

The Official Magazine of the Cougar Club of America



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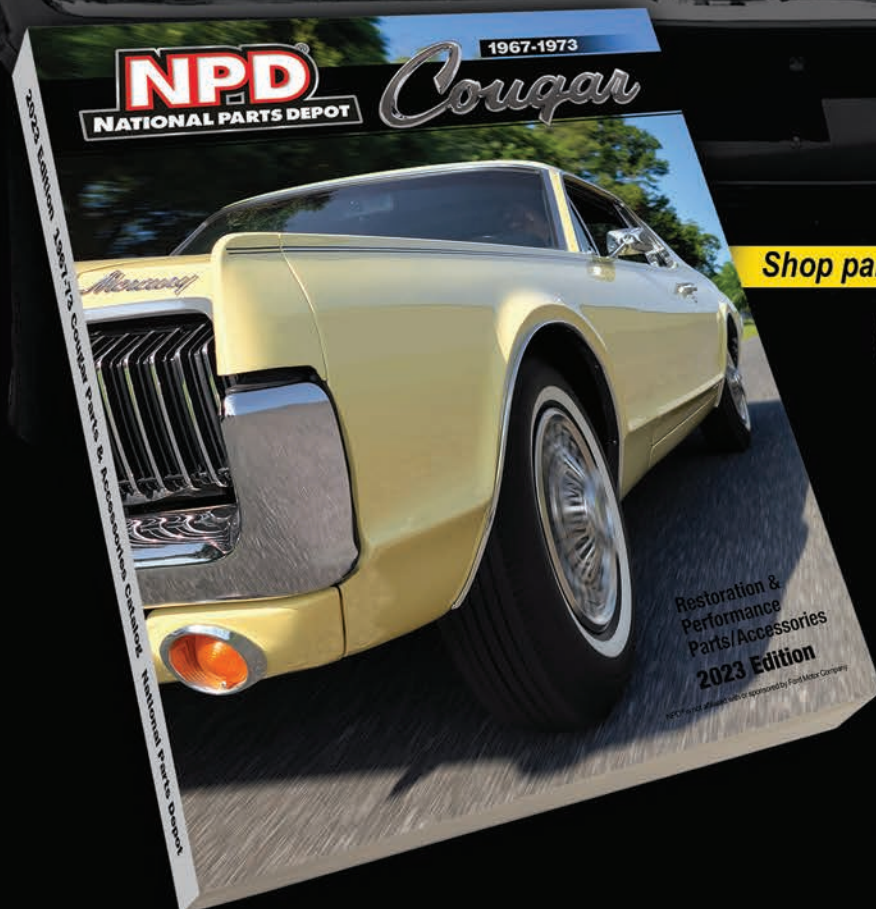


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AT THE SIGN OF THE CAT

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A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

By Gavin Schlesinger - CCOA Chairperson (CCOA #5780)

Ladies and gentlemen, start your engines...

I want to thank everyone who has been sending in articles and images for upcoming ATSOTC issues. This magazine is only successful with the support of our membership. Please send all your favorite Cougar photos from events or just from cruising around town to submissions@CougarClub.org, and you just may find your images appearing in a future issue of ATSOTC or on the club's Facebook page.

Upcoming events are the SoCal Cougar Club in Fullerton, California, on September 30, 2023, and, on the East Coast, DCC-CCNJPA is hosting an event in Solomons Island, Maryland, October 6-7th. Please send images to editor@CougarClub.org for these and any other event coverage.

Do you know of other events being planned? If so, please email details to clubservices@cougarclub.org and additional events can be added to our website www.CougarClub.org.

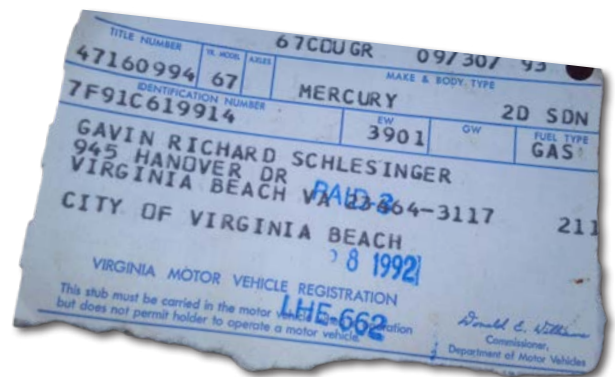


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As we age, change seems more inevitable. Some changes are for the better and some changes for the worse. No one will disagree it is terrible to have friends taken from us way too soon. I first met Donald Walsh in 1987 when I had 1968 Mercury Cougar parts listed for sale in a local newspaper called "The Trading Post." I had purchased a car that was in horrible shape, and I decided to have it towed to my parent's garage to part out. The first thing I sold was the drivetrain and, after Donald came to remove the items he needed, he continued to come over and help me disassemble the rest of the car and just hang out.







With all the time we spent together, we became great friends along with Gary Cox, Ron Crouch, and Sherry and David Johnson. Over our 36 years of friendship, Donald and I had many adventures in and out of our cars, in various apartments, and with each other's family events. Donald opened my heart and mind to many of his favorite musicians and bands. He was an amazing person with a true heart of gold, and would give anyone in need his last sandwich, the shirt off his back, or any help he could lend with his truck or two hands. The world was a better place with Donald in it — he was a true friend and an amazing man who is remembered and missed.

RIP Donald Charles Walsh, 3/22/1966-7/21/2023

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



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Diego Rosenberg Intro to Club for 1968 R-code Registrar

By Diego Rosenberg (CCOA #10288)

Hi, Cougar fans of the world! My name's Diego Rosenberg, and I am the new caretaker of the 1968 R-Code Option Registry. Bill Quay has done a fine job bringing visibility to this particular segment of the Mercury Cougar world and, as he steps down from this position, he's passing the baton on to me.

If my name seems familiar, it may be due to me dipping my toes from time to time in the Classic Cougars Community forum while researching books I've authored: *Selling the American Muscle Car: Marketing Detroit Iron in the 1960-70s* and, co-written with Rob Kinnan, *Cobra Jet: The History of Ford's Greatest High Performance Muscle Cars*. I could not have done those books without the help of members of the Cougar Club of America, with special kudos going to Gavin Schlesinger, Jim Pinkerton, and Royce Peterson.

I've tried to give back to the club by helping edit *At the Sign of the Cat*, and now I'm accepting this responsibility from Mr. Quay. Why the interest?

Around 1988, as a precocious high-schooler, I saw an ad in the *Swapper* for a Cobra Jet Cougar. As my dad owned a '68 when I was born, I had a soft spot for Mercury's pony car, and I knew enough that a Cougar with a 428 Cobra Jet was a substantial piece of machinery. With a pal from school, I drove a short distance to New Castle, Delaware, to

check out this 1968 Cougar. It was standard Black Cherry GT with a 4-speed. It needed work, but it was drivable. Alas, I already had a 1970 Olds 4-4-2 convertible in the driveway (needing even more work), so I knew purchasing the Cougar was not the wisest thing. My parents felt even more strongly, strangely enough.

Around 1999, after being on the Internet for a few years, I was able to find a Cougar chapter from the region. I asked if someone was familiar with the car, and I was told the car may have been in a drag strip mishap. That car was MIA for me until I was able to examine the registry and, lo and behold, there indeed was rear-end damage. Was the narrative correct as I heard? I don't know, as none of the phone numbers in the entry are current. Once I digitize the registry, I will move to update the contact information of every entrant.

Let's all thank Bill for the works he's done on this project over the years. I myself have big shoes to fill, so please do not hesitate to reach out to me at 68-r-code@cougarclub.org.

Sincerely,

Diego Rosenberg
Phoenix

SMITTEN



BY THE

KITTEN

By Mercury Marcel, founder & president of DuBe MCC.

V8 vibe is deeply rooted into my DNA.

I grew up listening to the hum of a large diesel V8 on my parent's boat, and my rhythmic love was further grounded when I watched *The Dukes of Hazzard* endlessly.

Saving all my summer job money, I managed to buy my first American muscle at age 19. She was a 1969 Dodge Dart. Perhaps she was a four-door but, with a V8, automatic, and power steering and brakes, I felt like a king taking my friends to the clubs.

As I matured further, so did my taste and sense of style, so I was on the lookout for a stylish coupe in the Ford family. I looked at various models like Comets, Mustangs, Falcons, and the like, but when I came across the untamed elegance of the Cougar, I was immediately smitten by the kitten.

She was a black plate survivor being sold by the brother of the first owner. He had to let her go due to health issues and was looking for another caretaker. She was cloaked in Onyx and equipped with AC, PS, PB, and black interior with buckets and center console — exactly like my wish list.

To become her new caretaker, I sold my first love and wired all my savings across the great pond. Then, the waiting game started: weeks and weeks hoping to get updates from the carrier. My friends and family were sending me video clips and pictures of containers falling off carriers just to antagonize me.



When she finally arrived after three months, we had a bit of a scare because, at first, she didn't start. After the nerves settled, we later realized it was just an empty tank.

I've almost completely overhauled every piece of mechanical hardware over the past 12 years I've owned her, learning the A-to-Zs of Cougars as I went along.

During the time of owning this piece of Mercury elegance, I slowly progressed into more aspects of the Cougar hobby. I enjoyed acquiring spare parts and found that I was meeting the same people repeatedly. I started gathering them in a WhatsApp group to share knowledge, information, and parts. This little group of enthusiasts grew into what is now the *Dutch Belgium Mercury Cougar Club (DuBe MCC)* with close to 100 members. Our goal is to help fellow Cougar owners throughout Europe and inspire aspiring cat owners.

One such example of ownership enthusiasm is found in one of our member's Cougar fan page. It's a true treasure trove of information, pictures, and interesting reads: <https://www.fordmercurycougarxr7.com>

We host a two-day annual meeting once a year to have a good time together, plus share tips and tricks whilst having a good laugh, a drink, and a bite. Everyone is welcome to join our get-together – more details on these meetings can be found on our Facebook page or by contacting me.

Over the years, I have gathered quite a large stock of 1967-68 parts and am always looking to buy parts and parts-cars. My goal is to become the largest used parts supplier in Europe for 1967-68 models. One can only dream big, right?

I often drive across Europe in my daily-driven 1966 Country Sedan to pick up and deliver Cougar supplies. One day, I hope to instill the same passion into my son when he's old enough to join me on these trips and participate in the hobby.

To all (European) Cougar owners, feel free to contact me on Facebook or via email at mercury.marcel@gmail.com. I always aim to help fellow enthusiasts find their parts, information, and connecting like-minded people. I am connected to all the European clubs so most likely I will be able to find what you are looking for.

I wish you many marvelous miles with your rides and perhaps we meet some time!





A wide-angle photograph of a large indoor car show. The venue is a massive industrial-style building with a high ceiling and large windows. Numerous classic cars, primarily from the 1960s and 1970s, are parked in rows. Many of the cars have their hoods open, and people are walking around, looking at the vehicles. The cars are in various colors, including bright yellow, orange, red, blue, and green. The text "National ALL MERCURY INVITATIONAL" is overlaid on the top half of the image in a large, stylized font. The word "National" is in red script, while "ALL MERCURY INVITATIONAL" is in large, bold, blue block letters.

National ALL MERCURY INVITATIONAL

By Randy Christian (CCOA #9216)

After many months of planning and hard work, the National All Mercury Invitational car show in Tulsa, Oklahoma, went off without a hitch. It might have been over 100 degrees outside, but it was a cool 72 degrees inside the massive SageNet Center. We had over 100 Mercurys and Cougars in the building, including 16 awesome Eliminators. This was one of the largest groups of Eliminators at a show since 2017. We had Mercurys and Cougars from all over the United States

including our very own Dave Wyrwas, who brought his two beautiful Eliminators all the way from New Hampshire. Also in attendance was a barn-find Eliminator that Gavin and Greg Wheeler pulled out of a garage two days before the show. A big shout out to Dave, Gavin, and Greg for all their efforts! There were some really rare and beautiful cars at the show, and we want to thank all the owners for bringing their cars.



MACC would like to thank our show sponsors for helping out and supporting our show. They were Hagerty, O'Reilly's, Gateway Classic Cars, Phoenix Financial, HomeandAuto.com, and all the other companies that donated awesome silent auction and raffle items. We could not have done the show without your support. We must also say thank you to the MACC show committee that worked extremely hard for many months putting the show together. They are Charlie Brown, Royce Peterson, Phil Childers, Floyd Brown, Craig Parrott, Juston Woods, George Temes, and yours truly. We must also give a big shout out to the Hilton Garden Inn in Tulsa for being a great host hotel and hosting our Friday evening meet and greet. They put out an awesome spread of finger foods and all the trimmings.

We were very honored to have John and Dee Bauman of John's Classic Cougars attend the show all the way from Michigan. They brought an Eliminator and set up shop and sold Cougar parts and other cool Cougar stuff. We all enjoyed visiting with them and hearing a few Cougar stories. Phill Parcels and Becky Tomlyn were in attendance and helped Royce Peterson concourse judge a few Cats. It was really cool having a few Cougar aficionados attend the show.





MACC wanted to make sure we get future generations involved in the classic car community. Hagerty provided us with their kids' judging kits that allow kids 5 to 15 years of age to walk around with their parents, judge the cars from their point of view, and award ribbons to the car owners based on their judging. We had 38 kids take part in this, and it was a big hit with everyone that attended the show. We must thank Joan Denney and April Krah, MACC club members, for overseeing this really cool part of our show. We must also not forget to thank all the MACC and family members who volunteered their time to ensure the show ran smoothly. We must also give a shout out to Jeanne Christian for all the great photos. You are all greatly appreciated.

We have been asked by many if MidAmerica Classic Cougars is going to do another car show in the future. Our best answer to that is the centennial anniversary of "The Mother Road," Route 66, is coming up in 2026, so you never know."

Randy Christian
Cougar Club of America
Community Relations Director #9216
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The major award winners from the show are:

Mercury Cougar Best in Show - **Bob Barton** - New Lenox, IL - **1967 GT Custom**

Mercury Best in Show - **Marty Burke** - Leonard, TX - **1969 Cyclone**

MACC Mercury Cougar Award - **Jim Wicks** - Vinita, OK - **1971 XR7 Convertible**

MACC Mercury Award - **Melissa Shereda** - Riverton, IL - **1969 Mercury Station Wagon**

Kids Choice Award - **Bob Barton** - New Lenox, IL - **1967 GT Custom**

Longest Drive - **Dave Wyras** - Merrimack, NH - **2 - Mercury Cougar Eliminators**



A photograph of a car show featuring a row of classic Ford Mustangs. The focus is on the rear of a dark green Mustang in the foreground, with a silver Mustang behind it, and several other cars visible in the blurred background. The text is overlaid on the image.

Near-Record Attendance

***Strong
Cougar
Turnout***

at Carlisle Ford Show

By Carl Garziano



This year's edition of the Carlisle Ford Nationals stayed true to form for this annual FoMoCo favorite in Pennsylvania: huge turnout, hot temperatures, a pop-up thunderstorm, and strong Cougar representation on the show field.

Overall, the June 2-4, 2023, event drew more than 3,434 cars and trucks, nearly eclipsing the show's record of 3,454 vehicles in 2022. In all, about 60,000 owners, spectators, and vendors were in attendance.

Contributing to that near-record turnout were more than 40 Cougars, including Eliminators, XR7-G and GT-E cars, a 1971 351 Cobra Jet convertible, and other scarce models. Many of the Cougars came from East Coast regional clubs that have made the Carlisle Ford event a much-anticipated annual get-together: the Cougar Club of NJ/PA, Delmarva Cougar Club, Mercury Cougar Club of New England, and New York Classic Cougar Club.













The clubs connected on and off the show field, including in nearby Mechanicsburg, the site of the unofficial show hotel for Cougar fans. The Marriott Courtyard provided the setting for nightly gatherings in the parking lot and a joint club cookout on Saturday evening. Although pop-up thunderstorms frequently occur at Carlisle in June, the show field stayed dry this year. However, Cougar fans didn't escape the rain entirely as a brief but strong thunderstorm at the tail end of Saturday's cookout chased attendees into the hotel's lobby.

When Cougar owners weren't socializing under the Carlisle-supplied tent, meeting at the brewpub just outside the show gates, or hunting for parts in the event's sprawling swap area, they were busy sprucing up their cars and winning awards for their beautiful rides. Below are the official winners list for the show's Cougar classes:

1967 - 1968 COUGAR STANDARD

Mark Eshelman	1967	First Place*
John Schiavone	1967	Second Place
Gilson Marpoe	1967	Third Place

* Celebrity Pick Chosen By: Daniel Peterson, Berks County Mustang Car Club Inc.

1967 - 1968 COUGAR XR-7, XR7-G, GT, GT-E

Brian McDermott	1968	First Place*
Richard Sadler	1968	Second Place
Jim Norwich	1967	Third Place

* Celebrity Pick Chosen By: Robert Day, Fairlane Club of America

1969 - 1970 COUGAR ELIMINATOR

Thomas Wilds	1970	First Place
David Dantzler	1969	Second Place
Rick Puskas	1970	Third Place
Mark Piechowski	1969	Special Award*

* Celebrity Pick Chosen By: Phillip Payne, Delmarva Cougar Club

1969 - 1970 COUGAR STANDARD & XR-7 COUPES

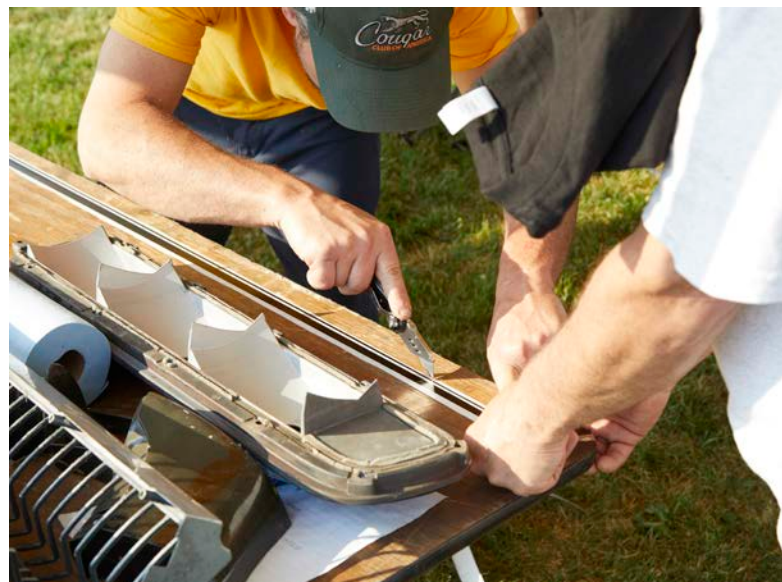
Cliff Gardiner	1969	First Place
Josh Reamer	1970	Second Place
Maura Nadeau	1970	Third Place

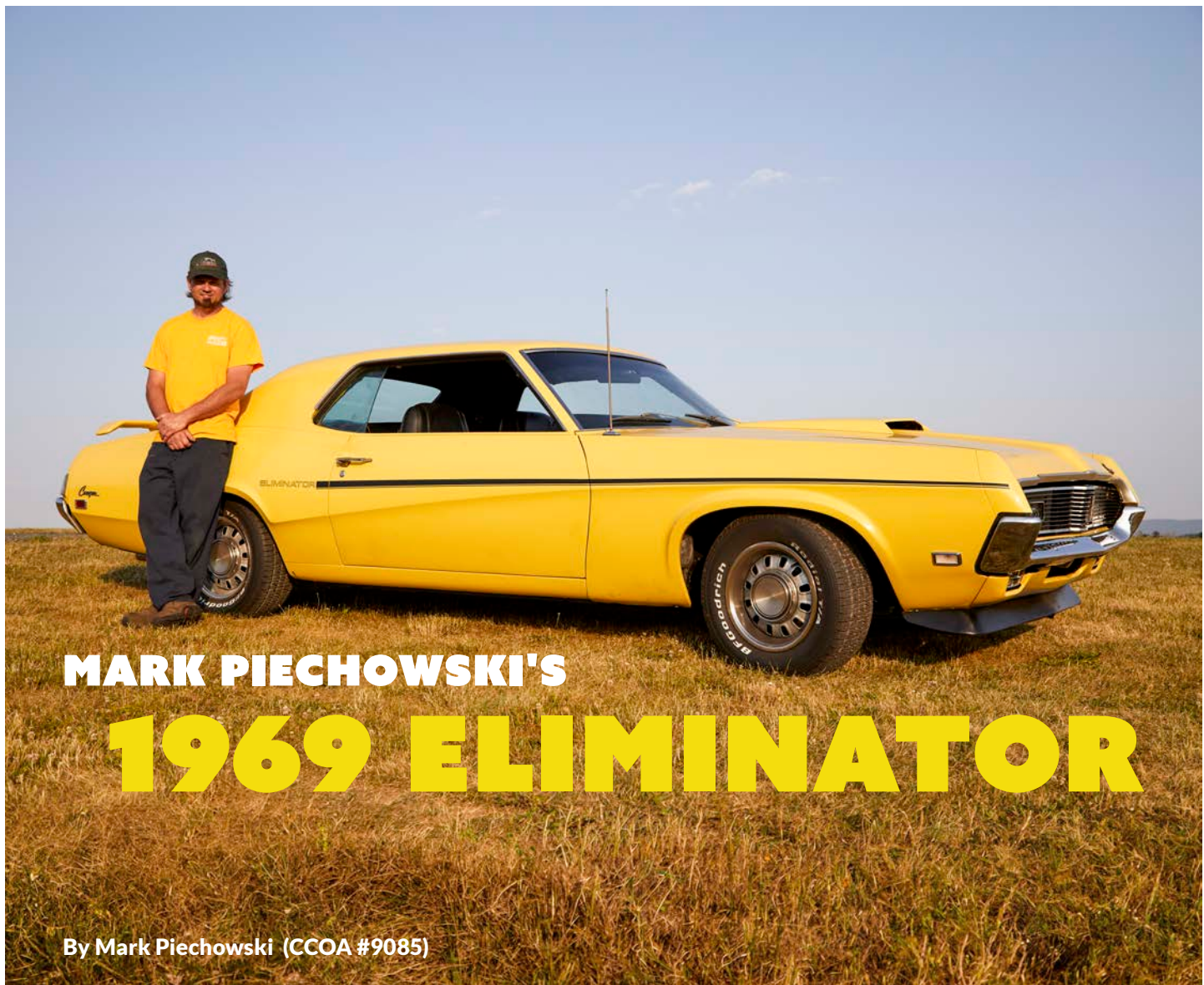
1969 - 1970 COUGAR STANDARD & XR-7 CONVERTIBLES"

Steven Polansky	1969	First Place
Paul Damato	1969	Second Place (Tie)
Roy Mills	1969	Second Place (Tie)
Andrew Ruopp	1970	Third Place

1971 - 2002 COUGAR

David Bran	1972	First Place
Robert Behnke	1973	Second Place
Zachary Martin	1972	Third Place





As summer turns to fall in the mountains of western Massachusetts, the season for old cars begins to count down. The cars love the cool weather of autumn as we get in a few more cruises admiring the colorful foliage while listening to the crackly AM radio. It's a moment that often sends me back to another time . . . (sigh).

Before long, the countdown comes to an abrupt end as the first plow truck spreads salt on the road. Even though the old Mercs are parked, the wheels in my mind keep turning: Which car I get ready for next year? Which car should I bring to Carlisle? Which car can be revived after decades of slumber? For 2023, I've decided on the yellow 1969 Eliminator.

Back in 2021, I purchased a Cougar Eliminator from Chris Jones of the Southeast Cougar Club. Help transporting the Cougar from Georgia to Massachusetts came from our resident Eliminator registrar, Dave Wyrwas.



Within a few months, we scheduled a weekend to take the car apart in preparation for body work. Traveling down from New Hampshire, Les Farr and Dave Wyrwas helped with the disassembly. Labeling bags to organize the parts was a full-time job in itself.



The Eliminator body and pieces were brought to a friend's father, who is a body guy. He accepted taking on the body repairs and paint in his home garage in central New York. We originally had the notion of getting things together for the 2022 Carlisle Ford Nationals but, unfortunately, there were setbacks, extra repairs uncovered, and personal lives to tend to.

Out of sight, out of mind for almost a year, it was time to get things back on track. As the end of 2022

approached, I reset my sights on driving to Carlisle for 2023, which is always the first weekend June. Discussing my hopes and wishes with the body guy, we thought it to be a feasible task. At this point, it seemed like we had plenty of time to accomplish getting things done. He would get the body repairs and paint done in New York while I worked on all the mechanicals, trim, and other components at home in Massachusetts.

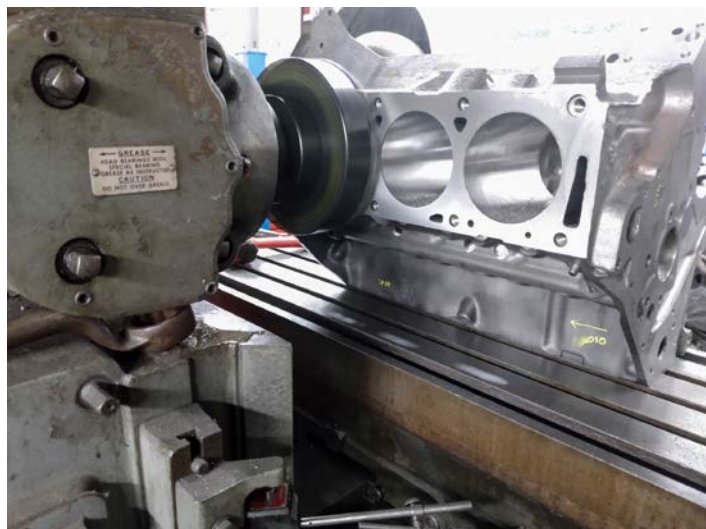
The biggest mechanical task was the engine rebuild. This yellow Eliminator is an S-code 390 automatic car. I love the Ford FE engines as they have a nostalgic cool factor, like the crackle of an AM radio, yet they can blast heavy metal in full stereo when needed (and this one goes up to eleven!). Some of the good stuff going into this 390 is a stroker crank (to make it a 445), ported heads, dual-quad intake, a moderate hydraulic roller cam, and FPA headers with 2½-inch dual exhausts. Most of these parts have been accumulated over the past year and now require proper assembly. With a plate already spilling over with running a transmission shop, house projects, other hobbies and two daughters (ages 9 and 7), I rarely have a minute for anything else. No problem, there's plenty of time between now and Carlisle. I have seven months for a bit here, a bit there. In theory, I should get everything done with time to spare. The reality of being constantly consumed by daily responsibilities makes a day go by in what feels like an hour, and a week go by in what feels like



a day. Winter solstice had come and gone, leading us into a new spring and, soon, summer. We also pass Christmas and New Year. And, then, the Carlisle deadline is weighing on me. The hope and desire soon turn into a mission. As the engine work gets underway, I find there are many hurdles to cross, questions to answer, mock-ups and tear downs, decisions to make, and much machine work to be done. Just when I think things are going as planned and on time, I discover a major problem with having the wrong crankshaft. Engine work gets put on hold for over three weeks as I source the correct crank and send it out for balancing. Every week, I am placing orders at Summit and other parts places for engine odds and ends. Then, add in Cougar parts from Cougar vendors, Cougar friends, Mustang vendors, eBay, and local auto parts stores — it was like having a financial funnel with the end cut off.

The question of the body being done on time was becoming unnerving. My friend's dad was doing me a favor and I didn't want to pressure him. One evening, a pleasant text came through my phone. It was the body guy sending me pictures with some new yellow paint on the cowl and trunk areas. Nice shiny 1969 #9 Bright Yellow. Glad to see he was making progress on par with my engine build. However, there was a LOT still ahead of us.

For me, the engine was getting back on track. The new crank was here, and the engine was mocked up again to measure how much to machine off the decks. This was a bit nerve-wracking for me as I've never done this task or had seen anyone deck a block on a milling machine. With careful attention I was able to complete the deck surfacing with good results.



Now for re-cleaning and assembly . . . or, so I thought. I made a change to tapping all oil galleys for screw-in pipe plugs. This required disassembly and more cleaning. Then, final assembly began to take place. There are many odds and ends that must be checked and verified to complete a thorough engine build. It all takes time.



Some of the other pieces are also yellow and ready. Unfortunately, the doors, hood, trunk, and a few other things still need further prep before the yellow can go on. The engine is together up to the intake manifold. The engine still needs carbs, ignition, accessories, and more.

Talking with the body guy, we determined it would be best if I were to pick up the shell to start working on the engine and tranny installation, brakes, and other assembly aspects. This would also free up space in his garage to get the other pieces positioned for paint. On April 26th, I drove my rollback out to pick up the painted shell. The drive was four hours each way.

There is still a lot left to do. If I were to name and describe everything, it would probably require this issue of ATSOTC to be hardcover and with extra shipping charges. The Carlisle deadline had become a serious mission for me. What started with a few hours after work and some work on the weekends had turned into regularly staying at the shop until midnight or 1 a.m., seven days a week.



Luckily, I had a few friends come in to help. Les Farr returned to help with engine installation and other tasks. In this photo, Les is operating the forklift while I guide the engine in place.



Work progressed as the days to Carlisle were counting down. It's funny how tasks multiply! For instance, I was ready to put on the rear quarter badges, but they needed to be straightened, polished, and freshened up with black paint. One task turned into four.

As the body guy finished components, he was gracious enough to bring them out or meet me halfway. Getting only a few pieces at a time is a funny way to put things together, but that is what had to be done to meet the deadline.

Another good friend came in to help. Paul Damato from New Jersey spent the long Memorial Day weekend helping with assembly. Here Paul is cleaning and prepping the instrument cluster.



We are now within the in the final week before Carlisle. The plan is to leave for Carlisle on Thursday, June 1st. Only two evenings before, I met the body guy halfway for the last body pieces, which were the hood and rear wing. I made it back to the shop at 10 p.m. and stayed until 4 a.m. I'm so close that I can't even take a break at this point! Wednesday was the last full day to make this happen. Everything was put aside as we did not work on any customer cars. A local friend and his two sons came by to help with what they could. After 5 p.m., I was by myself. There was still a list of things that needed to be done before driving the Eliminator. One by one, I worked my way down the to-do list, choosing the necessities to make the Cougar drivable.

Just after midnight, I went on my first drive to the gas station to fill up the tank. The car drove good on the initial test drive: brakes, steering, cooling system, lights, etc. all worked.



I went back to the shop in hopes of completing a few more odds and ends. Before I knew it, the sun was coming up. I completely missed getting sleep Wednesday night, but that's okay — Carlisle is here! The last thing before leaving the shop was to pack tools and extra parts. I drove across the street to my house to grab a bag my wife packed and kiss the girls goodbye. The Eliminator drove the 2½ hours to the lunch meeting point. Unfortunately, it developed a misfire in the parking lot. Of all strange things, the distributor cap developed a crack. Luckily, a new cap was in stock within a mile down the street. Mission complete, the Eliminator made it to Carlisle. Being sleep-deprived for six weeks, I can say the hotel bed never felt so good.

Thank you,

Mark Piechowski
North Adams, Massachusetts

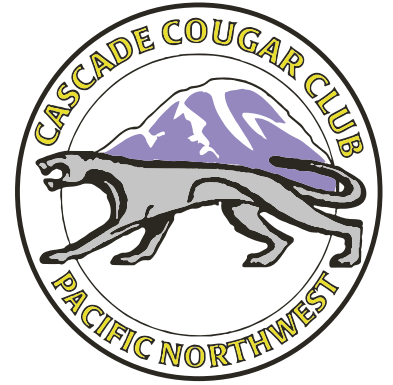
CASCADE COUGAR CLUB PROWL

Tacoma, Washington
July 8-9, 2023

By Heather Whitaker (CCOA #7477)



WOW! What a weekend! The festivities began in the early afternoon of Saturday the 8th as fourteen Cougars arrived at the Auburn Performing Arts Center. This was the gathering place where Steve Citrone, our cruise organizer and leader, chose because the parking lot is large and has been mostly empty every time he checked it out. However, on this particular Saturday, there was an event going on so parking spots were at a premium. As other patrons left, our Cougars slipped into the vacated spots until we were all closer together. As we stood around chatting, a Mexican family came by pushing an ice cream cart where the kids were selling their cold treats for \$1-2 each. Needless to say, our group decimated their stock, so everyone was happy: we enjoyed cold treats and they made a little cash.



After a brief meeting, we were off on our 50-mile cruise through the beautiful rural countryside of western Washington. The weather was absolutely perfect for a windows-down/top-down cruise and, once we left "civilization," there were few traffic signs or stops to separate our caravan. Approximately two-thirds of the way through our drive, we arrived at the little historic town of Black Diamond, where we stopped for about an hour to take in the attractions. The bakery was the biggest hit, as evidenced by the line that was out the door waiting to choose among the amazing selection of freshly baked goodies.







Brushing pastry crumbs off our shirts, we began the final leg of our journey, which took us to the town of Pacific and the home of Chris Osborne and Juan Nunez, where a delicious barbecue feast was waiting for us. Our buffet consisted of coleslaw, mac and cheese, baked beans, pulled pork, chicken and, of course, sweet desserts. As the evening slowed down, Scott Ferguson cooled off in the pool, playing catch with the two Jack Russell terriers in residence, with Chris Osborne later joining in on the fun. As the ball kept being thrown into the yard, with Colorado (one of the dogs) madly chasing and retrieving it, the rest of us sat poolside amid gales of laughter until it was time to call it a day. After leaving Pacific, Scott and Jeff Bingaman joined the Saturday cruise in downtown Puyallup. They made one circuit, then set up chairs on the sidewalk to watch the procession of all types of vehicles before heading off for a good night's sleep.

Sunday: show day! With a cool, breezy start, participants were already setting up chairs and tents when Scott and I arrived at Griot's Garage. Mark Petranek was at the gate sending cars to their designated parking areas, while Susan Benoit and Janna Greif were handling registration. Neal Jacobson was setting up raffle prizes and asked me to walk the field to sell tickets. Everyone was in good spirits and only too happy to open their wallets for a chance to win fabulous prizes. When I arrived at Thunder Cat, the 1967 Cougar race car owned by Rob and Shelle Lucas, I was presented with a unique question: "How much for a car-length of tickets?" The measurement came out to ninety-seven tickets, so I suggested rounding up to one hundred and charge fifty dollars. Not only was this agreeable to Rob, but when I also told subsequent ticket purchasers, they jumped at the idea. By the time I had finished a round of the show field, my roll of tickets was nearly gone, with several hundred dollars turned over to Neal's cash box.

Eli and Nathanael Pile provided the music and made announcements while Neal and Terry Purdy drew raffle tickets every half hour or so throughout the day, which kept everyone entertained. Tricia and Allison Lewis, wife and daughter of our chairman, Jeff Lewis, set up a grill and cooked hot dogs and burgers, which were very much appreciated. Glen Manheim spent a good part of the morning walking the field with clipboard in hand interviewing members for his "Service Provider" project, which will become part of the Members Only section of our website.

As the noon hour came and went, I spied John Benoit counting ballots and, before long, it was time for "Prowl Czar" Dave Nashif to announce the class



winners. Trophies this year were tire pressure gauges in a classy black box, accompanied by a winner's certificate. Brian Howson snapped over 600 pictures, and Conan Tigard was pressed into service to take pictures of class winners with their cars.

I'd say that Prowl 2023 was a howling success, no doubt due in part to our sponsors, National Parts Depot, and the Cougar Club of America. Thanks to their very generous donations, registration fees were able to fully cover our awards, and attendees were able to enjoy a delicious pre-Prowl dinner free of charge. In addition, several members sponsored classes which also helped defray miscellaneous show expenses. Of course, we couldn't have pulled it off without all our volunteers, so big thanks to everyone who worked very hard to make it happen and congratulations to all our winners.





PROWL WINNERS

C1 67 Standard

1st Terry Purdy, Yellow
2nd Steve Citrone, Blue
3rd Eron Avery, Lime Frost

C2 67 XR-7

1st Karl Gehlhaar, Black

C3 68 Standard

1st Mike Benson, Black Cherry
2nd Bill Wingate, Gold

C4 68 XR-7

1st Nicholas O'Neill, Green
2nd John Baxter, Madras Blue
3rd Thomas Gerber, Dark Blue

C5 69 Hardtop All

1st Bill Ronalds, Triple Black 428 CJ
2nd Brian Howson, Yellow
3rd Don Buol, Red

C6 70 Hardtop All

1st Jeff Bingaman, Competition Green Sunroof
2nd Chris Osborne, Yellow
3rd Conan Tigard, Gold Houndstooth

C7 69-70 Convertible All

1st Steve Goulding, Dark Aqua 69 XR-7
2nd Tami Vogel, Blue 70
3rd Dennis Welch, Red 70 XR-7

C8 71-2002 All

No Participants

C9 Modified

1st Elisha Pile, Blue 70 Eliminator Clone
2nd Shelle Lucas, Red 67 GT (Thunder Cat)
3rd Ken Hogenkamp, Red 67

C10 XR7-G, GT-E, Eliminator, GT

1st Scott Ferguson, Madras Blue 68 XR7-G
2nd Tim Ketchum, Black 67 GT
3rd Mike Banks, Competition Gold 70 Eliminator

MU Mustang All

1st Roger Griffin, Blue 22 GT/CS

MELF All Mercury, Edsel, Lincoln, Ford (except Cougar and Mustang)

1st Dave Long, 58 Mercury Voyager Wagon
2nd Karen Westby, Red 68 Torino
3rd Scott Miedema, Black 63 Mercury Convertible

OMM Other Makes & Models

1st Gary Vogel, Aqua 61 Chevrolet Impala
2nd Dennis Gruver, Blue/Ivory 54 Chevrolet Bel Air
3rd Tom Jaff, Green 54 Chevrolet Truck

BEST OF SHOW

Bob McManemy, Modified Red 67 XR7-GT

FORDNUTZ AWARD

Jeff Bingaman, Competition Green 70 Sunroof

LONG DISTANCE AWARD

Rob and Shelle Lucas, Sacramento, California

SPECIAL AWARD

Presented by Chairman Jeff Lewis to John Benoit for his tireless years of service organizing Prowl details and mentoring other volunteers and Board members.





1972 XR-7 convertible

Sold for: \$8,000

Total Bids: 4

VIN: 2F94Q518965

Miles: 96,000

Condition: 2

Comments: This XR-7 convertible came with the optional 351CJ/C6 and only has 96k original miles, runs and drives. Has factory dual exhaust, AC (not working), front disc brakes, power steering and the rare optional driver power seat.



1967 XR-7

Sold for: \$35,600

Total Bids: 6

VIN: 7F93C565370

Miles: 55,529

Condition: 1

Comments: Only 55k original miles on this numbers-matching XR-7. This Cat received a high dollar rotisserie nut-and-bolt restoration with everything restored to factory specs, everything works like it did in 1967. Dual exhaust was added, has new wheels and tires. This XR-7 was owned by an elderly gentleman who kept it in a heated garage.



Year/Model: 1969 XR-7 coupe

Sold for: \$26,600

Total Bids: 63

VIN: 9F93H557147

Miles: 76,800

Condition: 1

Comments: Originally from California and still has the black plates. This XR-7 has all original sheet metal with no patch work anywhere, a true survivor with 76k original miles. Has had one repaint in its original color of Medium Lime years ago and still shows very well. The interior was completely redone to factory specs and looks great, everything works as it should. Originally a two-barrel, now has a four-barrel Brawler carb with aluminum intake and headers and Flowmaster exhaust. The engine was totally rebuilt and runs and sounds great. Tons of fun to drive!!!!

eBay Cats

By Kamran Waheed (CCOA #3679)



1997 XR7

Sold for: \$5,500

Total Bids: 1

VIN: 1MELM62W3VH620080

Miles: 74,850

Condition: 2

Comments: This one owner XR7 30th Anniversary Edition Cougar has 74k original miles and has been garage-kept since new. Everything is all original and in very good condition. This is the third factory-issued color (Light Prairie tan) for the 30th Anniversary Edition, not many in this color. The car has not been used in years, but it was driven around the block every now and then to keep things maintained properly. This Anniversary Cat is fully loaded. The interior could use a good detailing to make look like new. The only issues are the driver's power window which doesn't roll down and the A/C blows warm air (probably needs a charge). Come with ALL the original paperwork including window sticker and maintenance records.



1973 XR-7 coupe

Sold for: \$12,000

Total Bids: 1

VIN: 3F93Q544245

Miles: 49,000

Condition: 1

Comments: This Cat has optional 351CJ with automatic transmission with only 49k original miles. The interior is like new with no rips or tears. Has console, AM/FM stereo, clock and air conditioning (not working). The Magnum 500-style wheels and tires were purchased two years ago, but tires have flat spots and should be replaced.

Official Ballot

2023 Election of Officers



Instructions:

Select your choice from the candidates for the CCOA Board of Directors positions indicated below. Vote Now! Your ballot must be *received* by **January 31, 2024**. Mail your ballot to the CCOA's Special Services Director at:

Phil Parcels
7227 Heath Markham Road
Lima, NY 14485-9508 USA

Or email Cougarvote@gmail.com

1. For the Office of Vice-Chairperson

- ☐ Mark Kulwik
- ☐ .
- ☐ .

3. For the Office of Club Services Director

- ☐ Chris Jones
- ☐ .
- ☐ .

2. For the Office of Financial Director

- ☐ Mark Smith
- ☐ .
- ☐ .

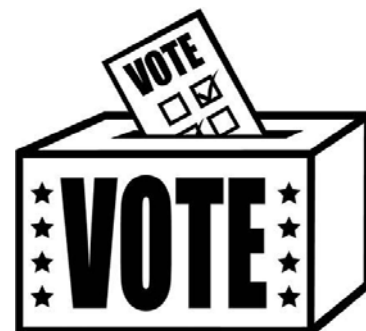
4. For the Office of Community Relations Director

- ☐ Greg Taylor
- ☐ Conan Tigard
- ☐ .

Your Member Number or Name:

Note: Your vote will remain confidential and known only by the **Special Services Director**. Ballots will be destroyed after counting. Your member number/name is requested only to prevent shenanigans, however unlikely that is.

You must be a CCOA member to vote. If you would like to join or renew your membership along with your vote, use the form on the next page and save a postage stamp in the process.



CCOA APPLICATION

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 <https://ccoa.cornerstonereg.com> today. Annual dues are **\$30** for members who receive the newsletter by email. For members who want a printed newsletter by mail, the dues are **\$45 for U.S. addresses** or **\$50 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: _____ Phone# _____

E-mail: _____

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

E-member (\$30) _____ U.S. mail member (\$45) _____ Non-U.S. mail (\$50) _____

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

Yes _____ No _____

Are you a member of a local Cougar Club? _____

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MIKE'S "BLUE THUNDER"
1970 ELIMINATOR



FULL CIRCLE

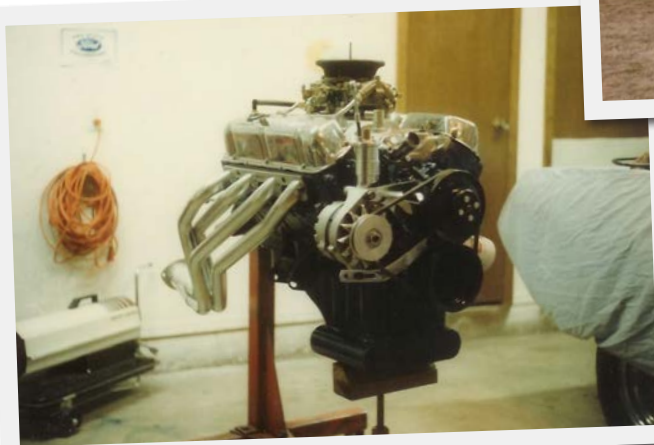
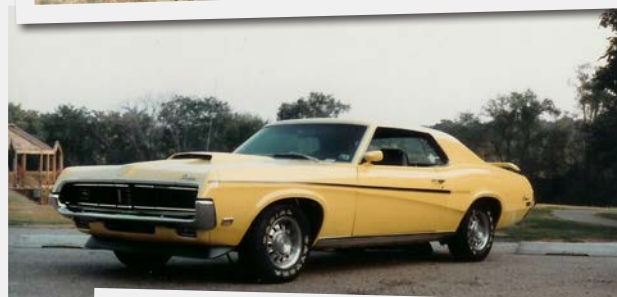
By Randy Marble, founder of CCOA Registries for the Cougar Eliminator, GT-E, and XR7-G (CCOA #1316)

In earlier days of the CCOA, I built a database (fancy stuff back then) based on data tag information accumulated from club member submissions. Over the years, I contributed to the newsletters with up-to-date registry numbers and specifics where possible. Lives change and business evolves, and I bowed out and turned over the information to the club. I am happy to know that it has been kept alive and expanded by the current custodians.

A bit of history of myself and my involvement in the Cougar hobby would be remiss without knowing about the early days, even before a driver's license was involved: As a child, I was a voracious reader – not of schoolbooks, but of every *Hot Rod*, *Car Craft*, *Cycle*, *Cycle World*, etc. issue that I could get my hands on. I owe my reading and comprehension prowess to these publications. Almost always, I focused on the technical articles and how people were “improving” on the iron coming out of Detroit. The cars that I was most infatuated with were the 1967 Shelby GT350/GT500 as well as the 1969 Mach 1, Boss 302, and Cougar Eliminator.

It seemed that when I had \$1,000, the car I wanted was \$2,000. When I saved \$5,000, they were \$10,000, and so on. In 1982, I was fully employed, with most of a college education (finished in 1983,) and happened to spot what appeared to be a yellow 1969 Cougar Eliminator on a used car lot in Oklahoma City. However, the “ELIMINATOR” lettering was missing from the area behind the doors. As it turned out, the car had been repainted and, of course, no reproduction stripe kits were available at the time. I purchased that car, which had the 351W four-barrel, and it became my driver through sleet, snow, sun, and no garage. The car came with whitewall tires and, frankly, was quite a pig, but I loved it just the same.

That car went through several incarnations, including being a tow vehicle for my Kawasaki GPZ1100 drag bike to and from the track. After several years of running the bike, plus the gas crunch, I ended up with a Honda Accord, so the Cougar became a secondary vehicle. I pulled the engine, hot-rodged it, and turned it into a bracket racer. With a conversion to a four-speed and adding nitrous oxide, I was running high 11s.

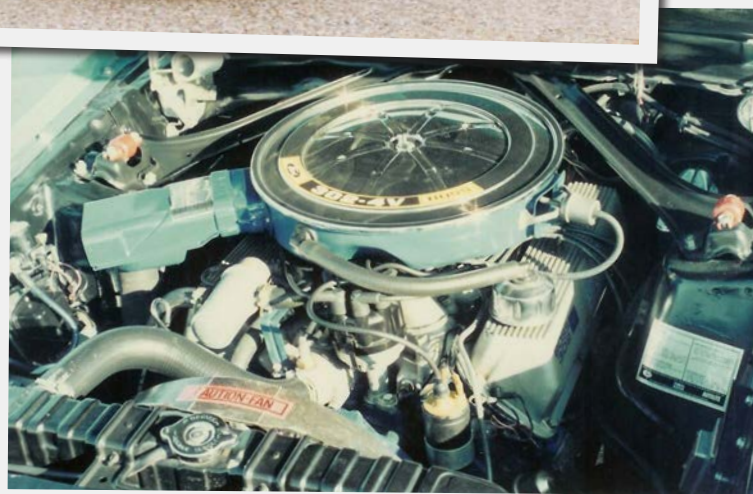


Again, life changes led to a move to Texas for a new job. At the time, I had the Eliminator and a 1969 Boss 302 Mustang. Carrying on with reading all the car mags, I noticed a three-line ad in the back of a 1985 issue of *Hot Rod* for a 1970 Cougar Eliminator with a Boss 302 and Super Drag Pak. I called the number and quickly made a deal (while making plans to sell the Boss 302). I then flew to Ft. Lauderdale with a carry-on toolbox full of tools, placed it in the overhead compartment, and bought the Eliminator. It was Competition Blue with white standard interior, 4.30 gears, and wide-ratio four-speed, and I drove it from Florida to the DFW area — my butt vibrated for three days afterwards. That Cougar appeared in multiple magazine articles and was a true survivor, with only some panel paint here and there. It is now owned by Dave Wyrwas, current CCOA Eliminator Registrar, and it remains in relatively original condition.

Now let's fast forward to current times. I never left the old muscle car hobby, but I diverted into modern muscle including several Z06 Corvettes and a 2011 Shelby GT500. All the while, I continued to pursue a hobby of road-racing, finally settling on a 2017 GT350R Shelby Mustang that I have campaigned for six years. I really can't say enough about it! I also own a 1967 Shelby GT350 with a very low VIN (#23) that has the rare scoop signals. I also participate in our local Shelby club, of which I was one of the early founders in 1990.

Eventually, I decided that it was time to get back into an Eliminator. First stop was a 1969 428 CJ that had an interesting background, but I passed on it. I then so happened to see a post on a Facebook group where a guy said he was getting ready to put his 1969 Eliminator back into storage so that he could bring his 1992 Mustang GT back home and sorta/kinda listed it for sale.

After looking at the pictures and hearing the back story of him inheriting it from his father in 1995, I was very intrigued. I flew to Pittsburgh, looked at the car, drove it for about 30 minutes, and was hooked again. The owner had mixed emotions given the family history, but seemed happy that it was going to someone that understood the significance of the car. Money and title exchanged hands and I flew home and anxiously awaited the transporter to bring the car to St. Paul, Texas.



So, allow me to introduce you to my new-to-me 1969 Cougar Eliminator, 390 4V, Wimbledon White with white interior, C6 automatic, tinted glass and (drumroll . . .) air conditioning! Whether you believe that climate change is man-induced or cyclical, it is damn hot here in Texas and I couldn't resist getting a car with A/C yet still represented the styling of the cars I love. I put Magnum 500s on the car with some decent size tires, as the engine is a bit warmed-over and the 215/70/14s just weren't up to the task. I consider this a "Day 2" modification which,

looking back, was the same wheel/tire setup that I used on my original yellow 1969. I have only performed some minor fixes and adjustments to the 390 Eliminator as the previous caretaker did an excellent job of making the car as slick as a whistle.

My future plans are to get the car to as reliable state as possible with the A/C system and then it will be my conduit to local shows and interaction with others in the hobby. Proud to be back in the fold and driving an Eliminator!







Jackets

Available online
<http://cougarclub.org>



\$75

A reliable soft shell at a real value. This go-to jacket sheds wind and rain and is a perfect choice for club events.

- 100% polyester woven shell bonded to a water-resistant film insert and a 100% polyester microfleece lining
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Price shown includes shipping to USPS ZIP Code addresses. Shipping charges to other countries will be shown during check-out and before payment is authorized.

Available in these colors:





by Tom Carter

In mid-1968, I had been watching for any Cobra Jet car to show up at the drag strip or on the street, but wasn't having any luck. But then I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw this 428 CJ Cougar parked on the street in front of the music store where I worked. I ran outside to admire it and, a few minutes later, the owner, Mike Becker, came out of a nearby auto store and said I was the first person who even knew what it was.

There was a highly popular cruise circuit in downtown Grand Rapids and, conveniently, there also was an unused access road leading to the back of the nearby C&O railroad yard that was perfectly straight and about a half-mile long. We called it "Market Street," although it was actually named Frontage Road and was parallel to Market Street. So, in addition to looking for girls, guys cruising the circuit would challenge others to a race and go over to Market Street to run them off. On a weekend night it was not uncommon to have dozens of racers and spectators down there at a time. I had raced there a few times in my 390 Fairlane, but now it was more fun to go with Mike in his Cougar, which was pretty much unbeatable.

We had been looking for the feared silver Corvette whose owner claimed he'd never been beaten, and finally saw him stopped at a light on Sheldon Avenue one night. I yelled, "There he is," and Mike pulled up next to him and said something like, "Twenty bucks?" to which the guy said, "You're joking, right?" As the guy chuckled, we headed off to Market Street for a two out of three race. Somebody else held the money, of course, and after Mike beat him easily in the first race, he just kept right on going and left.

Now I certainly don't condone street racing and, in fact, in the early-1970s, our club put on safety seminars and high school drag races at Martin Dragway to encourage kids to do their racing at the strip. However, I have to admit we did have fun earlier at Market Street. The city had gotten tired of it by 1970 and they dug up 10-foot strips of pavement about 100 feet apart, making it no longer possible to race there. It's still that way today.

I took these pictures of the Cobra Jet Cougar in my folk's driveway in 1968. It's Augusta Green with a matte black scoop and stripe from scoop to grille, and it has a black



interior. It's a C6 automatic and I believe it had a 3.90 rear. This was a very basic car too, with manual steering and very few if any non-performance options. I remember having a hand in setting up the suspension, carburetor, and distributor. There weren't many things you could do to run in Pure Stock, but we took full advantage of what could be done. Mike raced the car at Martin Dragway a few times in late 1968 but went into the service shortly after and sold the car. This car was the incentive for my choosing a 1969 428 CJ Cougar over a Mustang.

After returning from the Army, Mike decided to go circle track racing and built a car for Berlin Raceway. Oh, and that first car was, yes, a Cougar. Mike and I remained friends all the way to his passing in 2013.



MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Charlie Brown (CCOA #8693)
Member Services Director

WELCOME TO THE COUGAR CLUB OF AMERICA

Fall is here, and we all look forward to the cooler weather. This summer, I attended the All Mercury Invitational in Tulsa and manned the CCOA table to engage with people about the club. I love promoting the organization and our shared passion for Mercury Cougars. We 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, consider writing an article about your Cougar and its history. We all appreciate a good story and enjoy sharing those narratives with our membership.** We are also actively seeking technical articles for the magazine, so please don't forget to consider us when you're upgrading or restoring your Cougar and share an article.

Regarding CCOA membership over the last two months, we noticed a slight increase. However, the number of renewals remained consistent this month. Here are some statistics:

As of July 31st, 2023, Cougar Club of America has 773 active members, which is down from 784. We anticipate several renewals in August as renewal notices were sent out in June.

From May 1st, 2023, to July 31st, 2023, a total of 184 members renewed their memberships.

Between May 1st and July 31st, 2023, we welcomed 18 new members.

NEW MEMBERS

Joining the club in May through July are the following new members.

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

CCOA#	Member name	City	State	Country
10524	MELANIE HARPER	ROANOKE	IN	USA
10525	MICHAEL & RILEY SULLIVAN	SOUTH PASADENA	CA	USA
10526	GARY E HURST	ALBION	IN	USA
10528	PETER YOCUM	NEOSHO	WI	USA
10529	MARK MILLS	DELAND	FL	USA
10530	JOE & JOE CARTER	MORENO VALLEY	CA	USA
10531	RANDY LINDLEY	EDWARDSVILLE	IL	USA
10532	DOUG SNYDER	HENDERSONVILLE	NC	USA
10533	WALDO & KEITH LINDSEY	BLAINE	WA	USA
10534	JAMES & MAC JOHNSON	MONROE	MI	USA
10535	JAY BURKE	COVENTRY	RI	USA
10536	GARY VOGEL	GRAHAM	WA	USA
10537	WARREN & LANA BOHNET	HIGH RIVER	AB	Canada
10538	JOHN & LYNN YARBROUGH	LAND O LAKES	FL	USA
10539	EUGENE MORISON	FORT WASHINGTON	PA	USA
10540	DEAN RUDERFER	HICKSVILLE	NY	USA
10541	MARLIN MATLOCK	SUSANVILLE	CA	USA
10542	ALBERT RASMUSSEN	RANFURLY	AB	Canada

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 e-members receive an email with a download link to 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 your ATSOTC issues. 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

c/o Cornerstone Registration, Ltd.
PO Box 1715
Maple Grove, MN 55311-6715

Toll-Free: 866-427-7583 (In the U.S. only)
Tel: 763-420-7829
Fax: 763-420-7849

E-mail: ccoa@cornerstonereg.com

Online at <https://ccoa.cornerstonereg.com>

NEW! The Cougar Club of America

COOLER



\$43.00

Price includes shipping
within the continental U.S.

This spacious cooler has room for 12 cans
plus everything else you need for a fun event.

With embroidered logos in two locations, it also makes for an
eye-catching travelling companion.

The cooler features honeycomb polyester and polyester canvas.
Size: 8.75" H x 11.25" W x 8" D

This initial production run is limited – don't delay!

Get yours at: <http://www.cougarclub.org/store.htm>

CLASSIC COUGAR WATCHES

Get your
paws on it.
CougarClub.org

