

Futurliner News

GM Futurliner Restoration Project

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

Newsletter #37 April - 2010



Most of the restoration crew

Futurliner Work Crew - 2003

This 37th 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 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.

2010 Futurliner Show Schedule

Check the web site for future updates and changes.

- Jan thru April –
 - Futurliner continues to be on display at the AACA Museum in Hershey, Pennsylvania
- April 30, May 1, 2 Hudson River Valley Antique Auto 40th Annual Swap meet and Car Show
 - Rhinebeck, New York – Dutchess County Fairgrounds, 6550 Spring Brook Ave
 - Chuck Snow in charge
- May 21-23 Chautauqua County Fairgrounds (Greco Ln. and Central Ave)
 - Dunkirk NY – Exit 59 off NY Thruway
 - Chuck Snow in charge
- June 18-20 "Back to the 50's"
 - St. Paul Minnesota – Al Scholten in charge
 - Minnesota State Fairgrounds
- July 9-11
 - Iola Wisconsin – Al Scholten in charge

- Aug. 27-28
 - Grand Rapids Michigan – Al Scholten in charge
 - 28th Street Metro Cruise
- Sept 19 Glidden Tour registration day only at the Double Tree Hotel
 - Holland Michigan, Mike Ball in charge

This schedule is subject to change during the year so check the web site for the latest info.

You can help - If you are planning to attend, and if you are inclined to give us a hand, let the “in-charge” person know or let Don or Dean (address at the end) know. We’d love to have help telling visits about the project or help selling memorabilia to supper the project.

2011-2012 Futurliner Shows under Consideration

- May 28-29, 2011
 - St. Joseph, Indiana, AHS Truck show – Fred Hoffman in charge
- Aug 10-14, 2011
 - New England show – Ed DeVries in charge
 - Stowe VT ?????? - TBD
- March 12, 2012
 - Cleveland, Ohio – Autorama – Planning in process

What’s Happening Lately:

- The crew gets back together each April for the annual maintenance, touch-ups and upgrades. The heavy show schedule requires continued work on their part to keep the vehicle in tip top condition but it is well worth the joy it brings to visitors (and to the crew).
- Again this summer the Futurliner will ride across Lake Michigan on the S.S. Badger from Ludington, MI to Manitowoc, WI. This is a photo of getting ready to board a few years ago. Sure saves a lot of driving to get around the lake.

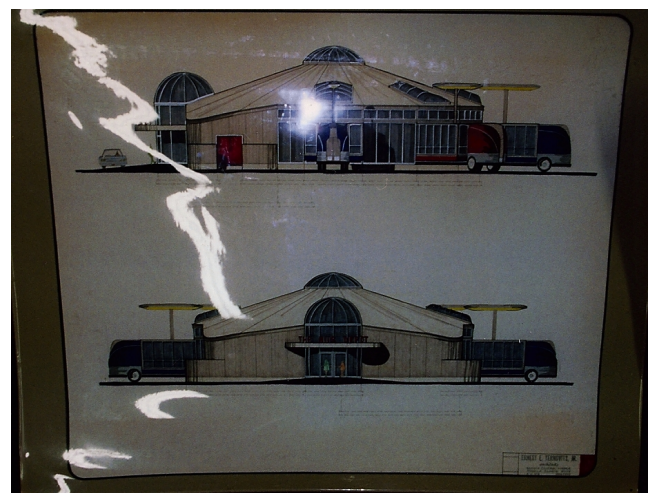


History of our Futurliner

Joe Bortz sent me an interesting photo and a story about how someone acquired 3-4 Futurliners in the 70’s or 80’s with the intent to make them into a restaurant. The idea is similar to the Victoria Station restaurants with railroad cars. This project would have required that the vehicles be destroyed with the front part removed to become a restaurant.

Chain Saw Massacre – Almost! By Joe Bortz

Many have asked me how I came across the five Futurliner busses that I had in the 1980’s. Back in the 80’s my old friend Al Gartzman informed me about a gentleman who claimed that he had a GM Futurliner in his backyard in the Chicagoland area. It seemed like a far fetched story but certainly one I felt that I had to investigate since at that time, I had already acquired several dream cars and knew that this was part of my calling. It was never my intention to own a 1953 GM Futurliner Parade of Progress bus as they were so large and so difficult to restore. Yet, I knew that it would be an amazing task.



When I met this gentleman after months of discussion I found out that he didn't just have one Futurliner in his backyard but he had another four stored west of Chicago on North Ave. in a large deserted part of an industrial park. I was perfectly happy to find out about the situation and thought it was wonderful that he was preserving these busses until one day he presented me with the plan that he had for these busses which was to chain saw them into pieces and use the pieces to make a unique restaurant. For those of you that remember the Victoria Station this is exactly what he was going to do. Have a core restaurant and have pieces of the busses attached to the core and have dining tables in the various pieces of the busses that would be sticking out from the core. While it sounded like a great idea I realized that he was about to destroy a very important part of General Motors history. Knowing that much of the history had already been restored I knew that I had to step in and save the busses.

Because I was in the restaurant business he was willing to turn over his ideas and plans to me with the idea that I would possibly continue on with his plan. Of course my plan was to intercede and save the busses. The enclosed drawing is one of the pictures that he gave me along with rolls of blue prints from his architect who had laid out all the technical aspects of the restaurant.

I bought the five buses and donated one to NATMUS in Auburn, IN which of course has been beautifully restored and has been touring around the United States in the summer months for the last several years.

All the details of what happened after I bought the busses and how they eventually got distributed is another story and hopefully I will be able to make the time to write this up and have published for all those who are interested. Meanwhile I thought that the attached drawing was very interesting. Now I hope to work with the current GM management to preserve the many later day concept cars that they still have. My hope is that the important icons of the 70's, 80's and 90's from GM will be kept for their historic value by GM. Anybody that would like to contact me with their thoughts or words of support can reach me at BortzCars@aol.com

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 Beaverdam**", is available on either VHS or DVD and can be requested from NATMUS for \$25 (including S&H).
- **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.
- **Model:** A scale model is available for \$45 plus \$10 S/H. It is 1/64 scale or about 6" long and comes in a clear plastic display case.
- **Clothing and Posters:** 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 a vehicle this size and which requires a sizable staff to accompany it. Because of this complexity, the crew and NATMUS have established the guidelines that were detailed in a recent issue (#31 – Nov 2007). If anyone is interested requesting the Futurliner for your show in 2010 or later, contact Don Mayton (address below).
- **Rennie Goyette** (Parader) wrote about the Futurliner going to the Dave Garroway's *Today* show in NYC in the 50's. If you have any further info about this trip, please let us know. You can read Rennie's story at http://wiki.gmnext.com/wiki/index.php/Futurliner_to_Dave_Garroway's_%22Today_Show%22

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Original Comic Strip from Nov 29, 2006 - Reprinted with permission of Bill Griffith – 4/1/2010

ZIPPY

"PARADE OF PROGRESS"

BILL GRIFFITH

