

(R)MITCHELL MOTORSPORTS - ISSUE NUMBER 296 - SEPTEMBER 2026

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MITCHELL MOTORSPORTS

Issue Number 296 - September 2026

DEDICATED TO ALL FORD MUSTANGS

SENT TO OVER 570 MUSTANG OWNERS AND CLUBS

Welcome to the latest issue of our MITCHELL MOTORSPORTS e-newsletters with feature articles and other items of interest for our members. In this issue, we present more stories with pictures and other items for your review. Thank you for joining our Association. Tell others about us.

THE CAR SHOW AT THE PATUXENT RIVER NAVAL AIR MUSEUM - BY RICK MITCHELL

(Editors's Note: I usually write the introductions to my show reports several days before attending the event, and then finish the article after show. In this case, I canceled going on the day before because the event was 90-miles away and the forecast called for rain. I later decided instead to finish the story as a tribute to my father, the late Col. Jesse D. Mitchell, Jr.)

Located in southern Maryland in St. Mary's County on the Chesapeake Bay in Lexington Park near the Patuxent River is Naval Air Station Patuxent River, which is also known as NAS Pax River. It is the home of the Naval Test Pilot School and the Patuxent River Naval Air Museum, and other commands. Pax River tests and evaluates different systems for naval aviation. The station was commissioned on April 1, 1943. The Pax River Naval Air Museum and Visitors Center opened many years later in 1978, and it preserves the history and heritage of the Naval Air Station.

The Pax River Museum has 44 aircraft on display, including jet fighters, trainers and helicopters, that are placed mostly outside on the flight line. Once each year the museum holds a car show, and on October 11, 2025, they held their 9th Annual Wheels and Wings event. The event's organizers offered 35 trophies, including a Top 20 and other Best Of awards, and these awards were based on judges who scored the cars and not by popular voting. Many of the cars entered in the show were allowed to park under the wings of the aircraft if they entered early enough many months ago, but I was not in time for that. I felt though that I was fortunate to obtain a general registration ticket only a few days before the event! This looked like a great opportunity to park on the flight line and photograph both the show cars and the restored airplanes, too.



This image from 1988 of an A-4M Skyhawk from VMA-322 was from Wikipedia (National Archives Identifier 6433805).

One of the aircraft on display was a McDonnell Douglas NA-4M Skyhawk that I wanted to see up close for pictures. In the decade of the 1960's, my father was the commander of the 175th Tactical Fighter Group, Maryland Air National Guard, and based at Martin Airport in East Baltimore. Periodically one of the Unit's F-86H Sabres would undergo maintenance, and then that jet needed a test flight to be sure it was handling correctly. Oftentimes my Dad got the call to fly the repaired jet. In the 1990's, I interviewed him about flying the Sabre, and eventually we discussed his flying near Patuxent. Here is an excerpt from that interview:



One of the MDANG's F-86H Sabres at Martin Airport. The soot on the nose means that the 20mm cannons were recently fired. (Image from 1963 by Stephen Miller from the internet.)

"Q: You discussed flying the F-86H Sabre at Patuxent. I know that you mixed it up and flew mock combat there. Was that official or unofficial?"

A: It was unofficial, but most of the time it was for our own defense! Patuxent is a test pilot training school for the Navy. They had these young, gung-ho pilots looking for more than just flying spins in their airplanes! If I went there on a test top (test flight), they did not leave me alone so that I could get my test top completed!

Most test tops required flying at 30,000'. We came back to idle on the engine and noted our fuel flow, our tail pipe temperature, and so forth. Then we accelerated to full power and noted those readings. Then we went to 35,000' and did the same, and then to 40,000'. I would be noting these readings when something would flash past my canopy! It may be an A-4 Skyhawk or one of their training aircraft.

Usually, if I was on their frequency, I told them, "Just give me five more minutes, will you?!" I finished my readings and said, "Okay! Where are you?!" It was surprising how much training I got! We chased those people, and many times they climbed all over us, or we were all over them, depending upon the experience of their pilots.



My Dad, Jesse Mitchell, on the ramp at Martin Airport in 1970. One of the Unit's F-86H's is behind him. They were all camouflaged in 1966.

Q: Was the A-4 difficult to fly against?

A: There was a later model of the A-4 with a hump back and a bigger engine. It was a light airplane with about 8,000 lbs. of thrust. If they had a cracker jack pilot in that airplane, I had a tussle on my hands!"

The F-86Hs lasted until August, 1970 in Baltimore when my Dad flew the last MDANG Sabre to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro, NC where it was later made into a monument for the town. The Sabres were replaced by Cessna A-37B Dragonflys during that year. Dad flew with the Guard until 1976 and later retired from the military in 1978. He passed away in 2014. *Thanks, Dad, for the memories.*

-END-

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got Sabre?

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MY TWILIGHT DOUBLE-HEADER CAR SHOWS - BY RICK MITCHELL

The first car show I attended was in April, 1982 in my 1966 Sprint 200 Mustang. Since then I have been to over 250 events in different Mustangs, but I had never gone to two different shows in the same day., that is, until October 18, 2025 This was the rare occasion when after a morning show was over, there was enough time to drive to compete in a second event that afternoon.

The forecast for that Saturday called for clouds in the morning, but turning sunny for the afternoon with temps rising into the '70's. By 7am the dark, long night gave away to gray morning skies that would later become a beautiful Fall day here in central Maryland. I also knew that this would be a long day of driving in my 2011 V6 Mustang while covering many miles, and eventually finishing out the afternoon in southern Maryland. And so I was on the road a half-hour later for my first show of the day!

MY 49TH SHOW

My first event must be one of the better Mustang shows in our area. This was the 2025 6th Annual Mustang & Fast Ford Car Show, hosted by Dave Alessandrini and the Knights of Columbus, Prince Georges Council 2809, located in College Park, a short 24-mile or 30-minute run south of my home off Interstate 95 heading toward Washington. This event was first held in 2020 at the height of covid and I did not attend because of the pandemic, but I have been to every one of their shows since then.

This was a popular vote show that benefited the Special Olympics of Maryland where all registration fees were sent. This was not a large event, but it was well-run and always enjoyable. There were classes for the different Mustang generations and other Fords, with first through third place awards, as well as honorable mention trophies for all others. They even had a best sounding exhaust competition, along with raffles and door prizes. It was a very good show to attend, and all for a worthwhile cause.



Leo Howard's '08 Mustang GT convertible. Leo is on the right side of this picture with a gray sweatshirt.

I was the first to arrive just after 8am, and soon thereafter, my good friends Leo Howard, Tony Cruz and others pulled onto the lot. The weather was still overcast, which was good as it kept the temps down, and I could see my engine better to reclean everything. I realized, too, that I was also touching up my car for both shows as I knew there would be little time at the afternoon event for cleaning my car..

By 11am, the sun came out and it got hot, and we now had a perfect Fall day for a show. The attendance was maybe 30-40 Mustangs and other Fords. We were later given our ballots to vote for the cars we liked, and after 1:30pm, we were called for trophy time. In my class Tony took second place with his '06 Mustang GT convertible, Leo received the third place award for his '08 Mustang GT convertible, and I was given an Honorable Mention trophy. These awards featured the styled, gold '70 Mustang trophy tops that are so popular at Mustang shows and a great looking award.



Tony Cruz's '06 Mustang GT convertible.

By now it was close to 2:15pm as I said good-bye to several friends. I packed, reprogrammed my GPS, and drove back to I-95 south for the 34-mile drive to Waldorf for my second show. The traffic on the interstates and the Capital Beltway was heavier, and this second trip took about an hour. I knew, though, that as long as I registered by 5pm that I could enter. I pulled onto the shopping center property, paid my entry fee in time, and carefully drove through the crowds of kids trick-or-treating among our show cars to find another good friend, Tom Smith, and his '06 Mustang GT coupe.

MY 50TH SHOW

The DMV Rods and Classics Car Club rescheduled their earlier April spring show because of the weather and instead turned that into this Halloween-themed event. This show was a part of the Shops at Waldorf Center Classics Car Show Series, and held on the same excellent parking area as before in the middle of the shopping center. This club runs three excellent shows each year at this location with their attendance usually around 125 or more entries.

What made this event so different from all past shows was that it was referred to as their 'Optional Trunk-or-Treat Edition' to celebrate Halloween, as a part of the '7th Annual Spooky Fall Fest,' held at the shopping center where there was also store-wide trick-or-treating, a petting zoo, a magic show, and a costume contest, as well as crafts, games and other activities. And instead of this show running typically from 9 to 2, it was now held from 1 to 7 in the afternoon.



Tom Smith's '06 Mustang GT coupe.

There were 104 awards available, which was generous, of which there was a Top 50 for all makes and models of cars, which was then split into 25 trophies for the 2000 and newer cars, and the other 25 for 1999 and older. There were additional trophies for the trucks, motorcycles, and other special categories, as well as theme awards for Best Costume, Best Decorated, and Scariest Trunk.

When we registered, we were given our number cards as well as our scoring sheets. The club used a simplified 50-point judging system, with ten points each for Body, Interior, Engine, Paint, and Tires/Wheels/Hubcaps. Each area also had an added notation that the judges were looking for cleanliness, so the judging criteria was that and the car's condition, which was a good way to evaluate the cars.



My 2011 V6 Mustang coupe.

I parked my Mustang, and only a few minutes later a judge asked if my car was ready? He then saw that I was still setting up and said he would return. Fortunately I had recleaned my Mustang at the first show and was mostly ready. I placed my scoring sheet under my windshield wiper and then walked away for a few minutes to find a restroom. When I returned, I wanted to clean my wheels once more, but my scoring sheet was gone! My car was judged while I was away.

After that I had over two hours to swap stories with Tom about our cars as the sun sank lower in the west, the shadows grew longer and the temps fell again. Soon we were sitting with our cars with the street lights coming on as we waited to be called for trophy time. At about 6:30pm, Krasil Bradshaw, who runs the DMV Rods, called us for the awards presentation. Eventually he came to our class, and Tom received one of their trophies. I was the last one called in my section, and I was surprised to receive a three-post trophy, probably one of the nicest awards my car was ever given. It was humbling to have this.



Two really nice awards from both shows!

Later I went back to my Mustang and packed for the evening. It was 7:15pm, and I still had a 60-mile drive to get home. This put me at a favorite gas station 10-miles from home by 8:45pm after battling more heavy traffic. I ate a bag of M&M Peanuts for my dinner on the ride home, and finally arrived by 9:15pm. What a great day out in my Mustang, and I would gladly do it all over again tomorrow!

Finally, I highly recommend any events held by either of these excellent organizations. If you have the opportunity to go to one of their shows, you will find them worthwhile and enjoyable.

-END-

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got Mustang?

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On October 18, 2025, I attended two different shows in Maryland on the same day, with one in College Park and the other in Waldorf. We are presenting several issues of our MITCHELL MOTORSPORTS with pictures of some of the many interesting Mustangs, Shelys and other Fords seen at these events. In this issue, we have good friend John Kuczinski's blue '66 coupe, followed by Dave Alessandrini's maroon coupe (Dave organizes these annual Knights of Columbus shows), and then a black third-generation convertible, and finally three pictures of the Shelby coupe that won the loudest exhaust competition, and yes, it was LOUD!









-END-

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got Shelby?

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-END-

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got Mustang?

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OUR 300TH ISSUE!

300

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-END-

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got Ford?

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-END-

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