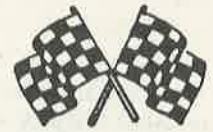




SMALL *Times*



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

volume 4 number 2

H-MOD ACTION! BOB GRAHAM DRIVING EX-EMORY SMITH CROSLLEY LEADS ALVA RODRIGUES AND HIS DEVIN PANHARD!!

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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



REPORT-H-MOD. REUNION- 1993

With a national current membership of 110 members throughout the USA, H-MOD. is most active in California where in the north, Laguna Seca and Sears Point regularly get entries of between 5 and 7 cars while in the Southern California area an event will usually see between 4 and 5 cars. When the two areas get together, which happened previously in 1990 at Las Vegas and again in 1991 at Laguna, the effect is magical. A time trip into history...brief but tremendously fulfilling, the basic stuff vintage racing is supposedly all about.

The PBS of Bim Shook was the fastest qualifier on Saturday at Willow Springs, California, with a blistering 1:49 lap for the 2.5 mile circuit. Bim's car is a G.T. coupe, very light and aerodynamic with Fiat single overhead cam power torquing through a 5 speed Hewland gearbox. Next to Bim on the grid was the Tanner T-5. This swift little front engine car was a championship machine driven in the early 1960's by the legendary Martin Tanner. Today the T-5 turns Willow in the mid 1:50's ably driven by Gene Leaseure in a manner that would surely bring a proud smile to the late great Tanner's face.

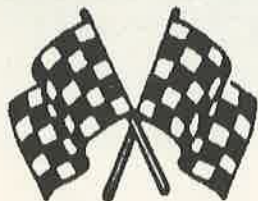
The bright canary yellow Nardi-Crosley of Don Baldocchi was positioned next in qualifying. Probably the fastest car with Crosley power in the country. Don is always a contender and has done an excellent job in restoring his car.

Another noteworthy Crosley powered vehicle was driven by Eric Shuloff. It is a tiny aluminum bodied, space framed car with Fiat 15 inch high rims on proper tires of but 4.5 inch width. The total racing weight of the car is under 800 lbs.

Next on the grid was the red with white trim Devin-Panhard of hardcharging Alva Rodrigues. This quiet, mild mannered Gonsales California resident is noted for his beautifully prepared 2 cylinder engine's power and reliability and his own tenacious driving style. Alongside Alva was the similar Devin-Panhard of Jacob Shallit who has had a short but active involvement in H-Mod. after completing in 1991 perhaps the finest restoration of a Panhard powered car.

My own Phoenix-Saab was positioned directly after the Panhards. This unique mid-engined car began life in 1959 with a Mercury outboard engine but later was changed to Saab two stroke power when

(continued REUNION page 5)



Joe Puckett

Well, folks we kinda impressed VARA at our H-Mod. Reunion 1993...Impressed them with our spirit, togetherness, driving and certainly the cars. They were wonderful to us and deserve our thanks for their efforts too. This spring issue sparkles with more of Donaldson and Cunningham's humor plus the race results at Willow. We had several cars that almost were ready...hopefully next year we can field 12, 15 or 20? We still need your contributions, a brief or even long winded letter will be welcomed. We need a Club Rep. from the SVRA and one from the Ohio or Illinois areas. Call me to volunteer. A list of current club reps. is shown elsewhere in this issue. Other surprises await so read on.

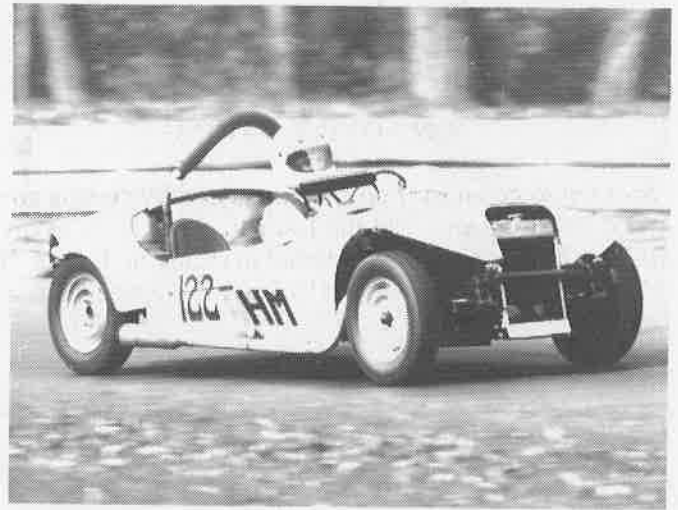
There once was a group called H-Mod
 Who, by some, were considered quite odd
 They raised hell in the bars
 And built strange little cars
 Which they raced with a passion, by God.

The engines are very small bore.
 But the drivers are racers; hard-core.
 The class was H Mod.
 And though it seems odd
 They're now faster than ever before.

By Curt Anderson

TECHNICAL TIPS

The process of pre-race check off is essential to the proper preparation of your race car. Take time to layout on paper, the various components i.e. engine, front end, electrical system, from front to rear of other vehicle. Adjustable settings such as plugs, points, tires, shocks should be shown in the logical order. Other key listings are suggested like weather, track, and how much beer is in the cooler. Just kidding guys, by truly, if you use a check off list, it will help you toward success and continue to grow and become a mite more sophisticated in the process.



AUTOCROSS - AN ALTERNATIVE

By Glenn Reynolds

Like many of you, trying to earn a living and race a vintage car puts great demands on one's time and pocket-book. I am lucky in that I live 45 minutes from Lime Rock, but even so, I can only manage 3 or 4 events per season. I can't imagine what it is like for those of you who have to make lodging/meal/travel/etc. plans for every race.

In my search for ways to use my car more often and still allow time for other pursuits, I decided to try Autocross. Let me say up front; autocross AIN'T RACING! It just doesn't jump-start your heart the way racing does when the green flag drops.

On the other hand, autocross is cheap (about \$15.00 per event). It requires no prior commitment - you just show up, pay the fee, and you're in, and there are lots of events everywhere. You just have to find them, as autocross doesn't get much publicity.

Another word of caution: don't expect to turn in the fastest time of day (FTD). You will be amazed at how fast a Honda CRX and some of the other Japanese "Pocket Rockets" can scoot with the current Yokohama A-008R autocross-specific tires. If you can, I would suggest going with a couple other H-Mod guys so that you can compete with each other.

These days Autocross is divided into two classes: Solo I and Solo II. Solo II is the slower speed variety usually held at a parking lot. It is a very twisty course (probably 2nd, gear), and the course is changed for every event. Solo I is more of a time trial run at higher speeds and the course does not change. A typical Solo I event would be held at a road course during the week or on "off" weekends.

Even though I really wasn't competitive in my class, I thoroughly enjoyed myself and found the other autocrossers to be very friendly and curious about my car (my 1858 H-Mod is older than 95% of the competitors). I even considered putting a set of sticky 185-60-13 A-008's on the H-Mod, but 7" tread width of racing rubber combined with my Crosley spindles sounds like an accident waiting to happen.

MORE REMINISCENCE OF THE OL' DAYS, OR, GRAMPAW THROTTLEBOTTOM ON SPORTIVE AUTOMOBILISM, VII

by John Donaldson

ON NOVICE RACING

So's not to get this off on a teejus note, why doncha go back to the last issue and read the last paragraph or so of my last article. Tells about getting started in racing in the late '50's.

Hourglass Raceway near San Diego was shaped like its name. Long front chute, right hand hairpin, left, right hairpin, short chutem, right-left-right, onto the front chute again. Two, maybe three miles around. Typical airport/parking lot track of the era.

This was the track where I earned the dubious distinction of turning a respectable road race into a destructive derby.

Novice practice. I learned when novice practice was by the track announcer calling for novices to the starting grid. You fired up, rolled out of the pits, and headed for the start finish line. What I didn't know was that your starting position for novice practice was determined by when you came out of the pits. I was all excited and hot to get going, so I was out of the pits early. But what I really wanted was to be at the back of the pack, so's I could stay out of everybody's way, and maybe learn something. An overly cheerful grid marshal motioned me to the front, about the second or so row.

S'help me, when all the cars were on the grid, stopped, the starter dropped the green on the whole damn field! None of this one-at-a-time-to-spread-everybody-out stuff. As I recall there were 20 or more novices that day.

We all charged off for turn 1, me thankful that I had gotten off without stalling the engine. At turn 1, the objective was to get around it without banging into anybody. The hell with finding the right line. Halfway up the short chute, a Porsche 550 Spyder blasted by me, like to have scared me to death. Before I could wonder whereinell he had come from, a 140 Jag blew by on my other side.

Things were pretty Raggedy-Andy through the first few turns, but we got sorted out at the last turn onto the front chute. It was at that point that I started thinking ahead. (And we'll all agree that it was about time, huh?) We were gonna have a pretty fair head of steam up as we approached turn 1 again. Where should I get on the binders? The 5 and 4 marker seemed a bit much, more like for Corvettes and Fewwocious Fewwawis. I decided to start at the 3 marker, and work down as I learned how to drive.

So, at the 3 marker I tromped on the brake, and WANG!!! I got rammed in the back end a cycle-fendered MG special. Sped me up considerably. Also pointed out to me that H-Modifieds didn't brake at the 3 marker. After a little experimentation, I learned what everybody else already knew. The 1 marker is plenty soon enough.

Back in the pits, I surveyed the damage to the Miller. The rear body work, originally kinda smooth and flowing, now had the center caved in a good 8 inches. No frame or fuel tank damage.

So now it was time for the Novice Race. As you may have guessed, back then, you ran what you brung if you were a novice. Looking back over 34 years, my memory is a bit dim, but I remember for sure that there was a Porsche Spyder, at least one Austin Healey, a gaggle of sprites, a Lotus, and at least one Corvette.

The announcer called for novices to the start grid. I was sure they'd grid us by engine size, or some such rationale, so there wouldn't be a Sprite and a Miller on the front row, right? Wrong. As you came out of the pits, that was your grid position. I was a bit more judicious than at practice, but I still wound up gridded in the middle of the pack. Butterflies? I had the free world's supply. The starter ran down through the grid, pointing at each one of us, and we each dutifully raised a hand, "Yeah, I'm ready". It just looked like I was waving at him.

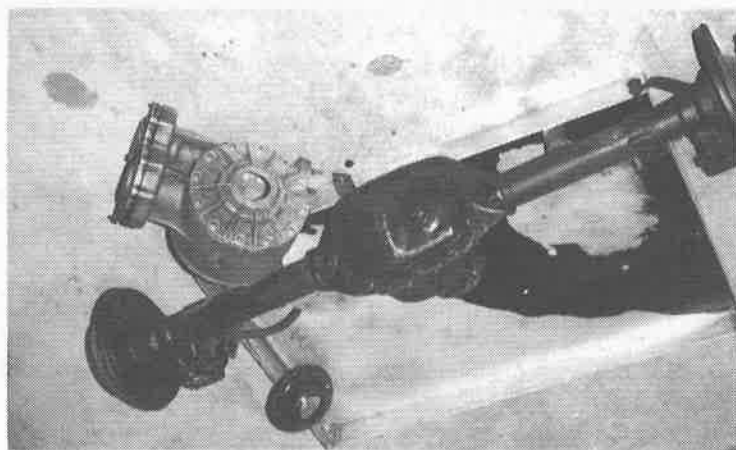
The green flag flew, and away we all went, each in his own line and speed. We got through the first turn without incident, also the second. At the right hander onto the back chute, things went to hell in a hurry. Some guy in a Healey spun, and everybody hit the brakes. I got on mine with a vengeance, and--they failed! I hit a Sprite in the back end so hard the mirror image of his license plate got imprinted in my nose bodywork.

Back in the pits again, there was no damage, other than cosmetic to the Miller, and to my already rattled psyche. I figured, "This is it. The SCCA is gonna run me off this race track either at gun point, or in tar and feathers." I'd been on the track for a total of 5 - 1/3 laps, in two events, and I'd been in two crashes.

So it was with fear and trepidation that I approached the chief steward, I 'splained who I was, what had happened, and asked if I got the rig back to L.A., got the brakes fixed, and came back, would they let me run Sunday? The chief Steward looked at me with a strange expression. "Son," he said, "After what's happened to you today, if you've got the guts to get that rig fixed and come back here, you can race!"

About that time Chuck Gounis showed up. He was spectating that weekend. He was notoriously unsympathetic. "Gawd, Donaldson, how could you be so dumb? Well, never mind, tow the rig back to the motel and we'll fix it."

We took off the rear body and Chuck took out the dent by the simple expedient of standing on the inside of it. The problem with the Goodyear Hawley disc brakes was that one of the pistons had blown out. The combination of not being properly adjusted, and my heavy foot, was the cause. Chuck had a spare O-ring, so he refitted everything, and we adjusted the brakes. That in itself was a chore. In all the time I ran that Miller, I never got them adjusted just right, and to this day, I've never trusted Goodyear Hawley brakes. (continued GRAMPAW page 6)



BELL AUTO 103 . . . QUICK CHANGE
REAR END. . . FOR CROSLEYS

LETTER TO EDITOR!

Hi Joe,

So glad to hear you're up knocking around. sorry I missed you're last press deadline so put this one on file.

I think the favorite race course for "H" Mods in So. Calif. during the 50's and 60's was Santa Barbara. The race track was located in the So. East corner of the (Goleta) Airport while the north and northwest portions were open at all time to commercial and private aircraft.

As I recall, we in "H" Mod had just been brought up to the starting grid when a signal came out to shut down because oil or some such on the course.

About this time a Vintage Navy WWII Hellcat fighter (actually it was a TBD Avenger, Editor) took off on the north side of the airport going west into the wind. At about 500 ft. or so the propeller hub overheated and caught fire with flames pouring out. The pilot banked left to make a 180° turn back towards the airfield. This seemed to be bringing him back over our position.

I was sitting there in my infamous Moretti and thinking I've got this thing started. I've got this far. If I shut it down - "H" Mod batteries being what they are - I may not get it started again before Tuesday. By the time I get this seat belt loose and get out of this car that plane could be here. So I sat with engine running.

I looked to my right at the faithful pit crews lined up along the grid. One third of them took off running towards the off limits snack bar for one last beer. The second third ran for the porta potties. The rest were just running around. I saw my wife to be duck behind a 55 gal. trash drum. I asked her later what protection she thought she would have against a 3 ton airplane. She said, "If I couldn't see him, he couldn't get me."

The pilot trailing smoke like a Corvette with a rubber piston, cranked his aircraft around and made a near perfect downwind landing on the runway where he started. He would have made a great "H" Mod driver.

After this minor delay, the guys who ran to the snack bar came back in good spirits. The third that went to the porta-potties were still struggling to get in and out. The rest were trying to figure out where they were when this whole thing started.

At last, the green flag flew and away we went. I think I finished dead last only because every car I passed got black flagged.

We all loved Santa Barbara.

The best of everything, Joe.
Bill Cunningham

PAST ISSUES OF SMALL TIMES AVAILABLE:!!

Now available for the nominal fee of \$5.00 the first 4 issues of our Small Times publication. Now three years old, the club newsletter is becoming collectable. Be the first on your block to have em. Send cash, check or MO to Linda Puckett; **NOTE, early back issues.** We'll ship em off immediately.

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Glen Reynolds

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(REUNION -- continued from page 1)

the outboards kept exploding. The driver for this reunion event would be Curt Anderson, long-time H-MOD. crewman for me in the 1960's.

"Legendary" is perhaps an understatement for describing Nick Brajevich who brought his 1953 Crosley Supersport to the reunion. The always popular Crosley speed equipment manufacturer would give up his driving chores for the reunion to Bob Graham an original H-Mod. driver who now is a major force in building winning Crosley engines.

Only two H-Mod. Miller-Crosleys are currently competing in vintage races. Bob Graham owns the ex-Emory Smith envelope bodied car, and I own the ex-Jack Brown cycle fendered roadster. My roadster was entered at Willow to be driven by Kip Fjeld who has worked long and hard on the restoration. Powered by a 722 cc Crosley engine putting out about 55 horses, this little car barely tips the scales at under 750 lbs.

The final entry was the recent restoration of Arizonian Scotty Knox. Recent is perhaps an oversimplification considering that a week prior to the event Scotty was standing in his garage knee deep in a plethora of parts. This car appears to be a 3/4 version of the 35B Bugatti but is a neat little brass trimmed, specially constructed one off imitator powered as it were, but the venerable siamese port Crosley.

Our event, race 3, was set to start about 1 o'clock. After a slow and orderly warm up lap, the green flag dropped on the tightly formed pack. By turn one the Tanner had a 2 car lead over the PBS and Baldocchi's Nardi. But a short minute later and the screaming PBS was attempting to pass. While this war raged Rodrigues and Shalitt in the Panhards about 4 seconds back, held off a spirited attack by Anderson in the other Saab. The Shuloff car waited in the wings but dispatched the struggling Supersport driven by Graham. Just before midpoint of the event, the Tanner began to experience problems and dropped off the charge moving Baldocchi into 2nd place about 2 seconds back of Shooks PBS. The Rodrigues Panhard was 4th ahead of Anderson in the Saab with Shalitt slipping off the pace.

At the checkered flag the PBS cruised to a win over Baldocchi in the Nardi by 3 seconds, the Tanner got a second wind and finished without a clutch in 4th place. Rodrigues' Panhard edged the Tanner at

the end while the Phoenix Saab was in for 5th.

Just as Saturday had been a calm day without much wind Sunday was a coolish blustery day with plenty of westerly wind. The great cumulus clouds above the rocky desert hillsides were tinted with natures palette knife in rich streaks of gold and mauve tinged gray. The cars in other classes were pretty much undaunted by the wind whereas the little H cars were losing 10 mph. on the front straight! The morning practice saw disaster strike the "Bugatti" of Knox as he barreled into turn one. A mechanical clank, crunch and shivering sigh ended his day, putting him on the trailer for this weekend without a lap of racing. Kip Fjeld in the Miller-Crosley also felt the fickle finger of fate when his transmission abruptly packed it in during practice.

The pre-race promotion of announcer Alan Bolte had everyone on the edge of their folding chairs as the green flag came out on Sunday's feature. This time the PBS shot into the lead with the Nardi-Crosley and Tanner fighting for scraps. Graham driving the Crosley Supersport was suddenly forced to park it when something broke as he approached turn 4. Shalitt boomed by the more experienced Rodrigues' Panhard and Anderson in the Phoenix-Saab, but could not hold on. At the halfway point the PBS had a commanding lead over the Tanner and the Nardi-Crosley and set about lapping the backmarkers. Anderson in the Phoenix-Saab, remembering some advise from the writer, took the Rodrigues and Shallet Panhards in quick order and pulled away. At the checker the finish was in order Shook, PBS followed 10 seconds later by Leasure in the Tanner and another 2 seconds later the relentless Baldocchi aboard the Nardi. Anderson was in for 4th in the other Saab and Rodrigues was trailed by Shallet.

In the excitement that followed all the drivers collectively said it was the best racing they had yet experienced in Vintage. The old timers that came out to watch said it was Kismet, a bit of the past re-experienced.

To me the entire weekend had been what this vintage thing is all about. The Club had made a resounding statement, and for a brief moment a number of us had been a hellova lot younger.

Joe Puckett

LETTERS TO EDITOR!

Feb. 2, 1993

Joe -

It was great to receive your newsletter the other day, and to hear that you are on the road to recovery.

I am going to start work on preparing a list of all known H-Mod cars in the northeast with owners name & address, condition of the car, and whether or not they are members. I'll send you a copy when it's done.

Regards,
Glenn Reynolds

.....

January 29, 1993

Dear Joe:

I just got my renewal from you today, and I have to say that I was pleased to find out that the club was still in business. More important I was glad to hear that you were still in business.

It was fun reading John Donaldson's column on his start in racing, particularly the prepping of his driving suit. My choice of driving suit was an Air Force coverall, flame treated, that I used to drive the Aardvark. What's more I still have the suit, but unfortunately, not the Aardvark. I have asked for the info on the March reunion at Willow Springs and hope to see everyone there, I just wish I had a race car to bring. Some day!

Sincerely,
Stu Haggart

H-MOD AREA COORDINATORS

The following area coordinators report current happenings in their area.

Tom Churchill-Ohio 513-767-9151,
Glenn Reynolds No. East USA 203-355-1697. Volunteers are needed for regular quarterly input to the club.

(GRAMPAW - continued from page 3)

Once you had run in your novice race, you were entitled to run in your class race. There was no Sunday novice race. Great. So I've got 5 laps of practice, 1/3 of a lap of competition, and they're gonna dump me into the G-H-Modified race.

During small bore modified practice, at his invitation, I followed Harry Jones around in His Lotus club. Actually learned something. Vowed to display discretion in carload lots during the race.

The starter flagged us off for the G-H-Modified race. Mrs. Donaldson's little boy, Johnny, played it cool. Let everybody get sorted out, didn't try to pass anybody.

After a half dozen laps, I caught up with a pretty little Devin bodied special shiny black. It was fun to have some company, and he was about as fast as I was. I followed him for a few laps, noticing that he seemed to be concerned about me. He'd look back at me as we came out onto the front chute. Little did I know...

In the middle of turn 1, to this day I don't know exactly what happened. I may have looked at my tach in the middle of the corner. At any rate, all of a sudden, here was the Devin Special, sideways, right in front of me! WHUMP!! I T-boned him. Knocked him 30 feet, sideways, down the track. I managed to get the Miller off the course. The front end was all bashed in, the tube frame was clobbered, the radiator was holed, and I felt lower than whale droppings. Chuck helped me load the rig onto the trailer. He was his usual empathetic self. "Wait'll you get the bill from Miller for this one, Donaldson!" were his consoling words.

EPILOGUE

Don Miller listened to my tale of woe. "Ya done good," he said. "Look, if you'd have tried to miss the guy, you'd have clipped either his front or rear corner. One or both of you might of got upside-down. If ya just got to hit somebody, T-bone'em square. And another thing. When you saw that guy lookin' back at you, you shoulda backed off. You were makin' him nervous. It's a dead giveaway."

LETTERS TO EDITOR!

3/1/93

Dear Joe:

I am enclosing a check for my renewal, and want to let you know that I enjoy receiving the newsletter. I am in the process of restoring a Crosley Sable that was last run in 1959. With the car I received parts from two (2) quick change rear ends that were originally used in it. The one in the picture is stamped "Bell Auto 103" and it is just a bare case, and the other is quite heavily damaged. I would like to know if there is anyone who would have a replacement or parts to make what I have on hand workable.

Have you ever considered publishing a book of your cartoons. I would really enjoy seeing them again as I am sure many other people would.

Sincerely,
Dennis Wickberg

Thanks Dennis for the encouragement. Have a book in layout stage as we speak!

.....
Feb. 5, 1993

Dear Joe & Linda;

Thank you for the newsletter. You people did a real good job especially after all you have been through. Joe, I am glad to know that you are finally out of the hospital and home again. No doubt you will have the club on track again. I talk to Nick and Joan frequently and they keep me in touch. I still have the Crosley Bandera mid-engine race car. Bob Graham did a real good job on it.

There is not much more to tell about so will sign off. Wishing the best of everything to both of you.

Sincerely,
Dick Scanlan

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