

## 26TH INTERNATIONAL SDC

### MEET

### 1990

### Marlborough Massachusetts

### hosted by the Ocean Bay Chapter



Photo courtesy of Dennis Jolicoeur.

Where were you when the lights went out in Massachusetts? Many of you know the answer and, for the rest, the answer will come later in this report.

After more than two years of planning, New England's time had come. On Sunday, July 15, many of the Ocean Bay members were scrambling around wondering if they were really ready for what was about to happen. Actually, this event really got underway for me the day before. I arrived at the Park West Hotel early on Saturday morning in order to stuff our "Goodie Bags" with the information we had collected, including the meet handbooks and other meet information. We had put this job off until now because our beautiful blue meet bags were on order and were due on the



Photo courtesy of Dennis Jolicoeur.

Friday before the meet. I also had to make the arrangements to get Ron Hall's Avanti into the lobby of the Park West.

As usual, nothing goes the way you plan. When I arrived at the Park West, I ran into Chuck Naugle who had trailered Ron's Avanti out. Well, the good news was that the hotel was ready for us with a crew of maintenance men to help us get the Avanti into the lobby. With the expertise of Chuck, the maintenance men and a little grease, we squeezed the Avanti through the doors. Once the Avanti was inside and nestled in the lobby, I went looking for the meet bags. That was a different story. It seems that they never showed up. After panicking for

a few hours, we finally got in touch with a local chapter member who lives in the area. Long-time member Dave Lynch who owns an apple orchard, Shelburne Farms, came to our rescue and delivered a few hundred Shelburne Farms plastic bags to us. By this time, it was almost evening and some of my crew were assembled to stuff the bags. This went on well into the night. By Sunday morning, we were finally ready with our temporary bags.

Three in the afternoon was fast approaching and the crew that had volunteered for the registration desk were busy running around trying to get things organized. The rush was on as club members from all over the world started heading for the registration



Photo courtesy of Larry Swanson.

desk. That was probably the worst day we had at the registration desk. A combination of the unknown fears of what to do, the missing meet bags and the last minute rushing, all added to the anxieties of the day.

On Monday, things were settling down a little better. The Swap Meet was underway at the Bolton Fairgrounds, the meet bags finally arrived, the Board of Directors Meeting was going on and on and on! I think they finally called it quits sometime after midnight—made me think twice about becoming a member of the Board of Directors (only kidding). A little sigh of relief—we had made it through our first full day of the meet!

Tuesday seemed better. The Swap Meet was again underway, although I had still not gone up to see what was going on. But I didn't have any concerns—I knew Dave Thibeault was in charge and since Dave talked me into bidding for this meet, I knew he was in complete control! Well, I thought things were going to be easy this day, and I wanted to attend the Chapter Presidents' Meeting and the Editors' Meeting—WRONG! Things couldn't have been busier and I could only drop in and out of the meetings as I was running by them. Tuesday night was the General Membership Meeting and I wished all the chapters bidding for the 1992 and 1993 International Meets good luck. I knew they were really going to need it.

Wednesday ("over the hump day" I thought), we were half way through the week and I was still alive. I needed to get up real early and make sure everyone got on the buses for the Boston Tour. Everything went like clockwork, everyone got on and I wished them happy hunting in good old Bean Town. Once the busses left the parking lot, I ran back to the registration desk to see what was needed. There I found Bill Waterhouse sitting in the same seat, in the same spot I had last seen



Photo courtesy of Gay Wittenberg.

Chester & Nancy Bradfield at the Boston Tea Party. The folks at Good Printers just call him Chief!



*Fred Fox and Larry Swanson at the tiller of a reproduction of an old Boston Tea Party ship.*

Photo courtesy of Larry Swanson.

him in Sunday afternoon. For a moment I thought, "Has he been sleeping in that seat for the last three days or is it my imagination?" Bill and the rest of the crew were fine, so I decided to try and get up to the Swap Meet to see what was going on.

As I approached the Swap Meet area, the first thing I noticed was the dust being kicked up by the cars on the gravel road leading into the fairgrounds. This was one of my greatest fears. As I drove up to the vendor area, I noticed that mild mannered, well-in-control Dave Thibeault was grinning through the dust. He had his usual "Tony" jumpsuit on and a kind of dazed look in his eyes. I asked if everything was okay and he said, "Sure, no problems," as he shook off some of the dust. I asked about the dust, and he said, "Don't worry, it will be taken care of by tomorrow morning." I hoped he was right and decided to walk around and talk to a few people. Everyone seemed to be happy and having a great time. I stayed for awhile so I could get my Champ truck into the panorama photo session that was about to take place.

After the photo session was completed, I travelled over to the Navin Skating Rink where the Autocross was going on. There I ran into Fred Hellmuth who was a little hot but well in control. Fred was having a good day. The runs were all great. There were no problems, and he managed to get some TV coverage. The police even showed up just to watch the Studes go through their paces. As I arrived, Bob Valpey had just completed his runs with his 1931

Studebaker Indy car and Ron Hall was taking a pass in a Brand X. The Autocross was excellent, and I thank Fred Hellmuth and his group for an outstanding day of showing the world what a Studebaker can do.

Back at the Park West, the Zone Coordinators' and Regional Directors' Meeting was going on. That evening was the National Auction and auctioneer George Reitenour was keeping everyone hopping. He even had Colin Fort hopping for his briefcase. Colin, I hope what was in the briefcase was worth it!

Thursday was the day that everyone had been waiting for—the day of the Concours D' Elegance at the Bolton Fairgrounds. As the Judges' Breakfast was getting under way back at the Park West Hotel, a whole entourage of Ocean Bay members were hustling around making sure everything was ready for the big day. Janet Thibeault, George Manoogian, Dave Burrows and my wife Elaine were as busy as beavers at the registration desk at the entrance to the Fairgrounds. Dennis Luukko and another group were directing traffic as it was entering the Fairgrounds. My two sons Chris and Jason, with Paul O'Neil, were busy taking photos of all the cars that were entered in the Concours as they approached the field that day. Bill Waterhouse was busy setting up his motorhome in the main Concours field for use as field headquarters. After a couple of runs from one end of the Fairgrounds to the other on foot, I decided to steal Bill's portable bicycle that was sitting in front of the motorhome. For the rest of the morning, I was seen pedaling



*Old friends meet. Studebaker designer Bob Bourke and Administration Building receptionist Idamae Maloney having a good time reliving old South Bend memories.*

Photo courtesy of Linda Fox.

my butt around the fairground, answering questions and helping out where I could. At one point, I even passed Dave Thibeault, who looked a little shell shocked, moving faster than I had ever seen him move. I asked him if he was having fun yet. He shouted a few mumbled words at me as I flew by him on Bill's bike.

The Chicken Barbecue was going great and everyone was enjoying it except the chickens. A major hit of the day was our Hay Ride to the nearby Nashoba Valley Winery and the Hebert Candy Mansion. Our guests enjoyed the winery tour, bought bottles of New England made wine, and then rode over to Heberts where they made their own ice cream sundaes and indulged in some delicious chocolates.

Meanwhile, back on the Concours field, Chief Judge Dave Ridge and his team of henchman were giving our cars the once over. Looking them over twice from bumper to bumper, seeing what's naughty and what's nice. The sun was hot and the humidity just hung in the air, but it didn't rain and that's all that counted. After a gruelling day in the sun, the judges' work was finally done. The counts were finally taken, and the results would be announced the next night, but now it was time for fun.

As evening arrived, the ladies who had been on the bus tour to the Fall River Outlets were all returning. At 7:00 PM, the shots rang out from the men who started it all—none other than the Concord Minutemen. These proud men performed for a crowd of Studebaker enthusiasts in the parking lot of the Royal Plaza Hotel,

site of our Fun Night. They performed for little over half an hour in uniform, playing tunes of the times after which they gave a four-gun volley of musket fire. I never realized muskets could be so loud. After the volley, the Minutemen walked around and answered any questions the crowd asked. As the sun was setting we all retired to the Main Ballroom of the



*Meet Chairman Dennis Jolicoeur and his faithful steed, 000, keeping the Concours field in ship-shape order.*



Photo courtesy of Larry Swanson.

*Colin Fort, Carroll Studebaker, Chuck Naugle and George Reitenour (standing) discussing the merits of Studebaker watches. A gorgeous display—I mean the watches!*

Royal Plaza for the rest of the festivities of Fun Night. There was dancing to the music of The Best We Can that kept many of us hopping right through the night and there were plenty of door prizes for all. A perfect end to a perfect day!



Photo courtesy of Linda Fox.

*Jim Geary receives the Harold Churchill Award for his great article on the LARKette in Turning Wheels.*



Photo courtesy of Linda Fox.

*Many SDC members enjoying just a part of Bruce Slifer's fantastic model display*

### Cover Photos

**Front Cover:** Prewar cars at the 1990 SDC International Meet.

**Back Cover:** Trucks at the 1990 SDC International Meet.

**Inside Front Cover:** Studebaker spring wagon model #6804 owned by member Jack Cooper of Wharton, New Jersey. On display at the 1990 SDC International Meet. Jack's wagon features the original paint scheme, original "Studebaker" decals on the sides and an optional hand brake.

**Inside Back Cover:** Avanti line-up at the 1990 SDC International Meet.

*Photos courtesy of Fred K. Fox.*

Friday was the morning after. Again, another early morning wake-up to see the Newport Bus Tour off. Once everyone was aboard the buses, I checked back at the Literature Swap, Model Car and Pocket Watch events. Everything was going well. Model Car Judge Jeff Keilen was entrenched in the judging and Bill Waterhouse was trying to get everyone settled with the Literature Swap. Chuck Naugle had the Watch Contest well under control. Somewhere up in one of the club suites, Ocean Bay head judge, Mark Keilen and my son, Chris, were busy putting a slide show together of the winners of the Concours D'Elegance to be shown at the Awards Banquet. I tried to retire to my room to make ready for the Awards Banquet that night, but was constantly interrupted for many different reasons, including a TV interview with a local Boston News Station. I finally managed to make it back to my room and, with the help of Dennis Luukko and Denny Lockmon, prepared for the Awards Banquet. All I could think of was that in a few hours it would all be over—two and a half years of planning and in one short week it was over. We thought things were starting to wind down, but . . . Old Mother Nature still had a surprise for us!

It was now time for the Awards Banquet, an event that many people had been waiting for. It was the big moment when everyone would find out how well their hard work had paid off. After all,



Photo courtesy of Linda Fox.

*Larry Swanson, sitting right, selling SDC collector coins, while newly elected SDC president, George Krem (left), gives him advice on the current market trends.*



*Dennis Luukko, Master of Ceremonies, carrying on like a trooper after the lights went out in Massachusetts. Notice that Dennis is using Bill Waterhouse's portable PA system. To the left is Elaine and Dennis Jolicoeur, and to the right is Wayne Francisco.*

Studebaker enthusiasts had travelled from all over the United States and Canada in their Studebakers to compete in the Concours and now was the moment of glory—at least for some.

Well, the night started out great, dinner was served and the meal was delicious. Everyone was enjoying themselves when someone came in from outside and announced that the weather looked real bad outside and that severe thunder storms were predicted. It was suggested that anyone who had left their windows open should go and close them. My windows were closed, so I didn't think much about it. I had just said to my wife Elaine that I was starting to feel at ease since we were half way through the evening and everything was going so well when a loud clap of thunder rattled the hotel and the lights went out in the Banquet Hall. A few minutes later when the emergency lighting came on, I sighed with relief and we started to proceed with the rest of the Banquet. About five minutes later, the emergency lighting also went out. I turned to Elaine and said, "What else can happen?" Well, I had spoken too soon because just as I finished, the fire alarms went off and we were ordered to vacate the building. Thank God the rains had stopped as we all exited into the parking lot. Soon after that, the fire engines arrived screaming into the parking lot, narrowly missing a few SDC members—and even more importantly those precious Studebakers. Shortly after that, the all-clear was given and we re-entered the Banquet Hall. The only problem was the lights were still out, but fortunately enough, there were candles on each table which gave an eerie glow to the room. It looked more like a seance in old Salem, Massachusetts than an

SDC Awards Banquet in Marlborough. It so happened that the emergency generators went up in smoke and that was what was setting the fire alarms off. The Fire Chief told us that a transformer was knocked out by lightning down the street and it would be some time before the power would be back on.

As we stood around wondering what we were going to do—we had just completed dinner and had not yet given out the awards—Bill Waterhouse remembered that he had a portable PA system in his motorhome. The only problem with retrieving it was that the motorhome was back at the Park West Hotel. Peter Crisitello volunteered to go back and get the system. While Peter went for the PA system, we moved a couple of candelabra to each side of the speaker's podium. This gave us enough light to read our notes and, with the help of Bill's portable PA system, we started into the awards ceremony. The candle light flickering off the faces of each speaker and the haunting glow from the candles at each table around the room again made this event look more like a witches convention on Halloween in nearby Salem.

Fortunately, after an hour or so, the lights came back on before we got too far into the awards ceremony. Wayne Francisco and I had completed our speeches in the dark, and I imagine this was a first for Wayne. As for me, everyone always says I'm in the dark most of the time! The trophies were given out and Mark's and Chris' slide show went off like clockwork, keeping pace with the winners as they were announced.

All in all it was a great banquet. It should be remembered for some time. Now you know the story, so when someone comes

up to you and asks, "Where were you when the lights went out in Massachusetts?" you can have a good reply ready.

Saturday, July 21st was the final day of the 26th International Meet. The rains had cleared, the thunder was gone, and it was a beautiful morning. I went down to the lobby of the Park West to see what was going on. Many of the members were busy checking out. Most everyone was talking about the lights going out at the Awards Banquet. Ron Hall and Chuck Naugle were making preparation to get Ron's Avanti out of the lobby, and I found myself in the midst of a crowd thanking me and saying they had a great time in New England.

One of my last acts as Chairman of the 26th International was to lead a procession of almost all Studebakers to Old Sturbridge Village, about 20 miles away. It gave me great pleasure to chauffeur Wayne and Susan Francisco to the Village in my 1957 Golden Hawk. This gave us a chance to talk and reminisce about the meet. I will always remember the moment during our conversation when I glanced in my rear view mirror and saw all those Studebakers behind me travelling down the Massachusetts Pike. I thought, "This is something I will never see again!"

We exited off the Massachusetts Pike into Old Sturbridge Village where we had reserved parking for all the Studes. The Director of the Village was there to greet us. With a feeling of loss, I said good-bye to Susan and Wayne and all the other members as they entered the Village. The 26th International Meet had taken so much time for it to come to be and now in what seemed like a flash, it was over. ❖



*Photo courtesy of Dennis Jolicoeur.*

*Members filing out of the Awards Banquet by candlelight as fire alarms ring throughout the hotel.*