

THE OCTAGON NEWS



Volume XLVII No. 7

May 2021

MGA Coupe Restoration Update
The Cornell-Liberty Safety Car



From Under My Car

Terry Looft

I can't believe it's been a month already, didn't we just have the meeting 3 or 4 days ago? It sure seems like it. But let's see what we can scrounge up.

I could report on our pub run this weekend but right now it is an unknown with weather and turn out. Hopefully even with the forecasted rain we will have a good showing for a club get together.

As far as a BCD report, currently everything is still un-known and up in the air. We are waiting to see what the new information on masks and such will have on BCD and if there will be a BCD. It may come down to just what the park wants to do. We are hoping for an update from Skip at the meeting, but information is still limited. It is still a "wait and see" right now.

Everything else is pressing on pretty much as normal. We are working daily in the shop on the MGC project.



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:

Next meeting May 26th

MG Car Club Officers

President.....**Terry Looft**
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And special thanks to Ron Parks for proofreading.

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Upcoming MGCC Events

May:

- 4 – Star Wars Day
- 16 – Spring Drive
- 26 – Meeting at Bennett’s Pubical

Jun:

- 3 – National Chocolate Custard Day
- 6 – British Return to Fort Meigs
- 23 – Meeting at Bennett’s Pubical

July:

- 4 – Americana Festival
- 9 – National Sugar Cookie Day
- 28 – Meeting at Bennett’s Pubical

See meeting minutes for other area activities!!



If it is progressing fast enough for an Atlantic city trip, that is a question not answerable at this time. There is much to be done in just a month. But it is looking very much like a car these last few days. We now have fenders and doors and lots of other bits being added to the interior.

As if there is not enough to do, we still have 3 MG 1100s to prepare for the trip as well. The “Red Car” is in bad need of a front crankshaft seal. It had been blowing a lot of oil past it on the last long trip. The “Green Car” had a distributor failure just after the last pub run in it. Actually,

the vacuum advance unit failed. It is now repaired, but needing timing and checked over. Ryan and Leeann’s 1100 needs a good tune up and we are putting trailer hitches on two of the cars for the trip to Atlantic City. In-between all that, I’ve been working on the airplane to finish its inspection for a trip to Iowa. That now may not happen; the forecast is for a full week of thunderstorms. (Don’t retire, you won’t have time for anything)

There is interest by some other clubs in joining us on our caravan to Atlantic City; it could turn out to be a great drive. We will see if the Cleveland and Columbus groups join us for a Slow Ride (no reference to Foghat) to Atlantic City.

I’m looking forward to seeing a lot of smiling maskless faces (possibly) at the next club meeting. See you there.

Welcome New Club Members

Carole Looft

Phil & Melinda Cole
2804 N. Main St.
Findley, Ohio 45840
419-348-4555
philcoleauctioneer@gmail.com
1958 MG Magnette

Enoch Caudill
301 Sherman Dr. Apt. 110
Franklin, OH 45003
937-815-9844

Send Us Your Pictures!

Carole Looft

I'm sure most of you have explored our club's website at <http://mgcarclubswohio.com/>. One of the sections for viewing features our members along with their cars. We have quite a few members who are missing from this section. If you would send us a picture of you with your car/cars, we are hoping to update this section with current members and car information. Send to clooft@earthlink.net and I will pass it on.

MGA Coupe Restoration Update

Ron Parks

Paul Rich made a beautiful wooden steering wheel for the MGA Coupe and donated it to the British Transportation Museum (See photo of presentation). Paul repaired the center ring inside the wood. He replaced it with new stock and tig welded it, for many years of maintenance free enjoyment. And, each stainless spoke was hand polished and realigned before welding. Paul then covered metal steering wheel ring with Peruvian walnut, sandwiched between sections of 100+ year old Cedar. Laminates of walnut veneer separate the sections of Cedar. Each finger groove is hand filed and, there are over 50 pieces of wood involved in construction of the wheel. This is a fine enhancement to the MGA Coupe, and we genuinely appreciate Paul's labor of Love in donating this to the MGA Coupe effort!



The engine started, however.... Dave Gribler has determined that our distributor gear is installed 180 degrees out. So, our next effort is to correct that situation before moving forward with more engine run-in. Dave has found a good article on the MGA Guru site with a link to a John Twist video to guide us in the effort.

Much to our collective relief, the other issue of low oil pressure is attributed to a bad gauge. Ron Ramer's external, stand-alone oil pressure gauge read 50-60 pounds pressure instead of the 20 indicated by the old gauge. We will send the old gauge out and have it rebuilt.

We have installed a new battery and have yet to loosen the cable fasteners and fish through some more cable to prevent its rubbing on the frame. The center bracket has been re-welded to the exhaust pipe and a larger clamp has been acquired. This bracket was welded originally to the pipe in the wrong position. Once we are sure we're done walking around in the middle of the chassis, we'll install the transmission tunnel, wood floors, and hand brake.

Pictures From Second Biscuits and Tea

Photos by Ron Parks



Pub Run to Valley Vineyard

Photos by Ron Parks



The Cornell-Liberty Safety Car

Compiled by Steve Markman
from numerous sources



You probably never heard of it, but this car influenced many safety features in our modern cars.

Back between the late 1940s and late 1960s, the Cornell Aeronautical Laboratory, part of Cornell University in New York, was *the* center for aerospace research by private industry. However, they also were involved in automotive and highway safety efforts, using aerospace technology to make driving safer and to

save lives. Concerned with the rising accident and death rates on our highways, Cornell partnered with the Liberty Mutual Insurance Company in the 1950s to develop and demonstrate many new safety features that were years ahead of their time. Cornell still operates privately today, under the name of the Calspan Corporation, and you certainly know about Liberty, thanks to their advertising using a giant bird and this clueless guy with a toothpick in his mouth.

Over the first half of the 20th century, many automakers focused their efforts on making cars more reliable, more comfortable, and more powerful. Safety was a lesser concern. There were exceptions such as laminated windshield glass, which didn't break into sharp pieces, was in use by the late 1920s, but back then safety didn't sell. For a while Ford tried hard to publicize the safety features in their cars, but it made little impact on sales. As Henry Ford II remarked: "We're selling safety, Chevrolet is selling cars."

The booming postwar economy put more Americans behind the wheel each year. Cars became faster and four-lane highways were being built to expedite people getting from here to there. It's little wonder that more drivers traveling at faster speeds led to a rise in accidents. By 1950, some 35,000 people were dying in auto accidents each year. Researchers at Cornell University and officials at Liberty Mutual insurance took notice. In 1951, the two institutions teamed up to research a simple question: What causes injuries in automobile accidents?



Cornell-Liberty team made many discoveries by carefully studying accident reports and medical records

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from around the country. Car doors were a weak spot. Too often in an accident, a door was smashed open and one or more of the occupants was thrown from the vehicle. Furthermore, the team discovered that someone thrown from a car was more than twice as likely to receive serious injury, yet back seat passengers were three times safer than those in the front during a crash.



Researchers determined that the head was the most-frequently injured part of the body, and that one in ten victims received a facial disfigurement. Contrary to popular belief at the time, the steering wheel provided no extra protection to the driver. Indeed, the wheel was often a *cause* of injury, being pushed into a driver's chest during a crash. What's more, control knobs, window frames and decorative ornaments often maimed accident victims.

But the Cornell-Liberty team soon realized the auto industry and the public weren't being convinced by research findings published in reports and presented at automotive conferences. They needed to build a car to show how such features could be integrated into a stylish vehicle and they would appear.

The Cornell-Liberty team put its findings into practice by building a concept car that reduced or eliminated many of these dangers. While many of these safety concepts seem obvious and are standard in today's cars, they were quite imaginative by mid-50s standards. Starting with a 1956 Ford Fairlane, the team incorporated more than 60 protective features. The safety car's accordion-style doors latched in three places, keeping them closed in a crash. Its energy-absorbing bumper wrapped completely around the vehicle, providing protection in low-speed accidents. Seat belts and bucket seats helped keep occupants in place in a crash, while head restraints reduced whiplash injuries. Dual roll bars integrated into the structure kept the passenger compartment from crushing in a roll over. Perhaps the most prominent difference was relocating the driver from the left side to the middle and replacing the steering wheel and column with a pair of control handles, making steering similar to pointing a sled. The dashboard, like other interior surfaces, was padded. Door handles, buttons, and knobs were recessed. Unnecessary trim and decorative pieces were eliminated.

Since avoiding an accident is better than surviving one, the Cornell-Liberty team took driver visibility and distraction into account. With the roll bar well-back of the normal roof support location, the wrap-around, distortion-free windshield gave the driver an unobstructed view, and was cleaned by five wiper blades. Also, the front passenger seats were set back a bit, so that passengers' heads wouldn't

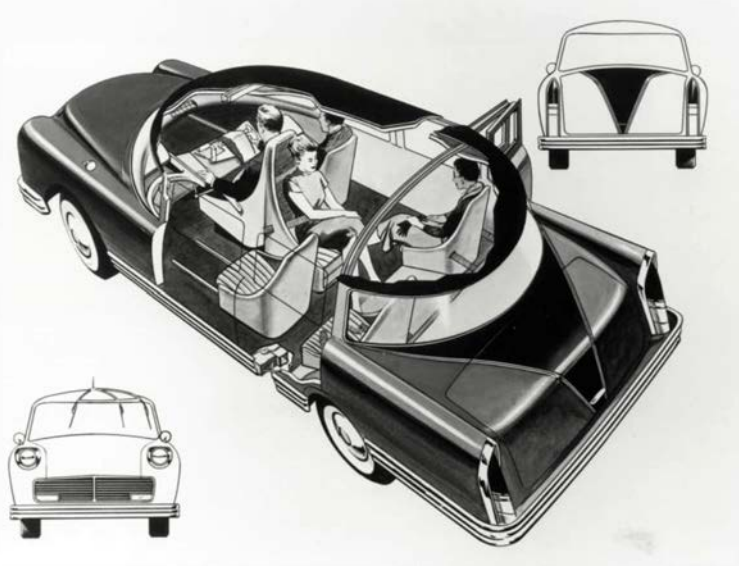


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further obstruct the driver's vision. The oversized speedometer and gauges were placed directly below the driver's sightline making them quicker to view.

Neither Cornell nor Liberty Mutual had any plans to manufacture or sell safety cars. Instead, they hoped that their project would bring more attention to crash protection from the public and – more to the point – from automakers. A decade later, after some additional prodding from Ralph Nader and new government regulations, safety became an established priority. And while the car you drive today may not have five windshield wipers or handlebar steering, it's certainly got a bit of the Liberty-Cornell Safety Car inside.

The car toured many cities and appeared at many auto shows, but I couldn't determine if it was street legal or if it actually ran. It eventually was donated to the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn Michigan, where it can be seen today.



Thanks and apologies to the following for my blatant plagiarism of their articles:

Lou Knotts, Calspan Corporation CEO, from the book Calspan – Testing the Future

Matt Anderson, Curator of Transportation at the Henry Ford Museum.

David Burrell, editor of retroautos.com.au

Classifieds

For Sale: MG-TD new body timbers: 1) Front latch pillars, left & right, Moss part no. 450-820 & 450-825. 2) Hinge pillars, left & right, part no. 450-830 & 450-835. 3) Under door rails, left & right, part no. 450-840 & 450-845. Half off the Moss price & includes free shipping. Danny Mortensen, 859-384-7821 or agsdanny@aol.com (5/21)

For Sale: 1970 MGB. It is a restoration project and I just don't have the time to give to it. It has a hard top and a soft top and chrome bumpers. It has been stored in my garage for the past 7 years. If interested we can send pictures. Asking \$3,000. Valerie Powell, clpowell428@gmail.com. (4/21)

For Sale: 1950 MGA project car. Vehicle has new cam shaft bushings; crank was ground (-.330 down) and stored correctly; missing carbs and manifolds. My dad was an MG enthusiast, and this was his last project before he passed away a year ago. We want to see it go to a good home to complete the restoration. Asking \$2500 or best offer. Located in Plain City, Ohio. Please contact Krista Precourt for more information at kprecourt10@gmail.com, or 805-427-5334. (4/21)

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For Sale: Honeycomb grill (1973 & 1974), good condition. Asking \$75. Reasonable offers accepted. Ron Parks, H 937-322-0717, C 937-207-9009, or MGdriver@woh.rr.com. (3/21)

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)

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 April Club Meeting

Diana Hodges

The April 2021 meeting of the MGCC SWOC was called to order at 7:30 exactly. To the second. There were 21 people in attendance.

President Terry Looft, “Welcome to our second live meeting here at Bennett’s Pubical. How is everyone?” Skip Peterson, “If we were any better we’d be you.”

President Looft continued, “The Tune Up Clinic. Thank you Steve & Mimi for opening up your shop. Thanks to Eddie for the donuts and Skip for the coffee. I think we had a good turn out. Ron did some spring work on his MGB and Mark Masquelier had some carb work done. There were at least 17 cars there.”

Terry continued, “As far as us, the MGC is coming along. We’ve got the dashboard to do, that and the wiring before we can do a smoke test. The engine’s in and it feels like we’ve accomplished something. We’re waiting on the plater to get the windshield frame back and a few other small things. I think the Automatic gearbox made things easier to get the car back together. The only real issue were the transmission mounts. Turns out they don’t exist. We found some down in Australia but we lucked out and found some old ones in an old box in the barn.

Vice President’s Report. V.P. Jim Carson, “We’re on for Sunday, May 16th Pub Run to Valley Vineyards. We’re meeting at Steve & Mimi’s MG Auto and we’ll leave about noon. We need to be there by 2. I told them to expect about 20 people.” Terry, “So about 10 cars.”

Minutes were next. Terry, Do we have a motion to approve the non-minutes. “It’s the first time he hasn’t lied to us.” MGCC voted. Non-Minutes approved.

Treasurer’s Report was next. Eddie Hill, “Why don’t you stand up to give your report? Treasurer Bob Farrell, “The MGCC had gains of: Membership Dues (\$51.00) in income for a total gain to the MGCC of \$51.00 We had total expenses of: Nothing (\$0.00) for a total expense to the MGCC of \$0.00. Monthly total losses when subtracted from the gains means a gain of \$51.00 to the MGCC. When added to our beginning balance of \$4,196.70, this leaves the MGCC with an ending balance of \$4,247.72 in the

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primary checking account. The Savings account now has \$381.69. With Cash-on-Hand of \$60, total ending balance of all accounts was \$4,689.42.” Skip Peterson motioned to accept the Treasurer’s Report as presented. Ron Parks seconded. MGCC voted and approved of having money.

Membership was next. Carole Looft, “We currently have 67 members. We did get some new members. Phil & Melinda Cole from Findlay, OH who own a 1958 Magnette. Also joining the club is Enoch Caudill from Franklin, OH. He’s been a Mini Club member for years and is now joining our ranks.” Welcome to the club.

Birthdays in April are: Linda McCann, Tim Dunham, Dave Estell, Mike Maloney, and Gordon Lindsay.

Activities with Mr. Ed. Eddie Hill, “It’s April. The Valley Vineyards trip on the 16th. There’s a Biscuits & Tea this Saturday (Yep, you missed it). Cincinnati British Car Days is scheduled for September 12th. The Concours d’Elegance is September 19th.” Something to think about, the 2021 Hot Rod Power Tour is scheduled to make a stop at the Montgomery County Fairgrounds on Tuesday, Aug 24th. This is the same basic schedule as the 2020 event, just postponed.” Ron Parks, “I got the AAA magazine and there’s an article about the ‘burger bucket list’ for Ohio and Linda & I will do some research and figure out a pub run based on the recommendations.” Eddie continued, “There’s a Father’s Day car show in Batesville, Indiana. Also, the Centerville Americana Festival is 4th of July.

Sunshine Committee. Jim Carson, “My 4th and final surgery is in June.” Carole Looft, “Dave Estelle had both knees replaced and is back home.”

Newsletter Editor Steve Markman’s not here.

Website Editor John Scocozzo is not present but Membership has an issue. Carole Looft, “I went to the website and there are 60 members with cars on the website. 33 of them are still active members. A lot have passed on.” Terry, “Some have croaked.” Carole, “We need to update this. We need you (the reader) to send a picture to John Scocozzo so that we can update the website for active member’s cars. This brings up another the other thing, I don’t know what we do for members who’ve passed away.” Skip, “I think something ‘in memorial’ would be appropriate.” Carole, “That’s what I’m thinking. Zeno, Louie D., Gary are all there and I think they should be in a different category from the live members.” Sam H., “I’d like to make a motion to reduce the dues for deceased members.”

Beer break called at 7:52.

Back from brake 8:07.

Terry, “How was beer break? Old business, Who’s the old one here? Don’t look at me! Jim Carson, thanks for volunteering.” Jim, “A while ago there was someone who got a bunch of MGTF parts. Who was that? I’m looking for some TF parts now.” Lois Gribler, “That was Steve Powell. We just saw the Powells’ at Menard’s today. They’re doing fine.”

Skip Peterson had a BCD update, “My gut feeling is that I think we might be able to have the event. The park is still sticking to a maximum of 10 people per shelter. If things continue to open up, we should be able to get the show on. Our average attendance is usually 1,000(ish) people based on 250 cars each with two people and then double that for spectators. Right now we’re sitting tight and if we know by June 1st, then we can do it. This is pretty push-button by now so we don’t need a lot of lead time.” Terry, “We’ll see what happens next month.” Skip, “But we are going to need some help to pull this off.”

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Club Historian. Ron, anything? Ron, “There’s a lot of stuff at the museum.” Dave Gribler, “John Scocozzo has been to the museum a few times and he’s been sent upstairs to where the Dick Smith archives are stored. We’re still waiting on an update.”

Pub Run. Jim Carson, “May 16th is the Pub Run to Valley Vineyards (you will have missed it by the time you read this). It’s a sandwich menu. There’s a new owner, you no longer have to grille your own steak.”

Tech Tips. Terry Looft, “Anyone have questions about their speedometers accuracy? There’s a SpeedOMeter app that’ll let you use your phone as a digital dashboard. It’s pretty close to the cars actual speedo. If you’ve got nothing or you know your speedometer isn’t accurate, you might find you like it better.”

For Sale. Ron, “The seats have been sold!” Skip, “Do we know the owner?” Ron, “Carli Dixon. I still have a grille for sale though.” Bob Farrell, I’ve got 4 wire wheel spindles for an MGB that worked when they came off the car a few years ago.”

Gordon, “I’ve got several dashboards for Austin Healey 100-4, 100-6 and a couple of other AH 3000 parts.”

Next meeting is May 26th, here at Bennett’s at 7:30.

Gumball Rallye. Carole Looft won. Carole, “How’d that happen?” How many Carole tix are in there? Skip, “I think we need an investigation.” Terry, Motion to adjourn. Meeting over. No investigation.”

Meeting adjourned 8:19



MG AUTOMOTIVE

Parts, Service and Restoration for
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Related Autos



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