

Futurliner News

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

Newsletter #41

April - 2012



Futurliner #10 at the Kruse, Auburn, IN - 2012

This 41st issue of our newsletter continues the semi-annual newsletters now that the vehicle is completed and being displayed during the year. This project has been an all-volunteer effort that started 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.

2012 Futurliner Shows

Note that some are Under Consideration, most are Firm

Check the web site for future updates.

- June 2, Muskegon, MI, Hot Rod Power Tour (Paul Prinzig in charge)
- June 9, Plainfield Motor Mile show, KOOL Chevrolet, 3780 Plainfield NE in Grand Rapids, (Chuck Snow in charge.)
 - The auto dealers on Plainfield Ave sponsor this event with all sorts of antique, hot rod and custom cars at each dealership.
- June 16, 20th Oldsmobile Homecoming, Lansing Michigan, www.reolds.org Chuck Snow in charge
 - Location is 7150 Harris Dr, Dimondale, MI, SE of Lansing, near the I-69 & I-96 split
 - This is the largest 1 day all Oldsmobile car show and swap meet anywhere.
- July 18, St. Charles, IL, Pontiac National, Paul Prinzig in charge, (under consideration)
- Aug 4, St. Joe MI Concours d'elegance of SW Michigan, (Al Scholten in charge)
- Aug 25, Grand Rapids, 28th Street, Harvey Cadillac, (Don Bratt in charge)
- Oct 5-6, Fort Wayne, IN, Ferreri's and Friends, Sycamore Golf Club, (TBD) in charge (under consideration)
 - 11836 Covington Rd, Ft. Wayne, IN 46814
- Winter 2012 - 2013 – We are talking to two major Michigan museums for possible display next winter. Watch the web site for info later or our fall Futurliner News.

You can help! - If you are planning to attend any of the shows, and if you are inclined to give us a hand, let the "in-charge" person know or let Don or Dean know (addresses at the end). We'd love to have help telling visitors about the project and help selling memorabilia to support the project. I have done it a number of times and it is a very enjoyable day (Dean)

What's Happening Lately:

- We get an occasional request to show the Futurliner during the winter or early spring when the weather is not good for trailering it. This spring, the crew experimented with a shrink wrap technique used to store large boats, etc. The process of wrapping the Futurliner for winter travel is not easy. (see photos on page 4) After it was displayed in Auburn IN last winter, they moved it to Grand Rapids without incidence. However, on the next trip to Ohio, air got under the plastic, bulged it and then broke out a large section. Our truck driver had to stop and pull it all off since it was flapping across the road. It was an interesting experiment and there might be a better way to do it in the future. If it can be transported in bad weather, it not only opens up more shows but saves the crew a lot of clean-up work.

History

Chuck Snow reported that it is possible that we may have stumbled upon what happened to the two missing Futurliners.

At the Cleveland Autorama we had two guys from Galion, Ohio, stop by to visit the Futurliner Saturday 3/17/12. They recalled that a Galion, Ohio, company called North Electric had an Indy race car in 59, 60, and 61. The

car was known as the "North Electric Special" driven by Bob "Cave Man" Christie. The car caused one of the largest wrecks ever at the Indy 500.

The race team had two vehicles that were used to haul the race car and provide accommodations for the crew members. They remember the vehicles had doors and stairs to the driver compartment with a driver seat placed in the middle and a curved back seat that accommodated four passengers. The vehicles also had large generators in the back compartment and they thought they were very likely Futurliners.

The vehicles were sent to Levant junk yard in Galion when a Swiss company bought North Electric and discovered the racing car after two years but they decided they did not want to be in the racing business. Levant junk yard is now an empty field.

Some diligent research is needed here to determine if this is true. If anyone out there has any more info, please let us know.

Futurliner Memorabilia for Sale:

Items available thru NATMUS serve as both fund-raisers for the Futurliner Restoration Project and interesting memorabilia for all of you.

- **DVD** The video, titled "**Miracle at Beavertdam**", is available on either VHS or DVD and can be requested from NATMUS for \$25 (including S&H). This makes a great program for your local car club and any group interested in history and is a neat "people story" in addition to the restoration challenges.
- **Model - A scale model is available but it is out of production so what is in stock is all we will have. Call the museum for their price. At the shows it is now \$80.** It is 1/64 scale or about 6" long and comes in a clear plastic display case.
- **Historical Book:** If you are interested in the full history of the Parade of Progress and the restoration project, pick up a copy of "**General Motors Parade of Progress & A Futurliner Returns.**" 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.
- **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. *Be sure to mark your check for the Futurliner project.*

Miscellaneous:

- We get numerous requests to bring the Futurliner to shows around the country. This is no small effort of course with a vehicle this size and which requires a sizable staff to accompany it. Because of the complexity of moving and showing the vehicle, the crew and NATMUS have established the guidelines that were detailed in a recent issue (#31 – Nov 2007). If anyone is interested in requesting the Futurliner for your show in 2011 or later, contact Don Mayton (address below).
- We learned recently the **Raffee Johns**, a former Parader and active in our project died in March at age 81. Raffee graduated from the Univ. of Michigan in 1951 and joined the parade of Progress. He was active in the restoration project and donated several items to our displays including original parade uniforms.

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It starts with a little roll of plastic wrap and then add a little heat