



# WOODEN, WOODEN, WOODEN!!!

BY JERRY HEASLEY

**T**he good old days are still here for patrons of "National Parts Depot," that is, because their Michigan store now has in stock a large supply of NOS wood-grain steering wheels! It's amazing this stash has held out, but it is a recent find, and perhaps too few people believe this offer is for real!

We purchased a deluxe wheel for our '66 Mustang hardtop project car. (Wood-grained wheels, however, are also available through the "Depot" for 1965 and 1976 Mustangs.) You're right, our coupe was not an original "Interior Decor Group" car, a luxury model, but the installation is the same, and we like it far better than our old cracked blue wheel. In fact, blue standard wheels are no longer available, and one must buy a black wheel that has been painted blue. It's the same way with most other colors, but the top dollar wood wheel is still buyable—for now. And if you already have a wood wheel, but need the supporting pieces to mount it, "National Parts Depot" can fix you up here too.

This installation does not require

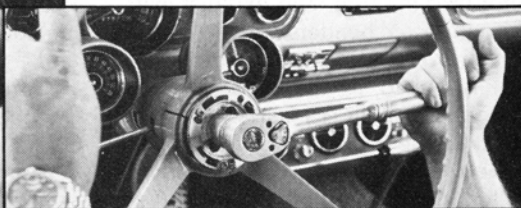
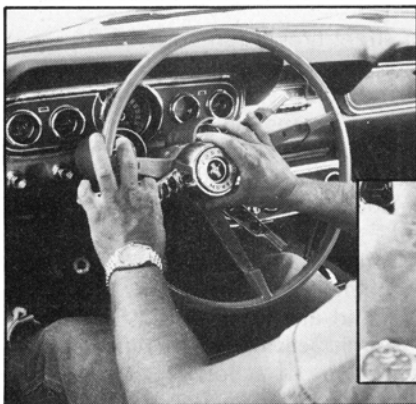
lots of muscle, but there are a few tricks, stuff that we struggled with for several hours to get right. We learned it the old fashioned way—by trial and error, over and over again until we got it right. The main glitch is the new outer horn contact ring, which is slightly shorter than the original, and must be shimmed.

Of course, if it weren't for the horn contacts inside the wheel, plus the turn signal cam, installing a wood wheel would be a simple job of taking off the old wheel with a puller, then snubbing down the new wheel, and finally popping on the external Mustang chromed plastic trim for cosmetics.

But inside the wheel are a pair of circular contacts, which, when pushed together by the external horn buttons, complete the circuit to blow the horn. Also a steel turn indicator cam clicks-off the signals when the wheel returns to its normal straight ahead position.

Here's how to install a wood wheel on your 1965/1966 Mustang.:

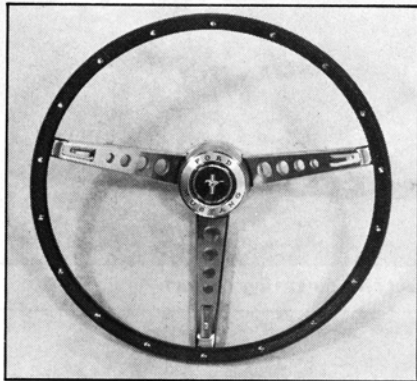
*First, press-in and turn to remove the plastic steering wheel horn button assembly on standard wheel. Of course, if you're removing a deluxe (wood grain) wheel, center hub ornament is held by clips, and simply pulls off to expose attaching nut.*



*Next, remove steering wheel attaching nut, using a 1/2-inch drive ratchet and a 5/16-inch socket. Be sure wheel is positioned straight ahead.*

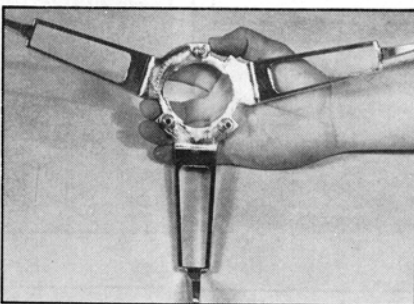
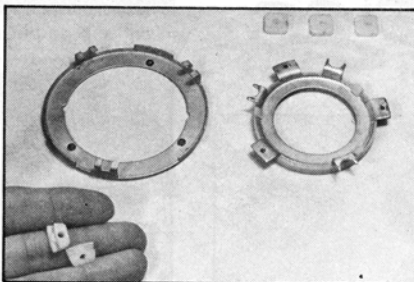
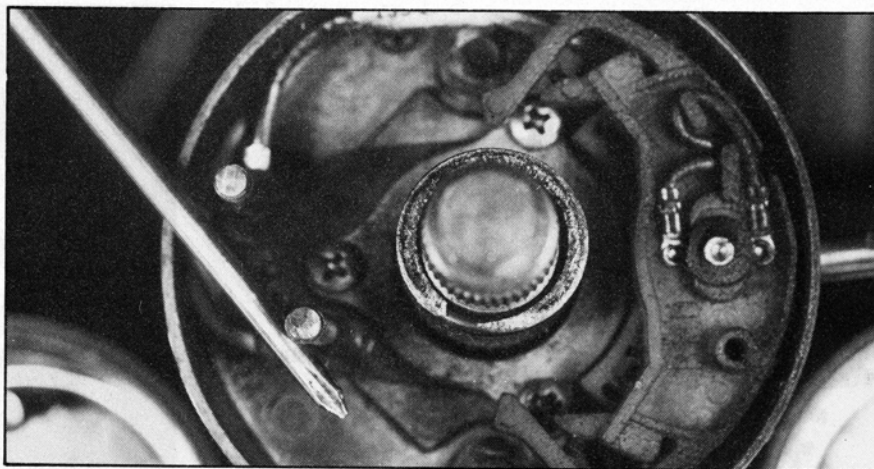
*You'll need a puller to pry loose the wheel. A couple turns, and wheel should break loose.*

To get an idea of how it works, take a look at these two contacts on end of steering column. They engage horn circuit. Hardware is set up with two concentric rings, one touching each contact. These rings are held apart a small distance, then contact one another when external horn buttons are pressed against the tension of springs.



With old wheel removed, work switches to new wheel, here shown with plastic hub ornament in place. Flip wheel over (plastic ornament removed) to begin installing horn contact and trim pieces.

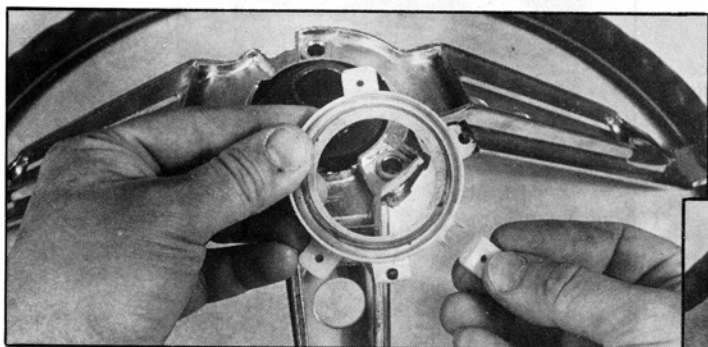
Take a look at pair of horn contact rings, which feature small plastic "feet."



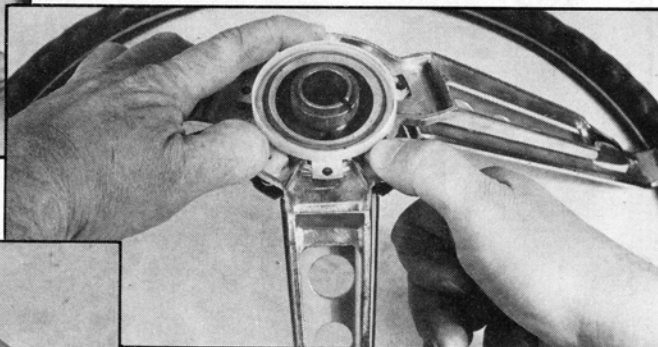
Horn button assembly has three levers, one for each spoke of the deluxe wheel.



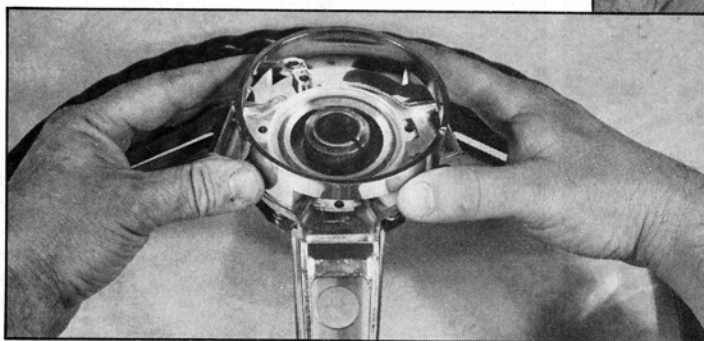
This chromed plastic spacer ring fills gap between end of steering column and base of horn button assembly.



Begin assembly by dropping horn button into place. Next, slip little plastic "feet" onto these three pads of inner horn ring contact.



Then, push inner horn ring into place.

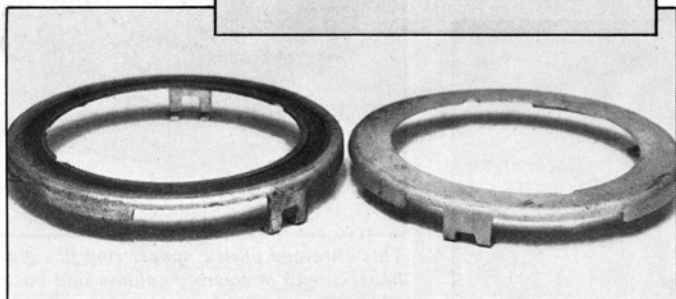
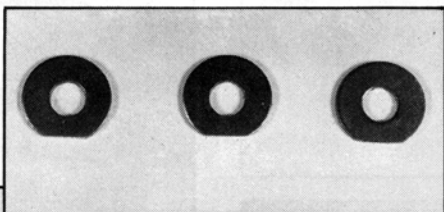


The bright chromed spacer ring slips on next.

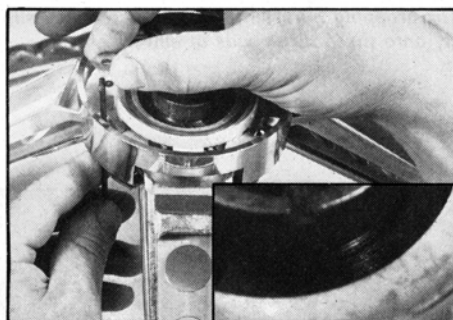




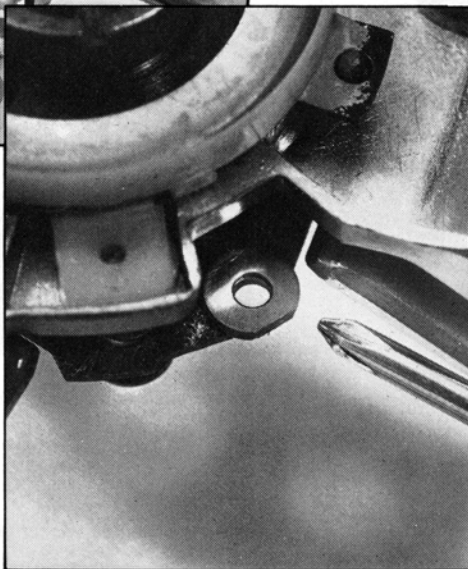
You'll need a handful of brass washers for shimming—maybe. It depends on height of outer spacer ring.



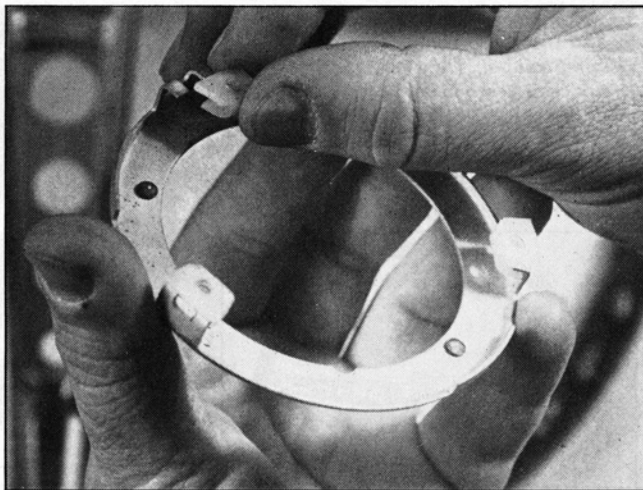
Here is the reason we needed shims—and your wheel very well may too. Notice ring on the left—from an original wood wheel—which is taller than one on the right which was sent to us. That's why shorter contact rings need to be shimmed.



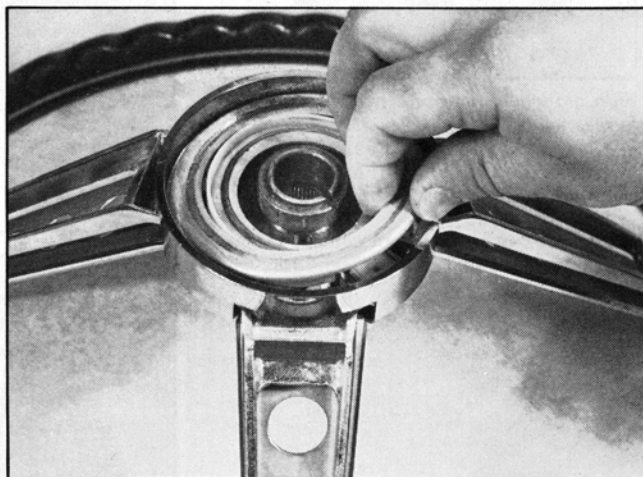
Walk washers down a thin piece of metal, threading a couple at one of three points around ring.



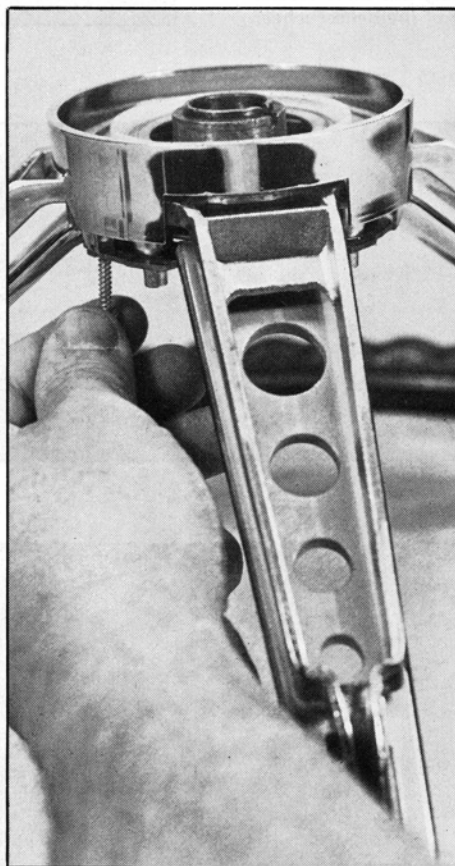
A close-up of position of brass washers (shims) shows their position—between shoulder of spacer ring and pad of the inner contact ring.



Next, slip on plastic "feet" for outer ring contact.

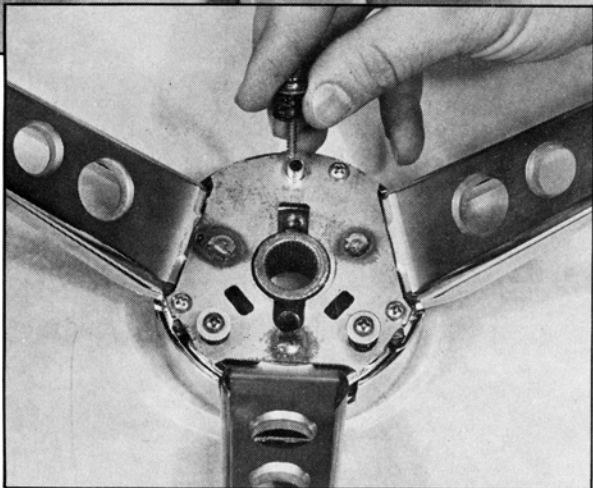
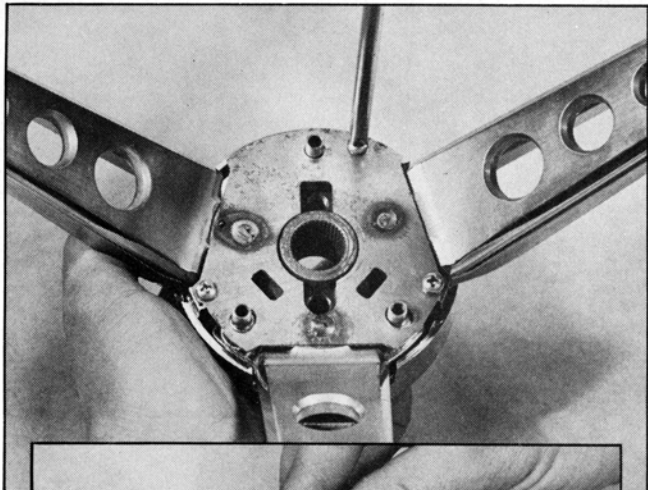


Then, outer ring slips into place inside the wheel.



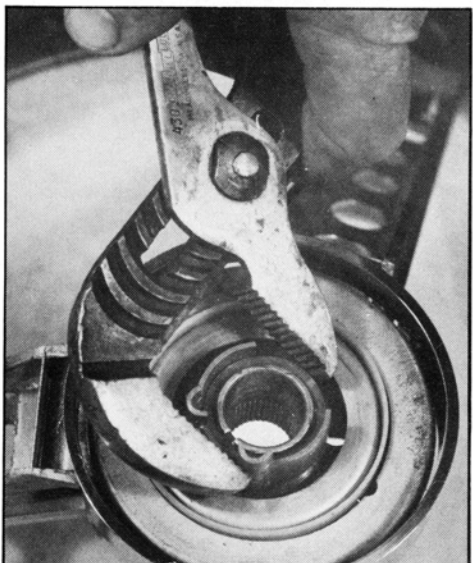
With wheel still inverted, start three screws from bottom side, making sure to loop the washers that shim inner contact ring.

Once shims are secured, it is safe to invert wheel and tighten down screws.

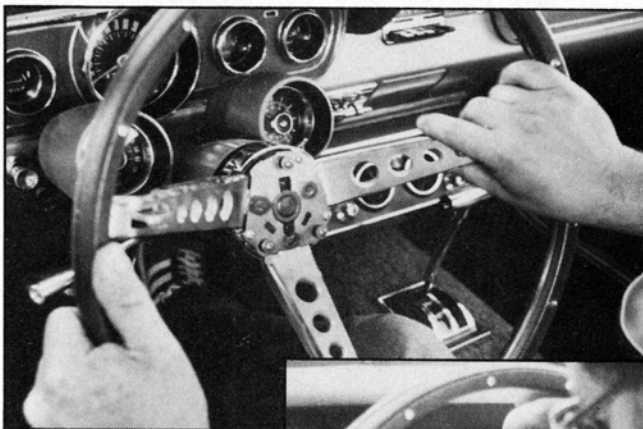
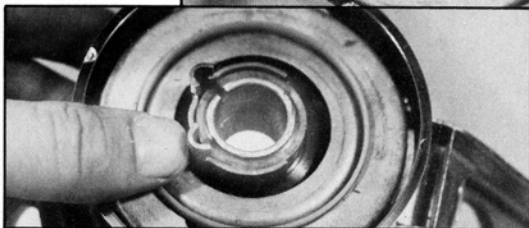


Finally, install and tighten the three screws (with springs) that secure outer ring and pre-load horn button for horn honking.

Install turn indicator cam next.



Cam indicator should mount at right angle to vertical line drawn through center of the wheel.



Next, push steering wheel back on column. Be sure and line up factory scribe marks in the straight ahead position.



Hand thread steering wheel attaching nut. Then tighten it down.



Center Mustang hub ornament simply pushes on, held by clips.

Job complete? Maybe. If the horn is blowing, then the two rings—inner and outer—are making contact, and need more shims. Check each of three horn-blow arms. If one will not honk, then it has too many shims, and wheel must be taken apart, and shims removed at this screw. We had to install three shims on one pad, two on another, and two on another. Then, each horn blow arm made easy and effective contact! Yes, it is a time-consumer, but well worth the attention.

#### NATIONAL PARTS DEPOT

12780 Currie, Ct., Dept. FM  
Livonia, MI 48150  
(800) 521-6104 (out of state)  
(313-591-1956 (in state)

