

# The Ragtop



January 2014

## Hill Country Triumphs

By Steve Johnson



**H**appy New Year. Lets start the new year with a celebration. Elizabeth and Dean Mericas are having a party on Saturday, January 11<sup>th</sup> so

the club can bring in the New Year with a bang. It's a costume party, so all participants should plan to wear attire appropriate for the year of their sports car.

What party would be complete without our favorite foods? Please plan to bring your preferred hors d'oeuvre for the guests to sample. The party will start at 6:30 PM. Elizabeth and Dean have included the party invitation and directions to their home in this *Ragtop*.

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

### In This Issue

Hill Country Triumphs by Steve Johnson.....Page 1

Happy Hour Party Invitation, Dean and Elizabeth Mericas .....Page 3

Race Report, December 2013 by Bob Kramer.....Page 5

VTR National Convention, Pt. 3 by Mike McPhail.....Page 8

Cruisin' the Coast — in a Stag by Peter Weber.....Page 9

Two Weeks before Christmas by Mike McPhail.....Page 11

From the Editor.....Page 14

Upcoming Events.....Page 20

This party will replace our normal second Tuesday club meeting that was scheduled for January 14<sup>th</sup>.

## Tour De-lites — December 10<sup>th</sup>

For the December club meeting on December 10<sup>th</sup>, Mike and Nel McPhail took a number of club members on a “Tour De-lites” of the Johnson City holiday lights that included dinner at the Pecan Street Brewing. Mike and Nel always take the club on this yearly tour and it’s always a wonderful time in the Texas hill country. I don’t know what we would do without Mike and Nel and their dedication. Thank you both.

## 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Rallye to Luckenbach — January 18<sup>th</sup>

Mike McPhail is also leading our second event of the year. It’s time for the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Rallye to Luckenbach put on by the San Antonio Jaguar Club. This is a Time-Speed-Distance Rallye that Mike and Roger Bolick have won in the recent past. It’s scheduled for January 18<sup>th</sup> this year and will start at the El Chaparral Mexican Restaurant in Helotes Texas. Please put this one on your calendar now. Mike will have more details as we are closer to the event.

## 2014 VTR National Convention — September 9-14

The Vintage Triumph Register and Triumph Club of the Carolinas will be hosting the 2014 VTR National Convention in Dobson, NC and surrounding areas – September 9-14, 2014. It has been 20 years since the TCOC hosted this convention. Their theme is “Back to the Blue Ridge.” Enjoy the following video for a taste of what will be available [www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6KbptrNRt0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6KbptrNRt0).



Be sure to check [www.vtr2014.com](http://www.vtr2014.com) periodically for additional detail.

## 2014 VTR Regional in Kansas City — April 27-30, 2014

The Kansas City Triumphs Club is making steady progress on the Regional in April. For example they have added a participant’s choice class to the show for “Other British.” Over 30 people and 15 cars registered with 6 months left before the event.



Take a look at their website for more details [www.kansascitytriumphs.com](http://www.kansascitytriumphs.com).

Would you please let me know if you are tentatively planning to go to the 2014 regional? The Kansas City Triumph club need a tentative count now for planning. Just send me a note at [stevenjohnson7@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stevenjohnson7@sbcglobal.net) if you think you will attend. Thanks in advance.

## Kastner Cup 2014 — May 16-18

The Kastner Cup this year is called “The Battle of Eagles Canyon” and will be held May 16<sup>th</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup> in Eagles Canyon just outside Fort Worth close to Decatur, Texas where you’ll find hotels. Bob Kramer is our contact for the event and has added more information to this copy of the Ragtop. Better add this one to your calendar now so you can get properly prepared for the event.

## Next Club Meeting

We won’t have our regular club meeting on January 14<sup>th</sup> this year. Instead we’ll have our New Year’s party Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>. Elizabeth and Dean Mericas have added the party invitation and a map to this Ragtop.

I'd like to see each of you at the party, and please drive your Triumph if possible. It's a great opportunity to get an evening of club fun and TR Time too.

Triumphantly,

Steve

Steve Johnson  
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[www.hillcountrytriumphclub.org](http://www.hillcountrytriumphclub.org)



**HCTC CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO  
A HAPPY NEW YEAR-HAPPY HOUR PARTY  
JANUARY 11, 2014**

This year, we will be having a "holiday" party in January instead of December. You might say, a Belated Happy New Year party. It will be held at the home of Dean and Elizabeth Mericas. Elizabeth is calling the event: Happy Hour with Snazzy Finger Foods. Members will be asked to bring a favorite hors d'oeuvre.

There will not be a white elephant gift exchange.

Instead all members need to come dressed in the fashion attire of the era of their car, which probably means a bunch of us will be dressed like old hippies or nerds in plaid jackets. You take your pick. An award will go to the best dressed. (I can hear some of you grumbling right now. Just get into the spirit of whatever year your car was born and run with it.) You're getting plenty of time to work on your costume, so have fun with it. (Check out Goodwill and Second Hand Stores, especially downtown or on Burnet Street.)

I may have a few other fun things up my tie-dyed sleeve, however If anyone wants to help me with other ideas, please drop me a note at [emericas@austin.rr.com](mailto:emericas@austin.rr.com) or call me at 512-291-6775. -Elizabeth Mericas

\* \* \* \*

What: Happy Hour with Snazzy Finger Foods  
When: January 11, 2014  
Time: 6:30 p.m.  
Where: Home of Dean and Elizabeth Mericas  
16904 Upper Woods Cove  
Austin, TX 78734



## HCTC Happy Hour Party 2014.

**No holiday party this year. Instead, we'll celebrate 2014 with a fun theme (see below).**

Hosted by Dean and Elizabeth Mericas

Date: Saturday, January 11, 2014  
 Time: 6:30 p.m.  
 Place: 16904 Upper Woods Cove – Austin 78734  
 Phone: Dean/Elizabeth Mericas: 512.291.6775

**Attire: Dress in period clothing of the year your car was built.**

**Win an award for the coolest attire!**

**Owners: Respectable, on the surface**

**Food: Bring your best appetizer/finger food (please no chips & dips)**

**\*Desserts: Requesting Volunteers for Desserts (Call Elizabeth)**

**Beverages: BYOB**

**Directions:**

No matter what direction you are coming from, you will need to get to RR 620. We live near Lakeway in Hudson Bend, a peninsula that juts out into Lake Travis. Hudson Bend is south of the Marshall Ford dam. We live near the tip of it, off the road that takes you to Carlos N' Charlies.

Going south on 620: Shortly after you pass the Marshall Ford dam on your right (you can't miss it), get into the right-hand lane. At the first traffic light after the dam, you will take a right onto Hudson Bend Road.

Going north on 620: Take a left onto Hudson Bend Road (red light). A huge FIREWORKS store will be on your right at the traffic light. Hudson Bend Road is the first street after the restaurant *Hudson's on the Bend* (red picnic benches in front of restaurant).

Continue up Hudson Bend Road, pass the marina supply stores, junky storage stuff and Hacienda RV Park. You will pass a pool company on your right and immediately come to a "Y" of sorts in the road. There's a tendency to go straight. Don't. There will be a sign directing you left to Hiline Road/Rocky Ridge. Go left. You will pass two houses on your right, then take a quick right onto Hiline Road. Huge electrical towers run along Hiline Road.

Continue on Hiline Road. Take a left at Trail of the Woods. (The Entrance is called Woods on Lake Travis.)

Take your second left onto Upper Woods Cove, a small cul-de-sac. We are the first house on the left, a terra-cotta stone/stucco house with a metal roof. On street parking and driveway.

**BRING A DAZZLING HORS D'OEUVRE/FINGER FOOD. PLEASE-NO CHIPS AND DIP....EXCEPT FOR DAVE & BETINA!**

**\*PLEASE CALL ELIZABETH OR EMAIL IF YOU ARE GOING TO BRING A DESSERT. Ph. 512.291.6775 or [emericas@austin.rr.com](mailto:emericas@austin.rr.com)**

# Race Report

## December 2013

By Bob Kramer

I used to write regular reports for the Ragtop about how much fun I was having racing my Triumph sports car. I didn't report on every race so I often began my report with some mention of how long it had been since my last report. Well this time it has been a really long time since my last report. I started my Triumph racing way back in 1996 as the lone TR3 in CVAR when I bought that car from HCTC member Al Hughes. In 2000 I sold that TR3 and bought a TR4, and we doubled the number of vintage Triumphs racing in Texas. Since that time the group we call the TxFOt, the TX Friends of Triumph, has continued expanding. In the last few years we have grown to the point that we can field a dozen Triumphs at a CVAR event if all the cars and owners can get together at the same time. With all these other racers to share their exploits I've been happy to sit back and read.

Like most stories there is more to it than just that. The truth is I was getting bored with vintage racing. I've never had a lot of time to devote to race car "development" and racing while putting three kids through college meant that paying others to do so was out of the question. The quest for faster and faster lap times was never my motivation. I like vintage racing because we race to rules that say you can only build a car up to a point in time in the rules. We are tied to the 1972 SCCA rules which effec-

tively save us money because there is only so much you can do and stay legal. Done right, this means that a bunch of guys are out there is similarly prepared cars dicing it up, and to me that is where the fun is in racing. But after a bunch of years behind the wheel and turning wrenches I had pretty much done what I was going to be able to do. I knew the tracks and sticking to the rules my car wasn't going to get any faster. Driving the same old tracks against the same competitors took its toll on my motivation. Additionally, some time back CVAR had moved the D Production cars like my TR4A into Group 7 with the Porsche 911's, B-Sedan 2002's, Datsun 510's and Lotus 7's. I could almost keep up with the middle of that group, but it was tough on both me and my car to be racing as hard as I could only to lose a few seconds a lap to the pack. On good days there were some 911's that I could race with and a Twin cam Alfa in my class, but too many times I was out there all alone, and that's not racing, it's just driving fast.

It's been a number of years since I recorded my best laps at TWS. I'll remember it forever because weather conditions were perfect for generating horsepower and I had new tires. I was hitting some pretty good lap times, even crossing into the 2:04's. In the end I wore a brand new right front tire down to the cords trying in vain to catch a faster car in the season ending "pursuit" race, where the cars were gridded in reverse order based on our best lap time for the weekend. We were started at intervals that would have us all crossing the finish line together if we could match that best lap eight times in a row! That race opened my eyes to how hard I was being on my car while ruining new tires that cost \$195.00 each. I decided that keeping the car in one piece and saving money on tires was more important than passing a black Alfa or Tangerine 914-6 that were built to a higher spec. With my motivation waning I haven't done much to the car in recent years other than routine oil changes.



Start of race at Texas World Speedway



Pace lap one.



Pace lap two.



Lap one, turn two.



Lap one, coming into turn three.

Things have been looking up this year. CVAR relented and let the D Production cars run in Group 2 against the MGB's, Fiats and Sprites. It was great getting all the Triumphs on the track together and we even held our own little All Triumph race in September by holding back at the start so that we could all cross together on the second lap. Greg Blake and I fought each other hard. I got lucky and picked up a set of used 205-50-15's Toyo RA1's from Jim Lee, a TR4 racer from Corpus and made a go of it. The lower profile transformed my tired engine and racing with Greg got me motivated. It is a lot more fun racing with wheel to wheel action than it is to just drive around. After that September CVAR event I ran COTA with a few other Texas Triumphs. I had a good time but it was more of a festival than it was racing. Andrew and I got to share my car in the hour long endure, although he had to spend some of his seat time parked at a corner station after an Elva Courier did a flip and required extraction and a helicopter landing on track. He was fine and an ambulance ride to the hospital would have sufficed but he got the full F1 treatment nonetheless. We were placed in the SVRA Group 3, which is a gaggle of unbelievably fast cars led by a bunch of 283 Chevy powered Specials and a pa-

rade of over-restored, supercar performance, and aggressively driven Porsche 356's. They were impressive on the track and come up in the mirrors quite rapidly. The old TR4A developed a miss, caused by a bad electrical connection bringing, somewhat sporadically, power to the points and plugs. It was easy to figure out once I got home! All said and done, with the number of cars on the track and with my goal being just to have fun and be a part of the festival, I was happy just to finish all the laps I was allowed.

CVAR made changes to its schedule this fall to work around the big COTA event. They bumped the normal November date for the Fall festival to December trying to avoid poor turnout due to the COTA conflict. The thinking was to space our event far enough away to make room in the budget, or plans, or fix your car, from COTA. Whatever the plan was it didn't work. We had a poor December turnout for the "Fall Festival", some 79 cars. That made our eight Triumphs in attendance a full 10% of the total registrations. Add to that Duncan Charlton's TR4 powered Morgan and we were a force to be reckoned with. Normally low participation equals boring racing, but not this time. We had two fast Spitfires in the Joe Hovey and Bill Collins machines, that very fast sil-

ver bullet TR3 belonging to Greg Blake, and five TR4/4A's, and in a change from the norm only three of them wore red. Jim Cox, the proprietor of the Branson Auction, auction brought down his black TR4 down from Missouri. John Frymark countered with his clean, white TR4A. Jim Lee's son Phillip and Bob Blake both piloted red TR4's, at least for a little while and my red 4A filled out the pack. We had high expectations for the racing and they were met.

It had rained Friday afternoon and we awoke to a cold, wet track on Saturday. Qualifying was a little tempered but after Jim Cox passed me a couple of laps in I followed him around to see how he drove the track. As he picked up the pace I was expecting him to spin in the wet conditions but he didn't and we both qualified well picking up fourth and fifth. Jim had come early and completed the test day on Friday to get used to the track. His car is equipped SVRA style with dual Weber's and that reportedly give better high end HP for down the straights. John Frymark came to CVAR from Southern California where they run dual Weber's with VARA. He missed the Friday practice and turned in his first laps on TWS during the cold and wet qualifying session keeping his fast car towards the back, for now. From my perspective both Jim and John

were faster down the straight than me, but so was Greg, so it is not all Weber's.

As for the rest of the Triumphs, Bill Collins had qualified his Spitfire third, just ahead of me on the start and the Triumphs of Greg, Bill, Joe and John had all qualified right behind us. Phillip Lee was struggling with a clogged fuel line and Bob Blake had brakes locking up. Neither would have much fun on track. The racing that took place the rest of the day was spirited and tremendous fun. Most of us had GoPro's running to document the passing back and forth that took place. The morning race was the most fun that I have had in a long time. My car would lose ground on the straights but I was able to catch up and often pass again in some of the turns. Video

snippets show a variety of Triumphs and other nondescript cars pulling up alongside, back and forth, time and again. All the drivers came in with huge grins.

Sunday was much the same. We pulled off another Triumph race by making sure we started at the back and then racing each other. John Frymark had learned the track and this point the two of us spent a lot of time chasing each other in our IRS cars. Greg was the fastest this weekend and he worked his way to the front of most races including this one. The last race on Sunday was a Pursuit race. They gridded us in reverse order based on fastest lap times and then held us the equivalent of 8 lap time differences so that we could chase down all the slower cars in front of us. This format

gives a well driven slower car a chance at the win, and sure enough an MGA took the flag. Jim Cox came in fourth with me on his tail for fifth. Greg Blake put down some really fast laps, fastest being a 2:06.5, which is a really fast lap in a TR.

Now that it is over the race has come to be known as the Cold Tire Classic, and classic it was. I can't wait to get all the Triumphs back together in February. I've heard that we may have 2 or 3 new racers for the Driving School. We will be putting on some shows worthy of a trip to TWS or more importantly, the Kastner Cup next May 17-18 at Eagles Canyon Raceway near Decatur, TX. With over 30 Triumphs expected this might be something to put on your calendar.



Row one: Lap one, turns three, four, and five.

Row two: Turn seven - catching John Frymark, and John Frymark passing Bob on front straight.

Row three: Bill Collins outbraking Bob in carousel. Wild wheel camber!

# Hill Country Triumph Club on Tour VTR National Convention 2013

## Part Three

By Mike McPhail



### **DAY TEN: THE LONG ROAD HOME San Rafael to Palm Springs 500 miles**

**S**unday morning, Art and I were relieved to find Roger, Tina and Bill safely tucked in their beds. They had made a full day of touring San Francisco, but were stirring soon after dawn. They would be taking the direct route to Palm Springs, while the dynamic duo headed across the Golden Gate Bridge into San Francisco and along the coast. Jim took the interstate, like the others, but at his own pace.

The traffic was unusually light, and we were on Route 1 in no time. The detour was certainly worthwhile, and over one hundred delightful miles was covered before we finally headed west, just after Santa Cruz.

IH 5 through the central valley goes on seemingly forever through the semi-arid middle of the state. Not much to see except a lone TR with Texas plates; none other than Ed Gowett!

It became apparent that our fellow adventurers were only about 45 minutes ahead of us when the call came from Bakersfield that Bill's new engine had developed problems. Roger was already on the case and it was determined

that U-Haul was in Bill's future. Good thing Roger brought his Dodge Ram Hemi!

It was still a long way to Palm Springs, so we left them to it. Traffic really picked up as we climbed the hills approaching Los Angeles. I lost Art when the TomTom directed me downtown...Art knew better, took the loop and was thirty minutes ahead of me by the time I reached the motel.

Jim made even better time, and unlike me, got to see the place in the daylight. The TRuck was nowhere in sight, and would not arrive for some time. In fact, the three of us were just about done with our late supper when the Dodge pulled up to the curb with the TR6 in tow. We had found a rather gay little café on the strip with a commanding street view from the patio. We were certainly pleased to see our comrades safe and sound! Tina had booked us into a charming motel on the edge of town. It was a shame we had so little time to enjoy Palm Springs, but we had another long day ahead.

### **DAY ELEVEN: JUST DES- SERT (DESERT?) Palm Springs to El Paso 700 miles**

There is absolutely no one at the IHOP in Palm Springs at 7:30 Monday morning! A round of Senior

Specials, then we were back behind the wheel. The mountains sure are spectacular in the California desert, but we didn't linger long admiring them. The Sonny Bono Freeway East bound (IH 10) would take us back to Texas, so we put the maps away and the pedal to the metal. The temperature rose to nearly 100 as we passed through Arizona; the only really uncomfortable few hours of the trip. Once again, it was after dark before the La Quinta was in sight. Art, Jim and I were way ahead of the Dodge...apparently Tina had enough of Bill and Roger and demanded to be dropped off at the Phoenix airport. Can you blame her?

We regrouped at the Texas Roadhouse for a late dinner. Art ap-

peared with a surprise guest...his dear sweet mother! Mrs. Graves is an El Paso native and delighted us with a charming narrative of her life in West Texas. We were assured, of course, that "Arthur is such a nice boy."

## DAY TWELVE: HOME AT LAST El Paso to Austin 560 miles

Art was waiting in the parking lot for us at 7 am Tuesday morning. We would not have the pleasure of his company today, since he was headed home to Tulsa (825 miles...ouch!). The 80 mph speed limit would have the rest of us in the Hill Country in no time. Hurrah, no more des-

erts. You could tell that Texas was getting more rain this year by the abundance of greenery along the Interstate. We even saw some grass!

I eventually lost track of Jim and the boys but was reunited with Roger and Tina at Rudy's...it was the second Tuesday of the month and I wouldn't miss the HCTC meeting for the world.



# Cruisin' the Coast — in a Stag

By Peter Weber

Greetings from the deep South, where New Orleans is home to a small but active community of British car owners. I'm a member of the British Motoring Club of New Orleans, [BMCNO.org](http://BMCNO.org), who organizes a club event every year to attend Cruisin' the Coast, which is held annually in early Fall on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Their web site is [www.cruisinthecoast.com](http://www.cruisinthecoast.com).

I've enjoyed British cars and motorcycles since I started driving in the early 70s. Back then I had a Triumph T25T trials bike and later a 750 Bonneville, but now it's Triumph cars. I have a '74 TR6 that I've been restoring for several years, and this past April I brought

home a magenta '73 Stag, Commission No. LE21378UBW. I set a goal to drive the Stag to the Gulf Coast for the event.

When I bought the car there were a few must-do items before it could be driven more than a few miles from home. The lower radiator hose at the water pump inlet would swell to double its normal size as the car warmed up. Almost every interior and exterior lamp either didn't work at all or didn't function correctly. Finally, the steering rack leaked fluid on my garage floor almost as fast as I could fill the reservoir. Fortunately I learned who Michael Coffey was before I bought the car, and he cheerfully provided the guidance I

needed with the purchase and he also supplied parts and advice for the steering repair.

The required repairs were completed only the week before the event, and what a shakedown drive — 200 miles plus from New Orleans to the Gulf Coast and back! To be safe I reserved car trailers from a rental agency for both the trip there and back, but happily they weren't needed. The car ran perfectly the whole trip. BMCNO organized a convoy to Mississippi, with two stops along the way to join up with more club members — and for me to check on things! This event was actually the first time anyone else in the club had seen the Stag, and it drew a lot of

attention. This was shaping up to be a nice trip.

I had no idea what to expect when we reached the Gulf Coast, except that this was going to be a large event, with thousands of cars registered, and very few of them British. Cars must be at least 25 years old to register — no problem there. Our first stop was “Cruise Central” where we registered our cars and picked up our cruise packets. Next we drove to each of the 5 cruise venues along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. This event isn’t a car show, instead it’s all about cruising in classic cars, seeing other amazing cars, and enjoying some great fellowship with other enthusiasts — all this along a historic and beautiful stretch of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Our first stop was Ocean Springs, Mississippi, where the downtown area was reserved for us registered cruisers. Our group of little British cars passed through the check-point where we showed our paperwork, and then we idled down the classic-car-lined streets, past some beautiful cars and thousands of enthusiasts (the Stag’s auto gearbox was a bit of a luxury in the stop-and-go traffic). The response to the car was terrific. Only a handful had even seen a Stag before, and the car attracted a lot of smiles, thumbs-up, and folks walking up to complement the car and ask what it was. Folks sitting in lawn chairs along the route would stare as the car drove by, then I’d hear “Stag” when they read the badge on the rear wing, followed by “Triumph” as the car passed and they read the badge on the the rear bumper — great fun.

Here's a photo I took through the windscreen when we stopped for a moment:



Notice the gentleman wearing the orange tee shirt with his hands on his hips on the right. I saw this look a lot:



Later I was waiting at a check point behind a nice 70’s Plymouth, when the driver jumped out and ran up to my window. We had this exchange, with him speaking in a British accent:

Brit: “This is a Stag!”

Me: “Yes it is!”

Brit: “Has it got the original engine?”

Me: “Yes it does”

Brit: “Son of a #####! I HAD one of these.”

He took pictures, smiled, and then jumped back in his car and continued on. The weekend continued with similar experiences at all 5 venues. The Stag was misidentified as Jaguar, a Lancia, and our favorite — an Impala. I suppose it was the emblem on the front grille?

The event offered a lot to do, with events like drag races and a large swap meet. There was live music at each venue. There was also an auction, where I saw a Spitfire, a few MGs, and a replica Austin Healey on the block. Cruisin’ the Coast has grown every year, with over 7,000 cars registered this year.

On Saturday afternoon the BMCNO group parked our cars at Cruise Central (along with several hundred other cars) and we enjoyed the morning while folks walked by and took it all in. This was the largest car-related event I’ve attended and also one of the most enjoyable. I’m looking forward to next year already. The response to the Stag, particularly from car buffs who’ve seen and know a lot of cars, was one of the best parts of the weekend. I feel lucky that I’ve ended up with more car than I thought I was buying. The styling is eye catching, it’s a pleasure to drive and it’s comfortable on a long ride. I’ll be driving the Stag to next year’s event and I hope you can join us on the Gulf Coast in the Fall of 2014!

# TWO WEEKS BEFORE CHRISTMAS

By Mike McPhail

TWAS TWO WEEKS BEFORE CHRISTMAS WHEN ALL THROUGH THE PLACE,  
CAME THE ROAR OF NINE TRIUMPHS SETTING THE PACE.

WHO WOULD HAVE KNOWN, AS WE SPED THROUGH THE NIGHT,  
THAT OUR DESTINATION WAS THE TOUR OF THE LIGHTS?

FOR CHRISTMAS SPIRIT, JUST TRY JOHNSON CITY  
YOU'LL BE HARD PRESSED TO FIND A TOWN THAT'S THIS PRETTY.

WE RAN FOR THE PECAN STREET BREW PUB  
HOPING THE BILL WOULD BE PAID BY THE CLUB  
WITH JANE IN HER KERCHIEF AND CLARK IN HIS CAP,  
THEIR COMING SO FAR HAD MADE QUITE A FLAP.

YES, FROM FAR AWAY BELLVILLE THEY DID HAIL,  
DRIVING THE TR THEY BOUGHT FROM MCPHAIL.

STEVE AND CANDY WE SO DID MISS,  
FOR NOW THEY WON'T SHARE OUR HOLIDAY BLISS.

MARK AND MARCELLA WE MET AT THE DOOR  
INSIDE WERE DEAN, ELIZABETH AND SEVERAL MORE

MIKE JANKOWSKI AND FAIR JULIANN  
HAD CHICKEN FRIED STEAK, STRAIGHT FROM THE PAN.

BILL AND ANNETTE WERE SHARING A BEER  
WITH GOOD FRIEND BOB SKEWIS, SO FULL OF GOOD CHEER.

VINCE AND BARBARA WERE MOST ANXIOUS STILL  
TO VIEW THE BRIGHT LIGHTS JUST UP THE HILL

SO WE FOLLOWED BEHIND JOLLY ROGER AND TINA  
TO SEE THE HOLIDAY LIGHT SHOW MAS FINA

YOU COULD HEAR MIKE'S VOICE, AS HE DROVE OFF WITH NEL  
HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL; I HOPE YOURS IS SWELL!



# 25th ANNUAL SAN ANTONIO JAGUAR CLUB LUCKENBACH RALLYE



Saturday, January 18, 2014 (Rain Date: February 8, 2014)

**Meeting Place:** EI CHAPARRAL MEXICAN RESTAURANT  
15103 BANDERA RD (TX HWY 16)  
HELOTES, TX

**IMPORTANT INFO**

**Registration:** 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM  
**MANDATORY Drivers Meeting:** 12:15 PM  
**Registration Fee:** \$20.00 per vehicle  
**First Car Out:** 12:31 PM  
**START POINT:** South end of El Chaparral parking lot

- ✓ This is a JCNA sanctioned time, speed, distance event.....NOT A RACE!!!!!!
- ✓ Rally will total approximately 100 miles and 2.5 hours.
- ✓ Trophies for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place will be awarded to drivers and navigators **AND** our Famous "Stray Cat" prize for the last driver to arrive in Luckenbach.
- ✓ The Rallye route is on paved roads, some very narrow with cattle guards and loose livestock. Please be careful and use caution in these areas.
- ✓ NO DRINKING AND DRIVING;
- ✓ There will be breaks during the rally, and fuel will be available at some of the checkpoints.
- ✓ JCNA rules will be used for scoring and ties will be permitted for JCNA results.
- ✓ Bring a watch, digital watch or stop watch and pencil.
- ✓ Call SAJC rallymaster Brian Blackwell at below numbers if you suspect bad weather on the morning of the rallye and do not have internet access. Or check the event calendar on [www.sajaguarclub.info](http://www.sajaguarclub.info)



**Questions?** Brian Blackwell (210) 695-8504, (210) 255-0361 Cell or [blackwb@gmail.com](mailto:blackwb@gmail.com)

SEE Y'ALL IN HELOTES, AND HOPEFULLY LUCKENBACH!!!!!!



Michael Connally  
[mcfoto@swbell.net](mailto:mcfoto@swbell.net)  
 210-262-0275

### 1973 Triumph TR6 with Overdrive

Commissioned April, 1973. Full frame off restoration 11/2001-11/2003. Totally disassembled, sandblasted and cleared of any rust. Paint job includes two coats etching primer, two coats of standard primer, 4 coats of color coat (Duco Jet Black) and four coats of Clear Coat. The under carriage is coated with POR 15 which is used to protect oil derricks in the Gulf. The car was voted Participant's Choice at the 2006 VTR National Competition in Dallas. It has won 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Place in subsequent competitions. It cruises comfortably at 70 mph and has been as far as 1,200 miles round trip on more than one occasion. The car is appraised and insured for \$22,000. I am offering it for \$19,500.

All suspension bushings replaced.  
 Wheels sandblasted and powder coated.  
 5 Yokohama 203 x 5.5 Tubeless Tires  
 All new rugs and door panels  
 New Dash Crown  
 New Convertible Top

Engine:  
 New Rings and Valves Ground  
 New Rod Bearings and Crankshaft Bearings and seals  
 New Clutch and Bearing  
 New Slave Cylinder  
 Carburetors Rebuilt  
 Distributor Rebuilt (Advanced Distributors)  
 Modified Cam  
 Headers  
 Monza Exhaust  
 Radiator Rebuilt

Richard Good Triple Manifold with three Stromberg Carburetors  
 MSD Multiple Spark Distributor and Heavy Coil  
 New Master Cylinder and Vacuum Booster  
 Richard Good HD U-Joints on Drive Shaft and Short Shafts  
 All New Discs, Shoes  
 Drums and Rotors Turned  
 All Brake and Fuel Lines replaced with Stainless Steel Tubing  
 Spin off Oil Filter  
 Rear Lever Shocks Replaced with Tube Shocks  
 Set of Four Koenig 15x7 Rims and Goodyear Eagle Tires  
 New Windshield  
 Tourist Trophy Laminated Walnut Steering Wheel  
 Convertible Top Cover  
 Tonneau Cover

## FOR SALE 1978 TRIUMPH SPITFIRE

Have you always fancied a Spitfire, but were put off by the sorry state of most offerings? Eureka! Now there is an outstanding example available right here in Austin. This absolutely rust free car was bought new in El Paso and has covered only 35,000 miles. It has been treated to a complete brake overhaul: master cylinder, calipers, pads, rotors, rear wheel cylinders, shoes...the works. The clutch master cylinder and slave cylinders are new and therefore the clutch action is delightful. The engine has been de-smogged with a Weber DVG 32/36 carburetor with automatic choke. It has a custom dual exhaust with headers. The engine is very strong and the gearbox is exemplary. This model has the big radiator and fan for cool running. The interior is spotless and features a 14 inch Grant leather steering wheel... the top is very nice, too. Needless to say, everything works!

\$4500 or best offer.

Act soon, before the Spitfire is listed on eBay. For more information, contact Mike McPhail at 512-695-8637.



## From the Editor

By Dan Julien

**H**appy New Year, HCTC members and other Triumph enthusiasts! We have a great set of articles for the first issue of 2014. Bob Kramer returns to the pages of the Ragtop with a race report. Mike McPhail takes us on the long ride home from the VTR

Nationals/Triumphfest in northern California, and then reveals a hitherto-hidden poetic talent in his account of the Hill Country Tour De-Lites. And we have a guest contribution from Peter Weber of New Orleans, via Betina Foreman (Southwest Director of the USA Stag Club).

I am happy to report that the last issue keeping my TR6 off the road has been sorted out, so it should once again be a regular guest at HCTC club meetings and events. Wishing you all another year of happy and safe motoring!

**For Sale: TR6 fiberglass hardtop "Snug Top" by Custom Hardtops of Longbeach, CA. Outstanding condition. Located in Dripping Springs. \$500 Contact Benson 361-947-7704 gbtuttle@yahoo.com**





*Chairman's Message:  
Welcome to Excelsior Springs.*

2014 South Central Regional Vintage Triumph Register  
APRIL 27 TO 30, 2014



Excelsior Springs, located just 29 miles from Kansas City, MO, was a worldwide attraction for their healing mineral waters in the late 1800's to early 1900's. Our host hotel, The Elms Hotel & Spa was built in the 1880's to serve affluent mineral spa devotees.

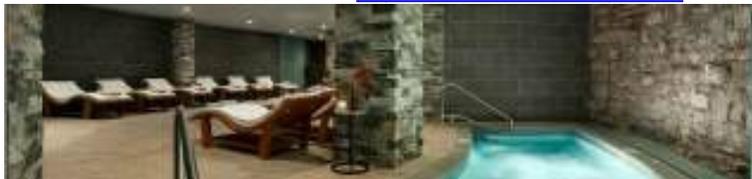


**The Elms today**

The Elms completed a multi-million complete update and remodel in 2012. They have one of the largest spas west of the Mississippi for your enjoyment. Head to their web site for information about this beautiful resort hotel <http://www.elmshotelandspa.com/>



Excelsior Springs is just 29 miles from Kansas City, MO



Spa at the Elms

**Area Attractions**

You will also want to see the **Hall of Waters** and try their soda fountain of mineral waters. The Hall of Waters was placed on the Clay County Historical Landmark Register in 1981 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places on June 9, 1983.



**Jesse James** This museum features the largest collection of James family artifacts, and is accompanied by outlaw Jesse James' family home and farm in Kearney, Missouri. Tour the museum and restored home, and view an informative video that relates the story of Frank and Jesse James and their bank- and train-robbing escapades. There's also a gift shop where you can procure Jesse James tee shirts, coffee mugs and other souvenirs. Jesse James' home and grave is about 10 miles away

**Events**

- |                          |                                |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Monday Welcome Reception | Concours                       |
| Gimmick Rallye           | Funkhana                       |
| Autocross                | Dinner Runs                    |
| Photo/Model/Craft        | Concours 'Participants Choice' |
| Awards Banquet           |                                |

The committee has worked for the last eighteen months planning this event. They have planned rallies, tours, and secured the accommodations and a host of other things that go into making a successful and enjoyable event.

It is the planning committee's hope that you will have a great time at the 2014 South Central Regional Convention. During your stay, you will be able to identify the committee members by their fluorescent green vests. They will glad to answer any questions or give directions to local sights for you to visit.

The Excelsior Springs Police Department has worked closely with us, and they will be glad to assist you in any way they can. Be sure to thank them for the security services they are providing us when they assist you. Please join me in thanking the planning committee and the rest of the KC Triumphs for all of their efforts. We hope you find this program useful as it will give details of the events, history and places of interest in Excelsior Springs. I encourage you to contact any of the 2014 planning committee members with any questions or concerns.

Welcome to Excelsior Springs! I look forward to visiting with each of you. If you see any way we can improve the event please let me know your thoughts.

Jack Edwards  
Chairman 2014 SC Regional  
Kansas City Triumphs Host

Registration will be available beginning August 15, 2013 at  
<http://www.kansascitytriumphs.com/> .

Those registering between August 15 and December 31, 2013 will be entered in a drawing to be held Jan 6, 2014, for one (1) night's stay at the host hotel (The Elms Hotel & Spa). There will be six (6) winners; the night's stay has a value of \$104.00 + taxes.

Good Luck!!

# FOR SALE



## 1960 TRIUMPH TR3

**JUST SERVICED      NO RUST**

**NEW TOP      NEW BATTERY**

**TONNEAU COVER & STICK COVER**

**TIRES ARE FAIRLY NEW**

**SOME SPARE PARTS**

**DOES NOT HAVE OVERDRIVE**

**Needs Side Curtains**

**\$17,900 or best offer**

**MIKE 512/252-3767 or [trebucs@sbcglobal.net](mailto:trebucs@sbcglobal.net)**

## Jim Icenhower's



### Wood, Leather and Vinyl Steering Wheels for Classic Cars At Exceptional Prices

Wood Wheels with Hub	\$219.95
Leather Wheels with Hub	\$119.95
Vinyl Wheels with Hub	\$109.95



I have steering wheels and hubs for almost all British classics as well as accessories like shift knobs, mirrors, light/badge bars and more. Check out my current listings on eBay at <http://stores.ebay.com/specialtypartshop> or email me at [jicenhower@yahoo.com](mailto:jicenhower@yahoo.com) for more information.

Listing change as I get shipments from the UK so check back often or contact me for any special requests.

Back issues of The Ragtop are available on our website:  
<http://www.hillcountrytriumphclub.org/newsletters.php>

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

Please check the latest spreadsheet sent out by Nel. It says the month and year your dues are due. If the year listed next to your name isn't 2013, 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  
[nmcpmail@austin.rr.com](mailto:nmcpmail@austin.rr.com)

### HCTC Officers

**President**

Steve Johnson  
[president@hillcountrytriumphclub.org](mailto:president@hillcountrytriumphclub.org)

**Consigliere**

Elizabeth Mericas  
512-291-6775  
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**Webmaster**

Jim Icenhower  
[webmaster@hillcountrytriumphclub.org](mailto:webmaster@hillcountrytriumphclub.org)

**Treasurer**

Earl McGlothlin  
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**Secretary**

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**Ragtop Editor**

Dan Julien  
512-451-3102  
[editor@hillcountrytriumphclub.org](mailto:editor@hillcountrytriumphclub.org)

## 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 \$15 check payable to HCTC to:  
Nel McPhail, 1105 North Canyonwood Dr, Dripping Springs, TX 78620

# Upcoming Events

Dates	Event	Location	Where to Find Information
Jan. 11	HCTC Holiday Party	Home of Dean & Elizabeth Mericas	See pp. 11-12.
Feb. 11	HCTC Monthly Meeting	TBA	Watch this space.
April 27-29	VTR South Central Regional Convention	Kansas City, MO	<a href="http://www.kansascitytriumphs.com">www.kansascitytriumphs.com</a>

## HCTC Classifieds



FOR SALE (in New Mexico)—1961 Triumph Herald Convertible. This car spent most of its life in southern New Mexico. I bought it as a project from an estate and it had been garaged for the past 25 years. It has a 948 cc engine, new tires, new interior, the convertible top is good. It needs door latches. \$3,500. Call Ron (575) 531-2193.

### For Sale

#### 1958 TR3A

Frame off restoration completed 2002. Runs great. Mostly original with few upgrades. Less than 5000 miles on rebuilt engine. White with black interior. Lots of extra parts. Detailed history of car repairs.

**\$20,000**

**Carol Pennington**

I am looking for a TR250 or TR4a Bonnet for a vehicle I am restoring. If you have one for sale please call me at 512-517-5325 or email me at [filv@fnbbastrop.com](mailto:filv@fnbbastrop.com). Thank you, Fil Valderrama

## No meeting in January

Instead, we will have our annual Holiday Happy Hour Party hosted by Dean and Elizabeth Mericas

Details on pages 3-4

Saturday, January 11, 2014 6:30 PM