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Contact: Bill Warner, Chairman

904-636-0027

bwarner@ameliacours.org

Chris Hoyt, Dir. of Operations

904-636-6687

choyt@ameliacours.org

NEW YORK-TO-PARIS WINNING THOMAS FLYER COMING TO AMELIA FOR 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS HISTORIC VICTORY

"The Great Race"-Winning Car Making Rare Trip Out Of Museum; Special Seminar To Be Held

JACKSONVILLE, FL; November 7, 2007 --- The Thomas Flyer automobile that won the historic New York-to-Paris "Great Race" in 1908 will come to the Florida coast for the 13th annual Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance, March 7-9, 2008. Contested 100 years ago, the tortuous race covered the width of the United States before stopping at points in Alaska, Japan, Siberia, and Berlin before ending in Paris. It has never been run again.

With the automobile barely a decade old, the thought of an around-the-globe race was unheard of at the time, but also very tempting to the adventurers of the day. The New York-to-Paris race turned out to be much more than a race; it was about national pride and the quest for automotive superiority among the leading "modernized" countries of the era. Sponsored by *The New York Times* and the Paris-based *La Matin* paper, teams from France (Motobloc, DeDion, Sizaire-Naudin), Italy (Zust), Germany (Protos), and the United States (Thomas) were entered in the grueling challenge. Nearly 250,000 people were on hand February 12, 1908, to cheer the cars as they started from Times Square. The winning Thomas Flyer covered 22,000 miles in 169 days, a record that still stands today.

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“To have the National Automobile Museum, The Harrah Collection, in Reno, Nevada, loan us this national treasure during their 100th anniversary is more than words can express,” says Bill Warner, founder and co-chairman of the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance. “It will be a once in a lifetime experience for the attendees to see this car up close and personal. All will be amazed at the primitive nature of the car and what it went through.”

Famed collector William Harrah found the Thomas Flyer in the early sixties and with the help of George Schuster, the only member of the U.S. team to drive the entire 22,000-mile race, he painstakingly brought the vehicle back to its original trim just as it entered Paris in 1908. Weighing in at 4,000 pounds fully loaded, the Thomas Flyer's four-cylinder power plant could propel it to 60 m.p.h. The car finished 26 days ahead of the second place German-entered Protos.

Special Seminar Will Recount The Thomas Flyer's Adventure

On Friday, March 7th, Amelia's annual seminar series will kick off with a presentation by Jeff Mahl, great grandson of George Schuster. With the original 1907 Thomas Flyer that won the race being at the show and in the Ritz-Carlton's grand ballroom for the presentation, Mahl will be reliving the events of that epic race with original photos and a first-person account of this international competition which reshaped automotive history. The race is considered by many to have ushered in the era of the automobile as viable transportation.

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The 2008 Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance will be held March 7-9 on the 10th and 18th fairways of The Golf Club of Amelia Island at Summer Beach adjacent to The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island. Parnelli Jones is the honoree and the cars of the E.R. Thomas Motor Car Co. will be featured. The show's Foundation has donated nearly \$1.5 million to Community Hospice of Northeast Florida, Inc. since 1996.

The Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance is one of the nation's most innovative vintage auto events featuring over 250 rare classics from seldom-seen private collections nationwide. The show is held annually during the second weekend of March at The Golf Club of Amelia Island at Summer Beach adjacent to The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island. For more information, visit www.ameliaconcours.org or contact them at 904-636-0027.

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