

The Criterion

NEWSLETTER of the NORTHEAST CHAPTER of the PROFESSIONAL CAR SOCIETY www.PCSNortheast.com

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Presidents message

After the winter that we had I am sure that everyone is looking forward to the Spring and Summer. The time has come to get the cars ready to show and to enjoy the warmer weather.

I went to Flint for the mid year board meeting and micro meet. Jeff, Fred and Gregg were also at the meet. There were several issues that were addressed by the Board. We now have insurance that covers all members and the public at any event the PCS or the chapters hold. We have a new PCS Treasurer, Paul Saether. The Northlands chapter is busy working on the meet for this summer in Rochester, MN. Things are moving well with the meet for 2015 in Houston TX, and with the 2016 Meet.

We have been asked by the North Arlington Emergency for a display of old ambulances on May 18, 2014. They will be having a day long celebration for EMS week. Anyone who can help out please let me know. West Patterson is also holding their town's 100th celebration and are looking for old cars for the parade. As soon as I have all the details I will get them out to everyone. Also I am working on setting up a chapter meeting for the end of April or beginning of May. I will ask Mary to send out when a date and place are locked down.

Gettysburg Meet 2016: As everyone knows we are hosting the meet in 2016 with the Tri State, Mid Atlantic and Henney Chapters. The dates for the meet are August 11 to 16, 2016. The hotel for the meet is the Wyndham in Gettysburg. This is a big year for the International Meet as it is the 40th International Meet. The committee intent is to make it the biggest and best. We are hoping to have a meeting in the fall. We are also looking for someone to run registration for the meet as well as other to help with different aspects of the meet. Each chapter will be responsible for one day tour. The Henney Chapter has mentioned an interest in doing the early bird tour and the Tri State chapter has requested Wednesday. I would like to know what day our chapter would like to do a tour on. It has already been suggested that we host a tour of the AACA museum in Hershey, PA. Also keep in mind that the board meeting in tentatively scheduled for Wednesday. and the membership meeting for Thursday. I will keep everyone informed as thing move forward with the meet.. If any one has any questions feel free to contact me.

Dan McCann



Chapter members attending were: front row, Everett Marshall and Wayne Guy; back row, Jeff Hookway, Mary Hookway, Lucille Marcy, Bill Marcy, Rich Litton, Fred Goerlitz.

Photo courtesy of Wayne Guy.

Matchbox Road Museum

by Bill Marcy

On Sunday March 9, 2014, seven Northeast Chapter members traveled to Newfield, New Jersey, to the Matchbox Road Museum. Situated on a side street, in a residential neighborhood, in a multi car garage, owner/curator Everett Marshall established this museum in 1992. Inside the museum, we found 50,000 matchbox cars and trucks, miniature buildings of every kind, miniature aircraft and other miniature cars and trucks.

This collection was put together by Mr Marshall starting in the early 1980s and has actually become a reference used by the Matchbox Company employees. There is definitely something for everyone, in the museum. There are even a few professional cars in the collection. This museum should be on your list of places to see, especially if you are a Matchbox enthusiast.

For me, the main attraction is Mr Marshall himself. He depends on a wheelchair to get around, however he can stand and walk somewhat. But, what makes Mr Marshall so interesting, is his character and his enthusiasm for his museum, his family, his town where he has spent his entire life and was even the mayor and more.. A very interesting man with lots of knowledge that he loves to share. Mr Marshall also loves to share his museum with anyone who is interested. You must call him in advance at 856 697 6900 to set up a date and time, but that is the only restriction.

After visiting the museum, we went to a local diner for a leisurely lunch, before the drive home.

A Message From The Editor

It has been a long and cold Winter, with more than enough of the white stuff. With Spring officially started, we can look forward to many sunny days and warm nights, that we can enjoy our collector cars for the next six, or seven months.

Hopefully, there will be plenty of events to enjoy. I encourage you to keep an eye on our Events Calendar and participate when you are able. Not only do these events offer you a chance to socialize with friends old and new, but they also give us the chance to drive and enjoy our cars.

On a very sad note, The PCS has lost one of it's most senior members. Fred Feiser passed away at age 95. Please see the short article on Fred, in this issue. He will be sorely missed, by those of us who had the pleasure and good fortune, to know him.

You will also read about two Northeast Chapter member's limousines and see some photographs of each. If you have a car that you would like featured in these pages, please email digital photos and the story of your car to me at bmarcy@optonline.net and I will gladly include it.

There is an article on our visit to the Matchbox Road Museum on March 9, 2014. There are also a couple of coming events you might like to attend, that you can read about. I hope to see you there!

Last, but not least, you will find an apology for an article I wrote a couple of issues back entitled "Ambulance Rescue.

Please take a minute to read it, as it may clear the air, so to speak.

Happy Spring! Bill Marcy

A Fond Farewell



On March 12, 2014, The PCS lost one of it's most senior members and a past PCS President. Fred Feiser passed away at 95, after a valiant battle with cancer. Fred was a very special person, as anybody who had the pleasure to know him can tell you.

Where Fred was, so was the sound of happy conversation and laughter. Always present with his wife of seventy two years, they made a lovely couple. They attended many PCS International Meets over the years, always having a good time with friends. Usually, The Feisers would be driving their black 1960 Chevy service car, now owned by Len Lenglois of Canada.

Fred Feiser was a life long resident of New Oxford, Pennsylvania, where he founded, owned and operated The Feiser Funeral Home, Inc for most of his life. He was a World War II veteran, president of numerous clubs and organizations, a husband to Dorothy, a father, a grand father and a great grand father. Most of all, he was a wonderful human being and he will be greatly missed by his friends in the Professional Car Society.

Rest In Peace Fred!

FLINT MICRO-MEET MARKS 10th ANNIVERSARY

By Gregg D. Merksamer

Unlikely as it seems, in light of the awful winter we just endured, that Flint in February could ever be a must-do destination, the PCS Michigan Chapter's annual Micro-Meet Weekends have consistently attracted legions of scale model pro-car builders, collectors and enthusiasts to Brady Smith's Ballenger Highway funeral home or, more-recently, the 3,900-square-foot "Garage Mahal" in his nearby Grand Blanc back yard. Northeast Chapter Members Dan McCann, Fred Goerlitz, Jeff Hookway and Gregg D. Merksamer were just a few of the long-distance attendees present at the Tenth Anniversary Edition held from February 21st through 23rd, 2014, drawn in part by the PCS Mid-Winter Board Meeting that took place at the Wingate Inn on Saturday evening.

It could be asserted the imagination, wit and detail orientation that so many attendees bring to their displays was exemplified by Darren Bedford's encore exhibit of the LEGO Funeral Home Play Set parodies he originally debuted at last year's Micro-Meet. The whole idea was sparked by a joke e-mail from fellow Toronto resident and prominent pro-car author Tom McPherson, imagining the box art for a LEGO Funeral Directors Play Set & Crematorium. Calling it "pure creativity from the noodle that just took off," Darren wound up devoting weeks of work and hundreds of dollars to scouring local and online sources for components that could be suitably re-purposed (the rounded casket lids, for example, were "art bricks" normally used for building facades), ultimately creating four separate dioramas that touted everything from a Prep Room cosmetician to a bagpiper for the Chapel service. The guest of honor, lying in his open casket, even had X-shaped eyes, while Darren?s artistic collaborator, Jennifer "Digger" Baker, gave the finished displays an authentic factory feel with Photo-Shopped box art bearing faux UPC codes with a common "666" prefix. For 2014, Darren expanded his diorama with a cemetery service witnessing a grave side release of doves, as well as a break room for the funeral home that even had a tiny LEGO water cooler.

Having been inspired by TPC Issue 62?s iconic cover photo (Fourth Quarter 1991) of a carrier load of 1973 Cadillac Commercial Chassis, John Kline of Milford, Michigan earned first place in the scratch-built or "kit-bashed" livery vehicle judging for constructing a 1/25 scale fantasy quartet of 1976 Chevrolet Caprice base vehicles being trailered to a coachbuilder by a 1974 Chevy Titan tractor (beyond the front clips and instrument panels sourced from MPC's Caprice Coupe kit, he'd carefully trimmed each chassis down to the frame rails using a Dremel tool and files, while the truck was re-configured into an authentic "day cab" by removing the second rear axle and the body's sleeper portion). Alan B. Judge of Livonia, Michigan, who used to be a shop class teacher, turned just as many heads with a huge 1/18 scale replica of an circa-1975 Emergency Services Headquarters building, whose roof could be removed for a better look at the Sunset Coach 1959 Superior and 1966 S&S Cadillac ambulances being operated by the "Judgeville" squad in concert with a "brand new" Dodge Tradesman van built from a Buddy L toy. Jerry Rettig, a master modeler from Arizona, opted for the more-intimate 1/43 scale (and received the Class 1 ribbon for scratch-built or "kit-bashed" rescue vehicles) in completing two - and only two - Esval replicas of Henney's 1942-only Packard Civilian Defense ambulance for Brady Smith and George Hamlin, which honored their home towns with body lettering respectively assigning them to the Flint Fire Department and the City of Des Moines, Iowa.

The midday unveiling of a brand-new, factory-built professional car model has been a treasured tradition at the Micro-Meet since Sunset Coach was still in business building 1/18 Cadillacs, though it's now Brooklin Models of Bath, England (no 'y like the Big Apple borough) that turns to Flint as a favored venue for premiering new additions to its 1/43 scale range of premium-quality, white metal Community Service Vehicles (now designated on their boxes as Professional Car Society Approved Replicas). This year's debutante was a 1954 Henney Superior Station Wagon taking full advantage of Brooklin Managing Director Nigel Parker's careful measurements of Brady Smith's previously-released 1954 Henney Landau Hearse, but this new addition ups the ante with a two-tone blue exterior, wraparound quarter panel windows and an intricate rooftop luggage rack.

While this year's Best-in-Show would ultimately go to Renfrew, PA resident Chuck Snyder for his "First Call Coach" conversion of a 1/18 scale 1957 Ford Courier Sedan Delivery by Signature, it was possible to take home an award without building anything. Ed Renstrom, following a 1,339-mile drive from Hot Springs, South Dakota, received top distance honors (also known as the Samsonite Award) for displaying a 1/43 scale Universal Hobbies replica of the 1968 Superior Cadillac Sovereign used by the Slumber Mortuary in the 1971 James Bond movie *DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER*, while Your Former Editor received People's Choice on the off-the-shelf Rescue category for a futuristic, Heuliez-bodied 1986 Citroën CX high-top ambulance rendered in 1/43 scale by Kess Models of Italy. My 18-car display (recipient of a second ribbon for the Most Models Registered) also included an imposing Micro-Motorcade where former Russian President Dmitry Medvedey?s Mercedes S600 Pullman Guard Armored Stretch Limousine was escorted down a cobblestone street by a Soviet-era ZIL-41072 "Skorpion" and a pair of long-wheelbase Mercedes G-Class security SUVs. This was all inspired by some truly-surreal TV footage of Medvedev?s 2008 inauguration I discovered at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JX97XMrLCdk, which shows no one ... NO ONE AT ALL! ... on the streets of central Moscow as Vladimir Putin prepares to have his seat kept warm for four years. It's almost as if everyone was ordered to stay home and watch the ceremonies on TV behind closed curtains and closed shutters; and at 1:35 or thereabouts, you can even hear the sinister, lonely caw of a crow as the cars roll toward the Kremlin?







Jim Parkinson's 1929 Packard Limousine

by Bill Marcy

Jim Parkinson is a new member of the Northeast Chapter and has been a PCS member for some time. He is a passionate car collector and restorer for many years and still is today. While he favors Cadillacs and professional cars, he has owned and continues to own quite a number of vintage cars.

Living on a large piece of property, on the eastern end of Long Island offers many benefits, such as lots of space to store his cars, but on the other hand, it prevents him from being an active member, since he is hours away from most PCS events. At age 73, Jim says he just can't drive that far anymore.

Jim has owned a number of professional cars over the years. In addition to the 1929 Packard limousine, featured here, his most recent other professional car was a 1955 Superior Pontiac combination. Jim likes to work on and drive his vintage cars and he is not afraid to work on his cars. For the most part, he likes to keep his cars "stock" or at least "stock" in their physical appearance.

Sometimes, as was the case with this Packard, there are missing parts and it just is not possible, due in part to financial considerations, to keep them totally stock. Jim found the Packard limousine in this article, as an abandoned and decaying street rod project. The drive shaft and wiring were missing. There was no motor, or transmission in the car, either. So Jim restored the outside to "stock" appearance and added a Cadillac 429 engine and driveline. He installed the obligatory Ford 9 inch rear end and he now has a car he can drive anywhere. Please also keep in mind, that if Jim had not purchased and restored the rare and beautiful limousine, it may have been lost to the ravages of time.

Jim is a very interesting man and I have enjoyed speaking with him about his cars and how he enjoys them. His business card reads "Old Car Orphanage" which I assume describes his collection.

Welcome to the PCS and Northeast Chapter Jim! You are doing a fantastic job!



Few Shows and Cruise Nights

I am sure that most of you are aware of local shows and cruise nights in your area, here are a few that you may not be aware of and you might enjoy them.

SHOWS

April 27, 2014, Rain Date May 4, 2014 Cadillac Club of North Jersey presents their ALL Cadillac Car Show and they welcome Cadillac professional cars too! They have the show on The Palisades, right on the scenic overlook, high above the majestic Hudson River. There is food and beverages available, a spectacular live DJ that plays our music, lots of spectators and friendly people and a gorgeous setting. I highly recommend it! Show Info call Lois Harriman at 201 888 8727

June 1, 2014 Newark Fire Muster They are always looking for vintage ambulances and combinations set up as ambulances. This event draws vintage and modern fire apparatus and ambulances. Food and beverages available. See the Newark Museum and The Balentine Mansion/Museum. It is a great event with activities and a Code 3 Parade through the streets of Newark. Muster Info call F/F Rich Mackay 973 600 4961

CRUISE NIGHT

Whiskey Café 1050 Wall Street Lyndhurst, NJ Every Saturday May through September See hundreds of cars and trucks old and new, even an occasional professional car. Fun, good people, food and beverages and of course a DJ. The fun starts at 5:00 PM.

An Apology from Bill Marcy

I want to take the time to make an apology to Peter Grave and anybody else who may have been offended by an article I wrote entitled "Ambulance Rescue" in a previous edition of The Criterion. I must admit, that I was intrigued and excited about writing the story, especially after interviewing one of the key players involved by the name of Darryll Thompson. I should have also interviewed Peter Grave, to hear his version of the story, in this regard, I failed miserably.

It was never my intention to make Mr Grave look bad, but that is the way it came out, I'm afraid. I do not want to make excuses for myself, however, I am not a professional writer, or editor, as I have previously stated. I am trying to do my best, but I no doubt have lots to learn and I must say that I have learned a valuable lesson here.

It is my sincere hope that my apology will be accepted by the people involved, especially Peter and Jan Grave, whom I have always liked. And I promise to be more careful in my future writings and ramblings, here in The Criterion.



Making a Statement In a 1976 Pontiac Catalina Limousine

Originally submitted by Wayne Guy to the South Jersey Pontiac Chapter POCI

When club president Chuck Catalano asked me to write a short article about my limo, I almost fell over laughing. You can't put that one on Mastercard, it's priceless! Chuck must be vying for oxymoron of the year. Short is not what this story is about. So, my friends, pull up a chair, pour yourself a cold one, and read on. This will take a while.

How Long Is It?

It's 22 feet long, according to my tape measure. I don't have manufacturer's published technical data, but I am still searching the flea markets for that. Wheelbase is about 164 inches. That is considerably longer than my hearses or ambulances. The coachbuilder, Stageway, used a standard Catalina 4-door sedan as a starting point to create this six-door, nine-passenger limousine.

Stageway limousines were built in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Prior to 1976 the company had merged with Armbruster Coach. The full name was Armbruster-Stageway, but the cars are most commonly referred to as Stageway limos. The conversion operation, simply stated, involved cutting the Catalina sedan in half and adding a middle row seat and two additional doors. According to the Stageway sales literature, it took 35 men about 170 hours to build one limousine. Each car was individually handcrafted. The middle doors have fixed glass, as there is no mechanism to lower the windows.

Why a Catalina?

Since a limo is supposed to be luxurious in addition to being large, I've often wondered why Stageway would start with a Catalina instead of a Bonneville. I've never gotten an official answer, but I can speculate on their reasoning. Obviously, a basic Catalina is less expensive than a Bonneville. However, it would still need to be highly optioned for limo conversion with largest engine, drive train, and power accessories. Therefore, cost savings would be small.

The Bonneville has always had a longer wheelbase and longer overall length than the Catalina. Through the 1970

model year, this difference was in the rear, i.e., the Bonneville had longer rear quarters and a bigger trunk than the Catalina. I believe all Stageway limos were built on Bonnevilles through 1970, because of the larger trunk. But the full-size Pontiac design changed from 1971-76. The Bonneville was still longer, but the difference was in the front. Catalinas had shorter front quarters and hoods, but both models had the same size trunk. Since Stageway was stretching the car anyway, the longer front of the Bonneville served no useful purpose. I doubt that differences in style were much of a factor to Stageway. However, in my opinion, the rear window and roofline of the Catalina lends itself better to limo conversion than does the Bonneville. Also, I like the Catalina grille better than the Bonneville.

Hey, It's a Pontiac

Well, no matter if it began as a Catalina or a Bonneville, it's still a Pontiac. The limo is equipped with a 4-barrel 455 cubic inch V8. The 1976 model year was the last of a seven-year run for the 455. They were greatly detuned, with a low 7.6 compression ratio. A single exhaust was standard and Stageway did not convert to duals. Basically, Stageway just ordered the most powerful engine and drivetrain that Pontiac offered. This sedan has the "Police Package," which features heavy duty radiator for cooling, as well as Saf-T-Trak differential and heavy duty suspension. (

Hey, It's a Stageway

The tag on the driver's door identifies the car as having been manufactured by Stageway in Fort Smith, Arkansas. There are no other markings or trim pieces on the car which can identify it as a Stageway coach. The VIN num-ber is unchanged from the original Catalina sedan from which this coach was made. By comparison, the VIN numbers on Superior hearses and ambulances identify the commercial chassis rather than a finished passenger car.

Stageway added the dual zone (front and rear) air conditioning to the original Pontiac factory air. The middle section of the car appears to use a standard Pontiac front bench seat. However, the doors were probably modified by Stageway. The middle door panels match well, and probably came from the same supplier that Pontiac used. This represents a quality improvement for Stageway. I recently saw a 1969 Stageway Pontiac limo with original interior, and it was apparent that the middle door treatments did not quite match the front and rear. Stageway added the vinyl roof after the stretch. But unlike hearse conversions, and other more expensive limos (i.e. Cadillacs) this limo does not have a raised roof. The wheels are probably riveted heavy-duty wheels to support the heavier conversion, but I have not demounted a tire to confirm this. A previous owner had put inner tubes in all of the tires, and that could be an indication of riveted wheels which are more prone to air leakage than the stock welded wheels.

History

I bought this car at Fall Carlisle 2005. I was just walking the grounds and spotted it in the car corral. It wasn't love at first sight, and I really did try to be rational about my desire to own the car. But then, those little voices in my head started to speak to me. I thought I heard my hearse and ambulance telling me that they needed a limo to play with. And after all, I was a member of the Professional Car Chapter of POCI and also a member of the Professional Car Society. It was my duty to buy this car.

OK, so I had convinced myself that I needed to buy this limo. I still wanted to make a shrewd deal with the seller, a used car dealer named Brian Kauffman of York, PA. Now, my plan was to show some mild interest, then walk away and return later with a really lowball offer. An offer FAR below the asking price. That's the way it's done, right? Mr. Kauffman would likely ponder my offer and probably counter with one of his own. Well, you know the rest of the story. Mr. Kauffman actually did hesitate for a split second before accepting my so-

called "lowball" offer. My first thought was, "Oh, no. What have I done? Don't tell me that I overpaid for another one!" Buyer's remorse was setting in fast.

More History

The brakes were, in fact, in need of immediate attention, but the problems manifested before I went to pick up the car. Mr. Kauffman bore the cost of the new master cylinder, lines, and shoes. I had the emergency brake repaired at my expense. Some mechanical issues remain, but they haven't hampered my enjoyment of the car on cruise nights.

The car was never titled to Mr. Kauffman, because he drove it with dealer's tags. The title I received showed the previous owner as Jerry's Car Museum in Pottsville, PA. Some papers that came with the car showed that it had sold new from Stageway to Pope Motor Company of Pottsville for a price of \$10,711 on March 2, 1976. It's possible that I could be only the third titled owner of the car, but unfortunately, I don't know the names or anything about the previous owners.

It seems very likely that the car was owned by a fu-neral home, based on the low mileage (38,000). Funeral directors refer to their limos as "family cars." It works some-thing like this. When you are riding in the back of the hearse enroute to that Big Garage In The Sky, your heirs will be riding in the limo discussing how to convert your car collection into fast cash for a vacation in the Bahamas.

Still More History, Sprinkled With Some Philosophy

Istopped at Jerry's Car Museum in Pottsville while traveling, but they were not open. Iplan to visit again and perhaps learn more about the car's history and its previous owners. Some people may not care about previous owners of their old classic. Who cares whose fat butt sat in the driver's seat before you owned the car? Who cares whose long, sensuous, nylon-clad legs crossed the sill plate before you owned the car? Well, I do. I care. I want to know who those people were. What were they like? What kind of lives did they lead? If they had not maintained the car, then I might not be driving it today. I am inspired and energized in a very positive way when I think of previous owners of my cars. The limo was originally painted dark blue (called Polaris Blue) to match the Pembroke Blue cloth seats. The front seat is the optional 60/40 split bench. Two old photos I received with the car show it in its original color. It looked quite handsome parked outside a stately old mansion. This photo makes me even more curious to know who owned it then. The color was changed to silver in 1987. Silver was the color of choice for many funeral cars of that era, lending more credence to my theory that this car was used as a funeral vehicle.

Many previous owners of my cars have passed away. By thinking about these people occasionally, I honor their legacy and I suppose I give them some small amount of im-mortality. I hope that future owners of my cars would think about me in the same way. "Yes, old Wayne really loved his Pontiacs." That's about all that any of us can hope for. We only care for our cars for a relatively short time. We can't take them with us. For that matter, we can't take any of our material wealth with us, can we?

Modern Limos

Coach builders do not convert many Pontiac's

into limos today. Lately, the ones that I see most frequently are Lincolns, Hummers, and an occasional Chrysler 300. While browsing on eBay one day, I came across a late model Grand Prix stretch limo. It was quite long, obvi-ously a custom creation built from the standard Grand Prix front-wheel drive platform.

Stageway also built some eight door, twelve passenger Pontiac limos. Usually, these were built from station wagons so they could have the benefit of more luggage space in the rear. But some were also built on sedans. To get an idea, just imagine my car with one more middle seat section added. With eight doors, the car starts to look like a caterpillar. The eight door limos were most likely used as airport or resort transportation

vehicles. Very few were made and it is unusual to see one today as most had relatively hard and short working lives.

The growth in limousines continues in numbers and in size. Most limos today are owned as part of a fleet. Leasing companies rent these cars as party vehicles, airport or casino transport, etc.

The same is also true for ambulances and hearses. At car shows and cruise nights, most people approach my limo and just assume that it is a standard (ho-hum) Pontiac sedan. But when they see the stretch, they usually come back for a second look at this rare, and perhaps somewhat odd, vehicle. At Woodbury last year a woman appeared extremely interested in my limo excitedly describing the car and reading the window card information to someone on her cell phone. When I inquired she mentioned that her father operated a limousine company.

Modern limo manufacturers have gone to great lengths to outdo each other. The stretches and luxury items are getting outlandish. The sky is the limit and, until just recently, there were no standards. Many cases have been re-ported where limos have gotten stuck because the driver tried to navigate a circular driveway which had too short of a radius. Some limos have gotten stuck when the driver at-tempted to go over a sharp rise and the vehicle came to rest on its undercarriage. The end result resembled a children's playground teeter-totter. If you've ever run aground with your yacht, you know what that feels like. The opposite has also occurred. When a limo driver goes down a grade, he must be very cautious of the distance to the next rise in the road. Some limos have gotten wedged that way, from front bumper to rear.

Short Summary (to a long story)

The diversity of vehicles in my collection puts me in contact with with many different segments of the old car hobby. I enjoy learning about unusual types of specialty vehicles, how they were manufactured, and their history. And specifically, I really like to delve into the history of my own vehicles. This limo is a nice example of a Pontiac, and it has given me reason to learn more. That's about all there is to it. That's the long and the short of my story (mostly long).

