STEVE SLOAN

As odd as this may sound, SAAC launched my writing career. Okay, I'm not an internationally acclaimed author, but I have been inspired to pen more than a dozen articles which were deemed suitable for publication in the Shelby American.

My story starts like many others. Back in the '70s I became infatuated with Shelby automobiles. First through the usual newsstand reading material of a 20-something male auto enthusiast. But the limitations of the information presented there was quickly reached. I joined SAAC to learn more. I ordered and read everything they printed; which just fed my Shelby mania. The Shelby cars from 1962 through 1970 were mesmerizing in both appearance and performance. And getting more so each year as the heavy hand of government regulation was emasculating what was left of the muscle car offerings from Detroit.

The history of Shelby American is the icing on the cake. They dominated SCCA racing in the United States in the '60s (thoroughly trouncing Chevy's admittedly beautiful Corvette) and topped every manufacturer in the world (including the vaunted Ferrari) when they won the World Manufacturer's GT Championship in 1965. Something no other American manufacturer has done, before or since. Then they followed that up with a win at Le Mans in 1966, taking spots 1 & 2 in the 1-2-3 Ford GT40 photo-finish. That among *MANY* other racing accomplishments.

In short, Shelby American has the best racing heritage of any American manufacturer in history. So for looks, performance and historical significance, nothing comes close to a classic Shelby.

With all that in mind, I set out in 1978 to own a piece of that history and performance with a Shelby Mustang. After a lot of study and thought I decided that a 1966 GT350 was the car for me Not just any 1966 GT350 would do. Through SAAC I had learned that the first 252 1966 cars were built into Shelbys from 1965 Mustang chassis. They had a unique combination of 1965 and 1966 features that really appealed to me. In February of 1979 I bought 6S087 and still own it.

That car is great, but along the way I've learned that the people around these cars are what keeps the flames of enthusiasm burning. Once again, SAAC provided what I needed – a connection to fellow enthusiasts. Through their publications (primarily the quarterly Shelby American), their forum, and their annual conventions I have met and established close friendships with a number of fellow enthusiasts. Some are owners and some not. As the club has always stated – ownership is not required.

As time went by I learned a lot of things about those first 252 1966 GT350s (currently referred to as carryovers) that I thought the rest of the Shelby enthusiast community might want to know about. And since SAAC had been so helpful in my education over the years I figured that maybe it was time that I paid a little of that back. So I wrote an article with much of what I had learned about the carryovers and sent it in for consideration. To my surprise it was accepted and published in the Summer 2013 issue of *The Shelby American*. What a hoot!

When my 6S087 came home from restoration in 2015 I was again inspired to share my experience with others through writing, and penned "The 36-Year Restoration." That also was accepted by SAAC and showed up in the Winter 2017 issue of *The Shelby American*.

I was hooked. Sharing the Shelby fun thorough articles for SAAC was a great feeling that I wanted to repeat. And so began a series of 12 articles under the banner of "Living With a Legend". It chronicled the good, the bad, and the comical of daily life maintaining, driving and sharing my 1966 GT350.

More recently I've submitted technical research articles, and who knows what will be next. Sharing my discoveries and experiences with other enthusiasts has added immensely to the fun of Shelby ownership.

To wrap this up, without SAAC I doubt I'd be aware of the real significance of Shelby American and these special cars, and may have never bought my 1966 GT350. I certainly would not have had the opportunity to make so many good friends over the years. And my writing career, such as it is, would never have happened. Thank you, SAAC!