

THE OCTAGON NEWS



Volume XLVII No. 6

April 2020



Remembering Phil Johnson
...and more valuable news!!

From the Driver's Seat

Diana Hodges

To say that these are interesting times is an understatement. Back in January when I first starting hearing about some virus in China, I didn't think much about it. By the time we reached March, I was worried that I might have to postpone a planned trip. Now, I'm wondering if I'll ever see toilet paper in stores ever again? We're not in any trouble, Sam & I have been shopping at Costco for years, so we have a three-years supply for just about everything from pickles, to frozen shrimp to toothpaste. With the world effectively shutdown for now, and everyone self quarantining and social distancing, we've discovered that cars make a very effective means of social distancing. As one recent trip showed us, the roads are about as crowded as Sam put it, "it's like Christmas Eve around 5:00." That was also probably a bad thing for him to see. A certain speed demon also figured that with so little traffic on the road, ludicrous speed would be much easier to obtain. For that reason, I've



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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:

Meetings temporarily suspended

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Upcoming MGCC Events

Apr:

- 5 – Read a Roadmap Day
- 18 – Tune-Up Clinic – **Cancelled**
- 19 – Cecil Kimber Birthday Party
Cancelled
- 22 – Meeting at Bennett’s Pubical
suspended due to Coronavirus

May:

- 4 – Star Wars Day
- 27 – Meeting at Bennett’s Pubical – **maybe**

Jun:

- 3 – Repeat Day
- 3 – Repeat Day
- 24 – Meeting at Bennet’s Pubical – **maybe**

See meeting minutes for other area activities!!

hidden the keys to the Corvette. The one thing we have noticed in our few travels out into the world is that driving seems to be much more enjoyable. There’s very little traffic. There are fewer distracted drivers on their phones or looking for just the right station on Sirius. We’ve been able to just enjoy the open road. Last week when the weather was in the 70’s, we took the MGB out for a nice little drive through the countryside and probably passed 3 cars. An odd thing happened on that ride. As we were driving through the little towns like Farmersville, there were a number of people just sitting on their front porches similarly enjoying the weather. Almost every single person we passed waved hello as we drove by. It was almost like being in a parade of 1. That seems to be an odd side effect of the times that we’re in. Now that people have had time to stop, sit back and do nothing, whether it’s because of boredom or going stir-crazy, the end result is that people seem to have rediscovered how to just be nice to one another.

Desperate times call for desperate measures. As a result, I’ve been looking into the possibility of using Zoom to hold a meeting if this lockdown doesn’t end anytime soon, and it doesn’t look like it will. One of the things that has to be addressed is security. With all

of the attacks on online meetings, the last thing we need is someone bombing our meeting with nude or pornographic pictures. It’ll be hard enough to get some of you to wear pants, let alone someone we don’t know. If we figure something out, we’ll let you know. Stay tuned. And on that note, stay safe, healthy and may all your Kroger runs be fruitful.

Canceling Cecil’s Birthday Party!



Our planned birthday celebration for Cecil Kimber’s 132nd birthday will not be held as planned. There will be no pizza party, birthday cake, party favors, balloons or surprises. We will set our sights on celebrating next April for Cecil’s 133rd special day.

Carole Looft



Social Distancing With Our MGs

Since getting together as a group is very highly discouraged at this time (as well as potentially being very unhealthy) and we’re only supposed to drive for essential trips, let’s at least pull our MGs out of the garage and let them see some sunshine. Have someone snap a picture of you with your MG in front of your home and send it to me and I’ll run the pictures in the next issue of *The Octagon News*. While you’re at it, why not get your dog, cat, or other pet in the picture? Stay well!!

Remembering Phil Johnson

1934 – 2020

I have no idea when I first met Phil, but I do remember his booming voice. When Phil spoke, everyone listened. And Phil drove the brightest red MG TD in the world. We all know I like bright red cars and I asked Phil what color his was, “Viper Red,” he declared proudly. It also featured chrome wire wheels, the only TD I’ve ever seen with chrome wheels.

One year, he hosted the holiday party at his house in Miamisburg with the TD sitting in the front yard decorated with white Christmas lights.

My fondest memory of Phil, however, took place on the back roads of Greene County. He had just purchased an MGB with a Ford V8 engine. We gathered at the Goodman’s for the annual summer picnic and after a while Phil came over and said, “Skip, lets go for a ride in the B. You need to feel this car.” We headed to the car and drove off; Phil had a



pretty heavy right foot. He pulled over about 6 blocks later and said, “You drive.” We swapped seats and I’ll tell you, this B has some guts. He pointed me toward some open roads and as I cruised around a turn really getting the feel of the car, Phil shouted “Stand on it!” That V8 slammed me back in the seat, my head into the headrest, and the speedo hit 100! It was as solid as a rock, stable as hell, and Phil was ginning ear to ear! “Pretty neat, eh?” Phil said. I was just smiling, I had no idea an MGB could go like that, or that Phil Johnson would own one. *Skip Peterson*

I attended my first British Car Day in 2000. After admiring about a dozen TDs on display, I asked someone how I could buy one. I was directed to a distinguished-looking man wearing a straw hat with “MG” embroidered on the front, proudly standing next to his sparkling, slightly off-red, TD. That’s how I met Phil, who encouraged me to join the MG Club because members usually knew when a TD in the area was for sale. After buying mine and driving it for a few months, I met with Phil to show me how to do my own oil change and lube, and to show me a few other maintenance items to keep in mind. As our club president at the time, he wrote his next president’s column about our tutoring session, touting that half of the fun of being in a club is helping new members by passing along our MG knowledge and expertise to get them started on the right path. And that’s how I’ll remember Phil, always there to reach out a hand of friendship and help others. *Steve Markman*

Phil’s first MG love was his MG TD, an affair developed long ago. Then he acquired his MGB for longer touring. I’m grateful to Phil for letting me drive his MGB after having the V6 engine installed. We took it for a spin from the club picnic at Goodman’s one year. My, it certainly was a hand full of power and a pleasure to drive. I understand why he enjoyed it so much!

Phil joined in and contributed to our club fun, serving as our President and hosting one of our more memorable Holiday parties. His MG TD full of gifts parked in front of his house made for a wonderful holiday decoration and left no doubt as to where the party was! Phil helped with British Car Day and volunteered as a class host at the Concours d’Elegance for several years. We will miss him. Our condolences to his wife Sandy and to Phil’s entire family. *Ron Parks*

U.K. Man Finds Car Buried in Back Yard

Gary Gastelu – Fox News

If you've been missing a Ford Popular for the past 50 years, we might know where you left it.

John Brayshaw of Heckmondwike, U.K. was building a deck while home on furlough from work during Britain's coronavirus lockdown when he found a car buried in his yard. He told SWNS he'd moved into the home just six months ago and was driving a post into the ground when he made the unusual discovery.



"It's one of those things that you literally have to see it to believe it," he said. "I was like 'What on earth is this?'"



At first he thought it was a bomb shelter or fallout shelter, but kept digging and realized it was an entire vehicle lying on its side. It even had its license plates and engine intact. "The only thing that was missing was the wheels."

He's identified it as either a 1955 or 1956 Ford Popular 103e, which was the lowest priced car in the U.K. at

the time. As for how it got there, that remains very much a mystery.

Brayshaw said he hasn't been able to find any record of the registration, and that the son of the home's previous owners, who passed away, said they didn't know anything about it and had lived there for 50 years.

However, he said he was told that the neighborhood was home to some people who had worked in the British Secret Service during the war, and that the car appears to be painted RAF Grey.

For now he's trying to decide if he should leave it where it is as a conversation piece and build the deck around it, or if he'll have to bring in heavy machinery to get it all the way out of the ground.



Classic ‘Phoenix’ Sports Car Restored After Burned in Barn Fire

Tom Hitchener SWNS

A classic car enthusiast is back on the road in his beloved vintage motor called Phoenix - five years after it was destroyed in a devastating fire. Roger Fountain, 77, rescued the 1934 Riley sports car which had been wrecked in a fierce barn blaze.



The retired rally driver loaded the charred and rusted remains onto a trailer and drove it to his home in Sutterton, U.K, where he began an arduous restoration project. Amazingly, the chassis survived the fire so Roger built a prototype around it using wood, cardboard and scrap metal.



Over the next five years, he painstakingly searched out the missing parts needed to completely restore the car back to its former glory. To celebrate his work, Roger named his pride and joy ‘Phoenix’ in honor of the car’s remarkable transformation.

Roger, who has no children and lives with his wife of 53-years Penny, said: “It was a real journey and the project has had lots and lots of twists and turns. “I never

thought it would never get there but there were times I thought it may take longer than expected. “I’m thrilled with the end result and very proud of the work which has gone into it.”

Roger’s life-long obsession with classic cars led him to put the word around enthusiasts that he was after a restoration project. In 2015, a friend called him to say a Riley sports car had been in a fire so Roger drove up to have a look for himself. “I drove 200 miles to inspect the car and it was completely burnt out, with nothing remaining of the body,” he said. “I wasn’t put off and returned with a truck and trailer and loaded up the remains.



“On arriving home I was able to give the charred and rusting pile a closer examination, and it was obvious that the chassis had escaped most of the damage and would make a sound basis for my new project. “Thus work began, sourcing replacement period parts, designing, repairing, refurbishing and fabricating.

“I was anxious to utilize as many original parts, especially the chassis, to retain the soul of the original car, to maintain its heritage as an example of a golden era of English automotive design.”

But, in 2018, Roger was stunned to discover the DVLA had classified it as a write-off so technically it no longer existed. In a bizarre twist, this meant that all surviving parts of the car had to be destroyed to comply with the law. Roger finally persuaded the DVLA to send an independent insurance engineer to inspect the car who agreed that it could be re-registered.

But the project was almost scrapped in the final two years when Roger suffered a smashed knee and broke his back in a horse-riding accident before being diagnosed with prostate cancer.

He added: “The recovery meant I could only carry out very light duties for some weeks but an offer from a good friend saved the day when he gave his time to keep the project rolling. “Before the project was completed I again had surgery to eliminate prostate cancer, thankfully successfully.”

Finally, in January this year, Roger was able to take his beloved Phoenix out for a spin with wife Penny, 77. Roger has now written a book about the remarkable restoration, entitled "Phoenix," which is available on Amazon.



They Don't Build Cars Like This Anymore

Ray Magliozzi – Car Talk

Used without permission...hope he doesn't mind.

Dear Car Talk: I have a 1951 Chevy, straight-6, 3-on-the-tree, with 31,000 actual miles. Nice Car. If I coast downhill in gear (this doesn't happen in neutral or if the clutch is disengaged), when accelerating after the downhill run, it will briefly (for perhaps 100 feet or so), put out a puff of smoke. What gives? -John.

Ray: That's the worst problem you have with a car that's old enough to collect Social Security? On a car of this generation, blowing some blueish smoke after coasting downhill is not unusual. As a matter of fact, even some newer cars do it, but to such a small degree that it's barely noticeable. Your problem is that your piston rings are wearing out.

The piston rings are supposed to fit tightly against the cylinder walls and scrape off all the oil before combustion takes place, so gasoline and air get combusted and your oil doesn't. Your piston rings aren't doing a great job anymore. Not that they were stellar to begin with.



There's a measure of industrial precision called "tolerance." Tolerance is the space between parts. Back in 1951, manufacturing tolerances just weren't that good. These days, our manufacturing processes are infinitely better, and tolerances are much smaller, resulting in better performance and much longer engine life. Back when your car was built, nobody expected you to go more than 75,000 miles without an engine rebuild.

You're seeing that smoke because when you coast down a hill, the wheels are turning the engine rather than the engine turning the wheels. During that time, while there's little combustion taking place, and little pressure being built up in the combustion chamber, oil is getting pumped past those poorly-made and worn-out rings, and it is pooling in the cylinders. Then, once you start to accelerate again, that oil is getting burned along with the gasoline and sent out the tailpipe.

Unless it's really driving you nuts, John, I'd just keep the oil clean and topped up and live with it for now. After all, given your annual mileage (we calculate 455 miles a year), you're going to be due for an engine rebuild in the year 2115, anyway.

Signs of the Times

Source: One of my online buddies

Half of us are going to come out of this quarantine as amazing cooks. The other half will come out with a drinking problem.

I used to spin that toilet paper like I was on the Wheel of Fortune. Now I turn it like I'm cracking a safe.

I need to practice social-distancing from the refrigerator.

Someone TP'd my house. Its value went up by about \$10,000.

Every few days try your jeans on just to make sure they fit. Pajamas will have you believe all is well in the kingdom.

Homeschooling is going well. 2 students suspended for fighting and 1 teacher fired for drinking on the job.

I don't think anyone expected that when we changed the clocks we'd go from Standard Time to the Twilight Zone

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This morning I saw a neighbor talking to her cat. It was obvious she thought her cat understood her. I came into my house, told my dog..... we laughed a lot.

So, after this quarantine.....will the producers of My 600 Pound Life just find me or do I find them?

Quarantine Day 5: Went to this restaurant called MY KITCHEN. You have to gather all the ingredients and make your own meal. I have no clue how this place is still in business.

My body has absorbed so much soap and disinfectant lately that when I pee it cleans the toilet.

Day 5 of Homeschooling: One of these little monsters called in a bomb threat.

I'm so excited --- it's time to take out the garbage. What should I wear?

I hope the weather is good tomorrow for my trip to Puerto Backyarda. I'm getting tired of Los Livingroom.

Classified Ad: Single man with toilet paper seeks woman with hand sanitizer for good clean fun.

Day 6 of Homeschooling: My child just said "I hope I don't have the same teacher next year".... I'm offended.

Better 6 feet apart than 6 feet under

Classifieds

For Sale: 1978 MG Midget. New top, interior, exhaust, master cylinder, rear bushing, steering wheel, radiator, and a box full of about \$350 worth of other new parts. Garaged. Asking \$3,000. Call Bob at 937-253-9935 after 4 PM. (2/20)

For Sale: 1979 Triumph TR7. Car has 70k actual miles. Rust-free body will need a new slave cylinder installed which I do have and also will need the starter replaced or rebuilt. I did have it running and I do have a video. All of the electronics work. Asking \$1,200 or best offer. Josh Gierke jgierke87@gmail.com. (1/20)

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 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)

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 March Club Meeting

Sam Hodges

Since the March 2020 MGCC monthly meeting was cancelled due to COVID-19 and the closure of bars, restaurants and other public meeting places, it will be up to you, the reader, to determine what happened at the meeting. Take notes, pay attention as there will be quiz on this later. Therefore:

1. The March Meeting was called to order promptly at:
 - a) 7:29
 - b) 7:30
 - c) 7:31
 - d) Were you NOT paying attention?!? The meeting was cancelled!
2. President Diana Hodges called the meeting to order by:
 - a) Banging the traditional gavel on the table
 - b) Throwing a beer mug against the back wall and shattering it
 - c) Yelling at Sam for not closing the door from the house to the garage before starting up the car.
3. Vice President Terry Looft:
 - a) Made a joke about not having anything
 - b) Made a comment about beer, or the lack thereof
 - c) Made a comment about his ongoing MG restoration
 - d) A & C but not B
 - e) None of the above
4. Minutes were next on the agenda:
 - a) Eddie Hill commented on how there was an erroneous listing for a hot tub party in his activities report
 - b) Dave Gribler pointed out that there was an error in the name of the NAMGAR Treasurer
 - c. Skip Peterson pointed out an error in the date for BCD
 - d. Secretary Sam Hodges didn't care about any of those issues and refuses to change perfection!
5. The Treasurer's Report was next. Treasurer Bob Farrell reported:
 - a. The new bathroom renovation is coming along nicely
 - b. The new kitchen cabinets look gorgeous
 - c. The new BMW needs an oil change
 - d. We had some money, we spent some money, we got some money.
6. Membership was next. Carole Looft reported:
 - a. Everyone has demanded a refund for their dues since this isn't what they were promised it would be
 - b. We have some members
 - c. For some reason, people are still joining even after reading the Minutes from past meetings?!?
7. Sunshine Committee chair Jennifer Peterson reported:
 - a. Don't call me the chair!
 - b. Someone got sick, someone got better
 - c. Where's the wine?
8. Beer Break was called:
 - a. 8:00am
 - b. 8:00pm
 - c. I haven't been sober since February

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- d. I cant believe how many people don't get the joke when I use 'brake' in 'beer brake'!?!
9. Old Business was next on the agenda.
- Charlie McCamey, "There is no old business"
 - Steve Powell, since Charlie wasn't there, "There is no old business"
 - Art Barnes, since Steve and Charlie weren't there "There is no old business"
 - All of the above, we're all old!
10. New Business was next. There was no new business.
- True
 - False
 - A but not B
 - All of the above
11. Tech Tips. Which of the following Tech Tips is NOT an actual tip?
- Always check the air pressure in you tires
 - If your car is pre unleaded gas, using an oil with a zinc additive is a good idea
 - The best way to test a lamp is to lick your finger and stick it into the socket
 - Tilt the glass over 30° to avoid a foamy head on beer pours
 - They're all tips, just not very good ones
12. For Sale:
- Ron Parks has a set of MGB seat covers. \$150 each or 2 for \$300
 - Carole Looft has t-shirts, but only XS and XXXL
 - Sam Hodges has 30-rolls of Charmin 2-ply. \$4,000 firm
 - Ed Wolf has 30-rolls of Charmin 2-ply. \$3,999, negotiable
 - I now hate Ed
13. Gumball Rallye was won by:
- Ron Parks (for the 35th time)
 - Lois Gribler
 - Dave McCann, Sr.
 - Cherri Farrell (hmmm...)
 - I took the \$10 and bought a single-ply roll of toilet paper
14. Meeting adjourned (Yeah, I know its not a question. Get over it).



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Parts, Service and Restoration for
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