

July / August 2018



Pacific Tiger Club Newsletter

Rootes of the Pacific Northwest



The lucky owner of a 1926 Bentley won this exquisite trophy at the Western Washington ABFM. See inside for more photos.

Celebrate the peak of summer driving with a leisurely cruise from Marysville to the tiny hamlet of La Conner on the scenic Swinomish Channel.

We'll meet at the Smokey Point Rest Area off northbound I-5, just north of Marysville. Tour guides Bill & Glenda Clemans will hold a drivers meeting at 9:45, handing out driving directions and passes to the La Conner city parking lot.

Check the Club Calendar for more important details, including lunch RSVP instructions.

See you there!

Club Officers

President: Ed Erickson
21509 48th Court So.
Kent, WA 98032
v13311@yahoo.com

VP/Newsletter Dick Sanders
4239 S. 261st So.
Kent, WA 98043
253-332-0253
RootesRooter@aol.com

Secretary: Jim Clark
17711 10th Ave NW
Shoreline, WA 98177
206-714-2653

Treasurer: Susan Pray
5775 Mutiny Bay Rd.
Freeland, 98249.
206-276-9634
Susanjpray@gmail.com

Committee Chairpersons

Membership: Dan Kuenzi
1130 Spring Lane
Centralia, WA 98531
509-952-7120
shelbycuda@hotmail.com

Historians: Dave Dunn / Dan Kuenzi

Renewing your membership?

Members are asked to send all membership checks and correspondence to:

*Pacific Tiger Club
c/o Dan Kuenzi
1130 Spring Lane
Centralia, WA 98531*

*509-952-7120
shelbycuda@hotmail.com
Annual Membership Dues: \$32.00 (US funds).
Make checks payable to: Pacific Tiger Club.*

PTC Club Events

Aug 25 Tour to La Conner, WA - 10 am

PTC Cruise to La Conner for Lunch - Led by Bill and Glenda Clemans:

We will gather at the Smokey Point rest area on I-5 north to start the drive. Please arrive at the rest stop no later than 9:45 am as we will have a drivers meeting before a 10:00 am departure. A turn-by-turn directions sheet and a parking pass will be handed out. This should be a very pleasant drive in top-down weather taking primarily back roads to the beautiful little town of La Conner with all sorts of touristy shops, ice cream stores, and waterfront boardwalks.

If you intend to participate in the Pacific Tiger Club La Conner drive August 25th, please RSVP no later than August 23rd to Bill and Glenda Clemans. at bgsnamelc@comcast.net or call (360) 572-0405 or (509) 430-0641. State the number in your party so we may confirm a number for our 12:00 noon reservation at the Waterfront Cafe in La Conner. Leave a message if no answer.

See you at the Smokey Point rest stop!

Sept 9 "Fender Bender" show at American Car Museum (aka LeMays) in Tacoma

A summer-ending show on the lawn adjacent to ACM.

Oct 13 PTC Annual General Meeting ("AGM")

Griots Garage in Tacoma. 11-2 Their retro diner is always a hit, plus lots of exotic cars on display in the showroom.

Nov 17 – Tour of Boeing's Everett Plant

Details TBA

Sunbeam Events

Rootes United XXXVII – Sept 14-17, 2018

North Hempstead, Long Island, NY

Hosted by Tigers East/Alpines East. Go to TEAE.org for more info

British Events

Portland All-British Field Meet – Sept 9-11

A week later than normal, as Portland International Raceway will be hosting the return of Indy Car racing over Labor Day Weekend. Concours, Funkhana, autoslalom, Land Rover off-road excursions. And SOVREN vintage races, too!

REBIRTH OF THE FREZZA TIGER

Part 2 - story & photos by Mark Sorsdahl

When Pacific Tiger Club published the Frezza Tiger article last fall, the final page of the newsletter showed the car at the 1966 NHRA Pomona Winter Nationals. One day in a book store, I picked up a copy of Hot Rod magazine's annual publication called Hot Rod Deluxe. The cover read: 175 Amazing Vintage Photos. Turning the pages, I must admit I was secretly hoping to find a picture of the Frezza



Tiger in action. When I reached pages 70-71 of the August 2013 issue and found the Frezza Tiger depicted near the center of a giant two-page spread, I almost fell out of my chair! Running out to the parking lot, I retrieved a magnifying glass to confirm Oregon plate MAG 782. I figured the odds of discovering the historic photograph 47 years later were astronomical. Needless to say, I bought out the store's inventory of Hot Rod Deluxe.

[At the end of Rebirth - Part 1, we found out that Dave Frezza, wanting to keep both front tires on the ground as long as possible coming off the line, had compensated for body flex by fitting a stock Sunbeam 13" rim to one side and a 15" Hillman rim on the other. - Ed.]

I still need to study and calculate the rotational effects of the engine and chassis in order to determine which side of the car required a significantly larger diameter Traction Master bar. The one remaining Traction Master bar, already removed from the car, was bent to destruction. A lot was happening during the hard drag launches and examination of the transmission output shaft reveals severe spline damage at the driveshaft yoke mating region. The transmission gears and synchronizers appear to be in better condition than one would think. The transmission serial number is HEH E 010313 as supplied to B9470528 at the factory. Much welding and reinforcement work from the drag racing period is present about the leaf spring front eye mounts.

Room for the 15 inch diameter racing slicks was made by radius work of the rear wheel well openings and welding in 1955-'57 Chevrolet Nomad rear wheel fender arches. This change was made upon entry to the NHRA B-Modified/Sports class. As a benefit of his drag racing success, Frezza received free Casler brand drag slicks from Casler Tire Company

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located at 1004 W. Brooks, Ontario, CA. The company must have been proud of their product, advertised in-period as "Casler Cheater Slicks."

For drag race use, the rear axle of the Frezza Tiger utilized a Studebaker Twin-Track position-traction unit with 4.11:1 gearing. Rebuilding of the rear axle assembly and transmission is set to begin by October, 2018.

Initially, the Frezza Tiger used factory shifter linkage at the drag strip. One day, a representative from P&G Tools came to Woodburn drag strip and asked Frezza for permission to take measurements in order for the company to manufacture P&G shifter linkage for Sunbeam Tiger. Dave obliged and the company subsequently produced units for Tiger and one was installed on the Frezza drag car. The P&G shifter linkage and shifter handle was set up for 1st, 2nd and 3rd gears only, operating in a straight front to rear shift pattern.

The Frezza Tiger in the B-Modified/Sports period was normally aspirated. Breathing during the C-Modified/Sports period, culminating in the NHRA Division 7 Championship was accomplished by Weber 48 IDA induction. Noted Shelby Cobra restorer Mike McCluskey of Torrance, California finished rebuilding the Weber carburetors to drag race specification about 1 ½ years ago. A Weber COBRA letter intake manifold from Shelby American was hand-stamped at the base oppo-



Sizing the Weber setup for installation, using a spare manifold



The Weber COBRA intake manifold, stamped on the base by Dave Frezza.

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site the lifter valley by Dave Frezza in mid-1967. Frezza still has the original stamp set. The intake was separated from the Frezza Tiger about 40 years ago and I was fortunate to track the piece down and reunite it with the car. The manifold retains the rare original twin pedestal

center-pull carburetor linkage.

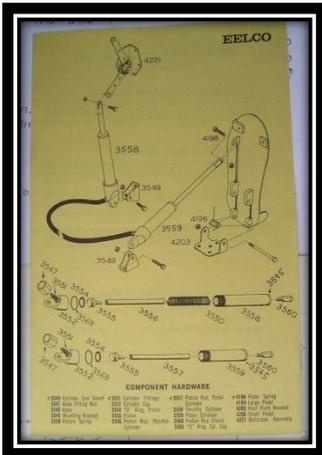
A hydraulic throttle linkage was utilized on the Frezza Tiger in conjunction with the Weber 48 IDAs. Hydraulic throttles have long been used on boats and dragsters largely for their ability to negotiate distance and bends. The original hydraulic linkage for the Frezza Tiger had been lost to the winds of time, but recently I was able to find an excellent used Moon hydraulic throttle and NOS bell crank that had been hanging on

the wall of a hot-rodder's garage in California. What was thought to be the functional equivalent of the Holy Grail was actually tracked down in about 3 days with much luck. The Moon hydraulic throttle still works, although the neoprene lines have slight external cracking and will need to be renewed. Frezza gave me the original box and schematic diagrams (see below) for his hydraulic throttle actually made by

Eelco, a speed equipment company that supplied Moon.

A Moon 2.5 gallon fuel tank mounted on the trunk floor of the Frezza Tiger supplied fuel to a Bendix Blue Top fuel pump. The original SU

fuel pump was found to produce insufficient volume to supply the thirsty Webers. I was puzzled at one point when the Moon fuel tank mounting brackets did not seem to match the four holes drilled on the trunk floor. Tom Black had one of his friends who owned several Moon tanks come down to the shop and he pointed out that the tank brackets fit if mounted longi-



The original Eelco hydraulic throttle schematic, among the many racing artifacts saved by Dave Frezza

case, as he remembers playing around with milk jugs to see how fuel sloshed under load, stating that the fuel must have stayed around the outlet port longer, avoiding starvation.

Prior to hitting the Weber carburetors, fuel for the Frezza Tiger was routed through a Lucas electric windshield washer bottle mounted just ahead of the passenger side firewall. In-period, the brake booster lower mounting bracket was reinforced for this purpose. The large glass reservoir was filled with dry ice to give the fuel a dense charge prior to combustion, an old drag racer trick. Rootes aficionado John Green of Chatsworth, CA provided a NOS Lucas electric windshield washer still in the original box with 9/64 date code.

During the drag racing period, circa 1966, the Frezza Tiger's original Lucas 12-volt battery was eventually replaced with a Sears Die-Hard unit when the Lucas battery succumbed to use.

tudinally. I asked Dave Frezza about this and he said that must have been the

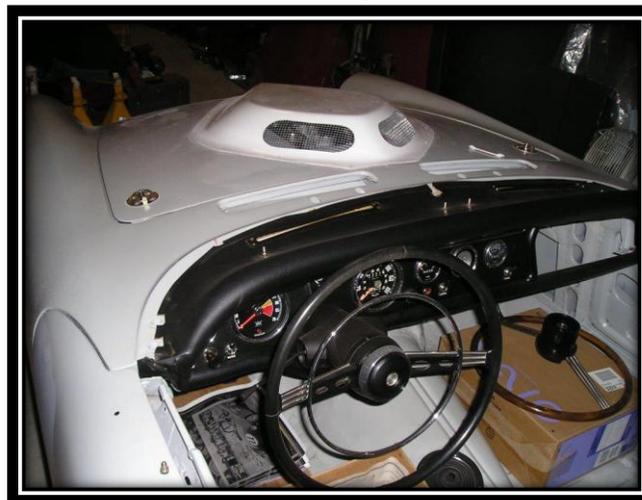
The driver seat of the Frezza Tiger during the drag racing period with the exception of I-Stock class was obtained from a local bowling alley. For years, I searched high and low for the right kind of bowling alley seat without success. One day, my son Jeff Sorsdahl called and informed me that while doing a roof / gutter job that he had spotted a large stash of vintage bowling alley seats stacked outside behind an antique store in the Sellwood district of Portland. An inquiry to the proprietor resulted in the free acquisition of nearly all of the seats. The bakelite seats feature cast characters on the underside reading: BORG-WARNER FIBERMOLD CORPORATION 2321 Abalone Avenue, Torrance, California. Pat. Pend. 500S Shell FIBERMOLD CORP. Gardena, CA. When I showed photos of the seat(s) to Dave Frezza, he said: "That looks like the one."

A LAT-7 scattershield with cast TIGER letters in the spot typically reading COBRA on the Shelby American-supplied pieces was used on the Frezza Tiger during the initial drag race period. The Tiger scattershield was used with the original 5-bolt 260. Later, when the 260 gave up, a 6-bolt HP 289 factory service replacement engine was installed, coupled to a 6-bolt Cobra scattershield.

Only 25 LAT-7 Tiger scattershields were ever produced, all at a foundry in South Africa contracted by Carroll Shelby.

I spoke with former Shelby American Crew Chief and

GT40 program veteran Phil Henny who confirmed that a South Africa foundry was used by Carroll Shelby. Mr. Henny advised Jim Price Performance was also involved with the South Africa foundry operation. Dave Frezza said his



A rear view of the hood scoop. This Mk I wasn't quite early enough to have a black dash from the factory. It'll be replaced.

LAT-7 scattershield was ordered by his sponsor, Fisher Motors of Portland, Oregon. STOA Secretary Matthew Taylor has a Rootes sales memo by way of Ian Garrad that names the original purchasers of the Tiger LAT-7 scattershields. Matthew is the son of Terry Taylor, owner of the famous Chittenden drag Tiger. Matthew, who has done much to advance the knowledge of Tiger drag racing history, told me an interesting fact that I was previously unaware of: The three known important Tiger drag cars, operated by Gordon Chittenden, Stan Peterson and Dave Frezza are all Rootes #86, Forest Green.

Saving weight has always been of utmost consideration in drag cars and after the I-stock period, the Frezza Tiger was no exception. The interior was gutted, including non-essential instruments. Weight was also cut via firewall modification allowing Weber 48 IDA induction, rapid engine/transmission removal and unfettered cylinder head access. The fan shroud, generator and even the starter motor were removed for weight saving purpose. Frezza said he would ask some of the fellas in the staging lanes to give him a push start as he approached the line. Frezza told me push vehicles seen in period photographs were actually used to assist drag cars to the line and down the return road as typically, only enough fuel was carried aboard competitive cars for the actual drag run. Less time on expensive purpose-built race engines, too. This will come as a surprise to many and certainly me, but for weight reduction, the Frezza Tiger in championship form utilized no front brake calipers or rotors. Imagine having to haul down a speeding Tiger at the end of the quarter mile with only the factory drum brakes!

From an early magazine article believed to have been published by Road and Track or Car and Driver, Frezza learned of a 292 cubic inch Ford truck crankshaft swap that would provide the advantage of a forged steel crankshaft vs. the cast iron crankshaft standard in the High Performance 289. This change was made to the Frezza Tiger for B-Modified/Sports class. I am looking for the actual magazine article and have found mention of it by others in contemporary hot rod forums. I'm also looking for in-period Super 8 home movie documentation of the Frezza Tiger in competition. A proverbial needle in the haystack, but I have a feeling the



Dave Frezza poses with his old dragster/road racer Tiger, still in primer in 2010 at the Portland ABFM.

footage is out there somewhere.

For some, there is nothing more exciting than bringing an old race car back to life. It is exhilarating to work on this machine from which history emanates.

The Frezza Tiger truly falls into the

fabled category of automobile classified ads that pro-

claim: “used only for short trips on weekends.” I have found that in order to conduct a proper restoration that a person must have one foot planted in the future and one foot in the past. It reminds me of a bumper sticker that I once observed in a race paddock: “Those who live in the past are doomed to enjoy it.

[Personal business affairs have put Sorsdahl's restoration on hiatus for the rest of the summer but he promises to dive back into it ASAP. We look forward to reading the next installment as the Frezza Tiger inches closer to its rebirth for the delight of Tiger enthusiasts everywhere.]

PRESIDENT'S CORNER



by *Ed Erickson*

As we enter August, our club continues to stage successful events. In June, our club had a tech session and meeting in Hansville, WA at the new residence of Dave and Anita Dunn. Hansville has seemingly started to challenge other areas as the center of the Rootes world in the Pacific Northwest. Besides the Dunn's, Larry & Linda Atkisson and Bob & Nancy Bennion previously moved to this small and beautiful hamlet.

Dave and Anita put on a great event with a nice lunch and an impressive tour of Dave's garage. He has two lifts, a "clean room," tools and an assortment of Rootes parts to accompany his three Tigers. We were all impressed. Larry Atkisson, Dave's neighbor, educated our group on what to look for under our cars to prevent brake problems and correct other potential safety issues.

Our next event was held on July 21 at the ABFM at St. Edward State Park near Juanita. The organizers have streamlined the proceedings to make it run more efficiently and it seems to be working. The people's choice winners in the Alpine class were Bill and Glenda Clemens with their Series II (1st) Ed Erickson, Series V (2nd) and Jeff and Kaylie Keyser, Series II (3rd). Tiger winners were Eric Heuscher, Mk1, (1st), Don and Joyce Joy, Mk1 (2nd) and Paul and Carmela Sanders, Mk1 (3rd) Budd Bennion (who else?) picked the award for nicest Rootes specialty vehicle with his '59 Hillman Husky.

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Our next event will be a driving tour from the Marysville area west to Puget Sound, and then north to our destination in LaConner—then lunch and sightseeing on your own. This should be a comfortable drive over nice roads with beautiful views. Bill and Glenda Clemons will lead the group. Further information will come your way via email soon.

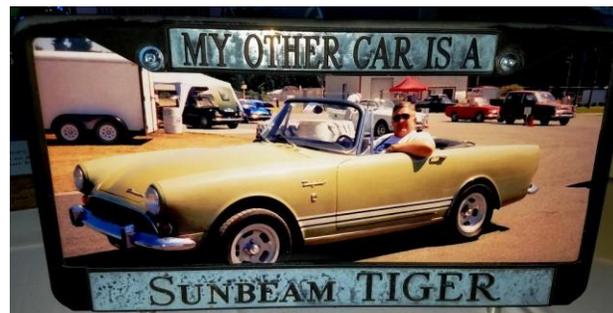
We'll be at the ACA Museum in Tacoma in September, and our annual general meeting will be held at Griot's Garage, also in Tacoma, in October. In November, a tour of the Boeing plant at Paine Field is scheduled. Info will be sent to you about these events.

Our season is in full swing. We look forward to your attendance at any and all of our scheduled events. See you soon. **PTC**

Edward R. Wright, 72

One of PTC's longest-term members, Ed Wright, passed away June 17. He is survived by his wife, Dawn, two sons and two daughters.

At his service on August 9, he was described as "loud," "talkative" and "always had to have to



A display at Ed's memorial service.

the last word." "We learned to bring extra snacks and a sweater to our meetings because Ed would keep us there all night." And this was from his *family, friends and business clients* who knew him and loved him. They could say all these things because we all knew that beneath all the bombast was a caring soul.

He will be missed.

-Dick Sanders



Veep! Beep!

by Dick Sanders

The May tour to Fall City was a heck of a lotta fun. Ed Erickson chose a nice variety of roads, even if we didn't end up taking all of them. The camaraderie and food at The Roadhouse was excellent.

Just as memorable was the trip home in the Alpine. Maybe it was the nice spring weather, but the reactions of fellow motorists ran the gamut. Thumbs-up abounded. Another typical reaction, not sought after, came from the fellow who leaned way out his window to ask if it was "a Tiger with the V-8." My answer, "No, it's an Alpine with the 4-banger" elicited a sympathetic "Ohhhh...." response in a tone usually reserved for news that your favorite pet had passed away. Almost reaching home came the strangest encounter. Slowing for a stop light, I could see an older-model BMW faaaast approaching me from the rear. He braked at the last moment and stopped with German efficiency. The driver, bedecked in dreadlocks, with Jamaican-flag colored garb and dash ornaments, then started shouting something unintelligible.



At first I thought it was directed at the SUV next to me with its thundering hip hop bass that threatened to shake the bumpers off my car. He shouted again and I quickly realized it was *me* he was trying get to the attention of. "Hey, man!" he said in a distinctive Jamaican accent. "I thought it was a TRI-umph. Nice SUNNNBEAM, man!"

It was earlier, on 405, that I got the most prolonged looks from the passengers in one vehicle. It was absolutely classic. It's happened several times before, when I used to drive to

Portland regularly. With one eye in the mirror I watched the all-too familiar gestures and conversation play out. Long ago I wrote down the drama and dialogue I imagined might be taking place. Here it is again, slightly updated:

I was going 60 mph in the right lane, so naturally I was being passed by 90 percent of the traffic on the freeway. I glanced in the mirror and saw a dark blue Dodge Caravan slowly gaining on me in the next lane. The husband was wearing a Starbucks T-shirt behind the wheel and appeared to be talking constantly.

"So Brady might have more Super Bowls rings, but Wilson is still a better quarterback," he droaned on. "Remember the play he made against the Rams ...?" The wife groaned silently to herself, leaning her head against the passenger window, wondering when he would grow exhausted of torturing her with his football fables. But she knew full well that even if he ran out of steam talking football, then it would be on to solving the Mariners' pitching problems, or the Sounders' scoring woes. Then something caught her eye.

"Look at that little yellow car," she said, sitting up, looking towards the open two-seater and pointing. "It's kinda cute."

"Yeah, cute," he disdainfully snorted. She hated that superior tone even more than his sports stories.

"But what is it?"

He leaned slightly forward over the wheel as the chrome letters on the trunk lid came into

view. His mind sprang into action. A distant childhood memory, plus that Motor Trend subscription his father-in-law had given him several Christmases ago was finally going to pay off. His father-in-law was always trying to “man him up,” whatever the heck that meant. Did the old man really think he knew nothing about cars? Hadn't he changed a spark plug once in shop class?



“It’s a Sunbeam Tiger. Boy, you hardly see those on the road anymore.”

“What’s so special?” she quizzed.

“They have a V-8.”

“In THAT little car?”

He knew he had her hooked so he decided to impress her with his command of automotive history.

“Yup. When I was a kid my neighbor Jack took me for a ride in his. We must have gone a ‘hunerd and fifty. A guy named Carroll Shelby invented the Tiger by putting that huge engine in a little car. That’s where he got the idea for the Cobra. It’s got a big Ford engine but some of them had a Chrysler. Remember that old James Bond flick Dr. No? Sean Connery drove a Tiger in it.”

Impressed by his unexpected automotive knowledge, she looked to the yellow car again as they pulled close enough to see the name on the side. Pointing again, her lips slowly formed the words as she struggled to read the chrome script.

“Al . . . Pine. It says ‘Alpine.’”

“Wha....?” His jaw dropped as he searched his memory for any clue. Motor Trend, don’t fail me now, he thought.

He leaned across her, both of them staring intently at the roadster as they slowly passed it.

“Oh, it’s one of those Alpine Sunbeams.”

Becoming more skeptical by the second, she pressed, “What’s the difference?”

Clearly on the ropes, he tried to re-group: “Uhhh....I think they made those Alpine Sunbeams in England. Yeah, England.”



She turned to him and gave him the look. He knew he was sunk, so as the little yellow car retreated in their rear-view mirror, he retreated to familiar ground.

“Remember when Wilson threw that bomb against the Vikings on fourth and twenty....”

She groaned – clenching her teeth. Not more football! How to stop the madness?!? She stewed for a moment, then suddenly relaxed and sat back in her seat. Looking out the window, she scanned the traffic intently for old cars. Any old car will do, she thought....**PTC**

CLUB EVENT GALLERY

June 23 – Tech Session at
home of Dave & Anita Dunn
– Hansville, WA



The Dunn's Taj Garage

Larry Atkisson leads the
tech session



Ross Evans' Tiger in the foreground of a
nice turnout of Sunbeams – and a Hillman.



Vern Allen (L) shows off his Tiger to Rob & Beryl
Carpenter. The Tiger languished in Vern's garage
for three decades before he found the time to do
this very nice restoration.

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**July 21 – All British Field
Meet at St. Edward State
Park – Juanita, WA**

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photos by Greg Oliver, Budd Bennion
and Dick Sanders



Don Joy's two favorite kitties.

During our club meeting, Jerry Logan (at right, pointing) asks for club support of the Rootes Archive Trust.



Budd Bennion's 1st place award. Maybe the best British car show trophies ever?



🎵 "...But they're cousins, identical cousins..."

It takes a sharp eye to distinguish the Lake Blue Series II (left) of Jeff & Kylie Keyzer from the Wedgewood Blue Series II of Bill & Glenda Clemans.



The prominent former seminary in the background will be on its way to becoming a hotel by this time next year. Still room for the ABFM?



From the Sunbeam Alpine Fans Facebook page, with the perfect caption:

"I can finally hear music in my Alpine!"



4239 So. 261st St.
Kent, WA 98032