

The Official Magazine of the Cougar Club of America



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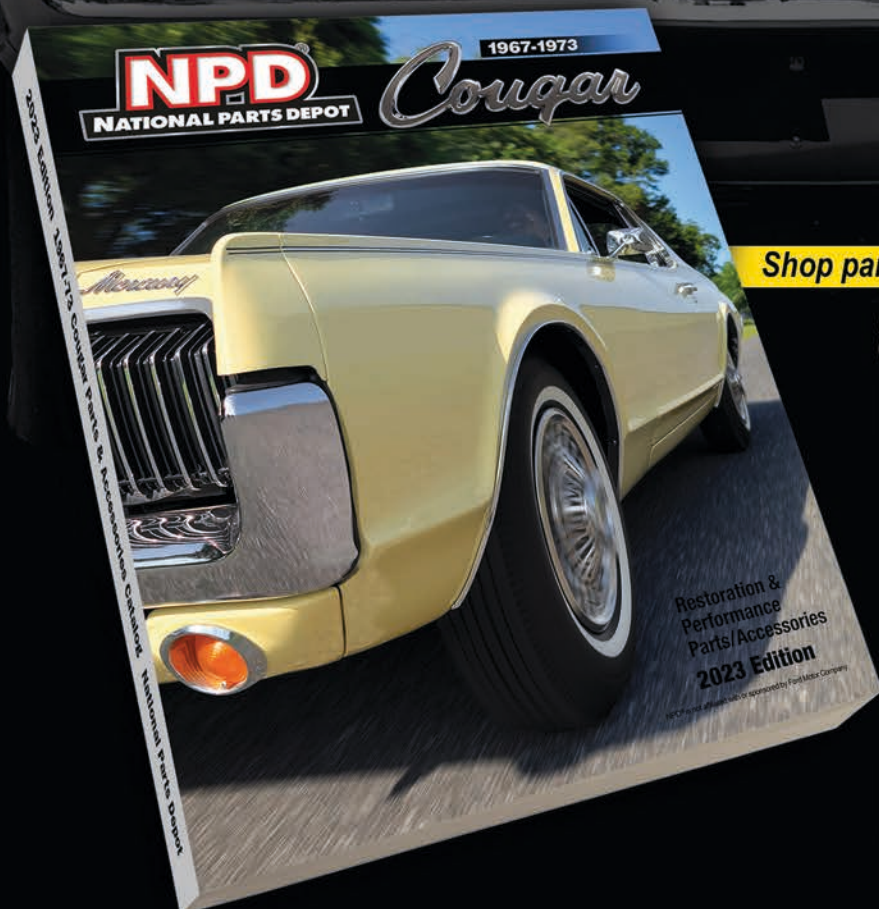


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AT THE SIGN OF THE CAT

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ATSOTC welcomes publishable material for future editions. Send your submissions to:

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Fall 2023 Deadline — Please send your submissions no later than **August 15, 2023**.

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Annual membership in the Cougar Club of America is available in several flavors:

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- \$30 for members who receive the newsletter by email.
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A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

By Gavin Schlesinger - CCOA Chairperson (CCOA #5780)

Ladies and gentlemen, start your engines...

I would like to welcome Thierry Frisch, who is returning as Editor of ATSOTC Magazine after five years. I also want to thank David Hyatt for his time as Editor and for the help and support for the CCOA and ATSOTC over the years. A thank-you also goes out to Diego Rosenberg, Assistant Editor and the new 1968½ 428 Cobra Jet Registrar, for his continued support for ATSOTC and our membership. Diego can be reached at assistanteditor@cougarclub.org

It has been far too long since we all have been together at an event or cruising the streets with our fellow Cougar Club members and enthusiasts — the happenings that have brought us together and helped produce inspiring articles and images that motivate us with our projects. With two events occurring in July, MACC's Tulsa event on **July 8, 2023**, and The Cascade Cougar Club's Annual Prowl event on **July 9th**, we would love for attendees to send images to Editor@CougarClub.org for event coverage. In the fall, there is another event on the East Coast: DCC-CCNJPA is hosting a gathering in **October 2023** in Maryland. Do you know of others being planned? Please email details to clubservices@cougarclub.org so additional events can be added to our website, www.CougarClub.org.

I frequently visit CougarClub.org and look at all the amazing information that Conan has been adding. I am especially fond of the section for **Members Rides** as it is neat to have a virtual car show at your fingertips anytime you want to see Cougars of various years, colors, and option groups. If you have not yet visited, please do so and, if you need your car(s) added to the page, email Conan via webmaster@CougarClub.org.

Founded by Mercury Cougar Enthusiasts, made strong by our Membership and Volunteers.

As we are a nonprofit (or "Not for Profit") organization, we sometimes must clean up inventory to make room for other merchandise. With that being said, I want to mention our *Buy One, Get Two Free* sales event in the online store section of CougarClub.org. We have

a specific area to which Dwight Griffis has dedicated, aptly named *Dwight's Deals*. Using the coupon code **Hats&Shirts**, the goal is to clear out existing aged inventory to make room for new items we are developing. We owe a lot to Randy Goodling who, as Merchandise Manager, takes the time to manage our inventory as well as print labels, package, and ship to the folks who purchase items. This is a big job and, as a volunteer, I would certainly say it plays a key role in the success of the CCOA.

As we continually inform all Cougar enthusiasts of upcoming events and activities, we try to maintain information provided on CougarClub.org and our Facebook page. The more events you share, the more fellow CCOA members can plan to attend happenings of which they may not have been aware. Send all of your favorite cat photos from events attended or cruising around town to submissions@CougarClub.org and you just may find your photos selected to appear in a future issue of ATSOTC magazine or on our **club Facebook page**.

We need your support. To help keep ATSOTC magazine going strong, please consider sharing your story with the club through our award-winning magazine. We would love to see images and hear what attracted you to your Mercury Cougar or what are some of the memories you have surrounding your car, your family's involvement, your heroes in the automotive world, or anything you are willing to share with the club. Become a part of the History of the Cougar Club of America by sharing your images and articles in an upcoming ATSOTC Magazine.

If you are interested in more information about ATSOTC Magazine, our website www.CougarClub.org, or if I can be of help in any way, please email me directly at chair@cougarclub.org.

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



DAVID BRAN - Second-Generation Q-Code Registrar

By David Bran (CCOA #10513)

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and share my journey so I may bring recognition to Cougar Q-code 351 Cobra Jet cars.

I think it will be almost impossible to find someone with more passion and fondness of these cars. I was born in 1962, near the beginning of the muscle car era. When I was about seven, one of my earliest memories falling in love with muscle cars was being in the back seat of a green Olds 4-4-2 while my older brother and his best friend played a game of cat and mouse from stoplight to stoplight. It was an awesome experience that left a never-ending impression on me.

Throughout those years, my father was in the car business and, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, he was a manager at the local Lincoln-Mercury dealership in Ellicott City, Maryland. When I was around 11 years old, my father brought home a green-on-green 1971 Cougar GT that the dealership took in on trade. It was

a very cool surprise for my mom! However, it didn't stay with her for long as he took in another trade: a beautiful 1971 black with white vinyl top and interior Lincoln Continental Mark III. My older brother had just turned 16, so he was given the Cougar GT. I loved the times spent with him cruising to the mall (the thing to do back then). I saved every penny I could, bussing tables and washing dishes from 9-10th grade so when I turned 16, I could buy a car.

For \$800, I purchased a 1971 H-code XR-7, blue-on-blue with the new white canopy vinyl top. Back then, all my friends had cool cars: 1972 Duster 340, 1969 Camaro Z/28, 1970 351C Mach 1, 1970 'Cuda 340, and 1969 Camaro SS/RS pace car. My friend with the Duster 340 actually crashed it and upgraded to a 1972 Chevelle SS 454, which became the fastest car I had ever been in at that time. Even though my friends had some very cool cars, not to mention the other Camaros, Mustangs,

and Chevelles around town, I always appreciated the fact that there were not many cars like mine. I always felt that my car was unique and a little different than all the other muscle cars.

I drove my Cougar for two years until graduation in 1980. About one week later, while I was at a friend's house, he brought a 1972 Q-code XR-7 convertible to my attention. It was painted Light Pewter with a white top and interior. Of course, at that time, I had no idea what a Q-code was, but I was quite impressed, especially due to the chrome air cleaner lid — I felt it didn't get any better than that. It turned out the gentleman was visiting from Chicago and was open to selling me the car so, \$1800 later, the deal was done. I kept the ragtop for about eight years, though I repainted it to a darker gray. I always knew it was special (and so much better than my friends' Camaros, Chevelles, and Mustangs) but I let it go due to pressures from college, fuel costs, time for restoration, and lack of funds and storage. I never really got over having to sell it.

Fast forward several decades, and I still had a passion for that Cougar. Fourteen years ago, I finally convinced my wife it was time to find a nice vintage car. However, she talked me out of a Cougar. Can you believe it? She simply was not a fan — she thought it was a bit big, though she never really had seen one, plus she was not into convertibles either. I needed to have something, so we settled on a 1968 Shelby GT500 restomod. The car was simply awesome, but I still had a wandering eye for the right 1972 Q-code XR-7 convertible. It had to check several boxes: I preferred the front grille of the first two years over the 1973 grille, for one. It had to have a white interior, too. That really narrowed down the search but, two years later, one that checked every box and looked like my old one passed across the Mecum Auctions block. I could not believe my eyes but, believe it or not, I passed on it because I had recently purchased the Shelby and I didn't think I could convince my wife to buy another car so soon. I settled on keeping an eye out for one down the road. Of course,



it was much harder than I ever anticipated and, after a 12-year search, I found the right Q-code convertible and purchased it in August 2022, a triple white ragtop with Styled Steel wheels. Once I received the car, I went to the MVA to obtain my historic tags. While there, out of curiosity, I inquired if the tag number from my old Q-code was still available and, sure enough, it was! If that is not destiny, then I don't know what is! But it still gets better: while I was waiting for the Cougar to arrive from Texas, out of curiosity, I pulled a Marti Report on my old car for comparison. Both cars of the cars – the one from 40 years ago and my new Q-code – were built on the same day! What are the odds of that? It was then that I decided it was time for me to reach out to the CCCOA and demand that they start a new registry recognizing second-generation Q-code cars...

alright, maybe I did not demand, but I was persistent, so much so that I convinced them that I am the person to take on the task.

Thanks to your input, I will continue to improve the directories as it is the registry's mission to locate and register as many Q-codes as possible, so please reach out if you know of a car for the registry. Next on the agenda, I plan to make a deep dive into the options and unique features available for Q-code Cougars (if not regular Cougars), plus the changes that Mercury made for 1973.





Ron Mahnke's 1967 MERCURY COUGAR XR-7

By Ron Mahnke (CCOA #9672)

I purchased this 1967 Cougar XR-7 in October 1982 from the second owner, who lived in Rockford, Illinois. The original owner, who lived in the small town of Winnebago, had purchased the car at Fran Kral Lincoln-Mercury in Rockford. As such, this Cougar spent its entire life in Winnebago County until this past December when we moved it to Florida. That way, we can use her year-round instead of half a year thanks to Midwest weather.

I have shown this car since 1984, with its first show being at Dave's Frost Top in Janesville, Wisconsin. Since then, it has competed at local, regional, and national levels, in over 700 car shows in seven states. Some of you may have seen her in Dearborn, Michigan at the 50th Anniversary show where 205 Cougars went on a cruise together. It has been said this was the largest gathering of Cougars since they were built.

In 2021, she competed in the Geneva Concours d'Elegance invitational in Geneva, Illinois, where she won the SCCA Buddy Palumbo Award. In October 2021, we were in Hampshire, for a fall Halloween car show and did an interview with Lou Costabile of "My Car Story" fame on YouTube. That day, she won the "Best of Show" award — a wonderful way to end the season before going into hibernation.

As we say goodbye to our old car show family here in Illinois, we will start meeting many new friends in Florida.

You can watch the YouTube interview here:

<https://youtu.be/cYZXxbkJo60>



1969 Cougar Returns to Original Owners' Home 52 Years Later!

By Doug Hoefle (CCOA #10513) & Dan Hupkowitz

In August 2022, we drove our 428 Cobra Jet-powered 1969 Cougar XR-7 convertible from Delaware to Michigan to visit with Jeri Feltner, the widow of the car's original owner who had last seen the car in 1970.

I bought the Cougar in February 2015 from a car collector in Virginia. It was in pristine condition; the bright red convertible looked as if it has just rolled off the showroom floor. It didn't come with much paperwork other than a photocopy of the original invoice, a Deluxe Marti Report, and a printout of the eBay listing from when Don Rush of West Coast Classic Cougar listed the car for sale in 2006.

I knew that "DSO 84" meant that the car was initially destined for Ford's corporate use, but I hadn't noticed that the car's original owner (technically, lessee) was printed right on the invoice until my car was selected as the November 2015 Ride of the Month on

classiccougarcommunity.com. In the comments on that post, I also discovered a little more of the car's history including who did the restoration. I spoke with the restorer and found out that it was a barn find in the Seattle area, was rotisserie restored between 1989 and 1993, and was a trailer queen ever since. He even sent me some photos of the car prior to restoration. It didn't look to be in terrible condition (though it was only 20 years old back then) but, then again, it did have a cheap paint job at some point that was likely hiding some nasty stuff, especially considering it started out as a Michigan car. What happened to the car between 1970 and 1989 remains a mystery.

After discovering that I had a piece of information that many classic car owners wish they had, I tried to look up Charles "Chuck" Feltner online. I managed to find a LinkedIn profile; however, my attempt to contact him was unsuccessful. I didn't really want to



press the issue too hard, being concerned that the Chuck might not even remember the car anymore or might not care. Several years later, in the fall of 2021, it randomly occurred to me to try googling his name again. This time I found some sad news. Chuck Feltner had passed away in February of the previous year (not COVID-related) at 83 years-old.

The lengthy and detailed obituary published in The Detroit News had a treasure trove of information. It included, along with fascinating information about his extremely accomplished life, the names of his wife and children, where they lived, etc. I wrote Chuck's wife, Jeri, a letter (yes, snail mail) and included some recent photos of the car. I let her know that we were thinking of driving the Cougar to the Detroit area in August 2022 to attend the Lambda Car Club International's Grand Invitational and, if she'd like to see it, we'd be glad to drive to a location of her choosing. To reduce



the appearance of being creepy, I included the below paragraph:

"I understand if you're not interested in seeing the Cougar and/or if you don't really remember much about it. At 52 years old, it's now a classic car that's remarkable and special today, but I understand that it was most likely just a regular car to its original owner."

To my surprise, I received an enthusiastic e-mail response from Jeri only a few days after I mailed the letter. She was thrilled that I had reached out and was very interested in seeing the car. We had been on the fence as to whether to attend LCCI's Grand Invitational in Detroit since we had already driven the Cougar out to Detroit and back in 2017 for Cougar Club of America's 50th Anniversary show. It's a very long drive in a 50+ year-old car with an air-conditioned 428 CJ that hadn't, until recently, run at reasonable engine temperatures in hot weather. However, Jeri's warm response to my letter sealed the deal — we would make the 1,200-plus-mile trek to Detroit once again!

Fortunately, with only one month before the trip, I had finally solved the issue that had plagued me for seven years. The car was now able to regulate engine temperature within reason, even on 90-plus-degree days with the A/C on! I polished and waxed the car, triple checked all mechanical aspects, and got ready for our second Cougar excursion to Detroit.

We made arrangements to meet Jeri and some close family friends at her home a few miles from our hotel during some downtime of the packed week-long schedule of the Grand Invitational. We arrived at Jeri's home on a warm, sunny day and were greeted with enthusiasm by her and some friends who had known Chuck and Jeri for over 20 years.

For two hours, she told us all about Chuck's life and personality, and how he used to have a different new car every year. Chuck was a Ford employee for 32 years and, at the time he owned the Cougar, he was a Senior Research Scientist in the Metallurgy Department of Ford's Scientific Research Division. Chuck and Jeri met and started dating while Chuck owned the Cougar, and Jeri remembered it fondly. She worked for Ford at



the time as well. When she first saw the car upon our arrival, she commented that it was completely Chuck's style and that she could effortlessly picture him in it. Chuck leased a new Ford Motor Company car every year and drove some of the coolest cars the company ever produced. He rose through the ranks at Ford over the course of his long career there and retired as a director in 1995.

Chuck and Jeri's accomplishments were many and varied. Chuck had a PhD in mechanical engineering and continued to work as a consultant after he retired from Ford. Despite his demanding career, Chuck still managed to find time for a variety of hobbies and



interests, many of which were shared with Jeri. She told us that Chuck was always learning something new and when he adopted a new pursuit or interest, he dove into it 110 percent (a personality aspect Chuck and I share). Chuck and Jeri even co-authored and published two books on Great Lakes maritime history and shipwrecks.

At the conclusion of our visit, Jeri presented us with a signed copy of their book, "Shipwrecks of the Straits of Mackinac." Jeri might be a septuagenarian, but she was full of vigor and seemed to be at least ten years younger. She's a remarkable woman and she and her husband led (and continue to lead) fascinating and active lives. We took lots of pictures and had a wonderful afternoon!

It was a fabulous experience to spend time with the Cougar's original owner's wife and their friends. It's a reminder that by owning, driving, and showing a classic car, we're not just preserving an object, but we're also preserving a bit of the legacy of its previous owners. I've since updated my car show sign to include some facts about Chuck and Jeri, and proudly display the autographed book presented to us at car shows.





SUPER CAT

1/25 model kit

By Bertrand Joseph (CCOA #9735)

Following the article on the famous “Super Cat” drag Cougar in ATSOTC vol.42 Issue 1, I thought it would be interesting to show you the 1/25 model kit of this car that I built a few years ago.

It is best to begin with an AMT 1969 CJ428 Cougar (note that MPC had issued a faithful replica of this car a long time ago, but it has become rare and valuable, and would be a shame to build it). Fortunately, the AMT kit is quite easy to find and buy, either at auction sites or at hobby shops. Don't use the AMT Cougar Eliminator model because it features the 302 engine, which is incorrect for this particular car.

I always begin the assembly of a model by painting the body so the paint has the time to cure while I work on the rest of the car. As with any model kit, it is necessary to carefully prepare the body before painting: remove

mold lines and flash, re-engrave the simulated opening parts, then wash it using water, dishwashing liquid, and a toothbrush. This step is essential to prevent defects from appearing in the final paint.

The next step is to apply a primer (I use Tamiya brand but an automotive one will work too), as it will reveal any unseen defects and it will help the final paint to adhere better. For this car, I used a Testors custom red transparent spray can over a silver base for that “candy” effect. Of course, this can be achieved with an airbrush too.

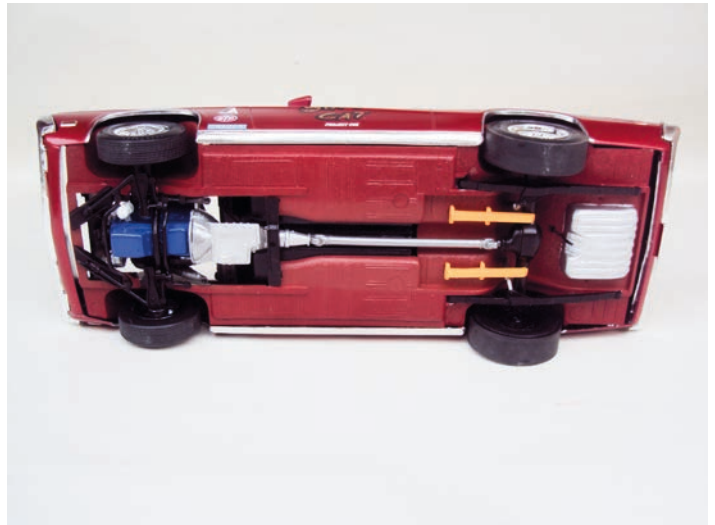


Fortunately, the engine of the kit can be used nearly as-is. I only added basic detailing such as ignition wires (it is a simple and cheap way to enhance a scale engine). The interior was simply painted semi-gloss black (Tamiya spray can again), plus I replaced the kit-supplied shifter with a Detail Master photo-etched Hurst one and added flocking to simulate carpeting.

To finish the exterior, it is best to use chrome foiling to duplicate the bright trim of the 1:1 car because chrome paint isn't as shiny and long-lasting and it tends to tarnish with time. It's also necessary to locate the correct decal sheet for this particular version. The decals are very user-friendly, they cover well, and are thin enough to conform to every curve.

The last step is the chassis: you can either paint it in primer and add the clear red overspray on the sides or simply paint it black. I added traction bars from the parts box, like the real car. All that's left now is to find a set of Cragar wheels, which is quite easy since a lot of old AMT kits featured these wheels as an alternative to stock ones; otherwise, some are available online for a few dollars.

Finally, you can mate the body with the chassis, add the last details (bumpers, grille, etc.) and, voilà, you are done!



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Jointly hosted by the Delmarva Cougar Club and Cougar Club of NJ/PA to celebrate each club's 25th anniversary, this event will feature a cruise to scenic Solomons Island, a people's choice show with more than a dozen Cougar classes and specialty awards, and an awards banquet.



Registration costs just \$65 and includes one show field spot and banquet seat. Additional show field registrations and banquet seats may be purchased separately. Rooms at the show site, the Hilton Garden Inn, Solomons, are available at a discounted rate. Reserve your room soon, as the show room block is limited.

Visit SolomonsCats.com to learn more, register for the show, and reserve a room.
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CCOA APPLICATION

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New (old) Editor Letter of Introduction

By Thierry Frisch (CCOA #9342)



Dear Members of the Cougar Club of America,

It is with great pleasure that I return as the Editor of “At the Sign of the Cat,” the Cougar Club of America’s quarterly magazine. After a five-year hiatus, I am thrilled to be back and working with such a passionate group of individuals who share a love for all things Cougar.

During my previous tenure as Editor, I had the opportunity to work with many of you and I always appreciated the dedication and commitment that each of you brought to the magazine. I am excited to reconnect with old friends and meet new members of our community as we continue to grow and evolve as a club.

One of my top priorities as Editor is to ensure that we continue to produce a magazine that reflects the best of our community. To achieve this, I am looking forward to seeing all of your submissions for future issues of “At the Sign of the Cat.” Whether it’s stories, photos, or insights, your contributions are what make our magazine so special.

To help streamline the submission process, I would like to remind everyone of the submission deadlines for each edition of the magazine:

For the Spring issue, published at the end of March, **submissions are due by January 31.**

For the Summer issue, published at the end of June, **submissions are due by April 30.**

For the Fall issue, published at the end of September, **submissions are due by August 15.**

Finally, **for the Winter issue**, published by the end of December, **submissions are due by October 31.**

I am excited to see all of your submissions and to work with each and every one of you to create a magazine that reflects the best of our community. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or if you need any assistance with your submission.

In closing, I want to express my gratitude for the opportunity to serve as Editor once again. I am truly honoured to be back, and I look forward to working with all of you to continue to make “At the Sign of the Cat” the best it can be.

Thierry



1970 Cougar XR-7 Convertible

Joe Carter and his Top Kat

By Diego Rosenberg (CCOA #10288)

All it takes is an imprint. Joe Carter grew up poor, so the Hollywood kid got his jollies from the 49-cent theater that showed second-run movies. In 1972, Joe caught sight of a Mercury Cougar in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*. It was the first time the 12-year-old had ever seen a vehicle like this. "It was love at first sight for me with the Cougar (although Diana Rigg came in a close second). After seeing the movie, I vowed to myself that one day I would own a Cougar convertible."

In 2014, that day would come. While perusing ClassicCars.com, Joe found a Competition Gold 1970 Cougar XR-7 convertible. "The thing about Cougars is they really are an elegant, upscale Mustang with very unique features. I love the front grille with, as the ads of the day said, 'Dual concealed headlamps that gleam by night and hide by day.'" Like many folks, it took a bit of soul-searching, but Joe stepped up to the plate and had the St. Louis-based car shipped to his California home.



"According to my research, it was originally purchased in California, and I am the third owner." The Marti Report bears this out, as the XR-7 was originally sold at Sierra Lincoln-Mercury in Fullerton. Only 27 Competition Orange XR-7 convertibles were built and, of those, only three had the Dark Tobacco leather interior. Under the hood, you'll find the M-code 351 Cleveland four-barrel with single-traction 3.00 gears. Other features and options include white convertible top, power windows, console, power front discs, tilt steering wheel with power steering, air conditioning with tinted glass, intermittent windshield wipers, and AM/FM Stereo radio.

"The car is a real work of art. If you look at the center hood and front grille, you will see the nose of an exotic cat. In those days, car designers had more free rein. Today, cars are works of technology, safety, and efficiency. In those days, they were works of art."

Joe drives his car everywhere, as if it was a modern vehicle. "I don't think a car like this should be kept in a garage with a plastic tarp over it." If he needs milk, off

to the grocery store he goes. If he plans a date with his wife, the Cougar takes them where they need to go.

"Growing up, my mother used to say, 'Someday, Joey, we are going to live by the beach,'" says the Moreno Valley resident. "She died of cancer at 54. Someday never came. My philosophy became: If you can do something you want to do, then do it. Life is short. If you find things that you love – that have meaning for you – don't wait."









By Melanie J Harper

My Dad was in the hospital. The toughest man I had ever known was in the hospital 600 miles away. Adding to the urgency, my Mom, who had become dependent on my Dad, was home alone on the farm with no one nearby to check on her.

As life would have it, my husband Rick had a serious commitment of his own. His brother was scheduled for heart surgery and my strong, kind, wonderful husband was committed to taking great care of him. Rick would give him a ride, wait in uncomfortable chairs, and bring him home to our house for a few nights, making sure he was stable and comfortable while regaining his strength.

Consequently, in the winter of 2013, it was up to Liz, my 2001 Mercury Cougar, and me to make the trip together. Liz had always been a dream to drive, yet I was anxious and in a rush. I started the trek across I-70 from Kansas City to Eastern Indiana. What was normally a long, tedious drive became a blur as Liz flew me across three states in record time. At that time, there wasn't so much traffic, and folks got out of the way when a car came up fast in the passing lane. Yes, we were moving fast as my tough-as-nails, never-complaining Dad was in the hospital.

Liz got me there safely. Mom and I arrived to find Dad in good spirits, even surprising the cardiologist. When the time came for him to be released, he slid right into the passenger seat and snuggled into Liz's low, warm cradle for a happy ride home. He had an appreciation for quality cars.

Along the way, I sensed the consequences of replacing the original Firestone Firehawks with a competing brand of tires. The ride home was a bit bumpy on those rural roads.

Dad grew stronger, and Mom recovered from the trauma of being home alone. My brother-in-law recovered well too. My husband finally took a deep breath after all the wear of critical caregiving. All of us rallied with gratitude for the immediate win.

Liz had simultaneously hugged the road while flying us across I-70. She was game! She was also stylish with her dark shadow grey clearcoat, dependable EFI 2.5L DOHC V6 and low mileage. She was familiar with the thirty-mile roundtrip to work on suburban streets. Likewise, she came through for the long drive when we needed her. Along the way, she often received compliments from friends and genuine adoration from strangers for her exceptional street appeal.

Why am I willing to share our love story with you? Well, she needs a fresh start.

You see, on January 29, 2001, I brought my brand-new 2001 Mercury Cougar home with only one hundred miles. I named her Elizabeth (aka Liz). Now, as of April 2023, she has less than 67,000 miles — mostly everyday miles. Oh, what a dream to drive. My heart! I am seriously attached yet seriously facing harsh reality. I don't believe in letting a car sit and decline. I promised myself I would never do that to her. However, she has been standing in our garage with only



cardboard between her feet and the cold concrete for two full years now.

Wondrously, in her early years, she scooted Rick and me through New Mexico onto the White Sands as the sun set west and the full moon came up east simultaneously.

In the best days, I would cheerfully slide behind her leather-wrapped steering wheel and settle into her inviting light grey leather seat. A simple touch would engage her six-CD player and put her stereo on high bass for Bob Seger & The Silver Bullet Band. "Took a look down westbound road. Right away I made my choice..." Phenomenal sound quality that embraces you!

On a sunny day, her power tilt sliding sunroof would open up the day to sunshine and hope. On a winter's day, her anti-lock braking and traction control would keep us safely grounded in our lane. She was simply a dream to drive with power seat adjustments, tilt steering and smooth cruise control.

During some sad days, Liz heard my desperate singing, coaxing me to work, when it felt impossible to make that drive and commitment, one more day. She heard my sobbing and angst after some of my favorite people were laid-off from Sprint.

As transitions were made, the direst moment in her lifetime happened. A distracted driver was so preoccupied with her bouncing dog in the dashboard that she turned right in front of us, leaving no room to avoid collision. Liz protected my dear friend and me by deploying her air bags and absorbing the impact, thus sacrificing her front bumper. I chose to replace the airbags and repair her injuries.

Thank her!

So, even at twelve years old, she was game! She flew me to my Dad's side. A few years later, we had a brief un-garaged stay in middle Tennessee. Then, we moved north, re-invested in her, gave her some pampering, and back to shelter in a garage.

She rewarded me with that awesome delight as I slid into her welcoming seat, superior sound, and thrilling acceleration.

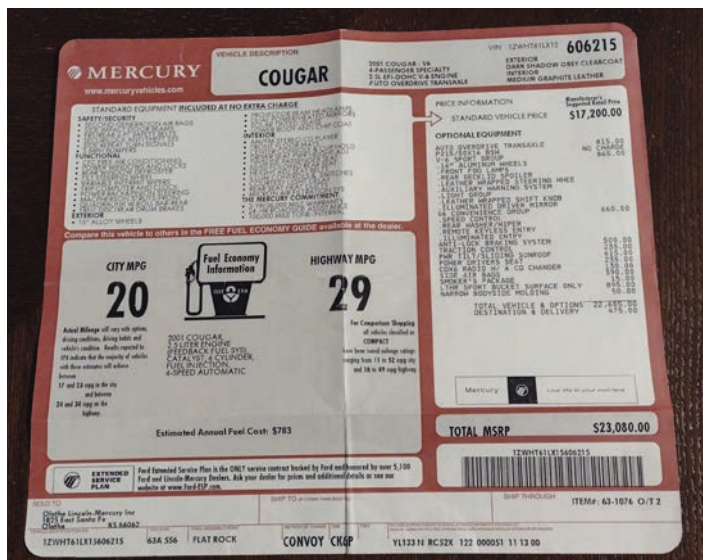
Signs of her age and wear grew serious about the same time as my husband's cancer diagnosis. Coincidentally, the compact disc changer locked up. No simple solution. No time to prioritize her. She watched as I chose her garage-mate to chauffeur Rick back and forth to chemo. She really needed to be chosen and driven.

She needed repairs. Some were done. Some had to wait. Her maker's service team called her a gem!

A beauty! But they found a slow leak and offered up the repair price. Truly, the cold, hard truth during a cold, challenging week near her 20th birthday. The world's assignment of value far less than her true worth. A reality worth accepting for the right person.

Ideally, we would find someone who will repair her, drive her, garage her, appreciate her. Happily, someone who wants to boost her power and show up his or her dad or grandfather in a seriously fun-loving competition. Or, perhaps, someone who will simply pamper her and respect her place in pantheon of Cougars.

Liz deserves a fresh season to thrive. She presents a striking stance, exciting aerodynamics, and timeless charm. Will you be the kindred spirit who is excited to open your home and life to her?





By Randy Christian (CCOA #9216)

MACC is back, and so is Thierry. Welcome back! We missed you. Mid America Classic Cougars remains a very active club with monthly club meetings, weekend cruises, tech days, and group attendance at car shows on a monthly basis. Our club continues to grow, and we have added over 15 new members since the start of 2023. We have some beautiful Cats in the club, which we will feature in future MACC articles with pictures and a small write-up.

Our big news is that for the past 12+ months, our club has been planning and will be hosting the National All Mercury Invitational. This is an all-indoor show at the SageNet Center in Tulsa, OK, on July 8, 2023. You may ask why an all-Mercury show? Well, we thought it would be fun to do and see how many cool Mercs we can get to Tulsa. We have sent out over 1000 e-mails recruiting Mercurys of all shapes and sizes, show sponsors, and raffle prizes. Some of our show sponsors are Cougar Club of America, Hagerty, O'Reilly's, Gasoline Alley, and several others. Just like we did at our National Cougar show in 2017, we will have an awards banquet with a

BBQ dinner and all the fixings. We have had some very cool trophies made for us by Gasoline Alley in Sapulpa, OK, and we have also created another 3D minted show coin that all cars registered for the show will receive. Yes, we will have extra coins for sale after the show if anyone is interested.

You can follow all the show activities on our website, www.midamericaclassiccougars.com, and on our Facebook page, Mid America Classic Cougars.

You will see a list of award winners and some cool pictures from the show in our next article.





1969 MERCURY COUGAR CONVERTIBLE ELIMINATOR TRIBUTE IN HOLLAND

Written by Jan de Wolf (Holland) (CCOA #10196) in the Spring of 2021
Edited by Conan Tigard (CCOA #9870)

First of all, let me introduce myself. I am an American car enthusiast from Zwolle in The Netherlands. My passion for American cars comes from my parents, who have driven American cars for as long as I can remember. They have owned a 1970's Chevrolet Camaro, a 1970's Ford Mustang Mach One, a 1960's Armstrong Siddeley (former car from the Dutch royals), a 356 Porsche, and a 1969 Dodge Charger (white with a black vinyl roof). So, my parents have owned a variety of cars that they selected because of the model, not its make.

My first love was, and still is, a 1967 Chevrolet Corvette Stingray 427, 435 HP coupe, but this type of car is way outside my budget, so I keep admiring them from afar and hope that I am able to buy one someday. I looked for years for an affordable Stingray, but couldn't find one within my price range.

Over the years, my girlfriend became my wife, and as will happen, kids entered into our lives too. I finally had to give up looking for a Corvette because they are not a family car. I decided that I needed an American vintage muscle car, and if possible, it needed to be convertible because I expected to drive it only during summer. I needed something large enough to fit all four of us and still have room for luggage, as we enjoy camping and weekend getaways.

I found that Mopars were too expensive. Then the Mustang caught my eye, but in The Netherlands, they were too many and I don't like the coupes. The fastbacks are very nice but are too small for four. In my search for a classic car, I stumbled over a Mercury Cougar and started getting curious about this car. I discovered that it was an underrated car and the first generations were rather limited number wise.



Because I wanted a convertible for the first model, I required a '69 or '70, because the earlier models had no convertibles.

I looked at a lot of them and spent a fair amount of money on appraisal experts, hoping to find a good one, because in Europe, there were none available. At some point, I found an ad on eBay about a 1969 convertible Cougar in Denver, Colorado. This Cougar had a very specific paint job and I pondered as to whether I should bid on the car because of the customization. I followed the auction and didn't end up bidding because its customization was one that you either love or hate. The bidding ended and it didn't make the reserve. After a few weeks, it was offered again and I followed the auction once more. I mailed the seller and asked him about the car and found out he invested serious money to get it to where is currently was. I asked him if it was okay to send over an appraisal expert to check the car out. After I received the report, I joined the bidding. Approximately one week later, I won the car with the highest bid.

Next, I had to find someone who could ship the car for me. The seller had no problem holding the car while I did this. Eventually, I found a Dutch company who could ship the car, and soon it was on its way. On the 31st of December 2015, it was delivered to my doorstep. It was the perfect way to end the year.

From the factory, this 1969 Cougar was a standard model convertible with a 351 Winsor. The previous owner had converted it to an Eliminator tribute. He also painted the car with the stars and stripes and had the red, white, and blue interior made. All around the car he had added red and blue lights, strobes, flashing lights, etc. He had so many extra lights that he was forced to install an extra battery to support all of them. I wasn't sure if these extra lights would be allowed to be lit while driving, but I took a chance and left them on the car.

I started to check the car over to get it ready for the Dutch DMV. After the first visit, I had to change the headlight, side light (running lights, not allowed),

check the bushings, and had to find a solution for the side exhaust "sound." I replaced most of the front suspension and replaced all the fluids. I knew that it wouldn't pass the first time because of the pipes being too loud, but I wanted to find out if the rest of the car was okay. When the DMV checked the exhaust, the initial noise level was 123 dBA. So, that is as loud as a jetfighter. I had to get it down to 93 dBA, more like the sound of a drill. I searched the internet and found a DIY on how to build your own dampener. I made these and went back to the DMV and ended up with 93.1 dBA, which allowed me to get my Dutch registration. Now I could drive my Cougar.

2016 was more about finding out how it felt driving this car around and how it handled. I even took it to a few car shows. On the day in 2017, I got pulled over by the police and they told me to remove all the, as he called it, Christmas lights, because cars were not allowed to have red and blue lights on a non-police vehicle. He gave me two weeks to remove the stuff and report to the police station. If I didn't remove the lights, he would take my car registration and I would have to go through all the DMV stuff again. So, I removed all the extra lights and the police approved of the removal. Later that year, my home-made chambered dampeners fell out at the ends of the side pipes, so I couldn't drive the car until I found a new solution. During winter, I found an American company called Classic Chambered Exhaust Inc. who made chambered mufflers for Corvettes and AC Cobra sidepipes. This solved my issue and they worked like a charm.

In 2018, I decided to try and figure out why the engine wasn't seeming to give me the 471 HP it should be. The motor started up and ran as expected, but when I floored it, the exhaust backfired like crazy, blew all the vacuum hoses, and smoked like a demon. I tried to tune the Edelbrock 650 carb, but that didn't help very much, so I brought it to a specialist (at least that's what they said they were). After 3 months, I picked up the car and found out that nothing seemed to have changed. During that summer, I drove around a bit, but could never get the engine running properly.

After the summer of 2018, even though the engine only had 4000 miles on it, I decided to pull it so I could find out what was wrong with it. In September, I pulled the engine and everything else that was in the engine bay. While I was at it, I removed the complete interior and emptied everything out of the trunk. By the end of November, the car was just a convertible body and two axles, the rest was out of the car in my "5th wheeler" storage.

During the following winter, I started to take the engine apart and found that this engine needed some serious help. There were indeed new bored over pistons in it, but the inlet manifold was resting on the cast iron GT40 heads. Because of this, the air flow wasn't good and there was a ton of air leakage. Also, the GT40 heads were in a bad shape. In checking further, there were some slightly bent pushrods. That was it for me. I started searching what I could do with the engine and decided to build a 408 stroker with all the bells and whistles.

As I make my way through the list of parts I needed to build a 408 engine, I discovered that building this engine would cost me some serious money. I wondered if it was possible to buy a 351W long block and finish it up with the parts I wanted.

After searching on the web, I found Tri Star Engines and Transmissions in Baldwin, Wisconsin. They built me a 351W with aluminum high flow heads making approximately 400 HP and 440 ft/pounds of torque.

I realized that the old rear end wouldn't handle the new engine so now I had to find a new rear end.

I surfed a lot of forums for information as to what options there were to fit my Cougar.

I ended up with a 4-link rear end from Chris Alston's Chassisworks with 2-way adjustable coilovers. They also offered sub connectors to stiffen the body. After all, the Cougar is a convertible and, as everybody knows, they flex. The 4-link and subframe connector set was "ready to fit" with a minimum on welding. Any necessary welding comes with a welding mold, so it should be a walk in the park.

During my "test cruising," I wasn't too happy with





the steering. I decided to replace the original power steering with a rack and pinion.

In 2019, I started ordering all the stuff I needed and my garage slowly filled with parts: a new engine, rear suspension with subframe connector to stiffen the car, and the rack and pinion from Unisteer.

Because I removed everything from the car, I decided to do a small restoration by repainting the engine bay, removing the old original sound deadener from the bottom, making repairs (sheet metal inside and out) where necessary, and removing any rust. The only place where I had to put in new sheet metal was the right front sill. I had to wait for the weather to get better because I have to do all the work in my driveway because I don't have a garage to put the car in.

April started okay weather-wise and I started removing the rear end and all the stuff underneath the car. After everything was gone, I cleaned the underside of the body by removing all of the old undercoating and dirt. After that, I sandblasted the underside of the car. Next,

I cold galvanized the bottom and sealed it with a 2k primer to finish up with the undercoating.

Now the underside of the car looked like new and I could start with the assembling the rear end to the car. This took a fair part of the summer. Meanwhile, I also gave some attention to the interior sheet metal, plugging up some holes. I removed the little bit of rust I could find and cold galvanized it.

After I finished up the rear, I started with emptying the engine bay so I could paint it beginning of the next year. At the end of the summer, I finally received my engine because it wasn't as easy as I thought to get a 500-pound crate-engine across the globe for reasonable money.

That winter, I finished building the long block to a complete engine. I mounted the highflow waterpump, MSD ignition, ceramic coated headers, etc. Because of the high flow aluminum heads, I had to enlarge the air canals in the Weiand 8023 intake to accommodate the airflow.

In the Spring of 2020, I started preparing the engine bay for painting, which would be Candy Apple Red to match the rest of the car. Because of COVID, I was forced to work from home. Normally, I travel around the world for my job, so I had some spare time to burn and could use it for restoring the Cougar. When the engine bay was ready, the engine went in and I started adding in all new wiring. This was a time-consuming job to get it nice and clean.

Soon, the transmission was installed, along with the driveshaft. During winter, I rebuilt the axle too, opened up the differential and found out that everything was in great shape. The Detroit Locker was fine, and the bearings and joke showed no wear. So, I reassembled everything and painted the 9" axle.

At the end of 2020, when I put the car back into storage, most of the mechanical stuff was finished. I broke in the cam by driving the car a few miles. Everything

worked perfectly, even better than I expected. The dash gauges oil pressure, temperature, volts, fuel, and warning lights were all connected properly. I even put in a fusebox to divide the power through the wiring better and replaced all the dash and light bulbs with LED to reduce the amps in the wiring harness throughout the car.

Now, in April 2021, I'm waiting again on better weather so I can put the car back on my driveway and start the last part of the restoration, putting in the sound deadening and insulation material, sound system, front seats, rear bench seat, floor mats, and finishing the trunk.

I hope to finish the car before summer and put some miles on the new engine. I look forward to feeling how the car feels because it certainly will feel different with all the changes I made.



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MIKE'S "BLUE THUNDER"
1970 ELIMINATOR



My father, Everette Andrews Sharp, grew up in Knoxville, Tennessee. Always a car lover, he joined the Ford Motor company in 1957, moving to Detroit. He became a Parts Service Manager for several districts, relocating the family to Oak Hill, West Virginia, and then to Cincinnati. In 1966, he and a partner took over the Lincoln-Mercury dealership in Bristol, Virginia, located on West State Street. (State Street is the state line and Tennessee is across the street).

I'm unclear of the year, but soon after, Mercury had a traveling Cougar promotion tour featuring two of the cougars seen in the commercials. It was a big deal to go to the dealership after school and see them. The large one stayed in a cage but the younger one, Judy, was allowed out on a leash. It would sun itself in the grass in front of the dealership and we were allowed pet it.

See below to read the "Talk of the Town" article.

The dealership had a large service area and, at least one night, Judy was allowed free range. An employee

came in earlier than usual, not knowing the cat was out. The large one was in its cage in the back so when he heard animal sounds, he thought they were coming from it. But then he caught a glimpse of something large out of the corner of his eye and realized what it was. Slowly he backed up and jumped into the Comet parked at his workstation. He stayed there until the handler showed up.

My sister and I spent a lot of time at the dealership helping Dad strip paint and clean parts for whatever car he was restoring at the time. A-Models were his favorite. My first car was a Mercury Bobcat and the last one I got through the dealership was the Zephyr.

Dad sold the dealership in 1980 and it changed hands several times. Today it's Stateline Motorsports, specializing in Indian Motorcycles, which Dad would have loved.

Thank you all for keeping the coolest car of all time driving down the road.



Talk of the Town Newspaper Article

By Howard Taylor

It's not often a down-to-earth country reporter gets to interview two television stars and pet a cougar all in the same day.

Well, actually, the interview wasn't with the stars themselves. It was with their owner and handler, Herbert Whobrey. But since cougars don't have much use for the money they earn, I figure he qualifies.

The stars are a couple of sleek cats used in television commercials advertising Mercury Cougar automobiles. It's unlikely there's a Bristolian between 3 and 93 who hasn't seen them at one time or another running alongside of, tearing paper off of, or lying contently inside of the car that bears their name.

WHOBREY, WHO has been handling cougars for eight years and owns eight of the cats, said there is a certain portion of trick photography used in the commercials with the cats.

"The scene with the cougar lying on the sign with it's tail switching over the edge isn't entirely candid," he said. "The cat is actually lying on a special stand behind the sign and is only about three feet off the ground. The switching tail isn't real - it's false, controlled by an electrical motor."

The one with the cougar running alongside the moving automobile uses a slight gimmick too.

"Judy is the only cat I have that will come when I call her name," Whobrey explained. "I was lying in the back seat of the car calling her to me constantly over a loudspeaker rigged to the side of the car.

"She was running to the sound of my voice while the car moved along at a slow speed. The camera speeds things up for the viewer."

Whobrey said that sometimes when a scene showing a big cat running over rough terrain is needed, he'll use a cougar that is completely wild.

"We turn it loose and let it run. If it gets away, you can always get another cougar."

WHOBREY CATCHES some of his cats in the wild while they are cubs, and gets others from zoos when litters are born in captivity.

Judy, the cub, and his other cougars have not been limited to auto commercials. They have also been used in other types of advertising, some sequences of which may not be released for two or three years - commercials are made that far ahead.

By that time, Judy may be an even bigger star. Whobrey says she has been tabbed for an upcoming TV series in

which a woman and her two small boys have a cougar around the house.

Could be she was already thinking about her extra privileges as a big star when photographer Harrison Hall and I visited her cage. We didn't dare reach in to scratch her head.

Whobrey brought the cats to the Twin-City this week as part of a promotion that is taking him and his famous felines to auto dealers around the country.

Judy, a two-year old beauty, and an unnamed nine-month old cub have been making their home only at Sharp's Lincoln-Mercury place on West State Street the past day or so, and were due to move on tonight.

Judy, who weighs about 125 pounds and is expected to add another 50 before maturing at three years, hasn't been displaying any of her talents. She just lies sleepily in her cage while folks come by to look.

THE CUB, though, has been causing quite a stir. She doesn't have a cage - just a leash from her neck to Whobrey's hand. A gangly 55 pounder, she likes to play with anybody who happens to be nearby and will purr and whine when you scratch her head.

It was the first time I'd ever scratched a cougar's head. I don't think it'll become a habit.

"This cub is as tame as any cougar will ever be," Whobrey, a Nashville native who now lives in Florida, said. "But no cat is actually tame in the same sense as a dog or horse, and I'd never trust one."

Whobrey says his cats are not trained to do the stuff people see on the commercials. "You just have to sort of coax the cougar into what you want it to do, then just keep doing it over and over again until you get the shot you are looking for."

"This one (pointing to Judy) is the cat we used to tear the paper off the Montego in its introductory commercial. We coaxed her to walk up on top of the car, then rattled the paper and she started ripping it off. It was just a natural thing for a cat to do," he said.

"The one in which the cougar climbs into the car, does an apparent inspection, then climbs out was much the same. We just had to keep coaxing the cat until she did the right thing. Sometimes it takes hours or even days of filming to get the right sequence."

Talk of the Town

By Howard Taylor

It's not often a down - to earth country reporter gets to interview two television stars and pet a cougar all in the same day.

Well, actually, the interview wasn't with the stars themselves. It was with their owner and handler, Herbert Whobrey. But since cougars don't have much use for the money they earn, I figure he qualifies.

The stars are a couple of sleek cats used in the television commercials advertising Mercury Cougar automobiles. It's unlikely there's a Bristolian between 3 and 93 who hasn't seen them at one time or another running alongside of, tearing paper off of, or lying contently inside of the car that bears their name.



TAYLOR



verette S' And Feline TV Star—See Talk of Town

WHOBREY, WHO has been handling cougars for eight years and owns eight of the cats, said there is a certain portion of trick photography used in the commercials with the cats.

"The scene with the cougar lying on the sign with its tail switching over the edge isn't entirely candid," he said. "The cat is actually lying on a special stand behind the sign and is only about three feet off the ground. The switching tail isn't real — it's false, controlled by an electrical motor."

The one with the cougar running alongside the moving automobile uses a slight gimmick, too.

"Judy is the only cat I have that will come when I call her."

See TALK, Page 2

name," Whobrey explained. "I was lying in the back seat of the car calling her to me constantly over a loudspeaker rigged to the side of the car."

"She was running to the sound of my voice while the car moved along at a slow speed. The camera speeds things up for the viewer."

Whobrey said that sometimes when a scene showing a big cat running over rough terrain is needed, he'll use a cougar that is completely wild.

"We turn it loose and let it run. If it gets away, you can always get another cougar."

WHOBREY CATCHES some of his cats in the wild while they are cubs, and gets others from zoos when litters are born in captivity.

Judy, the cub and his other cougars have not been limited to auto commercials. They have also been used in other types of advertising, some sequences of which may not be released for two or three years — commercials are made that far ahead.

By that time, Judy may be an even bigger star. Whobrey says she has been tabbed for an upcoming TV series in which a woman and her two small boys have a cougar around the house.

Could be she was already thinking about her extra privileges as a big star when photographer Harrison Hall and I visited her cage. We didn't dare reach in to scratch her head.

Whobrey brought the cats to the Twin-City this week as part of a promotion that is tabbed for him and his famous feline friends around the auto dealers around the city.

Judy, a two-year-old beauty, and an unnamed, one-month-old cub have been making their home on Sharp's Lincoln-Mercury place on West State Street for the past day or so, and were due to move on tonight.

Judy, who weighs about 125 pounds now and is expected to add another 50 before maturing at three years, hasn't been displaying any of her talents. She just lies sleepily in her cage while folks come by to look.

THE CUB, through, has been causing quite a stir. She doesn't have a cage — just a leash from her neck to Whobrey's hand. A gangly 55-pounder, she likes to play with anybody who happens to be nearby and will purr and whine when you scratch her head.

It was the first time I'd ever scratched a cougar's head. I don't think it'll become a habit.

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Restoring a 1967 Cougar XR-7 GT Dan Gurney Special

By Jeremy Daniel (CCOA #9665)

My name is Jeremy Daniel from Paso Robles, California, and my first car was a 1967 Cougar.

If you have been a member for a long time, you may recall much of this article from the 2016 Winter issue. A lot has happened since.

I fell in love with the Cougar after donating much work to its restoration. After actually making the paint myself, I painted the car. Since I worked at a urethane paint factory, a graffiti-proof urethane was selected. That car was finished as a restomod in 1989 in Pennsylvania. That same year, my then-wife and I had my daughter, Felicia. We would take my baby for rides, and she would fall asleep to the Cherry Bombs rumbling. Eventually, my daughter was driven to kindergarten in it, and she loved to tell everyone her daddy had a race car. It wasn't stock by any means. Sadly, over the years, time took its toll and eventually I couldn't afford to keep up with the car. Having sold the drivetrain, wheels, and hood, the rest was crushed because I couldn't bear to have it belong to anyone else.

Forward to 1997: I am now divorced/single and looking for another 1967 Cougar to restore. After finding one, I come to discover that this car has my old car's hood (I have picture proof)! This second '67 was completed and ready to paint in 1999. During the same time period, I returned to school and accepted a job in California, changing my life for the better. Once again, I could not bring myself to part with the car and, unfortunately, I couldn't take it with me so the car was given to a friend of mine to be painted and run in a crash derby. However, I never saw proof that it happened — he might have sold it, but I don't know. Thus, my second '67 Cougar was not to be.

In 2011, I was in the position to try again. Having looked online for six months, the car of a lifetime was found. I set out looking for a 1967, but never imagined having the chance to buy an XR-7 GT. I was the first one to call, practically buying the car on the spot. This car was bought in May for \$2800. After obtaining a Marti Report, I discovered my third 1967 Cougar was an XR-7 GT Dan Gurney Special with the original big-block 390



and C6 automatic. There were only 2,657 1967 XR-7 390/C6 Cougars made. More recent inquiries to my specific model show three 1967 XR-7 GT DGS cars in the current Cougar Club of America database.

The funny thing about my car being an XR-7 GT DGS, is that the only difference between the XR-7 GT and DGS package was the quarter window decal. Some person paid \$101.74 for a window decal. There must have been a good sales guy!

At the time of purchase, the car's condition was very poor, with rust that would turn away most anyone else. Major reconstruction would be required to get this cat purring and on the road again. It did drive and run, but it was sketchy. A rear brake line rusting off at the wheel cylinder took it off the road.

My daughter passed away unexpectedly in July 2013 at 24 years old. I almost sold this 1967 Cougar not long after that but, luckily, family and friends talked me out of it. I think of her all the time when I drive it, and some of the best memories in my life happened in a 1967



Cougar. Many more will come, I'm sure.

Prodding the initial major restoration was the 390 that leaked from the rear main, bad enough to pull the motor. The inside of the motor was showing every one of its 40-plus years, and I was in no position to afford a complete motor rebuild because it needed everything. The 390 was set aside.



I then focused on the bodywork because I had time and that is somewhat free. The car was stripped, then sanded down to bare metal. Once the Cougar was in primer, the full rust damage appeared, leading to a need for a donor car. Fortunately, one was located in Atascadero that was rust-free on the top, but not on the bottom — a perfect match. Next, time was spent cutting and stripping the donor down. Many parts were sent to the sandblaster.

Overall, the bodywork required four years until I was happy with my work. (I'm still not.) The car was primed many times in my makeshift garage paint booth, with

well over one gallon of filler sanded off, with as little as possible staying on. The rocker joints were filled in along with the rear tray seams. Aside from not replacing the bumper guards, that's all I changed with the body. The jambs and underside of everything were painted in my garage booth.

For the drive train, to allow for mobility, I found a 289 and C4 on Craigslist for \$1200. I think it lasted two years. For the final coat, I put my goggles on and drove it totally stripped down to a local place with a booth. I think he applied 10 coats of Ford Performance White (supplied by me) for a very good price. I did this

because I knew I would not be happy with my own job since I haven't painted in many years.

Goggles were donned again for the drive home for reassembly. The interior has mostly been redone at this point. Mechanically, I have replaced the whole brake system, rebuilt the power steering system several times, converted lower control arms and strut rods to 1968 Scott Drake items, and replaced the gas tank and lines.

Next came having the drivetrain rebuilt. I made a huge mistake the first time around and didn't do my homework on the builder to which I sent the transmission. The 390 didn't last three years. Upon tearing it down, almost nothing the guy said he did was actually done to the motor. I should have sued him, but an expensive lesson was learned.

In 2021, I had the 390 crated and sent to Phoenix Engines to be built. I did my homework this time around and made a very good choice with the 410-horsepower package. Luckily, they were able to save the original block and heads. It was slated to take around six months, but took 10 because of supply chain issues due to COVID. The engine sports an Edelbrock performer manifold, 770 Holley Avenger carb, FPA headers, and other goodies. It runs awesome to this day.

Just before the first build fell apart, I had an Auburn limited-slip put in because, for some odd reason the

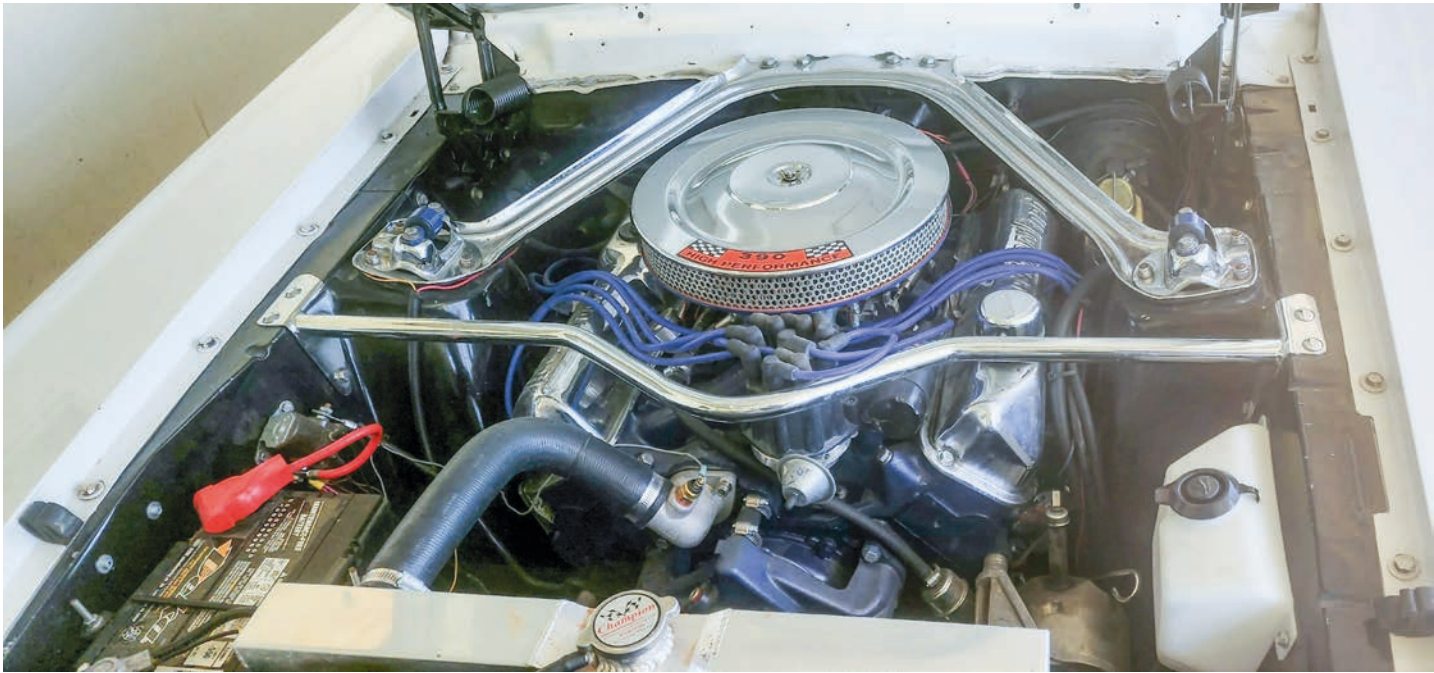
original owners did not opt for a limited-slip rear. The C6 has been fine since the rebuild before the first 390 build went south.

Some other upgrades have been a European brace, Monte Carlo bar, and passenger side torque box. I plan to weld a plate behind the back seat because it still twists, but I do not plan to do major suspension changes that can't be undone.

I drive my car as much as I can, even if it's not always warm and sunny in central California. She is not a garage queen, but I don't drive her in the rain.

I hope to see more of you in the near future, stay safe and Cougar on...







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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Charlie Brown (#8693)
Member Services Director

WELCOME TO THE COUGAR CLUB OF AMERICA

Summer is here, and it's time to get those Cougars out. Many of you have spent long hours working on your Cougars over the winter and spring, and I know they are looking great. We want to wish all of you safe travels to club meetups, car cruises, and car shows, and we hope you will share some pictures with us on our Facebook page. If you are so inclined, take some pictures at your club meetups and submit an article for the ATSOTC. If you're new to CCOA, write an article about your Cougar and its history. We all love a good story, and we love even more to share that story with our membership. We are also looking for technical articles for the magazine, so don't forget about us when you're upgrading or restoring your Cougar and share an article.

CCOA membership for the last 2 months saw a slight upward slope. We also saw a flat number of renewals again this month. I wanted to share some statistics.

As of April 30th, 2023, the Cougar Club of America has **784 active members**, up from 777.

From March 1st, 2023, to April 30th, 2023, a total of 51 members renewed their memberships.

From March 1st, 2023, to April 1st, 2023, we added 6 new members and 1 returning member.

NEW MEMBERS

Joining the club in March and April of 2023 are the following new members and returning members:

Welcome to the new members and welcome back to our returning members!

CCOA#	Member name	City	State	Country
10518	WILLIAM HOLZER	MEADVILLE	PA	USA
10519	AL ADAMS	OSAGE	IA	USA
10520	WOODROW WILBORN	VIRGILINA	VA	USA
10521	MARK PATZER	CENTERVILLE	OH	USA
10522	MIKE OHAGAN	MAYVILLE	MI	USA
10523	DAVID & DAVE MESSER	LITHIA SPRINGS	GA	USA
9150	RANDALL SAYLER	TECUMSEH	MI	USA

SPREAD THE WORD

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

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

Check your CCOA membership card for your due date. All members receive, if you are an e-member, the email with the download link will let you know if it's time to renew.

If your renewal is due, just use the "JOIN" button at www.cougarclub.org and this link will take you to Cornerstone Registration for renewal Membership processing. (<https://ccoa.cornerstonereg.com/>). If you prefer, you can send a check using the membership form found elsewhere in this magazine.

Be sure to let Cornerstone Registration know if you change your postal or email address. We use this data to mail out the ATSOTC. You can also change your personal information on their site. It pains me when mail is returned undeliverable. If you have an issue updating your personal information, please don't hesitate to contact Cornerstone Registration:

Cougar Club of America

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