

2010 MCA ANNUAL JUDGES' MEETING

By Jeff Speegle

Showing cars is often referred to as the hobby within the hobby. And, although not every owner finds the need to participate, many take time to attend a show, view the cars, and enjoy meeting new friends. We are awed at the level of detail and effort that goes into some show cars, and whether modified or stock we celebrate the dedication and commitment in money, time, or both required to compete.

The Mustang Club of America, being the nationally recognized authority, sponsors premier Mustang-focused concours events around the country (even at times outside the country) where cars are not judged against one another, but on a specific standard. None of this would be possible without well-researched, supported, and written standards and a dedicated army of judges to apply these standards. Judges give freely of their time and knowledge and often spend \$500-\$900, out of their own pocket, attending each show, depending on distances from their home. This can mean less time spent with families and less money to spend on other family needs. These dedicated individuals realize that they are needed at each show to impartially evaluate entries. If you know or meet one of these individuals, take the time to introduce yourself and thank them for their efforts and time. Your appreciation will be well received.

The MCA annually conducts an open judges meeting. Any MCA member can attend and participate in the meeting. I encourage any member who is interested in learning about the workings of the judging community, gaining a real insight into the mechanics of judging, and showing on a national level to attend. You may leave with a deeper interest in the hobby.

This year, the judges' meeting was held at Ray Skillman's Classic Cars, a large, beautiful showroom and restoration shop in Greenwood, Indiana, just outside of Indianapolis. This 65,000 square-foot facility has approximately 200 finished cars on display, including many different

makes and models. The restoration area includes a machine shop, spray booths, and enough lifts to make most of us envious. We were able to hold our judges' meeting at this location through the efforts of Jim Cunningham (Assistant Head Judge for 1969-1970 Mustangs and Boss) who spent the weekend facilitating our efforts and also instructing.

As has been our practice in recent years, the main focus of the meeting was the development of better judges with a focus on consistency. Since judges who participate in our national shows come from every corner of the country, it was not surprising that each has different habits and sometimes different

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outlooks on the art of judging. Through continuing education we are working to standardized techniques, down to show field introduction and even the goodbye. By standardizing judging techniques we can assure that all participants are treated with the same respect and all the key points are covered by every team show after show.

The presentation is a combination of classroom and application (practice judging) using vehicles on site. In addition, we added smaller breakout sessions that expose judges to new techniques that will allow them to help car owners reach the top award in their class. This year these sessions included how to use gun-bluing solutions to replicate heat-treated steel, a look at some newly reproduced concours power-steering hoses, a PPG and DuPont

exterior paint products presentation, and refinishing cast aluminum parts back to original.

The focus of these seminars is not solely concours cars. Many seminar components can be applied to the driven and modified classes. One example was a session on judging exterior bodywork and paint led by Jim Cunningham, which can be applied to any of the numerous classes MCA currently supports.

In closing, I would like to invite any club considering hosting a national show to conduct some judges' training in the year, or even two years, prior to their show date. Clubs that have held these classes have benefitted in multiple ways. First it increases the number of locally available judges for your show, and you're going to need a lot of them. Secondly, it helps convince potential judges that they have the skills to participate and can be a valuable component of a judging team. Lastly, it educates car owners about what takes place at national shows, and with that insight they are more likely to bring and enter a car than they would without this exposure.

The MCA has available instructors and standardized delivery support materials for single judge's training or courses specifically up for concours, daily/occasionally driven, or modified. Clubs have often found the greatest benefit from offering well-advertised individual courses but any effort will improve your chances of a successful show. In addition, I invite any current judge interested in a "Train the Trainer" course in their region to contact either Charles Turner, National Head Judge for 1st & 2nd Generations, or Allen Stewart, National Head Judge for 3rd to 5th Generations. You may also contact either of them to schedule Judging Seminars.

See you at next year's shows. **MT**

