

Living with a Legend

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A Day in the Life

– Steve Sloan

It has been a few years since 6S087 came home from restoration, and the initial thrill has tapered off a little. But I still love this car and drive it every chance I get. It's always a blast, whether I'm on a cruise with friends or just going around the block.

One recent Monday a friend called and asked for a ride to pick up his Toyota truck at a local repair shop. After ribbing him about how this would not be necessary if he owned a Ford, I agreed. Yes, I know Fords break too, but, hey, I have to get in my digs when I can.

It was a sunny day with mild temperature and low humidity. That's about a twice-a-year event in the Houston area so I rolled out the Shelby for this mission. It had been a month or so since I torqued the Cragar

lug nuts, so I paused a few minutes in the driveway to take care of that. You may not consider it necessary, but past experience tells me different.

Many years ago I got a block away from home when I noticed the back of the car making an odd noise. The rear end started wobbling back and forth like the car was trying to hula dance. What?! When I got out and looked I saw that the left rear wheel was barely clinging to the car on five nut-less lugs! Luckily, I found all five lug nuts scattered along the street on my walk back home to get a jack. Disaster avoided... but just barely. After that experience I've never gone over 2 months between checking those lugs.

With that task completed I headed out to pick up my friend. He was surprised and delighted when I came rumbling up to his house in the Shelby. He confessed that's what he had secretly been hoping for. We had a pleasant, if slightly traffic-filled ride to the repair shop where I dropped him off. The road in front of that shop is

four lanes wide and there was a huge opening in the traffic for me to pull out into. So big that I just couldn't resist a little burnout. Hey, idling in all that heavy traffic and poking along can't be good for this high performance engine. I HAD to do a burn out to clear the carburetor. Yeah, that's it. I wasn't showing off, I was just doing maintenance on my engine. Ha, ha!

With the carb well cleared out I quickly slowed back down to the posted speed. That's when I remembered that I was in the little town of South Houston; not to be confused with the big city of Houston. And the police in South Houston are known for giving tickets to drivers who are actually well within the speed limit. For them, the fact that you're doing nothing wrong is no excuse for not contributing to the local treasury. And just try going to court and pleading your word against that of a fine, up-standing officer of the law. Right.

I guess this was my lucky day because I didn't see any flashing lights or hear any sirens as I slinked down the road toward the legal safety of Pasadena. Our police enforce the law, but they're fair about it, and I can live with that.

I was almost home when a man who had previously been mowing his grass suddenly went crazy and ran into the street in front of me waving his arms wildly in the air. Oh, my! I pulled over and found out he wasn't insane after all. He just wanted to

The details of 6S087's 36-year re-birth were covered in the Winter, 2017 issue. Once the car was finished, Steve Sloan began picking up where he left off in 1979, when he bought the car. After being without it for more than three and-a-half decades, it was time to get reacquainted. He became, in effect, a new owner and experienced most of the first-time adventures that a new Shelby owner might typically encounter. This is the twelfth installment.





check out my car. He had seen me driving through the neighborhood before and had always wanted to meet me and get a closer look at the car. And somehow he could tell it was a real Shelby – not a clone. How could I not oblige him?

After giving him the nickel tour and answering a lot of questions it was my turn to learn something about him. Turns out he's retired from NASA and has a 1962 MGA MK-II project car in his garage, along with a 2001 Indian motorcycle. And he's a magician with metal working. If I ever need something made from scratch he can do it, or he'll know someone who can. And this guy had been living about a block away from me for an untold number of years. Driving a Shelby sure opens a lot of doors.

After a long and enjoyable visit with my new friend, I finally resumed my trip home to put my "social secretary" back in the garage. But apparently there was one more event on the

calendar that day. Look! Up ahead! Another guy in the middle of the road waving his arms. Holy Shamoley! It was another neighbor (from a few streets over) who had also seen me driving the car before and wanted a closer look. What a great day this was turning out to be.

This guy was a huge Ford and Shelby fan, and I could tell how much he appreciated what he was looking at. And, well, the engine was all warmed up. How about a ride? He said "yes" practically before I could finish that sentence. His smile was so big I was concerned that he'd injure his face. By now it was obvious that the carb needed cleaning out again, and the whoops and hollers from the passenger seat told me I must have done a good job of it.

Ah, this is what I live for. There's nothing like sharing the Shelby adventure with another enthusiast.

This guy was quite a bit younger than me and didn't have the money for a Shelby, but as we pulled back into the driveway he was talking about joining the fun and buying a classic Mustang. Before letting him go I extracted a promise to give me a ride whenever that happens.

Now don't get the idea that this is what happens every time I take my pony out for exercise. I've been on two-hour drives where I never got a second look. But I've also gotten a thumbs-up from a policeman while in this car. You just never know. I hope you're having as much fun as I am – living with a legend, and sharing the fun every chance I get.

