

# THE RAGTOP

 HILL COUNTRY TRIUMPH CLUB

FEBRUARY 4, 2010

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# WELCOME TO THE CLUB

by STEVE JOHNSON, PRESIDENT



January's Club event was the "Texas Hill Country Historic Tour" held on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. After postponing our tour for a week, we

found a dry spot in the January rain and had a great time letting our Triumphs out for a run. First we started with breakfast at Denney's, then a little touring of the hill country as we all came together at the Central Texas Museum of Automotive History in Rosansky, Texas. I'm talking deep in the heart of Texas here.

The museum was extraordinary. If you didn't make the trip, I would recommend taking the time to take a look when you r in the area. Jaime and Doris Molina and Wiley and Carol Christal did an excellent job on pictures and have shared them with us. Christal's Pictures [Press Here](#) Molina Pictures [Press Here](#)

After our leisurely tour of the Museum, we were on the road again to have a unique **lunch** experience at the FireWheel Café. It's located at the Hyatt Regency Lost



Pines Resort and Spa. There is a three mile drive out to the resort on a very nice winding road reminiscent of the British country side. This would be a great place for a VTR Regional or even the VTR National in a few years.

We had 26 enthusiast attending the lunch. Our band of 12 Sports Cars (11 Triumphs and a BMW Z3 M Series) made the run in stellar condition, as did we all. It was a great day for Triumphs. Let's do it again next month.

## OVERVIEW 2010 CLUB EVENTS

Here's an overview of the events for 2010. It's not etched in stone unless it has a date at the end, so if you have other recommendations, just let me know:

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**2010 Schedule of Events**

• January -	Texas Hill Country Historic Tour	Steve Johnson (1-23)
• February -	Willow City Tour	Dean and Elizabeth Mericas (2-20)
• March -	Marble Falls Spring Run	Terry and Jane Jones (3-20)
• April -	Burnett Air Show	Ralph and Jeffie Herter (4-10)
• April -	<i>South Central VTR Regional</i>	<i>Oklahoma City April 29 – May 1</i>
• May -	Salado Run to Ron Harrison's Shop	Mike McPhail
• June -	Progressive Dinner	Bob and Barbara Kramer
• July -	Fourth of July	Bob Skewis
• August -	Breakfast at Frisco's	Robert and Pam MacKenzie
• September -	Texas All British Car Day Austin	Jim Icenhower
• October -	Rolling Sculpture Car Show	Bill Waller
• October -	<i>VTR National – Jekyll Island</i>	<i>Georgia October 17- 22nd</i>
• November -	Bourne All British Car Day	Bob Baker
• December -	Christmas Party	Dean and Elizabeth Mericas

**February - Willow City Tour (we are doing it again in February)**

The February club event will be the annual "Lucas - Marelli



Willow City Tour" that will be hosted by Dean and Elizabeth Mericas. It's a "mixer" with cars from all the Austin Clubs participating, scheduled for February 20<sup>th</sup>. You should have flyer on the event that was sent out earlier. RSVP by February 12<sup>th</sup> if you would like to participate so that we can get an accurate count. The run will be both rustic Texas and elegant with a view of Enchanted Rock as we dine. Please take a look at the website <http://www.troisestate.net> and sign up today by sending a note to Dean at [dmericas@austin.rr.com](mailto:dmericas@austin.rr.com)

**South Central VTR Regional - 2010**

The Central Oklahoma Vintage Triumph Register (COVTR) is proud to host the 2010 VTR South Central Regional this year in Oklahoma City on April 28<sup>th</sup> thorough May 1<sup>st</sup>.

Historical Route 66 winds through Oklahoma City a short distance from the hotel. Please join us for a variety of driving and social events along this "Mother Road."



Events will include a Funkhana, Gimmick Rallye, Autocross, Concours d'Elegance Car Show, Welcome Party, Silent Auction and Awards Banquet. Also on the schedule are Self-Guided "U Pick" Route 66 Tours,

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breakfast runs and an evening dinner fun run. [CLICK HERE](#) for their website.

### 2010 National Convention Heads to Georgia

The 2010 North American Triumph Challenge will be held on Jekyll Island, Georgia. The convention takes place October 17-22<sup>nd</sup>

Details are coming together quickly and this gathering promises to be one of the most unique and relaxing events the Triumph community has experienced. More information is being added weekly to the <http://www.vtr2010.org/>.

### FEBRUARY CLUB MEETING

The next Hill Country Triumph Club meeting will be held Tuesday, February 9, 7 PM, Rudy's Bar-B-Q, 7709 North FM 620, just north of RR 2222. I hope to see each of you at the meeting. You don't have to drive your Triumph to experience the excitement.

*Steve*

## National News



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Lee Stark  
Tony Brown

**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](http://www.vtr.org), [www.triumphregister.com](http://www.triumphregister.com), and [www.6-pack.org](http://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 emailed to [don@dcphotos.com](mailto:don@dcphotos.com) Car related classified ads are free to members and will run for three months unless otherwise instructed. Contact editor for other ads.

**Membership Application**



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

How on earth did you hear about the Hill Country Triumph Club? \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail application and check payable to HCTC to:  
Nel McPhail, 1105 N. Canyonwood Dr., Dripping Springs, TX 78260

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## RUBY REPORT



Well, I finally got Ruby on the road. I tagged along with the crew to the CenTex Car Museum.

What a great drive down some very nice twisty curvy back roads. The car museum was equally enjoyable and it was great to spend some time with friends I haven't seen all year long...

This months cover is by Richard Ceraldi. Richard answered my "plea" last month for cover photos. I'll plea again here, PLEASE send in photos for consideration for the cover when I send out the monthly call for newsletter submissions. Otherwise there amy very well be yet another picture of a red GT6 no next months cover. Not that Richard I'm sure!

*Don*



## BOB'S YOUR UNCLE



Another year done gone and we had our first meeting of 2010 at the south location of Pok-E-Joe's last month. **El Presidente** reviewed the

highlights of our December "meeting" which was the Christmas Party at County Line. It was a great evening and we were the last ones in the parking lot when we poured out the door after the gift exchange. "**Torf**" **Torfason** reports that Miss Sarah's gum drop tree is the best present she has ever received and will be a centerpiece of Christmases to come!

Steve went on to announce that our January club drive would be to the Centex Museum of Automotive History in Rosanky. He handed out information sheets with full instructions and noted that emails would be sent out with the same information in attachments. The internet continues to be a great source of communication for those not able to make the meetings . . . if your email is not up to date with the club, please contact **Nel McPhail** so we don't lose you!

*Other upcoming events were discussed and it promises to be a busy couple of months ahead:*

- 1) **Dean Mericas** announced a "Lucas-Morelli Hill Country Tour" coming up on February

20<sup>th</sup> to the Trois Estate north of Fredericksburg. He is in negotiations to get us a deal on dinner after an afternoon of driving scenic two-lane roads. Dean's friends in the Alfa Romeo group will be joining us.

- 2) The March event is to be announced, but will be hosted by **Terry and Jane Jones** and will be another hill country drive around Marble Falls.
- 3) April 10<sup>th</sup> will bring us back to the always-worthy Burnet Air Show hosted by **Ralph and Jeffie Herter**.
- 4) The last weekend in April will also bring us back to the South Central Regional VTR (has it been a year already since we hosted last April?). The **Oklahoma City** club will be hosts this year, so spend some time on your cars and get the road ready! Stay tuned for more information.
- 5) Further into the future, **Dean Mericas** says to put October 24<sup>th</sup> on your schedule for the third annual Rolling Sculpture Car Show.

Steve lead a discussion of elections for our regional representative to the VTR national organization. Candidates up for the office are from the Tulsa and Houston clubs and he had done some homework

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that was emailed and passed around. A couple of members that knew both candidates chipped in their two cents and also talked about the importance of supporting the National VTR with your membership.

**Willis Thorstad** reported that he would have driven to the meeting, but he's in the process of rebuilding the front end of his TR6. Having been a judge of TR6's at Marble Falls last year, I can tell you that Willis' 6 is one of the cleanest and mechanically sound undercarriages around. Unlike most of us who rebuild from the top down, Willis started on his back and is working up . . . drop down to the ground sometime and check it out! Thanks to all the members that drove their Triumphs to

the meeting: **Ed and Eva Gowett, Bob Baker, Roger Bolick, Phil McKenzie, Harry Taggart, Steve Johnson and Bob Skewis.** *I'll see you on the road . . .*

# Bob

## MILESTONE REPORT

For those of you that have not heard, **Bob and Barbara Kramer** will soon be first-time grandparents, as their oldest daughter Jennifer is expecting. *Gran and Gramps are justifiably excited.*





**Deadline for RSVP is February 12.**

Dean and Elizabeth Mericas are hosting this tour under the banner of the Hill Country Triumph Club, but are inviting all of their friends in the Austin car hobbyist community to participate.

The tour will start with coffee and a light breakfast at Dean & Elizabeth Mericas' house in Hudson Bend, and then head west through about 100 miles of the best back roads of the Hill Country towards Enchanted Rock, through Round Mountain, Sandy and the spectacular Willow City Loop.

The highlight of the drive will be lunch at the Trois Estate. This re-creation of a Mexican mountain village is complete with a chapel and underground grotto, a museum containing more than 20,000 cap guns and other cowboy gear, a safari room, and a scattered collection of old circus and western memorabilia. The dining room in the main building is both elegant and rustic with a bank of windows overlooking Enchanted Rock and the surrounding area.

**Check out their web site:** <http://www.troisestate.net/> to see what a unique and fun place this will be for us to explore, relax and visit with each other in a beautiful Hill Country setting.

Rebecca Trois, the chef at Trois Estates, has really been wonderful about accommodating our group and keeping the cost reasonable (normally lunch is \$25-30). She came up with a beautiful three course fixed price meal of:

~  
*Salad with breads and dipping oils*  
*Albacore tuna bow tie pasta with fresh basil, tomatoes and a light sauce*  
*Dessert*  
*Coffee and soft drinks*  
~

The price per person for lunch will be \$19.21, which includes taxes and a gratuity. Beer and wine will be available at extra cost.

**A head count is absolutely essential in planning this event.** Please RSVP to Elizabeth at [emericas@austin.rr.com](mailto:emericas@austin.rr.com). **Deadline for RSVP is February 12.**

Details and directions to breakfast will be provided upon receipt of your RSVP.

# Central TX Museum of Automotive History

Photos by Wiley Christal



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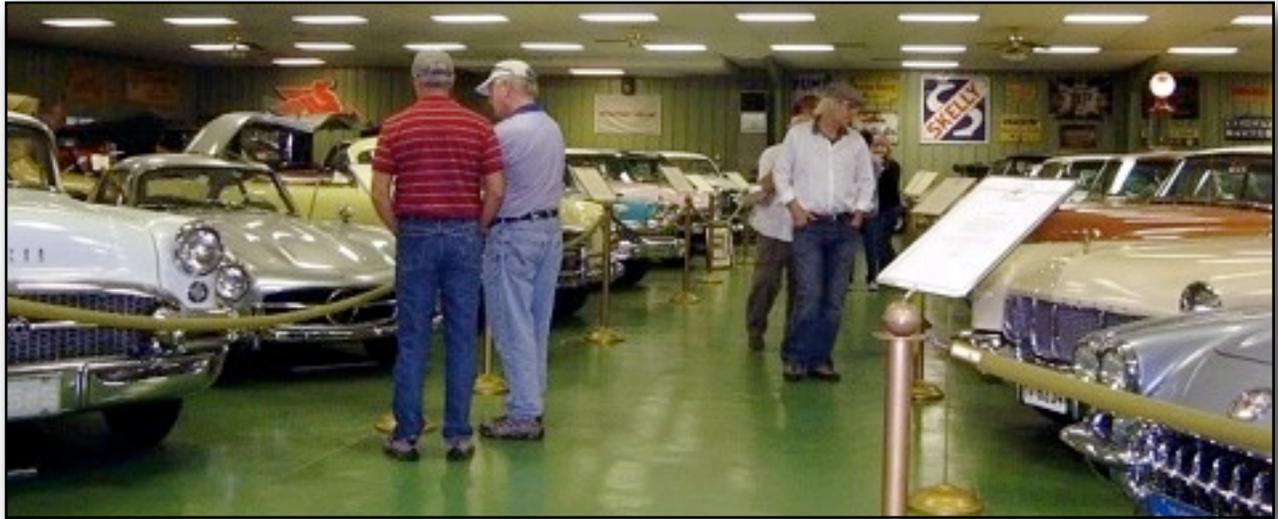


Photos by Jaime Molina



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Get behind this new front and guest-drive the world's greatest performance value at your dealer...don't let it leave you behind!



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# ~~Tool~~ Project of the Month

by Mike McPhail

Last month, you were left with your car all jacked up and the rear brakes in a million pieces! Okay, make sure that you have plenty of cold beer and now, let's get that bad boy back together.

This is the opportune time to clean up that backing plate, which at this point can be easily removed and detailed. You might as well paint the brake drum, too, while you are at it! "Gloss black" engine spray paint works well and dries quickly. "Dull aluminum" paint looks pretty good on the hand brake lever. Don't cheap out... purchase all new parts for the rest of the job. Now that everything is clean and shiny, it is time for reassembly:

1: Place the wheel cylinder into the back plate. New ones are so cheap that it is hardly worth rebuilding the old ones. If you must, then make sure that the bore is clean with no pitting and that the passages for the line and bleeder screw are unobstructed. If the wife is away, take the cylinders into the house and scrub them inside and out with a soapy Scotch-Brite pad in the kitchen sink. After they have been completely dried, use Girling Red brake grease for reassembly. Otherwise, a little brake fluid will work, but be careful not to get it on those freshly painted items.

2: Pass the brake line through the rubber dust cover and connect it to the cylinder. It is always easier to screw the connection into the cylinder while it is loose in its mounting. Sometimes a connector that has

been over tightened will be hard to start because of flaring at its tip. A little bit of sanding or perhaps filing will reduce the end of the connector (not the line!) to its proper size.

3: Place the two smaller retaining clips on the back side of the cylinder with the tabs up. Do this from the lever side. Use a little chassis grease to lube the area. There will still be enough play at this point to allow the hand brake lever to slide into place. So do it!



4: Put a little chassis grease on the large (relatively speaking) retaining plate and slide it between the other two to lock the cylinder in place. It goes on in the opposite direction from the other two, and the notches on the end will engage the tabs on the bottom plate. This is probably easier said than done. Maybe a beer will help.

5: Now the rubber dust cover can be pulled over the hand brake lever and its square

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edge tucked under the larger retaining plate, which stands slightly off the back plate. Some cars have some little pegs on the inside of the back plate with felt spacers to steady the shoes. These are of dubious value, but if the felt is missing, a bit of ¼" fuel line can be cut to take their place.

6: At this point the rehabilitated adjuster assembly should be in place with the adjuster bolt backed out. Go wash those filthy hands, then come back and set the new brake shoes side by side. Carefully position them so that the linings are symmetrical and the square hole that fits over the hand brake lever is where it needs to be. Place the springs on the shoes, with the spring with the straight piece in the middle on the wheel cylinder end. Hold the shoes apart so that the springs don't fall off and set the square hole end over the brake lever and onto the cylinder. Carefully wrestle the other ends into place. I think you will find this method preferable to

placing the springs on after the fact. Make sure the shoes are resting in the slots provided for them and not off to one side. Stand back and see that the shoes are centered...if not, a few taps with a rubber mallet will get things right.

7: If you can still find them, push the two shoe retaining pegs in through the little holes in the back plate and secure them to the shoes with the spring clips. If you hold the peg in place from behind with one hand, you should be able to slide the clip into place (no twisting this time) with the other hand, using no tools. If not, you are a wimp!

8: The brake drum will go on easily now, since you have the adjuster backed off and the shoes on straight. Take care to have the ¼" countersunk screw holes lined up. Put the screws in just to show that you are paying attention to detail.

9: After verifying that the drum turns freely (if not, you are on your own), adjust the brakes up tight. Reconnect the hand brake linkage. Release the hand brake, first, damn it! If the hand brake has too much travel, now is the time to adjust it. Leave the drums adjusted tightly until after the system is bled...next month.

10: Finish six-pack.

*Mike*

BACK ISSUES OF THE **RAGTOP** ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE  
[www.hillcountrytriumphclub.org/HCTC-news.html](http://www.hillcountrytriumphclub.org/HCTC-news.html)

## Bill's TR6

As most of you are aware I am an avid fan of the Triumph Spitfire. I have however after many road trips envied those Triumph owners with six cylinders. I came across a deal in June of last year for a Signal Red 71 TR6. It had a straight body and a fairly good paint job, although the engine was an unknown with the rocker arm in the back seat. Bob, Don & I trailered it to my garage and I started putting the external engine back together. New water pump and hoses, brake master cylinder, fuel pump, rebuild distributor, adjust valves etc... When I was finally ready to spark it off with a new battery and cables it was a no go. I tried in vain for an afternoon retracing ignition work to identify the problem. Finally that little voice (Roger Bolick) came back to me saying "what makes you think you're going to find the problem you created". So I phoned a friend and Don Couch came over, took a quick look and said "you're timing is 180% out. In short order she was purring like a kitten or I should say roaring like a lion. I cleaned up the interior, put on new tires and a front end alignment. I was a very proud new TR6 owner in the parking lot at Pok-e-Joes at the club meeting in November. I couldn't leave well enough alone and decided to rebuild the carbs to smooth out a little stumble in the idle. I was taking her out for a test drive and was amazed at the improvement. I was on my way home six blocks out when it just kind of lost power. I pushed it back to my garage. I will skip forward to the heart

break. A main bearing and rod bearing disintegrated.

I have pulled and dismantled the engine and it is at the machine shop. I intend to write updates as I rebuild with photos. Stay tuned.

*Bill Waller*



# CLASSIFIED

**For Sale: 1980 Triumph TR7 DHC daily driver.**

The car is in good original condition including the paint and is an excellent candidate for a ground up restoration or just drive it as is. Registration and inspection are current. Asking price is \$2500. Please call 512-844-3660 if interested or by email [jjhuser@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jjhuser@sbcglobal.net).

**FOR SALE:**

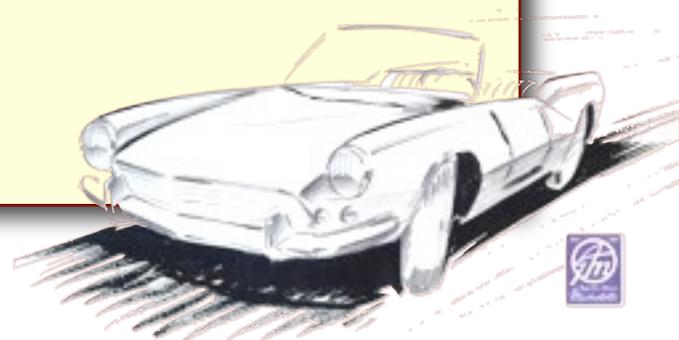
- 1978 SPITFIRE 1500 - fresh paint job - powder blue. ready for reassembly \$2900.00 obo
  - 1969 GT6 needs restoration, paint, interior \$1000.00 obo
  - 1963 TR-4 Restoration in progress, Rebuilt Engine, lots of new parts \$3800.00 obo
- Contact Don Couch for more info (512)-680-3540

**2004 HARLEY DAVIDSON FXDI FOR SALE \$10,000 obo :**

- BATTERY TENDER, CLYMER REPAIR MANUAL
  - CRASH BAR, EXTRA MUFFLERS
  - HIGHWAY PEGS, RACK, FOOT PEGS, GRIPS
  - DUAL SEAT, SISSY BAR w/ EMBLEM
- Contact Don Couch for more info (512)-680-3540

**SPITFIRE PARTS FOR SALE:**

- Have misc. SPITFIRE 1500 parts for sale
  - motors, four speed gearbox, diffs,
  - wiring harness
  - bulbs, bolts and more
- Contact Don Couch for more info (512)-680-3540



# THE RAGTOP - FEBRUARY 2010



## Calendar

**FEB 9th**

HCTC meeting - RUDY'S BBQ

**FEB 20th**

Club Drive - WILLOW CITY TOUR



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



The next Hill Country Triumph Club meeting will be held Tuesday, February 9, 7 PM, Rudy's Bar-B-Q, 7709 North FM 620, just north of RR 2222. Call 250-8002 for more info.