

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Now that our 1986 show season is over and things are getting back to normal, I would like to take this opportunity to say that my wife and I had the pleasure of attending three of our National shows. The first we attended was the Southeastern National hosted by the Foothills Mustang Club in Anderson, South Carolina and then the Eastern National hosted by the Shenandoah Valley Mustang Club in Winchester, Virginia. As you know we had two Grand Nationals on the same weekend in August, so we flipped a coin and attended the Rio Grande Grand National hosted by the Rio Grande Mustang Club in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I can't say enough about these fine regional groups on the way they put these shows together. There were beautiful show sites, great organization, exceptionally good quality show cars, good judging, fine banquets and, oh yes, great food.

The First Pennsylvania Mustang Club hosted the Betsy Ross Grand National East in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania and the reports are that the show was fantastic. To each of these fine regional groups we say thank you very much for your many hours of hard work and dedication. We appreciate you.

During these shows I met a lot of new people and renewed a lot of old acquaintances. Of course we got into a lot of discussions and by far the number one question asked was my thoughts on the amending of the by-laws to allow 1974 to present model Mustangs into the Mustang Club of America. I would like to take a few minutes of your time and try to give you my views of both sides of the coin.

First of all the Mustang Club of America was organized in 1976. At that time the last of the regular size Mustangs, the 1973's, were only three years old. I feel sure the National Board of Directors felt when drawing up the by-laws that the 1973's would be a good cut off point especially with the 1974's being down-sized. My feeling is that the National Board of Directors did a fine job in putting everything in place because our National Club has continued to grow in membership and

regional groups of which we are very proud.

As for the Mustangs, I believe when the Club was organized, the price range for the early year Mustangs was \$150 to \$600 with exceptionally nice ones going for \$750 to \$1000. With a price structure like that people of all ages could participate. Also at that time Ford Motor Company had almost any part you would need for a restoration available at a reasonable price. We all know what has happened between then and now. Prices for the early models have skyrocketed, parts have become hard to find and even though some are being reproduced the prices are higher than the original parts that were available from Ford. What does all this mean? It simply means that the Mustang Club of America was slowly but surely losing the younger people to a villain by the name of "economics". I don't think the enthusiasm is down by any degree of the imagination, but let's face it, if you were to start to build a concours class Mustang today (buying the car, the necessary parts, getting them put into place and finished to show quality) you would have a bundle invested. And when you purchase a \$7,500 to \$10,000 Mustang today you can't get it financed for 36 to 48 months; you've got to have the money up front. And when you buy insurance to protect your investment you find out that it's expensive. These are just some of the many reasons that the young people felt left out of the hobby that they once enjoyed.

On the other side of the coin, I feel that by amending the by-laws to accept the later year Mustangs into the Mustang Club of America we have opened the door for these people to re-join us. Also we are inviting people of all ages who have Mustangs to join us who otherwise would never have considered joining our Club. For instance, I've heard many people say, "I would like to be a member of the National Club and join the local regional group but I can't afford a show car." These are the people that we are catering to and saying "come join in the fun with us."

I also feel we will be in a better position to ask Ford Motor Company to participate with us in our Club, such as co-sponsoring some of our National shows, national recognition for our Club and to supply us data on the later year Mustangs.

Some of the questions that are being asked today are "when can we start showing our later model Mustangs," "where will you get qualified judges to judge the cars," "when can we get judging guidelines so we can start on our cars," "how many new classes will be added," and the list goes on.

Let me try to put it in perspective: You can show your car at any National show from now on but it will be popular choice only (cars will not be judged). Our judging committee is working already on the guidelines, but do you realize what a task that is going to be? With all the data that has to be sifted through, and all the research that has to be done on each model I think it will be well into 1987 before the committee can possibly come up with guidelines for the different models and body styles. Then we have to work out the different classes that will be required and, don't forget, we do have to come up with judges for these cars. I think it will be crowding it a bit to expect everything to be in place in 1988. I'm thinking more like 1989, but hopefully sooner.

Now I would like to encourage all of you to invite your friends and neighbors who own and drive Mustangs to join our National Club and also the regional groups. This way they can meet the nicest people in the World — Mustangers.

Until next time . . .

