February - May 2026

Pacific Tiger Club Newsletter

ROOTES OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

The Circle of (Car) Life.

Carroll Shalby, builder/creator of the Sunbeam Tiger prototype approved for production by Lord Rootes, reposed with his wife Cleo against the original 1926 Land Speed Record holder Sunbeam "Tiger" at the 2004 Sunbeams International (SUNI) event in Park City, Utah.

2025-2026 Club Officers

President: Looking for a volunteer!

VP/Newsletter Dick Sanders
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Committee Chairpersons

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

Website: Kylie Keyser

Historians: Dave Dunn / Dan Kuenzi

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

June 20 - Tour to the Fall City Bar & Grill
We'll gather at the Home Depot parking lot in Redmond at the end of Hwy 520. At 11am, we'll head south on Redmond Way (Hwy 202). A few twists and turns through the countryside before we wind up our journey at the Fall City Bar & Grill around noon for lunch and suds.

July 11 - Western Washington All British Field Meet – St. Edward State Park
Over 400 British iron spread out across the lawn in front of the Lodge at St. Edward. Friday night Social. Online registration at wwabfm.com.

Aug 9 - Picnic at Sunset Park in Shoreline, WA. NW 178th & 10th Ave NW. Jim Clark will be serving up hot dogs and ice cream sandwiches to add to your own picnic goodies. Jim suggests "Bring chairs!"

Aug 29 LeMay Annual Open House
Parkland, WA The original site of the Harold LeMay collection is open to the public once a year. Don't miss it!

Sept 12 Tour with Bill & Glenda Clemens around the Martha Lake area.Details TBA.

October 10 PTC Annual General Meeting (AGM) 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM Griot's Garage Tacoma, WA

Dec 12 Christmas Party at the Woodinville area home of Kevin & Judy Jewell

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.

Other Shows/Races etc

June 27 Greenwood Car Show 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM. Seattle, WA. Show & Shine.
Hundreds of classics, thousands of classic lovers!

July 20 Hansville Car Show 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM Show & Shine. Hansville, WA Buck Lake Community Center

Veep! Beep!

By Dick Sanders

Bad News/Good News Dept.

The toughest of news to report is that long-time member **Starke Shelby** passed away in March from cancer. If you never met him at Pacific Raceways, where he was a dedicated vintage racer in his Tiger and Alfa, then you probably knew him as an agent for Hagerty Insurance. Friend to many. Our sympathies go out to his wife Jane and son Evan.

Going back a ways, long-ago member **Rik Edwards** passed away in December. An active member in the late 70s and early 80s, Rik owned three Tigers, a white former SCCA racer, and two red Mark II's. In 1982, he married Clover and held a combined reception and PTC club meeting at their Totem Lake area home. Good times! Info courtesy of Jim Leach.

Good News! Three-plus years ago, **Brett Simpson** packed up his two Tigers and left his Kent home (with its 9-car garage!) for the wilds of Idaho. He then sold both Tigers, including the JAL 001 - first production Tiger. End of Brett's Tiger story? From Godfather III:" *Just when I thought I was out, they pull me back in!"* Last month, Brett found a nearby Tiger for sale and it was love at first sight. A red Mk I, it's a well-maintained restoration performed by *Book of Norman* author Norm Miller. Welcome back, Brett!!

Brett also passed along a few photos he took at a local drag race.. The top car drawing his attention? A Series II Alpine named "Tiger Eater," with some modest modifications.

In my own garage, a fine day in May was reason to celebrate. Both of our Series V Alpines ventured out into the sunshine for their 2026 debut. The red car will probably make our club events with no problem. The yellow one? Removing the steering wheel as part of rebuilding the column is not supposed to be a difficult chore. I managed to bodge it up so badly that the wheel his now broken and held to the column by just two spokes. Gee. My motto, *When in doubt, get a bigger hammer* has always worked in the past.

Membership

By Linda Atkisson

The PTC Swap Meet was well attended. It was a nice day, so a several club members drove their cars, including Brian & Wyatt Doan, Bill Sandell, Ross Evans, & new member Bob May. It was nice to see everyone.

Welcome to new PTC members:
Ron & Karen Anderson, Edgewood, WA
Bob May, Puyallup, WA

And also a warm welcome to returning members who we haven't seen in a long time:
Chris & Nancy Webber, Cave Creek, Arizona (formally of Monroe, WA)
Mark & Kim Gerhardt, Tacoma, WA
Ken Fletcher, Bainbridge Island, WA

We hope you'll be able to join us at upcoming PTC club events.
Reminder: All PTC dues renewals are due October every year. If you haven't sent your dues in yet, please do so. This will ensure that you will continue to receive PTC newsletters & notices for upcoming club events. Please send dues to: PTC: c/o Linda Atkisson 37624 Vista Key DR. NE Hansville, WA 98340

We are working on a new membership list/roster. Please send your updated information to me at catkisson@aol.com. Please update your information at your earliest convenience. Include:

1. Name/Names
2. Mailing Address
3. Email address
4. Contact phone number

If you have any questions, please call, text or email me at:

Linda Atkisson – Membership chair
catkisson@aol.com 206-612-4851

The recent dearth of member input forced me to drag out this old chestnut, first printed almost 40 years ago. If you don't want to read more stone-age ramblings, sit yourself down and tap out a few paragraphs of what you're currently up to with your Sunbeam or Hillman - Editor]

The Ballad of Irving

An Auto-Biography by Dick Sanders

It was 1977, gasoline prices were going through the roof (almost $2 a gallon!) and my college student budget was strained to keep my thirsty 1968 Dodge Coronet 500's tank full. That's the only rationale I can think of for buying my first Sunbeam, a 1969 four-seat fastback ("Baby Barracuda") Alpine Coupe. It seemed strange and exotic, and I had next to no experience working on cars. But what the heck, I'd just learned how to gap the points on my Dodge. I was now the master of all things automotive! How hard could it be to keep a Sunbeam running? I soon found out.

Literally within days the starter quit starting, the charging system quit charging, and the

headlights became prone to turning on or off at any time of their own choosing. The Coupe quickly became a personal rolling technical school. After a few months I had ironed out most of the major bugs and settled down to tackling the little things. Balky door, seat and window mechanisms, miscellaneous Lucas conundrums and the like.

Still, it could be fun to drive. Unlike the heavy-steering early '70s Toyotas I had test-driven, the Sunbeam was very easy to drive on the open road, and had excellent brakes and leg room. Fast? Nope. The Coupe model had the cast iron head with a single Stromberg carb setup, an optimistic rating of 68 hp, and basically had trouble getting out of its own way.

A year later I named the car *Irving*, partly inspired by its license plate, IRV 788, but mostly from an old novelty song played on the Dr. Demento radio show, called *The Ballad of Irving - the hundred-and-forty-second fastest gun in the West*. I figured that my *Irving* was

about the hundred-and-forty-second fastest *Alpine* in the West.

Irving took great offense to this. Within a month the starter shorted out again, this time melting the insulation off the battery-to-starter cable, which drooped down across the plastic fuel line and severed it completely. I propped open the hood to find sparks dancing across from the exposed, red hot battery cable to the back of the engine block, just inches from where fuel was freely flowing onto the ground around the car from the full, 17-gallon gas tank.

With no tools close at hand to disconnect the battery, I called the fire department. Just as the fire truck rolled up and slowly came to a stop (they probably thought it was a false alarm) a huge ball of flame erupted from the engine compartment high into the night sky. Momentarily as surprised as I was, the firefighters extinguished it in about 10 seconds.

Expecting the worst, *Irving* emerged remarkably unscathed with minor paint damage to the underside of the hood, needing just another starter, plus a few new hoses, wires, and re-routed battery cable to get it back up and running. A few months later *Irving*, still offended, burnt up its number 3 rod bearing while en route to Vancouver BC. An early morning phone call to a friend (Jim Leach) got a 40-mile flat tow back to Seattle from Everett. I'd have felt a little guiltier if Jim hadn't been the one that I'd let talk me into buying the car in the first place.

By this time I had just purchased a Mark II Tiger and also bought and sold a Series IV Alpine to pay for school, so transportation was not a problem. That goal of cutting down on car expenses while in college had long since been forgotten. In true young-bachelor style, I pulled the engine from the Coupe, physically dragged it up the stairs to my apartment and repaired it on my kitchen table.

It still ran badly afterwards. A piston ring broke almost immediately, followed soon after by parts of the rest of the piston, but I entered *Irving* anyway in the next autocross at Sunbeam Northwest III in Olympia. Why? Well, as the Ballad goes, *"A hundred and forty one were faster than he, but Irving was looking for one-forty-three."* With no power to speak of and piston-slap that could be heard a hundred feet away, second place in stock class was very rewarding.

That proved to be *Irving*'s last hurrah, as it went on a downhill slide from there. Yes, the decline was discernable even after all the previous problems. The fuse box, mounted on a hole in the firewall with inside lead wires too short for access or repair work, started acting up unpredictably, causing various shorts. The ignition system would go dead without warning and it became necessary to carry a long umbrella with me so I could reach underneath the parcel tray and poke at the back of the fuse box to restart the engine without having to pull over to the side of the road.

Big-time body lean through the autoalalom at Olympia's South Sound Mall, circa 1981.

The Coupe's end seemed near when, heading to a party after the next PTC banquet, a member following me in his Tiger told me he could see what looked like glowing cigarette butts blowing out of the tailpipe. Later that night, *Irving* limped back home across the 520 floating bridge. As I pulled into my driveway, the head gasket blew with finality.

Irving appeared in the classifieds that week. Soon after, a fellow with grand delusions of installing a V6 or a rotary or something came by to look at it. I let him have his delusions - and the car.

I learned a lot from owning the fastback. Areas of car maintenance that I wouldn't have dreamed of tackling before, such as electrical, engine or clutch work, became almost routine on the Sunbeams I've owned since. But by far the most important lesson learned was - never name your Sunbeam *Irving*.

Delta Camshaft, a fixture in Tacoma and a favorite of gear heads worldwide, is pulling up roots and moving to Arizona after 48 years. Their neighborhood had improved since the owners moved to this location in the 1980s, but deteriorated again with the arrival of Covid. High costs and taxes were also cited.

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