



## 1968 Mercury Colony Park - The Boomerang Car

I have always loved the full-size Ford and Mercury wagons that came out in 1968. I was in a carpool in high school and one of my friend's Mother drove a 1968 Mercury full size wagon that I thought was sharp. The Mercury wagon is built on the shorter Ford 119-inch chassis, so it rides much like the 68 Ford Country Squire. The six passenger Colony Park was designated 71E. This model sold for \$3,760 and weighed 4,259 Pounds. Total production was 5,624 units. The Colony Park with the third seat in the rear accounted for 15,505 sales for a total production of 21, 129 which was a slight increase of 2,439 units over the similar 1967 Mercury full size top of the line family hauler.

In 2008, I was perusing E Bay and saw a red 1968 Mercury Colony. These cars never seem to be available. The problem was, the wagon was in California, and I was in Charlotte North Carolina. I called to seller to ask a few questions, and he let me know a man in Sweden intended to buy and had already called him. I bid three times at the last minute, and the Swede was crying in his meatballs a few minutes later. I paid \$1,000 to have it shipped across the country, and when I saw it, it looked ragged. The woodgrain was baked from the California sun, and the Cardinal Red paint (Ford called it Candy apple Red on their Paint chart) was shot. The red interior was also worn out.

I went to the Carlisle All Ford show in July and found the correct red comfort weave material, and a set of one year only 1968 deluxe wheel covers. I had the paint redone, and the seats recovered. I found the correct woodgrain and slowly scraped the rock- hard faded vinyl off using chemical strippers, a heat gun and a razor blade. The car looked great and the 390 X code high compression 390 ran like a champ.

I took the wagon to Cincinnati for the American Station Wagon Owners Association National Convention run by show chairman Jim Klaserner, and it was a great weekend.

One of the wagon club members in Utah was a former Mercury Dealer and was looking for a 1968 for his collection. He bought it and had it shipped to his warehouse. 14 years later I had moved to Seattle, and I noticed the car on our station wagon Facebook page. It looked familiar, and I asked where the owner found it. He said he bought it in Utah, and had it shipped to Oregon, not far from me.

When the current owner decided to sell it, I gave him a call and struck a deal to buy it back. The car had been stored mostly indoors, but the clear coat paint that had been added in Utah was peeling off, and the woodgrain had started to fade unevenly.

This necessitated having the paint and wood grain done all over again! The cost of paint had gone up over the years, especially the color red. I went through the entire local yellow pages and all the shops said they no longer work on old cars, and couldn't get help, or went out of business. Finally, a local Midas shop looked at it and agreed to paint it for \$2,500 which seemed like a very fair price. They had it done in a week, and it came out better than I expected.

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# The Rotunda Times



## The Rotunda Times

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When you hear of a member/spouse's death, please get all the information such as the funeral home and address, viewing times and dates, and the service time and date.

**CONTACT: Jim Crawford**

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We will ensure that the membership at large knows of the death.

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The Ford & Mercury Restorers Club is a hobby organization whose purpose is to foster and promote the acquisition, preservation and use of all Ford vehicles.

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### President's Message

Our swap was successful. Only 11 spaces did not sell. As far as the gate, we will get results at the meeting. I want to thank everyone that worked the swap meet. I walked around and talked to a lot of the vendors. They were happy with the set up. We are going back next year. The only screw up was the Food Vendor did not show up. Next year we will have a contract with a nonrefundable deposit. You could still sign up for the Barn Show for \$15 Jerry Worful will take your money. By the way on Sunday, May 21st. I slipped and fell backwards on my stairs and fractured three ribs. I was in the hospital for three days. I am home now taking pain pills ; they told me it will take up to three months to heal. Hopefully, I will. See you at the meeting.

Stan Miller  
President

### Board Meeting Minutes

05/2023

There was no board meeting for May.

Terry Worful  
Secretary

### Minutes from the FMRCOA Club meeting 05/03/2023

Quick meeting. Stan was not present because of back issues. Discussed the swap meet.

Cole will set up the 20X30 tent for the information booth.

Still need people to sign up to work.

Information will be left of the gate.

Jack sold almost all the swap spaces.

Dale gave the treasurers report.

We had a guest, a friend of Wally Wigand. AJ had a 79

Mustang fastback. He plans on joining the club in June.

50/50 1st Tim Pusilo, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mark Lambert and Wall Wigand was third place.

Terry Worful  
Secretary



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IF A WOMAN SAYS  
"DO WHAT YOU WANT"  
**DO NOT DO WHAT YOU WANT.**  
STAND STILL. DO NOT BLINK.  
DON'T EVEN BREATHE.  
JUST PLAY DEAD.

I'm in a Wal-Mart  
parking lot  
watching a woman  
who can't  
remember where  
she parked. Every  
time she holds her  
remote in the air, I  
honk my horn.



**ELEMENTARY KIDS HAVE  
IPHONES.  
WHEN I WAS A KID,  
I PUT GLUE ON MY HANDS  
JUST  
SO I COULD PEEL  
IT OFF WHEN IT DRIED.**





## 1968 Mercury Colony Park - The Boomerang Car continued from page 1

Next up was the woodgrain. I called all the local vinyl wrap companies (which did not even exist the last time I had the work done) and one young fellow said he would look at it. He was unfamiliar with what a station wagon was but agreed to redo with a similar modern vinyl product and take all the old stuff off the car.

He did a very nice job but did complain that he seriously underestimated the time it took to remove what I had put on 15 years earlier.

The car has no rust anywhere, and the previous owner ran a Marti report. The options are WSW tires, Power Disc brakes, Power Steering, Air conditioner, Am Radio, Tinted glass, Remote control LH mirror, Heavy Duty Suspension.

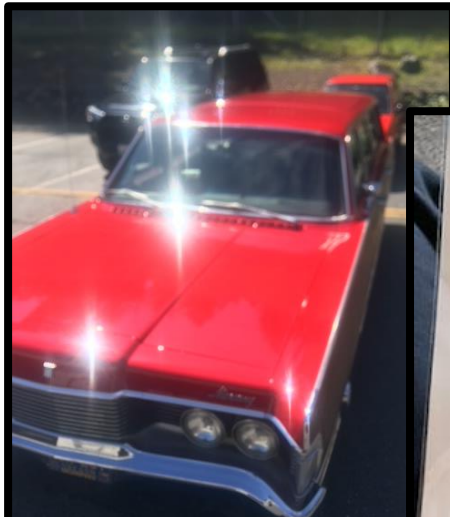
The 390 X code was an upgrade over the base Y code and featured a 10.5:1 compression ratio. It has no luggage rack, and the rear compartment is a huge storage area for all my tools and extra parts.

It was shipped to Foothills Motors in Pasadena, California. It was built on April 25, 1968.

I really appreciate the car more than ever now. I could never find a 68 Colony Park out in the wild if I wanted one today. It just seems that the car is special because it somehow found me twice.

Like Frank Sinatra sang Love is lovelier, the second time around, Just as wonderful, with both feet on the ground.

Tim Cleary



April 16<sup>th</sup> was the Monroe Swap Meet put on by Nick Avina and his crew. The day started out with near perfect weather, but with the threat of rain in the afternoon. We got there just before 8:00 am and the parking lot was filled to near capacity. This show gets bigger every year and I would estimate that there were at least 500+ vendors. As to spectators, the place was packed. At 11: 00 when we were waiting for the last member of our group by the entrance people were still paying to come in. Also, I saw a lot of merchandise heading out the gate. As this meet use to be put on by the Chevrolet Club, G.M. parts use to dominate. However, this year we saw a lot of Ford parts ranging from rusty junk to N.O.S. I found a few Model A parts and everyone in our group found a few treasures to carry home. Let's hope that the spring fever and getting out to enjoy a swap meet carries over to the FMRC swap meet in May. In late April a friend and I traveled by train to Ft. Worth Texas and the huge Pate Swap meet at the Texas Motor Speedway. Although announced they sold 10,000 spaces, at least one quarter were just used for parking motorhomes. As would be expected Chevy truck parts seemed to be the most popular items for sale, but lots of Model A parts, and yes, I did buy another start of a project. For some reason the early Ford V8 parts never seem to be in great abundance at this meet. Since we went by train, you ask how I got the parts home...simple: you buy a rust-free Texas truck to carry the parts home. Final swap meet to report on is the annual Fowlerville Swap meet held on the first Saturday in May. Never was a very big swap meet, but this year it surprised up with a much bigger size. Again, this year didn't disappoint and several in our group managed to carry home some needed (or in some cases unneeded) parts. This meet has always been a favorite of mine, low-key, lots of early parts, and getting to visit with swap meet friends you haven't seen since last fall. Next month reports on the FMRC swap meet and Bearing Burners.

## Rocket' Ranger Piloted by Program Engineer Sets Pickup Land-Speed Record

Written by Paul Kampe



Ford Ranger has had plenty of variants in its 40-year history, but a special Ranger that goes under the radar is the Rocket Ranger. With the launch of the all-new 2024 Ford Ranger and Ranger Raptor, we're looking back at the time a NASCAR engine powered an otherwise stock Ranger to a land-speed record.

Mark Bill, then the assistant chief engineer for Ranger programs, piloted the Rocket Ranger to a speed of 205.208 mph in the flying mile at the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah, a record at the time for pickup trucks.

Bill had an extensive automotive background, having worked for Ford for 25 years in both Vehicle Engineering and Advanced Powertrain Planning at the time of the record run.

"The experience gained through the high demands of racing pays off in everything we do," Bill said in a press release announcing the feat. "You can't make a mistake out here on the salt. We bring that approach back to the office, where our teams work hard to ensure Ranger is highly capable across a broad range of disciplines — from world's fastest on the salt to the winningest off-road."

While the exterior of the Rocket Ranger was nearly identical to that of a stock 2002 Ford Ranger, the interior and the pickup's engine were anything but. The inside of the cabin had been stripped bare, and a racing seat and roll cage were installed in place of the original components by Ford collaborator SPAL Advanced Technologies. An engine swap, courtesy of Roush Industries, gave the Rocket its launching power — with a 372-cubic-inch V8 fit for one of Ford's NASCAR Cup Series cars, capable of producing nearly 800 horsepower.

Fittingly, Bill's record run came just days after the 100th anniversary of Ford's involvement in racing, which saw company founder Henry Ford, still a struggling entrepreneur in 1901, driving his "Sweepstakes" race car to an upset victory over the country's top racer in a 10-mile race at Detroit Driving Club. The win helped Henry Ford secure the seed money he would use to help create Ford Motor Company.

Bill's record-setting run was actually the second time the Rocket Ranger had eclipsed 200 mph. It had previously reached 202.434 mph on Aug. 14, 2001, with another driver behind the wheel. The truck's front end was slightly lowered, and a new front air dam was added for the second run on Oct. 19 when it reached 205.208 mph. Its rear axle gear was also shortened, which allowed the engine to turn slightly faster.

Equipped with a Power Stroke diesel engine, Rocket Ranger reportedly returned to Bonneville multiple times and [claimed the diesel pickup truck speed record in 2007](#). As for the modern-day Ranger, it and the Ranger Raptor this week were revealed for the North American market.



## Sweet Music of Ford's 427 'Calliope' Engine Muted by Le Mans Regulations

@FORDOnline Apr 27, 2023

After consecutive victories at the famed Le Mans 24 Hours, Ford had a plan to go even faster in 1968. So, with April 27 (4-27) upon us and the annual race nearing, we're taking a look back at an experimental version of Ford's famous 427 cubic-inch engine created for the 1968 running of the endurance race – though it never saw the light of day due to rule changes.



Named "Calliope" for its resemblance of the whistles of a musical organ, the engine featured three valves per cylinder connected to pushrods driven by twin camshafts – which themselves were arranged in a unique over-under manner – inside the engine block, according to The Henry Ford Museum of American History. Unique fuel injectors were stacked above each cylinder, creating the similarity to a calliope.

Two belt-driven water pumps located at the front of the engine block were employed to help ease the installation of the 577-pound engine into a race car. Once on the dynamometer, the Calliope was said to be capable of as much as 800 horsepower, rating at 630 horsepower in Ford's testing. Just two of the powerhouse engines are believed to have been built. The engine was the centerpiece of a Hot Rod magazine cover story in June 1968 about five experimental Ford engines,

where editors called the Calliope "an imaginative approach to a medium-cost, high-performance, large-displacement racing engine." Despite the hype, Calliope would never see the Circuit de la Sarthe.



The engine was reportedly banned from competition there to a safety-oriented rule change regarding engine displacement – the 427-inch Fords of the previous two years had pushed speeds in excess of 200 mph on a course designed for slower speeds – but a Ford would still emerge victorious for the third consecutive year.



## Brian's Tips / Engine Performance



The performance of an engine can change quite mildly, or drastically, just by changing the position of the cam that's in the engine. Basically, if you want more power at the low end, like from a traffic light, you would install your cam in early (advanced). If you want more performance at the high end, like flat out, you would install your cam late (retarded). Unless you are rebuilding your engine, changing a cam is not an easy task, as you would have to remove the radiator, fan, distributor, water pump, cam/crank sprockets, timing chain and housing cover. Besides that, you have to remove the intake manifold in order to pull the lifters off the cam lobes, which means undoing the entire valve train in order to very carefully pull the cam out. There is really more that would need to be done, but what I just mentioned is basically what you would do in order to swap cams.

If you still have the mindset to do this, just remember that the major gain for power is in the heads, not the cam. Besides buying the cam and gaskets, you must replace the solid or hydraulic lifters with new ones, so they break in and match up to the new cam. If you are installing a crazy high lift cam, then you should break in the cam and lifters with softer valve springs, then after the break in period change the springs to be correct for the cam, which is a lot of work. While you're busy doing this work, you may as well replace your timing chain along with steel cam and crank sprockets. There are many different assemblies you can buy, and it's really worth checking into them before just buying stock off the shelf.

Pure stock has no adjustment possible and can only be installed straight up dot to dot with no way to advance or retard the cam. For a high lift performance cam, a double row chain is available from Roll Master, Cloyes, Ford Motorsports and others. That can require modifications that you don't want to deal with, so be careful if you decide to select this. For stock replacement single row assemblies, you can buy them with the zero dot to dot markings. Better would be with 4\* advanced and 4\* retarded markings along with the zero dots. If you want even better, then you go with the much better single row that has increments of 0\*, then 2\*, 4\*, 6\* and 8\* advanced, and 2\*, 4\*, 6\* and 8\* retarded. Several articles past I spoke of why it's important to degree the engine, so you know exactly where TDC (top dead center) is. Once you know TDC, and mark your harmonic balancer accordingly, and have the better cam timing assembly, you can adjust the cam to absolutely make sure it's being installed as desired. Since we know hardly anything is made perfect, imagine the crank sprocket being off just one degree, then the cam sprocket being off just one degree, timing chain slack one degree, markings on the damper one degree, now put that all together and imagine if it all ends up one way or the other. Now you can better understand why no two vehicles never run exactly the same, and if you are going to do this job, do it right.

Besides now having the knowledge and understanding of why it would be important to degree your engine to make sure zero is really zero, you can now 'wiggle' the cam with your adjustable cam timing set to put it all together correctly. Also, as I've mentioned several times, so many of those 70's vehicles were factory cam retarded by as much as 7\* so they could pass emission testing. Just taking that retard out and using an earlier model cam/crank timing set will enhance the performance and fuel economy more than you can believe. If you now know for sure you are good with the markings on your damper, you could now advance your cam maybe two degrees for more off idle performance or retard it a couple of degrees for pedal to the metal performance. Just by paying attention to the details of your engine, there is free horsepower and fuel economy to be had.



## A Strange Ford Experiment – Lou Ironside



Recently at an antique shop in Freeland, MI I spotted this unusual card with a vehicle I had never seen before. It is labeled as : La Galaxie – styling experimental model. Courtesy Ford Motor Co. This, although postcard size does not have any of the usual markings on the back indicating a postcard. There were several other similar size cards for sale there with such things as Chrysler Airflow and some foreign cars. This indicates to me this might have been part of a set ? Too big for bubble gum trading cards. It sort of looks like the vehicle was designed by a committee as there are way too many styling trends in one place. The front reminds me of a 1961 to 1963 Thunderbird rear, and the rear quarter panel has a similar look. The roof pillar at the rear doesn't fit at all with the overall design....at least those are my opinions !! There is no indication of the vintage of the vehicle, but my guess is maybe the mid-1950's....but that is only my guess. Obviously this experimental never got the attention that some of the other 1950's experimentals did. Probably we will never know the whole story, but interesting to look back at what was then....even if it was hidden away.

## Calendar of Events for 2023

<b>June 10 Wings &amp; Wheels</b>	<b>Yankee Air Museum Ypsi</b>
<b>June 11 - 17 EF V-8 60th Anniversary</b>	<b>Grand National Meet Dearborn</b>
<b>June 16 Roush Racing Museum Tour</b>	<b>Livonia</b>
<b>June 18 - 19 Motor Muster</b>	<b>The Henry Ford / Greenfield Village</b>
<b>Dearborn</b>	
<b>June 24 Sloan Summer Car Show</b>	<b>Sloan Cultural Center Grounds Flint</b>
<b>June 24 Bay Harbor Car Boat / Show</b>	
<b>July 14 Ford PDC Employee /</b>	<b>Vender Car Show Dearborn</b>
<b>August 13 Hog Roast</b>	<b>Southeast MI RG #126 Club house Jackson</b>
<b>August 14 Rockin Rods n' Rochester 9 -4</b>	<b>Rochester</b>
<b>August 19 Woodward Dream Cruise</b>	
<b>August 23 Cruisin' Hines</b>	<b>Hines Park Westland</b>
<b>September 8 Frankenmuth Auto Fest</b>	<b>Frankenmuth</b>
<b>September 9 - 10 Old Car Festival</b>	<b>The Henry Ford / Greenfield Village Dearborn</b>
<b>September 10 ? Ford Yacht Club Car Show</b>	
<b>September 17 39th Annual Milford Car Show Milford</b>	
<b>September 17 ? Orphan Car Show</b>	<b>Ypsi</b>
<b>September 22 -23 Concours d'Elegance of America DIA</b>	
<b>September ? Crosspointe Church Car Show Novi</b>	

Thank you to the Early Ford V8 Club RG#67 for the new events.

We will keep this page open for all upcoming events. If you have any information on events, please send them to me at [jmdem22@gmail.com](mailto:jmdem22@gmail.com). They will also be added to our webpage in the events section.



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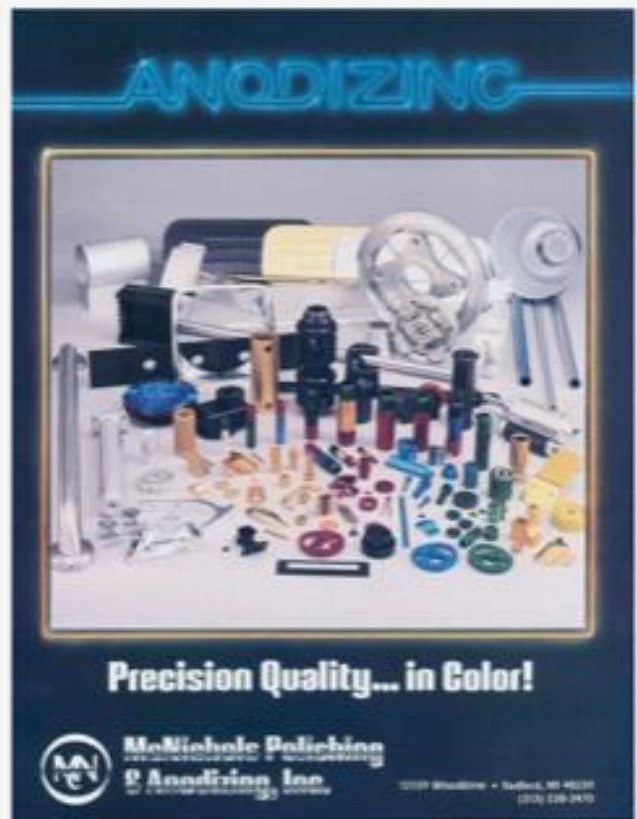
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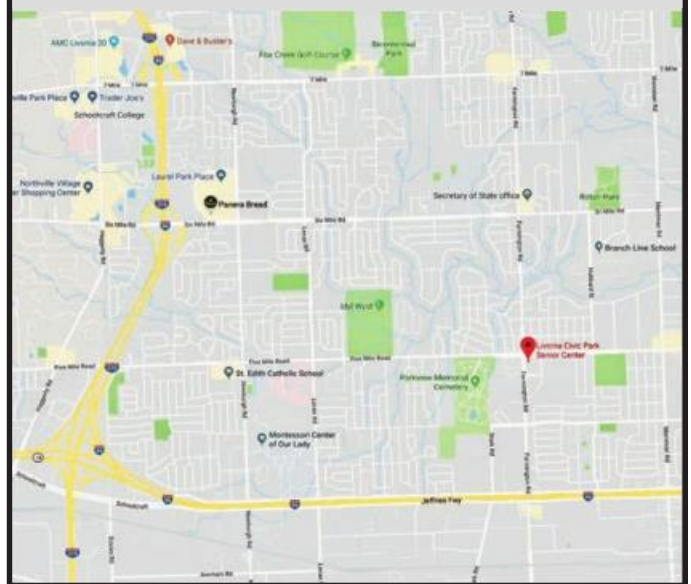
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## FMRCOAMONTHLY CLUB MEETING LOCATION

Meeting Location pending during pandemic  
Please check with the club to  
confirm meeting location

Our monthly club meetings are held at  
**Livonia Senior Center**  
15218 Farmington Road • Livonia, MI  
Between I-96 Service Drive & 5 Mile Road

Meetings are on the first Wednesday of each  
month and begins at 6:30pm with a snack.  
do bring a friend!



**WANTED**

The Rotunda Times would like to feature  
your old car or truck in an upcoming issue.  
We are interested in how you came about  
finding your vehicle of choice, and what you  
have done to enhance its beauty, and/or  
mechanical condition.

Simply email us your article  
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**Jim at: jimdem22@gmail.com**