

# Futurliner News

GM Futurliner Restoration Project  
(See more on our web site: [www.Futurliner.com](http://www.Futurliner.com))

Newsletter #31

November, 2007



## Zeeland, Michigan Parade – July 2007

This 31<sup>st</sup> issue of our newsletter continues our plan for semi-annual newsletters now that the vehicle is completed and on the show circuit.

This project has been an all-volunteer effort 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.

### 2007 Show Plans – Completed!

- The project team had a very busy and successful series of shows this year as listed below.
  - June 1&2 – NATMUS, Auburn Indiana
  - June 8 & 9 – Vicksburg Old Car Festival, Vicksburg, Michigan
  - June 10 – Concours d'Elegance, Ault Park in Cincinnati Ohio ([www.ohioconcours.com](http://www.ohioconcours.com))
  - June 15-16 – Mild to Wild show, Holland Michigan
  - June 21-23 Antiques on the bay – St. Ignace, MI
  - July 6 & 7 – AACA Grand National at Gilmore Museum, Richland, MI
  - July 13, 14 – Zeeland Car Show & Parade, Zeeland, Michigan
  - Aug. 3 & 4 – Red Barns, Gilmore Museum in Hickory Corners, MI
  - Aug. 24 & 25 – AACA Fall National Meet, Moline, Illinois
  - Sept 7, 8 & 9 – Salisbury House, Des Moines, Iowa
  - Sept 21-22 Chattanooga, TN – Coker Tire

- One of the highlights at the shows is giving people the opportunity to sit in the cockpit. We've had more favorable comments about that experience than about anything else about the vehicle. It certainly is impressive and a great public relations adventure.
- Our thanks to the dedicated group of volunteers who accompany the vehicle to each show, wash it, show it, talk to visitors, drive it, maintain it, promote it, arrange all the details of the shows, etc., etc. This crew, men and women, do a fantastic job with their "baby".

### **2008 Show Plans being developed: (check the web site for updates)**

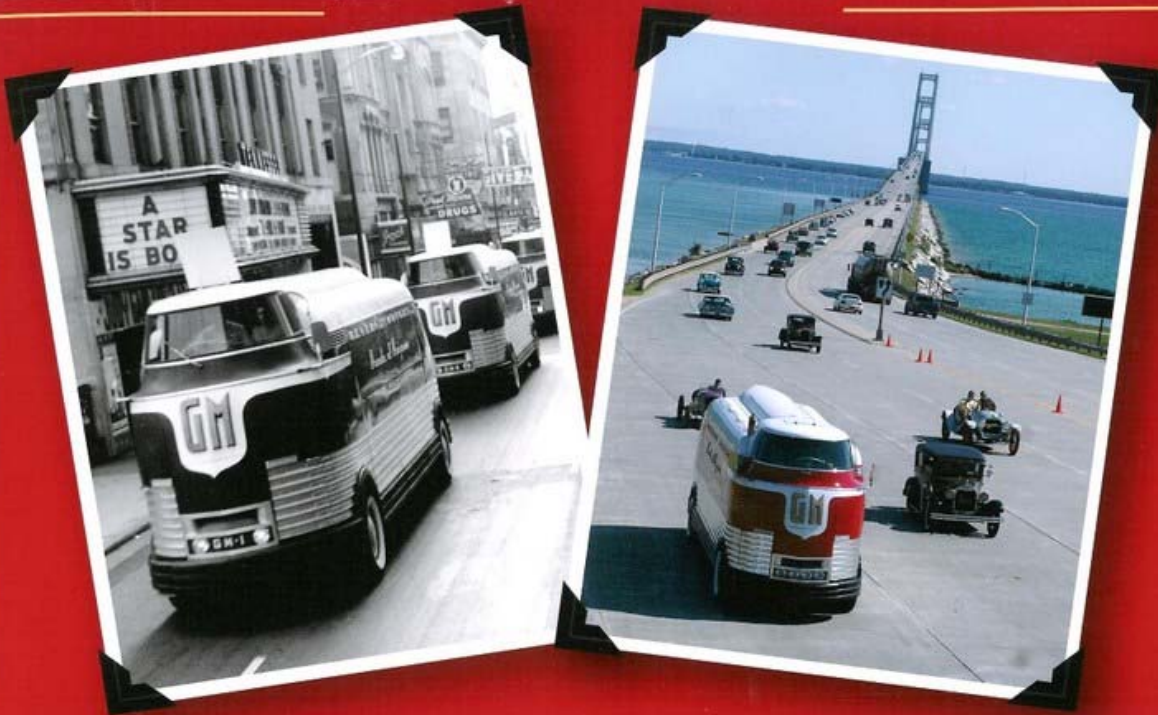
- March 14, 15 - AACA National show — Melbourne, Florida
- June 27, 28 - Sloan Summer Fair – Flint, MI
- July 6 – Car show — Traverse City, MI
- August 22, 23 - Metro cruise — Grand Rapids, MI

### **Futurliner Book:**

A great new book for car and truck buffs, ***General Motors Parade of Progress & A Futurliner Returns*** has just been published by Futurliner #10's owner, the National Automotive and Truck Museum of the United States, Inc. (NATMUS).

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. Aply edited by Donald Bratt, a restoration team member, the book will be available in late November 2007 through the Futurliner web site [www.Futurliner.org](http://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. All proceeds go to the National Automotive and Truck Museum for the preservation and ongoing exhibit of Futurliner #10.



# General Motors Parade of Progress & A Futurliner Returns

Written By BRUCE BERGHOFF & GEORGE FERRIS  
 Edited By DONALD HERBERT BRATT

## Futurliner Tires

If you remember the struggle we had in duplicating the original Futurliner tires, we ended up with wide white tires without the raised letters made by a local truck tire repair facility here in western Michigan.

We now have exact reproduction Futurliner tires on the Futurliner (one of a kind) through another set of "Miracle's at Beaverdam". Here is the story! Shortly after the Canadian (FIDO) Futurliner sold at the Barrett-Jackson auction in Arizona for \$4.2 million an inquiry was received about where we had obtained the white wall tires for our Futurliner. During the discussion, the new owner Ron Platte, was told that although we had white wall tires we could not get any one to produce a copy of the original tires as a donation to our Futurliner restoration. We also told Ron that the only tire company that even took the time to estimate the cost of producing these tires was Coker Tire. At that time just the estimate of making a tire mold was over \$30,000. Ron asked for Coker's phone number. A few weeks later I received a phone call asking for the original tire that we owned to be shipped to Coker tire. Just to get this monster shipped is a story in itself, see the web site. Coker then proceeded to have their engineers design a mold, then Coker had a prototype tire made, had testing done, DOT approval, General Motors approval, and then the process of manufacturing the tires. We actually received the tires in the late spring of 2007. We now have exact duplicates of the original tires that came with the Futurliners in 1941. These tires, in addition to the wide white 10:00 X 20" tires, include the raised letters that have "General Motors, Parade of Progress, US Royal and Fleetway".

This is a result of a gift from Ron Platte as well the Coker Tire Company willing to take the job of doing all of the engineering and manufacturing.

## 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 is titled "**Miracle at Beaverdam**", is available on either VHS or DVD and can be requested from NATMUS for \$25 (including S&H).
- A new scale model is now available for \$40 plus \$10 S/H. It is 1/64 scale or about 6" long. It is an excellent replica as you can see 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 ongoing 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. You can be proud to be a part of this very special and unique restoration project. Donations can be sent to NATMUS, 1000 Gordon M. Buehrig Place, Auburn, IN 46706.

## Miscellaneous:

- We offer our sincere condolences to two of our Futurliner families. Our Project Director Don Mayton lost his daughter Leslie to cancer in September and volunteer Wayne Jackson lost his wife Lois also to cancer this summer.
- 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 following guidelines. Briefly, the sponsoring show will need to provide:
  1. Financial donation to NATMUS - \$5000
  2. A tractor trailer truck to pull the vehicle to and from the event. Secure storage and wash facilities at your site.
  3. Expenses for volunteers. It requires a crew of at least 4-6 of our volunteers with expenses for hotels, meals and travel.
  4. Power at the show of 110VAC with 30 amp capability.
  5. Ability for the Futurliner crew to sell memorabilia as noted below to help cover the on-going expenses of the project.

More detail is available if you are interested. Once these requirements are agreed upon, the crew will see how it all fits together with other requests including the logistics of moving from one site to another.

- Robert Brugman sent us the December 1955 roster of Paraders and personnel. It will be on file if anyone is interested in the details. Ken Kierman also sent us some info from 1954.

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Address corrections requested

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# 2007 Shows