



# The Ragtop

The Hill Country Triumph Club

August 2011



SCCA Saga Continues, Alternator Swap, First Photo Contest,  
Vendor Comparisons, TX ABCD Link and info, and more!

# The Ragtop



Hill Country Triumph Club

August, 2011

## From your Editor,

Intense. That's the word of this summer. There is no doubt this most likely will be the hottest summer on record for us. At times I just want to drive due north until I escape it. However, it's been in the 90's and very humid here in New England, so not much escaping it.

Also I've happily returned to competitive driving with our club President Robert MacKenzie. It has been intense competition and intense fun, all blanketed by intense heat. I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience so far, even with some sunburn.

Yet there is no letup in sight. TX All British Car Days is just a month away, and there will be quite a bit of activity to finish the preparations. On the participant side, many of us have projects we'll want to finish in time for the show. I know I have many, actually.

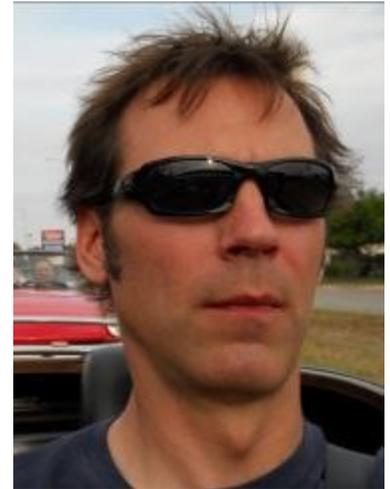
Of course, I don't really mind for the most part. I do enjoy working on Rocketdog, and going to

friend's houses to help them with projects. Sometimes they end up helping me more than I help them.

Even with all the deadlines looming that require my mechanical attention (TXABCD, SCCA Nationals, me getting to work) I really enjoy the effort. Sometimes things don't go according to plan, and then I usually laugh. Especially when I find out whatever calamity I just survived is something everyone else has been through.

There is going to be some seriously intense Triumph and other British car activity these coming weeks in my garage. I'm looking forward to making progress. Will I ever get ahead? Probably. Do I mind that it's a long and sometimes frustrating journey? I'd have it no other way.

*Mike*



Mike



Ellie



Rocketdog

All photos this page by Mike Jankowski

# The Inside Line

August - 2011

## Robert MacKenzie, President

As my flight descended through the clouds over the parched Texas countryside the pilots announcement said the local temperature in Austin was 104 degrees.

It was hot. Again.

As I drove home the outside air temperature indicator only said 102 so I was happy to see that it was cooling off.

This reminded me of an earlier time where the cars I drove were always cold inside.

Cold.

Remember that sensation?

Cold.

The coldest I can recall being, while driving in a car was in my first year of college on Lake Nipissing, in Northern Ontario. The car in question was a 1969 VW Beetle, light blue with a two-speed semi-auto gearbox that I bought from a scary biker guy for \$600. I named it Marsha and it was the perfect car for a college student. In California.

In North Bay where I went to school it was not such a good choice as it had no heater to speak of. It did have this contraption that was intended to take the heat off the exhaust pipes and pump it into the cabin but it felt like a hamster breathing through a straw. On the other hand, no matter how cold it was, Marsha always started.

So here I was, sitting in my VW, with the windows down, in -40 weather on the middle of a frozen lake in January.

I was about to start in my very first auto race. On ice.



Photo by Susan Beth

I had joined a sports car club that auto-crossed in the summer and staged ice races in the winter. The concept was simple; carve out a race course with a bulldozer on the ice, pop a few holes in the ice to flood it the day before and run a few races on Sunday.

Classes were simple, rear or front wheel drive and studded or non-studded tyres.

I recall that I ran about 4 or five events that winter and was soundly beaten each time by a woman in a Datsun 510. What I recall most clearly was that it was cold. Really cold. Club rules stated that you had to run with your windows down. Most days it was at least -20 if not colder. I would get home and have no feeling in my toes for hours. I still don't know how I escaped getting frostbite.

Recently I ran a club autocross event in San Antonio and the temperature was 105.

Somewhere in between there is a happy medium.

As our current heat wave continues, keep cool, keep hydrated and keep driving.

Onward and Upward!



Onward and Upward!

Robert D MacKenzie



# First round photo contest winner: Animals and our cars



Barb Kramer submitted this winning entry for Animals and our cars. Congratulations, Barb!

Ellie and I pored over the pictures submitted for the Animals and our cars category. There were quite a few awesome submissions, and I thank you all. I shall be working the submissions into future issues.

There is still time for Action Shot pics, Night and Light, Black and White, and because I have a few that need their own category, I'm adding a Reflections category. So, next month the theme is Reflections. Get them to me by the end of the month. Show me what creative energy you have lurking. Ellie and I have recused ourselves from the contests, as she said it would look bad if we were to win. So wow us with submissions!

# Bob's Your Uncle

## Bob Skewis

Uncle Bob comes out of retirement . . .

Since our new Secretary, Betina Foreman, was not at the meeting, I took notes again. Our hot summertime has really gotten into full swing and my Spitfire overheated on the way to Rudy's. Lots of good help was available, but it was not until some real damage to wiring that I needed real experienced help . . . thanks Mike McPhail! Anyway, the heat does not seem to have an effect on the intrepid racers of HCTC . . . Robert MacKenzie and Mike Jankowski are off to the Autocross Nationals in Nebraska at the end of August, and there was racing going on in College Station the weekend after the meeting. You have to love the year-round driving opportunities in Texas!



Jim Icenhower, as Chairman of the Texas All British Car Days, let us know that we will be able to pre-register on line this year and that we would be needing volunteers from all clubs to help out. Contact Jim about who is coordinating the volunteers this year and by all means, look at the website: [www.txabcd.org](http://www.txabcd.org)

Dean Mericas is once again organizing the Rolling Sculpture Car Show at the Hill Country Galleria on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. This is a great show you will want to put on your calendar . . . great venue and at least 150 cars of all kinds. It benefits the Bee Cave Library. In addition, Dean wanted us to save the date of November 12<sup>th</sup> for the annual Lucas/Moretti drive with our Italian counterparts. Once again, it will start at Dean and Elizabeth's house with a Pot Luck Breakfast. I'm sure Dean will wow us with another great Hill Country drive!

This was a meeting for new and old friends . . . Tony Korman is a new member that is joining with a 1976 TR6 from Santa Rosa, California. Also, Phil Toups is joining as he bought former member Barry DeCrane's beautiful original white TR6. The Old Friends were represented by HCTC founding member Art Graves and his lovely wife Karen who drove their new Mini down from Tulsa. The Long and Winding Road award for the month goes to member Sam Bass and his wife who visited us once again from the great state of Washington in their TR6. One of these days Sam is going to retire and leave the rain for the dry heat and drought of Texas . . . maybe it will rain by then, who knows?

Despite the heat we want to acknowledge the members that flew the flag and drove to the meeting : Mike Jankowski, Bill Waller, Bob and Barbara Kramer, Dan Julien, Winston DeFord and Jo Warren, Joel and Philip McKenzie, Dean Mericas, Bob Skewis, Tony Korman, Sam Bass, and Don Burkley. I'll see you on the road!

## SCCA Divisional

### Storming Aggieland

By Mike Jankowski

Your Editor and President have continued their crusade towards SCCA Nationals but not without incident...

Bryan/College Station was humid and hot, but at least there was green as far as I could see. A welcome change from the browns of Austin and San Antonio, and there were clouds building overhead. It was going to rain, and I was happy about that.

Robert and I offloaded the car and our gear, I snapped a few pictures, and off we went to the race hotel. Once there we did the usual registration, catching up, and eating. The pool beckoned, and we hurried through the rain so we wouldn't get wet before jumping in. No one said we were sane...

The next morning we rolled out to the old Bryan Airbase, and went through the usual routine: tech, paddock, work assignments, and walking the course. I hurried through walking the course, not really getting my head in the game, and felt generally off kilter. For whatever reason my focus was missing.

With our work assignments done, it was time to run. As previously, John Lieberman in his 1966 Austin Mini led off, followed by Robert. I was to go in the 2nd



The approaching storm in Aggieland...

set of runs, which gave me the advantage of seeing the times Robert and John posted.

The only problem was my driving went from bad to worse, and after 3 runs I was 1.5 seconds behind John who was leading, and Robert was in second. I just couldn't find any speed or form. It was maddening. Robert told me we were there to have fun. I replied in a not so friendly manner...

Finally on my 4th and final run I got my act together and drove the way I was capable of, leaping into the lead by shaving 2.2 seconds off my previous fast time. I was now in the lead by .7 seconds going into the final day.

Another night of Tour de France watching and relaxing by the pool was over all too quickly, and I was jumping in the shower far too early for my liking. With my nerves beginning to act up, I felt like things were getting back to normal.

Once at the old airbase, it was the same routine, except this time I absorbed the course. I was back to crawling on my hands and knees, laying on my stomach, and feeling the pavement. It felt right this time around, and though nervous, it was a good nervous.



The White Wave invades Bryan, TX.

Robert and John went out, and their times were quick. I strapped in, felt good, and had a great first run. So great that I thought the timing made an error because I was 4 seconds faster. To say I was surprised yet thrilled was an understatement.

Finally it was time for our 4th and final runs. John was unable to match my time, so I knew I had won the Divisional Weekend at that moment. Then Robert arrives across the line with a time faster than my fastest time, moving him to 2nd place for the weekend!

High fives and victory salutes were all around in our pit, and then it was time for me to try and wrest fastest time in class back. I had a really good run going through the first sector of the course when disaster struck.

At roughly 55mph, the left front tire blew, causing a momentary knot in my stomach. My day was over, as was my weekend. However, my consolation was that I now had won 2 Divisional weekends in a row, and found out later I won the Southwest Divisional Title.

A week ago Robert, myself, and our friend Danielle Mathias (who drives an MGB, poor misguided soul) went to San Antonio Raceway for a local autocross. All went well and the car was flawless.

Danielle forgot her shoes so had to drive in my shoes, which were very clown shoe like for her. I had a tough time finding grip, but was able to win the day in class. Robert continually improved his times all day, and is getting faster and faster each outing.

The most encouraging thing is that the car never had a mechanical issue, and our continued fettling has made the car much faster. So much so that I was able to beat many more high powered fast machines, like a Nissan GTR, Corvette Z06, etc. Nationals is looking good.



Keeping the sun at bay requires special equipment.



End of tire and end of the day...

## TX All British Car Days

Sep 24 and 25, 2011

<http://www.prismnet.com/~embee/txabcd/index.html>

Don't miss out!!!!

Rally! Catered dinner  
(with ticket)! Show Sunday  
with many classes!



## Pay Your Dues!!!!!!!

Please check the latest spreadsheet sent out by Nel. It says the month and year your dues are due.

### Hint:

If the year listed next to your name isn't 2011, you owe right now. Any quite delinquent members who haven't paid will be dropped from the roster.

Cost is \$15 per year per family. If you don't wish to renew, please notify Nel.

Mail your check made out to HCTC to

Nel McPhail

1105 N Canyonwood Dr

Dripping springs, Tx 78620

512-656-1456

[nmcphail@austin.rr.com](mailto:nmcphail@austin.rr.com)

Next month:

SCCA Nationals Coverage

More tech and vendor tips

More photos

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 [mikeragtopeditor@gmail.com](mailto:mikeragtopeditor@gmail.com) Car related classified ads are free to members and will run for three months unless otherwise instructed. Contact editor for other ads.

## HCTC Officers

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# Membership



# Application

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

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

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

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

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

Email 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 your application and check payable to HCTC to this address:

Nel McPhail, 1105 North Canyonwood Dr

Dripping Springs, TX 78620

# VENDOR OF THE MONTH

## by

### Mike McPhail

Okay, it is only August and I am running out of vendors. How about parts suppliers in general? Everybody knows about Moss and Victoria British. They are probably the two biggest, but are they the best? Let us compare:

**Inventory:** both have large stocks and rarely back-order items. Moss is perhaps more innovative and offers lots of pricey accessories and performance items. They both have handy catalogs and online or telephone ordering. Moss even publishes *British Motoring*, featuring fascinating articles and news about their latest offerings.

**Price:** many items are exactly the same price or vary only slightly, but it is certainly worth checking to get the best deal. Items that can be bought locally or direct from the manufacturer seem to be marked up tremendously. It may be worthwhile to look on Ebay or Amazon for the lowest price. Yet, British car parts are usually a bargain compared to parts for modern cars.

**Shipping:** Moss has two warehouses, but they are on the East and West coasts. Vicky Bee is closer, in Kansas City, so you may expect to get the shipment a little sooner. If you order \$1000 worth of parts from VB the ground shipping is free. A \$600 order from Moss will do the same. You can probably talk Moss into giving you a 10% discount on future purchases for one year if you place and order for \$1000. VB will do the same and continue it as long as you spend at least that much every year. Both companies have a declining scale on shipping so that the most you will pay is thirty-some-odd

dollars. Just avoid ordering something for twenty bucks, or better still, add another part to the total to get the most out of the shipping charge bracket.

**Service:** Moss has a genuine technical department and may be able to provide some useful advice. On their website are videos on a variety of timely British car repair topics. Vicky Bee isn't much help, but they are really sorry when they screw up and will bend over backwards to make things right.

**Quality:** Yeah, right! Just be thankful that new parts are available. Some people think you shouldn't buy rubber parts from VB, but I suspect most of the stuff we get comes from the same suppliers, often in Taiwan. Truth is, most vendors will take back unsatisfactory items with little or no fuss.

Everybody knows about these two great organizations, and our hobby would be dead without them, but what about the other guys? Jaguar owners have to get most of their stuff from companies like XKs Unlimited, Welsh Jaguar, Terry's Jaguar or John's Cars. John's is in Dallas and sells engine conversions (Jag and TR7), along with new, and used parts. Austin-Healey owners have their own secret sellers too, like British Car Specialists in California and Healey Surgeons in Maryland. Triumph owners can rely on The Roadster Factory in Pennsylvania, who also stock parts for MGB. MG owners can call the Bee Hive in South Carolina for those hard to find parts. Mini Mania and their spin-off Spridget Mania have everything for...well, you know. British Parts Northwest is a favorite of everyone and like many of these other smaller companies, specializes in customer service.

Sometimes you have to go right to the source (England) for that special part. SC Parts is practically within walking distance from Gatwick Airport and supplies many of our US retailers. They have all kinds of things in their extensive catalogs that are not normally available on this side of the pond. Denis Welch sells

some wonderful items for Jags and Healeys. Rimmer Brothers is a leading supplier for all Triumph models, and once again stocks parts you won't see from our usual suppliers. Cambridge Motorsport has a nice selection of TR and MG go fast stuff for the boy racer.

What if you need something right now? You don't have to pay for FedEx overnight service from Kalamazoo if you call Saint George Ltd. They are located in nearby San Antonio and can have your part to you pronto. Just call 800-292-5518 or visit them on the web at [www.saintgeorgeltd.com](http://www.saintgeorgeltd.com). Actually, all these vendors are on the web, and their websites are well worth visiting.

So who is our vendor of the month? It has to be Charles Runyan and the gang at The Roadster Factory, who we all love for their pure enthusiasm for British cars and their long standing service to our hobby. Get on their mailing list and you will be amazed at the weekly discounts on selected parts!

Here are the web addresses for some of the aforementioned vendors:

<http://www.bpnorthwest.com/>

<http://www.victoriabritish.com/>

<http://www.the-roadster-factory.com/indexmain.php>

<http://www.mossmotors.com/>

## Alternator Swap

By Mike Jankowski

So we all know our Lucas alternators aren't exactly paragons of electrical output. At best they are slightly above adequate. At worst they are nothing more than fan belt tensioners. Mostly we have very few options.

The first option is to replace a Lucas alternator with a Lucas alternator. Even an upgraded higher output Lucas alternator has one glaring deficiency: it's still a Lucas alternator. At least you can take solace in the fact you'll maintain original looks and "performance" with a Lucas unit.

The next option has proven to be a very popular one: the Delco alternator conversion. With about \$50 worth of parts, belts, brackets, and alternator, your British machine can have GM output and reliability in an afternoon. I love the simplicity of the conversion, and that any parts store has whatever you need anywhere in the country. The downside is I never have really liked the appearance of this conversion, which is why I've held off on implementing it.

Imagine my delight when I found a third option. Of all things, Bosch makes a direct drop in replacement alternator with 55 amps of output. The Bosch part # is 13107. With a bit of detective work I found several vendors who stocked it.

I went with Rock Auto, as the alternator includes a fan and pulley from them. Also, the price with shipping is under \$60.00 via FedEx. This part fits my 1978 Spitfire 1500, 1971 MGB, and most likely other British iron from the 70's. I'll be installing it upon my return from New England.

Here is the direct link to the item page:

<http://bit.ly/oO2V6a>

## The Fourth Annual Bee Caves Rolling Sculpture Car Show

The **FOURTH ANNUAL HILL COUNTRY ROLLING SCULPTURE CAR SHOW** will return to the Hill Country Galleria in Bee Cave, TX on Sunday October 23rd to celebrate all aspects of the car hobby. The entire length of Hill Country Blvd. will be reserved for collector cars, antiques, modern classics, exotics, muscle cars, street rods, foreign sports cars and art cars parked on display for the public. The focus is on fun and a common passion for everything automotive. Awards will be given by the show's sponsors according to themes they've selected. Last year's trophies included the "Car We'd Like to See in Our Driveway," the "Best Maintained Car," "Best Sports Car", and the "Editor's Choice." Recipients included Dave and Betina Foreman's TR6 (Best Sports Car) and Phil and Dorothee Auldridge's Hudson Hornet (Founders' Choice). Details and online registration are at:



[www.RollingSculptureCarShow.com](http://www.RollingSculptureCarShow.com)

# HCTC Classifieds

It's time for HTC members to rediscover Art's yard before American Hoarders does. He has, 2 Spridgets, 3 Spitfires, 3 Triumph Heralds, Singers, Humbers, XKEs, a TR6, a TR3 and More. There are huge piles, (actually small barns), of extra parts. It's time that Art admits that there are three times more projects than he will ever finish or drive. About half the cars need new homes. Some of these autos are in terrible to horrid condition and can scare the wrench out of your hand to look at, and some could be your dream car with a little love and elbow grease. Reasonable offers are going to be accepted from members that might want to buy a project.

Please contact Art Schoenig at [artschoenigco@sbcglobal.net](mailto:artschoenigco@sbcglobal.net) for an appointment.

## FOR SALE:

I would like to sell a -74 TR6 long block, partially disassembled \$175.00

I am also looking for a 4 prong square Hazard switch, for a 71/72 TR6

Ben Skoldeberg

e-mail or cell 512 750 4230

[ben@txsunandshade.com](mailto:ben@txsunandshade.com)

## 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

## FOR SALE:

Spif up that Spitfire with a pair of 1972 GT6 High Back Seats. \$150

Contact Richard @ (512) 413-11

## 1971 GT6 FOR SALE:

90% restored, needs to find a loving home, \$4000,

Allen Monroe 512-786-9570

FOR SALE: 74' TR6 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 cylinder •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

1978 SPITFIRE CONVERTIBLE FOR SALE - \$4750. (San Antonio)

\*\*\*\*Price Reduced(Was \$5750.)\*\*\*\*New upholstery and c/v top.

4spd.,no rust,orig. brown paint .Rebuilt weber carb.,headers.

New plugs,cap,rotor,back brakes,belt,hose and u-joint.

Licensed and inspected.94000 miles.Excellent investment,

Call Mike @210-744-6453 for more details and pictures.

FOR SALE: TR3 With reluctance, Anndel is putting her TR3 on the market. This was a complete ground up restoration, overdrive transmission.

Andy Home 713-975-0098 Cell 832-372-9804

1980 Triumph TR7: 61,000 miles, new top, new tonneau, Crane electronic ignition, Crane coil, manual choke, electric fuel pump, electric fan with adjustable thermostat, all gauges work (even the clock),

halogen headlights, workshop manual, car cover, licensed and insured, good tires. Super reliable!  
\$5500.

If you desire pictures, or have other questions, please contact me.

Rick Jankowski

(843) 705-7243

**FOR SALE:**

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

As I was cleaning my basement, I came across four perfect vintage pannasport rims I bought for the 1976 Spitfire. ( they are period correct and beautiful ). Also, I have other parts from that car. Here is a list.

Two chrome euro front bumpers, both original completely redone seats, wiring harness, all lights, all gauges, both completely repainted( in white) perfect doors, perfect redone bonnet, brand new gas tank, sporty English steering wheel with adapter, original steering wheel, new carpet, one extra 5th speed overdrive adapter to tranny, boot, the perfect original soft dash pad, 2 hard tops, rear euro bumper, front and rear original US bumpers, period correct radios -two, wiring diagram for car laminated, ragtop & frame both perfect door mirrors perfect in aluminum, original map light and perfect replacement, Headers, muffler and pipes from header to exhaust, header tape, head lights, body rubber and seals, rear view mirror, and etc.

You get the idea! I have my cost for all the replacements. I'll sell to a club member before I list them on Ebay if you so desire.  
Thanks, Edward

egordon1@austin.rr.com

Car related classified ads are free to Members and will run for three months unless otherwise instructed. Non-Members ads are \$5.00

Contact editor for other ads.

**Don't forget, back issues of The Ragtop  
are available on our website:**

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

