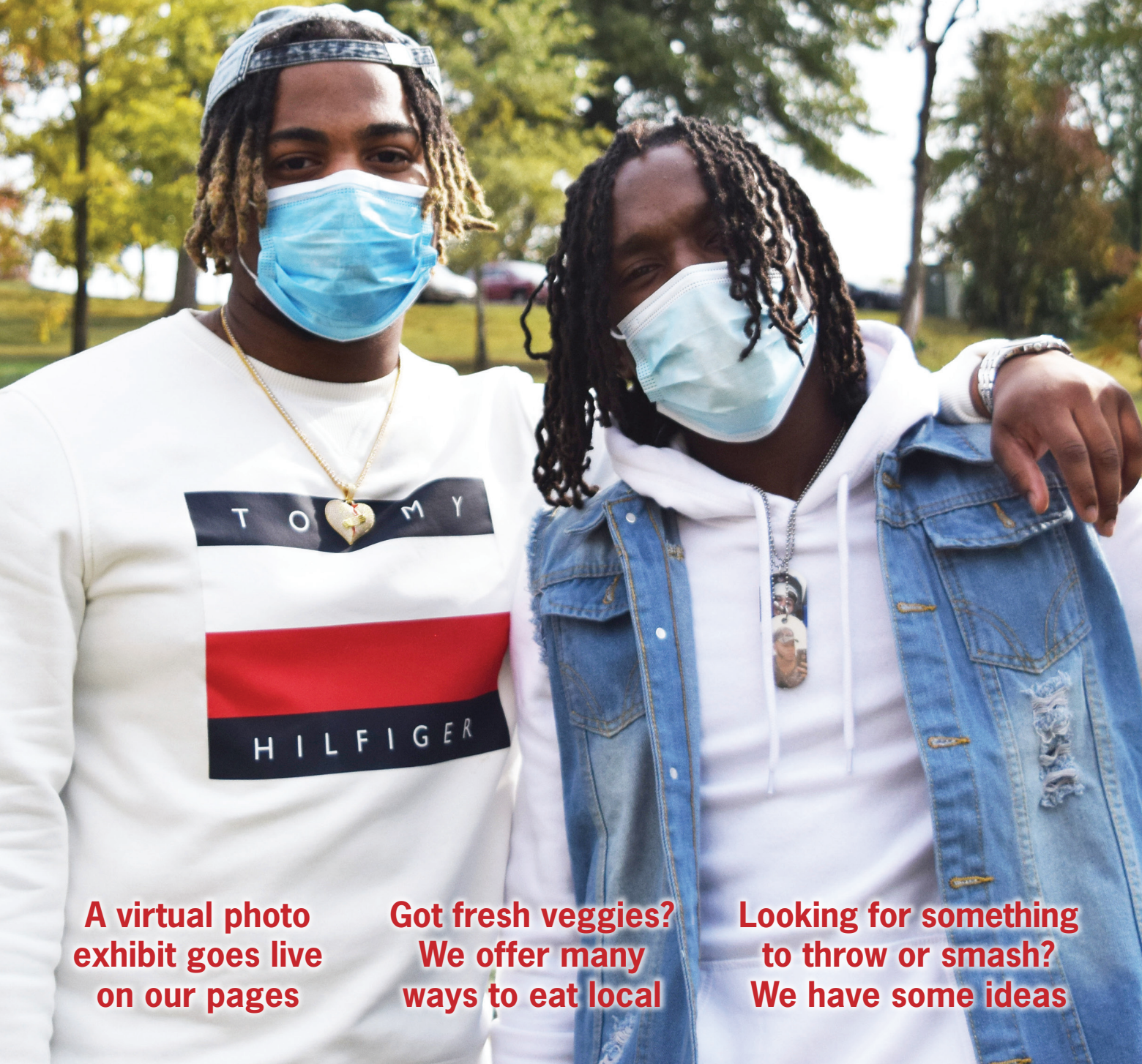


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Collectibles and relics are among the attractions at shows put on by Carlisle Events.



Enthusiasts migrate to Central Pennsylvania — the motor culture capital

Story and Photos By Dimitri John Diekewicz

Anyone living in Central Pennsylvania has no doubt seen the distinctively different shapes, shades of color, and sounds that pass through the area every April through September. These showpieces seem to appear from all directions, bringing a splash of reinvigorating change to the tedious scene of daily travel along the numerous roads and highways throughout the region. It's a show of chrome, color, and horsepower all wrapped up on four wheels. What brings them? It's a drive-in date at one of the nation's largest gatherings of post-World War II classic vehicle shows, better known as Carlisle Events.

America has always been a nation on the move and this attitude accelerated with the advent of the automobile. The now engine-powered public expanded its horizons and as the 20th Century moved on, motorized vehicles played an ever increasing pivotal role in people's lives. The years following WWII witnessed an explosion of the nation's highway system and ever more advanced machinery to course these routes with added luxury and plenty of power. Car culture accelerated and has yet to lift its foot off the gas.

As people began to reflect on their personal journeys and what had literally carried them down those roads, they also began to search for the cherished vehicles that helped them celebrate the past while also carrying it into the future. Seizing on this growing American auto culture, two ardent auto enthusiasts, Bill and Chip Miller (no relation) decided to establish an event where everyone with a passion for or passing interest in what is now regarded as the Golden Age of Automobiles could come together.

Bill Miller explains how he and Chip Miller got together. "It was late 1969 at what was the Collector Car Red Rose sale in Manheim. A friend asked, 'Do you know that guy over there? He's a Miller, too, and just as crazy about cars as you.' Well, as we spent over the next 36 hours transporting vehicles, Chip and I talked about every aspect of cars -- the ones we had, the ones we wish we had, and everything else. We became instant buddies. Then, we started hitting the Hershey show every year."

"We really try to hire car people and when they're having fun, it's a pretty good sign our audience is as well."
— Bill Miller, Carlisle Events founder

The Hershey show he referred to is one of the largest antique car shows, the Eastern Fall show of the Antique Automobile Club of America, which has its headquarters in Hershey. Although last year's show was canceled by Covid and this year's calendar shows some cancellations, the Eastern Fall show is scheduled for Oct. 6-9 in Hershey. The event began in 1954, but it was in 1973 when the Millers attended the show that they resolved to create what became Carlisle Events.

The Millers and Richard Langworth, who has written many books on auto history, had a booth for the recently-formed Milestone Car Society at the Hershey show. "At the booth, we had parked an older Corvette and within a small amount of time someone from the AACA came up and said, 'You're not allowed to have that here — that's not an antique; it's a used car. You have to leave,' Bill Miller said with a laugh.

Realizing the need for a show for post-war car fans, the Millers decided to start their own. After considering a couple of sites, the Carlisle Fairgrounds emerged as the cheapest to rent (\$600 in 1974), and with a central location off major highways (U.S. Rt. 11, I-81, and I-76), it proved to be convenient and popular.

"This was during a gas crisis and people told us no one would come," Miller said. "Well, the next year, we held our first event, Post-War '74, and 6,000 people attended. It was a hit. People would ask, 'What do you call these cars?' We coined the term 'Collector Cars.'"

The Millers' exposition was all encompassing, featuring all makes and models — both foreign and domestic — cars for sale, exhibit cars, parts,



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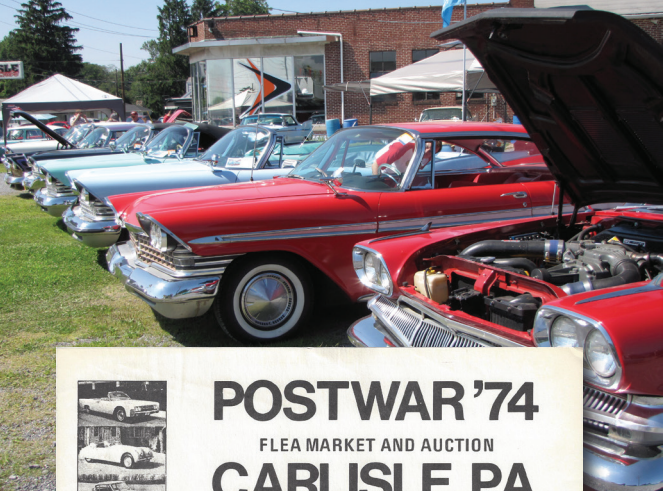


PHOTO SUBMITTED
Bill Miller

even more events — shows dedicated to Ford, General Motors, Chrysler, trucks, imports, and sports cars.

In 2012, Carlisle Auctions was added to the show schedule and together four annual classic vehicle sales average about \$16 million in total sales each year. All this has helped Carlisle Events to reach new milestones and their events annually draw about 500,000 patrons from around the world. That means the planner carefully considers new attractions.

“We really try to hire car people and when they’re having fun, it’s a pretty good sign our audience is as well,” Miller said. PR Director Garland echoes the sentiment, noting, “We have less than 30 full-time employees and we really are a family. I’m one of the new guys — and I started in 2011. ... When you come here, you’re not a stranger, just a friend we haven’t met yet.”

This multi-motor vehicle program in Carlisle and the close proximity to the AACA in Hershey has produced a mutually beneficial relationship that all enthusiasts enjoy. “The AACA is all about the future of the hobby,” said AACA CEO Steve Moskowitz. “We look at preservation and absolutely Carlisle Events are good supportive friends. Bill and Lance Miller are both AACA members and what they offer benefits everyone, especially in the autumn when their fall show runs just before our Eastern Fall Meet. It gives automotive fans two consecutive weeks to saturate their interests.”

While the AACA Hershey show focuses primarily on pre-WWII cars designated as “antique,” which in Pennsylvania means at least 25 years old, the event now also includes post-WWII vehicles. Carlisle, in contrast, hosts mainly post-war vehicles, including new special interest cars and trucks. “You have pockets of people who focus on the event they feel will satisfy their personal taste, but overall a large number attend both shows because together they create an intersection of interest that appeals to everybody,” Moskowitz said.

Although founder Chip Miller died in 2004, his influence is still felt. His son, Lance, continues to promote the high caliber events along with Bill Miller, who describes their philosophy as “We’re here for the older folks who have a passion for the cars of their age and the 19-year-old who just got his first Mustang.” One thing is certain, the Carlisle calendar of events will keep fans firing on all cylinders for the foreseeable future. ☉

literature, supplies, and services in an environment that was supercharged with excitement. “I found it at Carlisle” would be heard so often that the phrase became a company slogan.

From this 0-60 launch, Carlisle accelerated in following years, building the event, and picking up even more passengers as the show grew in popularity. In 1975, it was officially designated as the Carlisle Car Show, and two years later, it became a biannual bash with a kickoff spring show — the event that still attracts the largest audience. In 1981, Carlisle Events bought the fairgrounds and made improvements to the facilities. That allowed them to add

POSTWAR '74

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These registrants must fill out car or parts will also receive detailed road directions and a list of convenient motels and campsites. Campers and trailers will be allowed to camp right on the field. Since we have no club affiliation, all cars are welcome—and all vendors—regardless of the age of their cars or parts. There are no limits to the number of booths you can reserve, while the supply lists. Act now to insure yours. And, if you're coming to central Pennsylvania this fall just to browse or buy, come visit us. We promise you won't be disappointed!

Postwar Events is a not-for-profit organization, a 501(c)(3) public charity, exempt from federal income tax under the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code, and is recognized for the purposes of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

FALL CALENDAR (WE'RE ONLY PART OF IT!)
 SEP. 26-28: POSTWAR '74 FLEA MKT, CARLISLE
 SEP. 28: POSTWAR '74 AUCTION CARLISLE
 SEP. 29: MARQUE CLUB MEETS, CARLISLE
 SEP. 29-OCT 2: MILESTONE CAR SOCIETY'S EASTERN NATIONAL, THE EMBERS, CARLISLE
 OCT. 1: 2nd ANNUAL DUTCH WONDERLAND ANTIQUE AND CLASSIC CAR AUCTION
 OCT. 3-5: AACA'S SHOW-FLEA MKT., HERSHEY

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Car shows motor on in 2021

The Covid-19 pandemic forced Carlisle Events to prolong the start to its 2020 season, moving its popular spring event to the middle of June, but after consulting with officials and making a plan to move forward safely, the shows were on. Precautions included sanitizing stations across the 82-acre fairgrounds and eliminating some features to avoid concentrating too many people in one area. The shows went off without a hitch, which brought calls for advice from other event organizers across the nation. "We shared our safety protocol and in the process our brand has reached levels of exposure we couldn't have imagined," said Mike Garland, PR director for Carlisle Events. "Ultimately, we stood up for what we believe in and did so responsibly."

A full slate of shows is scheduled for 2021 and 2022. "We plan to go into this season with the same health safety measures," Garland said, adding that they will offer additional hand washing stations and sanitization stations throughout the grounds, and will regularly clean frequent touch points, encourage mask wearing and social distancing, and continue with directional traffic in food court areas and display buildings. "Any changes will be reflective of adjusted CDC guidelines," he said. Guests can review health and safety measures at the "Covid-19 Know Before You Go" tab on their website (www.carlisleevents.com)

2021 Shows

Carlisle Fairgrounds

1000 Bryn Mawr Road, Carlisle

Spring Carlisle, April 21-25

Carlisle Import & Performance Nationals, May 14-15

Carlisle Ford Nationals, June 4-6

Carlisle GM Nationals, June 25-26

Carlisle Chrysler Nationals, July 9-11

Carlisle Truck Nationals, Aug. 6-8

Corvettes at Carlisle, Aug. 26-28

Fall Carlisle, Sept. 28-Oct. 3

2020 Auctions

Carlisle Expo Center

100 K. Street, Carlisle

Spring Carlisle Collector Car Auction, April 22-23

Carlisle Auctions Summer Sale, June 26

Fall Carlisle Collector Car Auction, Sept. 30-Oct. 1



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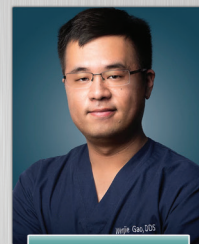
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