



The Criterion

NEWSLETTER of the NORTHEAST CHAPTER of the PROFESSIONAL CAR SOCIETY

www.PCSNortheast.com

First Quarter 2017

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President's Message

by Fred Goerlitz

I hope everyone is well and the winter is moving along for everyone. With the imminent onset of spring (6 more weeks or so if you believe the groundhog), let's make plans to get our professional cars out and start enjoying them. If you attend an event or know of one that sounds fun contact Bill Marcy, Criterion editor and Activities Director, so it can be added to the Northeast Chapter calendar and chronicled in The Criterion.

At the November chapter meeting, we discussed attending the Hackettstown Rotary Club's Memorial Motor Madness show at M&M Mars in Hackettstown on Sunday, May 28th. The event typically draws around 500 cars and features a live DJ. Judging is by people's choice voting. This is a great charity show and I encourage you to attend. More information will be provided when it is available.

I look forward to seeing you at events throughout the year.

Fred

Editor's Message

by Bill Marcy

As you read this newsletter, you are probably anticipating warmer weather and the upcoming car shows and cruise nights and other fun with our cars. We already have a number of shows and events that will welcome professional cars. So, please consider bringing your professional car to one, or all of these very good events. Most of these shows have a focus on charity to someone less fortunate than we are.

Always remember that not everyone is familiar with professional cars, some people are even confused as to our affection for these cars. But, if you take the time to educate people, talk with enthusiasm and passion, you can sometimes gain new admirers, occasionally even a new PCS member. And if you don't get nervous about letting youngsters sit in your car and let their parents take pictures, you can create lots of good will; maybe even spark an interest in professional cars for one of these kids. Believe me, it is a win-win for everybody.

We are currently seeking a new editor for The Criterion. I anticipate stepping down with the fourth quarter edition of The Criterion. Please consider stepping up and taking over. I have already demonstrated that it is not difficult and anybody can do it. See you soon! Let's make this a great year for the Northeast Chapter!

Professional Car Display

Calling all members...the America on Wheels Transportation Museum in Allentown, PA is offering us an opportunity to display our cars for the day on **Saturday, April 8**, from 10 am until 3 pm. This is their 9th anniversary and there will be a World War I replica ambulance to see as well as the museum itself. If our car display is well received, the museum has offered us a possible 6 month display of some of our cars in their rotating feature floor!

Let's try to get as many cars as possible on April 8 to help the museum celebrate. It's a great place to bring the family and the museum is wonderful. There is a lot to do in Allentown as well. They are located at 5 North Front St., Allentown, PA 18102.

See more information at www.americaonwheels.org.

Please contact Nick Elias for more information or directions, 610-433-2200.

NFDA's Philadelphia Story

by Gregg D. Merksamer

As the National Funeral Directors Association's annual International Convention & Expo rarely takes place within driving distance of his Warwick, NY home, PCS Publicity Chair and former *CRITERION* Editor Gregg D. Merksamer couldn't be deterred from a 260-mile, all-backroad day trip to the 2016 edition staged in Philadelphia from October 23rd-26th. PCS-affiliated folk he encountered among the 3,901 formally registered attendees and 1,997 exhibitor reps included *CRITERION* Publisher Roy Garretson; his predecessor, Wilkes-Barre funeral director Ted Collins; Rich Tana of Nutley, N.J.; Ken McCoy of Blacksburg, Virginia; St. Louis coach dealer Jose Molina; Ronnie Grubbs, of Funeral Coach Plus in Long Beach, CA; and our 2016 Gettysburg International Meet banquet speaker, Eagle Coach Company founder Mike Kellerman. PCS National VP Dan Skivolocke was also honored in the convention program as an 11-time NFDA Pursuit of Excellence Award recipient.

Funeral car builders were, as always, among the most-prominent exhibitors out of 390 firms displaying 98,700 square feet worth of wares at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. Though the majority of their offerings are based on purpose-engineered, heavy-duty versions of the front-wheel-drive Cadillac XTS sedan and all-wheel-drive Lincoln MKT crossover, alternative conversion platforms included the all-new Chrysler Pacifica minivan, the Buick Enclave crossover, the rear-drive Mercedes Metris "midi-van" and even the Chrysler 300. One firm discussed in the following "deep" captions even drops a Chevy Corvette V-8 into the ladder chassis it constructs in-house for a 1930s style Art Deco retro-coach!



Sean Myers spent two decades selling coaches for Southwest Professional Vehicles in Dallas, Atlanta and Kansas City before he started building his own cars in 2012-13, turning to craftsmen left behind when Federal Coach production moved from Fort Smith, Arkansas to Eagle's Amelia, Ohio facility several years ago. As many of them had once worked at the fabled Armbruster/Stageway firm that pretty much invented the six-door funeral limousine, Myers swapped the slash for a dash and dubbed his venture Armbruster-Stageway after he "got the band back together." The smallest offering in his all-Cadillac lineup is the XTS-XL short stretch lead car, which comes standard with stamped steel rear doors seven inches longer-than-stock and a vinyl-trimmed composite high-headroom roof.



This show-stopping, glass-sided Chrysler 300 hearse was designed around a 50-inch unibody stretch by brothers Troy and Clayton Hillier of Tenterfield, New South Wales, Australia, who have teamed with Dominick Vitelli's Quality Coachworks to produce a U.S. market version in Ontario, California. Steel frames and high tensile steel hinges structurally strengthen the composite church "trolley" doors and remote-controlled hatch, while the 30-kilogram casket compartment windows can be fitted with lift mechanisms for loading flowers as a \$10,000 extra.



With its painted top, flush-mount landau bars, wedge-shaped quarter windows and casket compartment skylight, the Eagle Echelon truly shattered convention when it debuted on Cadillac's DTS platform as a 2008 model. The current-generation, Cadillac XTS-based Echelon Limited shown in Philadelphia handsomely complimented its Radiant Silver body with a new-for-2017 Phantom Gray roof. Echelons painted black-over-silver, black-over-red and tan-over-polo green have also been built recently at Eagle's Amelia, Ohio plant.



K2 Products, the go-to outfit for “first call” coaches within The Kellerman Family of Professional Vehicles, recently brought Buick back into funeral service after a 20-year hiatus with its Enclave-based Vintage. The 14-inch tail stretch affords 91 inches of useable casket floor accessed through a left-hinged, hearse-type load door teaming the original lift gate’s rear window and taillights with a new exterior handle added neatly below the right-side lens. The interior partition is thoughtfully angled to retain full front seat travel.



MK Coach, run by Mike Kellerman’s son Jason and his daughter Lisa Richardson, touts a truly-unique range of unaltered-wheelbase, tail stretch hearses adding suitably-long casket floors, padded landau tops and traditional, left-hinged loading doors to the all-wheel-drive Lincoln MKT crossover and front-drive Chrysler Pacifica minivan. The latter conversion, dubbed the MK300, sports Chrysler 300 taillights to match those on 300 sedans being used as lead cars.



Having added extended-wheelbase Lincoln Legacy hearses to its lineup during 2015, MK Coach used the NFDA’s 2016 Philadelphia Expo to debut a Grand Legacy Limited teaming limousine

style quarter windows with a painted top and oval skylight. The deep blue display car was one of four entering service with Tim Stewart of Atlanta along with three MK Chryslers.



Rosewood Classic Coaches are made in Morrilton, Arkansas by Richard Neal, who stresses his retro-look hearses won't ever go out of style like a contemporary Cadillac or Lincoln. The brown & black Grand Vista starring in his Philadelphia exhibit featured 7-foot-long casket compartment windows and load door-mounted music speakers. Its Corvette V8-powered ladder chassis is built in-house using 2-by-8-inch box steel sections powder-coated for corrosion resistance, while the body's composite panels are bonded to a race car style safety cage using aircraft-type adhesive.



Rosewood Classic Coach founder Richard Neal and his wife Lorraine also showed a Baron Roadster towing a Grand Vista Protégé hearse trailer that weighs just 750 pounds empty and has self-contained electric brakes, so it can also be hitched to any classic car, street rod, tractor or motorcycle trike belonging to the deceased or the funeral director. Options include 39-inch LCD video screens and boat-grade external speakers for playing music at the burial.



With origins dating back 145 years to its 1871 founding as a Cincinnati carriage maker, Sayers & Scovill was the oldest hearse maker at NFDA Philadelphia 2016. The magnificent, metallic gold S&S Cadillac Masterpiece anchoring its exhibit featured an urn carrier, casket viewing windows and a clever, centrally-hinged “Swing-A-Way” loading door that pivots over the quarter panel for an industry-best, 270-degree opening.



The TESCO Family Coach - offered by the Transportation Equipment Sales Corporation of Oregon, Ohio - was explained at NFDA Philadelphia by Sales Manager Steve Luce (*left*) and Company President Bud Graham (*right*), who got the idea from the 1916 Packard “omnibus” in Houston’s National Museum of Funeral History. Its Ford E450 V-10 gasoline chassis fits a 13-seat body from Federal’s bus division in Imlay City, Michigan, to which TESCO adds an aft partition to create a crosswise casket compartment with its own curb-side loading door.

Upcoming Events

March 26, 2017 1:00 PM: NORTHEAST CHAPTER MEETING

The Northeast Chapter will be holding our first meeting of 2017 on Sunday March 26, 2017 at 1:00 PM. Location will be The Fireplace Restaurant Rte 17 north Paramus, New Jersey. We met there once last year and it worked out well. Please plan to attend. Everyone is welcome!

April 8, 2017 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM: America on Wheels

Transportation Museum America on Wheels Transportation Museum in Allentown, PA is offering us an opportunity to display our cars for the day and if our car display is well received, the museum has offered us a possible 6 month display of some of our cars in their rotating feature floor!

May 21, 2017: North Jersey Auto Show at Bergen Community

College This is a fabulous show sponsored by the Restored Rusty Relics antique car club. This show raises thousands of dollars for charity and has been doing so for nearly forty years. Last year, they had nearly five hundred cars and trucks on the show field. It is a wonderful show, worthy of your consideration. If we get a few professional cars, we can park together.

September 17, 2017 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM: Shook Funeral Home

Car Show at the Van Houten Avenue Street Fair Calling all cars!
Calling all cars! Street vendors, food, petting zoo, pony rides, live entertainment and music!

September 22nd-24th

Hemmings plans to include a judged professional car class at this year's show, which is moving to Lake George, NY. In terms of recognition of professional cars at a high level in the old car hobby, this invite is second only to PCS participation in the St. Johns Concours d'Elegance near Detroit two years ago. Again, this is an opportunity not to be missed. They are looking for about a dozen professional cars, which shouldn't be hard to find in that area. In general, any PCS member who would like to submit their pro-car for consideration should send photos and a brief write-up to Hemmings Motor News Concours (ATTN: Matthew Litwin), 222 Main Street, Bennington, Vermont 05201; they can also e-mail concours@hemmings.com. In common with our appearances at St. John and the 2013 Milwaukee Masterpiece Concours, this is a "musn't miss" opportunity to promote the PCS' preservation and authenticity focused mission to the wider old car hobby!

For Sale

1968 Superior Pontiac ambulance, looks good, runs well, lots of work done, Protect-O-Plate and history, many pictures.

Asking \$19,500, or reasonable offer.

Please call Bill Marcy (201) 342-4871



Of Interest!

Gregg Merksamer sent in an article that appeared in The Wall Street Journal on February 7, 2017, called 'Fly Cars' Speed Up Crisis Responses.' Although these vehicles probably don't fall under the category of "Professional Car", the article was quite interesting. The "Fly Cars", specially equipped SUV's and manned by two paramedics, rolled out last year to improve emergency response time. It allows paramedics to respond to priority calls without taking patients to the hospital. That task is handled by ambulances that respond along with the fly cars. According to the article, FDNY firefighters and emergency medical staff members together responded to 1.44 million medical emergencies last year.

To read the report in its entirety, check out The Wall Street Journal website:

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/in-bronx-fly-cars-aim-to-speed-up-emergency-care-1486216800>

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Northeast Chapter

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1959 ACC Edsel Amblewagon, courtesy of Mike McDonald. This beauty belonged to PCS SoCal Chapter member, Dave Lee