

Important Question

In the January, 1981, issue of *Mustang Times*, you solicited input as to improving the content of *Mustang Times*. As a relative newcomer, I do not have much background for suggesting improvements. However, there is one thing that I can constructively suggest at this point.

Although you may need the bulk as filler material, I suggest eliminating or revising the format of the "Regional Group News" section. Presumably, the regional groups are mailing a newsletter to their members. The rest of us have no need or desire to know the intimate details of each regional group's monthly activities. If regional groups need to keep other regional groups informed, a copy of their newsletter sent to the regional group director should suffice. About all that should be published concerning the regional groups is the information for their next meeting location and date as well as pertinent data concerning major group activities. The rest of the newsletter material that you have been publishing is a waste of space, in my opinion.

I do like the "Tech Tips" feature and hope you continue to get material contributed for it.

As a new member and non-Mustang owner (not yet!), I cannot make any other suggestions at this time. Good luck in your efforts to improve the publication and club.

Thomas A. Carlisle
Bartlesville, Oklahoma

Thank you for your thoughtful letter. We have had this same suggestion from other people as well but have resisted it so far for several reasons.

On the side for eliminating the regional group news are the arguments that they are of little or no interest to the majority of *MT* readers, that they can be very poorly written and require extensive and time-consuming editing, that frequently the RG does not submit them each month, and that they do take up space in the magazine that could hold articles or ads.

On the other side, the arguments are that every club seems to carry this sort of section in their periodical, so some desire for it from the membership is obvious. Also, as you did surmise, our monthly frequency makes the three or three and a half pages it occupies each month very welcome, because forty pages to fill every thirty days is a bit demanding of material.

Your suggestion that the RG's send a copy of their newsletter to each other RG director is flawed by two things: first, some of the RGs do not publish any newsletter, and second, with 49 regional groups and postage now eighteen cents, this is not a trivial expense for a club with a monthly bulletin.

Quite frankly, we would like to leave it up to the membership to decide. People like to see their names in print, you can be sure, and we hesitate to put the ax to the "Regional Group News" for that reason alone. But we'll abide by the opinions we receive in the mail over the next few months. If the votes seem to be evenly divided, we declare now that we will keep the feature. So get those cards and letters coming in!

Horse Dropper

You have asked for suggestions from the members for improving the *Mustang Times*. Since I was about to drop my membership in the MCA, I decided to write and tell you some of the failings I see.

First is the magazine, devoted, it seems, about seventy percent to advertising, five percent to Mustangs, and twenty-five percent to the dull, tardy, and of no interest to non-locals, regional meeting details. It is almost as interesting as movies of a stranger's children on vacation in Cleveland. It would be better if the magazine came out quarterly, and contained articles and photos of Mustangs. If the regions are planning a show or tour open to all members, advertise it. But otherwise, let's hear silence from these groups. The details of their forthcoming

Christmas parties don't light me up!

Second, if you look at the list of officers and directors, you will note that the club is really a local outfit, supported to some degree by the dues of us flatlanders who are hundreds of miles away. The list almost looks like the result of political incest. If this club is going to get its act together and be a national outfit, it had better raise its sights and look over the border.

I might add that I attended last year's National in Atlanta plus a meet in Kingsport a year or so ago and found everyone pleasant. But during the rest of the year there is nothing but that dumb magazine...

Boyd H. Keys
Dayton, Ohio

Thanks for your provocative letter. We are going to try to address all of your points in order.

First, we're hoping that you have found the magazine improved. We are trying desperately to increase the actual editorial content of the *Times* but this is a developmental thing that can't just be hammered out in a few months. As we have commented before, a monthly makes the *MT* much more attractive to advertisers. Ad income for a quarterly is usually non-existent. We personally favor bi-monthly frequency for a club magazine but unless the membership rises up and demands that this be done, we are locked into the monthly format. We made reference to the "Regional Group News" in another letter in this column, so please see that reply. You are sure right about the "tardy" part in many cases.

Second, concerning the local directors. This is simply a phase of the MCA's growth. At the present time, the boards of directors are formatted this way to allow monthly board meetings with input from a large number of people. Most car clubs that have national membership on their boards hold only a few, say, four to six, board meetings per year and attendance is typically fairly poor. The MCA board meeting typically

runs out of chairs, with fifty or more contributing board members present. This means that things usually get acted on sooner than perhaps might be the case otherwise. We don't believe that there would be a single board member who would not welcome input from any member, regardless of his geographical area. MCA wants participation, real participation, from all over the country. We want this to be a national, even international, club. But just appointing a board of directors with members scattered about the country in a nice random geographical pattern certainly will not guarantee these goals.

If you're still a member in a year, write and let us know just how the "dumb magazine" has done. And we'd love to have a National show in your area in the planning stages, but first we need a petition . . .

Double My Pleasure

It saddens me to see a negative letter about our club. I've been in car clubs before that didn't do half as much or have half as much spirit as MCA. For an all-volunteer organization that's run on nothing but enthusiasm, I think MCA is a well managed, smooth-running one. And I am proud to be a part of it. As for the recent criticism of our monthly publication, I was under the impression that it was supposed to be a newsletter. If these people want entertainment, tell them to buy a *Playboy*!

I do have a suggestion for the *Times*. Since we have 4,000 members, most of whom probably have Mustangs, perhaps there could be two cars of the month? I live too far to make most of the car shows and I'm always interested in seeing other people's cars and reading about them. I know I would be tickled pink to see my car on the cover.

I certainly do like the changes the new editor has made. Please keep up the good work!

Jim Staines
Mound, Minnesota

Thanks for your encouraging letter and your compliments. We do have a new feature that is appearing for the first time this month called the "Horse Show." In this we will be presenting photos and descriptions of reader's cars. Perhaps this will suffice for two cars of the month.

If you live too far from most of the shows, why not get with your local group and put on a National in your area? See last month's "Hoofbeats" and submit your petition today! That would solve your travel problem and help MCA in its expansion program, too.

OK By Me

Please accept my dues for 1981 (a little late). I would also like to place an ad in the next issue of *Mustang Times* but first I'd like to take a moment to tell you what I think of the job you're doing. As a member and past president of the East Tennessee Group of the Early Ford V-8 Club and AACA, etc., I can appreciate the job being done by you and the other people who make MCA work. I enjoy my copy of the *Times* in any form, so keep them coming.

If this suggestion has already been made then here it is again. How about an advisory panel for answering restoration questions and devote space in the *Times* to questions worthy of printing or of general interest to the membership? The panel would be made up of knowledgeable people grouping cars by year or body style, etc. Questions would be directed to the panel for action and in turn information to be printed would be referred to the editor. I know this has worked quite well with some of the other clubs and as I said, you might already have this in the works.

Dan Coakley
Kingsport, Tennessee

Essentially the letters column in which this appears is going to develop along the lines you have suggested (we hope!). We could, of

course, use the help of any volunteers knowledgeable enough to field the tough questions. Any takers? I feel that for reasons of expediency the questions should come directly to the editor, at least until the volume is too great to handle easily. Thanks for writing.

Colorado Question

Could you answer a question that's been bothering us for quite a while: what has happened to the Mile High Mustangs regional group? I haven't read any news or correspondence from this club since we have subscribed to the *Mustang Times*.

Also, could you please give me any information on starting a regional group? A number of people in our area have Mustangs and a great interest in them. We already have a Corvette club, so why not have a Mustang club, too! Any information you could give would be appreciated.

Larry & Nancy Atwood
Brush, Colorado

We must admit that we know nothing about the Mile High Mustangs. We dropped their listing in the regional groups page when we took over because it was blank, and there has been no response to this action whatsoever. So we can only assume that the club has folded. If anyone knows differently, we appreciate hearing from them.

As to how to form a regional group, we will be featuring an article on this subject in the next issue or so. In the meantime, contact the National Regional Group Director, Horace Wood, 3653 Altadena Drive, Birmingham, Alabama 35243. Basically, all you need to do is to get a group of people together, elect officers, plan activities, and petition the National for regional group status. It isn't that difficult and there isn't any absolute standard way to go about it. Best of luck and we'll look forward to hearing of your new group soon. Thanks for writing.