



The Criterion

NEWSLETTER of the NORTHEAST CHAPTER of the PROFESSIONAL CAR SOCIETY

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MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

As I write this message, spring has just arrived. I always love the things that the end of winter brings us, and I'm assuming that most of you feel the same way. There's the nice weather, of course, and the return of flowers and all the green. Then there are the car shows, cruise nights and all of the other pleasures in life we can enjoy to the fullest at this time of year.

Befitting the season, there are many wonderful events to look forward to, starting with the Northeast Chapter's 5th Annual Car and Truck Show in Lahaska, PA on Sunday, June 4th. With its quaint shops and variety of restaurants, Peddlers Village offers plenty to do in addition to the car displays, and there are few beneficiaries in the area more deserving than the Bucks County SPCA. A couple of nice PCS picnics have also been scheduled for the coming weeks, with Paul Steinberg hosting one in Woodstock, Connecticut on Saturday, June 17th while Paul & Donna Vickery welcome us back to their home in Millington, N.J. on Saturday, August 19th. Both BBQs will offer lots of parking space, so please bring your pro-car and display it.

As you will also read in further detail in this issue, the Chapter's 2006 calendar got off to a great start over the weekend of March 18th-19th, when several of us gathered in the scenic town of Norwich, N.Y. for a tour of the Northeast Classic Car Museum. Lucille and I were the first arrive at the local Howard Johnson's on Saturday afternoon, where we were soon joined by Jeff & Mary Hookway, Andy & Karen Toton, and Jeff Beyer. After a delicious dinner at Fred's Inn about two miles down the road, we returned to the motel lounge for refreshments and a few more hours of great conversation. The next morning, we found our own Gregg Merksamer waiting for us in the parking lot by the time we finished breakfast and lined up for our drive to the museum. To say the least, this place is an absolute "must" for enthusiasts, with enthusiastic guides and some of the most beautifully-restored and unusual automobiles you will ever see. Most of display vehicles are pre-1950, with a strong focus on air-cooled Franklins since they were built in the nearby city of Syracuse, N.Y., but we also spotted Cadillacs, Lincolns, Duesenbergs, Cords and Pierce-Arrows. There was even a rarely-seen Playboy retractable hardtop and a DeLorean with gull-wing doors. The biggest draw for us, of course, was the hall containing the special display "Red Lights and Sirens," which included vintage police cruisers, antique fire apparatus and a number of ambulances belonging to PCS Northeast Chapter members. My personal favorite, a red 1941 Lincoln ambulance on loan from the AACA Museum, appears on the cover of this issue.

With the National PCS election taking place this summer as well, I wish to announce that I will be running for PCS President and I would appreciate your votes. As you may know, I have served as National Vice-President under our current President John Ehmer, and let me say that he will be a tough act to follow. It has been my pleasure to serve with John, for he is one fine person to work with. If I am elected, I promise to do my best for all of the members of the Professional Car Society.

As this issue went to press, I also received word that The Criterion received a 2005 Golden Quill Award from Old Cars Weekly in the regional newsletter category. This is the second year in a row that Ted Collins and Gregg Merksamer have received this prestigious honor, which symbolizes the high esteem in which this publication is held outside of PCS member circles. Congratulations are also in order to our Chapter Treasurer Jeff Hookway, who will succeed David Petke in the important post of PCS National Membership Director. This well-deserved appointment becomes official at the 30th anniversary PCS International Meet taking place in Kingsport, Tennessee this coming August 1st-5th. Hope to see many of you there as well!

With Best Wishes, BILL MARCY

JUNE 17th OFFERS THREE PCS ACTIVITIES

So far as old car enthusiasts are concerned, nothing better emphasizes that spring is in full swing than a date where one can choose between several different but equally-fun activities. PCS members will be facing this happy dilemma on Saturday, June 17th, which will see three different chapters in our part of the country scheduling a get-together.

Paul Steinberg, known to computer-savvy PCS members as the moderator and "Chief Bottle Washer" of the Society's official website at www.professionalcar.org, will host the first June 17th activity on behalf of the New England Chapter at his home in Woodstock, CT. It features a cookout running from 10:30 am-on, though Paul adds "there is lots of parking so bring your largest Pro Car. Who knows, if we have enough lights and sirens, we can have a five-minute light and siren show and really tick off the neighbors." Soft drinks will also be offered on-site, and people who prefer beer or another beverage are encouraged to bring their own (it would also pay to take advantage of your coach's cargo space and bring along an extra chair, as these might be in short supply). Woodstock is situated on highway 169 in the northeast corner of the Constitution State, putting it about ninety minutes west of Boston, twenty minutes southeast of the Interstate 84/Massachusetts Turnpike interchange, or less than three hours away from the Tappan Zee Bridge and other New York area landmarks. More complete directions to Paul's door can be obtained by e-mailing him at noahsarkinc@earthlink.net (naturally, there is a link in the activities section of the PCS website) or phoning (860) 928-2233. Attendees should RSVP and declare how many people are coming with them by Thursday, June 8th, to insure Paul has enough food for the head count. Pets should be left at home, he adds with apologies, because "my dogs are not tolerant of other dogs."

Northeast Chapter members who wake up on June 17th with an urge to go south, instead of north, can head to Selbyville, Delaware and join the PCS Mid-Atlantic Chapter for the Hastings Funeral Home's 110th Anniversary. This 10am-3pm open house at 19 South Main Street (featuring horse-drawn and vintage motor hearses, gifts, refreshments and a replica of President Reagan's quarter-ton, four-inch mahogany plank Marcellus casket) will coincide with the town's Old Timers Days and an antique law enforcement vehicle exhibit celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the Selbyville Police Department. Hearses, combinations

and ambulances are especially wanted for the display in the funeral home's parking lot, though flower cars and limousines are also welcome. Trophies will be awarded for best-looking hearse and ambulance, and the funeral home is also offering a small per-vehicle stipend to anyone traveling over 50 miles to attend. RSVP to hastingsfuneralhome@verizon.net or (302) 436-8421 by Tuesday, June 13, 2006 so the funeral home can reserve a spot for your pro-car; in addition to your name, home town and state, your message should describe your vehicle's year, make, coachbuilder and body style.

Those with time-to-spare and a sufficiently-reliable ride will surely be interested in the PCS Ohio Chapter's Drive-In Movie Night, which will be hosted by National Recording Secretary Sarah Snook in the Akron area on June 17th (impressively, 15 pro-cars and 45 people attended the 2005 edition, which is chronicled online at http://pg.photos.yahoo.com/ph/hearsegirl66/my_photos). This year's fun begins around 3pm Saturday with a potluck picnic at Sarah's house, located at 3060 Kent Road in Silver Lake, Ohio; explaining that "I'm going to make a list of what foods people are providing so we don't end up with too many duplicates," she advises attendees to e-mail her at RoyRacer@aol.com and declare how many people and what sort of food they will be bringing along. "I'll e-mail everyone a revised copy of the list regularly," she adds. "I'll be providing pop, plates, silverware, ice, hot dogs, and a grill. Try to bring folding lawn chairs as well." Around 7:45 pm, the participants will convoy to the Midway Drive-In near Ravenna, Ohio, 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 \$8 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 stereo that you can use in your car without the ignition being on," Sarah advises. She can also e-mail attendees a list of local motels, though people are also invited to camp out at her house using their cars or tents.

On Sunday, June 18th, Sarah's get together continues with breakfast at Bob Evans and a trip to Stan

Hywet Hall & Gardens for a rain-or-shine Father's Day car show expected to attract more than 400 classics. "This year's theme is Big Cars," Sarah tells us, "and they will have many classic limousines on display including Joseph Kennedy's 1938 Chrysler, 1931 and '39 Packards, and a Duesenberg." The \$10-per-person admission includes a guided tour of the manor house and access to the grounds and car show, but on-site visitor parking is NOT available. "There is free visitor parking nearby and shuttles will be running between those lots and Stan Hywet," Sarah explains. "Because of this, we will carpool to Stan Hywet in some of our local members' daily drivers. You are welcome to leave your pro-car at my house while we are at Stan Hywet and pick it up when we're done." Again, RSVPs and questions should be e-mailed to Sarah at RoyRacer@aol.com.

NORTHEAST PICNIC TAKES PLACE AUGUST 19th

Promising good food, good fellowship and big-enough backyard to park a dozen professional cars or more, Paul & Donna Vickery have proved themselves to be outstanding hosts for the PCS Northeast Chapter's annual Summer Gatherings. Recalling the strong turnout witnessed for the 2004 and 2005 cook-outs, Your Editor is pleased to report that this year's edition has been officially scheduled for Saturday, August 19th rain-or-shine, and a moved-up 2 pm starting time should ensure that the grill is operational a little earlier than previously. The Vickerys will provide soda in addition to dinner, and attendees are encouraged to B.Y.O.B. as well as a salad, side dish or dessert to share. A preliminary head count, in the form of an RSVP directed to Bill Marcy at (201) 342-4871 or bmarcy@optonline.net, is also deemed helpful as the date gets closer. The lovely, Revolutionary War era farmhouse where the Vickerys live is easily found at 1434 Long Hill Road in Millington, N.J., which puts it about three miles from Interstate 78, Exit 36 or Interstate 287, Exit 30; first-timers in need of last-minute route guidance can, of course, call Donna or Paul on the day of the event at (908) 604-7990.

RECALLING OUR MARCH 5th SPARTA MEETING

Aside from the fact that Jeff & Mary Hookway always put out plenty of soda, chips and cookies - that's nutrition! - Your Editor always looks forward to any Northeast Chapter meeting held at the Sparta, N.J. First Aid Squad HQ, because it's typically the shortest drive he has to make on PCS-related business. The most-recent get-together, which took place on Sunday, March 7th, found Jeff Hookway reporting that the Chapter's head count was holding steady at 51, with Chuck Patterson of far-off Saginaw, Michigan welcomed as a new member. Mary Hookway reported that the Chapter also made a \$50 donation to Hurricane Katrina relief that was matched by Packard Industries founder Fred Kanter, and that a fruit basket was sent to Fred Goerlitz after his mother passed away in February; it was also announced that a charitable donation would also be made in her memory to the Cancer Society or Hackettstown, N.J. hospital.



Bill Marcy admires a display of model pro-cars brought to the March 7th Sparta meeting by Andy Toton, who said that the 1/25-scale Jo-Han kits displayed to the left gave him the idea to convert his 1970 M-M Cadillac combination into an ambulance. This assortment constitutes about 15% of his toy collection.

Bill Marcy could only make a preliminary forecast on attendance at 5th Annual Charity Car & Truck Show that the Northeast Chapter will be hosting in Lahaska, PA on Sunday, June 4th - this date is a week earlier on the calendar than the 2005 edition, in order to coincide with a big art show at Peddler's Village - but Pat Caruso reported that a full color flyer had been e-mailed to 188 past participants, the Metropolitan Chapter of the

RED LIGHTS, SIRENS BECKON PCS TO NORWICH

Classic Car Club of America, and the Raritan River and Valley Forge Chapters of the Cadillac-LaSalle Club. "It could be a strong turnout," Bill forecasted. "We got 102 cars last year, because we happened to have fabulous weather that attracted a lot of day-of-show registrations. I'm hoping there will be lots of interest in our new 'original car' class, which is tailor-made for things like a white Rambler sedan that's in perfect condition but never wins when it's competing against a convertible or two-door hardtop."

Several first aid squads and fire companies have turned to the PCS Northeast Chapter for advice on how to proceed with the restoration of a vintage ambulance, so the latest developments in this area were another major topic of discussion. Jeff Hookway said that East Rutherford, N.J. has a late 1950s Cadillac ambulance needed TLC, while Fred Goerlitz relayed intelligence of a 1939 Superior-Pontiac that needed a full restoration but was otherwise remarkably complete. A 1970s Cadillac recently examined by Bill Marcy and Paul Vickery was little more than "red and rust," but Andy Toton reassured the gathering that "I've visited a lot of places, and have seen a lot ambulances in various conditions. No matter what it is or how much it's deteriorated, you can restore it. Sure, it can get expensive if you don't know people with bodywork and welding experience, but you should always try to be positive with the people seeking your opinion. I've seen plenty of volunteer squads do fire trucks they owned fifty years ago, sold off and bought back after they went round-robin for a couple of decades." Bill Marcy emphasized, in the same spirit, "that a fundraiser is a great thing to suggest to an ambulance company that's trying to save a vehicle."

One of the biggest challenges involved with restoring a high-top Cadillac ambulance, Toton conceded, is that "there are very few junkyards who will keep them because they're twice as long as a standard sedan and the roofs are usually made of fiberglass. Most yards want to crush them and get the iron out after the 472 and 500 engines have been pulled." One nearby exception he's discovered is Bobby's Antique & Classic Cadillac Parts, which is found on highway 61 about a mile south of the U.S. 22/Interstate 78 corridor in Hamburg, PA. "They have over a dozen 1950s-70s pro-cars and a 1958 Cadillac limousine," Toton told the meeting, adding in a follow-up phone call to Your Editor that the owner, Bobby Stewart, can be contacted at (610) 562-8631.

Though it's still a well-kept secret in comparison to the Finger Lakes to the west or the Catskill Mountains to the east, south-central New York State is a scenically-rewarding destination with its ridgeline-running Interstates, panoramic valleys and mid-19th Century Greek Revival farmhouses. Thanks to energetic marketing and thoughtfully-designed exhibits oriented toward the novice auto enthusiast in everyone, the Northeast Classic Car Museum in the Chenango County seat of Norwich has emerged as popular stop on the region's 220-mile-long "Tourism Trail," which also features the Corning Glass Museum, the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, the National Soccer Hall of Fame in Oneonta, and Howe Caverns in Cobleskill. "The price of gas doesn't seem to make difference, given that our attendance for January, February and March is up from last year," Executive Director Kay Wells Zaia asserted after welcoming PCS Northeast Chapter members to the Museum on Sunday, March 19th. A special exhibit of emergency vehicles entitled "Red Lights & Sirens" was the chief drawing card for a delegation that included Bill & Lucille Marcy, Jeff & Mary Hookway, Andy & Karen Toton, Jeff Beyer (whose work schedule mandated an advance visit and departure on Saturday) and Your Editor Gregg D. Merksamer, but there was much more to see and enjoy once the group arrived at 24 Rexford St.

The Northeast Classic Car Museum owes its existence to the enthusiasm of a local auto hobbyist named George E. Staley, who employed nearly 250 people refurbishing aircraft components on Long Island before retiring to his family's dairy farm in Lincklaen Center in 1994. Though his 90-car collection started with a 1924 Model T Ford acquired in 1950, Staley's background as a fuel systems



The "Red Lights & Sirens" exhibit at the Northeast Classic Car Museum placed Dan Emmi's 1919 Ford Model T paddy wagon next to Paul Vickery's 1940 Flexible-Buick ambulance.

background as a fuel systems troubleshooter for Bendix Aviation during World War II (it is said that he was sent to Tinian to tune up the Enola Gay before the famous B-29 flew the A-bomb to Hiroshima) fostered a special fondness for the air-cooled Franklins built some 50 miles northwest of Norwich in Syracuse, N.Y. from 1902 to 1934. According to Zaia, Staley came to the community's attention by word-of-mouth, and it wasn't hard to convince him to move his cars to Norwich if a suitable building could be found. Commencing operations in a former fireplace equipment manufacturer's warehouse on Memorial Day in 1997, the museum added a second exhibit hall in January 1999 and a expanded to a third building in October 2000, increasing its capacity to 125 cars whose presentation has often benefited from the full-time mechanic, painter and woodworker that Staley employs. Many vehicles are accompanied by photo albums chronicling the restoration or mannequins wearing period costumes sourced from the Chenango County Historical Society down the street, which recall the sort of clothing worn by the original owners.

Tom Davis, a retired Norwich school teacher who served as our guide to the museum, could not say for sure how exactly many Franklins were on display, "as we're always taking one or two out and putting something else in. I would estimate there are thirty on the floor, with at least five others in storage." The earliest is a shovel-nosed 1903 runabout bearing Serial No. 102 of the 219 built during the firm's second year in business, which makes it the third-oldest known Franklin (the very first production example, sold to S.G. Averill on June 23rd, 1902, can be seen at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C.). Another unusual, and possibly-unique, attraction is a 1908 Series J one-ton truck prototype fitted with a flat-fronted body and shaft drive, which was purchased as basket case by Harold Sharon and restored in time for the 2003 Franklin Centennial celebration. A dashing, Frank de Causse-designed Series 11 boat-tail Sport Runabout from 1926 imitates the appearance of water-cooled autos with its upright "dummy" radiator and simulated fill cap, while younger visitors, according to Zaia, are especially-fascinated with how much wood in the museum's partly-disassembled 1929 Model 137 seven-passenger sedan. While this extended to the use of laminated-wood frames as late as 1928, Franklin earned a strong following through superior quality and its pioneering use of light but strong aluminum engines and body components. Aviators such as Charles Lindbergh were especially loyal customers - the



Mounted on a 1959 Dodge 4x4 chassis, Mahlon Irish's all-original American LaFrance "Little Mo" crash truck originally served in upstate Massena, N.Y. The formidable-looking cannon could pump water or foam while the vehicle was on the move.

company's Airman series, which sported a spinning propeller hood ornament, was even named after him - so it should be no surprise to learn that aircraft-related artifacts are also prominently-featured. The biggest power plant on the premises, probably, is a 28-cylinder, 3800-hp R-4360 engine that was used to propel such behemoths as the B-36 bomber and Howard Hughes' "Spruce Goose."

One of Davis' favorite exhibits, so far as things he wants first-time visitors to notice, is a side-by-side display of a right-hand-drive 1909 Chalmers-Detroit and a 1910 Firestone-Columbus that "gets people thinking about how nothing was standardized back then." The same could also be said of a sleeve-valve engine 1923 Willys-Knight sedan with one driver's-side and two passenger-side doors, a 1924 Stanley steam car with a running board-mounted whistle, and an air-cooled 1921 Holmes six-cylinder touring constructed in Canton, Ohio, by a former Franklin chief engineer named Arthur Holmes (this oval-grilled giant, resting on a 126-in. wheelbase that earned it billing as "America's Most Comfortable Car," is one of only four known survivors out of 500 built between 1918 and 1923). Philadelphia PCS members Andy & Karen Toton, who emerged as the event's official distance champs after an initial stop in Flemington, N.J. to leave the dogs with Karen's parents, took special interest in a fully-restored 1965 Divco milk truck whose signage employed original stenciling from Staley's Dairy in DeRuyter, N.Y. "Good Divcos are hard to find," Andy

