



March, 2026

President's Message



Hello Mustangers!

The St Patrick's Day Parade is on 14 Mar 26 and we will meet at Memorial Park, by the Sertich Ice Rink, at 10am to decorate our cars. We will have 10 cars in the parade and a handful of walkers. If you are not in the parade, come on out and support us. Take plenty of pictures and forward them to the webmaster. Afterwards, we will be having lunch at Rudy's Country Store and BBQ.

In April, the Coffee & Cars start at various locations around the city. Go out and show your car or just visit. Talk to other mustang owners about our club and hand out flyers to those who might be interested. There are usually free donuts! Phil Long Ford at Chapel Hills has agreed to sponsor the club. I am still working with them to sort out the details.

George Harris



Continued...

From the Editor...

My epic journey of getting the 351 Cleveland in my Mustang running again continues. I have ordered a new, custom cam and all the necessary accessories for install. All but the cam itself have arrived. Such is the life of a classic car owner.

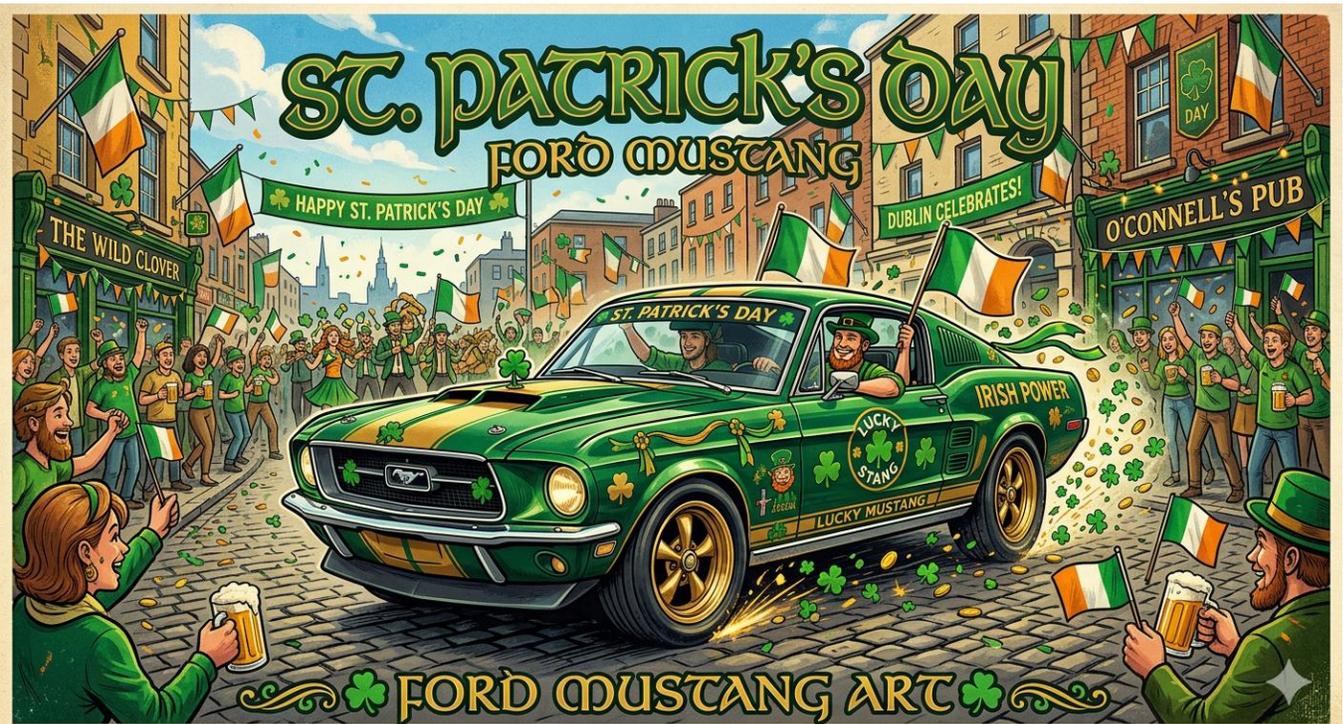


Sorry I haven't seen you at the club meetings or functions lately. As I explained last month, I was in Europe on a work trip during the month of January. I hope to make the March Club meeting then I'm off on another work trip for April. This time it's Korea, Japan, and Hawaii. Yes, I know. The struggle is real

This month I'm kicking off a newsletter series about modifying early street Mustangs. By "early" I mean mostly 1965 to 1970 Mustangs. But fear not, you proud owners of the big boy 1971-1973 Mustangs. Almost everything in the series will apply to those cars as well. And yeah, no kidding, Mustang II owners can also pick up a few tips.

The club board has discussed discontinuing the newsletter in favor of web site posts. People tell me they do read and enjoy the newsletter. So, be sure to let them know how you think and feel about this at the next meeting. This is your club and the more involvement from members, the better.

Patrick Germain



Ford Mustang News

Ford's New Supercharger Kit Delivers Up to 810 Horsepower

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/cars/news/2026/03/04/ford-mustang-supercharger-kit-boost/88977724007/>

Ford Mustang Sales Keep Going from Cellar to Stellar

<https://carbuzz.com/ford-mustang-sales-cellar-to-stellar/>

Ford's Terminator Mustang Just Joined the Ranks of Muscle Car Royalty

<https://www.gearpatrol.com/cars/2003-ford-terminator-mustang-auction/>

How to Build an 8 Second ¼ Mile Dark Horse Mustang

<https://www.mustang7g.com/forums/threads/how-to-build-an-8-second-1-4-mile-dark-horse-mustang-lp.174773/>



Upping the Ponies

And Other Mods for Your Early Street Mustang

By Patrick Germain

Some people consider the Mustang to be a sports car while others will argue it's not. Either way, when thinking of a Mustang, the word "sporty" should come to mind. And sporty is associated with performance. So it makes sense that many proud owners of the Ford Mustang want to make their cars more powerful and handle better. Increasing power, or upping the ponies, makes a classic car not only more fun, but also significantly increases the cool factor. And if you're not interested in being cool, why are you driving a Mustang?

The reality is a basic, low-horsepower Mustang can still be a lot of fun when cruising to Dairy Queen. If that's all you need, good on you. For those who want some grunt when they push the pedal which is narrow, read on.

In this multi-part series, I will cover some basics for modifying early Mustangs. For the proud owners of later model Mustangs, well, you have the benefit of having more power and handling from the factory than all but a tiny few early cars. If you want to see an article about modifying late model Mustangs, by all means let me know.

TV Car Show Clowns

Over the years I have talked with many early Mustang owners both online and in person. In many of these conversations it became clear those owners had watched a lot of TV car shows. This was apparent because they strongly believed they absolutely had to install a stroker crate engine, rack and pinion steering, coilover front suspension and multi-link rear suspension in order for their Mustang to have any performance potential.

Well, there's nothing wrong with such mods, but by no means is all that hardware and cash infusion required to make an early Mustang perform well on the street. Consider the objective of those TV shows is sell the hardware they are installing. And that hardware is donated. So don't get caught up in all that just because those clowns on the TV shows say it's mandatory.

You can significantly increase the torque and horsepower of your Mustang's engine with some basic bolt-ons. You can also significantly improve the handling of your Mustang with basic modifications. But hey, if you've got the time and budget for a high-end and crazy expensive, Pro Touring Mustang build, have at it. It's your car and your choice.

NOTE: The contents of this article are basic suggestions. Modifying a classic Mustang for performance can be very rewarding or downright catastrophic. Do your research. Consider all options and, by all means, be safe and be careful. Oh, and most importantly, have fun!

Part 1: What's Behind the Engine?

Before getting into that mill between the shock towers, let us discuss what bolts behind it. While not flashy, you can unleash a lot of potential here without touching anything under the hood.

Transmission

You must first decide what transmission type suits your fancy. Do you want to go automatic or would you rather row your own gears? Due to skyrocketing insurance premiums in the 1960s and early 1970s, the vast majority of early Mustang buyers opted for an automatic. If your pony has a factory manual, consider yourself lucky.

With an automatic, you can increase the fun factor by simply adjusting the vacuum modulator. That's the little vacuum can stuck on the side of the transmission. It has a vacuum line connecting to engine vacuum which regulates shift points. From the factory, the vacuum modulator was adjusted for economy and a smooth road experience. First, consider replacing your vacuum modulator. A new example is inexpensive and easy to install. Likely, the vacuum modulator on your car has been in place for many years and may not be working at all.

Remove the rubber vacuum line at the modulator and insert a small, flat head screwdriver inside the vacuum port. With a little finesse, you can dial in the shift points by turning a screw inside the modulator. Turn the screw clockwise to slightly raise the shift points. Try a half turn then drive your pride and joy. If you want more, try another half turn. It can be amazing how much better the car feels on the road by slightly raising the shift points. And yeah, don't get crazy. You don't want your auto shifting at 4,000 RPMs while cruising.

You can really up your automatic transmission's game by installing a shift kit. These kits make the transmission shift quicker and harder for better acceleration. The kits come with multiple modes from slightly snappy to full on "BANG!" for drag racing. To install the kit, drop the pan to drain the fluid and follow the instructions in the kit. Fair warning, it's a messy job. Technically, it's not much more involved than changing the fluid and filter. Here again, don't get crazy. Configuring the transmission to shift like a quarter mile beast will quickly grow tiresome on a street car. A little goes a long way here.

If you want to get really involved in a transmission mod, consider swapping out the torque converter. Here again, the factory converters were calibrated for economy and a ho-hum driving experience. The converter slips while the car is in Drive and sitting at a stop light, for example. As you open the throttle, the fluid inside allows the converter to slip while getting the car moving.

Eventually, the transmission speed catches up with the engine speed. On early Mustang automatics, the torque converter never fully locks like it does on later model cars, but still does a good job.

An aftermarket torque converter slows down the rate at which the transmission catches up with the engine as well as allowing a higher idle speed without bogging down. (This is often referred to as “stall speed”.) This results in harder acceleration and, most importantly, allows a much more aggressive camshaft in the engine to be discussed later. Of course, replacing the torque converter involves separating the transmission from the engine. It’s not a quick job, but makes a huge difference in how the car performs.

Ford Automatics for Early Mustangs

- **C4:** Ford installed this 3-speed automatic transmission in Mustangs from 1964 to 1981. That’s a long run. The C4 is durable, dependable and very common with excellent parts support.
- **FMX:** The FMX was installed in Mustangs from 1969 to 1973; typically behind 351 and larger engines. This transmission has a cast iron case. It is technically more durable than the C4, but is very heavy and not a good candidate as a performance transmission. Unfortunately, parts support is downright poor for the FMX.
- **C6:** This was Ford’s choice for “Big Block” Mustangs. It’s more durable than the C4 or the FMX. The C6 is very stout and can be easily modified for even more durability. It does have more parasitic drag when compared to the C4 which likely won’t matter much for street performance.
- **AOD:** This 4-speed, overdrive transmission easily installs into any early Mustang and requires no electronic shifter controller. However, for economy, it’s configured from the factory to skip gears and shift very early which makes them sluggish. Custom valve bodies are available for better performance.
- **4R70W:** The 4R70W speed overdrive offers better performance as well as durability over the AOD. It does typically require an electronic shift controller programmable by computer.

Ford Stick-Shifts for Early Mustangs

In my book, simply having three pedals on the floor really ups the fun factor for any Mustang. While a three speed manual is cool, it’s not the best for performance. Luckily, there are many manual transmission options for any early Mustang.

- **T10:** While there’s nothing wrong with a T10, it’s not the most durable choice. I’m not sure it’s deserved, but the T10 has a reputation for popping out of gear when decelerating. If your Mustang has a T10 and you’re happy with 4 gears, there’s probably

no reason to change it. The T10 was also used in many GM vehicles and continues to have good parts support.

- **4 Speed Top Loader:** The most desirable 4-speed in early Mustangs is the Top Loader. It's a very durable transmission which has proven itself on many a drag strip and race course. Here in 2026, it's getting difficult to find a 4-speed Top Loader in good condition. When you do find such one, the price is typically high. But hey, sometimes you get lucky, so if you really want a 4-speed top loader, search high and low. And theirs is always the option to have it rebuilt. Be aware Ford manufactured 130 different version of the Top Loader. When searching for a Top Loader, be sure you know what you're buying. For example, you will likely want a Top Loader from a Mustang and not a truck.
- **T5:** Through the 1980s and 1990s, the T5 was a very popular transmission in Multiple Fords. It was also a very popular transmission to pull from a wrecked Fox Body Mustang and swap into an early Mustang. Before you head to your local salvage yard, be aware here in 2026, the T5s have been virtually picked clean. And any used T5 for sale likely has over 250,000 miles on it. If you can rebuild a T5 yourself, you are a unicorn and can score a great deal on a worn out T5 for rebuilding.

There is a lot of confusion about this transmission. Not all T5s are of the same durability. Much has been said about the "World Class" T5 being the most stout, but that's a myth. Some of the V6 Mustangs had a World Class T5 not likely not hold up behind a V8. For a T5 swap behind a V8, the T5Z is likely your best option. It's rated for around 330 foot pounds of torque. It can work for higher torque applications depending on the weight of the car and the traction of the suspension, but you'll be living dangerously. You can purchase a brand new T5Z from many vendors.

- **TKO 600:** This is a five speed, overdrive manual transmission designed to handle 600 horsepower and 600 pound feet of torque. It fits well into 1967-1973 Mustangs. Some fabrication may be required based on the specific version. Tunnel mods will be required for 1965-1966 Mustangs. The TKO 600 is an extremely stout overdrive transmission that works great in a performance, street Mustang or even on a track. (My 1970 Mach 1 has a TKO-600.) The TKO 600 shifter is somewhat notchy and can be a problem going from second to third at high RPMS. Aftermarket shifters are available to mitigate these problems. However, there's a newer manual overdrive which is likely a better option.
- **TKX:** Available since 2020, the TKX is smaller than the TKO 600 and is available with 500 or 600 foot pound torque capacity. It was designed for smooth, precise shifting. This smaller transmission is an easy bolt-in for Early Mustangs which makes it an outstanding choice.

Rear Gear

When it comes to performance, the ring and pinion spinning in the differential is a significant factor. Strangely, many a performance enthusiast never considers changing those parts. From the factory, the vast majority of early Mustangs came with a very small rear gear; 2.79:1 or 3.00:1 were very common. These gears work great for economy and malaise. (Noticing a pattern here?) Early Mustangs with the famous “Hi-Po” 289 tended to have a 3.50 or larger rear gear and that was a significant factor as to why those cars were so quick. So, unleash your pony’s potential by installing a larger rear gear. Even a Mustang with an inline six can benefit from a gear change, although the smaller axle limits options. There are no aftermarket performance parts available for the 7.25” differential. If your inline six Mustang came with a factory automatic, you can swap the 2.83 rear gear for the 3.20 which came with the manual transmission 6-cylinder Mustangs.

For a non-overdrive car, a 3.50 works pretty well if you’re not driving cross-country. For an overdrive car, a 3.55, 3.70, 3.90 or even a 4.11 can work well for a street car. Here’s that word of caution again. Going crazy with the rear gear can get crazy results. One club member told me about an automatic Mustang he bought which had a 4.11 rear gear with a 3-speed automatic. When lightly pulling away from a stop light, the car would shift into third gear before it was through the intersection.

When changing differential gears, it’s a great time to consider installing a limited slip. (Please don’t make the mistake of calling it a “Posi”. That’s an abbreviation for the General Motors limited slip differential called Positraction and using GM terminology when referring to a Ford is a big, “No Bueno!”) Limited slip differentials were inexpensive options on early Mustangs and, for reasons I can never figure out, almost nobody ordered this option. Therefore, it’s extremely likely your early mustang has an “open” differential. This means the right rear wheel does almost all the work for moving the car. If you modify your engine for more power, stomping on it results in the infamous, “one wheel peel” or “one tire fire”. Yeah, you’ll roast the right rear tire off the wheel and make a lot of smoke, but you won’t really go anywhere.

Ford’s limited slip options in early Mustangs were Traction-Lok and the famous Detroit Locker. A new Traction-Lok setup works really well on the street to transfer power to both rear wheels at the same time with a little slippage. A Detroit Locker is better for racing and works like it sounds. When going in a straight line, it locks the rear wheels together for ultimate acceleration. When going around curves and corners however, it’s common to hear a, “Click, click, BANG!” as the outside wheel disengages. If you don’t mind the noise, a Detroit Locker is great. There is also a modern limited slip from Eaton called a Truetrac. A Truetrac uses internal worm gears for the best of both worlds. When accelerating in a straight line, the rear wheels are almost locked together. Yet, driving around curves and corners is as smooth as butter. I have an Eaton Truetrac in my Mustang and it works great.

Tune in next time for more tips about modifying your early Mustang!

Club Schwag!

The owners of All American Sports have retired and the business has closed. However, the sales team have moved to a new location.

If you to want to buy club gear (shirts, jackets, sweatshirts, ball caps, etc.), you can get it printed with the RMCC club logo.

Contact Leslie Fecteau at 719 553-5770 ext 113 at Colorado Sports to schedule an appointment. She is in charge of all club apparel, screen printing and stitching. You can select from existing racks to find something you like or you can order something in your particular size and color. Leslie has the RMCC logos and can typically get your gear ordered and printed within a week.

Get your club gear and proudly display the RMMC logo at all car events!

Club code of Conduct

The Rocky Mountain Mustangers take pride in our Club being an organized club with monthly meetings and events. We enjoy having members of all ages participate and show their love for the Mustang, from a new car to a classic car, a show car and a race car, and up and coming cars. We have had numerous members come and go from the Club for various reasons. The Board of Directors does not want to see any of our members treat other members, or potential members inappropriately, with comments or actions. In accordance with our By-Laws, the Board of Directors will ask anyone found causing embarrassment to the Club to resign.

Minutes of the meeting of the Rocky Mountain Mustang Club

21 February 2026

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 PM by President George Harris.

There were no new members or guests.

The treasurer's report and the minutes from January were read.

Old Business

George has contacted all of last year's sponsors and they all renewed their sponsorships.

Rosie's Diner has been contacted and the date and time for the club Christmas party are set; December 5th from 2 to 4 PM.

The date for the June club meeting is June 13th.

The motion to move the club picnic to Metcalfe Park has been withdrawn. The picnic will be held in Woodland Park on July 11th. The pavilion has been reserved for that date. More details need to be worked out. Steve Niebergall will be helping Lynn with the picnic.

Eleven members participated in the flash cruise to Drip Queen Coffee and it was a success. The club paid for member's first cup of coffee and the refills were free. Members then went to the Home and Garden show.

Michael Chapman said he has shown the new club website to George and Dave and they liked it. He will be showing to the rest of the board after a few tweaks for their approval and suggestions. He liked all the pictures that had been submitted but the quality left a bit to be desired. He said that pictures should be sent directly from the camera and not converted to another format such as JGEP.

The vote to approve the changes to the by-laws was taken. There were no No votes so the changes passed with 27 Yes votes.

New Business

Mark Barton has been contacted about continuing to sponsor the club and Phil Long Motor City will no longer be a sponsor. He stated that members can contact him directly for discounts on parts, service, and vehicle purchases. George is in contact with Chris Detone at Phil Long Chapel Hills to see if they would be interested in sponsoring the club.

Marc Short said that once again the club would be helping set up the autocross for the Rocky Mountain Mustang Roundup. Volunteers will be needed on Wednesday June 17th to do this.

Upcoming events are the St. Patrick's Day Parade and Mustang Week.

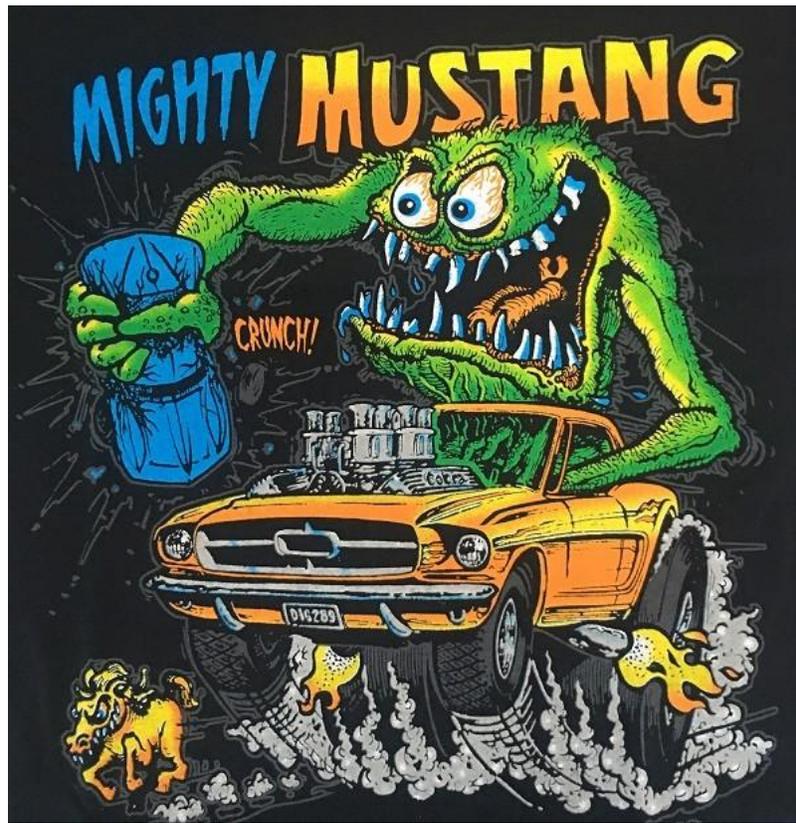
St. Patrick's Day is March 14th. Members will meet to stage for the parade at 11 AM. Reed will be sending out the location closer to the event. The plan is to go to Rudy's Bar-B-Q after the parade. The club has enough Mustangs but walkers are welcome as well as alternate Mustangs.

Mustang Week will be held in Galveston Texas on the week of April 14th to 18th. From the information on the flyer it looks to be a big event.

The Rocky Mountain Mustang Roundup is from June 18th to June 20th. June 18th is the track day, June 19th is a cruise to the top of Pike Peak, and June 20th is the show and shine in Cripple Creek.

Cars and parts were announced.

The prize drawing was held and the meeting adjourned at 3:26 PM.



Club Sponsors



**411 Hwy 105, Monument, CO 80132
(719) 232-3287**



**All American Sports. 3690 N. Academy Blvd
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