

STUDEBAKER **Spotlight**



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION
OF THE LONG ISLAND
CHAPTER, SDC

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Visit us at: www.longisland-sdc.com

MEETING INFORMATION

Third Thursday of every month
7:30 p.m.

Community Room
Marjorie Post Park
Massapequa

New members welcome!

Next Meeting:

**Thursday, November 21st at 7:30 p.m.
Marjorie Post Park Community Room**

OCTOBER MEETING RECAP



Our meeting opened with the Pledge to the Flag at 8:10 P.M. I read the recap from our September meeting. The Recap was accepted by Tom Portesy, and seconded by Bob Andreoccia.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Frank Sammon gave us a rundown of all income and expenses since our last meeting. The largest expense was the club newsletter. Included in his report was our checking account balance. There was no activity in our savings account, except the addition of interest. One new member paid his dues.

The report was accepted by Tom Portesy, and seconded by Bob Andreoccia.

President Carl Carilli reported that he straightened out a problem concerning one of the awards from Reunion Sunday. The recipient, Mr. Stephen Siben, had never received his plaque in the mail. Carl corrected the situation. He showed us a photo of Carl, Stephen, and the award. Stephen's car was the beautiful Dual Ghia auto.

Frank reported that Larry Swanson contacted Newsletter editors, including Cathy to report that there was a problem with the Postal Service delivery of Newsletters. Larry heads the "What's Happening" section of each *Turning Wheels* magazine. Larry told

Cathy that many of the reports that newsletter editors from around the country sent to him actually ended up in Denver. Some notices of chapter events didn't make the "What's Happening" section. The problem should be solved by now.

OLD BUSINESS: Nothing to report.

NEW BUSINESS:

As indicated in last month's newsletter, our annual Holiday Brunch will take place on Sunday, December 15th at Molly Malone's in Bay Shore. Thanks to Bob Andreocci, the arrangements have been made. The brunch will cost a little more than in previous years, but we decided to keep the cost to members and their spouses or significant others to \$10 each. All others will pay the full price.

Bob asked when our last increase in club dues occurred. We had a discussion on whether it is necessary to raise the dues. The final decision was that this was not necessary. We are in good enough financial shape. We'll just keep an eye on our finances, but keep the annual dues at \$15.

CAR SHOWS:

One of the last car shows of the year will take place at Bald Hill on Sunday, November 10th from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. Anyone who arrives in their vintage auto or truck with an unwrapped toy or non-perishable food will be admitted free of charge. Coffee, rolls, pastry and hot dogs will be provided at no charge.

Treasurer Frank Sammon asked if anyone would like to pay for their Holiday Brunch at our meeting.

CAR STUFF:

Tom gave us all an update on the Studillac that was recently purchased by Henry Malin. Tom flew down to Georgia to meet with Henry. They drove all the way up to Leesburg, Virginia to arrange for a truck to pick up the car for delivery back to Georgia. There were a number of complications involving the trucking company and replacement trucking company. All was eventually resolved, despite inclement weather. The car finally made it down to Georgia where Tom and Henry did some preliminary work on it. Henry has located a '54 hardtop body in Texas to replace the body on the car now. While in Virginia, they were able to retrieve a number of good spare parts for the Studillac, including glass. Tom told us that Henry received a bunch of documentation on the car.

Carl gave us an update on his GT Hawk. He has received a sizable offer from a gentleman in Oregon. The man will fly here with his mechanic to see the car. If the car doesn't sell, Carl will get the car back on the road.

GOOD AND WELFARE:

I read a thank you note from Lynn Langenbach for the donation made and the plaque sent to her in memory of Ralph.

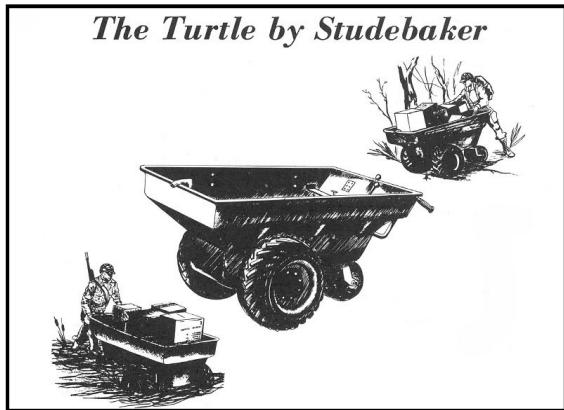
50/50 was won by Tom Portesy (again). Tom generously donated his winnings back to our treasury.

Our meeting adjourned at 9:26 P.M.

Roger A. Price, Recording Secretary

1962-1963 STUDEBAKER "TURTLE" PROTOTYPE

By Chris Dresbach, 24 August 2013



This is the story of what is probably the most forgotten about and lost part of Studebaker's history in the '60s, the Turtle. We all know that Studebaker president Sherwood Egbert's idea of the Avanti was supposed to save the automotive division of the Studebaker corporation, and ultimately could not; but what about what else Studebaker had up their sleeve to save themselves from going out of business? What was never released to the public by Studebaker was that they were actually trying to get a military contract in 1962; but since they didn't get it the history behind it was almost completely forgotten.

In the early 1960s Studebaker knew that they were in financial peril and in a sense saw the writing on the wall that if they didn't do something, they would go out of business. Studebaker was feeling pressure from other auto manufacturers who were building higher performance cars and selling them at a competitive price. In 1961 Studebaker president

Sherwood Egbert told the board of directors that what Studebaker needed was a sports car as well as high performance options for the Lark. Studebaker got their engineers going on building performance engines, which became the R series of engines, and Raymond Loewy designed the Avanti. In the 1963 model year Egbert got what he wanted: a sports car with the Avanti, and performance packages for the Lark and Hawk line. However, Studebaker management wanted to have a “plan B” in case the automotive division would have a total failure with the sports car idea. “Plan B” was to get a government contract.

Studebaker had worked with the U.S. military supplying them with different vehicles since the Civil War and they prided themselves on being a patriotic company. In 1962 the U.S. military was interested in a device that could be used to move ammunition in a war zone. The device had to be self-propelled, relatively light weight, and had to be useful to a soldier in a practical way. Studebaker put their defense division engineers to work on building such a vehicle that would ultimately be known as the Turtle. The Turtle was actually more advanced than what the military wanted. It was not only self-propelled, but it was four wheel drive, able to float, was compact, air droppable with a parachute, and weighed less than 400lbs empty.

Studebaker actually built three different designs of Turtles in 1962, but today only one is known to exist and that's design #1. Turtle #1 is more of a mockup of what Turtle #2 and final design #3 would become. Turtle #1 was never self-propelled, but is set up to be four wheel drive, has the steering in the center, does not float, and has prototype tires made of foam/rubber. The entire frame is also made of aluminum tubing. Turtle #2 was a little bit different from #1. Turtle #2 was the first to have a flotation hull, transmission and engine, and was four wheel drive but the tires were made of regular rubber. It also steered in the rear instead of the center. Turtle #2 was actually tested by the military in a R.A.V.E. (remote area vehicle evaluation) test in late 1962, but we'll get to that later. Turtle #3 was the same as Turtle #2 but was not four wheel drive. Instead it had a heavy rubber coaster wheel in the back that allowed it to turn. The problem with that idea was that a coaster wheel would act like a plow in mud. All three Turtle prototypes were operated by someone standing at the rear of the unit and #3 was powered by an Onan generator engine (10hp) and both had Gravely

hydrostatic transmissions. Turtle #2 was powered by an 8hp Kohler engine.

The Turtle project was top secret at Studebaker and the only people that knew about it were the engineers building them and Studebaker's board of directors. In the summer of 1962 Turtle #2 was ready for testing and was snuck out of the engineering building and shipped to Michigan for a R.A.V.E. test. A R.A.V.E. test was open to any inventor or manufacturer who thought they had a vehicle the Army could use and that would be their time to demonstrate it. Studebaker was one of several companies that brought experimental vehicles to the R.A.V.E. test site and the Turtle was assigned #17. It completed all but one demonstration test (the test for how quiet it could run). After the tests were completed Studebaker would be contacted later to talk about whether they got a production contract or not. Unfortunately that phone call never came to Studebaker. Instead it went to Kaiser who made the M-274 Mule which was also tested at the same R.A.V.E. test and was used extensively through Vietnam.

Through an odd twist of fate however, Army Generals wanted to view the design for Turtle #3 in December of 1962 but the reason is unknown. Keep in mind that the Turtle project at Studebaker was still top secret, and it just so happened that a major strike was going on at that time. Cliff MacMillan who worked in Studebaker Engineering at the time wrote an interesting article about how Turtle #3 was literally smuggled out of the plant. MacMillan, Jerry Gallagher, Chuck Wolfram, and Roy Chambers were the Studebaker workers who went into the Engineering building at midnight with a flatbed Studebaker truck, loaded the Turtle, and drove out to what is now the Singer-Marycrest building in South Bend; and somehow never got noticed. That was the last place the Turtle #3 was documented being seen since 1962, but Turtle #1 now resides in my personal collection.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Chapter Holiday Brunch:** We will be holding the brunch at Molly Malone's again this year, as they have completed repairs from Hurricane Sandy. Brunch will be held on Sunday, December 15th from 11a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost is \$10.00 for member and spouse. Full price for any additional guests.

LONG ISLAND CHAPTER STUDEBAKER DRIVERS CLUB MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME: _____ Birthday (Mo/Day): _____

SPOUSE: _____ Birthday (Mo/Day): _____

ADDRESS: _____ Anniversary (Mo/Day): _____

PHONE: _____ CELL: _____

E-MAIL: _____

STUDEBAKERS OWNED:

YEAR	MODEL	BODY STYLE

To join or renew your membership, mail completed membership form, with membership fee payable to
“LI Chapter SDC” to Frank Sammon, 105 Ridge Avenue, No. Great River, NY 11722-3430

DUES: Annual Dues are \$15.00. New members joining January – June: \$15.00, after July \$10.00.

NOTE: YOU MUST BE A MEMBER OF THE SDC TO JOIN A LOCAL CHAPTER.



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