

The 35th International Meet "An Experiment in the Off Season"

by Stuart Tritt

Photographs by John A. Verrill,
Bee Hamlin, John Cosby, Harry Crosson,
Peter Crisitello & Fred K. Fox



Photo by John Cosby

Ralph & Noella Novarra's 1956 Flight Hawk parked in front of the Holiday Inn "Welcome" sign.

With some of the protests we experienced regarding the dates chosen for this meet, we knew the old Studebaker saying, "Always give more than you promise," probably wasn't enough to inspire the average SDC member to attend this meet. We had to promise a lot and hope we could deliver on that promise. On most accounts, I feel that the committee and myself did just that.

The first week in September was selected due to the willingness of the Rapid City Visitors and Convention Bureau to help us put on the meet, and the much lower room rates after Labor Day. During prime summer it is a good bet that the average room in a Super 8 or Motel 6 goes for \$100 a night in Rapid City. That would probably affect attendance as much as the late summer dates. So one asks, "Why have the meet in Rapid City at all?" Until Stu Chapman and

the International Meet Committee start receiving bids from more than one location per year, instead of having to struggle to get locations secured, I feel all options should be reviewed concerning dates and willingness of chapters around the continent to host a meet. Time to get off the soap box and write about the meet.

It was cold . . . it was windy . . . it was rainy when Joe & Jeanette Jackmovich, Ken & Sharon Voigt, Gerry Pieper and myself arrived at the Holiday Inn Rushmore Plaza on Friday, September 3rd. Ken and Joe set about marking off the spaces for the swap meet in Rushmore Hall. Gerry cased the facility one last time, and I went to visit the meet sponsors to give them their tickets for the event. We rented a vast amount of the Civic Center for the week and without the sponsorship provided by Ken Dehn & Son Oil Co., Interstate Battery Systems of the Black Hills, Bently/Donovan Fine Jewelry, Black Hills Gold by Coleman, and Norwest Bank of South Dakota plus support from The Ramkota Inn, The Radisson Hotel, and Gill's Sun Inn/Days Inn, the space allotted for the meet would have had to be scaled back considerably.

Saturday was a day spent getting everything put together for the start on Sunday. By 4:00 pm most of the setup was complete. We also had many members arriving, and the sun finally broke out and remained out. We were blessed with "chamber of commerce" weather for the rest of the meet. The Holiday Inn, being an atrium style hotel, allowed us to hang three 50 foot vertical banners from the 6th and 7th floors welcoming Studebaker drivers. These were quite impressive looking (see photo at right).

Sunday the 5th was the official start of the meet which saw many more Studebaker drivers arriving and registration getting underway at 1:00 pm. Thanks to the organization of Dorcas Cameron and her crew at registration, this process went smoothly through the entire week. Registration and hospitality were in the same room, and this was a beehive of activity all week. Jeff and Judy Callaway were

in charge of hospitality and kept the cookies full. Everyone was to bring 35 dozen each and when it was all over only five dozen store bought cookies were left. Sunday night wrapped up with members Red and Shirley Jordan (The



Photo by Harry Crosson



Left: The registration/ hospitality crew hard at work.

Thanks to Ken Voigt and Joe Jackmovich, the swap meet went so smoothly I didn't hear of one vendor complaint. I also believe all the vendors did quite well at selling their wares. Monday also saw the annual marathon National Board Meeting get under way, and this year was no different. Monday night was the welcome "Studebaker Tailgate Party" and everyone enjoyed listening and dancing to the Calhoun Family.

Tuesday arrived with a blast of wind at about two

Jordanaires) entertaining and helping out where needed the rest of the week.

Monday arrived and the swap meet was in full swing and a beehive of activity. We had 52 vendors and most were under one roof in a single room. The other vendors that were outside were there by their own preference.

in the morning, as the wind knocked down some of the outside displays, but nothing serious to anyone or their Studebakers. The day started with many meetings and the *Co-Operator* Seminar. Also there were many tours scheduled to the Black Hills, around Rapid City, the Northern Hills, and the Badlands, which went on all week. Tuesday



Bill McDowell (left), long time owner of Packard Farm, chats with friends and customers.

Photo by Fred K. Fox



Lionel & Elaine Stone pleased the California contingent with a showing of state pride!

Photo by Fred K. Fox



Meet Treasurer, John Prodan (left) and Tours Chairman, Larry Miller in the computer alcove making sure things ran smoothly.

Photo by John Cosby



Jim Turner of Turner Brakes, a long time Turning Wheels advertiser from Noblesville, Indiana, signs up a new customer.

Photo by Fred K. Fox



Mark Soholt of Alamo, North Dakota, brought a large selection of parts for his vendor's table.

Photo by Fred K. Fox



Photo by Fred K. Fox

One of the popular activities of the week was the Co-Operator tech session held Tuesday morning. Chaired by Bob Palma, the seminar attracted over a hundred SDC members. Advisers, from left to right are Ingvar Vik, Dwain Grindinger, Bob Palma, Jon Myer and his son, Mike. It was very encouraging to see a young member like Mike so knowledgeable and enthusiastic about Studebakers.

evening most of the attendees boarded the buses for the Mount Rushmore Lighting Ceremony and train ride. Due to the tour bus company not communicating with Mt. Rushmore, most attending did not get a chance to eat, and arrived back cold and hungry. But all enjoyed the lighting ceremony.

Wednesday dawned to many more meetings and the Ladies Luncheon and Card Party, this was hosted by Gerry Pieper and everyone attending had a good time. The highlight of the evening was the National Membership Meeting and SDC auction. There were over 500 people in



Photo by Fred K. Fox

Mike Wohl, auctioneer, with his eagle-eyed assistants.



Photo by Fred K. Fox

Two unique Studebakers on display during the Concours.

attendance, and our thanks to Mike Wohl, Jim Mowry and Charles Plymale for their professional auctioneering services, they were quite entertaining and managed to raise over \$4,000 for SDC.

Thursday was car show day and Perry Meyers and crew did an excellent job of getting the cars in position for the concours. Everyone was in place by 9:00 am, and it was a beautiful setting in the park with all those shining Studebakers parked around the lake. The weather was ideal and everyone had shade if they desired it. We had 211 vehicles registered to be judged and an additional 83 vehicles on display. As the day unfolded we were entertained by the Studebaker Band (see page 10) in the afternoon in the band shell and also by the Calhoun Family on their portable stage that folds out of an M Series truck. It was kind of



Photo by John Cosby

The Calhoun Family performs from their M Series truck stage.



Photo by John Cosby

The Model Judges getting down!

humorous to watch the Chief Judge and his crew rocking and bouncing to the music as they were compiling the scores. Four o'clock came and went and most of the vehicles were still on the Concours field. Everyone was having such a good time that they didn't want to leave. In the evening, we were again entertained by the Studebaker Band. Our thanks to Glenn Shull for taking over the directing duties this year. Also thanks for the help the band got from the New Horizons Chapter in Rapid City. The music, which was difficult, was preformed well, and it was good to hear the band play "The Studebaker Grand March" again. I hadn't heard it played by a large band/orchestra since the National Meet in Dallas, Texas in 1975.



Photo by John Cosby

The SDC Truck Farmers gather again for their annual photo.



Photo by John Cosby

Photographer John Cosby caught the Menopause Sisters in action!

After the band concert, it was time for Fun Night and the entertainment continued through the night. Our hats off to the Menopause Sisters for their skits, I hope no one was injured from laughing at them. A big thank you to the Calhoun Family. Jim, Chris and the kids put themselves out all week to help make our meet enjoyable. During Fun Night we had the drawing for the "Studebaker hanging bar service pin ring" and the winner was Charles Hammond of South Bend, and he purchased the ticket at the museum. The Fun Night lasted till 12:00 am and like the car show we had to chase the people out at last call.

Friday was a beautiful quiet day, without much activity other than tours until the "Buffet in the Rose Garden"



Photo by John Cosby

Eric Vath and the Valley Eight entertained during the evening.



Photo by John Cosby

The future of SDC starts right here!

in the evening. This was probably the largest attended banquet at an International Meet with 751 people served. After the buffet everyone went into the theater for the awards ceremony. During the course of the evening entertainment was by the Valley Eight, a singing group from Scottsbluff, Nebraska. One of the numbers the group sang



Photo by Fred K. Fox

Meet Chairman Stu Tritt always had time for a smile.

was "Wait For The Wagon" which is a Studebaker song. After the Chocolate Affair we got down to the serious business of passing out the awards for the Concours. There were 164 awards passed out.

Saturday was a time when everyone bid goodbye to their Studebaker

friends and started the trip home. About two dozen brave souls were willing to go on the Mini Rally and tour through the Black Hills. After a rally school they were on their way. The winners of the Mini Rally were driver Thomas Knagge and his navigator Larry Swanson. As the day progressed it got colder and windy, just like when we arrived for the meet. A weatherman somewhere was looking out for us. ☞

*Sequoia Chapter presents
Loewy/Vance Portfolio to SWM*

In the July 1998 *Turning Wheels*, it was announced that a rare portfolio of water color paintings that was presented by Raymond Loewy to Harold S. Vance was for sale. The portfolio was being offered for sale by William W. Vance, Harold Vance's youngest son. After some negotiating, the portfolio was finally purchased by California's Sequoia Chapter of SDC. During the Awards Ceremony at the International Meet in Rapid City, Ron Hagen, president of the Sequoia Chapter, presented, on a loan basis, the portfolio to the Studebaker National Museum.

In a later letter, Ron Radecki, executive director of the museum, thanked the members of the Sequoia Chapter. "... We are delighted to have this very special and beautiful book become part of the Studebaker National Museum's collection. ... Although the museum has a large archives,

A watercolor painting of a 1952 Starliner from the leather bound portfolio. The portfolio features 12 watercolors and 12 line drawings as well as a presentation written by Raymond Loewy and signed by Loewy and his associates.

we have very few items that belonged to the presidents of Studebaker personally. ... It is not only a great piece of Studebaker history, but it is a wonderful work of art that will be enjoyed by all who will see it." ☞