



The Breakdown

Serving all Sides of the Marque since 1983

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Buffalo Octagon Club

President - Peter Calabrese
president@buffalomg.com

V.P. - Vacant at the moment
vicepresident@buffalomg.com

Treasurer-Larry Vito
treasurer@buffalomg.com

Secretary - Beverly Rice
secretary@buffalomg.com

Membership - Anjie Grzybek
membership@buffalomg.com

Regalia - Jim Borkman
jimborkman@yahoo.com

Newsletter Editor - Dan Grzybek
newsletter@buffalomg.com



Letter from the President

by Peter Calabrese

Friendly Greeting to All,

Periodically, I have a reoccurring dream in which I haphazardly come upon a “long-forgotten, classic car of mine” I never actually owned, but I find parked in some garage (or storage facility) cobbled together from fragments of my unconscious mind. In this dream, I give no thought to neglected vehicle maintenance, overdue reg./insurance, or unpaid storage fees. Regardless, the vehicle always starts and I drive off!

Sometimes the dream continues wherein I am motoring to some auto show where people (living and/or deceased) marvel at my “dream mobile”. Other times, along the journey to another destination (always unknown), the vehicle slowly morphs into a pedal car, or small toy. Or even worse, I’ll stop off briefly at some unfamiliar destination and misplace the vehicle all together. Oh, how I hate when that happens!

But no matter what happens in my dream, after I wake I feel a sense of disappointment that carries over into my conscious state. Perhaps, you fellow car enthusiasts may recall a similar dream where you’ve felt the same thereafter. Hopefully not.

The lasting thought from my dream is this... we might never park these disappearing “dream cars” in our garages, but we should provide good care for our very real MG classics which bring us joy and the occasional unpleasant consignment.

Already, I’m beginning to make a list of parts for my MG I’ll need to replace which have physically “worn out” from mostly sitting ideal in my garage after limited use last season. I swear my MG is the only vehicle I’ve ever owned which seems to wear at an accelerated rate while parked!

The time of year will soon be approaching when batteries not trickle-charged and gasoline held over from two driving seasons may tax our love of the car hobby. Be prepared when spring arrives.

Switch gears to club business now... our club may have been mostly idle in terms of physical driving events and somewhat short on in-person activities of late, but we remain financially healthy thanks to years of sound fiscal guidance as we prepare for the upcoming season. In addition, the members of the B.O.A. are brimming with loads of enthusiastic spirit which is helped along each month with ZOOM club meetings. I see ZOOM as a useful tool for our organization even when club activities begin to return to normal.

Speaking of ZOOM, I started taking our ZOOM B.O.A. meetings on virtual road trips (I think there’s a pun or irony when using “virtual” virtually... isn’t there?). If you were among the few who attended January’s installment, you already know the ZOOM meeting came to you from Jim Pelletterie’s shop and afterwards featured an informative tech session on electrical wiring repairs. I recorded the tech session for everyone to experience, but “technical difficulties” (think- stupidity on my part) makes it not so easily shared. I’ll have to work on that one, or you can make these sort of things easier for me by simply joining in.

Please note, the February meeting will be remote and virtual from the well-appointed, heated garage of B.O.A. newsletter editor (for life?), Dan, and his wife Anj. The theme will be “MG Hobby, Hobby Night” for the theme-orientated members forever searching for a theme. In other words, other hobbies of fellow MG hobbyist that bring them additional joy. Please attend ZOOM with us and be prepared to share your other satisfying hobbies.

Keep watching you email for more info and don’t forget to check your spam folder. Until then...keep dreaming!

Upcoming Events

Always Check The
Website for full details.
Buffalomg.com

-All current and future club events are on hold until Covid-19 restrictions are lifted and the membership feels safe

-Be sure to tune into our monthly zoom meetings to keep up to date on club functions.

ALL MG EVENT

– MG 2021 Scheduled

2021 marks the sixth 'ALL MG' gathering where the four major North American MG Registers come together for a huge combined event. Joining forces again are The North American MMM Register, The New England MGT Register, The North American MGA Register and The North American MGB Register. The five prior 'ALL MG' events have brought together between 800 to 1,300 MGs in addition to a number of other British Marques at the same time – all on the same show field. This event will be held from June 14, 2021 – June 21, 2021. You can be a part of this mega-MG happening.

The event will be held at Harrah's Atlantic City, more information to follow.



Just Ramblin' by Jim Pelletterie

Never put in print what you really feel. Hell with that! I'm tired of the snow and cold. The motivation factor has been changed. My Grandfather told me that his get up and go, got up and went. Now I know what he meant. At 22 degrees it's difficult to get the enthusiasm to get out in the shop to get something happening. For Christmas my Daughter and Son in law bought me a nest thermostat that I can control from my phone anywhere in the world. So instead of trudging out to the shop to hit the furnace switch I just swipe the app and hit heat . The Furnace turns on and the shop gets warmer so I will not freeze my butt off. I'm liking this technology. yea, Google is probably listening to everything I do but so what.

It looks like another tough year for car related activities, The flatten the curve turned into lets flatten you and any business you like. I'll shy away from politics here but it looks like we will need to make a decision on the Autumn Sports Classic again this year. Car folks are ready to jump on the scene whether it be a swap meet or cruise.

The car I built from scratch is pretty much complete and I had planned to show it downtown and then drive it and have some fun with it. Oh wait, that was last year. The word just came down that the downtown show is again cancelled this year and so are my plans. A new build only looks good for a short time once a few miles get traveled. The crispness of the new build starts to fade as road dust and other nasties make their way into every nook. I guess this was a bad time to build a new car.

let's talk Zoom meetings, president Peter has done a great job setting up meetings and keeping everybody in the loop. problem is not enough of you are in the loop. You don't need a computer to join the meetings but a smart phone will do it, a older dumb phone won't cut it. With the help of Peter Calibrese and Dan Gryzbek I was able to hold a Zoom tech session. it went fairly well and I hope it was informative for those who appreciate such things. Hope to see you on the zoom .

Covid has hurt a ton of businesses including mine. I actually had a plan that fell apart when the pandemic hit. Car sales are nowhere where they should be and work in the shop is nonexistent and I haven't been in school since last March. I have been remodeling bathrooms though. Did you know that when you have the time to take on a big project you never have the money . Welcome to my world!



Resturant Review

by Jim Borkman

El Ranchito Mexican Restaurant
9780 Main Street, Clarence, NY (716) 320-5830

Great service and food selection. This is authentic Mexican that is addictive and we come here often. If you are struggling to find a Mexican restaurant, this is the place to come. We love the El Combo and the Fajitas. Portions are generous and the Margaritas are excellent. The staff is very friendly and the food comes out relatively fast. I have never had a bad experience here, and that is why we keep coming back! During this period of Covid we have been getting take out however the restaurant is now open for limited in-house seating. Try it out, you won't be disappointed.



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Tech Talk

by Jim Pelletterie

As our cars age the parts that make them specials get fatigued, cracked or just plain worn out. Any rubber parts are first on the list of deterioration. I have written about the importance of renewing the rubber pieces in the braking system. Once the braking system is in tip-top condition it might be time to give your MG and yourself a treat.

The seats in your car are used every time you sit your butt in them. The drivers seat gets the most wear just because we don't always carry a passenger. You can make your MG feel new again by rebuilding the seats with new supports, foam cushions and covers.

You won't have to don tights or a cape to do this job but a dose of patience will come in handy.

The first job is to purchase the parts you will need from Moss Motors or your favorite supplier. The choice is yours in covers for these "new" seats. The standard "ambla" vinyl is available if you want the original look or you can go high end with a custom sewn leather covers. I prefer cloth covers but there are drawbacks with this type especially in an open car.

Removing the seats from the car is fairly straightforward. Four bolts hold the seat track to the floor but if they have never been removed since Trevor installed them in Abingdon you might have a problem turning them out. You don't want to break them so caution is recommended here. Once you get the bolt to turn, work it back and forth using a product like PB Blaster sprayed under the head of the bolt.

Now that the seats are out you need to separate the seat back from the bottom giving you two separate pieces per seat. Do only one seat at a time so you can use the other for reference. Using a screwdriver remove the clips that secure the cover to the tube frame. Once the clips are removed the cover and foam can be removed. You should have the metal frame with a diaphragm support attached to it. The support comes in two different styles. Early cars use a solid rubber piece stretched and secured with metal hooks. The later type is attached the same way but uses straps instead of a solid piece. The later style will offer more support as it is stiffer once installed. At this time it might be a good idea to clean and paint the frame.

You could need help installing the new diaphragm with a partner holding the frame while you pull the hooks into place. Go have a beer after this is done. Place the correct foam on top of the frame and using upholstery adhesive coat the foam where the seat section transitions to the side bolsters. Coat the underside of the cover also in the same position. Place the cover over the foam and check its position. Once you press the two-glued sections together they will be difficult to separate. Using the original clips if they are in good condition wrap the material at the base around the frame and clip into place. Use the other seat bottom as a reference.

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Make sure to
follow the Buffalo
Octagon
Association on
Facebook and
stay current with
updates

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P.O. Box 236
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Tech Talk cont.. by Jim Pelletterie

The seat back is installed in the same manner except you must work the cover over the foam. Turn the cover inside out and hold off on any adhesive at this point. To make the job a little easier take a section of plastic that the covers came wrapped in and using the adhesive glue the plastic to the foam from the top to half way down. We do this to help slide the cover over the new foam. Once this is done take the cover and roll it over the foam. If you are using real leather you cannot roll in over and you must slide the cover over using a tug and pull to get it into position. With the cover in position check the alignment with the seat bottom and adjust as close as you can. It's difficult to make the seams perfect because the bottom is actually smaller than the back especially on the MGB and Midget.

Once you're happy with the alignment you can gently lift the cover from the foam and spray the adhesive along the transition area only. If you glue the seat center of the back center section to the foam the seat will be inflexible and uncomfortable. Once the adhesive is dry to the touch you can press the cover into the crevice in the foam giving your seat a nice sculptured look.

With the seat bottom and back rebuilt they can now be reassembled to make a complete seat. Bolting them into the car is easy making sure the seat tracks are clean and lubed with a little grease. The seats have never moved so easy in years. If you rebuild one the other is the same, just take your time.

I left out a few minor steps but they are self-explanatory once you have the pieces in front of you. This is a job you can do yourself in your garage or basement and will give your MG a brand new feel and look great too!

Hobbies by Jim Pelletterie

At our last meeting it was brought up to have members tell us what other cars they have or special hobbies that consume them.

Let me start with owning every MG produced, in paper form. I have an extensive collection of MG ads and Brochures. They are all in correct binders in special archive stable sleeves. I actually stopped collecting but there are only a few that I don't have. The earliest factory brochure is from 1926. I really love the Ads that were in various magazines. they portray what was happening in that time period, a real history lesson.

My Dad got me into go kart racing when I was a kid and throughout the years I've raced and then stopped until my kids were old enough. I was the Roger Penske of local kart racing. Three race karts with all the spares, custom trailer and everything that goes with it. We had a great time and I wouldn't trade the time or money spent for anything. Unfortunately the kids grew up and moved away so I sold most of the equipment except for the five vintage karts I have. The oldest is from 1959 and I was able to find the same chassis my dad bought me from 1964. I just love that stuff. I hope I have enough time to get them all restored.

I have played and worked on cars since I was a kid. I am fortunate to have purchased shop tools that make the job easier. At 21 years old I was a A- tech and union steward and said, where am I going. I've built engines and restored cars to where they were show pieces. One thing I never did was build a car from scratch. Not starting out with a car and rebuilding it, but from nothing. I fell in love with a car I seen at a car show and knew this is the one but after much research the finances didn't work. After more research I decided to build one myself. using only internet pictures and two dimensions I could find. I put a plan into action, that was 2013. I had to learn tube rolling and bending, tig welding and a variety of other fabrication skills. I drove the car last summer and it was everything and more. it scared the crap out of me but I can't wait to drive it again. I call the car Proton because it's based on a Ariel Atom (you can look it up). It's only a part of a Atom. It's a supercar in every sense and very basic. 0 to 60 in sub three seconds. I cannot believe the time spent making parts but when they all came together the feeling of satisfaction is enormous.

'Hootie' the Bugeye

by Jim Borkman

The Purchase

One day a few years ago I was cruising E-bay looking at British cars for sale. To my delight I happened upon an Austin Healey "Bugeye" Sprite for sale in Herkimer, NY. The Bugeye, known as Frogeye in the UK, so named because its headlights are prominently mounted on top of the bonnet. The Bugeye is also known for its appearance of a smiling face with its distinctive grill coupled with the protruding headlights. At the time I was not seriously looking to purchase another fine British automobile as I was in the process of restoring an MGA. But given that this car was within driving distance and had a reasonable starting price I thought to myself, "Why not!" I will help this owner get the pricing going. How could I go wrong, with several days still for others to bid, and no reserve, I thought this car would surely sell to someone else.

As the days progressed I kept watching the auction and no other bids were coming in. Not overly concerned I patiently waited until the last day and now wondered; could it be possible that I would be the only one who is going to bid on this car? It was a bit disheveled, but heck, it is a classic, I thought. How bad can it be? A little paint and tune up, it should be fine.

When the auction ended I was both excited and a bit concerned. I had to reveal the truth to my wife Gail. Oh, and to pay for the car and make arrangements to pick it up.

Fortunately Gail loved Bugeyes. A friend of hers, while she was in high school, had a Bugeye and would occasionally drive her to and from school. I was in luck, not only did I win the auction, but I had my wife's blessing as well.

Off to Herkimer

It was a nice day as I picked up a U-Haul car dolly, hoping the wheel span would be narrow enough to fit the wheel span of the Sprite. It was about a 3 hour drive to the Herkimer, NY where the car resided. Once exiting the Thruway I traveled down a country road with excitement and anticipation in seeing my new purchase. It doesn't get any better than this I thought. It's all in the chase.

As I pulled in there was the car. Not bright and shiny but a dull red finish with tired tires. A bearded gentleman who was selling the car met me and we glanced up to take a look. He had enjoyed the Bugeye but it needed repair and attention he could no longer provide. Thankfully the engine did run and the car started right up with a nice plume of oily smoke. He said the brakes were quite worn and suggested I just take it up and down the driveway. So back and forth I went, test driving my new purchase. We signed the deal and shortly after loaded the Bugeye onto the car dolly. To my delight it just fit and I was able to transport the Bugeye safely home.

Restoration Begins

My initial desire was to get the car inspected and road worthy. So I decided to have the import car shop near my work take a quick look at the car. After new tires, brakes and a little carburetor tuning it was ready to go. I picked the car up after work and was off to car class, exhaust smoke gently trailing my ride. I couldn't believe how the car shook and how noisy it was. It really felt like a jalopy and I was more than concerned that it would fall apart before I got to British car class at Burgard high school.

Soon after getting the car on the lift we discovered the problem.

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'Hootie' the Bugeye

by Jim Borkman

A little background is helpful here. The Bugeye was one of the first cars designed with unitary construction however testing showed deformation of the rear. So the designers reverted to the original plan with the rear half more of a unibody construction and the front being with two front chassis supports. When the car was designed there was thought of installing a boot lid but due to concerns of strength it was opted to eliminate the boot lid and just make that area accessible through behind the fold down seats. The problem at hand with my car was that the lower rear half of the boot (or floor of the trunk was barely hanging on due to rust). Fortunately, a trunk floor was readily available and became the first major piece of body repair.

Additional repairs included replacement of the A pillar and rocker panels along with floor structural repairs. The bonnet was also converted to a front end hinge making the engine much more assessable. The Grill and rear bumperettes were re-chromed and the car was painted a bring Chili Red, the same as current Mini Coopers.

While the body repairs were underway we were working to rebuild the original 948cc engine, 43 bhp motor. This being my second engine rebuild I was pretty confident that it would go well. The pistons ended up 30 thousands over for the bore, a slightly stepped up cam was installed and an electronic distributor have resulted in a peppy engine. also sporting 1 ¼" SU's and an aluminum radiator to keep this baby cool. One of the most challenging tasks was replacing one of the cracked quarter-elliptic leaf springs.

Why "Hootie"

The results exceeded my expectations resulting in one of the most fun British, eye catching, cars to drive. OK, so why the name "Hootie"? You have to drive the car to understand the name but you can imagine that this car is an absolute Hoot to drive! It just makes sense and I love to drive it. It's certainly not a muscle car but a fun sporty British class is that brings smiles to the faces of those who see it!

