

2025 Gum Dippers Dues

Jan. 1, 2025 – Dec 31, 2025

As a reminder annual GumDippers membership dues for you and your spouse for 2025...
if you have not paid, please detach this page and return with your \$20 check.

We publish and mail four newsletters annually and our spring newsletter includes a complete membership roster tool to enable Gum Dippers to keep in touch with old friends and associates.

We certainly encourage attendance at our reunion, but it is not a prerequisite for membership of the GumDippers. Many members tell us that the roster and newsletters are a bargain at \$20.00.

Dues for new members are waived for the first year. Please help us continue to grow by paying your dues promptly. Our membership has grown from 977 in 2022 to 1024 today!!

Please assist us in keeping the roster current, particularly phone numbers & e-mail addresses. Report any changes (only) below and return the form to Russ Burr.

Name
Spouse
Complete the following----- ONLY IF THERE IS A CHANGE!!
Address
City, State, Zip
Home Phone#
Cell Phone#
E-Mail Address

Please remove this page and mail along with your check for \$20.00 payable to The Gum Dippers, as soon as possible to:

The Gum Dippers

c/o Mr. Russell Burr

P.O. Box 189 Tarpon Springs, FL. 34688

JUST A REMINDER - ANNUAL DUES – 2025

Most of our Gum Dippers are members for the sole purpose of receiving our newsletters and rosters so that they can “stay in touch” with friends and co-workers. Our roster is attached for that purpose. **Please call any of your friends who are not on this list and ask them to join our group.** Many of you do not attend our annual Reunion but want to receive the newsletter. The primary purpose of our organization is to generate this information and pass it on. PLEASE remit \$20. If you already paid, we **THANK YOU!** *First year free for new members.*

PAY \$100 FOR A LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP JUST PUT IT ON A NOTE WHEN YOU SEND YOUR CHECK IN!

Payable to Gum Dippers and mail to:

Mr. Russell Burr, Treasurer

P.O. Box 189

Tarpon Springs, Fl. 34688

Any **changes** to the roster: Address, phone, or e-mail address, should be shown with your payment...

Please---CHANGES ONLY!

or email changes to Russ: **toplinetire@mindspring.com** 727-943-8825

The Gum Dippers

Spring Newsletter 2025

BREAKING NEWS ABOUT OUR 2025 REUNION

WE WILL ONCE AGAIN RETURN TO THE SHERATON RESORT in 2025 on Thurs. OCT 23 to Sun. OCT 26. Rooms will be \$239 per night...specially priced for our GumDipper 2025 reunion.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS...MAKE PLANS NOW



Our 2024 reunion was held at the beautiful and luxurious Sheraton Sand Key Resort on Clearwater Beach, Florida. Yes, there were challenges from hurricanes Helene and Milton and at one point the possibility of cancellation was very real. Thanks to the efforts of our committee and the Sheraton staff, our Reunion took place as planned with only a few logistical issues...particularly mountains of sand on the

beach, roads, and parking lots.

Fortunately, the **Sheraton never flooded** with exception of the pool and spa. Our 2024 reunion will be forever remembered as the “**Miracle on Sand**”.

We had “GumDippers” from 17 states. Our accommodations, food, prizes, and entertainment were once again outstanding. If you missed it, you missed wonderful ambience, service, restaurants, an exceptional pool complex, beach, and tennis courts. A wonderful time was had by all. **Again, Sheraton service was magnificent. Thanks to all who attended.**



THE NEXT NEWSLETTER IN JULY WILL HAVE THE REGISTRATION FORM TO SIGN UP FOR THE 2025 REUNION AND ALL OF THE EVENTS...WATCH FOR IT! INFORMATION WILL ALSO BE POSTED ON THE GUM DIPPER FACEBOOK PAGE

AS USUAL WE WILL NEED HELP AGAIN IN 2025



We always need help in the Hospitality Suite where everyone congregates. Next year we will move Hospitality to the “Sunset Cove” on the 9th floor, a much larger facility with a penthouse view of Sand Key Beach. We will need your assistance to greet Gum Dippers arriving and get them registered, to keep the bar well stocked, the snack bowls filled, the soft drink, beer and water coolers filled, and to assist with any questions about the reunion. *We serve coffee and pastry on Friday and Saturday morning, and a self-serve lunch also.*

Our Hospitality Suite in 2024 was as usual always busy with members interacting, enjoying **free snacks, beer, non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverage.** Sue & Bob Meyer and beverage chairperson Russ Burr provided us with the finest wines, alcoholic beverages, beers, soft drinks and snacks. Bob and Sue were assisted by members of the Committee, Holly & Russ Burr, Ritch & Chris Mucciolo, Dave & Mabel Wonsetler, John & Glenna Johnsen, Nancy Spencer, Sandra & Richard White, Sue & Tom Markferding, Vin & Ann Donovan, & Rhonda Ferestad.

In addition, we had volunteers that made this an easy reunion, freeing committee members up to do other things and getting a break. We thank those volunteers for giving their time to help us and make this a truly fun reunion. Among them were **Ted & Sue Welsh and Betty & Eli Neidert.** They were of valuable and much needed assistance. Volunteers give the committee a break filling in for them at the registration desk. They also benefit from meeting everyone who checks in during their shift.

OUR FRIDAY AFTERNOON WELCOME MEETING

During our Welcome Meeting on Friday afternoon, we were fortunate to be joined by Matt Metzelaars, Director of Partnerships and Alliances in the Enterprise Strategy Office at BSAM. Matt shared an insightful and engaging update on Bridgestone's ongoing collaborations with customer partners, highlighting key innovations and new business opportunities that are shaping the future of the company. Having started his career with Bridgestone Retail Operations as a Firestone Store Manager, Matt's extensive experience across the organization gives him a unique perspective.

Fluent in the language of "GumDippers," he provided a valued presence at our meeting. We always look forward to his contributions and are hopeful of his continued involvement as a GumDipper.

Assisted by Matt, we awarded many prizes... (2) sets of tires and racing collectables provided by BSAM, many cash prizes, and a weekend stay at the Sheraton Sand Key worth over \$600. Industry news and prizes...entertainment for all.



FRIDAY NIGHT BARBEQUE

For many GumDippers, the Friday night barbecue is a highlight of the entire reunion. Set in an outdoor venue with perfect weather, it features a delicious spread of food, desserts, an open bar, and, of course, the infamous roasted whole pig. The evening offers the perfect setting to relax, catch up, and share stories, with conversations continuing long after the pig was served.



SATURDAY AFTERNOON



On Saturday about 40 GumDippers took a Jolley Trolley ride to Tarpon Springs about 20 minutes North of Clearwater. Tarpon Springs is a charming coastal town renowned for its rich Greek heritage. Located on the Gulf of Mexico, its history is deeply intertwined with sponge diving, an industry that brought waves of Greek immigrants in the early 1900s. Today, this vibrant community boasts a distinct Greek atmosphere, evident in its architecture, cuisine, and festivals. The Sponge Docks, a historic waterfront district, offer a glimpse into the past with colorful sponge boats and shops selling local wares. Visitors can savor authentic

Greek delicacies at numerous waterfront restaurants, enjoy live music, and even take a boat tour to explore the surrounding waterways. The town was hit hard by multiple hurricanes, however at least 50% of the shops, cafes, and restaurants were back in business. We were able to walk the sponge docks, shop, and enjoy restaurants...good weather, good food, & good fun.



SATURDAY EVENING GUMDIPPER BANQUET

On Saturday night our Banquet was held in the Grand Ballroom at the Sheraton Sand Key Hotel with a one-hour cocktail reception starting at six, The banquet was a lively and enjoyable event, complete with music, an open bar, and a delicious spread. Guests feasted on tender Southern spareribs and succulent shrimp, followed by a tangy key lime pie for dessert. The open bar kept drinks flowing throughout the evening, enhancing the festive atmosphere.



The Cocktail Party was followed by our banquet. **John Johnsen** opened the event, welcoming all and introduced **Bob Crowder** who presented the invocation. Bob also included a poem entitled **'Through the Eyes of Harvey'**.

We thank our sponsor and benefactor, **Bridgestone Americas**, who provided and supported the GumDippers throughout the years with gifts, dinners and prizes supplied by them to help make our reunion a remarkable success.



THE HISTORY FACTORY AT THE REUNION

Jennifer Andreola, Lead Archivist of Description and Metadata Services at the History Factory, will once again be showcasing 125 years of Firestone/BFS history at this year's event. She will be in attendance on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, offering attendees exclusive access to a wealth of historical materials. With over 200,000 digital assets at her disposal, Jennifer will be able to present captivating insights and artifacts, making this reunion an exciting and memorable experience for everyone involved.



HELP US OUT WITH OUR MEMBERSHIP

Help Us Grow and Keep Our Organization Strong!

We are grateful to our many dedicated members who share a passion for reconnecting with old friends and reliving memories of days gone by. Your involvement has helped create a strong and thriving community. But for us to remain vibrant, continue growing, and even to survive, we need your help to find new members!

To make this happen, we ask you to take a moment to review the membership roster, which is published once a year in April (attached to this newsletter). Look for any names

you don't recognize and consider reaching out to them personally. Encourage them to join us by explaining how they can become part of our wonderful group. It's simple: just direct them to **www.gumdippers.net**, where they can download and print the membership application along with instructions.

This is a **one-time annual request** from the **GUMDIPPERS**, and we are asking you to help us achieve these important goals:

- **Sustain the future** of our organization by growing our membership.
- **Replace lost members** and introduce our community to new retirees.
- Many of you, I'm sure, can introduce **just one new member** each year.
- Our unique organization deserves to be shared with all fellow retirees. As the late Joe DePaolis once said, "There is no other group like ours. No other major corporation has such a group of retirees."

We believe that your personal invitation, coupled with support from the Human Resources Department, will include our story and membership application in their annual post-retiree mailing—will help us reach these goals. A call from you to a former colleague could make all the difference!

Please review the attached roster to see who you might invite to become a member. And don't forget to **reach out to your Gum Dipper friends** and encourage them to attend the reunion. The more, the merrier!

We've got a **great event** lined up: free gifts, a **Friday BBQ**, a **Saturday night banquet**, free snacks, lunch, beverages, coffee, and plenty of camaraderie in the hospitality suite. **Each member should bring a membership**, how can you or anyone you invite afford to miss it? If you've attended before, you already know what a fantastic time it is!

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to seeing you and your friends at the reunion!

NEWS FROM BRIDGESTONE AMERICA'S

Vanderbilt, Bridgestone continue collaboration to address mobility, manufacturing



Co-creation and collaboration with innovative partners across a mobility ecosystem is a critical focus of our Bridgestone 3.0 journey. But these strategic relationships do not always have to come from within the automotive industry.

Bridgestone and Vanderbilt University continued advancing a creative public-private sector relationship with our second annual Vanderbilt-Bridgestone Collaboration Accelerator event in November 2024. The event gathered faculty, students, Bridgestone leaders and subject matter experts for a half-day networking and brainstorm session in the Vanderbilt Student Life Center.

The 2024 event featured a collaborative networking session facilitated by The Wond'ry that drove conversation around challenges specific to mobility, manufacturing, and automotive retail. These topics ranged from sustainable operations and embedded sensors to product strategy and talent development.

The morning started with a discussion between C. Cybele Raver, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at Vanderbilt, and Lindsay Porter, Vice President of Enterprise Alliances for Bridgestone West. Bridgestone West Chief Strategy Officer Craig Schneider also provided closing remarks.

“We can no longer expect to drive competitive differentiation through efficiency and vertical integration. Now all things must work in concert across a wider ecosystem, so it’s critical that we seek outside perspective that can help us challenge historical norms and deliver true innovative breakthroughs,” said Schneider.

Bridgestone named “Top Company for Women to Work for in Transportation” for third straight year



Bridgestone has once again been named a 2024 “Top Company for Women to Work for in Transportation” by the Women in Trucking Association (WIT). Representatives from Bridgestone received the award at the WIT Accelerate! Conference and Expo on November 11 in Dallas, Texas.

This recognition is given by *Redefining the Road*, the official magazine of WIT that promotes the accomplishments of companies focused on women's employment in the trucking industry. The award was validated by an industry-wide vote involving more than 31,000 professionals in transportation, which ranked Bridgestone high on voting criteria areas as determined by WIT, including:

- A corporate culture that fosters gender diversity.
- Professional development opportunities.
- Career advancement opportunities.
- Competitive compensation and benefits; and
- Flexible hours and work requirements.

“Bridgestone is proud to be recognized for the third straight year as a workplace where women in transportation can thrive. It’s a privilege to work for an organization that champions representation and shows young women just starting their careers that this is an industry where they belong, something that I hope will be the norm for more and more companies.”

Bridgestone to supply bespoke Potenza Sport Tires for Mercedes-AMG SL Models



On November 26, Bridgestone announced it will supply bespoke high-performance Potenza Sport tires with ENLITEN™ Technology for both models of the Mercedes-AMG SL: the Mercedes-AMG SL 55 4MATIC+ and the Mercedes-AMG SL 63 S E PERFORMANCE.

The high-performance branch of the Mercedes-Benz brand, Mercedes-AMG is defined by its pursuit of high performance, precision and efficiency—matching Bridgestone’s heritage and expertise in all things performance.

Potenza Sport is Bridgestone’s premium ultra-high performance sport tire that provides best-in-class performance in dry and wet conditions. These custom-made Potenza Sport tires are engineered with ENLITEN™ Technology, which is Bridgestone’s innovative approach to tire development. The combination of multiple cutting-edge technologies provides maximum safety and outstanding tire performance for drivers, while improving sustainability characteristics of the tire.

Bridgestone will immediately start the OE supply, while the warranty tires will be available in the beginning of 2025.

SORRY! WE DO NOT HAVE THE ANSWERS!

Russ Burr, our treasurer, and Dave Wonsetler receive calls from Gum Dippers inquiring about their benefits at BFS. We do not have the answers to questions regarding your medical plan and or pension. Please reference this list.

Benefit Provider Contacts

Not all benefits shown below apply to all retirees.

Benefit	BSAM Provider	Phone Number	Website Address
Medical (not Medicare eligible)	BlueCross BlueShield of TN (BCBST)	1-800-250-7331	www.bcbst.com/bridgestone
Prescription Drug (not Medicare eligible)	CVS/Caremark	1-800-521-3934	www.caremark.com
HRA (prior to 1/1/25), health insurance, and guidance services (Medicare eligible)	Via Benefits	1-855-835-3916	www.my.viabenefits.com/ bridgestoneamericas
Dental	Delta Dental	1-800-223-3104	www.deltadentaltn.com
Retiree Life Insurance, and Voluntary Accidental Death and Dismemberment	The Hartford	1-888-659-1531	https://connect.electbenefits.com/ BRDG
Pension	Willis Towers Watson	1-800-344-8114	https://myBridgestonepension.ehr.com
General	HR Support Center	1-855-873-6947 Fax: 1-615-493-2799	

Note: If you need a benefit card, please contact the appropriate company referenced above directly.

This guide is intended to serve as a Summary of Material Modifications as required by section 104(b) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act and amends your plan's Summary Plan Description (SPD). For a summary of the current plan provisions, please consult your SPD. SPDs and other plan materials are available in hard copy form upon request by calling 1-855-873-6947. While the SPD summarizes the terms of the benefit program as accurately as possible, it does not take the place of official Plan Documents for each benefit program. If there is any discrepancy, the provisions of the official Plan Documents will govern the benefits of employees, dependents, and beneficiaries to the extent permitted by law.

OUR OFFICIAL INFORMATION WEBSITE IS

Visit our website at www.gumdippers.net to access all recent newsletters, which include information about the GumDippers, a membership application, contact details, an email link to the group, and photos from our reunions. The site also provides an application for new members and friends interested in joining.

Please note that, for privacy reasons, we do not post our membership roster online. The roster is only available to active members in print form with our Spring newsletter.

THE “GUMDIPPERS” ON FACEBOOK

The Gum Dippers is a social network of retirees and friends of Bridgestone Americas and its subsidiaries including the former Firestone Tire & Rubber Company, Firestone Complete Auto Care, Tires Plus, Total Car Care and various manufacturing and distribution operations in addition to all Bridgestone operations.

We now have our own Facebook group!

To stay updated daily on Gum Dipper and Bridgestone/Firestone activities, simply log in to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Gumdippers> and sign up. We welcome all former Firestone and Bridgestone employees to join the group and encourage them to become part of THE GUM DIPPERS.

If you don't already have a Facebook account, it's easy and free to create one. Just visit [Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) and follow the instructions. Remember, you'll need a Facebook account to join the Gum Dippers group!

IN MEMORIAM

Donald E. Thornburg “Thorny” 91, was born June 16, 1933, in Akron, Ohio to the late Albert & Nettie (Sweet) Thornburg, passed away on August 23, 2024 at home peacefully in Conroe, TX.

Don was a wonderful Husband for 66 years to the late Frances Mae (Fisher), Father, Grandfather, Great Grandfather, Uncle, Cousin, and friend to many. Retired from Firestone Tire & Rubber, and in his second career, he became “The Candyman” for Award Fundraising of Akron. He then had a third chapter in The Villages, FL enjoying golf, to add to his passion for wood working.



Thorny was a regular at our annual GumDipper reunions often volunteering to work our registration table so he could meet and greet everyone that checked in. His smile and sense of humor are legendary...he will be truly missed.

Terry McGee, former resident of Bettendorf, IA, passed away in Northfield, MN on February, 2024. Terry started his career with Firestone in 1967 as a Credit Manager in Beloit, Wi. After several transfers, he became the store manager of the downtown Davenport commercial and retail store in 1973. It became one of the most profitable stores in the U.S., and he was selected to receive the Bridgestone/Firestone National Store Manager of the Year on numerous years. Terry credited his good crew of employees for his successes. Terry retired from Bridgestone/Firestone in 2001.

Terry is survived by his wife, Kay, two sons, Sean and Corey, and two grandchildren.

HARRIET TURNOF, 79, of Wayne, NJ passed away on Dec. 11, 2023

FRANK GALLI passed away November 14, 2023.

SIGGI WEISS, passed away December 18, 2023.

CHUCK WETTERGREEN passed away March 24, 2024.

YOUR GUM DIPPER COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: John Johnsen, Newsletter: Editor, writer & producer (727) 365-1151
jjohnsen1@live.com. Reunion; hotel arrangements, banquets, prizes

TREASURER: Russ Burr, Dues, Finance & Roster (727) 943-8825
toplinetire@mindspring.com, please advise him on any roster changes.

SECRETARY: Dave Wonsetler, Newsletter, Photographer (813) 324-8273
mabeandave@gmail.com, Reunion; planning, gifts and organization.

CHAIRMAN EMERITUS: Richard Mucciolo 727-773-9017 rpmucciolo@gmail.com

REUNION HOSPITALITY SET UP AND ARRANGEMENTS:

Bob & Sue Meyer: chairpersons ((941) 456-8131) rhmeyer1@outlook.com

Russ Burr: Beverages (727) 943-8825 toplinetire@mindspring.com

SPECIAL EVENTS: John & Glenna Johnsen (727)-365-1151 jjohnsen1@live.com

COMMUNICATIONS: Sue & Tom Markferding (352) 368-6739 tom11164@cox.net

DIRECTORS:

Vin & Ann Donovan (239) 362-2497 Ann_donovan64@comcast.net

Nancy Spencer nana.spencer@verizon.net 727-207-8076

Sandra & Richard White 813-973-3045 swhite53@MSM.com

You received the Roster attached to this newsletter, reviewed it and sent the following application to your friends that are not on that roster.

Our complete GumDipper Membership Roster is attached for you private use.
We do not post our roster online for obvious privacy concerns.

The GumDippers

Welcome to the GumDippers, an association formed to allow Firestone & Bridgestone employees, both retired and approaching retirement stay in touch with old friends.

Annual dues for new members are waived for first year.

Full Name _____

Spouse _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Home Phone Number _____

Cell Phone Number _____

E-mail Address _____

How did you hear about GumDippers? _____

Background Information (Optional but encouraged)

Are you still working? _____ If not, when did you retire? _____

If am I currently working, where? _____

Bridgestone Anniversary date? _____ Years of service? _____

Last position held? _____ Where? _____

Membership dues are \$20 annually, \$100 lifetime.

New member dues are waived for the first year.

MAIL APPLICATION TO:

The GumDippers c/o RUSSELL BURR

P.O. BOX 189 TARPON SPRINGS, FL. 34688