

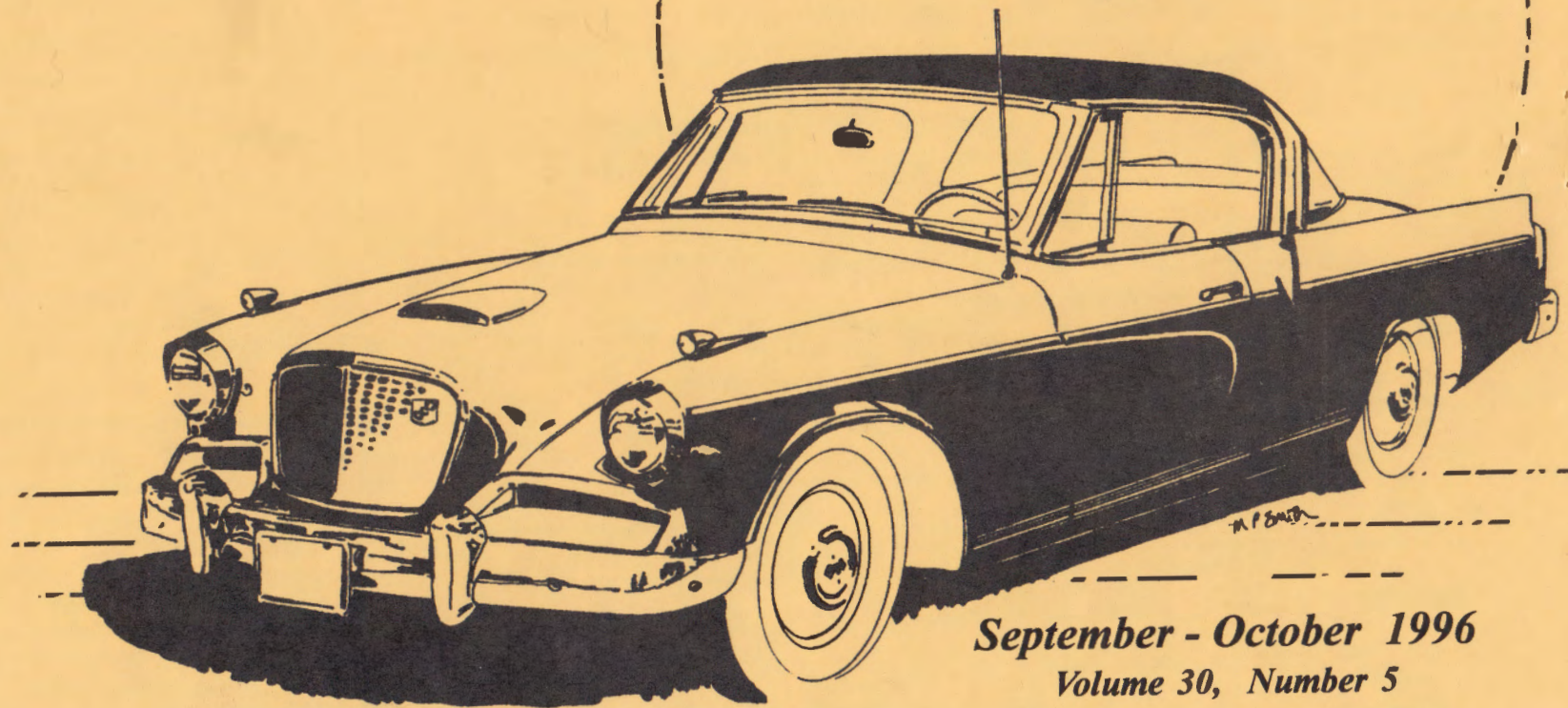


Studeogram

Bi-monthly publication of the Ocean Bay Chapter Studebaker Drivers Club Inc.

Octoberfest

Concours d'Elegance



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EDITOR'S *Letter*

By now you have thumbed through this issue of the newsletter and realized that it has been dedicated to the 1956 Golden Hawk. As most of you know, I own a 1957 Golden Hawk and Hawks in general are one of my favorite Studebakers. There are not many Golden Hawks around today. Studebaker only built the Golden Hawk for three years, 1956, '57, and '58 and although these cars were very popular there does not seem to be too many around now. So a year or so ago when Bill Ladroga purchased his 1956 Golden Hawk, Bill and I gained a common interest.

I have been following Bill's restoration on the Golden Hawk over the past year, sharing information when I can. The car is near completion and Bill hopes that it will make it to the October meeting at the Museum of Transportation. With my interest in Bill's car, it stirred up some

memories I have had on the 1956 Golden one, so I thought I would put a few words down on paper. Well you know me, I kind of get carried away when talking about my favorite subject! I hope you find the article interesting and I wish Bill and Lou Ladroga best of luck with their new toy.

Bill has also sent in a very interesting article on Master Cylinder reservoirs, relating to 1956 Hawks. I have featured it under the Tech Talk section of the newsletter since I consider this a safety related article. It is very worthwhile reading and something that some of you out there may want to consider engineering and building for your own benefit. If you have ever owned a car with the master cylinder under the floor boards you know what I mean. It is a pain in the neck when you want to check the brake fluid. This little factory option makes it quite easy to check the brake fluid level from under the hood, it is too bad that Studebaker did not make this stan-

dard equipment.

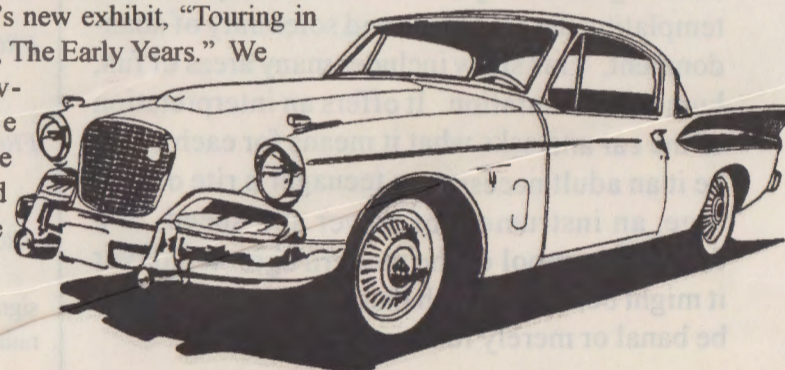
Moving on to other business, we have a couple of great Ocean Bay meetings coming up this fall. Our November meeting at the Attleboro Museum looks like fun and we hope you can make this meet. This is an exhibit relating to the one hundredth anniversary of the automobile in this country.

The October meeting, of course, is an Ocean Bay favorite. Held at the Museum of Transportation in Brookline, this meet gives Studebaker lover from all over a chance to enjoy Ocean Bay's Octoberfest Concours d'Elegance on the museum's lawn and also the museum's new exhibit, "Touring in America, The Early Years." We hope everyone will come along and enjoy the fun.

On a final note I hope a few of you out there were able to help Jeff Keilen out with some of the information he was looking for in my last Editor Message. Jeff needs your help with this information, so take a moment and drop him a line, I know he would like to hear from you!

For now happy motoring!

Dennis Jolicoeur
Studegram Editor





THE 1956 STUDEBAKER *Golden Hawk*

A TRUE GRAN TURISMO MACHINE

by Dennis Jolicoeur



The 1956 Studebaker Golden Hawk, oh how that Hawk had Thunder! It was conceived by Raymond Lowey Associates ala Bob Bourke under pressure from Studebaker's management to develop a car that could compete with Ford's Thunderbird and Chevrolet's Corvette. his Screamin' Demon could give any vette or bird a run for their money. It is my opinion, that this car is one of the best achievements of Studebaker Corporation and one of the best designs of Robert Bourke, based on what they had

to work with at the time. One must consider where Studebaker Corporation was in 1955. Things were really tough and there was no money to spend on tooling to produce an all new sports car to compete with the Corvette and Thunderbird. The rest of the world was now, also entering the horsepower race. With no tooling money and no money for a bigger engine, Studebaker did the only thing it could do, improvise.

To get a better prospective on the '56 Golden Hawk we must step back

a few years to the introduction of the 1953 Starliner. Much has been written on the 1953 Starliner and Starlight coupes also known as the Loewy coupes. As most of you know, these coupes were really the work of Industrial Designer Robert Bourke, who headed up the design studio at Studebaker for Raymond Loewy Associates. Bob's designs were beautiful and clean. The 1953 Starliner and Starlight coupes have won numerous awards for styling since the moment they were first introduced to present day.

A design heritage that no other American car manufacturer can claim! In 1953 the American public was not ready for a design as sleek and as aerodynamic as this car was, it would take another three or four decades for the public to realize the beauty in this design.

By the time 1955 rolled around Studebaker's management had pressured Raymond Loewy that "Chrome" was the answer to their sales problems. Why not - it was working for GM, Ford and Chrysler. To help introduce their new models for 1955, Loewy Associates developed a special show car. Based on the original 1953 Starliner, now called the Speedster, this model was loaded with chrome, it had a massive chrome grill, a wide knife blade side stainless steel molding that ran from headlight to taillight, a wide stainless steel band that ran left to right across the roof just in front of the rear window similar to what Ford was doing with their Crown Victoria. It also had a wide stainless steel "bull nose" strip running down the center of the hood, flanked by two large chrome spears mounted on top of each front fender. The Speedster also came fully-loaded and most of them came in brilliant tri-colors, most popular was the lemon and lime combination. One thing that is often overlooked by many, especially non Studebaker people, is it's beautiful sporty interior. This interior featured genuine leather seats and a sports car type engine-turned dash board. It was the most fully equipped, in standard form, car Studebaker ever built. Studebaker announced that, if the show car response was good, they would put this vehicle into production. The sales on the Speedster were good enough to

convince Studebaker to go ahead with a whole new line of "family sports cars" in 1956.

At this point in time a legend was born. For a few of you old timers out there, like me, I can remember when these machines hit the road. Wow! I was only thirteen at the time, but cars were my whole life, and boy, did that 56 Golden Hawk have an impact on me. But I was not the only one. This car would turn a few heads no matter where it was - in traffic, parked on the side of the road or flying down the highway. I can remember all my friends talking about this car. In 1956, the Golden Hawk, was very different than the other cars we would dream of owning; there seemed to be mystique about the car, partly because of the stories we were hearing on its performance and partly because none of us knew much about Studebaker in general. Because of this mystique, the Golden Hawk stood a little above the Corvette and Thunderbird in our minds. We were always looking out for one to get a glimpse of it, but there wasn't many around and still the legend was growing. I attribute much of this to the number of automobile magazines that were writing road tests on these cars at the time.

Several of the magazines ran feature road tests on the Golden Hawk in 1956, it seemed to be a hot item for the magazines. Most all of the magazine's reports were impressed with the Golden Hawk's acceleration, top speed, brakes, and styling. The February 1956 issue of *Motor Trend* reported reaching a top speed of 118 mph with an Ultramatic and 0 to 60 in 9.2 seconds. *Speed Age* magazine's Bill Holland tested a similar equipped Golden Hawk and obtained a

top speed of close to 125 mph, on poor road surface. Well known reporter Tom McCahill felt that a well broken in Golden Hawk could obtain 130 mph on a smooth surface. In the October, 1956, issue of *Motor Life*, Ken Fermoye reported on a factory test car with over 100,000 miles on the odometer. Equipped with an over-drive transmission his best 0 to 60 time was 8.8 second, but he was not able to establish a true top speed because of poor track conditions, and also because his outdated fifth wheel would not read over 100 mph! The 1956 Golden Hawk marked the first time the Studebaker name was linked with performance since the glory days of its President Eight in the late 20's and early 30's. Performance-performance, that's what it was all about to us kids of the 50's, and to a few of us, styling was a key factor.

Styling - there were many schools of thought in the 50's - GM's "Chrome" style created by Harley Earl and Chrysler's "Fin" style by ex-Studebaker designer Virgil Exner and "Out In Left Field" styling of Hudson-Nash. What Bob Bourke, Raymond Loewy Associates and Studebaker created with the 1956 Golden Hawk should be considered a landmark in automotive design! Called "The Family Sports Car" by Studebaker, the Golden Hawk had the ability to carry five or six people in a sporty style. Studebaker should be given the credit for being the first to produce, call it what you may - Gran Touring, Muscle Car or Pony Car - it was the first! The 1956 Golden Hawk Family Sports Car did pre-date the 1958 Thunderbird and all those Sixties sporty personal cars like the Mustang, Camaro, Firebird, Baracuda, Charger, etc.

It is my personal belief, that the 1956 Golden Hawk is one of Bob Bourke's best designs. Although it is not as sleek as the original 1953 Starliner, it retained that European flavor, famous of the Loewy Studios, while blending some of America's flamboyance of the 1950's. For the first time in a long time the 1956 Golden Hawk gave Studebaker a "sporty" image with the general public. This car was long, low and racy. It had an aggressive look to it and coupled with its performance, it was just what Studebaker needed to draw a younger crowd into the show room.

The 1956 Studebaker marked the end of a flamboyant relationship between Raymond Loewy Associates and Studebaker Corporation, until a rejoining in 1961 for the Avanti project. This also marked the last time Robert Bourke would design for Studebaker. As chief of design for Loewy studios in South Bend, Bob was given the instructions to square up the original Starliner, keeping tooling costs at a minimum. In keeping with a European style, Bob grafted a new Mercedes-Benz like grille to the Starliner, flanked by two smaller side grilles, similar to the original 1953 Starliner's. Interesting enough, this gave the Hawk a very aggressive look, similar to a Ferrari of the time. The addition of this grille also gave the Hawk a very long hood, - creating a feeling of power. On top of the hood was a nonfunctional hood scoop and on top of each fender, just behind the headlight rims were a pair of parking lights to give it a "classic" look reminiscent of the golden era in American automobiling. At the rear of the Hawk, Bob squared off the deck lid by raising it slightly at the rear edge and adding a

rectangular recess across the back face, with horizontal ribs. With the addition of a pair of small fiberglass fins on top of each rear fender, it gave the Hawk a very distinctive look, all its own. The Golden Hawk was also fitted with stainless steel wheelwell moldings and a wide grooved aluminum trim strip that ran from wheelwell to wheelwell just above the rocker panel. This cut the height appearance of the Hawk drastically, making it look even lower than it already was. The traditional belt line chrome strips that ran along the bottom edge of the windshield and side windows on the Starliner was eliminated for 1956. A new stainless steel side molding was added which ran from the headlight rim to a checkmark design just behind the rear side window. This allowed for a two-tone color effect, which was almost all the time used on '56 Golden Hawks. The stainless steel crown band that ran across the roof in front of the rear window, on the '55 Speedster, was retained, although moved back to butt against the rear window.

Exterior colors for 1956 were as brilliant as ever in Studebaker history. Sparked by the success of their lemon and lime colors on the 55 Speedster, Studebaker had a spectacular array of colors for 1956. I believe that the color combinations for 1956 were the best Studebaker had ever produced.

On the interior of this wonderful bird, it seemed no corners were cut. Starting with its beautiful engine-turned aluminum dash, inspired by the 1955 Speedster, with reminiscence of the Cord, Auburn and Duesenberg era. This dash, told the whole story with its large white on black, round, Stewart-Warner gauges and aircraft type toggle switches. In addition to the full instrumentation of oil,

gas, water temperature and amp meter, you had a one hundred and sixty mile per hour speedometer, a tachometer, a vacuum gauge and clock. No other car in America had such an impressive and functional dashboard as this Hawk did. I believe it is one of best designed in the American auto industries. The rest of the cockpit was just as impressive. It was a blend of the contemporary styles of the mid 1950's.

The seats were beautifully designed in vinyl or vinyl and cloth combination. The fabric used, had metallic threads woven through it which personifies the 1950's so well. The back top edge of the front seat was heavily padded and rolled to protect the back seat passenger from injuries in case of an accident. Studebaker also introduced seat belts that year, making it one of the first auto companies to do so. The door panels were one of Studebaker's best designs with molded-in armrests and gold lame inserts. You could even get power windows, power seats and tinted glass. Under the hood sat the massive 352 cu. in. Packard power plant with a four-barrel carburetor and a compression ratio of 9.5 to 1. This very impressive block produced a whopping 275 horsepower, enough to blow the socks off any American toy

With the growing popularity of the backyard all American Hot Rodder, a few of these screaming Hawks found their way to the local drag strip. Many of these birds were modified to accept the Packard Caribbean's dual four-barrel carburetors and manifold. Some of these do-it-yourself engineers even went as far as swapping the Caribbean's 374 cu. in.

engine into the Hawk. Other options included power steering, power brakes, Hill Holder, Climatizer heater/defroster and radio in addition the ones already mentioned earlier in this article. The Golden Hawk came with either standard shift with overdrive or automatic transmissions. Standard on the Golden Hawk this year were new finned drum brakes. The total production for the 1956 Golden Hawk was only 4,071 that year, compared to 15,631, - 1956 Ford Thunderbirds but the Hawk did manage to sell a few more than the 3,388 Chevrolet Corvettes that year.

Wow! - What a car, they still put chills up and down my spine when I see them. These cars were beautifully designed, well proportioned, racy and aggressive, what more could you ask for! Promoted by Studebaker as a "Family Sports Car" it gave the young at heart driver, who often had two kids, the opportunity to feel he or she was driving a sports car.

Today we can look back at the 1956 Golden Hawk and thank God that Studebaker did not have lot of money for tooling at the time the Hawk was designed, or else there would be a lot of disappointed Studebaker Drivers Club members out there. The 1956 Golden Hawk is a beautiful Gran Turismo automobile in the true sense of the word, and I personally would like thank Bob Bourke and the rest of the Raymond Loewy Associates group for leaving us this wonderful legacy.



The Golden Hawk

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Most power-per-pound of any American car! 0 to 60 mph. in 8.7 seconds . . . 60 to 100 mph. in 17.7 seconds! Torque, 380 ft. lbs. at 2800 rpm.; engine, 352 cu. in., V8, OHV; bore 4", stroke 3.50"; brake area, 195.3 sq. in.—biggest, safest, braking-to-weight ratio of any car. 4-barrel carburetion. Ultramatic Drive and all power assists available. Engineered to out-handle and out-run sports cars costing thousands more.

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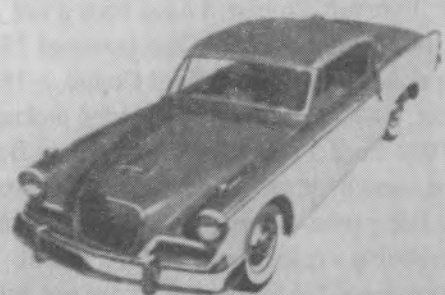
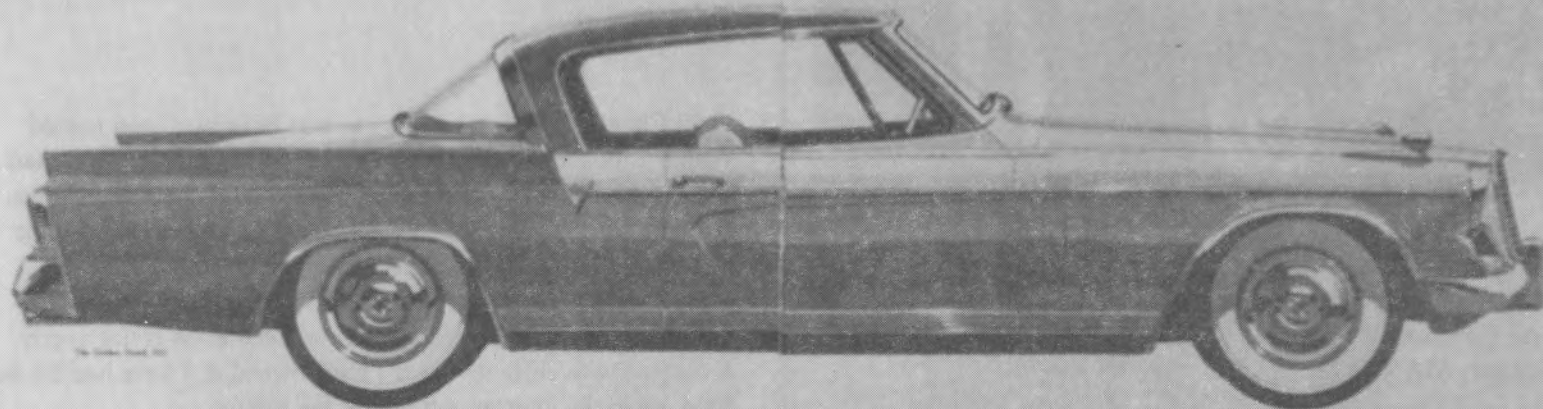
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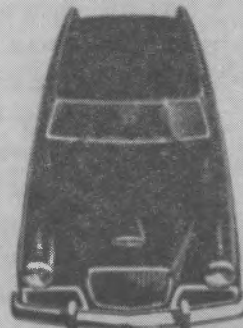
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a full line of sports cars—

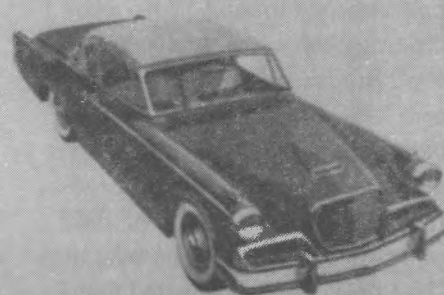
Studebaker *Hawks*



The Hawk 200



The Hawk 140



The Hawk 200

The first time there came to the market the first complete line of family sports cars ever offered, the American motoring public. The new Studebaker line of Hawk models provides the perfect answer to the growing demands of sports car enthusiasts who want a full size automobile and function, also want a multi-use "second car."

The new Studebaker Hawks were the "new way" designed by combining European sports styling with the best in American size, performance, and comfort. Each of the four standard models is 17 feet long, 6 feet wide, and less than 5 feet high, comfortably seating four passengers. All models are in the low price field—from the 140 four-door Hawk to the beautiful Golden Hawk, with its tremendous 27½ horsepower engine and Ultramatic Transmission—beating the price per horsepower of any car on the road!