

MUSTANG FEST

2009

An Island Time Celebration

Text and Photos by Island Rick Birnbach
— San Antonio Mustang Club

Thursday October 1st could not come quick enough this year! That was the kick-off date for the first-ever MustangFest—on Mustang Island. Two years in the planning, it is an event that will leave lasting impressions and great memories for everyone who participated—even for those who just came by to take a peek into the world of Mustangs!

“Cruise To MustangFest” started off slowly with one car leaving Mustang, Oklahoma, under police escort (a drug-seized Mustang GT from Moore Police Dept.). Those poor Okies don’t know what they missed! Bill Thomas and his lovely wife Sharon drove the one Mustang equipped with GPS tracking—they were driving their Bright Yellow 2002 Mustang GT convertible. When asked about their travel time and speed, they both claimed the 5th amendment! Along the way, Mustangs were waiting at rest areas and entry ramps to join in. The GPS from Rocky Mountain Tracking allowed those of us waiting to watch the cruise progress in real time and see them from a satellite view—the miracle of modern technology! Cruise To Mustang-

Fest reached San Antonio on schedule. (Note: MustangFest is now the exclusive agent for Rocky Mountain Tracking’s worldwide ‘Cruise Tracking’ division!)

That evening, about 40 Mustangs and drivers met at Cowboy’s Dance Hall. Cowboy’s is located at the junction of Loop 410 and IH-35, on the northeast side of San Antonio. Thanks to Jordan Ford, a private corral was roped off for the Mustangs and special entertainment was pre-arranged—Jordan Ford thought of everything. Complimentary bull riding and boot polishing was just a part of the festivities provided to the MustangFest participants. Cowboy’s has special events on different nights; check their web site www.cowboysdancehall.com for details. Dance lessons are held on Thursday evenings, which I could have surely used. After the lessons, dancing and partying were on tap for all, but not too much drinking after all we had another leg of the Cruise To MustangFest ahead of us the next day.

Friday morning, the Mustangs again corralled at Cowboy’s. After the drivers’ meeting to explain the trip, we all headed south on IH-37. Tom Bader and his wife, Vicki, led the way in Tom’s 2005 Mustang GT, followed closely by the GPS tracking car and what had to be one of the most

unique Mustangs—a duplicate of the car from the movie Transformers, a 2005 Saleen Mustang, painted and equipped to look exactly like a normal police car (until you get really close and read the words). One would certainly take it for a regulation police vehicle, but I have never seen a police car with the wording “To Punish and Enslave” written on it. Other motorists along the route also slammed on brakes as they thought about passing us—thinking it to be a REAL police car. Not many people passed this convoy.

Along the way, Mustangs from all over Texas joined the caravan—waiting at entry ramps and rest areas; they could be seen blending in the line, which grew with each mile. At about the halfway point, we stopped for a 10-minute rest and 77 Mustangs were counted. As we approached our first stop at Champion Ford in Corpus Christi, the producer, Tom “Island Tom” Hartford, greeted us from overhead. He was in a helicopter taking birds-eye view photos of the line of Mustangs and drivers, what a sight that must have been.

It was a tight fit, but we managed to park all the Mustangs into Champion Ford’s lot, providing a great photo opportunity for the local news media. The Air Czar helicopter hovered overhead

shooting HD footage and attracted a lot of attention. Champion Ford is one of the major sponsors and community partners for MustangFest and we can't thank them enough for their generosity and community. We once again lined up and hit the trail. A short hop over Corpus Christi Bay and we all arrived on time at Sharkey's on Mustang Island, just as Island Tom arrived by helicopter to welcome everyone to MustangFest. From there, we all went to our hotels/motels/suites to register and prepare for the rest of the evening.

Later that evening, Mustangers from the cruise began assembling at Pelican's Landing, a local restaurant with a wonderful island décor and outdoor stage. It is a perfect location for an event like this. Island Tom did a fine job of MC'ing the evening's entertainment, which started off with a phone call from the President of the Mustang Club of America! It seems like we have reached national attention, which translates into bigger and better things for the future! The evening's main event was a two-hour stage show by "Mustang Elvis." Rob Carter, a resident of Canyon Lake, TX, plays Mustang Elvis. Superb is the only way I can describe his performance. He has Elvis' moves and voice down like a pro — but more than that, the way he worked the crowd was amazing. After the show, the party continued on at two other locations in Port Aransas, with the Johnny Black show at The Back Porch and BOSS 302s with Mustang Amber Ale at Port Aransas Brewing Company.

Port Aransas Brewing Company was one of the popular locations where many gathered—not only this night, but for lunch and dinner on Saturday and Sunday as well. Port A Brewing Company brewed up some special stuff just for MustangFest. Island Tom came up with a unique recipe for a special Boss 302 pizza and the Port A Brewing Company adopted the recipe as their own. To make it even better, when you purchased one of the Boss 302 pizzas you got a free T-shirt to commemorate the event. The Brewing Company also made a big appearance at the car show on Saturday, setting up a booth, providing T-shirts and giveaways to help make this a memorable experience. Port Aransas Brewing Company also sponsored the awards for car show winners; their contribution to the success of the event is invaluable! Thank you, Port Aransas Brewing Company for being a part of MustangFest.

Day two started off with a waffle breakfast at the Island Moorings Yacht Club & Marina. These folks had it down to a science; a lineup of about 20 waffle irons was going strong! Walking down the row of waffle irons, serving each person as they went—pull out a waffle, fill the iron for the next and move down one. By the time they finished the row, the first waffle iron was ready to serve up another 'crispy-on-the-outside/fluffy-on-the-inside' waffle again. One was enough to fill you up, but most people (including me) had to stuff in another of those tasty treats—if one is good, two is better!

After breakfast, Mustang Tom held a quick drivers' meeting (to minimize confusion, Island Tom coined Tom Bader, MustangFest 2009 Host Club Coordinator, 'Mustang Tom.' Tom accepted the title with a smile. The plan for the day was to make an appearance at a local TV station then get set up for the car show. The Mustangs were lined up and we headed off the island on time to Corpus Christi where KIII-TV, the local ABC affiliate, was set up and waiting for us. Seeing all those wild Mustangs stampeding over the bridge must have been an awesome sight for the local folks. As we entered Kill's parking lot, a camera man was set up and shooting video of the line up of Mustangs as they made the turn from the street into the parking area. As soon as we all parked and got situated, Mustang Tom Bader gave an inter-



▲ About 40 Mustangs gathered outside Cowboy's Dance Hall in San Antonio, Texas, to caravan to MustangFest.



▲ A 2005 Saleen Mustang, painted and equipped to replicate the Mustang in the movie, "Transformers." It attracted much attention all weekend.



▲ All lined up and ready to go!



▲ Champion Ford in Corpus Christi, Texas, hosted our first stop.

view to promote the car show and the sponsored charity. Then, off we went again, back to the Island for the main event—the MustangFest car show!

The Car Show was held at Island Moorings Yacht Club & Marina. We began to assemble at 11am. By noon we were ready, vendors were in place, cars were all parked and shined up, and people from all over the area started coming in. The weather was perfect—IF you were an island mosquito! About 90 degrees in the shade with 200% humidity! While the show was going on, Vern Kerouac and Steve Martinez took charge of assembling goody bags while the two Toms worked the crowd and administrated the events. The judging was a Peoples' Choice. During the afternoon, Beatnack, a local musical group entertained the gathering with an assortment of '60s and '70s songs. After the judging was done, an auction took place with Island Tom acting as the stand-in auctioneer. Several sponsors donated items to help make the charity auction a financially successful benefit for the beneficiary. Most notably, Dallas Mustang made some highly generous contributions. A complete air-conditioning system for early Mustangs and \$200 in gift certificates were auctioned off adding a big bump to the donation we would pass along to our sponsored charity. Many bottles of Mothers Showtime detailer, Mustang clocks, a wire set and other items were also auctioned off. After a short break in activities, the Hooters Girls made an appearance followed shortly thereafter by Mustang Elvis! Elvis put on another great show featuring his new Mustang songs. Toward the end of the event, Island Tom tossed T-shirts other goodies to the crowd. After the show, a quick trip to the Port Aransas Brewing Company was in order for some of that ice-cold beverages and hot and steamy Boss 302 Pizza! Beer and pizza never tasted so good!

The rest of the evening was free time for all to enjoy the wonderful activities the Island has to offer. There is great shopping and nightlife on Mustang Island.

For our final day on the island, we assembled at the host hotel: The Dunes. The Dunes is a luxury facility with all the features and amenities you could ask for. Island Tom, a master of the mic, took charge of the



▲ It was a tight fit, but we managed to get all 77 Mustangs parked at the Champion Ford dealership.



▲ Mustang Tom Bader of the San Antonio Mustang Club gave an interview to promote the car show and the sponsored charity.



▲ Mustangers from the cruise began assembling at Pelican's Landing on Mustang Island.



▲ The car show was held at Island Moorings Yacht Club & Marina on Mustang Island.



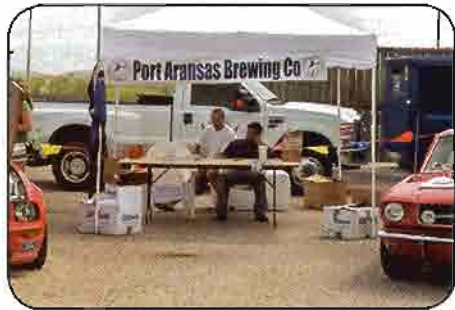
▲ Island Tom handled the mic during the evening's entertainment, which started off with a phone call from the President of the MCA.



▲ Local musical group called Beatnack entertained the gathering with an assortment of '60s and '70s songs.



▲ Mustangs cruised to Corpus Christi's ABC affiliate, KIII-TV Channel 3. Their camera man was awaiting their arrival.



▲ Port Aransas Brewing Company also sponsored the awards for all winners of the car show.

activities with the assistance of Mustang Tom. The main event was the presentation of a check for \$2,400 CASA of Coastal Bend to CASA's director, Page Hall, to assist in helping the children of the Coastal Bend area. Once the final tally is done, an additional check will be sent, which will make the total in excess of \$3,000 for the local charity. Witnessing that presentation made me proud to have been a part of this event and especially of being a member of the San Antonio Mustang Club!

The awards for the participants of the car show were then presented. Everyone who participated was already a winner, however there were three big winners of the day who deserve special mention. The biggest winner in two separate categories was the Transformers Police Car. Driven and created by Robert McCaskill, it was most everyone's favorite car of the show. Our newest member "Island Buzz" with his 1967 Convertible Mustang took home the Mayor's Choice award. The father/son team of Carlos Chavez Senior and Junior each took an award for their respective class—Carlos Senior with his 1972 Mach 1 (a Mexico-built car) and Carlos Junior with his 1986 Fox Body. Many other awards were also given—too many to list here. Congratulations to all the winners (all winners' names and their photos will be displayed at www.MustangFest.org).

At noon, it was with great joy and sadness that the first-ever MustangFest on Mustang Island had come to an end. The sadness of leaving the Island (and the hundred friends and Mustangers who took part in this wonderful event) was overpowered by the joy of knowing we did a lot of good for a lot of people—knowing MustangFest 2010 will be back next year ... bigger and better than before! Planning for MustangFest 2010 has already begun. The event is scheduled for October 1-3, 2010. The goal is 1,000 Mustangs on Mustang Island in 2010. Please visit the web site www.1000mustangs.com to register—keep up with the details and watch the next show unveil itself—Island Rick out! **MT**



▲ Awards were presented poolside at the luxurious host hotel, The Dunes.



▲ Island Tom Hartford, Producer of MustangFest, begins the Awards Ceremony.



▲ Tom Bader presents CASA's Director, Page Hall, a check for \$2,400, while Tom Hartford looks on.



▲ Mustang Elvis entertained the audience with his poolside "Elvis in Hawaii" act.



▲ MustangFest 2009 comes to a close. Much thanks to (L-R) Island Tom Hartford, and Mustang Tom Bader.