



The Criterion

NEWSLETTER of the NORTHEAST CHAPTER of the PROFESSIONAL CAR SOCIETY

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MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Happy New Year!! Hopefully, everyone had a safe holiday season, and you've all done as little shoveling as possible this winter.

I would like to start my first President's Message by thanking Bill Marcy for the outstanding job he did as my predecessor. Fred Goerlitz, elected the new Vice-President at our November meeting in Hackettstown, NJ, has been hard at work compiling a list of upcoming events, and I hope that anyone who knows of interesting car shows, tours or cruise nights will forward them to him as soon as possible. In between issues of The Criterion, we can get them posted on our web site as we learn about them.

As it stands now, the 2007 show season is shaping up as one which will combine several old favorites with some exciting new events. On Sunday, June 3rd, our Chapter will be sponsoring its Sixth Annual Charity Car Show at Peddler's Village in Lahaska, PA, which is open to all years, makes and types of vehicles in addition to professional cars. From June 21st-23rd, the PCS Miller-Meteor Chapter will be hosting another reunion in Piqua, OH for Miller-Meteor Cadillacs and Cotner-Bevington Oldsmobiles, which have been invited to take part in the big Saturday parade celebrating Piqua's bicentennial. Closer to home, the Cadillac-LaSalle Club's 2007 National Driving Tour will take place in the Hudson Valley the same week, and the 31st Annual PCS International Meet will give you many good reasons to be in Los Angeles from July 10th-14th. Believe it or not, our 2007 calendar doesn't wind down until the weekend of November 3rd-4th, thanks to an invitation we've received to display our ambulances at the prestigious Hilton Head Concours in South Carolina (contact Bill Marcy or Gregg D. Merksamer if you have something suitably nice you would like to be considered by the car selection committee). Additional info on these events, and others you should consider, can be found at the back of this issue.

One of the most important things that we discussed at our March 25th Chapter Meeting in Hackettstown is our hosting of the 2008 PCS International in Mount Laurel, N.J. next August 4th through 9th. The Wyndham Hotel has enough room for 150 show vehicles parked a space-and-a-half apart, and we only stand to benefit from how the Cadillac-LaSalle Club is having its Grand National in neighboring Cherry Hill the following week! Our day-by-day schedule of events is still tentative, but it is most likely going to feature motor coach trips to historic central Philadelphia, Atlantic City and Liberty State Park, which will offer easy access to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island boat rides. We're also making plans for "early bird" tours of area rescue squads, and a big pro-car convoy to P&L Custom's ambulance plant in Manasquan. As you can tell, Leo Maren III put a lot of time and effort into the hotel and the itinerary before he decided to step down as the head of the meet a few weeks ago, but we are going to need as much help as we can get to make sure all the little details come together smoothly and "Garden State in '08" is a success. If you would like to help, in any capacity, please let me know as soon as possible.

As print and postage costs have escalated to the point where they constitute a major share of the Northeast Chapter's annual expenses, it was also decided at our March 25th meeting that anyone receiving complimentary copies of The Criterion will start getting them as an e-mailed Adobe Acrobat attachment starting with the Summer, 2007 issue. A traditional, snail-mailed paper newsletter will still be available to those who join the Chapter at our \$12 annual rate, as well as any current, dues-paying member who contacts me and expresses this preference by June 1st. Chapter members who would rather receive The Criterion by e-mail are also urged to contact me and say so by this date. -

See You at Lahaska! Dan McCann

WHERE WE WENT THIS WINTER

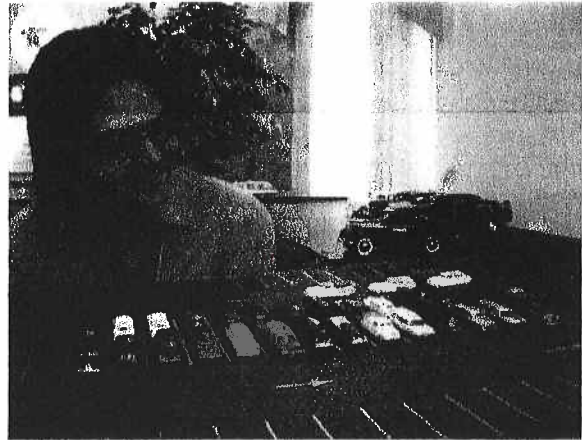
The main reason why this is the tardiest-ever winter issue of The Criterion is that Your Editor, on top of the week he went to Detroit for press days at the North American International Auto Show in January, spent an a total of seventeen days on the road in February. At least, the round trip drive to Lisa Lachover-Merksamer's parents in Delray Beach, Florida included some professional car activity we'll chronicle here.

Seeing Interstate 95 as a Damnation Alley where tractor-trailers vie for the land speed record regardless of traffic and weather conditions, Your Editor worked as many back roads into the route as possible; about the only time we used the Interstate was after dark, when there's nothing to see anyway. The secret to making good time on the old two-lanes is to find a couple of state or U.S. highways that avoid the busy cities and go all the way from one state line to another, so you're simply following a number instead of checking the map at constant intervals. This year's drive south took in long stretches of U.S. 15, U.S. 522 and state 46 in Virginia, plus a portion of U.S. 17 in northern Georgia where we spotted a line of airport crash trucks being offered for sale at a South Newport forest fire consultancy and a tremendous pyramid of aluminum cans, collected by a Vietnam vet who peddles fruit and veggies by the roadside in Eulonia. A

\$9 buffet offering fried chicken, fried okra and peach cobbler, served by Altman's Restaurant at the junction of U.S. 17 and Georgia 99, re-confirmed that we were far below the Mason-Dixon Line, and about a million miles away from the uniform blandness of franchise food!

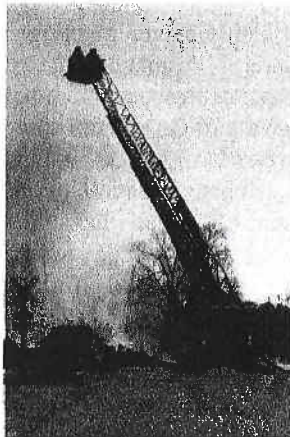
Though the Florida portion of the trip relied on I-95, sighting three of Dale Earnhardt, Jr.'s distinctively-decorated race car transporters heading to the Daytona 500 was an exciting moment. It also reminded us that our return

trip should include a link-up with PCS Club Store Manager Bill Wright, who is no doubt the southernmost member of the Northeast Chapter. Our supper rendezvous took place at Dustin's BBQ, which is situated across Clyde Morris Boulevard from the Volusia Memorial Funeral Home where Bill works. Many Noreasters will recall that the Port Orange Chapel, with catering by Dustin's, hosted the Tuesday evening welcoming BBQ when Bill hosted the 2004 International Meet. The latest addition to the facility's vehicle fleet is a 2006 Eureka Cadillac hearse, and Bill could not resist pointing out that the rear door's "leaning E" logo was like a mirror version of the #3 on Dale Earnhardt's Monte Carlo. He also showed us a high roof, commercial glass S&S 6-door limousine that had been displayed at Cadillac's World Headquarters in Detroit during the make's 100th anniversary in 2002.



Patrick Martin with a parking lot full of the 1/87 scale pro-cars he brought to the PCS Mid-Michigan Chapter's 2007 Micro-Meet in Flint.

Bill told us that, after being badly damaged by the 2004 hurricanes, the oceanfront Hilton that hosted the PCS International was renovated and is now known as the Shores Resort & Spa. The sight of its covered pedestrian bridge brought back many pleasant memories as we took the A1A beach route through downtown Daytona, but it surprised us greatly that so many hotels still had vacancies with the 500 taking place in two days. We theorized that temperatures in the low 50s were the culprit, and immediately re-focused our attention on how many of the local mini-golf courses incorporate full-sized airplanes into their decor.



On a Sunday morning in Ahoskie, N.C., an Emergency One ladder truck from Murfreesboro takes part in a warehouse firefighting exercise.



Sarah Snook and her fiancée Chase Mohr, photographed with one of the model displays at the Plumb-Smith Funeral Home. He even proposed in her 1966 M-M combination, by hiding the ring in the zippered headliner.

Beyond our first overnight stop in Kingsland, GA and breakfast the next morning at Ida Mae & Joe's North Midway Restaurant ("A Local Landmark Since 1939"), our South Carolina leg used U.S. 17 Alternate

between Walterboro and the Francis Marion National Forest, state highways 41 and Alternate 41 up to the Marion area, and U.S. 501 through Dillon to the North Carolina state line. Some of the more interesting sights along the way included an airport outside Walterboro where they trained Tuskegee Airmen and interned German POWs during World War II, and a big flea market at Ladson where Your Editor stocked up on freshly-boiled peanuts. Reaching South of the Border around sunset, we got back on I-95, overnighted outside Ava Gardner's home town of Smithfield, N.C., and spent Sunday morning heading northeast on state highways 42 and 11 to the soundtrack of a rocking, African-American gospel station. There was no time, this round, to take in "America's Largest Pork Display" in Nahunta, though the billboard we passed made it sound as tempting as the local sweet tea.

After reaching the U.S. 13 junction in Ahoskie, N.C., by far the biggest city of the morning with both a hospital and a funeral home, a tall column of smoke drew us to a big warehouse fire that had been set for training purposes by the train tracks downtown. Next up was Norfolk, VA and the awe-inspiring Chesapeake Bay Bridge & Tunnel, where we enjoyed a good but reasonably-priced seafood lunch on the southernmost man-made island. Some of the more interesting cars spotted on the East Shore en route to our final overnight in Dover, DE included a 1957 Buick hardtop in a chicken wire enclosure near the historic Almshouse Farm; a 1970 Superior Cadillac Sovereign parked outside the burned-out Lilliston Funeral Chapel in Accomac, VA; a gold-colored 1973.

Pontiac LeMans coupe on sale at Hopeton; and a well-preserved, 1950s vintage Chevrolet Step Van advertising an antique shop in downtown Salisbury, MD.

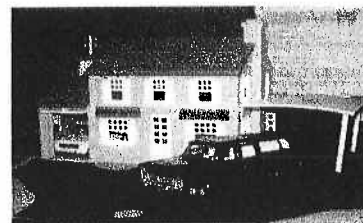
On February 24th, only five days after returning home from Florida, Your Editor flew to Detroit for the PCS Mid-Michigan Chapter's Third Annual Micro-Meet. Held in concert with the winter board meeting at the Plumb-Smith Funeral Home in Flint, MI, this Concours for scale model professional cars was billed as being "Smaller and Better Than Ever Before!" PCS



This 1957 National Buick ambulance was a big draw in the Buick Gallery at the Alfred P. Sloan Museum.

National President Brady Smith, who started collecting toy hearses as a ten-year-old four decades ago, got the idea after seeing how the model cases in his hallway attracted more attention than "all the expensive art objects in this building. Little old ladies who have

been to funerals (here) will call me up and ask if they can bring their friends over." One of the coolest items on display, secured from a friend at Comcast Cable, is a large, bright green Cadillac hearse sent to HBO affiliates as a "Six Feet Under" promo; the rear door opening was even equipped with an electric table, albeit used to load a CD player instead of a casket.



George Hamlin's "Glorious Funeral Home of Boris" diorama had a 1970 GAZ-13 "Seagull" hearse and Leonid Brezhnev's Lada sticking its nose out of the garage.

Attendees for the Micro-Meet came from all over the map. So-Cal Chapter President Lou Farah, optimistically renting himself a rear-wheel-drive Mustang after flying into Detroit, was the event's official distance

champ. Passing through Detroit as well, Upstate Chapter Founder & President Dan Herrick flew into Flint from Albany, NY and left the Hertz counter with

a far more-practical Hyundai Sonata. After completing a five-and-a-half-hour, non-stop drive from Pittsburgh, Rick Duffy and previous PCS President John Ehmer arrived around noon on Saturday. George & Bee Hamlin flew from Maryland with in incredible array of PCS Mid-Atlantic Chapter material. Larry Wilson and PCS archivist Nick Bliss came from Indiana in a 1991 S&S Cadillac six-door limousine, while Patrick Martin drove out from Palatine, Illinois in a nearly identical-looking 1991 Moloney Cadillac tagged "HULL 534" in honor of the Queen Mary's shipyard designation. "When I brought my first limo, a 1984 Hess & Eisenhardt 6-door," he explained, "my parents told me 'you don't have a land yacht. You've got a land liner.' And that's where this came from." The bright yellow Dodge Caliber hatchback that Your Editor rented from Thrifty attracted its own share of comment; "Did you pick up a few fares on the way over?," Patrick asked, while Decatur, Illinois mortician Dan Brintlinger wondered if the car had been borrowed from Airport Maintenance.

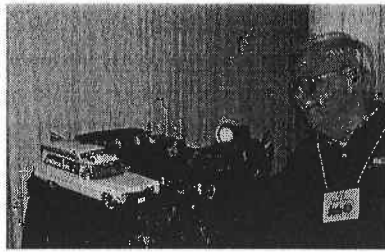
Inside Plumb-Smith's main chapel, the participating models were displayed on asphalt-colored cardboard that was cleverly striped-and-marked to resemble parking lots. A Kleenex box from a nearby table was quickly drafted into duty as a "host hotel" for the 31 tiny, 1/87 scale pro-cars in Pat Martin's assemblage, while the display put together by PCS Publications Director Walt McCall included a circa-1965 photo of his model hearse collection. "They didn't stand up very well," he conceded, explaining that "they were made mostly of cardboard and plasticene beyond the \$1.49 AMT model kit front clips." With Superior springing for a display, some of these creations were exhibited at the 1961 NFDA Convention in Minneapolis, but the "best ones were in Tom McPherson's showcase at Eureka" when the company went under.

Dioramas were another big sensation, especially with George Hamlin following up last year's Soviet Embassy display with the "Glorious Funeral Home of Boris." The hearse was a Packard-like GAZ-13 "Chaika" (Seagull) in 1/43 scale, which was teamed with ZIS, ZIL and Chaika limousines dating from the late 1940s through early 1970s. Clawson, MI residents Kevin & Wendy Carter countered with a Corgi Toys 1962 Superior Cadillac 48-inch Rescuer ambulance sitting in a winter forest. The full-sized car, Kevin explained, "was given to my wife as a

wedding present by our friend Tom Walker, but we had a week to move it out of Brighton, Michigan. It was the first snowstorm of 2004 and the tow truck was too busy to come out, so I ended up taking the picture."

Having previously used the Micro-Meet to debut his 1938 S&S Cadillac carved panel town car hearse, Alan Novak of Precision Miniatures in North Hollywood, CA sent prototypes of his new 1/18 scale 1966 S&S Cadillac professional cars in black Victoria landau, maroon limousine-style hearse, and white Kensington ambulance variants. After Walt McCall uncovered their tiny turntable in classic auto show fashion, attendees judged them to be Precision's nicest models to date, with intricately-detailed S&S emblems on the fuel caps and extending casket tables for the hearses. Dale & Betty Cole, veteran PCS members from nearby Rochester Hills, Michigan, took over an adjacent viewing room to promote their impressively-comprehensive Henney-Packard CD reference library, which fills three discs with specifications, catalog pages and factory memos dating back to 1929. Though there's 678 pages of material on the first CD alone, a set costs just \$60 to purchase including postage, out of which 15% is donated to the Mid-Michigan Chapter and another 15% goes to the regional Chapter treasury of the purchaser, if he or she supplies a name & address.

While the die-cast pro-cars were submitted to a popular vote, the awards for scratch-and-kit-built models were decided by George Hamlin's judging committee. John Kline of Milford, MI was the day's big honoree, earning best kit-bashed rescue vehicle for a 1970 National Chevrolet Suburban ambulance constructed from a mix of Blazer and pickup parts, and best modified funeral vehicle for a 1968 Plymouth Fury lead car made from Jo-Han's police car kit. He also received the top score in the "Senior" category for class-winners from previous micro-meets, with a 1976 Chevrolet Caprice high-top ambulance with Miller-Meteor Lifeliner-inspired styling. To complete this 1/25th scale project, Kline needed three months, a pair of MPC Caprice coupe kits and a 1966 Jo-Han Cadillac ambulance, whose stretcher was used to build the roof-mounted fracture board compartment. Even in the case of such entirely-speculative rigs, Kline told Your Editor "I try to do as much research as I can before starting. If it has windows, I want to do a full interior."



Walt McCall admires the 1966 S&S Cadillac professional cars debuted at the Micro-Meet by Precision Miniatures. Nifty details include intricate S&S emblems on the fuel caps and extending casket tables for the hearses.

Best-in-show, meanwhile, went to PCS Recording Secretary Sarah Snook for a 1959 Miller-Meteor Cadillac combination coach by Polar Lights, but this was not the weekend's biggest news in her case. Flint was the first time

that most PCS members got to meet her fiancée Chase Mohr, whom she met while they were working on the "Industrial Electronic Music Show" at the Baldwin-Wallace College radio station. Chase even proposed to Sarah in "Patty Hearse," her Cascade Green 1966 M-M Duplex Combination, by hiding the ring in the zippered headliner. The intimate, invitation-only nuptials take place May 19th at Cleveland's Knollwood Cemetery, which Sarah used as a playground growing up.

Following the conclusion of awards at half past three, a tour bus generously supplied by the Flint Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (Jerry Preston, the organization's President, actually works in GM founder Billy Durant's old office on the second floor of the Durant/Dort Building) took attendees to the Buick Gallery at the Alfred P. Sloan Museum. Presented with one of Tom McPherson's Flexible books as a gift for the Museum's archive, Weekend Manager Jen Hall noted that the facility touts one of the biggest collections of one-off concept cars in the U.S. Vertically-ribbed body side moldings and open front wheels respectively-defined the 1951 Buick XP-300 and 1954 Wildcat II roadsters, while the 1956 Buick Centurion hardtop sported a missile-shaped tail and transparent roof panels. The 1963 Silver Arrow inspired the first Riviera after GM abandoned the idea of using it to revive LaSalle, and the low-slung, Pontiac-flavored Phantom coupe rewarded scrutiny as a most-personal retirement project for 1958-77 GM design chief Bill Mitchell. Though a World War II vintage Hellcat Tank Destroyer trumped it for massiveness, PCS people devoted much of their camera memories to an

extremely rare 1957 National Buick ambulance loaned by Buck Kamphausen of Sacramento, California. Dinner afterwards took the form of an all-you-can-eat buffet at the Fire Mountain Restaurant, located on Miller Road in the southwestern outskirts of the city.

While it was wonderful to catch up with the people normally seen only at each summer's International Meet, the freezing rain that started falling around 6 am Sunday deterred many fliers from staying for the workshops and the 2007 L.A. Meet preview held at Plumb-Smith through the afternoon. Your Editor, who almost NEVER receives good news from an airline, couldn't get ANYONE to pick up at Northwest's toll-free number after four attempts, and finally drove back to Detroit Metro Airport without knowing if he would get any further. As about 25% of the outgoing flights were canceled, he considered himself most-lucky to have gotten off about a half-hour behind schedule, with the only major snafu being an "equipment change" requiring a dash from one end of Terminal C to the other. Dan Herrick, who did manage to reach Northwest, was initially told that the first flight out to Albany would be on Wednesday, but learned later at the Hertz counter that his connection from Flint to Detroit was not cancelled after all; still, had something like ten minutes to get himself through security with two pillar spotlights in his hand luggage, and spent ten hours in Detroit waiting for a connection that got him home to Chatham, NY by 2 am Monday. Lou Farah, reportedly marooned in Chicago, never got to use his ticket to the Oscars. Given such travails, it's no wonder Saturday evening's board meeting witnessed speculation about a winter meeting in a warmer venue, such as Scottsdale, AZ during Barrett-Jackson Auction week.



Brady Smith, Matt Taylor and Daniel K. Herrick admire Buick's 1956 Centurion Concept Car. The clear roof was dramatic, but completely-impractical for highway use!

