

North Hills' Car Clubs *Revving Up* for Summer

By Linda Gerber

For an event that transcends generations, gather your friends and family together and head out to one of the local car clubs for an event that everyone will enjoy. Once you arrive, you'll enter a lighted parking lot full of cars and their proud owners. The atmosphere brings you back in time with its antique cars and 1950s music playing over the loudspeaker.

Every Friday night throughout the summer, car-crazy people from all over the Pittsburgh area make their way to the **Wexford Starlite Car Cruise**. Hosted by North Way Christian Community, the Wexford Starlite Car Cruise has become one of the largest weekly car cruises on the East Coast. The 2008 season showcased over 14,000 show cars and 2,400 bikes and was attended by more than 56,000 visitors!

The Wexford Starlite Car Cruise runs through Labor Day Friday. Open every Friday night from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. throughout most of the summer, the Car Cruise is not just a fantastic place for hot rodders and gear heads, but for families as well. Live entertainment is provided by DJ Denny Dutko, and more than 150 volunteers show up weekly to provide a safe and friendly atmosphere for all who come out each Friday night.



For more information or to view photographs go to www.starlitecarrcruise.com. You can also visit *Cruise Control Weekly*, a short-form Internet TV show on YouTube at www.youtube.com/cruisecontrolweekly.

North Hills' resident Ken Barker is the current president of the **Greater Pittsburgh Mustang Club (GPMC)**. The club was founded in 1976 and he and his wife Jeannie became members in 2006. They are examples

of car enthusiasts that appreciate a specific type of car. Barker said, "I had just bought my 1966 Mustang convertible and wanted to get involved with a club of other Mustang owners. The GPMC is the only Mustang Club in the Pittsburgh area that's an affiliate of the nationwide Mustang Club of America, an important distinction."

The Barker's Mustang is a 1966 convertible. It is stock, done in Wimbledon White with a red "pony" interior. It has a 289 V-8 engine, with a 2-barrel carburetor and 3-speed automatic transmission. "The GPMC is first and foremost a group of friends who share a keen interest in Mustangs of any vintage," said Barker. "Mustang ownership is not required—only a desire to enjoy, share and preserve them."

GPMC holds at least one major charity-related event each year. This is usually their annual All Ford-Powered Show. Now in its 11th year, it will be held at Richard Bazzys Shults Ford, Lincoln, Mercury in Harmarville on June 14. Since 1999, the club has made total donations of over \$12,000 to organizations such as the American Cancer Society, United Cerebral Palsy, American Diabetes Association, and Central Blood Bank of Pittsburgh, among others. A portion of the proceeds from this year's show will benefit the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank.

The Greater Pittsburgh Mustang Club meets the first Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit their website at www.gpmc.org.

If you are one of many people who love to look at antique cars, the **North Hills Historic Auto Club (NHHAC)** is the place for



you. Founded in 1972, the NHHAC has grown to accommodate over 150 members.

Member Pat O'Neill is one of many antique car lovers and owns a 1923 Ford Model T Touring and a 1977 Chevrolet Monte Carlo. He is currently restoring a 1912 Buick Touring. "Our shows are open to the public, and people are invited to bring their cars," he said. Previous shows have included a 1951 Studebaker, 1972 VW Super Beetle, 1936 Buick Century and 1941 Cadillac, among other treasures on display.

The next scheduled event is the 37th Annual Car Show on June 8th at Mars Area Middle School. For more information about upcoming events or NHHAC, visit their website at <http://clubs.hemmings.com/frameset.cfm?club=nhhac>.

The newest car club in the area is the **Pittsburgh Smart Car Club (PSCC)**. According to founders Tom and Katie Kresak, the PSCC grew out of their love for the Smart Car and the desire to share their enthusiasm with others in the area. The smart car is a unique, gasoline powered, two-passenger microcar that is considered safe, fun to drive and fuel efficient, and is generally referred to as "cute." It has what can be described as an almost cult-like following, sometimes compared to the 1960s VW Bug.

PSCC events are in the planning stages for spring and summer of 2009. Everyone is invited to attend the events or meetings listed under "PSCC Events" at www.PittsburghSmartCarClub.org. The website is full of fun facts, pictures and videos. Although this car club is in its beginning stages, the PSCC supports Kids Grants Charitable Trust Fund, and you can view their information at www.KidsGrants.org ■

