

Just the other day I received a letter which began like this: "I am the secretary-treasurer of the (name withheld) Mustang Club and I wanted to comment on the magazine. Several of our members have complained about the magazine and I felt that since they would not write, I would. They seem to feel that the magazine is not worth the \$20 dues paid each year.

"One of their other complaints is the quality of the paper. The pages are very thin and it does make the magazine look cheap. I realize that this is a rather insignificant complaint, but I have heard this from several people."

Just as in the design of an automobile, in the design of a magazine there are numerous compromises. One that was made some time ago concerning the *Mustang Times* is that it must weigh less than two ounces. Why? So the club can mail your copy of the magazine to you *via first class mail* for only 28 cents. This then is the real reason for the thin 26 lb. paper which we use. And with it, at the 44 page level,

we are right on the two ounce limit. If we go over this into the three ounce class, it will cost us over \$500 more in postage *each issue!* This is not an insignificant sum for a club of MCA's size. This same problem, postage, is increased due to the *Mustang Times'* monthly frequency. Consider that MCA puts out over \$10,000 yearly just to mail the *Mustang Times* and perhaps you will understand.

The monthly frequency, though expensive, makes the *Times* much more attractive to advertisers. It also makes for greater communication with the club members. But is so expensive that we have to cut corners somewhere. The paper is just one place. Leaving out interior color is another. Would the membership prefer a bi-monthly magazine loaded with more content and color, printed on better paper? If so, then these changes can be made. But first a majority of the membership must take the time to make their views known. And we must figure some way to bear the concomitant costs.

As for the magazine not being "worth \$20 dues paid each year," of course not. As we have pointed out in these pages before, one cannot judge the value of a car club based on how much you receive for your money. Compared to newsstand periodicals such as *Hot Rod*, *Road & Track*, *Car Craft*, etc., the *Mustang Times* is going to look poorly. We don't have their volume of advertisers nor their high ad rates either. A magazine can survive only if the printing and typesetting costs are paid. By keeping these costs low and by trying to generate a fairly respectable volume of advertising at rates the advertisers can afford is, we feel, the best way both to serve the interests of the membership of MCA and to keep the MCA dues within reasonable limits.

These then are the compromises that have been made. If you do not agree with them, you owe it to us and yourself to express your contrary views. MCA's way is a bit different from the course followed by other car clubs, but surely there is some virtue in that, too.

