

The Official Magazine of the Cougar Club of America

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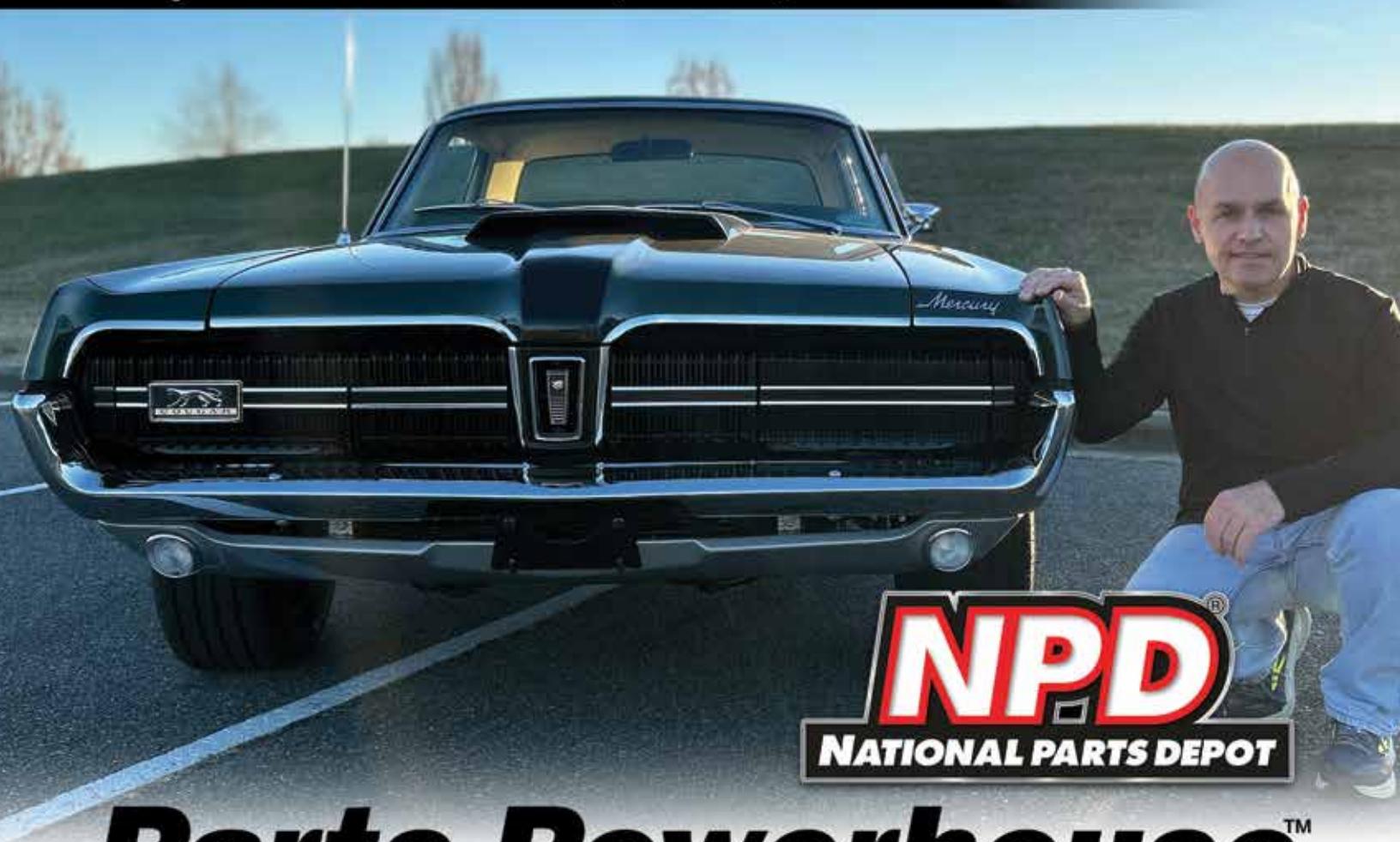
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WINTER 2023



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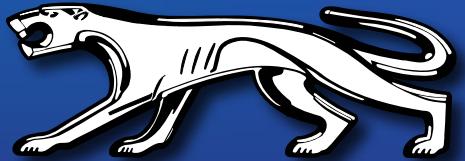
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Cover and "In This Issue" background photos:

Car show at Combat Air Museum located at Forbes Field in Topeka, Kansas, October 1, 2023.

All 1970s Cougars. Metallic Frost Lime Green XR-7 belongs to David Henry, the other three to Dean Snepp.



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...

“Every new beginning comes at some other beginnings end.” As we close the chapter on 2023 and eagerly look with anticipation to all the great memories to be made for 2024, it is hard to believe that I am entering my 12th year of being on the Board of Directors for the Cougar Club of America. It will be exciting to see the election results as we transition into the new year. If you have ever thought of being a volunteer, there is not a better time than today. **We are seeking additional support with coordinating events and our social media presence.**

In three years, we will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Mercury Cougar. It will take a lot to plan the events, and I am certain all the clubs that held events for the 50th will need ideas and volunteers to help start paving the way for celebrations to help commemorate this milestone.

If you have any feedback or ideas on how to improve the club, please reach out to me or one of the existing Board officers to share your ideas and feedback.

Once again, thank you for your continued support for the Cougar Club of America and our hobby!

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

We need your support to maintain the ATSOTC magazine and keep it updated with everyone's stories and images. Please send an email to submissions@CougarClub.org and/or Editor@CougarClub.org, as we want to hear from you, our membership and readers, on what can be done to enhance your ATSOTC experience. We especially enjoy when you submit your images and articles to be part of club history.

Our Website www.CougarClub.org, is constantly improving and evolving, Conan (webmaster@CougarClub.org) is doing an amazing job adding content, information, and images to help with all things Cougar. If you can contribute, it is always greatly appreciated.

Twenty twenty-four will be another amazing year, and I look forward to seeing everyone's events being planned and photos shared.

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!



1978 Mercury Cougar two-door

Photo: Ford Heritage Vault

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE SECOND- GENERATION Q-CODE

By David Bran (CCOA #10513)



Photo: Ford Heritage Vault

Nineteen seventy was the climax of the muscle car era. With the 1970 amendment to the Clean Air Act, Detroit realized it was time to wind down the horsepower race in favor of more environmentally friendly cars. The new fuel standards would ultimately lead to auto manufacturers reducing compression and adding additional performance-sucking technology to their engines, with catalytic converters soon to come. All of this, plus pressure from the insurance industry against high-performance cars, reduced horsepower and ultimately ended the muscle car era.

For 1970, Ford Motor Company introduced the 351 Cleveland both in 2V and 4V forms. The latter, often designated "M-code" based on the fifth character of the VIN, featured 11.0:1 compression, huge ports, canted valve design (similar to the "porcupine" heads used on the Chevrolet big-block 396 and subsequent varieties), 715cfm square-bore carburetor, and 300 horsepower. This engine was used for both passenger

car and high-performance applications. The 351C was produced through the 1974 model year.

When the second-generation Cougar entered production for 1971, both versions of the 351C continued to be available, though both experienced mild compression cuts. For the M-code, it featured 10.7:1 compression and a 285-horse rating.

The M-code 351 was joined in May 1971 by the 351 Cobra Jet, a new four-barrel Cleveland that was geared to the future. The 280-horsepower engine (identified by a Q in the VIN) was available for all Mustang models and required the Competition Suspension. Ford characterized the 351-CJ as a "mid-range, high-performance version of the 351-4V and is being offered to take advantage of the growing interest in sports/performance enthusiasts in lighter weight, lower displacement and better handling engines." Performance was claimed to be faster than the 4V by



50 feet from 0-10 seconds yet could operate on regular fuel thanks to 9.0:1 compression. A high-lift cam, four-bolt mains, 4300D carburetor, special intake manifold, and 2.5-inch exhausts were included with the engine. Very few Mustangs were ordered with the 351-CJ, possibly due to carrying a \$101 price premium over the 4V, while only one Cougar was built with this engine per Marti Auto Works. Was it available for the Cougar, or was that one build an anomaly?

That's a good question but, for 1972, the Q-code 351-CJ took over duties for the now-discontinued M-code. This was the year all automobile manufacturers went from gross horsepower ratings to net. The main difference was gross was measured off the flywheel with no accessories installed, while net was measured with manifolds, power steering, alternator, and accessories. This method of measurement was more realistic.

The Q-code engine was available for all four Cougar models: standard and XR-7, hardtop and convertible, plus the standard hardtop with the GT package. There was no badging to suggest which 351 lurked underneath the hood of a Cougar, though one could observe the dual exhaust system exiting through the rear. However, unlike what Ford did with the Mustang, Mercury went in a different direction with the 351-CJ, offering two variations: one with 262 horsepower, and another with 266.

The former required an automatic transmission and featured what Mercury characterized as "quiet exhaust" and 12-inch converter, possibly a reflection on the growing maturity of the typical Cougar buyer. For those who wanted the full 266-horse 351-CJ, they were required to opt for the 351-CJ Performance Group, which included low-restriction 2.5-inch exhausts, Competition Suspension (which included stiffer



Photo: Ford Heritage Vault



Rear sway bar equipped on all Cougars with the GT package and Q code vehicles, equipped with the "cobra jet performance group package"

springs and rear sway bar), and F70 x 14 whitewall tires. This performance package was an option for Q-code Cougars paired with the C6 Select-Shift automatic but was required with four-speed Q-code Cougars. When specified for an automatic, the CJ Performance Group included a smaller 10.25-inch torque converter with 2800-rpm stall converter.

The new cylinder head design changed from "quench" combustion chamber heads to a new, larger open chamber design with 75.4 cubic centimeters, thus reducing the static compression to 9.0:1. This change was made in preparation for the lower octane fuels down the road. The carburetor and intake design were also changed, with the previous 4300 715-cfm square-bore design being changed to a 4300D 715-cfm spread-bore design. The camshaft was retarded four degrees with a new, higher lift split-duration cam design that increased the dynamic compression. To compensate for the power loss from the reduced static compression, special high-rpm valve springs



and dampeners, and a large inertia damper, were included. Plus, Ford beefed up the new 351-CJ block with forged rods and stronger four-bolt main bearing caps that were not part of the 1970-71 M-code engine.

351-CJ Performance Group Cougars came equipped with 3.25 or 3.50 axle ratios, though locking rear was optional. Additionally, all 1972 Q-code Cougars no matter the horsepower featured staggered shocks.

For cars equipped with the Q-code 351, I have found four variations of the decal (4V or CJ) and air cleaner lid (blue or chrome finish). There seems to be no correlation as to which car received which decal and lid, appearing as if the factory used whatever it had available at the time.

In 1973, the push for better fuel efficiency and lower emissions continued. The horsepower rating for all Q-codes were advertised at 264. To further improve

efficiency, Ford reduced the valve size of the 4V heads (D1ZE casting) from 2.19/1.71-inch valves to (D3ZE casting) 2.04/1.65-inch valves used in the 2V heads. The compression was also lowered about a half point by changing from a flat-top piston to a dished piston. As an additional emissions control, Ford also added a carburetor spacer and an EGR (exhaust gas recirculating system) valve.

Nineteen seventy-four was the last year that Mercury offered the 351-CJ for the Cougar. However, the all-new 1974 Cougar grew in size, sharing its body with the Mercury Montego and Ford Elite, thus splitting from the Mustang's lineage. This was the beginning of the third-generation Cougar and the swan song for the Q-code.



Photo: Ford Heritage Vault

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Trivia



By Mark Kulwik (CCOA #9575)

1. During the 1967 launch, the 30-second TV commercial included the tagline, "Cougar. Are you ----- enough?"
2. As Cougar was described as a luxury car with a European look, what manufacturer successfully sued Ford?
3. Prior to its launch, what popular Ford car was destined to be named "Cougar?"
4. Even though the Mercury Cougar sold nearly three million units, the Ford Pinto outsold it. What body styles were available during the Cougar's lifetime?
5. The Cougar was a much smoother and more refined ride than the typical pony car. What two pony cars outsold the Cougar in 1967?
6. As a "mean road machine," the standard 4.7-liter two-barrel was good for 225 horsepower. How much horsepower was the 6.4-liter four-barrel upgrade good for?
7. The fiercest Cougar of them all was the 1968 GT-E at around \$4,300. How much more did the GT-E option cost above the base price?
8. The Cougar nameplate remained in constant production from 1967 until 1997 and then reemerged from 1999 to 2002. What was the highest selling year and how many?
9. When the 1969 and 1970 Cougars came to town, so arrived the "Eliminator." What were the color choices and how many were built?
10. In 1974, about the time of the global oil embargo, the Cougar lost some of its luster. What platform did the car change to in 1974?

Find the answers on page 49



ISLAND VIBE: BEAUTIFUL CARS HIGHLIGHT CCOA REGIONAL SHOW



By Carl Graziano





More than 50 Cougars from up and down the East Coast and points west converged on the picturesque community of Solomons, Maryland on October 6-7, 2023. The CCOA-sponsored regional show marked the 25th anniversaries of both the Delmarva Cougar Club (DCC) and Cougar Club of New Jersey/Pennsylvania.

Solomons lived up to its billing as a relaxed, bayside atmosphere thanks to scenic views and charming establishments for food and drink. Solomons Island, at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay and Patuxent River (and just a few minutes from the show site at the Hilton Garden Inn Solomons), was the perfect destination for a Cougar cruise on the first evening of the event.

Show highlights included a kick-off party at a restaurant and brew pub on the hotel property, the Ruddy Duck Brewery & Grill. At the party, participants were entertained by The Lugnutz, a cover band fronted by former DCC president and long-time Cougar enthusiast, Jim Karamanis. The event













also featured "Cougar Swill," a session-style IPA brewed for the show. All registered participants received a beer mug with a Cougar Swill graphic.

In terms of weather, show day was a mixed bag. It started dry, turned rainy for several hours, and finished clear and cool. All in all, show day was a success, and the organizers extended People's Choice voting to account for the downtime during the rainy portion of the day. The show field offered plenty of strong options for those votes, from Eliminators and convertibles, XR7-Gs and GT-Es, and solid examples of other vehicles from Cougar's first- and second-generations and beyond.

"We couldn't have been happier with the turnout for this show and the enthusiasm everyone showed for this event," DCC President Phillip Payne said. "The setting was ideal, the cars were beautiful, and the weather mostly cooperated."

The show closed with an awards banquet at the hotel, with first-, second-, and third-place trophies in more than a dozen model/year classes and several single-winner specialty awards. The awards banquet also featured a drawing for two unique, handmade quilts constructed with Cougar club and events T-shirts from both the two host clubs and CCOA.

Trophies were awarded in almost all classes. Best of show went to a beautiful black 1968 GT-E owned by Brian McDermott of Queensbury, New York. Other winners are listed below.



NAME	HOMETOWN	STATE	AWARD
Class 1: 1967-68 Standard/XR-7 Coupe			
Roger Cross	Williamsburg	VA	1st
Mike Sutton	Sebring	OH	2nd
Frank Schoenacker	Ashville	NY	3rd
Class 2: 1969-1970 Standard/XR-7			
Bryan Kaeser	Oviedo	FL	1st
Ron Harris	Wallingford	PA	2nd
Jeff Blaine	Mechanicsburg	PA	3rd
Class 3: 1969-1970 Standard/XR-7 Convertible			
Doug Hoefle	Wilmington	DE	1st
Charles Popenoe	Darnestown	MD	2nd
Steve Polansky	Cherry Hill	NJ	3rd
Class 4: 1971-1973 Standard/XR-7			
Chris Brod	Wallingford	PA	1st
Class 5: 1971-1973 Standard/XR-7 Convertible			
David Bran	Fallston	MD	1st
Sarah Swales	Hollywood	MD	2nd
Gary Wirth	Ellicott City	MD	3rd
Class 6: GT, XR7-G & GT-E			
Brian McDermott	Queensbury	NY	1st
Steve Palmer	Keedysville	MD	2nd
Steve Koss	Springfield	VA	3rd
Class 7: 1969-1970 Eliminator			
Bill Farrington	Greensboro	GA	1st
Rick Puskas	Hellertown	PA	2nd
Mark Piechowski	North Adams	MA	3rd
Class 9: 1983-1997			
Garry Nevills	Staunton	VA	1st
Class 11: Modified			
John Marks	Northfield	OH	1st
Kevin Wawroski	Huntingtown	MD	2nd
Doug Wilby	Iron Station	NC	3rd
Single-Winner Specialty Awards			
Mangy Cat			
Matthew Shuman (1968 Standard)	Williamsport	PA	
Engine Bay Bling			
Charles Popenoe (1970 XR-7 Convertible)	Darnestown	MD	
Long Hauler			
Bryan Kaeser	Oviedo	FL	
Volunteer			
Mary Mills	Ashland	VA	
Best of Show			
Brian McDermott (1968 GT-E)	Queensbury	NY	



Mid-America Classic Cougars (MACC)

By Randy Christian (CCOA #9216)



Spring and summer have come and gone as we have made it through another season of car shows, cruises, and club meetings. Twenty twenty-three has been a great year for Mid-America Classic Cougars (MACC) as we hosted the National All Mercury invitation in Tulsa in July to great success. As we prepare for 2024,

we thought a little history of MACC might be in order, as the club has come a long way since its inception.

MACC was founded in 2014 by Bill Evans and Randy Christian. We were just a couple of enthusiasts who thought we would see how many Mercury Cougars



were running around the Sooner State and try to bring them together since Cougars are not a common sight. As MACC enters its 10th Year, it is safe to say the club continues to be very active and growing, with 60-plus members in the region that includes Kansas, Missouri, and Arkansas. Our members are all about having fun, driving our Cougars, and helping out fellow guys and gals get their cars back on the road. We have monthly club meetings throughout the entire year that are hosted by various members at their shops or homes, always starting with a great meal and then discussing all things Cougar.

Our August 2023 meeting was hosted by Mike and Joan Denney at their home/shop in Mounds, Oklahoma. They always put on a great spread, and Joan is a great cook, with her sourdough bread to die for. The couple

are also very active in the early Ford V8 club, so they have a variety of Dearborn classics that include a 1968 XR7-G that has received a seven-year restoration. In September, it was time to visit Fast Phil's Emporium in downtown Tulsa. Fast Phil is actually Phil Childers, who has an awesome shop in the old Loomis Armor building. The building used to house armored cars that hauled legal tender and more all over Tulsa. Phil too has quite a collection of cars, including a 1968 Cougar convertible, an XR7-G that he is currently restoring, a 1937 LaSalle, and several mid-60s Thunderbird convertibles, to name a few.

Our October meeting was held at Royce Peterson's shop in Tulsa. It is always a blast to go to Royce's because you never know what Cougar you will see Royce working on amongst the Model Ts. At that



meeting, we were dazzled by three beautiful GT-Es receiving Royce's touch. We are honored to have Royce in our club as he is always willing to lend a helping hand or spread his enormous Cougar knowledge when asked. Other meetings to close out 2023 included a big November chili cook-off at Charlie Brown's home in Owasso, Oklahoma, followed by our annual club Christmas party at Randy Christian's home in Broken Arrow.

MACC is looking forward to 2024 as our first big event is in February: the 60th Anniversary Daryl Starbird show in Tulsa. This is one of the largest indoor car shows in the country, with over 1200 cars in attendance. We will have a MACC and Friends Corral set up, so if anybody wants to join us for a fun-filled three-day car show, just reach out to us. We are also planning several cruises in the new year as we love to drive our Cougars, suggesting that 2024 is going to be even more fantastic for MACC.





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What I Did To Get My *Cougar*

By Jeff Alderson (CCOA #10424)

I had wanted a 1968 Cougar since high school during the early 1980s. There were several 15-year-old beaters still commuting to class every day but, as a penniless teenager, buying one was never within reach. I had to wait until my mid-50s for an opportunity after shopping for the right one for several years. When I learned I had the winning bid on an auction site, the reality of the situation was still not sinking in. It took an email an hour later confirming my credit card payment for the auction premium before I truly believed I was going to own my very own classic Cougar.

Now all that was needed was to go pick up the car. It was located just over 400 miles away, outside Cleveland. What could go wrong? The plan was simple: my college-age son and I would drive out in our SUV with all the tools and lubricants we thought we might need. We would simply drive the car home with the SUV as a chase vehicle if an issue arose. Departure took place on Wednesday evening to navigate Chicago after rush hour. A late-night check-in at a South Bend hotel yielded a few hours of sleep. The same girl that checked us in was at the desk when we left at 5 a.m. to make our noon appointment to pick up the Cougar.

The toll booth at the Ohio border was stressful. A line of cars behind us were not patient when the machine refused to issue a ticket. The cranky woman at the station yelled that my I-Pass would work and to just move on, yet I didn't have an I-Pass. Pushing on to Toledo, apprehension built concerning how to exit without a fare stub. My son was okay with exiting at Toledo to enjoy breakfast at a Waffle House and, luckily, the lady at the toll booth was completely understanding why we had no ticket and let us out of turnpike prison. Over breakfast, I proposed a side trip to my son: I research Civil War veterans of the 2nd Wisconsin Infantry, and two were buried in Toledo. I warned my son this may take time and he would have to watch the clock and call off the search if our noon appointment was coming into doubt. He rolled his eyes and agreed to his new responsibility.

The change in plans took us to the northside of the city. The first cemetery could not have been easier, in and out in less than five minutes. Now, the route took us east across town on Central Avenue. At a red light there was a very long wait — so long, in fact, that I watched a fight start at a gas station across the street involving a middle-aged woman and an elderly

African American man. The words could not be heard but the body language screamed trouble. I had time to comment to my son that I thought one of them was going to take a swing at the other and, then, the woman stepped back to her car, reached in the open window, and returned with a large chrome revolver. She fired once at the man not more than 10 feet away. His response was to step towards the woman and challenge her more. She took a second shot and had to be purposely missing at that range. That's when the light turned green and I punched the accelerator to race past the scene. A third shot was heard blocks away. Two police cruisers with lights and sirens on raced past us. Calming down a few minutes later, I turned to my son and said, "Whatever you do, don't tell your mother!"

Undaunted by the criminal activity, there was still a second cemetery to visit. Once across the north side of Toledo, we found the cemetery section in which the grave was located. Before I could scan three rows of headstones, my son announced there was no need to go further, the veteran's grave was just on the other side of the SUV from me. Pictures taken and respect shown, we were again on our way. Leaving the cemetery entrance, we saw another disturbance on a side street: there were several people outside their homes, excited discussion going on, and a man lying on the sidewalk beside a motorized wheelchair struggling to get up. I am not proud to say that, after the shooting, we were more than scared to introduce ourselves to another unknown situation. The choice was made to quietly drive back to the turnpike. A few blocks later, my son expressed a feeling of *deja vu* about the location. There is no way he could have been in this part of Toledo without me knowing of it. A short distance later, we were clearly near the campus of the University of Toledo. My son had been there before during a high school campus visit. The excitement now behind us, it was back to the turnpike bound for Cleveland.

An exit from the turnpike lifted our anticipation as we were getting close to our destination. My son was driving as we navigated city streets. Passing a park, my son asked if I thought there was a bathroom there. I told him I didn't know and did not see one. Passing a business, he again asked whether I thought there was a bathroom available. I replied, "Do you have to go or something?" He said, "No." "Then why all the talk

about bathrooms?" That's when he fessed up, "Mom said I have to take you to a bathroom before we get to the car. You know how you get when you are about to buy something you really want." The truth hurts sometimes. I blew it off and announced that I would be fine.

We pulled up to the curb in front of the seller's house. There it was! The four T/A radial tires peeking out from under a car cover. Out on the front step of the house were close to ten packages from a delivery. My heart sank. What had gone wrong? I was sure of the meeting time. Why would no one be home? Then the wife and son of the seller then came out of a side entrance of the home and down the drive to greet us. A friendlier greeting could not even be imagined. Cougar owners are the friendliest people around, I have learned! (I am sure everyone reading this will agree.) We were offered water, iced tea, and even sandwiches, which my son and I both graciously declined. I pointed to the packages and learned that they simply did not realize a delivery had been made. The next order of business

was loading two rear quarter panels that came with the sale, and then the moment of truth. With all of us nearby, the seller's son removed the car cover as if it were a prize on a game show. The Black Cherry beauty was everything and more than what the auction photos had hinted. I admired the Cougar from the front for a few moments, then the seller's wife asked again if there was anything she could do for us. I swallowed and begrudgingly spoke, "Why, yes there is, may I use your bathroom?"

My son gave me an "I told you so" glance before and after I took care of business. He knew the satisfaction my wife would have when he shared this part of the story with her upon our return. I was handed the keys and told to start it. The driver's seat was comfortable as I nestled in. A couple twists of the key only yielded whining from the starter. I looked out the window at the seller's son. Memories of working on my father's 1968 Ford Galaxie hit me. I announced that I needed to pump the accelerator a couple times and the son nodded. The 302 turned over on the subsequent try





and started purring like all good Cougars should. A few minutes later, we were waving goodbye and backtracking our route home.

Getting back on the turnpike introduced a new driving experience for me. Never in my life had I owned a car anyone was excited to see. The man mowing at the toll booth yelled, "Nice car!" Taps of other people's horns as I drove west were appreciated. We stopped at the first rest stop to confirm how the car was performing. A family parked near us, with a father who had been a Mercury salesman, complimented the car. This was all new to me and enjoyed. Dinner at a later stop included a traveler walking up the Cougar and taking pictures while we watched from a perch with our pizza. The seller's son had said no longer will you have to second guess which side of the car the fuel goes in. I proved that wrong at my first fill up. I still managed to park too far away from the island for the pump to reach the fuel neck — very embarrassing. As I drove west past Toledo, with no intention of stopping after the morning's events, I listened to a radio station. They

were promoting the next morning's radio bit about "Ass of the Day." Having already watched the candidates for such a title at the gas station, there was no need to remain in Toledo to listen to the show.

With a second full tank of gas, the Cougar was up to the challenge of rush-hour traffic on the Tri-State Tollway around Chicago. Stop-and-go traffic started immediately after crossing the Illinois border. The tedium was broken by a truck full of construction workers wanting to know what year the Cougar was. The answer of 1968 brought all kinds of hoots and hollers as bets had been made amongst them. Lane changes in and out of the cash-only booths reinforced the idea that there were very few blind spots on the car. By the time we arrived home in Wisconsin, it was dark. The thrill of ownership was then firmly established as I waved to a friend outside a restaurant, who had no idea who was behind the wheel of the classic Cougar. Relief came as the garage door closed to protect the newest addition to the family.

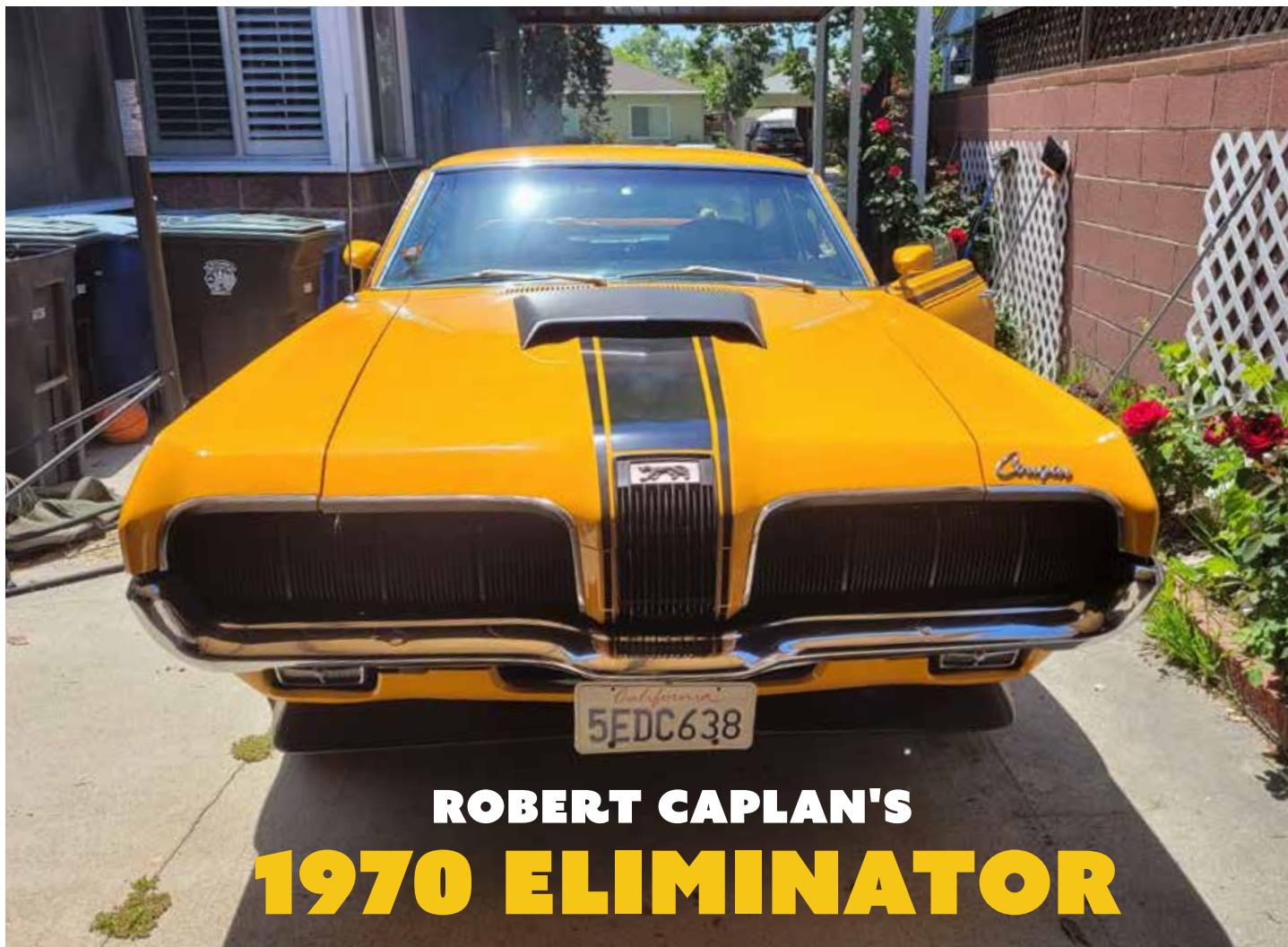
A trip to the DMV to transfer the title followed the next day. This was not the stereotypical unpleasant visit, as I was being expertly helped by a polite and caring lady. As she navigated me through the process, it was clear she was frustrated with her computer by the VIN number. She knew the Cougar's VIN did not have seventeen digits, but that was not helping her with satisfying the computer field requirements. Finally, she asked if I could supply a picture of the VIN plate. Initially, I said no as I had left the car at home but then I changed my answer and started scrolling through the auction listing on my phone. A picture of the plate came up and I showed her, quite proud of my accomplishment. She then asked if I could email her the picture. I hesitantly answered no, I did not know how. She motioned for my phone which I gladly provided. In 45 seconds, she had the picture printing at her station. Handing the phone back, she asked,

"Aren't you keeping up with technology?" I replied, "I just bought a fifty-year-old car, so I am hiding from it."

The Cougar I purchased is a 1968 XR7-G. I knew that when I bought it, but I had no appreciation for what that meant at the time. Researching the car and its cousins has been great fun. I got caught bidding on the car by my wife. She was very supportive, which was unexpected. She understood how much I wanted the car more than I realized myself. My wife loves going for drives and stopping at drive-in restaurants. My younger son drove it to prom this spring. I may not own the XR7-G for the rest of my life, but I will always keep with me the memories of how my family worked together to get the car. I have also gained a deeper appreciation of how much my wife loves me. It is these two benefits I did not bargain for when the adventure of buying my Cougar started.







ROBERT CAPLAN'S 1970 ELIMINATOR

By Robert Caplan (CCOA #9484)

I'm the original owner of this special, matching-numbers Competition Gold 428 Super Cobra Jet 1970 Cougar Eliminator. It comes with a beefed-up C-6 automatic transmission and 4:30 Detroit Locker rear.

My father had a contract with all of the Detroit automotive manufacturers. They would fly new muscle car releases to the old Hughes Airport in Los Angeles, and I would pick up the cars and drive them to Car Craft magazine to be tested for articles or drive the cars to various spots for photo shoots. As he had a special connection with Ford public relations, I ordered a Boss 429 Cougar Eliminator. When we discovered that the 50 cars slated to be produced had been canceled, Ford public relations call and asked what I would like to do. I then revised my order for a 428 SCJ with Drag Pak 4.30 gears. When I took possession

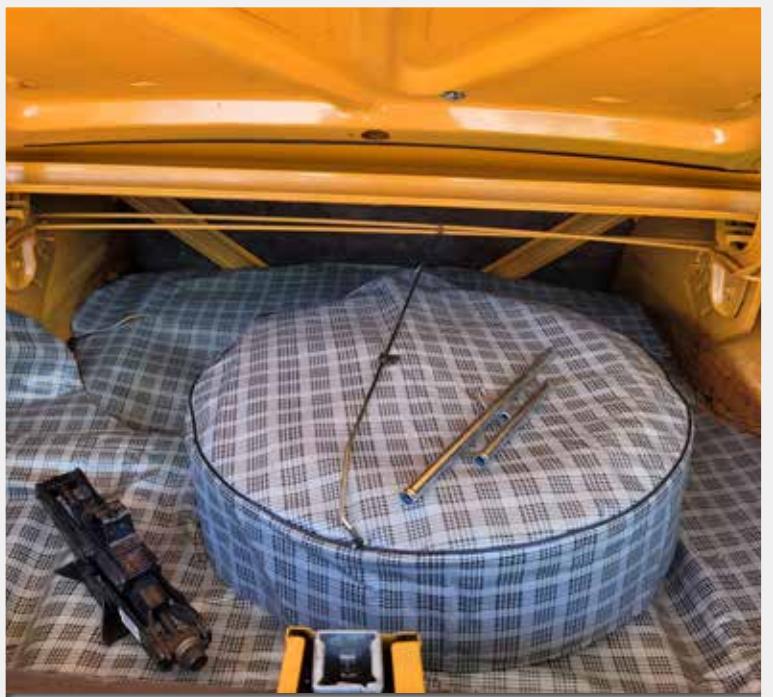
of my car, I occasionally heard a slapping noise at 3,000 rpm. I contacted Ford and asked where I could take it, and they suggested Foulger Ford, where the Ford Drag Team was.

To make a long story short, my car was at Foulger for about six months. They took apart the engine 11 times to find out where the noise was coming from. Each time, the car had to have the piston rings replaced; I also had the engine blueprinted on their tab and had a pair of Doug Thorley equal-length headers installed, which necessitated the oil filter being moved to a new position. They even flew three people from Dearborn to assess the problem. The total cost for this process came to \$28,000 but, of course, the car was under warranty. During the time the car was at Foulger, they even asked me to take the car to Irwindale to blow the engine up. Have you tried to blow up



a big-block Ford? I passed on that option! They then suggested to remove the engine and replace it with a new short block. Fortunately, on the 11th round, they finally discovered what the problem was: piston slap with one of the pistons while under 3,000 rpm, but not above. Voila, problem finally solved!

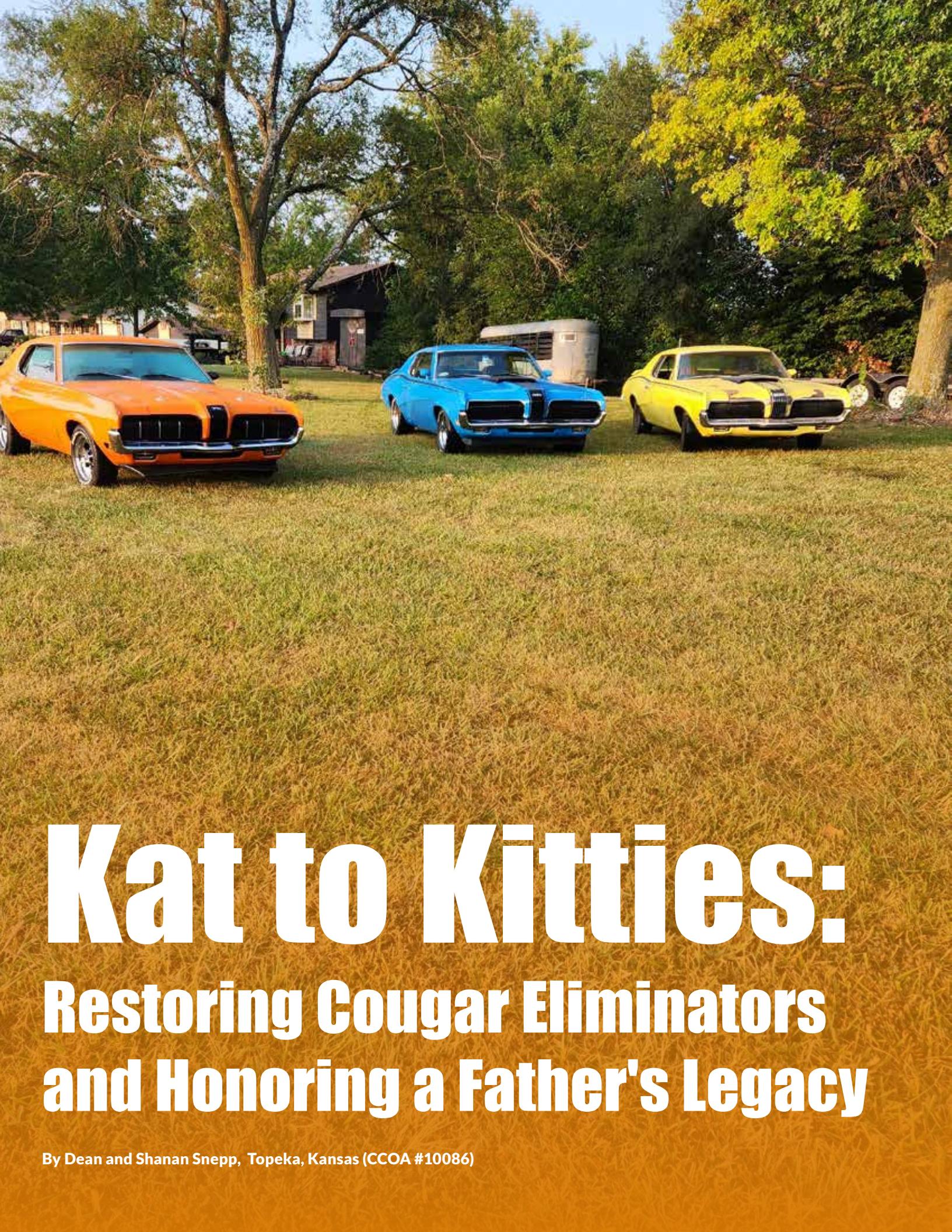
I still have the set of the original headers in my garage. All the original parts were subsequently put back the way that they came from the factory. I drove the car for two years and then stored it in a garage for 38 years. I wanted to take it to car shows, so I planned a rebirthing of the engine to make sure all was kosher. I discovered I needed a new battery, so I did some research and discovered the numbers did not match up for a 428 SCJ but did match for a Boss 429. I then started to check other components (like the battery tray, tray braces, and heat riser tube) and discovered they too fell into line for a Boss 429. Currently the Eliminator features 34,000 original miles and puts out 605 hp at the rear wheels. It runs just like it came off the showroom floor.





2002 Mercury Cougar

Photo: Ford Heritage Vault



Kat to Kitties: Restoring Cougar Eliminators and Honoring a Father's Legacy

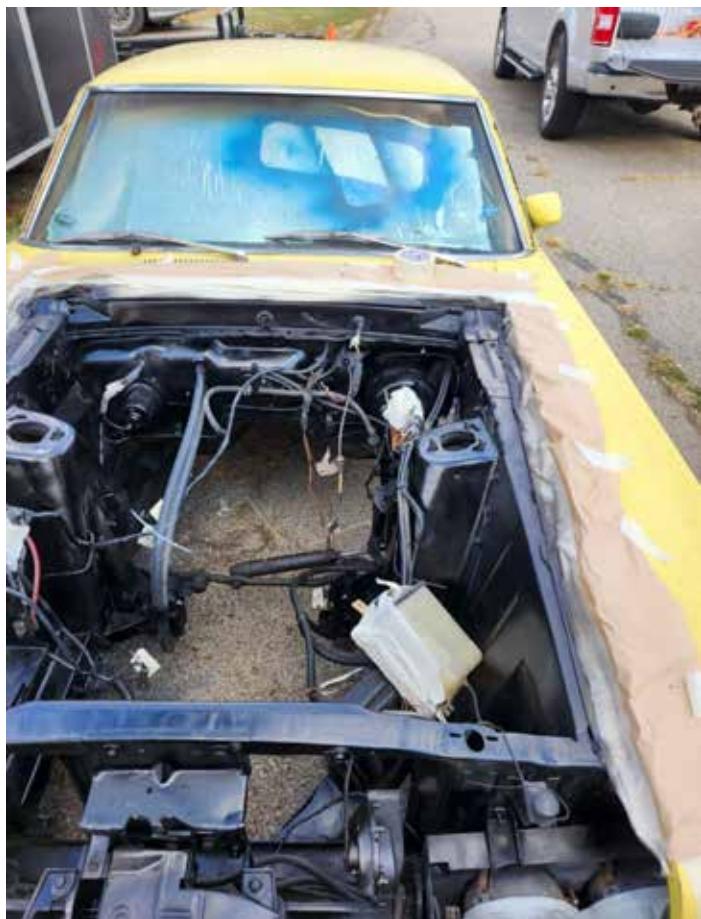
By Dean and Shanan Snepp, Topeka, Kansas (CCOA #10086)

We were blessed to obtain Kat in June 2016. Kat was in the Eliminator issue three years ago, so consider this an addendum of sorts.

We have been friends with fellow Eliminator owner Scott Beck. In June 2021, my wife Shanan saw Scott's ad for his second Competition Yellow Cougar Eliminator he found in Kentucky, where it had been sitting outside in a storage lot for 23 years. It was a borderline basketcase. Scott got it running and movable, then decided to sell it so he could finish his other two Eliminators. We bought her and had her shipped to our home. Miss Kittie, as she is now known, was delivered and sitting in our drive at 11:50 pm on September 7, 2021, my wife's birthday. Great present for her!

Miss Kittie is a 351C 4V FMX Eliminator with power steering and brakes, and Medium Brown Ginger Houndstooth interior. According to Marti Auto Works, she is one of 25 built in this paint and interior combination. We did a few things to get her road-worthy for a few cruise nights and late-season car shows. Then, in November, the restoration process began. I have kept a log on the Eliminator Owners group on Facebook to let everyone enjoy the transition and offer advice. So far, we have done a complete engine rebuild. While the engine work was being done, I





cleaned-blasted and painted the engine compartment, and rebuilt the front suspension, including new shocks.

Fast forwarding a bit, Miss Kittie has been taken to several cruise nights and car shows. She has been honored with the Best Work In Progress award at one of the events. We still have things to work on, but she is now ready for body work and paint (including a fresh stripe kit) along with interior work. I never dreamed of owning one Eliminator, let alone two. More recently, we have been blessed to obtain a 1970 Cougar XR-7 in mid-September that we have named Simba. She is in great shape and already had lots of work done to her before our purchase. Simba is powered by an original 351C 2V upgraded to a 4V plus FMX transmission, power steering, manual brakes, air conditioning and, of course, leather interior. She still needs minor things done to finish her up. None of this would have been possible if it wasn't for my late father leaving me a note to use my inheritance to buy an Eliminator that I always wanted. This started with Kat and now to our three Cats.





ATSOTC -SHORTS-

Introducing '**Shorts**' —
where brevity meets brilliance!

In this unique section, we invite you to share your snappy snapshots and brief tales from the road. We understand that not every story needs a novel, so whether it's one sentence or a handful of words, coupled with captivating visuals, '**Shorts**' is the place to make your mark. Join us in celebrating the essence of your Cougar moments, succinctly yet powerfully expressed!



1972 Mercury Cougar XR-7 convertible with +/-46,000 miles
Jeff Tidmore

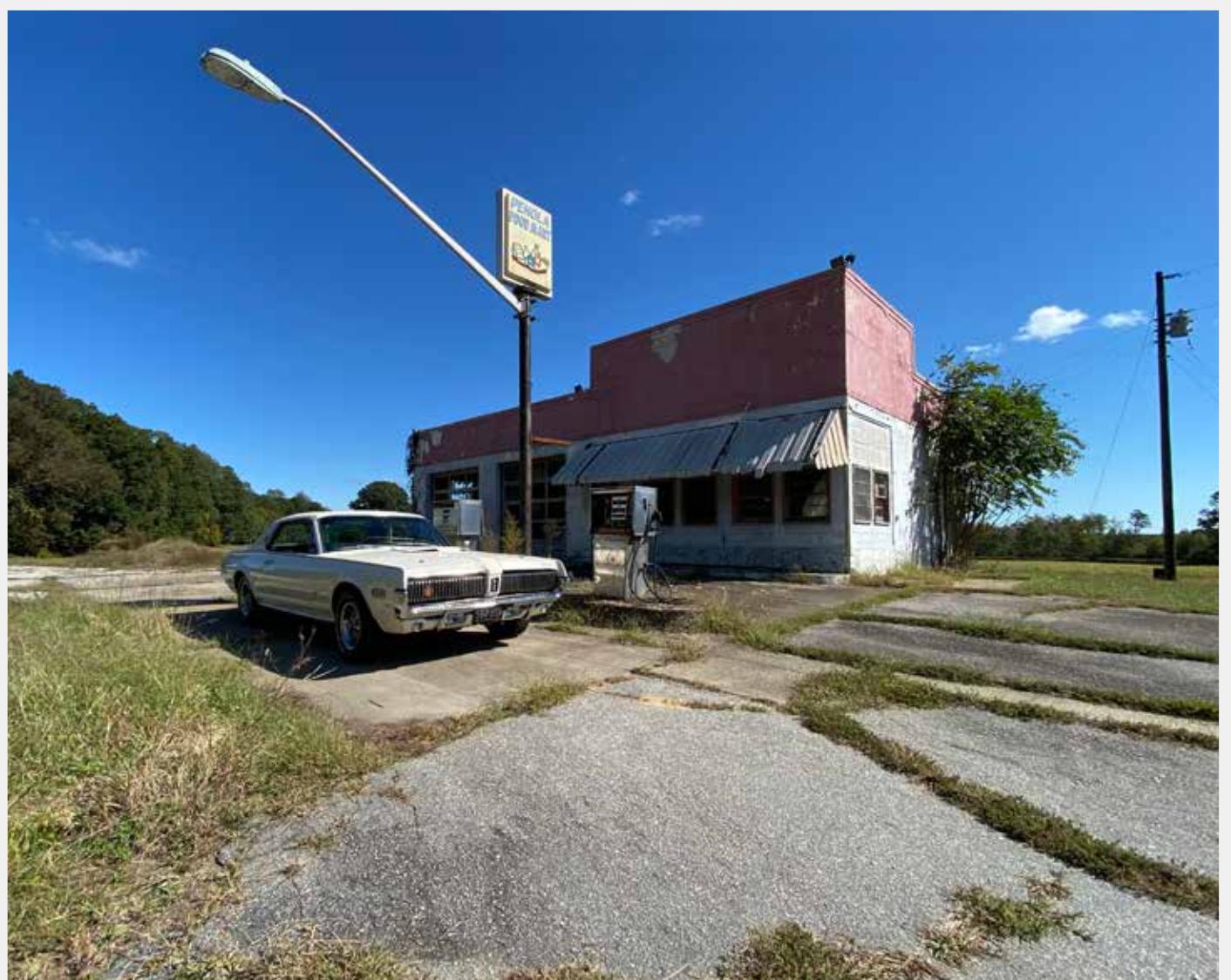


Here are some images of my 1970 Eliminator from recent car shows. I have owned it since 1977, and I rarely see any Cougars at car shows in Southern Arizona — certainly no Eliminators.

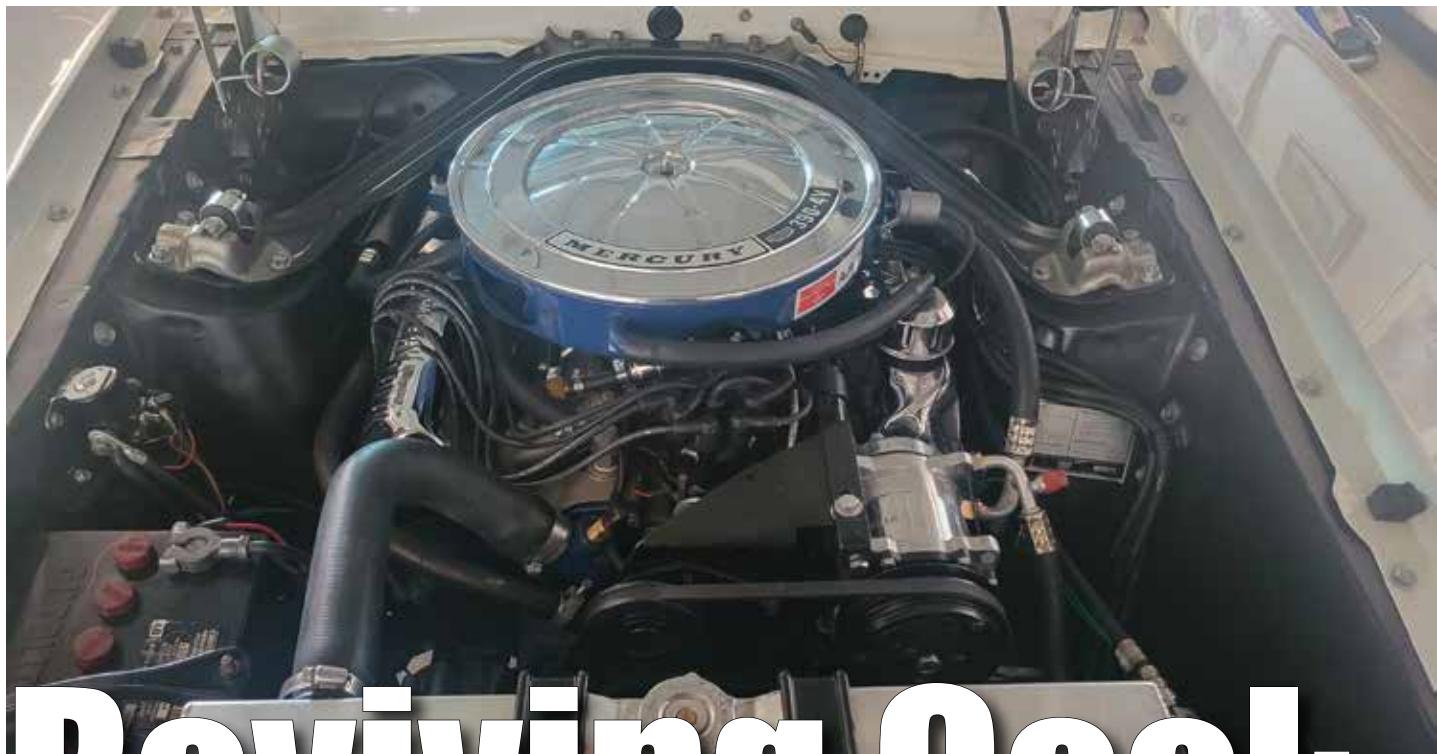
W. Marc Miller
Tucson, AZ 85706 #marcmillerphoto



1967 Mercury Cougar - South Dakota car
John and Ricki Lowe



Mercury Cougar XR7-G at an abandoned station.
Phillip Payne



Reviving Cool: A Journey to Restore Air Conditioning in my 1969 White/White Cougar Eliminator

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

As a follow-up to the previous feature on my 1969 white/white Cougar Eliminator, I would like to expose the path that I took to get the air conditioning up and running. As a reminder, I live in Texas, so air conditioning is quite necessary if you want to use the car during the summer months. My goal was to do my very best at keeping the interior look/feel components intact and hoping that I wouldn't have to replace the big box behind the dash.

The car was originally equipped with air conditioning and still had what appeared to be all its original components installed inside and out. It was apparent that the compressor had its bottom (side) seal compromised as there was oil residue all around that area. I was also told by the previous owner that he felt that was the culprit.

My first venture into repair was to purchase a new aluminum piston-type compressor that would keep the same look under the hood yet use the old (and expensive) R12 refrigerant. After installation, I chased every other original part, only to find that basically the filter dryer, condenser, and expansion valve were in rough shape as well. At this point, I pivoted and decided to reach out to Old Air Products and purchase their Underhood Performance Kit (#50-0020). This essentially replaces all the underhood components including hoses, filter/dryer, condenser, and expansion valve, and includes a modern Sanyo-type rotary compressor designed to integrate with the original interior components including the heater box and controls. The price of this kit (\$750) was just about what I would have spent buying all the replacement







parts individually, plus it came with all necessary pieces. Removal of the original parts proved to be fairly easy aside of the original expansion valve, which proved to be a difficult in that the big-block engine does not have the room for wrenches. I had to employ "Stubby wrenches" so, after some persuasion, it came loose.

To ensure that I had a clean inside evaporator, I used an aerosol can of Power Clean & Flush (#BK-7653135) from my local NAPA store. I used the nozzle of the can on the input line going into the evaporator, then I put a hose and

catch can on the output line and liberally shot the cleaner through until it looked the same going in and coming out. I repeated by shooting in from the other tube. After that, the flush material must be cleaned out and the lines dried. I used compressed air each way until I had nothing but air coming out. I was careful not to use too much pressure, as I was hopeful to preserve the interior evaporator. After that, I was convinced that I had clean interior components.

As far as the underhood installation goes, things to note are that I had to remove the hood latch components to remove and install the condenser. After several attempts to keep from scratching the radiator support, I removed the filter/dryer from the condenser. It went in just fine, and then I reattached the filter/dryer, as the output line is fixed in place. I also decided to change the routing of the hoses up and around the back of the air cleaner to get them out of sight a bit more. On the compressor, the kit includes an adapter that attaches to the original mount, plus you also utilize the original top mount, albeit with one additional strap bracket to secure the installation. The same idler and adjusting pulleys are used from the original setup. As a side note, I also applied a wrap-around insulation from Summit Racing called Lava Tube Shield (#281120) over the expansion to keep away the exhaust heat. As a final installation note, it is imperative that you use the O-rings supplied in the kit as they are compatible with the R144A refrigerant — the original rubber ones will not last.

An essential part of making the air conditioning effective is to ensure that you have plenty of air flow across the condenser, and that the fans need to run any time the compressor is engaged. I used a 12V input relay to tap into the power wire to the compressor. The relay provides the ground to the two 10-inch SPAL electric fans behind the Champion radiator. I also have an additional relay that turns the fans on when the coolant reaches 185 degrees.

Once installation was complete, I charged the system with R134A per instructions. I now get a temperature differential of about 40 degrees out of the vents. With the way the system is set up, it can utilize that or R12, the latter being what I believe to be a better performer. However, I chose to use the more available product. The car now runs cool both inside and under the hood.



MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Charlie Brown (CCOA #8693)
Member Services Director

WELCOME TO THE COUGAR CLUB OF AMERICA

Winter is here for many of us, but I know there are year-round drivers in Texas, Florida, California, and elsewhere. I encourage you Sun Belt folks share pictures on our CCOA Facebook page with pics of your rides and activities. We want to wish all of you the happiest of holiday seasons and may that long-awaited part show up under the Christmas tree. **Take pictures at your club meetups and holiday get-togethers and submit a write-up for ATSOTC. If you're new to CCOA, why not introduce your Cougar to the community with an article about your car and its history? We all love a good story, and we love it even more when someone shares it with our CCOA membership family.** We are also seeking technical articles for the magazine, so think of us when you're upgrading or restoring your Cougar.

CCOA membership for the previous three months has seen a slight downturn in active members. We also saw a flat number of renewals this past month, and there are many members that have not renewed in 2023. I want to share some statistics:

- As of August 1, 2023, Cougar Club of America has 750 active members, down from 773 a year before. We expected several renewals due to renewal notices, but members may have missed the notice.
- From August 1 to October 31, 2023, a total of 80 members renewed their memberships.
- From August 1 to October 31, 2023, we added 22 new members and 2 returning members.

NEW MEMBERS

Joining the club from August through October are the following new members – welcome, and welcome back returning members!

CCOA#	Member name	City	State	Country
10543	JAMIE SANDERS	CORINTH	MS	USA
10544	CHRISTON KAISER	TAMPA	FL	USA
10545	DENNIS SNYDER	HEGINS	PA	USA
10546	YOLANDA & ANDREW HOWARD	GALT	CA	USA
10547	LES FARR	PITTSFIELD	NH	USA
10548	TOM KAM	AUSTIN	TX	USA
10549	SCOTT BLANKENSHIP	MIDLOTHIAN	VA	USA
10550	JOHN TRACY	SNELLVILLE	GA	USA
10551	JIM RUSHER	LAGUNA HILLS	CA	USA
10552	DAVID BERRY	SHERWOOD	MI	USA
10553	BRIAN COOMBE	SUFFOLK	VA	USA
10554	HERMAN EAKER	CISCO	TX	USA
10555	JASON DAW	TAYLOR	MI	USA
10556	DARRYL HALE	BAY CITY	MI	USA
10557	PAMELA ADAIR	NEW BRAUNFELS	TX	USA
10558	PHIL VRMEER	ROCKLIN	CA	USA
10559	JEFF & JEFF TIDMORE	CANYON	TX	USA
10560	GEOFF BERNER	YERMO	CA	USA
10561	TRAVIS WENTWORTH	CENTRALIA	WA	USA
10562	RAYMOND MILLARD	AMHERST	OH	USA
10563	TIMOTHY & WENDY BEAUDRY	LOUISVILLE	KY	USA
10564	JOHN HANSEN	VERONA	WI	USA

SPREAD THE WORD

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

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
DO YOU NEED TO MAKE AN ADDRESS CHANGE?

Check your CCOA membership card for your due date. If you are an e-member, you will receive an email with a download link that 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 **ATSOTC**. You can also change your personal information on their site. It pains me when mail is returned undeliverable so, 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

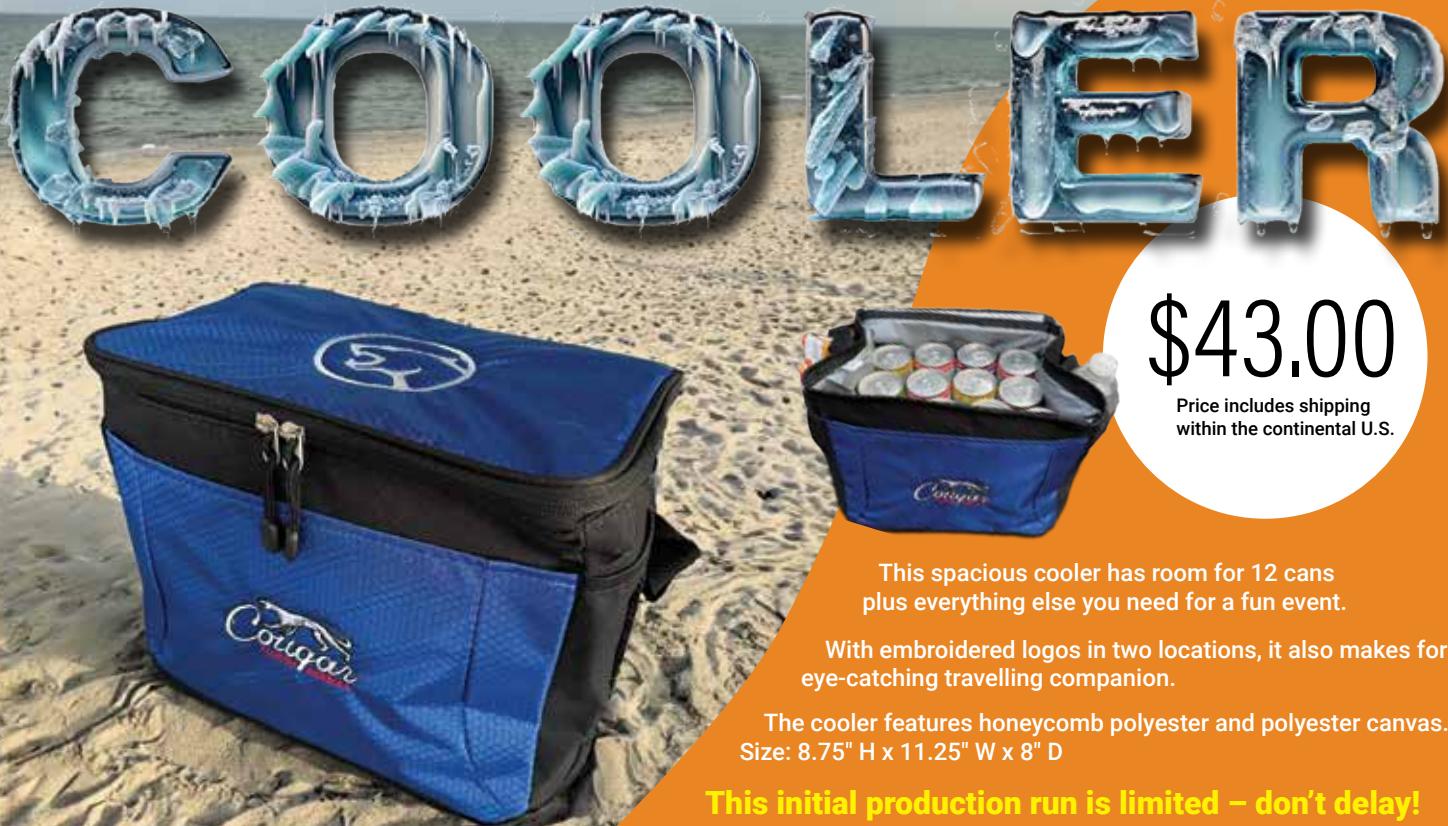
E-mail: ccoa@cornerstonereg.com

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

Trivia Answers

1. Answer "Man"
2. Answer "Jaguar"
3. Answer "Mustang"
4. Answer "Sedan, Convertible, Hatchback, Station Wagon"
5. Answer "1. Ford Mustang, 2. Chevrolet Camaro"
6. Answer "320 hp"
7. Answer \$1,311
8. Answer "1978 & 213,000 units"
9. Answers: "Blue, White, Yellow, Orange" "Total production 2,411 in 1969 and 2,200 in 1970"
10. Answer "Torino"

NEW! The Cougar Club of America



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

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? _____

*To join or renew, please fill out this form and mail it with payment
(Make checks payable to CCOA) or use the on-line form at <https://ccoa.cornerstonereg.com>*

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Tell us about your Cougar!

CLASSIC COUGAR WATCHES



Get your
paws on it.
CougarClub.org



