



*Faulkner at Carlisle*

# The 60th Anniversary of Plymouth's '59

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I wrote in BULLETIN 356 about *Faulkner* my '59 Sport Fury. Although it had spent four years up on blocks, I was optimistic about my prospects for getting the car ready for the 2019 Chrysler Nationals at Carlisle and its celebration of the '59 Plymouth's 60th anniversary.

By the time this article is published, "Chryslers at Carlisle" 2019 will have come and gone and *Faulkner's* return to the venue after a four-year hiatus, will have made all the effort worthwhile. Still, I fretted:

*So much to do to prepare for Carlisle: the red interior vinyl and fabric painted in black; weather stripping installed; power window switch sockets replaced; taillights and headlights reinstalled—a seemingly endless list. Much of the work is now complete, but as I type this report, the stainless*

*trim that Dick (Koch) so painstakingly repaired is yet to be installed.*

*Matthew Keij from the Netherlands to the rescue! Second only to Dick in his knowledge of all things '59 Plymouth, and a regular attendee at the Chrysler Nationals, his arrival in Upper Darby is imminent. In the days he will spend with me prior to Carlisle, he will help me bring *Faulkner* up to snuff, I am sure. But confirmation awaits.*

I needn't have worried. Hours after his arrival from the Netherlands, and more than a little jet-lagged, Matthew tore into the task ahead of him.

In a matter of a



*Trimming the '59: Matthew Keij*



day and a half, *Faulkner* was transformed under Matthew's steady hand. Here *Faulkner* is in his finished state (with *Martha*, my '54 Plaza Suburban lurking within the garage).

Previous owners of *Faulkner*, the Sterlings from Boise, Idaho, had monikered the Fury as *The P* while they owned the car. In homage, I installed a replica Idaho plate.



**WITH THE ARRIVAL OF MATTHEW'S FATHER, RON**, it was off to the July 11-14 Chrysler Nationals in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, a trek of 120 miles from Philadelphia.

Shortly after our arrival at the Carlisle Fairgrounds that Thursday, the weather took a turn for the worse, the hardest I've even seen it rain at Carlisle. Perhaps, the hardest I've seen it rain, ever! But after an hour, it was over and we enjoyed beautiful weather the rest of the weekend.



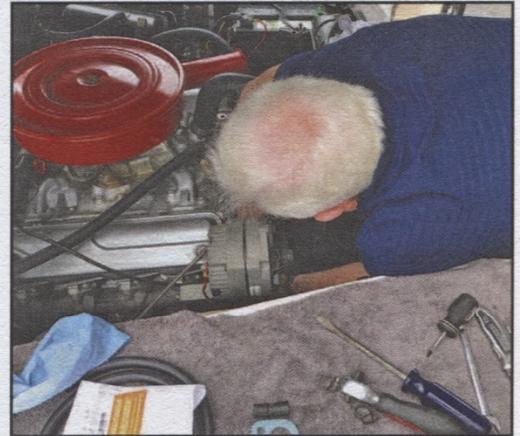
*"1959 Plymouth Motel"*

*Faulkner* was one of seven 1959 Plymouths to make the trek. Four of us would stay at the Mechanicsburg Motel 6, a scenic stone's-throw drive from Carlisle, and unofficially named the "1959 Plymouth Motel" after our many consecutive annual stays there.



While at the fairgrounds, I took a call from Dick Koch at the motel. Dick and Yvonne had made the thousand-mile trip to Carlisle from Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, trailering *Bertha Irene*, their

stunning '59 Belvedere convertible (see PLYMOUTH BULLETIN 333). While being backed off the trailer, *Bertha Irene* sprung a fuel pump leak. Fortunately, an Advance Auto store near the fairgrounds had the part, and Dick was back in business.



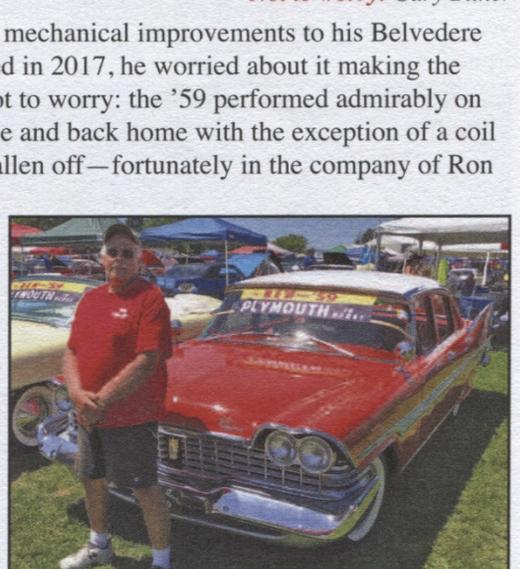
*Fuel pump repair: Dick Koch*

It wasn't long before we were joined at the motel by Gary Bitner from Youngstown, Ohio. Although Gary had made several mechanical improvements to his Belvedere hardtop, purchased in 2017, he worried about it making the 250-mile trip. Not to worry: the '59 performed admirably on the way to Carlisle and back home with the exception of a coil wire which had fallen off—fortunately in the company of Ron Keij.



*Not to worry: Gary Bitner*

Later that evening, we were joined by Mark Merritt and his beautiful '59 Fury (see PLYMOUTH BULLETIN 350), who had made the drive from Erie, Pennsylvania.



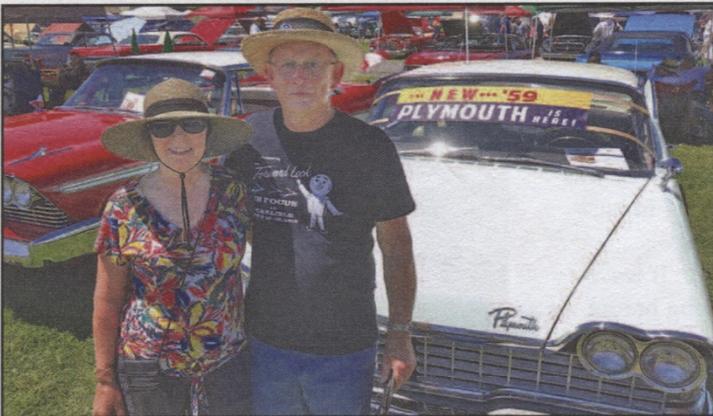
*Beautiful '59: Mark Merritt*



**1959 Plymouth Convoy**

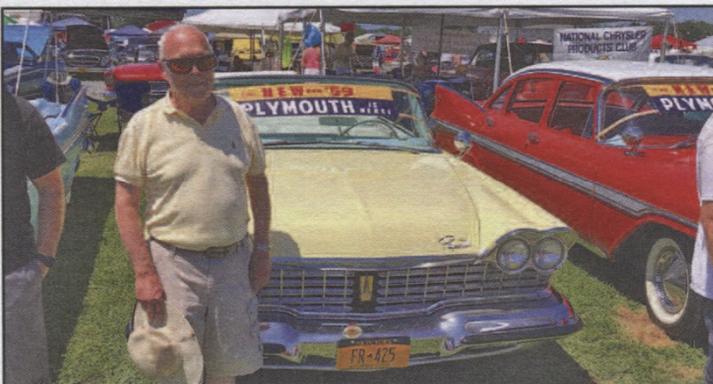
Over our many years of meeting fellow '59 Plymouth owners at Carlisle, traditions have developed. Perhaps none are more fun than the "1959 Plymouth Convoy" driving from the "1959 Plymouth Motel" to the fairgrounds. (Check out some videos—and other pictures from the 60th Anniversary celebration—at <http://bit.ly/60thAnniv59>). It was such a rush, while turning that corner in Mechanicsburg, to see yourself followed by '59 after '59!

Another favorite Carlisle tradition is the Saturday lineup of '59 Plymouths at the fairgrounds.



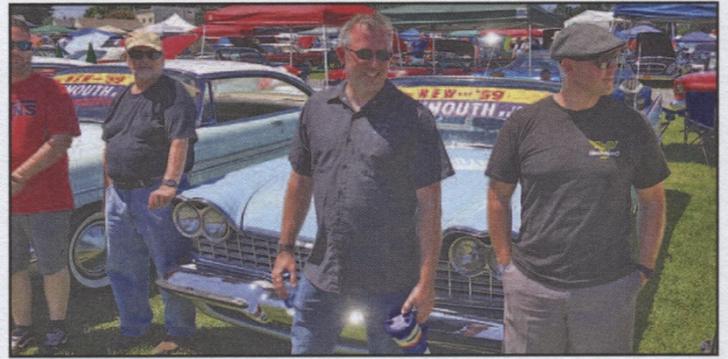
**First-time '59: Barb and Dieter Bauer**

We were joined by Dieter and Barb Bauer from Guelph, Ontario. Regulars at Carlisle, Dieter and Barb had brought their gorgeous '59 Fury for the first time. Sidelined for many a year with engine trouble, the Fury's kinks had finally been ironed out.



**Stunning Belvedere: Jack Fleury**

To our surprise, Jack and Diane Fleury had made the trip in their stunning Belvedere convertible, coming down from Malone, New York, a 450-mile trek.



**Gathering at Earl Hess' convertible: Matthew Keij, Earl Hess, Aaron Vogel (Sport Fury not at the show) and Will Walker (BULLETIN 348, pp 8-9)**

Lastly, we were joined by Earl Hess from nearby Lancaster, Pennsylvania, with one of his two 1959 Sport Furies. One is a hardtop, but he brought the remarkable convertible specimen to the show.



**Banner year: 1959**

**AND THEN: THE 1959 PLYMOUTH LINEUP!** As always, '59 Plymouth owners are asked to join the "photo-op," even if their Plymouths couldn't be there.



**Celebrity Choice Award: presented to Dan Morton [RIGHT] by Dave Stragand**

This year, there was a difference: We were sporting reproductions of actual Plymouth dealership banners for the 1959 Plymouth model year.

The club banners got so much attention that we were awarded a Celebrity Choice Award presented by Dave Stragand, owner of the acclaimed





*The 1959 Plymouth lineup*



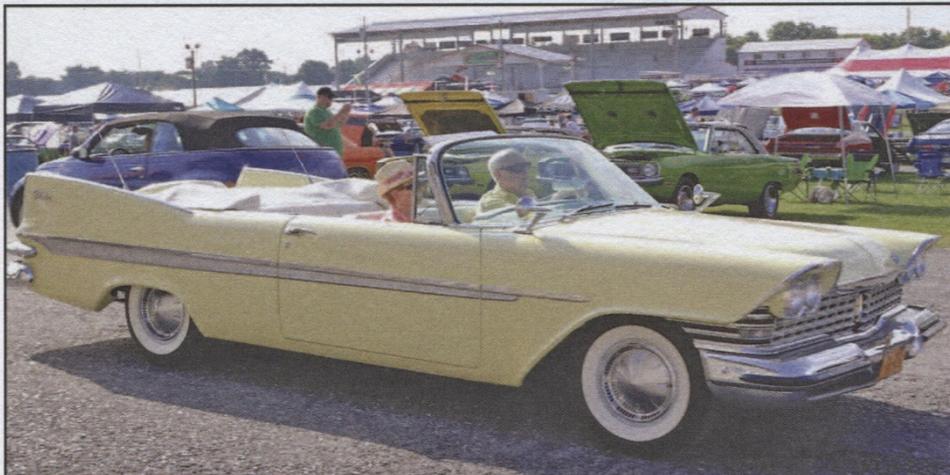
*At the '59 Plymouth Motel: Gary Bitner's Belvedere*

Forward Look website: <<http://www.forwardlook.net>>

It was an altogether-fitting end to the 60th Anniversary Celebration of the 1959 Plymouth. Soon enough, it was time to

say our goodbyes, as we scattered on our separate ways across the continent, and abroad, bound together by this slice of Americana that had brought us together with friendships we forged because of it.

**PB**



*Stunning Belvedere: Jack and Diane Fleury*



*Faulkner and Dan Morton*