

The Bell gets judged in Hershey

By Carol McPherson

The 29th Barrie Bell to be manufactured is heading to Hershey, Pennsylvania in several weeks to be judged at the fall meet of the annual Hershey Car Show.

Since 1996, two Innisfil men and one Barrie man have been restoring the car as authentically as possible, said Mayor Brian Jackson, one of the Bell's restorers.

Built in Barrie sometime between 1916 and 1920, it was one of 40 cars to be produced by the Barrie Carriage Company, said Jackson.

"We started with just the remnants," he said. "We've built it as authentically as possible."

Along with Murray Irwin and John Poole, the men have created wooden wheels and a wooden frame for the seats. Even part of the car's body is wood.

"We have letterhead from the Barrie Carriage Company referring to this car as the "Pride of the Highway", he said.

The car's motor was built by the Bell Motor Car Company in Bell, Pennsylvania.

The motors then came to Barrie where the body was built.

"This was Barrie's attempt to move into an industrialized world," he said. Until this point, the major mode of transportation was by horse.

As for building the car with authenticity a hundred years later, it's been a challenge.

"This has been quite an undertaking," said Jackson.

The partial frame of "The Bell" was found in an old Innisfil garage.

Jackson currently owns a 1930 Model "T" truck which is often seen along Innisfil parade routes.



Rebuilt as authentically as is possible, the Barrie Bell was found in an old Innisfil garage in 1996.
photo by Brian Jackson