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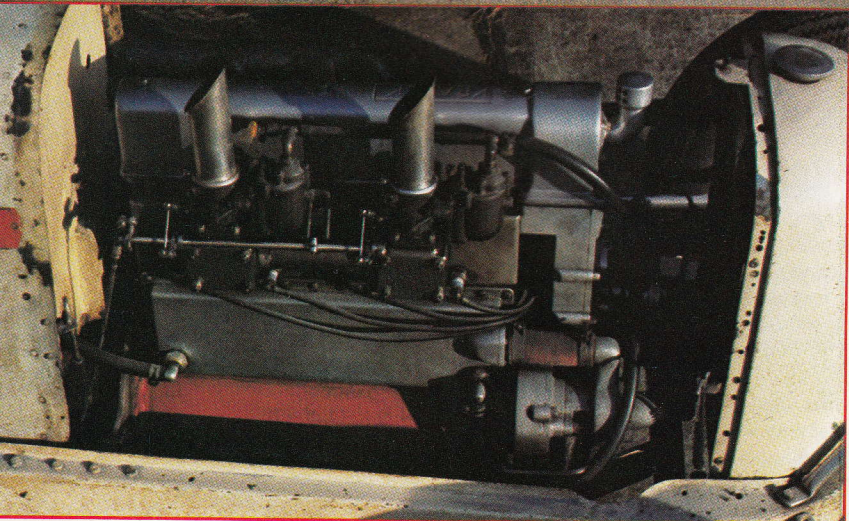
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**PERSONALITIES: Eddie Sachs, Ted Horn, Dave Manes,
Don Reiners and Stan Atherton**



THE CLASSIC KRASEK

by L. Spencer Riggs

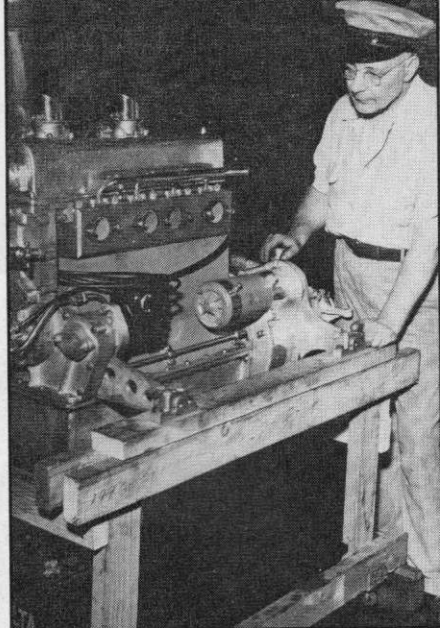
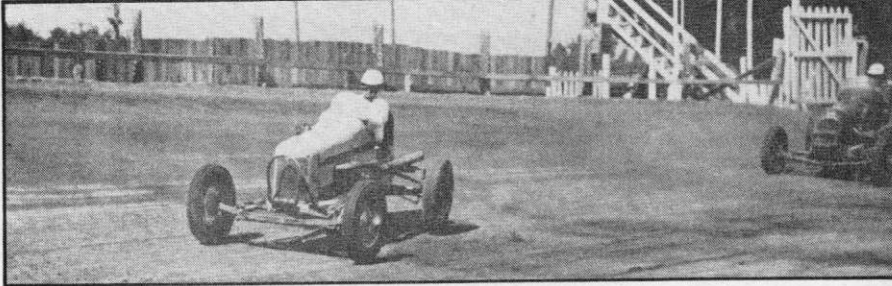


The little white sprinter on these pages was one of the winningest single overhead cam, four cylinder cars in America.

The Krasek "single stick" is now owned by Dave Hedrick, of Aloha, Oregon. He purchased the car from Krasek in perfect running condition.

Leo Krasek was a master machinist, who lived in the Chicago area.

No one is quite sure where the chassis came from, but one thing is sure. Everything else on the car was invented, machined and built by Krasek. Over the years the racer housed several different engines. Slim Rutherford claims that the original had an Over-



(above) Leo and his pride and joy. Note fine workmanship on the engine (Ed Kirchner). (left) Leo and Fritz Tegtmiger after winning a hundred lapper at Mitchell, Indiana in 1946 (Charles Spellman), (top left) Walter Barnett Leading the feature at Ord, Nebraska in 1948. He crashed on the next lap (Swopes photo).

land block fitted with a refined Fronty S.O. head. Leo often beat the Fronty "factory" cars! Later he went to a D.O. that he designed from Gallivan patterns. However, Leo had something special of his own here too, because he defeated the Gallivan powered cars regularly.

Today the car is powered by what made it famous, a single overhead cam four. The engine is 212 cubic inches with a bore and stroke of $3\frac{7}{8}$ " x $4\frac{1}{2}$ ". The compression is 12:1. Leo was said to have used a special fuel blend. Actually, it wasn't as exotic as many people thought with two parts gas and alcohol laced with one part benzol. The crank and rods were machined by Leo and spun on three poured Babbitt bearings.

The oiling system says something special about Krasek. The dry sump was supplied with a four gallon tank located in the cowl. The built in oil cooler on the intake side of the engine has to be one of the first of its kind.

The cam was another Krasek one of a kind and was twisted by gears instead of a chain.

The carbs reflect Krasek too. They appear to be ordinary Winfields. However, closer inspection reveals they have been reworked to Leo's own ideas. Few people would try to change something already considered perfect!

The power goes through a Ford Model A gearbox to the standard Ford rear end which turn the rear safety hubs. Dayton 16 inch wheels are on all four corners, the fronts steered by Auburn front spindles.

About 1949 Leo went to torsion bars

on the rear, but stayed with a cross spring on the front.

The car won many outlaw events in the 1920s. However, it was during the 1931 and 1932 seasons that K-4 became nationally known. Krasek went AAA and signed the legendary Bryan Saulpaugh as his driver. It was with this car that Saulpaugh went to the top, winning the Eastern Championship. The great Harris Insinger drove for Krasek in 1933.

Other famous haulers that drove for Leo include Bill Schindler, D. D. Morris, "Cowboy" Hardy, Pete Romceovich, Lou Tomei, Walt Trevelyan, Les Ford, Everett Rice, Howard "Speed" Adams, "Buck" Whitmer, "Tex" Pedersen and Mike Salay.

During the winter of 1933, Al Gordon drove the car to some up front finishes at Ascot. Don Freeland was the last man to drive the car in competition, that ride occurring in the early 1950s.

What really made the car so fast was Leo's secret, and he never told anyone. He would go to any extreme to protect his ideas. More than one mechanic or designer has found himself in court, charged with "infringement" by Leo Krasek.

Some of the amazing races run by the Krasek sound impossible today. They sounded just as impossible then.

The Central States Racing Association ran a 100 lap event at the dangerous half mile Mitchell, Indiana, Speedway. All the best cars in the Midwest were there. In 1946, if you didn't have an Offy you were out of the running. Someone forgot to tell Leo

and driver Fritz Tegtmiger. The fantastic pace sidelined car after car. Inch by inch the Krasek machine moved toward the front. By the 75 lap mark Fritz had picked off the last staggering Offy and taken the lead. At the finish the Krasek job had nearly a two lap lead, and a record of 38 minutes 26 seconds that stood until the track was closed.

One season the legendary Gus Schrader came to the Jungle Park Speedway, near Rockville, Indiana. Gus was I.M.C.A. Champion, a man called "The King," by fans. Jungle was a tight half with five turns, woods, and a creek for guardrails. Horsepower meant little, while handling and low end torque could spell winning. Gus and his Miller took every event, including the feature. The main event was one Gus would remember for a long time. Mike Salay and the Krasek car clawed their way through the field, drawing a target on the tail of Schrader's Miller. Mike didn't win but he gave the fans what they paid to see. He was sideways, under, above and everywhere except in front of "The King." Schrader won with Mike finishing inches behind him. As Gus pulled off his helmet a mechanic congratulated him. "Great race, Gus!" The veteran looked in the direction of the Krasek pit as he ran a hand through his thinning hair. "Yeah. Glad it's over," he muttered.

If you ever happen to be on the west coast and go to a vintage race car event, you may see a spidery white sprint car. No doubt Dave Hedrick will be more than happy to take time to tell you about the number 20. ●