

STUDEBAKER DRIVERS CLUB

12th ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL MEET



Meet Chairman Earl Drews welcomes Tony Caralla to Indy. Tony is one of the original seven members that started SDC with Harry Barnes in 1962 in New York state.

Super, fantastic and best ever were just a few of the superlatives used by some of the over 1,000 enthusiasts attending the 12th Annual International Meet of the Studebaker Drivers Club. The yearly extravaganza was hosted by the Indianapolis Chapter of the SDC the week of July 19.

A combination of ingredients contributed to making this the best attended meet ever held by the SDC. The centralized location and easy access to the South Bend attractions. The lure of the famous 500 track which is rich in Studebaker tradition. The tremendous growth of the SDC now over 8,000 strong and still growing. And finally, the increase in interest in the preservation and display of Studebaker vehicles.

A contingent of twenty-one Australians were the first to arrive in Indianapolis on Saturday the 17th. They received VIP treatment from the Indy Chapter, which was only fitting after their journey halfway around the world.



A cake prepared by the Indy Chapter to welcome the Australians on Saturday. The design is the same as the Indy 76 dash plaques.

By Monday the meet headquarters at the 500 Motel was a flurry of activity as arrivals came in from most of the 50 states, Lloyd Robertson even driving in from Anchorage, Alaska! In addition to the mini car show being held in the parking lot, members were busy renewing old acquaintances and meeting others who were formerly known only through the mail.

The hospitality room was busy serving some special Indiana brew as parts vendors tried to ward off the eager buyers who threatened to empty their wares into the parking lot.

Tuesday was set aside for the official swap meet to be held on the 500 infield. Vendors began lining up at 6:30 a.m. and despite some brief confusion about the proper gate, most were able to begin setting up by 7:00. A total of over 60 vendors covered 98 spaces with most specializing in Studebaker parts. Some of the more unique items offered included a trailer load of NOS 1939 headlights at \$5.00 each, mid 20's dealer factory pictures, miscellaneous toys and models, and a wide variety of sheet metal body and chassis parts.



Dick Quinn took this photo of his truck at 6 a.m. while waiting at the gate to set up for the swap meet.



The swap meet had two very nice features - two unhurried days of selling, and shade trees.



Jim McCllen's swap space featured both a Stude diesel and a Stude 4-wheel drive truck for sale.



The Big D swap booth is manned by the Woods' and Smith's. Ed and C.P. must have been taking a break when this was taken.

Tuesday was also a day of club business as various meetings were being held. The National Board of Directors Meeting ran smoothly through four hours, the highlights being the selection of Cincinnati, Ohio, as the site of the 1977 International Meet, and the reelection of C. P. Smith of Dallas, Texas, as President. One of the many reports came from membership chairman and Turning Wheels editor Larry Swanson who gave the board the current membership figures of 8,099, up by 1,116 over 1975. [The complete minutes of the board meeting are printed elsewhere in this issue.]



Bea Hamlin presenting the proposal for a Washington DC national meet. The balloons are from one of the other proposals.

At exactly 5:00 p.m. the board meeting was adjourned to free the space for the literature swap. This feature is perhaps unique to SDC, having grown in popularity over the past three years. Twenty-five different vendors leased 34 spaces to display their wares. The growing popularity of this feature was evidenced by the large crowds which filled the meeting rooms for over four hours. Sellers reported sales to be brisk with the only complaints being a lack of set-up time and the crowded conditions.



The other half of the board, this time watching the New Jersey proposal.

Wednesday was the big day for the over 287 cars and their owners who would vie for awards in forty classes. In terms of total members this was probably the largest meet ever held by the SDC. Even more impressive was the quality of vehicles being entered. In national competition the SDC has a 200 point scale with points deducted for any item which is not factory new. Most class winners scored above 190 points with the average of all cars at 170 points. Quite impressive when one considers that most of the cars were driven to the meet.

A drive through judging system was used, and though the lines were sometimes long there were few complaints as owners used their time for visiting or taking pictures. Some of the more impressive entries included the five diesel trucks from as far away as Arizona, Florida, and Washington. One particularly impressive rig was a diesel truck tractor of John Ernst of Riverview, Florida, who trailered in a 1955 Conestoga wagon and a diesel truck chassis. John's 8E40A diesel chassis was awarded the best of show in the commercial class, and will be featured on the cover of a future Turning Wheels.



John Ernst (L) with his two trucks, and the Ben Cummins' with their 1955 Conestoga wagon.



One of the host Indy members directing an arriving concours participant to his proper place.

Another impressive entry was the 1909 Studebaker electric entered by Carroll Studebaker of Dayton, Ohio. This was the first electric to be entered in a national show, and was awarded the pre-war best of show trophy. It will also be featured in a future issue.

On the unusual side was a 1936 Dictator drop head sedan with a special English made body owned by James Walmer of Indiana. An original car, it did not score high but attracted considerable attention. Another crowd pleaser was a 1929 President roadster owned by J. F. Kappus of Wisconsin. A similar car had paced the 1929 Indy 500 mile race. In its present form the roadster was a first in its class.

Perhaps the highlight of the day came at 3:00 when cars were allowed on the track to circle the famous 2 1/2 mile oval. To avoid congestion and possible accidents, track officials would allow only a certain number of cars on the track at a time. Photographers waited patiently for over an hour to get a shot of their favorite.

Studebaker's return to Indianapolis was significant for historic reasons since the South Bend manufacturer paced the famous Memorial Day classic on four occasions. Examples of the four pace cars were represented at the meet: the previously mentioned 1929 President, a 1940 Champion, a 1952 Commander convertible, and a 1962 Lark convertible.





After the tour of the track, some went to the 500 Museum to view the fine display of automobiles and memorabilia, while others returned to the motel to prepare for the fun night festivities.

The rain that came on Wednesday night did little to dampen the spirits of the over 400 who attended the dance and benefit auction of the fun night. While some of the more agile took to the dance floor, others sampled the local brew and talked automobiles. Periodically the festivities would be interrupted to auction off items donated for the South Bend automobile collection. A total of \$710 was raised during the meet.



One of our Canadian members serenaded us with Chopin played on the 100 year old piano in the Doctor's House at Conner Prairie.



Some of the 1800's personnel ate with us at the Conner Prairie settlement village.

The clouds stayed over for Thursday but the rain stayed away as several hundred members caravanned to the Connors Prairie Village for a barbecue dinner and business meeting. The restored 19th century village was both interesting and educational.



C.P. had to work on his truck Thursday before he could drive it to the membership meeting. Everyone volunteered to help our President - we all gave him advice. (He managed to fix it in spite of our advice.)

The climax of the week's festivities came at the awards banquet on Thursday night at the spacious Indianapolis Civic Center. The 687 who attended were treated to a delicious meal and an interesting and informative talk by stylist Brooks Stevens. Mr. Stevens recounted his experience while under the employ of Studebaker, beginning with his design of the 1962 GT Hawk through 1966 and the attractive



1966 prototypes which were generously offered for display at the meet. [A feature article on these prototypes may be found elsewhere in this issue.] His recollections of details and sometimes humorous and straightforward presentation made for an enjoyable and informative evening.



Brooks Stevens' prototype Lark on display. Note some of the cars on the field in the background.

Next came the presentation of trophies by Chief Judge Joe Bacon. A total of 157 attractive trophies was awarded in the 40 classes. In addition to the winners already mentioned, the post-war best of show went to a 1952 Commander 4 door owned by Joe Parsons and shown by his brother of Lima, Ohio. Best of Show in the modified class went to Dallas Neeley from Tennessee with a 1963 Avanti [his second year in a row], and best of show Avanti to Bruce Slifer of Allentown, Pennsylvania.



The Golden Hawk award, the Minnie Barnes award, and some of the concours trophies waiting to be presented. The Minnie Barnes Award was donated by our founder, Harry Barnes, to be awarded to the chapter that has done the most in the area of public service during the past year. The 1976 winner is the Buffalo Chapter of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The Golden Hawk Award was donated by Herb Keller, a past national president of SDC and an award winning editor himself, for the chapter publication that makes the most improvement over the past year. 1976 winner was the Star Lite Scoupe, Peggy Keaton, editor, of the San Diego County Chapter.

The Publications Committee, Dr. Jay D. LaGree, Chairman, announced the winners of the best chapter publications contest for 1976. In the monthly publications division, 1st place was won by the Husker Chapter Newsletter, Jan Lockmon, editor, and 2nd went to the Steering Wheel of the Missouri-Illinois Chapter, Fred Jones, editor. In the bi-monthly division,

1st was won by the Keystone Keynotes, Max Corkins and Pete Wilson, editors, and 2nd went to the Commander of the Potomac Region, Ray Wyczalek, editor.



Karen Wolczyk of Ohio and Judy Smith of Texas presented the trophies as Chief Judge Joe Bacon announced the winners. The luck winner in this photo is Jim Silvey of Indianapolis.

Friday morning's farewell breakfast concluded the meet as members bid adieu to friends and expressed their thanks to meet director Earl Drews and his crew for a well planned meet. The tremendous success of this year's meet will likely encourage even greater participation at the Cincinnati meet in 1977. I already have my reservations.

Dick Quinn