

Judges Profile

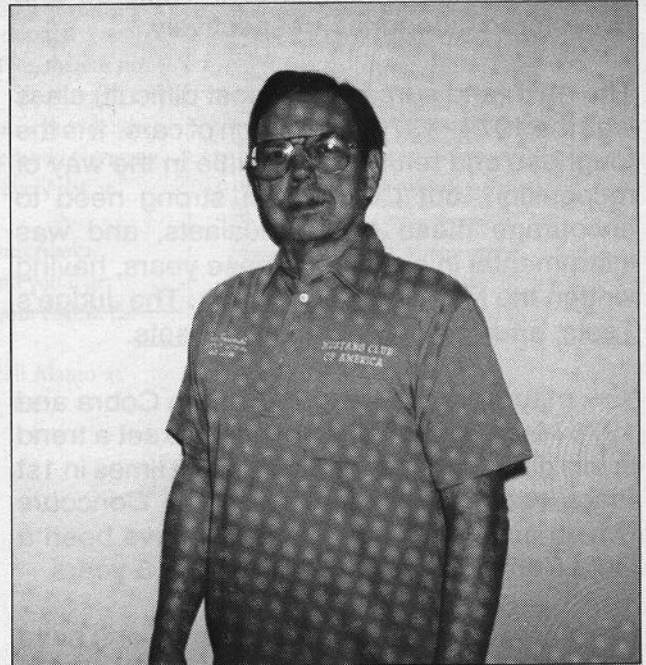
Thomas (Tom) E. Podemski
Gold Card Judge 1971 - 1973
Gold Card Judge 1974 - 1978

Let me introduce myself to those of you who are new to the Mustang Club of America, and reacquaint myself to those of you who have already met me, or know me.

It all began back in 1978, when I purchased a 1975 Mach I for my son's sixteenth birthday. When my wife and I bought the car, the salesman told us that one day, this car would be a "Collectible", (little did we know that he wasn't just making a sales pitch), and I never forgot what he said.

Exactly ten years passed. In August of 1988, we were on vacation and found (quite by accident) a 1971 Mach I, which my wife just had to have. I thought...Boy! Some guys are pretty lucky...but, little did we realize what she started.

Having always been a racing fan, and being interested in, but not knowing a great deal about cars, I quickly realized I had no clue about classic car restoration. This all changed as soon as my interest began to grow concerning car shows and what it takes to maintain an older car. Books and more books were purchased, then phone call after phone call to obtain information as I could. The next step was traveling, to see authentic cars others were doing, or cars they've owned as originals. My main priority and accomplishment was to keep my Mustangs in good running condition, the way they were intended.



After going through the phase of modification, with lots of chrome and high polish (which was probably the most fun), the next step was originality, and then to local shows for a few years. Then I decided to attempt my first "National" at which we took a 1st (1971 Closed), a 2nd (1970 Boss) and a 3rd (1973 Open) in the Concours Driven Class, which we'll always remember.

At this time, I was concentrating my efforts to the 1971 - 1973 model years, in which I participated and earned fifteen (15) 1st Place trophies, in the Concours Driven and Trailered Classes. I also assisted in writing the new Judging Sheets for this class at the MCA Shows, and have been a Gold Card Judge for six years. (continued page 48)

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Judges Profile (continued from page 45)

My next challenge was to pursue the 1970 Boss Class. Over time, I have placed eight times in the Concours Driven, Trailered and Unrestored categories, respectively.

The next (and surprisingly most difficult) class was the 1974 - 1978 generation of cars. It is the toughest, and returned very little in the way of recognition, but I did feel a strong need to encourage these car enthusiasts, and was instrumental in promoting these years, having written the Mustang II Rule Book, The Judge's Tests, and The MCA Judging Sheets.

You may have seen my 1978 King Cobra and 1975 Mach at shows, in an effort to set a trend in this direction. I have placed eight times in 1st Place with the King Cobra in the Concours Driven and Trailered Classes. I have been a Gold Card Judge in this division for 6 years.

I've also explored the Fox body cars, and have restored a 1979 Cobra and placed in both Concours Driven and Trailered.

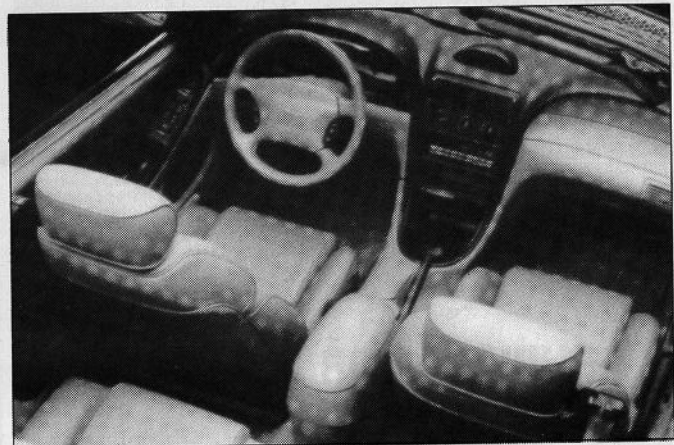
Next came my anniversary 350 GT (Fastback), and I am also familiar with the Unrestored Class, having placed with my 1982 GT, and my 1970 Boss 302. Let me not forget about my 1985-1/2 SVO, which I practically resurrected from the grave and transformed into a show winner, and a car my wife "loves to drive".

I have been a Late Model Judge since the inception of this class into the MCA Roster.

The cars which I have redone have placed over forty-five (45) times in the past eight years; with nine different Mustangs in thirteen different classes, one of the biggest thrills was winning a 1st at the Street Machine Nationals for Best Overall Muscle Car with my 1970 Boss302, with almost 1,000 entrants to compete against. We have participated in over one hundred and fifty (150) local, Regional Shows, and all the cars that I have ever competed with, I did myself. But I'm not finished yet. I am currently in the process of restoring (from bushel baskets) another 1970 Boss, for which I have been gathering parts for the past eight years. After that, there are more cars waiting their turn. I have also fulfilled my desires...to take five cars to an MCA National. I did that, and received five 1st Place wins, two Trailered, and three Driven.

My Mustangs have been featured in numerous magazine publications, catalogs, posters, calendars, promotional pieces, on trading cards, and have also appeared in at least ten hard cover Mustang books.

Having put all this to paper (against my better judgement), but due to a request by the MCA's chain of command, I would like you all to know that I am available for assistance of any kind, and by all means...at the next MCA show - let's talk Mustangs!



A 10 year evolution in Mustang interior design. The one on the left is an '84 GT although the dash layout is the same as the '79. The newer "wrap around" style, a '94, feels as good as it looks.