



BRICKYARD BULLETIN



VOL. 48, ISSUE 3, A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE INDY CHAPTER OF THE STUDEBAKER DRIVERS CLUB, MARCH 2023

The Indy Chapter has lost a longtime friend with the passing of Bob Palma. Bob was one of the original members of the Indy Chapter when it formed in 1969. His funeral this week was a fitting tribute with many Studebakers in the parking lot as friends and family gathered to remember Bob. He will be missed by all that knew him. The Indy Chapter will be looking for a way to honor his memory in the Studebaker Club in the future.

February 11, I was visiting my brother in Florida and got to attend the North Central Florida monthly meeting which was held at a local car show. Studebakers out numbered all the other brand X cars that were there and it was fun attending a bonus Studebaker event in the winter!

Hope to see everyone at our next get together March 18th!

Nancy Bacon
President, Indy Chapter

Tour of the John Force Racing Facility Saturday, February 18, 2023

What a great day we had with 39 members, the Lincoln Club and guest touring the John Force Racing Facility hosted by Steve Woodall with assistance from Gloria Woodall. Steve walked us thru the world of automotive racing and injected information about racing, motors and things we never thought about, like the cost of these cars, yikes! At the conclusion of the tour Steve handed out a nifty Peak ball cap to all attendees. We then headed over to Locale (formerly the Pit Stop) for lunch. There, we had 51 members and guest. I'm sorry that our room only held forty so several members and guest ate outside our room but they attended the meeting after lunch. We might need to start taking head counts as this was a near record attendance I wasn't expecting but was thrilled anyways. After lunch, president Nancy Bacon conducted the meeting:

Nancy began the meeting by acknowledging the great turn out for the tour and lunch and thanked Steve Woodall for the tour. At a sad point of the meeting Nancy spoke briefly about the difficult loss of Bob Palma and how he will be missed by the club. Nancy also welcomed guest Verne and Janice Bothwell. They own a 1952 Starlight Coup that Verne has owned since fresh out of high school.

Treasurer, Tom Flynn reported \$14,967.78 in the checking account with 73 paid members. He asked if the club wanted to continue sponsoring the two cars at the Studebaker Museum, 1950 Champion and a 1954 Commander formerly owned by Robert Forks. The cost is \$250.00 per car. The club unanimously passed the vote.

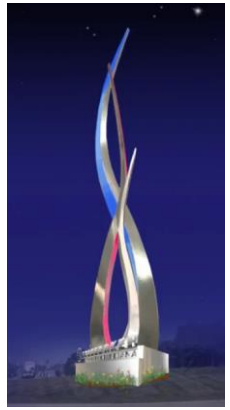
Becky Griffith reported that our next event is a pitch-in March 18 in Wanamaker and Mike Baker announced the April event. All events are on page 9 of your newsletter.

New member Matt McKinney announced he has bought a 1953 Champion fixer-upper. Matt is going to update the club from time to time on his venture into restoring the car.

The City of Carmel has commissioned four roundabout sculptures (R) that will celebrate “Indiana’s Classic Cars” on 96th Street. They will be designed by artist Arlon Bayliss and will be placed in 2022 and 2023. They will be placed at the roundabouts on 96th Street at Priority Way, Delegates Row, Gray Road and Hazel Deli Parkway.

The four sculptures will feature the classic cars Marmon, Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg, Stutz and Studebaker — all built-in Indiana during the first half of the 20th century.

Nancy informed the club that Studebaker Clubs are moving towards a new way to communicate with members by using *Group Works*. The way it works is: *Group Works* is a new communications program being built to help the club get information to members quickly. To date it has been used to alert members of a stolen Studebaker, the passing of club members and posting upcoming events like Zone Meets & the International Meet. This is a work in progress, they have added Board & Executive Committee members, Zones & Region Managers in September and two Chapters in December to test it out. Cynthia Sale will be helping clubs who want to join in get signed up. If interested, the Indy Chapter could send her a list of names and emails so she can send you an invitation. There will also be instructional videos to help. See February Turning Wheels for more information with additional information to come in TW each month.



Submitted by Becky Griffith
Temporary Secretary

Photos from the John Force Racing Facility



Race shop area where the crews work on the cars. We have 4 teams, each team has 2 tractor – trailers that carries the body’s, chassis’, parts and equipment. Two of the race trailers are at testing in Florida..



Photos by Becky Griffith,
Captions written by Steve Woodall

Host and tour guide Steve Woodall speaking to the group



Club member Sue Lile picks up the carbon fiber body shell we get from Metalcrafters out of California. Sue doesn’t know it but those body shells cost \$53,000 each (just the body shell alone) and another \$45,000 to turn it into a complete, race ready body. The shells weighs about 110 pounds and race ready weighs about 260 pounds. Each of the 2 funnv car teams has 2 complete bodv’s in the trailers.



Bob Fox checking out an engine block that has seen better days. A catastrophic explosion destroyed not only the block but the whole engine, another \$80,000 loss. Only good thing about it was, it was in a dragster not a funny car.



Part of a 6 disc clutch called floaters. There are 6 clutch disks and 5 floaters in our clutch packs. Discs are \$110 each and are good for 2 runs. The floaters are \$65 a piece and have to be replaced every run. If a team goes to the finals (8 laps) they will use 24 discs and 40 floaters. That's \$2640 in discs and \$2600 in floaters alone.



A race ready body ready to go on John Force's hot rod. The cars will accelerate from a dead stop to over 330 miles per hour in 1000 feet and just under 4 seconds.



Gloria Woodall standing next to a pair of Good Year rear tires. \$1000 a pair and are good for 4-8 laps



This is Robert Height's chassis getting serviced. 12,000 horse power, fire breathing machines. We will use 13 gallons of fuel per lap which includes the start up, burn out, backing up and the run. Our cars will use 5 ½ gallons of nitro methane fuel in less than 4 seconds at \$45 a gallon. If we can go to the finals we will have traveled 1.515 miles under full throttle, used 104 gallons of fuel at a cost of \$4680 per race. We get about 29 gallons per mile under full throttle.

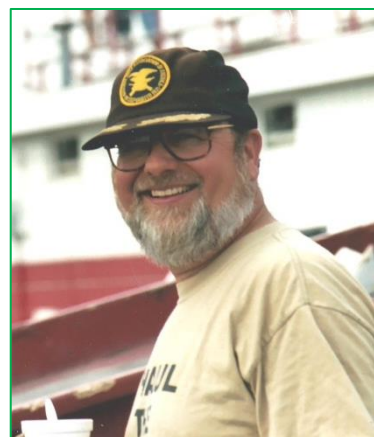


Austin Prock's Top Fuel dragster being serviced in their pit area. The Top Fuel cars and the Funny Cars use the same basic drive train parts but the Top Fuel cars have a 300 inch wheel base whereas the Funny Cars have a 120 inch wheel base.



A Tribute to Bob Palma

By
Tom Lawlis



First of all, I want to extend my heartfelt, deepest condolences to Cari, Kate, Joe and all the rest of the Palma family. Words cannot express the pain and anguish that they are enduring at this time at the untimely loss of their beloved Bob to that horrendous pancreatic cancer. I can relate somewhat to that awful feeling deep in the pit of the stomach one gets from losing a loved one, as I lost my dear wife, Judy, to that same dreaded pancreatic cancer eight years ago. Sadly, over the past few months, I observed that his fight closely paralleled that of my late wife. Over lunch recently, Bob asked me what he could expect. I didn't go into details but tried to offer encouragement. Sitting here writing this, I have mixed emotions of guilt and yet I feel very fortunate and blessed as I am a twelve year survivor of stage 4 kidney cancer. I too know what it is like to be told by a doctor, "You have stage 4 cancer", as Bob was told by his doctor. It certainly was a devastating moment for Bob as he was given that news back around Labor Day. Bob soldiered on with tremendous spirit and optimism and courage these past few months. He was still working and writing until the very end.

Much has already been written and much more will be written about Bob as he has touched the lives of untold thousands of people around the world for years through his prolific writings in the automotive field and other arenas as well. I will therefore try to keep my remarks short and focused on my personal relationship and observations of Bob over the years

I first met Bob in a somewhat unique way in the late 1980's. I knew of Bob through his Studebaker writings in *Turning Wheels* as I was a member of the Studebaker Drivers Club, but had never seen or met him. I had this 1962 Ford Sunliner convertible that I decided to sell to make space for my future '57 Golden Hawk 400 restoration project. I ran an ad in a local car rag and this fellow called and wanted to come and see it. He arrived and I took him to my new double garage and parked next to my Ford is my Tiara Gold 1957 Golden Hawk. Oh my! This stranger goes bonkers, not over the Ford but the Studebaker, and he soon identified himself as Bob Palma. How about that! It was the beginning of a wonderful friendship. No, he didn't buy the Ford but we sure talked a lot of Studebaker that day and ever since. We learned we had other things in common as well. We both attended Purdue University at the same time for two years during our individual four year stints, as I was two years ahead of him. However, we never crossed paths during that two year overlap period. We both were in the Purdue Reamer Club, an organization of a few junior and senior students that operate and care for the official mascot of Purdue University, "The Boilermaker Special", the rubber tired locomotive that can be seen cruising campus and cruising selected other Big 10 campuses on away football weekends, promoting the spirit of Purdue. Being two years ahead of Bob, I graduated just before he became a Reamer the next semester so unfortunately we didn't meet then either. I mention this because Bob often brought up the topic of Purdue, our association with the Reamer Club and how close we were to becoming Studebaker buddies back in the mid 1960's.

Over the years, I have seen that Bob was a one of a kind, bigger than life, irreplaceable type of person. At Studebaker events, he would light up the room, he would be the one everyone wanted to be with and talk to. His spirit was infectious. His knowledge of Studebaker and other makes as well was most accurate and encyclopedic. His experience, expertise, wisdom and dedication to the old car hobby, especially Studebaker is nothing short of remarkable. And may I emphasize dedication. Dedication to the *Turning Wheels* Co-operator columns for decades; dedication to accurate, detailed yearly reports on the Pure Stock Muscle Car Drags for 25 years; dedication to anyone who has questions at car shows and cruise-ins, and dedication to his basement sanctuary where-in resides his desk, his computer, his library and of course his own toilet. No one but his wife Cari could relate to us his true dedication and time spent down there over the years. Bless her heart for

allowing him the time to make the rest of us beneficiaries of his vast prolific writing skills, talent and knowledge. We love you too, Cari.

I won't recount here all of the special and enjoyable things that we did together over the years. Suffice it to say that I will never forget them and will be happy to talk about them to any in the future.

I learned that Bob was a model citizen and family man. He loved his family immensely and doted on his lovely grandchildren. Bob's unfortunate, way too soon passing will leave a huge void in the lives of his family member and for all of us as well. Bob conducted his life as a perfect role model for others. He was certainly the kind of person the world needs more of, not less of. We have all lost a true treasure with Bob's Passing

Rest in peace my dear friend; I will miss you so much.

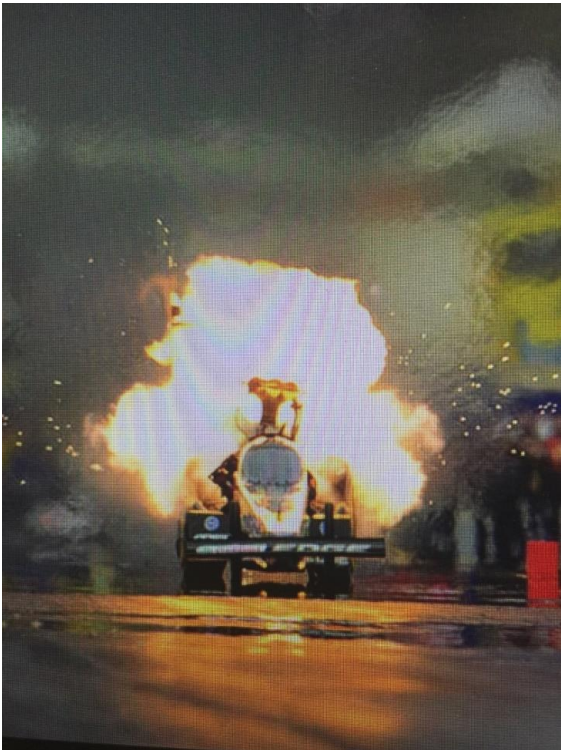
Welcome New Members

Vernon & Janie Bothwell
8806 S County Road 125 E
Cloverdale, IN 46120
765-657-0070
janvern@ccrtc.com

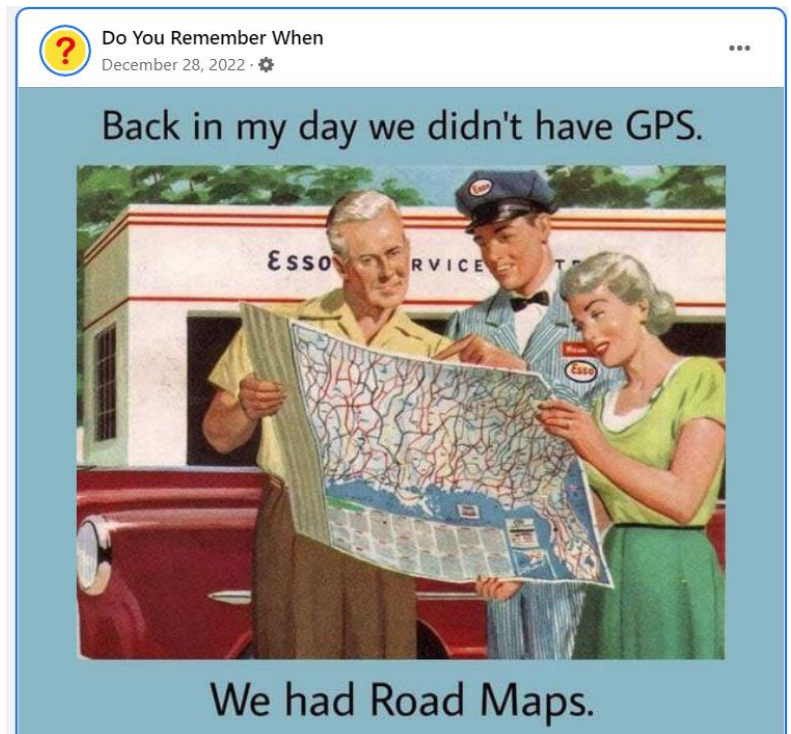
1950 Champion 4-door



One more photo from John Force Racing:



John Force Racing - Brittany explosion. That's the explosion that destroyed the engine block on page 2.



Why Studebaker?

How I Became Dedicated to Studebakers

By Bob Palma

Part II

Indianapolis: 1962 through the end of Studebaker Production

Meanwhile, I acquired my Drivers License in Paris at age 16 in February, 1962. At the time, our family's second car was a nice, rare 1957 Studebaker President **2-door** [total production: 836 units] in Coppertone and Arctic White. It had a standard 289 engine with 4 bbl carburetor, dual exhausts [standard equipment on all 1957 Presidents regardless of carburetor, as was the 289 engine], and Flight-O-Matic. By the time we moved from Paris to Indianapolis in July 1962, I had won my share of street races in the President and left a lasting impression on more than one non-Studebaker friend who had made fun of my attraction to South Bend's finest. *(To this day, I am counted among the members of the Paris High School Class of 1964 even though I didn't graduate with those friends because we had moved to Indianapolis. Still, I attend the regular five-year reunions...and with God as my witness, someone will approach me at every reunion and ask about Studebakers!)*

The 1957 President moved with us from Paris to Indianapolis, at which time I was in Seventh Heaven because there were multiple Studebaker dealers in Indianapolis, whereas Harry Rhoads had gone out of business in Paris in June 1960 and Studebaker was no longer represented there. I didn't like the idea of moving to the Big City, but having all the new Studebaker contacts around eased the pain considerably.

Ultimately, Snider Auto Service, authorized Studebaker dealer at West 38th Street and North Illinois in Indianapolis, became my home away from home. Sales Manager John Knapp became fascinated with my Studebaker immersion and allowed me to sit at his desk and read all the news releases from Studebaker. He generally gave me free reign of the place [free-range Bob?] as a 16-19 year old before Studebaker discontinued production in March 1966, shortly after I turned 20 years of age. My interest in Studebaker had waned by that time due to using Chevy engines and discontinuing high-performance models, but I still remember one of my last visits with John Knapp as we discussed the 1966 models' flow-through ventilation being demonstrated in a white 1966 Cruiser on the showroom floor.

The 1963 Studebaker showroom banners I occasionally bring to our Indy Chapter SDC Meetings for decoration came from Snider Studebaker when John Knapp gave them to me at the end of the 1963 model year.

For the 1964 model year, John ordered one of the large, premium, 11½ X 13½ #PD-64-17, vinyl clad, full-color Studebaker Salesman's 5-ring binders for my use and safekeeping. He gave it to me personally, *sealed in its shipping box*, as a thank you for all my "work" promoting Studebakers for the dealership. I don't know what those PD-64-17 binders cost, but they couldn't have been cheap...yet John Knapp ordered one for me, an 18-YO, for my personal use. I was humbled by his kindness and thanked him profusely. It remains in my possession today, never having been used by anyone else.

I spent a lesser amount of time at Roy Gale Motors on Indianapolis' East Tenth Street at North Sherman Drive, which later became Childers Studebaker, during the 1962-1964 period. There, I became enamored with the only black, full-package, R2/4-speed 1963 Super Lark convertible ever built, ordered for the dealership by salesman Jim Franklin. That very car has never been *-or needed to be-* restored and survives today in good condition, owned by SDC member Jeff Bradel of Centreville VA.

Jim raced his Super Lark at Indianapolis Raceway Park but, like other R-engined Studebaker owners trying to run NHRA (National Hot Rod Association) drag racing in 1963, he had to run in G/S (Gas/Supercharged)

because Studebaker (stupidly, in my never-so-humble opinion) refused to release horsepower figures for R engines. Since stock classes in NHRA were determined by advertised horsepower versus advertised shipping weight, NHRA had no way to assign R-engined Studebakers to stock classes.

Many R-engined Studebaker competitors in areas with an AHRA (American Hot Rod Association) track ran AHRA's Compact Stock class, where they dominated. But to the best of my knowledge, there were no AHRA-sanctioned drag strips in central Indiana.

Backing up a bit to complete my story of adventures when Studebakers were in production, my cousin **George Krem** has been a big part of my Studebaker enthusiasm through the years; we feed off each other in Studebaker pursuits. The 1957 Silver Hawk discussed on Page 14 of the December 2022 *Turning Wheels* was a big part of that story in that George was immediately acquainted with the car when Uncle Jerry (Dad and Uncle Milt's youngest brother) bought it new...and in which I learned to drive a manual-transmission car.

George and I are cousins with different surnames because his late mother (Louise) was my late father's older sister. This has worked well for George and me through the years because we can let people know we are related if we want to...and otherwise act as if we are two random strangers supporting each other's positions on Studebaker. I was with George the happy day in July 1964 when we found what would become the famous **Plain Brown Wrapper** 1964 Bermuda Brown Challenger V-8 two-door among the left-overs on the back lot at Studebaker of Indianapolis at 923 North Meridian Street in Indianapolis...and the rest, as they say, is history.

George and I spent as much time as possible during the summers of 1961, 1962, and 1963 in South Bend, sneaking around Studebaker facilities and taking both escorted and *-ahem-* unescorted tours of everything with a Studebaker name on it. All those adventures are too much to chronicle here, but George will be telling those stories soon in *Turning Wheels*.

After Studebaker quit building cars, I languished a bit emotionally because I had devoted so much of my life pursuing all things Studebaker and was distraught that efforts to help "save" the company had gone to naught. Ah, youthful innocence, eh...or is it ignorance? They sound about alike...

Life went on without Studebaker, although I still had my 1955 Champion Regal Coupe in storage, until I began teaching Auto Mechanics at Indianapolis' Arsenal Technical High School in January, 1969. That's when I met fellow Auto Trades teacher and life-long Studebaker nut Howe K. Clark Jr. of Brownsburg. Howe encouraged my getting back into Studebakers, joining the Studebaker Drivers Club, and helping him form The Central Indiana Chapter SDC...now known as The Indy Chapter SDC. Howe was responsible for my relocating to the Brownsburg area and we've had a lot of Studebaker fun over the 40+ years we've known each other.

My Studebaker story could fill a small book and I suppose that's what I've written to answer **Brickyard Bulletin** Editor Becky Griffith's question, "*How did you become so dedicated to Studebakers?*" This has been more than enough to fill one issue of our chapter's *Brickyard Bulletin*, so that's why I divided my story into two parts. It's been a fun ride; thanks to all the friends I've made along the way...I cherish our camaraderie.



Bob Palma

Cari and I with my 1955 Champion Regal coupe in Noblesville's Forest Park in the fall of 1970.



STUDEBAKER and the BOOKMOBILE

Part One



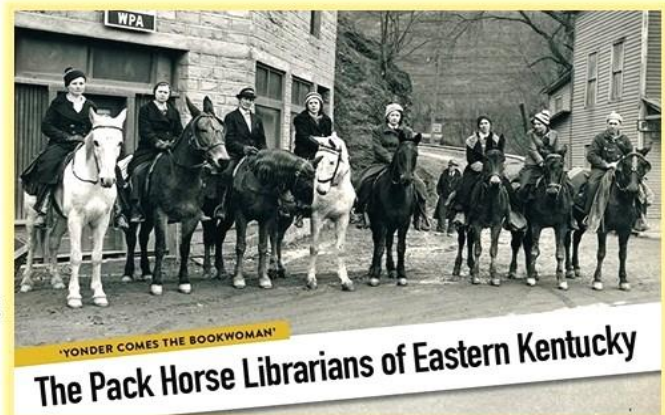
Any vehicle or mode of transportation that is used to distribute library books outside of a traditional library building is included in the general definition of a bookmobile. They have been known by many names throughout history. Names have included: a traveling library, a library wagon, a book wagon, library-on-wheels, and a book wheelbarrow. Whatever the vehicles are called, they were created to provide library services to people in otherwise unserved locations. Bookmobiles have been based on various means of conveyance, such as bicycles, carts, motor vehicles, trains, watercraft, and wagons...as well as camels, donkeys, elephants, horses and mules.

Many Studebaker wagons or carriages were purchased by various library districts throughout the country. The carriages were outfitted with shelves, while the wagons had custom constructed wooden boxes fitted into the wagon bed. Whether it was a wagon or a carriage, both of these Studebaker vehicles were invaluable to people hungry for books to read, but living in the rural areas of America.



There is some mention of Bookbarrows being utilized in larger cities. These were designed to serve invalids, hospital patients, and homebound people who wanted access to library materials, but were unable to travel to a local branch library. (Because of the unavailability of photographs and assuming that urban libraries would only utilize the best wheelbarrows, the picture (shown on the left) of the Studebaker Bookbarrow is a computer generated facsimile.)

Following the Great Depression, a WPA effort dubbed the **Pack Horse Library Project** covered the remote coves and mountainsides of Kentucky and nearby Appalachia between 1935 and 1943. Over 200 women were involved in the project which eventually had 30 different pack horse libraries serving 100,000 people and around 155 schools in the remote areas. The Pack Horse Library Project not only distributed books but also provided reading lessons and the book women would often read aloud to families.



As more and more transportation became motorized, libraries started embracing the newer modes of travel. Pictures of the earliest gas-powered bookmobiles are rare indeed, but the National Automotive and Truck Museum in Auburn, Indiana proudly displays a 1932 Studebaker bookmobile utilized by the Los Angeles County Public Library. Now, with the help of Studebaker, library outreach was ready to move into a more modern era.

Coming in April: Part Two of
STUDEBAKERS and the BOOKMOBILE

Upcoming Events

Saturday, March 18, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. - Larry and Sue Kennedy will host a joint Winter Meet with the Indy Chapter of the Studebaker Drivers Club and the Southern Indiana/Kentucky Chapter of the Hudson Club. This joint meet will be held at the Franklin Township Civic League, 8822 Southeastern Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46239 (located two houses beyond the Ordinary in downtown Wanamaker). Hosts will provide a meat dish, water, coffee and iced tea. Bring your place settings and a dish or dessert to share. This facility is handicapped accessible and has a handicapped restroom, but no kitchen facilities. There are lots of electrical outlets for crockpots and plenty of parking spaces. If you have questions, contact Larry at 317-862-2020

Mark Your Calendar:



Saturday, April 8 - Steve and Robbi Ortman have invited the club to a day of fun. The following is the days agenda:

11:00 a.m. – Lunch at Bookers Bar & Grill
109 N Main St, Kirklin, IN 46050

1:00 p.m. – Tour Travelers Point Bar & Tasting
405 E Madison St, Kirklin, IN 46050
and

Travelers Point Distillery **Hand Crafted Bourbon**
405 E Jefferson St, Kirklin, IN 46050 765-605-1291

3:00 p.m. – Tour private car collection, Goodwin Funeral Home 200 S. Main, Frankfort, IN and Ice Cream Soda Fountain

Hosts: Steve & Robbi Ortman 765-860-0639

RSVP rsogoodlife51@gmail.com by April 5th

Saturday, May 27, 2023 – Richard and Rose Poe are again hosting the **Annual Studebaker Nationals and Car Drags in Bunker Hill, Indiana**. This year it will be at a new location. Bunker Hill, Indiana is about 14 miles north of Kokomo. All performance and skill levels welcome. Bring your car to race, or not, and come to enjoy the day with us. This is a track day and open to us so you can make passes in your Studebaker just for the fun of it. There's a snack bar at the track. For more information about this event Checkout Bunker Hill Dragstrip web site @ www.Bunkerhilldragstrip.com or call Richard Poe at 812-345-5414, or roserichpoe@att.net

June 1-3, 2023 South Bend, In. Michiana Swap Meet & Crossroads Zone Meet St. Joseph 4H fairgrounds

Saturday, September 9 – International Drive Your Studebaker Day

September 12-16, 2023 - Studebaker International in Manitowoc and Two Rivers, WI, hosted by the Wisconsin Region Studebaker Drivers Club.

National Directors

President: Dennis Foust - studequy54@gmail.com
Vice President: Don Jones
Secretary: Cindy Foust - cfoust1966@gmail.com
Treasurer: Jane Stinson - jestinson@aol.com
Past President: Tom Curtis - tomnancurtis@aol.com

National Board of Directors

Crossroads Zone National Board Director: Bob Henning at rhnn15090@aol.com
Crossroad Zone Coordinator: Dave Hamblin
Regional Manager Indiana: Bob Henning

National SDC Membership

Regular membership dues in the National Studebaker Club are \$29.00 for new members 1st year only. Renewals are \$36.00 per year, which includes 12 monthly issues of *Turning Wheels*, the National SDC Magazine. (Other memberships are available.) Application is available upon request or e-mail studebakerdriverclub.com.

National SDC membership is a prerequisite. Renewal INDY Chapter dues are \$18.00. Renewals are payable January each year. After March a \$5.00 late fee will be added. Application is available upon request.

Updated January, 2023

Published by the Indy Chapter Studebaker Drivers Club

The Brickyard Bulletin is published monthly. The deadline for summations is the 15th of the previous month.

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Facebook: Larry Hopkins at Studebakers in Indy or <https://www.facebook.com/groups/634984973222050/>

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