

By Ron Bramlett

This new column may end up being once a month or it may be once a year. Give us your feedback so we know how you feel.

I chose the name "The Treasurer's Chest" for two reasons. This column will be about the MCA's financial matters and this column will also give me the chance to get things off my chest concerning the MCA. First, let's look at the MCA's current financial condition. As of December 31, 2009, the MCA has a total of \$212,077.25 in assets with a loss for 2009 of \$16,265.20. This is the bad news. The good news is that if everyone keeps his or her MCA membership current, we will have this problem corrected in 2010!

You have probably heard this story, but I'm going to tell it again. When I was elected to the National Board of Directors in 2006, one of the things that I questioned in my first two BOD meetings was what did it cost to service each MCA membership per year. President Bill Johnson appointed Shorty Brown and me to find this cost and report it at a future BOD meeting. We figured that it was costing the MCA between \$45 and \$47 per membership each year. Since MCA's yearly dues were \$30 annually, it meant the MCA was spending \$15 - \$17 per MCA membership out of the general fund on every membership. We were spending even more on multi-year renewals and new memberships since they were discounted. This, and the fact that the MCA dues had been \$30 for the 22 years without an increase, showed dues increase was long overdue. Shorty and I immediately recommended the MCA raise annual dues to \$45, cut costs where possible, and bring in new sponsor dollars to bring the cost of operating the MCA in line with the yearly dues. The MCA BOD raised the dues to \$40 a year, not the \$45 we had recommended. Although, the BOD members knew that we're still going to spend money from the general fund and end up losing money at the end of the year, the thought was that if needed, dues could be raised again in a couple of years. Well, a couple years later we still need to fix the problem or continue to lose money. But, we went from a \$42,000 loss in 2008 to a \$16,000 loss in 2009. This proved we could fix the problem.

While putting together the 2010 MCA Budget, all six members of the MCA Finance Committee voted to recommend a dues increase to \$50 annually with continued cost cutting and a continued quest for new sponsor dollars. We knew it wasn't going to be a popular decision, but we all felt that it was in the best interest of the MCA. With this increase in dues, which went into effect on January 1, 2010, it means that for the first time in several years, the MCA will be in a position

where it will be financially beneficial to seek out and sign up new MCA members. And with that, I ask every MCA Regional Club to strive to get their non-MCA members to join the MCA today!

This brings me to a couple of things that I want to get off my chest. First, the MCA Board has always held the interest of the MCA Regional Clubs as its highest calling. Yet all too often we hear from the Regional Clubs that MCA membership is a "hard sell" to their non-MCA members. Their non-MCA members are Mustang enthusiasts yet they can't see the benefits or the reasons why belonging to the national Mustang club is important to the Mustang hobby. All they see is that they get a magazine each month. Well, there are many more important aspects of belonging to the MCA than just getting a magazine each month and here's just one.

The MCA is the global organization. It's the glue that holds all MCA Regional Clubs together, whether that Club is in Iowa, New York, or Australia. Your local Mustang club is whom you network with in your area. The MCA is whom you network with nationally. Can you imagine what the Mustang hobby would be like without the MCA? There would be no uniformity in any of the judging for the Mustang shows. It's the MCA that does the research and coordination of this research to make it possible to set a standard for the entire world to judge Mustangs by. This in itself makes the MCA well worthwhile to invest a year's dues in, especially to anyone who has sold a classic Mustang at one time or another. Without the MCA, there would be little or no contact for your local club with many of the Mustang parts vendors except for those in your area. There would be no real relationship with Ford Motor Company because Ford couldn't deal with all the Mustang clubs on a one-to-one level. All of the Mustang clubs of the world would be on their own and have no real tie to each other. When you become a member of the MCA, your yearly dues, which is less than one tank of gas for most cars, helps make it possible for this organization, which is dedicated to the preservation of the Ford Mustang, to exist. This is just one of many reasons you get more out of being an MCA member than just getting a magazine each month. You are a member of the largest Mustang club in the world, which has the ability to network with thousands of people and companies in the Mustang hobby, has the respect of those in the Mustang hobby world wide and has members and Regional Clubs all over the planet.

This brings me to the second point I want to address. MCA Regional Clubs are the best source the MCA has for signing up new members. I am aware many MCA Regional Clubs boast of having 100 - 200 members

but only 10 - 20 are MCA members. Years ago, all MCA Regional Clubs were required to be 100% MCA members. In trying to make it easier for Mustang Clubs to become MCA Regional Clubs and enjoy the benefits that the MCA brings, the number of MCA memberships needed to become a Regional Club was reduced to 10. However, it was never intended that 10 MCA memberships would be the goal for Regional Clubs. It was thought that by making it easier for most local Mustang clubs, even the smaller ones, to become MCA Regional Clubs and to be able to share the benefits, these clubs would be proud to be MCA Regional Clubs and promote and grow its MCA membership. That idea still hasn't fully taken root. There are many MCA Regional Clubs that have lots of members but only a small fraction of them are MCA members. This needs to be addressed by every MCA Regional Club today. By the way, did you know that currently there are more than 180 MCA Regional Clubs? We hope to make it to 200 sometime later this year.

Many smaller Mustang clubs would find it difficult to afford the insurance to put on a show. Becoming an MCA Regional Club makes it possible for their show to be insured, under the MCA insurance policy, at no cost to them. All they have to do is fill out the forms and apply for the insurance within the proper time frame. This allows those clubs to collect and donate thousands more dollars to charities they support because they are not paying hundreds or even thousands of dollars out for show insurance. Did you know that in 2009 the MCA supplied insurance for over 130 Mustang shows and 10 driving events? The MCA is able to provide this service because Mustang enthusiasts like you and me belong to the MCA. If every Mustang enthusiast took the position that they didn't see what benefit they got from being an MCA member, many of these events might not take place.

With that in mind, I would like to encourage every MCA Regional Club to strive to have its membership be at least 51% MCA memberships by reporting time in June. I know that your MCA Regional Club can do it, if you explain to your non-MCA members what's at stake and how every MCA membership helps the Mustang hobby move forward. Let me leave you with this thought. One of the main reasons that the MCA exists is so that the MCA can support the MCA Regional Clubs. Shouldn't the MCA Regional Clubs support the MCA?

Until next time,

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