



The Criterion

NEWSLETTER of the NORTHEAST CHAPTER of the PROFESSIONAL CAR SOCIETY

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MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Looking to 2005, our first Chapter event will take place on Saturday, February 19th, when we meet for dinner at the Bonfire Restaurant in Paterson, N.J. It's an easy place to find, located off Interstate 80, Exit 59, on the right side of Market Street between East 38th and East 39th Streets, and those of you who attended the dinner that the Northeast Chapter held there in 2000 will no doubt recall the great time we had. The food isn't cheap, with a fixed price dinner including salad, soda, a choice of beef, chicken or fish, dessert and coffee costing \$24.80 per person including tax and tip, but it's an excellent value given the quality and the dining room is comfortable and cheerfully decorated. Cocktails, if you want some, start at 6:30 pm while dinner begins at 7, but please RSVP to me at (201) 342-4871 so that I can arrange for the restaurant to have enough tables to seat us together. If you need directions, call the Bonfire directly at (973) 278-2400.

Other events have already been scheduled for the coming year as well. Be sure to mark Sunday, March 6th on your calendars, when the next Northeast Chapter business meeting takes place at a location that will be announced later by postcard. We also have our Fourth Annual Charity Car and Truck Show in Lahaska, Pennsylvania to look forward to on Sunday, June 12th, and our newsletter editor Gregg Merksamer is also seeking a suitable date sometime in April or May to schedule a pro-car convoy/mini-meet at the New York State Museum in Albany, where a marvelous exhibit of historic ambulances has just opened. If you have an idea for another Northeast Chapter activity, or a suggestion concerning old car shows that we can attend as a group, please don't hesitate to contact me or one of the other officers listed to the left. We are especially interested in getting a volunteer to host another Chapter Picnic like the fine one Paul and Donna Vickery held last summer.

If I have any other hopes for the coming year, it's that our members will take every opportunity to seek out like-minded professional car enthusiasts who might not be aware that the PCS exists and encourage them to join our group. With regards to the general public who may give hearses and ambulances a wide berth, every encounter is an opportunity to answer questions, clear up misconceptions, and educate the people around you. -

May Your Holidays Be Merry and Bright, BILL MARCY

MINUTES FROM SPARTA

Warm Weather Spurs an Ad Hoc Mini-Meet

Unusually warm, 65-degree weather prompted several people to bring their classics to the PCS Northeast Chapter's November 7th business meeting in Sparta, N.J. Our hosts, Chapter Treasurer Jeff Hookway and Secretary Mary Hookway, had their 1966 Cadillac DeVille convertible on hand as they welcomed attendees to the Sparta Volunteer Ambulance Squad HQ, while Bill & Lucille Marcy brought the 1949 Flexible Buick Roadmaster ambulance that Your Editor profiled in Third Quarter issue of The Criterion. The parking lot mini-meet also featured Peter & Skeeter DeMattia's 1989 Dodge Caravan "first call" coach and a baby blue 1963 S&S Cadillac Park Row combination coach driven all the way from Bristol, Pennsylvania by Mike & Vicky Barruzza. Other regulars in attendance included Fred & Tracy Goerlitz, Andy & Karen Toton, Jack Cipriano and Northeast Chapter V.P. Dan McCann. A new face at the meeting, representing the Raritan River Region of the Cadillac-LaSalle Club, was Pat Caruso of Green Brook, N.J., who reported that his "pro-car friendly" chapter has attracted 120 members owning 160 automobiles since it was formed two years ago. Intent on increasing this total, he passed out membership applications and complimentary copies of the Chapter publication Caddy Corner; a worthwhile website is also maintained at www.rrrclc.org.

Northeast Chapter President Bill Marcy opened the meeting by discussing PCS-related correspondence he has received in his capacity as the national Vice-President. During the 2004 PCS International Meet in Daytona, Jeremy Ledford of Tennessee-based Volunteer Chapter debuted a banner emblazoned with the club logo that regional-level PCS chapters can purchase and display as a recruitment tool when they take attend car shows as a group. These attractive, durable banners were originally slated to cost \$200 each, but PCS Chapter Relations Committee Co-Chair Lou Farah did some follow-up research and determined that the cost could be reduced to \$175 apiece if at least five chapters buy them. As an added inducement, banner purchases

will be subsidized by the national PCS treasury to some extent, with Marcy adding that "my gut feeling is the amount will probably be \$50, making the final cost to us \$125. Those of you who saw these banners in Daytona know that something like this would be great thing to have in Lahaska."

In further reference to the Peddler's Village show, the Sparta meeting attendees voiced unanimous approval for staging a Fourth Annual edition which was, following further discussion, scheduled for Sunday, June 12th, 2005 rain-or-shine. The Bucks County SPCA, who sent a letter of thanks for the \$1,308 they received following the 2004 event, will remain the beneficiary, with Bill Marcy declaring that "we chose them because they're local and they're grateful. The amount of money we raised last year fed a lot of animals." Beyond the purchase of a banner to promote the PCS Northeast Chapter more effectively, other ways to improve the meet were considered, with the most important proposals being the distribution of door prizes and restaurant coupons from merchants in Peddler's Village and more invitations to other car clubs such as the International Station Wagon Club, recently organized by Renfrew, Pennsylvania PCS member Chuck Snyder.



Jeff & Mary Hookway brought their 1966 Cadillac DeVille convertible to the PCS Northeast Chapter Meeting they hosted in Sparta, N.J. on November 7th, 2004.

One of the big attractions of collecting funeral vehicles and ambulances is that the full history of many cars can be chronicled from the very first owner, which has been a boon to PCS Archivist Tony Karsnia's ongoing effort to assemble a permanent, comprehensive database of member cars. Peter DeMattia reported that the PCS Northland Chapter website at www.northlandpcs.com, where Karsnia has maintained a similar database for some time, contains guidelines on what sort of information is requested on individual vehicles, and Karsnia can also be directly e-mailed on the topic at tcriterion@comcast.net. At the Northeast Chapter level, Gregg D. Merksamer (reached at [845] 986-6857 or merks62@warwick.net) has volunteered to assist members in compiling clear and suitably-comprehensive histories of their cars.

Former Chapter President Leo Maren III chaired a discussion concerning other activities where the PCS Northeast Chapter should participate as a group. One event he feels particularly strongly about is the Club Day at Das Awkscht Fescht, which takes place in Macungie, Pennsylvania in early August and typically attracts more than 1,400 vehicles. Bill Marcy reported that the PCS table set up at the AACA's Fall Hershey meet by Ann Keel of the Mid-Michigan Chapter proved extremely successful its first time up, passing out perhaps 30 applications to "people who owned pro-cars but came up to the table not knowing anything about the PCS."

While the great success of the 1999 PCS International in Lancaster has encouraged discussion of an encore in Northeast Chapter circles for some time, Bill Marcy emphasized that considerably more preparation will be required to land one given the recent establishment of a Meet Committee to evaluate International Meet bids from 2008 forward. Recalling how the Southern California Chapter won 2007 hosting privileges at the PCS governing board meeting in Daytona this past summer, Bill asserted "I have never seen a presentation like Lou Farah's, which had times, places and costs all laid out in great detail. If we're serious about hosting another International Meet, it will likely be harder than 1999. The new Committee won't allow one person to have the meet all on his shoulders. We must submit a proposal in writing, and we'll need at least five Chapter members to go on the hook financially. One reason the committee set up was that Zach Helm (hosting the 2005 International Meet in Denver)

signed a hotel contract in the PCS' name. The National won't assume any financial liability, though they will advance up-front funds as needed. The costs of these things are skyrocketing, and attendance seems to be going down as more, and bigger, regional events take place." Dan McCann observed that International Meets staged in the northeastern U.S. traditionally "have the best attendance, car-wise and people-wise, since Pennsylvania has the largest concentration of PCS members."

With these caveats considered, the discussion in Sparta turned to how, and exactly where, the Northeast Chapter might host a PCS International Meet. While the Hudson Valley above New York City was briefly considered, a general consensus emerged for the Mount Laurel region centered on New Jersey highways 70 and 73, thanks to the concentration of Chapter members in the area and its proximity to Philadelphia, Atlantic City and, by mass transit if need be, Manhattan island. As far as dates were concerned, it was suggested that the meet would be advantageously scheduled were it to take place during a week preceding or succeeding the Cadillac-LaSalle Club's 50th Anniversary Grand National Meet in Cherry Hill, N.J., which will take place August 13th-16th, 2008. After Bill urged that a preliminary itinerary be established by the time the PCS Northeast Chapter holds its next business meeting on Sunday, March 6th, Leo added that "I can't stress enough that three or four people will have to follow up. In 1999 we worked well as a team, and we were all still friends when it was all over, but we'll have to work harder to make it all come together the next time."



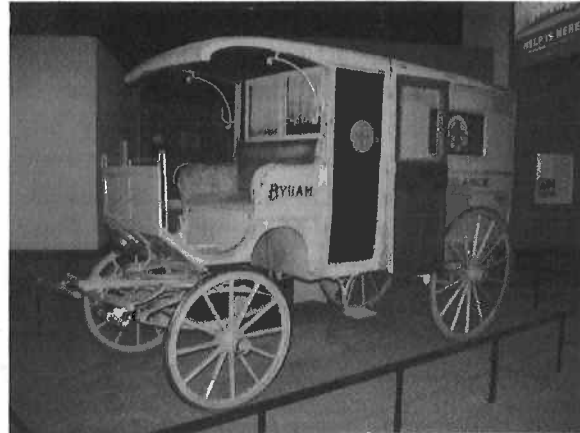
Following the Northeast Chapter's November 7th meeting in Sparta, N.J., Jack Cipriano, Andy Toton and Bill Marcy pose with Bill's 1949 Flexible Buick Roadmaster ambulance.

EMS EXHIBIT OPENS AT NYS MUSEUM IN ALBANY

On November 30th, 2004, Your Editor headed to the New York State Museum in Albany for the opening reception of "Help is Here: Emergency Medical Services in New York." This must-see special exhibit, open through September 11th, 2005, features fifteen historic ambulances ranging from a horse-drawn 1911 Cunningham to a 2004 Ford Econoline Type II raised roof van by McCoy-Miller, banner-sized period photographs depicting emergency squads in action across The Empire State, and an extensive gallery display containing splints, back boards, collars, CPR mannequins, early telemetry devices, vintage uniforms (one of which identifies the wearer as a "Medical Emergency Technician" instead of the other way around), a Bearcat scanner monitoring regional EMS transmissions and a pair of handcuffs of the type that was standard on New York City municipal ambulances in the late 19th Century.

If "Help is Here" has a central theme, it's that the hundred-year-long process of refinement represented by the vehicles and equipment on exhibit has also spurred significant enhancements in the skills and training of emergency personnel. Where yesterday's ambulance attendant was typically a part-time funeral home employee instructed in basic first aid at best, the modern paramedic undergoes thousands of hours of advanced training that enables them to save countless lives before the trip to the hospital even begins.

The Criterion is particularly proud to report that Myron Gittell, a PCS member from New Paltz, N.Y. (already known to many of you for reprinting and distributing Katherine Traver Barkley's 1978 book, "The Ambulance: The Story of Emergency Transportation of Sick and Wounded Through the Centuries," through his Load N Go Press in 1990) was responsible for the original idea and worked hard over a fifteen-year period to bring it to fruition. Senior Historian Geoffrey N. Stein, who serves as the New York State Museum's transportation and medical collection curator, recalled that "in 1989 Myron came to the Museum, saw our collection of fire apparatus, and inquired why we didn't have any ambulances, especially as so many departments operated them. We did have a 1939 Superior Pontiac



The oldest ambulance in the New York State Museum exhibit is a horse-drawn 1911 Cunningham Model 724 built in Rochester, N.Y. Fitted with a foot-operated warning bell, a spring-suspended "Chicago" cot and Light Silk Gray paint accented by gold lettering and silver plated hardware, it was originally constructed for W.E. Byham's funeral firm in Meadville, PA.

from the Adirondack Museum that had never been displayed, and Myron knew where to find other ambulances that had either served in New York State or been built in New York State, but injury, illness and death are subjects that some people have difficulty dealing with, so it took a long time to sell the idea to the Temporary Exhibit Committee."

After being originally rejected in 1989, and rejected again a second time in early 2001, the proposal was finally approved after the September 11th terrorist attacks and the subsequent opening of a permanent World Trade Center exhibit at the Museum that includes a 1994 Seagrave from FDNY Engine Company 6 that was crushed and burned at Ground Zero. "Because of 9/11, there's a much greater appreciation of emergency workers," adds Museum Director Clifford A. Siegfried, Ph.D. "We didn't want to just do an ambulance exhibit, as was initially proposed. We wanted it to be a story of the rescue service in New York State, so we could fully engage casual visitors with artifacts and videos."

Gittell's greatest find for "Help is Here," arguably, was a horse-drawn ambulance constructed in 1911 by James Cunningham, Son & Company of Rochester, N.Y., which was one of two hundred antique carriages that a Sussex, N.J. resident named William Greene inherited from his father. "There are scores of horse-drawn hearses out there," Myron

observes, "but very few horse-drawn ambulances have survived to the present day and this one's entirely original." Other interesting vehicles on display include:

- A 1918 Dodge military ambulance, possibly bodied by the H.H. Babcock Company of Watertown, N.Y., which was used by the National League of Women's Service to collect wounded soldiers from returning troop ships and transfer them to various New York City hospitals. It was nicknamed "Eli" since the Yale Club donated it. After driving the vehicle 25,000 miles and maintaining it herself, NLWS volunteer Nancy B. Kirkman acquired it and took it to her summer home in Cape Vincent, N.Y., donating it to the local John C. Londraville American Legion Post in 1950.

- A 1939 Dodge panel truck purchased secondhand for \$450 by the Cobleskill, N.Y. Fire Department in 1942 and refurbished for ambulance use by adding rear compartment windows and an all-white \$120 paint job from the local body shop. Current owner Brian D. Head, whose grandfather Joseph served with the squad in the 1950s, loaned it to the Museum along with a Minutes Book chronicling the January 26th, 1942 meeting where its original purchase was approved.

- A 1948 Meteor Cadillac that the Brentwood Legion Ambulance corps on Long Island purchased secondhand for a dollar and kept in service until the mid-1960s. Until the squad building was completed, "Baby" was parked at the town gas station. Used today as a parade vehicle, and occasionally as a hearse for squad members.

- A 1957 Miller-Meteor Cadillac, distinguished by dramatic wraparound rear windows, loaned by the Bangs Ambulance Company, of Ithaca, N.Y. Rita was a nurse, and she recalls in the exhibit signage that "we went 17 years without a vacation" after her family firm started offering ambulance service in 1945.

- A home-built 1963 Chevrolet Biscayne station wagon ambulance that the Macedon Fire Department outside Rochester, N.Y. purchased from a local dealership for around \$2,700. "With its 230 cubic inch six-cylinder engine and Powerglide transmission, it has to be the slowest ambulance ever built," Geoffrey Stein told us. The vehicle was furnished by Fuzzy and Bob Taber, who drove it in the 1970s.

- A 1969 Ford Econoline van ambulance, thought to be the first of its kind completed by Horton Emergency Vehicles of Grove City, Ohio. Though they were not as stylish as a passenger car-based unit, vehicles like these proved extremely effective in addressing the emergency profession's emerging desires for more equipment and interior space.



Built from a six-cylinder Pontiac chassis to hold its original price to \$2,170, this 1939 Superior Provident featured one of the first all-steel professional car bodies. Used in the Adirondack region towns of Blue Mountain Lake and Long Lake until 1962, it's the only ambulance of fifteen in the "Help is Here" exhibit sourced from the New York State Museum's own collection.

- An all-red 1974 Miller-Meteor Cadillac Lifeline with 54 inches of patient compartment headroom, which clocked 66,000 miles over a twelve-year period responding to 6,000 calls with the West Webster Fire District outside Rochester, N.Y. With its \$18,140 original price positioning it as an intermediate model between the 48-inch Miller-Meteor Volunteer and the 64-inch headroom Criterion, the rig is on loan from the FASNY Museum of Firefighting in Hudson, N.Y.

- A 1987 Ford Bluestar ambulance built by Medical Coaches of Oneonta, N.Y., which served the Delhi, N.Y. Fire Department until the spring of 2004.

- FDNY Ambulance 485, a Horton-bodied 1997 Ford F-350 Type I "modular" that responded to the World Trade Center attacks and still bears bodywork scars from the collapse of the Twin Towers. Carlos Lillo, one of the paramedics manning the vehicle on September 11th, 2001, was one of six EMS providers who died at the scene that day, and this rig was used to return his remains to his family. FDNY has operated New York City's EMS since 1996, and its 410-ambulance fleet is the largest in the U.S.

