



GO TO
Buffalo.com

FRONT PAGE
LIFESTYLES

LIFE

[CAREERS](#)
[FAMILY](#)
[LIFESTYLES](#)
[PARENT TO PARENT](#)
[PARENTING](#)
[PETS](#)
[VOLUNTEERS](#)

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TEN DAYS.

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[MORE OPTIONS](#)
or [SEARCH OLDER STORIES](#)



LIFESTYLES

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By **BRENDAN McGARRY**
News Staff Reporter
8/22/2002

What: "Women and the Automobile"

Where: Pierce Arrow/Transportation Museum, 263 Michigan Ave, at the corner of Michigan and Seneca streets

When: Noon to 5 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday

Admission: \$7 for adults, \$6 for seniors, \$3 for children ages 6 to 17, free for those 5 and under.

More info: 853-0084; www.pierce-arrow.com By **BRENDAN McGARRY**
News Staff Reporter

Long before Janet Guthrie made a name for herself racing NASCAR circuits, women were already making headlines in automobiles.

In 1909, a 22-year-old New Jersey woman drove almost 4,000 miles across the country to California and became the first woman ever to complete a transcontinental trip.

In 1915, silent film star Anita King drove from San Francisco to New York in 48 days. (Paramount Studios then starred her in a film about a transcontinental race, long before the popular "Cannonball Run" movies of the '80s.)

In fact, many believe the automobile helped galvanize the Women's Emancipation movement early in the 20th century. Skeptics beware - women invented the carburetor, an electric engine starter, a starting mechanism, a clutch mechanism and hundreds of other automobile devices.

In recognition and celebration of such achievements, the Buffalo Transportation/Pierce-Arrow Museum is presenting the "Women and the Automobile" exhibit, on display until October.

The exhibit combines life-size mannequins in antique apparel with the museum's sizable collection of vintage Buffalo-built automobiles by companies like Pierce-Arrow and Thomas Flyer.

The style of clothing matches the different eras of automobiles, ranging from the late 1890s to the mid-1960s. Protective clothing like dusters, goggles, hats, veils and gloves - required before the advent of enclosed vehicles - as well as jewelry, china and other accessories also are shown.

The collection of antique memorabilia is vast and includes original editions of "The Motor Maids" fiction books by Katherine Stokes as well as old automotive



ads.

"We are saving Buffalo history here and putting it on display for everyone to see," said James T. Sandoro, curator of the exhibit and director of the museum.

Sandoro has always been drawn to classy old cars. When he was a child, he liked to play on his neighbor's vintage Pierce-Arrow Town Car, designed with an open front for the chauffeur. He was repeatedly scolded for doing so, but never did learn his lesson.

Sandoro has been collecting vintage automobiles and antique memorabilia for more than 20 years. "It is more than we ever dreamed it was going to be," he said of the museum. "It's a legacy for future generations."

Sandoro plans to organize more car shows - last summer's brought nearly 200 Pierce-Arrows into town - in the hopes of drawing more people downtown. He also plans to build a Frank Lloyd Wright gas station near the museum.

"We want to make downtown a hub of history," he said. "Like a wheel, all power comes from the hub."

e-mail: bmcgarry@buffnews.com



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[▲ TOP](#) [▶ NEXT STORY](#)