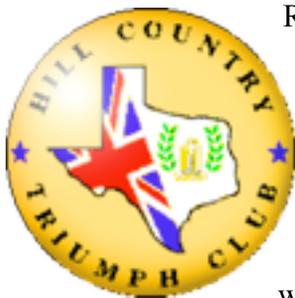


THE RAGTOP

WELCOME TO THE CLUB

by STEVE JOHNSON, PRESIDENT



The “Marble Falls Run” on November 15th was just what the doctor ordered for those of us who love to drive Triumphs, but simply don’t get enough of it. Our objectives this run was not only to exercise our TR’s, but to look over the facilities we have reserved and get ready to start planning for the (and here’s a

mouth full) “Vintage Triumph Register South Central Regional” we are hosting April 22nd through April 25th, 2009.

Our run started out with a drive around Travis Lake to Bob and Barbara Kramer’s for our first stop, before continuing our winding tour of our Texas Hill Country. Bob and Barbara had coffee and breakfast snacks for us. As always they are a great host and hostess.

continued on page 2

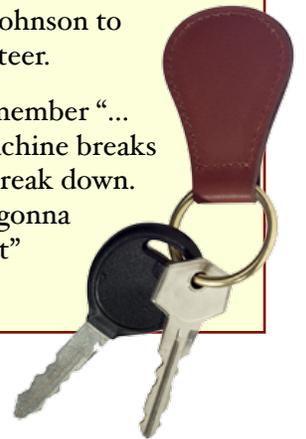
CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

With the upcoming regional event be sponsored by the HCTC, volunteers are needed for various duties. Most positions require only a few hours out of a day of the event.

We will need help directing traffic and parking cars for the Autocross and Concours events. Also, help with Pre-registration, Goodie bags, car wash, raffle, club baskets and sponsors.

So help us run this event like only the well oiled HCTC machine can. Contact President Johnson to volunteer.

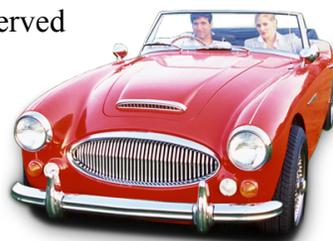
And remember “... when the machine breaks down, we break down. And I ain’t gonna allow that”



At 9:00 AM Saturday morning we headed for Marble Falls from the Kramer's, experiencing another hour's worth of great Texas meandering roads and great scenery as we made our way to our second stop, the [Marble Falls La Quinta Hotel](#). Twenty nine of us had coffee in the La Quinta Breakfast Room (see the following list of participants). I gave a short review of activities while in Marble Falls and then started a tour of the Hotel. Our tour was a self tour giving us a chance to look at many of the rooms. All of the rooms seemed approximately the same size, but had different furniture arrangements. Each room has a spectacular view of the lake and city. The hotel has only been open a few months, and it's excellent.

While at the hotel we also took a look at the Banquet Room we will be using. We will use it for at least two purposes. The first use is for registration. Barbara Kramer is in charge of our registration, and liked this area for because we will be able to keep our materials in the room without having to carry them to other locations (e.g., the Breakfast Room). The Banquet Room will also be used for the Awards Banquet.

Our next stop on the run was the events area we have reserved from the First Baptist Church, located just behind the hotel. We don't even have to get on the highway in order to travel from the Hotel to



the event area. It has a large set of parking lots for the events, a pavilion, and restrooms. We are thinking that the Concourse will be the major event at this location, but of course that will not be the only use of the area.



We had thought that the Autocross could be held on the Baptist Church parking lot as well. After the Autocross team looked at it (Don Couch and Bob Kramer), they decided that the curbs were a safety issue. The team spent some time scouting around the city and found the High School Parking. They decided it would be just what we needed. Bob Kramer knew who to contact, and closed the deal right after our run.

continued on page 3





Top: TRIUMPHS line the parking lot of the host hotel **Lower:** HCTC members gather in Marble Falls

MARBLE FALLS RUN - NOVEMBER 15, 2008

Participants

- Bob and Courtney Baker
- Roger Bolick and Tina Logan
- Richard Ceraldi and Del Yowell
- Warren and Yolanda Cole
- Don Couch
- Tom and Nancy Harrison
- Ralph and Jeffie Herter
- Jim and Karen Icenhower
- Steve and Candy Johnson
- Anne Johnson (visiting with McPail's)
- Dan Julien
- Bob and Barbara Kramer
- Nel McPhail
- Dean and Elizabeth Mericas
- Alan Palmer
- Bob Skewis
- Bill Waller
- Greg and Suzy West

Now for the important stuff. We all headed over to the River City Grill for lunch. Nel McPhail is in charge of our Awards Banquet and wanted to try the food to see if we thought it was good enough to have the River City Grill cater for us. The view is excellent, but the food had mixed reviews from what I heard, so we shall see what Nel's final catering selection will be made as we move toward the Regional. It sounds like a great reason for another run to me! Driving TR's and eating sounds like a winner.

Warren Cole and Dan Julian took pictures of our run. Warren put a number of the pictures in this month's Ragtop. If there are other pictures, please give them to Warren for safe keeping.

Our first meeting in 2009 will be on Tuesday January 13th. I'd like to make that meeting our first organizational meeting for the South Central Regional. At that meeting I'll review the various activities we'll need to be focusing on, and who's volunteered so far

on each item. We'll update my list at the meeting. If you would like to help, please send me a note. I want every one helping in an area they really enjoy, so give me several of your choices and we'll try to match you up with something fun for you. We'll need everyone helping. Please plan to attend this kickoff meeting.

December was also a great month for the club. Mike and Nell McPhail organized our Hill Country Christmas Lights Tour on December 6th. Dean and Elizabeth Mericas hosted our Christmas Party on the 13th. Please send these great organizers and hosts a note to let them know how much you appreciated all they do and did for us in 2008. More details are included in this Ragtop, so read on.

Happy New Year from Candy and I both.

Triumphantly Yours,

Steve



DON COUCH AND RUBY TRIUMPH IN AUTOCROSS

The results are in and I have won two FIRST PLACE victories for the 2008 season in autocross as a member of SPOKES and SASCA. SPOKES is based in Austin and SASCA is a San Antonio club.

2008 was my rookie year and I was nominated as Rookie of the Year. Though I didn't win, it was an honor just to be recognized by my fellow drivers. I look forward to the new season and hope to see more Triumphs dodging the cones!

Fellow club member's Robert Mackenzie, Richard Ceraldi and Fernando Ortega are SPOKES and SASCA members as well. Robert took a SECOND PLACE victory in GP class with his wonderfully race prepared



THE SAN ANTONIO SPORTS CAR ASSOCIATION or SASCA runs its events at the AT&T CENTER in San Antonio. Again, we race on the large parking lot at the AT&T Center. This "track" has some slight bumps as well as elevation changes and these can make for some real white knuckle racing.

Racing for a full season, I can see how much my driving has improved. There is still much to learn and improvements come in tenths of a second.

You can see some of Ruby in action at my YouTube site: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPEdKJbjc&k>

I invite all club members to come out and let's show 'em what the British Iron can do!



1962 SPITFIRE. Richard tears up the track with his GT6 and Fernando, for now, is in his Miata - ZOOM ZOOM.



Spokes ran most of last years events at San Antonio Raceway, the drag racing facility on I-H 10. There is a large flat parking lot that provides plenty of room to drive fast enough to make you wonder, "What am I doing!?"

Rumor has it a new venue for 2009 is lined up that will be closer to Austin. SPOKES did have one event at [HARRIS HILLS ROAD](#), the new permanent track near San Marcos. This event was the highlight of the season for me. It allowed drivers to drive as fast they dared.



BOB'S YOUR UNCLE



Our meeting last month at Rudy's on 620 started was held on Veteran's Day. El Presidente started with an acknowledgement of our 6 veterans in attendance. Richard Ceraldi noted that his GT6 was classified as a veteran, as he bought it while in the service.

Although not in attendance, Art Graves and his TR6 would fall into this category too.

Steve continued the meeting with a discussion of the run to Marble Falls to acquaint everyone with the location and facilities for the VTR in Marble Falls this coming April. While this discussion was going on, Carol Pennington arrived in the rain without her side curtains and we quickly threw a rain cover over Pearl to keep the carpets dry. Timing issues were discussed for the Autocross at the VTR and we think we have a solution that s affordable.

Dean Mericas gave us a wrap-up report on the Rolling Sculpture car show. The first time event was very successful with 80 cars and \$975.00 raised for the Bee Cave Public Library. Several HCTC folks were recognized for their contributions and help at the show – Bill Waller, Bob Kramer, Bob Skewis, Mike Schubert and Richard Ceraldi. Dean reported that the Hill Country Galleria was pleased and ready to sponsor the show again next year.

An announcement was made that we would not have a meeting in December as we traditionally have two events instead – the Johnson City Hill Country

Lights Tour and Dinner on the 6th and the HCTC Holiday Party on the 13th. Please note that since we will not have a meeting, there will be no Uncle Bob article in January, so feel free to make a contribution of an interesting article to the editor!

We welcomed new members Phil and Dorothee Auldridge and their new MGA that they recently purchased in California. Like all HCTC members, they are adventurous . . . they drove the new car back here from California, making it to Junction before the throw-out bearing gave out. After a long-distance tow and a little work, the new car is back on the road.

In other acquisition news, Bob Kramer purchased another race car on EBAY . . . this one a '63 TR4 from an estate in Dayton, Ohio. Bob Baker made the marathon trip with him to pick it up, thinking they were just going to load a car on a trailer. By the time the sellers finished pulling everything out of the garage and loading it on the trailer and truck bed, there was an additional 3 sets of tires and rims, 3 transmissions, and 6 boxes of miscellaneous TR4A parts. They reported there was not a spare place to load anything else.

Finally, Carol Pennington wants everyone to save the date of March 28th for the Tour de Yoakum that she has been planning for some time. Long time member Val Emrick came out to visit as she always does at the Rudy's location. Thanks to everyone that brought out their cars on an "iffy" weather night . . . Mike and Lucy McPhail, Steve Johnson, Greg West, Bill Waller, Bob Skewis, Richard Ceraldi, Wiley Christal, Warren and Yolanda Cole, and Carol Pennington.

WELCOME ANOTHER MEMBER TO THE SPITFIRE SQUADRON

For the past couple of years, Noel MacDonald has been a “celebrity” judge for our Daily Driver Award in the All British Car Day. Noel is a long-time British car lover, having grown up in the Isles – mostly with Minis. Since coming to the US, he has bought, refurbished and sold a lot of Detroit iron as a hobby. He and his son Evan have also done a nice job on an Alfa Romeo that they can’t let go. Recently, Evan found a 1963 Spitfire MK1 advertised and got Noel to look



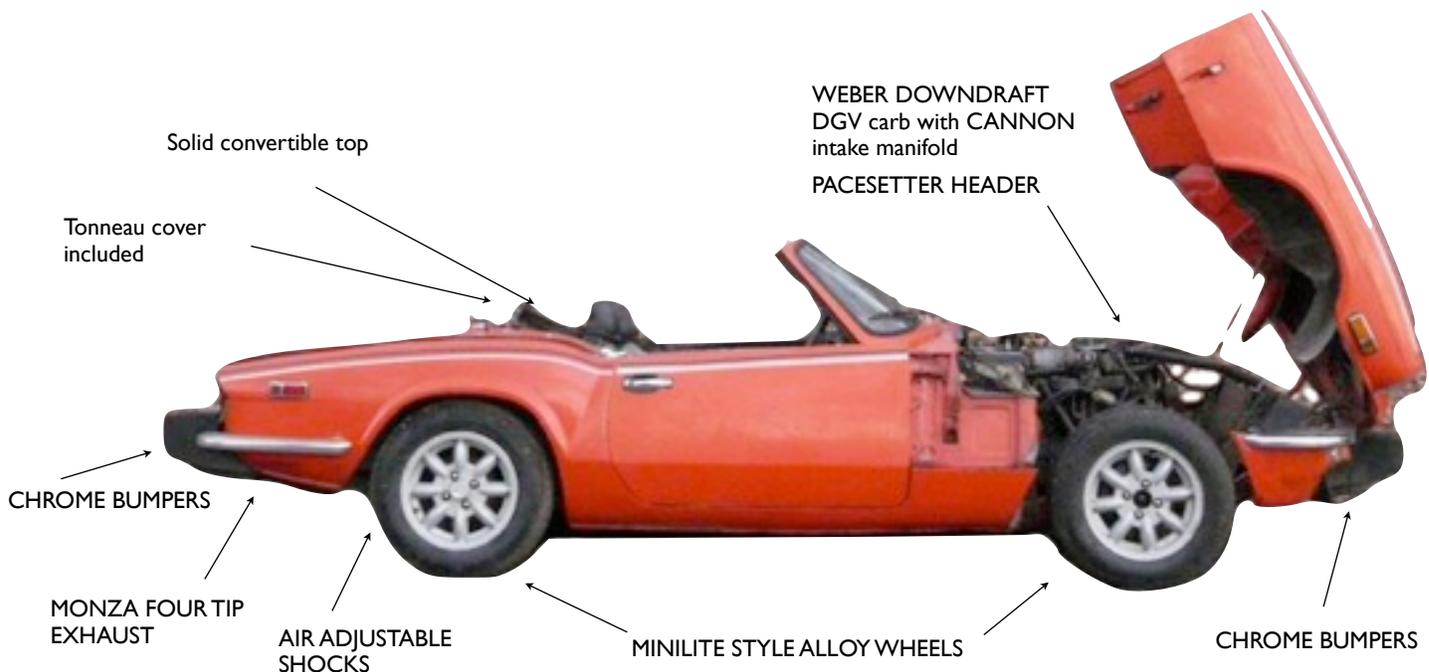
at it with him. They found it to be a fairly sound example and the previous owner had done a lot of work already, so they struck a deal for \$450.00 and the rest is history (or will be). They plan to do the paint job themselves and have the seats re-done locally among other things. It will be fun to watch the progress and we welcome Noel and Evan to the club!

CLASSIFIED

1978 TRIUMPH SPITFIRE FOR SALE \$2400

Runs surprisingly well, transmission shifts nice. Brakes work well. Passes inspection, all lights, wipers and horn function. Minimal rust, solid rockers, solid floor. It's a 20-footer. Lots of dings and hickeys but complete. Originally had the rubber bumpers until chrome bumpers from an earlier car were installed. The alloy wheels are Minilite copies called Minator also made in England. The tires are Kumho in good condition. The paint is old and dull so this could be a good beginner's painting project. The convertible top is solid, no holes or rips with clear windows. Unless I happen to fix it prior to selling, the driver's door opens from the outside handle only, the passenger side only from the inside. The horn honks like it has a frog in its throat. I have no idea how many miles are on this car as the odometer has never worked. It marks its territory with a few drops of oil, doesn't smoke and has good oil pressure. The gauges all work, the dash lights illuminate, the heater blows hot air in any season. The driver's seat needs upholstery repair. It comes with a tonneau cover to cover the cockpit without putting the top up.

Contact Dave Sanborn - 512-293-4823



HCTC 2008 CHRISTMAS PARTY BY ELIZABETH MERICAS

Pizza is a lot like sex. If it is good, it is really good. When it is bad, it's still pretty good. At the Annual HCTC Christmas Party, hosted by Dean and Elizabeth Mericas, the theme was just that. Not good sex...really good gourmet pizzas, like smoked artichoke and eggplant pizza, Yucatecan pie, Tandoori pizza and Thai pizza. Really good desserts were furnished by several club members. Elizabeth still wants to get a copy of the pumpkin bread pudding.

The weather was outstanding and the party often spilled outside or into the Mericas'

garage, which not only is home to a 1965 TR4 and a 1974 Alfa Romeo GTV but to a collection of automobilia and car art.



Besides good food, beer and wine, and a great turnout, there was the annual white elephant Christmas Exchange and a unique wine giveaway. There was also the men's "Short Stick Award". After being the lucky one to draw the short stick, Roger Bolick was presented with a collector's edition Viagra paper cup dispenser. We're sure he has already installed it somewhere prominent in his garage.

And the winner is... Vernon Bland with his 1975 TR6

Bill Waller and I started off with a report on our annual trip to the State Fair show sponsored by the Jaguar Driver's Club of North Texas. This show is always on the premier weekend of the Fair, the weekend of the Texas - Oklahoma football game. Since the game started at 11:00 in the morning and we had to be on the grounds at 7:30, Bill and I had to leave Austin in the dark at 3:45 am. This is not all bad, as the air was cool and the traffic light for the 3-1/2



hour trip. We would have made it on time too, if it weren't for that pesky alternator belt on Bill's Spitfire. Dim lights followed by a dead engine beside the road. We were able to tighten the belt and jump start him and get



going again. We pulled into the fair a little late, but they knew we were coming and waited for us. Let this be a lesson to all of you - it pays to pre-register! The day was great, UT won the game, we got in free to the Fair, were able to take our own drinks and food . . . what more could you want. Vernon Bland took FIRST PLACE and I brought home SECOND PLACE with my 250 in the Triumph class. Leaving the fair at 6:00 and arriving home at 10:30 after a long day . . . priceless!

TOUR DELIGHT - BY MIKE MCPHAIL



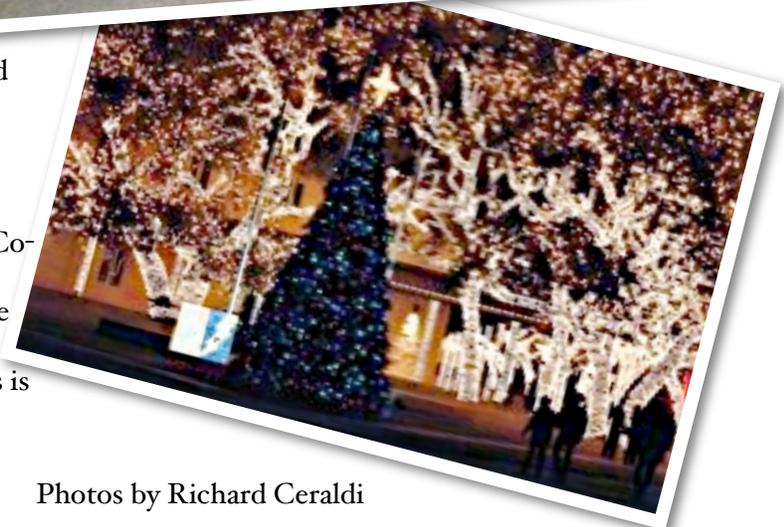
The Hill Country Triumph Club annual Christmas lights tour was a huge success! Twenty-six Triumph enthusiasts participated in this combination of driving, dining and revelry. Our happy clan started the nocturnal journey in Oak Hill, bravely following (pursuing?)

Mike “wrong way” McPhail’s trusty TR3 as it meandered along a route that was clearly not to be found on any map. Somehow, the entourage arrived in Johnson City with all present and accounted for, despite the obvious attempt to lose as many of the faithful followers as possible.

This year’s holiday feast was served at the fine Bed and Breakfast establishment “Chantilly Lace”, which is conveniently located just down the lane from the festively decorated Johnson City court house. The proprietors were patiently awaiting our raucous arrival, as exhaust notes (and fumes) filled the cool night air. Inside, the inn was elegant and comfortable with warmth emanating from the blazing hearth. A sumptuous dinner was enjoyed along with a great deal of hearty fellowship. We would certainly have been reluctant to leave this cozy environment had the lure of those millions of Christmas lights not been so overpowering!

Our glorious Triumphs lined the town square as we walked from the gaily lit court house to the Electric Co-Op building down the street. Here we were met by a forest of mighty oaks, all wrapped in garlands of white lights which illuminated the entire block.

What a fabulous start to the Christmas holiday. This is truly the “season to be jolly”!



Photos by Richard Ceraldi

The Hill Country Triumph Club, the 50th Chapter of the Vintage Triumph Register (VTR), was founded in 1990 to bring together the owners of Triumph automobiles in the Central Texas area surrounding Austin. In 1991, the membership decided to include other British car fans as associates due to lack of other clubs in our area that represent some of the other marques. As owners and lovers of our unique types of cars, we have a special kinship, which draws us together. Membership is open to anyone who is a British car enthusiast, with or without a car. Annual dues are just \$15.00 per family group or address per year. We have dinner meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of each month and at least one other event each month. We encourage you to join and support us, even if you don't drive your car regularly. We also offer technical assistance if needed. One goal of the club is to help its members keep their cars on the road. Please call one of the club officers listed in the newsletter for more information about club benefits and spread the word about our club to others.

The Hill Country Club is a local chapter of the Vintage Triumph Register (VTR)/Triumph Sports Owners Association, which is open to all drivers of Triumph motorcars; a chapter of the Triumph Register of America, exclusively for TR2 through TR4A sports cars; and a chapter of the 6-PACK, dedicated to the enjoyment, preservation, and restoration of the Triumph TR250 and TR6 sports cars. Membership in these national organizations is encouraged. Visit their websites at www.vtr.org, www.triumphregister.com, and www.6-pack.org.

The RAGTOP is published monthly by the Hill Country Triumph Club. Material within may be freely reproduced providing Ragtop and the authors are credited. Any and all newsletter contributions are welcome. Deadline for submissions is the end of each month. Submissions may be sent to: Warren Cole; 8290 FM 1322; Lockhart, TX 78644 or E-mailed to frankwarrencole@gmail.com. Photos in jpeg format are always welcome. Car related classified ads are free to members and will run for three months unless otherwise instructed. Contact editor for other ads.

OFFICERS



President
Steve Johnson
258.5340

stevenjohnson7@sbcglobal.net

Vice-President

Bob Baker
448.0093
bcbaker@austin.rr.com

Treasurer

Earl McGlothlin
292.3387
conniemcg@austin.rr.com

Secretary

Bob Skewis
892.4068
skewistx@att.net

Membership

Nel Mcphail
656.1456
mncphail@austin.rr.com

Ragtop Editor

Warren Cole
921.0939
frankwarrencole@gmail.com

Webmaster

Dan Julien
451.3102
dan.julien@alumni.utexas.net

Membership Application

☐ Name :
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 ☐ City / State : ☐ Zip :
 ☐ Home Phone :
 ☐ Work Phone :
 ☐ E-mail address :
 ☐ Car Make : ☐ Model : ☐ Year : ☐ Color :
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 ☐ Please circle which method you would like the newsletter delivered : E-mail Snail Mail
 ☐ How did you hear about the Hill Country Triumph Club?
 ☐ Please mail application and check payable HCTC to :



Nel McPhail, 1105 N. Canyonwood Dr., Dripping Springs, TX, 78260

THE RAGTOP - JANUARY 2009



This months RAGTOP is brought to you in part by Don Couch.
Don stepped in to help out, being that this is an all volunteer club.
Life gets in the way and from time to time, we all need a helping hand.



Calendar

Jan 18th, 2009

SASCA autocross #1 - AA&T Center

Feb 10th, 2009

HCTC meeting - Location TBA

Feb 14th, 2009

Hill Country Back Roads Tour

Feb 15th, 2009

SPOKES Autocross #1 Location TBA

Feb 20 - 22nd, 2009

CVAR - TWS

March 28th, 2009

Tour de Yoakum, Texas



1105 N. Canyonwood Dr.
Dripping Springs, TX 78620
address change requested

