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State Farm Insurance Executive's Hobby: Classic Pedal Cars Fill Garage

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Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine**State Farm Insurance Executive's Hobby:
Classic Pedal Cars Fill Garage***Local & Cent Ill
Chgo. Business
Feature
Collector*

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--His oldest one is a 1929 Buick. His prime one is a 1935 Super Charger Auburn.

Bruce Callis, State Farm Insurance Companies vice president, is a serious car collector--pedal cars, that is.

Over the last seven years, Callis has put together a collection of 25 pedal cars, a pedal airplane, and a pedal boat--many of which he has restored to mint condition from dented and rusty wrecks.

It all started when Callis's wife, Nancy, an antique dealer, spotted a '63 T-Bird pedal car, observing that it was just like the one their son had as a little boy. Callis's wife suggested he buy and restore it.

"That got me started," he said.

Why pedal cars for this high-powered insurance executive?

"They're cars," he said. "I've always been fascinated by cars."

Callis's hobby is profiled in the winter edition of *Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine* in an article, "His Other 25 Cars Are Pedal Cars," written by Elaine Graybill, the magazine's managing editor. It's part of a series of articles about unique collections and collectibles that interest businessmen, educators, community leaders, and others. A copy of the article is attached to this news release.

Callis, a Bloomington resident, is president of Illinois Wesleyan Associates, a group of 300-plus business and civic leaders who support the university, and an ex-officio member of the IWU Board of Trustees.

Callis's pedal car collection also includes a 1936 Ford rumble-seat roadster that matches his full-size roadster; another pedal car is a 1948 Pontiac similar to the first car he and his wife owned.

Callis works on his cars an hour or two at a time on nights and weekends. After using his mind all day, he said, it's nice to pick up a wrench and know he can get dirty. Sometimes his 4-year-old grandson, Michael,

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works by his side, showing surprising aptitude with tools.

By the way, if anyone has a line on a Lincoln or Cadillac pedal car made in the 1920s by American National Co., give Callis a call--he wants to add them to his collection, but he isn't willing to pay the \$6,000-\$9,000 going price.

"I'm an optimist," he said. "I'm always thinking that I'll find a good value."

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 1,800 students in a College of Liberal Arts, College of Fine Arts, and a four-year professional School of Nursing. In recent years, the university's endowment has grown to more than \$92 million; a \$15 million athletics and recreation center opened in the fall of 1994; and a \$24 million science building will open in 1995. The Carnegie Commission for the Advancement of Teaching promoted Illinois Wesleyan to a "Baccalaureate I" institution in 1994, a classification that places it among 164 highly selective National Liberal Arts Colleges in the annual *U.S. News & World Report* rankings. *U.S. News* ranks IWU the second most efficient national liberal arts college--a key gauge of the campus' quality academic program and relatively reasonable cost. *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*, another respected college guide, rated IWU "highly competitive (+)" in its latest edition. IWU's 1994 freshman class scored an average 27.9 on the ACT exam, compared to the national average of 20.7.