

Vol. 28, No. 6  
June 2009

# THE BLUEBONNET

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*News from the Texas Triumph Register*



**Dave Stacey's 1974 TR6**  
**at the 2009 Keels & Wheels Concours d'Elegance**  
**Lakewood Yacht Club, Seabrook, Texas**

[photo courtesy Len Myers]

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### **The Texas Triumph Register**

The Texas Triumph Register (TTR), founded in 1981, is an organization of Triumph owners and enthusiasts dedicated to the preservation and continuing enjoyment of the Marque. Membership is open to all who appreciate automobiles bearing the Triumph name. In addition to monthly meetings, the club sponsors rallies, shows, road tours, technical seminars, and social events.

Visit our website at:

[www.TexasTriumphRegister.org](http://www.TexasTriumphRegister.org)

### **National Affiliations**

The Texas Triumph Register is a local chapter of the Vintage Triumph Register (VTR)/Triumph Sports Owners Association, which is open to all drivers of Triumph motorcars; an area center for the Triumph Register of America, exclusively for TR-2 through TR-4A automobiles; and a chapter of the 6-PACK, dedicated to the enjoyment, preservation, and restoration of the Triumph TR250 and TR6 automobiles.

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)

[www.6-pack.org](http://www.6-pack.org)

### ***The Bluebonnet***

The Bluebonnet is published monthly for TTR members. Members are encouraged to submit articles, photographs, or other items of interest. TTR neither endorses nor warrants any product or service advertised herein.

The information contained in this newsletter is for information only. TTR assumes no responsibility for the correctness or safety of the procedures; the reader assumes liability for any risk — personal or financial — in connection with the repairs or modifications outlined in the articles.

Working on cars can be hazardous if done incorrectly or without the proper safety precautions. The consequences of some mistakes can be dangerous. TTR suggests that you consult an automotive professional before attempting any repair or modification with which you are unfamiliar or inexperienced.

### **TTR 2009/2010**

#### **Officers and Volunteers**

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##### ***The Bluebonnet's Muse***

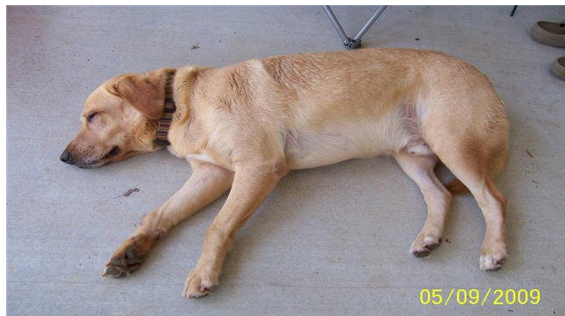
Jeff Harris  
[jharrispe@yahoo.com](mailto:jharrispe@yahoo.com)

Copy deadline for the *Bluebonnet*: the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. [Ed.: And I really mean it!]

*From the President . . .*



The May meeting was held at the Presidential Retreat on Lake Livingston, located just outside the metropolis of Onalaska. As always, security was tight and the guard dog patrolled the area.



Before the meeting, I had the head chef prepare a gourmet meal of burgers and hot dogs. Unfortunately for those of you wishing to engage his services, you will have to wait a while as he is off to the Congo to sharpen his culinary skills.



Work on my project TR3 continues. I have started removing the front fenders to repair and replace several broken mounting bolts. In addition, I want to replace the racing-style hood securing pins the previous owner had installed.

After five hours work to remove the 12 bolts that secure the fender to the body tub, I finally removed the left front fender. I wonder who invented the use of “captive nuts.” Seven of the twelve were no longer held hostage in their cage and spun freely. I finally was able to pull the fender away from the body and no less than two pounds of dirt fell onto the garage floor. I wonder if this was original equipment dirt installed across the pond or an aftermarket addition?

As always, I hope to see each and every one of you at our monthly meetings, our Saturday morning breakfasts, or our other events. Be sure to see the Events section of *The Bluebonnet* or check the web site for a chance to meet other club members and an excuse to get out of the house.

***Remember: Get out and drive a Triumph!***

*Eric*



## *Minutes of the May 9, 2009 Meeting of the Texas Triumph Register*

At 1420 hours on Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, Outgoing President **Eric Schumann** opened the meeting by thanking his lovely bride, **Sharon**, for allowing us to enjoy their fabulous new lake house on beautiful Lake Livingston. The hamburgers and hot dogs provided by Chef **Blake Schumann**, imported from West Africa just for the occasion, were made to order and were wonderful.

### Old Business:

**Dusty Nicholson**, Treasurer, announced that we still have about \$5900 in the account.

### New Business:

**Eric** reported that our Club did very well at Regionals in Marble Falls. TTR members accounted for about half of the attendees and swept the awards with the **Hados** taking the Best in Show award while **Dusty Nicholson** had the fastest time in the AutoCross. Last Month's **Bluebonnet** had all of the award recipients listed. Mike Hado brought a slide show of the Regionals for all to see. Don Carter said one reason for the success of these Regionals was the venue and we should consider this when next we host Regional. It would be good to hold it away from Houston traffic and have some contours in the drives. All in attendance agreed.

**Don Carter**, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, presented the new slate of Officers for consideration as follows: President, **Eric Schumann**; Vice President, **Bill Papp**; Vice President, Events, **Vern Burnett**; Membership and Historian, **Mike Hado**; Treasurer, **Dusty Nicholson**; Secretary, **Bob Delery**; **Bluebonnet** Publishers and Editors, **Diane** and **Bill Parker**; **Bluebonnet** Muse, **Jeff Harris**. The presented slate of candidates was elected by acclamation.

**Bill Papp** presented the list of future events:

- June's monthly meeting will be held on the 13<sup>th</sup> at **Brandi, Ella**, and **Dusty Nicholson's** home in Katy.

- July's meeting will be held on the 18<sup>th</sup> [Note: this is the *third* Saturday of the month] at the home of **Jan** and **Bob Delery**, in April Sound and will be combined with a golf outing for TTR members. Please advise Jan or Bob (936-447-3614) if you want to play and your handicap.
- The August meeting will be held on the 8<sup>th</sup> at **Louise** and **Don Carter's** fabulous home and garage in Houston.
- **Karen** and **Steve Kirsis** will host the September meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> in Bentwater.
- October's meeting will be on the 10<sup>th</sup> at **Melissa** and **Jim Farrell's** beach house in Galveston.

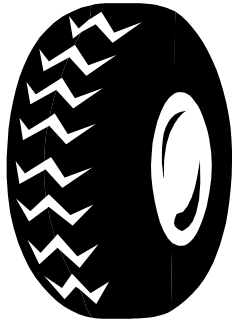
**Diane**, now retired, **Parker**, the excellent co-editor and publisher of the **Bluebonnet**, asked for volunteers for more articles for the publication.

The meeting adjourned at 1450 hours.

Respectfully submitted May 25, 2009,  
Bob Delery



Lakeside at the Schumanns'



## Triumph Tech Tip

[For more information: [www.nitrofill.com](http://www.nitrofill.com)]

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### Nitrogen Tire Pressurization

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The Air Force, NASA, most airlines, and NASCAR pressurize tires with nitrogen rather than atmospheric air. Some car dealers and tire retailers sell nitrogen-fill as a value-added service. Nitrogen-filled tires are usually identified by a fluorescent green valve stem cap. Is nitrogen pressurization a worthwhile expense for classic Triumphs?

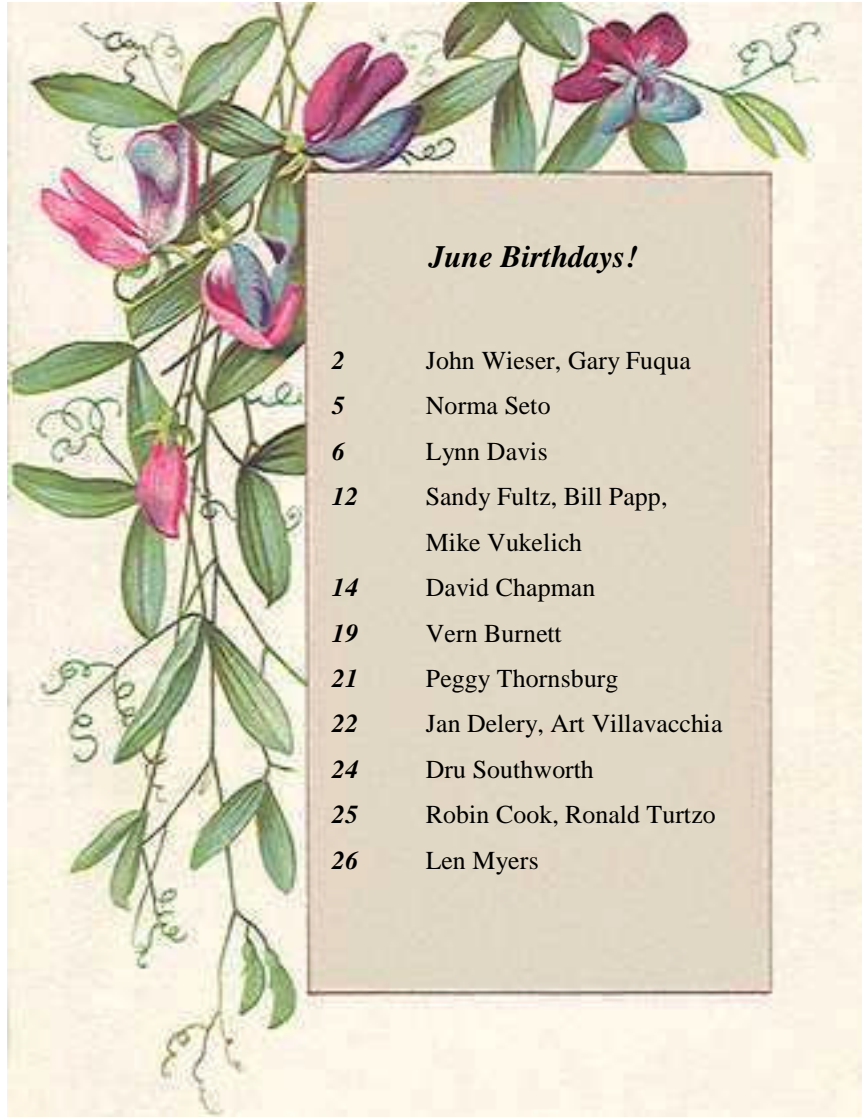
To answer that question, let's start with some basic chemistry. Atmospheric air, which is used to pressurize most car tires, consists of about 78% nitrogen, 21% oxygen, and 1% other gasses. Air can also contain up to 5% by volume of water.

**The claimed benefits of using nitrogen for tire pressurization generally include the following:**

1. ***Nitrogen-filled tires maintain pressure longer.*** This claim relates to the fact that the nitrogen molecule is larger than the oxygen molecule and therefore will take longer to diffuse through the tire. Both air- and nitrogen-filled tires will gradually "leak" and the pressure must be checked and adjusted.
2. ***The tire rubber compounds of nitrogen-filled tires last longer.*** This claim is probably true since oxygen is a powerful oxidizer while nitrogen at typical service temperatures is an inert gas. However, if you follow the expert's advice and replace classic car tires after 6-10 years of use (depending on which expert you choose to believe) regardless of mileage, the rubber deterioration issue may not be a big deal over the service life of the tire. One related benefit is that nitrogen is free of moisture, which could corrode your wheels. If your 30- to 50-year-old Triumph wheels haven't rusted yet, you are probably safe to continue using air for tire pressurization.
3. ***Nitrogen is less volatile than oxygen and safer in a crash.*** No doubt a valid reason for the space shuttle and B-2 bombers to use nitrogen pressurization. Is it really a valid issue for most classic cars?
4. ***Nitrogen-filled tires achieve better gas mileage.*** This is a corollary of Claim 1. It is true that cars with properly inflated tires get better gas mileage. The general estimate is that tires inflated to 32 psi get 3% better mileage than tires inflated to 24 psi. However, it doesn't matter whether the proper inflation is accomplished with air or nitrogen. And, with the limited mileage that most of our cars experience, a minor mileage improvement doesn't equate into any significant cost savings.

In conclusion, filling your tires with nitrogen instead of air may provide some minor benefits. But, is it worth the extra cost and aggravation? As of May 2009, Costco will fill new tires purchased from their store with nitrogen for no extra charge. But some vendors, especially new car dealers, charge \$5 to \$10 per tire for nitrogen fill. Dealers may also charge \$40 to \$60 to purge and refill a tire that has been topped off with air. And, nitrogen fill means you can't use that cool compressor in your garage to top off your tires. My recommendation is to save your money and stick with air for your Triumph tires.

If you have a different opinion and/or experience with nitrogen-filled tires (good or bad), please send a note to our Editor. If enough responses are received, we will do a follow-up article. (*Jeff Harris*)



***Sometimes even Superman needs a little help ...***

TTR Member Ron Stein wrote the BB Editor to ask interested TTR members to consider volunteering at Reliant Stadium for the June 12-14 *Classy Chassis Concours d'Elegance* , which benefits Shriner's Hospital in Houston. For more information (and to print the volunteer form, go to [classychassis.org](http://classychassis.org)).

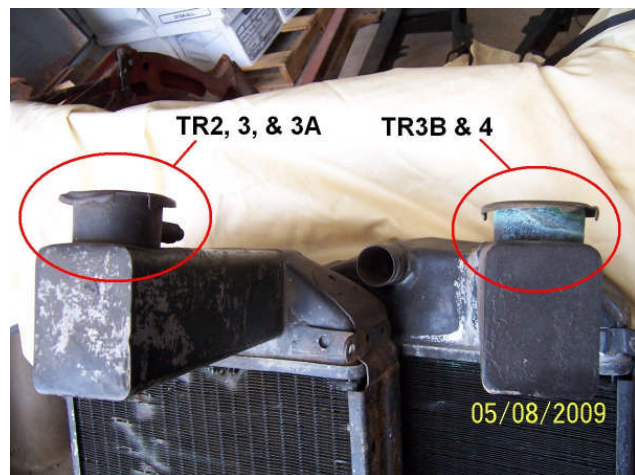
## Things You Learn On a Hill

by Mike Hado

By now many of you know of my unfortunate “incident” on the Hill Climb Slalom at Regionals in Marble Falls. Besides going off-road into the weeds for a little “agricultural motoring” as one observer put it, I marked my territory with copious amounts of water and oil all over the road. Like many things in life, I think this was actually a blessing in disguise and it took some stressing of the beast, so to speak, to have the problems show up. Here are the two things I learned that I want to share with you so you don’t make the same mistakes:

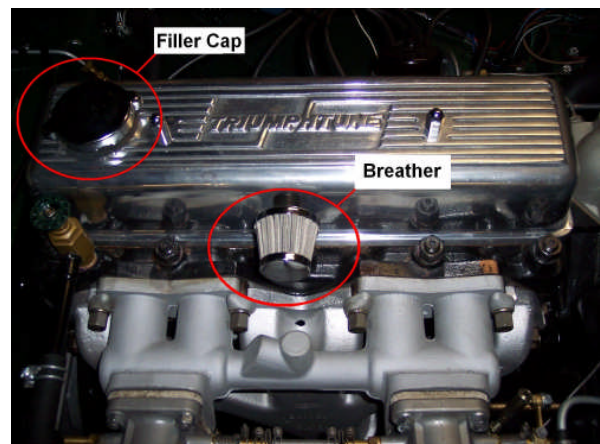
1. **Match the pressure cap to the radiator.** I always thought radiators for the TR2, 3, 3A, and 4 were all the same. Not so! They look the same, but a change was made to the TR3B and TR4 that made the new pressure rating 7 lb instead of the 4 lb on the older cars. In addition, and much more important, the depth of the filler neck was decreased about ¼ inch.

Here’s a picture of the two. The TR2/3 is on the left (deep neck, 4 psi) and the TR3B/4 is on the right (shallow neck, 7 psi). My problem resulted when I re-cored an old deep-neck TR3 radiator, but used my original shallow-neck cap so it never got close to touching the seat in the bottom of the neck. The result: As soon as the engine was pushed to the limit and heated up, the boil over was inevitable. It’s interesting that I drove the car for about a month like this, but the cool weather and relatively easy motoring disguised the problem.



2. **Valve covers MUST be able to breathe.** I installed a TriumphTune valve cover because I think they look nice plus it helps to quiet down the valve and rocker noise. They come with a filler cap that has a very tiny hole. They also come with a tube exiting horizontally from the middle of the valve cover. In my infinite wisdom, I said to myself, “My old chrome cover had no hole in the side so why should I use this one?”

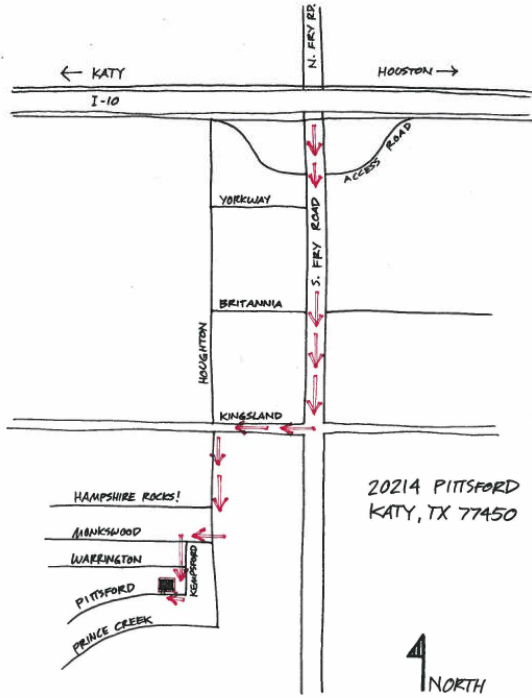
I promptly plugged it off. Once again, when the engine was pushed, the problems started. The piston ring blow-by increases, of course, under hard throttle and the crankcase pressure has to be released somewhere. Without a “breathing” valve cover, oil and vapors in the sump were forced out the vent tube at the back rear of the engine and all over the road. This does not happen with a standard chrome valve cover because the filler cap has a large breathing area to vent this pressure. To fix this, I simply installed an off-the-shelf breather/filter from O’Reilly’s as shown, using the hole already provided.



Yes, indeed. A blessing in disguise!

*Our Next Meeting is Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup> . . .*

*at the home of Brandi, Ella, and Dusty Nicholson  
20214 Pittsford, Katy  
281-647-9877*



*Let's gather at 3:00 to snack,  
then meet at 4:00.*

*Please bring a snack to share.*



**Our hostess, Ella, hitting the hard stuff  
at the 2009 TTR Holiday Party.  
Also shown, grandparents Don and Louise Carter.**



Come to the June meeting and figure out why Dusty's Spitfire parts car came with a trailer hitch . . . here's what Dusty thinks a 57-hp Spitfire could **not** pull:

4. Candy from a baby
3. A loose tooth
2. My finger
1. My heart away from my love for Triumphs

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**\$ Reminder \$ :**  
**Your club dues are due!**



***Lovebugs:***  
***The bugs car owners love to hate***

by Jeff Harris

Twice a year, typically in May and September, road trips through southeast Texas can be spoiled by lovebugs crashing into your car. The infestations are sometimes so heavy that the kamikaze bugs sound like rain hitting your windshield. On many trips in years past I have aggravated my family to no end by stopping at two or more car washes along the way to get these nasty bugs off the car. I refuse to use the windshield wipers and sprayers because it usually just smears the mess. Combine heavy bug debris smeared by wipers with a low angle sun and you have all the ingredients for near “whiteout” visibility conditions.

**Lovebugs:** So, what are these pesky creatures and do they have any beneficial purpose in nature? 'Lovebugs' are small black flies with red thoraxes, members of the family *Bibionidae*, also known as March flies.

CREDIT: James Castner, University of Florida

*Lovebugs*



The range of lovebugs has expanded over the last few decades from Southern Louisiana (1920s) eastward and northward. They are now seen from south Florida to South Carolina and along the Gulf Coast. Lovebug “season” typically lasts 4 to 5 weeks. Mating takes place almost immediately after emergence of the females. Adult females live only 2-3 days. Adult lovebugs are harmless and do not sting or bite. They feed on the nectar of various plants, especially sweet clover, goldenrod, and Brazilian pepper. Lovebug flights usually are restricted to daylight hours and temperatures above 68°F. At night, lovebugs rest on low-growing vegetation.

Female lovebugs lay from 100 to 350 eggs, which are deposited beneath decaying vegetation. Larvae (immature stage) feed on decaying plant material and live on the soil surface just beneath the decaying organic matter. Larvae perform a beneficial function by converting the plant material into organic components that can again be used by the growing plants.

**How to Protect Your Car:** A fresh coat of wax, especially on the front areas of the car, will help to protect the car’s finish. Some have tried coating the front of the car with a light film of baby oil. Car “bras” are available for some models.

**How to Clean Your Car:** Lovebug remains should be washed off the car as soon as possible. Lovebugs are more easily removed, and the chance of damaging the car's finish is lessened if the car has been waxed recently. When the remains are left on an unwaxed car for several days, the finish may be permanently damaged. Soaking for several minutes with water aids in removal. When lovebugs are numerous, some motorists spread a light film of baby oil over the front of the hood, above the windshield and on the grill and bumper. Specialized washer fluids are available that claim to remove bug debris from the windshield.



One example is Prestone® Bug Wash Windshield Washer Fluid said to be “excellent for removing bugs, bird droppings, tree sap and road grime”. The product is to be used full strength, not diluted. I have also had some success using WD-40 to soften and remove bug debris from painted areas but this should be washed off thoroughly once the bug remains are removed.

### Credits

1. Document ENY-329, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. October 1993, revised May 2003. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
2. D. E. Short, professor of Entomology, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.
3. [www.prestone.com](http://www.prestone.com)



## Events

- June 6<sup>th</sup>** Breakfast @ Skeeter's Mesquite Grill, 1553 South Mason Road (281-398-9260)
- June 13<sup>th</sup>** Breakfast @ West Gray Cafe, 415 West Gray (713-528-2887)  
**TTR Monthly Meeting** at the Nicholsons'
- June 20<sup>th</sup>** Breakfast @ Strack Farm Restaurant, 5707 Louetta Road (281-376-0901)
- June 27<sup>th</sup>** Breakfast @ La Madeleine French Bakery and Cafe, **Meyerland Plaza** (713-218-8075)
- July 4<sup>th</sup>** Breakfast @ Eats Mesquite Grill, 13918 Old Hempstead Highway (713-460-3287)
- July 18<sup>th</sup>** **TTR Monthly Meeting** at the Delerys' (Note: this is the third Saturday!)
- August 8<sup>th</sup>** **TTR Monthly Meeting** at the Carters'
- Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>** **TTR Monthly Meeting** at the Kirsis'
- Sep. 30 - Oct. 4** **2009 VTR Convention**, San Luis Obispo, California (start planning now)

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The breakfast group gathers at 8:00 a.m. and orders breakfast at 8:30 a.m. Because locations may change (especially for breakfast), always check our website the day before the event: [www.TexasTriumphRegister.org](http://www.TexasTriumphRegister.org).

## CLASSIFIEDS

Noncommercial classified ads are free to members and inexpensive for everyone else! Just \$30 per ad for six issues and six months on the web site. Photos run as space available. (Ads will run for the full term unless cancelled in writing.) Service ads run until cancelled, as space available.

### **For Sale:**

**Miscellaneous parts** for sale, most from post-60000 TR3A: front cowl, \$25; 3 sets of doors, \$25/pair; body tub, \$75; boot lid, \$75; 2 bonnets, \$50 each; 1 set fenders, \$100-\$150; differential, \$50; gas tank, \$30; 4-5 sets of side screen frames for rebuilds, \$25/set; many other parts, stanchions, suspension, interior pieces available. Contact Randy DeRuiter (832-231-3335), [deruiterville@hotmail.com](mailto:deruiterville@hotmail.com), or check out photos on his website: <http://s159.photobucket.com/albums/t145/deruiterville/TR3A%20misc%20parts/?start=all>. TTR member.

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The Hados: Mike, Mike, and Marie



### ***And finally ...***

It's not often that a person at my stage in life has the pleasure of meeting the parent of a friend. Somewhere along the way, I failed to notice that my peer group was starting to lose their parents. So it was always a joy to spend time with Mike Hado's Dad whenever he made it to one of our meetings. He always had a smile on his face ... and, ok, he thought my deviled eggs were wonderful ...

Mr. Hado passed away last week. He was 88, a veteran of WWII, and, according to Mike, it was his Dad's '67 MGBGT that got Mike hooked on British sports cars.

I know the Hado family will miss him a lot, but so will a whole bunch of us who enjoyed the time we spent with him.

### ***About Retirement ...***

I have been retired for two weeks now and I think it's going to be just fine. The only complaint I have so far is the loss of paid vacations and holidays. Memorial Day just didn't have that "found time" feel it used to have ...

***Diane Parker***



## Texas Triumph Register All-Purpose Membership Form

The TTR meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month. For more information, contact Mike Hado (281.807.4780). We look forward to meeting you!

Check one:     New Membership                       Renewal                       Update

Member's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
    Birthday (month/day) \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
    Birthday (month/day) \_\_\_\_\_

Street (or Mailing) Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Triumph ownership is not a prerequisite for membership; however, if you do own any Triumphs, please tell us about them:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Model/Color/Condition*</u>	<u>Commission (serial) No.</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

O = original, R = restored, B = being restored (or will be), P = parts car.

Dues: **\$30 per year per family**. Make check payable to the Texas Triumph Register (P.O. Box 40847, Houston, TX 77240-0847). Your cancelled check is your receipt.