

By Jim Hasenau

The first time I saw my Mustang was in 1975 when the car was 6 years old and I was 17. One of my good friends from high school asked me to accompany him on a lengthy errand. Road trip to Winter Garden in his dad's convertible Mustang! They had bought the car new from Heintzelman's and even six years later it looked perfect.



A few years later my friend nabbed the car when his father was ready to sell. Fast forward several years when my friend, who by then had two small children, decided that towing a ski boat with a 14-year-old Mustang with manual front/rear drum brakes whose occupants included his young family was not the best scenario. It was time for him to sell the 'Stang. We jumped in! My wife, Cindy, was in favor; she liked it far better than some of my previous "ugly" vehicles, but we will leave that for another story.

The car is a Silver Jade (green) '69 Mustang convertible. By the time I got it, it had about 180 k on the odometer, a dealer replaced 351 engine and sheet metal riveted rust repair panels for the floor. I had it repainted in 1993, using Imron enamel, as that was just before the base coat/clear coat paints were readily available. The paint looks OK, but it will chip if you look at it cross-eyed as it's somewhat brittle. So, it's not a "numbers matching" pampered example. But that's a good thing, as there is no reason to not drive it.

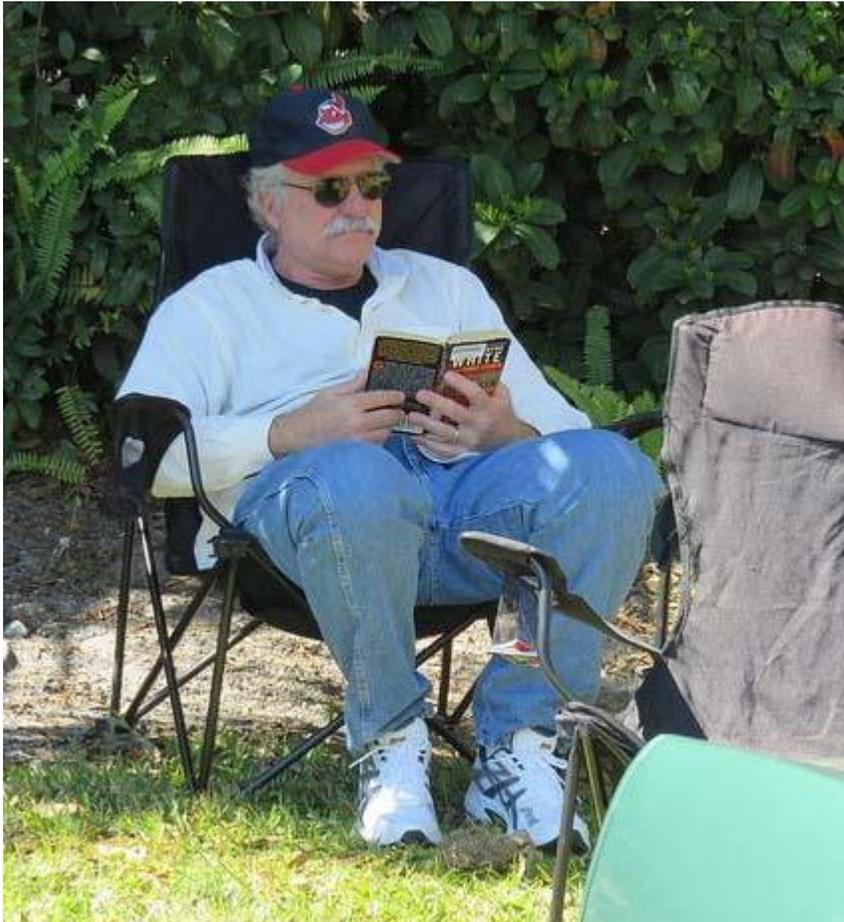
Old, non-modified cars mean old technology. I'm still running on distributor points, with the solid state replacement sitting on a shelf in the garage. I have updated some things like the rotary AC compressor that was required when our all-knowing government got into the refrigerant business, and it has radial tires, because I remember how noisy and "scrubby" vehicles rode like with bias ply tires. Also, I was able to obtain some salvage (this was a long time ago) door window glass from a '70 Mustang that bolts into

the '70 track vs. the '69 glue in windows. The glue in glass has been a problem since they were built, however, I understand that 45 years later there are now adhesives that can solve that problem.

I want to put in an electric fan for Central Florida parade duty and desperately need to put in an FM radio digital music player. The AM band is not what it used to be.

My wife and I like the '69 styling. It is the only year (so far) to have the quad headlights on a Mustang, as the '70 model, with identical body, went back to dual combo low/high beams. Can you imagine Ford doing year-to-year styling changes now? The accountants in charge would fire the whole design staff without a second thought.

Since it is a 1969 vehicle with manual drums, anything built after 1990 can out-corner, out-brake and in some cases out-accelerate my baby. That includes the ever present evil Nissans, driven by crazy,



frustrated people. So instead of daily driving and fretting over run-away Nissans, it's used as a cruise vehicle, afternoon picnics and morning coffee runs on the weekend. The original owner's manual, which has a psychedelic orange cover design (remember Laugh-In?), states that the car is "most efficient between the speeds of 35 and 60 miles per hour." Sounds quaint, but I heartily agree. At those moderate speeds the classic Ford power steering vagueness is tolerable and the dual exhausts sound great. It's a cruiser.

There is an old episode of the Wonder Years television show where the family is out car shopping. For a split second the salesman has tempted

them with a red 69 Mustang convertible. The look on the young actor's face as he imagines the family driving home, top down, is classic. That feeling is what allowed me to justify buying my friend's dad's old car. I don't want to ever lose that feeling. If I do, it's time to sell.