



# The Criterion

NEWSLETTER of the NORTHEAST CHAPTER of the PROFESSIONAL CAR SOCIETY

Third Quarter 2000

Gregg D. Merksamer, Editor

## KINGSTON CROWNS A SUPER SUMMER!

"The Limestone City" Welcomes PCS With Fireworks, Bagpipes



A big draw when the PCS came to Kingston's City Hall on Friday evening, John Kellam's 1933 McLaughlin Buick combination recalled the days when Canadian built cars were different from their US counterparts - Gregg Merksamer photo

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Northeast Chapter Meeting  
Sunday, November 19th

The nomination and election of 2001 officers will top the agenda when the Northeast Chapter heads to Wood Ridge, NJ for its autumn meeting at one p.m. Sunday, November 19th, gathering in Craig Stewart's turf at the First Presbyterian Church at 190 Valley Boulevard (at Columbia Blvd.). To reach the church from I-80 and other points North, take NJ 17 south to the Wood Ridge/Moonachie exit, make a right at the end of the exit ramp, and follow the road uphill to a "T" and turn right; make a sharp left at the bank onto Columbia Blvd., and go two blocks straight to the church on the left. If you're coming from the South exit the G.S.P. at exit 153, take NJ 3 eastbound about six miles east to the junction with Route 17 north, and take that to the Wood Ridge/Moonachie U-turn ramp, turning left at the light to cross back over 17 and climb the hill; at the "T" intersection turn right, then left at the bank onto Columbia Blvd. and go two blocks straight to the church on the left. Should you find yourself lost enroute, call the church at (201) 438-8966.

While the hosting torch had been passed to Evan Butchers and Len Langlois of the small but able PCS Trillium Chapter, the Northeast Chapter maintained a high profile at the Professional Car Society's 24th Annual International Meet in Kingston, Ontario this

August 8th-12th, sponsoring numerous awards and taking home a few honors of their own as Chief Judge George Hamlin donned a bright red cowboy hat to announce the class winners at Saturday's awards banquet. Ted Collins' 1966 Superior Cadillac flower



**Retiring PCS membership secretary Beverly Ruff is honored by past PCS Presidents (L to R) Carlton Ham, Mahlon Thompson, Fred Feiser, Gene Dybinski, Bob Parsons, Tom Hoczyk, and Mike Barruzza at Saturday evening's closing banquet. - Gregg D. Merksamer photo**

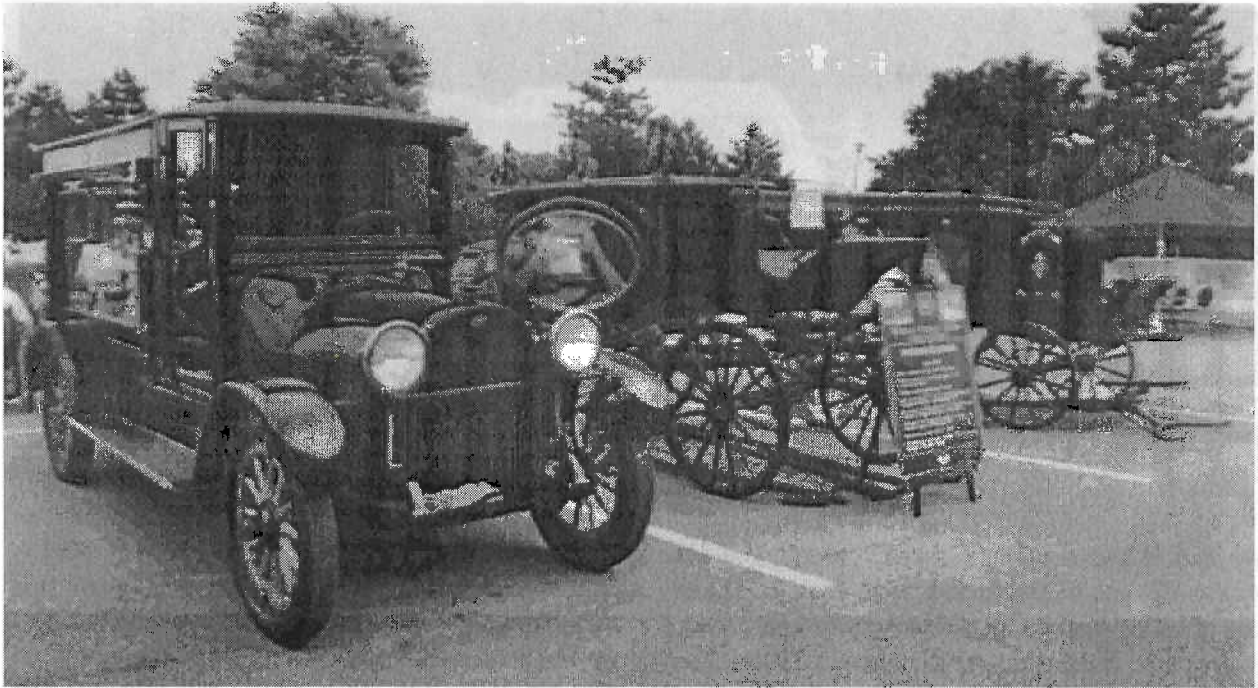
car particularly distinguished itself by winning the Best-of-Show trophy and, for the second year in a row, the Cadillac-LaSalle Club award presented by the Northeast Chapter for the best Cadillac-chassied professional car in attendance. Mike Barruzza and Dottie Forvour sponsored the awards for funeral coach/ambulance "combinations," with first-in-class going to Cranbury, NJ member Mahlon Thompson's 1953 Henney Packard Junior while 2nd and 3rd place went respectively to Brian Vaughan's bronze-colored 1974 Miller-Meteor Cadillac from Indianapolis and the 1964 M-M Paramount landau/limousine hybrid brought from Grand Rapids, Michigan by Larry and Michelle Allan.

The PCS Northeast Chapter also sponsored the Medic's Choice ultimately shared by Evan Butchers' 1965 Superior Pontiac and Joseph Torregrossa's 1975 M-M Cadillac hi-top ambulances, while Bill and Lucille Marcy donated the distance awards given to Jim Crabtree's 1971 M-M Cadillac Lifeline in the

driven category (hopefully compensating him for the tires he went through while fighting alignment problems all the way from California) and Connecticut enthusiast Dawson Blackmore, Jr.'s 1957 Memphian DeSoto high-top ambulance in the trailered category. The George S. Stewart & Son livery service of Wood Ridge, NJ presented all three prizes in the pre-1971 hearse class (with 1st, 2nd and 3rd going to Larry Williams' Finch-bodied 1919 Reo Speed Wagon, Marty Schmeisser's 1966 M-M Cadillac and Dennis Lloyd's 1959 Superior Cadillac) as well as the first place trophy for post-1970 hearses given to Mike Barruzza's 1973 S&S Victoria.

A grand total of 51 professional cars came to Kingston, with the two oldest being an oval-windowed 1870 horsedrawn created by the Hamill Carriage Company of St. Catherines, ON (its elaborate rooftop urns require its owner Ernie Morgan to remove the rear wheels each time it goes





**The oldest hearse at Kingston was Ernie Morgan's oval-windowed 1870 horsedrawn built by the Hamill Carriage Company of St. Catherines, Ontario, which was flanked by a Finch-bodied 1919 Reo and an unknown-make 1886 horsedrawn that were both brought by Larry Williams. - Gregg D. Merksamer photo**

inside its transport trailer) and an unknown-make 1886 model brought by Larry Williams. Painted in a pretty silver/gray two-tone, John Kellam's 1933 McLaughlin Buick combination recalled the days when Canadian-built cars differed from their U.S. counterparts, while Dan Skivolocke of Alliance, Ohio augmented his 1959 Cadillac collection (he already owns a white 1959 limousine we saw at PCS Lancaster '99 and a 1959 S&S Victoria that he's currently restoring) with a red-and-white Superior 42" Royale ambulance found in Salt Lake City through the *Hemmings* web site. Having hosted an "early bird" tour for the PCS on Tuesday, the Gordon F. Tompkins Funeral Home came to Saturday's Concours with an unusual commercial glass 1994 S&S Fleetwood 6-door limousine and a front-drive Sedan DeVille fitted with a trunk-top cremation urn carrier developed by Victoriaville caskets of Quebec. "Cremations are now 40% of our business," explained Tompkins' manager Ian Moore, "and before we hit the 50-50 mark we wanted to have options for all families."

As the Trilliums treated us to the sort of pomp

and ceremony that no one does better than a member of the British Commonwealth - who could forget Fort Henry's fireworks-filled "sunset" ceremony on Wednesday, or how bagpiper Kevin Gallagher and Kingston town crier Chris Weinman came to entertain us at Saturday's closing banquet? - PCS Canada 2000 punctuated the formal itinerary with plenty of surprises. Kenneth Howe bravely stepped into the breach left by Southern California's bid withdrawal and offered to host our Silver Anniversary International Meet in Lebanon, Missouri next August 1st-4th, quipping "we are the 'Show-Me State'" to grateful applause at Friday morning's member meeting. "Saturday Night Live" alumnus Dan Ackroyd (who made the funeral directing profession look so good in "My Girl"), an area native along with rock musician Bryan Adams and Canada's first prime minister Sir John A. Macdonald, drove by the Days Inn in check out our displays at the wheel of his yellow 1940 Buick Special 8. "I saw this guy in a convertible and went over to talk to him," Mid-Atlantic Chapter President Steve Lichtman recalled of the encounter, "and after



The "Alternate Professional Car Concours" at the New Hope, PA auto show August 13 touted Nick Elias' 1963 Eureka Cadillac, Bob Behr's 1949 Flxible Buick and Mark DiGiovanni's 1971 M-M Cadillac.

- Mark DiGiovanni photo

we had talked a while I asked 'aren't you Dan Ackroyd?' and he responded 'well, yeah.' Like any one of us, he was just an enthusiast who came to look at the cars. It turns out he also owns a 1932 Pierce-Arrow limousine."

As the national PCS presidency passed from Tom Hoczyk to his vice-president Marty Schmeisser, the board of directors announced the much-welcome chartering of an Indiana Chapter with John Rabold as president; dues are only \$5.00 per year payable to Nick Bliss, P.O. Box 304, Valpariso, IN 46384, and well worth it judging from the superbly-illustrated first issue of their "Minute Man Monitor" newsletter. It was also announced that Clay Madison has formed a Comet/Cotner-Bevington Chapter (all the more significant as the first non-geographic PCS chapter and the first founded through the website message board) to catalog all Comet/C-B coaches built in Blytheville, Arkansas between 1955 and 1975. Reached at 1518 North Scenic Highway, Lake Wales, FL 33853, Clay hopes to publish four issues annually of "The Comet" newsletter to convey company history and owner stories about these fascinating, mostly Oldsmobile-chassied funeral cars and ambulances.

### NEW HOPE'S PROCAR CONCOURS

Northeast Chapter members whose calendars couldn't handle Canada availed themselves to an "Alternate Professional Car Concours" organized by

Harvey Schofield at the 44th Annual New Hope, PA Automobile Show on Sunday, August 13. Constructed during the second-to-last year in business for the esteemed Rock Falls, Illinois coachbuilder, Nick Elias' 1963 Eureka Cadillac hearse earned first place honors in the procar class while Bob Behr's Flxible-bodied 1949 Buick ambulance came in second and Mark & Kandi DiGiovanni's 1971 M-M Volunteer Cadillac ambulance took third place. While Schofield said that "torrential rain Saturday afternoon, and overcast skies threatening more of the same on Sunday, motivated the organizers to relocate judging of the reduced group of Sunday participants to the paved parking lot," the rain never came and Mark DiGiovanni added that "foot traffic was heavy on Sunday afternoon, and Bob, Nick and myself were kept busy describing our cars and explaining their place in history."

### WHEATON WELCOMES NOREASTERS, MID-ATLANTICS

While its organizer Rich Litton had regrets about the attendance, no one could dispute the synergy created when the Northeast and Mid Atlantic Chapters of the PCS united for a September 16th-17th "Autumn weekender" at Wheaton Village in Millville, NJ. Procars on display included Rich's 1965 Superior Pontiac high-top ambulance, George Hamlin's all-original 1953 Henney-Packard fire ambulance, a scarce and stylish 1966 Superior





Bill Deegan's 1966 Superior Pontiac Consort was a standout at the Northeast/Mid-Atlantic Chapter "Autumn Weekender" at Wheaton Village, NJ. - Gregg D. Merksamer photo

Pontiac Consort standard-wheelbase combination brought by Bill Deegan, Jr., Harvey Schofield's 1967 Lincoln Lehmann-Peterson mini-limo and a 1986 Oldsmobile Century hearse owned by Randy & Christine Gottschall, while Jeff & Mary Hookway and Ted & Linda May attended without show vehicles. "While a bit on the cool side, the weather was favorable and there was the usual procar discussions and photograph browsing, and some of our guests toured the Wheaton Village museum and witnessed old time glass blowing demonstrations," Rich Litton recalled. "On the bad side, several members who planned on attending had to cancel at the last minute due to health reasons and work obligations. In speaking to the members who did attend they felt the concept of the meet was a good one and the site was outstanding," and Rich hopes that the Northeast Chapter's November 19th meeting in Wood Ridge will offer an opportunity to "discuss how we can have a well-attended dual meet next year."

## PCS JOINS PLANES, TRAINS IN READING

Given free admission and prime exhibit space adjacent to the hangar housing the flea market, the PCS Northeast Chapter was a prominent participant in the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's "Planes, Trains & Automobiles" weekend at the Reading, PA Regional Airport September 23rd-24th.

"We were there on Sunday and it was absolutely beautiful day," Bill Marcy reported to Your Editor. "It's actually a very relaxing place, not a big hustle-and-bustle airport but a place that made you feel like you were in the country. Old cars are always interesting, but you don't get to see vintage aircraft very often so it was pretty wild to go inside this WW II radio plane and a plane they called a Flying Boxcar, which can hold three Jeeps and it's a lot like walking into a garage." Other attractions included a 1917 vintage electric bus that had been restored as a show shuttle, the 1939 Ford convertible sedan that 75-year old Ray Carr recently drove around-the-world in 80 days, eleven different model railroad dioramas (the largest of which was the Reading Company Technical and Historical Society's 1,600 square-foot HO layout) and various opportunities to take a ride in the Museum's open cockpit biplane or its WW II-vintage North American SNJ trainer. Bill Marcy adds that "the curator at Reading really likes procars and would like to see more of them up there next year."

## A COACH YOU CAN AF-FORD

The Askew-Houser Funeral Home of Ebensburg, PA has unveiled the fourth diecast model (no pun intended) in its 1/25 scale Professional Car Series, a 1950 Ford F-Series panel truck turned into a service coach by the shops of Siebert in Toledo, OH (*below*). "The funeral cars of the 1950s could be considered 'Plain Janes' compared to earlier Cadillacs and Packards," Timothy Houser concedes, "but Siebert's simple, dignified design confirmed that less could be more." Limited to 750 units and priced at only \$26.95 including postage & handling, this Ertl-built replica features slim-line side lanterns and Siebert's famous "Flying Wreath" quarter panel trim. To order call 1-800-774-4898 or write Askew-Houser at P.O. Box 6, 300 North Julian St, Ebensburg, PA 15931.



