

# AT THE SIGN OF THE CAT

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE COUGAR CLUB OF AMERICA LLC

SUMMER 2018



# GT•E

50th Anniversary Edition



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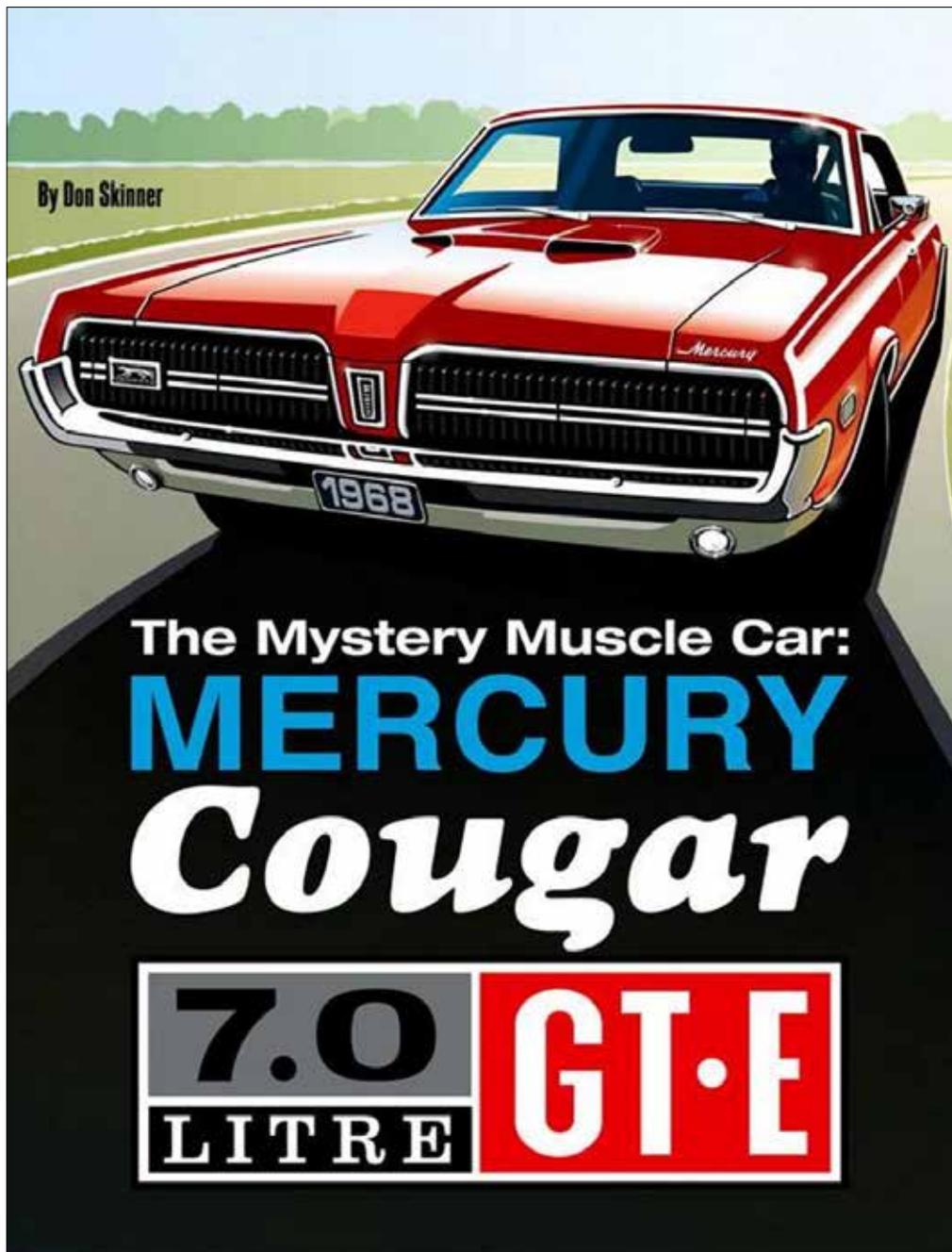
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- West Coast Classic Cougar - <http://www.classic-cougar.com/index.php>



## AT THE SIGN OF THE CAT

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**ATSOTC** welcomes publishable material for future editions. Send your submissions to the above address or to the Assistant Editor at [assistanteditor@cougarclub.org](mailto:assistanteditor@cougarclub.org)

Our next issue is planned for the fall. **Please send your submissions no later than August 31st, 2018.**

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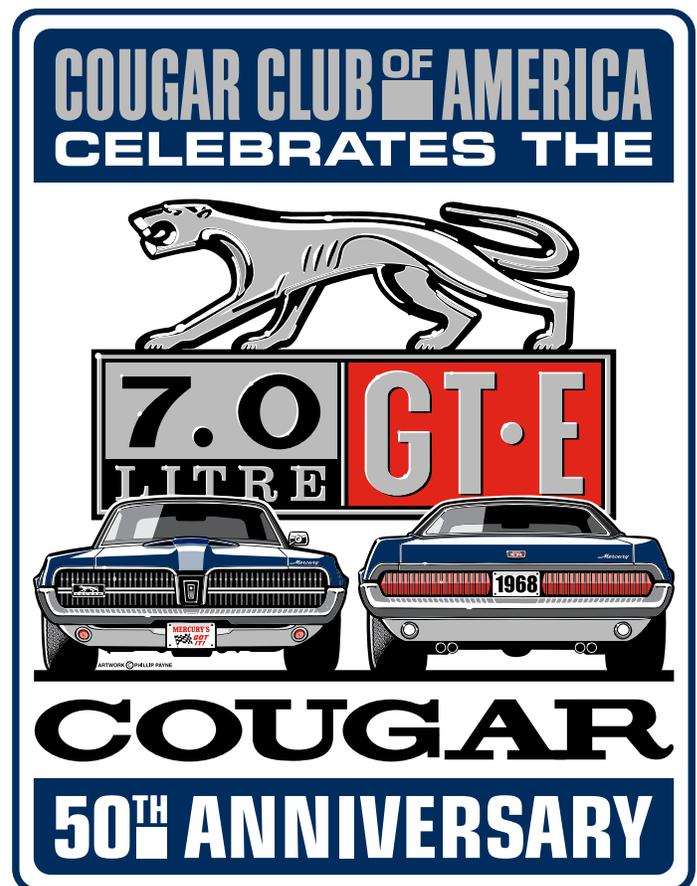
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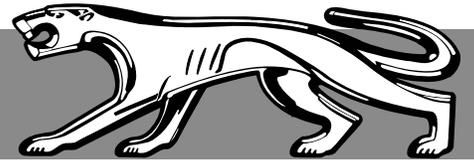
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2018 Brings the 50th Anniversary for the 1968 Model Year  
GT-E, XR7-G, 428 Cobra Jet, Calypso Coupe, Cougar 500

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Car show season has officially begun! It seems like forever since everyone was out and about celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events. So much has changed since the last show season. We have lost many great supporters of the club and our hobby. It is good to see so many familiar faces in photos, however, anticipating better times when we can all be together again, surrounded by good friends and amazing cars.

I am optimistic about the support and response for the 2018 events. All of us traveled to so many locations in 2017, near and far, and the memories made will last a lifetime. The photos of these wonderful times help inspire all enthusiasts to come out and support our events. I am thankful for all of the people that make our club and hobby as amazing as it is.

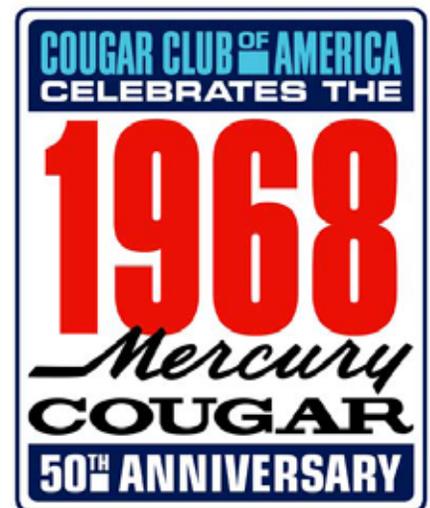
As events are planned in your area, please share them with our members and enthusiasts by emailing [ClubServices@CougarClub.org](mailto:ClubServices@CougarClub.org). The event flyers, web links and any information about them will be posted on [www.CougarClub.org](http://www.CougarClub.org) and our Facebook page. Your fellow CCOA members can plan to attend these events that they may not have known about otherwise. Send all of your favorite Cat photos from the events you attended, or cruising around town, to [editor@CougarClub.org](mailto:editor@CougarClub.org). One of your photos may just be selected to appear in an issue of ATSOTC or on our club Facebook page!

I am personally very excited in anticipation of all of the 2018 events. I want to thank all of our membership, new and renewing, and all of our volunteers for your support for the Cougar Club of America and our hobby.

Keep both hands on the wheel, and I hope to see you out on the street!

*Gavin Schlesinger*

**Gavin Schlesinger**  
Cougar Club of America Chairperson #5780  
CCOA LLC



<http://www.cougarclub.org/>

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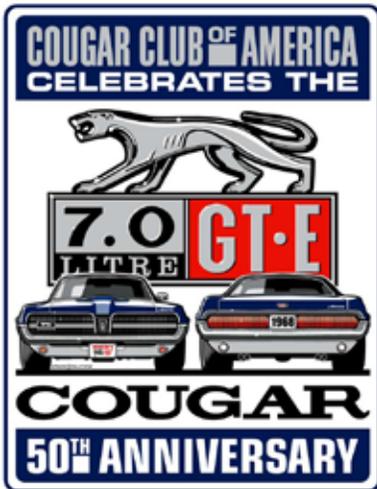


If you are interested in more information about the CCOA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Events, please email me directly [chair@cougarclub.org](mailto:chair@cougarclub.org)

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## GT-E Package – Introduction

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### What is a GT-E?

The GT-E opinion package is an amazing Cougar model that is understated in our car's history. The only model vehicle offered in 1968 from Ford Motor Company (FMOCO) equipped with 427-4V Side Oiler motor. What inspired this Cougar model design? Its initial design, prototype model was based on the XR7-S, a Cougar concept car that presumably launched the XR7-G and GT-E option packages. Don Skinner has written a GT-E book that is available via [www.CougarClub.org](http://www.CougarClub.org) that

All GT-Es began their life with initial production in the Dearborn Assembly Plant. Every GT-E was special as it was a special-order model that was highly customized based on who placed the physical order.

If you are a fan of the 1968 GT-E, the book Don has out on the market will excite you and answer more of the questions you might have about the model. We have details on [www.CougarClub.org](http://www.CougarClub.org) and when in doubt, please contact Jim Pinkerton, the GT-E Registrar.



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## GT-E Package – Introduction

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# A Message From Cascade Cougar Club, Pacific Northwest

By Heather Whitaker (CCOA #7477)



As another show season begins for those of us on the left side of the continent, I'm pleased to announce that preparations are in full swing for our 34th annual Prowl. Last year was such a howling success celebrating the Cougar's 50th anniversary with Cats visiting from all over the US and Canada that it's going to be a tough act to follow - but we'll try. We hope those of you who visited in 2017 enjoyed yourselves so much that at least some of you will return again this year to renew budding friendships. Please check out this year's show flier, note the date of August 19th, and plan a trip once again to our neck of the woods. I encourage you to visit our website, pre-register and also order one of our beautiful, collectible show shirts.



Due to Cougar's success, Mercury introduced several exciting options for 1968, among which was the GT-E. Cascade is fortunate to have two of these rare models in our ranks and their owners have shared their stories elsewhere in this issue.



Here in the Pacific Northwest, the show season kicks off with an event in the beautiful ocean-front town of Port Angeles, Washington. North Olympic Mustangs, hosts of this show, have always been generous to Cat owners, offering awards in several Cougar classes, thus all our attending members generally come away with "hardware." This year wasn't any different. In 67-68 Cougar, new member Gary Garrett placed second with his gold and black 68 standard behind Dave Nashif's Lime Frost 68 standard. In the 69-70 class, third place was taken by Neal Jacobson in "Ginger," his white 70 XR-7 (which, if you remember, he drove all the way to Detroit from his Camano Island home last year). Second was Jim Compton, who drove his white 69 XR-7 hardtop, and first was Jeff Bingaman with his Competition Green 70 sunroof Cat. Scott Ferguson rounded out the Cougar classes with his now very recognizable 68 Madras Blue XR7-G, taking first place in specialty Cougar. Congratulations to all of our winners!



# Cats Classic Cougar Club



By Brian Carpenter (CCOA #8301)  
Photos by Mike Bernabei (CCOA #9618)

The show season in our area was slow to start with winter hanging on until the end of April, then followed up with lots of rainy days in May. Cats first 2018 show is in the books as I write this. We attended the spring fling in Nashville, Indiana with the Shelby SAAC Club on May 19. Six Cougars were in attendance, including Ed Meyer with Dyno Don's Eliminator. Three awards were handed out for the top three Cougar picks. The George Conrad collection was next on June 16 in Huron, Ohio. It was a spectacular success with 15 Cats members' cars showing, in addition to George's 16 Cougars inside his Museum / Arena. Thank-you George, for your generous hospitality!

On August 4, the Cats will be at the Powerlight Abe Lincoln Show in Springfield, Illinois. This should be a big show. At the last count, we have over 40 Cougars planning on attending. The final show for 2018 is at Hines Park in Dearborn, Michigan on August 26, 2018, during the Cruise Hines Park Show. Cats have a spot secured by Merriman Road on Hines Park Drive. At each show, we re giving out three top Cougar pick awards selected by participant choice. Hope to see your Cougar cruising into one of the Cats shows this summer.

Brian Carpenter  
President, Cats Classic Cougar Club  
269-986-3047  
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# Mid America Classic Cougars

By Randy Christian (CCOA #9216)



2018 has continued to be an exciting year for Mid America Classic Cougars. Our membership has grown to 62 members with club members located in seven states. With the continued growth we have added two additional positions to our board to better serve the club and its members. Felicia Whisenant is our new Membership Director and is working to improve how we recruit and maintain our members and, most important of all, is welcoming new members to MACC. Juston Woods has also taken on dual responsibilities for MACC. Juston is the show chairman for our upcoming car show - Classics at the Drive -In on September 15, 2018. Juston has also taken the lead as the club's Events Coordinator. In this role, he searches for car shows and other activities for the club to attend. MACC is grateful for Felicia and Juston stepping up to help with continued growth of the club.



and the food and conversation was even better. Special thanks to Kendall and his wonderful 86 year old mother, Mrs. Wanda, for hosting the club. Mrs. Wanda said we were welcome to come anytime so we are definitely going back.

The MACC May 2018 club meeting was held in the quaint little town of Rogersville, Missouri, at the home and shop of Cecil and Doris Jones. Cecil and Doris are long time Cougaraholics. having been involved in the Cougar community for over 30+ years. They

have great stories to tell and the pictures to go along with the stories of the many Cougar shows and other car shows they have attended across the country. They have had several Cougar over this span and currently they have an all original 1967 bench seat Cougar that looks like it just came off the show room floor and a 1968 Cougar convertible that Cecil designed and built. It looks like it came from straight from the factory. Along with the Cougars, they have a beautiful Studebaker Hawk and

One of the goals of the club for 2018 was to spread our wings and have monthly club meetings in the four main states that make up the majority of our club members. I am proud to say that we have almost accomplished our goal. Our April 2018 club meeting was held in the thriving metropolis of Farmington, Arkansas at Kendall Spears shop. Kendall has a great shop and two beautiful Cougars. One is a 1967 and the other is a 1968. Kendall is also in the process of building a Dan Gurney Trans Am Tribute car. It looks great so far and we cannot wait to see in on the road and at shows. We had a great turnout





an immaculate Studebaker pickup. All of the cars are amazing, but the Cougar memorabilia in three different shops is out of this world. As always, the food and conversation were great and everyone enjoyed our time in Rogersville. We cannot thank Cecil and Doris enough for hosting the club.

MACC has also started a new tradition that we hope will grow and continue for many years to come. We have started having a MACC tech day where we are reaching out to our club members who may need help in repairing their Cat or getting it back on the road. Charlie Brown has graciously volunteered his shop where we can have these tech days. We're hoping to do one every other month and help as many of our members that we can. Our first tech day was held on May 5 and we worked on Keith and Dennis Vermillion's 1967 Cougar. We completely reworked the front grill and headlight assemblies and put LED bulbs in the dash. There is also a wiring issue that is going to require a second tech day in the near future but it will get resolved. We had eight club members show up to help and we all had a great time. It is all about getting as many Cats back on the road so their owners can enjoy them.



MACC will also be rolling out our next set of 1:64 scale club Cougars in the next month. We are doing three colors this year. Black, white and Calypso Coral. They will all be original 1968 Cougars castings in a plastic display case with a special backing card recognizing the 50th Anniversary of the 1968 Cougars with artwork from Phillip Payne. Keep watching our Facebook page and website, [www.midamericaclassiccougars.com](http://www.midamericaclassiccougars.com), for updates and when they will be available.



MACC is also hosting another great car show in 2018. The show is called Classics at the Drive -In and will be held on Saturday, September 15, 2018 at the Admiral Twin Drive-In in Tulsa, OK. The Admiral Drive-In is a dual screen drive in and we have room for 500 classic cars on one side and a swap meet on the other side. We will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the 1968 Cougar. Please mark your calendars and bring your Cougar back to Tulsa.

We cannot end this article without sending out our thoughts and prayers to the families of Matt Slay and Alan Easley, who we lost recently. Matt and Alan were longtime Cougar guys and would do anything to help their fellow Cougar owners out. MACC had the privilege and honor of working with Matt and Alan on our National Cougar show last year. We could not have pulled it off without them. We ask that you please keep Alicia and Sydney Slay, Gail Easley and Mike Easley, his son, in your thoughts and prayers. Our thought are also with the Lone Star Cougar Club as they lost two great Cougar members.



# Classics at the Drive-In Car Show and Swap Meet



**Saturday  
September 15th, 2018**

**Registration 7-10**

**Participant Judging**

**Awards at 3pm**

**Concessions Available**

[www.midamericaclassiccougars.com](http://www.midamericaclassiccougars.com)

[Midamericacougars@gmail.com](mailto:Midamericacougars@gmail.com)



[www.facebook.com/MidAmericaClassicCougars](http://www.facebook.com/MidAmericaClassicCougars)

**Admiral Twin-7355 E Easton Street  
Tulsa, Oklahoma**

# Classics at the Drive-In Car Show and Swap Meet

- First 100 MACC Dash Plaque
- All participants receive a MACC coaster
- Car/Truck/Bike registration \$25.00
- Swap Meet in East Parking Area
- Registration starts at 7:00am
- Participant Judging

## Schedule of Events

7:00-10:00 Registration

10:00 Judging starts

3:00 Awards

-Best of Show

(selected by Mid America Classic Cougar Show Officers)

## CLASSIFICATION

|            |                           |
|------------|---------------------------|
| Cougar     | 67-68                     |
| Cougar     | 69-70                     |
| Cougar     | 71-73                     |
| Cougar     | GT/G                      |
| Cougar     | GTE/Eliminator            |
| Cougar     | 73+                       |
| GM         | Before 1960               |
| GM         | 1960-Current              |
| Mopar      | Before 1960               |
| Mopar      | 1960-Current              |
| Ford       | Before 1960               |
| Ford       | 1960-Current              |
| Mercury    | Before 1960 (non Cougar)  |
| Mercury    | 1960-Current (non Cougar) |
| Corvette   | (All Years)               |
| Camaro     | (All Years)               |
| Mustang    | (All Years)               |
| Truck/Jeep | Before 1960               |
| Truck/Jeep | 1960-Current              |
| Import     | (All Years)               |
| Motorcycle |                           |
| Ratrod     |                           |
| Unfinished |                           |

# Cuesta College Cougar Restoration Update

By Jeremy Daniel (CCOA #9665)

In May of 2017, Cuesta College in San Luis Obispo, CA contacted Jeremy Daniel (CCOA #9665) about a legacy project for the school, which has two sports teams named "Cougars." They decided to restore a first generation (1967-1968) Cougar. This Cat would be utilized for events at the school, parades, car shows, and more.

Around August of 2017, Jeremy Daniel (a founding member of Mercury Stray Cats Central CA) found them a '67 Cougar to purchase through Zoli Csik (CCOA #1567) and a donated '68 parts car Cougar through Barbara Wendt (CCOA #3465). In December, Jeremy was invited to join the advisory committee for the automotive program for the college. Their plan is to restore the car in about two years and paint it the school's green color. They are considering making it a convertible (that's still up in the air).

The Director of the Automotive Department for the college is very busy, and they've had trouble getting together outside of the committee meetings that are held four times per year. The last time Jeremy was on the phone with him, he said the car was taken apart to get the project moving along. Upon asking if someone was taking photos, Jeremy unfortunately learned that nobody thought of it. Also, he found out that a student was a little over-enthusiastic with the teardown. That's good and bad. Anyone who has restored a car knows what Jeremy means. The project needs a mentor or manager. Jeremy will try to make time for it in the near future to help them proceed, as he has completed restorations a few times already.

Jeremy attended the latest meeting at the college recently, and he was able to take the "after" pictures seen here. The car is



almost ready to go on a rotisserie and get a full blasting. It is a very good start with minimal rust. Jeremy and Mercury Stray Cats Central CA are excited to be involved in the project. We will be sure to update everyone on this effort as progress continues. Hopefully, with more pictures...



# High Desert Cougar Club of Oregon

By Conan Tigard (CCOA #9870)



There is a new Cat club in town, and it is on the prowl, huntin' down new members. This Cat knows that there are plenty of classic Mercury Cougar owners in Oregon that need to be

The High Desert Cougar Club of Oregon has recently turned six months old and is growing as owners become aware of the club. As I continue to post on the HDCC Facebook Group by adding car show events, links to videos, cars for sale, news articles, and other fun Cougar items, the group has doubled in size in the last three months. While the headquarters for HDCC is located in Central Oregon, the members of this new club are scattered all over the map of Oregon . . . and beyond. We have even gone international, with our first out-of-country member, Constantine from Australia.



I work hard at attending local cars shows and bringing my 1970 houndstooth Cougar "Victoria" to be seen by all. I am happy to talk Mercury Cougars with anyone that approaches Victoria, and they are generally amazed at her original condition, including the houndstooth vinyl top (this really brings the fans in), and the houndstooth seats. They also love that the engine has never been modified and is very original. Most of the people I meet are either former Cougar owners, or had a good

tracked down. They may not know about this club yet, but they will as the word gets out. I have met plenty of people at car shows who tell me that they have a Cougar sitting in a garage, not being worked on. What's up with that? I try my best to encourage and support them to get that beast up and running so that it can live again. I tell them that it would be great to see their Cougar at any of the local car shows. Even better, I suggest that they join this new club and interact with other classic Cougar enthusiasts.



friend that owned one in their youth. The unfortunate thing that I find with these car shows is the absence of the Cougars. In the three shows I have attended this year, I found only one other Cougar. This beautiful 1967 Inverness Green XR-7 has been owned by Scott since he was in high school, so around 30 years or so. He has totally fixed up and powered up this Cougar so that he could spend many years racing this bad boy. It is a pretty awesome machine.



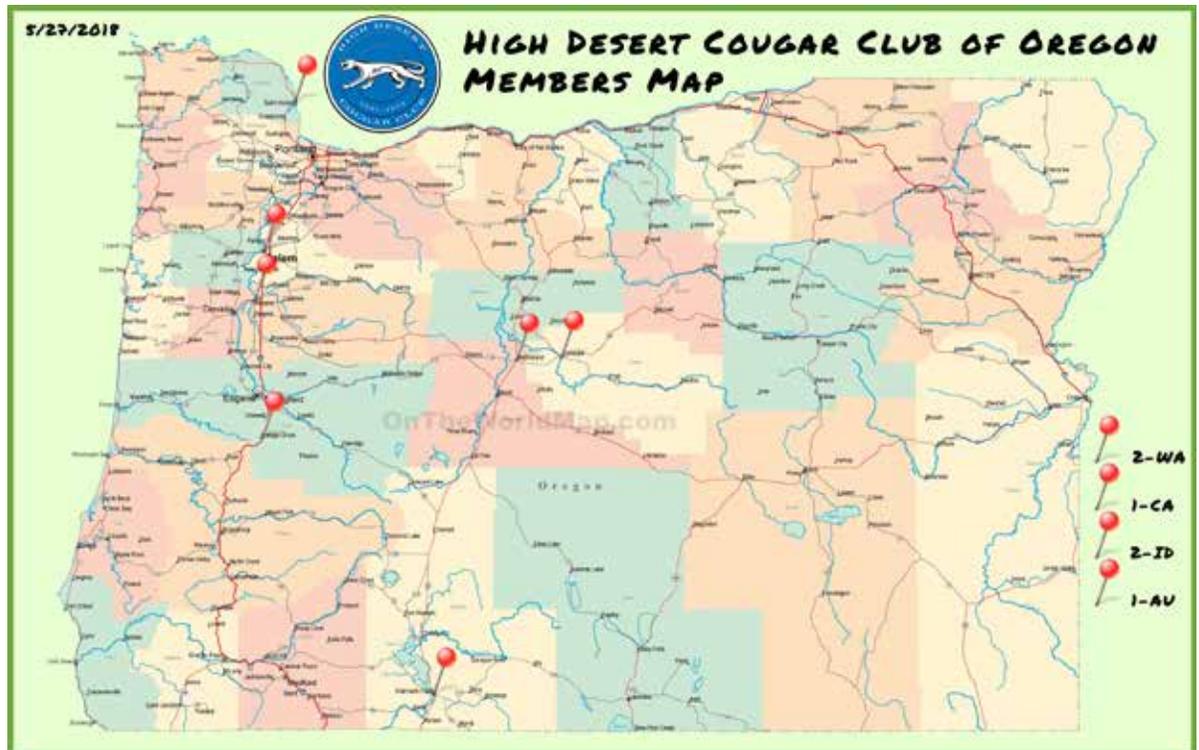
In the last month, I have attended Diego's Spring Fling Car Show in Redmond, the Trinity Lutheran Church & School Car Show in Bend, and the Battle Buddies Car Show in Bend. In the following months, I hope to run across some more classic Cougars at the Indian Head Casino Car Show in Warm Springs, the High Lakes Show & Shine in Prineville, the Elks Lodge Classic Car Show in Bend, Cruise to the Center of Oregon in Prineville, Flashback Cruise: Drake Park Show & Shine in Bend, the final Drifters Harvest Run in Redmond, and the Terrebonne Cruise-In. I left off the most important event in Oregon this year - the West Coast Classic Cougar Open House in Salem. Many of you are very familiar with Don Rush and WCCC, as you have purchased parts from him for your cars. This two-day classic Cougars only event promises to be something extraordinary and is something I have been looking forward to for a couple of years, since they did not have this event last year. I've already booked my Airbnb and am ready to go . . . right now! I cannot wait to hang out with only aficionados and owners of 1967 to 1973 Mercury Cougars.



I look forward to having the High Desert Cougar Club of Oregon continue to grow. As we add more members, I hope to have different chapters so members can get together and meet, attend car shows together, and just become great car friends. As it stands, we do not have any meetings planned because we all live too far apart. When you join, you receive a Welcome Letter, Membership Card, and a HDCC Window Cling, so everyone will know you are part of the club. And the cost of membership, well, it is free. No better price than that, is there? So, if you are an Oregonian and you own a classic 1967 -1973 Mercury Cougar and would like to join the HDCC, the Membership Application is on our website (not Facebook). I look forward to hearing from you soon and I will keep checking my email and snail

mail for your applications.

Conan Tigard  
High Desert Cougar Club  
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# Mercury Stray Cats Central CA Chapter



By Rob May (CCOA #9623)  
Central CA Chapter Director  
CCOA Volunteer Coordinator  
[www.strayCatscc.com](http://www.strayCatscc.com)



2018 car show season is starting off with a couple big bangs. Mercury Stray Cats Central CA successfully sponsored new Cougar classes at local car shows including St Patrick's Day Orcutt, CA and Warbirds Paso Robles. Before the club's formation, one or two Cats attended these shows, sadly often under "other" free for all categories.

Seven Cougars set the year off right on March 17th in Orcutt. An early morning rain storm offered some interesting driving for Rob May on his bias ply equipped '69, which had not been out in the rain since its restoration in 2016. George Woehkle (CCOA #9667) won the newly added Cougar class. George received a trophy with Rob May's name literally on it due to his sponsorship. 30 years of Cats were represented with the '67s on one end of the lineup and a 1997 30th edition on the other. (Thanks to Georgina Garcia May Photography for driving the '97, along with the photos for this chapter report.)

Jeremy Daniel (CCOA #9665) was vital for having the popular Paso Robles Warbirds add a Cat class. Thanks! Nine Cougars put on a great show May 12th at Warbirds. Several positive comments were heard complimenting us on our organization. The show's promoter even booted a Corvette club from a prime spot (which we were granted), due to their tardiness and less cars in their class. Dennis Gage of My Classic Car visited the Cougars! Todd Gregory (CCOA #6330) with his burnt orange 1969 XR-7, won the first ever Warbirds cat award. Mercury Stray Cats was proudly in the middle of the show's sponsorship banner. Chapter Director Rob May provided goodie bags for the Cats including a Ty Beanie Cougar!

Mike Brown's (CCOA#6669) Southern California Cougar Club, SCCC, hosted Cat Scratch Fever at the Fullerton airport on May 19th. Georgina Garcia May Photography and Mercury Stray Cats Central CA donated raffle prizes (including 50 1968 Hot Wheels Cougars to promote their 50th Anniversary) as well as sponsoring a couple of classes. George Woehkle won his 1967 XR-7 class. Dennis Baltimore and Rob May showed off their "twin" 1969 E paint code Light Aqua 1969 Standard Hardtops!

Ohio was the next stop for the Chapter Director and Georgina Garcia May Photography to provide coverage of the Dublin, OH Arthritis Foundation Show July 6-7. All 1967-1997 Mercury Cougars are welcome to help fill the Mercury Cougar class.

September is the Orcutt All Ford show with another new 1967-1997 Mercury Cougar class added!

All 1967-1997 Mercury Cougars, in any and all conditions, are high encouraged to circle Saturday, October 6th, 2018 on your calendar for Mercury Cougars Comets and Cyclones at the Radisson by the airport in Santa Maria, California! All registered Mercury owners will be provided with tri-tip sandwiches!





# Rob Matthes meets Cougar Club of Germany.

By Rob Matthes (CCOA #9506)

I met Mike at Fabulous Fords Forever back in April and told him I was heading to Germany for a family vacation soon. I was surprised when he told me there are 200 Cougars in Germany! He immediately offered up a chance to meet some Cougar Club members on my trip. I met with club members Harry and Matze in Nurnberg and had a great time!

Harry in his '68, Matze in his '69 with girlfriend Vanessa, arrived at my hotel and picked up my nephew and I for a fun (and loud!) ride through Nürnberg, turning heads and enjoying the attention these sweet rides get. We headed to a local Biergarten for a great German dinner and, of course, some beers! As car guys do, we started talking about cars and comparing notes on our Cats. The guys told me they sourced their cars from California, and surprisingly buy their parts from the same places we do in the US. The guys are hands-on owners and have done most of the work themselves. Harry builds engines as a hobby! Such a fun evening!!! Great to have met Harry, Matze and Vanessa! Just goes to show, the car hobby brings people together no matter where they might be from. And the Mercury Cougar is a great common bond! I'd like to thank Mike, Matze, Harry and Vanessa for their warmth and hospitality. I'd love to return the favor some day if they ever visit the States!



# The Cougar Club of Germany

By Mike Hofer (CCOA #9580)



During a business trip to Las Vegas and Los Angeles in April I took the chance to meet with Gavin Schlesinger. We met on a Friday for a beer in his home town, took a walk at the beach and had dinner together. On Sunday, April 18th, we went to the Fabulous Fords Forever Show at Knott's Berry Farm. Weather was great, and I was blown away by so many classic and newer generation Fords and some amazing Cougars, some in almost factory condition.

I don't know how Gavin managed to get me on stage with all those VIPs (Joey Hand, Saleen, Shelby, and McQueen family members), but I bet he has very good connections to Ford.

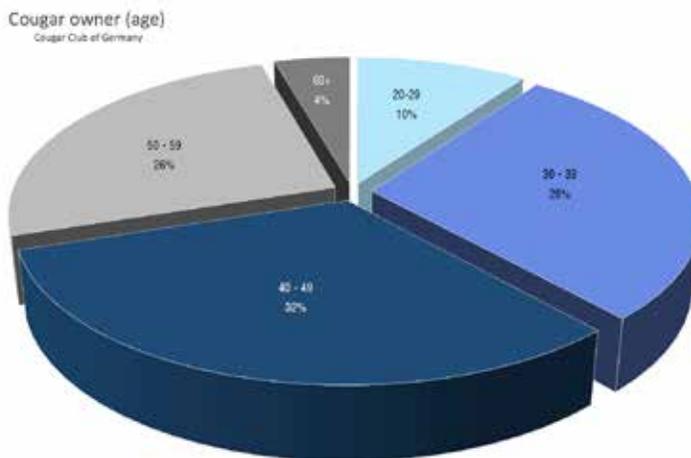
Gavin was pretty busy during the day but took time to introduce me to his friends



and Cougar owners. I got the chance to talk to them almost all day. We discussed the car's history and I was asked about our German club, activities and our club members. I remember people were worrying about the lack of young Cougar owners in the USA. We decided to introduce some of our young club members (age between 20 and 30) to you in the next ATSOTC newsletter, which is in your hands or on your desktop now. I hope the following Cougar owner profiles can prove that the car is attractive to young people too. In Germany, we see more and more young Cougar owners investing a lot of money and time into our most favorite classic US car.

I did a block diagram on the average age of the Cougar Club of Germany members. As it covers more than 80% of all Cougar owners in Germany, this graph is pretty representative.

During FFF show, I met Rob Matthes, who traveled to Germany just a few weeks ago. It was a pleasure to arrange a Cougar ride followed by a meet with some German Cougar owners in a Bavarian Biergarten in Nuernberg. If you ever travel to Germany or Europe, let me know. Cougar owners will assist you whenever necessary.



## THE NEXT GEN COUGAR OWNERS

### Matthias (Matze), 25

I bought my 69 standard coupe back in 2016 from a car dealer in Cologne, Germany.

Originally, I was looking for a Torino, but by chance I ran into my 69 Cougar and fell in love within the first second. The car was in good shape, no visible rust, and everything worked fine. One day the brakes failed while I was entering a US car show and I ended up having a minor rear-end collision. After some weeks of back and forth, I decided to do a complete and costly restoration of the whole car – the body, drivetrain, suspension, engine, everything. Today it is in mint condition; no parts are missing. The engine's performance is slightly improved and the car shows just minor traces of usage. Despite its almost show car condition, I drive it pretty often.

To me, Mercury Cougars have a great design, in combination with reliable automotive engineering. They are a dream of a car.

On my Cougar, I like the color the most. It is a Wellington Blue Metallic also known as Presidential Blue. People keep telling me that the combination of a bright interior and dark blue color with a black vinyl top is pretty unique.

This year my Dad followed my lead and purchased a beautiful 1970 Mercury Cougar.



### Philip, 23

I bought my 1968 standard coupe in 2016 from a private seller in Germany.

The Cougar was in "ok" condition, but after a closer look, I needed to weld in new floor pans and torque boxes recently as someone managed to put a new sheet metal on top of rusted metal.

I came across my Cougar while I was searching for a Mustang, as this is a quite popular car in Europe. After searching for some months, some Cougars popped up here and there. I never saw one in real life, and so I searched for them, and only for them at this point. :)

What I like the most about Cougars is the fact that they are pretty rare in Germany. All the people ask what it is, and its look is so timeless. Some people don't even believe that it is already 50 years old.

On my Cougar I like the straight design and the fact that it is a base model. Simple, American muscle. In fact, I just love everything about it and all of my friends love it too.



## Alexander, 22

I bought my 1967 standard coupe this year at a dealer in the Netherlands. I had been searching for months and finally found a firsthand survivor, completely rust-free, with 97,000 miles. Besides the vacuum headlights and sequential turn lights, everything works fine. The vinyl top has cracked over the years and I am working on a replacement as I am writing this.



What I like the most about the Cougars in general is the hideaway headlights and the sequential turn lights. Unfortunately, these don't exactly work on my Cat right now, but I'll get them to work.

I love the all-original stock condition and the green interior on my Cougar. My friends are thrilled.

## Daniel, 27

I bought my 1968 XR7 from a private seller in San Bernardino County, California.

The first car I ever drove in my life was a white 69 XR7 stick shift that belonged to a cousin of mine living in the States. It was my first visit to the U.S. and I was 15 back then. Ever since that special day I have been in love with classic Cougars.



During a seven-month stay in the U.S. in 2016,

I spent a lot of time searching Craigslist for a Cougar. Finally, I found one sitting in a backyard for a long time. I went there and talked to the owner. I threw in a new water pump, timing chain and radiator and after a quick carb rebuild, it fired right up. I was able to drive the car from the owner's premises one block down the road to the trailer of a shipping company. During the ongoing restoration back in Germany, it proved to be a true West Coast car. The interior is shot but the body has almost no rust.

What I like the most about my Cougar is getting to know its history, removing old mouse nests, and finding long lost coins. It makes me feel like an archaeologist. Bringing this piece of automotive history back to life fascinates me. Besides, who could say no to those sequentials, eyelids and that beautiful XR7 interior?

Although the Cat is not in a drivable condition at the moment, it puts a smile on everyone's face. A lot of people are asking me to take them for a ride when it purrs again. I am looking forward to sharing the joy that is inherent to this classic automobile.

## Timon, 29



I bought my 1970 XR7 coupe back in 2008 from a private seller in Germany.

Originally, I was looking for a Mustang and found the Cougar because it was being sold on a Mustang forum. I visited the seller, saw the Cat and fell in love the first second I saw her. I was driving some other cars before, but the Cougar is the first car I actually own myself, so it is something very special to me.

I love the design on Cougars, the shape, the beautiful interior design with round gauges and last, but not least, the sequential turn lights.

What I like the most on my Cougar is the fact that it is my first car and I can improve its performance and look way more than I could do with a modern one. And the Cougar Club, its members and friendships make this car even more special to me.

I am often asked for a ride by my friends and get very positive feedback. Great!



## Patrick, 27

In 2009, at the age of 18, I bought my 67 standard coupe from a seller in LA. A local dealer in Kiel helped me during the import to Germany.



The car is technically in very good shape. The interior is good and the outside has some patina. I worked on the suspension and brakes, bought a new transmission and powered up the engine (408W, AFR heads, etc.).

I was looking for a Mustang back in 2009 and I had no idea the Cougar even existed. While searching, I came across a Cougar and was blown away by the design and from then on, it was on my list. Finally I decided on a Cougar, as it is more rare than the Mustang.

What I like the most about the Cougar is the hideaway headlights, the mystery image and the fantastic shape and design of this elegant coupe. I also like the sound, the look and the fact that people keep asking themselves and me what make it is.

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## Tobias, 27

I bought my 69 standard coupe from Brian Carpenter in the US back in 2015. If I remember correctly, Brian contacted me after my post at mercurycougar.net



It is in great shape; I just needed to replace the exhaust system. The slight underbody rust was removed and repainted in black, some technical changes (lights) for German TÜV were made, but the rest of the car is still original.

What makes a Cougar so special to me are the sequential turn signals and the front design, plus is the fact that nearly everything is original and most things look like they did at the delivery date. The complete history is preserved. I know that the Cougar was sold new at Adrian Ford Mercury dealership in Adrian, Michigan, which is still in business as Dave Knapp Ford-Lincoln.

I get a lot of applause here and people keep asking me, "What kind of car is this?"

## Simon, 29

I was looking for a sporty 60s V8 US car and found my 69 XR7 coupe back in 2014. I bought it from a private seller in Hamburg, Germany. Besides the seats, steering wheel and safety belts, the car is in original and good condition.



What I like the most is the fact that despite the car is rare, one can source many parts from Mustang parts dealer. The hideaway headlights and sequential turnsignals get much attention at any car show.

What I like the most on my Cougar is the red/black color combination and the fact that it is equipped with almost any available option.

Funny: Other Cougar owners in Germany keep asking me if I sell the rocker panels.

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## Marcel, 29

I bought my onyx black 1967 standard coupe back in 2009 from a private seller in Palo Alto, California.



It is an original black plate car in decent, daily driver condition. I found her on eBay and instantly fell in love with the black on black colors, bucket seats and center console layout.

I've been searching up and down for a unique car with a classy attitude and available parts, as I wanted a daily driver. The Cougar immediately attracted my attention and checked off all of the boxes.

What I love the most on her is the fact that she makes everyone smile, including myself. I simply can't walk away without turning my head, catching a last glance after parking. And she was in one hand from 1975 until I bought her.

I am often asked if it's a big block cause of the growl. That always makes me laugh.

# 1968 Mercury Cougar GT-E

By Jim Pinkerton, GT-E Registrar (CCOA #5909)

We don't know what the "E" stands for. No documentation from F-L-M has been found to resolve the mystery. Speculation includes Eliminator, European, Endurance, and in-house code (E) for the 427-4V engine.

The 7.0 Litre GT-E was an option package available on 1968 Cougar standard and XR-7 models. The specific equipment provided in the GT-E option package included:

- Cougar 427E V-8 (4V) engine rated at 390 horsepower (before 5/68) or 428 Cobra Jet Ram Air V-8 (4V) engine rated at 340 horsepower (after 5/68)
- Bright engine dress-up kit, including chrome rocker covers, oil filler cap, dip stick, radiator cap, and air cleaner housing
- Select-shift Merc-O-Matic three speed automatic transmission
- Super Competition Handling Package
- Radial-ply FR70 X 14 wide-tread WSW or red band tires
- Power front disc and rear drum brakes
- Power steering
- Power booster engine fan
- 7.0 Litre GT-E badges on front fenders
- Quad chrome exhaust pipe outlet tips
- Styled steel wheels
- Unique front grille with blacked-out vertical bars, and horizontal bright trim bar
- Power-dome hood with simulated air intakes.
- Unique 2-tone paint; choice of 11 upper body colors\*
- Unique body side moldings with silver gray argent below the molding

GT-E upper body colors:

- Onyx (25)
- Cardinal Red (134)
- Wellington Blue (12)
- Black Cherry (23)
- Glacier Blue (5)
- Madras Blue (22)
- Caribbean Blue (5)
- Augusta Green (64)
- Lime Frost Green (18)
- Grecian Gold (40)
- Nordic Blue (43)
- Special Order / Calypso Coral (2)

A total of 393 GT-Es have been confirmed to have been built.... At this time, based on what is known today, 357 were equipped with the 427 Side Oiler engine and 37 came equipped with the 428 Cobra Jet engine.

GT-Es were available with any of five "Standard" Cougar or XR-7 interior styles:

- bucket seats, all vinyl
- bucket seats, Decor Group vinyl (optional)
- bench seat, Decor Group vinyl (optional)
- bucket seats, leather with vinyl (standard on GT-E)
- bucket seats, Comfort Weave vinyl (reduced cost on GT-E)
- GT-E with the XR-7 leather and vinyl bucket seats

Other XR-7 interior features include walnut grain dash, added instrumentation, accessory toggle switches, door pull straps, and additional courtesy lighting. This car is also equipped with the optional sports console

The GT-E name came from Ford's in-house code (E) for the high-performance 390 horsepower 427 cubic inch engine, which is what the original GT-Es had stuffed between their shock towers (replaced mid-year by the CJ 428). But the Mercury design team wasn't satisfied with just building a fire-breathing Cat. It had to look and handle like one, too. Thus, with a sticker price of a little more than \$4,000.

## GT-E Defined: Option Package

The features that turned a standard or XR-7 Cougar into a GT-E were all included in the GT-E option package. The Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price for the GT-E option was \$1,311.00. The package could be ordered on either the standard or XR-7 body styles with the resulting price considerations:

| Body Style | Base Price | GT-E Option | Total Price |
|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Standard   | \$2,933.42 | \$1,311.00  | \$4,244.42  |
| XR-7       | \$3,231.91 | \$1,311.00  | \$4,542.91  |

While there is no one place to find all of the answers to our many questions about these cars, the GT-E Registry attempts to provide as much information as possible. Each GT-E survivor found and added to the Registry adds to our collective knowledge of this unique automobile. So, if you own a GT-E, know somebody who owns one or have any other information about the whereabouts of a GT-E survivor, please contact me. All leads are important. Information about the GT-E that "old what's-his-name used to own back in '72 may result in the discovery of another survivor or help us learn useful information about the history of these cars. Any and all information you may be able to provide will be appreciated and pursued.

Jim Pinkerton  
GT-E Registrar  
Phone: (360) 668-0243  
Email: gt-e@cougarclub.org

# The Role of the GT-E Registrar

By Jim Pinkerton, GT-E Registrar (CCOA # 5909)

The role of the GT-E Registrar can be thought of as that of a research librarian: A custodian, reference collector, and interpreter of the master records concerning the production and history of the GT-Es produced by Lincoln Mercury in 1968.

In a perfect world, a complete record on each GT-E produced would exist and there would be no more questions to be answered. However, the work on the Registry will never be completed because some of the information about the cars is lost, with no surviving humans or objective evidence to fill in the gaps. Still, we keep adding to the information we have when people are aware of the search in progress and volunteer their knowledge.

As the Registrar, I am personally rewarded when we can add a hitherto unaccounted for GT-E to the Registry and therefore can share that information with the current owners of record, and the general public in the form of statistics and analysis.

Perhaps my greatest reward is helping people find a suitable GT-E to purchase, or find a buyer for one when the time comes to divest. I remember well the feelings I had many years ago when I bought the first of the now 6 GT-Es I've had the privilege of owning.

They are rare cars, and even after 25+ years as Registrar, they are endlessly intriguing. The search for more information goes on. Can you help?

Jim Pinkerton  
Cougar GT-E Registrar  
pinktwo@live.com  
Cell: 425-582-1046.



**MERCURY COUGAR GT-E:** A muscular addition to the Cougar line, the GT-E possesses such amenities as the formidable 427-cu.-in. hydraulic-lifter V8 that develops 390 horsepower, a bulging hood scoop whose primary function is to let the observer know what's under the hood, redesigned disappearing headlights, power steering and disk brakes, a work-horse 3-speed automatic transmission, styled steel wheels and an instrument panel (right) that proves attractively functional.





# Cougar GT-E Restoration, a Father & Son Story

By Joe Manek (CCOA #9800)

## Our story starts thusly...

Our father has always been a 'fix-it' guy, from the time he was in the Air-Force, stationed at Elmendorf Alaska in the motor-pool, to the 42 years diagnosing and repairing jet engines at Tinker Air Force base in Mid-West City, OK., There was little he couldn't fix or wouldn't try to fix. At 87, he's still that way today.

Dad was a 'wiz' at fixing anything mechanical, cars included; ours, relatives both near and far, neighbors and many of his co-workers. Dad was known as the 'go to' guy to consult, or talk into fixing, anything automobile related.

Growing up, I spent many weekends beneath or inside of a car being worked on by Dad, asking, probing, wanting to know what, why and how. Dad's first car was 34 Ford, with few deviations throughout his life, he owned Fords. I was raised on Fords. Cut either of us and we both bleed Ford Blue.

Fast-forward to 1972. I'm almost 16 and have \$500 of grocery sacking money and a freshly minted driver's license in my wallet. Dad told me that I could have the family 1964 Galaxy XL 500 if I wanted it. It was a good-looking car, with a beefy 352 and 3 speed automatic transmission. Nope I said, I've got to have a Mustang. So, for the lofty sum of \$585, Dad helped me find a 1966 Wimbledon White Mustang Coupe,

289, 2-barrel automatic. It had a dent in the passenger door, which Dad said was easily fixed, and was. I was in love.

But, two years later, in the summer before I went to college, I saw a black on black with red accents 1969 Mach 1 for sale. I had to make it mine. It had a 351 Windsor and a 3-speed automatic transmission. I was in love all over again. I cobbled together the \$1085 it was going to take to buy it with college money saved from still sacking groceries and funded by the \$800 I would get from selling the 66 Mustang to one of Dad's co-workers.

What a beautiful car that Mach 1 was. To this day, I still think it's the sexiest car Ford made. But, I digress. Having the Mach 1 is what I believe planted the 'seed' for Dad wanting a sporty car of his own.

Off I go to Oklahoma State University for the next four years, 1974-1978, coming home occasionally for weekends and holidays or whenever laundry piled up. It was during that time that Dad found a used car he thought might be a nice sporty adult version of a Mustang. He wanted a 'sleeper', something that was faster than it looked when sitting next to somebody in a hotrod at a stop light.



The car Dad found was a Nordic Blue 1968 Mercury Cougar XR7, dark blue interior with optional head rests and a black vinyl roof. Oh yeah, and with a GT-E option package. The Cougar was an insurance repo. Dad didn't really know it at the time, but that 7Litre on the fender meant it should have had a 427 Engine and C6 transmission. The car had been stolen and those valuable items removed. The insurance agent had a relative that apparently was a 'mechanic.' I put that in quotes because they made the dubious decision to put a 351 Cleveland and a C4 back into it. No doubt to save money, but not a desirable swap. But, it was a beautiful car, ran and drove well and was a good daily driver, albeit a bit more anemic than Dad had been hoping for. Dad used the Cougar to mostly just to drive back and forth to work for the next couple years.



I graduated from OSU and 'chose' to live at home while 'reviewing' my employment options with my newly obtained degree in Zoology. Dad suggested we put a 427 back into his Cougar, like it was intended to have.

Finding a 427 proved much harder and far more expensive than we expected. After searching for a while Dad decided that we would just put a 429 4V from a 69 Mercury Marquis into it. Factory specs at the time listed the 429 at 11.0-11.5 to 1 compression and about 360HP. He thought, that'll do.

### **Thus, began the 1st father & son project on the Cougar**

In the summer of 1979, we began what we naively thought would be an easy engine swap. Putting a big block Ford back into a car that originally had a big block Ford. A big block is a big block, right? Turns out the physical dimensions were completely different for 351 in it, the 429 going in it and the 427 we wanted in it. Different sizes meant different motor mounts, different transmission bolt pattern, different length drive-shaft. In short, different 'everything.' But, Dad was a 'fixer,' so 'fix' we did. We created hybrid motor mounts, half 351 and half 429. We swapped the guts from one C6 into the body of another that fit the 429. We had the driveshaft lengthened by a couple of inches, and we got creative on the shifter and carburation linkages.



But, in the end, we had a big block 429 in the 1968 Cougar GT-E, where a 427 should have been and a 351 had been. But, it could 'haul the mail.' I'm not sure anyone was ever brave enough to find out what the top-end was. It tended to get a little 'light' in the front-end above the 120 at which the speedometer was pegged, and it was still wanting more.



As a side note: My younger brother, Randy, had pursued a 'darker' path when it came to cars. He had a 1968 Plymouth Roadrunner, with a 383 hemi, 4 speed manual transmission coupled to a 411 DANA positrack. He and I went back and forth about who's car was faster, until it was settled one day at the local quarter-mile stretch of road, used for such things. I'll just say, he was quicker, but I was faster for that 1320 foot stretch of road on that day, barely edging him out at the line.

After we got home, and I proudly & repeatedly announced to all of my victory, Dad said, “well, I guess I should take on the winner”. He recalls that my older Sister, Susan, suggested it to him with a question about who he thought was faster. So, he and I went and lined up at the quarter mile. I found out that a Cougar with a ‘creatively’ installed 429 had everything that my Mach 1 had to offer, and then some.

Dad drove the Cougar off & on for the next few years. I moved to OKC and got married and shortly thereafter landed a corporate job in a little town about 100 miles North of where Mom & Dad lived.

Over the next few years, I managed to find a near mint condition Vintage Burgundy 1965 Mustang GT-350 Coupe. Did some restoration work on it, had it painted back original, then put it into storage. A typical too nice to drive story.

Somewhere in that timeframe, the 429 in the Cougar, ‘swarmed’, as my Dad put it. That is ‘seized-up’ to you me. It was left parked in the back yard to await a future fixing.



Several buy, fix and sell Mustangs later for my Dad, and sometime in 1984, his shop caught fire and burned to the ground. With it went 40+ years of tools, some irreplaceable tools his grandfather, a bona-fide blacksmith, had handmade. And, sitting there on the work-bench, was the vacuum actuator and relay from the Cougar’s Tilt-Swing Steering wheel.

My mom became sick in the summer of that same year and succumbed to cancer after a heroic battle in the spring of 1985. These were dark days for us all.

Dad got remarried, built a new house on the back half of his property, within eyesight of the garage pad where the fire had been and within view of the Cougar, still parked in the back yard of the old House. The Cougar eventually was moved into the woods near Dad’s new house, Sometime in late 1986 or 1987, it got a tarp put over it, and then was occasionally moved around for one reason or another.

I divorced in 1990. But, I kept the 65 GT Mustang, and a 1984 20th anniversary Mustang Convertible I’d bought new. Within about a year, I reconnected with a dear friend from my days at OSU with whom I’d kept sporadic contact. Vickie was living in Florida with 2 young daughters, Jessica and Lindsey. We did the long-distance dating thing for a short while, but it was

clear to me that ‘she’ was the ‘one’. We moved her and her daughters to Oklahoma where I lived and worked. We were married shortly thereafter. She is a most amazing woman and I had gained 2 wonderful daughters.

Somewhere around 1991 or 1992, the Cougar got moved from the woods into Dad’s garage, where its long wait for the next ‘fixing’ had begun in earnest.

For the next 4-5 years, we continued to live and worked in Oklahoma, but work was becoming different and the winds of change were blowing. Jessica, oldest daughter was about to head off to college. Lindsey, our youngest, needed a change of venue. Vickie and I had recently been to Alaska to visit her best friend. We caught the Alaska bug, big time. Both the timing and the opportunity for a fresh start couldn’t have been better. In the winter of 1996, off to Anchorage Alaska we went. To my regret, I sold both the 84 Convertible and the 65 GT, thinking that neither was well suited for Alaska, but the money certainly would be.

We lived in and loved Alaska for the next 16 years. During those years in Alaska we gained 5 wonderful grandchildren both near and far. We had many amazing adventures and made many life-long friends. We saw and did things most people only dream of. What an amazing, beautiful place. Our hearts are still there to a large extent.

Each time we would visit Oklahoma we would stay at Dad’s. Dad or I would often stroll by the Cougar in the garage and say, “we really need to get started on restoring that”, and I would typically add, “it’s a rare car we should restore it back to original”. When I would call home, on most of our phone conversations the topic of the Cougar restoration would inevitably come up.

Sometime around 2005, Dad even went to far as to track down and pay a tidy sum for a 427 engine and C6 Transmission, of approximately the correct year. He hauled them all the way back from South Texas. He had the engine gone-through by a local machine shop and re-sleeved back to Standard. With the heads off and the pistons out, he wrapped up the block in plastic and stored it in a corner of his garage, not quite ready to start the project.

In January of 2013, after having contemplated it for a few years, Vickie and I decided that living that far from our respective families, spread across Oklahoma, Louisiana, Washington State and Florida, was just too hard to manage. We also knew, as our parents aged, that time left to spend with them grew shorter with every passing year. So, back to Oklahoma I dragged my sweet wife. This time, a mere 30 miles from my Dad.

In the summer of 2014, Dad and I finally decided it was time to restore the Cougar and to do it right. We’d make it as original as time, skill and money would allow.

**Thus, began the second father& son project on the Cougar.**

I should start by saying, we did almost everything you could do wrong or in the wrong order. And, there are way too many things to put them all in this story. So here are a few.

The car had already been partially disassembled by Dad from a few previous stalled starts on the project over the years. The 429 engine and transmission were now sitting in the back of a 1967 Ranchero (another project for someone). Some of the interior, the front headlight and grill assembly, as well as the front and rear bumpers, were off or out. Parts were scattered about the garage, on shelves or in boxes and some were even tucked away in various locations inside the house

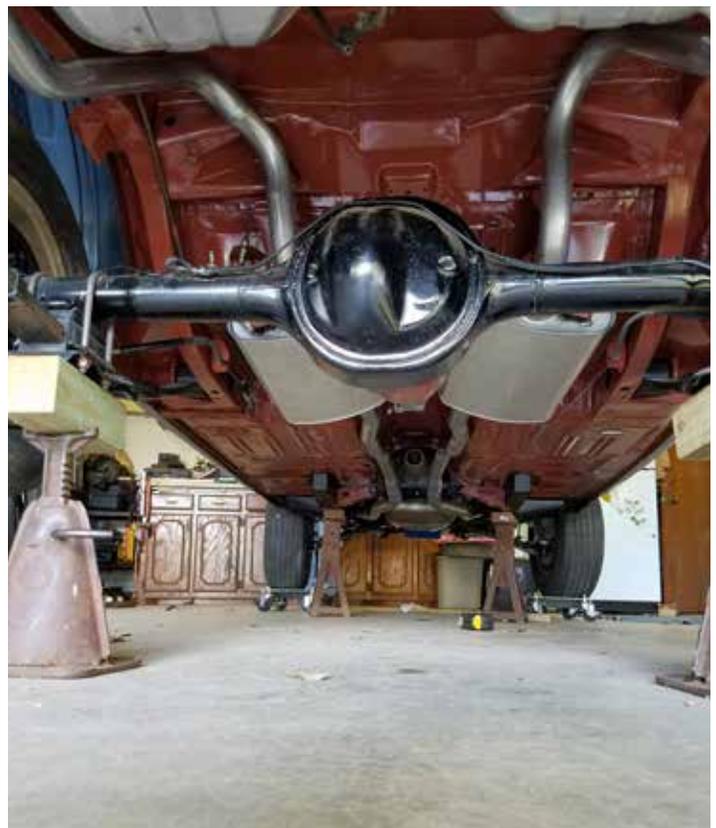
We found a paint and body man in a nearby town, who had a good reputation for show-quality paint and body work. He had never done a Cougar, only Mustangs and other unmentionable stuff. But, he said, he would do the job so long as we weren't in a hurry. He paid the bills with insurance work and would work on the Cougar as time allowed. He wasn't kidding.

We visited the car several times during its stay there. The car was fully media blasted on a rotisserie, and completely covered in 2-part epoxy paint for a durable protective coat. It needed some body work on both rear quarters behind the wheels, as well a little work on the passenger side of the rear window channel and the front passenger side floor panel, but for the most part was in excellent shape. It was primed with as near to factory primer colors and overspray as could be managed and then colored and wet sanded in the original Nordic Blue color. It took almost a year, but what we got back was a work of art.

During this same year, we discovered that 427 could have been stored better. One of the bottom cylinders had been made into the home of a rodent. So, back to an engine builder it went, this time to a renowned FE race engine builder in OKC. Again, it got all 8 cylinders re-sleeved back to standard. It was line-bored, trued and decked. It got all new rings, pistons, bearings and seals installed.

But, as we would soon find out, that was just the start to our long engine-related saga.

As we would come to know, a 427 for a GT-E Cougar isn't just a 427. It requires some specificity concerning many things we did not know about and did not have. For instance, it required a set of very specific 3090-J code heads, very rare and very expensive. It needed a Police Interceptor medium riser aluminum intake manifold. It needed a Holley 4150 List 4088 4-barrel carb with very specific metering blocks. The narrow engine bay between the shock towers meant along with those heads, it also needed a set of 390 GT exhaust manifolds. On the front end of the engine, it would need several hard-to- find pulleys and an equally hard to find seven blade fan of smaller diameter than generally found on FE's. From brackets to bolts,





we needed almost everything and had almost nothing. There was basically nothing we could use on the 427 from the 429 that had previously occupied its place.

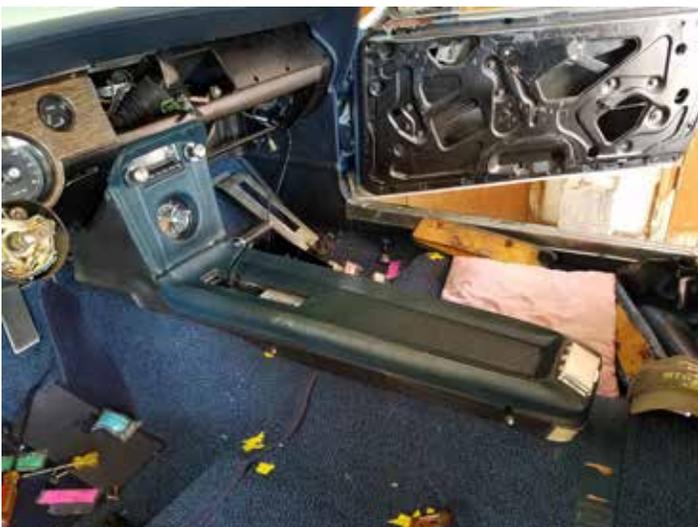
Elsewhere on the car, anything that could be restored, was restored. If we had to buy replacement parts or components, we tried our best to get used original parts and then restore them. When we had to buy new, we bought high-quality parts, correct for the car and period. We put in new two inch exhausts to match the factory originals. We put in a complete set of new correct suspension parts, leaf springs, coil springs, upper/lower control arms, and bushings.

The front seats, head rests and arm rests needed restoring. We researched who had the best products, then ordered samples to do hands-on comparisons. In the end we found what we were looking for and bought enough material for the front seats, including very correct comfort weave fabric. We found a local upholstery shop who showed us some very impressive restorations they'd done. They promised the moon, and as it turns out, delivered. The seats looked phenomenal. They even redid the headrests and armrests, neither of which I thought could be recovered, since they were originally molded vinyl. But, they looked awesome, even if incorrect for the car.



We put in a new headliner; easier said than done. We put on a new factory correct black vinyl roof. We put in all new rubber, molding and body plugs everywhere. Dad and I put in a NOS front windshield as the original was cracked. We reused the rear windshield, which was perfect. We replaced much of the side and quarter window related interior chrome pieces, as they had succumbed to that awful corrosion that 'blooms' underneath the chrome in higher humidity climates. We put in a new repo dash pad. I spent untold hours restoring the instrument cluster, keeping it all original with exception of the exterior plasticized chrome. I used chrome vinyl wrap to replace the instrument cluster chrome, after spending weeks developing a methodology for applying it. We'll see if that stands the test of time, but it looks good for now.

I restored both the front light assembly as well as the rear tail lights. Anything that could be dipped and left overnight in non-toxic rust remover, was. That stuff is amazing. Everything that was restored was taken down to metal and repainted back to original color, using epoxy paint for durability.



Dad and I have spent almost every Saturday these last four years working on the car. There must have been multiple hundreds individual of items restored or replaced. Working together on the car or separately researching and sourcing parts, we've surely spent over a thousand hours.

We hoped to have had it completed for its 50th birthday on Feb 23rd, but we didn't make that. Now the goal is to take it to a car show or two in 2018, during its 50th year.

In two different projects, spanning nearly four decades, this car has been more than just a car. It's been the catalyst for a father and son spending time together and doing one of

the things I remember most fondly about my teenage years; working on a car with my Dad.

It's been a journey, not a destination, and we have had many great memories as a result. I wouldn't change the bumps, bruises and mis-steps along the way...much.

Oh yeah, and we have a freaking beautiful and rare GT-E Cougar to show for it.

Father: Joe Manek

Son: Joe A. Manek





**Rob Crowder (CCOA #9222) & Steve Crowder (CCOA #9448)**





# Craig Keith (CCOA #7318)

Photos by Cliff Gardiner (CCOA #5997)





# Joerg Weller's 68 GT-E XR-7 427 Cardinal Red/Black

By Joerg Weller (CCOA # 9574)

In 1999, the frame of my 66 Galaxie broke. It had rusted badly. There was no way to get the car back on the road soon, so I was looking for another "classic" car to drive over the summer time.

I stumbled on a 1968 Cougar 302, 3-speed. Rough, cheap and drivable, so I bought it. Later I started to improve the car's looks. I found a nice interior set on eBay in the USA and I bought it. The seller was very helpful, and he sent the parts to Germany. It was my first international eBay transaction. When adding feedback on eBay, he (Matt) wrote, "I made a new friend," so we stayed in touch. He told me he had restored a GT-E Cougar in the past. I had no idea what a GT-E was, so I started to do research on the web and decided that I'd like to have one someday!

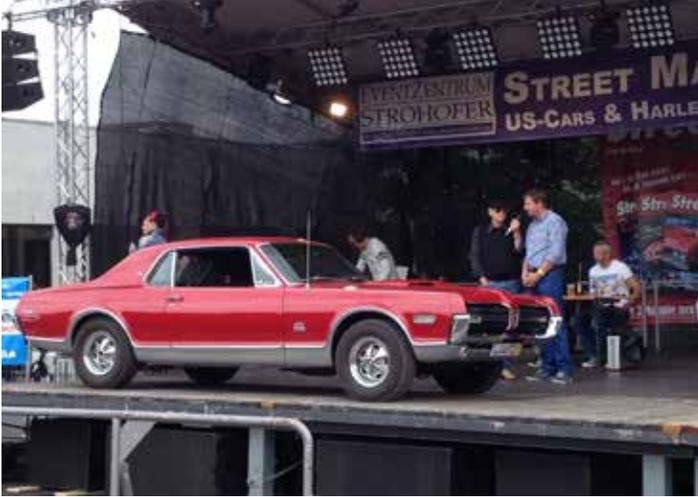
In 2011, there were three GT-Es for sale on eBay at the same time. Two very nicely described cars, a red and a green one. Everybody was discussing these cars on the forums, but nobody saw the third one, a red XR-7. It had a very bad description and horrible pictures. I clicked on the ad but didn't save it. Months later, I remembered seeing the red car, but had no memory where it was and didn't have the link any longer. Thank God I have my browser history saved for one year. I found the eBay ad. The pictures were gone, but the phone number was still there. Since my English is not perfect and my knowledge, especially about GT-Es, was not that good then, I asked my friend Matt to call the seller and ask him about the car. Some long days later he replied that the car was still available, was restored at the end of 80s, and is in drivable condition.

I decided to buy it and sent payment to seller without any proof. I was very relieved when I got an email from him saying, "Money arrived and you can pick up the car." I used a shipping company in CA. It worked out very well and 12 weeks later the GT-E arrived in Bremen Harbour, Germany. We picked up the car there and were very happy. The car was much better in condition than we had expected. Since this time, we made some repairs and TLC, but the car is a blast to drive. We love it very much and have never regretted having bought it. We named the car Red-E or Chil-E since I am currently installing a 68 GT500 4-speed manual gearbox and some more chili...

Dealer  
Crossroads L-M Inc.  
4015 South East Str.  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Your vehicle was ordered with the following features:

- C-6 Merc-O-Matic Transmission
- FR70X14 Wide Oval Radial Tires
- White Sidewall Tires
- Console
- Power Disc Brakes
- Power Steering
- Tilt-Away Steering Wheel
- AM/8-Track Stereo Radio
- Tinted Glass
- Styled Steel Wheels



## Joerg Weller's 68 GT-E XR-7 427 Augusta Green Met/Saddle

After I bought Red-E and had a nice time driving it, I connected to all the Facebook groups and forums. One day in 2015, someone posted a picture of a 68 GT-E on Facebook, many guys writing "nice" "awesome", "wish I had one," and so on. The last reply was from a guy who wrote "I have one for sale". So I contacted him immediately and he told me it's a green XR-7 with saddle interior and vinyl roof. My all-time color combination favorite. So I asked a friend for help. He saw the car two days later in person and send me his description about the condition. With the help from Phil Parcels and Jim Pinkerton, I bought this fairly rusty PA car, last licensed in 1978 in PA. It is in nice, original condition, but in need of a full restoration. My friend hauled the car to his house and some weeks later, the shipper picked it up there at 2am in the morning heading to Germany. The car is recently under restoration and I hope dt get it back on the road in 2020. We called it Green-E, along with my second GT-E the only one 2 GT-Es in Germany.



First sold by  
ELK MOTORS  
864 S SAINT MARYS ROAD  
ST MARYS PA 15857



Your vehicle was equipped with the following features; for the 1968 Cougar XR-7 2-Door Hardtop:

- Black Vinyl Roof
- GT-E Package
- FR70X14 Wide Oval Radial White Sidewall Tires
- Console
- Power Disc Brakes
- Power Steering
- AM/FM Stereo Radio
- Tinted Glass
- Chrome Styled Steel Wheels



# John Weissmann's GT-E

By John Weissmann (CCOA #9879)

My attraction to the GT-E began at an early age. My father bought a 1968 Cougar XR7 when I was 14 and that is what started my love for the Cougar. While working on the car and looking for parts I started to learn of all the other models. Every so often I would see an article on the rare, exotic, and extraordinary Cougar GT-E. I would hang these articles on my walls and dream of owning one. One day, while all my friends had Italian super cars on their walls. Through all the years I never had the opportunity to see one up close in person, just in the occasional magazine article and weekend TV car shows. The hood scoop gave the front a more aggressive look. The lower gray body trim that worked with any color.

Fast forward another 10 years. The car market exploded, and car prices are through the roof. In addition, it was hard to find a GT-E for sale since there were only a few hundred ever made. I did find one going up for auction and almost fell over when I saw the hammer price. But my search continued, which consisted of checking Hemmings and the internet. It seemed whenever (and it wasn't often) I found one, it was going to auction. After attending a few car auctions I learned quickly that you need to be present and should not bid unless you can see and touch the car.



Fast Forward life happened and 15 years later I am now looking to purchase my dream GT-E. Then one day on ebay there it was and 1.5hrs from me. I got my wife to give the nod to use my savings and retirement to buy my dream car. I was so excited, and when I called the seller to confirm, I was told someone just left a deposit on it. Devastated, I convinced myself it wasn't meant to be and when the time is right it will happen.

Once a month every month for years, Saturday night I would search the internet trying to locate a GT-E for sale and after a few years I see this ad in Hemmings. First, I look at the ad date because this has happened before an old ad pops up in the search results and fool me for a moment. But this time the ad was recent, and I wasted no time and shot the seller a message (no phone number) and impatiently waited. I didn't hear back and thought it was probably gone already.

Thinking to myself, I couldn't be the only one looking for GT-E and that missed out on this one too. I started to think what body parts I could sell to raise the money needed to actually buy a GT-E. I sent another message with no answer and conceded to another missed opportunity.

A few days later, I get an email that the car is still available and was given the run down on the history, shape and condition of the GT-E. The original engine was not with the vehicle but it was still a 427 in the car, and the car was in great shape and was a driver (what's the sense of owning a car if you're not going to drive them). Though bothered, I wasn't going to let the engine issue sway me. Most of these cars were used to their potential and engines were swapped out of many. Let's face it, who knew that a \$3k car would one day be worth six figures. I got some more details on the car and asked for more pictures of the hidden spots that rust and rot. In the meantime, I reached out to Jim Pinkerton. I went over what I knew of the vehicle and addressed my concerns about the engine. After a few conversations with Jim, I made arrangements and flew to the motor city where the car was garaged in a surrounding town. Jim was and has been an amazing help and from what I have experienced, always willing to help however he can. I cannot thank him enough for all of his help.

This wasn't a barn find but a moment that was almost a lifetime in the making. My search for an engine and OEM parts began before I even left for my trip. When I arrived at the seller's home, the car was outside in the driveway and how beautiful she looked, Cardinal Red and white interior. After the shock of actually being in front of GT-E in person wore off, I got to checking it out. She wasn't a survivor, nor was she a fresh restore and there was work to be done, but she was still perfect for me. Isn't that why we all love this hobby, using our hands build and fix these beautiful pieces of Detroit history? A deal was struck, a dream came true and I now have a 1968 XR7 GT-E. I am driving and sharing the car with others while I finish locating the parts needed to make her whole again. I have made my eldest daughter promise to never sell the car and continue to bring the car to shows to share with others. She doesn't know it but her first car is going to be a '68 Cougar that I am building now.



# A Message From Fordnutz Cougar Club, Vancouver, BC, Canada

By Heather Whitaker (CCOA #7477)



It would appear that the Cougar GT-E is a rare Cat indeed, at least in our woods here in Canada. Fordnutz has but two on our roster, one belonging to Malcolm McMillan, who resides in Port Moody, BC. The other is owned by Jim Pinkerton, an American member living in Snohomish, Washington, south of the border. Like many classic car owners, several of our members belong to more than one club, so I'll concentrate on the Canadian Cat here as I believe Jim's story will be covered independently elsewhere in this issue.

Here is Malcolm's story:

"I found the GT-E advertised on eBay in June 2013. I have wanted to own a GT-E ever since first learning about them back in the early eighties, so when

I saw this one for sale, I wanted to do my best to get it. There were only 357 of these cars built with the 427 W-code engine, so opportunities to buy don't present themselves very often. The car was owned by Cascade member Chris Farmer and was located



in Bothell, Washington. Chris bought it in 2007 and brought it to Washington from Cowichan Lake on Vancouver Island, where it had been since it was new. It had all of the important features that I was looking for – original VIN stamped engine and transmission as well as the rear end, and only one repaint in the original colour on a rust and accident free body with all original sheet metal.

It's a very nice driver with 95,000 original miles. Another feature that really sold me on it was that it is an original B.C. car, sold new at Suburban Motors in Victoria.



The car needed detailing to get to its present state and it was missing a few key rare parts that I have spent the last few years acquiring. All of the GT-E specific parts are rare and very hard to find for sale. The car was missing the original carburetor, distributor, smog system and exhaust tips

but I have since located and installed a date code correct carb and distributor. I have also added original '67 Mustang GT quad exhaust tips that look correct anyway. The interior was mostly original. The carpet had been replaced and the front seats had been reupholstered with incorrect vinyl rather than the original leather. I bought a concours correct leather upholstery kit and carpet set from West Coast Classic Cougar and installed them with help from fellow Fordnutz member and friend, Robin Miller. Robin also took care of many other details while it was at his shop – he really knows early Cougars!

This is an ultra rare car in very original condition. It is the only "ponycar" ever available from Ford with a 427 side-oiler engine installed at the factory. None was ever available in a Mustang or Shelby... period. The GT-E was also the last Ford to ever sport the 427 – the end of an era.



Outside of the Cougar community, the GT-E isn't very well-known, and most people have never heard of them. Answering "Yes, it really did come with a 427 from the factory" is my answer to the most asked question about the car."





# Al Juraco's GT-E

By Al Juraco (CCOA #9358)

photos by Andrew Chenovick (CCOA Volunteer Photographer) CCOA #9358







# Turning Back the Clock

By Dan Mohry (CCOA #9953)



I was on 3rd Street in Bethlehem, on my way to getting a suit altered. I had an appointment for 11:00am and I was running a little late. My cell was ringing and it was my friend Butch. Butch is “the Butch” of Butch’s Rod and Resto in Hellertown, PA. He repainted my 1969 Cougar convertible in his small shop and his work is flawless.

Through the process of the ‘69 Cougar project, a friendship was formed, and we started to invest, repair and resell a few cars together. We both have children in college and the extra dollars always help. I answered the phone and Butch excitedly tells me that he has found the ultimate Cougar for us. You see, Butch does work for a client that deals in high-end Chevs. The guy tells Butch about a 427 Cougar GT-E that is outside of Philadelphia and has been in the garage since the mid-1990s. Honestly, I didn’t know that Mercury used the 427 engines in the Cougar and I didn’t realize that there even was a special

model called the GT-E. He mentioned that this could be a good one for us to get involved with, because through his research, he saw another GT-E go at auction for crazy money. He was pressuring the guy to connect him with the owner, but for some reason, he wasn’t sharing the information.

I immediately started to learn as much as I could about the GT-Es – the options, history and values. I quickly found the GT-E registry on line and called and left a message for Jim Pinkerton. That evening my amazing, beautiful wife and I were out at a local Mexican restaurant. The place was packed and loud when my phone rang. I struggled to hear the person on the other end and realized it was Jim Pinkerton. I told Jim that I started researching these cars and now I was very interested in acquiring one. As Jim started telling me more about the GT-Es, I motioned to my amazing and beautiful wife for a pen and started taking notes on the extra napkins on the table.



Jim was sharing so much information so quickly that it was hard for me to keep up. He told me about a red XR7 matching numbers 427 that was located outside of Philadelphia. He mentioned that it had modification like a big Gurney decal on the side, stick-on hood pins and a car security system on it that was controlled by the key located on the driver's side fender. He also mentioned that the car was only available because the owner had passed away and his wife needed to sell it to settle the estate.

A few days later my friend Butch and I went to see the car. The owner, Margie, was such a nice lady, a school teacher who was trying her best to deal with the sad circumstances she had been dealt. She explained that her deceased husband, Steve



Bruno, was a vo-tech automotive teacher at the local school and he treasured this car that he had owned since the 1970s. Steve was a Philadelphia police officer in the 1970s. One night he

recognized the car and pulled the previous owner over just to talk about the car. Steve was so impressed with the car that he gave the fellow his phone number and asked him to call him if he ever wanted to get rid of it. Not long afterward, Steve received a call where the guy told him that it was time. The car was too much for him, so he traded Steve the GT-E for a fixed-up Ford LTD. Steve's wife shared a story of their wedding day and showed a picture of the two of them in the GT-E. It was kept in a two-car garage with things all around it and on it. It

had a layer of dust on it and all the tires were flat. She told us to check out the car as much as we wanted, so we went over the car with a fine-toothed comb. The underneath was rock solid which is very strange for a PA car. The sheet metal seemed to be all original. We could see the heads were stamped with a partial VIN and that so much seemed to be original. There was a 1995 PA inspection sticker on the car, so we assumed that it had been sitting since then. The engine was free and we made no attempt to try and start it. There was no doubt in our minds that we wanted to try and buy the car. Unfortunately, the offer we made was not accepted and we went home empty handed.

I could not get this car out of my head. I continued to do research on these cars and I really wanted this car... not to resell but for me to keep. I own a 1969 Cougar convertible, a GT500, a couple of CJ Mustangs and T-birds, and I desperately wanted to add this car to the stable, but I thought she was asking a bit too much. I still could not get the car out of my mind... a sickness, I know. One Thursday afternoon my friend Rich and I were playing in a golf fundraiser about 15 miles away from where we saw this GT-E. I was telling him about the car and the owner. Coincidentally, Rich is also a vo-tech and knew the owner, Steve, and his wife. A few months before he saw them both at a flea market and they were discussing retiring and such. I asked Rich if he was in a rush to get home because I wanted to swing by the Cougar and have him look at the car. It would also give him time to see Margie since he already knew her. I called and she was available for us to swing by. We spent a few hours there with Rich and her talking about old times. The conversation moved to the car and we finally came to agreement on a price. I was thrilled!

We then needed to wait on the title that was already requested to come back from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. This took months because the titles were transferred to microfiche and it needed to be manually found. The good news is that it all worked out, the title was found, and transferred into my name. The car was brought home on a trailer and pushed into my garage, then the process of making the GT-E road-ready began. My brother Jonathan, Walt, Butch's father, an expert mechanic, and Dan Willever, a local engine builder, were so helpful rebuilding the entire drive train, brakes and fuel system. We re-upholstered the seats and it only took three sets of leather upholstery until we received enough pieces that we could make a set that was acceptable. Don Rush was very helpful with that process. The process took over a year, but the delay was so worth the long wait.

The car is a semi-survivor. The rear quarters and trunk have been repainted, the seats re-upholstered and the drive train is fresh, but there are so many things that are completely original. The primer is showing through in areas from years of washing and polishing, the hood pins and lock cylinder on the fender are still in place. My amazing and beautiful wife enjoys driving the red GT-E and we take it to many car shows. We are not afraid to drive it anywhere. I am always surprised by the amount of people that are familiar with the rarity of the car and appreciate it for what it is. I really enjoy driving the 427 Cougar. It is so much snappier and smoother than the 428 CJ cars that I have. It has a small block feel with big block torque. The GT-E squeals the tires when it shifts into 2nd gear almost every time and it is just a blast to drive. Last year, as we were driving to Dan Nolan's Mustang Barn show in Souderton PA, the odometer went around and started at 00000 once again.



I am hoping to start a complete restoration in a couple of years. I have a few projects in front of it and I refuse to take it out of service until I am 100% ready to do a complete and quality restoration. I am going to try and take it to a better than original condition with as many original parts as possible. I have a few friends and enthusiasts that are helping me locate and acquire date correct parts. I am not in any rush to get to the restoration because I will likely drive it less once restored and we are having so much fun with it now.

Could you tell that my amazing and beautiful wife Anna proofread this before I sent it out?



# My First GT-E/XR7

By Don Stratemeyer (CCOA #9504)

(The photos were taken right after I bought it.)

I bought it used from a Chevy dealer with 17,000 miles on it around 1970-71. Nordic Blue with dark blue leather and a white vinyl top. From my research, the Cat originally came with the standard 3.50 non-locking ring and pinion but had a 3.89TL when I purchased it.

I made a few changes to the car while I had it. A 950cfm 3Bbl along with opening up the hood scoop and using the air cleaner off of another Ford product for ram air. I had the distributor re-curved and added a set of Gabriel 80/20 drag shocks and wider rear tires. The car ran very well as I remember easily dusting a 440 6Bbl Super Bee, 455 HO Trans AM, 440 Challenger and a 455 Hurst Olds, just to name a few. It also ran well at the strip, becoming a class record holder at Twin Cities Dragways, breaking the old record by a half second. Best time was in the 12.80s. The car's performance was directly affected by how hot the engine was, so I almost never ran time trials in order to keep the engine temp down.

When I first bought the GT-E, it had a high rpm miss starting at 5500rpm, all the while winning on the street. It turned out the 427 had a bent rod and a cracked piston. After replacing those with the engine in the car on a cold garage floor in a Minnesota winter, the big 427 would pull strong up to 6000rpms.

Sadly, due to a divorce, I had to part with my beloved GT-E, along with my two Shelbys, 50 Merc and B modified 68 Javelin. I remember standing in the parking lot of my apartment with tears running down my cheeks as it was loaded and taken away for a sum of \$850. I found three others for sale through the years that, for one reason or another, could not close a deal on. That is until purchasing my Wellington Blue 427 GT-E/XR7. That's another story...





# Ray Bischoff's 1968 XR7 427 GT-E

By Ray Bischoff (CCOA #6600)

This 1968 XR7 427 GT-E, sometimes call a 7 & 7 car, started life as a daily driver and street racer in the southern Midwest. It had accumulated 27,000 miles when the “born with” engine gave up. The year was 1971 and the car was pushed into a barn where it sat for decades. The car’s early retirement meant the weather didn’t have its way creating rust usually associated with Midwestern cars. The car was re-discovered in the 1990s and had a string of owners that intended a restoration. In 2005, Ray Bischoff, a long time Cougar enthusiast, had the chance to buy the 7 & 7 dream car. It didn’t look like many would call a dream car, however. The body was complete and relatively rust free but without the original engine. The VIN stamped transmission was still in place. The paint was tired and the interior tattered but the task to restore the car finally began.

Responding to an ad for an original 1968 side oiler engine, a deal was made to purchase a complete long block. Upon closer inspection of this long block, a VIN stamp was found on one of the cylinder heads. A call was made to the GT-E Registrar to verify the authenticity of the VIN found on the engine and a very enthusiastic Jim Pinkerton confirmed this engine was from the very first production GT-E. The heads and block are from VIN #8F93W530232 another original 427 XR7 GT-E. The cylinder heads are the same famous “J” heads used on the Winternational winning 135 Mustang cobra Jet cars. While 8F93W537922 does not have its “born with” engine, this original GT-E engine was rebuilt by Thompson Automotive in Detroit by their long time FE expert and installed along with the VIN stamped/“born with” transmission into the Nordic Blue car you see here.

An effort was made not to over-restore the car, rather, focus on maintaining originality. Much of the underside of the car is factory original, as you would expect to see from a 27.000 miles car. The interior was restored with leather seats and other components were sourced to freshen the car’s appearance. A mild roller hydraulic cam, modern pistons and other engine components were used at the time of the rebuild. Correct dated carburetor and intake manifold, a 31 spline rear end and most other factory items complete this blue on blue GT-E.





# Tansel Avci's GT-E

By Tansel Avci (CCOA #9990)

This is my second 427 Cougar. The first one was Nordic Blue and I sold it to Ray Bischoff. More on that in a bit.

I grew up in Commerce, Michigan. As a kid I played with Hot Wheels, and my favorite was the 68 Cougar with the big wheels in back! Most of my buddies dads worked for GM or Ford. We were car guys! In high school we were building engines and racing on the streets, try that now ... A good buddy of mine, Bill Wallace's dad, worked for Ford and he had a garage full of 427 side oilers. I'm not sure why... but he offered one to me back then for \$900. I should have bought all of them.

My aunt's 1968 Toronado with a 455 was the first car I rode in that went over 100mph. My dad drove a 1970 Pontiac Bonneville with a 455, my uncle had a 1966 Eldorado with a 427... If you haven't seen the pattern, we buy cars with the biggest engines!!

Prior to buying my blue Cougar, I went to a Cougar car show in early 2000 and part of it was the visit to the Roush museum. Susan has a couple of them and I found them cool looking. So I started looking for a GT-E, and finally tracked down a Nordic Blue GT-E in Chicago and bought it. Years later my business slowed and decided to sell to Ray.

When the economy picked up, the bug got me again and I found the gold one in Alabama. I didn't buy it and to my surprise it surfaced on eBay and I bought it from WCCC. The restoration was difficult, we are all aware GT-E specific engine parts (heads especially) are scarce. I had to "upgrade" a few items, but they can be easily replaced with correct parts.

I can't say enough about Paul Green who rebuilt this car from scratch. He is an expert engine builder and is a meticulous son of a bitch. Without Paul, and the help of Ray Bischoff, this car would not have come back to life.

I enjoy buying, restoring and selling unique cars, but they gotta have a big motors and they gotta be rare. Last year I picked up a 70 429CJ Ranchero; I got the need to go to Home Depot in style.

So why did I buy the GT-E? Rare, big engine, great body!! Damn, sounds like my wife.



# Mike Johns'

## GT-E

By Mike Johns (CCOA #4347)

The years have converted me to more of a purist. Mods are nice when tastefully done, but the special Cats should be left as factory delivered, or as close as possible. (Mods that are easily converted are fine.)

I was involved with Pre-Delivery Inspection, "PDI", for Subaru back in the early 80s. Too bad I didn't leave my reports in the cars. (It was common practice to inspect every vehicle (salt was an issue when traveling by ship), and due valve adjustments on

all new Subaru's from 1977-1982, before customer delivery.) A couple of Subarus had a hole drilled through the head liner, though it was hard to tell with the fabric type material caused by drilling and installing rivnuts for a silly luggage rack on the station wagons. I installed A/C systems supplied by Hitachi mostly, which were the factory systems in the day. I got to where I could pull in four cars in my bays and average about 45 minutes per car per A/C install including evacuation and charge.

I was using a state of the art A/C recharging station setup for multiple vehicles. Or I could use the old typical evacuator and gauge setup, simultaneously. I now take pride in doing 90% of all work needed on my cars, only caving when it comes to major electrical issues. I used the MR dual quad setup on 537286 for many years before returning it back to factory.

Cutting my teeth on Mustangs, I quickly recognized a bargain when it came to Cougars. You could find a loaded Cougar for a fraction of what the much more common Mustang sold for.

We drove out to Red Pines Point (Tahoe Lake) to attend our first "all" Mercury Cougar show-

Around here, they're called them Mustangs and Ford show. It was summer of 1988. Driving the car out, which was a 1967 standard model with GT package, we had issues with charging



and we're constantly stopping to replace parts by the time we got there I had replaced the alternator, the voltage regulator, and was concerned about the battery and it was very difficult to enjoy the show since my concerns were that the car was still not charging. Several car club members there were very helpful in getting me back on the road and back home w/o incident. My wife AND I were surprised at the hospitality the Nor Cal Cougar members showed us and never forgot the kind acts of that



day! They also seem compelled enough to give me a first place trophy, which I'm sure disappointed several local members.

Three years later, we had just completed the restoration on a Q code 70 Eliminator, which we trailered to the Denver National's Cougar Show in 1991. Amazing how the years have changed our hobby, but not how we want to relive our misspent youth! I was very excited for this day! My first GT-E was being recognized by Mustangs and Fords magazine. I received an early edition of this, shortly after it was confirmed to be printed. Unfortunately, there really wasn't much information about the exciting new options available for the 68 Mercury Cougar. We all know the Cougar took second fiddle to the Ford Mustang. I always wanted a 67 68 427 powered Mustang Fastback I had a local DMV officer I knew even look through the old microfiche files searching for any W code cars in 1967, 1968. (Of course, we never came up with any cars) This was pre-Marti-Report times, as it was early - mid 80's when my search really began.

About that time as well, my wife's coworker had a project Lime Frost 67 GT Cougar, minus engine/trans., He really didn't have any mechanical skills, so he offered the car to me for a bargain price. I had already cut my teeth on several Mustang projects by now, so was eager to "step up" to the more refined Cougar!

After several years of restoration, mostly being a daily driver, we started getting involved with the local Mustang club. One of the first Utah Shelby Mustang Clubs began in 1988; we were also lucky enough to be involved. I still have the first poster from that show announcement!

Along the way I found a 67 Ford Mustang convertible in Nightmist Blue with deluxe interior and sporting a C code engine

and, restored it to its former glory. But all along I longed for something with more power. I had owned at least 10 different small block cars, and wanted to step up to a big block. Fast forward to 1989, the Ford Mustang was celebrating its 25th anniversary!

What better way to celebrate the event than to arrange a coast to coast pony drive to attend the Fabulous Fords Forever Event highlighting the success of Ford's bestselling car to date.

It was also the year we drove out, with several local club members, on our own pony drive to attend the events! I have an unnerving story about a mid-60s Corvette passing us in the desert of Nevada, driving at least 100 miles an hour, then later us spotting a huge plume of black smoke, only to find the poor gentleman's car on fire on the side of the road. No one was hurt, but the car was an obvious total loss. After eventually getting to Knotts Berry Farm, where the show was scheduled, we were a bit road weary, driving a 1972 Ford Mustang H.O., that we were hoping to sell. But this show was special; you see, there was a red 68 Cougar GT-E sporting a highly modified engine compartment and a 427 engine. Having never seen a GT-E before, I was awestruck! I spoke with Bill and enjoyed the story about his car. As I sat along a fence row admiring Bill's car, a gentleman walked up and sat next to me and mentioned that he had the only known four speed GT-E. Well, of course I was even more curious about this special model.

The gentleman turned out to be George Huisman. Thus, began my quest to find my 427 Cat!





I felt very fortunate to find this Cougar, and even more that I got to share some of my story!

We will be attending and showing our latest GT-E at Knott's Berry Farm for the annual Fabulous Fords Forever Event! I hope to see and meet everyone there to celebrate its 50-year anniversary!

My first GT-E After a few moments of conversation with Hank Huisman of Odessa Florida, on the phone, I decided to buy plane tickets to fly to Tampa and check out the first prospective GT-E Cougar I was looking to purchase. Hank was there to pick me up and went above and beyond with accommodations! The next morning, after a somewhat sleepless night, since getting in was late. we had a quick breakfast. Obviously, I was jonesing to check out the car. The car turned out to have fewer miles than thought, logging in only 38,000 over the course of 20+ years.

After a quick inspection, I made a full price offer which Hank accepted. I couldn't wait to take delivery of the car, which sported its original drivetrain, but had been repainted once already.

Hank Huisman man is a standup guy that stuck to his word, sometimes very hard to find in this hobby. Most Cougar guys have been extremely helpful and that's the most important thing for me, a hobby with like-minded individuals. What more could you ask for?

My first drive in the GT-E sporting a 427 was quite an experience. I've driven many muscle cars but this one surprised me. When I approached an intersection with a yellow light and decided to accelerate through, what surprised me when I hit the accelerator already doing 40 miles an hour was the tires spinning into third gear. It seems uncommon for an automatic at that high speed. I was impressed from that moment on. Imagine a 427 Stroker that runs on pump gas and is very well mannered when street driven.

If you see me pass you on the road, wave as I go by or stop and see me at the next event....or gas station.

Best Regards,  
Mike Johns





# Randy Smalley's GT-E

**8F93W537798 M**

## HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 of 256 Cougar GT-Es produced with the W-code 427 side-oiler and automatic transmission
- Delivered new to McCarty Motor Co. in Jonesboro, Arkansas, as a dealer demonstrator
- 427 side-oiler engine
- 4-barrel carburetor
- Dual exhaust
- C6 Cruise-O-Matic transmission
- 3.50 rear axle
- Power steering
- Power brakes with front discs
- Red with black interior and vinyl top
- Bucket seats and center console
- Wood-grain interior accents
- Tilt steering column
- AM radio
- Tinted glass
- Headrests
- Styled steel wheels
- BF Goodrich radial tires



The Mercury Cougar is often overlooked by collectors because of the popularity of its cousin, the Ford Mustang. However, this 1968 Cougar GT-E can hold its own among any of the muscle cars of the 1960s. When first introduced in early 1968, the GT-E option included the side-oiler 427, a 390 HP big-block that ranks as one of Ford's most legendary powerplants. Even better, the GT-E package was a complete performance upgrade, also adding the Merc-O-Matic 3-speed automatic transmission, Super Competition Handling Package, power steering and power front disc brakes. Externally, the GT-E looked the part with a power-dome hood with simulated air intakes, unique blackout grille, two-tone paint, quad exhaust tips, 7.0L emblems and styled steel wheels. According to the Marti Report, the LaQuay Cougar GT-E is one of 256 produced with the W-code 427 and automatic transmission. It was delivered new to McCarty Motor Company in Jonesboro, Arkansas, as a dealer demonstrator.





By Gary Woodward (CCOA #8813)

At first I was skeptical that summer day in 1967 when Dad pulled into the driveway with Mom's brand new XR-7. The year before he had traded in our beloved '62 Colony Park that had those great "George Jetson" taillights for a boxy '66. Now the '54 Victoria was nowhere in sight – the car I desperately wanted to drive, since I was a '54 model too. All of that melted away when we went for our first ride. That beautiful wood grained dash! A built-in tach and those oh-so-cool toggle switches! That long hood! The hide-away headlights and the magic taillights! The glorious air conditioning for those hundred-degree Sacramento summer afternoons! OK, it was a 289, but it was a FOUR BARREL! Once around the block and we were hooked. Dad had scored! Lucky Mom! Lucky us.

So started our love affair with Mercury Cougars. I learned to drive on the '67, went on my first date in it. Hmmm... wonder what ever happened to Janine....

1968 saw the advent of what we called the monster-motor Cougars. 427s and

428s, oh my! With Dan Gurney driving a Cougar in the Trans Am, serious lust had set in. It was mostly my middle brother, Bruce, and I who were smitten. We loved the Cougs and later the Boss 302 Mustangs as well. By 1973, prices on these cars had begun to fall and Bruce was the first to land a monster. His first was a Cobra Jet XR-7 G. I am here to tell you that car was (is) a beast. We thought the '67 was pretty fast. Ha. The first ride in that G was breathtaking.

We kept looking in the paper for monster-motor Cougars and Bosses, but it wasn't until 1977 and I was going to college in southern California that I spotted a GT-E in the LA Times. What was a starving college student to do? Call Dad, of course!

"Dad! There's a GT-E in the paper. It's a Cobra Jet! You have to buy it!!!"

"I have to buy it?"

"You have to buy it!!!"

"Well, go take a look and tell me what you find."



I looked. He bought. One owner, nice shape, original paint, never hit, fast as – well – maybe not quite as fast as Bruce's, but plenty fast. Dad was smitten. He loved that car. What really got him was how docile the car would be until you

applied your right foot sufficiently to wake the beast. It still cracks me up thinking of him, this very conservative Federal judge, driving his hot rod Cougar to work and parking it next to his colleague's German "Merc."

A couple of years later I picked up my first Boss 302. Bruce had one too, and our favorite pastime became chasing each other through the hills of northern California. Often it would be Dad in the GT-E, Bruce in his G or Boss, our friend, Richard in his '68 XR-7 4-speed, and me in my Boss. One of our favorite trips was to fly over the hills to the sprint car races in Calistoga. How we ever survived those crazy days is a testament to the reality of guardian angels. So many stories. So many good times. There's the one about "Oh \$hit Bridge"... The one about Richard dumping his Cougar on its side... And the one about...

Well years, families, and careers would temper the craziness, but the cars were always the thread that kept our family close. Dad continued to drive the GT-E occasionally, but its lot was to be that of an outdoor kitty. His first new car, a '41 Ford, occupied the garage while the Cougar lived on the driveway and slowly began to weather. Bruce wisely shot a thick coat of paint on it one time to keep the rust demons away.

About ten years ago, the time had come. Dad was in his nineties and was getting his affairs in order. I just now had the funny thought how much he and that car were alike - older and weathered, but still on the road with a heart of gold. Dad handed the GT-E over to lucky me. What a cool day.

Of course it just had to be one of those hundred-degree-plus days that I chose to drive the car from Sacramento to LA for its makeover. I ran it over the Grapevine with the heater on full blast. News flash: Big blocks get hot. Me too. Good times.

I assembled a good team to do the restoration. Jim Pinkerton was instrumental in helping me to

decide how far to go with it. I decided to take it to a good driver condition since that's what it has always been - a running, registered, driving car.

The very best day in the life of the GT-E, though, was after the restoration when I drove it back to Sacramento, pulled up the driveway, and Dad came out to see it. Words fail. You can imagine. It was just so great that he got to see it finished and to drive it one last time.



For the last ten years I've driven it often to our local cruise-in, twice to Cougar events in northern California, and annually to our Cougar show in SoCal. It has been featured twice in the "Milestone" area at the Knott's Berry Farm All-Ford show.





# Jeff Willets' GT-E

By Jeff Willets (CCOA #9941)

To set the tone for an understanding of my obsession with Ford/Lincoln/Mercury products, this was set in my DNA by my father, who was a service manager at the local Lincoln/Mercury dealer. When I was very young, there is a photo of me sitting on the parts counter with a beer, and I can't be more than 18 months old.

So the DNA of the corporate family of Ford/Lincoln/Mercury was cast upon me. My father owned nothing but Mercurys or Fords for all of my life, except for one four-year period of a complete meltdown, I can only assume. He bought a 63 Chevy station wagon but thankfully he traded that in on a 67 Galaxie 500 XL, with a 390, which in turn was traded in on a 1969 Mercury Marauder X-100 with the big 429. What a car that was!

By now, I had come of age, and my first car in 1965 was a 65 Mustang, which I totalled in the fall of 67. That brought me to a 63 T-Bird. I was really getting the bug for high performance. I had tried to convince my father that as a responsible 16 year old, I should own a 1966 427 Cobra. That was received with a hearty laugh, however my constant pleadings for anything Shelby WAS wearing him down. Not as fast I wanted, but step-by-step, I was getting closer to my dream.

When the new offerings from the manufacturers were unleashed upon the public, I was still hankering for a GT 500. I HAD to have the big block, and the brochures all said that it could be had with the famous race 427 engine. It was the terror of all of racing and to think you could get the same engine that won LeMans in 67 in the Ford Mark 4 was beyond my wildest dreams. Of course, no cars were built with the 427, not in 67 or 68.

In the January 68 issue of Playboy was a photo of a beautiful blue Cougar XR-7 427 GT-E. I HAD to have it! The biggest obstacle to me buying one was that I didn't have a job and we weren't wealthy. Dad wasn't shelling out five grand for a 67 GT500, a 68 GT500, or a GT-E. Now the fire of needing the fastest and best car was enough for me to find a job that would pay enough to support my addiction. All I needed was for Dad to agree to put down the deposit and sign for the car, as I was too young. Well, that is where we now had to really up the pressure. In the meantime, Shelby had released the GT 500 KR.

Now I was conflicted, GT-E, or GT 500 KR. Dear old Dad was a hard person to convince and 68 came and went. Thankfully, the local dealers still had several GT500 KRS on the lot, and the Mercury dealer had a GT-E. It was now 69, and after doing some investigation, it was revealed that the GT 500 KR, would



several seventies and eighties XR-7s, a 72 Pantera (my dream car), a 1966 427 Cobra, a 66 Fairlane 500 XL, which I restored, a 66 Galaxie 500 XL, which I restored and sold to the Imperial Palace Car Museum in Las Vegas, where I was now living.

When I restore a vehicle or own one like the 427 Cobra, it becomes a “show” piece. I received several BEST Cobra awards at the Shelby National Convention and was offered a job at Cobra Restorers. When I restore a vehicle, it is an anal-retentive experience.

Onto the GT-E. My desire for one, as I said, never left me, and over the years I kept track of their value and what was out there for sale. In 2005, I had a deposit on a continuation 427 Cobra, bought a 1 of 1 66 Ford Custom 2 door 427 R code, and was thinking of buying a replica Ford Mark 4. I was always watching eBay, and my GT-E was on the site. It was in Salt Lake City, not far from Vegas, which was good. I can't remember what he was asking, or the reserve, but the photos showed a really nice car, with an incorrect hood scoop, and an incorrect vinyl top.



The car didn't sell, but he had provided a phone number in the ad, which I called weekly! Long story short, after about six months, I finally wore him down and asked him his bottom line. When he told me, it was in my ballpark, and I told him “SOLD!” My wife and I drove up, paid him in cash, trailered it back to Vegas, and began the restoration. My plan was to take it to Barrett Jackson. This was 2007, and to date, no GT-E had ever gone through a major auction.

I removed EVERYTHING from the car, took over 2,000 photos of the disassembly, documented every paint mark, chalk mark, grease pencil mark, every nuance of the assembly, every position/type of clip, for any and all wiring. Wiring was disassembled and rewrapped with correct wrapping, all interior seams, within body, were redone. EVERYTHING was replicated as done originally by carefully paying attention to the photos of the position and assembly of every component on the car. The interior of the car was painted with Red Oxide Primer, as per factory.



The backside of the instrument panel was restored. The metal rod from the interior door handle to the locking mechanism has a cotton type cloth on it. After 40 some years, it was black. It is now as white as the winter landscape in the Arctic. EVERY nut and bolt were either cleaned/restored or replaced with NOS parts. The drive line on this car is original and numbers matching, all with the metal tags that they were born with. Original 427 engine, of course, C-6, rear end, EVERYTHING.

Again, all paint marks, paint daubs, chalk marks, and grease pencil markings were replicated, as originally found on the car during disassembly. These markings were verified, if they were missing, by comparing the markings on concours correct Mustangs that were built in Dearborn on the same assembly line as the GT-E. I defy anyone to tell me that Ford didn't put the same paint marks on the same part/item on the Mustang, being built on the same line as the GT-E, at the SAME time, as the GT-E. They certainly didn't have one procedure for Mustangs, and one for Cougars, so common sense prevails.

only be a one-year model, which told me the KR would be worth more than the GT-E, because of the Shelby name and its rarity. That solved the problem.

Long story short, my father sprung for the down payment and bought the car in March of 69, HOWEVER, the desire for a GT-E never left me. In the ensuing years, I've owned a 69 GT 500,

No expense was spared. The time line was supposed to be seven months. The body shop had the car for 17 months, but little did I know that they had contracts with five rental car companies in Vegas. Every Monday morning their lot was full, and my car was put on the back burner. Once I received it back, it was time to freshen up the engine, as it was very tired looking cosmetically. It ran well, but this was a CONCOURS restoration. Nothing less than perfect would suffice.

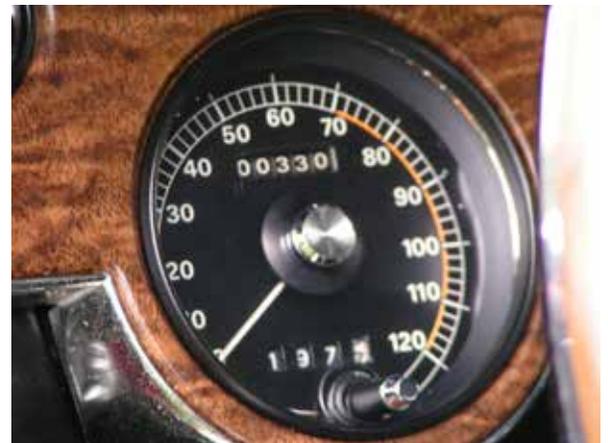


In the meantime, it was now summer. The engine builder/mechanic shop combination couldn't care less. They were making money hand over fist repairing all of the broken-down A/C units, so again, back burner. THEN I got tongue cancer, another setback of major proportions, my LIFE. Long story short, we moved back to my home town, Toledo, in 2011 to be close to family and friends. Restoration was 90% complete, and frankly I was no longer in any hurry to finish. Life got in the way again. In June 2012, I got lung cancer, and they removed the lower half of my left lung.



So, I finished the concours restoration in late 2014. Again, this car was restored to MUSEUM quality condition. It is presented as if it just came off of the assembly line, done to perfection, BUT items that would "flash" rust, were left to "flash" rust. You will not find another 68 Cougar XR-7, 427 GT-E, in this condition. Seldom driven, taken to only a couple of major car shows where they have over 500 cars. Cars are judged by REAL judges, to the point if you have a stone in your tire treads, you will have points deducted, winning Best of Show every time.

According to Pinkerton, this is one of five built, and is now one of three known to exist. Without a doubt, the finest example there is. The entire restoration was performed by me and my wife, all except the painting and body work, the vinyl roof, and the engine work. Engine compartment and undercarriage paint was done by me. The restoration was started in 2007, and finally finished by me, painting the pin stripes, in 2016.



I forgot the most important part to those looking at my car.

It's been said many times by many people that "they" restored their car the way "they" think it should have been built. Well, I kind of did that, to make the car look a little more interesting/aggressive at car shows. I did install a front valance that belongs on a XR-7G, HOWEVER, I do have the correct front valance for my car, the original valance. It can be installed on the car in about 20 minutes. You only need to unbolt it, and unplug the Lucas Lights, and bolt up the original. And a front spoiler, we all know that you can't have a muscle car without a front spoiler - just look at the Eliminator. I have the original exhaust pipe extensions and the original AM radio in boxes, and the original date code, born with exhaust manifolds.



# Some Cats Get More Than Nine Lives!

## Ben Shearman's 1968 Mercury Cougar GT-E

By Ben Shearman (CCOA #9965)

I grew up working on classic Fords with my father. I always enjoyed hearing the stories that my father would tell about street racing from the late 60s and early 70s. He truly grew up in the era of cheap gas and abundant big block fun! Perhaps one of the most indelible cars that my father would reminisce about was the "king of the quarter mile" in his town, a wicked Cardinal Red 1968 Mercury Cougar GT-E. Wrinkle wall tires, late night hell raising, \$50.00 bets on a race – almost had me smelling the unburned hydrocarbons on a late balmy evening in western New York. My father knew the original owner of the car well and witnessed him race this car many times during the late 60s and early 70s.

Years passed, and the GT-E changed hands multiple times. It ended up with acquaintance of my father who owned the car for over thirty years. Fast forward to 2016, when I finally asked my father about the mysterious GT-E that sat in a small,

to a very faded Cardinal Red GT-E. Ironically, the pine trees had saved the car from a rusty grave, as the shallow root systems prevented vegetation from growing up under the car. I was only able to get the trunk open and tunneled through the car verifying its important "W" code 427 VIN stamps in all the sheet metal, the original VIN tags on the door and dash, as well as assessing the overall condition of the car. My father had not laid a hand or eyes on this car in over 30 years so this was an incredible experience for him as well. I could see his eyes morph back in time to the days of loud exhaust and squealing tires.

After a close inspection, I determined that the car would need a professional full rotisserie restoration. It was all there, but neglect and the elements had taken its toll. Over the next few months, I went back and forth with the owner about me purchasing the car, yet he just could not let it go. Fearing the car would ultimately end up one with the earth again under those pine trees, I went back to the owner with one final offer, and to my delight, he accepted! He was very melancholy, but said "I know I cannot do the car justice, and I know you will bring it back to its former glory." He had saved three large binders of original receipts, articles, information on the car, owner's manual, etc., which was really nice to have.

I remember the day we cut the chains away and aired up the tires so that we could drag the car up on our rollback. It was very exciting to see this car just roll for the first time in decades! The owner of the car actually shed a tear as the car was loaded up, but you could tell it was a tear of joy. He knew the car would be restored and preserved for generations to come.

back woods property in western New York. He said that the gentleman who owned it would never sell it and it was chained up to some pine trees way in the back of his property. As a collector and enthusiast, I knew I had to acquire the GT-E that I grew up hearing such awesome stories about. The "king of the quarter mile" had to be mine and I yearned to bring it back to its former glory.

The first few visits to the owner of the car were met with fierce resistance. He was unwilling to even let us look at the car some 100 meters from the road. Finally, after explaining to the owner about my desire to restore the car, and also showing him some of my other cars, he reluctantly agreed to let us take a look. Eagerly, I made my way through the thick weeds and pine trees

My GT-E is a factory XR-7 car in Cardinal Red with a black leather interior and is a one-of-one produced GT-E! It is very rare in that it has the center console, eight track radio, and the coveted 3.50 rear end with traction-lok! We are currently in the middle of a three-year rotisserie, concours style restoration. It has been a long road as correct parts for these cars are very difficult to find. Finding an original carburetor and distributor proved to be incredibly hard, however a special shout out to Jim Pinkerton for his help and dedication to these cars. He not only has been indelibly helpful with parts and questions, but has turned into a good friend as well. We anticipate the car being completely finished by mid 2019 and cannot wait to take it down the road after 35 years of sitting under pine trees. It is true, some Cats do get more than nine lives!





# Brian Aust

(CCOA #8424)



# GT-E Collectibles

By Rob May (CCOA #9623)

In 1968, for one year only, a GT-E option was available on Mercury Cougars. Collectibles are not common and were often only produced for one year as well. Various paper products including articles, photos, books, cards, and brochures are available. This article's author's favorite items are the miniature Cat cars. Companies producing GT-E related models include vintage: Dinky, Bandai, Republic, and Revell. Of note is the fact that while boxes stated or showed GT-E options, the actual models inside did not always reflect any GT-E features! Modern manufactures of GT-E items are Johnny Lightning and M2. Photos by Georgina Garcia May. All items will remain in the May family's museum. Several 1968 collectibles with hood scoops are available but lacking other GT-E features, they are not included within this write-up.

England's former Dinky company sold a "#174 Ford Mercury Cougar." This has a GT-E photo on box while not mentioning "GT-E." Note the car is shown in red on the box, however, only blue cars were offered. These metal 1/43th scale Cats had opening doors with a moving radio antennae. Sadly, only this one Mercury Cougar was produced.

Japan's Bandai created various 1968 Mercury Cougar "tin" cars. These 1/18th scale thin metal Cats were either friction or battery powered. Bandai often placed rear lights on top of their cars. One of their Cougar cars incorporated a very realistic functioning rear sequential turn signal. A red GT-E illustration can be found on one of their boxes, although no GT-E words are added. Two different pictures can be found. Both have the horizontal center GT-E only grille molding, however, only one has the side fender emblem. Interestingly, the toy car did not have any GT-E features. Bandai is still in business, sadly though this was their only reference to GT-E. See *Legendary Cougar Magazine*, Vol 2, Issue 6, for more photos of these Japanese Tin Cats.

Marketing dilemmas ARE apparent in several advertising and manufacturing items. The Dan Gurney special option package initiated in 1967 which continued in 1968. Also, as featured in the Spring 2018 ATSOTC, the XR7-G was a rare option offered in 1968. Republic from Los Angeles produced a Dan Gurney Road Rally slot car item. While no mention of the GT-E nor XR7-G car is mentioned, the box shows two 1968 cars with the grille from a GT-E and hood similar to both. The included yellow and red Cats also were molded with these features.

Revell manufactures both toys and small scale models. Two 1/32 sized Cats can be found. "Cougar GT-E" is stated on their snap-together box. While there are variations on the box top art, all reflect a non GT-E body in their pictures as well as the molded in green plastic kit inside. Revell also sold a gold slot car. Once again, the body did not reflect the GT-E option mentioned on the box. In 1986, Revell merged with Monogram. Revell/Monogram produced annual Mercury Cougar models (up to 1992). Still in business today, it would be great to see some old lines reproduced as their retro model production has increased during the past few years.

Considered "modern" collectibles, although some date back to 2005, Johnny Lightning issued 1/64th scale GT-E diecasts with fairly accurate details. Multiple colors were offered including red, green, and blue.

Matching cards were offered on some of the various packaging.

Recently, in 2011, M2 also sold 1/64th scale diecasts "1968 Mercury Cougar GT-E 428." They can be harder to find than the more accurate Johnny Lightning GT-E Cats.

Sadly, no manufacturer had the forethought to produce 2018 50th anniversary cars of the GT-E Cat!





# 1979 Cougar Review --- Mad Max Style ---

By John Kreuz (CCOA #9931)

Imagine a world in which civilization has been destroyed by a nuclear holocaust. Who knows who started it? It might have been a pissing match between two nations to see who had the bigger red button. Most of the United States is a barren wasteland. Gangs of raiders prey on travelers, while power-hungry despots rule over the weak and irradiated. Vast majorities of land are uninhabitable. In this world, there is a big event that happens at the end of September, a five-day period in which there is a temporary peace between the constant warring tribes. This time is set aside to come together as one and celebrate another year above ground. A time of opening up trade, brokering treaties, revelry and turning a blind eye to the harsh embrace of the wastes. This event is called "Wasteland Weekend."



Now, bring yourself back into the real world's current time. There really is an event called "Wasteland Weekend," where people can get away for a while and insert themselves into the Mad Max-inspired, post-apocalyptic world. Imagine a Mad Max-themed, post-apocalyptic, alcohol fueled 4-day "Renn Faire" of sorts (only because you have to dress in "theme," similar to being an extra on any of the Mad Max movies). Car shows, live music, bartering, camping in the desert, drinking, swimsuit competitions, fire dancing, Thunderdome cage-fighting, bounty hunting, a sport that is a mix of rugby, lacrosse and wrestling, and lots of alcohol.

2016 was my first year. I didn't bring a themed car, however, I vowed that for the next year that I was going to run a themed vehicle (not required unless you actually want to be a part of the car show and drive it in the "City").

So, a friend of mine had a base-model 1979 Mercury Cougar that he had just purchased. He bought the car and literally was whacked the next day making a left-hand turn. The car still ran fine, but the bumper was pushed to the driver's side. It needed the fenders and a hood to be fixed. He had straightened it all out pretty well. I bought it for \$500 and drove her home.

Out of about 172,000 1979 Mercury Cougars, only 5,524 were built as four-door pillared hardtop sedans. Under the hood is a 351 modified engine with a 2-barrel carburetor, 3-speed automatic transmission, and a Ford 9-inch rear end. The car came standard without A/C, 14" steel wheels with deluxe wheel covers, a vinyl top, a passenger side remote side mirror, and the quarter windows on the C pillars. The car has manual vents, crank windows, no power locks, no cruise, no tilt, no frills, no thrills.

Being a Milwaukee car its entire life, the ravages of time and the relentless bombardment of salt have taken their toll. Rust had eaten away most of the driver's side foot well, the rear wheel wells, parts of the hood, doors, and most of the back half of the frame. It was definitely repainted sometime in its life. Whomever had done so chose a cherry red with faint rainbow metallic flakes, making the car appear 20 foot good. Up close, it is apparent that the metal is not doing very well.

My original plan was to restore it, but with a gaping hole in the driver's foot well and not a straight or non-rusty panel on the car, AND a leaky roof, I decided that it wasn't feasible to restore her, so I figured, "Well... Wasteland taxi." I am an Uber driver by trade, so I figured I'd make a character that's pretty much a Mad Max meets Pony Express meets Cabbie from "Escape from New York." A trailer hitch and a homemade spare tire holder for the back was added, along with a 5-gallon jerry can filled with water.

It was finally time to head out. The trip would take about 24 hours of straight driving time, 2,004 miles. The car was loaded to the hilt with all of the stuff we



were going to trade, all the spare parts and fluids, all four spare tires and all of my wife's stuff. There was literally only room for myself and a clear visual of the passenger side rearview mirror. Having faith in the HellCat Express (not to be confused with a Hellcat Dodge motor), the journey commenced.

The first thing noticed was the epic roar coming from the rear tires. They were so badly chopped that I couldn't hear the radio unless it was cranked up. The exhaust was insanely loud too. Dual exhaust setup, but both Cats were leaking from every orifice. The cut up stop sign shoved under the carpet did little to suppress noise. Also, the sign got boiling hot as the journey progressed. IT was like driving a hot plate. Finally, since the front left tire was about 10 inches wide, a bias-ply tire and filled to 40 psi, out of those 10 inches of tread only about 2 inches of it actually contacted the road. This provided for a hellish driving condition. The front end of the car was very wandery. The car would basically make lane changes by itself. Adding the fact that the alignment was severely out of whack, I had to wrestle the car down the road for the ENTIRE 2,000 miles.

So, 2,000 miles of no cruise, no A/C, no floors, four tapes, one speaker and three days to get there. Along the journey, I realized that the Cougar with a 351M, fully loaded, gets 13 mpg. What I ALSO found out is that it'll use an entire crankcase of oil every 200 miles, so basically 5 quarts every fill up.

I ran into my first problem on I-55, right around Bloomington, IL. The car started to lose engine power. After limping the Cougar to the gas station, I swapped the filters from an extra carb brought along and it fired up healthy. Upon filling her up, it was noticed that my jerry can was gone. I was truly heartbroken.

I stopped at an abandoned gas station in Sarcoxie, MO. It was a perfect time for a photo shoot.

We plunged through pretty intense rainstorms coming out of Tucumcari, NM; the skies turned black and opened up,

releasing a deluge up my ancient steed. A steady stream of water poured down the passenger side A pillar and the rearview mirror. The little wipers emerged from their galley and valiantly defended my clear view against the enemy precipitation. The slick pavement actually made it easier to control the drunken steering as the last remaining speaker blasted "Riding the Storm Out" in a moment of irony. Then, as quickly and suddenly as the storm came, it left. Beams of sunlight illuminated the sprawling pavement ahead of me. The wipers retreated into their galley, weary and bereaved. Kreuz and his trusty Cougar had weathered the storm.

I met up with my friend at his house in Laguna, NM, west of Albuquerque. The rain hit again as I had left the valley of Albuquerque, not as ferocious this time, but once the GPS had told me to leave the paved road, I worried a bit. The two-ton car wallowed up the clay paths, over cattle guards and through vacant houses and rusted out, malaise-era cars. Clay-colored mud was flung in every direction and the Cougar was slathered on both sides, but those mud tires in back never lost grip and I never got stuck. The town of Laguna was small, but one could tell that I-40 had decimated the little town, which was severed by old Route 66. The rusted, bullet hole-ridden signs still pointed out where old 66 lay. I felt honored that my mismatched tires rolled down the same cracked and neglected pavement that was once "The Mother Road."

All the while, other Wastelanders from all over the country are making their treks out to the Mohave Desert. A group of them have joined together and formed "The Great 40 Migration." There were pre-planned campsites every night for those who chose to join.

The landscape had leveled off and turned into a bright tan fighting with a darkening sky. From the time we left Laguna until we rolled into Kingman, AZ, 10 hours had elapsed. It was late. The next morning, the sun was up. Spirits were high. I could feel the anticipation growing. 361 days of thinking, planning,



yearning and feeling helpless have passed. I was now ahead of the convoy. I couldn't help myself. I wound the car up to 85 in some stretches, only to be hobbled back down to 50 due to sharp inclines as we passed through the mountains. The yellow desert had become rocky and orange once again.

Upon steering the Cougar onto a dirt road, we were launched over the first ravine. The jolt was bone-jarring as I bounced off the ceiling. The old sedan rumbled over the washboard roads, every fastener being put to the test as the entire car spasmed.



Bits and pieces of rust flaked off the car as it rumbled down the road, passing Prius', CRVs and the occasional themed car. The Cougar left a giant rooster tail of dirt and dust in its wake.

About a mile and a half in, I met the first big gorge in the road. Having not seen it coming, we hit it doing at least 35. I felt as though I crashed into the ground. The entire front bumper was pushed upwards as I got out to check. No leaking fluids, car was still running, so I jumped in and kept going. I did slow down when I hit the second big ravine. THAT'S when I hit the third ravine. You'd have figured I would have learned by then. Nope. Luckily, the car held up and I made my way to the line of cars waiting to get in. Everyone was stunned that a rattle trap, \$500 rust bucket made it 2,000 overloaded and over revved miles of insanity.

I immediately found a place to put all the extra stuff I had brought to barter with, supplies and spare parts. I chose a spot of desert by the edge of camp known as "The Wilds." I was in a race against time since I had to pick up my wife and in order to get into the city, you need to be dressed in theme. I donned my gun belt (made out of seatbelts) and my pauldron (made out of Illinois license plates), my hat and my goggles. Using checker duct tape, a shoulder stripe was made around the car, and a taxi sign was mounted...we were good to go.

The Mercury was a hit. I had plenty of people yelling out TAXI at me, and when I stopped, they were genuinely surprised that I was willing to pick them up. The car was scenery in a music video shoot. There were other Fords, namely an 86 Crown Victoria LX and a 72 Mercury Grand Marquis, but no other Cougars. There is one guy building a pre-runner 68 Cougar for next year. We met new friends, reunited with old ones, gambled at the Last Chance Casino; my wife fought in the Thunderdome. You face one way and there is the din of conversation, the rumble of engines, columns of fire shooting into the sky,

live music and fun. When you turn 180 degrees, you are staring off into the darkness.

Another thing about Wasteland is that people are very kind and caring. One of the Facebook followers gave me a kind of rusty 5-gallon jerry can because I had lost mine. I gave him a piece of tire tread (I called them "tire pelts") in return.

The trip back was relatively uneventful. After arriving home safely, the Cat was parked in my backyard. My plans are to raise the front end because it has a horrible approach angle, weld a brush guard or something to the front, reinstall my spare tire holder better, as well as a jerry can holder. Plans include finding an old police light bar, just the bar section and mounting spotlights across the top. I will try to bring the Cougar out next year. The future is not set, and we will see. The Road will provide.

I would not hesitate to drive this Cat ANYWHERE. To my Cougar I say, "You have been witnessed. May you ride eternal, shiny and chrome."





# Matt S. Slay

CCOA #5002

12/21/1971 - 4/8/2018

When we are young, we spend time looking at the calendar, wishing it was later in the week, the month, the year, and so on. We wished we were older and had more time spent in the sun, doing what we want, surrounded by the people we care about and enjoying their company.

Let's start at the beginning and add a little color to how Matt ended up with his notorious white 1969 convertible. Back in the late 80s, Matt Slay wanted to own a 1969 Mercury Cougar that one of the ladies in his neighborhood was selling. Matt's father wanted nothing to do with his son driving an old car. He tried to dissuade his son but, with his mind made up, Matt was given a "car allowance" by his Dad. Instead of spending all of it on a new, flashy car, he chose to use half for his white Cougar and save the rest for investing. His Dad told him he could only purchase the Cougar as long as he kept up with the repairs. There would NOT be a non-running vehicle parked at the house, taking up space. In addition, Matt was not allowed to have car parts scattered everywhere. His journey into the hobby had now begun.

Like many of us who have currently or previously had classic (now antique) cars, Matt began to make trips routinely to his local auto parts store. On one of those trips, he was approached outside by an older, shady character who was interested in his Cougar and wanted to start a Cougar club. Well, that is how he often joked about the startup of the Dallas Fort Worth Cougar Club (DFW Cats), which evolved into the Lone Star Cougar Club (LSCC).

In the 80s, the ancient pre-internet days, there was very little Cougar information available. The two primary sources that I discovered were John's Classic Cougar Catalog and the Cougar Club of America's ATSOTC, which I learned about from John's catalog. It wasn't until the late 90s, when cell phones and internet usage became more advanced, that we were able to reach out of our smaller circles and start to network with other Cougar owners. That is when I first heard of Cougar Regional Clubs and began networking with people from time to time. I spoke with Matt as a fellow younger person in the hobby. We always laughed and joked about hanging out with people in parking lots and working on older cars. We met in person years later when we both started traveling to events.

I could relate to Matt Slay on so many levels. Over the years we talked about everything from The Six Million Dollar Man and Buck Rogers to sailboats, vintage airplanes and the Goodyear blimp. We shared stories about everyone and everything.



Each of us has that one person that unloads and uploads everything they are thinking and going through. When someone was grumpy or happy in the club, Matt was eager to call and share the news, good or not so good; it was always welcomed conversation. Matt was quick to share the five people who could get through to his phone, even when in silent mode. He was always a great person and proper gentleman, which is an odd term for a guy to use, but if you think about Matt's social graces, manners, and the lack of foul language, you understand. Also, remember how many times over the years you can point out the overdressed person in the room... from shoes (loafers or boots) when working on cars, to the number of t-shirts worn. There was a constant call, text, email, or just random photo shared daily; well, almost. Some of you who know the days and months where the phrases used were: "Going Dark." "Radio Silent." or "Poor Reception at the Farm."

On April 8th, 7:26pm, my family was tucked in for the night. I was at a place where I owed an email to the CCOA Board, Registrars, Volunteers and Regional Cougar Club contacts. It was a surreal moment thinking of what to say. Very few people knew what I had kept inside for almost 12 hours. It was not public at this time, but Matt had touched so many people, I had to say something, and this is what I came up with:

"Friends, it is with sad eyes and a heavy heart that I write this note. I have been at a loss for words since I received the news this morning that Matt has passed. It had been a hard two weeks since Matt had been in the hospital. Up until the past two weeks, we spoke a few times a week. Mainly, I did the listening, as no words seemed to come out. We chatted about things that seemed to be important, not knowing that one of the conversations would be our last. There were endless pocket-dials over the past few months, as his condition took a turn for the worse. I was hopeful that this email would not have to be sent and that if I did not send an email, maybe it would not be true. My thoughts are with Alicia and Sydney, and with all of us; he was loved by so many and will be missed by more than he will ever know. Please do not broadcast this news on social media as it is Alicia's right to notify all of Matt's friends when she is up to it. Once arrangements have been made, I will let the group know, and in turn, please pass along the information. Hug your family, please, call your friends, make the relationships you



have now know how special they are to you. Matt was taken way too soon and way too young."

Matt S. Slay (CCOA #5002) was 2016 elected Club Services Director, a position he held until his passing. Matt was an active member of Lone Star Cougar Club and held many roles over the years. His final position was very fitting as Director of Social Media for [www.lonestarcougarclub.com](http://www.lonestarcougarclub.com).

When tragedy strikes, it is almost as if time stops. It is a hard feeling to describe. I know where I was when \_\_\_\_ comes to mind, as many people can fill in the blank with events that impacted them deeply. In an instant you know that the world has changed, and every clock tick forward will not change the event that just happened. People discuss the things that truly impact us such as birth and death and everything in between. I can say that this is a hard one for me. It is so hard to put into words the void that is felt with such a close friend passing at a young age. The fact is that the recent past (not even a full year) has taken too many people from our lives. Matt was a family member to so many of us, a fast friend that with his charm and smile broke down many barriers and made long lasting friendship connections with ease. For me, the quote "Friends are Family that You Choose" is a good one, as so many people refer to family either by birth or by marriage as who they were saddled with (I know many people have exceptions to this and amazing extended family).

I think of my friend often when I see a sailboat, vintage plane, Goodyear blimp, a Mercury Cougar, and our mutual friends and extended family. My heart goes out to everyone who has lost something with Matt's passing, but especially in my thoughts and prayers are Alicia and Sydney, who need everyone to be strong for them and with them.

Video Tribute Link  
<https://www.tributeslides.com/tributes/show/JS9WBF3Q7XWWRKK6>

## Below are a few notes received from around the world

I actually thought I wouldn't answer any CCOA related mails during my trip, but I have to make an exception for this. It's very sad to hear about Matt's passing. I was already wondering why he hadn't submitted any articles for the last two or three ATSOTCs but I would never have imagined it could be because of such a horrible reason. When I met him at the Western National Show two years ago, he was the nicest guy ever. Really a great, open and lovely person. It's such a loss.

*Thierry Frisch ~ ATSOTC Editor*

Thank you for the email regarding Matt. This is terrible news. I enjoyed talking and meeting Matt on several occasions. Please give his wife and daughter our condolences. Definitely one that is gone way too soon. I will miss his smile and southern accent, along with the posts on Facebook.

*Sincerely, Stan and Jodie Owens ~ SoCal Cougar Club*

Thank you for letting us know. I am so sorry to hear this news. I had the pleasure of meeting Matt and Alicia at several of the shows over the past two years. He was an easy person to get along with. His work with the CCOA and the Cougar community will be greatly missed. My condolences to his family.

*Randy Goodling ~ CCOA Merchandise Manager*

Very, very, sad news and a great loss.

*Becci Tomlyn ~ San Diego Cougar Club*

This is one of those that just seems impossible. Matt was so full of life and boundless goodness. Our world is a lesser place with his passing. May our thoughts and prayers be with Alicia and Sydney, and yes, hug your family and friends - life is so fragile.

All my best,

*Gary Woodward ~ SoCal Cougar Club*

Prayers for Alicia and Sydney.

*Mark Smith ~ CCOA Financial Director ~ Mercury Stray Cats Cougar Club*

So sad and unbelievable. What a great guy.

*Mike Brown ~ SoCal Cougar Club*



This is absolutely horrible news.

*Jim Karamanis ~ DelMarVa Cougar Club*

I am so sorry to hear of Matt's passing. I am honored I got to meet him at our events; what a genuinely nice person. So sad.

*Kim Custis - Mercury Stray Cats Cougar Club*

Words completely fail me at these kinds of times - that we will all miss Matt seems like such a pitiful understatement.

*Jim Pinkerton ~ GT-E Registrar ~ Cascade Cougar Club*

My prayers go out to all those who mourn his loss!

*Mike Johns - Utah Cougar Club*

I'm stunned. How terribly sad.. I'm very glad I got to know Matt even a bit more last summer. He is a very special soul, I know that. Thank you for being such a good companion and friend for him and his family. Keep your chin up and feel that heartbeat, as much as we hurt right now.

*Brian Aust ~ Cascade Cougar Club*

Still hard to comprehend that Matt has passed.

*Brian Carpenter ~ President - Cats Classic Cougar Club*

This made us so sad this morning. Thoughts and prayers go out to Alicia and Sydney.

*Crystal Trammell Lawrance ~ KTL Restorations, Danville, Virginia*

This was so shocking to hear when Rob told me yesterday! I wish Dallas wasn't so far. I was checking for quick flights but hopefully Alicia and Sydney will be surrounded by their family and friends this weekend.

*Georgina May ~ CCOA Photographer ~ Mercury Stray Cats Central California Chapter*



I'm so sorry to hear this. Although I only met Matt once, we talked Cougars over emails a lot the last couple of years. He helped my friend looking for a Model A. So sad.

*Cliff Gardiner ~ CCOA Photographer ~ New York Classic Cougar Club*

Prayers and condolences for Matt, his family and friends.  
*Brad Blue ~*

Wow, did not see this coming... very sad news. Matt was a great guy, super friendly and helpful in organizing things. I got to hang out with him and his family at a few shows. Definitely a devastating loss for the Cougar community, and for everyone that knew him. It even happens that I have a pic with him; I'll attach it. This was from the East Coast nationals show in 2015. I remember having lunch with him and his family. They made me feel at home.

*Andrew Chenovick ~ West Coast Classic Cougar: Photo, Video, Graphics, Marketing*

I will remember him as a good friend always ready with a wrench to help out and a great car club ambassador who will be dearly missed.

*Kevin Hyatt ~*

Oh, my goodness. I don't have any words. Just tears. I may have never met Matt, but I could tell from his posts over the past few years he was someone who loved his wife, adored his daughter and was much loved by many.

*Joe Manek ~ Mid America Cougar Club*

That is very sad news indeed to hear of Matt's passing. Our thought and prayers are with his family at this time. I will be revving up my Cougar on April 13th in honor of Matt.

*Lorie Marchinkow ~ CCOA ~ Surrey, British Columbia, Canada*

My goodness, that is sad news. I had no idea he was ill. We were just talking about him at the meeting last Saturday, and I was hoping he would come out west this summer. Such a great guy. I had several conversations and emails with him in the past when he was restoring his Madras GT-E. What a tremendous loss to the Cougar community. My thoughts are with his family. So sad.

*Rob Matthes ~ SoCal Cougar Club*



Definitely shocking and extremely sad news. I only met Matt very briefly at the Dearborn show but his wife, and especially his daughter made, a lasting impression when we were selling t-shirts. They were so friendly and Sydney is one talented kid holding her own with all the cash transactions and the credit card app.

*Michael Kwok ~ Mercury Stray Cats Cougar Club*

Very sad and sorry for the bad news. My condolences to his family, friends and to all of the Cougar community. God bless.

*Constantine Baltas ~ Cougar Club of Australia*

I met Matt several times at various events and at my home. He will be greatly missed in our Cougar community.

*Scott Taylor ~ Arizona Cougar Club*

Very sorry to hear of Matt's passing - my Cougar "dips her lid"  
*Robert Niven ~ Canberra Australia (currently in France)*

I am at a loss for words. Matt introduced me to the club and he and Alan were the first couple of people who welcomed me in. It's hard to believe they are both gone.

*William Schram ~ Lone Star Cougar Club*





# Nineties MN12 CAT

By Gary Nevills (CCOA #9947) and Rob May (CCOA #9623)

Early examples of the MN12 Ford/Mercury platform continued with the 1991 Thunderbird and Cougar. Gary and Anita Nevills, from Staunton, Virginia, own this Cat, along with five other small furry versions. He tells the story to Rob May, CCOA's Volunteer Coordinator. "While looking for a Mustang, a car lot had this 1991 Mercury Cougar XR-7." Gary remembered the body style when the new ones first came out and loved it, so he bought it with 137,000 miles. Sadly, he didn't have the car two weeks and the transmission went out. Ugh. First thing he did to modify the car, after repairing the transmission, was to add a set of Flowmaster mufflers, some rims, Bilstein struts, and an Eibach spring pro-kit (dropping it down a bit).

When the oil pump went out, it was time to do the motor. Thanks to Prime Performance for the short block, 30 over heads from Pro Comp Dist, and intake with 76 mm throttle body from Blue Oval Ind. The 302 HO no sports a trick flow cam, full roller 499/512 lift pro comp heads at 190cc with a set of Mac long tube headers, all MSD ignition, and a cold mass air Typhoon intake system. Motor was put together with ARP studs /bolts paired with under drive pulleys and an aluminum radiator. At the rear is a set of 3.7 gears, while the computer has a jet performance chip.

"Both front seats were re-covered, thanks to my wife, and the rest of work was done over time by myself. Driving it is like driving a Mustang, but better, because the car is well balanced and handles like a true track car with all the driving comforts of a sport coupe." - Gary

Every year, the '91 Cat makes it to as many all Ford powered car shows as possible. This fine example of the early 90s Cougars has earned multiple first through third place awards.







# 50th Anniversary T-shirts are hitting the shelves



FRONT

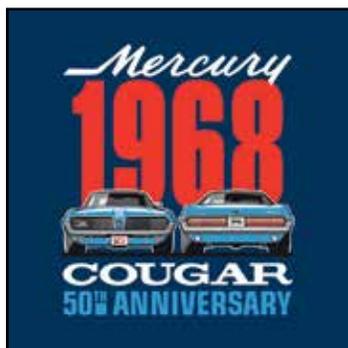
BACK



A 50th Anniversary key chain is included on merchandise orders over \$50.00.

With the purchase of two die-cast cars, you receive one key chain and with four die-cast cars, you receive two key chains.

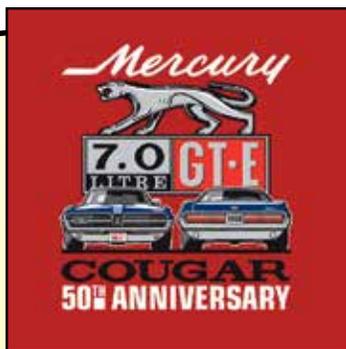
(while supplies last)



FRONT

BACK

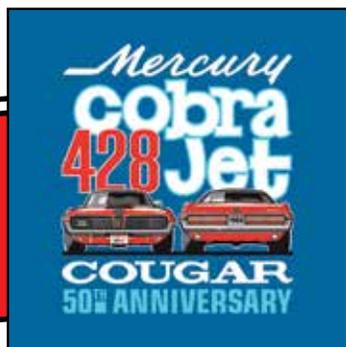
Use the coupon code **4SHIRTS** and receive **\$25.00 OFF** when you order any four of the 50th Anniversary t-shirts shown on this page!



FRONT

BACK

All four of the 1968 shirts are available in a Youth Large size at a cost of **\$30.00!**



FRONT

BACK

**Sizes S - 2XL are \$30.00 each - Size 3XL is \$35.00 each**

Shipping to the Continental USA is included. Shipping charges outside the USA will be calculated.

# -shirts and Hot Wheels Cars COA Online Store **NOW!**

## **CELEBRATE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1968 Mercury Cougar** **WITH THIS EXCLUSIVE 2018 CCOA SET**

We have had two different Hot Wheels castings for the 1968 Mercury Cougar in 1/64th scale created exclusively for the CCOA - a new for 2014 casting and a vintage 2002 casting. They are available in four colors matching 1968 Mercury Cougar paint options; Wellington Blue, Calypso Coral, Cardinal Red

Metallic, and Grecian Gold Metallic. The cars were stripped down and repainted, with the graphics added by hand. Our amazing graphics and backer cards are designed by none other than Phillip Payne, the CCOA Brand Manager. The acrylic cases are engraved with the CCOA logo on the top and are ready to display.



**The 1968 Cougar models are \$40.00 each**  
**Two for \$70.00, which includes one of the 50th Anniversary key chains**  
**Four for \$120.00, which includes two of the 50th Anniversary key chains**

Shipping to the Continental USA is included. Shipping charges outside the USA will be calculated.  
[www.cougarclub.org](http://www.cougarclub.org) | 71



## Last of the Fox Chassis Cats '88 Cougar XR7

By Michael Rivera (CCOA# 9882) and Rob May (CCOA# 9623)

Classic Eighties styling is well represented here by Michael Rivera's 1988 Cougar XR7. The cat makes its den in Ocala, Fl. Born in the Bronx, New York, Michael was always into cars since he was a kid. Collecting car toys, magazines, and brochures was his passion. Also, he was also fond of drawing cars. "I would customize them using graphics and body kits to design a car initially seen in car brochures collected from local car dealers." Here is his Mercury Cougar story as told to Rob May, CCOA's Volunteer Coordinator:

"I lived in New York until graduating from High School, and joined the U.S. NAVY in July of 1988. My dad bought his first Cougar in 1984 (LS with the V6). It was Black with the Canyon Red cloth interior, my father's favorite color combo. The car looked so sharp and sporty, it was also very classy. My father loved the look, especially the flat back window treatment." In the fall of 1986, Michael was out collecting car brochures (as he always did). While stopping at the Mercury dealership, he noticed the all new 1987 Cougar in the showroom. This Black LS model was



dressed up with a body-kit and aftermarket wheels. "I rushed home to tell my dad about it. That weekend, he traded up for that Cougar. I loved that Mercury so much, I begged my dad to loan me the car for my senior prom! He said I could have the car after finishing my 4 years with the NAVY. Unfortunately the car was totaled in an accident around Christmas time in 1988."

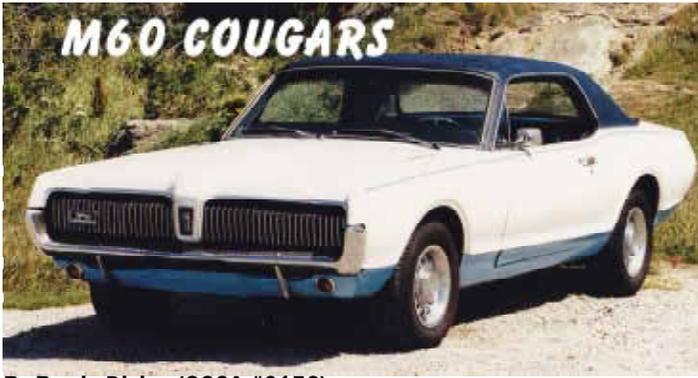
When it came time for Michael to buy his first car, he knew exactly what he wanted. He was stationed in Washington D.C. when he found a 1986 Mercury Cougar XR7 at a Mercury dealer in Virginia in 1989. It was Silver with Grey cloth interior, equipped with a Turbo 2.3 4 cylinder with 26,000 miles on it.

In 2014, Michael bought a 1997 Cougar XR7 30th Anniversary Edition with the 4.6 V8. "I owned it for only 18 months, when it was totaled in an accident (Sound familiar). In June of 2017, while browsing the car classifieds on the internet, a red 1988 Mercury Cougar XR7 was listed for sale in Tampa. The car seemed to be in great condition. That weekend I decided to take the 90 mile trip to Tampa from Ocala (where I currently live since 1997) to see the car." The Cat was up on car ramps on the corner of the lot. The paint was oxidized some, but nothing was faded including the bumper moldings (which usually turn yellow). Everything was stock on the car from the wheels to the factory cassette radio. "I couldn't believe what I was seeing. I know how hard it is to find one in this condition in the southern part of the country. I wasn't even looking to buy another car at the time; however, when after asking the sales person how much, I couldn't pass on it."

Michael's Scarlet Red (with Smoke Gray Leather w/ Sport Seats) thirty year old 1988 Mercury Cougar XR7 currently has 121,000 miles on it. The 5.0 EFI V8 with Automatic w/ Overdrive transmission and 3.08 Traction-Loc Rear Axle runs smoothly.

This fine example of the last of the Fox chassis Cats (seventh generation) now is only driven on weekends or to car shows. While in Florida, Michael worked as an Automotive Parts Specialist for a Mazda/Isuzu dealer for 12 years. He learned a lot about cars from working at the dealership. (Special thanks to the people of the service department of Jenkins Mazda, especially Leo Kasper( Service Advisor) and Stephen Sullivan (Lead Master Tech)).





By Barrie Dixon (CCOA #0156)

We now have new rules applied to our “Vehicles of Historic Interest.” Legislation came into force on May 20th of this year that says that vehicles over 40yrs old no longer need an annual inspection. Here in the UK that’s known as a MOT. It’s a long story as to why it’s called that and I won’t bore you with the history. Conditions to the new ruling imply that our cars are exempt unless they have had “significant modifications,” which is a term I would apply to maybe a Hot Rod or a Street Rod. If you are like me and have only ever brought your Cougar up-to-date in order to run some of the latest technology, then the term “modification” really doesn’t apply. Shoot, if that was the case, I would still be running bias ply tires!

The new ruling applies when you are sending for a new “tax disc.” On the application, there is now a box to tick to say you comply with the new terms and conditions. However, what happens if, like me, your car was taxed before May and your MOT isn’t due until later this year? Well, DVLA have said they will not issue any prosecutions in these instances. Hopefully they’re going to remember that if any of us run into problems. While we wait to see, I fully believe that my Cougar has had its last MOT!

We probably had the worst winter in the UK in a long time this year and my motor survived well thanks to a load of anti-freeze. However, the paint on the hood suffered a load of “frost bite!” It seemed to get through the winter ok, but as soon as we all began to feel that much warmer, huge blisters appeared in the paint and I’ve had to do a load of patch-up work just to protect the metal. Why am I telling you this? Well, if anyone sees me and my Cougar at a show this season and thinks “He hasn’t looked after it that

well” when actually I have, I’m just waiting to get it into the repair shop for a bunch of restoration work. That work will include new paint, so I don’t want to put too much in that the shop is going to have to take out again in a few months time. Is that ok? Do you approve? Do I really care what you think anyway? Ha! You can ignore that last question; maybe the last two questions.

Paint or no paint, I fully intend using my car over the next few months in what promises to be a half decent summer and fall. There are places that Jeanette and I have been wanting to visit for a while now, but the weather over the last three or four summer seasons has been just so horrible that it hasn’t felt like summer at all. I could go on and on about the weather here in the UK and write several more paragraphs, but the sun is shining, the temperature is high and I think I should take my Cougar on a little bit of a cruise instead.

Enjoy the season; enjoy your Cougars.

# COUGAR OWNERS UNITE!



Join with hundreds of **Cougar Club of America** members to celebrate the Mercury Cougar. As a member, you will receive the CCOA's publication, *At the Sign of the Cat*, an official membership card, and an eye-catching window decal for your car that identifies you to fellow Cougar enthusiasts wherever you go.

Use this form or the online registration form at [www.cougarclub.org/join.htm](http://www.cougarclub.org/join.htm) today. Annual dues are **\$25** for members who receive the newsletter by email. For members who want a printed newsletter by mail, the dues are **\$35 for U.S. addresses** or **\$40 for non-U.S. addresses** (payable in U.S. funds only) Become a member of the club that is *exclusively* dedicated to the preservation of the Mercury Cougar.

New Member \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ (make any changes below)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

(please print clearly and include email even if choosing regular mail membership)

E-member (\$25) \_\_\_\_\_ U.S. mail member (\$35) \_\_\_\_\_ Non-U.S. mail (\$40) \_\_\_\_\_

**May we share your contact info with regional clubs and other event organizers?**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

*To join or renew, please fill out this form and mail it with payment  
(Make checks payable to **CCOA**) or use the on-line form at [www.cougarclub.org/join.htm](http://www.cougarclub.org/join.htm)*

Rob Merritt  
Membership Director  
1320 West 5th Street  
Duluth, MN 55806-2339

Tell us about your Cougar!

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# EBAY Cats



**Year/Model:** 1977 Wagon  
**VIN:** 7H96S5XXXXX  
**Miles:** 57,000  
**Condition:** 3  
**Winning bid:** \$8,500  
**Total # of Bids:** 1

**Comments:** A great example of the first year for the station wagon Cat. All original with 57k original miles on the optional 400. Has auto, PW, PS, PB, 6-way power driver's seat, AM/FM 8 track stereo and intermittent wipers. Front disc brakes are completely rebuilt and rear drums were adjusted. The AC is there, but condition is unknown. Carb needs rebuilding. Has an exhaust leak due to the right exhaust manifold being cracked; a used pair of factory exhaust manifolds is included. Body has ZERO rust due to aftermarket Ziebart rustproofing when new but has some dents and dings (none major). The wood grain is original, but not in great condition. The tailgate works in both directions and the window motor works, but the glass does not move (included is a NOS gear for the motor). The chrome is all there but has some dings and dents. Bumpers are nice. The interior has some wear, but all seats are in great condition. The dash pad and door panels are beautiful. Driver's floorboard has rust, but a full floor pan from a '78 XR7 is included. A unique Cat to restore and enjoy!!



**Year/Model:** 1968 XR-7  
**VIN:** 8R93S5XXXXX  
**Miles:** 78,000  
**Condition:** 1  
**Winning bid:** \$32,900  
**Total # of Bids:** 1

**Comments:** This XR-7 has the GT package and the optional 390 4v/C6, 1 of only 1,845 produced. Has many options including console, PS, AM/FM stereo, deluxe seat belts and headrests. The undercarriage, floors and frame are in great shape and the body is very straight and clean with no rust or rot visible. Many new parts including front and rear springs/wheel bearings, brakes, suspension bushings and the rear end has been freshly reworked. Was repainted 12 years ago in cranberry red (original color was polar white), and a new black interior was installed (original color was saddle). The paint does have a few chips. The interior looks very nice and the dash, door panels, carpet, and seats are in great shape. Most of the gauges, lights and controls work, with the exception of the tachometer and clock. All the original trim and chrome is there, but some does show its age. The engine and transmission have been rebuilt with about 500 miles on both. The engine sounds/runs great and the transmission shifts smoothly. Comes with a Deluxe Marti Report. This is a stunning Cat and gets many looks where ever it goes!!



**Year/Model:** 1969 XR-7 coupe  
**VIN:** 9F93M5XXXXX  
**Miles:** 123,000  
**Condition:** 2  
**Winning bid:** \$15,200  
**Total # of Bids:** 32

**Comments:** Not many XR-7 coupes came with the GT package in 1969. Bought from the original California owners in mid 2000 and brought to Arizona. This Cat is an all matching numbers 351 4v/auto with 123k original miles and runs great. The body has no rust and has all its original sheet metal and floors. This Cat has only been repainted once in its life in the original color; the paint is excellent. The interior is nice and clean with the exception of the front seats needing to be redone, the rest of the interior looks great. Has AC, but not working. Have lots of service records from throughout the years. Comes with original books/manuals, window sticker, bill of sale, built sheet and protector plate. Also has Marti report and registration from the 70s to 2000s. This unique XR-7 has never been in any accidents and always been garaged since new.



**Year/Model:** 1974 XR7  
**VIN:** 4A93QXXXXXX  
**Miles:** 52,427  
**Condition:** 1  
**Winning bid:** \$7,601  
**Total # of Bids:** 6

**Comments:** All original XR7 with only 52k original miles on the optional 351CJ 4V/C6. The paint and interior are original and in mint condition; the interior still smells "new". The vinyl top is impeccable. Has bucket seats, floor shift and center console, the clock even works. This Cat runs and drives incredible. This XR7 has been well cared for all its life and is unmolested and totally original.



**Year/Model:** 1968 STD  
**VIN:** 8F91F575XXXX  
**Miles:** 60,800  
**Condition:** 3  
**Winning bid:** \$10,500  
**Total # of Bids:** 14

**Comments:** A STD Cat with the Dan Gurney package that is an unrestored survivor with only 60k original miles on its 302 2v/C4. It has been repainted only once years ago in the original color of Blue Diamond, but the paint is peeling off in a few areas around the fender, quarter panel extensions and the rear valance. The blue interior is 95% original and is very nice, the radio is the only thing not original. Has AC, PB, PB, center console and bucket seats. Also has the original DGS turbine wheels covers. This DGS Cat only had one owner until purchased from the wife of the original owner. Has all the original glove box literature, including warranty cards and manuals.



**Year/Model:** 2002 Cougar Sport  
**VIN:** 1ZWFT61LXXXXXXX  
**Miles:** 141,000  
**Condition:** 2  
**Winning bid:** \$1,405  
**Total # of Bids:** 35

**Comments:** One owner Cat for 16 years, now needed a new home. Although this Cat has 141k original miles on its V6/auto, it runs and drives great. This Cat has the sport package, which includes a power sunroof, power mirrors and power driver's seat. The black cloth interior is in good overall condition; the seats look good and the dash is clean with no cracks. All power options work except for the power side mirrors. The radio does work but is stuck on the AM radio band. It does need all four new struts. Overall, the body is in fair condition and most of the paint looks nice, but the left rear quarter has low quality paint repair and the front nose has a lot of chips. All of the glass and lenses are good with no cracks, the factory alloy wheels are in good condition. A great Cat to drive and enjoy!

# PERSONAL ADS

## PARTS FOR SALE

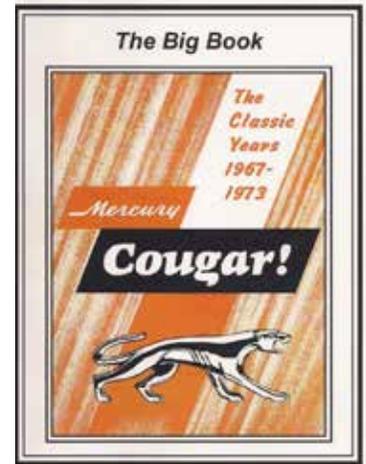
1968 390 with C6, A/C, P/S, P/DB etc. etc. all still in a 1968 Ranchero you get the whole front clip \$3,500.00 1967 289 4V set up: carburetor cast # C7DF M, series 4300, venture 1.00; intake cast # C6OE-9425, date 6J19 etc. \$350.00 1973 C6 460 Police Interceptor cast iron tailshaft transmission : Tag # PJC H5 FA 013051 \$1,000. 429 PI / 460 PI Intake cast # D3VE-A something, date 3E8; also includes extra fittings etc. \$75.00 460 PI short block: block cast # D1VE-A2B , date 3E4; crank cast # 2YAB ; water pump cast # D2VE B-A ; Dist cast # D3ME-12127-CA , date 3D25; alt. cast # D3VF 10300 AB 15V 90A NEG; flex plate; Harmonic balancer; brackets; pulley, etc. \$2000.00 429 Police Interceptor heads: cast # D2OE-AB, dates 2E5 & 2E18, \$1,200.00 429 CJ carb: cast # 7040288 , date 1182; AUTOLITE tag # D0OF B , date D227, \$750.00 429 CJ / SCJ valve covers, \$650.00 pr429CJ/SCJ short block: 4 bolt main block cast # D1VE-6015-A, date 1A19; \$4,000. 1967 Cougar or Mustang: stainless steel power front disc brake 6 piece line set. \$75. 347 stroker kit; includes 3.400 crank, 5.400 H beam 4340 chromemoly steel rods, 4.030 KB hypereutectic flat top pistons with two valve reliefs \$1,200. 1967 289 heads, cast # C6AE, date codes 7D18 & 7E2 \$200.00; 1967 GT 390 carb cast # C7OF-9510-A, list 3793, date784, good core \$250.00; **FE blower/supercharger set up complete : BDS,\$5,200.00** 1967 GT 390 engine: block cast # C6ME-A, date 7C22; heads cast # C7AE-A, dates7B7 & 7C20; intake cast # C6AE-9425-G, date 6J27; exhaust manifolds, timing cover, water pump, oil pan, pulley, brackets, fuel pump etc. \$3,500. 390 tri power set up, \$1,850. 1966 428 short block \$2,500.00 428 CJ exhaust manifolds, \$900.00 pr. 428 Super Cobra Jet: flywheel; cast # C9ZE-A \$1,200.00 428 Super Cobra jet crankshaft; cast # 1UA \$2,500.00 1967 Ford/Mercury 390 A/C system:original Ford A/C compressor, A/C clutch, clutch pulley, brackets, idler pulley, water pump pulley, crankshaft pulley etc. \$500. 351W heads, cast #E7TE, date codes 5B15 & 5B17, \$150 for the pair. **1970 Boss 302 heads: cast # D0ZE 6090 A ; dates 0B19 on both heads; push rod guide plates cast # C9ZE-6A564-C ; original valve sizes 2.19 / 1.71 58.0 CC \$1,600.00 for the pair** 1970 351C 4V closed chamber heads: cast # D0AE; dates 0E16 & 0E20, \$800.00 1970 351C 4V cast iron intake \$150.00 1973 351C 4V open chamber heads: cast # D3ZE; dates 3A17, \$600.00 1970 351C 3 groove crank pulley : cast # D0AE-6312-C, \$125. 351C single groove water pump pulley : cast # C9OE-8509-F, \$100. 1970 351C idler pulley : cast # D0AA-8A617-A, \$125. 351 A/C bracket; cast # D0ZA-2882-C, \$200. 1970 351C bracket : cast # D0OE-10156-A, \$100. 1970 351C bracket : cast # D0OE-10145-A, \$75. 351C bracket ; no cast #, \$100. 351C timing pointer, \$75. 351C front engine plate, \$125. 351C thermostat housing, \$20. 351C dip stick tube, \$75.1965 289 Hi Po aluminum water pump: cast # C5AE-8505D, \$400.1965 289: rods, cast # C3AE D, matching set of 4, \$50; 1965 289 2V intake cast # C5AE 9425 D, dates 4K6 \$75. 1965 289 original gold valve covers, \$60. 302/5.0L roller short block: block cast # E7TE CA \$250.00 etc. much more inquire (314)480-2556 Keith Litteken St. Louis MO or email kslitteken@aol.com

## WANTED

Carburetors part # on air horn C8AF-AD C8OF-AB & C8OF-AA; FE distributors Part # on housing C8OF-D, C8OF-F, C8OF-H C7OZ-12127-D, C7OF-12127-F C7OF-12127-F,-G , C8AF-12127-AD. 1968 Cougar red dash pad. (314) 480-2556 Keith Litteken St. Louis MO or email kslitteken@aol.com

## The Cougar Big Book is back in stock in the CCOA store.

[http://cougarclub.org/store.htm#!/\\*In-stock\\*-Mercury-Cougar-Big-Book-The-Classic-Years-1967-1973/p/53625166/category=14120799](http://cougarclub.org/store.htm#!/*In-stock*-Mercury-Cougar-Big-Book-The-Classic-Years-1967-1973/p/53625166/category=14120799)



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# MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Rob Merritt (CCOA #8323)  
Member Services Director

My hometown of Duluth, Minnesota has a way of going straight from winter to summer, and this year was no exception. April saw blizzards and colder than usual temperatures in what seemed like the never-ending winter. Suddenly, May burst out with temperatures that were more like the dog days of August. Can't complain too much, since the change of season gets the Cat on the prowl.

## TEN THOUSAND COUGAR FANS

Would you believe that the CCOA is about to induct its 10,000th member?! I expect it to happen before the next edition of this newsletter. No, unfortunately, they aren't all still members. Members come and go, change interests and priorities and some have, sadly, left us forever. Nonetheless, we think this milestone is worth mentioning and celebrating.

We'll announce the winner in the next ATSOTC. Member #10,000 will receive an extra year's membership as well as some CCOA swag as a prize. Even if you aren't member 10k, you can always get CCOA merchandise at the online store – [www.CougarClub.org/store.htm](http://www.CougarClub.org/store.htm) Check it out for the latest in apparel, literature and other exclusive CCOA merchandise.

## NEW MEMBERS

Joining the club since the last ATSOTC (through June 1) are the following new members – who weren't lucky enough to be number 10,000:

|                    |                         |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| MIKE SCOTT         | SITTINGBOURNE KENT U.K. |
| SCOTT DOUCETT      | MESA AZ                 |
| PAUL GEORGE        | CARMICHAEL CA           |
| DANIEL DRAGAN      | ESCONDIDO CA            |
| PAUL SAWYER        | JAMUL CA                |
| RICH LOCK          | OCEANO CA               |
| GERARD FORGNONE    | RAMONA CA               |
| DENNIS BALTIMORE   | SIGNAL HILL CA          |
| DANTE DUPHORNE     | LAKE MARY FL            |
| GREGORY JONES      | DES MOINES IA           |
| TOM CARLSON        | MASHALLTOWN IA          |
| ROBERT CUMMINGS    | BOISE ID                |
| MONTE ALAN KECKLER | MOUNT CARROLL IL        |
| JOHN RAGO          | NEW LENOX IL            |
| DAVID PERRY        | SYCAMORE IL             |
| JOHN KREUZ         | WADSWORTH IL            |
| NATHAN WATTS       | ELKHART IN              |
| ROBERT SINGLETON   | BENTON KS               |
| CHRIS MOREY        | HIAWATHA KS             |

|                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| TAB PATTERSON       | NICHOLASVILLE KY |
| MARK LACHANCE       | DIGHTON MA       |
| PHIL STEVENS        | HOLLYWOOD MD     |
| MATT STEVENS        | SALISBURY MD     |
| DON & LYNN DITRI    | NOVI MI          |
| ROBERT HUGHES       | ST LOUIS MO      |
| JIM GILBERT         | SALISBURY NC     |
| VIRGIL & SUE KLEIN  | HASTINGS NE      |
| BRIAN McINNIS       | HUDSON NH        |
| BRUCE HOWSEN        | NEW WINDSOR NY   |
| DAN BOGGS           | SANDUSKY OH      |
| RUSSELL WESTFALL    | TOLEDO OH        |
| JEFFREY WILLETS     | TOLEDO OH        |
| JASON NADLE         | MIDWEST CITY OK  |
| DAVID WEJROCH       | CARLTON OR       |
| DANIEL MOHRY        | BETHLEHEM PA     |
| BENJAMIN SHEARMAN   | BRADFORD PA      |
| DOUGLAS ROBERTSON   | ELLWOOD CITY PA  |
| MICHAEL MATIS       | KITTANNING PA    |
| CATRINA QUINTANILLA | HOUSTON TX       |
| RANDALL WOMACK      | VICTORIA TX      |
| ANGELA GREEN        | MANASSAS VA      |
| GARY NEILLS         | STAUNTON VA      |
| DARRELL J. CLINE    | MUKILTEO WA      |
| DAVID ALVAREZ       | OAK CREEK WI     |

Welcome to the new members!

If you know someone who appreciates the Cougar but is not yet a member of the CCOA, share your newsletter or invite them to visit our website. New members are always welcome!

## JULY RENEWALS COMING DUE

If your renewal is due, use the handy on-line form under the "join" button at [www.cougarclub.org](http://www.cougarclub.org) If you prefer, you can

send a check using the membership form found elsewhere in this newsletter. Check the mailing label for your due date if you subscribe to the printed version of the newsletter. If you are an e-member, the email with the download link will let you know if it's time to renew. And be sure to let me know if you change your postal or email address. It pains me when mail is returned undeliverable. If you just need to update your information, or have a question about your status, feel free to email me at [membership@cougarclub.org](mailto:membership@cougarclub.org).



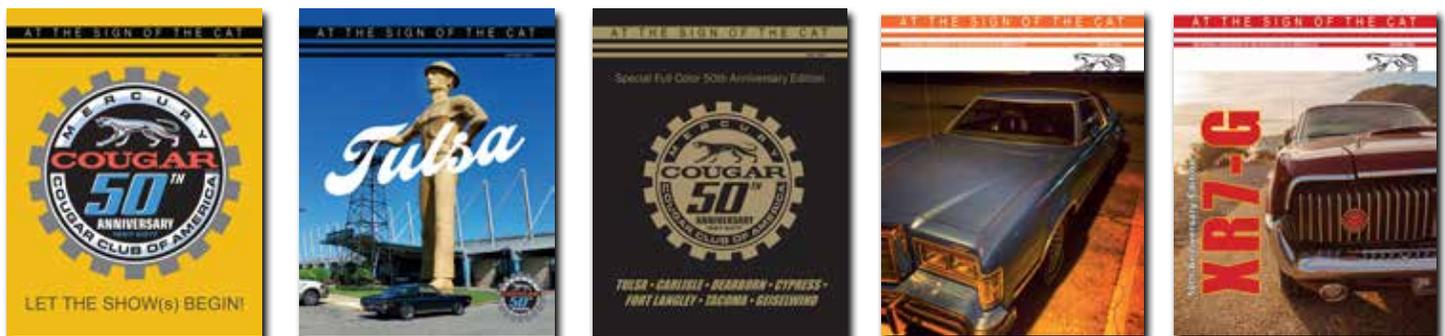
# The Cougar Club of America is looking for a new Graphic Designer / Editor



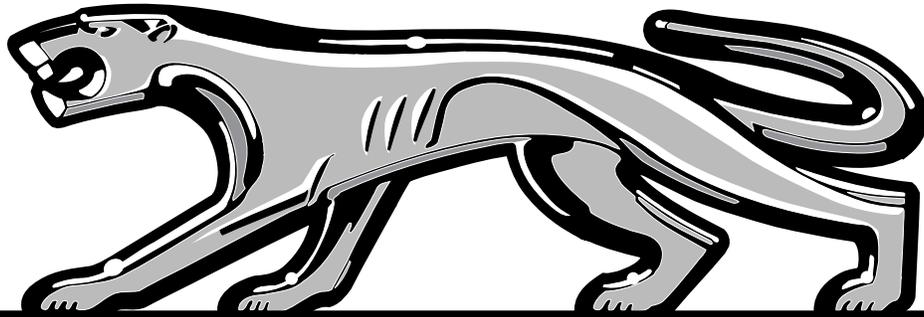
The newsletter graphic designer/editor position will require a major investment of time when issue deadlines approach. The graphic designer/editor is responsible for expenditure of the largest single expense to members from their dues. In-depth familiarity with the publication process and desktop publishing is deemed essential. Specific duties include, but are not limited to:

- Must have unrestricted access and expertise with Adobe InDesign, Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator
- Responsible for compiling submissions arriving via email (text documents and images) from members and club reports from elected officers; write and/or edit articles and images, proofread all content and make revisions as necessary; arrange composition and page makeup of four issues each year of the club newsletter, AT THE SIGN OF THE CAT;
- Communicate with the printer on the specifications of each issue, such as 4/C pages versus black and white and total page count. Provide print ready PDF files to the printer when the issue has been completed.
- Provide low resolution PDF file to the appropriate person to upload to the club's website for electronic subscribers.

If you have any questions or if you want to apply, please send an email to: [chair@ccoa.org](mailto:chair@ccoa.org)



**COUGAR CLUB OF AMERICA**  
**CELEBRATES THE**



**7.0**  
**LITRE** | **GT-E**



ARTWORK © PHILLIP PAYNE

**COUGAR**

**50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**