

Futurliner News

GM Futurliner Restoration Project
(See more on our web site: www.Futurliner.org)

Newsletter #33

October 2008



Pebble Beach California – 2008 Show

Our thanks to Automotive News magazine and Rick Kranz for letting us use this photo that was in their August 25, 2008 issue. It will need no caption to tell you this is Jay Leno at our vehicle. Our gang was at the show also of course supporting the Futurliner project.

This 33rd issue of our newsletter continues the semi-annual newsletters now that the vehicle is completed and on the summer show circuit. This project has been an all-volunteer effort starting in 1998 with the goal of restoring one of the twelve GM Futurliners, originally built in 1940, to its original and functional condition. The vehicle was donated to the National Automotive and Truck Museum by Joe Bortz in the early 1990's and is still owned by the museum in Auburn, Indiana. The restoration project was led by volunteer **Don Mayton** in Zeeland, Michigan with a group of nearly 40 volunteers participating.

2008 Show Comments

- The 8 shows listed in the last newsletter were all completed with a good number of our crew supporting each event. Thanks to our volunteer crew and to the sponsors who provided the needed funds.
- The highlight of the year has to be taking the Futurliner to Pebble Beach Calif. for the very prestigious show in August. We were surrounded by special show cars, GM displays, etc. and plenty of interested folks. Here is our unofficial spokesman, Ed DeVries, talking to the press.



2009-2010 Show Plans (check the web site for updates and details)

- Several local shows are under consideration but to date, these are still under discussion.
- Sept 17-18/08 – AACA Grand National show and meet in Topeka, Kansas (under consideration).
- 2010 - There is discussion with several groups in New York State about bringing the Futurliner to upstate NY. Nothing is definite as yet though.

What's Happening Lately:

- Our big thanks again to Star Trucking for providing the tractor to pull our trailer and Futurliner to various shows around the country.
- Weller Truck participated in Grand Rapids Metro Cruise by having their 1953 GMC Tractor pull the Futurliner trailer with the Futurliner on the trailer.
- The volunteers continue to meet monthly to review show plans, establish show work assignments, perform routine maintenance on the vehicle and enjoy each others company.
- We have been in contact recently with Nicklas Jonsson who purchased a Futurliner in Calif and it is now at home with him in Sweden. He plans to restore it in a few years and it has received a lot of publicity of course in its new home.
- Another Futurliner vehicle is in Poland Springs Maine and being restored by Tom Learned. This one was formally owned by Kendrick Robbins. He has sent some photos that we have on file.
- The project continues to get interesting letters from people who have seen or participated in the Parade of Progress. One recently was from Bob Ronningen who relates about how his grandson, who was 8 yrs old on 2006. When the article came out in Old Cars Weekly about the Futurliner being at Iola WI. When his grandson saw the photo, he told Bob that he fully intended to be at Iola to see it with him. His grandson

apparently even gave up his birthday party in favor of going to the swap meet and seeing the vehicle. The opportunity to climb into the cab was just fantastic for him. He thoroughly enjoyed his adventure and now follows his grandfather every year to lola, even though the Futurliner is not there. His model of the Futurliner sits proudly on his dresser. Another "old car nut" (as we call ourselves) in the making!

Futurliner Book:

The new book published last year is selling extremely well - **General Motors Parade of Progress & A Futurliner Returns**. It continues to get excellent reviews from everyone who reads it.

With 232 glossy 8 1/2 x 11 pages (24 in color) and 380 pictures, the book tells two big stories: 1) the story of the General Motors Parade of Progress from 1933 to 1956 and 2) the amazing story of the resurrection and authentic restoration of Futurliner #10 in Beaverdam, Michigan by a group of highly motivated volunteers referred to as The Restoration Team. In addition, there are stories told by Paraders (men who traveled with and presented the various exhibits that constituted the parade) along with stories of each of the 9 (out of 12) surviving Futurliners.

The "General Motors Parade of Progress" section and the "Paraders' Profiles" were written by **Bruce Berghoff** of Arcadia, Michigan, author of *The GM Motorama: Dream Cars of the Fifties*. The story of the restoration of Futurliner #10 was written by **George Ferris**, author of several articles on automotive history. Aably edited by Donald Bratt, a restoration team member, the book is available through the Futurliner web site www.Futurliner.org with links to the NATMUS store or by calling NATMUS at (260) 925-9100. The price by mail is \$35 (which includes postage, taxes and handling) or \$29.95 at the NATMUS museum store. Proceeds go towards the preservation, show expenses and the ongoing exhibit of Futurliner #10.

- Correction – in the last newsletter I stated that the new book (above) was "published by NATMUS". It actually was published *for* NATMUS and the project by The Futurliner Restoration Team in Michigan and by the authors, Bruce Berghoff and George Ferris. (*Thanks to Al Batts for spotting this error on my part. – Dean*)

Financial status - Poster, Hats, "T" Shirts & a Neat Video:

- Items available thru NATMUS serve as both fund-raisers for the Futurliner Restoration Project and interesting memorabilia for all of you. The video, titled "**Miracle at Beaverdam**", is available on either VHS or DVD and can be requested from NATMUS for \$25 (including S&H).
- A scale model is now available for \$40 plus \$10 S/H. It is 1/64 scale or about 6" long and comes in a clear plastic display case.
- Posters, polo and "T" shirts and hats are available thru NATMUS. Prices and photos are on the web site - (<http://www.futurliner.com/poster.htm>)
- Donations are still required for on-going repairs and maintenance of the Futurliner. Many people have been very generous in their financial support of the project and all donations are deeply appreciated. Donations can be sent to NATMUS, 1000 Gordon M. Buehrig Place, Auburn, IN 46706 and they are fully tax deductible.

Miscellaneous:

- We get numerous requests to bring the Futurliner to shows around the country. This is no small effort of course with something this size which requires a sizable staff to accompany it. Because of this complexity, the crew and NATMUS have established the guidelines that were detailed in the last issue (#31 – Nov 2007).
- Old Cars Weekly gave us their "Golden Quill Award" this year for the newsletter. Thanks to Jim Crame for providing us super color copies and to all of you who have participated in the project.
- We learned that Parader Dick Kay has passed away in Sept. in Florida per an e-mail from his wife Louanne.

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Address corrections requested



August in Pebble Beach, California

(Crew members are – back row: Jim Crame, Wes Myrick, Ryan DeVries, Ed DeVries, Connie DeJong and Dick Saddler. Center row: Lynda DeVries, Judy DeJong, Dorothy DeVries and Janet Saddler. Front row: Bonnie Crame & John Wissink. Thanks to the crew for traveling to Calif. and helping with the show.