

# THE OCTAGON NEWS



Volume XLVIII No. 4

February 2022

Ryan and Leeann Looft's New Arrival  
Registration for GT-47 Opens



## Fast Idle

Ed Wolf

Not too much to report this month. Hope this letter finds you warm and well during these cold winter days. Although, you never know, by the time you get this newsletter, it could be one of those 60 degree winter days that we get every so often. Seems like we've had our share of the cold, snowy weather this year. Looking forward to an early Spring, and getting our cars out and on the road once again.

This is the season of, well, winter projects. Hope yours are going well and good progress is being made. Or, at least the appearance of progress. Seems a mathematical formula could be applied here. Project Duration (DR) is equal to the sum of Project Planning time (PP) plus Project Activity time (PA) plus Time Searching for tools (TS) plus Time Waiting for parts (TW). So in short,  $DR = PP + PA + TS + TW$ . I'll leave this for you to fill in the data from your own experiences



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 February 23<sup>rd</sup>**

## MG Car Club Officers

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And special thanks to Ron Parks for proofreading.

### Inside This Issue

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## Upcoming MGCC Events

### Feb:

3 – Feed the Birds Day  
23 – Meeting at Bennett’s Pubical

### Mar:

18 – National Biodiesel Day  
23 – Meeting at Bennett’s Pubical

### Apr:

5 – National Read a Roadmap Day  
27 – Meeting at Bennett’s Pubical

*See meeting minutes for other area activities!!*

here, and possibly endless conjecture about whether additional terms need to be included in this equation, such as Time Waiting for Replacement Parts to arrive after the incorrect part is received. Or, possibly a term covering the time involved in Retrieving Tools or parts from unfortunate mishaps that leave them stuck in obscured places, and sometimes inside the engine itself. I will share that in my experience; it is very common that PA is just about equal to TS, and that these combined are often less than 1% of PP + TW. And that on more than one occasion, it would have been a real benefit to be able to flip the car over and shake the lost part back out of the engine. And concurrently, to shake loose all the other lost, forgotten tools that were there in the engine bay.

Hoping to see you at the next event.

## Ryan and Leeann Looft’s New Arrival

**R**yan and Leeann Looft are pleased to announce a new arrival to the family: a 1996 MGF. No other details are available at this time (weight, length, etc, but I suppose you can look those up for yourself). Both parents are doing well, as are the grandparents, Carole and Terry. They’re all excited to get it out on the road this spring. Congratulation to the new parents!!



## Automotive Finishes

Steve Markman

**E**arly automotive finishes were no more than what had been used for decades on horse-drawn carriages. Not surprising, since early autos were nothing more than carriages powered by either a gas engine or an electric motor. Prior to 1924, vehicles were painted using the same carriage-builder method used for decades. An explanation of the paint process from an early advertisement of the Studebaker Brothers Carriage Manufacturing Company in South Bend, Ind. proudly stated:

“Studebaker Finish! The most perfect, lasting surface of paint and varnish possible to put upon carriages. Twenty-two successive stages of finish ... appear on every Studebaker carriage. But, there are other steps typical of Studebaker thoroughness ... the chemists’ tests of oils and pigments; the careful preparation of

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the wood to take its finish properly; the repeated hand rubbing (sanding and polishing) to get smoothness; the perfect drying of the coats, an item that means fifty-two days of valuable time. More important than all of these, is the long, unequaled Studebaker experience, coupled with the thoroughgoing principles practiced throughout this 101 acre plant — Studebaker Finish Endures.”

It took fifty-two days to paint a carriage, and this was typical of other manufacturers. *And they bragged about it to show their level of care!!* The drying times were extremely slow, and vast dust-free drying rooms were needed. But durability was poor. The varnish topcoats often began to fail in two to three years due mostly to ultraviolet rays in the sunshine.

As early automobiles began to use sheet metal, the need for corrosion-resistant primers and new sealers arose. These new products were added to the centuries-old system already in practice. However, the time-consuming and labor-intensive methods were incompatible with assembly-line manufacturing and mass production. Clearly, something needed to change.

Keep in mind that paint – any paint – is made from various color pigments suspended in some sort of material, called the binder, to hold the pigment particles in place and attached to the surface. Existing paints available at the beginning of the 20th century were based on natural linseed oil resin as the binder. Oil resins don't dry through evaporation, but cure through a chemical reaction called oxidative cross linking, meaning that chemicals in the binder were going through a chemical reaction instead of evaporation of a solvent. Don't worry about the chemistry...the bottom line is that the paint takes a long time to dry. Recall that Ford painted all its early cars black, but it wasn't because Henry especially loved the color. It's because black paint dries faster than other colors because it absorbs more heat from sunlight than lighter colors, speeding up the chemical reaction. But Ford's black paint still was applied by hand to the Model T in multiple coats and sanded between coats, a process that still took about a week to complete. This caused production bottlenecks on the assembly line, and Model Ts in various stages of painting filled the factory floors.

This process bottleneck led to the first paint specifically developed as an automotive coating – DuPont Company's “*Duco*” paint. This new coating technology made a great improvement in productivity by reducing the drying time for each coat from many days to a few hours. The DuPont chemists who developed explosives and motion picture film found that by modifying the cellulose used in these products, they obtained a low viscosity lacquer resin that could be sprayed as a coating. Being a lacquer, this coating dried through solvent evaporation, rather than a chemical reaction. This new lacquer resin provided an excellent basis for a paint that had improved appearance, toughness, and durability compared to natural oil resin paints, and also could be pigmented easily with a wide variety of color pigments, besides just black! After a couple of years of testing, General Motors introduced *Duco* finishes on almost their entire automotive line in 1924.

But, as Paul Harvey used to say...here's the rest of the story. While several companies were working to develop a better automotive paint, DuPont sort of stumbled on theirs from a mistake. On a hot Friday afternoon in July of 1921, a DuPont worker left a drum of gun cotton (cotton fibers treated with a nitrate solution used in the manufacture of explosives) out on a loading dock during the very warm weekend. When workers brought in the drum on Monday morning and examined the contents, they found not gun cotton, but a clear, thick liquid. This liquid became the foundation of nitrocellulose lacquer, which soon became the leading automotive finish for nearly 50 years.

Alkyd enamel is another finish developed during this time period. It used a polyester resin modified by the addition of fatty acids and other components that made a little-more flexible coating. During the 1930s, both nitrocellulose lacquer and alkyd enamel became common. Many manufacturers also used

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combinations, offering black enameled fenders and a selection of colored lacquer bodies. Chrysler, Ford, Nash, Willy's and Studebaker used alkyd enamels, while General Motors and many smaller independent manufacturers used lacquer. These products and their derivations were used well into the '70s by both manufacturers and the refinishing industry.

Despite their popularity, these lacquer topcoats had one significant drawback – they had weak exterior durability. After about one to two years' exposure to sunlight and the elements, the coatings would begin to degrade, and frequent waxing was needed to restore the paint's shine. By the 1980s, the automotive manufacturers realized they needed better durability, as many consumers expected their cars to last at least five years, and they wanted their car to keep their new-car shine. (*Editor's note...I already was keeping mine ten years at this point, although they usually looked their age.*) At the same time, the Environmental Protection Agency was issuing new regulations for volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that limited the amount of solvent that an automotive facility could emit into the atmosphere.

Thus things changed again by the 1980s as European manufacturers demonstrated a superior product, the base coat/acrylic urethane clear coat system (Again, don't worry about the chemistry. It's just another way of making the binder.). Why? At the end of World War II, the Axis powers in Europe were prohibited from using certain chemicals and substances in their manufacturing processes because they also could be used to manufacture explosives. This put many of the components for nitrocellulose lacquer off limits. As a result, European manufacturers focused on enamels and developed a high-solids acrylic urethane paint system. This system was extremely durable in comparison to the air-dry systems of lacquer or synthetic enamel that were commonly used at the time. The other big advantage was that instead of the pigment being exposed to the elements, the pigment was sealed under a protective, transparent layer of clear coat. Paint manufacturers also began including UV inhibitors in the formula.

American manufacturers were slow to accept the European paint system, as the manufacturing and painting processes were more complex. Two problems associated with the new system were "dieback" and "mottling." Both were caused by successive layers of paint being applied before the previous layer had dried completely, thus trapping solvents in the lower layers of binder, and causing either loss of the glossy appearance, pigment particles clumping together, or both. With auto manufacturers sticking to their well-known paints, it fell on the auto repair industry to wring out the new system and eventually convince manufacturers of its superiority.

In the 1990s, another major development occurred in the formulation of automotive coatings: the use of water-based basecoats. The chemistries of these basecoats can vary between manufacturers, but the common factor is the use of water as one of the main volatile components. Typically, the motive to use waterborne technology is to obtain lower VOCs and reduce the environmental footprint of the painting process, but that is not the only benefit. It turns out that waterborne automotive basecoats often can provide improved appearance and metallic effects. (*Editor's note – my 1987 Oldsmobile was a beautiful burgundy color, but the paint began to crackle into a spider web pattern after five or six years. In response to my complaint, Oldsmobile told me that water-based enamel does that, so get lost. Why was I not surprised?*)

I didn't get into it, but metallic paints, which became increasingly popular as designs evolved from straight lines to curves, introduced their own set of issues. The metallic particles had to lay flat in the layer of paint to give the proper sparkle, and this introduced problems that the paint chemists had to overcome. But there's more behind the story of metallic paints. The 1930s saw the introduction of metallic paints, which were first made from actual fish scales and reserved only for the very rich. It would've taken about 40,000 herring to make one kilo of paint, but they'd give paints a mother of pearl sheen that could show off the curved forms of the cars of that day. But for most folks, expensive fish

scale paint wasn't a practical possibility. American paint companies substituted aluminum flakes, which were much cheaper than fish scales.

I also didn't get into advancements in primers, but have you noticed that cars don't seem to rust out like they used to? There also was a steady evolution in spray equipment, as manufacturers and repair shops needed spray guns that transferred most of the paint to the car instead of the air. And...there's also robotic spray equipment that coats consistent, even layers of paint without any runs, drips, or errors (and doesn't need coffee breaks, call in sick, pay raises, or go on strike).

The final major step change in automotive coatings technology occurred in the 2000s, and this advance focused on process efficiency. In the typical automotive assembly plant, the painting operation can take up to half the space of the entire facility, account for approximately 40% of the capital cost of an assembly plant, use 80% of the energy, and produce the vast majority of carbon dioxide and VOC emissions! OEM manufacturers have asked the paint industry to find ways to reduce this footprint and the cost of applying the coating. This has required paint manufacturers to develop coatings that can be applied more efficiently, in fewer steps, and with less energy.

The paint and painting processes used today might seem obvious now, but look at it this way — without these kinds of innovations, cars couldn't be mass-produced and would've proven too expensive for most of us and thus, a whole lot more of us might still be riding bikes or walking. And it's certain that in the future, car paint technology will continue to evolve.

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## Watkin's Wembley Folly: London's 'Eiffel Tower' That Never Was

Duncan Leatherdale, BBC News

**Before Wembley got its world famous football stadium, a Victorian railway magnate had even grander plans to turn the borough's marshy fields into London's answer to the Eiffel Tower.**

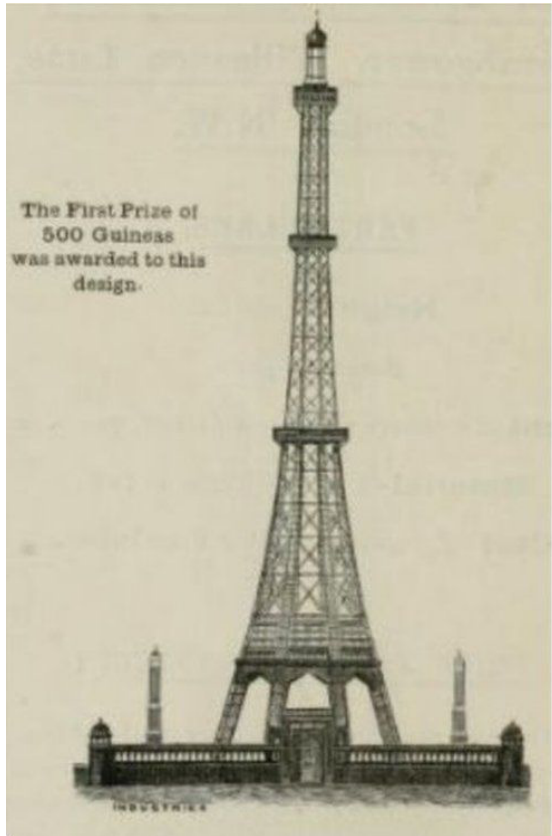
**S**ir Edward Watkin's plan was simple but ambitious - build the tallest structure in the world. The railway magnate had been inspired by the 984ft tall Eiffel Tower, which was unveiled beside the River Seine in 1889. He wanted London to have one of its own. "Like other Victorian men of the era, he wanted to make his impact on the world," said Jason Sayer, of the London School of Architecture. "The tower was to be his legacy."

Sir Edward Watkin ran a number of railways in England and Canada.

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The Eiffel Tower was the world's tallest man-made structure when construction finished in 1889. Initially derided by some for being a monstrous addition to the city's fine architecture, it went on to become a global tourist attraction, recouping its £260,000 construction costs in the first seven months and becoming the perennial back drop for Parisian postcards.

Sir Edward wanted Great Britain to have an equivalent. But, instead of building a rival tower in central London, he believed a marsh on the city's outskirts would be the perfect spot. He had bought 280 acres of land in the Wembley area as part of his grand scheme to build an entire new community, connected to the city of London by the Metropolitan Railway, of which he had been chairman since 1872.



His tower was meant to be the beacon for his new suburban paradise; comfortable homes set in pleasant parklands just a 12 minute train ride from Baker Street station. The poor would be able to swap the overcrowded disease-infested streets of central London for healthy country air. His park would also encourage city-dwellers to enjoy days out on his railway, with a trip up the tower being the icing on the cake.

The park opened with the tower still under construction. His park, which included a boating lake, waterfall and various sporting grounds, opened in May 1894 and quickly became popular with some 100,000 visitors in its first few months. Those ambling lazily around the large green gardens would have heard the heavy clanking of metal as work continued on Sir Edward's tower.

But work was not going well. It had been designed by the London architects Stewart, McLaren and Dunn, who had seen off 67 competitors for the 500 Guinea prize. Some of the proposed towers were somewhat fantastical and patently impractical, if not impossible. One was a

2,000ft high tower shaped like a multi-tiered wedding cake with a working railway spiraling up it. Another was described as an "aerial colony" complete with hanging vegetable gardens and a scale replica of the Great Pyramid on its summit. It was to feature a 90-bedroom hotel, restaurant, theatre, shops, Turkish baths, winter gardens and promenades, as well as a weather station and observatory at the top.

Stewart, McLaren and Dunn's winning entry closely resembled the Eiffel Tower, although it was made of steel as opposed to iron and, at 1,150ft, was some 165ft taller than the Parisian centerpiece.

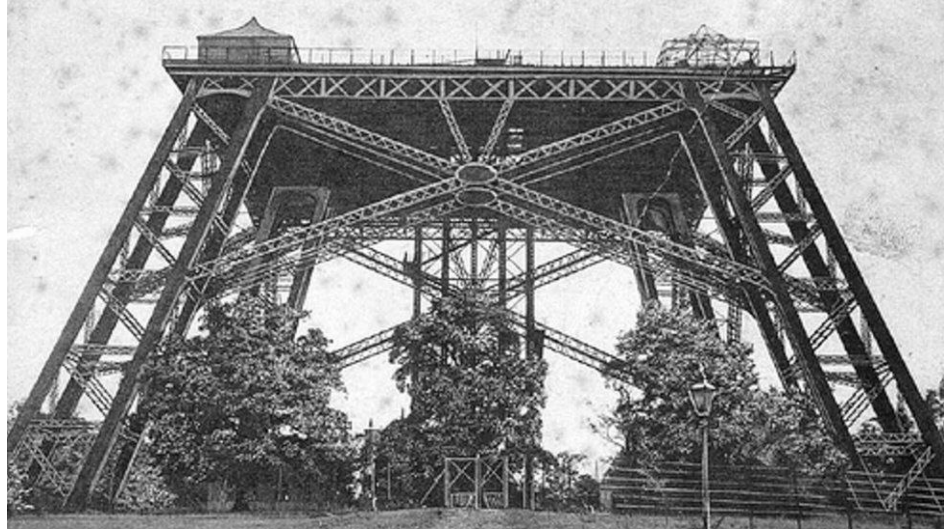
Sir Edward had actually approached Gustave Eiffel to take on his tower, but the architect of the Parisian masterpiece politely declined, fearing his compatriots might think him "not so good a Frenchman as I hope I am" if he helped the English build a bigger tower than France's.

But Wembley was the wrong place for such a project for two main reasons. Firstly, the ground was muddy and marshy and prone to subsidence. The first stage of the tower, consisting of four giant legs supporting a plateau 155ft in the air, was completed a short while after the park's opening. But it was soon developing an ominous lean that was even more pronounced two years later.



Secondly, it was too far from central London. "Wembley was not the equivalent of the location of the Eiffel Tower to put it mildly," said Christopher Costelloe, director of the Victorian Society. "People would get there and find there was not much to see, certainly no panoramic view of London. "If he had built it in Hyde Park it would probably have been a roaring success."

Sir Edward's hopes that his even partially built tower would enjoy the same immediate success as the Eiffel Tower were quickly dashed. Public interest in it waned with visitors donating only £27,000 of the £220,000 required. Sir Edward ploughed £100,000 of his own money into it, but by the end of 1894, work had ceased.



In a bid to reignite public excitement, lifts were installed in 1896 to allow people to get up to the platform. However, during its first six months only 18,500 people paid to do so. The tower once mooted to be named after Queen Victoria became known instead as the "Shareholders' Dismay", "London Stump" and "Watkin's Folly".

Sir Edward, who had also made an ill-fated attempt to dig a Channel tunnel in the 1880s, died in 1901. The following year his much-vaunted tower was closed to the public and in 1906 it was finally torn down. Though Sir Edward's tower was a failure, his vision for Wembley was not. The park's leisure facilities proved popular and became a venue for large-scale gatherings.

Wembley's place in the list of global icons would be assured when, in 1923, a magnificent new stadium, complete with twin towers, opened to host the FA Cup final between Bolton Wanderers and West Ham United.



In 2002, when the stadium was torn down to be replaced by another landmark stadium, workmen found large concrete foundations beneath the pitch. They were the first and last pieces of London's answer to the Eiffel Tower.

## Classifieds

**For Sale:** 1973 MGB, yellow, currently not running but all there...\$2000. Contact Dave Schwager, 937-751-4872 (11/21)

**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 and dry. Electric for battery maintainers. Terry Looft 937-527-7353 or [tlooft@earthlink.net](mailto:tlooft@earthlink.net) . (10/21)

*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. ish to continue the ad for an additional three months. srmarmkman@att.net or 937-886-9566.*

## Minutes from January Club Meeting

Sam Hodges

**P**resident Ed Wolf called the January 2022 meeting of the MG Car Club Southwest Ohio Centre to order promptly at 7:30. President Ed. “Thanks to everyone for coming out. We’ve got a good turnout for a January meeting. Other than that, I’ve got nothing.”

Vice President’s Report was next. V.P. John Scocozzo, “If you have nothing, I have nothing.” President Wolf, “Does anyone want to approve the nothing?”

Minutes were next on the agenda. After a brief discussion about the validity of the Minutes, which are by the way, word for word, Dave Johnson motioned to accept the Minutes as reported. Ron Parks seconded the motion. The MGCC voted to accept the Minutes as reported, under penalty of perjury.

Treasurers Report was next. Ed Wolf, “I have a copy of the Treasurer’s Report. The MGCC had gains of: Membership Dues (\$75.00) for a total gain to the MGCC of \$75.00. We had total expenses of: November Gumball (\$10.00) + Food Bank donation (\$100.00) + Salvation Army donation (\$100.00) + British Museum of Transportation donation (\$100.00) for a total expense to the MGCC of \$310.00. Monthly total gains when subtracted from the expenses means a net loss of \$235.00 to the MGCC. When subtracted from our beginning balance of

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THE PHYSICIAN WRANGLER RICHIE

**June 6-10, 2022**  
**Colorado Springs, Colorado**

**REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!**



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\$5,357.48, this leaves the MGCC with an ending balance of \$5,132.48 in the primary checking account. The savings account now has \$381.97, with cash-on-hand of \$40. Total ending balance of all accounts was \$5,554.45.” Lois Gribler motioned to accept the Treasurer’s Report as presented. Ron Parks seconded the motion to accept the report. MGCC voted. Treasurer’s Report approved.

Membership was next. Carole Looft, “In December we had 5 renewals. In January we had 6, so that brings the total to 65 members which is good for this time of year. We have a new member in attendance tonight. Steve Torre from Kettering owns a 1975 MGB GT. He lives in Skip’s and John’s neck of the woods. Now you know where to get help.” Steve Veris, “...Or parts, late at night.” Steve Torre, “I bought the car from an estate sale, but basically it was in good shape. Not great shape, but good. Needs some work.” Terry Looft, “As long as it wasn’t full of snakes, you did good.” Steve, “All the things I’ve found so far have been dead, so...”

Birthdays in December: Art Barnes, Joy Veris, Diana Cooper. January birthdays: George Chase, Ed Wolf, Rick Shields, Lois Gribler. Carole (to Lois) “Did you celebrate?” Dave Gribler, “I used her credit card to buy her dinner.”

Activities with Eddie was next. Ed Hill, “It’s winter time, who’s doing what?” Terry, “Now’s the time to start registering for the big shows. Registration for Peterborough, Canada is open.” Dave Gribler, “This years MGA meet registration is not open, but the website is up and running.” Steve Markman, “Is there going to be Brits-in-the-Burg this year?” John Scocozzo, “I was on a British Museum Zoom call and the British Museum isn’t doing Brits-in-the-Burg this year but they’re thinking about doing something else.” Eddie, “I’m going to talk to Steve & Mimi about the annual Tune-Up clinic. We should also start thinking about a Spring Tour.” Carole Looft, “Volunteers welcome.” Ed, “All you have to do is to plan a drive through the country and take us along.”

Sunshine Committee. Carole Looft, “I know things, but not about people’s health.”

The advertisement is for Rimmer Bros, a British company supporting British cars, featuring a 'BIG Sale!' for MGB cars. It includes a photo of a red MGB GT, a QR code, and various car parts like a battery, a fuse, and a headlight. The ad also lists contact information and a website.

**RIMMER BROS EST 1982** February 2022  
A BRITISH COMPANY SUPPORTING BRITISH CARS

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MGB GT

**BIG**  
**discounts**  
Limited Time Offer!

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This is just a selection of our MGB Sale items, view the full Sale on-line at [www.rimmerbros.com](http://www.rimmerbros.com)

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UK 01522 568000 - USA 855 746 2767 e-MAIL [sales@rimmerbros.com](mailto:sales@rimmerbros.com)  
[www.rimmerbros.com](http://www.rimmerbros.com)

Newsletter was next. Editor Steve Markman, “Keep those articles and pictures coming or I’ll have to restart the *Pet of the Month* feature.” Ed Hill, “I see that you were published in MGB Driver.” Steve, “Yes, they asked, and I gave them permission to use my articles. That article on brakes just keeps going, no pun intended. I had fun writing that article. I realized that I’ve written about 90-pages of articles over the last few years. I’m thinking about combining them and publishing them as a volume. Any interest from the club?” Terry: “How much would they cost?” Steve, “Probably my cost minus 10% to get rid of them.” The MGCC appears to be interested in such a thing.

Webmaster (and V.P.) John Scocozzo, “Not much new. The Internet is still there.”

Beer Brake called at 7:47

Back from Break at 8:01

President Wolf, “No more beer for you. Next item is old business.” Lois, “Who’s old

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business? Ron's hiding," Sam H., "Art's hiding back here too." Art Barnes, "I don't claim that title."

New Business, Dave Gribler, "Beer break?" Ed Wolf, "My memory's not great, but didn't we just have that?" Carole Looft, "I got an email from Skip Peterson. The featured cars at BCD this year are the MGB and the Spitfire. I'm hoping that whoever lays out the show field will put MGBs in a prominent location." Ed, "We also have the Daimler club and they're having their national meet in conjunction with BCD. I was going to put them in front since they're guests and I'm not expecting more than 10-12 cars. But, since I have a chrome bumper B, I guess those are going to be front row now. How many classes of MGB are there? Pull handle, chrome bumper, rubber bumper, GT?" Ed Wolf, "Will you be the one who informs the Daimler club that joining the MGCC is a prerequisite of the meet? It'll only be \$1.50 by then anyway." Terry Looft, "As long as they count towards your numbers? I know where this is going." Ed Wolf, "Of course I want my numbers to come up."

Tech Tips. Terry Looft, "Who here has issues trying to keep their choke out?" Sam, "They're supposed to stay out?" Terry, "I got tired of my choke always working back in, or having to hold it open while driving down the road. I have a Ronco choke-holder-open part now." Steve Veris, "That looks like a Lego brick to me." Terry, "I have 4 but I can print more. If you need one, let me know." Steve Veris, "Are there instructions?" Ed Wolf, "Does it work on Triumphs?" Terry, "No." Steve Markman: I use three spring-type cloths pins to hold it out and remove one every few minutes as engine warms up."

Art Barnes. "I have the world's smartest daughter. She bought me this lovely MGA shirt, by way of Amazon. Way better than any MGB shirt."

For Sale. Ron Parks, "I'm selling my tonneau cover because I'm putting a roll bar in my MGB. This one is mohair and like new." Terry, "How many mo's did it take to make that?" Ron, "It's for an MGB with headrests. Make me an offer."

Dale Katzfey, "I've got 48-spoke MGA painted wire wheels for sale. I bought chrome so these are available if anyone's interested."

Art Barnes. "If you could imagine four of these tables together, Steve Powell has enough MG TC parts to fill them that he doesn't want to inventory but is willing to talk about. If you've got a TC or know someone who does, talk to Steve." *Editor's note – I could have sworn his said Steve Miller, but I could have heard wrong.*

Gumball Rallye. Carole Looft, "We've got a couple of things. We've got four shirts and three books that had been Phil Johnson's as well as the normal \$10." Leslie Hunter wins the \$10. Rachel Johnson takes one of the books. Ed Wolf, "Oh, I get this tonneau cover." Takes book. Diana Hodges wins the other book. Andy wins the first shirt. Ron Parks gets another shirt. Ron, "You're standing too close to the tonneau Ed." Ed Wolf, "I can do a little sewing. I can make you a nice pair of pants out of that." Bill Hunter wins the final shirt.

Meeting adjourned at 8:23.

**MiniMania**



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