November 2025 - January 2026

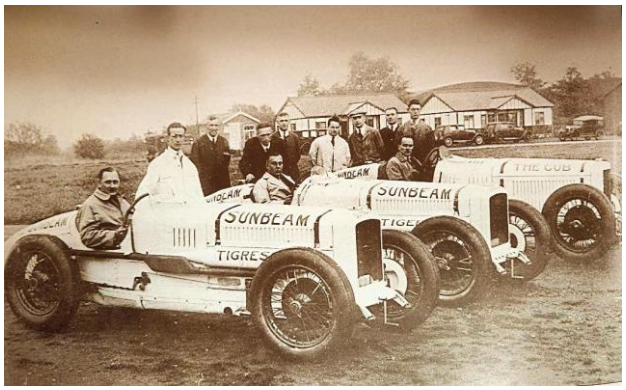
Pacific Tiger Club Newsletter

ROOTES OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Veep! Beep!

by Dick Sanders

As many of you know, our Sunbeam Tigers of the 1960's were named after a land speed record holder of long ago. Sunbeams in fact held the land speed record five times between 1922 and 1927. We're coming up on the century mark since a 12-cyliner, 4-litre-powered Sunbeam named 'Tiger' on March 16, 1926, driven by Henry Segrave on the beach at Southport Sands in England, turned 152.33mph.



Pictured here in 1929, the Sunbeam Company's next to last year of racing, are 'Tiger,' flanked by stablemates 'Tigress,' also powered by a 4-litre V-12, and "The Cub," a 2-litre machine. Photo from *Sunbeam Racing Cars – 1910-1930* by Anthony Heal.

Unlike other land speed record holders, 'Tiger' continued to be successfully raced on circuit tracks, standing mile events, even hillclimbs. We'll look at more of their racing history in next month's Newsletter.

2026 PTC Event Planning Meeting

Feb 21 - 11am

Hosted by Budd Bennion

14720 - 30th Avenue NE, Shoreline, WA - near Lake City, WA & just off I-5 & NE 145th St.

PTC Contact for directions, or if you have ideas for future events: Cell 206 291-0232 or email: budd.bennion@comcast.net

2025-2026 Club Officers

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Committee Chairpersons

Membership: Linda Atkisson
37624 Vista Key Dr NE
Hansville, WA 98340
206-612-4851

Historians: Dave Dunn / Dan Kuenzi

Website: Kylie Keyser

Renewing your membership?

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

Pacific Tiger Club
c/o Linda Atkisson
37624 Vista Key Dr. NE
Hansville, WA 98340
206-612-4851
catkisson@aol.com

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

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Calendar - PTC Club Events

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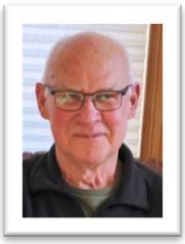
July 11 - Western Washington All British Field Meet. St Edward St Park, Kenmore, WA - See WWABFM.org for more info.

Other Sunbeam Events

Sunbeams United National International (SUNI VIII). Sept 14-19 - Springfield, OH to Oklahoma City. A unique format for the eighth SUNI: a four-day tour of a section of Route 66, celebrating 100 years since its completion. Space very limited! Contact Claudia Trippel at Secretary@Catmbr.org for more details.

Inside this issue: Part 3 of The Frezza Tiger

My Tiger Odyssey



Story & photos by Kevin Jewell

I have always been a bit car crazy and in my early years could name the year and model of most of the cars on the road. My high school library subscribed to two car related magazines "Hot Rod" and "Sports Car Graphic". I spent my library study time dutifully devouring each issue and dreaming of what I might someday own. Do you sense that the dream might involve a hot rod sports car?

Of course, life got in the way. First college, job, marriage and even the first child all happened before I could realize my dream. By 1973, I had a job that paid a good monthly car allowance to cover all the work-related auto travel. By driving an older car, I was able to bank a fair amount of money in my dream fund. By late 1975 I started my search for a Tiger. I looked at three Tigers that were either very tired, or too expensive, before I found my "new Tiger" in February 1976 in Oak Harbor, home of a large Naval Air Base. According to the "Book of Norman", my Mk IA Tiger was produced in April 1966. However, the Washington registration listed the car as a 1967.

The early days. From green to silver in the first of three re-sprays. Still clad in stock rims and hubcaps

Included with the car was an original workshop manual. The manual had an English Motors of Berkeley sales slip that listed the manual purchaser as "Burroughs" and a date of 3-13-67. From this I assumed that the original purchaser was probably in the Navy and had transferred to Oak Harbor as the car's seller told me he was the second owner. I suspect we can assume that the car sat in the dealership until March of 1967 and the dealer registered the car as a 1967, something fairly easy to do back in those days.

The Tiger was not the best example, but it fit within my budget. The carpeting had been replaced with loose shag carpet and the color code 86 green body had minor damage to the front. The car was totally stock with the exception that the Autolite carb had been replaced with a large Holley 2 barrel. I was thrilled as the car was still considerably quicker than what I had been driving and had the sound of a V8. I had a work mate do a quick fix on the front end and re-spray the car with a silver lacquer paint. Although it has been repainted twice since, it is still silver. This was now my work car for the next 3 years.

On a visit to the then-outdoor Bellevue Square, I spotted a black Tiger and parked next to it. Instead of the Rootes badge on the rear fender, this black Tiger had white Pacific Tiger Club badges in the same shape and size as the Rootes badge. Some of the early PTC members might remember those fender badges. I waited for some time for the owner to return and asked about the club and found myself at the next club meeting and immediately joined PTC.

During this period many PTC members were active in autocross and they convinced me to participate in the last autocross of the 1976 season. I found this fun and looked forward to the following autocross season. In 1977, the first event was held in February at South Sound Mall and was called "Weather or Not" as we can all guess the weather in February. Regardless, Judy and I with young son Clarke all went to Lacey for the event. Of course it rained, the track was very wet and in one of the corners I spun the car and hit a light standard with the

left front fender. I limped the car off the track and with the help of PTC members bent the fender away from the wheel and straightened the tie rod end to keep the front wheels straight. Money was tight, and this was my daily driver, so I decided that I probably should retire from autocross. I think my next autocross was several years later during Sunbeam Northwest III, in Olympia.

The original 260 served me well for about a year, until one day returning from Kirkland the engine started badly knocking and the passenger compartment filled with smoke. I drove it home and the next day had an appointment with my trusted mechanic. We agreed to tear down the engine and found that one of the main bearing caps had literally broken in half which allowed excessive movement of the crankshaft. Two of the other bearing caps had cracks, and we also found one non-stock piston. I was probably fortunate that the engine lasted as long as it did. With the hot rod mentality of "There is no substitute for cubic inches", I sourced a junkyard 289 and had it bored out .060 to yield 298 ci. That engine ran hot as long as it was in the car, although we put many miles on that engine.

In 1980, our daughter Kelly was born, and we now had two children. I added a second seat belt to the package tray behind the seats and both children went all over the northwest with us to car shows/meets etc. Judy would put her seat far forward and Clarke would sit behind her with his feet behind the seat. I couldn't move my seat forward and still drive. Kelly would sit behind me and put her legs/feet between the front seats on top of the console. By 1980 I had retired the Tiger from daily driver duty and did the first minor restoration with a

When both kids still fit in the Tiger's backseat!

shiny Cadillac FireMist metallic silver paint job. The two children continued to accompany us in the Tiger until they literally no longer fit on that package tray.

Fast forward to 1988 and the club is discussing attending the inaugural Sunbeam International (SUNI I) meet in Snowmass, Colorado. With the help of Larry Atkisson, during the winter of 1988-89, we did a first-class restoration of the Tiger, taking the exterior to bare metal. This time I chose a less metal flake Corvette silver for the paint, which is still on the car. We also attended SUNI III in Big Sky, Montana with the Tiger.

Kevin used one of his company's trucks to haul their Tiger (top), plus the Tigers of Alec & Joan MacLaurin (middle) and Larry and Linda Atkisson to SUNI I in Snowmass, CO in 1989 and to SUNI III in Montana ten years later. The men alternated driving and the balance of the group followed in a motorhome.

Additionally, I believe that we have attended every Sunbeam Northwest, except the one in Victoria, BC. We have also attended several Tigers United events, starting with our first in 1978 held in Redding, CA. At the Tigers United event in 1994 we, along with several PTC members, had our Tigers TAC'd by STOA. Our Tiger holds certificate #113, dated 7/23/94. During these years we have served in many of the volunteer roles in PTC, including 4 years as president and countless years as membership. Today we find that we don't put many miles on the car, although it still can be very fun to drive.

The Tiger today: 2025 Avants Classics on the Green, held at St. Michelle winery in Woodinville, WA. Kevin and Judy's son Clarke Jewell is a member of Avants and was asked to bring the Tiger as well as Judy's Z3 "Clownshoe" Coupe.

This brings me to my milestone. I realize that there are still some original owners out there and I will never be able to match that claim. However, in February of 2026, we will have owned our Tiger for 50 years. By the summer of 2026, we can also claim that we have been continuous members of PTC for 50 years.

During that time, we have enjoyed driving the car a little over 100,000 miles. It has been quite the Odyssey. Certainly, when we bought the car in 1976, I never expected to still own it 50 years later. ***PTC***

Rebirth of the Frezza Tiger Part 3

Restoration of the *Frezza Tiger* Resumes after a long Hiatus

Story and photos by Mark Sorsdahl

[One of the best stories to appear in the PTC Newsletter concerned the restoration efforts on a Tiger that was extensively drag raced from new on the west coast by Portland native **Dave Frezza**. Another Portlander, **Mark Sorsdahl**, eventually purchased the Tiger in 2000 and began documenting its history with the help of Frezza. Much work was done but, as often happens, life got in the way for several years and progress slowed.

The two-part story appeared in the Sept/Oct 2017 and July/August 2018 issues. The STOA club later received permission to reprint the articles in their own newsletter. Members can find these issues on our website: PacificTigerClub.com. Thank you, Mark, for bringing us up to date in Part 3 on your painstaking restoration.-Ed.]

Hey Dick,

Came across your name in my contacts this evening and was almost embarrassed to recall stating you would be advised re: the Frezza Tiger progress.

Recently the building housing my race shop for the last 9.5 years sold and I was given a 120-day move-out deadline. At the time, my

freshened primary road race motor for my vintage Tiger was on shop floor. In addition to that was the Frezza Tiger 289, rebuilt 3 years ago. I decided to get going on both cars with the #45 now race ready and the Frezza Tiger finally a roller with full drivetrain.

Have to admit I was intimidated as the plan was to install the Frezza motor with Weber 48 IDA induction and Cobra throttle linkage intact - a tricky proposition. Grade 8 bolts were attached to the cylinder head corners with a protected chain linked the motor to the lift device. 8-10 hours of work with a friend and an engine hoist with a load spreader bar resulted in the powerplant installed with no paint damage.

Now I am fully inspired to move forward with finishing the Frezza Tiger. One of the published articles mentioned the car being completed in the future at a new shop and restoration facility. Little did I know that 8 years of work at my off-grid site in Washington state's mountains would be required to finish new shop and house, nearly completed.

The Frezza Tiger, road race Tiger and other road race Tiger and other Tigers and Alpines in my collection have been evacuated from the old shop and are securely stored in a pre-mountain relocation. A couple of my Sunbeams are already at altitude. Please feel free to contact me anytime if you are curious about aspects of the Frezza Tiger or wish to discuss something else.

Take care.

Mark Sorsdahl

The period livery of the Frezza Tiger was painstakingly recreated by Portland artist Mitch Kim using early photographs as reference. Mitch Kim is old enough as to have frequented the northwest drag racing scene in the mid-1960s and knows how things were done back in the day. As we poured over the historic shots, speaking to Mitch was like talking to a wise historian of otherworldly understanding. His trained mind captured details well beyond my observation and his paint brush gave new life to the ancient images. – Mark S.

Dave Freeza, back in the day, at Woodburn Drag Strip in Oregon.

Mark Sorsdahl is a Portland-area private investigator. When not restoring the Frezza Tiger, he competes in northwest vintage races in his black #45 Tiger.

Holiday spirits aplenty at the PTC Christmas party on Dec 6, hosted by Bill & Glenda Clemans

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