

THE RAGTOP

 HILL COUNTRY TRIUMPH CLUB

JUNE 7, 2010

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WELCOME TO THE CLUB

by STEVE JOHNSON, PRESIDENT

The wild flowers this year have been great, and we've had a couple of club adventures to keep us on the road during May.



We had our share of rain, but it still left us with plenty of time to drive our Triumphs. I hope you were out in yours as much as I was in mine.

The first May event was the 22nd Annual Blanco Classic Car Show. Many thought it was going to rain on May 15th, but the unpredictable weather turned out to be great. Ralph and Jeffie Herter had the only Triumph in the show. Their TR3 didn't win a trophy this year, but there's always next year. Mike and Nel, along with Roger and Tina visited the show, saw the great cars that were there, and kept the Herter's company. They all had a good visit at the Red Bud Café after the show.

The second May event was the "Turn It Into Triumph" Rallye on May 22nd. The Rallye started at the La Quinta in Marble Falls, and took Mike McPhail's "BBQ Run" all the way to Spicewood. They ended the run at "Angel's" for a plate of charity BBQ, showed the cars, and listened to live music, as they took in another experience in the Texas hill country. Look for their write-up in this issue of the Ragtop.



The Hill Country Triumph Club elects officers each June. This year's election will be held at the club meeting Tuesday June 8th. All of our officers have said they will continue for next year, with the exception of your president. I'll be stepping out after two years, and letting someone else have a chance to work with this outstanding Triumph Club. If you would like to help the club by serving in any of the offices that follow, just let me know and I'll put your name on the ballot.

If you can't make the meeting, but want to make sure your vote is counted, just send me a note at stevenjohnson7@sbcglobal.net.

Serving as your club president for the past two years has been a labor of love. We have one of the best Triumph Clubs in the world, and I want to see it stay on top. Thanks to each of you for your contributions and your help. I've gotten to know each of you much better, and look forward to attending as many of the events with you this coming year as possible.

Triumphantly Yours,

Steve

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 emailed to 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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On the cover:
"Asleep at the wheel", Bob Blake at CVAR.
Cover photo by **Paul A. Valentine**

RUBY REPORT



This month's RAGTOP finds me a little "under the weather". I am in the process of building a storage shed in my backyard and have found some new aches and pains.

My right arm goes numb so it's difficult to use a mouse! I think I'll stick to a shutter button than a hammer!

I want to thank all the contributors and a special shout out to Mike McPhail for his continuous contributions of wonderfully informative as well as timely articles, like this months article on the cooling system... just in time for summer.

Don



BOB'S YOUR UNCLE



El Presidente started his last meeting with a door prize drawing. Our two luckiest members won – I wish I could list all the door prizes they have won over the years. Mike McPhail won a shirt and tote bag with our club

logo and Roger Bolick won a tote bag with same. This is just a reminder that you can have our logo on any number of items that can be ordered from Land's End.

A short report was given on the annual Burnet Air Show drive that was hosted by Ralph and Jeffie Herter. A good time was had by all that attended and we thank the hosts for their efforts on our behalf again. Steve went on to relate some of the events our small band of members participated in at the VTR in Oklahoma City. One of the highlights was a demonstration by Pat Barber of Detroit on removal and replacement of a windshield. This may seem simple, but the demonstration took quite awhile and went better with extra hands available. Don't ask any of us in attendance to be resident experts now . . . we were drinking a beer and are therefore exempt. The Autocross was a highlight that everyone enjoyed with a large parking lot and SCCA professionally run, everyone got 5 runs in and were well satisfied (especially with the late start due to the early morning rain). For those of you who were wondering about Art Graves stitches shown in the last Ragtop, he had an accident carrying a large glass jar. We are just thankful that he didn't get cut more seriously, as he was home alone at the time. Get well soon, Art!

Jim Icenhower talked up the "Turn it into a TRIUMPH" rally coming up on May 22nd. Plan is to meet at our favorite Jim's restaurant at the 'Y' in Oak Hill for a caravan to Marble Falls where we will be doing a TSD Rally before going on to Spicewood for the benefit BBQ. Bob Kramer gave a report on the "Sherlock Home Boys" race crew that is building the Rat-6 for the 24 hours of Lemons race this fall in Houston. Since each group racing is doing a theme, and our club is doing the Sherlock thing, a call is going out for costumes that are appropriate – jackets, hats, pipes, etc. If you have something that you think might help out, contact Mr. Kramer. By the way, the pit crew will be known as the Hounds of the Baskervilles. Not sure what they will be wearing!

Finally, the June meeting we will use to elect officers for the coming year. All positions are filled at this time except for the President. No hiding in the bushes . . . we need someone to step forward and serve that has not done it before. We had 12 cars in the parking lot of PokEJoe's . . . thanks to the following for driving their cars and flying the flag: Bob Blake, Dean Mericas, Jim and Karen Icenhower, Don Couch, Mike Jankowski, Philip McKenzie, Mike McPhail driving Harry Taggart's TR6, Dan Julien, Bill Waller, Bob Baker, Steve Johnson and Bob Skewis. Also, thanks to all the ladies that came out to the meeting . . . most we've ever seen at one time! I'll see you on the road . . .

Bob

**CAR'S
CAR'S**



**CAR'S
CAR'S**

LIVE MUSIC

**Christian Rapper
J - Gomez**

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de Cristo**

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THE CANDLE**

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CHICKEN, SAUSAGE
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\$7.00**

**Big (A)
moonwalk**

**DJ.BY
LEE PENA**

Turn It Into Triumph Benefit Drive 5/22/2010

by Jim Icenhower

The May driving event departed from the oft customary meeting place, the Y in Oak Hill, journeying to Marble Falls to commence the rally. Making the maiden club trip for their brown TR-6, Terry and Jane Jones met up at the La Quinta with Mike and Nel McPhail in their white TR-3, Roger Bolick and Tina Logan in his green TR-6 and Karen and Jim Icenhower, with guest Cynthia Tays, in their "other" car. The group then embarked on a two hour jaunt through the beautiful rural hillsides between Marble Falls and Spicewood. This fun follow-the-leader drive, compliments of Mike McPhail, included traversing cattle guards, one lane bridges and running low-water crossings, a photo op at the site of the annual Oatmeal Festival, cruising past a herd of buffalo (nowhere but Texas!), and NOT cruising past a herd of cattle, who decided to cross the road in their own good time between cars! The Icenhowers learned that a Subaru Forester won't keep up with a TR-3 deftly driven by Mike McPhail!



The drive concluded at Angel's Ice House in Spicewood at 12:30 p.m. to participate in the Turn It Into Triumph Benefit. This fundraiser benefited David Wiginton, a young man who was severely injured in a Triumph motorcycle accident in February. When David's wife, Mel, saw the McPhail's beautiful white TR-3 pull into the parking lot, she rushed to take David to the entrance gate to see the cars.

David was thrilled to see the Triumphs arrive! Little did we know that David's very first Matchbox car was a Triumph TR-6! David says he still has it on a shelf at home! David was issued a standing invitation for a cruise in a TR-6 as soon as he is ready! The rally participants were soon joined at the BBQ lunch by Bob and Barbara Kramer et al. The Kramer's son, Andrew and girlfriend, Chelsi, drove the Tahiti blue TR-6 from Volente to Spicewood while Bob, Barbara, their daughter, Sarah, and a very special friend visiting from Connecticut, arrived in their TR-uck!

Everyone enjoyed the yummy BBQ, good live music, and perusal of the many silent auction items in the great open air setting of the Ice House. The Turn It Into Triumph event brought in over \$4,000 to help David and Mel defray medical costs, an expenses associated with making ADA modifications to their home while welcoming their first baby in July. Participating in such an event was a rewarding way to complete a fun-filled day in the Texas Hill Country. David and Mel send their heartfelt thanks!

Jim

Bill's TR6, "Never Ending Story"

Well the engine is in the car. I decided to replace the carpet(why not at this point!) and discovered a little rust surprise needing repair. Here are latest photos of interior improvements. I have been delayed in finishing the engine upgrade by one 4.25" rubber o-ring. This is the o-ring in the spin-on oil adapter, lost somewhere in my garage. I hope to fire it up and get it on the road by the end of June. See you on the road. Bill



~~Tool~~ Project of the Month

by Mike McPhail



Memorial Day weekend usually signals the start of summer in this part of the country, and warm weather can be expected. If you drive a post sixties little British car, then you shouldn't have much trouble with overheating as long as:

- your cooling system is full of 2-to-1 mixture of water and antifreeze
- you have installed a 160 degree thermostat
- and the proper radiator cap
- the fan belt is tightened properly
- all the radiator ductwork and overflow/recovery system is in place

Regarding antifreeze, Texans obviously don't have to worry about the radiator turning into a block of ice, even in January. The anti-corrosion properties are what should concern us most. The 1/3 mixture is fine for preventing rust in our cast iron (aluminum is another story) engines, and

transfers heat noticeably better than a more concentrated mix. Distilled water should be used for best results.

Some engines won't warm up in cold weather with a 160 thermostat, but it is worth the trouble to swap to the cooler stat once hot weather arrives. Thermostats have changed over the years. Many early cars, like the Sprite, AH3000 and TR3 have a bypass in the cylinder head for coolant circulation before the thermostat opens. These engines had a special stat with a sleeve that blocked the bypass after the engine warmed up and the stat opened. These stats are available once again from Moss, but most folks just use the modern version. However, some cooling action will be lost if the bypass is not blocked off. A sleeve (Moss again!) is available to get this done, but a plug in the bypass hose works as well. Most modern thermostats do not have a vent like they did in the old days. I always drill a 3/16 inch hole

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in the flat part of the thermostat to make filling the system easier and prevent pressure build up. Caps have changed, too. Older ones are a little taller, and there are several pressure ratings, so order the correct one for your vehicle. Arbitrarily raising the pressure is a good way to blow a hose or a freeze plug!

Everybody knows the risk of poor charging due to a loose fan belt, but the same thing can happen with the water pump. A new belt will almost certainly stretch and should be checked often.

When you are stuck at a traffic light the engine temperature may rise alarmingly. Some increase is to be expected, but can be minimized if everything is in order. While driving at highway speeds, your engine should be running at its coolest. If the temp jumps only at low speeds, you may have low coolant level, an antiquated fan, or missing/damaged ductwork. An overflow bottle will allow the maximum amount of coolant to be in the radiator. When hot, the excess will overflow, only to be recovered when the engine cools down. This action also allows the excess air in the system to be purged. The ductwork or radiator shroud prevents the hot air in the engine compartment from being pulled around to the front of the radiator when the car is moving slowly. It is very important that only outside air is pulled through the radiator.

Older LBCs may lack some of the more modern engineering found on the 1968+ cars. Lots of these improvements can be retrofitted to these clunkers! For instance, a late 1275cc Sprite cross flow radiator, ductwork and fan will bolt right on an early

car. A TR6 fan can be made to work on a TR3, and its compact overflow bottle will fit just about anything. Aftermarket high performance fans are available (you guessed it, Moss!) for Austin-Healey 3000. A handy fellow can easily fabricate a radiator duct, if a new one is not available. A nice ABS plastic shroud is available for older MGBs. A new radiator is not all that expensive and probably more cost effective than a trip to the radiator shop. Consider losing the crank hole in the TR3 radiator, as that makes it about fifteen percent less effective.

Barring a bad head gasket, or some other dire problem, you should expect to run between 160-190 degrees Fahrenheit, regardless of the outside temperature. As a last resort, Wizard Cooling has modern, all aluminum radiators for many British cars.

In my opinion, electric fans are of little use, unless they are specifically designed as a replacement for the original fan. They also put quite a load on the charging system; therefore, forget about using an electric fan on a car with a generator.

Don't trust that temperature gauge, either. Laser thermometers are reasonably priced (Harbor Freight) and using one for a second opinion may prove that your engine isn't so hot after all! Of course, that's we suspected all along.

Mike



Photo:Paul A. Valentine

Race report for Eagles Canyon last weekend

by Greg Blake

CVAR was at Eagles Canyon last weekend. Dad got there Friday to get some extra seat time in No. 14 (Ex VARA red TR4). This was his first race weekend since taking his student weekend back in September '09. Unfortunately he only got one practice session in before the rain started. He said by the end of his session it was pouring down

rain. He said the car was breaking up over 5000rpm. I got there to clearing skies around 4pm Friday, but they had already called it quits for Friday test and tune. We walked the track and noted several areas where water was leaching through the pavement ...GREAT.

Saturday came and the skies looked like they would let loose at any moment. Luckily we were spared all day, no rain. Bobby Whitehead, Gary Fuqua, and Bob Blake represented FOT in group 7. Gary ran really strong in a group of three, I think he was up with two B sedans. Car looked faster than normal. Bobby was a bit behind

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mixing it up with another B sedan, think it was a 510, having a good time. Dad was way in back in the first race and the car sounded terrible (more latter). Bill Collins(last name??) was there in his recently acquired Spit in group 2. Bill looked really good. Car sounded good too. Joe Hovey was there too but unfortunately his spit was left at home. I think he has been chewing up bearings lately. I ran the TR3 in group 4 on Sat.

The track was still wet for qualifying when I went out for the first time to learn the track. Luckily, Dad and I had noted those wet off camber corners on Friday. They were extremely slick on Sat. There was one, I think it is turn 7 & 8, where you have just scrubbed speed from the 2500' back straight to enter a 90 degree no camber uphill lefthander which transitions to a 90 degree off camber down hill right hander. The tricky part is that the crest of the vertical curve is right were you need to start your turn in for the right hander. You get really light there. To add to the trickery, at the apex of this right hander was one of the worst wet spots on the track. Needless to say, I stayed off the gas through this apex.

I qualified 1st for VA and VB but had two formula coopers and a lola in front of me for the start. I did not intend to qualify up there because I am still a bit nervous on starts. I guess that is a good way to get over that fear. At the start, I let the 356 speedster, Healy 106, MGA, and Alfa pass me. I chased for a lap to see how those wet

sots were doing. Once settled, I passed the MGA and Alfa on lap two. The 106 and the lola were pulling away as I chased the speedster. We were neck and neck on the straights and bumper to bumper in the turns. This went on for two laps, with me yielding at each corner. I found two places on the track where I know I could pass him clean. The exit to turn 2, and out braking him at the end of the back straight. On lap 3, I decided I would pass him at the end of the back straight. I setup to the inside to out brake him and we both flew past his normal braking point, I guess he knew what I was up to. He ended up way too deep into 7 and I though he would need some extra room to recover so yielded again. We got into 8 a little off line and he did a half spin, while he was recovering, I shot past going into 9 and never saw him again. For the next several laps I was closing the gap with the 106 and the lola, but ran out of time. Turns out I set fastest lap time for VA and VB while chasing the 106. In lap two of the second race I ran into the oil pressure issue posted about earlier so I pulled in.

Back to #14. Like I said it did not sound good but I did not get a good opportunity to hear it at full tilt. There was about 10 911s running group 7 this weekend and it is difficult to hear a TR motor over those screamers. In the second group 7 race Dad was again falling back and the car did not look fast, the stars aligned and I heard the motor at the end of one of the straights and noticed what Dad was complaining about, it

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sounded terrible. When he got back to our pit, it was late and the kegs were already tapped. We were pretty thirsty so the car could wait. We hooked up with the rest of the FOT at the kegs and ran into Ed & Josh Barnard. They had been at corner 10 all day. Ed said #14 sounded off. After a few trips to the keg we decided it was time to do some diagnostics, the timing of that decision had nothing to do with the rum cake or floating kegs.

We figured out pretty quick that #14 had been running on three cylinders all day. We eliminated electrical and a compression test yielded good results. Fuel...well #4 was firing just fine. So Ed broke out the carb cleaner to no avail, could not find the leak. We were all a bit baffled at this point and convinced ourselves that there must be something blocking the intake runner to #3. We decided since I was not running in the morning we would have time to pull the carbs in the morning. Once removed, everything looked clear. Carbs went back on. As we were tightening the nuts on the carbs, we noticed that one of the intake

manifold split washers was not compressed. Sure enough a wrench revealed that the nut was finger tight. Fianly got it. We went through all manifold nuts. She fired up and sounded great. A silly intake leak. We then were able to time it better since it was now running A LOT smoother and the timing mark was not jumping around. We also set the mixture a little richer after looking at the plugs. What a difference. This car has never sounded this good. Dad took 11 seconds off his best time from Sat in the first Sunday race. He was going to grid for the second race and a grose jet failed with no spares, the car went on the trailer. What a great weekend. We all had a blast.

Greg

CLASSIFIED

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90% restored, needs to find a loving home, \$4000, 512-786-9570

Allen Monroe

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Mike Schubert

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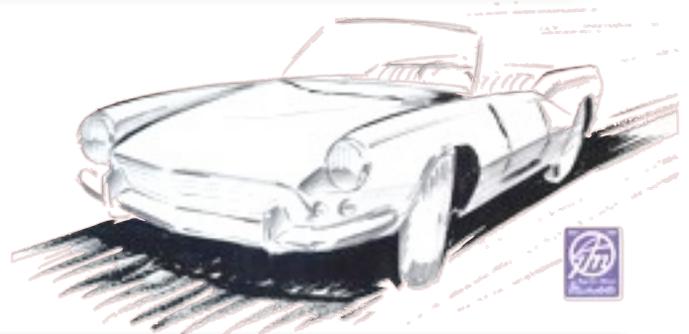
512-252-3767

TR7 FOR SALE:

Late TR7 coupe. 5 spd, factory AC. Safety Orange. Needs clutch master cylinder, tires, fuel system cleaned. Solid and rust free. Will sell to anyone in club as is for \$1400. For details contact Mike Jankowski 512-923-7988

FOR SALE:

- 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



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<http://www.hillcountrytriumphclub.org/newsletters.php>

THE RAGTOP - JUNE 2010



Calendar

June 8th - HCTC meeting - Rudy's BBQ

OCT 24th - Rolling Sculpture Show - Hill Country Galleria



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



The next Hill Country Triumph Club meeting will be held Tuesday, June 8, 7 PM, Rudy's Bar-B-Q, 7709 North FM 620, just north of RR 2222. Call 250-8002 for more info.