



The Dipstick



Dedicated To Preserving The Marque Since 1973

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Activities Report, October 2023

Just when we thought we were finished with Covid, it reared its ugly head again – on the Fall Tour no less! Everyone made it home safely, but... NO October meeting! NO Chili Cook off! Our October hosts, Kathy and Mark, had succumbed to the illness and didn't want to pass it on (thank you).

So our final event for October will be the now annual "Trunk or Treat" at Big Ugly Brewing in Chesapeake. We get to give kids a "sugar high", show off our cars, AND sample some frosty and delicious beverages. Then November kicks off with our monthly meeting on the 8th at the home of Renee and Bill Olcheski. That will also be our Election Night and our opportunity to choose officers for 2024. As an aside, next year will be my last for Activities Chairperson. Please let it be known if you are interested in taking up that mantle after that, or even starting in 2024.

Sunday November 12 will be our annual Fall Tech Session, hosted by Sue and Terry Bond. This is always fun, since they have many interesting auto-related antiques on display, and also feed us well. Plus, they are both Tech Wizards – if one of them can't provide the cure, the other probably can, (along with other knowledgeable MG drivers). If you have any particular issues you want to solve, give Terry or Sue a "heads-up" in case any planning or research will help.

To finish out 2023, we'll have our annual "Holiday Lights" drive-through at Newport News City Park after the traditional Italian dinner at Joe and Mimma's Pizza on December 5. We moved to this drive-through after the Norfolk Gardens changed their lights to walk-through only. Times and addresses will be sent out prior to the lights drive. If anyone would rather go through the Virginia Beach boardwalk, be aware that tickets are only on line and you will have to sign up for a specific time slot. Our Holiday Party gala this year will be at Princess Anne Country Club on December 17. Then on to 2024 and more roads!

Safety fast. (and always), Bruce Easley

Coming Events

TMGC Events

- Oct 29 - Trunk or Treat; Big Ugly
- Nov 8 - Meeting at Olcheski's
- Nov 12 - Fall Tech at Bond's
- Dec 5 - Holiday Lights
- Dec 17 - Holiday Brunch



Marque Time!

President's Message

This is where I usually thank the hosts for the previous meeting but unfortunately, due to a breakout of covid among some of our members, including the hosts, we had to cancel the October meeting. However, I still want to thank Mark & Kathy Davidoski for volunteering to host the meeting. Having meetings in member's homes has been a long held tradition in our club and helps to foster a feeling of family among our members.

By cancelling the October meeting we were not able to hold our elections for the new club officers, so that will take place at the November meeting instead. As I mentioned last month, we have an excellent slate of candidates for the election. To refresh your memory, Mark Davidoski has agreed to continue as club Treasurer and Michelle Parker has agreed to continue as club Secretary. Rob MacPherson has stepped up to run as Vice President and Scott Parker has agreed to run as President. Thanks to these members who have volunteered to guide the club over the next year.

Since this is my last Marque Time column (I hope) I want to take the opportunity to let you know that it was my privilege and an honor to serve as your President these last two years. I want to thank all those folks who helped to make my job easy. This club has been an important part of my life these past 30+ years and I am so glad to be a member.

Safety fast.

Mike



**TMGC Holiday Brunch,
10:30 Sunday, Dec 17, 2023**

Our Holiday Brunch will be at the Princess Anne Country Club, 3800 Pacific Ave, Virginia Beach. The brunch will be on Sunday morning, December 18, 2022. Mark your Calendar.

TMGC Offices and Committees		
President	Mike Haag	mikehmg@cox.net
Vice President	Scott Parker	swparker619@gmail.com
Secretary	Michelle Parker	mlparker619@gmail.com
Treasurer	Mark Davidoski	davidoskicrew@cox.net
Dipstick Editor	Jim Villers	190SLJim@cox.net
Activities	Bruce Easley	easleybw@aol.com
Webmaster	Mike Haag	mikehmg@cox.net
Historian	Sue Bond	susanbond@cox.net
Regalia	Rose Ladd	twfrog@hotmail.com
Technical	Terry Bond	terryaaca@cox.net

2023 Fall Tour September 21-24, 2023

Let the fun begin – Thursday

By Terry and Susan Bond

As usual when touring – some went this way, and some went that way. Although starting from different points, and avoiding the usual traffic snarls coming from Tidewater, we eventually regrouped at the New Kent rest area on 64 heading towards Richmond. After checking oil, kicking tyres and partaking of a much needed “reverse coffee break” we motored on, eager to find some back roads.

When we finally got off the interstates, it didn’t take long to find a suitable “MG” road, 33 headed towards our first stop in Louisa -- lunch. Or, as was heard from the back row, “do we have to eat again?” But our lunch stop was really a nice surprise. It was a wonderful, spacious Italian restaurant – “The Roma.” There was enough room there for three MG clubs at least. The full menu was available, and the service (and food) were great! We could have stayed there for dinner too, but adventure and winding roads awaited.



First stop – the New Kent rest area on I-64

A dose of history was first on the agenda with a stop at Highland (used to be called Ashlawn), just up the hill from Monticello. This was the often-overlooked home of President James Monroe. We had a wonderful docent (first of many during the Fall Tour) who delighted us with little-known tales of Monroe and his accomplishments.



A group photo in front of James Monroe at Highland

Oh, the things we forgot from high-school history! Ongoing excavations are revealing more details about Highland’s past, so even those who had been there previously learned something new.

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Back on the road again, it didn't take Bob McKenna long to find the flat spot on his left rear tyre. He safely pulled over, leaving plenty of room for the entire pit-crew. Although there were well over a hundred (it seemed) people watching, only a few did all the work. The rest of us were witnesses to the speed and efficiency of the pit stop. Within mere minutes we were back on the road again, headed to our overnight destination, a nice Comfort Inn in Orange, Va.



The Pit Crew quickly changed Bob's tire

After checking in, the group motored on to the Silk Mill restaurant for dinner. (Yes, we have to eat again). Susan and I brought up the rear though. Last away from the hotel, the MGBGT, aka Stanley, would not start. We quickly diagnosed all the Lucas smoke had leaked from the battery. The first lucky break -- we were parked on a slight hill with nothing in front of us, so I gave the car a gentle shove, and Susan popped the clutch to bring it back to life. Second

lucky break -- there was an Advance Auto Parts store about ½ mile from the hotel, directly on the way to the restaurant. The worker brought out his tester and found that the battery was a full year beyond its life expectancy. (Stanley has history with batteries on Fall Tours.) Third lucky break -- they had the correct size battery in stock! A few minutes later we were on our way to dinner. We arrived just in time to be last to order our food. Oddly, we were first to be served. Again, wonderful food, and outstanding service.

The Silk Mill is actually an old Silk Mill, where silk parachutes were assembled during WWII. It's like an industrial Cracker Barrel with lots of "stuff" hanging on the walls and from the ceiling. We did a quick check and there were no MG parts though.



After dinner at the Silk Mill, Orange, VA

Most motored back to the hotel for a good night's sleep, but a few of us decided a local brewery known as "Iron Pipe" sounded good for a night-cap. It was just around the corner from the Silk Mill, in the same building, and featured lots of iron pipes left over from the building's former life. We enjoyed a flight of brews and a pleasant evening

Fall Drive 2023 – Friday Edition By Robert Perrone



A line of MGs in the Montpelier visitor parking lot.

The Friday portion of our 2023 Fall Drive had a little something for everyone. We had some beautiful weather, excellent roads to drive, and interesting places to visit.

After leaving our hotel in the morning, we had a short drive to Montpelier, which was described in a brochure at the site as “...the

plantation house of the Madison family, including Founding Father and fourth president of the United States James Madison and his wife, Dolley.”

As expected, our guide (or docent, if you’re feeling fancy), provided quite a bit of information about the history of the estate, as well as the residents. One of the more interesting facts about the home is that it was divided. For several years Madison’s widowed mother, Nelly, still resided in the house following the death of her husband, James Sr., but she lived on one side of the home while James and Dolley lived on the other.

One of her frequent guests was Thomas Jefferson, a close friend of James Madison. We were also informed that Nelly Madison enjoyed at least one adult beverage every day, and lived to the age of 98. After hearing that, although I may not be certain



The front entrance to Montpelier

that one has to do with the other, I’m taking no chances, and I will continue to enjoy a daily libation as well.

And, on the subject of adult beverages, in the afternoon we visited the Virginia Beer Museum in Front Royal. As some may recall, our fearless tour guide Bob McKenna made note of the planned visit to the museum and said “Robert Perrone wants to teach me about beer (which is like a priest teaching ZsaZsa Gabor about marriage) so I am providing him with some visual aids and information to help.” I’m still not quite sure what he meant, and I would have been happy to wax eloquent on the virtues and history



of beer, but instead I enjoyed samples of a few unique brews that were available at the museum.

There was a significant amount of memorabilia and other beer-related artifacts on display, including some that I thought I would never see again. For example, back in my younger days my friend Kerry and I generally bought a local, upstate New York beer, such as Genesee. However, at times when funds were at their lowest we opted for beer that



was incredibly cheap. And by that I mean not only the price, but the quality as well. Kerry and I laughed about this just about a year or so ago when I was visiting him. It was, in fact, a beer which had no brand name, did not identify the brewery and had on its plain white can, the word “BEER” in plain black letters.



An excellent beer can display.

The Virginia Beer Museum in Front Royal

And yes, they had a can of “BEER” on display in their large collection of beer cans and bottles. I sent Kerry a photo of the can and his response was “I remember that all too well....3.59 a case!!!” Yes, we were as cheap as the beer.

Later that day I was talking with Rob MacPherson and Sue and Terry Bond about checking out a local craft brewery, Vibrissa. I agreed to lead the way there after dinner, and Sue would lead back to the hotel. Unfortunately, my navigation skills are not exactly Magellan-like and we ended up in someone’s driveway. I considered asking the people that lived there if they have any beer, but I thought “Why involve the police at this point?” and we decided to return to the hotel. Sue found our way back, otherwise I might be somewhere in Tennessee right now.

We settled in with a few fellow travelers back at the hotel, and enjoyed some fine conversation and a variety of beverages, secure in the knowledge that I could not get us lost again, at least not that evening.

Fall Tour 2023 - Saturday by Mark Davidoski



The Belle Grove Plantation house.

After a Comfort Inn breakfast we headed to Belle Grove in Middletown. This working farm was built between 1794 and 1797 by the Hite family. It features two foot thick limestone walls with sandstone corner trim, likely from the same onsite quarry that provided sandstone for the construction of the White House.

Belle Meade produced grain (which was ground into flour in its gristmill), cattle, hogs, sheep, ducks and geese. Extensive orchards yielded apples, peaches, pears and plums. The farm enjoyed prosperity throughout its life due to its diversified product mix. This compares to the single crop plantations further south and west that were single crop affairs with either cotton or tobacco. It even featured its own General Store located in front of the property, on what became the only macadamized roadway in the county. Talk about a license to print money!

Mr. Bob Bell did a masterful job as our docent as he pointed out numerous features of the main house. Some were suggested by Thomas Jefferson, a family friend, such as self-closing doorways (to keep the heat inside), large built in closets (rare at the time), and a basement kitchen full of ingenious labor-saving kitchen utensils and devices. The home has been restored to its original configuration, including wall to wall woolen carpets from the same English manufacturer who provided the originals in the 1790's.



Watching a cooking demonstration in the basement.



Lunch at the Miller's Grill .

Next we departed for lunch at Miller Grill in New Market. This eatery adjoins a public golf resort and offers a great lunch menu. Refueled, we headed over to Luray in a steady rain. The exciting mountain roads were even more fun with wet tires. We passed a mountain farm stand whose marquee proclaimed "Bushels & Pecks of Joy" - just the right sentiment for thrashing our MGs up and down the mountains!

Into Luray we found ourselves at the world famous Cooter's Museum/Store/Music Studio which celebrates anything and



The Dukes of Hazard "General Lee" .

everything related to the Dukes of Hazard television show. We even arrived in time for the last 15 minutes of a three hour live performance by Cooter's own blue-grass band.



Jim & Betty Villers with Terry Bond

Onward to Culpeper, we climbed up and out of the Shenandoah Valley and down again on more superb MG roads. We stayed at the Best Western on the edge of town and enjoyed another excellent meal at Pepper's, the hotel restaurant. By early evening most of the group was headed for slumber land, after another day of awesome driving, spirited socializing and visits to fascinating places.

2023 Fall Tour Sunday by PJ Peterson

After a good breakfast at our hotel, we departed about 09:30 for Chancellorsville Battlefield. It was a beautiful drive down RT 3 with just a slight mist. 45 minutes later, we arrived at the battlefield.

Bob McKenna linked us up with a Park Ranger, Mr. Ryan Longfellow. He was also a history teacher as well. He reviewed the event leading up to the fighting on May 1-5 1863. Then he covered the fighting around Chancellorsville. Incredibly knowledgeable about the fighting and the events that led up to General Jackson being shot by his own men.

We departed the battlefield and arrived at Harry's Ale House for lunch. This was the last stop for the Fall tour and after lunch, everyone departed on their own back to home.



A Ranger explains the Chancellorsville battle .



Lunch at Harry's Ale House .

WHAT'S FREE MAY NOT BE. Paul Fuqua's "free" MGB

As many in the club may know, long-time member, Ernie Parker, has had his '77 B in storage awaiting reassembly for over 20 years. He offered it to whomever in the club would take it and carefully and thoroughly put the car back together.

I stepped forward at the insistent urging of Frank Linse to accept the car. Ernie had sold the house where the car has been stored for decades and the new owner needed the parts and car removed as soon as possible.

Frank, Mark Davidoski and I visited Ernie's house, took a quick inventory of what was there and established a plan of action. Within the next week, I had my 24' enclosed trailer backed up to the garage, a large supply of plastic bins on hand, plenty of tie-downs and a fierce determination to move as many usable parts as we were able to find. Two engines, two transmissions, the rolling shell of the B plus all manner of new, used and unidentifiable parts went into the trailer to be brought back to my garage in Norfolk.

I arranged for a Bay Disposal dumpster to be delivered to Ernie's house and to cart away all the "junk" parts which we deemed too far gone for use. As is typical whenever a dumpster is in place in a neighborhood, all manner of stuff was thrown into it by neighbors to such a level that it couldn't be hauled away without some folks removing their sofas and other household items.

I finished and sold the '79 VW convertible which had followed me home from the MECUM auction in Dallas and opened up a hole in the Fuqua garage for this new project, another B.

A decent paint job over repaired sheet metal was a plus. New interior components including seat rails, frames (early model), foam and upholstery (late model) were in the stacks of stuff. But the car's suspension, brakes, plumbing, hardware, wiring harnesses, weather stripping, windows, steering



The MGB project in Ernie's garage.



A pile of parts in Ernie's shed.

wheel, radio, driver vent window pillar and frame were either missing completely, or untouched and badly in need of rebuilding. Fortunately TMGC members were able to scrounge up some missing parts which are not being reproduced and which were not in Ernie's possession.

Once again on my speed dial were Moss, LBC Parts Co., Pegasus, Abingdon, Summit, Eastwood and other automotive vendors.

The UPS and FedEx drivers beat a path to my door with boxes of parts in an array of sizes not seen before in our neighborhood, even with Frank Linse living just up the street.

Frank is the guru, the Mister Miyagi of MG dom. As I kept adding needed elements to the Moss shopping cart, Frank kept showing up with some obscure part in hand, out of his rafters and not so amazingly, he knew exactly where this gizmo or that thing-a-majig should be bolted, fastened, hung or otherwise made part of the car.

The tires were beautiful but woefully out of date, the wheels painted white and without trim rings or center caps, the backing plate for the left rear drum was missing at a least a third of its structure, there were no parking brake cables, the fuel pump was non-existent as was the clutch master cylinder.

With a written plan of action and a white board on the back of the door to my garage, we dove in to the re-assembly. Critical elements to purchase and install included the complete front and rear brake assemblies (rotors, drums, calipers, linings, wheel cylinders, parking brake linkages), clutch, wiring harnesses, drive-shaft, fuel system and carburetors, exhaust system, alternator, oil cooler and lines, radiator, fan, hoses... you know, the list is seemingly endless. A set of Minilite clones and new Goodyear 185 R65 14's were purchased and mounted. Plus I had to build an inventory of SAE fine-thread bolts. AMS on Indian River Road in Chesapeake was a regular trip.

The front end was dangerously worn: replaced were the A-frames, spring pads, shocks, all bushings, tie rods, kingpin fulcrum assemblies and the sway bar links plus the springs were changed out to the 1" drop springs Moss sells.

The driveshaft universals have been replaced, a rear shock strut and spring pad were trash and have been



Putting the dash together .

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replaced. The leaf springs remain although the rebound straps were replaced. The fuel tank was a rusted mess and is new. All brake and clutch hydraulic lines were replaced as were the parking brake cables and components.

At this writing, the blue B actually is a functioning car. It is no longer just an empty shell. It has a windshield (with all new weather stripping), windows and doors and regulators and wind wings and a rear view mirror and wiper blades and side trim and headlights and taillights and side lights. Bumpers are mounted, the bonnet, doors and rear deck lid are in place and carrying all their trim, handles and weather stripping. The braking system is in place, a rudimentary exhaust system has been put together, the drive train functioning, interior done, arrangements made to have the cloth top installed.

Purists will notice the twin SUs, the heavily modified dash and the repositioning of crucial gauges, switches and other controls. A fuel pump disconnect switch is in place as is the battery disconnect. Under dash courtesy lighting for the passenger is there as is a separately-switched map light. An aluminum radiator and 10" thermally-controlled fan are features under the hood as is an overflow canister for the vents on the carburetors. A hi-torque starter is in place and the wiring layout somewhat simplified.

After almost six months of off and on again thrashing (with the guidance and assistance of Frank Linse) another B has been resurrected and will allow this family to enjoy driving it as often and as far as possible.



The completed interior. .



The completed MGB (not quite "free").

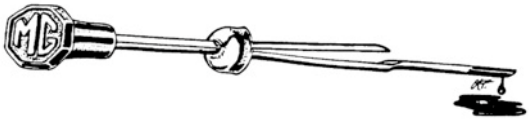
MG

7:30 - 8:00 pm - Kick Tyres
8:00 Meeting

Monthly Meeting
Wednesday Nov 8th
Bill & Renee Olcheski
1409 Edgartown Ct.
Virginia Beach
467-4046

Map labels: I-264, Independence Blvd, Princess Anne Rd, Ferrell Pkwy, Kempsville/Witchduck R, Indian River Rd, Holland Rd, Lynnhaven Pkwy, So. Plaza, I-64, Roundhill Dr, Clemensford Dr, Edgartown Ct, Lynnhaven Pkwy.

Turn onto Roundhill at traffic light.
Right at 3rd street (Clemensford).
Right at 2nd street (Edgartown Ct).



First Class

The Dipstick

Tidewater MG Classics

C/O Jim Villers
3133 Inlet Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23454

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