Happy New Year 2026

Central Virginia Chapter Studebaker Drivers Club

Commanding Leader

CVC/SDC Meet ~ November 15th, 2025

(L-R) George Field, Martin Pajki & Daughter, Jim Jett, George Marshall, Chris Mendl, Matt Steffen

November provided a pleasant fall day for the group to gather at Marty's Grill in Mechanicsville, Virginia.

Three Studebakers were driven to the meet, Matt Steffen's 1957 Silver Hawk, George Marshall's 1961 Hawk and Jim Jett's 1963 GT Hawk R-1.

Arriving in Brand X were Chris Mendl and Martin Pajki.

A good meal, good company and a good day for a Studebaker drive.

Jim Jett's 1963 Gran Turismo Hawk R-1

George Marshall's 1961 Hawk

Matt Steffen's 1957 Silver Hawk

Chris Mendl's 2019 Corvette

Calendar of Events

*** Designates CVC Event**

*** January 10th, 2026**
Saturday @ 2pm
CVC/SDC Meet
Southern Taste Diner
9951 Hull Street Rd N
North Chesterfield , VA 23236
(804) 655-2551

January 17th, 2026
Saturday @ 9am
Polar Bear Run 25 - Annual mystery run to somewhere good
Get all the details and sign up at this website: **PBR 25**.
INFO: contact@carclubcouncil.com

January 30th—February 1st, 2026
Friday Jan 30th @12Noon - 9pm
Saturday Jan 31st @ 9am - 9pm
Sunday Feb 1st 9am - 4pm
64th Annual Festival of Rods and Customs Indoor Auto Exhibition
Asphalt Angels Car Club
Meadow Event Park - Farm Bureau Center
13111 Dawn Blvd
Doswell, VA 23047
Our show is known up and down the East Coast for its unique & unusual trophies, relaxed & laid back atmosphere & impartial judging. Info for the show including entry form and vendor form at:
Website: **www.asphaltangels.net**
Contact Phone: (804) 994-2800

*** March 14th, 2026**
Saturday @ 2pm
CVC/SDC Annual Meeting
Kitchen 33 and Bakery
13155 Mountain Rd
Glen Allen, VA 23059
(804) 368-8556
Website: **kitchen33.org**

For more events in Central Virginia, go to the Car Club Council of Central Virginia website:
http://carclubcouncil.com/

Next Meet

January 10th, 2026
Saturday @ 2:00pm

Southern Taste Diner

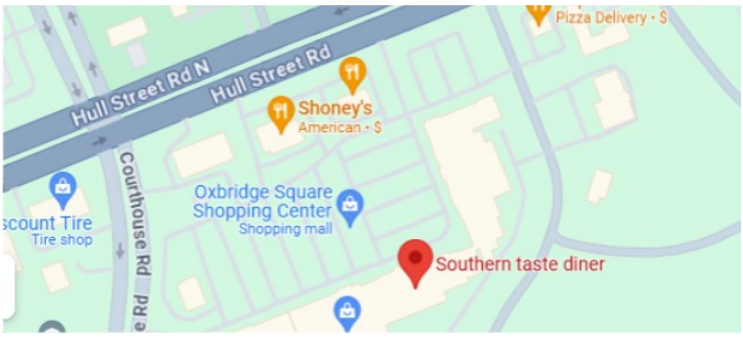
9951 Hull Street Rd N
North Chesterfield , VA 23236
(804) 655-2551

CVC will be back on the Southside for our January meet at Southern Taste Diner in North Chesterfield, Virginia. The Diner is located in the Oxbridge Square Shopping Center at the intersection of Hull Street Road and Courthouse Road.

See you there.

To view Southern Taste Diner's menu, click **HERE**.

For personal driving directions, click **HERE**.



Commanding Leader
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Central Virginia Chapter
Studebaker Drivers Club
Richmond, Virginia
Jim Jett, Editor
jsjett@centralvirginiachapter.org

Officers:
Jim Jett, President
Lee Harrison, Vice President
George Marshall, Treasurer

** Annual Meeting **

March 14th, 2026
Saturday @ 2:00pm

KITCHEN 33 AND BAKERY

13155 Mountain Rd
Glen Allen, VA 23059
(804) 368-8556

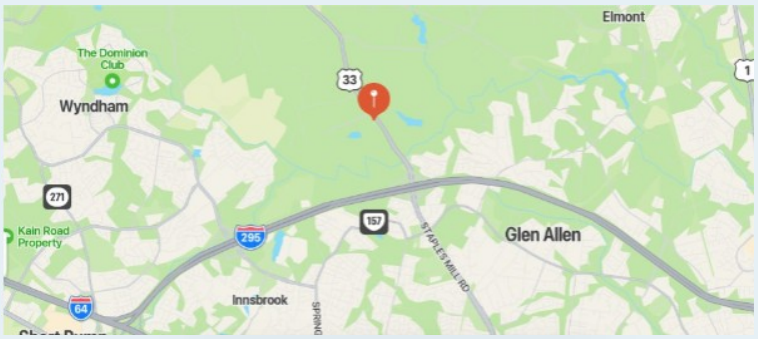
CVC will have the Annual Business Meeting at Kitchen 33 and Bakery in Glen Allen, Virginia this year.

At this meeting, we will have nominations for the chapter officer positions of President, Vice-President and Treasurer.

Chapter dues for 2026 should be paid by March 31, 2026. The dues can be paid anytime by mailing a check to the Treasurer at the address shown on the attached membership form, at this Meeting or online via PayPal on our website at http: **//www.centralvirginiachapter.org/JoinCVC.html**.

To view Kitchen 33's menu, click **HERE**.

For personal driving directions using MapQuest, click **HERE**.



2026 International Meet

Waxahachie Civic Center Sept 23 to 26, 2026

Links & Information

This top notch facility with a banquet seating capacity of 800 has more than enough room for all of our needs.

Swap meet vendors will be treated to the fanciest area to date.

We'll also open it to the public on Saturday along with a general car show open to all.

Breaking News

IT IS OFFICIAL! The 62nd Studebaker Drivers Club International Meet will be held in Waxahachie, Texas, September 23rd through 26th of 2026!

The North Texas Chapter of the Studebaker Drivers Club is proud to announce the Waxahachie Civic Center as the site for our '26 International meet.

As of the Pittsburg meet, the Antique Studebaker Club have asked to join us in our event.

This will add a new perspective to the event with these beautiful prewar cars in attendance. More news to follow.

We need your help!

Subject: Invitation to Participate in the Upcoming Studebaker Meet in Texas!
Dear Studebaker Enthusiasts,
I hope this message finds you well.

Texas has a proud history of hosting, with previous meets in Irving in 1975 and Austin in 1998. Remarkably, some of our active members were part of those events 50 years ago. While they possess invaluable memories and insights, many may not have the energy to participate actively in the upcoming meet.

This is where I reach out to all club members and enthusiasts. You don't need to be a club member to help us welcome guests who may be making their only trip to Texas. We are known for our hospitality, so let's extend a warm welcome!

The city of Waxahachie is excited about this event and is going above and beyond to support us. I am seeking both physical & financial support during the event and assistance in planning.

Click LOGO to go to website

We have immediate needs for volunteers to host external planned events, including:

1. Fort Worth & the Stockyards - taken
2. Dallas & the 6th Floor Museum
3. Arlington Medal of Honor & Car Museum
4. Waco Magnolia Silos & Dr. Pepper Museum Taken
5. Waxahachie Ladies Lunch & Tour

Your role would be to manage headcounts and accompany our guests on the bus. The rest is up to you to make the experience as engaging and informative as possible! All fees and tickets will be prepaid, so your main responsibility will be ensuring everyone who disembarks the bus also gets back on.

With rising costs, we aim to be budget-conscious while delivering a fantastic experience. Buses alone cost $1,500 a day to rent or $30 per person to reach these destinations.
I hope some of you might have corporate connections to sponsor a bus or one of our events. Full recognition will be provided in various venues. Many of you have fond memories from the 1998 meet or other national events, and I encourage you to share your suggestions.

Please consider how you can contribute to one or more of the functions. To volunteer, share ideas, or ask questions, feel free to reach out directly.

Let's come together to make this meet unforgettable! Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

CVC Out~N~About

Lee Harrison and Jim Jett attended the Ace Hardware Cruise In on October 10th – 11th, 2025 in Amelia, Virginia. On Friday Lee displayed his 1941 Graham Hollywood and Jim came in his 1962 GT Hawk. On Saturday, Lee brought his 1961 Lark VIII and Jim his 1963 GT Hawk R-1. The 63 GT Hawk R-1 was given the Managers Choice Trophy .

Buzz Horne attended the Oldies But Goodies Fall Classic at Keystone Truck and Tractor Museum in Colonial Heights, Virginia, on October 11th, 2025, with his 1957 Studebaker Golden Hawk. On November 1st, 2025, Buzz displayed his Studebaker at the Old School Hot Rodders of Virginia Fall Cruise In & Swap Meet in Sutherland, Virginia.

George Marshall displayed his 1961 Studebaker Hawk at the Chesterfield Career and Technical Center Car and Truck Show held on November 2nd, 2025, and the 5th event as a fundraiser for CCTC in Chesterfield, Virginia.

Studebaker Sightings

Sighted at the Ocean City Maryland Fall Cruise In; 1950 Studebaker custom pickup.

Studebaker Tech Tip

Tech Support

A More Reliable Brake Light Switch for Avanti

By Bill Henderson
Source: https://studebakersocal.com/BCOIE_TechSupport.htm

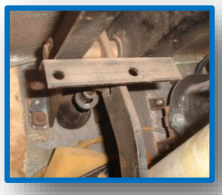
I am a relatively new Avanti owner, and am in the process of rehabilitating a 1963 R2 (63R 2782) which has been generally well cared for its entire life. I am a firm believer in "safety first", and I have never been a fan of the old-fashioned pressure-activated stop light switch that was standard on the Avanti and many cars in the early 1960s and before.

As mine was not working, I decided to change it over to a mechanical switch that mirrors what is used on nearly all modern cars. There are advantages to this change. First, the brake lights now activate instantly when the pedal is moved, unlike the old system where the pedal has to generate full pressure to activate the switch and light the lamps. Second, the old style switch is troublesome and a potential point of hydraulic failure as it actually taps into the brake hydraulics.

I have performed this change on several other old cars, and it was easiest by far on the Avanti. Total time from start to finish was less than an hour, and the cost was under $10. While this topic has appeared in these pages twice before during the past twenty years, the other two articles involved multiple brackets that had to be fabricated and mounted to the brake booster under the hood. My adaptation is much easier, and carries the added benefit of moving the switch inside the car where it is better protected from the elements.

Step 1: Procure a stoplight switch from NAPA or another auto parts source. Mine carried NAPA part number #SL169 ($4.99), and is a fairly standard application used on many older cars and trucks. This type of switch is ON (contacts closed) when the plunger is released, and is OFF when the plunger is pushed in.

The switch will mount at the top of the brake pedal, and the slightest movement of the pedal will allow the switch plunger to open, causing the brake lights to go on. Releasing the pedal causes the top of the shaft to bump against and depress the switch plunger, turning the lights back off.



Step 2: Studebaker already very thoughtfully provided a pre-drilled attachment point at the top of the brake pedal for the new switch to mount. I used a small rectangular scrap piece of steel to make a bracket for the switch, measuring, marking and drilling the proper holes with my drill press (though a regular drill will work just fine if you clamp the work piece in a vice.)

(continued next page)

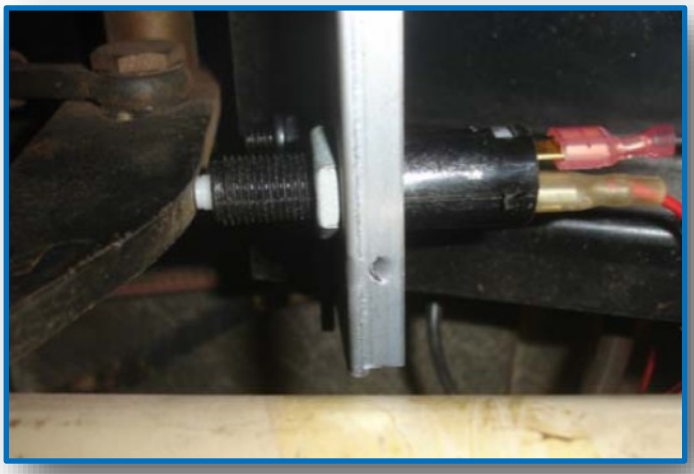
Studebaker Tech Tip

A More Reliable Brake Light Switch for Avanti

~ continued

Step 3: Mounting the switch to the bracket, and the bracket to the car is straight forward, using small, appropriate sized nuts, bolts and lock washers.

Step 4: While doubtlessly I could have located the feed wires to the brake lights in the loom under the dash if I wanted to, I chose the simple option of creating a simple patch cord that runs from the barrel connectors on the old switch connection under the hood, then through the hole in the firewall with the rest of the wiring harness, emerging inches from the pedal and the new switch. I secured the extra wires to the existing loom with evenly spaced wire ties for neatness, and made sure that there were no hanging wires under the dash.



That's all there is to it. Enjoy safer driving!

Odds "N" Ends

By Pete Yuen

Winter Project –

1 - Wheels and Lug Nuts - Remove wheel covers and make certain all lug nuts are on and not stripped. Check for wheel wobble. Check the torque on wheel nuts, on Studebakers it should be torqued at 75-80 psi. When checking the wheel nut tightness, remember that on older vehicles, there are left hand threads as well as right hand threads. It is believed that Studebaker terminated the use of the left- hand threaded studs on their 1957 models. Studebaker marked the left-hand threaded studs with a letter, L, the lug nut with a groove on each of the six sides. To tighten, the direction is opposite to the right -hand thread, that is, go in the direction of loosening for right hand threads. The left- hand threaded studs are on the left side of the vehicle when it left the factory. It is possible that through the years, people have mistakenly put the left-hand threaded wheels on the right side of the car. Generally speaking. cars built after 1957 will have all right hand threaded studs but don't bet on it. Things can get changed by error or necessity.

2 - Tires - Check wear pattern and look for checking. cuts, nails etc. If tires have uneven tread wear, the wheel alignment may be necessary to correct the problem.

3 - Front disc Brake - Check calipers for correct mounting and tightness. If loose, check for rust. Check brake lines for correct positioning. Check brake hoses for any signs of abrasion or wetness. Wetness generally means leakage unless fluid has been spilled on part that shows wetness.

4 - Center pivot on steering, tie rods, bell crank, king pins and steering coupler - Check for loose- ness. Note that the center pivot is often overlooked when the car is getting lube job. Make sure that it has adequate lubrication. When you have the grease gun out to grease the center steering pivot, go and grease the whole vehicle.

5 - Motor mounts - Check front and rear to make sure that the rubber is not torn or cracked and that no nuts or bolts are missing.

6 - Underside of motor, transmission, rear end, power steering and brakes - Check for leaks and trace down the cause (Seals, hoses, gaskets, bolts etc.)

(continued next page)

Odds "N"Ends ~ continued

7- Frame - Check for cracks at extreme front at frame. Check "A" frames on front suspension for cracks and beside cross member at front coil springs.

8 - U joints - Look for rust around them and move driveshaft to check for play. Rust usually indicates worn needle bearings and the cross.

9 - Exhaust system - Check for leaks and condition, cross over, clamps and hangers.

10 - Rear end and hub - Check for play and possible bad keyway.

11 - Body Mounts - Check condition at extreme forward end of frame horn where bracket comes off radiator saddle .

12 - "A" arm bushings - Check upper and lower for looseness or bad rubber and outer pins to make certain they are not tearing out.

13 - Radiator and hoses - Check for leaks, check for very hard or extremely soft, oil- soaked hoses. Replace any hose with those conditions.

14 - Belts - Water pump and fan clutch - Check belts for cracks on inside and looseness and check for play in fan. If there is water leakage at the water pump, replace it.

15 - Engine and engine compartment - Check entire area for any incorrectly installed, missing or wrong parts. While in the engine compartment, check for worn or bare wires. Insulate or replace the worn or bare wires. Lift the rotor from the distributor, put a few drops of oil on to the felt pad. Check the condition of the rotor and the distributor cap. If it looks like it needs replacing, do it. Check the condition of the points. If there is a small, conical protrusion of metal on either the movable or stationary part of the points, replace it.

16 - Windshield wiper - Check to make certain motor and linkage are tight. Check the condition of the wiper blades. Replace if necessary. It is highly likely that the windshield wiper post has never been lubricated since the car left the factory. In order to oil it, remove the wiper blade, cut a short piece of hose that till fit over the splined adapter and the nut that secures the wiper post unit. The hose has to be longer that the adapter is high. Before starting the project, get a bunch of rags handy as you will need them.

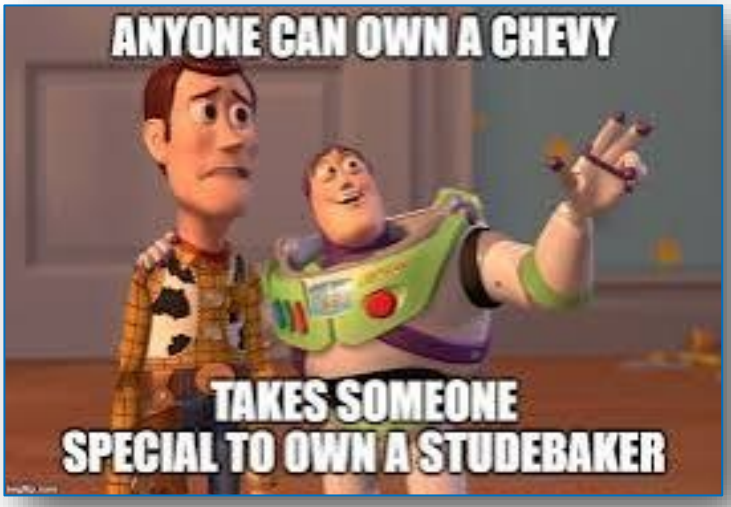
1. Hold the hose tightly against the car body.
2. Get someone to start the wiper.
3. Fill hose with light oil, no thicker than #20.
4. Keep wiper moving for 20 or so seconds.
5. Shut down wiper.
6. Get rags ready as you lift the hose.
7. Use rags to soak up and remove oil from the car body.
8. Clean area of oil, install wiper blade.
9. Repeat for the other wiper post if there is one.

17 - Battery and Battery hold down - Check battery for fluid level, corrosion at the terminals and cables, Clean if necessary. Make sure that hold- downs are tight. Make sure that there is good ground back to the battery. You cannot have too much ground (for the electrical circuit to perform well.)

18 - Doors - Check for any play and door opening location springs to be in place and working. Check for all hinges to be working and not binding and check door locks to make sure that they are all working as they should be. Oil hinges and moving parts.

19 - Lights and horn - Make certain that they are all working properly. Check wire connections and ground.

20 – Check strength of anti -freeze. Check with anti-freeze manufacturer in regards to change/replacement intervals.



How the exotic, custom Excalibur sports car started life as the . . .

Studebaker SS

Thanks to Ben Alspach and Ed Meyer members of the Gateway SDC Chapter

Things were looking bleak for Studebaker at the dawn of 1964. The South Bend factory had just shut down, putting an end to U. S. production. The revolutionary Avanti, conceived as a striking "halo" model to generate showroom traffic, had been selling in limited quantities but was eliminated with the closure at South Bend. The sporty GT Hawks were also being dropped and the few remaining Studebaker models that would continue (via the Hamilton, Ontario plant) weren't particularly exciting or innovative. Many industry pundits were convinced that the legendary Studebaker brand was finally "on the ropes".

Such thoughts were undoubtedly running through the mind of well-known industrial designer Brooks Stevens as he walked the aisles of the giant Chicago auto show in March of 1964. Stevens had been doing design work for Studebaker for several years and was unimpressed by the humdrum, "skeleton" Studebaker line-up now on display.

But Stevens had an idea. What if he could create some excitement in the Studebaker booth at the upcoming New York auto show (in late April) with a stunning "concept car" in the vein of those dream machines conjured up to impress the public at the big shows in the 1950's? The car would attract many more people to the Studebaker display while also showing the industry that Studebaker was still "looking ahead" and positioning itself for the future.

Stevens proceeded to "pitch" his proposal to Studebaker management. He would use a Lark Daytona convertible platform with a supercharged Avanti 289 V-8 and disc brakes as the basis for a stunning "modern classic" sports car resembling the fabled Mercedes-Benz SSK roadster of the late 1920's. The iconic look of one of the greatest automobile designs of all time but now with the reliability, performance and amenities buyers wanted in the 1960's. Studebaker's top brass was, no doubt, caught off guard. . . and particularly since Stevens would have to create this fantastic car in just a few weeks! However, they gave him tentative approval. . . on the condition he could deliver the car in time for New York.

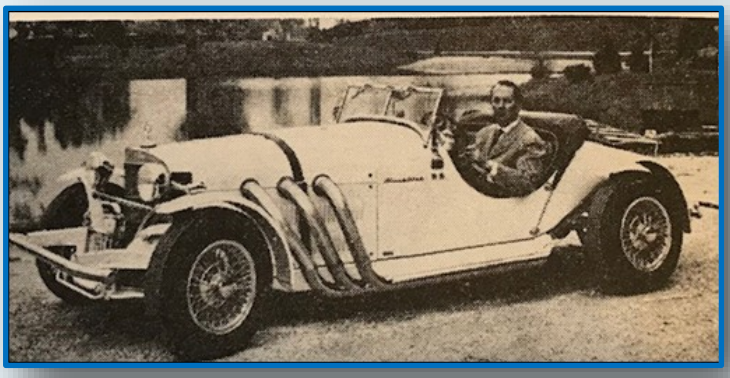
Stevens immediately hit the drawing board and enlisted the help of his two sons, David and William, to turn his vision into reality. The Lark Daytona chassis was soon delivered to Steven's studio/workshop, and his family team went to work. Miraculously, the "Studebaker SS" show prototype was built in less than six weeks! However, as the finished concept car was in transit to the New York auto show, Studebaker officials suddenly had a change of heart. A high performance, contemporary classic, they'd decided, would be inconsistent with their goal of marketing a "common sense" car they believed was critical to Studebaker's survival. The "SS" would not be displayed in the Studebaker booth at the New York auto show.

Needless to say, Stevens was stunned by this sudden reversal. However, he had too much time, money and personal commitment in the project to just walk away. At this point, he made the decision to "go it alone". Leveraging his excellent reputation and extensive network of auto industry contacts, Stevens quickly placed phone calls to the New York show's managers and was able to arrange display space for the custom protype in a separate booth.

With some quick badging and signage changes just before the show's opening, the newly renamed "Excalibur SS" was a hit in New York. In August of 1964, Brooks Stevens and his sons organized "SS Automobiles" to manufacture the new car. Over 100 examples had been sold (or ordered) by the end of 1965.

Of course, Studebaker's situation continued to deteriorate, and the supply of their 289 V-8's dried up in a few months. Once again, Stevens used his industry connections; this time to source a new power plant. His friends Ed Cole and "Bunkie" Knudsen at GM were happy to provide the hot 327 Corvette engine to the fledgling Excalibur operation. Soon, a Paxton supercharged version was also offered, providing performance on par with the Avanti V-8's which were originally to be supplied by Studebaker. *

Material for this article was gleaned from several sources including The Encyclopedia of American Cars 1940-1970, The Standard Catalog of American Cars 1946-1975 and Old Cars Weekly Marketplace magazine.



Studebaker Tech Tip

Miles 'n' Smiles
Studebaker Drivers Club
San Joaquin Valley Chapter
www.sdcsanjoaquinvalleychapter.com

My Car Won't Start . . . Troubleshooting Part 1

By Jim & Karen McKeever

You turn over the key to your car and nothing happens. Is it the battery, the solenoid, or the starter motor?

Here are some quick tips to help you decide.

- **Tick, tick, tick sound** – If you turn the key and all you hear is a ticking sound the solenoid is "talking" because it doesn't have enough voltage to engage properly. Check your battery. Look for dirt or corrosion on the cables, clean them if necessary, and charge the battery.
- **Headlight test for the battery.** Turn on your headlights and have an assistant tell you if they are bright, dull, or no lights at all. If the lights remain bright the battery is charged and good. If the lights are dull or non-existent, check your battery. Look for dirt or corrosion on the cables, clean them if necessary, and charge the battery.
- **Ignition test for the solenoid and starter.** With the headlights on, turn the key to the start position. Have your assistant tell you what the lights look like. If the lights stay bright, electricity is not going through the solenoid to the starter. Also, you will not hear the tick sound. Check the cables and wires on the solenoid to see if they are corroded, broken, or loose. Clean, repair, and tighten as necessary. If the lights go noticeably dim or go out, electricity did go through the solenoid to the starter, so the starter needs checking. You can take the starter to your local auto parts store, and they can check it for you (and sell you a new one if it's bad!).
- **Manual engine turn** – If your starter is good, check to see if you can manually turn over your engine. If it won't move, you probably have bigger problems than are covered in this article. If you can manually turn over your engine . . . we will discuss voltage troubleshooting next month.

Helpful hint: Whenever you are dealing with things electrical, it is always a good idea to check your grounds to the frame and to the engine.

(Information in these tech tips is based on the writer's own research, experiences, and viewpoints. The information, and links to other websites, is to be viewed and/or used at your own risk. The writer makes no guarantees regarding the outcome of the use of the material, products, or resources in this article and is not responsible for any loss or damage incurred. Adjustments or modifications may be needed for your specific vehicle. Remember to use all standard safety equipment and precautions.)

My Car Won't Start . . . Part 2 – Voltage Checks

Last month we investigated why your vehicle doesn't start by doing some simple troubleshooting on the solenoid, starter, and battery, and you manually turned over your engine. Now it's time to get technical.

Helpful hint: Whenever you are dealing with things electrical, it is always a good idea to check your grounds to the frame and to the engine.

Use a multimeter to do some voltage testing to isolate the defective part. **NOTE: This article is written for a negative ground system. If you have a positive ground system, the red and black leads will need to be reversed.** You will know if you have a positive ground system because your positive battery cable will go to ground.

- Set your meter to D.C. Volt (Direct Current) and then choose the next volt range number larger than your battery voltage.
- Turn on the multimeter, place the red, or positive lead on the positive, or + post and the black, or negative lead on the negative, or – post. The meter should read about 12.5 volts. If the reading is less than 12.5 (give or take a couple of points) recharge the battery. If the reading is over 12.7 volts take it to a parts store to be checked to see if it is good.
- If your battery is found to be good and properly charged, and has clean posts and terminals, check the voltage between the battery negative terminal to the solenoid battery input cable. It should read the same as the battery voltage. If not, check the cable for corrosion (usually a green coating) and clean or replace the cable with the same gauge.
- If the voltage between the battery negative terminal to the solenoid battery input cable is the same, have an assistant crank over the engine with the red lead on the terminal of the starter (or as close to the starter as possible, as different manufacturers have different configurations of solenoid to starter assemblies) and the black lead on a ground (any bare, clean metal can be used for the ground.) While cranking over the engine the meter should read 11 volts, or about 1.5 volts less than the battery. If it doesn't, check the cable for corrosion, and clean or replace the cable with the same gauge. If the voltage at the starter is good but the cranking is too slow, have the starter checked at the parts store and replace it if bad.

(continued next page)

Studebaker Tech Tip

B.S.Column ('bout Studebakers')

Rear Axle Nut Tightening

By Jerry Blount
Northwest Chapter SDC

Studebaker passenger cars used a tapered rear axle shaft/hub assembly up to the mid-1965 models, when the rear axle shafts were changed to a flanged style.

The concept of a separate axle shaft and hub was not unusual in the era that Studebakers were commonly on the road. Fords used a similar style through 1948, Chrysler cars through the late '50s, AMC cars into the '60s - so repair shops that worked on a variety of car brands were accustomed to this style of axle/hub assembly. Most of these repair shops had the hub pulling tool that was required to remove the hub/drum assembly from the axle shaft.

This was in the era that many corner gas stations had a full time mechanic that did brake jobs, etc.

As time passed on there seemed to be fewer general mechanics that understood the details regarding tapered axle/hub assemblies.

Occasionally I would be asked by a Studebaker owner about a clunking noise, especially when changing from forward to reverse. I would find the axle nuts not sufficiently tightened. A couple of times I found them finger loose. The problem was easily cured by tightening them to specification.

Back in the middle '60s I was fortunate to talk to real Studebaker mechanics who were happy to share information with me. One of them told me, in regard to rear axle nuts, "Tighten them as tight as you possibly can, and THEN tighten to the next cotter pin hole." If you get his humor!

The proper specification is almost that. "Tighten rear axle nuts to the first cotter pin hole beyond 170ft.-lbs, then install the cotter pin."

Studebaker Tech Tip

My Car Won't Start . . . Part 2 – Voltage Checks continued

- If you have a 6-volt battery system, the procedures are the same, but your voltage numbers will be different. This chart shows the corresponding numbers. Some vehicle owners have 8-volt battery systems. I don't have those equivalents yet but will provide them as soon as I can.

12 Volt system	**6 Volt system**
Battery 12.5 volts	6.23 volts
(check if over 12.7)	(check if over 6.35)
Solenoid 12.5 volts	6.23 volts
Starter 11.0 volts	4.8 volts

(Information in these tech tips is based on the writer's own research, experiences, and viewpoints. The information, and links to other websites, is to be viewed and/or used at your own risk. The writer makes no guarantees regarding the outcome of the use of the material, products, or resources in this article and is not responsible for any loss or damage incurred. Adjustments or modifications may be needed for your specific vehicle. Remember to use all standard safety equipment and precautions.)

HAGERTY | Media

Studebakers and the secret to winning a premier vintage road race

Hagerty
05 April 2016
Source: **https://www.hagerty.com/media/events/studebakers-winning**

The assembly of vintage racecars captivated filmmaker Jeremy Heslup when he arrived in Veracruz, Mexico. He was there filming a documentary on the 2013 Carrera Panamericana road race. A sports car enthusiast, Heslup was immediately smitten by the race-prepped Alfa Romeos, Datsuns and Lancias. Being new to the Carrera, however, he was puzzled by the respect accorded to one particular group of racecars: the Studebakers. Sitting next to lithe European sports cars, these Champions and Commanders looked like stodgy, hulking monuments to 1950s American excess – certainly, assumed Heslup, no match for their nimble opposition.

(continued next page)

Studebakers and the secret to winning a premier vintage road race ~ continued

But then their engines fired up, the race began and Heslup was quickly forced to rethink his opinion of the Studebakers.

Beginning in the 1940s, the designs that sprang from the Raymond Loewy Associates offices shaped the U.S.'s visual landscape. And many of these designs remain in use, as fresh and relevant as ever, to this day. It is hardly an exaggeration to say, as a New York Times Book Review critic once noted, that the Loewy team changed the shape of the modern world.

The Loewy studio's design triumphs were as disparate as they were beautiful, counting among their successes Coca-Cola vending machines, iconic logos for Shell, Exxon and Lucky Strike, Air Force One's livery and the NASA Skylab.

This legendary design group, however, never penned a racecar.

Or so they thought.

In the early 1950s, Loewy came across a design for a car that his team member, Robert Bourke, had been fiddling with for some time, a sketch that would become the 1953-54 Studebaker Champion Regal Starliner and Studebaker Commander. Touted as "The New American Car with the European Look," these Champions had low-slung noses and sleek bodywork making them far more aerodynamic than their predecessors, a trait that, unbeknownst to Loewy and Bourke, would one day make these cars worthy of their names

At about the same time that Bourke was penning the Champion, a now-legendary race was beginning in Mexico. Commissioned by the Mexican government in 1950 to celebrate the Panamerican Highway's opening, La Carrera Panamericana took its place alongside similarly dangerous road races like Italy's Mille Miglia and Sicily's Targa Florio. Between 1950 and 1954, factory teams from Ferrari, Mercedes-Benz and Lancia – as well as iconic drivers such as Phil Hill, Eugenio Castellotti, and Juan Manuel Fangio – descended upon Mexico for this border-to-border race.

During this short timeframe, 27 people died as a result of the Carrera. Combined with the 1955 24 Hours of Le Mans disaster, the Mexican government cancelled the race (the Mille Miglia was ended in 1957 for similar reasons, while the Targa Florio survived until 1977).

In 1988, a Mexican enthusiasts' group revived the Carrera as a 2000-mile vintage race that, while safer than its original form, remains a high-speed affair in which crashes, injuries and even fatalities, serve to focus participants' minds. The race is a grueling, cross-country dash requiring both expert driving and physical endurance just to finish.

Victory, of course, requires not only skill but also the right car. And more often than not over the past three decades, the Carrera's "right car" has been a Studebaker. When Heslup first covered the race in 2013 (which led to his documentary, The Last Great Road Race), the winning car was a Studebaker (as it had been 19 times before that). In 2014, when he returned to document the event, a Studebaker won it all again. Ditto for 2015, when Studebakers took all three spots on the podium.

"When I first did the Carrera in 2013, I didn't really like the Studebakers," recalled Heslup recently from his home in Los Angeles. "But after seeing just how freaking fast and loud they are – I mean, these things are capable of 200 miles per hour – and realizing how visceral it must be to race one through Mexico at full speed, I now want a Studebaker more than any car in the Carrera."

(continued next page)

Interesting Studebaker Muscle Car Facts

Source: https://www.musclecardiy.com/muscle-car-tech-tips/interesting-studebaker-muscle-car-facts/

Fact 962: When Studebaker closed shop in 1963, Molded Fiberglass Body Company still had 150 semi-completed body shells on hand. This made it easier for Nate Altman to keep momentum going for his Avanti II continuation project. Without Altman, it's likely the bodies would have been scrapped. Under various subsequent leadership teams, Altman's Avanti II was produced in limited quantities through 1990. Looming passive-restraint mandates (air bags, automated shoulder belt mechanisms, etc.) squashed further output though persistent sparks of interest rise from the ashes even to this day.

Studebakers and the secret to winning a premier vintage road race ~ continued

Even veteran Carrera drivers like American Taz Harvey eventually come around. After tasting success in a Datsun 510 and 240Z – and realizing that these small cars were simply too underpowered to win overall – Harvey is now preparing his own Studebaker for the 2016 race.

"There's an old saying about there being no replacement for displacement," says Harvey, "and this really comes into play when you start getting up to 7,000-8,000 feet….so being super-competitive, we decided that if we're going to win this thing overall someday, we need to start looking for a Studebaker."

So how did Studebakers, never intended to race, dominate road racing in Mexico?

The Carrera's premier Competition Class is restricted to cars manufactured in 1954 or before. As veteran driver and car-builder Mats Hammarlund points out, the Champions' and Commanders' original shape offers some built-in downforce unmatched by their era's counterparts. Peek beneath their shells though, and you'll quickly notice that these Studebakers have largely ceased being anything that Loewy's designers would recognize.

The Carrera permits significant modifications to its fastest class, Turismo Mayor (grand touring), provided they retain their original wheelbase and meet basic safety requirements. Once in Hammarlund's hands, then, these cars undergo a transformation converting them into purpose-built race cars. The Studebaker's original inline-six is removed and replaced with a Chevrolet-based, Hammarlund-built race engine capable of wringing 600 horsepower from its 366 cubic inches.

"These engines are quite special," notes Hammarlund, "since they have to run on regular pump gas and work really well for seven straight days of racing; transit through traffic without overheating; and run smoothly through lots of different altitudes."

The car's internal structure is a scratch-built Hammarlund chassis. They also completely redesign the suspension and steering systems. With his background in European racing, Hammarlund's builds are likely to incorporate more rally technology, whereas his American and Mexican counterparts lean toward a NASCAR influence.

Whatever the build philosophy, these cars have become the ones to beat in Mexico. Indeed, Hammarlund-built Studebakers have won the Carrera outright four times in the past six years, while also claiming a pair of second-place finishes and one third -place finish.

Raymond Loewy and Robert Bourke would indubitably be proud, if a bit surprised.

Craigslist Classic: 1963 Studebaker Zip Van – Studebaker Goes Postal

By J P Cavanaugh
Posted on March 11, 2022
Source: **https://www.curbsideclassic.com/curbside-classics-american/craigslist-classic-1963-studebaker-zip-van-new-wheels-for-mr-zip/**

(first posted 3/11/2016) The story of Studebaker's final few years are well known here. However, there is one vehicle that remains quite little known and has been seldom seen since the early 1970s. May we present the Zip Van.

(continued next page)

Craigslist Classic: 1963 Studebaker Zip Van – Studebaker Goes Postal ~ continue

1963 was a grim year in South Bend, Indiana, and nowhere more so than in the company's administration building. Big investments (big by Studebaker standards, anyhow) in the Gran Turismo Hawk, the Avanti, the Wagonaire and even the workaday Lark had failed to boost the company's sales volume in any significant way. What looked to be at least part of a solution appeared in the latter part of 1963 in the shape of a contract to supply over 3,000 mail delivery vehicles for the U. S. Post Office.

According to a history of Studebaker trucks by the Studebaker Drivers Club (found here), what was technically called the Model 8E5FC had been designed by Studebaker engineering in order that the company could make a bid for Post Office business. The mechanical components were all readily at hand, and included the 112 hp overhead valve Skybolt Six, the Borg-Warner Flight-O-Matic transmission, an instrument cluster from the Transtar truck line, and all of the other suspension and running gear bits that would be quite familar to anyone who had ever been under a postwar Stude.

Interestingly, it appears that these also came equipped with the Packard-designed Twin Traction limited slip differential. I wonder if anyone ever squeezed one of the V8s in front of that Twin Traction? For Express Mail, of course.

The van was designed with but a single seat, since mail delivery tends not to be a team activity. That seat had a bottom cushion that could flip up or down, and a unique pedal arrangement (with two accelerator pedals but a single brake) that allowed the truck to be driven from either a sitting or standing position.

The steel bodies were supplied by Met-Pro, Inc. of Lansdale, PA. Met-Pro had never built a truck body before, but was located in a depressed area, which evidently factored into the Government mandating that Studebaker use Met-Pro as its sole body supplier.

Although the little truck had only an 85 inch wheelbase, it weighed in at over 4,300 pounds, according to the single source I found that mentions the little vanlet's weight. One source indicates that these bodies were of a unitized design, thus lacking a traditional frame. Could the inexperience with unit construction by both Studebaker and Met-Pro have been the cause of the high weight? The grille design was said to pay homage to the Keystone State where the bodies originated. Of course, that same general shape had graced many Studebaker front ends as well.

Although Raymond Loewy had designed many Studebakers and designed the new 1970 logo for the Post Office (by then called the Postal Service), he clearly had nothing to do with the styling of the Zip Van – which was a sort of anti-Avanti. Studebaker's winning bid on the Post Office contract priced each van at $1,883.24, or roughly $300 less than the cheapest 1963 Lark.

This was not, of course, Studebaker's first purpose-built mail delivery vehicle. Unlike other auto manufacturers, Studebaker had a long history as a manufacturer of horse-drawn vehicles. Although the Post Office was not then in the habit of standardized vehicles for delivery, Studebaker designed at least one wagon specifically for rural mail delivery. The unique design allowed the postal carrier to remain inside the closed wagon with the horse's reins coming in through a front window. And in the era of local and regional contractors, it is quite likely that Studebakers of various sorts had their share of mail transport duties. But as far as a national contract to supply thousands of purpose-built mail delivery trucks, the Zip Van would be the first. And last.

(continued next page)

Craigslist Classic: 1963 Studebaker Zip Van – Studebaker Goes Postal ~ continue

The name was undoubtedly chosen to coincide with the rollout of the Post Office's new ZIP Code. Many readers are old enough to remember when a name, address, city and state would get a letter from one person's mailbox to another. In fact, it was not uncommon to see envelopes where the word "City" was the only thing after the street address, and which everyone understood to mean the same city where the letter had been mailed.

But times were changing, and mail volume had doubled in the twenty years before 1962. The Post Office's "Zone Improvement Plan" was the answer. The country was divided into a series of numbered postal zones. These numbered zones would allow number-reading machines to begin their role in mail sorting, a role that has continued unabated. In the early 1960s, however, forcing the general public to use five unfamilar numbers on each piece of mail met with a lot of resistance. The Post Office met this resistance with an extensive ad campaign featuring a new animated spokesman, Mr. ZIP.

Note the screened openings under the main windshield covered by the hinged "storm window", a crude but efficient way to combine increased visibility with ventilation. Also, note the engine access hatch in the desk-like dash surface.

Production of the Zip Van did not get underway until September 3, 1963, which was after the start of 1964 model year truck production. These were, however, all designated as '63 models, apparently to comply with the federal contract. Remember that bit of history that the last Studebaker produced in South Bend rolled off the line in December of 1963? Well, that history is not actually true. That December shutdown may have affected all retail vehicle production, but the last actual vehicle was probably a Zip Van, which remained in production in South Bend into early 1964 in order to fulfill the Post Office contract. The Post Office must have been satisfied because it exercised its option under the contract for an additional 25% on top of the original specified quantity. All in all, a total of 4,328 of these were built before Studebaker closed South Bend vehicle production for good. In 1964.

With the long life that most Postal delivery vehicles have had, why have most of us never even seen one of these? These were pretty much all gone from Postal duty by the early 1970s, mostly replaced by the Jeep Dispatcher. Like with other classes of vehicle, Postal vehicles (especially those with steel bodies) did not live as long in those days as were sold off to the public as surplus when they were done delivering the mail, and their fate was probably like that of most Studes during the '70s – to the junkyard with the first need for a moderate repair. The company that ran ice cream trucks in my neighborhood in the '70s ran some of these, as I recall. The lazy S on the white hubcaps gave it away.

Several sources indicate that the Zip Vans were liked quite a lot by letter carriers and that they were in regular service for seven years instead of for the five years that had been planned. Unfortunately, with Studebaker being a Canadian company in 1965-66 (and one that did not produce trucks in any case), the chances of a second contract for Zip Vans (even with the GM engines used by Studebaker Canada) was somewhere from slim to none.

It is interesting that the Postal Service never sought to buy more Zip Vans with chassis supplied elsewhere to mate with the Met-Pro bodies. However, the Jeep FJ-6 Fleetvan was offered in postal spec starting in 1965, which was close enough in size and concept. Later vehicles like the Jeep Dispatcher and the Grumman LLV have been a bit smaller. With the modern Postal System's increasing reliance on parcel delivery, something the size of a Zip Van might be more suitable again.

(continued next page)

Craigslist Classic: 1963 Studebaker Zip Van – Studebaker Goes Postal ~ continue

I have a habit of wasting time by checking my local List of Craig for Studebakers. I don't see a lot of them, but I am sometimes tempted by the occasional Lark or Champion. I had never, however, seen a listing for a Zip Van until this one, which was for sale in Lafayette, Indiana, about fifty miles from me. For some reason, I want this very badly. But is there anything less suitable for a play vehicle? One seat and probably quite miserable to drive. Of course, if I want something fun to drive, I have a Miata for that. And this is a Stuuuuudebaaaaker! [Author slaps self.] So no, I will not be buying a Zip Van. Which is why this is a Craigslist Classic and not a Curbside Classic, because had I actually found this and seen it in person, it may have come home with me. And then I would have to sleep in it.

By 1966, the public's compliance in using ZIP codes when addressing envelopes had improved to 50% and would continue improve from there. Mr. ZIP undoubtedly gets a lot of the credit, likely from making the kids pester their parents and grandparents into obedience. I know that I can still remember my family's first ZIP code, though I managed to learn it without getting one of these board games. What I did not know at that tender age was that the very last American Studebakers were instrumental in moving our ZIP-coded mail.

Classified Ads

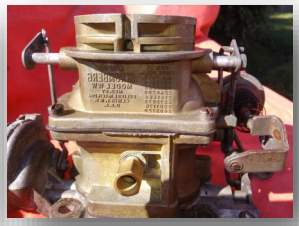
Approved Classified Ads are free to all CVC/SDC members and available to non-members for $5 per ad. Ads will be on the website for 90 days and in one newsletter unless renewed.

For Sale:

ONE (1) New air filter for 289 R-2 V8, $17.25.


ONE (1) Rebuilt 12-volt generators, $125.00 each.

ONE (1) Rebuilt Stromberg Model WW 2 barrel carburetor, $300.00

Contact Jim Jett, (804) 920-2129
EMAIL: jsjett@va.freei.net

Membership

You don't have to own a Studebaker to be a member of the Club. If you do, or are just interested in Studebaker automobiles, we would love to have you as a member. You can join and pay membership dues online or print and mail the membership application. Membership in the Studebaker Drivers Club is required to join the Central Virginia Chapter.

Link to join CVC/SDC:
http://centralvirginiachapter.org/JoinCVC.html

Link to join the Studebaker Drivers Club:
http://www.studebakerdriversclub.com/join.asp

Photos and articles for Newsletter and Website

Do you have any photos of events you attended? Is there an upcoming event you would like to promote? Do you have any interesting information you would like to share?

If so, send them to the editor at
jsjett@centralvirginiachapter.org

CVC/SDC apparel available

Items displaying the Club logo are available to Club members. The Polo Shirts are available in white, navy or black in men's and women's styles. T-shirts are available in white or black in men's and women's styles.

CVC/SDC apparel and other items can be ordered and paid for on the Club website, go to:
http://centralvirginiachapter.org/MemberStore.html

Central Virginia Chapter
Studebaker Driver Club, Inc.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME:_____

SPOUSE/PARTNER:_____

ADDRESS:_____

_____

CITY:_____ ST:_____ ZIP:_____

TELEPHONE: (___) ____-_____ EMAIL:_____

Membership number in Studebaker Driver's Club, Inc._____. (Found on your membership card). This is a requirement for local membership.

Annual dues are $15.00 per person/couple (Both husband and wife are voting members)
Checks should be made payable to **"Central Virginia Chapter SDC"**

Please list the model, year and series name of any Studebaker vehicles you own. (Ownership of a Studebaker is not a requirement for membership)

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Please mail with dues to:

George Marshall
Treasurer CVC/SDC
12302 Bailey Oak Pl
Midlothian, VA 23112-6895