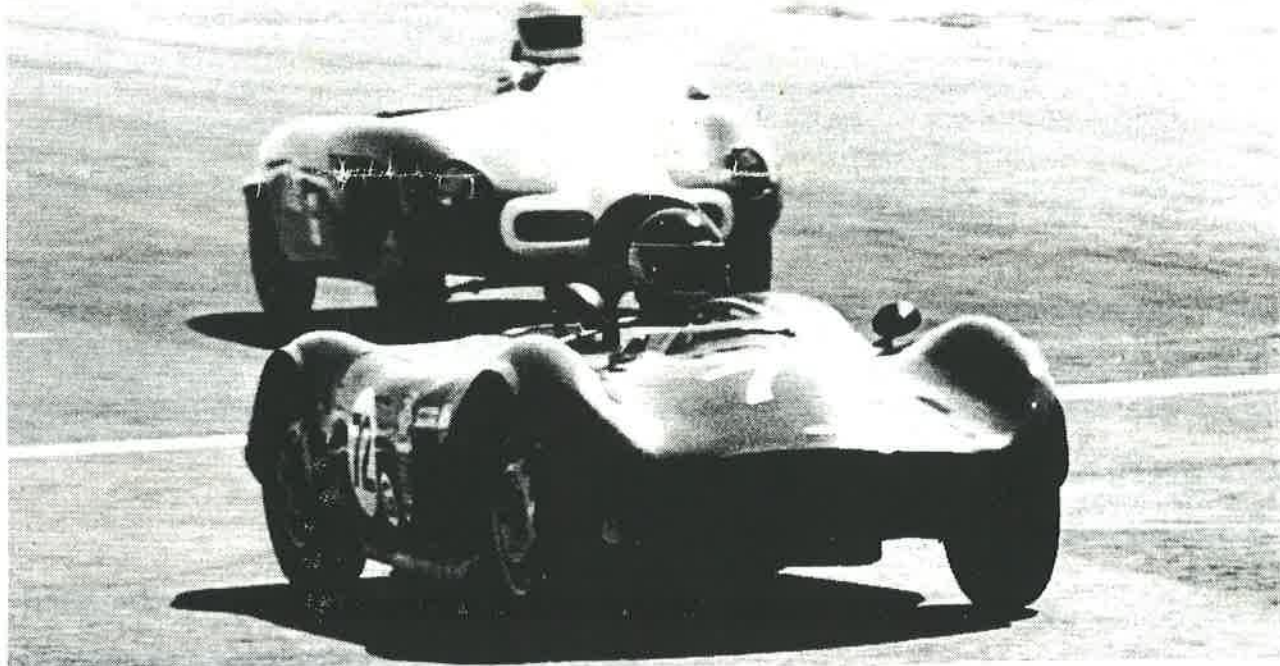




# SMALL *Times*

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE "H" MOD. OVER-THE-HILL-GANG

volume 2 number 4



PHOENIX SAAB AND DEVIN-PANHARD DICED FOR TEN LAPS BACK IN 1986 AT RIVERSIDE WITH THE SAAB WINNING THIS TIME. THESE SAME TWO CARS HAD OTHER BATTLES BACK IN THE EARLY 1960's AND CONTINUE TO RACE EACH OTHER IN THE 1990's.

## H-MOD OVER THE HILL GANG Staff



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The H-Mod Newsletter is published at 22901 Loumont Drive, El Toro, CA 92630. Send all contributions, letters, etc. to this address for the Editor's attention. Membership renewals or purchase of items should go to LINDA PUCKETT (Phone (714) 768-7882).

This publication is a quarterly publication for the members of the **H-Mod Over the Hill Gang** which exists as a socially oriented, not-for-profit club dedicated to documenting and tracing auto racing history, restoring and racing Vintage "H" cars and talking about the good old days!

## CAUSE AND CURE

*Martin Tanner*

Based on my experience with my H Modified cars, I have collected an intriguing collection of reasons why one's H Modified machine fails to operate properly, if at all. In the hope that you will benefit from a kindred soul's experience, instead of doggedly proceeding to enjoy these same experiences for yourself, we devote most of this page to these difficulties I encountered at one time or another during my eight years in H Modified. Keep in mind, the mechanical troubles described here are those of only one owner-driver-builder, the late Martin Tanner. It is likely that you have had mechanical difficulties which are of a different nature and can, therefore, at some late date, contribute to this educational repertoire for a subsequent newsletter.

### ENTIRE REAR END OF CAR SEEMS TO EXPLODE:

Pieces of fender go over your head, etc. This is nothing to worry about. All that happened was that the aluminum or magnesium cooling fin (or muff) that was shrunk-fit onto the drum, disintegrated and centrifugal force has carried the pieces about a bit. CURE: Fasten the muffs on with set-screws.

**CAR WON'T GET OFF THE LINE:** Your drive-shaft is spinning around the hub of the rear universal joint. CURE: Weld the shaft to the joint. Don't depend on a press fit because you intended to weld it and then forgot all about it.

**SAAB — HARD TO START:** Take a compression test. You may have a bad piston or broken rings. Another cause, too much oil—or not well mixed oil—in gas tank, of course, just plain flooding.

**UNUSUAL CAR VIBRATION:** Look for broken gear box case. CURE: Beef up case or get another brand. This is more economical than hoping for the best and thereby cracking seven identical gear boxes in a row.

### FLYWHEEL GROWLS, CLATTERS, SQUEALS and GRINDS:

Cause: A bolt fell into the bell housing. This is probably a bolt holding adapter plate to engine. CURE: Take everything apart, put a new bolt and key it, wire it or pin it some way or another. With practice, this can be done in several seconds less than 5 1/2 hours.

### YOUR FRONT WHEEL BEATS YOU TO THE CORNER:

This is caused by a broken front hub. After this has happened three times, you will become quite adept at driving on three wheels. This is something of a handicap, however, and you will find your lap times substantially off. CURE: Design some beefier hubs.

### 3 AMAL CARBURETORS ON SAAB ENGINE.

**RUNS ON TWO CYLINDERS:** Cause: One of the three rods or wires attached to the carburetor pistons is loose and they are out of synchronization. You won't know the cause the first time this happens, but some friend will point it out to you 3 minutes before the race starts.

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## SAFETY FIRST

Will Henderson bought a Crosley-powered SIATA in 1963. Then, to make it more competitive, he bought a new Renault engine and hired a machine shop to de-stroke the crank to get capacity down to 850. Then he took the whole car apart, hoping to find places to reduce its weight. But by this time the season was drawing too close for comfort, so he sold the entire project at a great bargain to make room for the ready-to-run ex-Walsh Kurtis-Jabro-SAAB car he bought. He carefully concealed all bills, receipts and cancelled checks in an old suitcase behind the furnace. Then he bought the trailer to fit the ex-Walsh car. At the first race, the Walsh engine blew up. It was now too late to save money so he bought another new all-tuned-up engine. More paid-up invoices stuffed into the suitcase. Then Helen (wife) discovered the suitcase. Will is one of these characters who is always on the ball. He said: "You see, dear, I just had to buy a new car because the old one wasn't safe!" (He had sold his Siata to their son-in-law.)



MAHLON CRAFT'S EX-ROOSEVELT NO. 62 TWIN CAMMER WAS AN H-MOD. CHAMPION BACK IN 1962. MAHLON IS NOW RESTORING THE CAR TO ITS ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION.

## EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

*Joe Puckett*

This issue has had its problems and certainly some real good results. The problems began with developing enough material to make an issue worth reading and finding other viewpoints, then with Christmas suddenly on us, we calmly slid past the old brake point into 1992. So you get 5 issues in 92!

Look gang, we desperately need some of your articles about the good old days, scribbled in charcoal or etched in stone, no matter! Or howzabout 1/2 dozen lines about your vintage racer... This pub also depends on photos, preferably black and white but good contrasting color will work. The photos should be either expendable or simply a slide copy of a photo which is really inexpensive for you to obtain and we can blow it up to size as required. The staff here amount to two.

We lost our October date with VARA for another Las Vegas reunion because we couldn't get the cars last year. They will stage a Mini-Sprite showdown instead. Don Racine expects we will be invited back to the Monterey Prehistorics, in August, I hope the field is limited to H-mod, but others in our group don't feel the same and like the challenge. Lastly, how about contacting some of the old H-mod. guys you know about joining our illustrious group...It will provide us with more material, they will renew old friendships, and perhaps more of the stories will be, errrr, substantiated.

### RACE REFLECTIONS

*By Bill and Nancy Cunningham*

I'm so happy ol' J.O.P. (John Donaldson) confessed at the Laguna Seca Banquet to some of early racing indiscretions. He hit three cars in his very first race. Alas, he did not tell all.

I remember one rainy February morning when I went down to the quonset hun in El Segundo, California, where Rich Ericson, Bill Cunningham, Dave Thelcke, J.O.D. and a callow youth names Po Juckett (Joe Puckett) were all de-tuning their H-Mods for the spring season - all except Donaldson. His car was about as race ready as it had ever been (he had air in three of his four tires).

John decided this was a good time to practice his 'Le Mans' starts. He would stand on one side of the room and thunder across about four yards and leap over the closed door of his car and aim for the driver's seat. Three times in a row the gear shift lever went up the pant leg of his coveralls.

Everyone stopped what they were doing and came over to John.

"Look" they said, "You have to tape up your ankles."

Out came the ever loving two inch masking tape and ol' John was again combat ready. After three tries, the spring had left his stride but away he went. He again lumbered across the room and made his leap only to have his trailing foot tip the top of the door and he tumbled butt first into the cockpit. This time the gear shift lever do not go up his pant leg - although he did seem in some discomfort as he climbed out of the car.

He spent the rest of the afternoon standing stiffly and babbling to anyone who would buy him a beer.

NANCY CUNNINGHAM

### Reflections on Laguna Seca -

H-Mod hasn't changed over the past thirty years. We have always sent out a herd on Saturday and a pack on Sunday - a damn good pack I may say.

Most of the wives of H-Mod drivers and their crews don't really mind their husbands fooling around with the cars. It leaves them too tired and too broke to fool around with anything else.

Someone has to tell Chuck Gounis (Tisgounis, Exxon, Harry Hay Bales, Charlie Gear Crunch, or whatever name he is running under today) you do destruction testing in the garage and not on the race course.

I still think Doc Molle's body out weighted any H-Mod car he ever drove. BILL CUNNINGHAM

### Point Mugu Vintage Road Races set by HMSA for April 11-12

Steve Earle will inaugurate this Southern California event with a format lifted right out of the 1950's and 60's complete with airport runways and haybales. **Your H-mod club has requested and received authority from Steve to run our own event that weekend, if enough cars can be entered. If not enough of our club members enter, we would probably be placed in other groups. Call Joe at (714) 768-7882 for entry information...**

**Hurry time is a wastin'**

## FLASHBACKS

*By Bob Thulander*

I just gotta call from Joe. The gist of the call was that if a few of us would get our collective butts in gear we will really have something with this club. He wants contributions, as best we can recall...well here goes.

In 1958 at the fall running of the SCCA at the new then Laguna Seca Raceway, the best in the west showed up to what was termed a real shoot-out in H-Mod. The field looked like this on Sunday's grid:

Chalmers Hall - Little Digger Crosley Spl.  
Harry Jones - Devin Crosley  
Harry Eyerly - Eyerly Crosley  
Bob Graham - Tweensy II Crosley  
Ray Ingles - Sanitary Special Crosley  
With a backup of 2 Devin Panhards, 2 Renault Spls and a couple of others the gray matter can't recall.

There weren't any Saabs yet so Laguna had quite a mosquito problem. In later years it was found that two strokers helped eliminate these no seeums pretty well, in addition to a lot of the competition. Ah! Back to the race!

When the green flag dropped, this group went after it with a vengeance. At the finish it was Hall, Jones Eyerly and Bob Graham. These cars were each quite capably of running midpack against well driven Lotus 11's and were faster than the average MG spl. Today the little Digger is in Southern California, the Jones car is lost, as well as Graham's and the Sanitary special. The Eyerly car is for sale currently at \$60,000 but no takers are known.

I met Bob Graham in 1958, at that Laguna Race. He had a partner, Robin Cooke, and two identical cars the last of the breed they thought. However, 60 days before the event I had bought a Fiberglas body at a shop in Vallejo, California. It was identical to Bob and Robin's Fiberglas body. The guy who sold me the body had said this was the only one and the mold had been destroyed. Have you heard that line before? Bob was ready to punch my lights out I guess, but held off and took it out on the competition. The Graham/Cooke

chassis was very interesting and cheap, utilizing old Plymouth torque tubes for the basic dual rails. It was a very sano car well driven against the best, on the west coast. I would later show Bob a picture of my Fiberglas body after he had settled down. He is a good friend and still today we talk about every couple of weeks. My car has remained incomplete for over 30 years but it will be done in my lifetime. Bob and I have worked with Crosley engines for 37 years, getting to know Nick Brajevich has helped a great deal as well as others who know their engines.

Years ago the Crosley engine was a popular cheap and plentiful source of power. But the oiling system was the catch that made many a good mill into junk.

Some of the problems and fixes are as follows:

PROBLEM	FIX
Cast Cranks	Military Spec. Engines
No Oil Pressure	Graham Oil System
Split Cam Cups	Bearcat Solid
Turbulator Blocks	Restrictive
Tower Gear Slip Shaft	Spot Weld
No Straps on Mains	Strap

If you have a question, call me at 503/895-4551 or Bob Graham at 408/244-9422 (after 6 p.m.).

5/22/91

Joe,

### AN ODE TO THE H-MODOVER-THE-HILL GANG

AN OLD H-MOD DRIVER NAMED BILL,  
USED TO GIVE ALL THE RACE-FANS A THRILL.  
AS HE GROUND UP HIS GEARS,  
HE FELL PREY TO THE YEARS,  
AND AT LAST COASTED OVER THE HILL.

Dick Schoenen, M.D.  
483A No. Central Avenue  
Upland, CA 91786  
714/981-7174

August 15, 1991

2/10/92

Dear Joe & Linda:

Enclosed find check for dues renewal. Also a little poem that my wife, Kay, wrote for you and Nick. She thought that you might get a kick out of it. Also, it might make a good fill in for your bulletin. She sent a copy to Nick and Joan.

We want to thank you for a well organized meet and an enjoyable weekend. We heard no complaints, so everyone must have been more than satisfied. Thanks again.

Sincerely,  
Dick Scanlan

Over the Hill "Youngsters"  
By Kay Scanlan

Nick and Joe are two "youngsters" who have started a club,  
It helps keep them away from the local Pub,  
The group has grown from a few to quite a large class,  
Many wonderful people, you can bet your sweet ass.

They work over cars and love and joy,  
Much like a kid with a half-worn toy.  
They can turn a pile of junk into a beautiful car,  
The best to be seen from near and far,  
They rev up those engines with a mighty roar,  
Ease up a little, then give it some more.

Young and old stop, look and listen,  
Sometimes you'll hear, "Hey, that's missin,"  
It goes to show that those "over the hill"  
In their hearts are youngsters still.



LEFT TO RIGHT-H-MODDER'S JOE PUCKETT, CHUCK TSIGOUNIS,  
NICK BRAJEVICH AT RIVERSIDE IN 1988, DISCUSSING CREATING A  
CLUB LIKE THE OLD DAYS. REAL VISIONARIES!

Dear Joe,

I read your nice article in Victory Lane about restoring the old Miller Crosley. Nice work!

At the end of your article you mentioned hearing about a Devin Crosley in a shed, etc. I wonder if that could be my old car. I used to own an old Devin Crosley, which had its body parted from the chassis back in the 1960 era. The body may be the one you have found. It was originally painted white and had right hand drive. When I last saw the body, it was apparently mounted on a stock Crosley frame, with very little racing goodies other than the body. If that is th car, I would like to know about it. If it is still for sale, I could easily be talked into buying it. If it is not available, I would like to keep track of it and try to find out if it is the body off my old car. Let me know.

I hope to see you at an event soon. If you plan to come to the San Diego race, I will look you up. I will be selling at the swaps this weekend at the stadium too.

Yours truly,  
Fred Puhn, 425 Shell Ave.  
National City, CA 91950  
619/475-1155 (7-9 pm & weekends)

Dear Fred,

Sorry the car wasn't a Devin...it was a one off rust bucket, not built for facing...in fact never completed.

Joe

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August 10, 1991  
RE: MILLER RDST.

Dear Joe,

Thank you for all the info. on the Miller I'm restoring. I will now go at it with new vigor as it will be great to see two of the roadsters type out on the track.

I did not get to see the Sunday event and hope all had a good time.

Hope I may at times ask your advice on restoration and history of my car as your car looks very nicely done and to the true spirit of vintage racing.

Also if you ever make up or have more Miller ID badges, please keep me in mind.

Is your old MPX-Crosley Spl. still around?

Thanks again,  
Lou Pavesi, 13920 Fremont Pines  
Los Altos Hills, CA 94022, (415) 948-5203

Dear Lou,

I can now name first 15 Miller cars and original owners!

Editor

## H-MOD OVER-THE-HILL GANG

### Dues Renewal \$ 12 (November to November )

Please renew my membership in the H mod. over - the - hill - gang. i wish to continue receiving the quarterly Newsletter and the news about our events. i understand that this year will feature special events and club novelty items such as teeshirts and race videos which will be made available to our membership.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

RACE CARS PREVIOUSLY OWNED \_\_\_\_\_

RACE CARS CURRENTLY OWNED \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE COMMENT ON THE KINDS OF EVENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE. \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE CHECK BOX YES OR NO FOR INCLUDING YOUR NAME ETC. IN A MEMBER REGISTRY FOR MEMBER USE ONLY.....

YES  NO

### NEW MEMBERSHIP \$15 (November to November)

I HAVE ENCLOSED \$15.00 DOLLARS TO JOIN...

YES... I WANT TO JOIN THIS ORGANIZATION AND PARTICIPATE WHEN AND WHERE I CAN. I UNDERSTAND I WILL RECEIVE A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER AS WELL AS NOTIFICATIONS OF EVENTS, SALE OF TEESHIRTS AND OTHER CLUB MATERIALS INCLUDING VIDEOS AND PATCHES.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

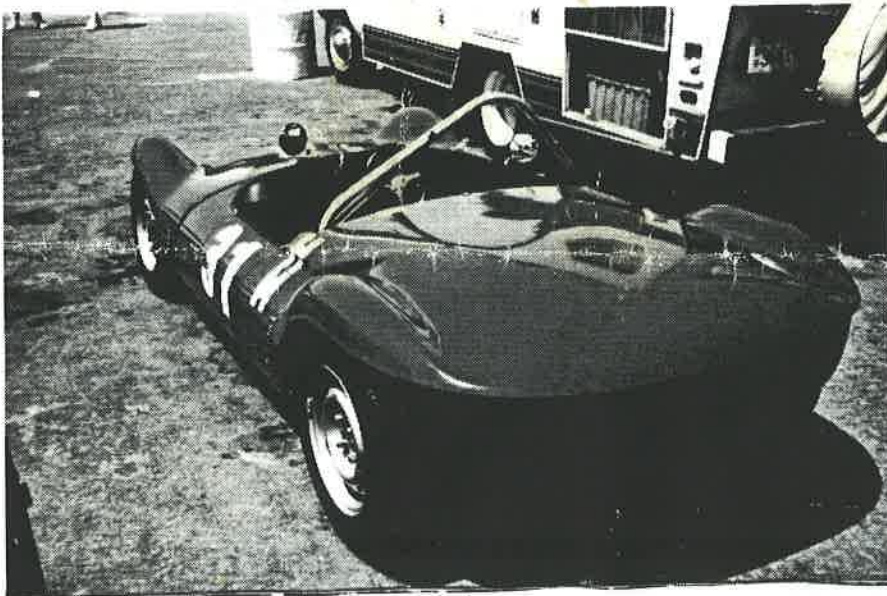
RACE CARS PREVIOUSLY OWNED \_\_\_\_\_

RACE CARS CURRENTLY OWNED \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE COMMENT ON THE KINDS OF EVENT YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE. \_\_\_\_\_

POTENTIAL NEW MEMBERS \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to Linda Puckett c/o H-Mod.  
22901 Loumont Drive, El Toro, CA 92630  
Phone (714) 768-7882



JABRO MK4 SAAB OWNED BY TERRY MATHENY IS AN EXCELLENT REPRESENTATIVE OF A TRUE H-MOD. COMPETITOR. THIS CAR IS FOR SALE BY TERRY FOR \$12,500 & FEATURES REAR ENGINE LOCATION, LAMBERT CASE 5 SPEED GEARBOX, SPARE ENGINE WITH TRAILER. CAR IN CALIF. CONTACT TERRY AT (218) 631-4373.



We need East, Midwest & Southern "Schedule of Events" and more member public relations for H-Mod.

## WANT ADS

### VINTAGE CARBURETORS!

Pre-war Webers, a 2-barrel SU, a pair of tiny side-draft Meminis (Topolino racer size), and others. Also have Rootes supercharger Italiameccanica (serial No. 8), Scintilla magneto, and 8-cylinder pre-war magnetos. All expensive, but will trade for equally precious parts, cars, etc. Send SASE for list.

**Fred Puhn**

**425 Shell Avenue**

**National City, CA 91950**

**619/475-1155 (7-9 pm & weekends)**

### JABRO-SAAB REAR ENGINE SPL.

ORANGE IN COLOR, TOTALLY RESTORED AND VERY COMPETITIVE RACED RECENTLY AT MONTEREY HISTORICS, PLENTY OF SPARES. . .

\$15,000 FIRM—

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**SAAB SPARES—**YES, I have spare everything from wheels to carburetors, pistons (used), cranks others too numerous  
**DETAIL HERE ...**

**JOE PUCKETT (714) 768-7882**

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original items still being manufactured by the original manufacturer!  
**Nick Brajevich, call (213) 321-2247**  
for price list

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22901 Loumont Drive, El Toro, CA 92630. . . or call (714) 768-7882