

## 1956 Golden Hawk and the Jet Streak Engine By Frank Ambrogio

I know most Studebaker fans are familiar with the *Jet Thrust* engine that was available for 1963 and 1964 Studebakers. However I believe only a small number of Studebaker fans, including many 1956 Golden Hawk Owners, know much about the *Jet Streak* engine.

I purchased my second 1956 Golden Hawk on January, 23 1987 from Mason Maynard of Crete IL. He had owned it less than two years after purchasing it from the original owner, Jim Thomas of Muncy PA on February 9, 1985. Ironically, that made me the third owner of both 1956 Golden Hawks parked in my garage.

Painted P5638 Mocha/Snowcap White, the car was equipped with the standard items including manual transmission, wheelcovers, turn signals, and clock but had very little in the way of optional accessories. The short list of options consisted of back-up lamps, white wall tires, and Climatizer. The all vinyl interior white bolsters with dark taupe inserts.

Jim must have added a few accessories during his 29 years of ownership. When I took possession from Mason, the accessory list had grown to include internal controlled antenna, push button radio, windshield washers, and one more item that was not on the Studebaker-Packard accessories list.

That was the *Jet Streak* engine kit that Studebaker-Packard contemplated but never authorized for factory installation. S-P even assigned part number 1541805 to the kit which consisted of a special cam shaft kit PN 1540800, dual point distributor assembly, and dual four-barrel carburetor setup.

Here is the option as described in an unknown source article: *"Studebaker's Golden Hawk is a pretty hot potato as it sits in the dealer's showroom but has so far escaped the active interest of race drivers. A recently announced kit for factory or dealer installation converting it into a "Jet Streak" may change all this."*

*"Boosting horsepower to 330, it consists of an Iskenderian cam, 1955 Packard Caribbean dual 4 barrel carburetors and manifold, chrome valve covers, dual breaker distributor, and a special coil. Displacement and compression ratio remain unchanged neither requiring a lift."*

The complete 1540805 kit consisted of 38 items including major parts, gaskets, nuts, and bolts. Interestingly, chrome valve covers were not on that list but they are listed as an option in the parts catalog as AC-2796 - *Cover Kit, Valve Rocker Arm Chrome*. Perhaps worth noting is that the chrome rocker arm kit did not appear on a single Golden Hawk production

order for 1956. The kit basically consisted of the 1955 Packard Caribbean 352 cubic engine, with the addition of the cam and distributor. Even the Rochester carburetors were the ones used on the 1955 Caribbean. I assume the 1955 carburetors were used instead of the ones used in 1956 on the 374" Caribbean so that less or no, additional tweaking would be necessary.

I had the good fortune of speaking to original owner Jim Thomas in 1995 who said he tried to order the car with the kit installed at the factory but Studebaker wouldn't do it. I have examined all 4073 production orders for 1956 and found no evidence that a 1956 Golden Hawk was ever produced with a factory installed 374 cubic inch engine, and/or the Jet Streak option.

**NOTE:** *Only 4071 cars were actually produced. Two cars, Serial #s 6030726 and 6031367, were scrapped during production for some reason.*



**This is a photo of the engine compartment of Serial # 6031884 sporting the Jet Streak Engine with the dual carburetors and chrome rocker arm covers.**

I also have a copy of a letter from Carl B. Thompson of SASCO Technical Service Operation dated May 13, 1969. It was a reply to 56J owner Roscoe Stelford who had inquired as to the Jet Streak and 374 inch engines for the 56J.

SASCO, Inc. May 13, 1969

Mr. Roscoe C Stelford, Jr.  
R R. #1, Box 146  
Hampshire, Illinois 60140

Dear Sir:

*In 1956 a conversion kit was contemplated converting the 1956 Golden Hawk to a Jet Streak engine. However, this kit never was released for sale. The kit was a combination of Studebaker and Packard parts, The Studebaker parts never were purchased and are not available. Attached is a list of the parts which will give you an idea of what was involved*

*We did not install a 374 cu. in. engine in the Golden Hawk. Our largest engine on the car was 352 cu. in.*

*A cylinder block assembly fitted with pistons, pins and rings is available for the 56J.*

*Thank you for writing and giving us the opportunity to offer our assistance.*

Very Truly Yours  
Carl B Thompson  
Technical Service Operation  
SASCO, Inc.

Through the years, I've heard many stories of 1956 Golden Hawks coming from the factory equipped with the 374" engine and/or the Jet Streak option. However, I've never been able to find anyone who could substantiate those claims.

Packard sold lower horsepower versions of its V8 engine to American Motors Corporation for use in their 1955 and 1956 Nash Ambassador and Hudson Hornet models. Reasons abound as to why S-P abandoned the Jet Streak option, but the one I like best is this:

Packard would not allow any other car brand with Packard power (i.e. Studebaker, Hudson, & Nash), to have a higher cubic inch or horsepower rating than its biggest Packard. I have no idea if the Jet Streak 330 HP number is accurate, but if so, the Golden Hawk horsepower would have exceeded the 310 rating for the 374 CID 1956 Packard Caribbean. This is certainly plausible, especially since Packard's Jim Nance was still calling the shots in South Bend, but I've never been able to verify it. Maybe it was an oral directive and never documented, or perhaps there is something in the bowels of the Studebaker National Museum Archives that would

provide the answer. This might also be the reason the 374 CID Packard V8 was not included on the 1956 Golden Hawk option list.

Jim Thomas further stated: *"one day I was driving home from work and I got beat by a Chevy. I swore that would never happen again. I had the engine out of the car seven times till I got it how I wanted it."* I don't know if Jim was referring to a Chevrolet from the 1956 model year, or something newer. We never discussed the results of his subsequent Chevy encounters.

I was the proud owner of two 1956 Chevrolet Bel Air models in my youth. One convertible which I owned from late 1958 till early 1962. The other one was a hardtop which I owned from mid 1962 till mid 1964. Both had the Powerpack option.

I never glanced to the side and saw a Studebaker next to me in my 3+ years of "stop light" drags with the convertible in the Detroit suburbs, so I don't know how I would have fared against any 1956 Golden Hawk. At my age, I'd rather let my imagination provide various outcomes instead of knowing the final result. It's just not that important now. A 30 MPH "punch out" would *squawk* the tires, and that was enough excitement for me.

Getting back to my Golden Hawk, I added a few items during my 27+ years of ownership. The options list has grown to include seat belts, rear seat speaker, safety brake fluid reservoir, the aforementioned chrome valve (rocker arm) covers, and one more convenience item.

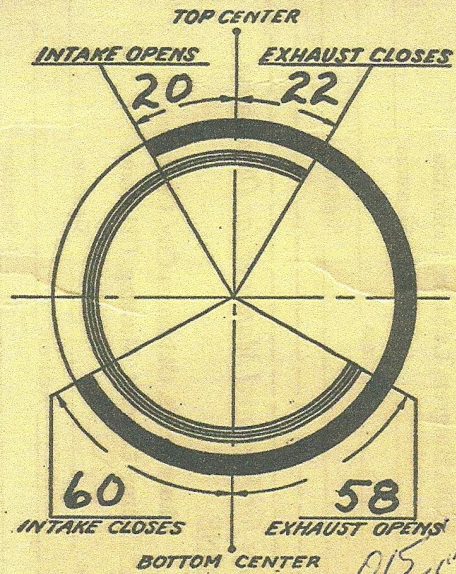
Power, performance, and good looks were all I cared about during my younger years. I wasn't that concerned with comfort and convenience. Every car from the mid 1950s to the mid 1960s looked good to me. Besides, our generation had a penchant for making our own modifications to personalize our ride. However as I've gotten older, comfort and convenience have become a major part of the mix. The one convenience option this car sorely lacked was power steering. I could manage without power brakes, windows, or seat, but power steering became more and more of a quest with each passing year. It took thirteen years to accomplish this transition, but I finally was able to get it done in March 2000. I've already written that story, and hopefully it will appear in a future issue of Turning Wheels.

So in my opinion, I had the perfect 1956 Golden Hawk with a little extra power where the rear wheels meet the road, and a little extra assist whenever a little maneuvering was required.

It's a shame that Studebaker-Packard opted to abort the *Jet Streak* Engine option for the 1956 Golden Hawk. I think it would have added a little more mystique to the car's legend.



**PACKARD - NASH - HUDSON**  
**1955 1956**  
**STUDEBAKER (GOLDEN HAWK)**



VALVES CLEARANCE LIFT  
 INTAKE .002" .015" 410"  
 EXHAUST .002" .015" 410"

REMARKS E4 Rev-Master  
 Full

ED ISKENDERIAN  
 CAM GRINDING



15/11/05

Consists of:

- [illegible]



W1033

PART NO.

1541800

4-23  
SET  
15NO DRAWING

Consists of:

Ed. Iskenderian Co.No.

1 - Camshaft  
 16 - Adjustable Rocker Arm Push Rod  
 16 - Valve Lifter Assy.  
 16 - Valve Spring - Outer  
 16 - Valve Spring - Inner  
 16 - Valve Spring Seat  
 1 - Valve Guide Boss Hollow Mill

E-2RM-6-C  
 E-2RM-6-PR  
 E-2RM-6-CL  
 E-2RM-6-OS  
 E-2RM-6-IS  
 E-2RM-6-SR  
 E-2RM-6-PHS

Instructions for Engine Timing and Installation  
 to be included in each kit.

JET STREAK EQUIP.

FURNISHED BY <b>ED ISKENDERIAN</b>										--- THEIR NO. <b>E-2RM-6000</b>		FOR SERVICE, SUBSTITUTE				DATE <b>11-20-56</b>	
										MATERIAL		STUDEBAKER-PACKARD CORP. STUDEBAKER DIV. SOUTH BEND, IND., U.S.A.				SCALE	
										ANALY.		NAME <b>CAMSHAFT KIT - AS PUR.</b>				PART NO. <b>1541800</b>	
										TREAT.							
TRANS. CHG. NO. LET. FROM DATE BY CK. CH. DR.										10806 PROD. RELEASE 4-20-56		OR. YR. CK. CH. DR. ENGR. REV.				LETTER SUFFIXED AFTER PART NO. ON RELEASES. PURCHASE ORDERS, ETC. DENOTES FINISH --- WHICH MUST BE AS PER STUDEBAKER STD. SPEC.	
PERMISSIBLE VARIATION ON COMMON FRACTION DIMENSIONS TO MACHINED SURFACES TO BE + OR - .010 UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.										WEIGHT (POUNDS) ROUGH OR BLANK _____ FINISHED _____		SAMPLE MUST RECEIVE ENGINEER'S APPROVAL BEFORE QUANTITY IS MADE --- (YES OR NO)					

The Ed Iskenderian cam kit for the Jet Streak engine

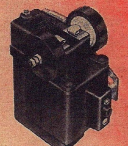


Spark-up your Car...

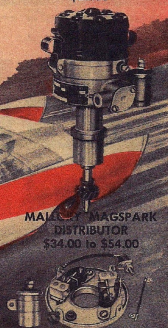
**Mallory MAGSPARK**  
IGNITION SYSTEM

INSTALL A MAGSPARK IGNITION SYSTEM IN YOUR CAR AND GET ALL THE POWER AND PERFORMANCE THAT WAS BUILT INTO YOUR ENGINE

The Magspark Transformer derives its name from the Magneto. It produces a Magneto spark, long acclaimed by engineers as the best ignition... You can have the Magspark Transformer and Magspark Distributor installed on your engine. You will then have a complete Mallory Ignition System which will give you the best performance that is in your engine... You can also use this revolutionary Magspark Transformer with the standard distributor that is on your engine, by installing a Mallory Magspark Distributor Conversion in your distributor. This is a simple installation which is less expensive and will give you a Magneto type spark from your own distributor... A Magspark System is available for practically all makes and models of engines... Ask your dealer... Or write today for complete data on the Magspark System.



MALLORY MAGSPARK  
TRANSFORMER  
\$22.00



MALLORY MAGSPARK  
DISTRIBUTOR  
\$34.00 to \$54.00

MALLORY MAGSPARK  
DISTRIBUTOR  
CONVERSION  
\$3.40 to \$11.90

MALLORY ELECTRIC CORPORATION  
12416 CLOVERDALE AVE. — DETROIT 4, MICH.

MOTOR TRENDS/FEBRUARY 1956 9

PRINTED IN U.S.A. 3-57

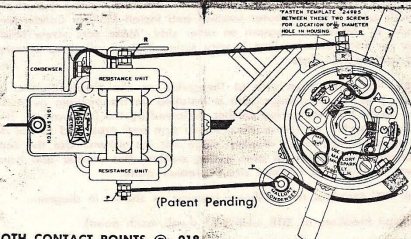
FORM 361-AS



## MAGSPARK CONVERSION NO. 24990

(With STABILIZED Circuit Breakers and Heavy-Duty Condenser)

BUICK (Roadmaster-Super) ... 1950-52	PACKARD (8-cyl. DELCO) 1951 and up
BUICK (Special) ... 1950-53	PONTIAC (8-cyl.) ... 1950-56
CADILLAC (V-8) ... 1950-55	STUDEBAKER (V-8 DELCO) 1951 and up
OLDSMOBILE (V-8) ... 1950-55	



(Patent Pending)

SPACE BOTH CONTACT POINTS @ .018  
DWELL EACH POINT: 26°

**ASSEMBLY NO. 24990 WILL NOT FUNCTION PROPERLY WITH THE CONVENTIONAL TYPE IGNITION COIL. IT MUST BE USED WITH THE MAGSPARK TRANSFORMER ONLY.**

Assembly No. 24990 includes:

- #24981 Ballbearing LH Advance Plate
- #D-24875 STABILIZED Circuit Breakers (2)
- #24972 Diaphragm Link Spring Washer
- #25010 Condenser
- #24971 Diaphragm Link Flat Washer

INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS ON OTHER SIDE

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR INSTALLING MAGSPARK CONVERSION NO. 24990

**CAUTION:** USE MAGSPARK CONVERSION NO. 24990 WITH MAGSPARK TRANSFORMER ONLY. Magspark Transformers are all marked whether 6 or 12-volt, and also the polarity. If the positive battery terminal is grounded to the engine, use a Transformer marked positive ground; if the negative battery terminal is grounded, use a Transformer marked negative ground.

1. Remove the distributor from the engine.
  2. Remove the original circuit breaker plate from the Delco distributor.
  3. Drill 11/32 diameter hole in distributor housing in location shown in diagram on other side.
  4. Connect primary wire from Delco contact point to "P" contact point on the Mallory circuit breaker plate. Make sure "R" and "P" wires are tightened securely to contact points.
  5. Install the Magspark Ballbearing plate in the distributor using the same screws that were used with the original circuit breaker plate. Install diaphragm assembly back into distributor housing and install Mallory Condenser in same location as shown on diagram on other side. Make sure screw holding Condenser to distributor housing is very tight. Tighten all three screws holding the circuit breaker plate.
  6. Connect the diaphragm arm to the guide on the circuit breaker plate, as shown. First the diaphragm arm is installed on the vacuum guide connected to the plate; then the spring washer, followed by the flat washer. The ground wire is connected on top of the vacuum arm and grounded to the distributor housing under the circuit breaker plate ear, as shown. Use the same screw to connect the diaphragm arm, spring washer, flat washer and ground wire as was used on the original circuit breaker plate.
- Install "R" terminal to distributor housing as shown in diagram.
- Set circuit breakers at .018 each (26° dwell, each point).
- Install distributor into engine. Connect wires to Magspark Transformer as shown in diagram. DO NOT USE THE DELCO RESISTANCE UNIT WITH THE MAGSPARK TRANSFORMER (see Magspark Transformer Installation Instructions on Page 5, Form 347). Make sure the Magspark Transformer is mounted on engine block in the same place as original coil or on a special Magspark Transformer Mounting Bracket.
10. Time the engine for best performance.



Noted 5/13/69  
SASCO, Inc.

May 13, 1969

Mr. Roscoe C. Stelford, Jr.  
R. R. #1, Box 146  
Hampshire, Illinois 60140

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Very truly yours,

*Carl B. Thompson*

Technical Service Operation  
SASCO, Inc.

CBThompson-hb