

THE OCTAGON NEWS



Volume XLVII No. 4

February 2021



First Ever MG Book Review
Voltmeter Follow-UP

From Under My Car

Terry Looft

I guess winter has arrived. I finally had to break out the snowplow a week ago. It looks like it's going to be put to use a lot this coming week. Not such a bad job considering it has a cab and a heater that lets me plow in shirt sleeves.

Another month and not much to report, I even thought about having Sam write my president's letter, just to have something interesting to read.

We had a good turn out for last month's zoom meeting. I'm really looking forward to seeing the minutes. I am sure the meeting was much more exciting than we perceived. Sam will let us know just how much fun we had.

Since there has been very little change from last month I think we will do a zoom meeting for February as well, hopefully even more will join in.

I can report work is still progressing on Carole's MGC. In fact, its birth



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 **twenty-five (\$25.00)** 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
See you on ZOOM

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Upcoming MGCC Events

Feb:

9 – National Pizza Day
24 – Meeting somewhere

Mar:

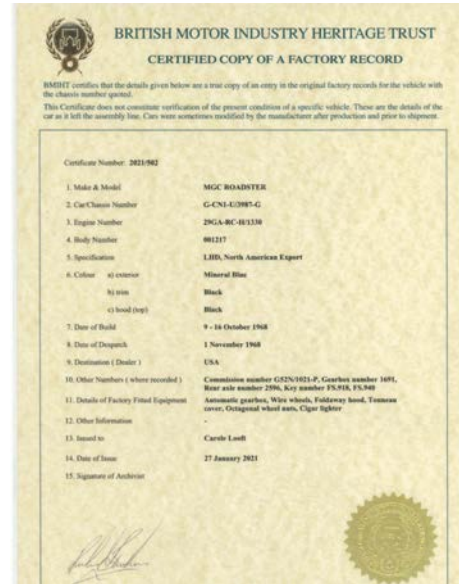
6 – National Day of Unplugging
24 – Meeting somewhere

Apr:

5 – Read a Roadmap Day
28 – Meeting somewhere

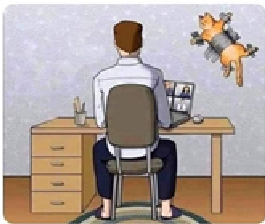
See meeting minutes for other area activities!!

certificate just arrived from the British Motor Museum in England with all of its details. The build date was October, 1968 and confirms that it came with the automatic transmission. We try to put in a few hours of work every day at the shop. There are so many little



sub-jobs to do that progress seems slow. At present all the brake lines and fuel lines are made and ready to be powder coated. Working on the cockpit details now, getting heater and defrost vents, wipers, and all the other things behind the dash installed.

How to prepare for a Zoom meeting



I hope as the weather improves, along with people getting their vaccinations, that our members will feel more comfortable in coming to the meetings. Carole and I are scheduled for our 2nd shot in two weeks.

John will get the zoom meeting link out and I will put a little notice on our Web page as a reminder to check your email for the link.

Until the meeting, stay warm, hope we can chat then.

“Mouse, The Man, and The MGB”

A review by Tony and Janet Shoviak

Written by Wayne Truax

Illustrated by Andrew Black

This is a charming children’s story about the interaction of a mouse, who wants to help get a laid up MGB running again, and the man who is the owner of the MGB. After some attempts by the mouse to get the man’s attention, the man realizes that the mouse was not an ordinary mouse and could be a great help to him. Together, they get the MGB operational and then drive off on an adventure.

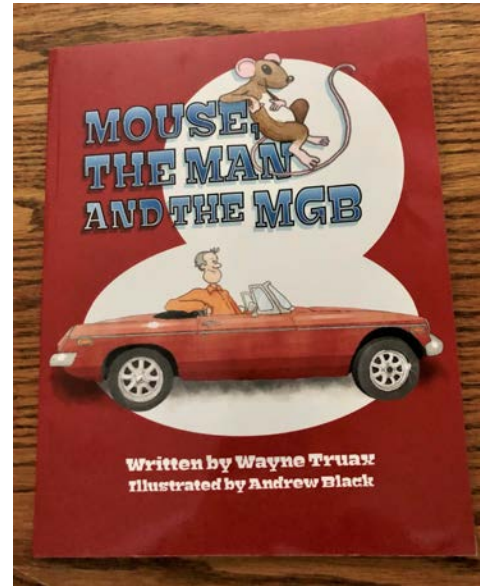
We contacted the author, Wayne Truax, and he explained his reasons for writing the book. First off, the story was sparked by Wayne’s real-life interactions with a mouse that watched him work on his MGB. It developed into a book for MG owners to share with children and grandchildren with the intention of generating interest in classic cars.

In addition, Truax hopes to impart a life lesson to young people: don't give up. We must add that the book has a lesson for adults as well. Allow the children in your life access to your classic cars as they hopefully will take care of these cars when you are gone.

The book can be purchased on Amazon and in February of 2021, available at Coastal 181 Reading for Racers <https://www.coastal181.com>. A coloring book will be available soon and translations into Spanish, Mandarin, and French.

A nice read for anyone and the illustrations are terrific.

Special thanks to LeeAnn Looft for sending us a copy of this book.



Voltmeter Follow-Up

Steve Markman

After writing last month's article, I decided to add a voltmeter to my TD. I will not modify the instrument panel so as to maintain originality. But, I already had a water temperature gauge that I installed on the bottom edge of the instrument panel, so as an experienced woodworker, it was a simple task to make a new mount that incorporated both gauges and matched the walnut dash panel (Well, almost, anyway. More on that later).

After hooking it up, here are the results I saw, and a comparison to the voltage readings I expected based on last month's article. I only ran the engine in the garage for a few minutes and haven't taken the car out for a drive yet. The engine didn't really warm up, and the battery certainly wasn't full recharged after the startup, so I may see different values when I can get the car out for a run.

	Expected Value	Actual Value
Engine off/ignition on	12.6	12.0
Cranking	~11	10.0
Idle	~14	11.5
Fast idle	13.8-14.2	13.8
Idle with lights on	~13	10.5

Note that all readings are lower than expected. There probably are at least three reasons for this:

1. Gauge Errors. The gauge may not be that accurate. It only cost \$18. There were others listed that cost 2 – 3 times as much. They might be more accurate, maybe not.
2. Poor Electrical Contact. In my hurry to see what would happen, I didn't make any effort to clean the terminals where I connected the wires. After thirty years of running since the car was restored, bits of corrosion and dirt likely have found their way onto the terminals.
3. Location of Terminals. There are lots of places to pick up the voltage signal. I ran the wire through the firewall and attached one wire to the cable going from the positive battery terminal to the chassis

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(remember, the TD has positive ground), and the other from one of the terminals on the fuse block. There likely are losses through the wiring, as all wire produces resistance. There might also be a voltage loss going through the fuse. I could have picked another spot, such as on the key switch, which is before power even gets to the fuse block. But, I didn't want to pull the switch, and it's getting too hard for me to crawl under the dash to work from behind, especially in the winter.

While all these readings were lower than expected, they all followed the trend I was expecting. Maybe in the coming weeks I'll get the car out for a spin and see how the readings compare on a longer drive, after the battery is fully recharged. For now, I'll just say that it is important to know your car's normal readings and watch for any deviations from them.

So, what went wrong with the installation? Many of you know that I am a pretty-well advanced woodworker. One of my projects a few years ago was covering my dash with a large sheet of walnut burl veneer (this was a common period upgrade and doesn't affect the authenticity of the vehicle). The project took most of the winter and I was very happy with the results. To make a single mounting plate for the two gauges (the other is a water temperature gauge, which the 50 TDs lacked and I'd added years earlier), I used a scrap piece of veneer left over from the dash. In the last few years, I've learned more about the use of water-based versus oil-based finishes: the water finish dries absolutely clear and the oil finish darkens the wood. Without thinking, I used the oil finish, which gave me a deep, beautiful color, but a much deeper shade of brown than the dash, which was done with water-based. I was in such a hurry to see how the gauge worked that I didn't re-do it and installed it, anyway. Maybe here's next winter's project: pull out the assembly, sand, and refinish the walnut with water-based finish to match the dash. There's always something to do on an antique car! But, isn't that half the fun of owning one?



Car of the Month

Steve Markman

My 1963 REO Snow Blower

I know!! It's not a car, but it has a petrol engine and tyres, and has its origins with Ransom Eli Olds, founder of Oldsmobile, and since no one sent anything about their car this month, I'll share the story with you. You may recall that a few years ago I wrote an article about horsepower, after being curious why my new Troy Bilt snow blower only listed the engine displacement and not the horsepower. Here's the story about the old REO snow blower that I replaced after nearly fifty years of service.

Way back in high school, besides having a paper route to earn money, I also mowed lawns and shoveled snow. Since we didn't have video games, computers, smart phones, and only three channels of television, I had plenty of free time and these money-making activities kept me busy. Snow blowers were a relatively new invention in the early 60s, and I kept bugging my father to buy one. My argument was that I'd be happy to plow the drive instead of being forced to shovel by hand, and I even could earn

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extra money clearing neighbors' drives. By about 1963, my dad finally relented and agreed to buy one, but I had to pay him back half of the cost, about \$65, from the money I'd earn with it.



Our new REO snow blower was a bit of a beast, and lacked anything close to modern safety features. In fact, the gear selector was spring loaded in the forward position, so heaven help you if you fell and let go of the machine. Even while in neutral, a slight bump to the selector lever could pop it into gear and the machine would lurch forward. I suppose this was typical of the machine design philosophy of those days...the operator was supposed to pay attention to what he/she was doing and be careful. What an antiquated thought. The only thing close to safety devices were the sheer pins that fixed the numerous gears to their shafts. In the event the snow blower hit a rock or the corner of a house, the pin would snap, preventing further damage to the mechanism. Note that this was to

protect the machine, not the operator or the house. More on this later.

I don't recall if we got it in late 62 or early 63, but with the heavy snowfall we used to get in Cleveland, I was plowing a few driveways a week at \$3 per drive, a lot of money for a kid back then. It was a thrill eating through six or eight inches of snow and seeing the plume shoot twenty feet off to the side. Interestingly, the deeper the snow, the farther away and higher into the air it'd shoot it. Even if the snow plow cleared our street before I was out there and threw a mix of compacted snow/ice onto the drive, the REO would eat right through it.

After a month or so, we had a major blizzard and schools were closed, a fairly rare event back then. I plowed my drive, and then got calls from a few neighbors. While I was out working, a friend wondered by. I offered him a job; go house-to-house and find me more customers. I gave him fifty cents for each one he found. Soon he came back with a list addresses. I was out all afternoon and into the early evening.

We always ate dinner together as a family. When I didn't come home, I don't know if my parents were more worried about me or more angry that I was absent. I finally came in as my parents were washing the dishes (by hand...no dishwashers in those days) and they started scolding me for missing dinner. As they yelled, I put my hand in my pocket and started pulling out crumpled \$1s and \$5s and making a stack on the kitchen table...sixty five of them to be exact, and said that this should pay off my half. I still remember the look on my Dad's face, one of the few times



My son clearing our driveway, 1992.

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he was speechless! Dad lived for another fifty four years, and I don't think I ever saw that look on his face again.

After I left home, my Dad continued using the REO until sometime in the late 70s, when he bought one of those little light-weight ones with an electric start because the REO was getting too hard for him to use. I brought it here to Dayton and continued to use it for years. It ran all right, but seemed to lose a bit of power over the years and started getting harder to start. I also was lucky to get a half-hour of running time before a shear pin would break. This required about a half-hour to repair since I first had to remove the sheet-metal body. As mentioned earlier, the gears were connected to the shafts by shear pins. Disassembly revealed that the holes were getting worn so that there was movement between the gears and shafts, stretching the pins until they broke. I eventually replaced them with bolts, and hoped that I never hit the corner of the house or garage, as I'd probably do significant damage. The pins were supposed to snap to prevent damage, but they weren't supposed to break under normal use...almost every time I used the machine. Since REO had gone out of business years earlier, as had the company that made Clinton engines, parts weren't available and having them custom made was out of the question. While replacing the pins with bolts helped, still it seemed like I was spending more time tearing the machine apart than actually plowing snow. It also took forever to start, even after shooting some starting fluid into the carburetor and using an electric space heater to warm the engine. By about 2012 or so, the rewind spring for the pull start cord broke, and I had it. I bought the Troy Bilt snow blower.

After all those years of service, I hated the thought of putting the REO out in the trash, and pushed it into the corner of the garage. Maybe I could find someone who'd want it. I thought that perhaps there was a museum of yard equipment somewhere. I Googled the topic every so often, and after a few years, I stumbled on someone up north of Dayton, possibly in the Findley area, who collected REO lawn mowers. I contacted him and he never knew that REO made a snow blower. He'd be more than happy to take it. A few days later he drove down to pick it up. I guess I shouldn't have been surprised that just as we love our MGs and take them to shows, there are yard equipment shows and this gentleman specialized in REO equipment. He showed me a picture album of all the mowers he's restored and pictures of him at shows with some of his prize entries. He was especially excited when I gave him the original owner's manual, one 11x17 inch sheet folded in quarters, with none of the typical safety warnings or legal disclaimers, and all in English. It even had the original sales receipt stapled to it.

As he was getting ready to leave, I realized the man's wife had been sitting quietly in the truck the whole time, so I went over to say hello. She smiled, shook her head, and said that everyone has to have their toys. He drove off happier than Terry and Carole with a new, rusted junkyard MG to restore. I contacted the new owner a while back and he still has the REO, but hasn't worked on it yet. Hopefully, some day it'll impress his fellow yard equipment enthusiasts, and maybe even take an award at a yard equipment show.



A Few Things I've Been Saving



A cold winter day in Minnesota. A woman called her husband.

**Wife: "The car is not starting. Dashboard shows the sign of a person sitting on toilet."
Husband: "What...??
Send me a picture."**



Classifieds

For Sale: 1979 MGB. New Stayfast Acrylic top, new top frame, new tires (as of summer 2020), working AC, new wiring harness, trailer hitch with wiring, twin Su's, Fiero seats. Asking \$7500. Call Larry Youngblood at 937-689-6995. (1/21).

For Sale: Hayden Electric Fan, used, excellent shape. Listed in the current Moss catalog, MGT-154 on p. A27. \$35 includes shipping. Dan Mortensen, agsdanny@aol.com or 859-384-7821. (1/21)

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, dry, and security system. Electric for battery maintainers. Terry Looft 937-527-7353 or tlooft@earthlink.net. (10/20).

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. srmarmarkman@att.net or 937-886-9566.

Minutes from January Club Meeting

Diana Hodges

In a nod to the 21st century, the pandemic and Bill Gates, the January 2021 meeting of the MGCC was called to order for the first time ever as a Zoom.com call. There were 23 members in attendance on Zoom.

From a warm, sunny tropical island (*or at least that's what his background portrayed*) President Terry Looft, "This is something new, old people trying to figure out computers." Graham Cooper, "Speak for yourself." President Looft continued, "We only have 45-minutes before they cut off of the free meeting we're using, so lets make this quick."

"To start off I wanted to pass along our condolences to Mike Maloney. There were several MGCC members at the funeral. Kay & Mike were always a fixture at gatherings. She will be missed. During this pandemic, at least we still have the shop and we're working on the MGC's. We've been keeping busy attaching parts. Carole's upstairs on a different computer so she cant throw anything at me now. That's all I've got."

Vice President Jim Carson was absent or at least having technical issues. He was on the test call and said he'd be here so maybe he'll show up.

Minutes were next up. Art Barnes motioned to accept the Minutes as reported. Ron Parks seconded. The members present voted and the Minutes were accepted as reported even though most of it was pure fiction (*I dare you to figure out which parts were NOT fiction!*)

Treasurer's Report was next. The MGCC had gains of: Membership Dues (\$320.00) in income for a total gain to the MGCC of \$320.00 We had total expenses of: Postage (\$14.00) + Flowers for Kay Maloney's Funeral (\$127.84) for a total expense to the MGCC of \$141.84. Monthly total gain when losses are subtracted means a gain of \$178.16 to the MGCC. When added to our beginning balance of \$4,432.77 leaves the MGCC with an ending balance of \$4,610.93 in the primary checking account. The Savings account now has \$381.58. With Cash-on-Hand of \$50, total ending balance of all accounts was \$5,042.51. Tony Shoviak motioned to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. Dave McCann, Sr.

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seconded. MGCC voted and approved of having money.

Membership Chair Carole Looft, “At the end of December I sent out reminders to renew. We’re up to 63. Diana ended her term with 68 so we’re currently just 5 shy.”

Birthdays in December were Art Barnes, Mary Youngblood, and Joy Veris.

January birthdays were George Chase, Ed Wolfe, Richard Shield, Lois Gribler, and Gayle Hirsch.

Vice President Jim Carson made it into the Zoom meeting and was finally ready to give his report. V.P. Jim, “I just had a procedure on my back today, a radio frequency application to get rid of pain. I’m still a little woozy. I do have something interesting...” Jim showed the members present a picture of Bill Toobin, the guy that got him started in MG’s, and his then Morris Minor.” President Terry, “Glad you showed up and glad you’re feeling better.”

Terry continued, “Eddie sent an email and he’s trying to get on but he’s having tech issues. Right now we’re still planning on going to the all MG meet in Atlantic City this summer but right now I give it an 80% probability of happening. We’re going to plan on taking 3-4 days to make it a relaxed trip out and back. We’ve got a few other MGCC members already committed.” Sam, “Which means the Gribler’s will be there in 8-hours.” Lois G., “8? Maybe if we stop for lunch.”

Terry, “We need to start thinking about something else as far as activities. We need to get the cars out as soon as the roads are clear. We need to also think about the Tuneup Clinic. Hopefully by next month we can come up with something more concrete.”

Sunshine Committee, Jennifer Peterson, “I don’t know anything, ask Carole.” Carole, “I have nothing.”

Newsletter Editor Steve Markman, “I hope everyone enjoyed the article that I did about volt meters. It encouraged me to install one in the TD. I’ll have a follow up for the next issue.” Lois, “I read the whole thing and it was very descriptive as to the difference between an alternator and a generator.” (At this point, someone noted a large sailing ship model in the background behind Steve.) Steve M., “Building these is my other hobby. I’m going to be the artist of the month at the Centerville Police Station in April with 3 of my big model ships on display. They only have room for three but I’ve got more.”

Dave Smittle offered the use of his Zoom account so that we could have unlimited minutes for the meeting. We all received a notification that the meeting had been upgraded to unlimited. Thanks Dave.

Webmaster, John Scocozzo, “I noticed that some members are posting notable information to Facebook and I was wondering if there’d be any interest in having a forum on our website. Terry posts a lot about his restorations and there’s information and pictures from British Biscuits & Tea. Basically it would be someplace where the people who aren’t on Facebook would have a place to chat.” After a brief discussion, it was decided to give it a try. You should have received an email from John with a link to the new forum.

Old Business. Terry Looft, “Let’s see who gets elected. Dave Sr., sorry, you’re it. We really haven’t been doing enough to have old business.”

Ron, “Terry, I have something...” Carole, “That’s New Business Ron.” Ron, “As far as the MGA restoration, I’m going to give people another month to get their shots and then I’m going to fire that up again.”

President Looft, “We also need to think about our club donations. Since Dick Smith was a founding member, maybe we could make a donation in his memory.” Skip Peterson, “I think that’d be a very good idea.” Ron, “I agree.” Skip, “I make a motion to give \$250-300 in Dick’s name.” Terry, “We just need to

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be frugal. If we don't have a BCD again this year." Skip modified his motion for a \$250 donation to the British Museum in Dick Smith's name. The MGCC voted and approved the donation.

Dave Johnson, "I know it's early but I volunteer to do the club picnic. We're getting a new piece of property that should have plenty of space." Terry, "There's talk about doing a joint holiday/picnic party. We just need to talk to President Emeritus Diana."

Sam Hodges, "If we're looking for something to do I can dust off the Ice Cream Social Distancing drive, add a few new roads if nothing new comes up."

Jim Carson, "I have a tech question. I acquired an MG TD and I wanted to do the interior in red. Steve Miller said he did a Camaro once and they had a spray that you could use. Anyone know what that is?" Carole Looft, "We've used SEM paints on the 1100 and it worked really well. We didn't do a color change, it was grey on grey but it is holding it up." Jim, "This would be going from black to red." Skip P., "Has anyone checked with Eastwood as far as paint for vinyl. If anyone has it, they would."

Since we're on Tech Tips, anyone got anything else?

Terry, "Our next meeting is supposed to be February 24th but we'll play it by ear. We'll see what the situation looks like. If people get their shots, the bars reopen and are comfortable coming out, then that might be the way we go. Otherwise, we'll be right back here on Zoom."

For sale. Ron Parks, "I've got MGB seats and an MGB grille. Make an offer on all, both or either."

Gumball Rallye drawing. Carole, "Believe it or not, I've been filling out tickets while we've been here. You're going to have to trust me." After drawing a ticket, Ed Wolf won the money. Ed Wolf, "What's that? I won Ron Parks Seats? Wow." Terry, "Thanks for donating them Ron." Ron, "You've got a '74 right? Otherwise they won't fit." Ed, "I've got a '73 but I'll make it fit. Drinks are on me tonight."

Terry, "Is this worth doing again?" MGCC, "Definitely, sure."

Meeting adjourned 8:20.



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