



The Criterion

NEWSLETTER of the NORTHEAST CHAPTER of the PROFESSIONAL CAR SOCIETY

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MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Happy New Year!! Hopefully, everyone had a safe holiday season, and you've all done as little shoveling as possible this winter.

I would like to start my first President's Message by thanking Bill Marcy for the outstanding job he did as my predecessor. Fred Goerlitz, elected the new Vice-President at our November meeting in Hackettstown, NJ, has been hard at work compiling a list of upcoming events, and I hope that anyone who knows of interesting car shows, tours or cruise nights will forward them to him as soon as possible. In between issues of The Criterion, we can get them posted on our web site as we learn about them.

As it stands now, the 2007 show season is shaping up as one which will combine several old favorites with some exciting new events. On Sunday, June 3rd, our Chapter will be sponsoring its Sixth Annual Charity Car Show at Peddler's Village in Lahaska, PA, which is open to all years, makes and types of vehicles in addition to professional cars. From June 21st-23rd, the PCS Miller-Meteor Chapter will be hosting another reunion in Piqua, OH for Miller-Meteor Cadillacs and Cotner-Bevington Oldsmobiles, which have been invited to take part in the big Saturday parade celebrating Piqua's bicentennial. Closer to home, the Cadillac-LaSalle Club's 2007 National Driving Tour will take place in the Hudson Valley the same week, and the 31st Annual PCS International Meet will give you many good reasons to be in Los Angeles from July 10th-14th. Believe it or not, our 2007 calendar doesn't wind down until the weekend of November 3rd-4th, thanks to an invitation we've received to display our ambulances at the prestigious Hilton Head Concours in South Carolina (contact Bill Marcy or Gregg D. Merksamer if you have something suitably nice you would like to be considered by the car selection committee). Additional info on these events, and others you should consider, can be found at the back of this issue.

One of the most important things that we discussed at our March 25th Chapter Meeting in Hackettstown is our hosting of the 2008 PCS International in Mount Laurel, N.J. next August 4th through 9th. The Wyndham Hotel has enough room for 150 show vehicles parked a space-and-a-half apart, and we only stand to benefit from how the Cadillac-LaSalle Club is having its Grand National in neighboring Cherry Hill the following week! Our day-by-day schedule of events is still tentative, but it is most likely going to feature motor coach trips to historic central Philadelphia, Atlantic City and Liberty State Park, which will offer easy access to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island boat rides. We're also making plans for "early bird" tours of area rescue squads, and a big pro-car convoy to P&L Custom's ambulance plant in Manasquan. As you can tell, Leo Maren III put a lot of time and effort into the hotel and the itinerary before he decided to step down as the head of the meet a few weeks ago, but we are going to need as much help as we can get to make sure all the little details come together smoothly and "Garden State in '08" is a success. If you would like to help, in any capacity, please let me know as soon as possible.

As print and postage costs have escalated to the point where they constitute a major share of the Northeast Chapter's annual expenses, it was also decided at our March 25th meeting that anyone receiving complimentary copies of The Criterion will start getting them as an e-mailed Adobe Acrobat attachment starting with the Summer, 2007 issue. A traditional, snail-mailed paper newsletter will still be available to those who join the Chapter at our \$12 annual rate, as well as any current, dues-paying member who contacts me and expresses this preference by June 1st. Chapter members who would rather receive The Criterion by e-mail are also urged to contact me and say so by this date. -

See You at Lahaska! Dan McCann

WHERE WE WENT THIS WINTER

The main reason why this is the tardiest-ever winter issue of The Criterion is that Your Editor, on top of the week he went to Detroit for press days at the North American International Auto Show in January, spent an a total of seventeen days on the road in February. At least, the round trip drive to Lisa Lachover-Merksamer's parents in Delray Beach, Florida included some professional car activity we'll chronicle here.

Seeing Interstate 95 as a Damnation Alley where tractor-trailers vie for the land speed record regardless of traffic and weather conditions, Your Editor worked as many back roads into the route as possible; about the only time we used the Interstate was after dark, when there's nothing to see anyway. The secret to making good time on the old two-lanes is to find a couple of state or U.S. highways that avoid the busy cities and go all the way from one state line to another, so you're simply following a number instead of checking the map at constant intervals. This year's drive south took in long stretches of U.S. 15, U.S. 522 and state 46 in Virginia, plus a portion of U.S. 17 in northern Georgia where we spotted a line of airport crash trucks being offered for sale at a South Newport forest fire consultancy and a tremendous pyramid of aluminum cans, collected by a Vietnam vet who peddles fruit and veggies by the roadside in Eulonia. A

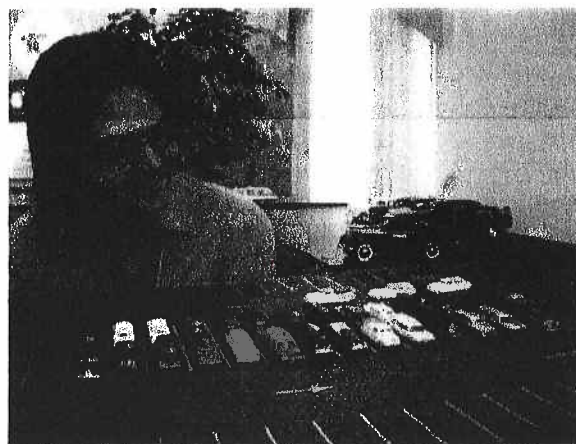
\$9 buffet offering fried chicken, fried okra and peach cobbler, served by Altman's Restaurant at the junction of U.S. 17 and Georgia 99, re-confirmed that we were far below the Mason-Dixon Line, and about a million miles away from the uniform blandness of franchise food!

Though the Florida portion of the trip relied on I-95, sighting three of Dale Earnhardt, Jr.'s distinctively-decorated race car transporters heading to the Daytona 500 was an exciting moment. It also reminded us that our return

trip should include a link-up with PCS Club Store Manager Bill Wright, who is no doubt the southernmost member of the Northeast Chapter. Our supper rendezvous took place at Dustin's BBQ, which is situated across Clyde Morris Boulevard from the Volusia Memorial Funeral Home where Bill works. Many Noreasters will recall that the Port Orange Chapel, with catering by Dustin's, hosted the Tuesday evening welcoming BBQ when Bill hosted the 2004 International Meet. The latest addition to the facility's vehicle fleet is a 2006 Eureka Cadillac hearse, and Bill could not resist pointing out that the rear door's "leaning E" logo was like a mirror version of the #3 on Dale Earnhardt's Monte Carlo. He also showed us a high roof, commercial glass S&S 6-door limousine that had been displayed at Cadillac's World Headquarters in Detroit during the make's 100th anniversary in 2002.



On a Sunday morning in Ahoskie, N.C., an Emergency One ladder truck from Murfreesboro takes part in a warehouse firefighting exercise.



Patrick Martin with a parking lot full of the 1/87 scale pro-cars he brought to the PCS Mid-Michigan Chapter's 2007 Micro-Meet in Flint.

Bill told us that, after being badly damaged by the 2004 hurricanes, the oceanfront Hilton that hosted the PCS International was renovated and is now known as the Shores Resort & Spa. The sight of its covered pedestrian bridge brought back many pleasant memories as we took the A1A beach route through downtown Daytona, but it surprised us greatly that so many hotels still had vacancies with the 500 taking place in two days. We theorized that temperatures in the low 50s were the culprit, and immediately re-focused our attention on how many of the local mini-golf courses incorporate full-sized airplanes into their decor.



Sarah Snook and her fiancée Chase Mohr, photographed with one of the model displays at the Plumb-Smith Funeral Home. He even proposed in her 1966 M-M combination, by hiding the ring in the zippered headliner.

Beyond our first overnight stop in Kingsland, GA and breakfast the next morning at Ida Mae & Joe's North Midway Restaurant ("A Local Landmark Since 1939"), our South Carolina leg used U.S. 17 Alternate

between Walterboro and the Francis Marion National Forest, state highways 41 and Alternate 41 up to the Marion area, and U.S. 501 through Dillon to the North Carolina state line. Some of the more interesting sights along the way included an airport outside Walterboro where they trained Tuskegee Airmen and interned German POWs during World War II, and a big flea market at Ladson where Your Editor stocked up on freshly-boiled peanuts. Reaching South of the Border around sunset, we got back on I-95, overnighted outside Ava Gardner's home town of Smithfield, N.C., and spent Sunday morning heading northeast on state highways 42 and 11 to the soundtrack of a rocking, African-American gospel station. There was no time, this round, to take in "America's Largest Pork Display" in Nahunta, though the billboard we passed made it sound as tempting as the local sweet tea.

After reaching the U.S. 13 junction in Ahoskie, N.C., by far the biggest city of the morning with both a hospital and a funeral home, a tall column of smoke drew us to a big warehouse fire that had been set for training purposes by the train tracks downtown. Next up was Norfolk, VA and the awe-inspiring Chesapeake Bay Bridge & Tunnel, where we enjoyed a good but reasonably-priced seafood lunch on the southernmost man-made island. Some of the more interesting cars spotted on the East Shore en route to our final overnight in Dover, DE included a 1957 Buick hardtop in a chicken wire enclosure near the historic Almshouse Farm; a 1970 Superior Cadillac Sovereign parked outside the burned-out Lilliston Funeral Chapel in Accomac, VA; a gold-colored 1973

Pontiac LeMans coupe on sale at Hopeton; and a well-preserved, 1950s vintage Chevrolet Step Van advertising an antique shop in downtown Salisbury, MD.

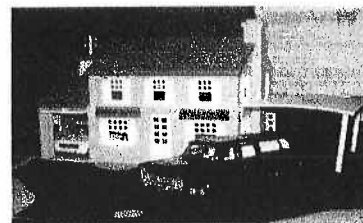
On February 24th, only five days after returning home from Florida, Your Editor flew to Detroit for the PCS Mid-Michigan Chapter's Third Annual Micro-Meet. Held in concert with the winter board meeting at the Plumb-Smith Funeral Home in Flint, MI, this Concours for scale model professional cars was billed as being "Smaller and Better Than Ever Before!" PCS



This 1957 National Buick ambulance was a big draw in the Buick Gallery at the Alfred P. Sloan Museum.

National President Brady Smith, who started collecting toy hearses as a ten-year-old four decades ago, got the idea after seeing how the model cases in his hallway attracted more attention than "all the expensive art objects in this building. Little old ladies who have

been to funerals (here) will call me up and ask if they can bring their friends over." One of the coolest items on display, secured from a friend at Comcast Cable, is a large, bright green Cadillac hearse sent to HBO affiliates as a "Six Feet Under" promo; the rear door opening was even equipped with an electric table, albeit used to load a CD player instead of a casket.



George Hamlin's "Glorious Funeral Home of Boris" diorama had a 1970 GAZ-13 "Seagull" hearse and Leonid Brezhnev's Lada sticking its nose out of the garage.

Attendees for the Micro-Meet came from all over the map. So-Cal Chapter President Lou Farah, optimistically renting himself a rear-wheel-drive Mustang after flying into Detroit, was the event's official distance

champ. Passing through Detroit as well, Upstate Chapter Founder & President Dan Herrick flew into Flint from Albany, NY and left the Hertz counter with

a far more-practical Hyundai Sonata. After completing a five-and-a-half-hour, non-stop drive from Pittsburgh, Rick Duffy and previous PCS President John Ehmer arrived around noon on Saturday. George & Bee Hamlin flew from Maryland with in incredible array of PCS Mid-Atlantic Chapter material. Larry Wilson and PCS archivist Nick Bliss came from Indiana in a 1991 S&S Cadillac six-door limousine, while Patrick Martin drove out from Palatine, Illinois in a nearly identical-looking 1991 Moloney Cadillac tagged "HULL 534" in honor of the Queen Mary's shipyard designation. "When I brought my first limo, a 1984 Hess & Eisenhardt 6-door," he explained, "my parents told me 'you don't have a land yacht. You've got a land liner.' And that's where this came from." The bright yellow Dodge Caliber hatchback that Your Editor rented from Thrifty attracted its own share of comment; "Did you pick up a few fares on the way over?," Patrick asked, while Decatur, Illinois mortician Dan Brintlinger wondered if the car had been borrowed from Airport Maintenance.

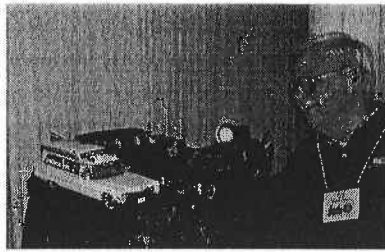
Inside Plumb-Smith's main chapel, the participating models were displayed on asphalt-colored cardboard that was cleverly striped-and-marked to resemble parking lots. A Kleenex box from a nearby table was quickly drafted into duty as a "host hotel" for the 31 tiny, 1/87 scale pro-cars in Pat Martin's assemblage, while the display put together by PCS Publications Director Walt McCall included a circa-1965 photo of his model hearse collection. "They didn't stand up very well," he conceded, explaining that "they were made mostly of cardboard and plasticene beyond the \$1.49 AMT model kit front clips." With Superior springing for a display, some of these creations were exhibited at the 1961 NFDA Convention in Minneapolis, but the "best ones were in Tom McPherson's showcase at Eureka" when the company went under.

Dioramas were another big sensation, especially with George Hamlin following up last year's Soviet Embassy display with the "Glorious Funeral Home of Boris." The hearse was a Packard-like GAZ-13 "Chaika" (Seagull) in 1/43 scale, which was teamed with ZIS, ZIL and Chaika limousines dating from the late 1940s through early 1970s. Clawson, MI residents Kevin & Wendy Carter countered with a Corgi Toys 1962 Superior Cadillac 48-inch Rescuer ambulance sitting in a winter forest. The full-sized car, Kevin explained, "was given to my wife as a

wedding present by our friend Tom Walker, but we had a week to move it out of Brighton, Michigan. It was the first snowstorm of 2004 and the tow truck was too busy to come out, so I ended up taking the picture."

Having previously used the Micro-Meet to debut his 1938 S&S Cadillac carved panel town car hearse, Alan Novak of Precision Miniatures in North Hollywood, CA sent prototypes of his new 1/18 scale 1966 S&S Cadillac professional cars in black Victoria landau, maroon limousine-style hearse, and white Kensington ambulance variants. After Walt McCall uncovered their tiny turntable in classic auto show fashion, attendees judged them to be Precision's nicest models to date, with intricately-detailed S&S emblems on the fuel caps and extending casket tables for the hearses. Dale & Betty Cole, veteran PCS members from nearby Rochester Hills, Michigan, took over an adjacent viewing room to promote their impressively-comprehensive Henney-Packard CD reference library, which fills three discs with specifications, catalog pages and factory memos dating back to 1929. Though there's 678 pages of material on the first CD alone, a set costs just \$60 to purchase including postage, out of which 15% is donated to the Mid-Michigan Chapter and another 15% goes to the regional Chapter treasury of the purchaser, if he or she supplies a name & address.

While the die-cast pro-cars were submitted to a popular vote, the awards for scratch-and-kit-built models were decided by George Hamlin's judging committee. John Kline of Milford, MI was the day's big honoree, earning best kit-bashed rescue vehicle for a 1970 National Chevrolet Suburban ambulance constructed from a mix of Blazer and pickup parts, and best modified funeral vehicle for a 1968 Plymouth Fury lead car made from Jo-Han's police car kit. He also received the top score in the "Senior" category for class-winners from previous micro-meets, with a 1976 Chevrolet Caprice high-top ambulance with Miller-Meteor Lifeliner-inspired styling. To complete this 1/25th scale project, Kline needed three months, a pair of MPC Caprice coupe kits and a 1966 Jo-Han Cadillac ambulance, whose stretcher was used to build the roof-mounted fracture board compartment. Even in the case of such entirely-speculative rigs, Kline told Your Editor "I try to do as much research as I can before starting. If it has windows, I want to do a full interior."



Walt McCall admires the 1966 S&S Cadillac professional cars debuted at the Micro-Meet by Precision Miniatures. Nifty details include intricate S&S emblems on the fuel caps and extending casket tables for the hearses.

Best-in-show, meanwhile, went to PCS Recording Secretary Sarah Snook for a 1959 Miller-Meteor Cadillac combination coach by Polar Lights, but this was not the weekend's biggest news in her case. Flint was the first time

that most PCS members got to meet her fiancée Chase Mohr, whom she met while they were working on the "Industrial Electronic Music Show" at the Baldwin-Wallace College radio station. Chase even proposed to Sarah in "Patty Hearse," her Cascade Green 1966 M-M Duplex Combination, by hiding the ring in the zippered headliner. The intimate, invitation-only nuptials take place May 19th at Cleveland's Knollwood Cemetery, which Sarah used as a playground growing up.

Following the conclusion of awards at half past three, a tour bus generously supplied by the Flint Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (Jerry Preston, the organization's President, actually works in GM founder Billy Durant's old office on the second floor of the Durant/Dort Building) took attendees to the Buick Gallery at the Alfred P. Sloan Museum. Presented with one of Tom McPherson's Flexible books as a gift for the Museum's archive, Weekend Manager Jen Hall noted that the facility touts one of the biggest collections of one-off concept cars in the U.S. Vertically-ribbed body side moldings and open front wheels respectively-defined the 1951 Buick XP-300 and 1954 Wildcat II roadsters, while the 1956 Buick Centurion hardtop sported a missile-shaped tail and transparent roof panels. The 1963 Silver Arrow inspired the first Riviera after GM abandoned the idea of using it to revive LaSalle, and the low-slung, Pontiac-flavored Phantom coupe rewarded scrutiny as a most-personal retirement project for 1958-77 GM design chief Bill Mitchell. Though a World War II vintage Hellcat Tank Destroyer trumped it for massiveness, PCS people devoted much of their camera memories to an

extremely rare 1957 National Buick ambulance loaned by Buck Kamphausen of Sacramento, California. Dinner afterwards took the form of an all-you-can-eat buffet at the Fire Mountain Restaurant, located on Miller Road in the southwestern outskirts of the city.

While it was wonderful to catch up with the people normally seen only at each summer's International Meet, the freezing rain that started falling around 6 am Sunday deterred many fliers from staying for the workshops and the 2007 L.A. Meet preview held at Plumb-Smith through the afternoon. Your Editor, who almost NEVER receives good news from an airline, couldn't get ANYONE to pick up at Northwest's toll-free number after four attempts, and finally drove back to Detroit Metro Airport without knowing if he would get any further. As about 25% of the outgoing flights were canceled, he considered himself most-lucky to have gotten off about a half-hour behind schedule, with the only major snafu being an "equipment change" requiring a dash from one end of Terminal C to the other. Dan Herrick, who did manage to reach Northwest, was initially told that the first flight out to Albany would be on Wednesday, but learned later at the Hertz counter that his connection from Flint to Detroit was not cancelled after all; still, had something like ten minutes to get himself through security with two pillar spotlights in his hand luggage, and spent ten hours in Detroit waiting for a connection that got him home to Chatham, NY by 2 am Monday. Lou Farah, reportedly marooned in Chicago, never got to use his ticket to the Oscars. Given such travails, it's no wonder Saturday evening's board meeting witnessed speculation about a winter meeting in a warmer venue, such as Scottsdale, AZ during Barrett-Jackson Auction week.



Brady Smith, Matt Taylor and Daniel K. Herrick admire Buick's 1956 Centurion Concept Car. The clear roof was dramatic, but completely-impractical for highway use!

MINUTES FROM OUR NOVEMBER BUSINESS MEETING

Dan McCann's promotion from Vice-President to President headlined the elections held at the PCS Northeast Chapter's autumn, 2006 business meeting, which took place Sunday, November 5th at the Hackettstown, NJ First Aid & Rescue Squad HQ. Fred Goerlitz was elected to succeed Dan as the Chapter's second-in-command, while Jeff & Mary Hookway accepted another term as Treasurer and Secretary.



Dan McCann, elected the new Northeast President, assumes the Chapter's charter from Bill Marcy.

All told, fifteen people were counted in attendance when the meeting was called to order at 1 pm, and the total would have been even higher had the water pump of Mike & Vicky Barruzza's 1963 S&S Cadillac

combination not gone "through the hood" en route from Bristol, PA. Two other classics did complete their trip to Hackettstown, including the all-original, 22,000-mile 1978 Ford LTD 4-door pillared hardtop that Your Editor found at Fall Hershey three weeks earlier; upon arrival, this pale jade beauty was parked nose-to-nose with a copper-colored 1976 Oldsmobile Custom Cruiser station wagon owned since new by Joseph C. Buono.

Bill Marcy opened his last meeting as Chapter President by noting how glad he was, following a show of hands, that most of the attendees had received the autumn issue of *The Criterion* mailed by Ted Collins a few days prior. Turning to a "cruise-through" of the Chapter's 2006 events, he was strongly compelled to address criticisms posted on the PCS message board that some cars attending the Peddler's Village meet in June "were not properly dressed"; though he was "personally not happy" about the skeleton shown in one hearse, he still believed that PCS display rules banning macabre miscellany should

not apply to Lahaska, as it was a fundraising-focused event admitting all makes of cars and trucks including modified vehicles. Peter DeMattia pointed out that the non-compliant entrants at Lahaska "were not PCS members so this was hard to control. Bill Wright and John Ehmer talked to some of these guys, and some had not even heard of the term 'professional cars.' But the way they handled it, the guys with caskets were receptive." By the time the discussion moved on, a consensus had been reached that PCS vehicles at future Lahaska meets should be displayed separately from modified pro-cars or funeral coaches not complying with PCS display rules.

Turning to the 30th Anniversary PCS International Meet held in Kingsport, TN from August 1st-5th, 2006, Bill Marcy proudly recalled his counting 16 Northeast Chapter members in attendance. He wondered if "this was maybe more than the hosts, though one of them brought ten cars. I think it says a lot about us that the Northeast Chapter has more people at the Internationals than any other Chapter." He expressed similar satisfaction with the third annual Northeast Chapter summer picnic held at Paul & Donna Vickery's Millington, NJ home two weeks later, adding that the large turnout of cars made it "like a mini-meet in our own state." Responding to Rich Litton's request that its 2007 counterpart be scheduled one week earlier to avoid conflict with the Wheaton Village muster, Paul Vickery penciled the 4th annual picnic into his calendar for Saturday, August 11th, subject to reconfirmation at the March 25th Chapter meeting.



Joseph C. Buono came to Hackettstown in this 1976 Olds Custom Cruiser that he purchased new.

Leo Maren III, who has since stepped down as the meet coordinator, used the November meeting to present an update on the Chapter's preparations for hosting the 2008 PCS International Meet in Mt. Laurel, NJ from August 4th through 9th. Locking in a nightly rate of \$99 a room, a

contract has been signed and a deposit made with the Wyndham hotel on route 73 north just east of the New Jersey Turnpike interchange. Tours of Liberty State Park and Philadelphia were deemed probable events, but arrangements remained tentative due to lead time issues. Bus companies that might be hired to handle the tours, for example, could not yet commit to prices owing to fuel cost uncertainties.

If there was one thing Leo was certain of, it's that there will be "a lot of jobs we need help getting done when the time comes." With Dan McCann now serving as the contact for volunteers, tasks already identified for the to-do list include corresponding with companies for goody and grab bag items, and securing sponsors for the awards, welcome party and other events. As any welcoming party at the Wyndham would be expensive, a simpler affair at some nearby firehouse is being contemplated. Local rescue squads might also be invited to the Saturday's car show free-of-charge, where their ambulances would compete against each other in a special class. Bill Marcy asked Leo if there were any cruise nights during meet week that the PCS should attend as a group, to which Leo responded that the schedule might not leave adequate time but that "a lot happens in Delaware." Andy Toton pointed out that many cruises require participants to "be there early and stay locked in between 4 and 9 pm."

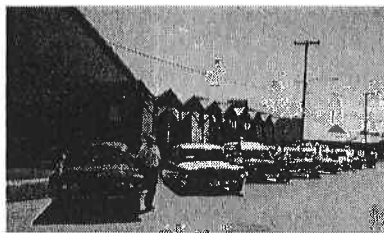
Before the meeting concluded with a hearty round of applause thanking Bill Marcy and his Lucille for their service to the Northeast Chapter during his term as President, it was also decided that Northeast Chapter dues would remain at \$12 for 2007.

BUCKEYE EVENTS WELL WORTH THE DRIVE IN JUNE

Ohio will be alluringly-busy venue for PCS activities in the month of June, and Northeast Chapter members with time-to-spare and a sufficiently-reliable vehicle are strongly encouraged to widen their horizons accordingly. After all, why should John Ehmer and Bill Wright be the only people in our circle regularly savoring the myriad joys of an extended pro-car road trip outside of International Meet week?

First up, on Saturday, June 2nd, is the PCS Ohio Chapter's annual Drive-In Movie Night, which is being hosted by National Recording Secretary Sarah

Snook in the Akron area. The fun begins around 4pm with a potluck picnic at her residence, located at 3060 Kent Road in Silver Lake, OH; prospective attendees should e-mail her at RoyRacer@aol.com and declare how many people and what sort of food they plan on bringing. "I'm going to make a list of what foods people are providing so we don't end up with too many duplicates," she explains. "I'll be providing pop, plates, silverware, ice, hot dogs, and a grill," but folding lawn chairs are another item that participants should try to bring themselves.



The 2004 Miller-Meteor Reunion would not have been complete without a photo session at the old Clark Street plant open from 1961-79. On June 23rd, the 2007 Reunion will find these cars taking part in a parade celebrating Piqua, Ohio's Bicentennial.

At 7:45 pm, a professional car convoy will depart for the Midway Drive-In outside Ravenna, OH, where Sarah says that "there are two movie screens that play two movies each per night. I'll know what's playing the Tuesday before the meet. I'll then e-mail everyone the

choices and we'll take a vote on what movies we'll see." Admission is \$10 if there's one person in the car or \$15 per carload, offering strong incentive to bring a 5-seat combination coach or ambulance instead of a flower car. "Since the theater only broadcasts on FM radio and does not have any speaker boxes, bring a boom box if you don't have a car stereo that you can use without turning the ignition on," Sarah advises. While she can e-mail attendees a list of local motels, people are invited to camp out at her house using their cars or tents.

Given the terrific time that everybody had at the 2004 edition, the 2007 Miller-Meteor Reunion being held in Piqua, Ohio from Thursday, June 21st through Saturday, June 23rd is already shaping up as one of the most-anticipated PCS activities of the year. Northland Chapter President Tony Karsnia and Tom Caserta, a Piqua native who was once M-M's national sales and service manager, are still the co-chairs of the event, which will improve upon 2004's outstanding itinerary by playing a central role in Piqua's Bicentennial celebration. This will culminate in a mile-long parade through the downtown area that

commences 2 pm Saturday. "Miller, Meteor, Miller-Meteor, and Cotner/Bevington vehicles will be placed first in the lineup," Karsnia says, "but all professional cars in attendance, regardless of coachbuilder, are welcome in the parade." The Bicentennial's coordinators, he adds, "feel that all people who made the effort to bring a professional car are entitled to participate. PCS display standards will be enforced, and those with Miller, Meteor, and Miller-Meteor cars are encouraged to invite Miller-Meteor retirees to ride along in the parade."

As was the case three years ago, the headquarters hotel for the 2007 Miller-Meteor Reunion is the Comfort Inn-Piqua, which is located on the grounds of the Miami Centre Mall at Interstate 75, exit 82 for Ohio state highway 36 westbound. In order to receive the pre-tax special rate of \$67.96 nightly, call the hotel directly at (937) 778-8100 before May 21st and mention Miller-Meteor Professional Car Society. Effectively, the official itinerary begins 1 pm Thursday forty miles north of Piqua in Lima, OH, with a tour of the Accubuilt plant where S&S, Superior, Eureka, and Miller-Meteor vehicles are currently built (anyone wishing to take part should arrive at the Central Point Parkway facility, found off exit 122 of Interstate 75, around noon). Following a convoy south to Piqua and check-in at the hotel, a 6 pm welcoming dinner will be held at the China East Restaurant on the south side of Route 36, which will offer attendees an opportunity to socialize with the Miller-Meteor retirees who built their cars. Friday's schedule features a 9 am motorcade to the old Clark Avenue plant where all 1961-79 model Miller-Meteors were constructed, on top of which the ambulance owners can take advantage of an open invitation to photograph their rig in front of the Piqua Fire Department's central HQ. As a prelude to Saturday's parade, a second convoy departing the Comfort Inn at 5 pm will head downtown for an evening display in the parking lot of Francis Office Supply, which is situated on the southwest corner of Water & Main Streets. Especially in concert with the anniversary celebration, the bustling pub and restaurant scene in downtown Piqua should promise plenty of attention for our pro-cars! General info on the Piqua Bicentennial can be found at www.mainstreetpiqua.com, while questions about the Miller-Meteor Reunion should be directed to Tom Caserta at (937) 773-0259 or Tony Karsnia at (612) 325-2344 or kars971@aol.com.

PCS INVITED TO '07 HILTON HEAD CONCOURS

Even if he had never taken up the game of golf, Horace Greeley might well have urged young men to "Go South!" instead of West had he been alive today. PCS members have good reason to heed this call and head to balmy South Carolina on November 3rd-4th, as the organizers of the Hilton Head Concours d'Elegance have invited us to show our ambulances in a special "Quest for Style & Speed" exhibit that will also feature vintage fire trucks and fire chief's cars. Cadillac ambulances are especially encouraged to take part, as this is the featured marque for this year's event.

Jamie Christie, the Hilton Head Concours advisory board member who extended the invitation, is a Virginia-based motoring journalist who covered the 2006 Kingsport Meet for Auto Events magazine. He asserts, and Your Editor enthusiastically agrees, that a nationally-renowned Concours like Hilton Head is an unparalleled opportunity for the PCS "to be counted in the big picture of car collecting." Aside from the publicity, other incentives to attend include that there is no entry fee, meals at the show are complimentary for car owners, and Saturday's schedule features a huge Jamboree of Southeastern U.S. Car Clubs. While the original invitation mentioned ambulances exclusively, Christie says that the Concours' Car Selection Committee will "rule everything in before we rule everything out," so combination coaches will be considered so long as they're limousine-style or otherwise not-too-heavily funereal. "If the exhibit is a hit," he adds, "maybe they'll invite hearses later."

PCS President Brady Smith, well aware of what a display at Hilton Head can do for the PCS, has designated Your Editor and Former PCS National V.P. Bill Marcy as the point men for this project; call Bill at (201) 342-4871, or me at (845) 986-6857, if you own an ambulance that might be suitable. The event organizers have already reserved the PCS a block of 25 hotel rooms, keenly-priced for this resort area at just \$89-a-night before tax, at the Hilton Gardens situated just across the bridge from Hilton Head Island; to secure a reservation at this rate, telephone (843) 837-8111 and mention the Concours and the PCS. These are likely to fill up long beforehand, so make your reservations early! Further info on the Hilton Head Concours, meanwhile, can be obtained from its website at www.hhiconcours.com.

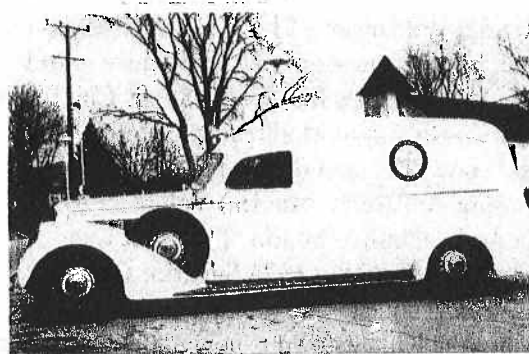
Only one question still remains: is it just a coincidence that, from a distance, the Palmetto tree on South Carolina's license plate looks like a golf ball on a tee?

MANASQUAN'S MAGNIFICENT LINCOLN AMBULANCE

Though they made up for it as Cadillac championed front-wheel drive hearses and the stretch limo industry grew by leaps-and-bounds during the 1980s, Lincoln had a conspicuously low profile in pro-car circles from the mid-1930s through the late 1970s. Accordingly, anything we can learn about Lincoln funeral vehicles and ambulances from this period is extra-valuable, and it should really surprise no one some of the neatest historical gems uncovered resulted from Richard Litton's research into the one-off rigs operated by New Jersey rescue squads.

Confirming that good things come to those who wait, this Moorestown, NJ member recently uncovered new intel on a photo he originally sent to Your Editor in April, 2005, which depicted a quite-imposing 1938 Lincoln Series K V-12 ambulance that was purchased new by the Manasquan First Aid Squad. Judging from the panel-style body, Rich had speculated that the most-likely builder was the Adam Black Co. of Jersey City (which also made moving vans and other sorts of commercial truck bodies) or the Franklin Body & Equipment Corp. of Brooklyn, which mounted advanced-looking, box-type modules on one 1955 and two 1958 Cadillac chassis.

Given a chance to examine the records of the First Aid Squad, however, Richard determined that the Manasquan Lincoln was in fact constructed by the (Silver) Knightstown Body Company of Knightstown, Indiana. This was one of two rival, and almost identically-named, coachbuilders operating in this small community thirty miles east of Indianapolis. They had originally been a single concern, incorporated as the Knightstown Buggy Co. in 1900, but an apparent falling-out between the partners put an end to that in 1922. Since Knightstown Body was controlled post-breakup by the Silver family (father Robert, son Ralph and daughter Jessie), the firm's professional cars were sold as Silver-Knightstowns, while the bodies built by their former partners Charles and Martha Walters at the Knightstown Funeral Car Co. were marketed as Knightstown Galahads. Both



Rich Litton has determined that this one-off 1938 Lincoln V-12 ambulance used by Manasquan, NJ's First Aid Squad was constructed by the (Silver) Knightstown Body Company of Knightstown, Indiana. The coachwork was transferred to a Cadillac V-8 Commercial Chassis in 1947.

companies created an astounding array of vehicles from donor cars that were usually-supplied by their customers, with Galahad bodies appearing on Auburn and front-wheel drive Cord L-29 chassis while Silver-Knightstown built a fleet of four Springfield Rolls Royce Phantom I hearses (plus a matching service car) for the prestigious N.Y.C. funeral firm Walter B. Cooke and a 1934 DeSoto Airflow side-loader used for Walter P. Chrysler's 1940 funeral. After World War II, Vernon Z. Perry (who had been the wood shop foreman at Knightstown Funeral Car) re-united elements of the two firms to create the National Body Manufacturing Co., which initially focused on ambulances and "first call" cars derived from Chevrolet and Pontiac sedan deliveries.

Prior to this, "between 1935 and 1942, Knightstown kicked ass in central and north Jersey," Richard reports. The selling dealer of Manasquan's Lincoln was Harry Wagner of Deal, NJ, who was in the pro-car business all the way from the 1930s through the mid-1970s; Richard adds that "he also sold Meteor from the end of World War II through 1950, S&S from 1950 to '70, and finally Miller-Meteors for the Clark company, where many old S&S customers were conquests." In 1947, Richard also found out from Manasquan's records, the Knightstown coachwork was remounted on a brand new Cadillac Commercial Chassis by the Joseph Wildanger Company of Red Bank, NJ, which was best known as a builder of wooden station wagon bodies. The subsequent whereabouts of the original

Lincoln chassis are unknown beyond its being sold off for \$500 after Wildanger's \$1,955 conversion job was completed, but this one-of-a-kind ambulance is still around. In 1962, reports PCS Publications Chief Walt McCall, it was driven to Montreal for an ambulance operators' convention and donated to the AAM (Amherstburg-Anderdon- Malden) Volunteer Rescuc Squad in Amherstburg, Ontario. Though it was eventually-succeeded by a 1974 Superior Cadillac high-top - AAM added a red top to the white body in the interim - the Knightstown is now in the final stages of being restored for Canada's only EMS museum at the Southwestern Ontario Heritage Village (recently renamed the Canadian Transportation Museum) near Essex, ON.

2007 PRO-CARS BOW AT NFDA PHILADELPHIA

Staged at the Philadelphia Convention Center from October 15th-18th, 2006, the 125th annual convention of the National Funeral Directors Association was the first one held in the City of Brotherly Love since 1950, and also the first time since the 2000 edition in Baltimore that the event had taken place within Northeast Chapter driving distance. Your Editor was certainly pleased to encounter several PCS people on the exhibit floor, including our publisher Ted Collins (breaking from his day job running the family's funeral firm in Wilkes-Barre, PA) and 1980-82 National President Mahlon Thompson, who rode in from Cranbury, NJ with his daughter Christine. "I'm her guest," he explained. "She got the old retired guy down here to see everything." Indiana coach dealer Charlie Butler was another welcome sight especially since Parkinson's makes it hard for him to get around. He started selling Eureka coaches back in 1957, while his father started handling Henney-Packard in 1936.

The main reason, or course, that Your Editor took the three-hour drive from Warwick, NY was to check out the latest enhancements to the 2007 pro-cars. Cremation urn carriers were a popular response to the trend away from earth burials, with the typical installation incorporating special pier pins with padded, C-shaped arms. A silver Cadillac Renaissance shown by Federal Coach of Fort Smith, Arkansas enhanced this feature with a fold-up backing that separated the carrier (which could also be fit a child casket sideways) from the rest of the interior. A

Chrysler Town & Country minivan built in Amelia, Ohio by Eagle Coach touted a pop-up "Urn Enclave" that stored in the well originally occupied by the third row seat, while an adjacent Eagle Lincoln Ultimate Elite used an entirely-removable design with a simulated stone finish, marble insets matching the casket floor, and two pegs that drop into the bier pin holes; as a result, it could be placed in any modern hearse with half-inch bier pin holes.



Krystal Enterprises displayed this Chrysler 300 hearse before delivering it to Inglesby & Son of Pennsauken, NJ. Specifying the 250-horse V-6 instead of the Hemi V-8 held the starting price to \$59,900, on top of which this purchaser added a Bentley grille and in-dash navigation system.

As business and recreational customers can use them too, limousines with curbside fifth doors had a higher profile in Philadelphia than the traditional, funeral-focused six-door models, and the smart money is betting that superior resale value, due to a wider range of potential second customers, will make this the dominant livery configuration in the future. LCW Automotive of San

Antonio, Texas took the idea to the next level by displaying a 120-inch Lincoln Arlington combining a 90-degree fifth door opening with a partition-mounted, slide-out seat. According to its inventor V.Guy Ninio, who is also the President of Silverado Coach of Woodland Hills, CA, the 1,000 pound capacity roller mechanism and built-in, slide-out footrest featured on this "Sterling Handicapped Access Package" allows one-handed operation to "accommodate the passenger instead of the wheelchair. It's made with simplicity in mind, but it could be motorized. The next prototype will have a raised roof for even better access. A gull-wing opening is also in the future, if we can get approval from Ford."

Notable as the first hearse that Your Editor had ever seen with a sporty, floor-shifted automatic transmission, the Chrysler 300 hearse exhibited by Krystal Enterprises was being delivered, post-convention, to Inglesby & Son of Pennsauken, NJ. Though this was the first 300 hearse completed at Krystal's Brea, CA factory - it had been finished the

Monday evening before the convention, and transported all the way cross-country by 7 am Thursday morning - the firm has delivered over a hundred VIP Chrysler limousines with 120-inch center stretches. To hold the starting price to \$59,900, the 250 hp V-6 is used instead of the Hemi V-8, while nickel trim and recessed ceiling lighting afforded the casket compartment a most-contemporary appearance.



The commercial glass S&S Cadillac Victoria Florale flower car was indisputably the most eagerly-anticipated vehicle debut at the 2006 NFDA convention in Philadelphia. This prototype is now owned by the Lawrence E. Moon Funeral Home of Flint, MI.

Even if it hadn't been the biggest on the floor, Accubuilt's nine-car display would have been a big attention-getter owing to the world debut of an S&S Victoria Florale flower car on the heavy-duty Cadillac B9Q coachbuilder platform. Design details distinguishing this vehicle from Eagle's venerable Coupe de Fleur include slightly-inclined side troughs with built-in drains, a full-width Cadillac brake light across the top of the loading door, quarter windows built into the tops of the #2 side doors and a three-sided, "270 degree" stainless steel deck intended for waterfall sprays. Accubuilt CEO Don Cuzzocrea recalled that "we've had requests over the last several years (to do a flower car), and if we were to do one it had to be commercial glass. We finally decided to build it about ten months ago. This car was sold before the show, but not when we started to build it." The prototype seen in Philadelphia, distinguished from production versions by having 39 inches of interior wheelhouse clearance instead of 41 inches, is part of a ten-car fleet acquired by the Lawrence E. Moon Funeral Home of Flint, MI. Joe Bunn, Accubuilt's Sales Administration Manager for Funeral Vehicles,

added that "the idea was Don Cuzzocrea's and Bud Bayliff's. Next, Bud is going to do a carved panel Sovereign for his brother Tom's funeral home in Spencerville, Ohio. The car is framed, and I've seen drawings of the finished car. It looks nice."

In common with any other trade show for any other industry, NFDA had its share of razzle-dazzle. Emphasizing that Philadelphia was once the home of Dick Clark's "American Bandstand," pretty bobby-soxers strolled through the aisles promoting National Pre-Arranged Services, while 1950s style poodle skirts were as prevalent at the Wilbert vault display as the company's clever slogan "Lined. Sealed. Delivered." In this spirit, the Starwalt Motorcycle Hearse Co. of Springfield, Illinois should have hired the Shangri-Las to grace its exhibit of a 1997 Harley-Davidson Ultraclassic V-twin fitted with a side-mounted casket table; the casket on-board was decorated with purple LEDs and the autographs of famous bike builders. Company founder Terry Starwalt, a former carpenter who has been a biker for 32 years, explained that "I was coming home from a West Coast cycle trip, and was passing through Cheyenne, Wyoming. It's a pretty barren place, and I started asking myself 'how can I make a living riding my bike?' I started out doing this for myself, but a lot of people asked me about it and I came to the realization that if I didn't do this, they would get someone else to do it for them. After advertising in YB News and a motorcycle publication called Thunder Press, I have orders for 17 of them."

PCS PRO-CARS BECOME MOVIE STARS

No phone call from a picture car coordinator seems complete without the phrase "I need it yesterday," but PCS people have usually risen to the occasion when a period-perfect funeral coach, limousine or ambulance is required for a film or TV show. On top of the DVD bragging rights, the time and logistical challenges associated with such work are often tempered by the opportunity to make more money in a single day than one usually earns in a week. Judging from the snail and e-mail that has crossed Your Editor's desk on this topic, 2006 was a very good year so far as the demand for movie pro-cars was concerned.

Anyone who went to Albany for the EMS parade and paramedic games at the N.Y. State Museum in May, 2005 will no doubt remember the gold-and-white

