

WITH SHOW SEASON NOW A MATTER OF MEMORIES, TURN YOUR MUSTANG ATTENTION TO CLUB MEETINGS

By John M. Clor

One of the points I like to discuss while I'm out on the road talking to Mustang clubs and owners is that Ford Motor Company has a heritage of building cars and trucks that make a personal connection between owner and vehicle. Of course, we as Mustang owners live this fact every day, and very much enjoy this distinction among fellow car buyers.

While it may be true that some brands—most notably Asian imports—have established a reputation for building vehicles that operate like appliances, you don't see appliance fans polishing, judging, and showing off their fridges in the Home Depot parking lot on a weekend afternoon! My point is, select few cars evoke the kind of passionate ownership experience that Mustang does. When you buy a Mustang, you're not just buying a car to get you from Point A to Point B in the same way you buy those other transportation-device appliances. Rather, you're buying into an entire enthusiast community!

It's that same owner-car "connection" that makes us want to become members of the MCA and willing participants in the Ford enthusiast lifestyle. It's what makes us, our Mustang—and Ford—so special. You just "own" other cars, but you "love" your Mustang! It's really what we celebrate at car shows together—spending the extra time, money, and effort putting our personal stamp on our Mustangs and making so many new Mustang friends during club outings and events. Your local MCA-affiliated club provides the basis for all this to happen—which enhances our ownership experience even further.

Perhaps it's only fitting that in the Mustang's birthplace—Detroit and the entire southeastern Michigan region—we have one of the largest, best-run and most active MCA Regional Mustang clubs on the planet. Indeed, I feel fortunate that I'm a card-carrying member of the Mustang Owners Club of South Eastern Michigan—somewhat better-known by its rather ungainly acronym, "MOCSEM" (pronounced MOCK-sem). Like most MCA regional clubs, mine is managed by a collection of wonderful, dedicated volunteers, has monthly membership meetings, hosts a myriad of activities all year long, supports a litany of charities and community causes—and puts on a big, annual car show.

I was first attracted to this organization by its yearly car show—and initially as just a spectator. After getting married, then buying a house, and eventually having kids, I had sold-off my latest Mustang project car to help fund turning a spare bedroom into a nursery and making other family oriented purchases. A full career as a journalist and buff-book editor preceded my move to the Ford Special Vehicle Team PR staff in 1995, when I was also mid-way through a decade of coaching my sons in youth hockey and serving on the board of and producing the yearbooks for the Grosse Pointe Hockey Association. But my work at Ford rekindled my long-standing love affair with the Mustang that had first manifested itself back when I was just a teenager. And after a friend had invited me to join him in attending MOCSEM's annual car show, it was "déjà vu, all over again."

I recall thinking how the MOCSEM show, dubbed "Mustang Memories," was so aptly named—because for me, seeing so many classic Mustangs up-close and in-person brought back a flood of high school memories; plus seeing the newer cars and meeting new Mustang people was sure to build lots of memories for the future.



Back then, the show was held in a neighborhood greenspace area known as the "Wilson Barn" (as it was an old farm homestead that eventually got surrounded by Detroit's post-war suburban sprawl.) It later moved to a nearby 95-acre historical park in the same Detroit suburb of Livonia, MI. But for 2010—the club's 35th anniversary year—club president Mike Ray wanted to make the "Memories" show the biggest and best ever, and hold it on the hallowed ground of Ford World Headquarters in Dearborn, MI.

Well, thanks to the efforts of 194 volunteers, 32 judges, and a small army of helpers, MOCSEM pulled off a truly spectacular "Mustang Memories 2010" show at the WHQ this summer! A record-setting 623 cars from across the Midwest and parts of Canada had registered for the massive display lot in the shadow of Ford's "Glass House." And in addition to all the participants, more than 3,000 spectators also went through the gates to join in the club's annual celebration of Fords. There were a staggering 165 awards handed out to worthy owners, with the lofty "President's Award" bestowed upon an original, Black Jade Boss 429 Mustang with only 11,000 miles on its ticker, driven to the show by its local owner, Dr. Seraphim Pallas.

One much-anticipated highlight for this year's "Memories" event was revealing the winner of the annual Mustang Dream Car Giveaway contest. The well-advertised prize this year was a pair of Shelby GT500s—one a Concours Restored 1967 Shelby GT500 blue-over-white fastback and the other a matching, one-off 2010 "Patriot Edition" Shelby GT500, both donated by Ford Motor Company. (The yearly raffle is the brainchild of the Dream Car Giveaway Network, which was set up to benefit various charities across the country.



For 2010, raffle proceeds go to the "Healing Heroes Network," a charity founded by Dr. Alan Spiegel and wife Stacey to provide the latest and best-available medical procedures to injured veterans.)

In one of the most amazing acts of charity ever to be witnessed at a Mustang show, the winner of the two dream Shelbys caught everyone by surprise. Turns out the lucky ticket holder, Bob Totten—himself a retired military man who was wounded in conflict—had purchased 100 raffle tickets just "to help out a great cause for a group of heroes." He never even dreamed he could actually win these two fantastic GT500s! But during the awarding of the keys ceremony, Totten called Dr. Spiegel to the podium, and told the crowd:

"After much thought and discussion with my family, I'd like to donate back this pair of Shelby Mustangs to the Healing Heroes and Dr. Spiegel to be sold privately as a pair. That way, the proceeds can be used to get many veterans the much-needed help and support for their medical needs. As a retired veteran, I feel it's only right to help in any way possible; I have been afforded a once-in-a-lifetime chance to give back ..." and he then handed the keys to a stunned Dr. Spiegel as the spectators roared their approval.



If you've met or already know me, then you must have figured that I brought and entered my own special pair of Mustangs to the show—my silver 1978 King Cobra and my just-finished red-on-white 1977 Cobra II. They made up two-thirds of only three second-generation cars that were there among the 600-plus entries, but that third one was a stunning, bright-yellow, mod-motored "restomod" Cobra II that was a picture of hot rod perfection—and an easy award winner. But my '77 Cobra II took its class (thanks mostly to R&A Motorsports of Lees Summit, MO), so I went home with a trophy as well!

Mustang Memories 2010 is now just that—a great memory. The 23rd annual MOCSEM Mustang Memories show returns to the Ford World Headquarters next year, on Sunday, August 14, 2011. For a Mustang and Ford show this big and special, you should think about making the pilgrimage to The Motor City next summer so that you can make some Detroit-flavored Mustang memories of your own! But just because the show season is over, it doesn't mean that there's nothing left to do but wait for your club's big show next year ... now's the perfect time to attend one of your club's regular monthly meetings!

Perhaps you're looking for expert advice on the task of storing your beloved classic for the winter, or maybe you'd just like to get more out of your club membership than just car shows. It's time to get more active, and now's the perfect time to drop in and take your Mustang enthusiasm to the next level. You'll be pleasantly surprised to find that club meetings can be as fun and fascinating as any cruise or show! One advantage of being in a regional MCA club is that the monthly membership meetings go on all year long—and are a great

place to learn the ins-and-outs of Mustang ownership or to meet new and interesting Mustang people!

I did exactly that after MOCSEM's Memories show—and who did the club have lined up to speak at our monthly meeting that night? None other than former Ford Racing director Charlie Gray—of Lightweight Galaxy and Thunderbolt Fairlane fame—plus my own boss, Jamie Allison, Ford's North American Motorsports Director! What stories Charlie told of the good 'ole days at Ford Racing—and how cool was it that Jamie pulled \$30 out of his wallet before his speech to buy a MOCSEM membership? It was a real treat to hear the past and present of Ford Racing history.



What's more, I enjoyed some pretty good pizza from our hosts at Classic Design Concepts, plus got hooked up with Bob Corn, a Holley carburetor expert over at Roush Industries who offered to help me solve a flooding problem on one of my Mustangs! Man, that's what I call a good night—and it only happened because I showed up at one of my club's monthly membership meetings! You should plan to do the same this winter.

I'll share some stories from these two Ford Racing directors in a later column—plus fill you in on what talking to many of you during my own travels has taught me about the hobby. But for now, don't just live off memories of Mustang shows gone past—get out and participate in your local club meetings ... you'll be glad you did!

Editor's Note: Veteran automotive journalist John Clor has owned, raced, worked on or written about Fords and Mustangs for nearly 30 years. After a 15-year career at The Detroit News, Clor shifted to automotive journalism with stints at AutoWeek and later Edmunds.com. He joined the Ford Special Vehicle Team in 1995 and spent the better part of the next decade working on SVT communications, PR, and Marketing. Today, he manages the www.FordPerformanceGroup.com enthusiast outreach program for Ford Racing, and is also a columnist for Mustang Trader magazine, editor of SVT Enthusiast magazine, and author of the hardcover history book, Mustang Dynasty. A member of several Ford-based car-clubs, Clor is the proud owner of three '70s-era Mustangs, including one that he calls "a long-term project."

John Clor

John M. Clor
Ford Racing

www.FordPerformanceGroup.com

