

Established  
1977



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Volume 24 Number 8

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May, 2001

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Business and/or social meetings are held monthly close to the middle of the month. Please refer to newsletter for the time and location.

## On The Mark

I wish I could say how excited I was to be sitting in front of the computer writing this article. I can't lie, this is killing me. Sherry and I just returned from vacation the other day. You'll have to excuse me if this article doesn't get it but I'm still in vacation mode. Worst yet is going to be Monday morning and the first day back to work after a week off. Before I left I made sure everybody in the office was aware I would be away, but I'm sure my phone is not going to stop ringing on Monday and I'm sure everything I have been working on has come to a screeching halt without me there pushing. Not to mention the emails. What did we do before we had email? However, the vacation was wonderful.

Sherry and I spent a wonderful week on Sanibel Island on the Gulf side of Florida. We did absolutely nothing the entire week. The biggest decision of the day was where we were going to eat dinner. We sat on the beach all day, I got caught up on my car magazines and Sherry scoured the beach for seashells and read her book. Sherry and I were talking about maybe next year we would drive the TR6 down instead of flying and renting one of those 4 cylinder Ford Mustang convertibles. It would be an interesting trip and we would need more than a week but it would be fun. It would however be easier if I just hit the lotto then it wouldn't matter how long it takes. This working for a living is really getting old. But back to reality. The weather is cooperating and the driving season is just getting started and the WPTA has several events to get you out in your car. The first, is most appropriate, the annual Tune up Clinic. But first let's review last month.

April was pretty quiet for the WPTA. It wasn't a total loss however thanks for Fred Williams. Fred came up with a quick informal get together at the Crow's Nest. Thanks Fred for stepping up and helping out. The only bad thing, I was out of town April 21st and missed the event. I was just getting started planning how I was going to spend the entire week on the beach. I got a message from Fred Williams that there was a nice turnout. Sorry I missed it. Hopefully Fred will write a paragraph or two about the event.

First up this month is our annual Tune Up Clinic. This newsletter may be coming out after the Clinic but just a reminder to all if it makes it out before that, the Clinic is May 5th at Roy Millers Shop in Sharpsburg. Thanks to Doug Foyle for sponsoring this event again and a special thank you to Roy Miller for allowing us the use of his garage, Scott Schober for donating the oil, and John Swauger and TRF for delivering the parts. See last month's newsletter for a map. It is always a good time. If you are a new member it is a good way to meet people and pick the brains of the people who have already experienced the same miss-fire or had that funny cluck in their transmission. Or just come out and hang around drink beer; we always send out for lunch.

I remember my first turn up clinic, I'm sure I have told this story to many of you before but here it is again. It was 1989;

I had just the previous summer purchased my TR6 and became a WPTA member. I knew right away the TR6 needed a new clutch. At a meeting in early spring of that year I mentioned to Jim Shaw that I needed to change out the clutch. The morning of the Clinic I showed up with a clutch and before I knew what was happening Jim Shaw, Dave Antis, and Dan Greene had the car up on jack stands and all three of them were under my car unbolting this and that and before to long we were pulling the transmission out. I had never met any of them besides Jim Shaw previous to that. I'll never forget that, that is one of my best WPTA memories. That is what the WPTA is all about. People helping out. So if you get a chance stop out to lend a hand or just hang out and see that everybody else is working on but either way I hope to see you there.

Also this month we have scheduled a General Business Meeting. However I am sorry to say that I am canceling the May 9th meeting. I still have not been able to make arrangements for a new meeting location. I have made several phone calls but the same old problem. Most places want a guarantee on meals or want to rent us a room at a premium. I haven't given up yet. All we need is a place that will let us order off the menu and give us 30-40 minutes for a meeting. I talked to a manager at one place and he was going to check with the owner to see if my idea will work for them. Maybe we need a clubhouse? So again the May 9th meeting is canceled, but come on out to the Tune Up Clinic and we can maybe talk club business if anybody has anything to discuss.

Coming up later this month is the Import Carlisle weekend. It begins May 18th and ends May 20th. If you haven't reserved your room yet you may be out of luck. This is a weekend you have to experience to appreciate. It is a weekend of greasy car parts, beer drinking, and male bonding. If you can't make it out for the whole weekend maybe stop out for a Saturday afternoon. Hope to see you there.

Also, early next month we have Wil and Linda Schweitzer's Run to New Philadelphia on June 2nd. There is an article in this month's newsletter describing the event and it sounds great. Mark your calendars.

As for my projects not much has happened. I am going to be hard pressed to get the transmission into the TR6 for the Tune Up Clinic. That might be a good excuse to get the TR3 out of storage and bring it out for the day. The car has been stored now for about 3 years and the one time I had to move it the damn thing started right up. It also had good brake and clutch pedal. It's a shame the car is parked but the engine is getting real soft and I'm afraid to take it to far, but this maybe the perfect event to get it out. Sounds like a plan. See ya there.

**Quote of the Month**  
**You can't never have too  
much spare s--t!**

## Triumphs In Competition: The Spitfires

By Bruce Stutzman

In 1963, the factory decided to use the new Spitfires for their works rally team and to prepare Spitfires for a return to Le Mans.

Development began on four Spitfire racecars and five rally cars to compete in the 1964 Le Mans race and Alpine Rally. After considerable effort they successfully developed 100 reliable horses at 7000 rpm's from the 1.1 liter engines. The transmissions of course could not handle 100 hp so they used the TR4 gearboxes in the racecars and Vitesse gearboxes in the rally cars. The engines were almost impossible to start however. The Lucas starter wasn't up to the job.

The racecars had Aluminum bodies with faired headlights. They were fitted with fiberglass fastback tops that made them look like the not yet conceived GT6. The only solution the factory had for the rear swing axles tucking under at speed was to stiffen the rear spring. This was a substantial improvement but it just postponed the inevitable ill handling.

Three Spitfires were entered in the 1964 Le Mans race. Although they were totally reliable reaching a speed of 134mph only one car finished. Three Spits were also entered in the 1964 Tour de France. One of the cars won its class and finished 5th in the GT category. Two of the rally Spits entered the 1964 Geneva Rally and were outstanding, finishing 1st in class, 1st in the GT category and winning the team prize.

By 1965 the racing Spitfires had undergone additional development and were now even lighter at about 1500 lbs. The weight saving came from use of a lighter gearbox (the prototype built for the up coming GT6), smaller rear brakes, a thinner gauge chassis and an aluminum cylinder head.

The rally cars received a 1300cc engine that developed 117 hp at 7000 rpm. A team of three Spitfires was sent to Sebring for Kas Kastner to race. They finished 2nd and 3rd in class behind a special bodied MG midget.

A four-car team entered the Le Mans 24-hour race in June 1965, With their 1100 cc engines now producing 109 hp, they finished 13th and 14th overall and 1st and 2nd in class.

In July, the rally cars with their 1300 cc engines finished 1st and 2nd in class in the Alpine Rally.

1965 was the end of the factory Spitfires; they switched entirely to using sedans, as did most factory teams.

The limiting factor in the performance of the Spitfires was always the ill handling caused by the swing axle rear suspension. The factory knew this but, afterall, the Spit was an entry-level low priced sports car.

The factory actually did develop a proper Lotus Elan type MacPherson strut IRS that saw its way onto a racing Spit in 1966. This car was prepared by the factory for independent racer Bill Bradley. Bradley's car was unbeatable winning its class fourteen out of eighteen races until it was destroyed in a wreck. By the end of the 1966 season Bradley held the lap record at most of the English racetracks.

In the U.S. the Spits became extremely popular in SCCA racing. They were campaigned by Group 44 and by several other very successful racers including Lee Mueller, Rick Cline and Carl Swanson. The 1100 cc cars ran in G production while the 1300 cc ran in 4 and later the 1500 cc cars ran in F production. The battles between Spits and Sprites and Midgets are legend and still subject to heated debates over which cars were faster. A good example of these battles was the 1972 SCCA runoffs when a Spit won G production and a Midget won F production.

Kas Kastner successfully tamed the rear swing axles by using a camber compensator.

Next issue the 6 cylinder cars.

## The answer to one of life's great mysteries!

I haven't heard anyone explain this as well as the all-wise Cliff Clavin, on the sitcom Cheers. One afternoon at Cheers, Cliff Clavin was explaining the Buffalo Theory to his buddy Norm... Well ya see Norm, it's like this... A herd of buffalo can only move as fast as the slowest buffalo. And when the herd is hunted, it is the slowest and weakest ones at the back that are killed first. This natural selection is good for the herd as a whole, because the general speed and health of the whole group keeps improving by the regular killing of the weakest members.

In much the same way, the human brain can only operate as fast as the slowest brain cells. Excessive intake of alcohol, as we all know, kills brain cells, but naturally it attacks the slowest and weakest brain cells first. In this way, regular consumption of beer eliminates the weaker brain cells, making the brain a faster and more efficient machine. That's why you always feel smarter after a few beers.



1965 Sebring Spitfire



1964 Tour de France



Kastner Brophy SCCA Spitfire

# Run To New Philadelphia

by Wil Schweitzer

Saturday, June 2nd, is the date for our first driving event for this year. The run will leave from Wil and Linda Schweitzer's home in Hickory at 10:30 A.M. Arrive early and enjoy some of Linda's baked goodies, orange juice, and coffee. We will take about a ninety minute drive to Tappan Lake for lunch, at about 12 noon. After lunch, a short drive will bring us to Schoenbrunn Village in New Philadelphia, for the 2 P.M. tour. When we are finished with our visit with history, we can take a short drive to an Amish winery and cheese house, or if pressed for time, drive directly to Bluebird Farm Estate in Carrollton, Ohio, for dinner. Check out Bluebird Farm on the web at [www.eohio.net/bluebird](http://www.eohio.net/bluebird). Carrollton is along the route home, although a different route than we will take going to New Philadelphia. Dinner is scheduled for 5:30 P.M., which should allow almost everyone to reach their home before dark. The price for dinner is \$17.00 (includes tax and tip) per person, by reservation. Send your check, made payable to WPTA, to Wil Schweitzer, 20 Grandview Ave., Hickory, PA 15340. Please include a note with your choice of dinner entree, grilled salmon or 6 oz. fillet Mignon. Please send your reservation NOW! Reservation deadline is May 19th. Reservations are necessary only for the dinner, not the other parts of the tour. Everyone is welcome to take part in any or all parts of this event. If you only want a morning run, drive to Hickory for the baked goodies and a little socializing with other WPTA members. If all day is too long, return home after lunch or after the Schoenbrunn Village tour. Just be there!!!!

## Evening Road Ralleye, May 5th

On Saturday, May 5th, the Hickory Lions Club will hold a puzzle (fun) rally

leaving from the Village Green Golf Course on Route 18, Hickory, PA. First car off at 6:45 P.M. Cost of \$10.00 per person includes a drink and hors-d'oeuvres after the rally. Four persons per car (difficult in most Triumphs) is okay. Bring a flashlight, umbrella, and spatula. Why, I have no idea. If interested in doing an early dinner in Hickory, call Wil Schweitzer at (724) 356-7341.



**"A Wedding Under The Covered Bridge"**

In honour of Gary Fredo and Linda Siger's upcoming wedding, The WPTA wishes them many Triumph moments! This photo was taken by Bill Kern on last year's fall leaf tour.

## THE TRIUMPH CHRONICLES:

# Clutch Disengagement Problems

by Mort Binstock

My Triumph chronicles continue! I've owned my TR-6 since new, having purchased it from A & L Motors in July of 1973. My TR has been a good and fun car over the years. I enjoy owning and driving it. This Chronicle covers the diagnosis and repair of my recent clutch disengagement problem.

After many years of fun driving, my Triumph lost its fun last summer because of difficulty disengaging the clutch. The clutch no longer fully disengaged.

Symptoms included difficulty shifting, hard to get into first when the traffic light changed, and grinding going into reverse. Difficulty shifting was not consistent, sometimes shifting was normal, sometimes not, mostly difficult. It was hard for me to pin down the problem from the using the symptoms as clues.

I had replaced the clutch about 5 years ago installing the Roadster Factory's Magic clutch. I was hoping my problems were not with the clutch, changing a clutch is most tedious.

I had read plus overheard conversations that TR's clutch disengagement at best is marginal. I also heard that it is difficult to get all the air bled from the clutch hydraulics. Some stories included TR owners spending all day bleeding the clutch before getting it to work. My problems appeared similar to air in the hydraulics, however it did not always worsen as the car became hot. Difficulties appeared to be temperature related, but not always. Very perplexing!

Perhaps this article's experiences will shed light on disengagement problems to provide an easy diagnosis and solution for others. My initial troubleshooting last summer included carefully bleeding the hydraulics. I even disassembled the master cylinder to make sure that its vent valve worked.

After all this work, clutch disengagement remained marginal, unpredictable, and unsatisfactory. I put my car away for the winter, most unhappy with it and with my inability to repair its difficult shifting. I was not looking forward to the 2001 driving season. Careful examination this spring revealed the problem, the slave cylinder's self adjuster. Normally a weak spring in the slave cylinder, when the clutch pedal is totally up, pushes the slave piston rearward. This rearward piston movement takes up all slack in the clutch mechanics including compensation for wear.

My slave piston's self adjuster's operation was lazy. It would either not take up the slack or do so too slowly. It would not take up the slack resulting from a normal clutch engagement. Any subsequent disengagement started out with too much play in the mechanical linkage to prevent a complete disengagement.

Nothing was binding, just little to no self adjustment. I could rock the clutch lever back and forth (not much) & the slave just would not take up the slack.

Replacing or rebuilding the slave fortunately for me, is no big deal and I will do so some day. However, after finding the problem, I was in no hurry to break the hydraulic seal then have to refill and bleed the hydraulics. Also, before proceeding further, I wanted confirmation that this was truly my problem.

I took the quick easy way out adding an external very weak carburetor spring. I connected this spring between the clutch lever (at the slave connection) & the car frame. No more slack! The clutch slave quickly and reliably, but gently moved rearward. Next, testing actual driveability.

The clutch now works great!! My TR is fun to drive again!

I will eventually dismantle & repair the slave, reporting on what I find. I am curious why its self adjusting operation is lazy.

At this moment however, I am curious to learn of this article's readers experience with dragging clutches, hydraulic bleeding tips, and self adjuster problems. Learning from each others experiences will help us all keep our TR's on the road longer.

Here is to a great summer of trouble free driving!

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# WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA TRIUMPH ASSOCIATION

647 Royce Avenue, Pittsburgh PA 15243

A CHAPTER OF THE VINTAGE TRIUMPH REGISTER  
A CENTER OF THE TRIUMPH REGISTER OF AMERICA

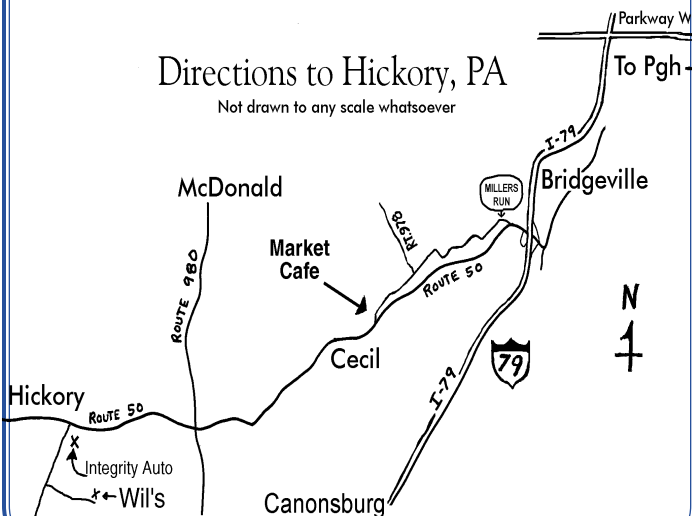
**May, 2001  
Issue of the  
Dzus Dnuz**

**Saturday, June 2, 2001**

## Run to New Philadelphia

Directions to Hickory, PA

Not drawn to any scale whatsoever



## ~WPTA~ Calendar of Events

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>May 5</b>     | <b>Tune Up Clinic</b>                   |
| <b>May ??</b>    | <b>Spring Drive In</b>                  |
|                  | The Roadster Factory                    |
| <b>May 18-20</b> | <b>Import Carlisle,</b>                 |
|                  | Parts sales: Jim Shaw 412-262-3878      |
| <b>May 28</b>    | <b>Newsletter Meeting,</b>              |
|                  | 5pm-Typecraft/6pm-Michael s Pizza Bar   |
| <b>June 2</b>    | <b>Run to New Philadelphia</b>          |
|                  | Wil and Linda Schweitzer 1-724-356-7341 |
| <b>June 25</b>   | <b>Newsletter Meeting,</b>              |
|                  | 5pm-Typecraft/6pm-Michael s Pizza Bar   |
| <b>July 7</b>    | <b>Washington Tour</b>                  |
|                  | MG Club                                 |
| <b>July 21</b>   | <b>British Car Day,</b>                 |
|                  | Schenely Park,                          |
| <b>July 21</b>   | <b>Night Owl Rally</b>                  |
|                  | Mark D. Phillips                        |
| <b>July 30</b>   | <b>Newsletter Meeting,</b>              |
|                  | 5pm-Typecraft/6pm-Michael s Pizza Bar   |

## ~ Of Other Interest ~

- |                   |                                |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>June 24</b>    | <b>British Car Day</b>         |
|                   | Bowie Maryland                 |
| <b>June ??</b>    | <b>Pittsburgh Parts-A-Rama</b> |
| <b>June 21-24</b> | <b>TRA</b>                     |
| <b>June 22nd</b>  | <b>Vintage Races Mid Ohio</b>  |