



Professional Car Society

Florida Chapter

4th Quarter Newsletter

October 2009

Good day to all Florida members. What a busy fall we're having. The PCS is back on track and doing quite well, membership is growing, members are happier, and the weather in Florida is finally cooling off. There are quite a few activities going on and I would like to invite the PCS-Florida Chapter members to get involved. Below is a listing of what is happening:

Turkey Rod Run: Nov 26, 27, 28, & 29. This is a HUGE car show and swap meet and if you are in need of parts, you will probably find it here. Members will be meeting at Bill Wright's house Fri Nov 27 at 8:30 a.m., then caravanning to the speedway. Cars will be parked, then off to the swap meet to see all the other beautiful cars. There is a registration fee for this show. www.daytonabeachcarshows.com

Gaslight Parade: Nov 27th in Ormond Beach. After the show at the speedway we meet later that evening to participate in the Gaslight Parade with many other vehicles and fire trucks. No charge for this event and we get to go Code 3. Contact Bill Wright for more information.

Ormond Beach Car Show: Nov 28th in Ormond Beach. This Saturday show has a special category just for the Professional Car so hope to have at least half a dozen attend. Trophies will be awarded as well. There is a charge to be in this show. www.aaca.org/volusia

East Palatka Christmas Parade: Nov 27th in East Palatka, FL. Please check with Pam and Sam Gill for more information as they are planning on being in that parade. 386.329.9188

New Smyrna Beach Christmas Parade: Dec 5th 3 p.m. Need to register for this show but we do go Code 3 for about 4 miles through downtown NSB. Please contact Richard Vyse. 386.427.3634

"Big Daddy Don Garlits" Toys for Tots Car Show: 1st Saturday in December held at his museum in Ocala, FL. I understand all you need is to bring toys for the kids but should check further if attending.

As you can see, there are many events taking place in various places throughout Florida. Certainly would be fun to have as many members attend as many events as possible. Please feel free to contact me for additional information or to let me know what shows you might be attending.

Moving on, I would like to address the direction I see the PCS-Florida Chapter headed in. When trying to get this club off the ground again, I never imagined this club with all the formalities such as having a board, having officers, and a web site. I believe this club can be a viable club and my intentions are to provide information about activities being held in Florida for members to attend as they can. There is more activity in my area due to the volume of shows here so naturally you will see more here. I know it is not easy for Florida members to attend these shows because of the proximity of where we all live and I will do my best to keep members involved and welcome input as well as volunteers for positions.

Tale of the “*Criterion*”

Let me tell you the story of a man in Florida who loved “*Criteria*”. This man dreamed of the day he would own one for his very own. You see, it all began many years ago while attending a show in Gulfport, FL. It was Kevin Lynch’s 1974 *Criterion* that just took my breath away that spring day so it is his fault.



Kevin Lynch’s 1974 Cadillac Criterion

I arrived at this car show in my 1972 Cadillac S&S 3-way hearse with my son Skyler. As soon as I saw this ambulance I fell in love. It was on this day I vowed to have one of my very own. Unfortunately, that dream has taken many years to come true. One thing you have to understand is the “*Criterion*” is a rare ambulance. It was made for only 3 years beginning in 1974 and discontinued after 1976 due to the downsizing of the Cadillac. As I understand there were only 150 total *Criteria*’s built over the 3 years. A proto-type *Criterion* was built in 1973 and used to show the shirts in D.C. what could be done. The proto-type ended up in Orlando and became so rusted it was used in a fire drill.

Over the years I continued to look for a *Criterion* with no luck. Occasionally one would surface but its condition made it just too much of a project for me or the nice ones were too expensive. In December 2007 I got a call from Paul Steinberg informing me of an ambulance for sale that PCS member Dave McCamey was selling due to health issues. It was not a *Criterion* but felt that dream was one I had to let go. Paul warned me it had been sitting outside just blocks from Lake Huron in Cleveland for a number of years and did not know much about it but if interested would get me pictures. Paul sent me some pictures and the moment I saw it, and knew I had to have it even though it was not a *Criterion*. For starters it was orange with an orange interior and “I love orange”. It also was a 1973 Cadillac and I have always loved the 1973 era.



1973 Cadillac “Lifeliner” ambulance as it sat for a number of years.

What I thought was going to be a simple purchase took several months and a process of submitting bids. Thank goodness when I got the call in Feb 2008 that I was the high bidder, you can imagine my level of excitement. I enlisted the help of Ron Devies to get the ambulance to his place in Alliance, OH where it sat for another two months before finally getting it home to Florida. Once home I began to get the Lifeliner back to a respectable state ASAP. I've had a ton of work done to it and even drove it to the PCS-International Meet in Flint, MI last August.



2009 International Meet held in Flint, MI with Sarah Snook's 1966 Cadillac

Before leaving for the Flint meet I had an email forwarded to me letting me know that Leo Maren was interested in selling his 1974 Criterion. Leo and I swapped emails for a couple weeks but did not have a concrete deal in place. Terri and I headed off to Flint for a week of fun and fellowship with the Lifeliner. While there we talked to a lot of PCS people and it seemed as if everyone owned more than one pro-car. I started pointing this out to Terri who I believe, finally got the hint that I wanted another pro-car and in particular, a Criterion. As we head home we talked about it for two days and she finally gave her blessing to get it. You can imagine just how quickly I got in touch with Leo to let him know we had a deal and bear with me while I get transportation arranged. I checked with a transportation company who was willing to bring it to me but preferred it running if possible. I contact Leo who got it started and gave it a bath in anticipation of it leaving his home very soon. But, while attending a local cruise-in with fellow PCS members Pam & Sam Gill the transporting of the Criterion came up again. Turns out they happened to own a Dodge diesel dually and were more than happy to let me use it. Sam even arranged for a 5th wheel flat bed trailer. You can imagine my excitement. So I made arrangements, letting all involved know when I was leaving and when I would be there to pick up the Criterion. Mike Barruzza from Bristol, PA was coming by as well as Paul Vickory to assist in loading this monster.



Pam & Sam Gill's Dodge Dually and trailer

So away I go to get the truck and trailer and headed north. I left Thursday evening on Oct 1st driving through the night wanting to get there as soon as I can. I managed to get within 100 miles of Leo's house and pulled over to take a soda and bathroom break thinking I was home free. Getting back on the turnpike the transmission on the truck started acting funny. With major construction and Friday afternoon traffic, I headed for the next exit. I get the truck into a store parking lot only to see smoke billowing and fluid pouring out from the tranny. Oh joy!



What does one do now? I called Sam and explained what has happened and while talking to him notice a transmission shop across the street. I talked with them and they managed to get the truck to their shop and begin the task of figuring out what is wrong. I had to disconnect the trailer and leave it at the store for the time being. They pulled the tranny and ripped it apart, never a good sign, and turns out it will require a complete rebuild. Sam and Pam talked with them and gave their approval except this is Friday afternoon and there is no way they can get all the parts here and done today. Matter of fact the main part cannot be here until Monday so I'm stuck at a turnpike exit in Delaware and no truck. I did huff it to a Quality Inn about 1 ½ miles down the road and got a room for three nights. I rented a car and headed back to the store to explain why my trailer was going to be there until Monday afternoon. The store manager was ok with that so I'm set to go. Come Saturday morning I head for Leo's place to look at the Criterion. Mike arrives and we check it out pretty good. It has been sitting for a few years but all in all in pretty good shape. We start it up after giving the batteries a jump and except for a slight ticking in the left cylinder bank, it sounds good. All lights and both sirens work perfectly. It is decided to drive it to Mike's Garage Majahl in Bristol, PA therefore making it closer for me to pick it up when the truck is ready on Monday. After eating a hearty breakfast and Paul joining us, we head off to Mike's some 68 miles away and the Criterion made it there with no issues. I take Leo home and we

settle the account. Mike and I agree to meet at his garage on Sunday so I could play with it for the day. I picked up some cleaning solutions and spent about 4 hours cleaning it up. Mike and I held some great conversations about everything under the sun, from his collection of pro-cars to his wife Vickie. She is such a nice person and a car-gal. Lucky man there Mike.

Come Monday I returned the rental and just couldn't sit still all day waiting on the truck so I spent the morning walking up and down the street. I bet I was on that street so long people thought I was a male prostitute. After grabbing a soda and chips I spent about 2 hours sitting on the trailer not wanting it to be hauled away by store management. About 2:25 p.m. I saw the lift coming down so I knew they had to be close on the truck. Off I went only to be told it would be about another hour. At 3:20 p.m. it is ready to go so I'm off to hook the trailer up and head to Mike's. Mike and Vickie arrive about 6:15 p.m. and we tried to get the Criterion loaded. But, due to my excitement I ended up ripping the exhaust off as I was pulling onto the trailer. Fun-fun but it is finally on the trailer.



Mike and Vickie Barruzza with Criterion loaded and ready to go

I ended up driving 21 hours straight, leaving Monday night at 8 p.m. and arriving home on Tuesday afternoon. I got it unloaded at the funeral home and took it to my mechanic for further inspection hoping he can just straighten the exhaust out. It is never that easy guys. Turns out the exhaust poked a hole in the transmission pan so that had to be pulled, banged back out, and welded. Once complete I was off to Muffler Man, who installed a beautiful exhaust system.

So at this point all I've been doing is polishing items, cleaning items, and enjoying the car. Already have taken it to the local cruise-in along with my Lifeliner and Bill Wright's 64 Buick. By the time you get this I will have the lettering completed, hand painted this time.

Here we have Bill Wright's 1964 Buick Flexible combo ambulance with its new lettering. Looks really nice.



Bill's 1964 Buick Flexible with new "Hand-Painted" lettering



**1974 Criterion, 1973 Lifeliner, and 1964 Buick Flexible
Attending the New Smyrna Beach Car Cruise**

I will close with a **"Big Thank-You"** to the Gill's for the use of their truck and trailer for it is PCS friends like this that make being a member worth it all.

May God Bless.

Richard Vyse
PCS-Florida Chapter
President