



# The Commander

## Potomac Chapter

### Studebaker Drivers Club



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

Vol. 58, Issue Number 2 — April-May 2026



**Chris Thomas (right) and Chris's Avanti at Katie's Cars & Coffee in Great Falls on March 7, 2026**

IN THIS ISSUE	
Steering Column.....	2
Chapter Officers.....	3
Planned Activities.....	4-5
B.S. Column.....	5
Digital TW.....	6
Burtonsville Cruise-in.....	6
Studebaker in Wartime.....	7
SDC Int'l Meet 2026.....	8
Sully Car Show info.....	9
Member Profile.....	10
What Did You Do.....	11-12
Birthdays.....	13
For Sale, Free, and Wanted.....	13
Membership Application/Renewal.....	14

**Next Meeting**  
**April 26, 2026**  
**7PM**  
**via Zoom**



## Steering Column



Hi all,

I trust that this finds everyone well and looking forward to the promise of Spring. I didn't manage to get out in either of my Studebakers with the good weather this past weekend, but the neighborhood kids saw my garage open and asked if they could sit in my cars. Of course I let them, and then they promptly had a "race". I'm not sure if the Hawk or the Avanti won, but no high-priced gas was expended in the encounter. It never ceases to amaze me how the younger generation get excited by the roll-up windows in the Hawk. For the rest of us, we get excited by the optional power windows that my Avanti has! I suppose that life is all about perspective.

I'm looking forward to the events scheduled this year and hoping that enough of us can get together and enjoy driving our vehicles. As the year goes on, please let me know what works (and what doesn't work) so that the leadership team can put together a program that suits everyone. I'm hoping that we get a good turnout to the Meadowlark Botanical Gardens meet planned for May 16<sup>th</sup>, and look forward to catching up there/then.

Until then, wishing you all happy motoring!

Best,

*Chris*




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> Chris Thomas	<u>Vice President</u> Steve White	<u>Treasurer</u> Dave Farris 852 Baltimore Pike Gardners, PA 17324 240-461-7676
<u>Secretary</u> 	<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>Newsle er Editor</u> Pete Rutledge 5102 Cannon Bluff Dr. Woodbridge, VA 22192 703-853-8209 (C) pjrutledge3@verizon.net

## Potomac Chapter Membership Renewal Reminder

The good news is we have had 35 members renew for 2026. Thank you so much for continuing to support your local chapter. We still have nine active members who have not renewed yet, this is a little high for this time in the renewal cycle. Unfortunately, this is extra work for me because I will need to contact them personally and try to encourage them to renew. I will be sending an email and a phone call reminder to those of you that have not sent in your renewal. 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. Your car/truck is our best advertisement; I cannot drive anywhere these days without getting positive comments and questions. So, carry an application form in your vehicle and you will be prepared to recruit new members. Please contact Membership Director Stephen Walter at [stephen.walter1@verizon.net](mailto:stephen.walter1@verizon.net) if you have any questions.

## POTOMAC CHAPTER, SDC 2026 Planned Activities (Tentative)

Event (location)	Date	Details
Burtonsville Cars & Coffee Burtonsville Town Square 15662 Old Columbia Road Burtonsville, MD	Sunday, April 19th 07:30 to 9:30	<i>non-Chapter event in Maryland</i>
<b>Annual General Meeting</b> Zoom meeting	Sunday, April 26th 7PM	<i>Chapter event via Zoom Zoom link will be emailed prior to meeting</i>
<b>Meadowlark Botanical Gardens</b> 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Ct Vienna, VA 22182	Saturday, May 16th Tour: 10:00 to 11:15 Picnic: 11:30 <i>Optional: 7AM Kae's Cars &amp; Coffee, Great Falls, VA</i>	<i>Chapter event in Virginia  Evite sent to all members on 3/31</i>
<b>Bethesda Cars &amp; Coffee</b> at the <b>Corner Bakery</b> 10327 Westlake Drive	Saturday, May 30th 08:00 to 10:00	<i>Chapter event in Maryland</i>
<b>Sully Car Show</b> 3650 Historic Sully Way Chantilly, VA	Sunday, June 21st (Father's Day) 10:00 to 15:30	<i>non-Chapter event in Virginia pre-registration required</i>
<b>Kae's Cars &amp; Coffee</b> Kae's Coffee House 760 Walker Road, Great Falls, VA	Saturday, July 11th 06:30 to 08:30	<i>non-Chapter event in Virginia  arrive early!</i>
<b>Burtonsville Cars &amp; Coffee</b> Burtonsville Town Square 15662 Old Columbia Road Burtonsville, MD	Sunday, August 17th 07:30 to 9:30	<i>non-Chapter event in Maryland</i>
<b>Drive Your Studebaker Day - vineyard tour</b> <i>Start at Boxwood Estate Winery</i> 2042 Burrland Ln Middleburg, VA	Saturday, September 12th 10:30 to 14:30 <i>drive to</i>	<i>end at Breaux Vineyards</i> 36888 Breaux Vineyards Ln, Purcellville, VA <i>Evite to all members</i>

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

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

**POTOMAC CHAPTER, SDC**  
**2026 Planned Activities (Tentative) (cont'd)**

Event (location)	Date	Details
<b>Rohr Car Show</b> Manassah Masonic Lodge 182 9810 Cockrell Road, Manassas, VA	Saturday, September 19th 8:00 to 15:00	<i>non-Chapter event in Virginia</i> \$25.00 pre-registration
<b>Rockville Antique &amp; Classic Car Show</b> Glenview Mansion at Rockville Civic Center Park 603 Edmonston Drive, Rockville, MD	Saturday, October 17th 11:00 to 15:30 <a href="https://www.rockvillemd.gov/667/Rockville-Antique-and-Classic-Car-Show">https://www.rockvillemd.gov/667/Rockville-Antique-and-Classic-Car-Show</a>	<i>Chapter event in Maryland</i> registration opens July 7th <b>** always sells out - book early!!</b>
<b>2025 Chapter Holiday Party</b> Veva's on Potomac 38 S Potomac St #1, Hagerstown, MD	Saturday, December 12th 13:00 to 16:00	Chapter annual meeting and holiday party!  contact: Dave Farris <a href="mailto:david.farris@verizon.net">david.farris@verizon.net</a>

**NOTES:**

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

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

***B.S. Column (bout Studebakers)***

**By Jerry Blount—Member, Northwest Chapter**

**With thanks to Brenda Scott, Editor, Northwest Newsletter**

Several years ago, I wrote a column about original clutch pressure plate assemblies as used on '55 to '64 V-8 Studebakers. The point of that column was to list the various diameters used - 10"; 10-1/8"; 10-1/4"; and 10-1/2" and the rating in pounds for the different model applications. 1545 lbs. to 2050 lbs. with several in the 1700 - 1800 lbs. range.

I wanted to point out that most aftermarket clutches were more like 2200 lbs. and thus could lead to clutch linkage failure, not to mention a tired left foot. Some Studebaker parts dealers were selling a commonly available American Motors/Jeep 10-1/2" clutch pressure plate rated at 2220 lbs. I chose to rarely sell this part (only for heavy duty use) my preference was something close to the original Studebaker listings. So, I sold 10" and 10-1/4" pressure plates whenever I could, since these would be in the 1600 - 1800 lbs. range.

Recently my California wholesaler Studebaker parts supplier chose to discontinue selling remanufactured 10" pressure plates, mainly due to lack of people willing to do the rebuilding process. Fortunately he now has a source for new 10-1/2" pressure plates, rated at 1450 lbs. - noted as "standard duty". The "heavy duty" version is 2000 lbs. '55 - '64 Studebaker V-8 flywheels have a bolt pattern that will accept 10" thru 10-1/2" pressure plates, so a 10-1/2" pressure plate will readily replace a 10" plate. You should either reface your flywheel (good idea anyway) or use a 10" disc.

## 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.

March 29, 2026  
Burtonsville Cruise-in



Our VP Steve White's spectacular black GT Hawk stands out next to a run-of-the-mill black Brand X (only kidding about that very nice '57 Ford T-Bird).

(George Hamlin found this on the internet)

**One truck could go anywhere, the other could barely go anywhere**

—and in war, mobility is survival. The difference between American and German logistics vehicles in World War II wasn't just about horsepower or cargo capacity—it was about a fundamental understanding of what modern warfare demanded. The Studebaker US6 was engineered for total war: a 6x6 all-wheel-drive beast that could power through mud, snow, sand, and ice while hauling 2.5 tons of critical supplies to troops who desperately needed them. It didn't matter if the roads were destroyed, flooded, or nonexistent—the US6 went anyway, keeping entire armies fed, armed, and moving forward no matter the conditions. Meanwhile, Germany relied heavily on trucks like the Opel Blitz, a capable vehicle for its time, but fundamentally limited by its 4x2 rear-wheel-drive design. It could carry slightly more weight on paper—3 tons versus 2.5—but that advantage evaporated the moment it left paved roads. Stuck in mud, helpless in snow, and useless off-road, the Opel Blitz was a peacetime truck trying to fight a global war across every type of terrain imaginable. The result was predictable: American supply lines kept moving through rain, winter, and bombed-out landscapes, while German logistics choked and stuttered whenever conditions turned harsh. Wars aren't won just by tanks and planes—they're won by the unglamorous trucks that keep those tanks fueled and those planes armed. And when one side can deliver supplies anywhere and the other can't, the outcome is inevitable.

-----

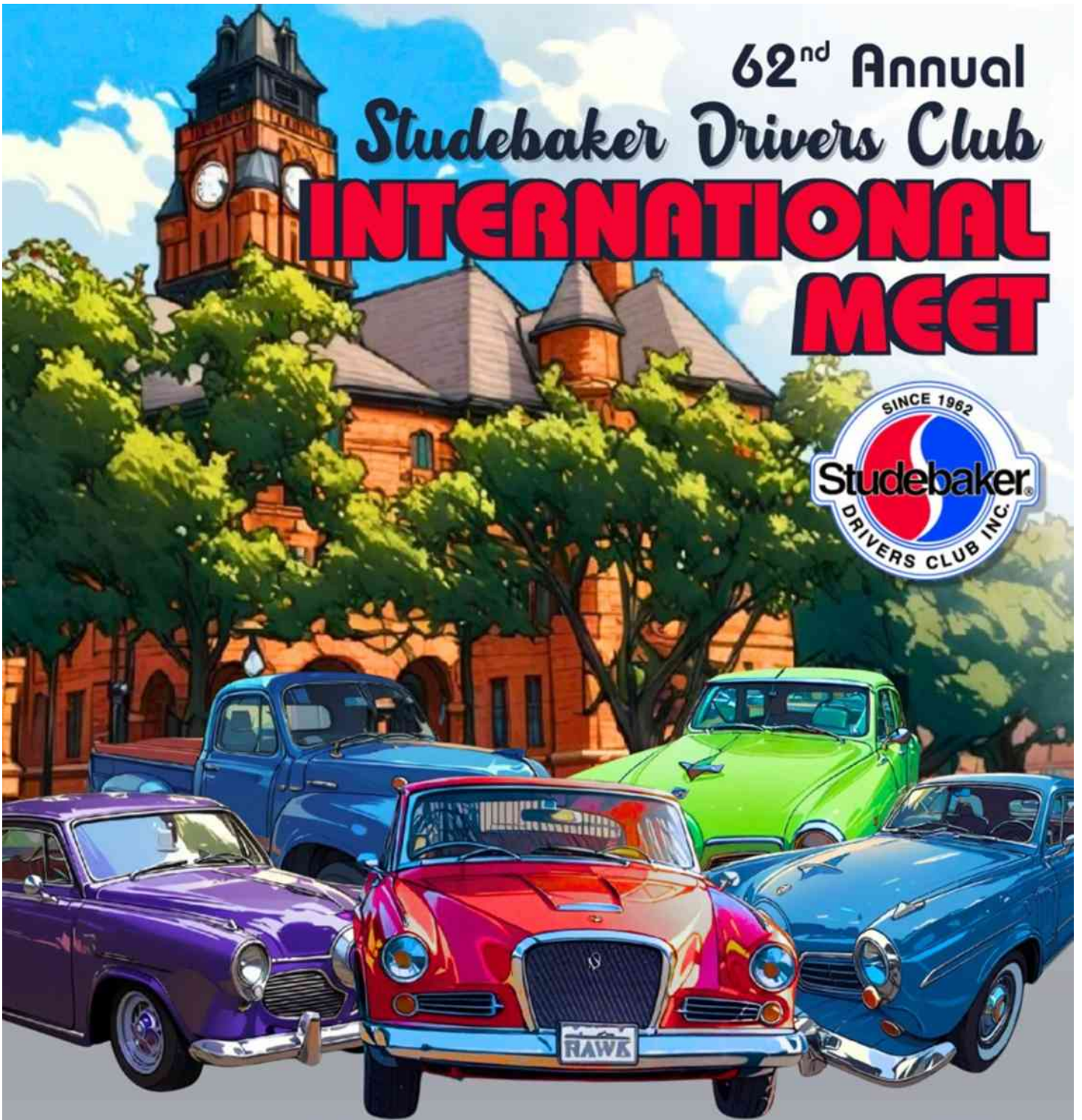


STUDEBAKER US6 (USA) | Drive: 6x6 (All Wheel Drive)  
Cargo: 2.5 Tons | Terrain: Mud & Snow



OPEL BLITZ (GERMANY) | Drive: 4x2 (Rear Wheel Drive)  
Cargo: 3 Tons | Terrain: Roads Only

62<sup>nd</sup> Annual  
Studebaker Drivers Club  
**INTERNATIONAL  
MEET**



**Waxahachie, TX**  
**SEPTEMBER 23 - 26, 2026**

[VISITWAXAHACHIE.COM](http://VISITWAXAHACHIE.COM)

## 51st Sully Antique Car Show! – June 21, 2026

The George Washington Chapter, Inc., Model A Ford Club, and the Fairfax County Park Authority will jointly sponsor the 51st Sully Antique Car Show on Father's Day, June 21, 2026 at the Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly, VA.

Bring your Model A Ford Hot Rod or antique vehicle (2001 or earlier) to show (must pre-register by June 17) and win a trophy. There are thirty show classes with 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place trophies, and a trophy for Best in Show and a Sully Staff choice. Or, just bring your family to enjoy the show where you will see approximately 350 - 400 classic and antique cars; special displays including Hit 'n Miss engines and a "take-apart Model T Ford"; food vendors; a kids' tent with free coloring books; live music; and a Century Class Display of 100-year-old cars. Historic grounds information session included with admission (weather permitting), which online is \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors and \$8 for children. Trophies will be awarded at 3:00 pm.

**SHOW CARS MUST BE PRE-REGISTERED BY JUNE 17!**

See [GWCMoDeLA.com](http://GWCMoDeLA.com) mid-April for registration information.

## Potomac Chapter Member Profile

Name: Chris Thomas (see cover for picture of Chris)

Length of my membership in the Potomac Chapter, SDC: Joined in 2024

Other car clubs I am a member of: None. *Studebakers only!*

My favorite car(s): Studebakers, Packards, and Cords

My favorite Studebaker(s): Bullet noses; Lowey coupes; Avantis; GT Hawks

My current car collection includes: 1963 GT Hawk; 1963 R2 Avanti

Other Studebakers I have owned: 1951 Champion Business Coupe

My involvement with Studebakers (from when it started until today):

I was practically born into the club when my Dad bought a 1962 GT Hawk in 1972 when I was less than a year old. I grew up around the cars, and our flock grew to eight vehicles at some point (nine if you include Grandad's 1964 Daytona!). I bought my first Studebaker when I was ten years old. Living on a farm, I had purchased 50 chickens and sold the eggs. The car cost \$300.00, and although it never did get back on the road, Dad and I had fun working on it. After a brief flirtation with Mopars, I came back into the fold when Dad gifted me the GT Hawk in 2016. A couple of years ago I bought my dream car - a 1963 R2 Avanti with four-speed. The first owner apparently returned it to the dealer in 1964 and told them it was "too fast, and too hot", and so the dealer converted it to R1 with air-conditioning. I've spent the last couple of years correcting that "mistake" by returning it to supercharged status, and am grateful to members like Jeff Bradel who have greatly assisted along the way. My two sons both enjoy driving the cars, and hopefully someday will enjoy working on them, too!

My favorite Studebaker memory: Dad and I driving the 1963 GT Hawk through Death Valley late at night while heading to the 1989 SDC International Meet in Las Vegas. We had to keep the windows closed since the hot air from outside was burning our faces - with the added stress that the gas gauge was (of course) non-operational, and there are very few gas stations in the desert. Good times.

## Potomac Chapter Member Profile

### Photos of me and my Studebakers:

*Dad & I in the same car that we drove to the 1989 Intl Meet in Las Vegas.*



Below is my Avanti at Katie's Cars & Coffee in Great Falls.



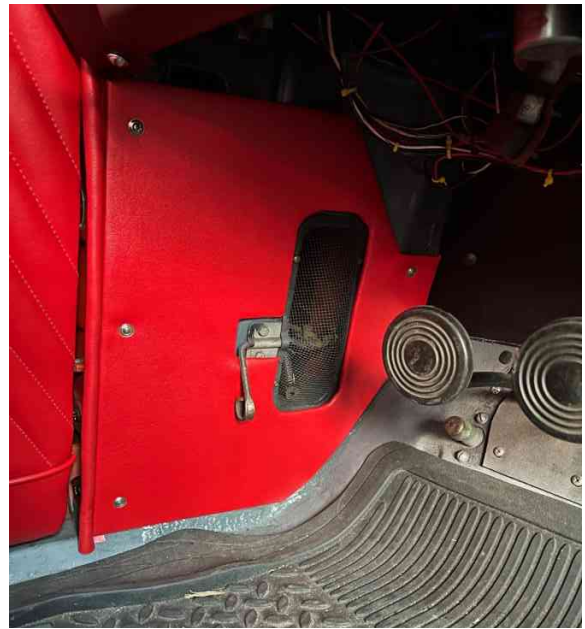
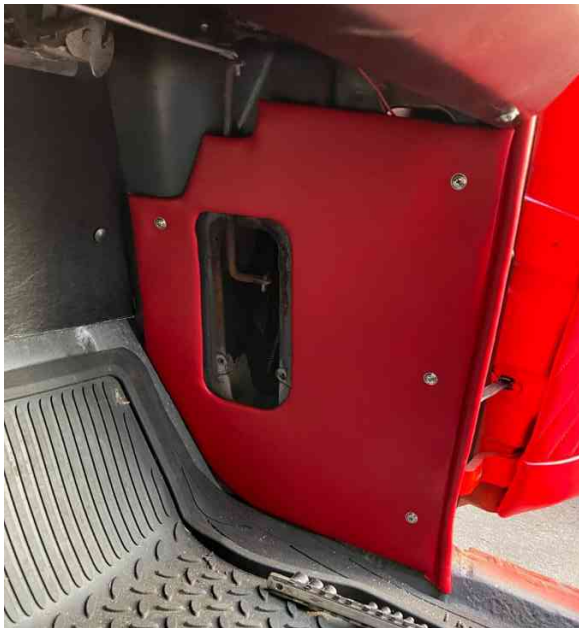
Tech tip: Consult with others in the Club before starting something. There is so much knowledge within the Studebaker family. Everyone is so helpful in sharing.

Final thought: These cars were made to be driven! Get out and drive - even if it means a breakdown once-in-a-while. It's like life... don't look for excuses to not do something.

## What Did You Do to Your Studebaker?

### Pete Rutledge — 1954 Studebaker Commander Starlight Coupe

The interior of my "high school hot rod" is nearing completion. This past month, I made new kick panels. I did not have old panels to copy, so I made patterns by cutting and taping together pieces of card stock paper. Then I transferred the pattern to tempered hardboard, which I subsequently covered with red vinyl to match the seat upholstery and door panels. All that's left to do inside the car is to apply foil-covered butyl rubber sound deadener to the floor and then install black carpet (which I am making from a carpet roll).



On the outside, the car is getting blacker. I prepped and sprayed the doors with flat black epoxy primer (reminiscent of the cars I saw on Main St. as a teen). Rear quarter panels will be next; then hood and trunk lid. I'm spraying outdoors, so I'll like to get more done before the trees start shedding debris.



## Birthdays\*

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL!!!!

### APRIL

Apr 1—Linda Winokur  
Apr 8—Hal Hermann  
Apr 10—Charles Acker  
Apr 19—Margaret Bjarnason  
Apr 20—Sue Scott

### MAY

May 8—Peggy Conner  
May 10—Allen Greenlee  
May 10—Shirley McDaniel  
May 10—Larry Pugh  
May 15—Peter Lefkin  
May 24—Bob Wilson  
May 25—Donna Coffin  
May 29—Anne Mortensen  
May 30—Darlene Pugh

**\*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

# 2026 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](mailto:stephen.walter1@verizon.net))  
14916 Chestnut Ridge Court  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

**Yearly dues apply from Jan 1<sup>st</sup> to Dec 31<sup>st</sup> of each year**

- I am a member of SDC International.       I am joining SDC International at this time.  
National Membership # \_\_\_\_\_      *Upon receipt of your national Membership #,  
please send the membership # to the  
address 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
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____