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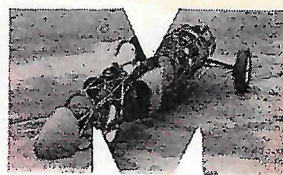
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## COVER

Don Waite's extraordinary craftsmanship monopolizes this month's cover and a record number of pages in the rotogravure section. You'll agree with our decision to do a real job on Don's roadster among roadsters, we are sure, when you see the infinite detailing involved in the car. A past master at building equally fine early lakes machinery, Don is presently employed in the Engineering Department of the Western Gear Corporation in Los Angeles. Ektachrome by Eric Rickman

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HOT ROD MAGAZINE



Perfect weather, daring driving and new records all combined to make the 40th annual Pikes Peak Hill Climb a spectacular event

# CLOUDS

by RAY BROCK

■ July fourth, nineteen sixty-two, was the date of the fortieth running of the highest, steepest, crookedest and most interesting race in the world. It's officially called the Pikes Peak Auto Hill Climb but is equally well known as the Climb To The Clouds or Race To The Sky. A quick look at the statistics on the race will give you a good idea as to why this is one of the most thrilling racing events in this country and the world.

■ The race is held on the toll road which winds its way from the small town of Cascade,

Colorado, near the 8000 foot elevation,

to the top of the mountain 14,110 feet high. Although the road is 20 miles long from toll gate to

the top of the mountain, the race is held only for the last 12.42 miles of the road. It starts at 9402 feet elevation and 94% of the road used for the race is uphill. 38% of the 12.42 miles

is 10% grade or steeper. The surface is dirt and gravel for the entire length.

■ The lower section starts out gentle enough with broad, high speed

lefts and rights from the starting line near the 7½-mile post. Shortly after the 10-mile marker

(2½ miles from the start), drivers encounter a number of sweeping switchbacks and looping turns which keep them busy. Just over five miles from the start, at the Glen Cove parking area, the fir and aspen trees start thinning out and near the 11,000 foot elevation marker, the road passes above the timberline and into the rock and dirt area along the north face of the mountain. It is here that the race can be easily lost because the road is steep, narrow and usually quite dusty, giving poor traction for spinning tires.

■ Hairpin switchbacks require expert skill to keep speed as high as possible without spinouts. Added to the difficult road is the fact that engines heat up badly in this section from 11,000 to 13,000 feet and horsepower is cur-

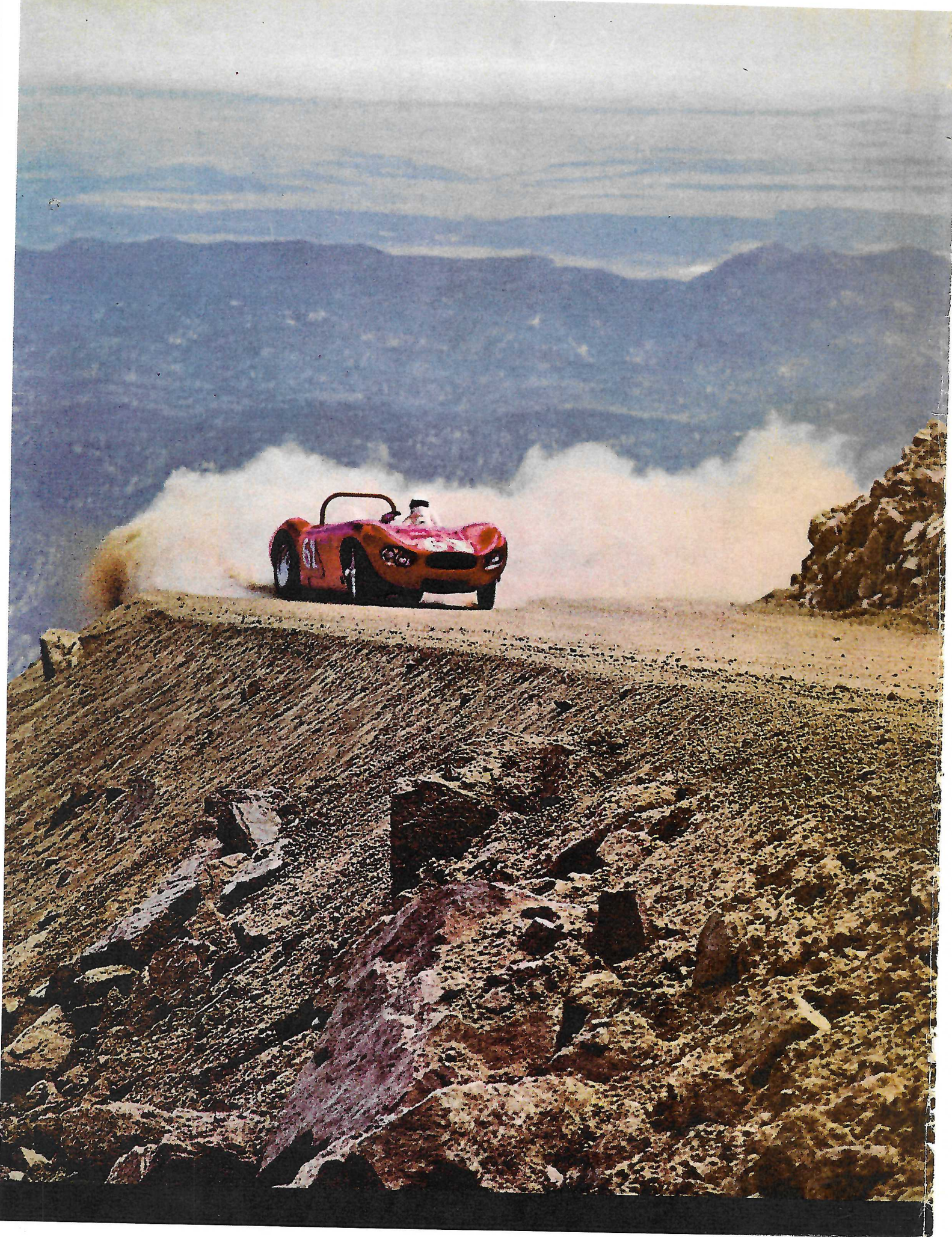
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# CLIMB

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## CLIMB TO THE CLOUDS continued

tailed by the lack of oxygen. Once past the 16-mile post at Devil's Playground, elevation 13,000 feet, the road is less steep and the curves gentler, giving both drivers and cars a slight breather for about two miles before a final steep two-mile dash to the top.

Three days of practice are set aside prior to race day on the Fourth and the three classifications of cars, championship, stock and sports are each assigned a section of road to practice from first daylight at about 4:30 a.m. till the road is opened to the public at 8 a.m. One section is from the starting line to a parking area at 11-mile, a second is from Glen Cove near 13-mile to 16-mile at Devil's Playground and the third is from the Gravel Pit near 18-mile to the mountain top at 20-mile.

All cars assigned to a particular trial section make practice runs a few minutes apart, then they all return back to their starting point in a group and repeat. As many as five or six runs can

be made by each car before the 8 a.m. deadline. With this many trial runs on each of the three sections plus a qualification run from the starting line to Glen Cove two days before the race, all drivers have a good chance to become acquainted with the road.

The United States Auto Club sanctions the Hill Climb and their specifications are used to govern the various classes of cars that may be entered. Championship cars are required to meet the same specifications that are used for USAC big cars racing throughout the country except that for the first time this year, the 96-inch wheelbase minimum was cut to 84 inches so that sprint cars could also be used. Engine displacement is limited to 255 inches for Offy or other overhead cam racing engines, with modified stock V8 engines permitted a maximum of 366 inches. Any type of fuel is permitted in this class. Blowers are permitted on engines of less than 175 cubic inches.

Stock cars for the Hill Climb must be of the last three model years and are not permitted to use beefed suspension components or other special items allowed in stock car oval track racing. They are required to have certain safety features such as roll bars and seat belts plus any rear axle ratio can be used but wheel and tire sizes must be standard production. No modifications are allowed to the engine. The bore must remain standard except that a .030-inch overbore is allowed for stock cars a year or more older. Only a single four-barrel carburetor is permitted. Mufflers may be removed and open pipes installed beyond stock manifolds.

Sports cars are divided into two classes; over and under 2000 cc. Both classifications are required to meet the requirements of most sports car sanc-

tioning bodies; be self starting, have room for spare tire and passenger and use pump gasoline. Other than the small class displacement limit, almost anything goes as far as engine modifications and chassis.

From the first day of practice, unofficial comparison checks by stop watches showed five-time winner Bobby Unser to be one of the faster entrants in the championship division, followed closely by his younger brother Al, Slim Roberts, Gordon Herring, Roy Walker and Paul Kleinschmidt. Bobby Unser's car was powered by a 360-inch Pontiac, Al Unser's car used a 360-inch Chevy, Roberts' lightweight special used a 220-inch Offy, Herring had a 255 Offy, Walker's power was Chevy and Kleinschmidt's car was Cadillac-powered.

In the stock car class, Louie Unser plus Sanborn brothers Nick and Frank were all making excellent practice times in their '62 409 Chevrolets but Curtis Turner and Parnelli Jones were equaling and occasionally bettering the Chevy practice times with their '62 406-inch Fords. A 413-inch Plymouth showed up in the stock car class but had repeated oiling problems and never made a complete practice run.

In the sports car divisions, Bobby Donner, one of the better Porsche drivers in this country, had practice times well ahead of anything else in his under-2000 class and generally beat the times of all the larger sports cars. The approximate 1200-pound weight of the RS61 Porsche plus independent suspension, the powerful overhead cam 97-inch engine behind the driver giving superb traction and Bobby's driving skill added up to a perfect combination for a hill climb.

In the large sports car class, defend-

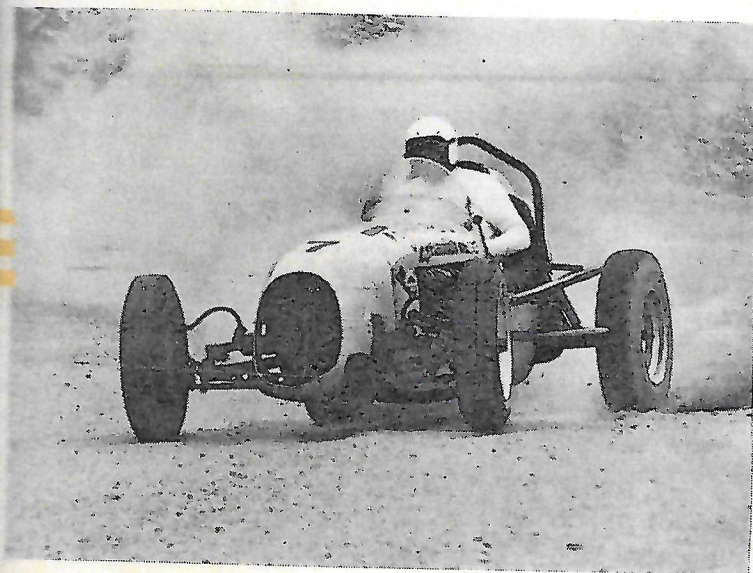
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*LEFT—Winner in stock car division was Curtis Turner in a 406-inch Ford. Steep, dusty switchbacks require perfect driver coordination to maintain speed.*

*LEFT CENTER—Three-time Climb champ Bobby Donner won under-2000 class with his RS61 Porsche and posted faster time than unlimited sports cars.*

*LOWER LEFT—1962 Corvette did well in the hands of Al Daniels, had fast qualification time for class but finished third in race on dry, dangerous course.*

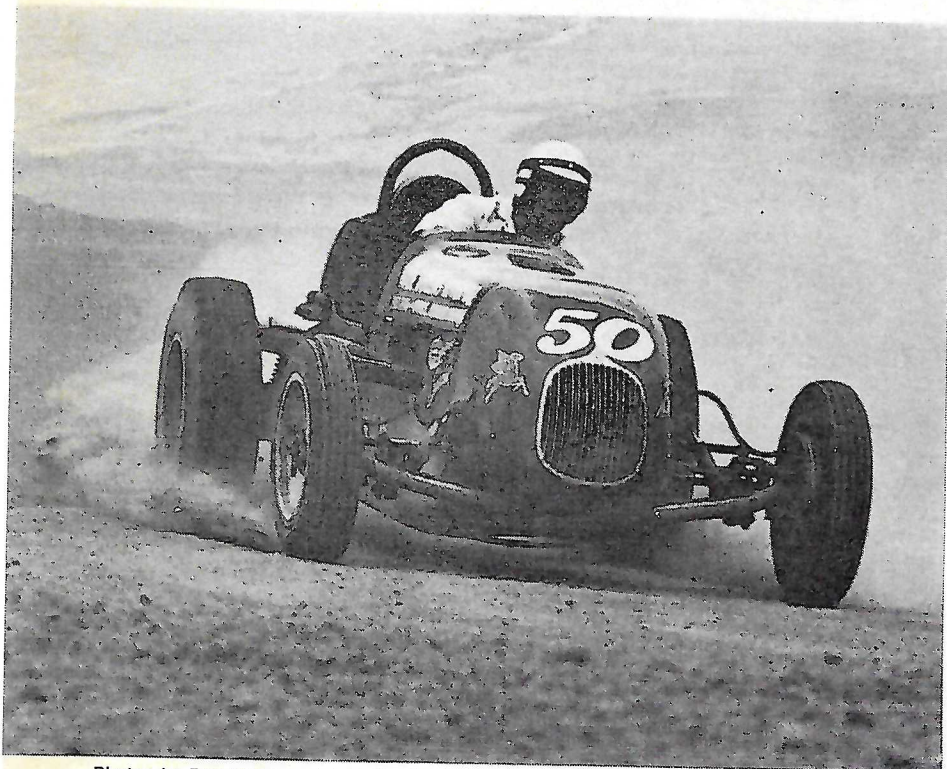
*BELOW LEFT—Six-time winner of the championship division, Bobby Unser. Car was powered by 360-inch Pontiac built by Ansen Automotive, Los Angeles.*



*LEFT—All-time champion at Pikes Peak is "Old Man of the Mountain," Louis Unser. Louis has won the championship division nine times, the last time in 1953. Louis' car this year had problems in the engine department and he finished 12th. RIGHT—Ak Miller won his class for the fourth time in a 406 Ford-powered special chassis topped by a Devin glass body.*

SEPTEMBER 1962





Photos by Ray Brock and Jack Brady

ing champion Ak Miller had a partially new car for the '62 race. Instead of the stroker Olds used in past years, Ak and his partner George Hanson had fitted a stock 406-inch, 405-horsepower Ford engine and then topped it off with a new Devin fiberglass body which provided more room for driver and wheel travel. Ak and George had just finished the car the day before leaving California for Colorado so had no opportunity to check things out. The chassis was basically the same as it had been the previous year but the addition of a slightly heavier engine and the larger body threatened to change handling.

In the early morning practice sessions, Miller's Ford-Devin showed good speed but he was in tight company with Colorado Springs Chevy dealer Al Daniels and a couple of other Corvette and special-car drivers. Al drove a stock 327-inch fuel-injected '62 Corvette with finesse and had very good practice times. Frank Peterson also had a new 327-inch Corvette engine for his fiberglass special and was running faster than in 1961.

An interesting car in the large sports car class but one which was definitely far from large was a Corvair Spyder-powered Devin sports car. A fiberglass body was fitted to a special chassis built by Devin which employed the rear suspension from a Corvair and front suspension from a Volkswagen. The engine was a stock turbosupercharged '62 Corvair Spyder powerplant with 144 cubic inches. Veteran Pikes Peak driver

**ABOVE**—Orville Nance drove best race of his career to nab fourth in the championship division. His car was powered by a stroker Chevy V8.

**UPPER RIGHT**—The 409 Chevy driven by Nick Sanborn performed well but couldn't match Turner's Ford. Nick settled for a second.

**RIGHT CENTER**—Pete Woods' Devin sports car used a Corvair Spyder engine and though outpowered in class, topped hill in 16:12.

**RIGHT**—Indy sensation Parnelli Jones was right at home on Peak dirt, finished third among stockers with a 385 hp, 406-inch '62 Ford.

Pete Woods handled the driving chores and did an excellent job although the car was well outpowered by other entries in its class.

To determine starting positions for the race on the Fourth, all entries raced against the clock from the starting line to Glen Cove, five and a half miles away, on July the second. There had been a heavy rain on the mountain the day and night before qualifications but it had stopped several hours before 6 o'clock starting time, and the road was damp but in excellent shape. Small sports cars started first and, as expected, Bobby Donner burned up the course in his Porsche to set quick time for the class and break his '61 record by more than 20 seconds with a time of 6 minutes, 13.2 seconds. Jack Guynn had next fastest time at 6:34.7.



In the large sports class, Al Daniels made an excellent run in his Corvette and set fast time of 6:30.6 for the class. Ak Miller's much lighter Ford-Devin had been equipped with a new set of tires which did not work as expected, especially on the damp road surface, and he slipped into Glen Cove three seconds behind Daniels. Pete Woods was fifth fastest among the six entrants with his Spyder-Devin but still only 16 seconds behind Al Daniels with a clocking of 6:46.9.

Stock cars were the next to qualify and Curtis Turner trimmed 6 seconds off his '61 qualifying record as he pushed his 406 Ford from the starting line to Glen Cove in 6 minutes, 24.7 seconds. Nick Sanborn took second with his 409 Chevy at 6:29.4 and Parnelli Jones made his Pikes Peak debut

HOT ROD MAGAZINE





*ABOVE—Runnerup to brother Bobby, Al Unser drove an impressive race but had a little trouble pushing front wheels on switchbacks. Al's car was Chevy powered, 84-inch w.b.*

*LEFT — One of pre-race favorites was Slim Roberts in Vince Conze's Offy-powered lightweight. Slim was reportedly ahead of Bobby Unser's pace before making a spectacular plunge over the side of the mountain.*

*RIGHT—2nd place winner in small sports class was John Max Wolf in a 2 litre AC-Bristol. He couldn't cope with lightweight RS Porsche.*

*BELOW RIGHT—The only 255-inch Offy entered this year was driven to fifth spot by Gordon Herring with a clocking of 13 minutes, 27.4 seconds.*



with a clocking of 6:30.6. Defending stock car champ Louie Unser had ignition trouble with his Chevy and failed to finish his qualification run. This placed him at the tailend of the stock car lineup on race day.

In the championship division, Bobby Unser lived up to expectations as he trimmed almost 2 seconds off last year's time to earn the first starting position on race day with a clocking of 5 minutes, 34.4 seconds. Al Unser was just 3 seconds slower at 5:34.7 and he was followed by Roy Walker (5:43.6), Gordon Herring (5:45.0) and Paul Kleinschmidt (5:46.4). One of the early favorites, Slim Roberts, had been unofficially timed faster than the Unsers in the lower section of the run but while still nearly two miles from Glen Cove was deluged by engine oil from an un-

known source. Slim slowed down considerably in hopes that he could save the 220-inch Offy from quitting due to lack of oil and actually coasted across the finish line at Glen Cove with a clocking of 5:48.8. It was later found that the cap on the oil tank beneath the seat had come loose and was dumping oil into the cockpit. The engine was undamaged but Slim was oil-covered.

July fourth, race day, was warm and clear. The wet roads of two days earlier had completely dried and the road surface was hard but covered with loose, dry dirt. One of the largest crowds of spectators to ever attend the Hill Climb started making their way up the mountain to their favorite vantage points the night before the race and by the time the road closed at 9 a.m. the next

*(Continued on page 92)*



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## CLIMB TO THE CLOUDS

continued from page 39

day, more than 10,000 spectators were stretched out along the 12½-mile run. The largest concentration was at Devil's Playground near the 16-mile post at an elevation of 13,000 feet. Here, a large area for parking plus a boulder-covered hillside to sit on, gives many thousand race enthusiasts a view of the cars for several miles as they twist their way up the mountain.

The first car up the mountain was the 1962 Ford convertible pace car driven by Pikes Peak race manager Lloyd Faddis. Following a speedy dash to the top to make sure the road was clear of spectator cars, Lloyd radioed back to the starting line that all was clear. The small sports cars led off at three-minute intervals and from our lofty vantage point at 16-mile, it was easy to see that Bobby Donner's Porsche was much faster than other cars in his class. Confirmation came a few minutes later when word was received that Donner had reached the top in a new record time of 14:25.3, a solid 13 seconds faster than his '61 record.

Donner had been giving some of the drivers in the large sports car class a ribbing during practice because he was turning faster times and he had threatened to beat them in the race, too, with his 1600 cc Porsche. After his run, it looked as though Donner knew what he was talking about because he was also five seconds faster than the '61 unlimited sports car record.

Chevy dealer Al Daniels led off the large sports car class with his '62 Corvette and performed an excellent driving job, but the slippery, dusty road didn't provide the best traction and he had to settle for a time of 15:01.3. Three-time winner Ak Miller was next to try his luck and although he, too, was obviously bothered by the loose surface, the lightweight special had less trouble than Daniels and Ak registered a time of 14:29.3, just .7 of a second slower than the record he'd set in '61. Other cars in the class failed to better Ak's time so he became a four-time class winner. Frank Peterson was second in the Chevy-powered special (14:57) and Daniels held on for third. Looks like the large sports cars will have to do a little engine and chassis tuning if they're going to catch Donner next year.

Stock cars were next to leave the starting line at intervals of three minutes and leadoff driver Curtis Turner gave a beautiful driving demonstration to the spectators perched high on the side of the mountain. Nick Sanborn also did well in his 409 Chevy and Indianapolis record holder Parnelli Jones drove his Ford like he'd been raised on

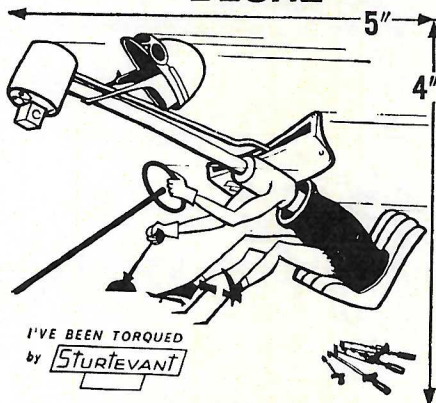
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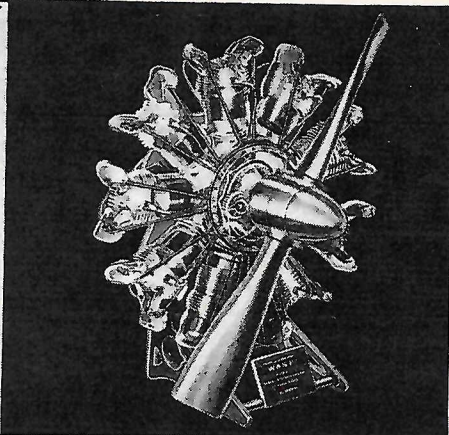
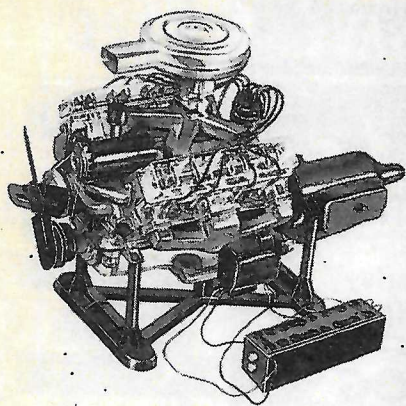
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## CLIMB TO THE CLOUDS

continued from page 92

Pikes Peak instead of this being his first trip. A radio report from the lower stretches of the course delivered the news that defending stock car champion Louie Unser had slid off the road into a group of parked cars shortly after the start. We later learned that nobody had been injured but Louie's Chevy was wrecked and a couple of parked cars were also damaged.

Radio coverage on the progress of the stock cars as they made their way up the mountain reported that the winning stock car time had been set by Curtis Turner in a '62 406-inch Ford. Curtis lopped 10.5 seconds off the '61 record with a clocking of 14 minutes, 55.5 seconds. Runnerup Nick Sanborn registered a time of 15:00.5 and Parnelli took third with a time of 15:02.5.

With sports and stock cars out of the way, the championship class was next and five-time champion Bobby Unser was the first of 23 cars to take the starter's flag. The question in the mind of the spectators was whether Al Unser, Slim Roberts, Paul Kleinschmidt or a couple of others could get going fast enough to beat Bobby? Qualification trials had proven Bobby faster than in '61 and he is a smooth driver not apt to beat himself by getting off the road. Experts thought that Al and Slim Roberts were best bets to upset Bobby.

From the Devil's Playground area, we could watch Bobby display his skill as he made his way up the mountain. As usual there were no mistakes and soon after he passed our vantage point we got the radio report that once more he'd set a new record with a time of 12 minutes, 50.6 seconds—6 seconds under his '61 time. Al was next up the road and although his car appeared very fast in the lower sections, handling seemed to be bad on the dusty switchbacks above Glen Cove and valuable time was lost on each of the turns. Al's time of 12:54.6 was flashed over the radio, 4 seconds slower than Bobby's.

As more cars slithered their way up the mountain, it became obvious that one of the specks down in the valley was making better time than the others and might have a chance to beat the Unsers. This was Slim Roberts in a very light 220-inch Offy-powered car built by Vince Conze. This car weighed less than 1000 pounds and even with Slim's 200-plus pounds in the cockpit, was far the lightest entry in the race. Unofficial clockings by spectators high up on the mountain had Slim several seconds ahead of Bobby as he slid around the corner of the mountain and headed toward the first of two switchbacks at the 16-mile post.

Slim drove the car close to the edge as he prepared to set the car for the



first of the switchbacks but just as he started to "toss" the car into the left-hand turn, the right front wheel appeared to catch a washout on the edge of the road and as the tail of the car came around, it flew over the edge of the mountain. At this point on the road, the dropoff is just about the steepest on the whole course. Slim's car dropped off the road tail first, then went end over end down a rock and dirt slide area. Several flips and some 200 feet farther down the mountain, the car finally lodged against some boulders in an upright position.

Officials and spectators slid down the mountain to aid Slim and try to keep the car from tumbling any farther. A couple of quick-thinking men wedged large rocks under the car to stop it and then, to everyone's relief, Slim opened his eyes and raised his head. The accident had happened in plain view of thousands of spectators at Devil's Playground and they all let out a lusty cheer when Slim was helped from the car. Slim's only apparent injury was a multitude of bruises and scrapes around the face but a doctor at the scene ordered the race stopped so that an ambulance could cart Roberts to the hospital for a further checkup.

When the ambulance arrived, a large group of men started to carry Slim up the steep bank on a stretcher but even with the aid of ropes from above did not have much luck keeping their footing. Finally Slim decided he could do better by himself so he got off the stretcher and climbed the last half by himself. Again, the crowd responded with a loud cheer as he stepped into the ambulance and resumed his place aboard the stretcher.

With Slim back down the hill, the race was again resumed but none of the other cars and drivers that followed had the speed or skill to wrest the crown from Bobby Unser and he became the champion for the sixth time, the last five in a row. Bobby still has a way to go to catch his Uncle Louis though because Louis won nine races from 1934 to 1953 and is still trying for number 10. This year, Uncle Louis's car didn't run too good but he finished twelfth in the championship class with a time of 14:32.4. By the way, Uncle Louis is 66 years young and looks about 40. That mountain air does wonders for you.

The 1962 Pikes Peak Hill Climb results are history now and quite a few of the special cars will be put away to gather dust for another year but the spectators won't forget this race for a long time. Next year's should be even better, especially in the championship division where the rules change permits sprint cars. See you at Devil's Playground next July fourth, and if you have a car that fits into one of the classes, bring it along and have fun.

SEPTEMBER 1962

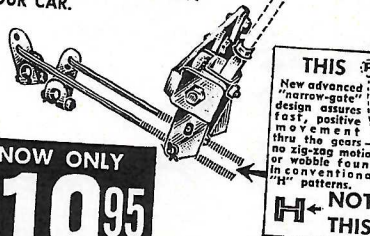
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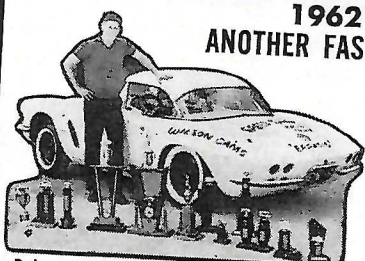
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