

Kicking the Horse

I have just received my renewal notice from your joke-of-the-year club and I am happy to inform you that you will not receive \$20 from me for a magazine full of the same ads that I can find in *Hemmings Motor News* for half the price.

This letter is not entirely directed to you (although coming from a very fine publication such as *Car Collector* I think you would possess more scruples) but to the clubs officers who have made a bad mess out of what could have been a top flight publication. When I first joined this mockery one year ago I had hoped that the publication would improve, but upon receiving the last issue it is apparent it has gone from bad to worse.

I give credit where credit is due, but to take so many people for so much and give them so little, that, my friend, is a flat sin. Your color cover is nice, but it just doesn't make up for the extreme lack of information on the inside. You have no restoration articles, no tech tips, no past history on the cars, in short — no worthwhile information. Face it, Greg, if you left out *all* the advertising you would have a six page magazine!

As a member of the Shelby American Automobile Club, The Classic AMX Club International, American Motors Owners Association, and president of The Tri-State Classic AMX Club, I feel justified in saying that your publication is definitely the pits.

I did attend the Eastern National meet and was pleasantly surprised by the high degree of quality of the attending Mustangs, but please do the club a favor and put together a serious

newsletter that is not just one big classified ad.

Satolli Glassmeyer, Jr.
Cincinnati, Ohio

First of all, thank you for your letter. No one denies that the *Mustang Times* has not been what it should have been by now. Like a lot of car clubs, The Mustang Club of America has had growing pains. But you are passing over several very important points that have a great deal of bearing on the comparisons that you are making.

You compare MCA with the Shelby American Automobile Club, which is one of the better-run car clubs around. This is reasonable, but you miss one very important thing: SAAC's publication, *The Shelby American*, is bi-monthly, that is, is published six times a year. Ask anyone in the publications field how much difference there is between a monthly and a bi-monthly and see what kind of answer you get. There is just not enough time for volunteer help (which is what *Mustang Times* has had until recently) to research and write articles for a monthly and have it turn out as packed with informative material as the SAAC book is. And we should be aware that Rick Kopec, who is *The Shelby American's* editor, is a paid professional. Considering these facts, is it a surprise that the *Mustang Times* came off looking second best against SAAC's *Shelby American*?

As for the lack of content, tech tips, etc., we'd like to know just how many tech tips, restoration features, etc., you have submitted. It is difficult for a magazine editor to lay around someone's house while a restoration is in progress, taking notes and photos.

Ditto for the tech tips, past history, etc. What we are trying to say is that unless the membership participates in the production of a club magazine, it will never be very much or very useful. The knowledge which you insist should appear in the club periodical does not reside in the editor's brain but rather in the minds of the members. After all, they are the Mustang experts, not your magazine's staff.

All of this rejoinder is not meant to say that the *Mustang Times* can't be improved; it can and will be (and hopefully has been). What it is trying to say is that your help is needed! Your submissions, your tech tips, your restoration article, your information in the editor's mailbox is the absolutely necessary first step. We will take it from there.

We also point out that a car club is not a "value-obvious" entity. For your \$9.75 per year, does *Hemmings Motor News* sanction national meets? Does it formulate judging rules and judges certification programs? Does it publish membership cards and rosters? These can only be answered no, and really, the comparison is invalid, like apples and oranges. *Hemmings* does not have to bear color separation costs, either, and at the same time, its circulation and ad rates are considerably higher. If all you are concerned about is how much you get from the club, then perhaps MCA is not for you. But if you are interested in participating in a growing, vibrant club devoted to one of the most popular cars of the last fifty years, then you'll help solve the problems that rightfully concern you. To paraphrase John F. Kennedy, "Ask not what the Mustang Club of America can do for you, but . . ."