THE OCTAGON NEWS

Volume LX No. 2

November 2024





From El Presidente

Sam Hodges

ood morning, good afternoon, night! I have no idea when you're reading this, so I'll cover all the bases. As the driving season comes to an end, I've seen more and more MGs going into winter storage. Personally, based on the prediction of the Old Farmer's Almanac, going to roll the dice and not really store the cars. I'm hoping there will be enough nice days to sneak in a drive or three over the upcoming holidays.

Speaking of holidays, our annual Christmas party is quickly approaching. President Emeritus Dave McCann, Jr. recently placed the order for the food so calendars. mark your Saturday, December 7th at Bennet's Publical. party starts at 6:30 due to the festivities that the city of Miamisburg has planned.





North American MGB Register

Southwestern Ohio Centre of the MG Car Club P.O. Box 20032 Dabel Branch Dayton, OH 45420-0032

Club Membership Information

Membership dues of 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:

Wed, November 20, 2024

MG Car Club Officers

President Sam Hodges	
phone937-581-4767	
emailsammgb@earthlink.net Vice PresidentEd Wolf	
phone937-668-1298	
email <u>90legendl@gmail.con</u>	
SecretaryDiana Hodge	š
phone 937-760-0272	_
emaildiana.l.hodges@earthlink.ne	<u>t</u>
TreasurerJohn Scocozz	0
phone937-231-918	
emailjscocozzo@gmail.com	
Member at LargeSkip Peterso	n
phone937-603-760	
email	<u>1</u>
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President EmeritusDave McCann Jr	•
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WebPage......www.mgcarclubswohio.com

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There's going to be a Christmas parade and tree lighting starting at 5:00. If you're not busy, you might want to come early and plan to stick around for our party. Main street will be closed for the party, so plan accordingly.

Recently, I was reading an article in the most recent issue of Hagerty's Drivers Club magazine about the celebration of 100 years of MG. Interesting read as they were comparing an MG TF, MGA and MGB GT. All three had distinct charms that were distinct from the other. One of the things I've always loved about MGs is their ability to make 45mph seem so much faster than it actually is. Last month, Diana & I went over to see Frank Lloyd Wright's masterpiece, Fallingwater. The house was everything I expected it to be and more, but driving the twisty Pennsylvania backroads, I kept thinking that this would be a great area to drive. I'm a little jealous of the southwestern Pennsylvania area British car owners for their access to some of those roads.

As a result, as previously stated, and due to the fact that I firmly believe that I'm not driving the cars enough, I've decided to try to make this winter a year round driving affair. Since I store the

cars in the garage out back, this isn't really a challenge. It just means not putting them in the sealed bags instead, throwing a car cover over them, but it makes me feel good to think I'm doing special. something With my luck, I'm sure that has cursed us to 14ft of snow, but I'm sticking with Farmers this winter.



Up Coming Events

November:

20 – Meeting (Bennett's Publical Family Sports Grill,)

December:

7 Holiday Party (Bennett's Publical Family Sports Grill, 6:30PM)

January:

22 – Meeting (Bennett's Publical Family Sports Grill,)

February:

26 – Meeting (Bennett's Publical Family Sports Grill,)

From the Editor Ron Parks

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emember any and all appropriate contributions to the newsletter are always welcome. You can mail them to me at 4101 Grossepoint Street, Springfield, OH 45502, or E-Mail to:

MGDRIVER@woh.rr.com.

Either of those methods will work fine or you can call me at ((937) 322-0717 and we can arrange to meet and transfer materials or conduct an interview.

Final Dues Reminder

By Carole Looft

I

f you have not sent in your renewal, it is due now. Unpaid members will be dropped from the roster at the end of the year.

Membership dues are \$25.00 for club members who will be receiving the newsletter by email. Those members wishing to continue with a paper copy of the newsletter will need to add an additional \$10.00 to offset printing and postage making their total \$35.00.

NOTE: The pro-rated amount is for **NEW** members only.

We appreciate your continued support of the MG Car Club Southwest Ohio Centre.

You can bring your dues to the monthly club meeting or you can send it to:

MG Car Club SW Ohio Centre P.O. Box 20032. Dabel Branch Dayton, OH 45420-0032

British Transportation Museum Visit & Pub Run Ron Parks

ur visit to the British Transportation museum for their Chili cook-off served as the MG Car Club SW Ohio Centre's pubrun. Those members in attendance enjoyed tasting the dozen or so entries in the Chili-Cookoff and voting for their favorite. The entries varied, some having squash and other vegetable ingredients and others more traditional.





$The\ Octagon\ News-November\ 2024$











Dave McCann Jr.'s MGA

By Dave McCann Jr.



got the MGA between GT-33 and GT-34, or around 2009. I got it from George Kress in Pittsburgh. had several and was starting to thin out his collection. It was drivable, but the engine was not in the best condition. I drove it back and forth to Virginia at least twice before I got it into good enough shape to get it to Ohio. I think I had the head rebuilt at some point, but I ended up getting a different 1600 engine from a guy in

Canada. That engine turned out to also have issues. My impression is that the guy knew how to rebuild MG engines but was cheap and reused too many parts. The third engine was an 1800 5-main and came out of a 69 MGB-GT that we had not gotten back on the road. To put a 5-main 1800 in an MGA requires changing the backing plate and some sort of MGA/MGB hybrid transmission (or other modifications). In the case of this car, I put in a 5-speed from Hi-Gear Engineering. Hi-Gear offered (still offers) an installation kit that included the MGA transmission mount and an MGB bell housing. I did need to change the backing plate to an earlier MGB backing plate, as it was easier than trying to fit the large bell housing in an MGA (if that is even possible).

I did not drive the car to GT-34 in Hot Springs Arkansas, so the first GT it went to was GT-35 in Wisconsin. I do not recall what the state of the car was at that point, but the 1800/5-speed swap occurred before Rallye To Reno leading up to GT-36 in Reno. I don't recall many issues on the way to the West Coast, although I did have to replace the muffler. I was able to pick one up at Victoria British when we stopped there, and I was able to get the muffler installed in Dodge City the next day.

Seems like the bottom end of the 1800 got rebuilt over the winter between GT-36 and GT-37, but as GT-37 was in Dayton, it may have been the year after. The car went to GT-38 in Asheville, NC without issues and I don't recall much that I did to it before GT-39 in Ottawa, Canada. On the way back from Ottawa the 5-speed ran out of oil. I had to get the car towed, but after refilling the transmission it seemed to work fine. It ended up working fine for about three years, but then I had to replace it when the bearing that was damaged three years prior acted up again. Because of the bearing issue, I drove the car about a thousand miles in fourth gear (as the bearing did not cause problems with no load on the layshaft).

GT-40 in Michigan did not cause any issues for the car, and then the car did not go to GT-41 in Louisville as I drove the MGB-GT V8 instead. GT-42 in Solvang, CA was where the bearing

issue came back up. I left the car in San Francisco and drove my 64 MGB to Solvang, and then flew home. A friend helped me replace the transmission and then later drove the car home for me.

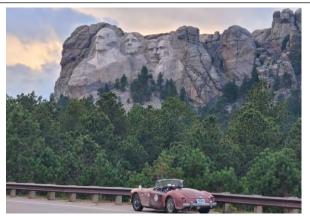
There were no issues with GT-43 in Virginia, GT-44 in Iowa, or GT-46 in New Jersey. For GT-47 I again had trouble with the car as I overheated in traffic in Louisville on my way to Colorado. Over the winter some friends and I swapped in the engine from the 74 MGB, and I was able to drive the car to GT-48 in Memphis without issue. I even drove out to Tucumcari, New Mexico as I was unable to do that on the way to Colorado the previous year.

When the new engine was swapped in, I also put in an aluminum radiator, a plastic engine driven fan, and a fan shroud to improve the cooling. The fan installation was also notable as it was possible to put the fan on an MGB water pump and have it not too close to the stock MGA radiator position. I haven't had an issue with cooling since and the car runs at around 160 nearly all the time. It might possibly run too cool. I've been considering changing the thermostat to one rated at 190 degrees.

For GT-49 in Oregon, I had a couple minor issues, but all of that is detailed in recent articles.

This winter I'm planning on installing a new wiring harness. I think I will remove the floors to help that process, and I might make new floors. I'll also install some insulation when I put the floors back in.







I don't recall when I got new wire wheels. The car came with chrome wire wheels, but they were not in great condition and I wanted to try the tubeless wire wheels. I've not had any trouble with those, but I did have trouble with my first set of tubeless tires. I bought cheap tires and all four of them needed to be replaced for issues other than wear. I've been running Vredesteins since and they have been without issue.

When I changed to the 1800 engine, I also installed an alternator to replace the stock generator. The alternator is a GM 10SI. Attaching the alternator to the engine required the GM J





bracket to hold the outer side, but cut down and with a new hole drilled. It also required a hinge point adapter. Having a 10SI in an MGA. particularly with the hinge point bracket I used did present issues. The 10SI is a larger diameter, and the hinge point adapter moves the alternator further away from the engine block. It difficult becomes access the passenger side

radiator mount and now with the fan shroud access is further restricted. I might have been better off going with a Lucas alternator, but I wanted one that would be available at parts stores. I don't think I've needed to replace the alternator, so being able to get a replacement has not been a benefit yet. But then the alternator has not broken either, so I'm still probably ahead. There are Japanese alternators that are very compact, although they are not cheap. I considered that as an alternative to the GM alternator, but as I've not had problems with the 10SI I probably will not change anything there.



Early on I put in a mesh grill to improve airflow to improve cooling. That most likely helped, but did not eliminate cooling issues. During the 1800 swap, or possibly before, I changed from the stock MGA 4.3 ring/pinion ratio to an MGB 3.9. In combination with the 1800 and the 5-speed, I'm running nearly the same running gear as an MGB, save for 5% taller tires. The car runs at 70 MPH in fifth gear when the engine is turning at 3000 RPM.

A couple years ago I got new gauges from SpeedHut. I was able to design the faces to look similar to stock, although I changed to a tan face with blue illuminated numbers. The red illuminated pointers also diverge from stock. I've been working on 3d printing a custom dash for the MGA. We'll have to see when I get around to finishing that.

Either when I installed the 1800, or earlier, I installed a gear reduction starter. That has worked without issue since it was put in. I also started using Pertronix electronic ignition modules pretty early and they've worked pretty well for me.

With all the travel to NAMGAR GTs the MGA has been as far West as I-5 through the three West Coast states and to the ocean in San Francisco. It has been as far east as Northwestern Rhode Island, and to the Atlantic Ocean in states from New Jersey to North Carolina. South as far as Gainesville, Florida and North to Calgary, Alberta. I've not driven the MGA to any of the corners of the Contiguous US (I've been to all four in other MGs), but it has been to the northern-most point in the Contiguous US, the Northwest Angle at the top of Minnesota. I don't know how many miles I've driven in the car, but the odometer has been in the car for two years and has over 16000 miles on it. I've driven coast to coast four times (three west and one east), and according to my notes I've had the car in 43 states plus the District of Columbia and five provinces of Canada. I've



driven at least one of my cars in 48 states and seven provinces, so the MGA accounts for quite a bit of that.

And I've had the top up at least twice.





Another Look at MG2025 in Crystal Lake, IL

By Carole Looft

the North American MGB Register. We had a chance to check on the accommodations for the national meet coming up in July, 2025.

In heading to the Chicago area, our hope was to find a route that would keep us off the toll roads. So, we took I-65 out of Indianapolis northward and picked up highway 30 West toward Joliet. That proved to be a long stretch of congested areas and a lot of stop and go

Verry and I were in Crystal Lake, Illinois the last part of October for the annual meeting of

toll roads. So, we took I-65 out of Indianapolis northward and picked up highway 30 West toward Joliet. That proved to be a long stretch of congested areas and a lot of stop and go traffic. It ended up taking about 3-4 hours to drive over to Joliet. We will need to re-evaluate our route and possibly end up on the toll roads after all.

The host hotel at Crystal Lake is a Holiday Inn. It is a large, six story building with close to 200 rooms. All the rooms have a microwave, refrigerator, and a Keurig coffee maker. There is a restaurant and bar on site and the grounds are spacious with ample parking. The car show will actually be held at the hotel. The area around Crystal Lake is quaint with other small towns that have interesting shops and antiques. The town of Woodstock, IL is a short drive away. Woodstock is famous for the filming of the movie, *Ground Hog Day*.

We should know more about the various show's activities when registration for the event comes online around the first of December. Crystal Lake is far enough away from the bustle of Chicago so it should prove to be another enjoyable show for NAMGBR.

A-TEAM

By Ron Parks

he A-Team has made more progress towards turning the donated MGA 1600 Roadster into a nice driver that the British Transportation Museum can sell for a profit. Bill Hunter, and Ron Parks attempted to start the engine after installing the new fuel pump. The fuel pump was certainly working, as the front carburetor was overflowing. Bill took the carburetors home with him and with advice from Steve Powell, worked on cleaning and making them functional. The float in the back carburetor was stuck, causing the front one to overflow. The team will attempt to start the engine again after re-installation of cleaned carburetors.

We are creating a list of reassembly items to be done and will ask for some volunteers to adopt areas of reassembly. i.e., You might want to adopt the carpet, clean and install; or, a seat, clean it up and install it; bumper front, bumper rear; headlights; taillights, clean one or more wire wheels (1-5). You get the idea. The goal is to make the car a reliable driver and presentable enough to attract a buyer. So, in the near future we will email a list of reassembly items and ask for volunteers to work on different areas of the car. The hope is that we can be all over the car at the same time without getting in each other's way and make it drivable and saleable by spring.

Editor's note: A-TEAM title, coined by Ed Wolf.

Loss to MG Community

(Introduction by Ron Parks with excerpt from Jack Smittle's Obituary)

ur condolences to Dave and Kim Smittle and family on the passing of Dave's parents. Jack and Maxine Smittle were married in 1955 and passed away just 12 days apart in October 2024. Besides being active in many civic organizations, they were MG enthusiasts extraordinaire. The Smittle family entered several MGs in the Dayton Concours d'Elegance in 2023 and received the Chic & Arlene Kleptz Family Award.

Jack and Maxine were members of several national and statewide MG sports car He founded clubs. Central Ohio MG-T Owners. now known as Central Ohio MG Owners (COMGO). MGs were his passion and pride--from postretirement spare parts business, Old Farts Auto Parts, to the 2005-11 design and build project of a 1946 MG TC special body car essentially from scratch which he called the S-Type. The car was invited to several prestigious Concours d'Elegance shows Glenmore, Stan Hywet,



Chic & Arlene Kleptz Family Award – Dayton Concours d'Elegance 2023

Boca Raton, Amelia Island, Dayton and Lake George, NY. He loved participating in events with "the Special" such as Ohio Chapter Gatherings of the Faithful, multistate GOF Centrals, the Rallye to Reno, car club trips and the annual Put-in-Bay Vintage Sports Car Races and Reunion. He judged Mid-Ohio vintage sports car shows and was considered an expert in MG history, originality and memorabilia. While he loved the cars, he enjoyed interacting with fellow enthusiasts even more.

Dayton Native helped drivers stay under the

radar (The following excerpts are from an article by Richard Sandomir, New York Times that appeared in the Dayton Daily News on Monday October 21, 2024)

Submitted by Lois Gribler

ois and Dave Gribler had met Michael Valentine, a fellow University of Cincinnati alumnus and benefactor at an alumni event some years ago. Michael was a 1973 UC engineering graduate. Lois noted the MGB connection in the article. The following paragraphs appeared in the article:

Michael Valentine, an electrical engineer, loved to drive fast in his MGB sports car. But in 1974, after a national highway speed limit of 55 mph was mandated as a fuel conservation measure, he believed that a "holy war" had begun: speed seeking drivers against police officers trying to snare them with radar guns.

"In a holy war, you can take either side and be right," he told The Cincinnati Enquirer in 1981. He added, "The problem is that police radar is an electronic device of fallible character in the hands of ordinary human beings."

Valentine, who didn't believe that road safety was determined by finite speed limits, went into battle armed with the Escort, a radar detector that he built with Jim Jaeger, his college friend and business partner, for their company, Cincinnati Microwave.

They were met with early success. In 1979, a year after the Escort's debut, Car and Driver magazine tested 12 radar detectors and ranked it the best – "by a landslide" – for its ability to pick up the signals of police radar equipment.

The rave catapulted sales. In early 1981, Valentine said that Cincinnati Microwave had sold 50,000 Escorts.

Valentine never stopped upgrading the Escort, and after parting ways with Jaeger in 1983, he designed two generations of detectors at his own company, Valentine Research.

After Valentine's death at 74 on Sept. 16, Road & Track magazine lamented the loss of "one of the great saviors of speed." The magazine added: "We all owe Michael Valentine a great thanks for his commitment to the auto enthusiast community. "And, probably some of the cash we've saved on tickets too."

Tech Tip

By Ron Parks

Adjusting rear brakes is made easier using the special brake adjusting wrench, Moss part number 386-160. BRAKE ADJUSTER WRENCH | Moss Motors



Classified Ads

Wanted: I have a '53 TD in need of a differential. Rick Jobe rtjobe@jobenet.net (8/24)

For sale: 1 right & 1 left front latch pillar for the MG TD,.Moss catalog #450-820 & 450-825. Selling as a pair for 1/2 the catalog value - \$94. Brand new. Free shipping. Danny Mortensen 859-384-7821 or agsdanny@aol.com (9/24)

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. Electric for battery maintainers. Please bring chargers and extension cord. Terry Looft 937-527-7353 or tlooft@earthlink.net. (9/24)

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 Ron Parks MGdriver@woh.rr.com or 937-322-0717

Larger ads may be purchased for inclusion in the Octagon News for the following annual prices for 11 issues: full page ad - \$100, half page - \$75, quarter page - \$50, & Business card size - \$25.

Minutes from October Club Meeting

Diana Hodges

El Presidente Sam Hodges called the October meeting of the MGCC SWOC to order, for the first time for the third time precisely at 7:32. El Presidente is late. President Sam, "Welcome to the dictatorship. I'd like to start off the meeting with a Tech Tip. Whenever Diana goes to the groomer (Hey, Wait! Groomer?!?) we make a habit of having a date night. I'll usually meet her for dinner afterwards. The last time, the weather was nice and I decided to drive an MG. Dinner was fine, we had Mexican, but on the way home, I noticed that my turn signals weren't working. Then I noticed the tachometer was dead. Then most of the dash. Most alarmingly however, my brake lights had stopped working. Luckily I was in Miamisburg and only about 4-miles from home and I was able to get home without any issues. As any of you who've had this happen know, it was one of the relays that had gone bad. I keep a couple of these around because this isn't the first time it's happened, just the latest. My tech tip, keep a couple spare relays around, you're going to need them."

Vice President's Report was next. Vice President Ed Wolf, "Fuel prices are down. It was only \$2.79 at the Sheetz in Centerville. I find it an odd coincidence that it dips right before an election."

Minutes we're the next thing on the list. Sue Scocozzo motioned to approve the Minutes as reported. Terry Looft seconded. MGCC voted. Minutes were approved. Surprisingly, Diana Hodges and Dave McCann, Jr. opposed. *I see I didn't slander them enough*.

Treasurer's Report was next on the agenda. Treasurer John Scocozzo, "We had income of Membership Dues (\$450.00) + Regalia sales (\$24.00) for a total gain to the MGCC of \$474.00. We had total expenses of: Drive/Outing Supplies (\$118.20) + Gumball Rally cash (\$20.00) + Postage (\$60.00) for a total loss to the MGCC of \$198.80. Monthly total loses when subtracted from the gains means a total gain to the MGCC of \$275.20. When added to from our beginning balance of \$2,358.51, leaves the MGCC with an ending balance of \$1,633.71 in the primary

checking account. Since I put the extra money into the savings account, and we've been doing pretty good with our interest, I moved another \$1,000 over to the savings account. Now the savings account has \$3,381.14 after the application of \$0.10 in interest. Cash-on-hand is \$50.00. Total ending balance of all accounts was \$5,066.85." Ron Parks motioned to accept the Treasurer's report. Carole Looft seconded. MGCC voted. Treasurer's report approved.

After the vote, there was discussion at the front corner table about moving the money into a short-term CD to increase our interest holding. John reported that he moved another \$1,000 to the savings account based on the fact that we're getting more interest. Carole Looft, "How much are we talking?" John, "An additional \$.02-03 per month." Sue Scocozzo, "I make a motion that you look into this." Terry Looft, "I second that."

Membership Chairwoman Carole Looft was next. Carole, "We currently have 37 members. That's about where Dave was right after the first of the year." Steve paid his dues so now we have 38 members."

Birthdays in October: "Steve Powell, Graham Cooper, Dar Planeaux, Linda Fields and Steve (who is now dues paying member again).

Activities with Eddie. President Sam, "Eddie isn't available tonight, but he did send me his report. he only things he has are the Pub Run to the Chili Cook-Off at the British Museum of Transportation on Oct. 26th, starting at 4:00, and the Holiday Party. That will be at Bennett's Publical on December 7th at 6:30." The time shift is due to Holiday festivities (parade and lighting ceremony) being held by the city of Miamisburg on December 7th.

Sunshine Committee was next. There was no one sick that we knew of. (*Unless you consider El Presidente being sick with power...*)

Newsletter Editor-for-Life, Ron Parks, "If I haven't featured your car, send in your articles so we can feature your car."

Webmaster John Scocozzo, "It's there and still working."

Beer Brake not called at anytime! Pres. Sam, "We're on a roll. Let's end this thing."

Back from non-Break immediately.

Old Business. "Who's the oldest one here?" Ron is walking out as he assumed there would be an actual break.

New Business. Terry Looft, "Since NAMGBR is in Chicago and there's a chance for a good turnout, we're going to Chicago and staying at the hotel where the event is being held next year. We'll report back on what we find." Ed Wolf asked about tolls. "Does EZ pass work universally? I have one for Pennsylvania but does it work in Illinois?" President Sam, "Not sure if it works universally, but I do know that if you're driving an SUV through the EZ pass portals and you don't have a front license plate and you have bikes in a bike carrier on the back of the SUV, the cameras cannot read your plates and you never get a bill. I've got onto the EZ pass website for the last few years looking for myself and I haven't seen a thing." Terry, "We have historic plates on all our cars and they never send us anything." (*Perhaps these should be under tech tips*?)

Carole Looft, "I have an idea. New members, and even some old ones, need help from time to time. *To John and Ron*: MG Driver has a section in the back to ask a question. I wonder if there's

any way that we can put something similar on the website? If the questions are answered, include the answer in the Tech Tips. New members want help, this may be a way of getting that help to them." Ron, "We could put in newsletter that if you have a question, go to the website." Ed Wolf, "Maybe we can put questions from the MG web forums on the website or in newsletter as well. They could also come to the British Museum on Saturdays. People are working on their cars and there is always someone to help." Ron, "On that same note, what if we have more than one Tune-Up Clinic a year? Maybe a spring and fall? Maybe we can offer roving tune up clinic. Show up and work on a car." Dave McCann, Jr., "Are you suggesting that people who join our club need help?" Carole, "It all starts with adding the information to the website and the newsletter."

Tech Tips. Terry talked about how his B was lacking compression. The head gasket was blown between cylinders 1&2 and 3&4. "Terry, "I'm going to have to do a mini overhaul, re-ring it or possibly bore it again. There's enough that I can go .40 over, but not the .60 over that others have suggested is possible."

For Sale: Terry Looft, "Project MGB, low compression."

Gumball Rallye, was won by John Scocozzo in a shocking conflict of interest. Did I say John, Sue Scocozzo quickly corrected me. Sue Scocozzo won Gumball.

Next Meeting is Nov. 20. Due to Thanksgiving, the meeting will be moving ahead one week. President Emeritus Dave McCann, Jr., "December 7th is the Holiday Party at 6.30. Ok to bring desserts to share. Food will otherwise be provided. Bring a gag gift.

Steve didn't get his newsletter the last few months. Wondering about the email. If you didn't get this newsletter be sure to let us know.

Motion to Adjourn: Terry Looft Motioned to adjourn. Sue Scocozzo seconded. Meeting adjourned 8:15.



