



# “The Breakdown”

“Serving All Sides of the Marque” 1983-2009



Volume 26, Issue 1

January 2009

### *Upcoming Dates to Remember*

- February 9th, BOA meeting at Magruders.
- March 9th, Celebrate Cecil Kimber’s birthday at the March BOA meeting at Magruders.
- June 8th, BOA Summer Picnic at Como Lake Park.
- Sunday September 6th, 26th annual Autumn Sports Classic

### *Please Welcome our newest members!*

- ◆ **Reverend James Maxwell, Medina, 1967 MGB**
- ◆ **Thomas Jones, Kenmore ,1970 MGB-GT**

**Be on the lookout for our newest members and be sure to say hi!**

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## President’s Message

**Joe Puma**

Hello everyone, and Happy New Year! As I write this on New Years day, it’s very cold outside with lots of snow on the ground and the MG’s are hibernating quietly in the garage (although I did have the red Midget running last weekend when we had that 60 degree day).

As the New Year dawns, significant changes are afoot in the Buffalo Octagon Association with the transition to a new slate of officers, new membership and regalia chairmen, and a complete overhaul of communications with a move to integrate the newsletter, web page and message board into a streamlined web-based package. More on this later...

I’d like to personally thank the outgoing officers –

Brian Aldous, Lisa Bradt, Bill Hain, Debbie Leible and Celeste Kray for a wonderful job over the past two years. Much was accomplished during their tenure and they should all be very proud – the club is in fine shape both organizationally and financially. For those who missed it, Bill Hain was honored as the recipient of this years President’s Award – the Herb Bradt Memorial Cup - bestowed by Marcia Bradt at the annual Christmas party last month. Congratulations Bill – well deserved – and thank you for many years of service to the Buffalo Octagon Association!

As we get to work planning the upcoming car season, a number of ideas have come up, including spring garage tours, a train trip to

a Syracuse automotive museum, a weekend car show event at Chautauqua Lake involving antique boat races benefiting a local charity, plus the usual picnics, tours and of course - the annual Autumn Sports Classic car show. We have also formed a committee to study the possibility of hosting another national convention, possibly in 2011 or 2012.

If you have any comments, ideas, gripes, or just want to chat about general club operations, please feel free to contact me anytime at [jcpuma@verizon.net](mailto:jcpuma@verizon.net) or (716) 876-6382. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy new year!

Joe Puma

## 1st Tech Session of the Year: Replacing a Rocker Panel on a MGB

On Saturday January 24th, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. the Buffalo Octagon Association will have it’s first tech session of the new year. This is one not to be missed if you have ever considered tackling one of the more common rust

problems that plague our beloved MG’s.

Jim Pelletterie will show us some of the steps involved in replacing a rocker panel as this is a repair requiring 20 hours to complete.

This tech session will take

place at Jim’s home which is located at 5579 William Street in Lancaster New York 14086.

Coffee and doughnuts will be provided. Bring your cameras and your questions.

## Car Chat: Joe Puma's MG Midget Racercar.

Joe Puma

As many of you know, I've been in the process of building a vintage racecar for about five years now. After owning a 1973 MG Midget for over 20 years, modifying it along the way for increased horsepower and improved handling & reliability, and being a big vintage race fan, I thought the time was right to attempt to build a purpose built race car - with the dream of someday competing in the vintage races at Watkins Glen that I had been attending as a spectator for so long. Of course, it would have to be an MG Midget - my reasoning was that with the knowledge gained over all those years of fiddling with my existing car, how hard could it possibly be? Plus, Midgets and Sprites are purported to be the all-time best

entry-level road race cars, known to be fast, reliable and most of all, forgiving.

Well, five years later, I can say with



authority that building a racecar in your garage from a 36 year-old \$500 bone-stock body shell is not for the feint of heart. I was lucky to

be able to acquire a solid rolling shell from a friend, but everything else - engine, drive train, suspension, electrics, interior, etc. - had to be sourced, rebuilt and/or modified and installed. I found out that virtually nothing just "fits" in a race car. Just about everything - new or used - involves custom fabrication and modification - regardless of what the manufacturer may claim! Keep in mind that no new ground was being broken here - people have been racing Midgets and Sprites for 50 years - and I unashamedly copied something from just about every Midget or Sprite racecar that I came across at the races, in books or on the internet.

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## MG remains a no-show in North America

From the San Diego Tribune

"The USA isn't on the short-term radar as an anticipated market for us, but with the right product, it would be good to return there," Gary Hagen, marketing director of NAC MG, told the British Web site Austin Rover Online ([austin-rover.co.uk](http://austin-rover.co.uk)). Hagen also confirmed that plans to build MGs in Oklahoma from kits shipped from China have been killed.

Not long after China's Nanjing Auto-

mobile Group Corp. bought most of the remains of MG Rover in September 2005, Nanjing told of plans to set up an R&D center and factory in Ardmore, Okla. Then Nanjing was taken over by Shanghai Automotive Industry Corp.

"The deal fell through," Hagen said of the Oklahoma plan. In August, production of MG TFs started in MG Rover's old plant in Longbridge, England. The cars will be sold in Great Britain.

MGs were last sold in the United States in 1980. Numerous plans have been hatched over the years to return MG to



## Meeting Minutes: November 11th, 2008

Submitted by Lisa Bradt

The meeting was called to order at 8:00PM. President Brian Aldous welcomed everyone, especially some of the newer faces and some folks we haven't seen in a while. He also cautioned all of the female club members to watch out for Dave and John as Celeste and Debbie were both out of town.

### ◆ Secretary's Report:

◆ Brian called upon Lisa to give the Secretary's report. A motion was put on the floor by Lisa to accept the minutes as they appeared in the most recent newsletter. The motion was seconded, and the minutes were accepted as per the newsletter.

◆ Brian reported that, per his records, four more members were present at tonight's meeting than at last month's.

### ◆ Treasurer's Report:

◆ Bill reported that income from member payments for the Steak Roast was present in this month's statement. *Continued on page 3*

## Meeting Minutes

- ◆ Brian brought up the matter of our charitable donations for this year. Last year, donations were made to The Ronald McDonald House, Hospice, National Kidney Foundation (NKF) and Mercy Flight.
  - ◆ A motion was put on the floor by Jerry U. that we donate to Hospice and NKF this year. The donations suggested were less than the total amount given last year, but more than what we have donated per charity in the past.
  - ◆ Jim Pelletterie mentioned that he feels strongly about Mercy Flight and the work they do.
  - ◆ Bill felt that increasing the amounts of the donations might not be the best idea and suggested that we return to our previous donations.
  - ◆ Brian recommended that we decide on a total amount for all donations before proceeding any further.
  - ◆ Jerry P. put a motion on the floor that the club donate no more than 10% of the total treasury.
  - ◆ Jim Pelletterie seconded Jerry's motion.
  - ◆ Joe G. made a motion to increase the amount to 15% of the treasury. His motion was seconded.
  - ◆ Joe G.'s motion was put to a vote and was passed with 16 members in favor and 3 against.
  - ◆ Once the amount was determined, Pat put a motion on the floor for the amount decided to be divide between all three of the previously mentioned charities: Hospice, NKF and Mercy Flight.
  - ◆ TJ seconded Pat's motion. It was put to a vote and was passed unanimously by the membership.
  - ◆ A motion was put on the floor to accept the Treasure's Report, and it was accepted by the membership.
- **Membership Report:**
- ◆ Joe P. reported that we have had one new member join recently. His name is James Maxwell, and he was referred to the club by Debbie Leible. He owns a 1967 MGB.
  - ◆ Joe also reported that our membership is at approximately 78 families currently.

*Continued below*

## New Officers for 2009

### Jerry Urban

Following the elections at the November general meeting, these are you new officers and committee chairpersons.

- President— Joe Puma
- Vice-President—T.J. Bradt
- Treasurer— Lisa Bradt
- Secretary—Celeste Kray
- Regalia—Chuck Privitera
- Membership—John Leible
- Newsletter—Jerry Urban
- Sunshine—Lynne Puma
- Sergeant at Arms— Jim Pelletterie

Each of these dedicated individuals

has stepped up for a new two-year term.

Please come out to a meeting or event to meet them if you haven't already.

Your input is critical to these individual charting a course that will insure your clubs viability in the future.

## Meeting Minutes

- ◆ **New Business:**
- ◆ Jim Pelletterie brought up the idea of the club hosting a national event again, possibly in 2011, as there is already an event planned in the Toronto area (Belleville, ON) in 2010.
- ◆ Myron asked what is involved in a national event. Jim explained that it is usually a three day event with a huge car show as the main attraction. Other events include driving tours, guided tours of sights in the area, a picnic, rallies, and a banquet.
- ◆ Jim Pelletterie stated that he would be willing to run such an event.
- ◆ Joe G. put a motion on the floor to form a committee to explore this possibility.
- ◆ Brian brought up some key points: timing and location are the keys to a successful event.
- ◆ Joe's motion was passed, and he will head up a committee to discuss possibilities in January.

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## Car Chat.....

I also had to learn how to weld, and it helped to have friends to help out with the critical stuff like fabricating and welding the roll cage – something I wouldn't dare attempt myself. Swap meets in Ancaster, Ontario and Carlisle, Pennsylvania each year provided some hard to find parts as well as an ongoing source of income from selling used parts – racing bits are expensive. Many parts were bought and sold on eBay along the way, and thank God for Harbor Freight Tools!



Anyway, a milestone was reached last fall – the car finally was able to

move under its own power, and I was able to take it to be shown at the Autumn Sports Classic car show – you may have seen it there. A few laps around the parking lot before and after the show proved

that it wasn't just there to pose – it ran well and was fast enough to scare me! There are still some bugs to be worked out, and it will undoubtedly take considerable sorting at the

racetrack, but I am encouraged that my dream of racing a vintage sports car that I built myself is not too far off. In future issues, I'll go into more detail about the project's numerous



trials and tribulations and report what progress (if any) has been made.

Special thanks to all the folks who have helped me along the way – Jim Pelletterie, Rob Bork, Chuck Privitera, TJ Bradt, Rick Magro, Peter Calabrese, plus my wife Lynne for being extremely patient and spending far too much time helping me bleed the brakes!

## Vintage British Auto Class

JP Kelly

Vintage British cars in Western New York are some of the best-maintained vehicles on the road today. The cute MG's and the powerful Jaguars along with the other famous marques from the island nation have a special place to go to be pampered by their owners.

While thousand of sports cars were imported to the shores of the United States since the late forties the dealer network and the repair facilities faded away with the years. Although a few specialty repair shops are still doing a brisk business, the demand for quality repairs has fallen on the enthusiastic owners.

The Buffalo Public Schools as a part of their extensive adult education program initiated a very specialized program. The program offers owners of these fine machines a place to learn how to maintain their cars. The twenty-six week program uses a working shop and hands on techniques to teach owners the proper

procedures on vehicle maintenance; performance upgrades, and show preparation.

Rebuilding a vintage British engine or overhauling a set of SU carburetors is a normal activity in this classroom. Students have the ability to work on their cars or parts through the weekly three-hour program. With the assistance of master mechanic Jim Pelletterie the students have the option to work on any part of the vehicle that needs attention.

Although the class is known as a recreational type of program the student count is always good. With the support and direction of administrators Les Leopold and John Suchy the program utilizes the assets of Burgard Vocational high school, which is located just outside the city. The students are the big winners as an automotive shop and classroom is dedicated to this very special class.

The classroom is divided into two sections. The theory section has tra-

ditional desks and chalkboards to explain vehicle systems and the nuances of British engineering. The other section contains two automotive lifts and special shop equipment like bead blast cabinets and rotary parts washers, The only repairs that cannot be made are to body and paint as the room is not equipped to handle this work.



*Students tune and solve problems*

*Continued on page 5*

## Meeting Minutes

◆ Joe gave an update on Robert Sherwood, our member who, along with his wife, got lost during the Steak Roast. The Sherwoods had some car trouble but were clever enough to be able to get the car running again. Thankfully, they made it home safely. A suggestion was made that someone's cell phone number should be included on instructions for future driving events.

◆ Thanks to Joe P. for following up to make sure the Sherwoods were okay.

### ◆ Regalia Report:

◆ Lunch totes and baseball caps with embroidered logo are still available for \$20 and \$15 respectively. They would make great Christmas gifts. Let Lisa know if you are interested.

◆ A few of this year's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Autumn Sports Classic T-shirts are also still available.

### ◆ Newsletter:

◆ Celeste was out of town, so no report was available. As of last meeting, Celeste had asked if anyone was interested in taking over as Newsletter Editor.

◆ A copy of the Christmas party flier was included in the last newsletter. Several people have already turned in their reservations. Please mail them to Lisa Bradt by December 3.

### Old Business:

◆ Jim Pelletterie is still looking for a place to store all of the club's sound equipment and other paraphernalia.

◆ Eric said that he may be able to

store it in his warehouse as long as we can provide some notice when we need to get it. His warehouse is located on Clinton St. in Buffalo. Eric will talk it over with his wife and let us know.

◆ Jim Pelletterie also offered to sell the club his trailer as he is looking to unload that as well. We would still need a place to store the trailer itself and would have to find dry, reasonably warm, indoor storage for the sound equipment.

◆ Jerry U. brought up the issue of the website again. The membership decided that it is worth the \$100 per year fee to maintain it, and it should continue.

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## British Auto Class

Over the past twelve years many tired British cars have been made efficient again with rebuilt drive trains. Brake and suspension systems are always a top priority as they are considered the most important parts on the car. Replacing lower A-arm bushings on a MGB or renewing all the suspension rubber on a TR6 is just another job that gets done within the two thirteen week sessions. The student-owners get great satisfaction knowing that they have preserved a part of motoring history while learning how to work on the Little British Car they own.



*Students check brakes on a Spitfire*



*Working on Austin Healy carbs*

Every spring another British car hits the road in better shape than the year before. The student/owners have a greater confidence in their cars and are able to drive them further distances knowing that they did the repairs properly and with great savings. Just one repair could add up to cost of the class and with all the quality work completed the class becomes a great deal.

Saving money and understanding fine British machinery are only a few perks to come from this class. Stu-

dents become friends and spread their knowledge to others. When the cold winds blow off lake Erie and the snow is piling up the British cars in Western NY are maintained to the highest degree. With many carefree miles ahead the owners know they have the best-maintained cars on the road.



*Jim P. teaching British Brakes*

The class starts its second semester January 28th. Contact Jim Pelletterie at [mremgee@roadrunner.com](mailto:mremgee@roadrunner.com) if you are interested in the class.



Buffalo Octagon Association

P.O. Box 236

Bowmansville, New York 14026

*Our next meeting is Monday  
February 9th, at 7:30 p.m.  
sharp.*

*Magruders Restaurant  
4995 Broadway  
Depew, New York 14043  
685-4400*

**We're on the web at**

**[www.buffalomg.com](http://www.buffalomg.com)**

## Meeting Minutes

### ◆ **Elections:**

◆ Lisa read the nominations from last month as listed in the newsletter.

◆ The floor was then opened to any additional nominations.

◆ **President:** Brian had accepted the nomination last month unless someone else was interested in taking the office. Garrett nominated Joe P for President. Joe accepted the nomination. Brian then opted to withdraw his acceptance from last month.

◆ **Vice-President:** Lisa had accepted the nomination last month. Chuck nominated TJ for Vice-President. TJ accepted the nomination, and Lisa withdrew her acceptance from last month.

◆ **Secretary:** The Secretary's position was accepted last month by Celeste Kray. No additional nominations were

offered for this office.

◆ **Treasurer:** Bill had accepted the nomination last month. Joe P. nominated Lisa for Treasurer. Lisa accepted the nomination under the condition that someone else would take over as Regalia Chairperson in the event that Lisa should become Treasurer. Chuck volunteered to fill that position if necessary. A paper vote was cast for the Treasurer. Lisa won the election by a slim margin (4 votes).

◆ As acting Secretary in Debbie's absence, Lisa cast the mandatory one ballot to make the election of the other officers official.

◆ Appointed positions were then discussed:

◆ Jerry U. offered to take over the newsletter. Celeste will surely celebrate upon her return to Buffalo (if not sooner).

◆ John L. volunteered to take over as Membership Chairman.

◆ Lynne Puma agreed to keep her responsibilities as Sunshine Steward.

◆ Jim Pelleterie agreed to stay on as Sergeant at Arms.

◆ The meeting was adjourned at 9:24PM. Jerry U. won the Split Club Prize of \$20. Mr. Bill was a happy jester yet again...no one won the Joker game.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Bradt

November 11, 2008