

The Ragtop



July 2016

Letter from the President

By Don Couch

So one month in and I've still yet to preside over a formal club meeting. Both the last meeting venues have been way too noisy to hold a meeting but, if I do say so myself, both the last two meetings venues have been a lot of fun, both with great turnout. First, we had the morning meeting at Circuit of the Americas for the F1 watch party. Next, we had our Tuesday evening meeting at Black Star CO-OP, again, a rather noisy venue.

We did pick up a few new members, Tom Harwell with a '76 TR6. Mike Rafterty with a '72 TR6 and David Lindzey with a '72 TR6 as

well as new member Jim Frechette with a beautiful Triumph 1800. So nice to see our membership continuing to grow.

I look forward to a more "civilized" meeting this coming Saturday at The Frisco's. I hope to be able to discuss future events I'd like to see happen. Phil McKenzie has asked to sit down with me and pencil in some dates for events throughout the year. I finally got Ruby back together and look forward to getting out for a drive. Check the website calendar to keep up to date.

Hope to see you all at The Frisco's bright and early.

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Pay Your Dues!!!!!!

Please check the latest spreadsheet sent out by Nel. If it says Jan-16 in the dues column your dues are over-due now. Any quite delinquent member who hasn'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

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Back issues of The Ragtop are available on our website:

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

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 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.

McKenzie's Meeting Minutes

By Phil McKenzie

HCTC June Meeting 12 June 2016 11 AM Circuit of the Americas

The June Hill Country Triumph Club meeting was held at the Circuit of the Americas Velocity Lounge F1 watch party. Due to the nature of the event, no official meeting or club business was conducted. Instead, attendees enjoyed food, drink and F1 racing on a colossal big-screen display. Another car club was in attendance (some Italian make I

don't recall), that made for some interesting people-watching as well. Although a smaller contingent, the British car club members were a much more dignified lot!

Prior to the meeting, Don and Brenda Couch, Roger Bolick, Bob Skewis, and Mike Schubert braved the heat and met at Tres Amigos to caravan to COTA. Arriving at COTA they met Phil Taylor, Bob Baker, Willis Thorstad, Paul Dick, and Dave Forman. Phil

McKenzie and Mike Jankowski showed up just before the race started.

The TR6s were once again in highest attendance: Willis Thorstad, Roger Bolick, and Paul Dick. Bob Skewis drove his TR250, and Mike Jankowski of course drove his Spitfire.

COTA provided us with a place to park together. Our Triumphs were joined by 2 other British car cousins; a Mini-Cooper and a Jaguar XK-8.



Trade Your TR6 Dash Light Dimmer for a 12 V Outlet

By Mike McPhail

Did you know that Joe Lucas invented the three way switch? Yes...dim, flicker, and off! That is the way the instrument light rheostat functions on a Triumph TR6. If you have the dashboard out of your Six, now would be an opportune time to swap the useless dimmer switch for cigar lighter. Gave up smoking? Well, in addition to lighting cigars, you can power your GPS, radar detector, MP3 player, cell phone, etc.

The hard part is getting the old switch out of the dashboard. The knob is super-glued to the shaft, and so to avoid damaging the dashboard, it may have to be destroyed before the switch can be removed. Two little screws hold the switch bracket to the back of

the wood. Connect all the wires from the switch together and the dash lights will be brighter than ever before. Of course, the dash has to come loose first! The wooden dashboard is held in place by only the speedo & tach and the five screws holding the wood to the metal back plate. That's a lot of trouble... maybe you should just pull out the console and do all this standing on your head!

Call Moss and order a 142-270 cigarette lighter (\$9.49). This gadget fits nicely in the hole, but is designed for mounting in a thin metal dashboard. Therefore, remove the lamp (sorry) and use your Dremel tool or something to cut back the lighter case about 3/8" along the lateral indenta-

tions. Spread the tabs created and the lighter will now fit the dash.

Connect the lighter to 12 V and ground. For always "on", connect the center terminal to a purple wire, which is fused. For "on" only when the car is running, a green wire will provide a fused circuit. The clever thing is to locate the accessory wire from the ignition switch, and add your own fuse... AGC 5, or if you are really going to smoke, AGC 15. You knew that there is an accessory position on the ignition switch didn't you? Depending on the year model, this can be a terminal on the back of the switch or a wire cleverly hidden behind the dash...check your official Triumph Service Manual.



Hole in the dash.



Lighter vs. dimmer.



Remove the lamp.



Use Dremel to cut lighter.



Bent tabs on lighter.



Looks great!

HILL COUNTRY TRIUMPH CLUB NAME BADGE

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18340 Masi Loop
Pflugerville, TX 78660
512-252-3767

Ragtop Race Report

By Don Couch

I was the best of times, it was the worst of times...

Touted as the last race for the fifth or sixth time at Texas World Speedway, it was to be the last for my motor.

I'd finished Saturday's race and just needed one more in the books to get my SCCA competition license. My car ran great and now my thoughts turned to racing around the track with Robert MacKenzie and Dave Foreman in their Spitfires for this last of the last races at TWS.

We suited up and off to the grid we go. The plan was for the three of us to lay back from the pack (as if I had a choice) and to race each other, swapping the lead. We make the warm-up lap and come down the front straight to the green flag. I'm in the lead with Robert behind followed by Dave.

We make our way around to the back of the track to turn six and Robert comes up along side of me and passes. I think, "Well, it's a bit early for a lead change but sure, go on ahead". I check my rearview for Dave. I see him back there and Robert has opened up his lead so I try to catch up to him.

Around the carousel turn, I check my rearview for Dave again. Where's Dave? Where's Robert? Robert is again pulling away so I race on wondering where Dave is. We get thru Larry, Curly and Moe and back onto the front straight. Robert is now a good ten to fifteen car lengths ahead of me.

So much for the plan of racing each other I thought and... Where's Dave? Dave's not here.

Foot to the floor I barrel down the front straight round turn one into turn two and now I'm thinking, "Don, save the car, don't try to race Robert, just finish the race, get your license."

And where the hell is Dave?

Flying around a race track at the blistering speeds a 1300 Spitfire can produce, it's easy to forget time and lap count. What seems like hours turned out to be about ten minutes for me.

I was happily sticking to my plan of save the car and finish the race. I'm foot to the floor, full-throttle down the front straight feeling the usual rumble that I felt from the rear of the car every time I am at full speed.

Looking ahead to turn one, I back off the throttle, downshift into second gear, let the clutch out and then... BAM! I feel the car shudder. Instantly, I take her out of gear, check the gauges and mirrors. Gauges all look fine, mirrors empty, I put her back in gear and head for the run-off road at turn three.

I pull as far off as I can so as not to be an obstacle for the other cars. The tow truck comes and I keep asking everyone, is the race half over? Did I make the halfway point? No one seems to know so off to the pit I go. Once there, I pop open the hood, look around the engine bay. Really, I don't see anything obvious wrong. She leaking a

little oil but hey... She's British, right?

I get the trailer and climb back into the car to drive her on the trailer. Fire up the engine, all sounds fine. I put her in gear and hear a random rattle like a bolt is loose flying around. I shut her down immediately and look over to Robert and Mike Jankowski were standing nearby. "Sounds like a flywheel bolt came loose" one of them says. So we push the car onto the trailer and I head for home.

Back home with the car back in the garage, I figure the best place to start is to pull the gearbox and find out what's rattling around in the bell housing. I separate the gearbox from the engine, expecting to hear the sound of loose change hitting the floor but instead I hear nothing. In some ways, I think it's worse to not find anything obvious. I hate the "mystery" problems, I'd rather I found the flywheel in six pieces than to find nothing.

Well, pulling the gearbox was enough of a job so I call it a day. The next week or so would find me tearing down the gearbox completely, finding the input shaft is bent and trying to figure out why and how that happened. The rumbling I always felt at about 70 mph got me to thinking maybe the drive shaft is out of balance. Out it comes next, and it a behemoth of a driveshaft. It's from a MGB. WHAT??? MG parts in MY Triumph? That's gotta get replaced. Actually, the reason the previous owner used it is because it's much

more robust than the stock Spitfire shaft.

So fast forward a week or so and I decide to crawl under the car with a light to really give the clutch assembly a look and find what was rattling around. I start looking around and I notice what looks like a bullet hole near the top lip of the oil pan. "That ain't right", I think to myself. Then, I notice a crack in the engine block between where number three and four piston would be. "Oh, this really ain't right" I think to myself.

Laying on the floor of my garage, I'm thinking how could this be? The motor sounded great when I fired her up to put her on the trailer. How can this be? I put her back into gear and drove her off the track. Was I really driving a three cylinder Triumph? Guess I solved my "mystery" noise. Now to pull the motor and tear into it to find out what happened.

Pulling the oil pan revealed that the number four piston rod big end let loose and got mangled up. From best I can tell, one of the

bolts backed itself out and the bearing cap ended up in the oil pan. I never lost oil pressure and it may be that my three quart Accusump kept enough oil pressure for me to drive off the track.

Not the small problem I thought it was and now it's rebuild time. It was still a great weekend of racing and even just being on the track the short time I was with Robert and Dave made it all worthwhile.



Ragtop Rag

By Dave Foreman

So, I found the guy who was supposed to be the 'Spitfire Whisperer'. He turned out to be a fraud and a thief. The car sat after that. With two other racecars, it just didn't seem important. But there it sat. The builder of the National Champion Spitfire offered his services. What the hell, in for a pence, in for a British LB. Some \$20k and essentially completely refurbished 1964 Spitfire race car later, we assploded a differential. Replaced with a 3.89 diff, that turned out to be NOT the right one, we needed a 4.11. Found that out on the race track at Texas World Speedway with two other Spitfires run by Robert MacKenzie and Don Couch. Race one in the SCCA Lone Star Grand Prix, Memorial Day weekend, no prob, though we knew the diff was not correct. However, race 2, on Sunday, after agreeing with the other two Spitfires that we would alternate positions for optimum video, we did the out-lap, got the green flag start, and made it to Turn 8 when

an axle failed. I limped to behind the Marshal station in the carousel (so as not to hinder the race for others), and hung there till the race end.

MacKenzie ran flawlessly, if not slowly (he has an 1147, Couch and I run 1296's). Don, unfortunately, suffered a mechanical between turns 2 & 3, several laps later. My first question to the Marshal was, have we reached the half-way point in the race? Important, as this race would have seen Don get his 'hard card' racing license. Twas not to be.

My other two racecars are German, a BMW and a Porsche. In the Porsche, I took the 2015 National Championship with PCA. In the BMW, not so successful, but a heckufa lotta fun. And, not without mechanical issues and \$pending, have required not nearly the resources that the Spitfire has. The Spit's diff and axles will be replaced (improved), and will be raced at Circuit of The Americas

in the SVRA Vintage Racing National Championship in November. Wearing a For Sale sign. I'm done racing Triumphs. While the Camaraderie with the Triumph folks is unmatched with any other marque, I go to the track to race, not to rebuild cars. So my Triumph racing will be limited, after November, to racing with the Team Racer TR6, now under Bob Kramers' stewardship. It is running in the Optima Battery ChumpCar World Championship race at COTA in August (not me, too damn hot), followed by the World Racing League Championship at COTA first weekend in December.

When (if) the Spitfire racecar sells, we will still be Triumph enthusiasts, as Betina still has the '75 TR6 street car in Mimosa Yellow. If the Spit doesn't sell, we will bronze it and hang it on the mantel. But we are done racing (and spending on) it. Wanna buy the fastest Triumph 1296-powered racing Spitfire on the planet? It's available.



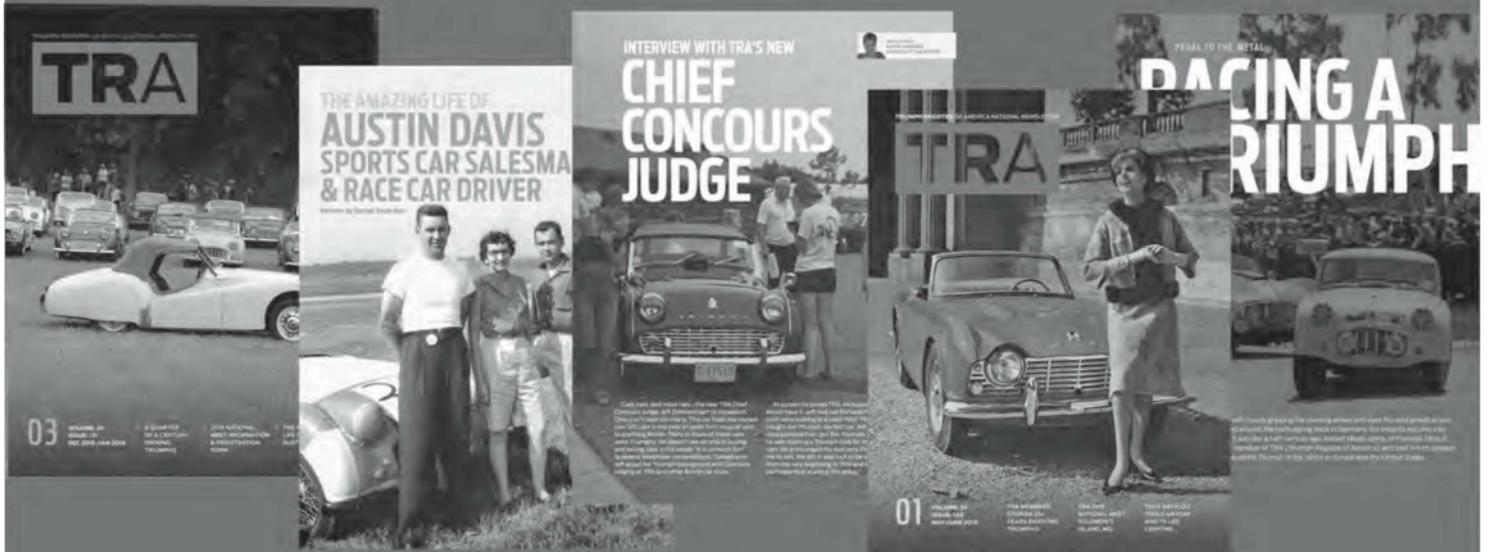
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Make & Model

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Car _____

Make & Model

Year _____ Commission Number _____

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Car _____

Make & Model

Year _____ Commission Number _____

Mail check and/or application to:

Tonda Macy
TRA Treasurer/Membership
4200 Lisa Drive
Tipp City, OH 45371
tonda@macysgarage.com
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Listing change as I get shipments from the UK so check back often or contact me for any special requests.

HCTC Classifieds



I know I have been out of the loop for a while with the club members but still enjoy the Triumph hobby. In an effort to add a unique look to my shop, I sourced a maker of metal signs. This is the sign i have asked him to make.

I thought some other members might be interested as well. Here is the pricing and the different finishes he can offer.

4'x6' sign as per pic/3 colors printed on .040 aluminum sheet -does not include wood borders/aging or crating /shipping, \$325.00

printed on painted 24-26 ga steel sheet no aging wood borders crating or shipping \$425.00

on steel as per pic w/wood borders, aged and distressed \$565.00

If people have questions, they can reach me at 512-517-5325

Thank you,

Fil Valderrama

I've decided I'll never have time to restore my 63 Spitfire. I want to offer it to the club, before I post to forums.

It's free. One condition, you have to take it all. It will require a lot of time and money. I'm in Seguin, TX and you can contact me with this email address pbaize@satx.rr.com.



HCTC Classifieds

I have a intake and exhaust manifold for a TR4-TR3 and a intake for GT6-TR6 that I would like to sell.

My phone # 512-909-6849

Mark and Marcela Jenks

I recently bought a project 1965 TR4a.... Any advice, help, parts,would be greatly appreciated

Alan Palmer ampalmer4@gmail.com

RH and LH Trunk Side Panel TR3, TR3A, TR3B. These are new steel panels, made in the U.K. They have never been fitted or installed. \$70.00 each. Carol 512-971-6778.



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. Thank you, Fil Valderrama

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

July 9 — HCTC Morning Monthly Meeting.

July 12 — HCTC Tuesday Evening Monthly Meeting.

October 3-7 — VTR National Convention, Pottsboro, TX. Information at vtr2016.org.

Next breakfast meeting:

Saturday, July 9, 2016, 9:00 AM

The Frisco

6801 Burnet Rd

Austin, TX 78757

thefriscoaustin.com — Phone: 512-459-6279

Next evening meeting:

Tuesday, July 12, 2016, 7:00 PM

The Tavern

922 West 12th St

Austin, TX 78703

At the corner of 12th and Lamar

tavernaustin.com — Phone: 512-320-8377