

MEMBER OF THE MONTH

This month's feature member is our Vice President Joe DeSanta.



I can remember my dad's love for powerful cars. He was a Buick nut. His father bought him a new, 1956 Buick convertible for a wedding gift. Although I don't remember it very well, I do remember the next car. He traded it for a 1962 Buick Electra Convertible. It was a huge car and had every available option.

As a young boy my family would visit my Grandparents every Sunday. There was an isolated stretch of country road where my dad would "open it up". He told my mom it was good for the car. My sisters and I would beg my father to make the alarm on the speedometer buzz. He had it set for 100mph! Next car was a 1964 Buick Wild Cat Convertible big block. Followed by a 1965 Buick Riviera with the 425ci. SuperWildcat engine.

In High School all my friends drove hot cars. On the street in front of school there were 67 and 69 SS Chevelles, 68 to 71 Camaros, a 68 Barracuda, a 69 Road Runner and a 70 442 Olds. Even the teachers had cool cars. One collected Studebakers and my English teacher had a 66 GTO and a 65 big block Vette. Not to be outdone in 1975 (my senior year) I bought a 1970 Z28. I had the chance to purchase a 65 Corvette convertible for \$2,300 from a friend but my dad threatened to kick me out of the house for even thinking of buying it. I drove the Z28 for the next 4 years. When I married in 1979 the Camaro had over 165,000 miles on the odometer. I sold the car to buy a new Datsun 200SX (good gas mileage).

Somehow, I put my love for cars on the back burner for the next 22 years or so. Although I was always on the lookout for a nice 63 to 67 Vette I could never convince my wife that I could fit 3 kids and her in one. In 1996 I caught the bug again. Since I was divorced 4 years earlier and only my oldest son lived with me I decided to start looking for a car that could scare the hell out of me. My first thought was to look at the new SS Camaro but after looking at the back seat (26 years later you still can't use them) I passed. My son Tommy saw the new Mustang Cobra and convinced me to take a test drive. Although I was never a Ford Fan, I fell in love with the 305hp, 14sec 1/4mile, 0-60 in 5.4 sec., limited edition car.

All of this leads to my neighbor Joe Murray. You see he lives directly across from me and there is only so many times a person can listen to a 454 idling in your neighbor garage. Sure, I could continue to pretend my house didn't shake when he started it. I could continue to hide myself in the basement until he left, but after all, I am only human. I tried to convince myself the 4.6-liter Cobra was just as nice as a Vette. I still found myself looking at the Vettes at all the car shows and cruises. In the end even my Mustang friends shunned me for my traitorous acts.

Joe Murray, realizing my plight asks me to attend a CCND meeting. I laughed at him, after all I don't own a Vette, and the Ford guys would have me stoned. He reminded me Rich West owns both Vettes and Boss Mustangs. I finally gave in. So I joined 3 year ago with no car. I attended all the meetings, I judged the NuCar Shows and drove Joe's cars to all the events. But I was still an imposter. Last year Joe called me because he had just seen a 1972 454 Corvette for sale at one of the local dealers. He claims he knew the original owner and was extremely surprised to see it for sale. Joe reminded me I even saw the same car at the Fox Run Cruise the previous year and tells me to get off my ass and look at it before he buys it!

After a 3 day negotiation with the dealer, my current wife and the bank, I decide I can't live without the car. Finally, I own my first Vette. It is a 1972 Coupe 454 (one of 3913) matching numbers with only 36,000 miles. The car was only driven about 3,000 miles for the last 25 years. It's original down to the War Bonnet Yellow paint.

This year I plan to replace the wheels with original rally wheels, detail the interior and engine compartment and continue to enjoy it.

The real reason I let Joe Murray convince me to be the Member of the month is because I'm looking for a good home for a 1996 Mustang Cobra. It is as good as any Vette and gets great gas mileage (yea right).

Joe DeSanta

