



# Dearborn '95 31st International SDC Meet

by John Begian,  
Dearborn '95 Meet Chairman

**D**earborn '95 has come and gone with a big Studebaker BANG! Eight hundred twenty-four, YES, 824 family registrations at the final bell! 400 cars, 287 judged, and 113 display vehicles packed the activities field at Greenfield Village. We had ex-



*Our heartfelt thanks go out to these wonderful people, the members of the Western Lake Erie Chapter, who donated their time and effort to make Dearborn '95 such a marvelous experience!*



Photo by Peter Cristallo

*The annual ritual of cleaning and polishing begins as Studebakers continue to arrive in the parking lot of the Hyatt Regency-Dearborn.*

pected large attendance; after all, where can automobile aficionados get such a "high", but in the Motor City.

The Western Lake Erie Chapter's months of planning and hard work was evident at every corner. Putting on a party for 3,000, *yes, 3,000 people*, is quite an undertaking. It is especially challenging when very few of the chapter's members actually live in Dearborn. Monthly meetings for the past 18 months paid off dramatically. Combined with the professionalism of Barry Brim of the Hyatt Regency-Dearborn and his helpful staff, events rolled along smoothly.

On Saturday, July 15, WLEC members met midday at the Hyatt to begin decorating and to make up the goodie bags. Over 40 members were in attendance to help with the huge task. One thousand goodie bags were made up to accommodate our guests. The west parking lot of the hotel was cordoned off for "Studebakers

Only." After all, everyone who attends an SDC International Meet deserves exclusive Studebaker parking. The east parking lot was marked off for outside vendors.

Officially starting on Sunday, July 16, the 31st SDC International Meet started with a bang, quite literally. The Goodyear Blimp, poised over the Dearborn area, greeted guests arriving from all parts of the continent, and also those from Australia and Europe. Registration opened at noon to a barrage of Studebaker members eagerly awaiting tickets for the week's events. Linda Costell, of Sylvania, OH, did an excellent job of organizing and operating registration.

At the Hyatt, vendors began to set up; in the Regency Ballroom, the spacious Great Lakes Center and in outside spaces. Fifty-eight vendors in all came to Dearborn to sell their wares. Hurrying to get the best deals, members began the week shopping for those Stude-



Photo by John Cosby



The Goodyear Blimp over the Hyatt Regency-Dearborn. Just couldn't resist those Studebakers!



Photo by Ray Bates III

Over 110 Studebakers fill the Ford-Wyoming Drive-In.

baker parts deals. Thanks go out to Ed Costell and his crew for the efficient setup of the vendors.

At 6 pm, the Kick-Off Party began the week's festivities. The Henry Ford Estate, home of Henry Ford I, and his wife Clara was the scene. Music was provided by WLEC member Joe Papai and the band, Sounds of Detroit. The grounds of the estate were in excellent condition, ready for sight-seeing. The buffet and cocktail hour began amidst a darkening sky, which soon erupted into thunder and lightning. Outside tours would have to be postponed to later in the week. Door prizes were given away to lucky participants. SDC members danced until the Estate shut down for the evening.

Monday, July 17, started with many interesting tours. Tours for the day included Detroit Overview, Historic Auto Industry, Meadowbrook Hall and the Chrysler Technology Center. Registration was busy all day and the Hospitality Suite opened for business under the leadership of WLEC members Sallie and Bill Volz of Ypsilanti, MI.

Members who stayed at the Hyatt were able to clean their Studes with hoses and wash rags provided by the Hyatt. A delicious grill was



Photo by Ray Bates III

setup outside by the Hyatt for those who needed recharging. At the swap meet, for the first time ever, a fully operational US Post Office attended an SDC event. A commemorative postmark, specially designed for the SDC Meet, was used on all outgoing mail and packages for the entire week. Members used the Post Office extensively throughout the week for mailing those parts back home. Many thanks to WLEC members Heidi and Mike Seery of Oregon, OH, for bringing the US Post Office to the SDC!

Monday evening saw another SDC International Meet first when members attended the Ford Wyoming Drive-In, the largest in the state! Over 110 Studebakers filled the theater to reminisce and watch "The Mask." Carnival games were enjoyed by young and old alike and more door prizes were given out. It was a unique event, and thanks go out to Eleanor and Ivan Love of Holt, MI, for organizing this event.

I must say it was interesting to go into the projection room and see all the equipment in action. Speaking of action, Larry Swanson and Bill Mitchell were seen avariciously eating several of the

foot long chili dogs in the front seat of a Packard. Remember to take a breath, Larry.

Tuesday, July 18, touring continued to new venues such as the Lawrence Fisher Mansion and the Edsel and Eleanor Ford House, as well as, the Chrysler Technology Center and Detroit Overview. More and more Studes filled the west parking lot. The Stude cleaning ritual was in full swing. In the evening, the general membership meeting began with board member Gary Lindstrom falling from the head table riser. Gary is doing fine, now, but it was one of the quietest SDC Membership Meetings on record. SDC President Paul Wallace ran the meeting in his usual efficient manner.

Wednesday began with more tours to Frankenmuth and Detroit Overview. The swap meet continued strong. After lunch, the Studebaker Engineering Interactive Seminar began. Five former Studebaker associates spoke about their life and times with Studebaker. Several areas of the company were represented; John Nemeth and Jack Smith, engineering; John Bird, styling; Ray Windecker, marketing; and Edward Davis, the nation's first African-American car dealer-retail.

Jack Smith was seen in his Mobilgas Economy Run plaid jacket for the 1954 Studebaker team, John Nemeth discussed his patent on the front-end damper of the Lark convertible, John Bird recalled the design of the 1950 "Bullet-Nose," Ray Windecker talked about mar-



Photo by Fred K. Fox

Five former Studebaker luminaries (left to right: John Bird, Jack Smith, Ray Windecker, Edward Davis & John Nemeth) spoke about their life and times with Studebaker during the Studebaker Engineering Interactive Seminar. Look for a report on this seminar in a future issue.



*Jack Smith models the plaid jacket he wore as part of the Studebaker team during the 1954 Mobilgas Economy Run.*

Photo by Larry Swanson

keting during the last days, and Edward Davis told of the obstacles he overcame while selling Studebakers in 1938 as a Negro. Fred and Linda Fox were seen furiously taking notes during this interesting seminar. SDC members surrounded the speakers after-

ward to ask more questions. John Nemeth told me later that he wished there were this many Studebaker enthusiasts when the company was still in business!

On Wednesday evening, the SDC Auction was held. Members bid on a variety of Studebaker paraphernalia donated by attendees. The auction is always enjoyed by all who attend.

Thursday, July 20, was the day of the concours. The field had been set up the night before to buzzing mosquitos. The gates opened at 6:30 am to assure that SDC members with judged vehicles had their picture taken inside Greenfield Village. Thanks to the photographic crew of Ray Battestilli of Oxford, MI, and Dave Stonehill of Sylvania, OH, pictures were taken at the speed of light and traffic never backed up. Harvey Snitzer of Canton, MI, and his crew were able to park 400 cars efficiently and neatly on the activities field.

For the first time in my short SDC memory, rain fell at the concours. Drizzle came and went all morning and

*SDC Concours judges were intrepid souls as they carried on come rain or shine.*



Photo by John Casby

into the afternoon. Judges were clad in bright orange hats and worked tirelessly to get through the cars. Rain began to fall at a faster pace later on and members left to dry out. This venue allowed SDC members to visit one of the premier tourist attractions in the US while a part of the concours.

Before the evening festivities began, the Studebaker Band, under the direction of Brad Kuchan, of Bloomington, IL, played to the enjoyment of all. The Studebaker Band



Photo by Ray Battestilli

*During the concours, Dick Quinn, TW Almanac editor, and Buzz Beckman pose beside Win Howard's original 1923 Big Six Housecar.*

*SDC printer, Chester Bradfield of Good Printers, proudly shows a copy of the SDC Roster and an issue of Turning Wheels*



Photo by Fred K. Fox

## I Remember . . .

by Mark Kush

My most cherished memory of the 31st International SDC Meet occurred at the Awards Banquet, Friday evening. After dinner was served, and the awards presented I sat down at the table where Jack L. Smith and his wife were sitting. I introduced myself to Mr. and Mrs. Smith and mentioned I had a '59 Lark Hardtop.

Mr. Smith talked about the Scotty program in great detail, even gave me a copy of the Scotty proposal that was sent to Harold Churchill, dated October 11, 1957! I was euphoric!

Before we parted, Mr. Smith said if I had any more questions, or just wanted to talk Studebaker, to give him a call. Truly Studebaker enthusiasts are some of the friendliest people around. 🍷

just keeps getting bigger and better each year. Keep up the great work, Brad.

Fun Night, appreciated by all 525 attendees, featured Sherman Arnold and the Interstate Band. Sherman did his "Tribute to Elvis" to the enjoyment of the SDC membership. Along with singing and dancing, Sherman worked the crowd with his unique style. It was a FUN NIGHT that would not soon be forgotten.

Friday, July 21, started with the final Historic Auto Industry Tour. Randy Mason did a fine job of playing tour guide and organizing the handout for the tour.

*SDC members look forward all week to the goodies they will find at the Literature Swap!*



Photo by Ray Battestilli



*From left to right: Linda Fox - TW editor, Bob Palma - TW technical editor, Fred Fox - TW covers editor & feature writer.*





Cliff Taylor and Brian Millette, Minnie Barnes Award Winners.



Two real life Studebakers! Gus, a resident of Dearborn, and Carroll, well-known to many SDC members.

Another tour to the Fisher and Ford mansions concluded the week's tours. The Literature Swap, with 13 vendors, was attended by many members. Pocket watches and model cars were on display for the enjoyment of all. Twenty-four watches and 14 model cars were judged. A member from Oswego, IL, even brought his SDC coin collection in hopes of getting a trophy. Better luck next time, Larry!

The banquet began at 5 pm so we could wrap it up at a decent hour. SDC members, numbering 615, attended the banquet to feast on the delicious meal. The program started promptly at 7:00 pm when 221 car trophies, pocket watch and model car trophies were distributed. Ending at 9:20 pm, it was one of the shortest SDC banquets in recent memory. > page 34 >



Photos by Fred K. Fox

Harold Vermillion, former member of the original Studebaker Band, stands in front of an old photo that shows him and other members of the Corporation Band. He was very complimentary of our SDC Band.

### 1995 Studebaker Band Members

Director, Brad Kuchan, Illinois

- Flute, Robyn Crabtree, TN
- Clarinet, Dennis Day, IA
- Clarinet, John Cosby, KY
- Clarinet, Cindy Lombardo, OH
- Clarinet, Jenny Kuchan, IL
- Saxophone, Ray Martin, ON
- Saxophone, Gloria Richard, PA
- Saxophone, Tom Hoadley, OH
- Trumpet, Bruce G. Connor, MO
- Trumpet, Ralph Norton, IL
- Trumpet, Matt Wendt, WI
- Trombone, Andrew Beckman, WI
- Trombone, Eunice Klug, WI
- Trombone, Glenn Shull, CO
- Tuba, Hezzy Kappus, WI
- Percussion, Don Connor, MO
- Percussion, Larry Swanson, IL
- Percussion, Barbara Shull, CO



Studebaker Band members provided an entertaining performance. The new uniforms ( Studebaker Band caps donated by John Brichetto) looked jazzy!



Director Brad Kuchan brings forth another fine presentation.





*SDC President Paul Wallace and his wife, Wanda, as they headed into Fun Night . . .*



*Jim Geary's reproduction of J.M. Studebaker's "Gold Rush" wheelbarrow. Beautiful!*



*The check-in desk at the 31st International SDC Meet. The place where Western Lake Erie Chapter members spent MANY hours. Please accept our THANKS for a job well done!*

The afterglow began with a dulcimer band from Toledo, OH. A Studebaker art auction commenced to sell the enlargements which had been decorations in the banquet hall. SDC members stayed until midnight relaxing to music and winding down after the busy week.

Saturday, July 22, opened with a tour to the Chrysler Proving Grounds in Chelsea, MI. A leisurely drive west from Dearborn brought 35 Studebakers to Chelsea for a lap around the oval; the Grounds Facilitator, Tom Brown, paced the field in a Cummins powered Dodge Ram dualie with the instructions to go no faster than 70 mph and not to pass the pace vehicle. Good thing the pace vehicle sped away from

us at speeds well above 70. It was exhilarating to see Studebakers on the same oval where the "Winged Warriors" drove some 25 years ago.

After dining at the Wolverine in Chelsea, the Studes drove over to Yesterdays Collections in Ann Arbor, home to an ice cream parlor and automobilia showroom. SDC members scooped up books and butter pecan like they were going out of style.

Thus concluded one of the largest SDC meets in history. It may interest you to review the statistics in the box to the right.

I wish to thank WLEC members Vida & Tom Parker, Sue & Terry Judd, Marion & Paul White, Mary & Jack Fuller, Peggy & Burt Sayers, Pam & Gerry Flegal,

|                      |      |                    |     |
|----------------------|------|--------------------|-----|
| Family registrations | 824  | Outdoor vendors    | 16  |
| Hyatt room nights    | 2126 | Literature vendors | 13  |
| Tours                | 1824 | Total Vehicles at  |     |
| Fun Night            | 525  | the Concours       | 400 |
| Banquet              | 615  | Judged             | 287 |
| Indoor vendors       | 42   | Display            | 113 |

Photo by Fred K. Fox

Photo by Fred K. Fox

Photo by Fred K. Fox



Photo courtesy of John Ernst

Dwight Fish, Gale & Mark Kush, Randy Mason, Bill Bird, Bob & Miriam May, Myrna & Ron Bush, Harvey & Julie Snitzer, Mike Begian, Bob Girvan, Fred & Donna Birdsell, Mel & Judy Hoeft, Mike Huddleston, Ray Howard (the Meet logo designer) and all those others for their help and patience during the last two years. The planning and implementing of our ideas was a challenge for all chapter members. I am confident the WLEC is a stronger chapter after tackling an SDC International Meet.

I also wish to thank all the SDC officers and board, membership and vendors who helped make this a very successful meet! Without your support, we could not have done this kind of a job. Now I can buy room raffle tickets instead of selling them!

I look forward to enjoying next year's meet in Long Beach. Good luck to the Orange Empire Chapter and Gordon Bricken for a successful meet. I will look forward to doing the socializing, shopping and relaxing which was very difficult for me this year. 🍷



Photo by Ray Battestilli

*John Begian in a maze of film!*

*THANKS, John, for a job well done! Maybe you and Linda Costell will have time for lunch on the Queen Mary next summer.*



Photo courtesy of John Ernst

*This is the second annual meeting of the SDC Truck Farmers. Now, how did our Truck Farmers get the engineer to cooperate?*