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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LIGONIER MUSEUM TO EXHIBIT PRIVATE MASCOT/HOOD ORNAMENT COLLECTION

Ligonier – This summer, the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Ligonier Valley is offering patrons an opportunity to view a world-class private collection of antique mascots/hood ornaments. The collection debuted to guests at the Museum’s Garden Party in early June and will now remain on view through August 6. Never before seen by the public, the collection includes priceless works from the early 20th century. Approximately 90 mascots are on display in the SAMA exhibition.

Automobile mascots, more commonly known as hood ornaments, were the rage in the U.S. and Europe from the mid-teens to the 1950s as a way to express originality amidst the fast-paced development of the automobile. Distinctions among brand mascots, advertising and fantasy mascots are notable, with some mascots forever identified with particular car brands. Original costs ranged from \$5 to \$50 and were typically available through an auto dealer, auto parts store, or distribution house.

Figureheads were found on ancient Egyptian tombs and conquering Viking ships long before automobile features became prevalent in the early 20th century, when cooling radiators were visible at the front of vehicles. The radiator caps topped the cooling systems but were soon identified as offering a perfect pedestal to place a statue or icon. Notable automobile manufacturing mascots include the famous Rolls Royce winged lady, Voisin’s “Cocotte,” Hispano-Suiza’s “Stork,” and Pierce Arrow’s “Archer,” all on display in this exhibition.

Fantasy mascots not associated with a particular manufacturer were especially creative and prolific in 20th century France, where they were mounted by the automobiliste who enjoyed the spirit of craftsmanship. Most mascot artists were also sculptors and silversmiths. Fantasy mascots are often collected and displayed in themed groups, such as animals, nudes, religious or vocations – that is, artistic designs which gave pleasure through their ornamental effect on the vehicle. The private collection on display is an eclectic compliment to the original artists’ creativity and skill.

“We are so honored to have this beautiful mascot collection at SAMA-Ligonier Valley for the summer,” said Site Coordinator Kristin Miller. “Having this never-before-seen assemblage is an amazing opportunity for our guests to enjoy. It has been fascinating learning

about where each one was designed and on what car it was placed. This unique and exquisite collection has been a pleasure to display and I encourage everyone to come experience this treasure.”

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Ligonier Valley is located at One Boucher Lane and Route 711 South in Ligonier. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 1 to 5 p.m. weekends. The Museum is a handicapped accessible facility and is open to the public free of charge. For more information, call (724) 238-6015 or visit www.sama-art.org.