

Growth of an Amateur

by Stan Mott

Illustrations: Stan Mott

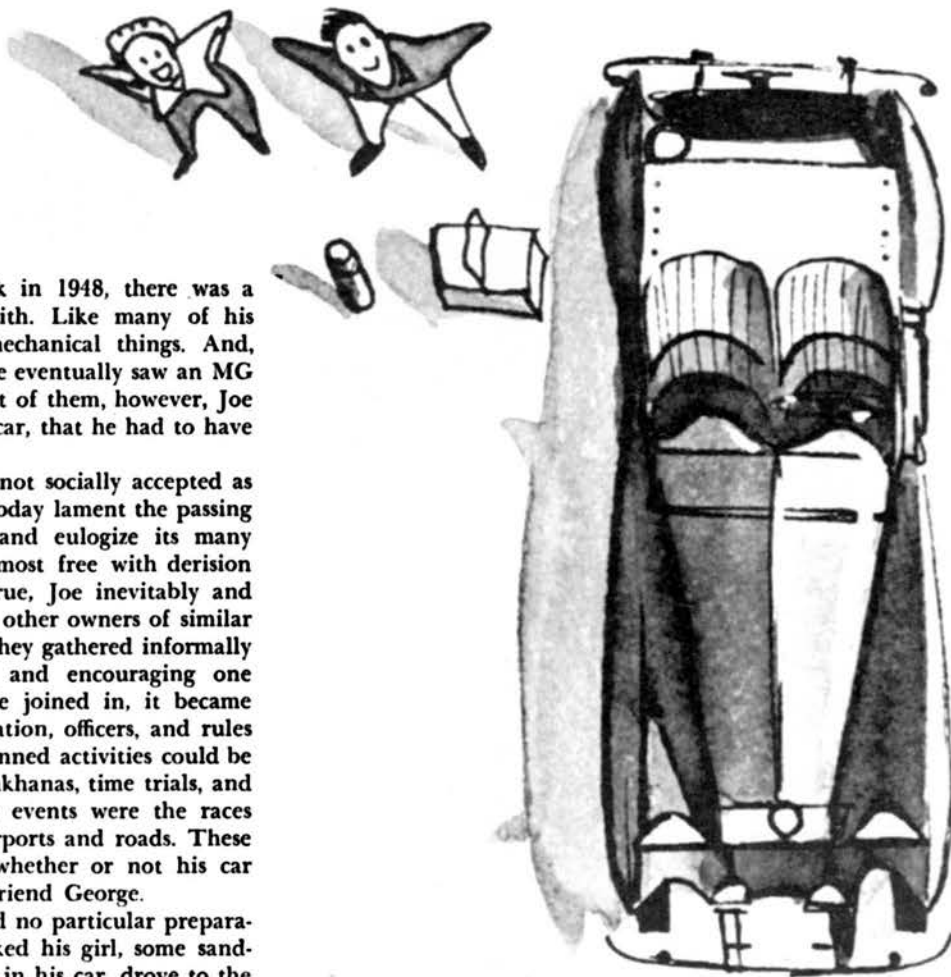
A LONG time ago, 'way back in 1948, there was a young man named Joe Smith. Like many of his contemporaries, he liked mechanical things. And, like many of his contemporaries, Joe eventually saw an MG TC on his city's streets. Unlike most of them, however, Joe knew, the minute he saw the little car, that he had to have one.

In those far off days, TC's were not socially accepted as "smart," and the very people who today lament the passing of that spindly wheeled wonder and eulogize its many virtues, real and imaginary, were most free with derision for Joe and his car. This being true, Joe inevitably and naturally banded together with the other owners of similar cars whom he met at his dealer's. They gathered informally whenever it was possible, aiding and encouraging one another. As more and more people joined in, it became apparent that a club, with organization, officers, and rules would be advantageous, in that planned activities could be carried out. There were rallies, gymkhanas, time trials, and group trips, but the most popular events were the races held occasionally on abandoned airports and roads. These gave Joe the chance to find out whether or not his car really was faster than that of his friend George.

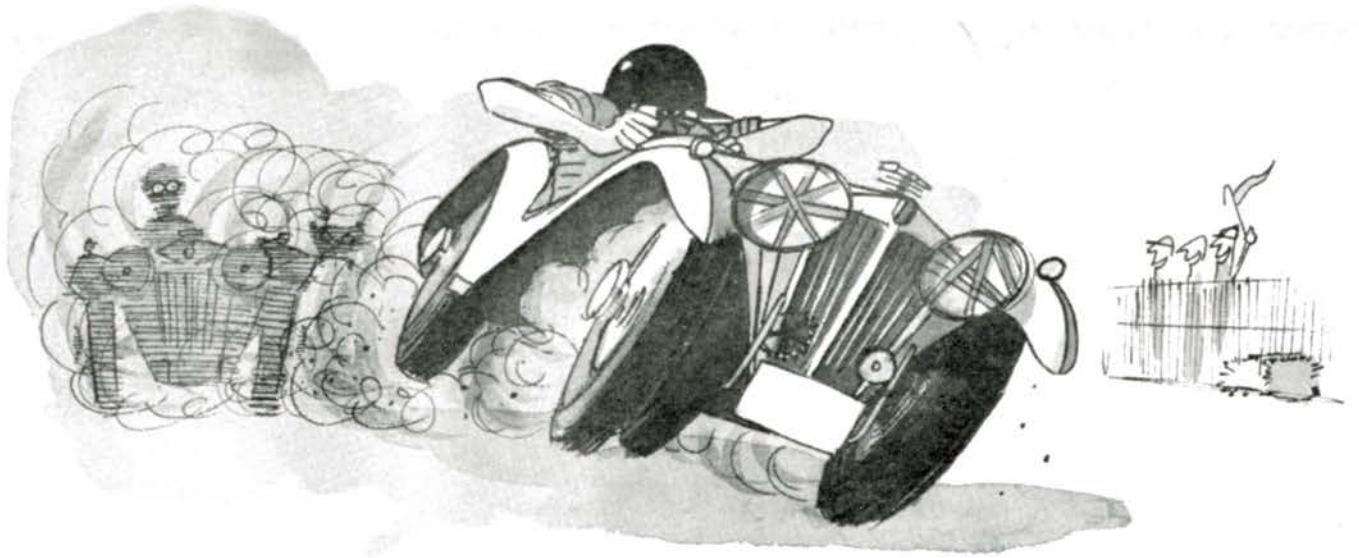
The races were fun; they required no particular preparation or special effort. Joe just packed his girl, some sandwiches, and a thermos of lemonade in his car, drove to the track, unpacked said girl and lunch, raced, beat George, ate the lunch, put the girl back in the car and drove home.

Next year, Joe took along an extra set of spark plugs as insurance and wore a new shiny white crash helmet, but the day wasn't quite so much fun, because good old George had installed a blower on his engine and won everything. This was doubly disturbing to Joe because this time there was a fair-sized crowd present to witness his defeat.

That wouldn't do, of course, so Joe countered by remov-



*All they needed was a girl, lunch, and a TC.
Next year, Joe brought a spare set of plugs...*



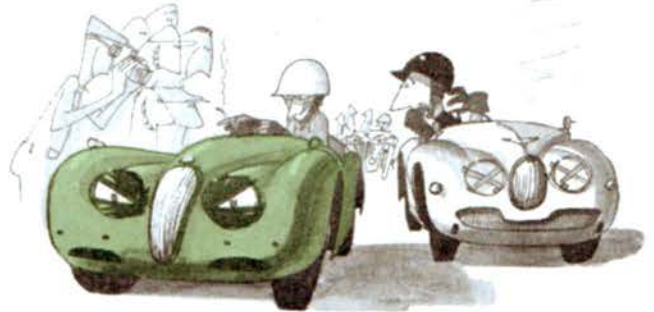
But George had mounted a blower on his TC, and ran away and hid!

ing from his car everything that would come loose. It was more fun than ever. George was vanquished once again, and the hundred dollar tune-up it had taken to do it seemed well worth while.

It seemed less so at the first of the next season, though. George wasn't driving a TC any more; he had a Jowett Javelin Jupiter, and most of the other fellows were driving that new Americanized MG with the baby buggy wheels, the TD model.

There was only one thing to do, and so, despite the expense involved, Joe bought a Jaguar XK-120. *That* would show George and the boys the short way around, and show the spectators a real car and driver at the same time. And it did, too — for a while. George met the challenge in typical fashion. He bought an XK-120 M.

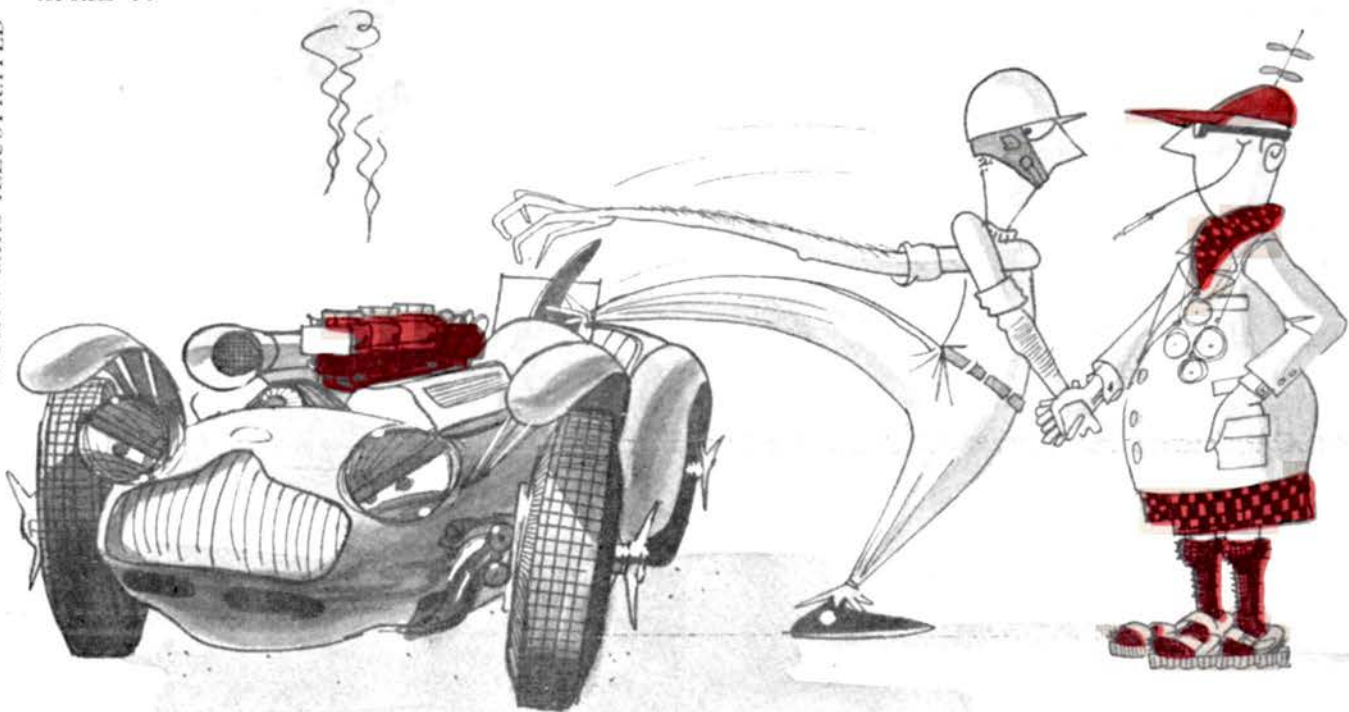
You can imagine the effect of this on poor Joe. It was no longer a matter of merely winning or not winning a trophy. There was a crowd outside those fences; a gay



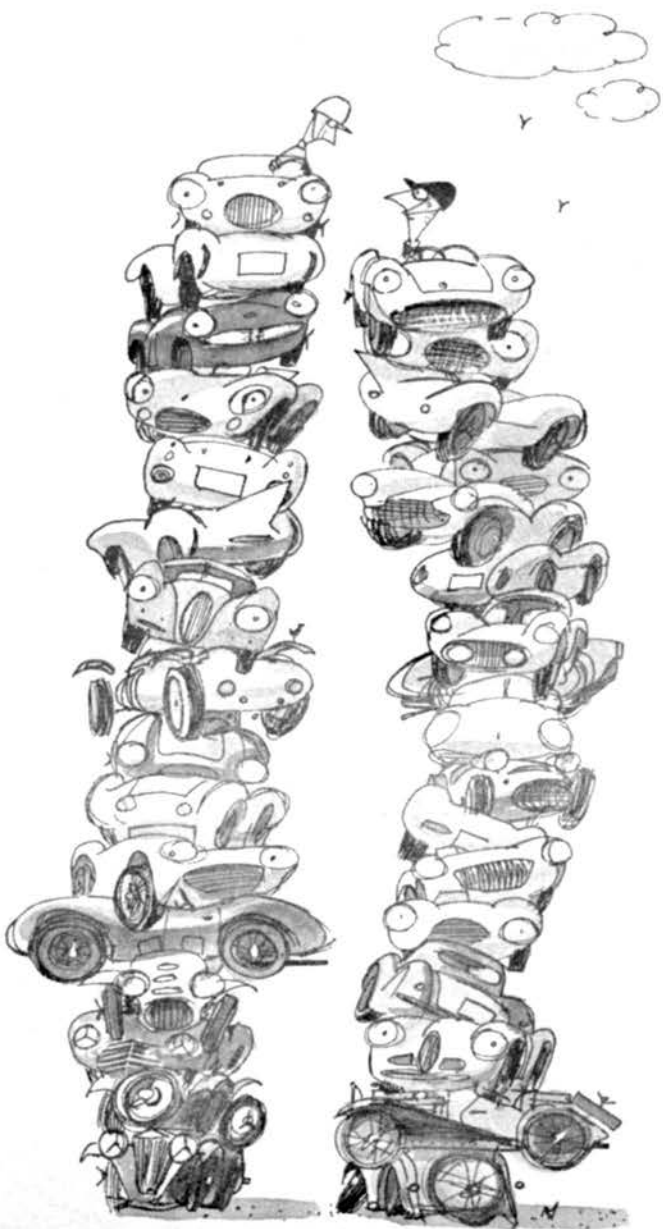
Joe countered with an XK120

To preserve his manly dignity, George met the challenge with an XK120-M.





"Wealthy sportsman" White offered Joe his Allard. But another "wealthy sportsman"



crowd caught up in the social whirl of road racing. To that crowd, in Joe's mind, his honor, his very manhood, was at stake. Yet what could he do? His car was not fast enough; he could afford no faster, and to quit would mean dishonor.

Joe's plight was not unknown, and actually was welcomed by some, notably a Mr. White, who was well known in some circles as a "wealthy sportsman." Mr. White approached Joe with an offer to let him drive a new Allard. Joe was overjoyed at this opportunity, and began driving the Allard with new enthusiasm. George was a menace no longer, at least not until he appeared driving a Mr. Black's 2.0 Ferrari.

Mr. White's solution? A 2.3 Ferrari for Joe.

Mr. Black bought a 2.6.

Mr. White bought a 2.7.

Mr. Black bought a 2.9.

Mr. White bought a 3.0.

Mr. Black bought a 3.5.

Mr. White bought a 4.1.

Mr. Black bought a 4.4.

Mr. White bought a 4.5.

Mr. Black bought a 4.9.

At a loss for Ferrari, Mr. White switched tactics. He bought a 1500 OSCA.

Joe is happy. He doesn't work any more, but he doesn't miss it; he hasn't spent a dime in years. He's an amateur





bought George a Ferrari. White changed his tactics, bought Joe a 1500 cc Osca.

sportsman full time now. It's just like in the old TC days. Racing doesn't require any particular preparation or special effort. Joe just packs Mr. White, 12 girls, 10 Italian mechanics, 16 scorers and timers, four caterers, three psychiatrists, two pilots, and a public relations man, together with a tent, three tables, 40 spare tires, a machine shop,

two ice tubs, a bar, 24 cases of coke, two portable outhouses, 14 folding chairs, two scooters, a Ferrari, a Porsche, an OSCA, and a 10-pound bag of spare cash into a van trailer, a VW bus, a Cadillac Eldorado, a Bentley Continental, and a twin engined airplane and goes to the track. There he sets up his settlement, and wins the race. (Unless George does . . .).

