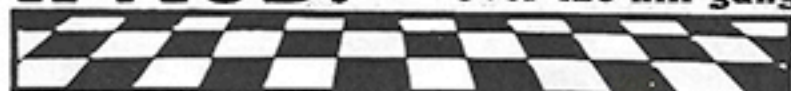


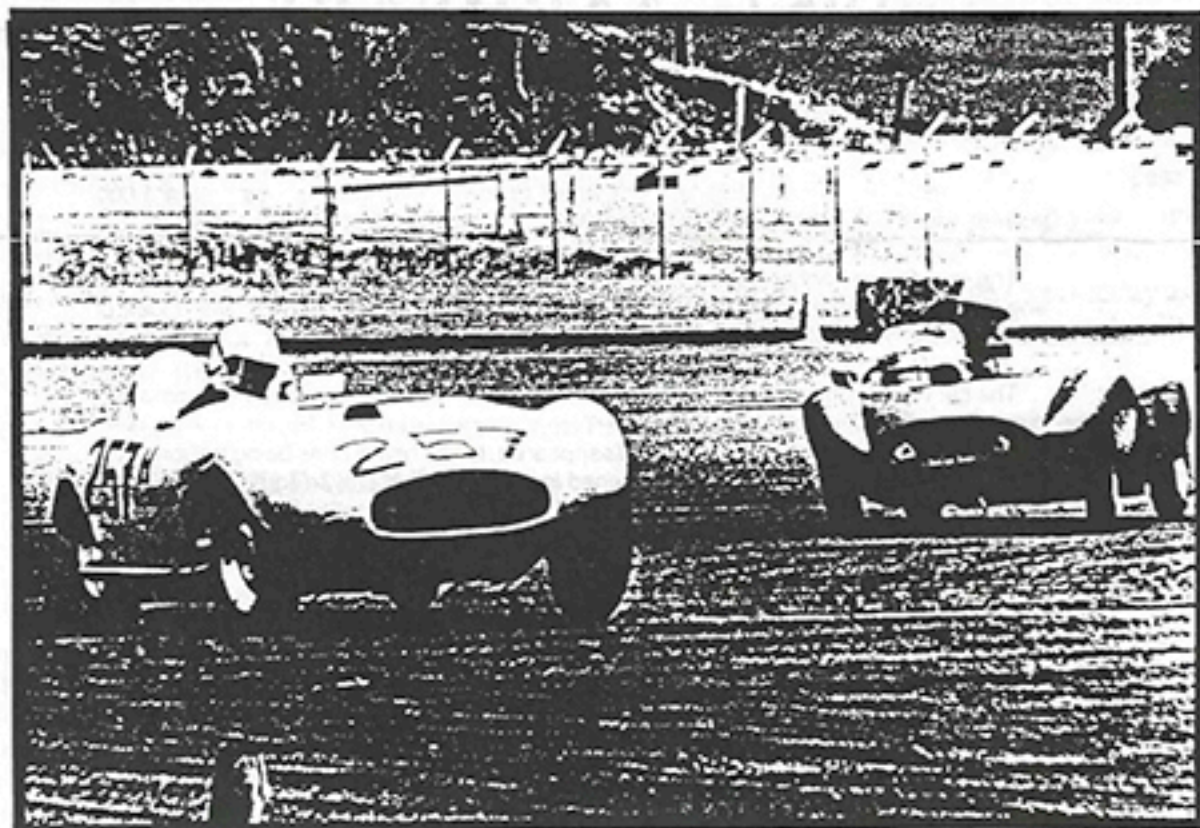
# Newsletter



**H MOD.** Over the hill gang



## VOLUME 1 NUMBER 3



257 John Donaldson and Emory Smith duke it out with a pair of Miller Crosleys. John has an article on Don Miller in this issue while Sandy McDonald traces some interesting "h" history. John raced on the west coast, Sandy in the midwest and points east, in the good ol' days of yesteryear!

### H-MOD OVER THE HILL GANG

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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.

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 group, dedicated to documenting and tracing auto racing history, Vintage "H" cars and good old bench racing.





## 1952 AARDVARK

The Aardvark was hand built in Southern California during '51 & '52 by John Porter. All the mechanical components are from a "Panhard Junior" while the body is built of hand roller aluminum and a fiberglass nose panel.

The Aardvark is a front engine, front wheel drive car that weights less than a 1,000 pounds with the entire engine and tranny in front of the front wheels.

The engine is a Panhard 850cc, opposed flat 2 cylinder with a roller bearing crankshaft and "torsion bar" valve springs. This is the engine that powered many of the "Index of Performance" winners at LeMans for many years!

The car was designed to compete in the very popular "H-Mod" class and ran extensively throughout California including Pajero, Torrey Pines, Paramount Ranch, Golden Gate Park, Riverside, etc. until 1966 when it disappeared. It was heard of as being in Florida for a few years, but was discovered abandoned in a field in southern California where it was said to have been for the previous 10 years. The car was restored 5 years ago by it's present owner to as close to as possible the original intent =

"A little Aardvark never hurt anyone"



famous "h"mod. quotations...

"rev it til the @#%&\*%\$(+ valves float!"

"Brake points?...who uses the !@#&%\* brakes!"

THE H-MODIFIED CLUB LAMENT

(To the tune of the Georgia Institute of Technology Sor

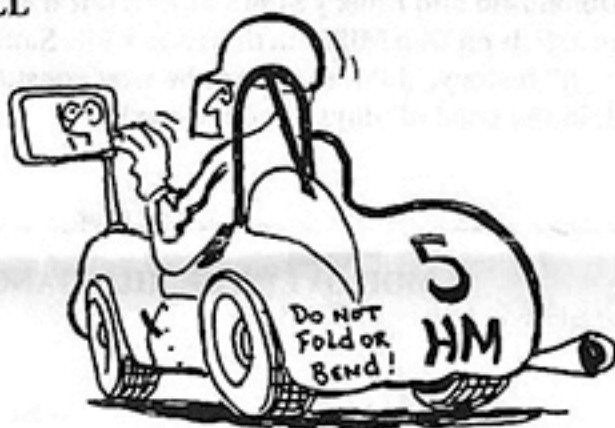
### TEST YOUR RECALL

#### WHAT'S YOUR DEFINITION OF:

1. Texas Start
2. Two Stroker
3. Crash Box
4. Skid Lid
5. Binders
6. Four Porter
7. Locker Rear
8. Blue Streaks
9. Mouse Equipped
10. Nerf Bars

#### ANSWERS

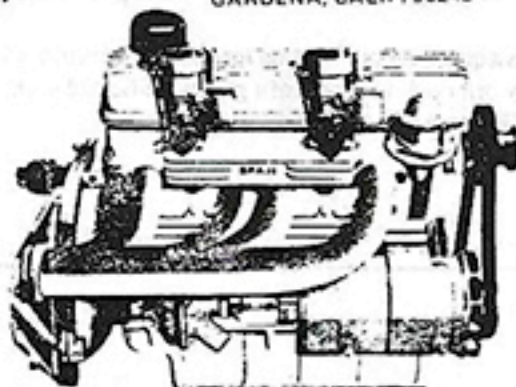
1. Jumping the green flag early
2. In H-Mod, usually a Saab or Merc outboard 2-cycle
3. Gearbox without syncros
4. Helmet
5. Brakes
6. Four port intake
7. Rear end "locked" for traction advantage
8. Goodyear Tires
9. Flat Topline (Mouse)
10. Pushbars - front or rear of car



## BRAJE . . . .

CROSLLEY CUSTOM AND SPEED EQUIPMENT

1651 WEST 130th STREET  
GARDENA, CALIF. 90248



I'm drivin a wreck that got thru tech  
It's an H-M Modified!  
Most unreliable racing machine  
But it gives me quite a ride!

I cobbled and scrounged the pieces,  
And some I went and buyed,  
And when the bills come pouring in,  
My wife, she almost died!

When I want-it-to-go I give-it-a-tow,  
And then it always quits.  
You can't get parts, but if you do-  
Then nothing ever fits!

Nobody ever tells me-  
Just what I need to know  
To put together this bucket of bolts  
That cost me all that dough.

Before the race, it's a basket case  
But on Saturday noon- YIP-EEEE!  
I'm off and running a race machine  
What a going car is she.

It's so fast in every corner,  
And so slow on every straight,  
The only thing I ever pass  
Are tow trucks at the gate!

You can have your nag or drive your Jag,  
Or a Porsche that stirs your pride.  
I say I'll quit - but build again  
Until I'm mutilled.

Like all you jolly good fellows,  
I'll race the true and tried,  
And just like you, I'll stick and I'm stuck  
In H-M Modified.!



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## EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

By Joe Puckett

It is amazing the way this club has taken off... Really! We are up to 79 members and of those 42 originally raced H-Mod in its heyday! Another amazing thing is that it is a one-man promotion, and I still seem to have lids on all the pots... The cost to produce this newsletter is running kinda high though, and we are not trying to make a profit, just break even. Oh, well!

This summer edition will give us an article by Sandy MacArthur (midwest) and John Donaldson (west coast) each a fun filled, informative look at the way we were.

We will talk about a H-Mod reunion race proposed for Las Vegas with the Vintage Auto Racing Association on October 13-14, 1990. We need photos of the cars, preferably in action... Please send slides, they can be made cheaply from glossies either B/W or color and you don't give up your originals.

We will need a brief description of the slide too! We need more articles on Vintage racers today as well as the Good Old Days... And ads... we need ads... costs to compile print and mail are growing like the membership! So find an easy chair and read awhile.

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### CLASS H IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE S.C.C.A.

*As Remembered by Sandy MacArthur*

Back in the late 40's and early 50's, most young men wanted to join the S.C.C.A. and race automobiles. Compared to circle track racing, the appeal of road racing was new and extremely exciting. Most of us bought MGs, which could be had for about \$1800, and a helmet for \$20, and were in business. As there were no "production" or "modified" classes, etc., we were grouped only by our displacement so that we all were placed in what would be labeled "modified."

A little research showed that there was a F.I.A. class for cars 750cc and under Class "H." The first person I recall exploring this was a New England genius named Candy Poole, who built (or at least entered and drove) a Crosley powered machine called the "PBX," which was much smaller and lighter than cars most people had ever seen. It opened a lot of eyes at Watkins Glen and other eastern races, and it ran for years and nearly always won.

This got a few of us thinking about the power-to-weight ratio rather than the ultimate horsepower. Specials began to appear which would frequently beat the MGs with only 750ccs. although eventually about a dozen engines were used, the Crosley was the most popular since you could buy a used, rusted car which would have an overhead cam, over square, five main bearing on both crank and cam, aluminum case, "fixed head," lightweight 12 inch wheels, and disc brakes on all four, all for about \$100. (Few people today realize that all this was standard and massed produced even over forty years ago.) There was soon a booming after-market in manifolds, cams, ignition systems, oil coolers, etc. (Crosley themselves got into the act with a sort of Jeep looking car called the Hot Shot and Super Sport which had slightly higher compression, but it was too heavy, had a poorly ratioed gear box, and was not really competitive with the specials.)

Another factor that encouraged the special builders was a new product to appear at the time - Fiberglass. No longer did you have to be—or hire—an expert metal beater, all you needed was a nodding acquaintance with an acetylene torch, a little imagination, and an empty garage stall. Road & Track magazine, under John Bond, was always giving us articles on roll centers, under steer and such, and we all thought we were experts.

The Class "H" specifications were practically wide open: displacement limited to 750cc, and to make it a sports car it had to seat two people (try that in a modern Sports 2000!), have head and tail lights, a starter, spare tire, at least one door, a handbrake, reverse gear, and for some larger races it had to swallow an F.I.A. suitcase (about the size of an overnight bag). This left plenty of room for imagination!

I had sold my MG, so I set about building an "H" car with the help of ex-Californian John Wood. My goals were simple: it should cost no more than a used MG, and it should beat them!

I used a chrome-moly 2 1/2" tube ladder frame, Planer suspension in front, using lightened Studebaker parts, an MG T.C. gear box, Henry "J" rear axle, cycle fenders, and 12" mag wheels from Midgets (\$10 a piece drilled to my bolt pattern from Pop Dreyer in Indianapolis, where I was then living). Joe Silnes, race car builder also from Indianapolis, made me a simple aluminum body all held on with "Dzus" fasteners so that the car could be stripped down to the chassis in five minutes. The engine received the state of the art treatment: Navy steel crank, balancing, Braje intake manifold, two SU carbs, oil cooler, Mallory ignition, chromemoly straps under the main bearing caps, large oil sump, slightly stiffer valve springs, and different cams starting with Iskenderian, then Harman, and Collins, and ending with Weber. The engine started with 27.5 horse power and gradually crept up to 55.

From all this I put together a car which I named the Sparrow because of its modest ambitions (people associated the name with "English sparrow" some thought it was a foreign



## SKIDMARKS

BY JOE PUCKETT

We understand Charter Member, Bob Graham, is almost finished with his restoration of one or Don Millers cars. The rumor is that Bob got an offer of \$60,000 plus for his Siata and decided to park it and watch it get fat and more valuable safe in his big comfy garage!

Don Baldocchi won a recent race at Sears Point in Northern California, in his Crosley Nardi, the race had several quick "H" cars driven by "H" Mod members, Don Racine (Aardvark), Fred Temps (Paper Maché Spc.), Sue Racine (Jabro Crosley), Alva Rodrigues (Devin Panhard). The Northern California, Oregon and Washington "H" Mods total over 35 cars in varying states of restoration.



LEFT TO RIGHT-JOE PUCKETT, CHUCK GOUNIS AND THE LEGEND, NICK BRAJE AT RIVERSIDE RACEWAY FAREWELL IN 1989.

## RODGER WARD'S SAN DIEGO GRAND PRIX

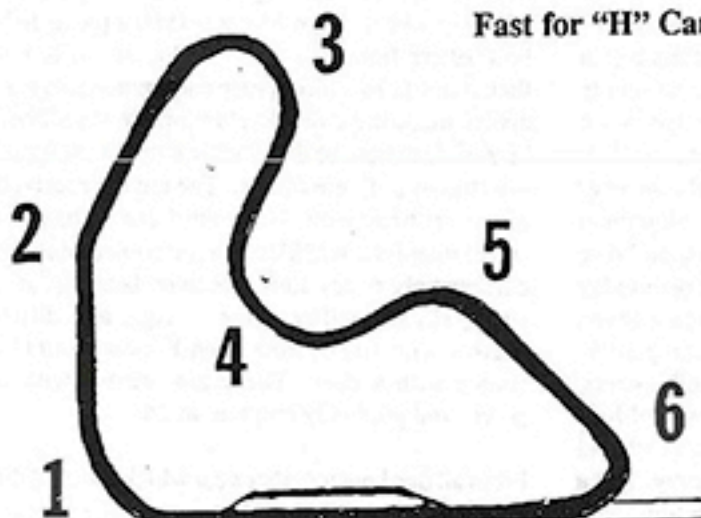


San Diego Grand Prix in May, saw Chuck Tsigounis in the "H" Mod Phoenix-SAAB storm to a 3rd overall and first in class on Sunday. The race was composed of cars from 3 Liter to the 850 SAAB, 1st overall was a Lotus 7 and 2nd was an MGA.

**AGE AND TREACHERY  
WILL OVERCOME YOUTH AND SKILL.**

## VINTAGE REUNION RACE LAS VEGAS - OCT. 13-14

The Speedrome in Vegas is a really good track it has been - Recently refurbished and repaved and although the main straight is the run off portion of a drag strip, the rest of the six turn, 1.6 mile circuit is unrelated to the drag strip. It's sort of like a 2/3rds scale flat version of Willow Springs.



Interested? See form for entry elsewhere in this issue! We will offer a package of information on this event for \$3.00.

WHO DO YOU KNOW THAT SHOULD BE A MEMBER OF OUR "H" MOD. GROUP?  
HAVE EM CALL JOE AT 714/768-7882.



car). It was a little overweight (as was I) and really too long, but it did what it was designed to do. Problem was, beating MGs was no longer enough. The Italians had sent over a crop of cars that not only did that but beat my Sparrow just as easily. We were now faced with such 750s as the Nardi (BMW engine), the Siata, Bandini (Crosley), and the Giaur, all which were made of Topolini Fiat parts and heavily breathed on with lots of garlic so that they went like bombs. The Osca, from those old pros the Maserati brothers, was yet to come.

I believe Paul Gougelman was high point man in the S.C.C.A. in 1953 facing a light Nardi with a BMW Fiat twin giving big bags of torque. Bruce Townsend had built a very pretty little red Crosley special looking for all the world like a shrunken "D" Jaguar—except that the latter would not appear for a couple of years. Bruce won Class "H" at Road America for four years running, being clocked at 110 m.p.h. A man named Chuck Hassen opened up a lot of eyes nationally at one of the early longer races in Florida by actually beating a lot of Jaguars and such in a Crosley Bandini which looked as sweet as it was quick. A good friend of mine, Jim Riley, bought it and we ran as a team with our colors bright green with white wheels and numbers. This color was supposed to be a jinx at Indianapolis, so it was rarely used and made identification of our team easier for our pits.

When Jim quit racing I bought the Bandini, as it was a lot faster than the Sparrow, which I then swapped for a three wheeled Morgan. I ran the Bandini for years and loved it. Another good friend of mine, Craven Smith, was an excellent Crosley tuner, and we did better than our share of gathering trophies. In 1955 I got an entry for the 12 hour race at Sebring in Florida.

About this time Roy Kramer, editor of "Piston Patter"—the Chicago region S.C.C.A. magazine—threw a little quiz question in one issue: "What American made, mass produced, 4 cylinder water cooled engine would fit right into Class "H" and put out over 40 dependable horsepower, yet can be carried around on one arm? (or words to that effect). After several days of intense head scratching, I came to the conclusion that it could only be a Mercury Outboard. By this time the Crosleys were getting a bit long in the tooth; nothing remains static forever in racing. The Osca, which eventually killed the era when just anyone could build a low cost winner, had appeared but was priced about \$7500.00 (a good bit higher than the cost of a new Cadillac and only about \$2500.00 less than a Ferrari) so they did not crowd all the specials off the track at once.

Inspired by the quiz question, I had a very nice visit with Carl Keikhaefer of the Mercury Company, and he agreed to install an outboard engine in my car for Sebring—for free yet—plus he offered to have his team of professional race car mechanics rebuild the car completely, and then lent full factory support for the race. I ended up with a car which was not only the first, I believe, to use a Mercury engine but also turned out to have the smallest displacement (621cc) ever entered in Sebring before or since. I selected Paul Gougelman, whom I had known since school, to co-drive with me. It was a real thrill to be competing in the same race with Fangio, Moss, Taruffi, Dreyfus and dozen or so other drivers whose names were household words to sports car fans. I believe we were leading the race on Index of Performance when about halfway through our greatly overstressed Fiat "Topolino" gear box gave out.

An amusing side light of the race happened when Paul was out on the 5 mile track: the carb needed an adjustment so he stopped, flipped off the hood, fixed it, and tore on. However, he did not fix the hood quite right, and while getting up to speed it flew off. He stopped again and put it

on right, but not before a 300SL ran over it. When he returned to the pit with this big Englebert tire track running right over the front of the car, we all nearly fainted!

I raced the Bandini another year with good results, but it was getting fatigue cracks in the fatigue cracks. Paul had a Giaur with a 70 h.p. Moretti twin cam for sale so cheap I couldn't refuse. It always set fastest lap time the first lap but was boiling at the end of the lap. All the "experts" could not fix it, but I felt they must be overlooking some simple things—and they were. We solved the problem and won more than a few trophies that summer.

While doing very well in a six-hour Road America Fall Race with Bruce Townsend as co-driver, we ruined a main bearing and a connecting rod. I HAD to race two weeks later in St. Louis since the Class H Car Club (a forerunner to the "H Mod Club") had arranged so we could have our own race. We had always raced with the Porches, and while we could beat some of them we could never beat all of them, so we could never get 1st over all, to carry the checkered flag, to appear in the magazines, etc. so here was the race we had all been waiting to run in, and here I was with a main bearing and connecting rod all shot.

However, when I had sold the Bandini, I had kept the Mercury engine, never being sure if Mr. Keikhaefer would want it back someday. For about ten nights after work, I labored mightily to stuff it into the Giaur; I had to make an adapter plate for the Fiat 1100 tranny and clutch, redesign various controls and radiator plumbing, but we made it to the race. To my surprise, we turned faster laps than the Moretti had done on the same course that spring. I took it down to Nassau for their first race, and got a second.

Keikhaefer had now put a slightly better Mercury engine into the Stanguellini car which Briggs Cunningham had imported to win its class at Watkins Glen, which it of course did with ease. With the Mercury engine, it set some international records at Daytona Beach. About this time Herm Behm, a friend of Keikhaefer's, had become the Stanguellini importer, and had a factory entry for the 1957 Sebring to drive with Carl Haas. By this time the race was so important that only factory entries were accepted. Due to poor health, Herm found he could not drive, and invited me to take his place. Carl and I won our class which was quite a thrill that every driver does not get to enjoy. After Herm died, I bought this car with the Mercury engine from his widow, and continued to race it with success. (One year I drove in 10 major races at a total cost of \$811.00 including tires, entries, parts, hotels, etc. Since I probably was the tightest Scot in racing, this was most likely a record, but it does go to show one reason why Class H was so popular.)

The Mercury company told me about a man in Quincy, Illinois who made exhaust megaphones for their outboard that were the ONLY modifications that they approved of. The pipes had to end 42 inches from the engine ports, yet the S.C.C.A. demanded that the exhaust exit behind the driver. I made a large tank (my "expansion chamber") of paper then stainless with a 4" aluminum pipe to in front of the right rear fender. The tank I crammed into the rear of the right front fender. Maximum revs went from 5500 rpm to 7200 with no loss of torque. It made a new car of the Stanguellini. At Milwaukee I caught and passed Ollie Schmidt in his 750 Osca. A lot of oil and soot had condensed in the chamber; and when we were really going, it caught fire. I simply could not quit while leading the Osca, so I concentrated on ignoring the side of the car, which was fortunately away from the officials. I escaped a black flag to win, and the fire burned itself out with only a lot of blistered fender paint.

By this time I had become the Stanguellini importer, and was very busy with formula Juniors, "demonstrating,"



racing, and selling cars and parts. However, I wrote to Vitorio Stanguellini in 1958 and told him that if he would enter a sports car at Sebring, I would sell it for him. I let the word out that I had a good entry, and was looking for a co-driver. All he had to do was meet my specs and buy the car for cost (which was not an unknown practice at the time). I sold the car to a good driver, Bob Roloson, and we went down in '59 to find our competition was two factory made Osca's and two factory made French D.B.s.

In the race we were ahead and faster than one D.B., passed one Osca and were steadily gaining on the other. I felt sure that we would end up 2nd in class, but a light rain came like you only see in the tropics and Bob lost it at speed and hit a bridge support, pretty much destroying the car. Seemingly impossible, he was unhurt.

That pretty much ended my career in Class H. I drove in a few more races but was too involved in Juniors. And shortly thereafter, everything changed. Racing became more professional, costs soared, "H" class became DSM, and speed greatly increased. The days of the nation wide group of Clever Builders of Super Light Giant Killers was over. But the people who contributed the most to the class and who all made their own cars became and remain Legends.

Candy Poole, the father of the class and one of the very best, John Mays, "the Wizard" who, to my knowledge, was never beaten if he finished, and

Martin Tanner, who built six cars with aluminum tube frames which are all still in existence, and who made Saabs look and sound like Offenhausers.

(Editor's Note: In the interest of H-Mod history, I would suggest the great Harry Eyerly, Don Miller and Red Le Grand be added. Harry because he too never lost! Don Miller and Red Le Grand because they produced many contending cars between them (over 50 in number) and quite a few of these were champions!

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## THE MILLER'S TALE

*By John Donaldson*

Racing in the old days. Remember when? Ah, yes, nostalgia for the salad days of sports car racing fair gallops across the land. Vintage racing thrives, and draws huge crowds.

Remember the one-off specials of the days of yore? Max Balchowsky's "ol' Yeller"? Lancer Reventlow's Scarabs? The Batmobile of Bat Masterson? American built fire-breathers all!

But... Who was the American car builder of the late '50's and early '60's who built more cars than Max and Lance put together, whose cars won more trophies than any other American-built cars until Corvette finally got its act together? (Oh, blimey, I hear you mutter, another trivia game!)

Don Miller built class H-modified cars. More than 45 of them. 750 cc displacement, 2 seats, FIA rules (sort of), pump gas, and go. Millers won championships in Southern California while Osca drivers and Siatra drivers watched in amazement.

Don was a hobby builder; the kind who'd walk to his garage/shop after dinner, toothpick in left chop, and muse, "Think

I'll weld up a frame tonight." By 10 O'clock that night a frame would be welded up, to chalk marks on the floor, ready for hanging suspension, engine, and what-have-you mounts. His was a pay-as-you-go operation. He couldn't start one car until he'd sold the previous one. So, depending on the demand for his cars, he'd build somewhere between one and a half dozen a year.

The basic formula for a Miller was a Crosley engine, Fiat Topolino gearbox and rear end, space tube frame, and aluminum body. From there things got a little Raggedy-Andy, car to car. Front suspension was what struck his fancy at the moment; Fiat Topolino, beam, twin A-arms, swing, whatever. Until he started building rear-engined cars, his rear ends were all live axles, with springs and mountings being what was available in his parts bin.

Millers were light. 750 pounds was about average. Alas, you paid for that lightness, via a lack of amenities. It was said that you'd cut yourself to pieces getting into a Miller, but once you were in, it went like Gangbusters. The car was all raw aluminum, no padding or flanges. The driver's seat consisted of the aft bulkhead of .030 inch aluminum and a sheet of aluminum separated from the bellypan by the thickness of a couple of frame cross tubes.

A paragraph or two about the Crosley engine, for those of you who were in three cornered britches in 1960. By today's eight horse per cubic inch standards it was a mite anemic; by the prevailing norm of 1960 it was a pretty fair country racing design. Overhead cam four-banger, integral head and block, five main bearings, aluminum crankcase. In the Crosley car it had a couple of fairly dour drawbacks, not the least of which was a cast iron crank that would come glued over 4000 RPM. The siamesed intake ports and a pot metal Tillotson carburetor contrived to restrict breathing more severely than somewhat. It also had a sheet steel furnace brazed block about which the less said the better.

After the demise of the Crosley Car Company, a fella name of Lou Fageol bought the patterns and rights to the engine, and built engines for, among others, the U.S. Gummint. For power plants on the DEW line. No, I'm not gonna explain the DEW line. Ask for Grampaw. Anyway, after some number of hours on the DEW line, the Government pulled the engines out of their mounts and replaced them, sending the old engines to a surplus yard. You could buy one of those Fageol Crosleys for a hundred and a quarter if the crank turned over, and a hundred if it didn't. You always bought a stuck one, 'cause there was only one reason it wouldn't turn over; a frozen piston. Since you were gonna bore it out anyway, you broke the piston up with a cold chisel, and had \$25 in your pocket. Which was always nice, because if you had so much money, whatinell were you doing messing around with a class H modified? Get thee to a Lotus or a Porsche, you plutocrat!

Fageol Crosleys were several cuts about the automobile engine. For openers, the brazed block was replaced with a God-fearing cast iron block, eliminating all kinds of water, oil, and air interminglings. Then there was a forged steel crank that would wind to 9 or so grand, if properly balanced. That was enough. Above that the valves floated. Oh. And, the mains were steel strapped. All in all, a good starting place for a low cost, small bore racing engine. Hang a couple of SU carburetors and a good set of headers on it, get fancy with a cam and some pistons, and you were ready to make like Fangio... Moss?...Fitipaldi??!?!?

Back to the Miller cars. In 1959, you could buy a new Miller for \$1400 with an engine, or \$1100 without. If you knew your way around a Crosley engine, you bought the car without. Not because Don couldn't build engines, my, no! It's just that Don got a little impatient when it came to



engine building. Among the quaint treasures you might find in a Miller engine would be a belly grind, or maybe a twist, camshaft.

A belly grand cam happened this way. Don would walk up to a grinding wheel, brace the cam against his belly, and grind off some of the heel of each lobe. Instant high lift! Some Millerites claim Don miked the lobes to get them about the same. Others say it was an eyeball operation.

A Miller twist cam would make Ed Iskendarian stagger across the room for a Tylenol. Don would chuck up a stock Crosley cam in his lathe, hacksaw it apart between the intake and exhaust lobes, twist one end just a bit, to get different timing, then weld the two parts back together. He'd repeat the process for each set of lobes, then beat the thing straight with a brass hammer. Rumor has it that "Duke" Bukowsky won the 1961 Southern California H-Modification Championship with a Miller twist cam. It's possible.

No two Millers looked exactly alike. Most of them bore a slight resemblance to a D-Jag that got left out in the rain too long, but every now and again he'd build one with cycle fenders. Most were right hand drive, but if you really wanted it, he'd cobble you up a left hander. Don beat and rolled his own body segments out of aluminum, segment by segment, then gas welded 'em together.

My Miller had a swing front axle. Don one time said he wasn't sure if that Miller was the best or worst handling car he'd ever built. Personally, I loved the way it handled; the front end carried just a whisker of positive camber under acceleration and at speed, so when you entered a high speed sweeper the car would push (understeer) a bit. Come up on a hard corner, get on the brakes, and the car would dive, the front end would go to negative camber, and the car would get loose (oversteer), so's you could hang the rear end out. Such shenanigans drain blood from the faces of contemporary car builders, but it those days it was a fun way to go racin'.

Don't get the idea that Don was just a shade tree mechanic. If, in the early '60's, you managed to stuff your shiny Lotus 11 under Riverside's turn 6 guardrail, Don was the only guy in the area who could put your frame right. He was that rare combination of visionary designer, down-to-earth engineer, tinkerer, and hands-on tin bender.

Neither get the idea that Don was just a dirty-fingernail trackrat. Don's street machine, his commute car, was an restored 1937 MG-TB, replete with longitudinal leaf springs all around, wire spoke wheels cut down to 15 inches, and a trailer hitch.

Don was also involved with Concours d' Elegance in Southern California. He had an Austin "Nippy." A Nippy was a pre-WW II British sports car based on the Austin Seven, as wretched a little bleep box as ever came across the Atlantic in steerage. For all that the Seven was a slug, the Nippy was a blast. Cycle fenders, totally dysfunctional top, rakish lines, good to exciting performance. Anyway, Don's Nippy was immaculately restored, and a trophy winner. He'd load the Nippy on a trailer, hitch it to the MG-TB, and sally forth to the next Concourse. Folks (remember, this was in the late '50's) would gather to help him unload the Nippy, and to ogle the little pre-war dear. Eventually someone would notice the TB tow car, with predictable reactions.

On the other hand...

Don was, on occasion, a practitioner of the Bon-Ami breakin. Let's say that in the Saturday race you contrive to

scatter the engine in your Miller. You approach Don with tears in your eyes, and you and he, car in tow, head back to his Inglewood shop to rebuild the engine. Along about 1 in the morning the job is complete, but there's no time to seat the piston rings, right? Not... so fast.

Don would put about an inch of Bon-Ami scouring powder in a salt shaker; he'd fire up the engine, set it at a fast idle, and shake a little Bon-Ami into the carb inlet. The engine would grunt, drop 500 RPM, strain like a Russian weight-lifter, and recover, whereupon Don would assault it with the Bon-Ami again. After an inch of Bon-Ami and an oil change, you were ready to go racing. (I never actually witnessed such a breakin; Don told me about it, though, so it must be so.)

Another breakin technique that Don used was to load the car on the trailer, fire the engine up at a fast idle, and drive the tow rig to the race track. By the time he got there, the race car was out of gas, but the rings were seated.

Don's fixit genius showed one day at Santa Barbara when his own Miller shed a rear wheel seal during practice. He slithered into the pits with three wheels worth of brakes and one greasy tire, and immediately fell to work cleaning up the Fiat Topolino rear hub assembly. Topolino rear wheel seals were in short supply in 1961, Fiat having abandoned the Little Mouse a decade or more earlier. Undaunted (for that, I never saw Don daunted about anything in racing) Don scrounged a shop rag, tore it into about the volume of a rear wheel seal, soaked it with fibrous axle grease, stuffed it into where the seal used to be, buckled everything up, and was ready to go racing. Hmmp! If I'd a' tried that, I'd a' had rag, grease, rear end lube, and a wheel all over turn 3.

Miller owners had one intangible, but extremely valuable, extra; the unwritten lifetime warranty that went with every Miller. If you ever had trouble with your Miller; chassis, handling, engine, stuff the rig into a wall, whatever, all you had to do was ask Don. "Whudda I do now?" One way or another, he'd fix it. Oh, yeah, if you were dumb enough to T-bone a Devin, as I once did, he'd charge you a little to unbend everything and put it right, but Don had a fatherly interest in all his cars. He'd bust his (biblical beast of burden) to make sure we all made the starting grid, then he'd climb into his own Miller and beat our ears off.

At any one race in Southern California in the days of yore, you could see anywhere from six to twenty Millers on the H-Modified starting grid. Twenty-five car fields weren't unusual.

H-modified car owners in general, and Miller owners in particular, approached Tech Inspection with fear, loathing, and trepidation, for a variety of reasons. For one thing, back in the '60 scrutineers put great store in working touring equipment, like headlights, on modified sports cars. Big, fat, hairy deal. I had converted my Miller electrical system to 12 volts, except for the headlights. (Who worried about such Mickey Mouse things as headlights on a modified car?) You can measure the life of a 6 volt headlight under a 12 volt clobbering, with a stopwatch. I nursed those headlights through 6 tech inspections by flicking them on and off at the inspector's request, and suggesting quickly that he check the brake lights, which were 12 volt.

Then there was the matter of generators. A generator drags down about 3 or 4 horsepower from most any engine at top speed. If you've got 400 or so horses on tap, who cares about a generator? With a 50 horse Crosley that 4 horsepower loss spells disaster! So, generator belts were loose, field coils were removed and used for ash trays, and electrical wires ran under the engine and were taped out of sight. You just had to remember to take the battery back to the motel room for charging between races.



Starters learned early in their flagging careers not to hold a pack of H-modified cars on the starting grid for any length of time. You see, Crosley engines and Topolino gearboxes leak. Sometimes oil, sometimes water, but always something. Spread out around a 3 mile track, the little drips and drabs went unnoticed. But on the starting grid, if you held the field very long, you'd have 20 or so little puddles to throw cement on after the cars had left.

Class H-modified racing was not restricted to the continental US. Along about 1957, the Hawaiian Sports Car Club worked a deal to hold a road race on Oahu and get a flock of cars shipped over from the mainland. Don, wife Ruth, and Don's own Crosley were among the participants. The shipping over is a story in itself, but the folks over in the islands do things just a bit differently from us Haolies. To start with, the cars were kept in the underground garage at a large hotel in Honolulu, whereat the drivers and crews stayed. The race track, on the other hand, was some 15 miles out of town, and nobody had brought along trailers and tow rigs.

The race organizers prevailed upon the Honolulu police department for an escort each day from the hotel to the track. According to Don, the drive from the hotel to the track was more fun than the racing. You had this mixed bag of motorcycle cops, Ferraris, Jags, MG's, motorcycle cops, Crosleys, Aston Martins, more motorcycle cops, Maseratis, Allards, and some more motorcycle cops, barreling through the streets of downtown Honolulu at full chat,

sirens screaming, tires howling, open exhausts blaring, and the local folks applauding from the sidewalks. Makes your toes curl just to think about it, huh?

H-modified groupies (girlfriends, wives, parents, other) never worried if their driver failed to come around on any given lap of a race. There was no grinding crash, no column of smoke, no scream of sirens. Something had broken. Again. A piston, a cotter pin, an oil fitting, a whatever. After the race, the tow trucks would go out onto the course and retrieve the DNF's. Each truck would throw a rope to one or more cars, and drag us back to the pits.

I recall one time there were three of us being towed by one truck. As we approached the pits, I noticed that I was a little behind the other two cars. So, I reeled in some rope. My fellow towees spotted this sneaky maneuver, and did some reeling in of their own. By the time we got to the pits, we were hard up on the truck's rear bumper, each of us damned if he'd be last.

Alas, the days of the independent, garage car builder are gone forever. Now we have disposable engines, throwaway chassis, and drivers with more money than skill and brains combined. Well, yes, the days may be gone, but the cars are not. Not all of them, anyway. Go to a vintage car race. Stroll the pit area. Look for the small-bore pits. Keep an eye out for a shrunk D-Jag with an in-line four banger in it. Talk to the owner. You just might have stumbled across a Genuine Miller.

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## LAS VEGAS - VARA -H-MOD 40TH REUNION RACE NEWS FLASH

At the October 13-14 event at the Las Vegas Speedome, the VINTAGE AUTO RACING ASSOCIATION (VARA) will support a special 40th anniversary race (Saturday and Sunday) featuring the H-mod group!

The attached entry request and a check or money order for \$3.00 will help on postage and will enable us to convince VARA we can indeed field 20 cars! Upon receipt of your entry request, we will send the VARA entry and medical form (if required) as well as map to the track, a rules extract, track, layout and accommodations information. We are still a low budget outfit...so we have to charge for this!

This event will welcome ALL H-Mod members driving or spectating in a 40th year celebration! Call if you have a question - Joe Puckett (714) 768-7882.

Please hurry! The old gangs getting back together!

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### ENTRY REQUEST - LAS VEGAS-VARA-H-MOD 40th REUNION

Mail to "H" Mod-Las Vegas Racing Info - 22901 Loumont Drive, El Toro, CA 92630

Name	Address	
City/State/Zip	Telephone	
H-Mod car being entered	year built	previously raced
Engine type	Engine C.C.	Body style

- Check here if you are currently Vintage licensed and have a current medical.
- Please send accommodations details for Las Vegas!
- I want to attend and take part in a celebrity parade only!
- A check for \$3.00 is enclosed to help with processing the information and mailing.



## H-MODIFIED BLUES (To the tune of "Your Red Wagon")

You're blasting down the back chute,  
Tachin' eight-two  
When the engine starts to tremble  
And a rod comes flyin' through

That's your red wagon  
Yeah, that's your red wagon  
So just keep on a-draggin'  
Your little red wagon along.

You're stompin' on the binders  
As you set up for a turn  
When the pedal hits the floorboard  
Man, your gonna crash and burn

(Refrain)

You're in your Crosley special  
In a screamin' flat-out race  
When Chuck Gounis drives by ya  
With a smile upon his face

(Refrain)

The lousy clutch is slippin'  
and the shocks are going fast  
You're about to get a black flag  
And your pitboard says you're last

(Refrain)

You're wheelin' through the esses  
With a trophy in the bag  
And ya come out going backwards  
'Cause you zigged instead a zagged

(Refrain)

Your engines eighty over  
And your cranks illegal too  
Then your crew chief spills the moon gas  
And it eats the concrete through

(Refrain)

The plugs are runnin' oily  
And the differential's dry  
The transmissions freezin solid  
And your water temps too high

(Refrain)

Your sittin' on the grid  
When your engine starts to cough  
Then your crew chief kicks a tire  
And the goddam thing comes off

(Refrain)

Your seat belt is unbuckled  
And your helmet strap is loose  
When that car starts rollin' over  
You done cooked your own sweet goose

(Refrain)

## CROSLY HISTORY!

Dave Brodsky who heads up the West Coast Crosley Club is preparing a book of Crosley racer history. If you have information on your Crosley powered racer you would like to share, write Dave at 5542 Lauren Drive, San Jose, CA 95124. Don't like to write? Call Dave at (408) 264-4941! He may know something about your car you don't know!

## SEARCHING!

We are searching for members! If you know someone who is into fast tiny cars...., please have em call us at (714) 768-7882.

Thanks!  
and  
Welcome  
to  
"H" Mod!

Bill Pelley  
Herb Deeks  
Daryl Verkerk  
Mahlon Craft  
Augustin Chofre  
Charlie Hayes  
Glenn Reynolds  
Rich Taylor  
Dan Mullin  
Gene Leasure  
Howard Banaszak  
Tom Churchill

## LATE NEWS!

Doc Molle will drive one of Don Racine's Panhards at Las Vegas, we learned recently. Can the Ex-Fairchild "twin cam" panhard engine be out of mothballs?

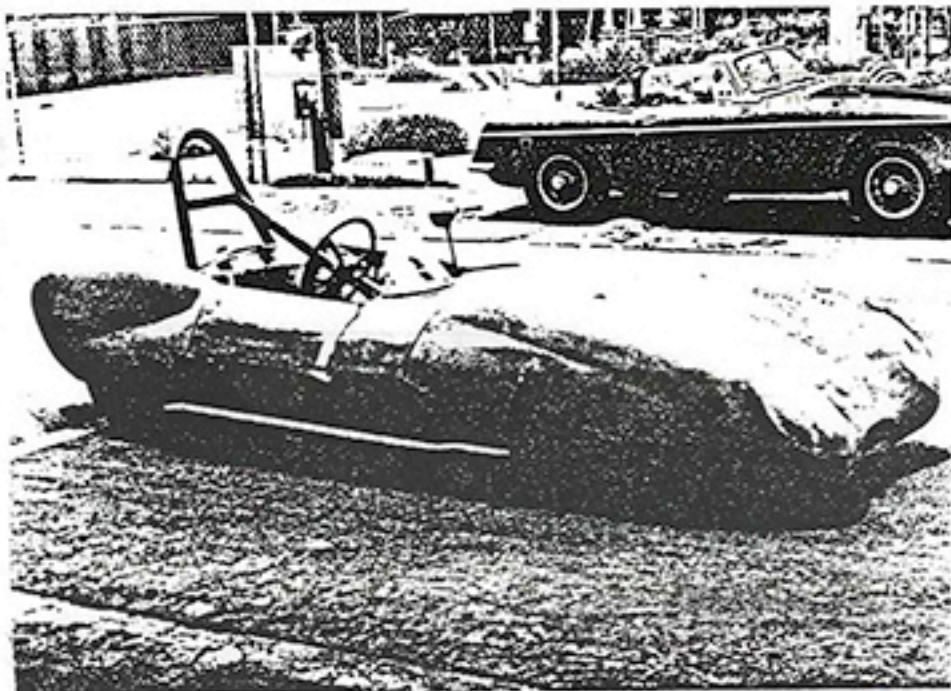
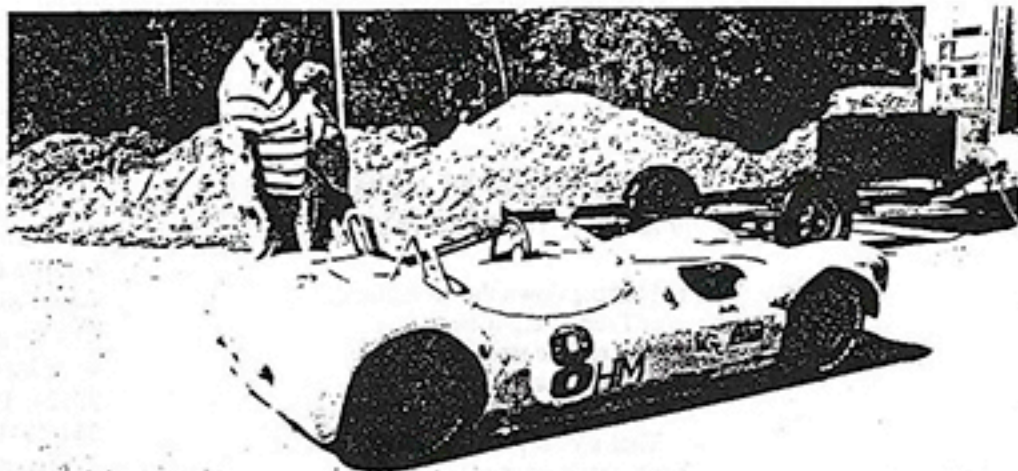


## "H" MOD

### GALLERIA

Right - FreddyTemps paper mache' spl. A Crosley powered car created by high school students on a project. The car had a body comprised of laminated paper towels!

"Fast" Freddy has restored it and races it in Vintage on the West Coast.



Scott Daprns "Bogus Lotus" Crosley powered "H" modified. This car is being readied to race at Las Vegas. Scott is a former Go Kart champion.

Get your car in our Galleria. Send snapshot or slide. We can print it but can't return it...OK?

### TEE SHIRTS!

Yes, we still have "H" Mod tee shirts! Specify.....

Small \_\_\_\_\_ Med \_\_\_\_\_  
Large \_\_\_\_\_ XL \_\_\_\_\_  
XXL \_\_\_\_\_

Blue only 50/50 quality tees...

Send check or money order to: Joe Puckett for \$12.00 per shirt - That's \$11.00 each plus postage and handling.

"H" MOD OVER THE HILL GANG  
c/o Joe Puckett  
22901 Loumont Drive  
El Toro, CA 92630



FIRST CLASS