

# ABCS Newsletter

April 2005

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**NEXT MEETING – THURSDAY, April 14, 2005 – Ben Bailey's "Garage"**

## Minutes of the ABCS Meeting for March 10, 2005

After a leisure meal, President Ben Bailey started the meeting by introducing our two guests. Seventeen members were present. There was no reports from neither the Secretary nor Treasurer.

The subject of the shirts arose again. Allen Calcote informed us the cost would be \$32.00 per shirt in lots of 25. Nobody liked that idea. Randall Thomas' brother was the previous source for the shirts. Randall will talk to his brother about supplying them again for the club.

Ben reminded the members that next month's meeting will be at his "garage", where we will be treated to hot dogs and other goodies. His "garage" is located in Johnson City. A map of its location will be published on the web site later. For those in Kingsport, Carl Floyd suggested meeting at Advance Auto on Ft. Henry Dr. at 6:00 PM where he would lead us to Ben's Garage.

At this time, Ben asked Gail Bright to introduce our program speaker, Ron Bussey, a retired professor of Anatomy and

Physiology, who now collects and restores scooters.

Ron gave us a brief history of scooters and told us about his prized possession, a Lambretta scooter, which he owned as a teenager in Detroit and later sold; found it many years later and restored to its former glory.

The door prize this month was a nice, sturdy pair of jack stands, which were won by C.C. Goodson.

### Upcoming Programs:

There are no programs scheduled for May, June or July as of yet. We will welcome any ideas.

### Upcoming Events:

April 3 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual British Car Gathering for Cystic Fibrosis in Knoxville.

April 16 – Drive to Roan Mountain. Meet at Sears Auto Center in Johnson City.

May 14 – 18<sup>th</sup> Annual British Car Gathering at Townsend. Leaving from Burger King in Gray, TN.

# March 2005 Drive to the Breaks

By Herren Floyd

Seven cars were gathered at Rush Street Grill before 9:00 AM on Saturday, March 19 and ready for Ben Bailey to lead us on the drive to The Breaks Interstate Park. Three of the seven cars were British. Ben & Natalie in their MGB, Paul Kern & George (his dog) in his 1963 vintage MGB, and Barry and Dani Black in their yellow MGB. Following them were Herren & Otti Floyd in their Mazda Miata, Gerald & Becky Mitchell in their Honda Civic, Allen & Margaret Calcote in their Honda Prelude, and Juan Dominguez brought up the rear in his Grand Cherokee.

We headed north on John B. Dennis Bypass and Wadlow Gap Road to Weber City and then north on US 23. It was a bit cool, so all convertible tops were up with windows closed. Just into Kentucky, we took route 805 and stopped at Hardee's in Jenkins for a restroom break. Soon after leaving Hardees, we realized that Gerald & Becky and Juan were not behind us, so we stopped and waited and eventually turned around to look for them. It was then that we came to realize that all of us had cell phones but not each other's phone numbers. We decided that Gerald & Becky and Juan must have driven on to the park ahead of us, and so we drove on up 805 and 197 to the park. Sure enough, they had gotten there before us.

The weather was mild enough to put the top down in the park and to enjoy walking down to admire

the spectacular scenery from two overlooks. The park restaurant was still closed for the season, so we stopped for lunch at nearby Turners Restaurant just outside the park at about 1:00 PM. We enjoyed good food and fellowship for about an hour and a half. The restaurant accepts only cash as payment, but it didn't take much of it since their prices are very reasonable.

We took a different route back from the park along the winding roads East 80 through Elkhorn, West 83 through Clinchco and Clintwood, and eventually back onto US 23 South. We stopped for coffee and snacks at the Hardee's where US 58 joins 23 in Duffield where we often stop on the way back from the Middlesboro Air Show. The weather was kind to us, the roads were fun to drive, and the scenery was great. Everyone had a very enjoyable drive.



## Year of Manufacture License Plate

By Gerry Mitchell

It is common to see license plates on antique, classic, collector and show cars that display the same year as the car was manufactured. This adds to the interest and authenticity of the car. A few years ago, legislators who were sympathetic to us old-car nuts passed legislation that allow us to display these year-of-manufacture license plates on our hobby cars in place of the legally registered plates if the official plate and registration are kept in the vehicle to show to any law-enforcement officer upon request. This rule was initially limited to holders of the standard renewal-required license plates but was later amended to also include holders of "ANTIQUE" license plates. Since I agree that is a neat idea to display the year-of-manufacture license plate on one's antique or classic car, I have YOM license plates permanently displayed on three of my older Jaguars: a 1956 Tennessee plate on my 1956 XK-140 DHC, a 1958 Tennessee plate on my 19158 XK-150 OTS, and a 1971 Tennessee plate on my 1971 V12 E-Type Coupe. The 1971 license plate has a great deal of sentimental value for me because it is the actual license plate that my wife, Becky, had on the car she owned in 1971. So, it has remained in our family ever since it was issued.

In the latter part of 2004, I had occasion to have a great deal of corrective mechanical work performed on my 1971 V-12 E-Type FHC. The car made several round trips to Atlanta to have this work done. On the final return trip from Atlanta, we were not able to depart from the mechanic's place of business until quite late in the afternoon.

We also were planning to have supper at one of our favorite Mexican restaurants, "Tijuana Junction" just south of Ashville and, of course, this made us even later. The E-Type was running very well and we were enjoying the ride. A little while after we had passed northbound through Erwin, TN, and were just south of Johnson City on I-26 at almost midnight, suddenly there appeared in my rearview mirror bright flashing lights. We were cruising along at about 70 MPH so I didn't feel that we were being stopped for speeding. I was therefore very puzzled as to why the police would stop us.

When the Tennessee State Trooper walked up to the car, he said, "Your license plate is a little old, isn't it?" My reply was that Tennessee law permits us owners of antiques, classics, and show cars to display the "year-of-manufacture" license plate on our cars as long as we have the currently registered plate and registration in the car to show the police if requested to do so.

His response to this was that he had never heard of such a law and did not believe that this was true. However, he did request that I show him my current license plate which I gladly did. It is an "ANTIQUE" plate. Since it was very cold out at that hour of the night, he invited me to sit in his cruiser while he searched his big Tennessee motor-vehicle-rule book to see if he could locate anything relating to display of YOM license plates. He failed to find any reference relating to this subject. He then asked me to give him my name and telephone number and said he would call Nashville for clarification of the question and would call me back when he had received a reply. It seems strange that the trooper never asked to see my driver's license or registration.

Two days later, the trooper, who is stationed at the Fall Branch office of the Tennessee Highway Patrol called me and said the result of his inquiry to Nashville had been that there is no such rule and that it is not lawful for a hobbyist to display and out-of-date “year-of-manufacture” license plate on his old car while driving on public roads.

I was pretty sure of my conviction about being able to display a YOM license plate on an antique car so I began some research on the internet casting inquiries out for any authoritative information on this subject.

A kind person who saw my inquiry sent me the following material from the Tennessee Code/Tittle 55, Chapter 4, Registration and Licensing of Motor Vehicles, Part 1, General Provisions: “The owner or lessee of an antique motor vehicle may display the license plates from an era when the manufacture of such vehicle occurred instead of the current license plates, provided, that current license plates are maintained in the vehicle by the owner or lessee and produced for inspection upon the request of any law enforcement officer. Ben Bailey was kind enough to provide me with a copy of a June, 2001, letter from Martha Irwin, then Director of Title and Registration which says, in part,, “Tennessee Code Annotated Section 55-4-111 (4) (a) has been amended to allow for individuals to use a license plate within 10 years of the year of the manufacture of the vehicle instead of the current license plate. A current plate registration must be maintained by the owner and must be kept in the vehicle to be produced upon request by a law enforcement officer”. You may use this letter as authorization to use an antique license plate but authorization is

not really necessary under this section of TCA.

I felt that, even though I was on the “right track”, the information was still a little ambiguous because it was not clear that this applied to vehicles with “ANTIQUÉ” plates.

Believing that further clarification was necessary I wrote a letter to the Director of Title and Registration in Nashville requesting further information. I received a prompt reply from Paula J. Shaw, the present Director who sent me a copy of present pertinent regulations:

(b)(1) “Upon receipt of an application on a form prescribed by the commissioner, applying for registration and certifying that the motor vehicle for which registration is being applied is an “antique motor vehicle”, the commissioner may issue license plates to owners of antique motor vehicles in accordance with the provisions of part 2 of this chapter. Such license plates shall bear the word “ANTIQUÉ” in capital letters at the bottom of such plate, and a unique identifying number in the center of the plate. For the purpose of this section, “antique motor vehicle” is a motor vehicle over twenty-five (25) years old with a nonmodified engine and body which is used for participation in club activities, exhibits, tours, parades, and similar uses as a collector’s item, but is in no event used for general transportation.”

(2) “Such registration shall be valid so long as title to such vehicle is vested in the applicant, and shall not be subject to the provisions of this chapter requiring annual registration.”

(4) “The owner or lessee of an antique motor vehicle may display the license

plates from an era when the manufacture of such vehicle occurred instead of the current license plates; provided, that current license plates are maintained in the vehicle by the owner or lessee and produced for inspection upon the request of any law enforcement officer.”

I believe these paragraphs plainly state that the holder of an “ANTIQUÉ” license plate may display a “year-of-manufacture” license plate on his vehicle while driving on public roads. I supplied this information to the Tennessee Trooper who stopped me but I have not received any acknowledgement from him to date. Ms. Paula Shaw also told me in her reply that she had forwarded my letter to the Colonel of the Highway Patrol in Nashville so perhaps the Troopers will be better informed of the YOM license plate rule in the future.