October / November 2018

Pacific Tiger Club Newsletter

Rootes of the Pacific Northwest

President's Corner

BY ED ERICKSON

As we wind down the 2018 PTC driving year, the annual general meeting looms closer. October 13 is the date for the meeting and it is scheduled to be held at Griot's Garage in Tacoma. This year our catered lunch will be from the Old Spaghetti Factory in downtown Tacoma. Our meeting will begin at 11 a.m. with a meet and greet, followed by our lunch at 12 noon. Our meeting will include a brief overview of the past year's events, old and new business, a financial report, a secretary report, and election of officers for 2019. This to be followed at approximately 1 p.m. with our usual raffle drawing of prizes. Then we will adjourn by 2 p.m.

Nominations are still open for all Club officers, but I will say that all of this year's officeholders have agreed to continue in their posts for another year. As for the presidency, I encourage someone to step forward and volunteer to take over this position. Southern California again beckons Marguerite and me beginning in November and our residency will last there until next May. Budd Bennion filled in as President during my last absence, but both he and I would desire for someone to take over full time.

Our September outing was originally to be held as part of an event at the LeMay Museum in Tacoma. We found out two weeks before it was scheduled to happen that "Fender Benders" had been canceled. We hurriedly put together a meeting at the Issaquah XXX Drive-in. Those who showed up lunched on root beer floats and burgers and had a congenial good time.

A tentative event will be held on Saturday, October 27. We have called this our "Last Splash Dash." Our own Craig Burlingame has offered to lead those us through the back roads of eastern King County in order to warm up our cars one last time before we put them to bed for the season. We'll be back at the old XXX Drive-In to start our tour at 10:45am. Emails will be sent out soon with more details.

Hope to see many of you at Griot's in Tacoma for the AGM on October 13.

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Renewing your membership?

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

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Annual Membership Dues: *$32.00 (US funds).*
Make checks payable to: Pacific Tiger Club.

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PTC Club Events

October 13 11am-2pm

Annual General Meeting

– Griot's Garage 3333 - So. 38th St. Tacoma, WA

Good times! Good food! Good company!

We'll have our annual raffle of various automotive and surprise items. There will be reports on PTC activities over the past year and installation of next year's club officers.

Snacks, food, and drinks (catered by Old Spaghetti Factory) will be provided by the club.

From I-5, take the 38th street exit and head west. Griot's is the red and white building on the right side about 3/4 of a mile from the exit.

This annual event is offered, as usual, at no cost to all PTC members and family.

We need a head count! Please RSVP to Dan Kuenzi at shelbycuda@hotmail.com or call 509-952-7120

Oct 27 - Last Splash Dash - 10:45 am

Craig Burlingame will lead our last driving event of 2018, starting from the XXX Drive-In in Issaquah. We'll tour north through windy country roads to Snohomish for lunch at the **Bakery at 1st & Union**.

Nov 17 – Tour of Boeing's Everett Plant

Tourists and locals agree – this is a tour not to be missed. Featuring the biggest building in the **world.**

The tour starts promptly at **11am**. If you plan to attend, please RSVP by October 20th so we can purchase enough tickets for everyone.

The group rate is $23 per ticket for club members and family. State the number in your party when you RSVP. Call soon as tickets may be limited. Members will have to reimburse the club for their ticket, including no-shows.

RSVP to Dan Kuenzi at shelbycuda@hotmail.com or call at 509-952-7120

Jan 26 - PTC 2019 Planning Meeting

Saturday January 26, 2019 Budd Bennion will host our 2019 Event Planning Meeting, 10 AM. 14720 30th Ave NE Seattle 98155

[Kieron Lake is a free lance writer and a lawyer for Hagerty Insurance. This article was originally intended for the Hagerty newsletter in 2014 but never published. A big thanks to Brett Simpson for making this available to our readers.]

Big Cat Live:

Sunbeam Tigers after 50 years

by Kieron Lake

The hand that creates the Lamb creates the Tiger, as William Blake once pondered before he took up writing rugby songs. The studious sort might opine the poet's reflection on divine creation, but it can't be denied the possibility of a prophetic similarity between Blake's words and Sunbeam's industrious Creation; with a little assistance from Carroll Shelby, a Ford V8 and some re-engineering of their comparatively sheepish 4-cylinder Alpine, Sunbeam had created their first production Tiger by May 1964.

In addition to owning one of the "AF" pre-production Tigers, the UK's Graham Vickery also owns B382100633 (above), the last Tiger built.

The Tiger was conceived through a partnership of British and American talent that added primal ferocity to the beauty already apparent in the lines of Sunbeam's later series Alpine. Given all of the early production shipped to a North America, under the post-war governments "export-or-die" political credo, and was well received by that market, it's unsurprising that the American side of the partnership is more loudly proclaimed. Rarely is it acknowledged the contributions made by the Jensen engineers Eric Neale and Kevin Beattie who, having had experience with Chrysler's big block engines in Jensen's own C-V8 model, redesigned the American-made Tiger prototype to better accommodate the larger Ford engine and gearbox and provide for much better handling than the first Shelby prototypes.

There was a rumble in the jungle for the Tiger when Chrysler finally acquired the controlling interest in Rootes, the owners of Sunbeam, and it was only a matter of time before corporate strategy put a blunderbuss to the Tiger and the rest of the Sunbeam family. Contrary to popular belief, it wasn't the continued use of a Ford implant that conflicted with Chrysler's involvement, it was Rootes "penny packet" operations which impeded Chrysler's ambition to introduce volume production to the European market and the last Sunbeam Tiger came off of the production line in June 1967.

Not to dwell on the misfortunes of the past, nor to dismiss the Tiger as a cheaper version of Shelby's better known accomplishment, the brutish Cobra, the modest and elegant appearance of the Tiger blended good old British charm with steadfast American performance underneath. Refusing to succumb to extinction, the Tiger still enjoys a healthy life in the wild through the attention and care they received by enthusiasts on both sides of the pond.

Graham Vickery, from Guildford in Surrey, took a little convincing when in 1967 he experienced his first 100 mph run in a family friend's tiger. A youthful daliance with another Tiger in the early 1970s was put aside when family life became a happy distraction until the 1990s saw him drawn back. Purchasing A 1964 pre production vehicle in 1995 he has enjoyed countless trips across the continent, visiting Sweden, Denmark, Belgium and France.

Brett Simpson's Tiger, the first from the Jensen assembly line.

His car is a rarer beast than most, being a Mark 1 specification but incorporating an early 289 motor which the factory fitted in 1965 ahead of turning over production to the Mark II. An early photograph of his car also shows his pre-production model sporting wire wheels which soon proved week prey to the Tiger's torque when the wires were torn from the rear rims during factory testing. Now fitted with alloys and capable of reaching 125 mph, Graham is comfortable taking a more leisurely pace on his regular visits to the Le-Mans Classic and Spa. The shell is in remarkably good condition having had very little metal replaced during its 2011 strip and repaint, and Graham's next ambition is to bring all of the car's components back to their original standard.

Brett Simpson's current project, B4700995, back from the paint shop.

Brett Simpson, from Kent in Washington state, on the west coast of the U.S., learned to drive a manual in his older brother's Tiger in the 1970s and after persisting in his long pursuit of a local owner finally managed to bag his current trophy Tiger in 1995. By that time though, the 1964 car he'd acquired had been 30 years in the hands of its previous owner, used as a daily driver and parked wet. It was rescued in a sorry state. Mice were nesting in the engine bay and passenger compartment, the front crossmember was broken, the driver's door was from a later series model and almost an inch of filler was occupying the left rear bumper. Brent, quality inspector by day, fully restored and refurbished the car himself over 4 years whilst taking pride in retaining stock originality with Girling front disc brakes and rear drums, and a full complement of Jaeger instruments.

Sporting serial number JAL550001, this reference identifies Brett's car as being the first production model assembled by the experienced hands at the Jensen Factory based on their redesign. Brett now enjoys all opportunities he can to simply drive and experience his car, rather than taking it to shows, and rarely ever has the top up on his Tiger. Favorite routes are any along the Columbia River in his home state, and the Sea-to-Sky Highway route from Vancouver to Whistler, in Canada.

The worlds of these two gentlemen crossed a little closer to home, at Gatwick Airport, when during the chaos of the 2005 London bombings the aircraft which Brett was testing was temporarily grounded. A quick call back to Tiger club headquarters in the U.S. put them both in contact and Graham appeared post-haste to collect Brett and a few of his colleagues from the airport hotel in which they were quarantined. Escaping the mayhem to an evening country pub run in Graham's pristine Tiger, the pair have been friends ever since. ***PTC***

Veep! Beep!

by Dick Sanders

Sometimes good things happen for the wrong reasons. A big thanks to **Greg Oliver**, who mapped out PTC's original route for our **Tour to La Conner**. But then Greg's work precluded him from attending, so he turned it over to **Bill & Glenda Clemans**. They ran the route again themselves and found one minor obstacle: a large segment of Marine View Drive had just been closed for repairs until early September. A new, inland route was scoped out. I was disappointed, as I had envisioned a sunny drive while admiring views of the upper Sound.

But come August 25, things had changed. Our seemingly endless summer came to an abrupt end, greeting PTC with gray and drizzle at the Smokey Point rest area. Bill & Glenda had news for us. Marine View Drive had re-opened the previous day, several weeks ahead of schedule. But that route was now too long to meet our scheduled reservation at the restaurant in La Conner. The new route turned out to be great, though, as the clouds briefly abated enough to warm us with a few rays as we toured through scenic farmland and small towns.

At La Conner, Bill & Glenda suggested a return trip up Marine View Dr. After a few hours of walking the town and then lunch overlooking the Swinomish Channel, most of us took them up on it. The driving was OK, but I could count on one hand the peek-a-boo views of the Sound between garages and shrubs. Our inland reroute had turned out to be lucky after all.

Auction Action! **Budd Bennion** reports he found a Hillman Husky back east that sold for $8,500! In Maryland, a nice Singer Gazelle (the slightly upscale version of the Hillman Minx), converted to a Ford 2.3L, recently went across eBay for $4,508.

Closer to home: for PTC member **Michael Meagher**, steelhead is a higher priority than Sunbeam, so he decided to finance a decade worth of fishing by selling his black Mk IA Tiger. He showed the car in the For Sale area at the Western Washington All British Field Meet in July but drew no offers. However, a few days later a representative of Lucky Collector Car Auctions, which handles the semi-annual auctions for the LeMay Museum and had scouted the ABFM, called and suggested he place it in the upcoming auction on August 25.

Michael sat by expectantly as his Tiger came across the floor, generating an immediate opening bid of $50K, but no more. With his reserve set higher to net $50K *after* commissions, Michael thought it might be a no-sale that day. As the auction seemed to be wrapping up, someone from Lucky approached him and recommended removing the reserve, which offered the chance of a bump in price (and a guaranteed commission for Lucky). Michael rolled the dice and agreed. Another bid came in at $52K and the auction soon ended. Although he didn't quite meet his objective he still went home happy. And PTC is also happy to welcome new member **Kenneth Slichter** of Bainbridge Island, WA, proud new owner of a black Mk IA Tiger. He introduced himself to the small group attending our hastily-rescheduled September 8 meeting at the XXX Drive-in in Issaquah. ***PTC***

CLUB EVENT GALLERY

August 25 – PTC Tour to La Conner (photos by Craig Burlingame)

Kevin Jewell leads us through a roundabout in his silver Mk IA Tiger.

Ed Erickson (far right) leads our meeting. No summer attire today!

At the right close-up angle, with the tonneau disguising the number of seats, the Clemans' Series II Alpine could easily be mistaken for the huge-finned Chrysler 300.

Craig Burlingame's Minx in La Conner.

Greg Oliver and a friend visiting from Germany accelerate out of the Smokey Point rest area.

GALLERY – CONT.

MEMBER POSTCARD:

From the Brothers Bennion:

"Bob [pictured] and Budd near end of 530 mile road trip to Seaside, OR car show, Sept 2018. Stopped here for lunch in Vader, WA. Clean place and good food. The owner was a little surly but the special of the day, chicken salad sandwich and homemade soup, was very good.

A friend of mine said if you don't want to drive into Vader, right off the freeway northbound on I-5, take the #60 Toledo-Vader exit. Right there at the exit is Mrs. Beesley's Burgers, best in state (next to Dick's Drive-In, of course).

Info for those who drive-um."

MEMBER UPDATES:

Jerry Logan's restoration of the Peter Harper/ Peter Procter-driven Sebring Alpine is already underway. Stripping has begun, dipping is next. Note the lightweight aluminum doors used for racing.

Spotted! Nick Fadich's Tiger at Seattle's Magnolia neighborhood car show in August.

FOR SALE:

1967 Sunbeam Alpine, Series V.

1,300 miles on upgraded rebuild of original motor, 1,600 on Trans. Suspension and main gauges are all fresh. Body / paint very good. Interior has all been redone in pebble texture. Aftermarket seats upholstered in leather.

In addition to a cloth soft top, it has both a tonneau and a custom bimini cover. Incl. both steel and LAT-copy wheels, with tires plus other spare parts. In Hemmings @ $12,400. Offered locally for $11,499, or offer. Walt Suman 206-484-4777 wsuman@aol.com

A follow-up to our multi-part series on the Frezza Tiger. Current owner Mark Sorsdahl reports that Dave Frezza recently un-earthed more momentos from his drag racing days, including this splendid t-shirt.

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