

# THE RAGTOP



HILL COUNTRY TRIUMPH CLUB

NOVEMBER 8, 2010

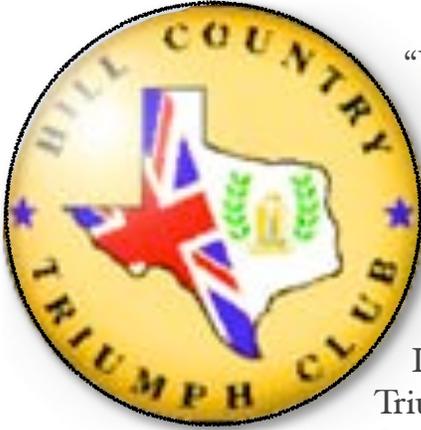


## **In this Issue**

- Gateway to the Hill Country**
- 2010 VTR Nationals**

# THE INSIDE LINE

by *ROBERT MacKENZIE, PRESIDENT*



“You can’t teach an old dog new tricks”

These words came to mind as I stood in my garage earlier this week as

I looked at my two Triumphs. My ’78 Spitfire is still in pieces;

however I am pleased to report that I now have all the pieces and should have it back together and on the road again soon. The ’62 Spitfire racer is sitting forlornly, under its cover, ready to race but having nowhere to go. Fixing the ’78 got pushed down on my ‘to do’ list, as did racing this summer. As much as I love working on and driving my Triumph; I just did not have the time. On a similar note it seemed as if each time there was a race event I wanted to enter in, I had some other more important thing to do.

What is strange about this is that the ’78 Spit is slowly turning into an autocross car and the race car, currently configured for SCCA autocross, will be modified yet again into a vintage racer.

This is where the new tricks and old dogs come in.

When FC921 (the ’62 Spitfire race car) came into my life, I restored it. For the most part, I did not build a new race car from an older car; I took a race car that had been built many years ago and restored it without looking at current rulebooks with an eye on how it would, or would not, comply with the requirements. Today I am looking at it differently. The challenge before me is how to preserve the originality but still have it meet the current safety standards and the often conflicting definition of “original” as stipulated by the various race clubs.

The second challenge is how much to I change in order to improve the cars performance and reliability. Do I install the side-draft Weber, even if it means I have to swap out the pedal-box for a later cable throttle? I think the answer is yes.

As for the ’78 my goal is just to get it back together and on the road; a reasonable trick for that old dog.

*Robert*

**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@dphotos.com](mailto:don@dphotos.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**

Gateway to the Hill Country Party  
Cover photo by Jaime Molina

## RUBY REPORT



Will someone please slow down these months!!! Time is just flying by. It's been a very busy month for me but somehow I found some time to drive Ruby, go to a car show and work on restoring another Spitfire! I want to thank Tom Harrison, Steve Johnson and of course, Mike McPhail for their wonderful contributions to the RAGTOP this month. Great articles from all three. Thanks so much!

*Don*



**British Motoring Club  
New Orleans  
21<sup>th</sup> Annual British Car Day**

**Saturday, March 19, 2011**

**At Delgado Community College  
City Park Campus**

(Orleans Avenue between City Park Ave & Navarre Ave)

*On-Site Registration: 9am to noon*

Show: Noon to 3 pm

Awards at 4 pm

**All British Cars & Bikes Invited  
Spectators Welcome**

(No charge for spectators!)

**For more information contact:**

**Rick Huber (225) 926-6946**

**Karen Murray (504) 236-7509**

**Cathy Greensfelder [cgreensf@cox.net](mailto:cgreensf@cox.net)**

**Visit our web site: [www.bmcno.org](http://www.bmcno.org)**

**Host Hotel: Hampton Inn – Elmwood**

5150 Mounes Avenue, Harahan, LA 70123 (800) 426-7866 / (504) 733-5646

(Ask for special BMCNO \$99 rate, code “BMC”, available until 2/26/2011)

## VTR National by Tom Harrison

The VTR National Meeting in Jekyll Island, GA, was a great experience for Nancy and me. The Jekyll Island Club Hotel was outstanding—one of the most inviting hotels we've ever visited. The setting—the lovely hotel building, the cottages (actually mansions), grounds with Spanish-moss-draped live oak trees, views of the Atlantic Ocean and the Intracoastal Waterway—is pure Old South—genteel and laid back. The ambience of the hotel is private club—begun in 1886, only 22 years after the Civil War—with several excellent restaurants, a neat bakery/sandwich shop, and superb service. A porch with wicker chairs and tables wraps around the back of the hotel, and the pretty views of the courtyard make the porch most inviting. The place became a hotel for the public in the 1940s. On a practical note, parking for TRs was right behind the hotel, and the weather was perfect the entire time—overnight lows around 60 and daytime highs around 82.

The nearby town of Brunswick, GA (pop. 17,000), is pretty with wide boulevards of old homes and a quaint downtown. Nearby are St. Simons Island and Sea Island, both of which are more developed commercially, and therefore, less inviting, than Jekyll Island. While at VTR we attended a British music concert at Glynn Academy in Brunswick, and that was much fun.

After VTR we spent a couple of days in Savannah, GA, 80 miles to the north. To Savannah we drove with a pretty TR250 from

Delaware, and that added a pleasant ending to the Triumph festivities. Savannah is one of the most interesting cities in the United States. The city was founded in 1733 by James Oglethorpe and its historic district is laid out on a grid with 24 tree-covered squares complete with fountains, statues, benches, and even a cemetery.

It was especially fun to be with other members of HCTC—Mike and Nel McPhail, Roger Bolick and Tina Logan, and Art and Brian Graves. Surprisingly, Red River Triumph Club had the most attendees (22) of any club in the country. The 2,400 miles to and from VTR were uneventful mechanically for Blue Bell, our 1965 TR4A, and winning 1st in TR4, TR4A, TR250 Participants' Choice added a nice touch to 10 days of triumphant motoring.

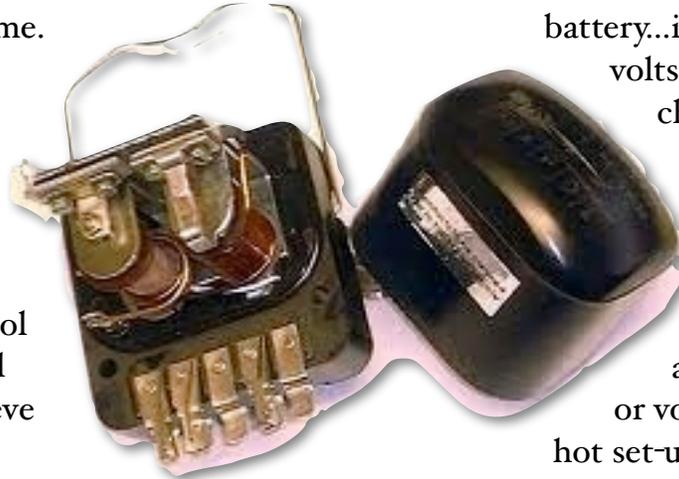
*Tom*

## Project of the Month

by Mike McPhail

Let's talk about some other electrical topics this time. Well, actually I'll talk and you can listen! I pretty much beat the generator subject to death last time, so I will move on to the voltage regulator control box. The repair manual would lead you to believe that these units are adjustable, but that is just a myth. You can tweak the little screws for hours, and never get things right. But if it isn't working you have nothing (much) to lose by looking a little closer. If the battery is not charging and the generator checks okay (see last month's article), the regulator may be suspect.

Before getting too carried away, put the battery on a charger and see if it will take a charge. The state of charge can be checked with a hydrometer. Keep one of these in your tool box. The number of balls that float when the dropper is filled with fluid from the battery will indicate the state of charge. Be sure to rinse the tool thoroughly when finished, as battery acid will make short work of your Levis. Batteries do not like to be discharged, and most will not survive a full discharge more than once. Likewise, old batteries that have been allowed to go dead will rarely take a charge.



Check the voltage of the charged battery...it should be about 12.5 volts. Once you have a fully charged battery installed in the car, start the engine and observe the voltage at the regulator "A" terminal. The reading should be about 13.5 volts at fast idle. An amp meter or volt meter on the dash is the hot set-up. If you do not have one already, consider adding one. The red ignition light will only show that the generator is not charging the battery. Often the system may be over or under charging, without you knowing it. For those of us with an amp meter life is easy. Upon starting the car, the meter will show a heavy charge (about 15 amps) for a short time, then drop back to just a trickle. Turn on the head lights, and the meter should stay in the positive. A volt meter is almost as good, since you can infer that if the voltage is above 13.5 volts, the battery is being charged. Voltmeters that plug into your cigar lighter are an easy way to monitor the system.

Let's say that you have checked for loose connections, have a good battery and generator, but still no charge. Remove the cover on the regulator control box (RB106) and observe the two relays. The relay with the adjustment screw over the contact controls the current to the generator field coils. It may have dirty or burnt contacts. You may wish to measure the gap (to replicate on reassembly),

continued on page 8

continued from page 7

then loosen the lock nut and remove the contact for examination and cleaning. In normal operation, the other relay (the cut-out) will be operated and the regulator relay will be rapidly operating in order to vary the flow of electricity to the field coils. This isn't as obvious as it sounds, and the minimal sparks produced can be better seen in the dark. The maximum current is delivered with the contact closed, so temporarily shorting out the contact may cause the cut-out relay to operate and the generator to charge. If you try this, be sure to have the battery terminal loose, so you can pull it off if (when?) smoke appears!

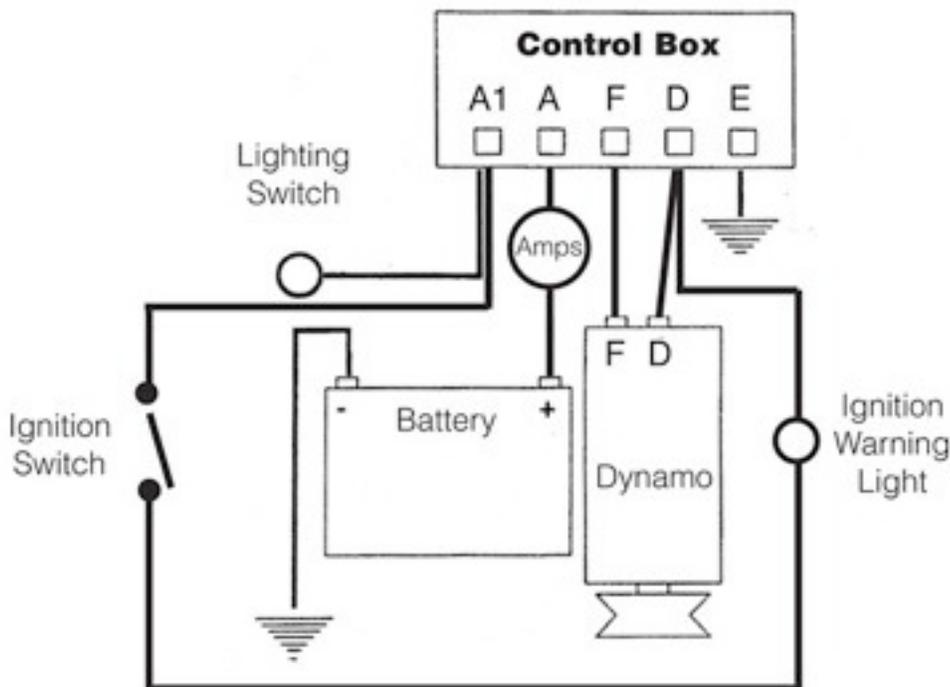
Occasionally, overcharging is the problem and the contacts have welded

themselves together (shorted generator field coil?). Disconnecting the wires from the "D" and "F" terminals (until you can make repairs) will isolate the generator from the system and prevent forest fires.

A few readers will have the three relay RB340 regulator, but the situations are similar. In practicality, new regulators are quite inexpensive, and a replacement is usually the best bet. Keep one in the boot!

*Mike*

### Wiring Diagram for Control Box 37290



# Gateway to the Hill Country Party

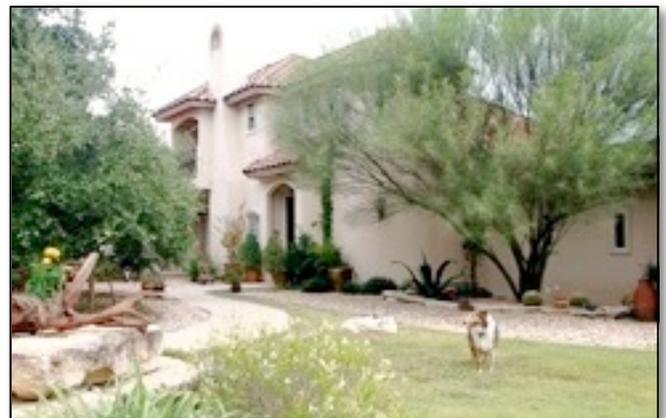
by  
**Steve Johnson**

You'll remember the 1957 Jaguar XJS Coupe won't you?... Or how about the Austin Healey 100-4?... Maybe the La Mans version then?... Or the TR3's... the TR4A Surrey Top possibly... How 'bout the TR6?

Well, they were ready for viewing and fun at the **"Gateway to the Hill Country Party"** on October 9<sup>th</sup> given by our excellent host and hostess Jaime and Doris Molina. The Molina's have carved an oasis into the Texas Hill Country outside Dripping Springs that is awesome. It's called **"Hacienda El Caracol."**

To start out, Mike McPhail had put together a run that took us through winding roads of our beautiful Texas Hill Country before heading to the Molina hideaway. The day was beautiful, and the temperature was just right for this peasant drive.

We arrived at the Molina's home, which is in a beautiful secluded 12 acre spot. The Hacienda had native shade trees, a cool breeze, and a view that we all found extraordinary to say the least. Doris showed us around the house, and then onto their beautiful patio with pool and casita. That's when the view really hits you. You feel like you're away from everything. It's a



piece of Texas most people just yearn for, but few experience.

Lunch was scheduled to start at 2:30 PM, but we didn't wait. As quick as Jaime pulled the skewered beef and bodacious shrimp off the grill, people crowded around, and they disappeared without a trace. Then the plates came out, and we were eating.

continued on page 10

continued from page 9



The food was excellent. Jaime spent most of the day on the grill. He's an excellent cook to say the least. The guests brought salads, desserts and munchies to compliment Jaime's grill work. To accent the food and munchies Mike McPhail made sure we had a keg of beer, and Bill Waller shared some of his personally brewed beer which was great. He's becoming quite an excellent brewer. Roger Bolick took samples of Bill's beer to the Vintage Triumph Regional to enter in their "Brew Swap" contest (and he probably won the event from what I've tasted). I hope Roger made it all the way to Jekyll Island with Bill's beer. It's very good and I'm sure was sampled several times before Roger arrived.

You know, all car enthusiasts are really enjoyable, compatible, people, no matter which sports car they own and drive. It's wonderful to enjoy the cars and the company together. We can talk for days on end about sport, and the cars we all enjoy. I met a lot of new friend that love their

cars, like driving them, and enjoy being together. Our sincere thanks to Jaime and Doris for bringing us all together for a day we'll never forget. Jaime took some great pictures. You'll find them at: <http://picasaweb.google.com/lh/sreDIR?uname=southtexasclubalbums&target=ALBUM&id=5526492339817529825&authkey=Gv1sRgCI6DwaTS-ebAiQE&feat=email> .

Those attending from the Hill Country Triumph Club were:

- Steve & Candy Johnson (TR4A)
- Roger Bolick
- Steve Richards (Jag SKS Coupe)
- Bill & Annette Waller
- Mike, Nel & Lucy McPhail (Healey Lemans 100-4 and TR3)
- Robert and Pam MacKenzie
- Jaime & Doris Molina (Our Host and Hostess Healey 3000)
- Glenn Phillips and friend (TR6)
- Dave Foreman (TR6)

I'm sorry more of our Hill Country Triumphs weren't able to attend this year. There will always be next year. See you then at the Molina's.

Triumphantly,

*Steve*

# CLASSIFIED

**FOR SALE:**

Spif up that Spitfire with a pair of 1972 GT6 High Back Seats. \$150  
Contact Richard @ (512) 413-1172

**1978 SPITFIRE FOR SALE** , orig. paint, new interior & top, headers and weber carb., many new parts . Licensed and inspected. \$ 5750.  
Call Mike @ 210-744-6453.

**FOR SALE:** 74' TR6 for sale? basically a stock looking TR6-very clean

5,500 miles      Mimosa w/ Chestnut interior (paint job approx. 3 years old) rust free  
Strong engine (Ron Harrison just replaced the clutch & a few other items listed below)

- new red (Hella style) horns
- fairly new top (~2 yrs old)
- brake master cylinder (2 yrs old)
- windshield (2 yrs old)
- new clutch slave cyliner
- approx. 30K miles of tread left of Michelin Redlines

asking \$13,200 (\$12,500 w/out the new leather Miata seats)  
Questions, call Jim Wells @ 254-780-1464  
email: [jimanddiana@clearwire.net](mailto:jimanddiana@clearwire.net)

**FOR SALE:** 74 TR6 seats, decent condition black vinyl. \$250

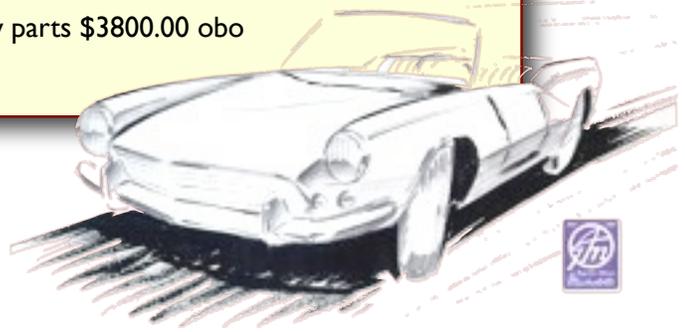
TR6 wheels with worn redlines, good hubcaps and trim rings. Small dents in a couple of the wheels. \$250  
Will sell both for \$450 OBO.      Andy Reed 303.478.5658

**1971 GT6 FOR SALE:**

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

**FOR SALE:**

•1963 TR-4 Restoration in progress, Rebuilt Engine, lots of new parts \$3800.00 obo  
Contact Don Couch for more info (512)-680-3540



# THE RAGTOP - November 2010

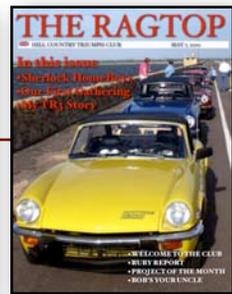
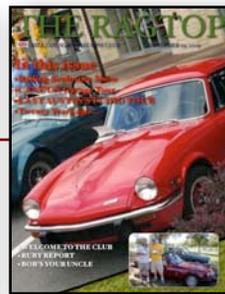


**Calendar**

**Nov 9th - HCTC meeting - Pok-e-jo's BBQ**



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



BACK ISSUES OF THE **RAGTOP** ARE AVAILABLE  
ONLINE

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

The next HCTC meeting will be held Tuesday, November 9, 7 PM, Pok-e-jo's BBQ in the Brodie Oaks shopping center, Northwest corner of South Lamar and Ben White/Capitol of Texas Highway/Loop 360, Phone 512-440-0447.