



The Criterion

NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHEAST CHAPTER OF THE PROFESSIONAL CAR SOCIETY
FIRST QUARTER 1997

GREGG D. MERKSAMER, EDITOR

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

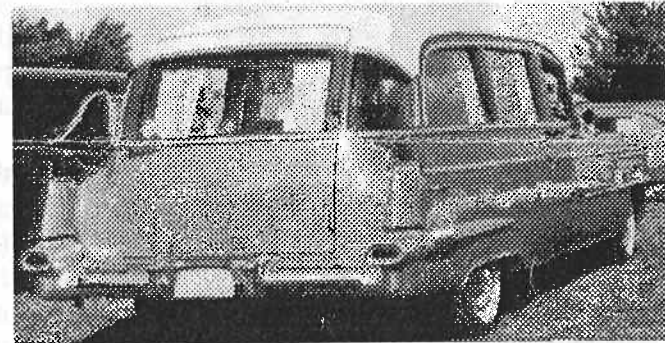
NE Chapter to meet
Sunday, April 20th

The formation of various committees for the 1999 PCS International Meet, which the Northeast Chapter will host in Lancaster, PA from August 18-21 of that year, will be the #1 topic when we meet in Wood Ridge, NJ at one p.m. Sunday, April 20th, at the First Presbyterian Church, 190 Valley Boulevard (at Columbia Boulevard). Of course other general chapter business will be discussed as well. Here's how to reach the church . . .

From the North: From Interstate 80 West or East pick up NJ 17 Southbound. Take Route 17 about three miles to the Wood Ridge-Moonachie exit in vicinity of Fiesta Catering. Make a right at the traffic signal at the end of the exit ramp, follow road uphill to a "T" and turn right. Make a sharp left at the bank building onto Columbia Boulevard and proceed two blocks straight to the church's parking lot on the left side of the street.

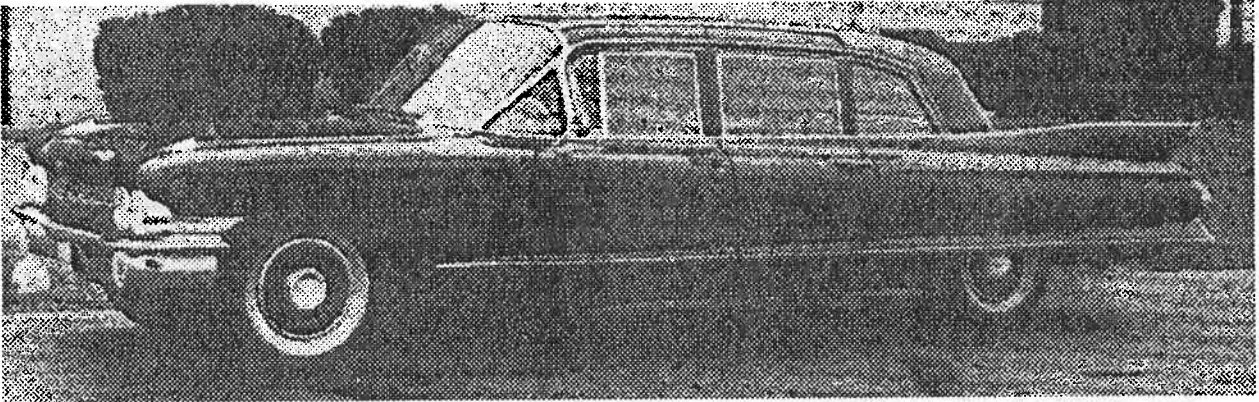
From the South: Take the Northbound Garden State parkway to Exit 153 (NJ 3 Eastbound). Take Route 3 about six miles east to Route 17 four miles north to the for Wood Ridge-Moonachie

U-turn ramp, making a left at the traffic signal at the end of the exit ramp and crossing over Route 17. Follow road uphill to a "T," turn right and then make a sharp left at the bank onto Columbia Boulevard and proceed two blocks straight to the church's parking lot on the left. Should you find yourself lost enroute. call the church at (201) 438-8966 and our chapter's informal Global Positioning System will come to your rescue.



MILLER-METEOR *Mea Culpa*

Several sharp-eyed readers checked in to tell me that Paul Vickery's 1956 Cadillac ambulance was bodied by Miller instead of Meteor, as was stated in the front page photo caption of the last issue of *The Criterion*. While I'm well aware of the styling differences between the two coachbuilders' 1956 products - compare Paul's car on top with the Meteor-bodied Cadillac combination Mahlon Thompson used to own - let's just say this is one mistake my computer's spell checker was not designed to catch! Considering that I have to check the difference every time, I'm also frankly glad that the two Ohio-based companies, with Miller in Bellefontaine and Meteor in Piqua, decided to merge under the Wayne Works umbrella that very year!



THE ULTIMATE SAFETY CAR

An ad in the February 1997 *Old Car Trader* brought my attention to an armor-plated "ex-Sheik" 1961 Cadillac limousine being offered for sale by Pennsylvania Motor Sport in Skippack. As I'm currently writing a book about armored automobiles under the tentative title "Fortified Fleetwoods," I was prompted to cross the Delaware and examine it at the first possible opportunity.

Peter Brotman, the proprietor of Pennsylvania Motor Sport, actually knew little about the history of this car, which was one of twenty eight he acquired from the Ernest Stern Collection in Pittsburgh. After a phone conversation confirmed that the car had a thick, three-piece windshield, my hopes were high that this car was the one built by Hess & Eisenhardt of Cincinnati for Iraqi Premier Abdel Karim Kassem (*top of page*), as depicted in the 1961 chapter of PCS Publications Director Walt McCall's book *80 Years of Cadillac-LaSalle*. A 1975 Hess & Eisenhardt reprint from *Cincinnati* magazine shows a side view of this same car, though this article says that the car was built for President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt. It is possible H&E built more than one armor-plated Cadillac limousine in 1961 - quite a feat since even H&E's Kennedy Continental wasn't armored until after that Dark Day in Dallas - or the car was a gift from one Arab leader to another.

In any event Brotman promised that the "ex-Sheik" Cadillac, while it was not running after being stored for many years, was in restorable condition and showed just 11,000 miles on the odometer. In its current state he was asking \$13,000 for the car but

expected to put some work into it and make it driveable. After scheduling an appointment for the first Wednesday in February, I imagined that the car would have several interesting modifications to accommodate the armor plating. Among other things I expected to find that the door hinges, door locks and window mechanisms would be different from the stock items, and that the car's wheels would have anti-puncture countermeasures and more than the standard number of lugs.

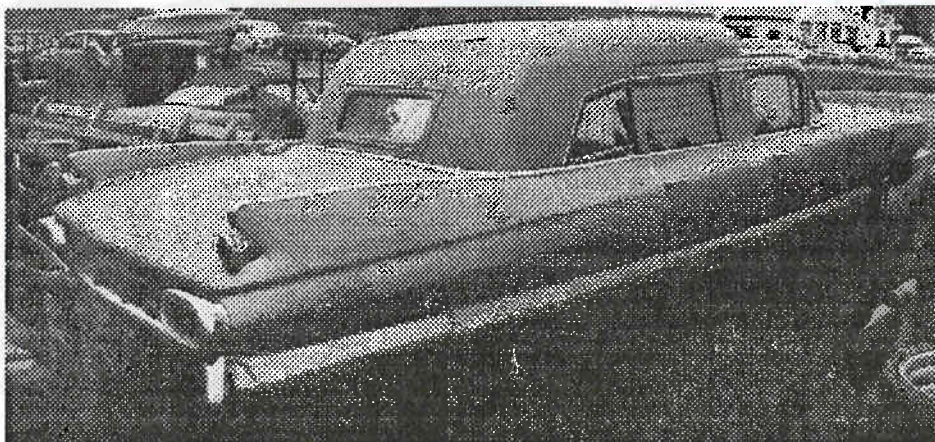
While rust was apparently limited to the surface of the exterior and the mileage seemed authentic, the armoring job on the Pennsylvania Motor Sport car (*below*) was obviously far less sophisticated than the H&E Kassemobile and there were no tags or other marks to identify the armorer. While H&E had managed to produce curved bullet-resistant glass by 1961 (a discreet extra pair of windshield posts were added to simplify the immensely complex task of bridging the factory "dogleg" pillars), the windshield in this car used three entirely flat panes of glass, overhead windshield wipers and a crude-looking cast metal surround to fill the huge gap to the OEM windshield trim. Another black mark included a



hardly tasteful repaint from black to gold, with noticeable overspray on the moldings and weatherstripping.

The fully operable side windows and ventpanes, mirrored on the outside & tinted on the inside, each comprised four individual layers of glass and were exactly one inch thick for the chauffeur and 1 3/8 inches thick for the rear passengers. That this car was not an H&E was further implied by the lack of metal channels bonded to each window to keep the multi-layered glass from separating. In the interior the original rear door releases were replaced with a custom type, mounted in the center of highly modified window sills, that slid rearward to open the vault-like doors.

While it was obviously not a Hess & Eisenhardt, built in a secured section of the Cincinnati plant under a code name that kept the customer's identity a secret to all but one or two top executives, the car at Pennsylvania Motor Sport was still an interesting oddity. The stock Fleetwood Seventy Five Series bodysell had a raised roof over the passenger compartment and an eleven inch center stretch between front and rear doors, to permit the fitting of a custom interior with flower patterned gold brocade trim, a sofa-style rear seat, gold-plated fittings and three folding jump seats built into the back of the chauffeur's partition. The trailing tips of the rear tail fins were rounded off and trimmed with a free-standing circular tail light (*below*) that was borrowed from some other GM car but I'm not sure which one. In any event, readers should let me know if these photos recall a newsreel, documentary or magazine photo that might shed light on the original customer's identity. Potential buyers can contact Pennsylvania Motor Sport at (610) 584-5900.



WIDENING OUR NET

PCS "Noreasters" who have electronic mail addresses should provide them to Chapter President Leo Maren III at caddy@bellatlantic.net, so that he can assemble a list in time for the April 20th meeting. Maren notes that E-mail has been a big boon to those with the most PCS business to discuss, since "it's faster and cheaper than writing a letter and you don't have to think about the best time to return someone's call."

OTHER CAR CLUBS ROLL OUT THE RED CARPET FOR PCS

PCS people who attended the 1996 International Meet in St. Paul, Minnesota may recall how the Heartland Regional Buick Club simultaneously hosted its 8th Annual Meet in Minneapolis. There PCS members found many of Buick's best on display, and several attendees of the Heartland Buick Meet drove their cars across town for a return courtesy visit.

With the **Buick Club of America** meeting in **St. Louis, Missouri** from **July 16-20**, Pittsburgh area PCS member John Ehmer says that the BCA is looking for Buick-chassied procars to attend. The hosting chapter will even waive the registration fee for any procar displayed, although you'll still be obligated to pay for any connected tours, events and meals. For more information call John at (412) 563-4779 or write

him at 1542 Princess Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15246.

In case you have the whole week off when the PCS meets in Baltimore and you're also a member of the **Cadillac-LaSalle Club**, their 1997 Grand National in **Chicago August 13-16** also features a professional car class. For further information call Tom or Jan McGuire in Lake Zurich, IL at (847) 540-5708.

KILL ALL THE LAWYERS, THEN GIVE THEM A LIFT

The October, 1996 issue of *American Funeral Director* wondered whether Florida morticians will be able to continue leading funeral processions, since the Florida Supreme Court recently ruled that they might be liable for negligent motorists who caused an accident after failing to yield to a funeral procession.

At the core of the controversy is a case involving a woman in an Orlando convoy who was injured in

such an accident and sued both the offending motorist and the funeral home leading the procession. As the case moved through the courts, a judge on the 5th District Court of Appeals even asserted that "perhaps the funeral director could have planned the procession so that it only took right ... turns."

Meeting in Tampa last August, members of the Florida Funeral Directors Association feared that the decision would make funeral directors liable for actions over which they have absolutely no control. While State Rep. Alzo Reddick Sr. and State Senator Katherine Harris are sponsoring an amendment to the Florida traffic statute that would free funeral firms from liability for negligence so long as they followed the language of the law and acted with prudent and reasonable care, Florida funeral directors discussed what their firms are doing in light of the court ruling. One funeral home prints a disclaimer on its memorial folders, telling people that the firm assumes no liability for organizing the procession. A county sheriff in attendance advocated refurbishing retired police cars and recruiting a corps of volunteers to serve as escorts.

CELEBRITY RESTING PLACES

According to the October, 1996 *American Funeral Director*, a New Jersey used car lot recently discovered a person's ashes in the trunk of a 1988 Chevrolet Celebrity it was servicing. This was definitely a first for Peter Cirinai, owner of the New Brunswick Auto Exchange, who has found things like food, clothing, bags of garbage and even artificial Christmas trees in the cars he buys but never the remains of a previous owner.

According to police, the large plastic bag containing the remains had slipped into the spare-tire well and stayed in the trunk while the Celebrity was sold from one dealer to another; the car, which had been on Cirinai's lot for about a month, had been purchased from Freehold Nissan, which had bought it at a South Jersey auto auction that had in turn purchased it from yet another dealer. A tag tied to the bag, indicating that it came from the crematory at Monmouth Memorial Park in Tinton Falls, allowed police to identify the remains as those of James Proctor of Long Branch; he had died, ironically, as a result of burns sustained in a 1989 car fire.

Unaware that her father's remains were still in the trunk, Proctor's 29-year-old daughter Michelle explained that she had sold the car to Freehold Toyota in June. "We were planning on dumping the ashes in the ocean," she said, adding that "we kept them in the trunk so we could do that. I'm so forgetful sometimes."

"WHEN YOU SAID THEY WERE IN STABLE CONDITION..."

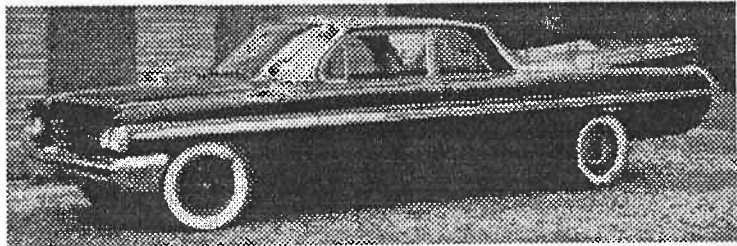


This bit of wit comes from the cover of a Christmas card put out by British Ambulance Society to raise money for the British Ambulance Museum Appeal Fund. The Real McCoy is rendered in color and contains the message "Season's Greetings" on the inside. To get yourself ready for next Christmas, packs of ten accompanied by white envelopes can be purchased for \$4.50 a pack plus U.S. postage from George Hamlin of the PCS Mid-Atlantic Chapter at P.O. Box 123, Fulton, Maryland 20759-0123.

CRITERION CLASSIFIEDS:

1940 Henney-Packard Series 1801 Hearse/Ambulance. Restoration started, body sandblasted and primered. Covered dual sidemounts, 3-way entry. \$3,500. Joe Napoli, (201) 251-9746.

1962 Pontiac Flower Car Prototype by Armbruster Stageway. Losing storage for hand-built one-off stretched from a 2-door Catalina body by the famous factory in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Complete and running but needs restoration. Seats five. Hi-compression 389 2-barrel police/taxi motor. Best offer. Dave Csimbok, (908) 541-2794 or e-mail AMCXpress@aol.com.



1958 Eureka Cadillac Limousine-style Combination Coach. Original gray finish with matching crinkle-finish top and optional rear wrap-around corner windows. two-tone nylon and leather interior with optional formal drapes and walnut grain Formica casket floor with reversible rollers. This 44,000 mile car attended the 1978 and 1982 PCS International Meets before going into carriage house storage in 1986. Asking \$6,500. Carlton Ham, (603)934-4913 or e-mail whtmtman@aol.com. Also selling **1967 Miller-Meteor Cadillac Embassy Flower Car**, one of six built during the 1967 model year. 50,000 original miles, Inverness Green exterior with black crinkle-finish roof. Trophy winner at several PCS International Meets and the Cadillac-LaSalle Grand National in Albany, New York. \$15,995.

1974 Superior Cadillac High Top Ambulance. Complete equipment and emergency lighting, 93,000 miles, some rust on hood and rear quarter panels. \$1,000. Jim Spahr, (610) 527-0223.

1977 Superior Cadillac Funeral Coach. Russet red exterior, black interior and Landau-style top. 66,000 miles. Tape deck. Newly inspected and excellent running condition. Needs body repair on passenger side after being sideswiped by a deer. Asking only \$900. Brian Stahl, (412) 563-4779 or E-mail hogid@ix.netcom.com.

New PCS member wants 1959-74 Cadillac Ambulance. Mike Murphy, (301) 577-7923 or E-mail murphy_m@bls.gov.

Mini Hearse Wanted within an hour's drive from New York City. Also selling **1984 Armbruster-Stageway 6-door Limousine.** E-mail George Tower at tower@tiac.net.

Repair or Service Manual Wanted for 1970s Superior Flower Car rear deck. Mike Barruzza, (215) 788-8105.

CRITERION CALENDAR:

April 11-13 (Fri.-Sun.), Hershey, PA: Hershey in the Spring. For more information call (717) 867-4810.

April 12-13 (Sat.-Sun.), Allentown, PA: Spring Thaw fire equipment flea market at the Agricultural Hall, Lehigh County Fairgrounds, 18th & Chew Streets.

April 17-20 (Thurs.-Sun.), Carlisle, PA: Spring Carlisle, at the Fairgrounds. For more info: (717) 243-7855.

April 20th (Sun.), Wood Ridge, NJ: PCS Northeast Chapter spring business meeting, 1 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, intersection of Valley and Columbia Boulevards. **See front page for more information.**

April 27th (Sun.), Parsippany, NJ: Spring Show sponsored by the Cadillac Club of North Jersey at the UPS Warehouse, 799 Jefferson Road. For more info call Craig Stewart, (201) 438-1757 between 9:30 & 10 pm.

April 27th (Sun.), Macungie, PA: All GM Show at Memorial Park. Info: (610) 367-6664 bet. 6:30 & 9 pm.

May 2-3 (Fri.-Sat.), Hershey, PA: 2nd Annual AACA Museum Auto Expo, in the Green Field.

May 10th (Sat.), Lewes, DE: All GM Show. For more information call Don Addor at (302) 934-8021.

May 17th (Sat.), Manheim, PA: Red Rose Auction and Flea Market.

June 7th (Sat.), Woodbury, NJ: Valley Forge Region Cadillac-LaSalle Club show at Vallee and Bowe.

June 8th (Sun.), Northeast Philadelphia: German-American fire muster. For more information call Mike Baruzza at (215) 788-8105.

June 12-14 (Thurs.- Sat.), Lakehurst, NJ: Convention of the Society for the Preservation and Advancement of Antique Motorized Fire Apparatus of America (SPAAMFA). Vintage ambulance owners who might be interested in attending should contact Craig Stewart at (201) 438-1757.

June 21st (Sat., rain date Sun. 22nd), Bethlehem, PA: Concours of the Eastern United States, at Lehigh University's Mountaintop Campus.

June 28th (Sat.), Harrisburg, PA: Central Region Cadillac-LaSalle Club show at Brenner Cadillac.

July 13th (Sun.), Easton, PA: 200th Anniversary Birthday Parade featuring vintage emergency vehicles. For more information call Mike Baruzza at (215) 788-8105.

July 25-27 (Fri.-Sun.), Carlisle, PA: Summer Carlisle, at the Fairgrounds. For more info: (717) 243-7855.

August 2-3 (Sat.-Sun.), Macungie, PA: Das Awkscht Fesch. To pre-register call (610) 967-2317.

August 3rd (Sun.), Glenside, PA: The Greater Glenside Chamber of Commerce invites PCS members to join the SI-17 Special Interest Class of their 4th annual car show. An entire mile of Easton Road between the train station and the Beaver College Campus will be closed to traffic for this mall-style event. Entrants that pre-register by July 26, 1997 save \$5 (show registration costs \$20 per car) and receive a special commemorative plaque. For more information contact Jack Ripley at 346 Monroe Ave., Glenside, PA 19038 or (215) 887-9084.

August 9th (Sat.), New Hope, PA: Professional Car Class on display today

August 13-16 (Wed.-Sat.), Chicago, IL: 1997 Cadillac-LaSalle Club Grand National will have a professional car class. Must be a Cad.-LaS Club member to participate. Further info: Tom or Jan McGuire, (847) 540-5708.

August 19-24 (Tues.-Sun.), Timonium, MD: 21st Annual International Meet of the Professional Car Society, hosted by the Mid-Atlantic Chapter at the Marriott Hunt Valley Inn, 245 Shawan Road. Scheduled activities include motorcades to the B&O Railroad Museum on Thurs., Aug. 21 and the Fire Museum of Maryland on Sat., Aug. 23, where regional EMS squads will display their rigs alongside those of the PCS and the Association for the Preservation of Historic Ambulances. Concours judging will take place on Fri., Aug. 22nd at the Ladew Topiary Gardens, followed by a delicious catered lunch at the gardens' fox hunters lodge. Non-automotive activities include a visit to historic Fort McHenry on August 19th and a tour of Washington D.C. on August 20th. **For registration materials** write to **PCS 1997 International Meet, P.O. Box 2023, York, PA 17405**, fax (301) 649-1069 or phone Mid-Atlantic Chapter President Gene Lichtman at (301) 649-1321. Individuals and businesses that want to sponsor a class trophy (\$25 including a mention in the meet program) or advertise in the program (a full page costs \$ 100, a half page \$60, a quarter page \$30 and a business card just \$10) can submit ads and checks to the PCS Mid-Atlantic Chapter at P.O. Box 4795, Colesville, MD 20914-4785.

August 30th (Sat.), Boyertown, PA: Duryea Days Car Show & Flea Market. For more info: (610) 367-2090.

September 1st (Mon.), Ludwig's Corner, PA: Labor Day Horse and Antique Car Show.

September 12th (Fri.), West Chester, PA: Vintage emergency vehicles are invited to participate in Cruise Night/Police Night at the Faulkner dealerships. For more information call Don Miller at (610) 647-1358.

September 21st (Sun.), Lahaska, PA: Valley Forge Region Cadillac-LaS "Local National" at Peddler's Village.

September 26-28 (Fri.-Sun.), Englishtown, NJ: Auto show & swap meet. For more info: (908) 446-7800

THE PROFESSIONAL CAR SOCIETY

"Dedicated to the restoration and preservation of vintage ambulances, funeral cars & livery vehicles"

NORTHEAST CHAPTER

CHAPTER PRESIDENT:

Leo M. Maren III
369 Chestnut Street
Stirling, NJ 07980

(908) 647-3738
caddy@bellatlantic.net

SECRETARY:

Mary M. Hookway
201 Glenside Trail
Sparta, NJ 07871

(201) 729-8083

VICE-PRESIDENT & ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR:

Bill Marcy
349 Lookout Avenue
Hackensack, NJ 07601

(201) 342-4871

CHAPTER CO-TREASURERS:

Andrew & Karen Toton
765 Livezey Street
Philadelphia, PA 19128

(215) 483-2078

CRITERION EDITOR:

Gregg D. Merksamer
37 Hardscrabble Road
Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510

(914) 741-0957
Merks62@prodigy.com

CRITERION PUBLISHER & NATIONAL PCS PRESIDENT:

Michael A. Barruzza
700 Beaver Street
Bristol, PA 19007

(215) 788-8105
Fax: (215) 788-1931

Servicing Professional Car Society members in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania, the Northeast Chapter of the PCS operates under a charter granted by the Society's Board of Directors on August 19th, 1986. Subscription to this publication is by membership in the Chapter through the Membership Director listed above. **Membership in the national organization of the PCS is a prerequisite to membership in any of its regional chapters.** Details on joining can be obtained from National Secretary Beverly Ruff at P.O. Box 9636, Columbus, Ohio 43209 or by accessing the official PCS home page at <http://www.professionalcar.org>.

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JEFF & MARY HOOKWAY]
210 GLENSIDE TRAIL
SPARTA, NJ 07871

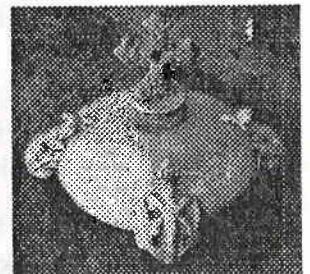
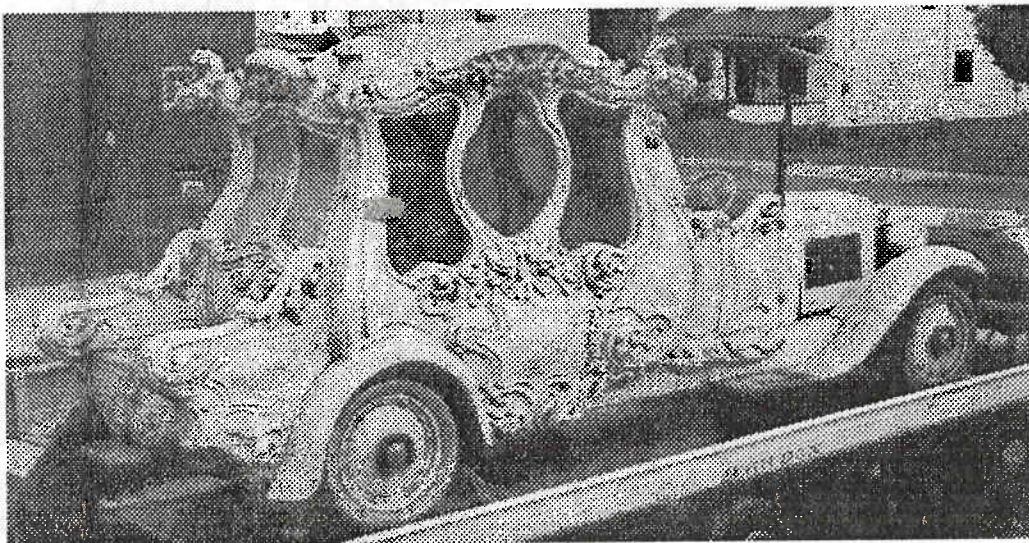
FIRST CLASS MAIL

THE PROFESSIONAL CAR SOCIETY
Northeast Chapter
700 Beaver Street
Bristol, Pennsylvania 19007-3823



The Criterion

NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHEAST CHAPTER
OF THE PROFESSIONAL CAR SOCIETY



UP FROM URUGUAY: Lowell, Michigan funeral coach dealer Rance Bennett recently delivered this elaborately carved 1929 Studebaker child's hearse to Pittsburgh-area PCS member John Ehmer. To get the coach into its eight foot shipping container, the rear wheels and the rooftop dome and cross were temporarily removed. Considered a cultural treasure, it took more than two years of administrative wrangling to get the car out of Uruguay.