

# AT THE SIGN OF THE CAT

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE COUGAR CLUB OF AMERICA LLC

SPRING 2018



50th Anniversary Edition

# C-7-XR







# High Desert Cougar Club of Oregon

By Conan Tigard (CCOA #9870)



Conan Tigard stumbled upon his first classic Mercury Cougar in 1982 by accident. While shopping with his mother for his first car, the third car they looked at was a 1969 Mercury Cougar base model, white paint, black vinyl top, and white interior. Conan had never heard of one before his mom mentioned it. They bought the car when he was 17 years old after instantly falling in love with the Mercury. Conan drove that car all over Santa Barbara County, where he lived, and even went back and forth to Houston, Texas a couple of times. All in all, he owned the car for five years until his stepfather offered me an almost brand new 1986 Honda Civic. Conan says he stupidly

sold the Cougar for \$1,500 to a dealer in Santa Barbara and occasionally would see the new owner driving it around town.

"Decades passed but I never forgot my first car. I thought about the Cougar constantly, always comparing it to whatever foreign car I was driving. But, being a single parent, raising a daughter by myself in the San Francisco Bay Area, money was tight. I dreamed of owning one again... someday. I often wondered if my old one was still alive in the Southern California area somewhere."

Conan remarried, finished raising his daughter, and around his 50th birthday, drove over to Prineville, Oregon to go mountain biking on a new trail that had just been built. At the head of the trail was a 1968 Cougar, tires sinking into the dirt, right passenger window broken out. He couldn't stop staring at this car which reminded him of his first Cat. Conan went home and started looking on Craigslist at Mercury Cougars for sale in Portland, Seattle, and San Francisco. Months later, after visiting the West Coast Classic Cougar 2016 Open House, he ended up buying a 1967 Maroon Cougar XR-7 GT. However, he knew this wasn't the right car for me, so Conan sold it to a fellow down in the Los Angeles area.







"I looked again for another year, and having just sold my rental townhouse, had a little more money to offer for a Cougar this time. I went on a 1,500 mile round trip to the middle of Montana, Seattle, and finally Portland to look at three Cougars. While inspecting the one in Seattle, I knew that I had found it... a 1970 Houndstooth Cougar Base with a 351C 2v, original vinyl top, and one repaint. After talking with the car's mechanic at the Cascade Cougar Club about the car, then calling Don Rush at WCCC, who also knew the car, an offer was made and accepted. The car was shipped to Redmond, Oregon. As bad luck would have it, the truck bringing the Cougar to me blew its engine at the Washington / Oregon border. So, my wife and I drove the three hours there, arrived in the dark at 9:45 pm, and then drove the Cougar all the way home, arriving around 1 am, all the while not exceeding 60 mph. It was a little scary not really knowing the car, but it performed smashing, except for one time that all the lights went out right at the beginning (I don't think I had pulled the light pull all the way out)."

There are not a lot of Cougars in Central Oregon, and Conan has never seen another at a car show nearby. He is hoping to change that by starting the High Desert Cougar Club and bringing more visibility to the Cat. "We only have seven

members so far, but only two of them live around here while most of the members are over the mountains in the Willamette Valley. I am hoping to find more members in the area, and I am also thinking about having a satellite group over the mountains.

My passion for the Cougar runs deep and I absolutely love every moment driving my car, which is anytime but the winter season. I look forward to more car shows and hopefully meeting other owners with Cougars. Look for my 1970 Deep Gold Metallic Houndstooth Cougar out and about here in Central Oregon. She is a real head turner."

High Desert Cougar Club was founded on November 14, 2017 by Conan Tigard. His goal is to gather other Cougaraholics so they can talk about Cougars and spread their enthusiasm about this awesome car.

Eventually, we hope to have enough members to do the following:

- Attend car shows as a club
- Meet at different locales for dinner once a month or so
- Gather the cars for Cougar Cruises (not in the winter)
- Help each other work on their cars
- Befriend other Cougaraholics and car enthusiasts
- Enjoy every moment driving a classic Cougar

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to fire off an email to Conan. He is ready to answer any questions.

Conan Tigard  
High Desert Cougar Club  
[www.highdesertcougarclub.com](http://www.highdesertcougarclub.com)

