



The Criterion

NEWSLETTER of the NORTHEAST CHAPTER of the PROFESSIONAL CAR SOCIETY

Third Quarter 2002 - Ted Collins, Publisher - Gregg D. Merksamer, Editor

KANTER'S BIG TOY BOX:

Elections, 2003 Lahaska show planning occur at Boonton meeting

Because it's just his style, when you get right down to it, Fred Kanter proved a most-enthusiastic host as the PCS Northeast Chapter convened in Boonton, NJ for a tour of Kanter Auto Products/Packard Industries on Sunday, October 13th.

What made this tour particularly special was that, when it comes to vintage automobiles, Fred has a real eye for unusual vehicles with extremely-interesting stories behind them. To cite just a few examples, the cars stored underneath the 44-foot ceilings of his 1883 landmark silk mill included a 1952 Bentley R-Type rebodied as a sports car with cut-down doors and an MG windshield, a 1949 Kaiser Virginian 4-door hardtop and a rough but still-elegant 1954 Ford Comète coupe built in France. (*see photo, page 2, top left*) "I got it free with an Aston Martin and kept the wrong car," Fred said of the latter.

While the only professional car on the tour was a 1959 Lincoln Mk IV Hess & Eisenhardt limousine with 19,000 original miles and an unusual interior upholstered in tan leather (Mary Roebing, whose family built the Brooklyn Bridge, was the original owner), Fred's fleet also includes a 1948 Henney Packard 3-way landau used for Vito Corleone's funeral in "The Godfather," a 1953 Cadillac Imperial limousine built for a Vanderbilt family member, a 1977 International Travelall high-top ambulance, a 1958 Superior Cadillac ambulance that participated in a 1974 cross-Manhattan auto race from the UN building to Sardi's restaurant and a 1988 S&S Lincoln hearse that will soon be decorated with an elaborate exterior mural. Fred added that his years in the hobby has also seen "quite a few nice cars that got away, like a perfect 1940 Henney Packard 3-way hearse with Leveldraulic that I paid \$100 for in 1966. I traded it for a Pierce -Arrow club sedan, and I would love to have it back.

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

With the days getting shorter and the weather getting colder, I hope that all of you had a great summer full of memorable shows and cruise nights. We will soon be in the holiday season and, whatever holidays you celebrate, I hope they will be very enjoyable for you and yours.

On Sunday, October 13th, we had a great time touring the headquarters of Kanter Auto Products/Packard Industries in Boonton, NJ. A big thank you is in order to Fred Kanter for his hospitality as he showed us his extensive and eclectic car collection!

Prior to our tour, we held elections for Chapter officers. I'm honored to continue as President and Activities Director, while Dan McCann was elected to succeed Craig Stewart as Vice President; I salute Craig for his steadfast service to the Chapter, and am confident that Dan will do a great job in his place. Mary Hookway, meanwhile, was re-elected Secretary and her husband Jeff stays on as our Treasurer and Membership Director.

During our meeting in Boonton we also decided to host a second charity car show at Peddler's Village in Lahaska, PA on Sunday, May 25th, 2003, so please mark your calendar and expect to hear more on this event next year. We felt strongly that a local charity should benefit from this show, so our designated charity will be the Bucks County ASPCA.

- Happy Thanksgiving, Bill Marcy



The latest acquisitions on display included several of the one-off concept cars that the Ford Motor Company auctioned off for charity this past June, raising an impressive \$4.3

million (more than quadruple pre-sale estimates) in the process. Fred's purchases included the dramatic Lincoln Sentinel sedan from 1995, an angular Ghia Altair built on a European Ford Granada chassis in 1983, the ultra-aerodynamic Ford Probe IV sedan (its .152 drag coefficient was announced by a badge above the right taillight, *see photo, page 3, upper left*) and a 7'10" long Ghia Trio commuter car that could have fit in the bed of an F-150 pickup. "This is my kind of collection-very eclectic," Northeast Chapter President Bill Marcy said as he squeezed his lanky frame into the central driver's seat of the Trio. (*See photo, center right*) The memorabilia filling every corner of the building was just as entertaining, ranging from a "Six Million Dollar Man" pinball machine (*below*) to a diner made from a Yugo hatchback for a 1995 School of Visual Arts exhibit at Grand Central Station (epitomizing recycling at its best, other entries included a brick-surfaced Yugo barbeque, a Yugo church confessional and a Yugo grand piano with the New York vanity plate "89 KEYS").

The Packard Industries tour was preceded by the autumn business meeting of the PCS Northeast Chapter. Attendees included Bill & Lucille Marcy, Jeff & Mary Hookway, Fred & Tracy Goerlitz, Gregg D. Merksamer, Lisa Lachover-Merksamer, Mike Barruzza,



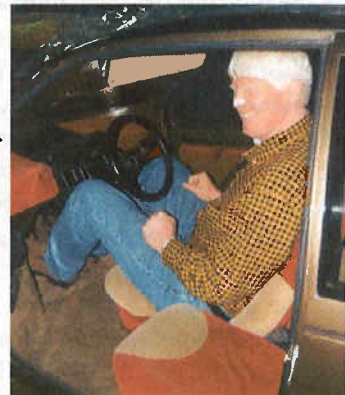
Victoria Reimer, Dan McCann and Bud Coleman, who announced that he'd just bought an extremely rare 1938 Cadillac Series 7519



five-passenger sedan without division ("when I got it home," he recalled, "my wife told me I thought you said it had more paint than that").

After the elections for 2002-3 Chapter officers took place (the President's Message on the front page lists the results), Bill Marcy reflected on the good turnout at May 19th Lahaska show in spite of initially-cold weather. Among the pre-registrants, he said, "we had 15 no-shows, but we had 15 cars show

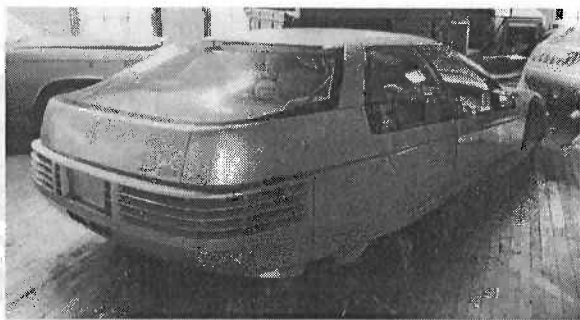
up on the day of the event. I personally enjoyed being in that show, and to me the whole aspect of putting it together was very enjoyable. Andrea Wheatley and the other people we worked with at Peddler's Village were absolutely



terrific. Because we opened it to other things beside procars we got to see a lot of member cars we'd never seen before, like Jon Ponulak's 1966 Dodge police car and the 1972 Pontiac LeMans convertible brought by Gregg Merksamer."

Bill's only disappointment was that no one from the Port Authority Police was present to accept the \$1,145 raised for the World Trade Center Survivor's Fund from registration fees and the raffle items donated by Bill's sister-in-law.

As the meeting attendees pondered who should benefit from the 2003 show (which has since been scheduled for Sunday, May 25th), Victoria Reimer pointed out that animal shelters are often overlooked and always in need of funds; it was therefore moved that the local Bucks County ASPCA, which has already staged several dog shows on the Lahaska green, should be the designated charity.



RECALLING GRAND RAPIDS:

While Northeast Chapter members Bill Marcy and Mike Barruzza endured costly and time-consuming mechanical troubles on their way to the 26th Annual PCS International Meet in Grand Rapids, MI, there was general consensus that former president Gerald Ford's hometown had shown us all a good time by the time it was all over.

With more than eighty vintage ambulances and funeral vehicles in attendance for the July 31st-August 3rd event, the long professional car convoys garnered considerable attention as they headed to Wednesday evening's "cruise-in" at Rosie's Diner in Rockford or the Thursday morning tour of Patten Monument/Great Lakes Granite Works in Comstock Park, which produces between 6,000 and 10,000 gravestones a year. While a just-finished memorial with a 1974 Chevy Nova carved on it was a big hit with the group, the company has also diversified into kitchen counters, golf course markers and long-lasting corporate signage that will hopefully bring luck to any dot-com that orders them. "Basically, I try to find as many uses as I can for granite and niche-market them," declared company sales manager Kevin Vachon. While most of Great Lakes' gravestones are still created by hand, the company's latest tool is a \$90,000 CNC Laser Etcher that can use a computer-scanned photo to create almost any-conceivable design. "The strangest request we've had," Vachon reported, "was for a woman in a bikini. So-called licensed characters are also OK, because a tomb marker is considered private property. It's not like we're going to be mass-producing Mickey Mouse gravestones."

Thursday afternoon's convoy led the PCS to the West Shore Services Fire Museum in rural Allendale, MI, which is housed within an 1880-vintage fire station (*see photo, right*) that was disassembled brick-by-brick, moved ten miles west from Grand Rapids and painstakingly-reassembled after a year-and-a-half of effort. "Over the years, the

roof had been tarred to a thickness of nine inches," recalled company V.P. Roger Engvall. No less memorable was Friday's trip to Hickory Corners for a tour of the Gilmore Classic Car Club Museum, whose 140-vehicle collection is housed in nine historic barns on 90 beautifully-landscaped acres. As the PCS members waited for their cars to be photographed in front of recently-installed 1932 Shell filling station, the interesting exhibits they could examine included a 1930s vintage London bus with Firestone signage promising "Most Miles Per Shilling," a three times life-sized Rolls-Royce town car interior built for the Walt Disney movie "The Gnome Mobile" and the #47 Tucker displayed with corporate artifacts like a "Tucker Topics" dealer magazine and stock certificates; you could even push a button to hear a recording of Preston Tucker describing the car's 67 safety features.

According to Freeland, MI PCS member John Keel's careful count, there were 52 professional cars inside and 31 cars outside the Delta-Plex Expo Center for Saturday's indoor car show, and even the regulars were astounded at how many high-quality vehicles were on hand. The time when U.S. procar makers built their chassis as well as their bodies was recalled by Bill Peoples' Best-in-Show-winning 1927 Henney funeral coach/ambulance "combination" (which also earned the coveted "Funeral Director's Choice" award, *see photo, page 4, upper left*) and an all-original 1930 Meteor ambulance that was still in active service in Grand Ledge, MI until the 1960s. Spectacularly-intricate aluminum drapery panels drew many spectators to the 1938 Meteor LaSalle owned by Joseph Pray's Charlotte, MI-based mortuary and the 1938 S&S Damascus shown by Minneapolis liveryman Larry Dunn.





Missouri funeral director Ken Howe, meanwhile, earned a Livery Class First with one of nine long-wheelbase Lincoln Cosmopolitan limousines constructed for the Harry Truman White House in 1949. Recalling that it “climbed Pikes Peak every day so it was like triple ambulance duty,” Dave Bennett showed a 1955 Cadillac with transparent roof panels and 12-passenger seating that was one of six built by S&S as a sightseeing coach for the Broadmoor resort in Colorado Springs (see photo, upper right). Enthusiasts interested in one of the others were informed that “the hotel sold them all off in 1975 and most of them ended up in the desert full of bullet holes.” Bennett added, however, that a 1959 model Broadmoor built by Superior is “supposedly still-around in Flint, MI,” and that Wayne Turner of Dayton, OH owns another confirmed survivor from 1955. As for his own Broadmoor, which needed only paint after it was acquired at the Auburn Auction two years ago, Bennett promised “I’m just getting started. Just wait until PCS Pittsburgh next year - I’ll have it looking good.”

David C. Sabonjian brought from Belmar, NJ (see photo, lower left). The oldest motor-driven coach on exhibit was a 1918 S&S that had once been used as a chicken coop, dictating that six inches’ worth of droppings had to be scraped off the casket floor during the restoration.

In addition to a “moving” sound-and-light show in the Delta-Plex parking lot, Saturday evening’s awards banquet also witnessed the installation of Evan Butchers and Len Langlois as the PCS’ first



Henny-bodied Packards were proudly-represented by Mark Wilson’s freshly-restored 1948 ambulance and a 1940 flower car brought from Massachusetts by Darrel Hawksley (see photo, center right) which had been discovered by the previous owner in a Newark, NJ used car lot in 1963. Criterion publisher Ted Collins’ 1966 Superior Cadillac flower car from Wilkes-Barre, PA earned another first-in-class and the Cadillac-LaSalle Club

Canadian president and vice-president. “It’s a real honor the represent one’s country as the president of a wonderful international organization like the PCS,” Evan said, “especially since Canadians have already played such a big part in founding the professional car hobby.” Evan also pledged to “work on a cooperating basis with each chapter president” and looked forward “to building a bridge” with the West coast membership. “My door is always open,” he stressed to the message board regulars, “and my phone is just as close.”



Award for the best Cadillac procar in attendance, while PCS Chief Judge George Hamlin saw “a lot of potential” in the 1963 Superior Cadillac high-top ambulance that

AGAIN, A LOVELY AUTUMN IN LAHASKA:

Reflecting the hospitality that the Cadillac-LaSalle Club continues to show the PCS, Harvey Schofield recently-reported to Your Editor that seven professional cars attended the C-LC Valley Forge Region’s Annual Fall Meet at Peddler’s Village in Lahaska, PA on September 22nd. “As was the

case at last year's show, this event was open to procars of any chassis make," Harvey wrote. "Mike Barruzza's 1963 S&S Cadillac combination, Bob Behr's 1949 Flxible Buick ambulance, Joe Bova's 1990 Cadillac flower car and Andy Toton's 1970 Miller-Meteor Cadillac combination attracted considerable spectator attention," he added, with Ted Collins' 1966 Superior Cadillac flower car earning first place honors in the meet's Commercial Class. Mike Barruzza's 1973 S&S Cadillac Victoria landau hearse won the second place award, and third went to Harvey Schofield's 1967 Lehmann-Peterson mini-stretch limousine. PCS Northeast Chapter members Fred & Tracy Goerlitz and Jeff & Mary Hookway also attended, but left their respective ambulances at home.

ALTERNATIVE HEARSE, NOW AVAILABLE

The Tombstone Hearse Company, of Alum Bank, PA, has announced that a reproduction 19th Century horse drawn hearse pulled by a Harley Davidson is now available for funeral services. (See photo, below) The hearse is equipped with traditional hardware found in other late model hearses and can accommodate a full size casket or cremation urn. The Tombstone Hearse is designed to honor the deceased motorcycle enthusiast and celebrate the passion of motorcycling and the nostalgia of days gone by. The company can be reached at 877-834-4180, or at www.tombstonehearse.com.

IMAGES, ANECDOTES WANTED:

Krause Publications of Iola, WI, which employs Your Editor as a New York area show/auction correspondent for Old Cars Weekly, has hired me to write a 300-page book about funeral cars and ambulances that is scheduled to go to press next April. I would, accordingly, be very grateful to Northeast Chapter members who would be willing to provide publication-quality images for this project.

Vintage photos, contemporary 3.5-by-5 inch or larger prints from 35 mm-or-bigger negatives, Kodak Picture Maker-type print-to-print duplicates, transparencies and sales brochure illustrations are all acceptable (though they are generally not sharp enough to publish, color copies and digital images are also useful for selection purposes), and all contributions will be gratefully acknowledged in print. . In an effort to distinguish this work from the hardware-focused books that have come before, I am also interested in gathering PCS members' recollections regarding their professional experiences with these vehicles, especially if you can also furnish a photo of the vehicle you're recalling. If you have an photo or anecdote you might like to see in print, please don't hesitate to call me at (845) 986-6857 or e-mail merks62@warwick.net. With your help, this book could generate considerable interest in the Professional Car Society and its activities; in my capacity as the national PCS Publicity Chair, this mission is never far from my mind!

Providing An Honorary Last Ride Of Remembrance

