

THE TIDEWATER MG 'T' CLASSICS

President: Ron Eaton (420-2405)  
Vice Pres: Jim Banvard (340-6737)  
Secretary: Tom Lund (480-3090)  
Treasurer: Helen Barrows (428-3250)  
Editor: Susan Boswell (486-1293)

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

Greetings of the Season and all that--

A new feature is introduced this month--FROM OLD NUMBER 5078 (alias Ron Eaton)--which promises to be our president's monthly mutterings on the state of the MG, the world, the weather, SU carbs, the faithful, or anything else that pops into his head. We also have some news from England and the next exciting installment of MG FEVER.

FROM OLD NUMBER 5078 (alias Ron Eaton)--

A quick glance at the membership roster reveals some facts quite worthy of reflection. The active in-town membership list of singles and families totals 55, and separating the families into husband and wife, the figure becomes 97. We usually manage to field around one-third of the membership at our monthly meeting which I believe by most standards is really quite good. I think it can and should be improved. I would hope you take a look at the meeting/activity schedule and please mark your planning calendar accordingly. I know that winter tends to bring about a decrease in participation in all facets of outside activities, and, of course, the little cars get a rest and needed maintenance. So--don't feel bashful about using that Detroit Iron as transportation to club functions!!

Usually I leave the reporting on activities to those better skilled; however, there was no one else in this case, so please bear with me.

Having received my spare tire on Saturday, and successfully mounting it, I felt fairly confident in cutting the in-town umbilical cord. Sunday morning Rosemary and I headed south, unafraid, to Elizabeth City, N.C. and the Museum of Albemarle Antique Show and Sale. It was an absolutely beautiful day and the drive down past Dismal Swamp, et all, couldn't have been nicer. One stop to renew the electrical continuity to one of my sparking plugs cured out only problem of the day (minor missing and lousy acceleration).

We arrived just before 1 p.m. and prominently displayed 1'auto in front of the museum. It received a lot more attention than Rosemary and I can claim, but sure looked lonely for others. There was country type food available and many lovely antiques, most of which were out of my price range (don't use that as a guide though, I'm very cheap). The trip back was a little cooler but just as nice. Perhaps next year, if asked again, we can show Elizabeth City that MG produced more than one unfinished TC.

Speaking of TCs, I note the roster lists no less than seven, and Banwards' newest acquisition makes eight. I can only remember seeing one other TC at a club activity. It sure would be nice to see a turnaround in that attendance record.

New Subject: By-Laws. Jim Banvard has volunteered to head up a committee (we need two volunteers to serve on the committee) to review and correct or amend our By-Laws as necessary and present them to the club for approval. They should reflect what we are doing or we should do what they are saying. We are not too far apart but a dusting off is needed.

Finally, I hope to see everyone at the Christmas Party on the 15th at the Pagleys'. For the ones who won't be able to be there, have a happy and safe Holiday!

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS, ONE AND ALL!!  
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THE NOVEMBER MEETING was at the home of Dennis and Janet Duff. As cooler weather threatens, attendance begins to dwindle, so only 16 of the die-hards showed, including our newest member Bob Swain and his friend David Sumners (I think?) from Melfa, Virginia on the Eastern Shore. Bob told an entertaining tale concerning the acquisition of his '51 TD which he talked an eccentric old millionaire into selling him. The TD sat in a barn for 11 years and had only 41,000 original miles on it. Bill Larkin of the Chesapeake Chapter described it as the best unrestored TD he'd ever seen (guess he never saw the Ashes' pink thing).

TREASURER'S REPORT--Helen Barrows reported that we have \$587.95.

PARTS--Robert Davis (who has been given a reprieve from his surgery until after the first of the year) warns us that Lucas just increased its prices by 10% and another 10% increase is expected in three months. Better order now. Inflation and the doddering dollar are doing us in.

ACTIVITIES--New Activities Chairperson Jennifer Ash could not attend, so she sent as a representative Pam Smith who with Ross and Ann Haines comprise the Activities Committee. The calendar of 1979 events will be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

The elusive by-laws, which have been in hiding for a couple of years, have finally surfaced. Unfortunately they date from March 1977 and Ron Eaton (as he mentioned in his message) feels they are in need of another revision since we do things that aren't in the by-laws and don't do things that are. So a new By-Laws Revision Committee headed by Jim Banvard (and in need of two volunteers) will be convened and this time, after the revisions have been submitted to the membership for a vote, every effort will be made to get the newly revised by-laws copied and distributed to the membership. Some people didn't even know we had by-laws.

Thanks to Dennis and Janet for their hospitality, especially the hot cider which was just the thing on a cool November evening. The next meeting is Christmas Party, Friday, Dec. 15, at 8:00 PM at Jim and Tina Pagley's, Ca. Tina (622-6894) at least a week in advance and let her know what you will be bringing. The Pagleys are being transferred to Sigonella, Italy in April and want to have one last bash for the club, so let's make it a grand one.

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COME ALL YE FAITHFUL TO THE CHRISTMAS PARTY!!!  
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UPCOMING EVENTS--

DEC. 15 (FRI)--THE CHRISTMAS PARTY--JIM and TINA PAGLEY'S--see map for details. Please call Tina and tell her what you're bringing.

JAN. 27 (SAT)--Third Annual Wicker Basket Affair at Jim and Brenda Banwards. This is our annual fund raising affair and all contributions are welcome.

FEB. 25 (SUN)--Brunch--location not yet determined.

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EAT, DRINK, AND BE MERRY AT THE CHRISTMAS PARTY!!!  
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WHAT Y'ALL MISSED--FALL FOLIAGE DRIVE-OUT--This was out-going Activities Chairman Richard Hall's last event and he made it a grand one by laying out a leisurely drive over back roads not familiar to most of us, ordering up some lovely fall foliage and a glorious almost warm sunny day, and ending it 2½ hours and some 84 miles later at Roy and Marilyn Wiley's for a cookout.

We started at Sears in Pembroke Mall with a bevy of cars that included Barrows, Boswells, Eatons in their TC which was making its debut as an almost restored TC--made it through the run without mishap so Ron must be doing something right. Also in the caravan were Haines, Groovers, Moores, Bob Salvin and Elizabeth, Tarrs, John Walter and friend, and Roy Wiley (Marilyn was home tending the coals). Bess Mann wanted to run with us but some of the guys tuned their ears and found she had a rod knocking. So a complete engine rebuild is in Bess's future.

Richard led us down roads I didn't recognize, made a few pit stops, and

tried to convince us he was lost once, but we knew better. I think we even made it into North Carolina once. All along the route, people stopped their cars, even when they had the right of way, to let the caravan go through lights and stop signs so we could stay together. Nice people in Virginia!

On the way to Roy's, we passed Robert Davis's house where we saw Robert working on his Y. At the Wileys' we were joined by Sandy Hall, Roosevelt Moseley, Andy Wallach in his new TD, and the Ashes and munched on hotdogs and oysters and fought off Roy's aggressive duck friends.

Many thanks to Roy and Marilyn who supplied all the cook-out goodies, except the salads and desserts which were brought by Elsie Tarr, Roosevelt Moseley (thanks, Mom), Helen Barrows and me. Thanks also to Richard Hall for his two years of faithful service as Activities Chairman and for this bang-up finale.

SUNDAY BRUNCH AT FORT STORY--Thirty-one of the faithful gathered at the board for a pre-holiday training session at the Ft. Story 'O' Club which may have changed managers but certainly hasn't tampered with the overall excellence of its brunch fare. Among the gourmets were Ashes, Barrows, Banvards, Henry Blanchard, Boswells, Eatons, Fishers, Groovers, Bess Mann and friend, Bob Salvin and Elizabeth, Smiths, Elsie Tarr, Bob and Ethel Walker, and Roy Wiley, plus assorted offspring, including Pam and Kim Wiley home from college for Thanksgiving. Back from six weeks of Navy school in Key West was Herschel Smith who looked like he spent most of his study time in the sun. Welcome to another returning wanderer, Carl Fisher, home for a couple of years with orders to the Atlantic Marine Center in Norfolk.

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FUN, FOOD, AND FROLIC AT THE CHRISTMAS PARTY!!  
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And now Part II of the continuing story...MG FEVER by Robert Davis  
(Ed. note: When we left our hero, he was out bike riding and had spotted a green TD in a driveway...)

I quickly jumped off my one speed bike and moved in for a closer look. No seats and the top looked rotten, but the paint wasn't too bad. I was about to open the hood when someone said, "You like my son's MG?" I quickly removed my hands from the hood latches and began asking questions, lots of questions, at which point the lady of the house asked me inside to meet the man of the house. He told me his son had bought a boat and wanted to sell the car as is. I found out the engine ran but needed a freeze plug. The newly covered seats were inside, but the side curtains were in bad shape. Returning to the car when no one was home, I looked over the engine and every other place I could peek, crawl, and poke.

Later the same month the owner called and asked me over to talk. He had put a set sum of two grand on the car and wouldn't discuss a penny lower; however, he said I could pay him at will, which to me meant over a time period of the next ten years, but he actually and obviously meant otherwise. The deal was set by a hand shake and some good quality Scotch (of course, at eighteen any Scotch is good quality).

I got the car just after my nineteenth birthday and that's when the trouble started. Over Christmas I showed up with \$200. Every month I'd send at least \$50 more. All the time I still drove the faithful MGA. I got the TD engine running with the help of Dave Barrows, who lent me gaskets, and Cathy Dowrick, who came over one day and set the timing. I had done very little besides put the head and carbs on, and install a freeze plug. Whoever took the front exhaust pipe off did it with a cutting torch. I'm sure they couldn't get the nuts loose from the studs. Anyway when Cathy came over, the car was supposed to be ready to run. It might have, except that when I turned on the key, the gas hoses looked like a sprinkler system and there was no exhaust system hooked up. Cathy set the timing with the utmost precision. The engine ran nicely considering there was a good chance it was going to ignite and burn up. Cathy stepped over to the other side of the yard while I revved the very loud engine. Cathy wished me the

best of luck and mechanical ability. I sure needed it. The next day I changed both gas hoses and drove around the block with perfect illegal intentions. I bought an exhaust system with some of my Christmas money and did some other work like fix the brakes and try and set those two unusual carburetors.

During spring vacation, a friend, Rick Sullivan, was going to drive home with me and fix my MGA. The gearbox had gone in first and reverse. I had no trouble setting out in second. We stopped in Charlottesville for a hamburger at the Oasis burger hole and had to set out in third because second had gone.

Getting off I-64 in Richmond to spend the night resulted in loss of third gear. It was such a sight the next day. Rick would get out and push the car until I could get going in fourth, then he'd rush up and jump in the passenger seat of the A. Right through downtown the next morning, Rick pushed and I drove with all those people pointing and laughing.

Does he get the MGA fixed? Do our two heroes make it home from Richmond? Has the TD used five quarts of oil in 90 miles? Has the YB developed a rod knock? Tune in next month for:

A long drive in fourth and a push to start, or--What's that laygear doing in your lap?

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\*\*\*\*\* RIGHT ON, ROBERT!! \*\*\*\*\*  
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And from across the Atlantic comes this report--

Dear Tidewater Tinsmiths--

Well, this month I hit almost all the MG suppliers in England except three, and formed several opinions. First, buy it from Moss or Abingdon!: The cost of parts has gone out of sight. The dollar is partly to blame, but speculation in MGs has hurt us all. Entire XPAG engines for \$250 or Y-types for \$2000 are the last deals and few of those are around. TFs bring \$7000 unrestored, and TDs \$6000 in rusty condition. TCs and TAs are the cheapest, but are still \$5000-\$6000 in bad shape and \$7000 plus restored. It costs \$3000 for a partial restoration of a TF.

Anyway, I hit all the big ones that are advertised in TSO, Classic Cars and Motorsport.

First, Toulmin's is 20 minutes west of London. Crummy shop, but knowledgeable and friendly. They have a lot of T parts and can get Lucas stuff when Lucas isn't on strike! Second is Richardson's at Staines, 45 minutes west of London. Great for MGBs, TAs, some TCs, but alas no TD/TF parts to speak of. There is a rusty old XPAG or two lying around. No- Y-types anymore, but he's broken up 50 at least for junk! He owns 3 TFs, 1 Y-type, a TA Tickford, 9 TDs and 4 TA/TCs! No sales however--all investments. See him for used MGB parts!

Third is Moto-Build at Hounslow--30 minutes west of London. All rubber parts for T-types. Good selection, but pricey. Some books. No scraps, no used parts. Flippant attitude and not as expert as others. Fourth is Connoisseur Carbooks, great place to spend pesos!: All MG books--much out of print stuff--15 minutes west of London and well worth it. What a selection of books!:

The ones remaining are NTG, two hours east of London; Pre-War MG, an hour southeast (surely not 20 minutes as in his ad!) and Naylor's, five hours north of London. I hope to be able to report on them in January or February.

Well, best to all. See you in March,

Mike and Nita

(Ed. note--Mike reports that Nita has come through a bad bout with meningitis and is scheduled for neurosurgery this week (Nov. 26). He hopes she'll be well on the way to recovery by Christmas. So do we all, Nita. Further sad news for the Tidewater T's--Mike and Nita have received orders sending them to Charleston where Mike will serve as executive officer on the USS FORREST SHERMAN. He'll be in Norfolk for two weeks at the end of March for school and will see us then. From London to Charleston--what's your secret, Mike?)

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FELLOWSHIP OF THE FAITHFUL AT THE CHRISTMAS PARTY!!  
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TECHNICAL ARTICLE--What every backyard mechanic should know:

TROUBLESHOOTING YOUR 'T' by Grady Cook, THE SQUARE RIGGER (CHESAPEAKE CHAPTER of the New England 'T' Register)

Did you ever try unsuccessfully to start your car, knowing full well the good old SU pump was clicking away and you had fuel in the tank? Ignition problems, right? Probably. Well, everyone knows how to pull a spark plug wire, hold it about 1/2" from the engine block while cranking the engine and watch for a spark. Where do you go from there if you only have a weak spark or none at all? Trial and error replacement, right? Wrong! Not if you use the following handy dandy trouble shooting procedure.

First, test the primary circuit, for the secondary circuit cannot be checked until the primary is working. Remove the distributor cap and rotor, and turn the engine until the ignition points are closed. Remove the high tension lead from the center of the distributor cap and hold it about 1/2" from the engine block. With the ignition switch on, open and close the points with a pencil or other convenient dielectric object. A good strong spark indicates a good primary circuit and coil. Conversely, no spark means primary circuit problems or bad coil.

Next test the points. Turn the engine until the points are open. Now use a small screwdriver (awl, scribe, etc.) and make contact between the moveable part of the points and the distributor backing plate. Move the screwdriver up and down, repeatedly making and breaking contact between the moveable half of the points and the backing plate. A good strong spark between the high tension lead and block indicates bad points. Weak or no spark means other primary circuit problems than the points or coil. While checking the points in this manner, note also whether or not a smaller spark arced the gap between the screwdriver tip and backing plate while being raised up and down. No spark indicates a shorted condenser or a break in the primary circuit.

To further check the condenser, simply remove it from the circuit. (Remember its purpose is to prolong point life.) Again move the screwdriver tip up and down and observe for a spark. A spark now from screwdriver to back plate that was not present with the condenser connected in the circuit indicates a shorted condenser. Still no spark at this point means an open in the primary circuit, so check for a frayed wire in the distributor.

If things seem in good working order up to this point, repeat the first test of the primary circuit above. Still no spark at this point means a bad coil or high tension wire. A good spark means trouble with the cap, rotor, or spark plug wires.

The rotor may be checked for shorts by removing the distributor cap and holding the high tension lead near the rotor while cranking the engine. If you get a spark, better replace the rotor.

The distributor cap may be checked for cracks (and defective plug wires also) by cranking the engine in a very darkened place, or at night. If it looks like a miniature electrical storm around the distributor cap, you probably have a cracked cap and better replace it. If you observe sparks from any of the spark plug wires to any part of the engine, the insulation has broken down and new plug wires are the answer.

Well, there you have it. It is valid for virtually all conventional ignition systems. Keep in mind also one of the points from a recent article by Renk (Len Renkenberger) that it is possible (probable?) with our MGs for the tach drive to rotate a bit and easily short out on the low voltage connection screw on the side of the distributor of the XPAG engine and put you out of business.

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NEMGTR DUES ARE DUE BY 31 DEC 1978  
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ODDS 'N ENDS--NEW MEMBERS I've already mentioned Bob Swain and his '51 TD who hail from the Eastern Shore. Welcome also to Jim and Karen Rudd (mentioned last month as prospective members) and Pat McDonald who will forever be known as the guy who bought Jack Manherz's yellow TD. While I'm at it, my apologies to Mike and Nita West for leaving them off the roster. Since I botched their new address the last time I ran it, I'll try it again. Please add the following to your rosters--

Bob and Terry Swain '51 TD  
Box J  
Melfa, VA 23410  
(Home) 804-787-2559  
(Office) 804-787-2110

Maj. P.J. McDonald '52 TD  
HDQTRS/LFTCLANT  
Little Creek NAB  
Va Beach, VA 23521  
(Home) 481-0486  
(Office) 464-7779

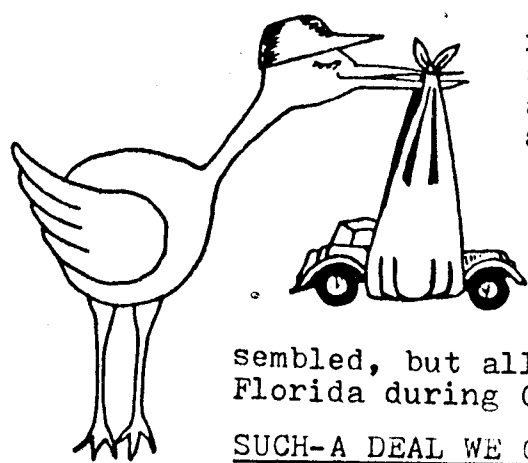
Jim and Karen Rudd '52 TD  
79 Shannon Dr.  
Newport News, VA 23602  
877-8999

Mike and Nita West  
c/o LCDR F.G West, Jr.  
Box 84 COMUSNAVACTSUK  
FPO New York, NY 09510

To elaborate on the statistics Ron mentioned in his message, we as an organization (as of 6 Dec. 1978) consist of 51 full-time members, 5 associate members, 16 out-of-town members, and one honorary member, who own collectively

12 TFs, 52 TDs, 10 TCs, one TA, 7 Ys, 4 VAs, and one Arnolt TD. Our earliest T-Register members are Dave and Helen Barrows with #856.

NEWEST ACQUISITIONS--The above list includes our newest additions:



Andy and Carol Wallach must have tired of all the ribbing about the eight year restoration of their TF so they bought Al Zanetti's TD (advertised last month) and now have something to drive. She looks very nice and runs well.

Jim Banvard went down to Athens, Georgia for three weeks of Navy School and decided to spend a fateful weekend visiting MG friends in Jacksonville. I say fateful because Jim has finally found the car of his dreams, his own '48 TC--maroon, partially disassembled, but all there, Jim hopes. Banwards are planning a trip to Florida during Christmas to bring their prize home.

SUCH-A DEAL WE GOT FUR YOU--

FOR SALE--Two new early TD distributors \$70 each; new replacement distributor for late TD/TF, \$60; rebuilt replacement distributor, \$45. Call Robert Davis, 482-4309.

For a 1963 Bug-eye Sprite, 948 CC.--radiator, \$20; generator and voltage regulator, \$20; water pump and fan, \$5. All in excellent condition. Call George Plum, 499-4850.

THREE OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST--

New England MG 'T' Register dues are still due before Dec. 31, 1978. Please disregard the address included in last month's newsletter. Instead, mail your dues to: Bruce Young, Box 605, Endicott, NY 13760.

**Perelman Out of Hospital**  
 News flash from The Va-Pilot:  
 American humorist S. J. Perelman has been discharged from a Peking hospital after being treated for acute bronchitis. The 74-year-old author of the Marx Brothers' classic "Monkey Business," has left Peking's Capital Hospital and moved back into his hotel room.  
 Perelman went to Peking hoping to be the first foreigner to drive through China since 1949 and copy the famous 1907 Peking-to-Paris classic.  
 His 30-year-old MG sports car, which was to be shipped to the Chinese capital, is still in Hong Kong, and Perelman has abandoned plans for the drive.

I received an early Christmas present in the form of a hand-tooled leather check book with a TF on the front. Similar checkbooks (checks not included) may be purchased from Levi Tarr the son who does beautiful work, so if interested, please give Levi a call at 425-5023. He offers a choice of logos and he's speedy, too.

MODEL *															
MPH	TC	TD	TD Mk. II	TF	TF 1500	MGA	MGA 1600	MGA 1600 Mk. II	MGA Twin Cam	MGB 1800	MGB GT	MGC	Midget Mk. I	Midget Mk. II	Midget Mk. III
0-30	5.7	4.5	5.2	5.5	4.8	4.0	4.3	4.2	4.0	3.2	3.5	4.0	6.3	5.0	4.3
0-40	8.8	7.4	7.5	8.8	7.1	6.3	6.4	6.2	6.1	4.8	5.7	5.6	9.8	8.4	6.7
0-50	14.0	12.2	11.1	13.0	11.0	8.6	9.1	9.1	8.3	7.7	8.6	7.6	15.2	12.0	10.2
0-60	21.0	18.2	16.5	18.9	16.3	14.1	13.3	12.8	9.7	11.0	12.1	10.0	21.6	17.2	14.7
0-70	33.3	29.5	24.4	29.9	24.7	19.0	17.7	17.4	12.9	13.2	16.6	13.8	33.5	27.9	21.1
Std. 1/4	21.8	21.7	20.8	21.5	20.6	19.5	19.8	19.2	18.8	18.3	18.5	17.7	22.8	21.1	19.9
Max. Speed	73	77	82	80	86	99	101	105	120	110	108	120	79	90	93
MPG	25	25	22	22	24	30	27	25	23	24	25	21	32	28	24

PERFORMANCE

\*From Christy, John and Karl Ludvigsen. The New MG Guide. Sports Car Press, New York. 1958.



# CHRISTMAS PARTY



JIM & TINA PAGLEY

1440 LAFAYETTE BLVD  
(PARK ON DE GRASSE)

622-6894

ODU

↑  
TO NAVY  
BASE

↑  
I-64  
TO HAMPTON

27th  
26th

HAMPTON BLVD

PRINCESS ANNE RD

HOSPITAL

BOUSCH ST →

BRAMBLETON AVE

SCOPE

WATERFRONT DRIVE

← I-264 TO NORFOLK

DEGRASSE LAFAYETTE BLVD

HERE

CHESAPEAKE BLVD

CHESAPEAKE BLVD

NORTHAMPTON BLVD

I-64

VA BEACH BLVD

RT 44

VA BEACH EX-WAY

TO CHESAPEAKE ↓

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DEADLINE FOR THE JANUARY NEWSLETTER IS 31 DECEMBER 1978!!  
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Third item of interest--I need a volunteer to cover one or all of the Tuesday meetings in January, March, May, and November which I will miss because of bowling. I am asking you to take notes and submit a written report for publication in the newsletter. Last year I tried writing the report from other people's notes and found this arrangement unsatisfactory. So please volunteer. This is your big chance for immortality!

AND FINALLY--HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL, AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT!!

PEACE!!