

### Modified Melee

Enclosed is a recent invoice for membership renewal to the Mustang Club of America, Inc. I would like to renew my membership. However, it is a timely occasion to point out that the club owes me a membership free of charge. Let me explain:

In 1979, preceding my registration for the Mustang National to be held at Northlake Mall, I called the president of the Mustang Club of America, Jim Osborn, to obtain a registration form and get some information. My main concern was to make certain that my car qualified for the Modified class, as it had a supercharged Chevrolet engine. Upon receiving assurance that this would not present any problem, I registered and attended the show. After spending the entire day at the show, I was approached and informed my car would be disqualified because of the Chevrolet engine. I was told I would, however, receive a trophy at the awards ceremony because my car was certainly deserving, but also was told it had not been decided what my award/trophy would be called. Upon presentation of my trophy at the Quality Inn, I was congratulated for receiving an award and told I would receive a plate for the trophy at a later date. The next morning, Sunday, after a conference with officials of the club, I was told that since I had been misled my registration fee and dues would be refunded to me (since the club did not recognize my car as a Mustang). To date, I have yet to receive either my plate or my refund.

It hurts one's pride deeply when a little bit of individuality is exercised, when one strives to put together the best combination for a street machine, in one's own mind, and then to be scorned by your organization because of the particular type of modification. I have entered numerous car shows since that time, and have won something in each and every one (either Best Street Machine, Best Engineered, Best Engine, or some combination of all three). In fact, my car recently won Best Engineered at the *Car Craft* Nationals in Indianapolis, Indiana, out of over 5,000 cars.

I feel my car has a rightful place

somewhere in MCA Mustang shows. If a category does not exist for my automobile, I feel your categories may need updating. There is not much sense in having an automobile of "show quality" if it cannot be shown, and regardless of what kind of engine my automobile has, it is still a Mustang; no amount of denying that fact will alter the fact that it is a Mustang — a Mustang with a Chevrolet engine.

I have had a couple of conversations with officials of the Mustang Club here in Atlanta, and have been told a letter should be written to the board of directors. I would ask that you send the enclosed copy of this letter to the board of directors with an official request that my car be recognized for what it is — a 1966 modified Mustang — and a category be enlarged to either include my car, or a category be created that would include my car.

Many thanks for your consideration. I look forward to a response as soon as practical and convenient.

Ernest A. Withers, Jr.  
Stone Mountain, Georgia

Thanks for your letter. It seems that these things happen in the lives of many, many clubs, even ones like NASCAR and the NHRA. Just as Bobby Allison's Pontiac "slopeback" was the victim of instantly changed rules at Daytona this year, so in a way were you. What really happened is that you presented a situation for which there were no rules and therefore rules had to be made up on the spot by more than one individual. Is it any wonder that those rules changed depending upon whom you talked to?

This seems to have all the markings of a great, big club scandal but really it's quite simple. We have two groups: the first doesn't care that you have put a Chevy engine in a Ford Mustang body (and therefore you are welcome to enter it), and the other is outraged that you have "violated" the immaculate Ford vehicle. More significantly, one side feels that you are participating in the preservation of Mustangs and the other feels that you are actually destroying them (by demonstrating a very central kind of

non-authenticity).

Ernest, you will still be able to display your car at Mustang Club of America meets, as anyone can, whether it be a Mustang or not. But at the present time, the board has decided not to allow cars with non-Ford drivetrains to enter MCA judging. However, the board is responsive to membership opinion and will reconsider this question, if so doing is warranted.

The editor's personal opinion is that any participant with any kind of Mustang should be welcome. Evidently judging from letters and opinions we have received, many members hold the opposite view. One problem with this view is the one of knowing where to draw the line. For example, does Barton Small's use of a GM vacuum solenoid (see "Tech Tips in this issue") destroy the "purity" of his car? If not, then would someone else's use of a Corvette front end on his (hopefully) Radical class Mustang?

It is the editor's understanding that your moneys have been refunded and that you have been granted a year's membership in the MCA. We are glad to hear that this regrettable issue has not resulted in a lot of bitterness on your part. We appreciate your approach to the problem as well; it illustrates how an individual can use his club, rather than uselessly abuse it.

Any member who feels strongly on this issue is urged to communicate his views to the editor for airing in the *Mustang Times*.

### Better Later

I am perhaps a little late in responding to your January editorial and comments from our Cincinnati ex-member. However the problem has been bothering me so I thought I would write you better late than never, to express my opinion. To me, it's ironic the two were in the same issue: your article expressing concern for the apparent apathy of some of our members, and a letter exemplifying some of the attitudes causing the problem.

I think what we are experiencing is

part of the growth pattern of any club or organization. It is started on a shoestring by several very intent, hard-working people who get off to a good start alone. After the club has proven itself, then all the others come out of the woodwork to jump on the bandwagon of success and pretty soon the "joiner" sees the work being done by the workers. He is hurt because he doesn't get any recognition. The only way he can get recognition is to criticize the work done, complain, and write letters. When he is rebuked, he then has the excuse he has been looking for to quit! Not his decision but rather because the club is "no good and doesn't do what he wants." Sound familiar? It happens every time.

I feel we are now at the point of "pruning the bushes;" let the complainers leave. The strength is in the genuinely interested. An example of that was also evident in the January issue. I am referring to the monumental task of the "In Search of Mustangs" project volunteered by Jim Smart.

It is not possible or even necessary for everyone to undertake a project of that magnitude. All the average member has to do is be positive about his club, help where he has the ability and talent, and give encouragement to those doing the tasks he is not able to perform.

A. E. Schweitzer  
Grosse Pointe Woods, Michigan

Thanks for your analytic thoughts. As you can tell from other personal opinions we have expressed, we feel as you do about MCA and car clubs, in general. We've belonged to over twenty different car clubs through the years and they all are very much the same in the way that problems occur. The ones whose concepts are valid and worthwhile seem to survive and prosper. Those whose concepts are thin and shaky fall by the side.

The nice thing about all of this is that the Mustang's current collectibility is bound to increase; the demographics of who collects cars tells us this. This growth can and (we hope) will be channelled, however partially, into the Mustang Club of America. No other collectible car

has become so collectible so soon after its production run, especially one produced in such numbers. The Mustang Club of America could be the largest car club in the world in the next five or ten years. But, we all must not quibble over trivialities or personalities. We must look always forward, never backward.

It is all a bunch of idealistic rhetoric, of course. But we're here thinking it can be done and we're hoping you are, too.

### Helping Out

In reference to the February edition of the *Times*, I like the thin paper. I hope you ignore the complaints.

How about an article on how to decipher the warranty plate codes and how to relate 1965-66 colors to present-day color formulas. Also, how about an article on the correct hubcaps for 1965-66 Mustangs (with pictures!)

R. W. Hardman  
Longwood, Florida

Thanks for your letter. We'll try to get the warranty plate stuff out as soon as we can. The color codes transposition could take a little longer, as it will entail a bit of research. As for the hubcaps thing, I've already spotted the same thing you suggest in a regional group's newsletter. I'm hoping that they will allow us to reprint it in the *Mustang Times*.

### Fastback First

Would you check out a VID number for me? It's on a 1965 Mustang fastback we purchased several years ago. Looking at the production date, the car seems to have been manufactured on the first day of 1965 production. The numbers are VID no. 5R09C135613, build date 09J, DSO 62. Also, if it is available, I would like to know the number of fastbacks built that day.

R. F. Rush  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

We're afraid that we can't help you on this one. So far as we know there's just no way to determine just when

1965 Mustang production began at each plant. Your car, you will note, was made in the San Jose assembly plant. Going by the consecutive unit number, we should be able to say that the car was the 35,613th Fairlane, Falcon, or Mustang built at San Jose for the 1965 model year. We'd be interested in knowing just why you believe this to be a first-day unit.

You last question I feel quite sure will be impossible to know with certainty, too. It might be that you could interpolate from the figures found in *Ward's Automotive Report*, but I doubt that single day production figures were ever available outside of certain offices of the Ford Motor Company.

Thanks for writing. Perhaps some member can enlighten us both.

### Suppliers Space

Each issue of the magazine features articles about Mustangs and their proud owners. I'd like to see future issues devote some space to those of us who assist others with their restoration projects. In the past three years, it has been my pleasure to ship parts to most of the fifty states, and to three foreign countries. Without the efforts of people like myself, many Mustangers would not have consoles, GT lights, styled steel wheels, etc., for their cars.

James M. Fears  
Dallas, Texas

As you may know, we have run a few "Vendor of the Month" pieces. We'd be happy to run a few more but unless the vendors themselves submit photos and facts or text, it is going to be a bit hard to keep it up. We have several suppliers in the Atlanta area we are planning to do, but we get enough flak about this being a "Georgia" club to want to do three or four local *VotMs*. Since these pieces represent essentially free advertising (if you neglect the cost of the photos and the time taken writing the text) we can't see why more vendors won't help us out.

Send us your piece, Jim, and we'll be glad to take your suggestion. Thanks for writing.