

THE OCTAGON NEWS



Volume XLX No. 2

November 2023



Pictures from Pub Run at The Famous
The History of Bumpers

Presidential Musings

Dave McCann, Jr

I'm sitting down at the computer after the October meeting, again with a limeade. The meeting kicked off a successful start to the year, I think. We have the next meeting set up for the 15th of November, the **THIRD** Wednesday of November, and the Wednesday that is eight days before Thanksgiving Day. If you arrive the night before Thanksgiving, it will not be my fault. Have a beer and go back to smoking your turkeys. The Holiday Party is also at Bennett's Publical on Saturday, the 2nd of December. 6pm as is usual. We also decided to have a Pub Run on the 4th of February, 2024, at the Little River Bar and Grill, in Oregonia. Details are still to be set up, but look for confirmation at the November meeting or in the January newsletter. As with most things in February, it is subject to weather.



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 Publical Family Sports Grill**, 67 South Main St, Miamisburg 45342, at 7:30pm. The next meeting will be:

Next meeting November 15th

MG Car Club Officers

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And special thanks to Ron Parks for proofreading.

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Upcoming MGCC Events

Nov:

- 1—National Authors Day
- 11 – Veterans Day
- 15 – Meeting at Bennett’s Publical
(note-one week earlier than usual)

Dec:

- 2 – Holiday Party at Bennett’s Publical
- 5 – Bathtub Party Day
- No Club meeting – happy holidays

Jan:

- 3 – Fruitcake Toss Day
- 24 – Meeting at Bennett’s Publical

See meeting minutes for other area activities!!

After I submitted my first president's article, Steve Markman asked me a question as a seed for part of an article: why do I have cars all over the country? Here's the story.

Between 1997 and 2012, I followed work around the country and worked in several different places on the east coast and west coast. I worked in both Orange County and the San Francisco Bay Area in California along with central and northern Oregon. While in Orange County and while the '70 MGB was off the road for engine work, I bought the '64. When I moved east to Richmond, Virginia, the '70 was still not finished so I left it in California and so when it did get finished I found a place to keep it in the Bay Area. For several years I kept the car in a warehouse full of semiconductor manufacturing equipment spare parts. It was a place built from large redwood beams. The guy who owned it had his own collection of MGs and rented out space to friends and other collectors. It was not just for storage, there was space to work on the cars there also. Numerous club tech sessions were held there. He moved on from the manufacturing spare parts business to a British car repair business when the warehouse lease was not renewed and the whole neighborhood of warehouses

became a neighborhood of houses and apartments. About the time that was happening, I had my car up in Idaho where I was working on a job for several months. When that job completed, instead of driving the car back to California, I drove it east. Earlier that year I moved back from Virginia to Ohio. In the process of doing that, I built a shed behind a friend's shop in Richmond so I could keep a car there. The '64 and the '70 were swapped back and forth a few times before I drove the '64 back to the California Bay Area and found a new place to keep it. Shortly after that, I bought an MGA, and that lived in Virginia and Pennsylvania on and off while I was trying to find an engine that would work in that car. Two 1600s were tried before I pulled the 1800 from an MGB GT project car and coupled it to a Hi-Gear Engineering 5-speed gearbox to make the MGA run. That engine was rebuilt piecemeal over the years as required. I worked north of Albany, New York for a couple years, and the '70 and the MGA were swapped around between NY, VA and Ohio. Eventually, I ended up with another MGB GT, this one with a 64 Buick 300 V8. The '64 was in California at this point, and still is. The Virginia car varied as needs and projects changed. And the other three along with the shell of the MGB GT project car were stored at home in the driveway or in Famous Dad's paint shop which became a car shop, eventually expanding to include a second two car garage at the storage facility so four cars could be kept inside. When management changed at the storage facility, it became clear that moving out and building a garage would be the 'best' option, and the project GT was sold off because there was no space to keep it around. It's more than a year now since I moved the last cars out of the storage facility, and the garage is better and better every day.

No shortage of cars to visit with the fleet of MGs. See y'all at the meeting and Safety Fast.



Pictures from Pub Run at The Famous

Photos by Rob Parks





The History of Bumpers

Steve Markman

Bumpers are one of our cars' important safety features. They are the first barrier against the impact from another vehicle or a fixed object, and can play a critical role in the survival of the car and the safety of everyone inside it during a crash. Few of us know how bumpers came to be. By considering their evolution, one can get a better sense of just how important they are.

Automobiles first appeared in 1885, but bumpers didn't start appearing on them until around 1915. Early automobiles were little more than horse carriages modified to be powered by either a gasoline engine or electric motor. Early designers did not foresee the need to install such an extra, although they probably thought that a collision with another vehicle was possible. Besides, where would it be installed, anyway? (photo, right)



The first bumpers possibly were used in 1897 by the Czech manufacturer Nesselsdorfer Wagenbarr-Fabriksgesellschaft, but were solely for aesthetic purposes, or maybe it was just for helping tie the structure together. From the looks of it, maybe it was to protect the front from getting scuffed when pulling up to one of those horse-hitching posts that commonly were in front of most homes and businesses. Who knows? Compare the picture on the left, and notice that the front wheels are set back just enough that the bumper can give the body a bit of protection, maybe.

In 1901, the British engineer Frederick Richard Simms was the first to consider auto bumpers as playing a role in improving safety. In 1905, he filed a patent application for the "buffer," claiming that its goal was to "prevent damage to reflectors, mirrors, radiator and other parts of the vehicle, which should be the last to collide with an obstacle, as well as for the purpose of protecting people or vehicles on the road." He also explained that the "buffer" should be manufactured "similarly to pneumatic tires or made from solid rubber or filled leather."

As sales of new motor vehicles grew, steel strips were installed on the front and back. By the end of the 1920's, thin metal strips were replaced by double steel bars. But, early bumpers were almost entirely decorative. Some even served more as “people catchers” rather than to protect the automobile itself!



The chrome bumper first appeared in the 1920s. Chevy played a pioneering role by offering forward chrome bumpers with two bars as optional features on the 1926 Superior (left). Other automakers followed suit, designing increasingly complex and stylish bumpers into the 30s and 40s. Bumpers gradually evolved from being simple metal bars to curved, flowing pieces of chrome-plated steel. But even as they came up with more complex designs, they still saw the bumper



primarily as aesthetic in nature, giving the vehicle a unique personality. They certainly absorbed some of the energy of a crash, but most of it transferred right through the mounting assembly and into the car's main structure.

After the Second World War, the United States and other industrialized countries experienced an economic boom, driving demand for ever more stylish cars. Automakers saw the bumper as a valuable source of style and distinction; they began to integrate bumpers with the rest of their vehicles' grille and side trim, creating a complete, flowing appearance. However, they were mounted low and still provided minimal crash protection.



In 1973, the US government introduced its first bumper regulations, recognizing that bumpers had the potential to protect vehicles and drivers in the event of a crash. Lawmakers mandated that they had to be able to withstand a rear impact up to 2.5 miles per hour and a frontal impact up to 5. Only if the tail lights, headlights, fuel system equipment, and other essential components remained intact during such a crash would the bumpers be considered strong enough to provide the desired level of safety. These regulations applied to all new automobiles sold in or imported into the United States. The government tightened these regulations in 1974, demanding that bumpers also protect the engine, safety systems, and lights in any crash below 5 miles per hour. It increased them even further in 1979 by declaring that all body panels had to survive in a crash at that speed.

In response to these new regulations, automakers had to scale back on style and focus on making bumpers stronger. They took different approaches. Some went from chrome to rubber bumpers, while some moved the bumper farther forward and added shock absorbers so that it would withstand fender benders more effectively. These bumpers may have been safer, but they appeared bulky and awkward with a big open space. (1976 AMC Matador, right, 1973 vs 1974 MGB, below)



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Meanwhile, the government continued to modify its bumper regulations. The early 1980s brought the requirement that bumpers had to be between 16 and 20 inches above the ground, so that in theory, most impacts would be between bumper and bumper. (Note – also a clever way to ticket cars without any bumper at all!) But Federal authorities loosened the regulations on crash resistance, so that bumpers only had to protect vehicles in front and rear collisions up to 2.5 miles per hour, or in corner impact crashes of up to 3.

Early on, rigidity was seen as beneficial to occupant safety. However, the trend of vehicle crashworthiness then moved in the opposite direction, towards vehicles that crumple progressively, absorbing energy and keeping occupants from being thrown about as violently.



In 1968, the Pontiac GTO introduced a plastic bumper on the front, but retained the chrome one on the rear, then went all-plastic the following year. To meet both safety regulations and stylistic demands, automakers expanded on Pontiac's plastic bumper designs during the early 1980s. They used a plastic skin to fill the gap separating the car's body and the edge of the bumper. From there, they began to rely on plastic more and more. By the 1990s, almost all new vehicles were made with plastic bumper covers, which

usually had a steel or aluminum reinforcement beam underneath, which provided the strength, as well as plastic honeycomb or Styrofoam to provide cushioning. These bumpers provided a high degree of safety during fender benders, allowing cars to meet all applicable safety regulations. They were also lighter than traditional bumpers, lowering the vehicle's weight. This proved essential in helping to comply with environmental regulations, as well as providing a stylish look. However, even a small bump that leaves no mark on the bumper cover can compress the foam hidden behind it, compromising its ability to absorb energy the next time. Have a body shop inspect and replace the foam if needed. The last American car to feature chrome bumpers was the 1991 Ford Crown Victoria.

For all the benefits of the new bumpers, many consumers express nostalgia for the sleek, stylish appearance of their chrome predecessors. After-market manufacturers offer chrome plastic bumper covers to replace the factory original. I couldn't find any pictures of a car thusly modified, nor of a production car that offers them. I would tend to think that with the plastic cover integrated into the vehicle's design and painted to match the body color, a chrome one just wouldn't look "right." Maybe I'm right, maybe not.

Considering their century-long history, the evolution of bumpers certainly hasn't ended. What will they

look like in twenty years? Your guess is as good as mine.

Sources:

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MG TD Makes *Car Talk*

Ray Magliozzi

Dear Car Talk: Twenty-two years ago, I bought a completely disassembled 1953 MG TD, the same car your late brother used to own and wax poetic about (ad nauseum, as you'd say) on your radio show.

Recently, I finally finished reassembling the car and took it on the road. In 75 total miles of driving, I have blown two freeze plugs. I chalked it up to poor installation until I talked with a professional MG mechanic, who admitted to having the same problem.

Did your late brother have this problem with his MG TD? And if so, what did he do to solve the issue? — Larry Dear Larry: Wow, you set a new record, Larry. My brother never got more than 60 miles between major repairs.

It certainly could be installation error on your part. But since you've managed to track down one of the last professional MG mechanics still roaming the earth, I'd ask him to install the next set of freeze plugs for you.

By the way, I'm assuming he's 93 years old, and answers to "Nigel."

If they blew out that quickly, my guess is that the holes are too big. That can happen if someone was overzealous in trying to install them sometime (or several times) over the past 70 years.

Freeze plugs are driven into pre-existing holes in the engine block. And if they're forced in too violently, or if the holes are aggressively sanded out, the holes can become too big. And if that happens, obviously, the plugs can get blown out under pressure.

Nigel can probably figure out if that's your problem. And if the holes have gotten too big, he can get you some rubber expanding freeze plugs designed to address just such a problem. And then, if you're lucky, you'll get 90 miles before you need to replace them again. Good luck, Larry.

Editor's note – I hate to question Ray's wisdom, which I've enjoyed for years, but the TD's cooling system is unpressurized, so I don't think the plugs could get blown out under pressure. Obviously an oversight, as he may never have had the pleasure of working on his brother's TD.



Classifieds

For Sale: '65 MGB parts car. Under tarp for 40 years ago. Rust, no floorboards, otherwise complete. 69K miles. Located in Troy. \$600. Tom or Debbie, 937-694-2939. (10/23)

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. (9/23)

For Sale: MGB/GT. Rusty, possibly salvageable for parts. This GT has spent many a moon in a barn. It's been sitting outside for a while so the rain and weather actually have cleaned it up a bit. It has a lot of rust, and even the rust holes have rust holes. If you are brave enough to get your nose a little too close to where there used to be a passenger window, you will get a whiff of something horrible; it smells of either dead/rotting bodies or the human waste burn barrels I learned to dislike from my Vietnam experience. The car might be restorable by someone who has more money than brains! Hey, the sign says "For Sale...make offer!" Go for it! It might make a heck of a project for someone. I hate to see any British car towed to the junkyard for crushing. Maybe it'd make a good home for some wild critters on your back 40. Phone number on the For Sale sign says "937-972-2633 MAKE OFFER!" , or you can call Larry Youngblood for more of his opinion, but he will have absolutely no part in the actual sale of this car, If you call, don't even mention that you heard about it from Larry. (8/23) *(Editor's note: I toned this down from what Larry sent me.)*

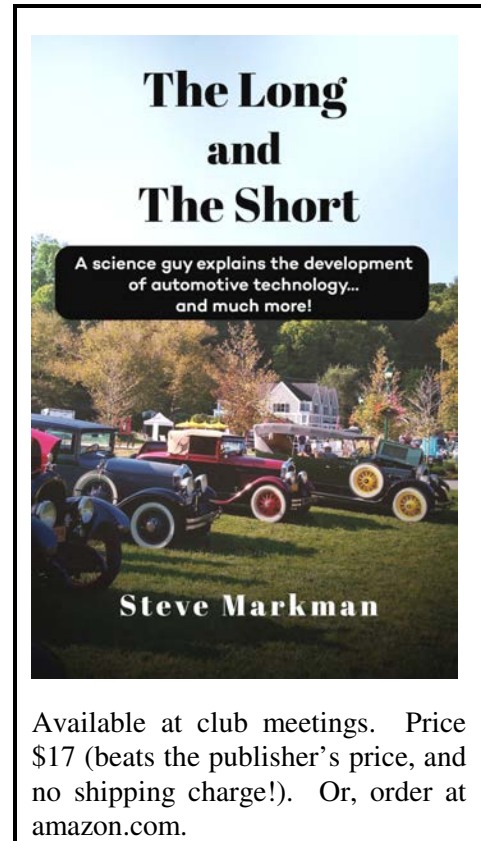
For Sale: Numerous MG-related items. MOSS MGB Roll around engine stand fits '62 - '80 MGB engines. Used, but in very good condition. \$65. Numerous framed MG posters, pictures and metal signs that need new homes. Wall hanging made from MGB wire wheel cut in half, washer welded to back side in order to hang on wall. \$65. 1/18 scale, factory-built '47 MGTC by Road Signature. Yellow with green interior and black removable top. No box. \$30. Several MGT & MGA books signed by author...\$30 - \$35 ea. Larry Youngblood, 937-689-6995. Leave message if I don't answer. (6/23)

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. If you wish to continue the ad for an additional three months, contact srmarmman @att.net or 937-886-9566.

Minutes from October Club Meeting

Sam Hodges

Newly crowned President Dave McCann, Jr. called the October 2023 meeting of the MGCC SWOC to order precisely at 7:30. For the first time. And then again at 7:31... Dave McCann, Jr., "Hi guys. Looking



through the list, looks like the first thing tonight is the Vice President's report.

Vice President Dave Gribler, "The MGA is running again. I finally started it today after I replaced the head gasket." Skip Peterson, "How many head gaskets does this make? Five? Six?" Dave, "I've lost count." Dave Johnson, "There were a couple just on the drive to and from Minnesota." Gribler, "That was only 1 on that trip." Skip, "How many have been changed on the side of the road?" Dave G. (*Actually counting*) At least 4." Dave, Jr., "We'll call that the Vice President report."

Minutes were next on the agenda. Dave Johnson motioned to accept the Minutes as reported. Ron Parks seconded. MGCC voted. Minutes approved.

Treasurer's Report was next. Treasurer John Scocozzo, "We had some income this month. The MGCC had gains of: Membership Dues (\$420.00) + Regalia sales (\$30.00) + BCD Revenue (\$1,500.00). Total gain to the MGCC was \$1,930.00. We had total expenses of: Drive/Outing 'supplies' [*the first round*] (\$147.09) for a total expense to the MGCC of \$147.09. Monthly total losses when subtracted from the gains means a gain to the MGCC of \$1,782.91. When added to our beginning balance of \$4,370.64, leaves the MGCC with an ending balance of \$6,153.55 in the primary checking account. The savings account now has \$382.25, with cash-on-hand of \$40.00. Total ending balance of all accounts was \$6,575.80." Sue Scocozzo, "wait a minute. I have a question? How much interest did we get?" John Scocozzo, "¢2. And that's my ¢2 worth." Skip Peterson motioned to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. Dave Gribler seconded the motion to accept the report. MGCC voted. Treasurer's Report approved. Skip, "This might be a new record for the treasury."

Membership was next. Dave, Jr., "Apparently we have 33 members. The people who renewed last month before the elections." Jennifer Peterson, standing in for Carole Looft, "I did get 1 renewal but I don't know what to do with it. Do I keep the check?"

Activities with Edward was next. Eddie Hill, "The season's about up. The Holiday party is here at Bennett's on Dec. 2nd. Mark your calendars. There's a possibility of a Biscuits & Tea this Saturday." Dave Johnson confirmed that there will be a Biscuits & Tea this Saturday. *That was last Saturday so you missed it.*

President Dave, Jr., "Should we talk about maybe setting up a Pub Run for January?" Dave Gribler, "January, it's not even Christmas yet." After some date discussion, it was decided that February 4th would be a good date for a possible pub run since it's the weekend before Super Bowl and most places shouldn't be too crowded. "Next month bring a suggestion of where to go." Possibilities mentioned at the meeting were the TJ Chumps on Stroop road, in front of the old Urban Suburban.

Sunshine Committee. Jenifer P., "Everyone's healthy."

Newsletter. Steve's not here.

If you think you are smarter than the previous generation...50 years ago the owners manual of a car showed you how to adjust the valves. Today it warns you not to drink the contents of the battery.

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“Where are the Loofths?” President Dave, “They’re in Texas at the NAMGBR general meeting.” Skip, “The one where they take the dues.”

Webmaster John Scocozzo, “I’ve got pictures from the Pub Run at The Famous.” Dave, Jr. “How was the Pub Run?” Lois Gribler. “There were 21 people.” Skip, “The food was good, the service was good.” Dave Gribler, “You sure about that?” Skip, “That’s true. The food was good, the service was okay.”

Beer Brake called 7:44

Back from Break at 7:55. *Dave feebly banging gavel...* With more gusto at 7:56.

Old Business. Dave, Jr., “Other than Ron?” Skip, “I’m looking around and I’m not too far from being it.” Dave Jr., “We had a suggestion for another possible location. The Little River Cafe in Oregonia.”

John Scocozzo, “I wanted to remind everyone that our November meeting is 1-week early on Nov. 15th due to Thanksgiving.”

New Business. There was no new business.

Tech Tips. Ron Parks, “Tom at the body shop was able to fix a bunch of little surface scratches that I had on my MGB. He gave me some pink stuff, rubbing compound. You have to rub it long enough to heat it up.” Jennifer, “What’s the name of it?” Skip, “It’s Toms pink magic stuff.” Dave G., “What happens if you rub some where there isn’t a scratch?” Skip, “You might be in the hospital.”

Dave McCann, Sr. “We did it before and we might want to rethink this as a spring drive. We haven’t been to the Auburn, Cord Duesenberg museum for a while. Maybe we can do it as an overnight trip. Think about it for our Spring tour.” Skip, “The hotel we stayed at last time set up security to drive through the parking lot every hour for us. They really welcomed us.”

For Sale. Lois Gribler, “I have a Pontiac hubcap.” Dave Johnson, “I have an MGB shell free to the taker. (*I might be interested in that. No, I AM interested in that, just need to find the time.*) Sam Hodges learned about a 1955 MG TD for sale. It’s currently in Arizona, but if anyone’s looking for one, I can get more details.

Skip Peterson won Gumball. Ron, “I sent Tom a text and he says it’s called Correction Compound.”

Dave Johnson motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ron Parks seconded. Meeting adjourned 8:08.

  <p>www.BritishTransportationMuseum.org 321 Hopeland St., Dayton, OH 45417</p> <p>Giuseppe Automotive Restoration (818) 269-3240</p> <p>Your antique/classic maintenance and restoration expert</p>	  <p>Parts, Service and Restoration for MG, Triumph, Austin Healey and Related Autos</p>  <p>Steve Miller 3733 Wilmington Pike Kettering, Ohio 45429 (937) 294-7623 e-mail: MgAutomotive1@aol.com</p>
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