



June 2006

# NORTH TEXAS WHEEL

*Newsletter of the Studebaker Driver's Club of North Texas*

**June Meeting**  
**Saturday, June 17th**  
**Tire Kicking at 9:00am, Dinner at 10:00am.**  
**Golden Corral Restaurant, Hwy 121, The Colony.**

## May Meeting Notes:

(Prepared by John Caldwell)

There were 23 present including Dwayne Hartzo from the Fort Worth area, who joined at the meeting. He drove his 51 Champion 2 door sedan. His father, who gave him the car, came along with him..

Floyd Harrell drove his 50 Champion but used both legs to drive it this time. You may remember his mention of tying the clutch and brake pedals together so he could use it while his knee healed.

R W Thornton asked that we start now taking photos for the club calendar while the weather is nice. On the topic of photos, it's time to update the website so send me, (webmaster), your favorite pic.

Treasurer Van Holmes could not stay for the meeting but left a financial report - balance of \$9,299.41

Dale again asked everyone to plan on attending the International convention this year in Omaha. He recently checked and found that the meet hotel is full but there are 10 alternates to choose from.

Mention of our Fall tour was made. Plans are for it to be in the Commerce area.

Dutch Conditt has made another fabulous Studebaker Belt buckle and donated it to the club for fund raising. (See next column.)

After discussing the matter, we decided to raffle it off.

Tickets will cost \$5 each and the raffle will occur

over a 3 month period with a drawing in August.

\$32 was awarded in the 50/50 drawing.

The meeting ended with a film - "Back Home in Indiana"

John Caldwell

Another work of art from the 'Dutch' Master. WOW!



Set against a gold filigree mounting, the Studebaker 'S' symbol sports three semi-precious stones. The blue is Sodalite, the white, Halite (the softest of the three) and the red is African Red River Jasper.

The club is lucky to have Dutch Conditt, master craftsman, as a member. All the best to you, Dutch. We love Ya'.

## 2006 SDC North Texas Club Meeting Schedule

Month	Date	Tire kick-	Meeting	Location
June	Saturday, 17th	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	Golden Corral, Hwy 121
July	Saturday, 15th	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	Golden Corral, Hwy 121
August	Saturday, 19th	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	Golden Corral, Hwy 121
September	Sunday, 17th	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	Golden Corral, Hwy 121*
October	Saturday, 21st	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	Golden Corral, Hwy 121*
November	Sunday, 19th	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	Golden Corral, Hwy 121
December	Saturday, 9th	11:00 AM	NOON	Golden Corral, Hwy 121
* = Subject To change. Check next month.				
Call Golden Corral for information. (214) 559-3155				

### Arboreal Typography

( Writing with trees and/or bushes)

5000 pine trees make up the word 'Studebaker' at the test track near South Bend.

Planted in 1937, the trees have matured blurring the effect somewhat, but the bold form of the letters can still be seen.

(from <http://googlesightseeing.com/2005/10/26/arboreal-typography/>)



May 21st was a great day for Tire Kicking!

### FOR SALE

Noticed a sixties lark 4 door for sale in the 400-500 block of Hickory in Denton. Anyone know about this?

Also there are two '64 Larks in the June 10th Classic Car Trader: A Commander, new interior, new paint \$3500 972)979-2348; The other looks fine, driven weekly, \$2000 (469) 693-2447

(If these belong to anyone in the club, my apologies. Rod.)

## The Studebaker Man

Ben Brown has worn many hats over the years. He fought in the Golden Gloves, worked for the railroad as a fireman on a steam locomotive and held various positions in the food industry, including owning a few restaurants in his time. With all that Ben has done in his mere 91 years on this earth, what he likes to talk about most is the fact that for the past thirty-five years he has owned, and driven, nothing but Studebaker's. He bought his first, a 1958 Silver Hawk, after seeing one out west.

My search for the elusive "Studebaker Man" began about a year ago. One day, while my wife was dog sitting at our daughter's house just outside of Potosi, Missouri, I decided to go for a leisurely drive and see what there was to see in this small town in central Missouri. These trips nearly always yield an old car or two which gives me a story for my column. At one point during this particular expedition, an old gas pump and some vintage advertising signs caught my eye so I pulled into Elliott's Motor Company, a small repair shop on the edge of town, to check things out. When I mentioned to the guys sitting around inside that I was a writer doing stories about old iron, they suggested I do a story about the Studebaker man. They went on to tell me about this "ol' boy" who lived "outside of town always," that had a "bunch" of Studebaker's in various garages and sheds on his property and a Studebaker graveyard out back for parts. According to them, he never drove anything but Studebaker's.

Fascinated by the prospect of meeting this eccentric Studebaker lover and listening to his stories, I asked where I could find him. In typical small town directional speak, they proceeded to give me directions. It went something like, "you go up yonder a ways, just past the "new bridge," then look for a gravel road on your left. Turn there and go over a small stream, past a stand of fir trees, around a bend and you'll see his place on the right." Sometime later, after making many a wrong turn, stopping to ask directions from one antique shop and later a convenience store that sat out in the middle of nowhere, I finally stumbled across his property. I was sure this was it for, just like the boys in the repair shop said, there they were... inside a handful of ramshackle carports and a couple of garages without doors, I saw the back end of at least half dozen or so Studebaker's. From where I stood I could see a couple of Hawks, a Lark, two pickups and, barely visible over one of the sheds, nestled in a stand of scrubby bur oaks, I spotted an old, rusted out school bus with the name "Studebaker" painted across its rusty brow... obviously a resident of the Studebaker man's graveyard.

The property was fenced all 'round so I pulled into the gravel driveway up to a wide, metal gate. As I got out, I was greeted by six very large, white dogs. None of them looked like they wanted to befriend me. They didn't look ferocious... rather they looked like, if they could speak, what they would be saying to me would be "go ahead... make my day. Just take one step through that gate and we'll show you a thing or two!" Not wanting to tempt fate, I called out "is anybody here". After a short while with no response, I began to sound my horn repeatedly to see if I could stir the Studebaker man from whatever he may have been doing. Fearful thoughts began to run through my mind at this point and I considered the possibility that, at any moment, I might find myself looking down the business end of a 12 gauge shotgun. Eventually however, with no response, I decided to call it a day and return to my daughter's place. The experiences of that day and my unsuccessful quest to find the Studebaker man haunted me for months to follow. It was a quest that would eventually span four seasons, but my search for the elusive Studebaker man finally came to a conclusion last month as I was back in Potosi conducting a seminar on collectible automobiles for the YMCA Trout Lodge Adult Enrichment Adventures program.

Midweek, during a lengthy break in the program, I decided to run by the Studebaker man's property to see if my luck would be better this time. Returning to the same place I had visited nearly a year before, I pulled up in the same gravel driveway and was greeted, once again, by the same pack of big, white dogs. This time, however, when I sounded my horn, the Studebaker man, Ben Brown, slowly opened the creaking screen door of his modest home and came out to greet me.

Instead of the angry, old, shotgun wielding man I half expected to encounter, I was greeted by one of the most warm and friendly people I have ever had the pleasure of meeting. We spoke briefly over the metal gate as the big white dogs watched every move I made. It was mutually decided that a visit the following day would work best for both of us, so I returned to The Lodge, satisfied to have actually made contact with Ben Brown. The following day I returned as planned and met with Ben, his daughter and son-in-law. Together we strolled through Ben's little two acre plot nestled among the pines and oaks.

We chatted about Studebaker's and he proceeded to tell me a story about each and every one. Though he is ninety-one, Ben's memory is as sharp as a fin on a '58 Hawk, of which he has three by the way! We toured it all, the garages, the car ports, the work shops... and his small pond where he is currently building a boat dock and planting eight cherry trees. Yes, he's doing the work himself.

Ben told me about how he became interested in Studebaker's. In 1969 he saw a Studebaker Hawk and it was love at first sight. He decided he had to have one and eventually found a two-toned, Canyon Copper and Jewel Beige example that was for sale. He still has that car, plus eight or so others including two more Hawks, a pair of Studebaker pickups and a couple of Larks, and at 91 years of age, still drives one of the Larks and one of the pickups into town on a regular basis.

What so captivated Ben were the stylish lines of the sporty Hawk, a descendent of the award winning 1953-55 Champion and Commander Starlight and Starliner coupes designed by Robert Bourke of the Raymond Loewy Design Studio. These "Loewy Coupes" were hailed as the "new European look" and are considered by many to be the finest example of American automotive styling from the fifties. Nary a detail was overlooked and while these cars were stunning when viewed from any and every angle, if I had to choose my favorite, it would be the front end with its long, low hood, sporty grill and the fender mounted parking lights (personally, one of my favorite details).

Two Hawk models were offered in 1958. The Silver Hawk (one of Ben's shown in photo above), a "pillared" or "post" coupe and the top of the line Golden Hawk, a "pillar less hardtop." Standard power for the base line "Champion" Silver Hawk was a 185.6 cu. in./101 horse cast iron, L-head six. V-8's of 180, 210 and 225 horsepower were offered as options, and the stunning Golden Hawk included a 289 cu. in., 275 horsepower engine blown with a Paxton supercharger.

The Hawk was a no nonsense, personal luxury sport car designed with the enthusiast in mind. They performed admirably on the straightaway and handled well in corners. (NOTE: Washington County Sheriffs please skip to the next paragraph.) Though none of Ben's Hawks were the supercharged version, Ben claims he has had one of them up to 120 mph Let's hope it wasn't recently!

Notable among a lengthy list of Studebaker options was a "hill holder" feature (\$15.00) which prevented a manual transmission equipped car from rolling back when stopped for a traffic light, and "seat belts" (shoulder belts weren't even thought of in 1958) for \$25.00. By the way, one of the popular items sold at my father's Mobil gas service station in those days were universal, after market seat belts which came in a variety of colors to coordinate with any interior and had a clunky, metal lever which mashed the woven fabric belt into a holding position when pressed down. We installed a set of front seat belts for about twelve dollars and change.

Functionality was a bright spot of Bourke's design plan, and it carried over into the interior as well, right down to the all-business dashboard with its "engine turned" panels and basic black and white Stewart Warner gauges. Enthusiasts loved the car and accepted it with open arms and checkbooks. Only problem was, there weren't enough enthusiasts to pay the rent and, after a brief burst in sales during the early sixties (primarily the result of the relatively successful Lark compact), the lights were turned off for the last time at the Studebaker plant in 1966.

Visit my web site at [www.thefinman.net](http://www.thefinman.net) for more on the Studebaker and the "man." E-mail your thoughts and suggestions at [the\\_fin\\_man@msn.com](mailto:the_fin_man@msn.com). The Fin Man is a member of the Society of Automotive Historians.



## ONE HOT STUDE DRAGSTER!

What you are looking at here is an Australian Dragster running in a class that requires the cars to look like an Original Equipment Manufactured (OEM) vehicle. In this case a 1959 Hawk. Of course, any similarity, other than the shape, is purely hypothetical. From its chrome-moly tubular frame, Graphite-fiberglass body, 500+ cube FORGED block, 3-disk mechanical clutch, etc, this is no '59 hawk. For more, go to: [www.studeracing.com.au](http://www.studeracing.com.au)



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### **Quick Stude Fact**

October 31, 1920. Studebaker Corporation announces that it will open a Factory Branch in Dallas, Texas.  
( Does anyone know where that was located? )

## NTSDC Officers for 2006

**President – Dale Truitt**  
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**Newsletter Editor– Rod Barclay**  
[dalsource@verizon.net](mailto:dalsource@verizon.net)

## Upcoming Automotive Events

- **June 24-25**, D/FW Swap meet, La Grave Field  
600 N. Main, Ft. Worth. (254) 751-7958
- **Sept. 8-10**, Southwest Swap Meet, Ameriquest  
Field, Arlington. (214) 221-4745
- **Sept 24-29, 2006** SDC 42nd International Meet,  
Omaha, Nebraska.
- **Sept 29-Oct 1**, 14th annual Goodguys, Texas  
Motor Speedway. (925) 838-9876
- **3rd Sat. of every month**, Classic Christian Cruises.  
4 p.m. to 10 p.m. Birdville Stadium, N. Tarrant Pkwy &  
Precinct Line Rd, N. Richland Hills.

For additional event listings and great links, visit:  
[www.hemmings.com](http://www.hemmings.com) and [www.hotrodhappenings.com](http://www.hotrodhappenings.com)  
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