

The Commander

Potomac Chapter

Studebaker Drivers Club



NOTE: We are on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1846254089018596/>

Vol. 57, Issue Number 5 — October - November 2025



Chris Thomas and Dad with their GT Hawk at the 2025 SDC International Meet in Washington, PA

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Next Meeting

Dec 13, 2025, at the
annual Holiday Party



Steering Column Steve White



The year 2025 seems to be zooming by faster than an Andy Granatelli Studebaker Avanti. I hope you had a chance to get your Studebaker out and about and enjoy the reaction of car lovers as they enjoy seeing your cool car.

I am sorry that I missed the 2025 Studebaker Drivers Club International Meet held in Pennsylvania. I know we had several members including our Vice President, Ron Hoff, and our Activities Chair, Chris Thomas, representing us there. Chris tells us that he may have recruited some new members, too. The International Meet is something I would have enjoyed, but I just didn't think my GT Hawk could make it to Washington, PA. I've seen Chris' report, so I know I made a mistake in not going.

I did make it down to the Kensington, Maryland, Car Show on Saturday, September 27th. My Studebaker GT Hawk was rewarded with an amazing trophy. Kensington is only 10 miles from my house, so I knew I could make it there and back. I've attended the show in the past; while there I found that there are a lot of Studebaker lovers including Arch Campbell, the former Channel 4 movie reviewer. I always enjoy seeing him because he knows cars and he is a real fan of the GT Hawk. Several people stop by to chat because they are young and have never seen a Studebaker or

they are older and have some sort of connection with a Studebaker. Oh yes, there are some who just admire the beauty of a shiny and sleek Gran Turismo Hawk. Another amazing thing is there was a big chance of rain on September 27th but we only had a few drops all day.

Our SDC Chapter is a sponsor of the Rockville Classic and Antique Car Show, and we expect to have a number of our members there on Saturday, October 18. Steve Walter and I are our representatives to the event. We always have a good time, and the number of spectators is always amazing. The informal cruise-ins are always fun, too, and I highly recommend them because one may be close to where you live and the people there enjoy having another classic car and its owner joining in on the fun. Speaking of fun, I've



been able to get together with Chris at the Cars N' Coffee in Bethesda on a couple of Saturday mornings. You've seen our picture with another Steve and another Chris in the last issue of *The Commander*.

I am pleased to announce that we've had some movement in finding a Chapter President for 2026. I'll keep the news under my hat for a while, but I can tell you how happy I am we'll have someone who really knows his stuff when it comes to our Chapter and Studebaker Clubs.

I'll close with a big thank you to Pete Rutledge. He has been recognized again by our International Club. You'll find news about him in Chris's column.

Steve



The Commander is the bi-monthly publication of the Potomac Chapter, Studebaker Drivers Club. Subscription is by membership to the Potomac Chapter at \$15.00 yearly (with emailed newsletter) or \$30.00 yearly (with mailed hard-copy newsletter). Canada/Mexico \$20.00 (with emailed newsletter), all other countries \$25.00. (with emailed newsletter). Direct all membership correspondence to the Membership Director. Direct all correspondence relating to The Commander to the Editor, who retains the right to edit or modify any contribution. Deadline date is the 15th of the month for the following month's issue. The Commander is also an internet publication.

The Potomac Chapter is an officially chartered chapter of the Studebaker Drivers Club, Inc.; its by-laws were approved, and charter granted by SDC in June 1967. Membership is recruited from the states of Maryland, West Virginia, (northern) Virginia, and Washington, DC. Those from other areas wishing to join the chapter are welcome.

Potomac Chapter, Studebaker Drivers Club

The Potomac Chapter of the Studebaker Drivers Club, was chartered in April 1967. It encompasses the area of Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. Current membership approaches one hundred. Our members hail from as far away, as New Zealand, the states of Hawaii, Florida, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Our mission is well defined in our [Chapter Bylaws](#).

Chapter Officers (2024-2025)

<u>President</u> Steve White 17801 Farley Farm Road Rockville, MD 20855- 1661 301-977-2627	<u>Vice President</u> Ron Hoff 1005 Bedford Street Cumberland, MD 21502-1206 301-724-1617; 301-784-9548 (C) ronaldhoff@aol.com	<u>Treasurer</u> Dave Farris 852 Baltimore Pike Gardners, PA 17324 240-461-7676
<u>Secretary</u> STILL VACANT	<u>Activities Director</u> Chris Thomas	<u>Membership</u> Stephen Walter 14916 Chestnut Ridge Court Gaithersburg, MD 20878
<u>Historian</u> Ed Lemanski 7875 Red Jacket Way Jessup, MD 20794 301-776-9893	<u>Web Master</u> Bob Johnstone 12161 Holly Knoll Circle Great Falls, VA 22066 703-450-0754	<u>Newsletter Editor</u> Pete Rutledge 5102 Cannon Bluff Dr. Woodbridge, VA 22192 703-853-8209 (C) pjrutledge3@verizon.net

Potomac Chapter Membership

We have finished the membership renewal drive for 2025. The final tally was 43 paid memberships. Of that, three are new memberships. Two of the new members are a father and son, Charles and Mitch Acker. It is always good to see new members. Unfortunately, we have lost some of the old members. Thank you so much for continuing to support your local chapter. Also please remember to make out your check to **Potomac Chapter, Studebaker Driver's Club** and not to me. Our annual dues remain at a modest \$15 for an emailed newsletter or \$30 for a mailed newsletter. As usual you will find an application form on the last page of this issue of The Commander; carry one in your car/truck. Your car/truck is our best advertisement, I cannot drive anywhere these days without getting positive comments and questions. Please contact Membership Director Stephen Walter at stephen.walter1@verizon.net if you have any questions.

POTOMAC CHAPTER, SDC 2025 Planned Activities

Event (location)	Date	Contact & links
Rockville Antique & Classic Car Glenview Mansion at Rockville Civic Center Park 603 Edmonston Drive, Rockville, MD	Saturday, October 18th 11:00 to 15:30 https://www.rockvillemd.gov/667/Rockville-Antique-and-Classic-Car-Show	Chapter event in Maryland registration opens July 7th https://www.rockvillemd.gov/667/Rockville-Antique-and-Classic-Car-Show ** always sells out - book early!!
2025 Chapter Holiday Party Veva's on Potomac (was Bulls & Bears) restaurant 38 S Potomac St #1, Hagerstown, MD	Saturday, December 13th 13:00 to 16:00	Chapter annual meeting and holiday party! contact: Dave Farris david.farris@verizon.net



***NOTE:** Members will be notified of any future updates separately by email and/or in the next newsletter.

PLEASE NOTE: If you would be willing to organize a cruise or other activity for the chapter, please advise Chris Thomas.

2025 Studebaker International Meet - Washington, PA

by Chris Thomas

I cannot say enough great things about the International Meet in Washington, PA. The weather was outstanding, the cars were fabulous, and everyone I met was great company.

My Dad and I arrived in convoy to the Meet on Wednesday, September 17th from our rendezvous spot at a Rest Stop in Maryland just past Frederick. We had all managed to get through a sudden downpour that tested the wipers and defroster on my Hawk. It's a good thing that the truck in front of me didn't drive off the road, because I was following his taillights closely!

From the Rest Stop it was clear sailing as my Dad and I drove along with Veek Baskerville, and Don Hibbard (both prospective new members of the Potomac Club). Veek and Don both have 1950 Landcruisers, but they couldn't be more different builds! Here's a photo of Veek's award-winner from the Meet:



Yes, it has an LS super-charged Corvette engine!

Don wisely left his factory-stock 1950 Landcruiser at home, since the rainstorm in Maryland was threatening and that vacuum wiper system would never have kept up to the deluge that we faced! He has promised to show it off at a local event soon.

The Swap Meet was excellent and I was able to pick up numerous parts for

both my 63 Hawk and 63 Avanti. Member Jeff Bradel seemed to be doing a booming business, and it was great to catch up with him at various points during the show. His booth was not far from Fozzie and Kermit in their ride, the Muppetmobile that was at the show courtesy of the Studebaker Museum.



There were of course numerous standout cars at the show. These beauties really made me remember why I've always wanted something from the 1930's:



The Avanti Owners Club were out in real force, and the #8 record-setting car from 1963 was displayed prominently in the hotel lobby:



Ron Hoff's beautiful Daytona, and Chris Newell's amazing "Larkamino" both got a lot of attention for all the right reasons.



Dad and I got to show off our Hawk (he bought it in 1977 in California):



Prospective new Potomac Chapter member Igor Shkvarunets brought his 1952 Landcruiser.



He's new to Studebakers, and seems to be hooked (like the rest of us!). Igor and I lifted pints of *Studebaker IPA* while at Red Robbins for dinner at the show one night. I look forward to many more such opportunities at future events.

Overall it was a very successful Meet, and a real joy to spend time with others who share the passion. I look forward to the next opportunity, although I fear that Texas in 2026 may be too far for me. South Bend in 2027, anyone??

More from the SDC Int'l Meet

By Jeff Bradel

I attended the Washington, PA, international meet. The weather was perfect and it was a nice event. Many nice cars were on display including Bonneville number 1 (64 convertible owned by Nelson Bove), Bonneville number 8 (Avanti owned by Gary Woods), and the Due Cento (R5 Avanti).

New National SDC Officers

Here is the list of the new national SDC executive contacts:

PRESIDENT: Don Cox, 104139 Phantom Rd., Meeker, OK 74855, 951-529-0873

studebaker_don@yahoo.com

VICE PRESIDENT: Ernie Brown, 1305 12th Ave. NW, Arab, AL, 35016-2025, 256-200-0642,

erniebrown@juno.com

SECRETARY: Cindy Sale, 11731 NW Beaver Dr., Granger, IA, 50109-9763, cynthiasale525@gmail.com.

TREASURER: Avi Prochazka, Royal Oak Michigan, Address Not available, 248-915-5350,

avprochazka@gmail.com

PAST PRESIDENT: Dennis Foust, 143 Studebaker Rd., Spring Mills, PA 16875, studeguy54@gmail.com

More from the SDC Int'l Meet

By Chris Newell

Marcia and I were thrilled to attend the annual meet in southwestern Pennsylvania, joining with several members of the Potomac Chapter. We put almost 800 miles on our 1963 Lark Car-Truck, including a mid-week side trip over to Fallingwater in Mill Run to tour with other family members a historic Frank Lloyd Wright house. We took many pictures at the Meet of the over 200 Studebakers there, including several beautiful examples of restoration excellence. We also found a remarkable sense of community and common experience among the attendees and learned so much about the marque.

I was happy to get a visit there from my friend Ross Miller, of Speedwell Garage, Parkton, Maryland. This is the gentleman who built my car, converting a derelict 4-door sedan Lark to a 2-door car-truck that can be considered what Studebaker would have built as a Lark car-truck back in the day, in my humble opinion. He is a skilled craftsman and kind person. Attached is a photo of Ross next to my car at the Meet, as well as photos of the Champagne Gold car he started with in 2022, and Green Mist car he finished with in 2024.

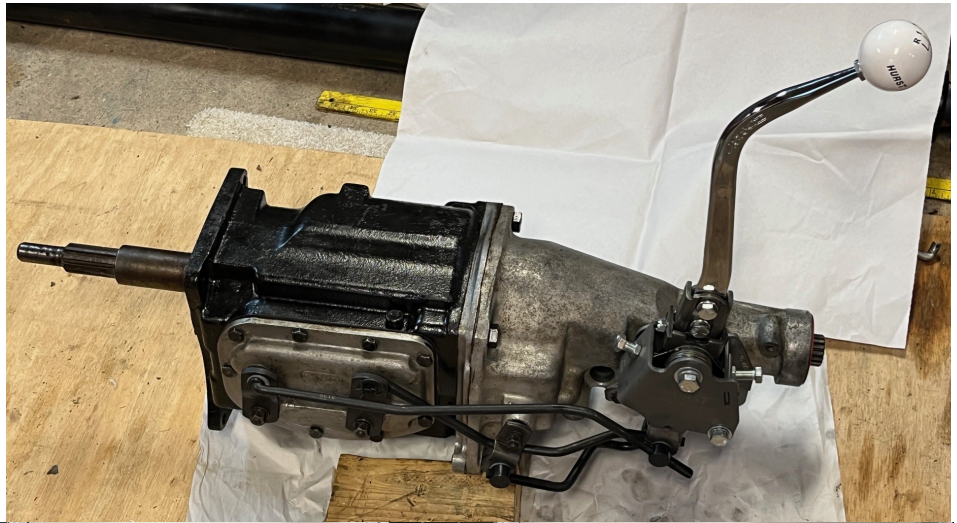


We are thinking about attending next year's Meet in North Texas. More to come, I'm sure.

What Did You Do to Your Studebaker?

Pete Rutledge — 1954 Studebaker Commander Regal Starlight Coupe

Well, my big project this month was for my '54 Studebaker. I undertook my first-ever transmission rebuild. I rebuilt the Borg-Warner T10 4-speed transmission that I had put in the '54. It had been jumping out of 2nd gear (a common problem with these transmissions), so I removed it from the car and rebuilt it with new bearings, seals, bronze synchromesh rings, and "torque-lock" synchromesh sliders, which are designed to hold the transmission in the selected gear and should fix the jumping-out-of-gear problem. It was an interesting project (a mechanical engineer's dream). The only special tools absolutely essential to doing the job were a hydraulic shop press (20-ton from Harbor Freight) and snap-ring pliers (about \$19 from AutoZone). With the help of a number of YouTubes, a transmission rebuilding book, and an Avanti shop manual, I actually took the transmission apart and put it back together twice, because after the first attempt, I didn't think it was working right. The second attempt was the charm. To put the finishing touches on the project, I have treated the transmission (and myself) to a brand new Hurst Competition Plus shifter (the last time I had one of these shifters was over 50 years ago, when I installed one in my '58 Corvette and it was wonderful). Now I just need to get the transmission back in the car — easier said than done! If the transmission works as I expect (hope) it to, the '54 should be drivable for greater distances, but there is still work to do: front end rebuild and some painting, inside and out.



Shop Talk (supplied by Pete Yuan thru Susan Lusted)

Thanks to FLYING HUB CAPS for the following articles:

THE BOUNCING HOOD

Some solutions are so simple and easy that one wonders why it took so long to reach them.

So it was with a terrible front end shake in our GT Hawk on impacting large bumps, potholes or closely spaced successive bumps that set the front of the car rattling like it wanted to come apart.

Play in the club newsletter business long enough and you will eventually hear about every problem that owners of the marque you've chosen ever experience with their vehicles.

For the six years that we had Entropy, it was one problem that I could not fix. For most of this time, I chalked it up to having a stiffly sprung front suspension, a situation only exacerbated by the 'Heavy Duty' front springs and shock absorbers I was using as well as Delrin bushings placed at the control arm pivot points and an addition of a 1- inch front anti- roll bar, complete with polyurethane bushings. In hindsight, my preconceptions of how a stiff suspension would affect the car's ride blinded me to the real problem.

Something still wasn't right though. The Avanti had as non-compliant a front suspension, being a near duplicate of the Hawk but did not shake and rattle over road imperfections. Entropy even continued its shenanigans when I replaced the front springs with lighter 6 cylinder items in order to lower the front end. So, for the umpteenth time, I crawled around under the car shaking, banging and tightening everything in sight with no change. Then a trip to West Palm Beach pushed me over the edge. I had to fix this. . . . It was driving me nuts!

Upon returning home and in near desperation, I tried something I was sure was a long shot and probably wouldn't work. . . Folding a note paper over several times, I squeezed it between the hood and fenders in six different spots, three on each side of the car. . . But it did work - no more rattles, creaks or noises reminiscent of impending Studebaker meltdown from forward of the firewall!

For six years, the hood which had never rested on the small rubber bumpers on each side was now supported well enough that it no longer became a third- rate tuning fork when the suspension had to contend with potholes, washboard roads or other pavement nasties.

OBVIOUS? . . . NOT VERY. I had been looking for too complex a reason.

EASY FIX . . . Installation of thicker than stock rubber bumper pads did the trick to forever-more quell the hood's musical inclinations. HAPPINESS RETURNS

THE TAPERED AXLE

So it was for me about Studebaker's tapered axles and that they sometimes break. Both of our '63 cars use them. With age and miles on these axles, I began to worry a little when I learned of several recent instances in which a tapered rear axle had fractured, imperiling the lives of the occupants in the car.

Should the rear wheels breaking off and passing me on the road, taking its share of the car's brakes with it as it rolls away makes me uncomfortable. A feeling I'm convinced my passengers will share with me should it happen with them in the car. An Avanti owner had it occur while driving on a mountain road, downhill with several of his grandchildren with him. He was able to slow and stop as the car still retained its front brakes and it remained balanced on the remaining three wheels until he stopped. I venture to guess that not everyone will be as lucky, should it happen to them. I know that my luck isn't that good.

My maintenance schedule calls for outer rear axle bearing cleaning and repacking every 25,000 miles. When we first got the Hawk, it had traveled over 142,000 miles with no checks of the rear axle bearings. . . I chipped the old grease, then the consistency of brick with a screwdriver. The Avanti had also been ignored throughout its 109,000 miles of life. To be safe, I replaced both outer bearings on both axles, including the races pressed into the axle housing.

Failing lubrication combined with normal loading can cause catastrophic bearing failure and cracked axles. This situation is more likely still if the car is heavily loaded. If it breaks on the outside of the bearing, nothing remains to hold the wheel on.

It's then "Bye, Bye wheel" and "Hello, expensive repairs and possible medical bills." We all deserve better than this. **Check your axles today!**

62nd Annual Studebaker Drivers Club **INTERNATIONAL MEET**



Waxahachie, TX
SEPTEMBER 23 - 26, 2026
VISITWAXAHACHIE.COM

Stude Spotter

From Chris Thomas:

Seen at the Guinness Factory located just outside of BWI airport. If you are in the area (and thirsty) be aware that you can have craft brews poured from the back of a Studebaker truck!



Digital Turning Wheels Magazine

All issues of Turning Wheels from January 2024 to the present are available online. Members can access them by going to the SDC web site at: <https://studebakerdriversclub.com/> On that page, click on "Member Area" at top right. On the next page, log in (or create a log-in account). On the next page, which shows your membership details, see the blue box on the right side; click on "View Digital Magazine." On the next page, there is a list of available digital issues of Turning Wheels. Click on any one of them to read it. You will see that SDC has done a pretty nice job of digitizing our club magazine.

Note: The latest digital edition of *Turning Wheels* becomes available on the 25th of every month.

October-November Birthdays*
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL!!!!

OCTOBER

Oct 1 — Tom Powers
Oct 4 — Marty Long
Oct 5 — Diane Greenlee
Oct 11 — Craig Comontofski
Oct 22 — Murray Welsh
Oct 25 — Anne Bradel
Oct 29 — Frank Philippi

NOVEMBER

Nov 2 — John Sartorius
Nov 17 — Edward Coffin
Nov 18 — Larry Koenig
Nov 19 — Chris Thomas
Nov 27 — Jenny Long

***Please Note:** If we fail to list your birthday, it may be because we don't have your birth date in our membership database. If you would like to see your birthday listed in the future, please let Stephen Walter know just the month and day of your birth date.

FOR SALE, FREE, and WANTED

NOTHING THIS MONTH

2025

Potomac Chapter SDC

Membership Application or Renewal

Please complete this form and mail a check, payable to POTOMAC CHAPTER SDC.

- ☐ \$15.00 Electronic email copy of Commander newsletter
- ☐ \$30.00 Mailed hardcopy of Commander newsletter

Send the completed form and check to:

Stephen Walter (For questions email: stephen.walter1@verizon.net)
14916 Chestnut Ridge Court
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Yearly dues apply from Jan 1st to Dec 31st of each year

☐ I am a member of SDC International.
National Membership # _____

☐ I am joining SDC International at this time.
*Upon receipt of your national Membership #,
please send the membership # to
the address or email above.*

This is a ☐ NEW Application ☐ Renewal/Update

Name: _____ Spouse Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone (primary): _____

City/ST/Zip: _____ Phone (secondary): _____

E-Mail: _____

Birthday: ____ Month ____ Day Spouse: ____ Month ____ Day

I own the following Studebakers (including Rockne, Erskine, EMF, Avanti)

Year	Make	Model	Body Style
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

YOU MUST BE A MEMBER OF NATIONAL SDC IN ORDER TO JOIN ANY SDC CHAPTER