



# The RAGTOP

Monthly Newsletter of the HILL COUNTRY TRIUMPH CLUB

Volume 17, Issue 5, May 2004

[www.hillcountrytriumphclub.org](http://www.hillcountrytriumphclub.org)

## Triumph Family

by Bob Skewis, President



## Lessons Learned

Many of you have already heard about my recent accident with the Triumph, but I thought I would say a few words about some truths that have been affirmed. **First of all**, statistics have shown that most accidents occur within a one-mile radius of your home. Except for commuting to work, most of us do our driving as close to home as we can but even on a Saturday Club drive, I was only about 1000 feet from the house at the first stop light when it happened. **Second**, you don't have to be an active participant in the accident. I was completely stopped as was the car behind me, but this didn't stop the idiot driving the third car back which smashed into car #2 and pushed it into mine. **And finally**, it pays to have good insurance or even better - it is just plain lucky if the perpetrator of all of the pain and suffering has good insurance. In my case he did, but if it had been the guy in the middle (a visitor from Mexico with a Mexican driver's license and no insurance, driving his cousin's car) I would have had to depend on my collector's

insurance to foot the bill. In dealing with a no-name third-party insurance, I was prepared to go through a long delay or possibly denial of the claim considering the age of the car. However, I was pleasantly surprised to encounter cordial and prompt service. I learned last Friday that the full amount check is being cut and will land in my mailbox this week. Of course, there may be other lessons to learn or re-learn as the repairs progress.

Just a reminder now of the annual **Drive your British Sports Car to Work Week** coming up on **May 22-30**. This 8th annual event is a nation wide effort to spread awareness of our historic machines. I don't know about you, but it is always a pleasure to me to be cruising MoPac and have another 2-seater modern sports car (take your pick of Miata, Honda 2000, BMW Z3 or Z4, Porsche Boxter, etc.) pull up beside me and have the driver give me a big thumbs up. It is an acknowledgement that they know that our cars are part of the evolution of driving top down on the open road. So, get out there and fly the flag - the Union Jack, of course.

Most of you know that Art Graves and his family are being transferred to Tulsa, OK this month. The Pflugerville house sold fast and they have closed on the new homestead in Sooner Land. They are very busy finishing school and finalizing plans for the move while living in a hotel suite. I want you to stay tuned for a late announcement of a barbeque at the Skewis household sometime in May or early April. If Art and Karen can find a weekend soon that they can cut free, we are going to say a proper good-bye to a friend and founding member of our Club. The notice will be going out via email, so if you are not web connected, contact me by phone and I will keep you informed of the situation. I'll see you there!



## Farewell...

by Art Graves

**A**s most of you know, my family and I are moving to Tulsa, Oklahoma. I can only echo the familiar refrain, "I never thought it would happen to me". Here's how it happened.

I worked for Southern Union Gas, a division of Southern Union Company. About a year ago Southern Union sold Southern Union Gas to ONEOK (pronounced "One Oak"). You may know us as Texas Gas Service (TGS). Because ONEOK wants all I.T. developers in Tulsa, they made me an offer I couldn't refuse and so here we go. I was not happy when I first heard the offer and didn't think Karen would go for it at all. But she surprised me and said, "let's go!".

I was born and raised in Texas (El Paso) and have lived most of my life in Texas. I like

living in Texas and telling others that I live in Texas. If you don't know it already, I will tell you that Texas has a mystique about it that most other states do not. I like that mystique. Karen and I have lived in Austin for twenty-five years, we both graduated from U.T. and our babies were born here. This will be a big change for us. I say I'll like the change, but I must admit that I don't sound very convincing making that statement. I'm sure I will sound more confident once we are settled in Tulsa.

To date we have sold our house in Pflugerville and have a contract on a house in Tulsa. In order to make this change more complete, we are buying an old house in the old part of town. It was built in 1927, has a basement, very little yard and a four car garage. The drive to work will be about ten

minutes - no traffic. Our son Brian will continue to attend U.T. and Hannah will start high school next year. Closing on the new house is May 12, so I will miss the May HCTC meeting - again!

I have already joined Green Country Triumphs in Tulsa. I've known many of them for several years and they are typical Triumph people - great.

I will certainly miss Texas, Austin, and the Hill Country Triumph Club. I've enjoyed my association with all of you. Good luck - I'm sure I'll see you at Triumph and British car events!

*On behalf of the members of the Hill Country Triumph Club, we wish you happy TRails in Oklahoma. You will be missed terribly. Thanks for the memories. Editor*

# Putt Putt

It is on the calendar for May 7, June 4, July 2, and August 6 from 6PM-closing. Owners of classic cars will receive 2 for 1 golf all night for themselves and anyone they bring in their cars. Classic Burnet Road Putt Putt is located at 6700 Burnet Road.

Come out and have some fun!



## New Orleans British Car Day

by Warren Cole

**W**e always start out with the best intentions. The flyer for The British Motoring Club of New Orleans All British Car day said the hospitality room would be open from 5pm to 9pm. So we vowed to leave town by 1pm so we could get there for the tail end of the much anticipated Louisiana Cuisine; however, it was 11: pm by the time we left town.

At 10pm the hotel manager called to confirm our arrival. We told him we were still coming but would get there after 4am and want to hold our room. At 2:30 am on the East side of Houston we were passed by 6 cars driving very fast. Four nice racers, a Mustang convertible, and a small white pickup went by about 90 MPH. The pickup was driving really crazy and passed a Honda in the group on the inside median of a 4 lane wide highway after chasing him very closely. Yolanda said "Where is a cop when you need one?" We looked to our right and there he was going after the group. They saw the cop and went for an exit. He stopped somebody but we could not see which one.

Right after crossing into Louisiana we hit dense fog which persisted almost all the way into New Orleans. The Interstate in Louisiana was very rough with the last 40 to 50 miles into town having very rough asphalt patches across the choppy concrete every two to three hundred yards. At 8am we called

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**W**e had a wonderful member turnout for the April meeting held at Funddruckers on Anderson Lane, and just about everyone drove their TR! Ed and Eva Gowett, Bob and Barbara Kramer, Warren Cole and Yolanda, Johan Carl, and Dan Julien were in their TR6s; Clif Blanchard drove his Spitfire; Mike and Nel McPhail, Bob Baker, David Schlosser, and Carol Pennington drove their TR3s; Phil Taylor remained British in his Range Rover; while Bob Skewis and Roger Bolick were forced to appear in non-Brit vehicles. The main topic of conversation revolved around the upcoming Regionals since held in Norman, Oklahoma. Several members are also planning to attend the Blanco Car Show on May 15. You can contact Mike McPhail for details.

As many of you have heard, we are losing one of our founding members, Art Graves, who is moving with his family to Tulsa, Oklahoma. Bob Skewis is tentatively planning a going away party. Stay turned for more details. We'll miss you Art!

The meeting ended with door prizes being awarded to Carol -- a hat, Roger -- a shirt, and Bob Skewis -- oil.



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the Great Shoney's to see about cleaning up before the show. We were told our room was given away, and not to come before 3pm.

After fighting our way through traffic jam we finally arrived at the show about 9 am and unloaded the car. We drove in with our dirty car and an official said, "You must be a good guy you are driving a TR6" I started apologizing for the condition of my car and the guy said, "Don't worry look at mine." We looked over to see a very rusty ratty blue 76-TR6. I thought my car would be the worst one at the show, but didn't feel so bad after seeing his.

The show was very well organized. There was a person every few feet directing you where to go. We drove in and were guided through a loop where they took your picture in front of the pond. After the picture we were directed to our spot in a line of TR6's. The official was very precise in the placement of our car. It took me about 4 back-and-forths to properly get set but when it was over there were 11 TR6's lined up perfectly. It was quite a sight. Everyone had a nicely prepared engine bay and there were a number of interesting variations present. One guy had a custom made intake manifold with 3 Stromberg carburetors and K&N filters with these wild yellow water-repellant covers. Another had painted his engine bay semi-gloss black. We were the only street car with Webers which generated a surprising amount of interest. One person said they had never seen a green convertible top.

The day was bright and sunny, 82 degrees and breezy. The cars were in front of the Delgado College Student Union which had a nice air-conditioned space to escape to and get something to eat. Outside there were a few tents with a wide array of Anglo-centric products. We got an original style key cut for our car. One vendor had a selection of Haynes manuals including ones on "Babies", "Men", and "Sex". Another vendor had T shirts, Mugs, Boxes, etc. They had about 10 to 12 different items available with the picture they took of you in front of the pond. Furiously rubbing the car for 2 hours in the South Louisiana sun made us soaked in sweat. This combined with the all night drive, created a countenance that caused great concern with the wife of a '51 Jaguar sedan. We were walking into the Student Union to dry out and get something to drink when we passed by the Jaguar with the tool kit displayed. I said, "Hey, Yolanda, check out this cool tool kit in the trunk lid

of this Jag". Just then the lady rushed around from her chair at the front of the car and closed up the trunk. I was too tired to get it but Yolanda said, "She thought that we were going to steal her tools!" After 3 bottles of juice and a club sandwich in the Student Union we dried out and did not seem to create any further concern.

There was a full field of British cars in attendance. About 20 Jaguars were on the south end of the field including a fine silver XK-120DHC from Georgetown. Then came a row of Big Healeys followed by two rows of MGA's and B's. Next was a group of 30 Triumphs. At eleven examples, the TR6's were the most numerous of the meet. However, there were no TR3's, 250's, or Morgans at the event so they obviously need our support next year! All the cars were nice, and one wag with a Spitfire had a bumper sticker that said "YEAH ITS GOT A HEMI". A copper colored GT6+ was a standout, along with a low mileage original 1970 TR6 in pale yellow with a hardtop. After the Triumphs was a row of mixed makes. A custom Land Rover was followed by a Cooper formula racer with a SOHC Cosworth "four". Then there was a race Cobra, yellow Lotus Elan and an immaculate BRG Europa. A cluster of five Rolls-Royces finished the row. At the North end of the field were about a dozen T-series MG's, one, frame and engine only.

The cars had to stay in place until 3pm. When some started to trickle out we sat back and watched the cars leave. We finally headed for Shoney's about 5pm. On the shoulder of the Interstate we saw a black E-type coupe on a trailer that had come loose and smashed the left front corner into the tool box on the front of the trailer. The car was very nice and wound up winning its class at the awards ceremony. It will need the left front bumper and some mild metal and paint work on the bonnet before it wins again. The host hotel was the Shoney's in, Metairie, about 4 miles from the turnoff to the show. It wasn't in the best part of town and I was concerned about leaving the car overnight but no one seemed to have any problems. The place was dingy and in keeping with the blackened cuisine of the area the carpet in our room was blackened as well. The room smelled bad, had no closet, two skinny towels and one ply toilet paper. Next time we're going to the Holiday Inn one exit further down the highway. We got to the awards banquet late, and were invited to sit at a table right inside the door. As it happened the fellow from Georgetown with the XK120 DHC was at our table and he won best of show. The best of

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# Bastrop Drive

April 10, 2004

Meet  
Sun  
Drive  
Lunch  
Drive  
Rest  
Drive  
Rain  
Scatter



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## VTR Regionals

by Bob Kramer

We all heard about the hail storm that hit Oklahoma City two days before the VTR South Central Regional. The Weather Channel showed pictures of unlucky Okies shoveling ice that approached the size of golf balls. It wasn't bad enough that the COVTR had asked a bunch of Texan's to stay on campus at OU, "hell" for a Longhorn; they were going to have it freeze over too! Those of us that couldn't escape work responsibilities to leave on Thursday worried about the intrepid group of TR driver's that risked life, limb and hail damage for a pretty drive north from Burnet. That group included the McPhail's and Herter's in TR3A's, Richard Ceraldi and Roxanne in his GT6 and soon to be Okie Art Graves in his high mileage TR6. At Norman they were joined by the man of many clubs, HCTC'er, STTA'er, and ex TTR'er, Spitfire driving George Montgomery, and later by Warren Cole with companion Yolanda. By getting there early they were able to take advantage of the many local walking tours and museums that are the toast of Norman. Rumor has it that Norman hosts the largest dinosaur carcass in the USA, and it's not Barry Switzer. Although the "Sooner" Hotel and associated cabins we stayed at were right on campus, they were separated from the general student area. The buildings surrounding us were used for the OU Adult Education Center. There

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were lots of weekend students in seminars, but not much else going on to interfere with the regional. No "Old School" or "Animal House" antics this time around. There was a rock concert going on somewhere on campus Friday night but the music finished before midnight. This location allowed for easy scheduling. The welcome BBQ, Concours and Awards dinner were held in adjacent buildings, and the autocross about three blocks away. The rallye started and finished in the hotel parking lot.

The biggest surprise of the whole weekend was how nice the Norman area was. They are about a month behind us in the seasonal timeline. Their oak trees are just now dumping pollen pods. After arriving we took on the challenge of washing the cars. There was still some drizzly rain in the area and the weather would best be described as threatening. With every breeze the car would get covered with oak pollen pods and you would have to rinse again. In the end, we washed quickly and back up away from the trees to dry. The rain came over night, ruining some perfect polish jobs, but for me it just meant shammie-time.

The clouds remained for the Concours and the autocross. It was a great opportunity to show off those hardly used HCTC

Sweatshirts. The Sooner Hotel parking worked out well for the car show. People could mingle or go back to their rooms as needed. We had an interesting mix of cars. There was the usual collection of Spitfires, TR3's and TR6's, but this year there was more variety. A couple of Stags, a nice group of TR4's and TR250's and a good group of GT6's filled out a nice field. There was even a Sports Six, a nice light blue one. Many participants chose to show their cars in the Participants Choice or modified class. We are seeing more and more cars that are modified in some way to improve comfort and/or performance. We will always have the concours car show, but it is nice to see that people are bringing there daily drivers, weekend fun cars and performance playthings to the regionals.

I didn't take any notes as to which HCTC cars did well in the car show. Hopefully we'll be able to scam an awards list from the COVTR and publish it in the RAGTOP. I'm not really a show car guy. I come for the camaraderie, the autocross and the rallye. With my Blue TR6 in the garage, new engine half installed, we were at a disadvantage in the autocross. Godiva is a bone stock, partially restored driver. I did replace the rear trailing arm bushings

at some point but never got around to the front. She burns a fair amount of oil, and the tires are over ten years old. I was quite surprised at just how well that old car did. I managed to pull off four quick runs and Barbara did the same. With my best time just over 33 seconds, Barbara should be quite proud that she ran in the 38's. We took first in the Stock TR6 class and challenged for the fastest time of the day. We didn't stay to watch the second half of the autocross because we wanted to do the



rallye. In the end a modified Spitfire piloted by Ruth Josey got into the 32's and won that. Didn't she also win FTD at Fredericksburg? The blue demon TR6 will be back next year!

The rallye was the most challenging, naw that's not right, most annoying rallye I have ever been on. It started out in threatening skies and ended in beautiful sunshine. Along the way we drove through some scenic areas that surprised us. I though Oklahoma was a dustbowl. The problem I had with the rallye was that it wasn't set up to be a driving rallye. There were areas that you had to leave your car to look for clues that were on cabins and sidewalks. The instructions didn't warn you about that. Many of the things we need to "find" were spaced very close together on 60 mph roads. That makes for unsafe driving. In order to complete some of the questions we had to pull out of traffic onto grass shoulders, into people's driveways and we did a lot of doubling back. As a matter of fact, we did so much of that, that we lost the tie breaker for a third place finish because we drove a mile more than the other third place car. The good news is that Art Graves and Bob Skews teamed up and won the thing. No small feat. It was so "un-fun" at times that I wanted to just

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The Blanco Classic Car Show, started small in 1988, seems to grow larger each year and has indeed become the premium annual event in Blanco. It is held in beautiful Blanco State Park along side the green grassy banks of the flowing, picturesque Blanco River. It is open to all makes models. The number of participants has been as many as 200, and well over a thousand viewers from near and far attend to admire the cars and trucks. **Triumph has its own class.**

Ample food and beverages, restrooms, and a first aid station are available on site. The Blanco Masonic Lodge is the primary sponsor and all revenues after show expenses will be used to fund charitable activities and support other community activities of common interest and benefit.

Registration: 9am to 11am...Awards: 2:30 pm

**16TH ANNUAL BLANCO CLASSIC CAR SHOW  
REGISTRATION FORM**



**\$22.00 PRE-REGISTRATION INCLUDES:  
→T-SHIRT,GOODIE BAG & DASH PLAQUE  
\* includes EXPRESS CHECK-IN AT SHOW  
(MUST REGISTER BY MAY 1ST)**

  

**\$25.00 DAY OF SHOW -REGISTRATION INCLUDES:  
→T-SHIRT,GOODIE BAG & DASH PLAQUE**

  

<u>REGISTRATION INFORMATION</u>	<u>CLASSIC CAR INFORMATION</u>
NAME: _____	MAKE: _____
ADDRESS: _____	MODEL: _____
CITY: _____ ZIP _____	YEAR: _____
TEL#: _____	YOUR CAR CLASS: _____
EMAIL : _____	

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: "BLANCO CLASSIC CAR SHOW"**

MAIL TO:  
BLANCO CLASSIC CAR SHOW  
PO BOX 861  
BLANCO, TEXAS 78606

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL: DOBIE BENSON @ 830-833-5348  
EMAIL @ benson@moment.net

# Hill Country Triumph Club

## 2004 Events

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Close to the event, call the Hotline for additional information 512.703.6553

### MAY 2004

- 7 **Putt-Putt, Burnet Road** 6PM-close
- 11 **Hill Country Triumph Club Meeting.** 7PM. A la Carrera in the Balcones Woods Shopping Center at 11150 N. Research Blvd. Take the Braker Lane exit. 345-1763.
- 15 **Blanco Classic Car Show** See page 7 for details.
- 22-30 **Drive your British Sports Car to Work Week**

### JUNE 2004

- 4 **Putt-Putt, Burnet Road** 6PM-close
- 8 **Hill Country Triumph Club Meeting.** 7PM.

### JULY 2004

- 2 **Putt-Putt, Burnet Road** 6PM-close
- 14-17 **VTR 2004 National Convention,** Richmond Virginia, Sponsored by the Richmond Triumph Register <http://www.richmondtriumphregister.com/>

### AUGUST 2004

- 6 **Putt-Putt, Burnet Road** 6PM-close
- 6-7 **TRF Summer Party, Indiana County, PA**
- 8 **Hill Country Triumph Club Meeting.** 7PM.

### SEPTEMBER 2004

- 25-26 **All British Car Day**
- 30-Oct. 4 **Triumphfest, Lake Tahoe, CA** Sponsored by Triumph Travelers. Visit <http://www.triumphtravelers.org> for additional information.

### OCTOBER 2004

- 2 **The State Fair of Texas All British Parade to the Fairgrounds !!!**  
The theme this year is The British Invasion. A celebration and salutation to all things British featuring the Jaguar Marque. More info to come.

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### Hill Country Triumph Club Shirts, Sweatshirts, and Hats are always available!

Shirts are 100% combed cotton pique tri-color pullover "JERZEE" golf shirts. Sweatshirts are 95% "Lee" hooded sweatshirts with a muff pocket. Shirts and sweatshirts have the HCTC logo embroidered on the front. Shirts and sweatshirts are \$25.00 and hats are \$15.00. Buy yours at the next meeting or event!



For Sale, 1974 TR-6. Immaculately restored. Great driver. Needs absolutely nothing. \$15,000.00. Contact Griff at (210)651-4293 or at E-mail rgriff@txdirect.net. 5/04

1980 TR7 Rear End. Half shafts not included. Ratio 3.45:1. \$150.00  
Herb Valliant 512-343-1458 or  
valliant@ccsi.com 3/04



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*New Orleans*

show trophy was beautifully engraved 1/2 in. thick glass creation. There were a number of very nice cars in attendance and he was surprised and elated to win. Each car that received a trophy had its picture from in front of the pond projected against a large screen at the front of the room. The Land Rover guy won first place in a class of one. The guy that had the green 74 TR6 with the triple Strombergs won best TR6.

After we left that spicy food made us thirsty so we went to a store to get some drinks. Across the street from the store was one of those above-ground cemeteries New Orleans is famous for. Because of the traffic and the car on the trailer we had to drive past the cemetery for several blocks before we could find a place to turn around. The cemetery was huge perhaps 10-15 city blocks and totally dark. The sight of all of those mausoleums fading into the darkness made the place look grin and spooky. The next day, we drove up to Lakeshore Drive by Lake Ponchartrain and then back down Canal Street into the heart of the city. Canal Street is lined with old houses fronted by huge trees with branches that stretch out across the street, a perfect cruise for a convertible. As we left town, West on Highway 61, ("Where do you want this killin' done? Out on Highway 61."), we reflected that the proper car for a visit to New Orleans would be a smooth riding one like an XJ-6 or a Rolls Royce, as many of the street are in terrible shape. Next year, we hope to pull the TR6 there with the Cadillac.

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*VTR Regionals*

drive the route and skip the questions. Congrat's to Bob and Art, they earned it.

The Awards banquet was nice. Great food, nice table arrangements and some Powerpoint photo presentations. The raffle was spread out over the evening. People won in streaks. At the end, Barbara one three table settings in a row. Thanks a lot, where's my case of oil? The awards were a little weird, with only two places in the Concours receiving a plaque. They said something about VTR rules not allowing awards if a car didn't achieve a minimum of 350 points, which is true, but we noticed that no class got a third place award. With all the TR6's, Spitfires and TR3's we don't think that is possible. There was also no navigator plaque for the rallye. Running these things is always a financial challenge, and they presented nice sized plaques, but I would rather have seen smaller ones going three places deep. Just my opinion. The good news is that it saved a lot of time! This years Gary Johnston Award winners were Norm and Millie Phillips. Although I



wasn't privy to the meeting in which the nomination discussions took place, I understand that our very own Art Graves was a finalist and they had to wait for the results of the concours to add up the points. Art, you should have taken a run at the autocross!

That's about it for this regional report, We all made it home safe. After all that driving, up and back, we finally hit some real rain as we approached Round Rock. We made record time on the trip home, five and half hours! According to Paul Hulka from the STTA, next years regional will be either in San Marcos or Salado. They feel that they need to move it north in order to encourage participation. Should be good for the HCTC folks as closer to home to make for a great HCTC turnout.

# Membership Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Car Make: \_\_\_\_\_ Model: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Car Make: \_\_\_\_\_ Model: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_



*See page 2 in the newsletter for membership details.*

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Hill Country Triumph Club  
1105 N. Canyonwood Dr.  
Dripping Springs, TX 78620  
*Address Correction Requested*

**The next meeting will be May 11<sup>th</sup>, 7PM, at Ala Carrera.  
See page 8 for directions.**