

In Search Of Mustangs

A Mustang Census Moves Toward The Future

by Jim Smart

As IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS moves into its ninth year, information continues to pour in from around the globe. Your letters and kind words, despite all the delays, setbacks and unanswered mail, have been a source of inspiration for this project's original founder. It all makes me realize the reasoning behind staying behind this project as we all have—to educate and enlighten each and everyone of us who's interested in all the nitty-gritty facts pertaining to Mustang production.

Although IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS has struggled to stay afloat for nearly a decade, the basic interest in the project on behalf of the hobby has never faded. I still receive letters from many of you who were there in the beginning back in 1979 when monthly updates regarding this project were pretty common. And IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS has brought a good many facts to the surface that have aided the hobby in many ways, hence those of you who have stayed in touch over the years. Personally, I'll always cherish the special friendships I've made over the years as a result of being a Mustanger. Face it, we're just one big happy family.

And when we think about this one big happy family, it's important to understand the unity that makes the hobby thrive. Earlier I mentioned the people who've never lost touch with me over the years—and there are a good many of you out there. The one person I'm thinking of currently is Virginia Mustanger Jim Haskell. If you've been following the hobby for any length of time now, you know without a doubt who Jim Haskell is. He's the guy who has been persevering the 1964½ Mustang Indy Pace Car movement for five years plus now. Through Jim's efforts over the years, we've all learned so much about these limited production early Mustangs that we didn't know before. And Jim didn't allow too many things to get in his way. He contacted nearly everyone known to exist who was involved with the Indy Pace

Car project back in 1964 when it all began. As a result, articles on these cars have appeared in both the *Mustang Times* and *Mustang Monthly Magazine* (produced by Dobbs Publications in Lakeland, Florida).

It's surely no secret that Jim has been a motivating force in the hobby for quite some time now. Not long ago, Jim came to me and asked how he could help get IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS rolling again. At the time, I had recently relocated to the Saint Louis area from central Florida where I had been the editor of *Mustang Monthly Magazine* for three years. It was time to awaken a sleeping registry project and realize the full potential of what IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS could be. What I had here in Saint Louis was a battery of information (approximately 12,000 entries) both on computer tape and in 3 x 5 card form, plus literally hundreds of thousands of envelopes with untold information within. Jim and I sat down and had a long chat about the future of IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS and where it was hoped the project would go in the coming years.

We decided the project needed more than one person's input for a number of reasons. First and foremost, a project of this magnitude (largest special interest automotive registry in existence) should always have a backup system, namely another enthusiast who knows enough about it to carry it through, should anything happen to the project's original founder and original information. So Jim extended a hand and offered to do whatever was necessary to help me get this project in motion again. He began with developing a program (originally developed for his 1964½ Indy Pace Car Registry) for IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS (IBM Data Base Three) similar to what we had on the Quantel computer system at Dobbs Publications. This program goes a step further with Jim's input, by allowing access to even more variables of information, made possible by the IBM Data

Base Three system. It was Jim Haskell who originally adapted the Data Base Three system to a Mustang registry. Now this high technology is being adapted to IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS.

By the time you read this, we'll have an IBM Data Base Three system operating here in Saint Louis, making access to information and input of future information much easier than has been the case in the past. With Jim inputting registry information on his home turf in Washington, D.C. and us here in Saint Louis doing the same thing, IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS can now grow to new heights. And with new information comes the solution to a number of things about Mustang production that still stump us today. Jim's and my efforts, coupled with input from special contacts both still working for and retired from Ford, a new frontier awaits us all. Thank you, Jim, for helping me see this through.

So Long, Ol' Friend

While IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS has been and needs to be an ongoing project, there have been numerous other registry projects that have struggled against all odds to stay afloat and bring our hobby the results of their efforts. Randy Ream and Todd Eby are an excellent example of how perseverance can pay off with a Mustang registry. If you've been following their *Boss 302 Registry* to any great degree, you're well aware of what these two gentlemen have done for the 1969-70 Boss 302 movement. All they asked for in the beginning was a \$5.00 contribution from each person who wanted to be kept abreast of their project's activities. To this day (five years later), I still see updates on their project, yet they have yet to ask for another dime. Does that tell you something about dedication to a cause? Their *Boss 302 Registry* book appeared on the scene about two years ago. Their book, coupled with Donald Farr's *Boss 302 Book* have left a tremendous mark on the Boss aspect of the hobby. And they're still doing it—five years later.

But while the *Boss 302 Registry* has received a lot of publicity and been very

successful, other registries have struggled to stay in the spotlight. And there are some that haven't even tried. But no one will ever accuse Maryland Mustanger Rick Mitchell of not trying. Rick is the sole driving force behind the now deceased *Early Six Mustang Registry* (formerly the 1966 Sprint 200 Registry). This gentleman launched his project back in the early eighties to help hobbyists to recognize the six cylinder Mustangs. It all began with 1966 Sprint 200 models and was eventually expanded to include all 1965-66 Mustangs with sixes.

I don't think anyone ever really thanked Rick for his perseverance. His project surpassed 200 members and changed people's attitudes about six cylinder Mustangs. Over a period of five years, Rick produced one of the most

successful registry newsletters I've ever seen (because it was always on time) and he did a great job of producing it. As a result, I'll be modeling the *IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS* newsletter after Rick's when the time comes.

Rick's Early Six Mustang Registry came to an end from a lack of perseverance from registry members. A lot of people elected not to renew their memberships or simply forgot to. Knowing Rick as I do, it wasn't as though they didn't have ample reminder. He saw his project through, staying in close touch with his members and followers. And Rick did something I'm not sure how anyone does with great frequency, he kept each and every letter answered. Yet, in spite of all that, members lost interest and stopped supporting the project. Personally, I

think we should all thank Rick for what he did for the six cylinder Mustang movement. These gems, as a result of his keeping the ol' nose to the grindstone, have gained new recognition on both the show circuit and in the magazines. Thank you, Rick, you will be missed.

New Address

For those of you interested in *IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS*, a continuing Mustang census dedicated to 1965-73 Mustangs, please be advised of a new address for this project, P.O. Box 31425, Saint Louis, Missouri 63131. A phone number will be available in the near future. Please include One Dollar and a self-addressed stamped envelope with your correspondence should you desire a reply.

MT



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