

30th Annual International Meet Gets Thumbs Up

By Brian Millette, International Meet Chair

It took three years of planning and meetings, but the 30th Annual Studebaker Drivers Club International Meet hit Minneapolis June 25 with a fanfare that lasted all week. The meet drew the largest number of families in memory – 765 – and is being called the best ever.

Hundreds of volunteers from the North Star Chapter and other clubs worked tirelessly to make sure everything went smoothly for their out of town guests.

Here is their story . . .



Saturday, June 24

North Star Chapter members met at the Radisson South Hotel to put together hundreds of registration packets and goody bags needed for the week. These registration packets were individually filled with tickets for tours and specific activity information that guests needed for the week. A lot of vendors were also there, setting up their "stores". The SDC Hospitality Room was also being prepared.

Sunday, June 25

Guests arriving at the airport were surprised to have a 1940 Commander, owned by a local limousine company, pick them up at the airport, courtesy of the North Star Chapter. The Wagon Train, which left Scobie Montana in April, arrived at the Mall of America, stopover site of the *Interstate Batteries Great American Race*. The Hospitality Room was busy and many vendors began selling their products.

International Meet committee member Ed Skomoroh, left and Meet chair Brian Millette and one of the many Studebaker items that were on display.

Monday, June 26

Monday was a big day. Lots of guest arrivals; tours of the area attractions started; many shoppers began hunting at vendor stands

for that "special part," and the annual national board meeting was held.

For the first time ever, a big attraction opened its doors.



Keith Rust and Craig Harrison unveiled their new brainchild – a 2,000 square foot room full of Studebaker memorabilia. A variety of items, from large show room banners to trinkets that fit in the palm of your hand, were displayed.

Artifacts from the early wagon days of Studebaker, toys, factory employee badges and literature were showcased all week. Rave notices indicate this “museum” could easily become a permanent fixture at future meets.



National board member for the Upper Mississippi Valley Zone, Cliff Taylor, taking in the memorabilia room.

Hospitality room staff (l to r) Jackie Harrison, Lovina Goetzke, Alice James and Beatrice James are ready for another busy day of passing out coffee, cookies, pop and Minnesota hospitality.

In the evening, 630 people attended the special 30th Anniversary Gala. The “get to know you” session was planned as a tribute to the past by the North Star Chapter Meet Committee. The event was like a 1964 introduction of the latest Studebaker products, complete with invitations, balloons, a band, snacks and a group of 1964 Studebakers under wraps. The audience was delighted to see unveiled Paul Anderson’s 1964 Daytona convertible, Perry Wolf’s 1964 G.T. Hawk and Bill Wahl’s 1964 Avanti.

The highlight of the evening was when special guest, former Studebaker designer Brooks Stevens, unveiled the Sceptre. The Sceptre is a concept car he designed to be a future Studebaker, and Brooks generously loaned it to the meet for display throughout the week.

Brooks Stevens’ Sceptre concept car in front of a 1964 Billboard in the Grand Ballroom of the Radisson Hotel.



North Star Chapter meet committee members (l to r) Paul Anderson, Dean Elstad and Bob Stude enjoying the Opening Night Gala.

*Mr. Brooks Stevens***Tuesday, June 28**

What a special privilege it was to hear Brooks Stevens present an hour long lecture with slides about his years with Studebaker and his current design work for Polaris Industries. After his speech Brooks graciously signed many autographs.

Tuesday was a heavy tour day, with 185 going on a driving tour to "Hooked on Classics" in Watertown, MN. In the evening, another 125 enjoyed the Strohs Brewery Germanfest in St. Paul, and 204 relaxed on the Jonathan Paddleford Riverboat dinner cruise down the Mississippi. Back at the hotel, the general membership meeting was attended by another 200 people. They heard about decisions made at the national board meeting, including the 1997 Meet being awarded to the Michiana Chapter, to be held in South Bend.

Wednesday, June 29

When the North Star Chapter Meet committee met for its daily 7 a.m. breakfast meeting on Wednesday, everyone was able to report smooth sailing and positive comments at the halfway point of the meet.

Tour highlights today included 110 people visiting the Ford Plant in St. Paul, (which sold out months prior to the event) and a very funny comedy at the Old Log Theater was enjoyed by 125 people.

Hundreds attended the most successful auction in SDC history. About \$4000 was raised from the merchandise that was donated for the benefit of the Studebaker Drivers Club!



A freshly shaved wagonmaster Marlen Halverson after auctioning off his beard at the Wednesday night national auction.

Thursday, June 30

Bright and early, the concourse area was bustling with people giving the final touches to their cars before photos and judging. Inside, Chief Judge Dave Ridge was hosting the judges breakfast and reviewing guidelines.

At 9 a.m., the judging of 198 vehicles began. There were also 132 cars and trucks in the display category, for a total of 320 in the concourse parking areas.

This year participants parked in their specific classes throughout the week. Thanks to Jim Rock and his crew, the concept worked admirably and added to viewer enjoyment.

Fun Night capped off the day with music and dancing.



A participant's vehicle is given a complete inspection by the eyes of one of the numerous judging teams (with their distinctive Aussie style hats) during the Concours on Thursday.

Friday, July 1

Bruce Slifer and his family got up early to set up his huge toy collection for display. Also that morning the watch and model judging was held, along with the literature swap and sale. North Star members jumped in to prepare for the final event – the annual Banquet and Awards Ceremony.

Over 500 people attended the banquet and were treated to an excellent array of food, topped off by a dazzling entrance of waiters carrying flaming baked Alaska for dessert. The North Star Chapter, the Badger Wheel Chapter (from nearby Wisconsin) and other volunteers were given a huge ovation.

Our own "Mr. Studebaker," Lawrence Burke, was honored for his many years of service to Studebaker owners.

Lastly, the many proud winners received their trophies from the club's chief judge, Dave Ridge.

With a final official goodbye, the 30th International Meet was history. But it all happens again next year, when friendships are renewed and Studebakers will be showcased in Detroit.

Mr. Lawrence Burke



Ernie Loga accepts the Appreciation Award for Don Curtis for his many years of service chartering new SDC chapters.



Brian and Aleta Millette



The Studebakers enjoying the Awards Banquet.



Paul and Wanda Wallace

The numbers are gratifying

Total Attendance	1759
States Represented	42
Countries	6
Judged Cars	198
Display Cars	122
Wagons	6
Tour Attendees	1386
Gala Attendees	630
Fun Night Attendees	579
Banquet Attendees	525
Indoor Vendors	35
Outdoor Vendors	16
Memorabilia Vendors	14
Host Hotel Rooms Rented	1845
Camp Studebaker Attendees	79
Watches Judged	23
Model Display	20

The Hospitality Room served 668 dozen cookies, over 1,000 cups of soda, 79 lbs. of coffee and bags and bags of snacks.

The success of this meet is due to the support of the National Board; dedicated volunteers from the North Star Chapter and chapters throughout the United States; helpers for Camp Studebaker; the patience and hard work of my wife Aleta; and the support of SDC members throughout the world. Thanks to each and every one of you. See you next year! – Brian