

FROM THE DRIVER'S SEAT

Don't ya just love Fall? Crisp morning air, bright days, cool nights. Oh no, leaves to rake, pool to winterize, plants to get inside. Sigh. A few months ago I was talking about the Fall and end-of-season Regional shows breaking out all over. Already been to a few and have a number left to attend, but as we enter our off season for shows and such, thoughts turn to what needs to be done to groom our ponies over the winter to get ready for next spring. For some it may be adding power steering to the '65 coupe, weld the sub-frame connectors on the Fox body, or get started on that supercharger installation on a 5th generation GT. There are so many different aspects and thoughts on so many different minds for so many different Mustangs.

With that tone set, let's think about just what our Mustangs mean to us. With what we put into the Mustang hobby in general, do you ever just sit back and think about what you get back in return? Is it really worth the time, expense, and effort we devote to what is really a passion as well as a hobby? Where did the passion come from, humm? Thinking back, I reminisce of when the Mustang was first introduced. For me it was 1965 and I was 15 years old. Didn't even have a driver's license yet and was already thinking about how cool this new car was. Then I fast forward to the first Mustang I actually owned. It was 1974, I was fresh out of the Army, had an expecting wife, a car without air conditioning, and lived in Memphis, TN. Oh, did I mention Summer was approaching and it gets really hot in Memphis during the Summer. So off we go to find a car with air conditioning. The gas crunch of '73 had led to the demise of the muscle cars and Ford had introduced a diminutive little car called the Mustang II in response. Well, it was a Mustang and it had air conditioning. It served us well and kept a pregnant wife and subsequent baby cool through the summer, for several more years, and another baby.

Jump to January 1990. Now that first baby in 1974 is about to venture forth and become a licensed driver. Dad happened to spot a '65 Mustang coupe on a used car lot, and the memories of 1965 came flooding back. Just because I didn't get to capture that magic for myself in 1965, nothing was going to prevent me from capturing it for my son ... and I get to play too! We went through it mechanically, took it to MAACO for a paint job, and he got his driver's license in it in June 1990. Three years later I did the same thing for my youngest son with a '66 fastback that turned into a Shelby clone. Both boys drove their Mustangs all through high school. The oldest graduated to a Thunderbird (at least he stayed with a Ford) and the youngest moved into a Ranger pickup (he's a Ford man too). Even today they both tell me on occasion they wished they had their Mustangs back. How many times have we heard that line from former Mustang owners?

With both the boys filled with Mustang enthusiasm, I decided it was my turn. I subsequently completed Concours restorations on a '65 Convertible, a '66 Coupe, and a '66 K-Code Fastback. Guess you could say I immersed myself in all things Mustang. Needless to say for the past 21 years Mustang has been an integral part of my life. Now I sit and watch my four-year-old granddaughter drive her one-year-old sister around in a battery-powered Mustang convertible, and know I'm doing my part to ensure our love affair with Mustang will continue after I'm long gone.



What have I gotten back for my involvement in the Mustang hobby? Being able to help others enjoy the hobby is a big part of my return on investment, and I think it's safe to say that applies to all true Mustang enthusiasts. We all want to share our passion for the Mustang by helping a fellow hobbyist or introducing someone to the Mustang for the first time. It is just kind of neat knowing you played a part in giving someone something they can enjoy and share. I invite all of you to tell your stories of life with Mustang in Letters to the Editor with Mary Jean. Everyone has a unique story, so come on and share.

Time to wrap this up and get it submitted by my deadline for the November issue. Then I can go to the shop and have some real fun working on a Mustang. Oh, it's not broken, I just plan on making it better.



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