

# How to Avoid Mustang Hobby Burn Out

by Rick Mitchell

"Well, Joe, what seems to be the problem?"

"Gee, Doc, I don't know. I've been in the Mustang hobby for three or four years now. I restored my Mustang in record time! I did a lot of shows and I took home a bunch of trophies! I just don't know. This past year, it just wasn't the same! It wasn't as much fun."

"You know, Joe, it sounds to me like it's gotten to be a *routine* for you. Like you've done the same thing for so long that you're starting to burn out",

"Well, Doc, then what do I do about it? I *still* really do like those Mustangs!

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Does this malady sound familiar to you? If you're relatively new in our Mustang hobby, then this article probably won't apply. But if you've been on the trophy trail for a few years, then this scenario may sound all too familiar. But don't panic! There may be a cure for your problem.

The situation is this: Many of the folks who were new hobby members back in 1979 through 1981 when the hobby first took off, had become seasoned show veterans by about 1984. Then they either didn't like to show their Mustangs as much, or had lost interest in our hobby, and had gotten out. By 1986, a second newer wave of interest was developing in our hobby. This was partially due to the recognition of all post-1973 Mustangs. But the problem is, "How can we keep our hobby's "old-timers" actively interested? The answer: *Don't* encourage them to sell their old Mustangs, and instead *do* get them involved in *other aspects* of our Mustang hobby.

Many older members bought an early Mustang, joined a Mustang club locally, restored their car, and then

went out and competed for several years. After their trophy cases began to fill up, their interest in red hot competition soon began to cool. The *goal of winning* had been accomplished. Repeatedly going back out to compete then seemed *routine*. It was no longer a challenge.

The need is now for those older Mustang members to *mature in the hobby*. Just as a son learns from his father, soon the son will become a father, too. He in return must then teach his own son. When you feel you have learned everything about the early Mustangs and have won a trunkful of trophies, then it's time to give back to the hobby some of your time and talents.

Become involved. There are so many ways to do this. Participate in your club's activities. Learn to judge, or how to assist in the judging. Help out at registration or setting up. Stick around after a show is over, and help clean up after most everyone else has gone home. As Winston Churchill once stated, "They also serve who only sit and wait". Be available to help out.

Consider writing articles about Mustang related subjects. Every club newsletter or magazine needs written material on a regular basis, all the time. I have never met an editor who complained he or she had too much material to publish! The reverse is usually true.

Visit Mustang or antique car shows in areas different from the ones you competed in past years. Take your family with you. Pack a picnic lunch! The whole family will love it. Let your child pick up the trophy!

Above all, don't sell your Mustang in a moment of frustration: "I'm bored so I'm selling my Mustang". Watch out

for the danger signs, such as, "If I sell it, I can use the money to buy a new Turbo Sidewinder XLT". You'll hate that new XLT within the first month. I guarantee it! And you'll tear your heart out every time you see your old Mustang at a car show with the new owner.

The key is to find new ways to pump fresh enthusiasm into your hobby. Strive to keep it interesting. The result will be that your love for these cars, and everything else that surrounds them, will never die within you. And by maturing in the hobby, through expanding in other areas, you will never grow tired of your old Mustang when the next show season comes around.

And that's how to avoid Mustang hobby burn out!

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