



The Criterion

NEWSLETTER of the NORTHEAST CHAPTER of the PROFESSIONAL CAR SOCIETY

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MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Hello, everyone! Winter is finally over and not a minute too soon. Now that spring is here, it is time to get our cars out for all of the upcoming events in our area. To ensure that you actually get to the show of your choice, this is the ideal time of year to inspect for leaks and carefully check your tires, brakes and lights. I have read numerous articles suggesting that radial tires should be replaced every five years, whether they show visible wear or not. This is because that the steel belts separate with age and can cause a blowout. Despite the extra expense, it is much better to be safe than sorry!

As you will read in the following pages, we have a great many events to look forward to this spring and summer, including a May 14th parade and muster at the New York State Museum in Albany that will be an incredible opportunity to introduce the PCS to a whole new audience. I'm also looking forward to a big turnout for the Northeast Chapter's Fourth Annual Charity Car Show, which returns to Peddler's Village along U.S. 202 in Lahaska, PA on June 12th and is open to all years and types of cars and trucks. In August, I also hope to see many of you at the Professional Car Society's 2005 International Meet in Denver and our Chapter's summer picnic at Paul & Donna Vickery's home in Millington, NJ, a date for which will be announced in the next issue of The Criterion.

When you show your professional car at different events, it is always a good idea to bring along some membership applications for the PCS and the Northeast Chapter. If you contact our editor Gregg D. Merksamer, he can also mail you some business cards listing the address of the national PCS and Northeast Chapter web sites, making it easy for the people you meet at old car shows to learn more about the Society and, hopefully, become a member themselves. As these meets may be the only chance for some people to learn about professional vehicles, always make an effort to speak knowledgably and enthusiastically about the cars and what the PCS does to preserve them authentically.

On Tuesday, April 19th Leo Maren III, my predecessor as Northeast Chapter President, successfully underwent quadruple heart bypass surgery at Morristown Hospital. Once he gets home, where he'll be recuperating for the next three months, I encourage all of you to send him your thoughts and prayers for a speedy recovery.

Get Well Soon, Leo! BILL MARCY

DON'T MISS PCS PARADE, DISPLAY AT NYS MUSEUM IN ALBANY MAY 14th

Regular readers of The Criterion will recall that our last issue devoted lots of "ink" to the impressive "Help is Here" exhibit of historic ambulances and related artifacts appearing at the New York State Museum in Albany through September 11th, 2005. Thanks to the overwhelmingly positive response that the display has received, PCS members have been invited to show their cars on the Empire State Plaza in front of the Museum on Saturday, May 14th.

Notable as the first official joint activity of the PCS Northeast Chapter and the newly-chartered Upstate Chapter founded by Daniel Herrick of Chatham, NY, this muster will be held in conjunction with a "Help Is Here" EMS Challenge, where capital area rescue squads will take part in such contests as an ambulance obstacle course, a stretcher race and a scavenger hunt where participants will look for clues in the Museum exhibit. While ambulances and combination coaches are expected to constitute most of the meet attendees, all PCS vehicles are welcome including funeral coaches and flower cars.

Situated in downtown Albany, the Empire State Plaza and the New York State Museum are easily reached from Interstates 87 and 90 by taking the Interstate 787 spur to the U.S. 20/Madison Avenue exit and heading west up the hill to the Cultural Education Center. The day's festivities officially begin at 8 am in the bus lot on the west side of the Museum beyond the tunnel, where the pro-cars and an EMS honor guard will start assembling for a 9 am parade that heads west on Park Avenue, north on Delaware Avenue, and then returns to Museum complex by heading east on Madison Avenue (a contingent from the Air National Guard Base at Scotia has been invited to join in as well, and the Albany Fire Department Pipe Band is also slated to participate). At the parade's conclusion, the competing rescue squads return to the bus lot for their contests while the PCS vehicles are directed onto the Empire State Plaza for a day-long display beside the dramatic, skyscraper-ringed reflecting pool. While the insurance firms Ten Eyck Group and McNeil & Company are providing primary sponsorship and judges for the contests, Subway and North Eastern Rescue Vehicles will respectively furnish food and trophies for the oldest and newest ambulances, the best-looking uniforms, and the furthest distance traveled. The event officially concludes at 4:30 pm, with

an awards presentation and a solemn closing ceremony in front of the New York State EMS Memorial near the northeast corner of the Plaza.

For those who want, or need, to make an overnight trip of it, the Comfort Inn & Suites at 99 Miller Road in Castleton, NY (off Interstate 90, Exit 10) is offering rooms at a special \$89 rate. While this is not inexpensive, strictly speaking, the hotel is brand new, offers free breakfast and an indoor pool, and is situated beyond the city proper to ensure a secure, well-lit parking area with enough space for trailers. For reservations phone the hotel directly at (518) 479-3217, e-mail the manager Wayne Scherry at waynescherry@yahoo.com or log onto www.comfortinnalbany.com. If desired, potentially cheaper accommodations can be found near the Albany County Airport, the Crossgates Mall area at the junction of U.S. 20 and Interstate 87, and the Coxsackie/U.S. 9-W interchange (Exit 21-B off I-87) about 20 miles south of central Albany.

While there is no charge for attending the May 14th parade and muster, the Empire State Plaza is an official high-security area situated atop a government building and participating PCS members must pre-register by Monday, May 9th, supplying their driver's license and vehicle license plate numbers on the form included in this issue. Mail completed forms to Gary Ferris, Chief Development Officer, New York State Museum, 3025 Cultural Education Center, Albany, N.Y. 12230; if you have questions, phone him at (518) 473-8478 or e-mail gfferris@mail.nysed.gov



Having purchased it new, Joseph C. Buono brought this 1976 Buick Riviera to the PCS Northeast Chapter's March 6th business meeting in Sparta, NJ. The odometer shows 123,000 original miles.

RECALLING THE MARCH 6th SPARTA MEETING

Hosting the PCS Northeast Chapter's March 6th business meeting at the Sparta, NJ First Aid Squad HQ, Jeff & Mary Hookway reported that the Chapter currently counts 47 members. While there was a small number of non-renewals, Oliver Ogden was welcomed as a member - this Silver Springs, PA resident is the proud owner of a 1988 S&S Cadillac Victoria funeral coach - and the parking lot outside the HQ building touted a nicely-kept, 123,000-mile 1976 Buick Rivera with wire wheel covers that had been purchased new and brought to the meeting by Joseph C. Buono of Harrington Park, NJ.

Though the PCS' Minnesota-based archivist Tony Karsnia has to focus on his June 11th wedding to Kimberly Kuhlman, Bill Marcy expressed his hope that Northeast Chapter members will continue to submit material for the permanent, comprehensive database of individual professional cars that Karsnia has assembled at www.northlandpcs.com. Jeff Stanton, e-mailed at webmaster@northlandpcs.com, was suggested as a suitable alternate contact, and Your Editor Gregg D. Merksamer (reached at [845] 986-6857 or merks62@warwick.net) remains willing to assist Northeast Chapter members who wish to compile clear and suitably-comprehensive histories of their cars.

The next item on the agenda was the Northeast Chapter's June 12th charity show at Peddler's Village in Lahaska, PA, which will continue to benefit the Bucks County SPCA and welcome all makes, types and vintages of cars and trucks. Top honors in the convertible, closed car, 2-seat sports, muscle car, truck and modified/custom classes will still be decided upon though people's choice voting (the division of the traditionally-large closed car and convertible classes into 1964-older and 1965-up sub-categories will also be continued), but several new awards will be added including "Oldest Car," "Longest Distance Traveled," "Show Committee's Choice" and "Best Original Condition." Looking towards the 29th Annual PCS International Meet taking place this August 2nd-6th in Denver, CO, Bill Marcy urged the Sparta attendees to "attend that meet if you possibly can, even though you will probably have to fly and it's taking place the same week as the Cadillac-LaSalle Grand National in Des Moines, Iowa."

It was also reported in Sparta that an advance group of volunteers, led by former Northeast Chapter President and 1999 Lancaster Meet Chair Leo Maren III, had put additional planning into a possible bid to host the 2008 PCS International Meet in the Mount Laurel, NJ area. With an eye towards bracketing the 50th Anniversary Cadillac-LaSalle Club Grand National taking place in nearby Cherry Hill, NJ, the meet's most likely dates will be July 29th-August 3rd or August 12-17th, and Bill Marcy noted that two different hotels along the route 73 corridor had already "expressed a willingness to want our business." Leo personally prefers the 700-room, \$99-a-night Wyndham as it's bigger than the 216-room Doubletree and offers access roads that promise longer, and safer, entrances and exits for slow-moving vintage vehicles. Bill suggested that the smaller hotel has some advantages of its own, such as a relatively-big, 250-seat banquet room and a lobby "where people can sit and watch the cars arrive. If we host the meet there, we will probably have the place more or less to ourselves." As far as tours and activities are concerned, the most-likely destinations will be Philadelphia's Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell, the Philadelphia Zoo, the Manasquan, NJ factory of P&L ambulances, the casinos of Atlantic City and, closer to New York City, the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island and the Liberty Science Center. "The main advantage of Mt. Laurel is that it's easy to get to, and you can go in three different directions and see all kinds of different things once you're there," Marcy also stated. "Given the great turnout that we had in Lancaster without trying, and the fact that Leo will be in charge again, we have a really good chance of running a successful meet in this area."

Several bits of new business came from Pat Caruso, in his capacity as the Northeast Chapter's semi-official liaison to the Raritan River Region of the Cadillac-LaSalle Club. In conjunction with the Hookways, he is tentatively planning a fall tour of an extremely interesting private collection belonging to Herb Singe of Hillside, NJ, whose father founded the AACA's New Jersey Region all the way back in 1951; some of the highlights include a massive 1911 Palmer-Singer touring car, the world's oldest surviving Thomas Flyer and an ornate Wurlitzer calliope dated to 1903. Pat Caruso also distributed a flyer concerning New Jersey's QQ - prefix "Historic Vehicle" license plates, which explained

RARE FINDS FROM OUR WINTER WEB SEARCHES

To anyone who lives, like us, in a region of the country where a good old car event is all-but-impossible to come by in the dead of winter, the World Wide Web and a steady stream of e-mail from fellow auto hobbyists can be invaluable diversions when the streets are salty and the days are dark and short.

Accordingly, Your Editor was grateful to receive a message a month-or-two ago from a Society of Automotive Historians colleague named Christopher G. "Kit" Foster, containing a photo of a 1942 Chrysler Gothic-paneled hearse by A.J. Miller of Bellefontaine, Ohio. Currently being parted out by All-American Classics of Vancouver, Washington, which purchased it at auction from the gigantic, Tacoma-based Harold E. LeMay collection, this coach was so irreparably rusty that a proper restoration would be dauntingly difficult and expensive, but it was nevertheless exciting as the sort of pro-car that you would not expect to even exist unless a photo of it crossed your desktop. Aside from being Chrysler-based, as opposed to a far-more-common Cadillac or Packard, here was a once-beautiful funeral coach from the war-truncated 1942 model year that essentially ended three months after Pearl Harbor, on top of which it was constructed in a style that was, due to chronic materials shortages, Detroit's switch to full-fendered bodies and the increasing dominance of Landau hearses, essentially extinct by 1947. Even more remarkably, All-American's search of the Tacoma Public Library archive yielded a photo of the car when it was new, parked beside a six-window, limousine-style 1942 Miller Chrysler hearse, a pair of matching 1942 Chrysler limousines and a Chevrolet sedan delivery that was probably used for first calls. Not long after Foster's e-mail was received, the car's radiator was offered on eBay though it apparently attracted no bidders, and there was scuttlebutt that the intricate exterior carvings (actually aluminum die castings) might be auctioned next. Won't someone with deep pockets and ambition and rescue this likely-unique professional car from dismemberment?! If you're up to the task, contact All-American Classics at 15209 N.E. Fourth Plain Road, Vancouver, Washington 98982 or 1-800-955-4999.



Bodied by A.J. Miller of Bellefontaine, Ohio, this likely-unique 1942 Chrysler Gothic panel hearse came from the Harold E. LeMay collection in Tacoma, WA, where it evidently spent its entire service life.

During March, eBay Motors offered yet another rare and interesting pro-car from the Pacific Northwest, this time a top-of-the-line 1975 Superior Pontiac Bonneville Model 226 "high-top" ambulance with 54 inches of patient compartment headroom (Superior's Model 216, in contrast, had a 51-inch roof cap). The seller was a resident of Mara, British Columbia named Bruce Singbeil, who had made good money renting the rig out for music videos and TV shows and was, on the grounds that it had "long since paid for itself," not overly-concerned about a top dollar sale. Since a local offer of just \$1,400 Canadian brought the online auction to an early end, it should surprise no one that the body, treated to Bondo and a "splash job" several different times to spruce it up for camera work, had a cracked windshield and badly-perforated quarter panels, but the car still warranted scrutiny as 1975 was the last year that Superior offered Pontiac professional cars. Production of these models, previously-handled by Superior's "Southern Division" plant in Kosciusko, Mississippi, had been taking place beside the company's Cadillacs at its main factory in Lima, Ohio since the beginning of the decade, but output fell dramatically as van and truck-based ambulances seized a larger share of the market. Including hearses and combination coaches, only 60 Superior-Pontiacs were completed in 1975 versus 563 1975-model Superior Cadillacs and, more significantly, 350 Superior-Pontiacs in 1970.

Closer to home, Oklahoman-turned-Virginian Steve Loftin directed a number of fellow PCS members to an on-line history of the Princeton, NJ First Aid & Rescue Squad that included a photo of a Lincoln ambulance that entered service in May, 1960. While the accompanying text accordingly identified the rig as a 1960 model, big bullets on the ends of the bumper confirmed the base vehicle was actually a 1959. Though the image was black-and-white, the exterior color scheme was most likely red with a silver roof, not unlike the 1951 Henney-Packard and 1955 Miller-Cadillac First Aider which appeared on the cover of the Fourth Quarter, 2002 issue of The Criterion. The body builder, meanwhile, was Vernon Perry's National Coaches of Knightstown, IN, which prided itself on building ambulances, limousines and funeral coaches on whatever chassis the customer desired. Typically, a rescue squad doing business with this firm would buy a suitably-large sedan or station wagon from a local new car dealer, have some of its members drive it out to Knightstown for the conversion work, and pick it up and drive it home after the job was done several weeks later.

Even if Your Editor was not an avowed Ford Blue Oval partisan, the Princeton photo would be exciting since Lincoln professional cars built between the mid-1930s and the late 1970s, let alone ones based on unit-bodied Lincolns from the 1958-69 model years, are exceedingly rare; it is NOT an exaggeration to state that one might see a thousand professional Cadillacs, or even ten thousand professional Cadillacs, for every



Due to electrical gremlins, this exceedingly rare 1959 National-Lincoln ambulance served less than two years with Princeton, NJ's First Aid & Rescue Squad. A twin, it is reported, went to Cape Cod, Massachusetts!

Lincoln funeral coach or ambulance one might see from this period! On top of this, the Princeton Lincoln's electrical system proved so troublesome that, after less than two years in service, the rig was traded for a 1961 Eureka Cadillac at Geissel's Philadelphia pro-car dealership. Even more incredibly, one of the Princeton Squad's old-timers told Moorestown, NJ Chapter member Rich Litton that a second National Lincoln ambulance, with all-white paintwork, was used somewhere on Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

REMEMBERING MARSHALL LONG

It is with much regret that The Criterion must report that C. Marshall Long, a long-standing PCS member who once served as the Ohio Chapter president, passed away on March 30th, 2005. Though he was still a relatively young man, this Reynoldsville denizen had battled diabetes for several years and ultimately lost his lower right leg to the malady in September, 2004; entering the hospital the following December, he spent his last three months bravely battling various infections before succumbing to kidney and heart failure.

St. Petersburg, Florida member Michael Hennessy, having purchased Long's beloved 1966 Superior Pontiac high-top ambulance around the time of its appearance at the 2003 PCS International in Pittsburgh, took on the task of announcing his passing on the Society's Message Board, describing Marshall as "a quiet, unassuming man that often went unnoticed" even though he was "a fixture at many PCS International Meets. Throughout the years many of us



Rusty as it was, this 1975 Superior-Pontiac from British Columbia deserved scrutiny on eBay since it was one of only sixty built during the model's final year.

