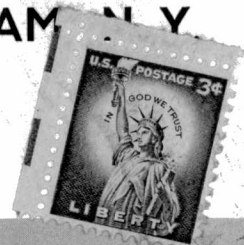


Jan 61



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January, 1961

THE KNOCK OFF
MOHAWK-HUDSON REGION
SPORTS CAR CLUB OF AMERICA, INC.

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Berne, N.Y. E. Berne 47W

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ASST EDITOR

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Schenectady 3, N.Y. EL 5-1456

Regular meetings of the MOHAWK-HUDSON REGION are held on the first Wednesday of each month at the Circle Inn, south of the Route 7 intersection on US Route 9, Latham, N.Y.

Information regarding the region and its activities can be obtained from any of the above officers.

Please send all contributions to the Knock Off to the editor at the above address. Advertising rates and schedules will be available upon request from the editor.

HAVE

YOU

PAID

YOUR

DUES

??????????

Things are sort of jumbled up right at the moment, so the activities schedule for the coming month is not immediately available. We expect things to be in better shape for the February issue, so please bear with us.

We have an announcement of one forthcoming event, though. The Jeepster Auto Sport Club of America, Eastern N.Y. Region, is planning a "Winter Wonderland Sports Festival" to take place January 29, 1961. It starts from the Howard Johnson Restaurant at the Latham Corners Shopping Center at 6:00 A.M. Registration begins at this hour, and the first car is due to leave at 7:00. A short, easy gimmick rallye will end at Mt. Snow where there will be skiing, swimming (honest, that's what they said), skating, tobogganing, refreshments. Trophies for first through fourth places in the rallye. Fee is \$2.00.

SPORTS CARS DEFEND COUNTRY

The following article is an AP bulletin dated Dec. 5, 1960, found in an unidentified newspaper:

"Sports car drivers - those tweedy types for whom the grind (sic) of a gear is a song and the roar of an exhaust a symphony - are getting a role in Civil Defense.

"They're going to be used as couriers in a Nassau County Civil Defense exercise next Saturday, to carry messages to hospitals, railroad stations, clothing warehouses and schools.

"Thirty-five owners of wire-wheeled runabouts of assorted sizes met for a preliminary briefing yesterday at the Office of Civil Defense in Nassau County Park. Then they dispersed to carry out practice runs of their individual assignments in various parts of the county.

"The drivers were told why they were chosen to be couriers: Because their cars are quick and maneuverable and because they know their machines and can make repairs on the road if necessary.

"They also were told: No speeding."

After all, now - we don't speed!!!

It does sound like one of the strangest rallies that was ever put on, though. Giving trophies must have been something of a problem. Did they present CD helmets to the best messenger?

Perhaps this is what Elva had in mind when they named their car.

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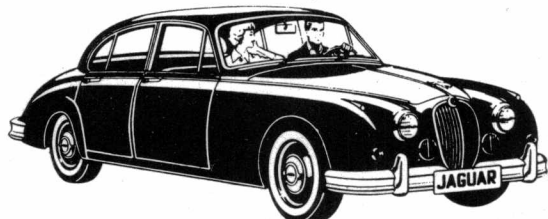
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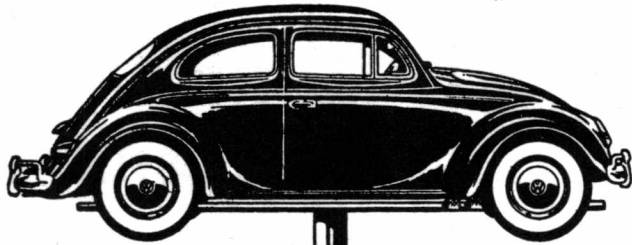
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DISCONCERTED JOTTINGS

by Peter O. Allen

My preliminary comments are directed at the sports car columnists for the local papers; Bob Fertig and Lisa Henri of the Albany Times-Union and Schenectady Gazette, respectively. Both have done a good job of presenting our case to the public as well as keeping the local enthusiasts informed of local, national, and international events. I was, however, more than a little disturbed by one recent article. For those of you who missed the article, it discussed the current problems of the local sport, i.e. rallying. It pointed to the preponderance of poorly organized and executed events that have recently been presented.

This column, I feel, was not in the best interests of the sport. It showed, to a large segment of the non-sporting public (the enthusiast is not the only reader of the column, you know), that the sport is, to put it mildly, in a sad state of affairs. I am not trying to hide the dirty linen, but I will be darned if I want to see it washed on the corner of State & Pearl Streets at high noon, either.

When reflections are cast on the honesty of the contestants, the competency of the officials, and the intelligence of the enthusiast, then I say I would rather see no column at all. I know how hard it is to come up with material, but that is the way I feel. Let us keep club problems in club publications.

As far as the points in the article are concerned, I could not agree with the writer more, at least on most points. Personally, I believe that the organizing of anything less than a Windham-type event is NOT a hard job. It does require time, a commodity lacking to many of us. It does require a little imagination, a commodity lacking to only a few of us. It does require thorough planning, this being a function of the first two ingredients. It requires a certain degree of experience, although with some intelligent thinking, plus advice from others, all but the complete novice can stage a most successful event.

About a year ago, after presenting a successful (i.e. only one instruction misinterpreted by only one contestant), no-gimmick, TSD rally, I considered compiling a Rallymaster's Guide Book; a simple set of general rules for laying out, organizing, and successfully running any type of event. The trouble with any such set of "rules" is that there is always an exception to every rule. At best, it would be a controversial article. I will be happy to discuss such an endeavor with any interested party, though.

It has been shown that the sport in its most simple forms (Hare & Hounds rallies and gymkhanas), is quite popular. Is it then to be concluded that the majority of the participants in these events are too lazy and/or too stupid to go on to such things as a simple TSD rallye? Possibly, but I think that a fear, or awe, at the sight of a group of hardened addicts, pacing the paddock area at the start of an event, brows furrowed, fingers manipulating Curtas and slide rules, eyes scanning the pages of a set of TSD tables, almost immediately makes the novice decide that his first event will also be his last such event. It is not improbable that just the rumors of the rigor of an SCCA-type TSD rallye will keep the novices away in droves. If this, or some similar explanation is not correct, then we may as well stop all our rallying, since it is certainly not in the interest of the membership at large.

As an experiment, to test this theory, I hereby volunteer to run a simple TSD rallye. I propose to make it a short, leg-to-leg event, with speed changes made only at the checkpoints.

A rallye instruction school would be held immediately preceding the start of the event, and would be designed to allow a rank amateur to compete, and place, using only a watch, clipboard, pencil, and paper. The event might start at 2:00 PM with the school starting at 12:30. This would be an easy way to find out how many people are in the "Want-to-play-the-game-but-don't-know-how" league.

If this event were a success, a second might be staged (and should be), wherein a speed change occurred at the midpoint of each leg, as well as at each checkpoint.

If this idea seems too tame for the general membership, or not in their interests, then I would like to stage these schools as a private venture. I do feel, however, that such an undertaking should have the sanction and backing of a strong club such as SCCA.

My only goal in such a venture is to see a return to the local sport of the local enthusiasts. Just as it is impractical to hold a racing drivers' school without letting the student immediately practice what he has learned, so is it impractical to run a rallye school the same way.

Rallying can be fun. Events can be run over some pretty remote dirt roads without finding a Healey-hurting-hump-in-the-heap; and without covering a contestant and his car with an inch of dirt; and without endangering the safety of a single contestant. There is little pleasure in running a rallye on the Thruway.

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MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING

December 7, 1960

The following appointments were made:

Contest Board Rep.	Henry Van Deusen
Asst. Contest Board Rep.	Ray Gaul
Knock Off Editor	Arther Frederick
Asst. to Editor	Midge Birdsey
INEC Rep.	Mac McClumpha

The subject of the Knock Off was raised and the following agreed:

1. Minutes of Executive Meeting to be publicized regularly in each issue.
2. Every member of MHR is requested to feel free to submit items of news, articles, or such information that may be of interest to the club.
3. Person or persons who win an event are requested to submit an article covering the event.
4. Executive Committee noted Phil Fisher's offer to take pictures.
5. Suggestion by A.R.E. to approach Plaza merchants to take ad - listing names of all stores within plaza area. Possible cost to approximate the fee for a full-page spread.
6. No Knock Off issue to be distributed during regular meetings.
7. Regular meeting night to be deadline for receiving all publications for Knock Off.

Discussion on point system for Rallye Master was raised. 90 points to be awarded to one or two rally masters or gymkhana masters for one event only during a year. Decision: 3-2 in favor.

A unanimous vote in favor of the suggestion by our Activities Director that 30 points be awarded to any person working prior to and during an event.

As to the coming events, the Committee voted 4-1 in favor of a weekend rallye at Lake George sponsored by the Fort Wm. Henry Hotel to be held possibly during the first weekend in June, 1961.

ICC - questionnaire to be drawn up on cards for distribution during roll call at a regular meeting. Our club covers own cost of mailing. Cards will be addressed to entire membership.

A guest list is to be passed around during regular meetings for newcomers to sign.

Next meeting scheduled for January 11, 1961.

Board members present: R. Heacox	G. Birdsey
G. Gaul	A. Lee
R. Barton	

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

January 4, 1961

Meeting opened at 8:40 PM at Circle Inn by R.E. Heacox.

R.E. announced the following appointments:
(Same as in Exec. Comm. Minutes - Ed.)

Minutes of last meeting read and accepted.

Treasurer's Report read and accepted. Balance is \$567.79.

Activities Director announced Reliability Run to start at Latham Circle, Jan. 22, fee \$2.00. Bill Ackner is Rallye Master.

A.R.E. announced new membership drive, urged everyone to promote a drive to enlarge the Region.

R.E. reviewed December Exec. Comm. meeting and announced that minutes would appear in the Knock Off.

Old Business:

Past R.E. Fertig transferred last minute accounts to new officers.

New Business:

R.E. described the Reliability Run.

Starting time for meetings was discussed, and it was agreed that they would continue to be scheduled for 8:00 PM and would commence as soon as possible thereafter.

Guests welcomed by R.E.

SCCA Annual Meeting held in New York, Feb. 9-11 was announced and activities were described.

Alan Jacobson answered the call for a rallye master for a TSD rallye to be held March 19. Ray Gaul will assist.

R.E. urged all members to vote for Area 11 Governor.

Discussion on regional speed events was held then shelved.

Meeting adjourned 10:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Lee
Secretary

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THE REMARKABLE CROTON

It all started as a hobby. Hubert Croton was the black sheep son of a knighted Englishman. As a child, he used to delight in lighting fires under the horses of the tenant farmers to make them run faster. His technique even developed to the point where he could prepare any horse to turn the fastest standing furlong in the shire.

Hubert saw his first motor car in the nearby town of Ipswich-on-Rye (hold the mayonnaise) when he journeyed in to replenish his supply of faggots and kerosene. This "horseless carriage" kindled the lad's indefatigable curiosity. The car's proud owner was only too glad to answer Hubert's questions, and he even consented to give him a demonstration ride. The auto's inherent superiority over the horse struck young Croton immediately; it could hit fifteen within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile and had no mind of its own. Naturally, he began thinking of ways to make one go faster.

After he had been released from the village gaol for building fires under three automobiles, Hubert decided to enter the booming auto business with the money that his father gave him to leave the shire by sunset.

Croton's, Ltd. began life as concessionaire in Crankshire for Austin cars. The success of this merchandising endeavor soon led the proprietor to establish a team of Austins that successfully competed in local rallies, trials, races, and hill-climbs. After a few short months, the team had gained an enviable reputation; one of his Ecurie Accost cars had even taken first place in the "Double Twelve" at Brooklands.

Although the Austin Sevens used by Hubert's team could be made into quite good racing machines, Sir Croton's indefatigable curiosity (he was knighted for outstanding achievements in the automotive field) led him to quite advanced modifications of his "Sevenses" to increase both power and reliability. To accomplish this end, he bored and stroked the engines of his team cars until each displaced 2987cc on its two cylinders. A word of explanation is necessary here: the boring process removed so much metal from the cylinder walls that the two pairs of adjacent cylinders moved into two. The 224 lb. crankshaft (without flywheel) was carried in two main bearings; each of these was $\frac{3}{16}$ " wide for reduced friction. The bearings were made of industrial diamonds held together with Plastic Wood - these bearings were a little bumpy, but they were designed that way to increase oil flow to the main journals. One must admit that this design shows much more sophistication than Hubert's earlier efforts with fires.

The greatest problems encountered in the modification process arose with the fitting of the two rods for each of the hour-glass-shaped pistons. The hour-glass shape was chosen in the interests of reliability; Hubert reasoned that a regular oval would leave too little "meat" at the sides of the two oblong barrels. Perfect alignment of the pair of rods was absolutely necessary because any diversion from parallel would tend to bend the big end journals unbearably. These journals, incidentally, were $\frac{1}{8}$ " in diameter to save weight.

Mixture was supplied by eight variable-choke ZU carburettors with truly enormous chamber pots to provide immediate damping of the pistons. From these carbs, the fuel passed through 29" x 4" diameter ram-tuned intakes to 1" intake valves. The rather small valve size was chosen to obviate any cooling problems. The extractor effect given by the 4" exhaust valves relieved any breathing problems.

Engine cooling was changed from water to air by the simple expedient of cutting deep fins in the head and block with hacksaws and files (Hubert always insisted on a maximum of expert handwork). Even though this operation left but $\frac{1}{32}$ " between combustion chamber and the Great English Countryside, Hubert's secret hardening process made it all quite feasible. This process is here revealed for the first time; it consists of removing a 2" circle from the top of the combustion chamber and reducing it to dust. This dust is thoroughly mixed with rubber cement and replaced by a sintering process. Thus the top of the chamber simply bends under extreme pressure instead of breaking.

Successful though these modified Austins were, Hubert, who had an indefatigable curiosity, was dissatisfied. He longed for a design completely his own to prove his pet theories. He also hoped that fame and fortune would persuade his father to allow him admittance to the family town house again.

Sir Croton the Younger spent weeks over the drawing boards completing his designs. He drew upon his vast racing experience and the knowledge of his mechanics to arrive at a car that was fast and light, reliable and superior in handling, comfortable and easy to drive. Although some few features were adapted with trepidation from Bentley and Lagonda, the most important features of the car were original Croton. And thus it was named the Croton Sport.

The newly-organized Croton Car Co. of Crankshire, Ltd. built the car from the ground up, including all parts and accessories. The latter not because they wanted to but because no-one else would have a thing to do with the project, short-sighted persons as they were.

Engine specifications will be found on the following page, if you have courage to go on.

ENGINE SPECIFICATIONS

Type	132° V-16
Displacement	1599cc
Dimensions	1" bore, 7.6" stroke
Valves	Four per cylinder placed in line laterally, driven by 16 transverse overhead cams rotated by rubber belts.
Compression ratio	7.5:1
Power	170 bhp at 2208rpm
Torque	13 lb-ft at 2207 rpm
Usable range of engine	2000-2210 rpm

The engine was not the least conventional feature of the Croton Sport. Although the body was over 18 feet long, it was only three feet wide at the point of departure. This point was four inches to the rear of the radiator cover to provide good tracking via aerodynamics. The driver sat outboard at the right and steered with his left hand. Clutch, brake, and accelerator pedals were soldered to the stressed skin and were positioned to allow the driver to drive with legs extended. Lateral locations were ideal for heel-and-toe driving. The very efficient body shape combined with the slight right weight bias (due to the engine's being placed 6" to right of center) meant a measurable superiority on right-hand turns that more than compensated for some slight clumsiness on the left turns. The 80" wheelbase provided maneuverability commensurate with today's GP cars while the adequate overhang gave the car a high polar moment of inertia.

Drive was by solid shaft from the 16-plate wet clutch to the rear transaxle. The engine, drive shaft, and transaxle were welded together to maximize unsprung weight and keep the wheels on the ground; the body was suspended from this assembly via transverse fully elliptical leaf springs. Thrust was taken by anything that was strong enough. The 2.258 final drive and the 26" tires (taken from the Chief Mechanic's bicycle for economy) imparted a top speed of well over 100 mph.

The Croton Sport won 85% of the races in which it was entered by virtue of its superb handling on right turns and its extraordinarily high horsepower. In fact, it even out-dragged Blower Bentleys on occasion. The secret of its success was, of course, the powerful engine. The secret ingredient in the power package was the advanced cam drive. The coefficient of elasticity of the belts was calculated to produce at least fifty miles of peak output before a rewind was necessary. A fifteen-second pit stop was sufficient to tighten the belts by means of a three-man crank. The rest of the engine served as a damper to keep the belts from uncoiling too fast and sending the machine forward at over 400 mph. Incidentally, used belts were mounted on rims and became superior racing tyres.

Austin's success in the passenger car field gave Hubert the idea of invading this market, too. Consequently, he produced a de-tuned version of the Sport and dubbed it the "Chubby" in opposition to Austin's "Chummy". This cognomen was inspired by the contours of the body, inasmuch as it consisted of five Sport bodies placed side by side with a seat in each. The driver occupied the center position in the interests of better balance. Popular though the car was, however, Hubert was still dissatisfied because of his indefatigable curiosity. When he drove his modified Chubby to and from the shop (this car had a supercharged Allison aircraft engine), he had trouble with the handling. Although second-guessers may divine that this fault arose from the 1000 lb. engine mounted forward of the front axle, the problem was actually an insoluble 42° change in rear wheel camber during acceleration.

The new Croton came forth as a result of much burning of midnight oil. It used the well-proved and economical engine installed in its immediate predecessor, but the tread was widened from the previously used 37½" to 93" in the interests of stability. Wheelbase was lengthened to 82" for a less choppy ride. The car handled rather differently from conventional machines, but three or four years usually sufficed to acclimate the owner sufficiently to venture a trip to the pub. Unfortunately, even the English were not up to this degree of restraint. Consequently, the successor of the Chummy came to be known as the Crummy.

The Crummy was made for over thirty years, though, before it was finally discontinued. Even in its last days it was an advanced design, and its worth was aptly demonstrated during World War II when many served in the African Campaign. Armored, they looked so terribly frightful that they completely demoralized Rommel's forces. The army then drove right through.

Hubert, now Lord Croton, could only hold his firm together long enough after the Crummy's five dozen per year sales to introduce one final model. It was an undistinguished car, and none survived more than two years due to inadequate coating of the papier mache frames (for lightness). Frame breakage often caused these cars to skid backward for great distances, causing the public to nickname it the "Backward Croton" even though its official nomenclature was "Croton Special". Of course, it used the same engine installed in the Chubby. This low-torque engine combined with the backwards attitude so often encountered finally led to the public's adopting a last nickname - "Backward Croton" and "Special" became "No-tore Special" and sounded the death knell for one of England's best automotive creations.

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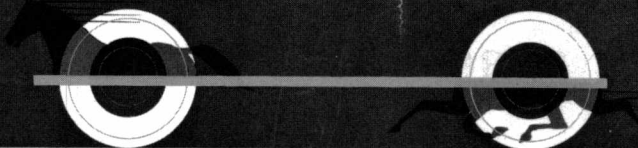
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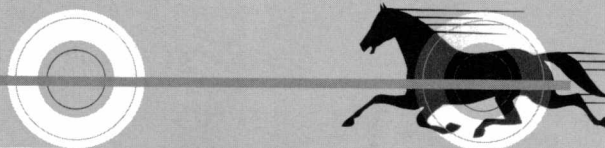
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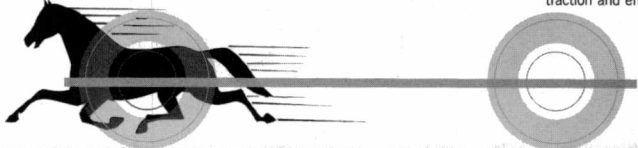
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