



The Big One by Art Unger

photo by Evan Severson



photo by Art Unger

am; I haven't made up my mind. That evening was Welcome Night. We had ice cream. I talked to a lot of people as well, too many to remember individuals, but I recall that the ice cream was delicious.

On Tuesday, in addition to the tours and seminars, newsletter editors and judges met, the Studebaker Band had its first practice and the Co-operator Session was launched. Bob Palma stated that a full slate of experts was

Pretty well every year we head out to the Studebaker Drivers Club's International Meet, sometimes by car, sometimes by air and, now and then, by Studebaker. This time, traveling by brand X we noticed that every river we passed, from the west coast on, was either full or in the process of flooding. 2011 has had its share of capricious weather. On Sunday, June 19, we arrived in Springfield, Missouri, at the Ramada Oasis. The locals were ready for us. I was greeted warmly by Richard Dormois (I think I'm one of his favorite persons). Old (and new) friends were already there; people seem to arrive earlier and earlier at this event.

The registration area was busy from Monday on, some seminars were scheduled and, of course, the vendors were busy setting up the swap meet area at the Ozark Empire Fairgrounds. I missed Monday because I spent all day at the Board Meeting. I'm not complaining; well, maybe I



Co-operator panel set to answer questions. (Left to right): Ingvar Vik, Herman Thoms, Carl Thoms, Bob Palma; (Right photo): Jim Pepper, Buzz Beckman, Jon Myer, Dwain Grindinger.

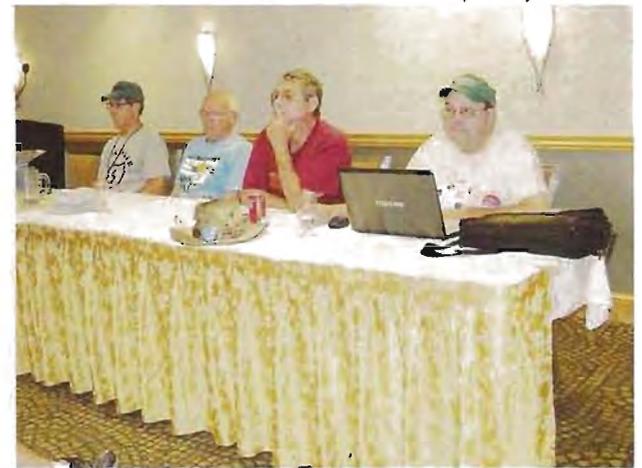


photo by Ann Turner



*Twin antennae, dual exhaust – flavor of the 50s.*

photo by Art Unger



*Studebaker National Museum.*

photo by Evan Severson

in attendance and Studebaker knowledge overflowed the room like the wayward Missouri river. If you had questions, this was where the answers were.

Naturally, whenever I had the chance I would wander out to the parking lot to witness the arrival of more Studebakers. That evening the Membership Meeting finished off our annual Board gathering. The only real news was the resignation of Mimi Halgren, our recent President. I told her how disappointed I was that she was married, I mean. . . leaving her appointment and,



photo by Evan Severson

after her laughter subsided, she mumbled something about wanting her life back. At that point we introduced our new President, Tom Curtis, who will shortly learn all about 'public service'. In this club we are fortunate to have excellent volunteers to step up and guide this organization (people who work tirelessly for no remuneration).

Wednesday dawned early; you can't sleep in at a Studebaker meet. It was time to spend most of the day at the swap meet where all the vendors were, where all the goodies were. I got to meet many people, some of them famous (like An-

*Command center module of the starship Ellenore.*

photo by Art Unger





*Picnic anyone?*

photo by John Cosby



photo by Evan Severson

*The girl of his dreams and the car that invented cool – what more does a man need?*



photo by John Cosby

*Joseph and Janet Walker were color coordinated with their '55 Conestoga wagon.*

drew Beckman) – and his brother. . . and his Dad. . . and his mother – all the Beckmans were there! I also managed to visit a short spell with Kent Haberle, a very famous person of the ASC persuasion. As you can tell I love to name drop.

There were more seminars and tours planned for Wednesday but I didn't get to any of them; I spent all



photo by Art Unger

*This custom combined the rear fender panel of a sedan or wagon with coupe styling. Cathedral style taillights accent fender fins.*

day looking for a gas cap for a friend (which I eventually found). Outdoors were more vendors including the well known Karkiewicz bus. This vehicle full of Studebaker parts shows up at many meets. I was browsing inside (the interior of the bus has been converted to be a virtual warehouse of small parts) when I saw a small kitty walking over some nameplates. It responded to petting and I asked the proprietor: "How much for this?"

"Ten bucks," he replied.

"Is this your cat?" I asked, and he said, "Nope, never saw it before, but if it's still here tomorrow, it will be going home to Indiana." You just never know what important part you can find at a Studebaker meet.

That evening was the Studebaker Auction with the Studebaker Band performing for everyone. I didn't go; I was afraid. .

. sure that Richard Dormois, the loquacious auctioneer, would talk me into buying something.

Having been trained the day before, the vehicle judges had an early breakfast on Thursday (the day of the Concours) before they began the difficult task of evaluating all the cars on the grounds. 134 vehicles were judged and an additional 146 were on display. The crowd milled about

photo by John Cosby





photo by Art Unger

*The orange 'whirly thing' appeared on quite a few Studebakers.*

in the sunshine, enjoying the variety of models produced by the Studebaker Corporation over 116 years.

Inside the fairgrounds hall Studebaker toys and watches were being judged. The Studebaker Band performed again, at noon outdoors on the show grounds, entertaining everyone with another concert.



photo by Art Unger

*Vibrant color choices for customs make you look twice.*

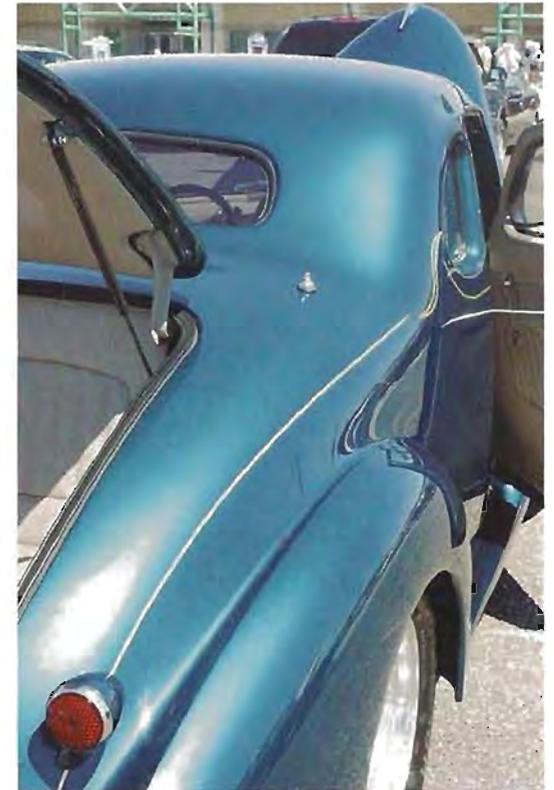


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photo by John Cosby





photo by Evan Severson

Our honored President, Mimi, retiring with her recognition award.

In the evening Fun Night – that’s what they called it. I’m not much of a “fun” person so I didn’t enjoy it as much as some. However, it was interesting to see some old codgers who had difficulty getting out of their car suddenly come to life on the dance floor. The country band was very good and their beat was infectious. While we stood



photo by John Cosby

Nita Ketchum, 2011 International Meet Chair.

in the long line for food, George Hamlin suddenly broke free and grabbed someone else’s wife and they both proceeded to give us a dancing lesson. George, normally a sedate statistician, seemed to be endowed with a new electricity and his partner, Susan, was excellent as well. Their spirited performance raised eyebrows. Although not listed on the agenda it certainly livened up our food line. I think it’s the Pepsi he consumes. And, come to think of it, maybe I did have fun after all.

On Friday everything was winding down with everyone looking forward to the evening Awards Banquet. Apparently the week had seen 1,172 Stude-lovers attending from four other countries (Canada, Netherlands, New Zealand, and Australia) besides the domestic converts hailing from 43 different states. Awards and trophies were generously distributed. Special recognition was accorded our retiring President, Mimi Halgren, for her excellent but short reign. And the food was good. Did I mention the food?

The Ozark Trails Chapter put on a superior meet with everything working smoothly. Their local editor (*Stude News*) ‘Mik’ Mikulan, a relatively new SDC member, reports that he learned a lot from working on the meet preparations. He wrote:

*“I got closer to all the Ozark Trails member volunteers I have worked with over the past year preparing for this event and learned the history of my own club. I cannot believe all the car information and questions I had were answered. I helped many people to learn about the ‘Ozarks’. Just about every-*



by ‘Mik’ Mikulan

Members of the Ozark Trails Chapter, host of the 47th International SDC Meet.

*one I talked to had a good time and the day of the car judging was perfect.”*

That sums it up – the hosts prepared well and executed professionally. The venue was perfect for SDC needs and the weather cooperated.

It was a pretty good meet; there should be another one in a year or so.

*Get ready for next year’s BIG event in South Bend.*



photo by Evan Severson