge



The Johnson covered bridge

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“Leeann Looft’s MGB/V8 & Lois & Dave Gribler’s MGC



Linda & Ron Parks at Mink Hollow Covered Bridge



Members at Rock Mill Covered Bridge; L to R, Linda & Ron Parks, Jennifer & Skip Peterson, Terry & Carole Looft, Janet and Tony Shoviak, Dave & Kim Smittle and Dave Gribler



MGs at Rock Mill covered bridge



Breakfast at Hampton Inn before drive home



Going home - Shoviaks & Smittles

British Number Plates

(Editor's note – We call them license plates here in the States)

Steve Markman

Whenever I saw a British license plate, I always wondered if there was any sort of pattern to what appeared to be a random mix of numbers and letters. Guess what...it turns out there actually is a system to it. With the help of the internet, the depository of all human knowledge, here is what I found out. BTW – they changed the numbering system so many times as the population of cars grew and grew that I'm not sure I got it exactly right, but it's my best guess.

Vehicle registration plates, referred to as 'Number Plates,' have been used in the United Kingdom since 1904. They are compulsory for motor vehicles used on public roads, with the exception of vehicles of the reigning monarch used on official business (that's because they're issued in the name of the Queen, so she doesn't need to issue one on behalf of herself). Basically, the groupings of characters tell where the car was registered, when, and then a unique code for that vehicle. With few exceptions, the plates cannot be transferred between vehicles.

The Motor Car Act 1903 required all motor vehicles to be entered on an official vehicle register and to display the alphanumeric plates. The Act was passed so that vehicles could easily be traced in the event of an accident or violation of the law. Vehicle plates in the UK are rectangular or square in shape, with the dimensions of the plate and its lettering set down in law. Front plates are white, whereas back plates are yellow.

Within the UK there are two systems: one for Great Britain, which dates from 2001, and another for Northern Ireland, which is similar to the original 1904 system. Vehicles registered under previous numbering systems continue to retain their original number plates even though the area identifier in the previous number system is not the same as the post 2001 area identifier. Since I think all of our MGs were manufactured well before 2000, I'll limit my discussion to the older systems.

Plates issued between 1903 and 1932

This first system consisted of a one- or two-letter code followed by a sequence number from 1 to 9999. The code indicated the locality where the vehicle was registered. In England and Wales, these were initially allocated in order of population size (by the 1901 census) – thus A indicated London, B indicated Lancashire, C indicated the West Riding of Yorkshire and so on up to Y indicating Somerset, then AA indicated Hampshire, AB indicated Worcestershire and so on up to FP indicating Rutland.



The letters G, S and V were initially reserved for Scotland, and the letters I and Z for Ireland. In both cases, allocations of codes were made in alphabetical order of counties, followed by county boroughs – thus in Scotland, Aberdeenshire was allocated SA, Argyll received SB and so on, while in Ireland, Antrim was allocated IA, Armagh received IB, and so on.

When a licensing authority reached 9999, it was allocated another two-letter code, but there was no pattern to these subsequent allocations as they were assigned on a first come first served basis. London and Middlesex quickly took most codes with L and M as the first letter respectively, while Surrey, initially allocated P, took many codes beginning with that letter.

The first mark to be issued in London was the simple, bold, A 1 and this was registered to Earl Russell.

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He wanted the mark so badly he camped out all night to secure it, making him not only the first registrant but apparently also the originator of the idea of having a personalised or distinctive plate on a vehicle.

A zero has been issued by several issuing authorities for the official car of the council head, in cases where plate number "1" had already been issued by the time the councils decided to give priority to its first citizen. Example include the Lord Mayor of London (LM 0) and the Lord Provosts of Edinburgh (S 0), of Glasgow (G 0) and of Aberdeen (RG 0).

So much for the ancient history part.

1932 to 1963

Like I said earlier, the system initially made sense, but quickly became confusing as the popularity of motor vehicles grew. By 1932, the available codes were running out, and an extended scheme was introduced. This scheme placed an additional letter before the numerical code, but had the sequence number run only to 999, thus restricting the number of characters in a registration to only six. The first area to issue such plates was Staffordshire in July 1932 with ARF 1 etc. All other areas in England and Wales, plus most areas in Scotland, followed suit once they had issued all their two-letter registrations.

In some areas, the available alphanumeric combinations started to run out in the 1950s, so they started what became known as "reversed" registrations – the letters coming after the numbers. Staffordshire was again the first area to issue such registrations, starting with 1000 E in 1953. In most cases, the three-letter combinations (e.g. 1 AHX for Middlesex) would be issued first, while in later years some areas started with the one- and two-letter combinations and others issued all three at the same time. The ever-increasing popularity of the car meant that by the beginning of the 1960s, these registrations were also running out. So much, again, for keeping it simple.

Some three-letter combinations were not used as they were deemed offensive. These included ARS, BUM, GOD, SEX, and SOD. DUW was issued in London for several months in 1934 before it was realized it was the Welsh for "god", and withdrawn.

1963 to 1982

In August 1962, another attempt was made to create a national scheme again to alleviate the problem of registrations running out. This used the scheme introduced in 1932, of a three-letter combination followed by a sequence number from 1 to 999, but also added a letter suffix, which initially changed on 1 January each year. An "A" suffix thus was used for 1963, "B" for 1964, etc. Middlesex was the first authority to adopt this scheme when it issued AHX 1A in February 1963. Most other areas followed suit during 1964, but some chose to stick to their own schemes up until January 1965, when the letter suffix was made compulsory.

As well as yielding many more available numbers, this system was a handy way to identify the car's age. However, the year letter changing on January 1 each year meant that car retailers soon started to notice that buyers would tend to wait until the New Year for the new letter to be issued, so that they could get a "newer" car. This led to major peaks and troughs in sales over the year, so the industry lobbied to get the scheme changed to help level this out. So, in 1967, the change of year letter was started on August 1 rather than January 1. Looks like the confusion is starting again.

In the beginning, plates were black with white or silver characters. Reflective plates were introduced in 1969 and were white on the front and yellow on the rear with black characters.

In October 1974, responsibility for issuing registrations was transferred from local and regional

authorities to specialist Local Vehicle Licensing Offices (LVLOs) or Vehicle Registration Offices (VROs). Most of the two-letter area codes allocated during the first scheme continued in their respective areas, albeit now indicating the nearest LVLO/VRO rather than the local or regional authority. However, the decision to streamline the allocations of these codes meant that some were transferred to new areas. For instance, the former Suffolk code CF was transferred to Reading, while the former Edinburgh code WS was re-allocated to Bristol.

1983 to 2001

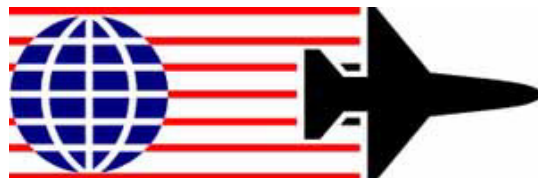
By 1982 suffixes had reached Y, and so from 1983 onwards the sequence was reversed again, i.e., that the year letter — starting again at "A" — preceded the numbers. The available range was then A21 AAA to Y999 YYY, the numbers 1–20 being reserved for the government's proposed, and DVLA select registration sales scheme. Towards the mid-1990s there was some discussion about introducing a unified scheme for Europe, which would also incorporate the country code, but after much debate such a scheme was not adopted because of lack of countries willing to participate. (Thank goodness!)

The changes in 1983 also brought the letter Q into use – although on a very small and limited scale. It was used on vehicles of indeterminate age, such as those assembled from kits, substantial rebuilds, or imported vehicles where the documentation would be insufficient to determine the age. There was a marked increase in the use of Q registrations in the late 1980s and early 1990s, fuelled by car crime. Many stolen vehicles had false identities given to them, and when this was discovered and the original identity could not be determined, a Q registration would be issued to such vehicle. It was seen as an aid to consumer protection. Due to indeterminate age, origin and specification of Q registration vehicles, most motor insurers are reluctant to insure these 'Q-plate' vehicles.

By the late 1990s, the range of available numbers was once again starting to run out, but I'll cut this off at this point. As Dr. Suess said in one of his books of tongue twisters, "Is your tongue numb yet?" If you have a British number plate on your MG, and the above discussion helped you to sort out where the plate came from and what it meant, my hat's off to you.

Thank You to All Our Veterans

I know it'll be a bit after Veterans Day when you read this, but it's never too late for a special "Thank You" to all of our military veterans. We hope you enjoyed *your* day.



Don't forget to attend the Nov meeting to vote on the proposed by-law change!!

Buyer Saves 1,000 mph Car Project From Bankruptcy

Gary Gastelu | Fox News

Someone just bought a 1,000 mph car. Now he just has to get it running.

Auto parts entrepreneur Ian Warhurst has come to the rescue of the British Bloodhound SSC project, which declared bankruptcy in October after failing to come up with the \$33 million it needed to make a land speed record attempt in the streamliner it's been working on for over a decade.



The high-profile team has been working with industry and government partners to develop the jet- and rocket-powered car with the aim of blowing away the current record of 763 mph with a 1,000 mph run across a dry lake in South Africa.



The track has already been cleared and a test run targeting 600 mph was scheduled for next year when the funds ran out and the project's assets were put up for sale, with the car itself priced at just \$313,000, according to its driver Andy Green, who set the current speed mark in 1997.

Warhurst is an engineer by profession and currently runs turbocharger outfit Melitt. The amount paid to acquire the assets of the

Bloodhound SSC project was not revealed, but he says he's ready to do what it takes to reach its goal as a matter of pride.

"I have been overwhelmed by the level of interest and messages of goodwill following the news that I have bought Bloodhound. It's clear how much this unique British project means to people," Warhurst.

The Bloodhound SSC reached 200 mph on an airport runway in the U.K. last year. A timetable for its next run has not yet been announced.

Update... The Bloodhound is on the rebound and in early November 2019, reached 501 mph.

Classifieds

For Sale: 1980 MGB. Green with tan interior and it is a driver that always has been garaged. Tires are 13 years old, rust is very minimal on the undercarriage, top seems to be in pretty good shape and new battery. We have owned it since 2005. Interior has a slight tear on the driver's seat (previous owner had

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a screwdriver in his back pocket and forgot about it when he sat down). We are the 4th owner that we know of. I can mail color pictures on request. 49,000+ miles. \$7500, but willing to negotiate. Not driven in a year due to medical issues. Tom Hawkins, (937) 239-4574 (Cell#) evenings only, or thawkins2@woh.rr.com. (10/19)

For Sale: MGB Biscuit color, Vinyl seats. These seats are in good shape with less than normal wear as, the foams, webbing, covers & head rests all replaced in 2002, when car was restored. A good buy at \$300, if you're looking for nice biscuit colored seats for your MGB. Contact Ron Parks with your offer, by phone at 937-207-9009 or email MGdriver@woh.rr.com. (10/19)

For Rent: Car storage in Wilmington, Ohio. \$30/mo for one car, \$50/mo for two cars for club members. Non-club members \$35/mo per car. Indoor heated and dry. Electric for battery maintainers. Terry Looft 937-527-7353 or tlooft@earthlink.net. (10/19)

For Sale: 1978 MG Midget. New top and interior. Box of other new parts included. Asking \$3,000. Call Bob at 937-253-9935 and leave a message. (10/19)

***Free classified policy:** We are happy to run your auto-related ad for three months free of charge, but may cut older and non-MG related ads as space requires. Please contact the editor when your item sells or if you wish to continue the ad for an additional three months. srmarkman@att.net or 937-886-9566.*

Minutes from October Club Meeting

Sam Hodges

The October MGCCSWOC meeting was called to order by newly elected President Diana Hodges precisely at 7:30. (I tried to warn her that we don't actually call them to order on time, but she wasn't having any of it.)

President Diana Hodges, "I wanted to call the meeting to order and point out a bunch of historical event that occurred on this date. On this date, October 23, 1980, the last MGB was produced at the Abingdon factory. Also, on October 22, 1948, the first Triumph Mayflower was produced." Eddie Hill, "Didn't Charlie come over on the Triumph Mayflower?" Skip Peterson, "Has anyone ever seen a Mayflower?" (I had to Google it...)

President Hodges continued, (...Okay, that's just weird not talking about myself as President or in the 3rd person...) "We got a couple of things in the Mailbag. The monthly copy of Safety Fast, and letters from the Food Bank and the Salvation Army."

Vice President Terry Looft, "I could be like the old V.P. and say, 'got nothing'. We do have a new project that we're starting. A 1968 MGC automatic. The engine made it to the machine shop. When we took it apart, it was obvious that it had been warm. It was full of sludge. It doesn't look like it was run without oil, but it was run without water. Tomorrow morning we're headed to Calgary, Alberta for the annual MG meeting. It's a busy, busy month for us. Lois Gribler, "Where'd you find a new machine shop?" Terry, "Zajeb! Machining & Welding in Xenia. Tom left Genuine and went there. I highly recommend them."

Secretaries Report was next. Lois Gribler, "I have an issue about the damn cocktail wieners." (The next

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4-5 minutes were consumed with wiener jokes. Too many for me to capture them.) Skip, motioned to accept the Minutes as reported. Eddie Hill seconded. MGCC voted, Minutes approved as reported.

Treasurer's Report was next. Treasurer Bob Farrell, "The MGCC had gains of: Membership Dues (\$444.00) + British Car Day Proceeds (\$2,000.00) for a total gain to the MGCC of \$2,444.00. We had total expenses of: September Gumball (\$10.00) + Postage (\$24.90) for a total expense to the MGCC of \$34.90. Monthly total losses when subtracted from gains means a gain of \$2,409.10 to the MGCC. When added to our beginning balance of \$1,873.71 leaves the MGCC with an ending balance of \$4,282.81 in the primary checking account. The Savings account currently has \$380.62. Total ending balance of all accounts was \$4,723.43. Jennifer Peterson motioned to accept the Treasurer's Report. Ron Parks seconded.

Membership. Chair Carole Looft, "We currently have 51 members. Renewals are coming in. We got a new member, Glen Hamilton from Oakwood, owner of a 1953 MG TD."

Birthdays this month include: Steve Powell, Graham Cooper, Mike Edgerton, Jim Cox, Linda Fields, Tom Dworetsky, Dar Planeaux, Dick Smith, and Ellen Sparklin.

Sunshine Committee. Our new member Jim Cox went into the hospital for stints for two blocked arteries. At this point, President Diana Hodges threw Secretary Sam Hodges under a 45-foot Prevost bus by pointing out that I had to have a second surgery for a detached retina in my left eye (since the meeting, make that 3. I had another detachment...).

Newsletter Editor Steve Markman, "Thanks to Ron for the article on the trip to Vermont. We used to have a Car-of-the-Month feature. With so many new members, maybe we should think about starting that up again. You don't have to be a good writer. Just contact me and tell me the details. I'll write it and make you sound just about like a pro journalist. So, for all the new members, we'd love to hear about your cars."

Webmaster John Scocozzo, "Nothing new to report. The internet is still there."

Activities with Eddie. Eddie Hill, "This weekend is the chili cook off for British Museum of Transportation. The Holiday Party is Friday Dec. 6th at 6:30 at the Gribler's. There's the Fall Tour, (You missed it) the weekend of November 2-3. Otherwise, it's the end of the season and there's not a lot going on.

Beer Brake called at 7:48

Back from Break at 8:07

President Diana, "Old Business...", Charlie McCamey, "None tonight!"

Pres. Di continued, "The dues amendment will be voted on next meeting since it has to have been published for 30 days. The November meeting will be Nov. 20th due to Thanksgiving." Skip, "Should we put something special in the newsletter to drive the point about the vote home?" Steve Markman, "We can make that happen." Skip, "I can send you an email to remind you, if I remember." Jennifer Peterson, "I'll remind you."

Diana H., "Start thinking about a possible Pub Run for January. Think about possible places that we'd

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like to go and dates.”

British Museum of Transportation, Ron Parks, “On Nov. 9th we’re having a workday on the MGA Coupe at the Museum.” Skip, the Museum has a 1993 Mini that was imported from Ireland for sale. It still has the Irish license plates. They’re asking \$16k. It’s interesting to see the way the Mini has changed. The exterior looks largely the same, some cost cutting on things like badges, but its the interior that’s the real shocker. It has a relatively modern interior. Inside, it looks like a Honda Civic. Cool car.”

The British Museum of Transportation s having their annual Chili Cookoff. See Eddie if you want to enter a chili, but the deadline’s tonight (yep, you missed that too).

Tech Tips. Dave Gribler, “MGCC rear brake adjusters are left and right handed. If you take them apart and just throw them in a box, they’re left and right handed. They won’t adjust if you don’t put them back the right way.

For Sale. The British Museum Mini and Ron’s MGB seats. 1-for-\$150 or 2-for-\$300.

Gumball Rallye. Famous Dave McCann, Jr. won.
Terry and Dave Estell motion to adjourn

One down, 10 to go. Meeting adjourned 8:23ish.

The logo for MiniMania features the word "MiniMania" in a stylized, bold, black font. The "M" is particularly large and has a jagged, mountain-like appearance. The letters are set against a white background.The logo for MG AUTOMOTIVE features the words "MG AUTOMOTIVE" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The text is underlined and set against a white background.

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Don't forget...meetings now are held at *Bennett's Publical*