



Newsletter



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE November 2012



One thing for sure---the monthly meeting at the Vegas November 7th will be a real deusey! The new officers will be elected, the "Car of the Year" honorees will be announced, and we will be having one other "SUPER SURPRISE" that will be shared that evening. You won't want to miss this one!

The art work for the car of the year folks is under way and will be really special for 2013. It is definitely going to be different, so you will have the opportunity to see the shirts and purchase them at the Holiday Christmas party in December. As a matter of fact, December 8th to be exact-- at the Grand International. While I am on that note, the Board has decided to have a little generosity this year and the cost of the party will only be \$5 per paid member with the ABSOLUTE stipulation that the meal/evening must be paid by December 5th --at Hardees. Remember, there is no December meeting because it is so close to the PARTY! So after the 5th (the 6th, 7th and 8th) the cost is \$20.00 per person. All guests are welcome. Guests (non-members) paid prior to and including the 5th, are still only \$5.00. Pay early if you plan on coming to this great yearly event.

I had a great trip to Denver last month. I went to the Classic Car auction at "The Ranch" in Loveland, CO. and had great results. There will be some new cars in the club for next Spring!

New officers and Board members will be elected at the 7 Nov meeting. This coming year each Board Member will take on one of the major events throughout the year. Whether it is the Wild About Wheels car show, Motor Magic, the Season Finale or the Christmas party---each Board Member will take charge. A member in the 'audience' will be asked to assist the selected Board member. Get ready!!!

The "Club House" should be ready before the meeting on the 7th. As a matter of fact, I think it will be by the 1st! The list of members that want a slot in the Club House is not real long yet, so if you want to store your car in a heated slot for the winter or for a year, feel free to contact me for the guidelines and rules of the 'spot'. Cost is only \$50 per month. The floor is now sealed and waiting the proper drying time to cure.

Well, thanks for your continued membership support and I hope you enjoy the perks of the Dakota Cruisers...Christmas Party, Christmas Party!!!

George Masters, President

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Christmas party is December 8th. Have you paid?
Only \$5.00 if you pay by November 7th.

Did the 1949 Ford really begin life as a Studebaker design?

[From Hemmings Motor News: Styling Simulation.](#)



The legend is that the '49 Ford was designed on the kitchen table of a former Studebaker designer, with the help of his Studebaker design buddies. Ford's top management was so overwhelmed that they bought the design over their own in-house effort, and the rest is history.

At the close of World War II, the Ford Motor Company was losing a fortune. Top management felt that the '49 Ford, styled by their own E.T. "Bob" Gregorie, was too big and heavy to turn their fortunes around. So they made that design the 1949 Mercury. That was in October 1946. Then a crash program was organized to produce a revolutionary 1949 Ford to be introduced in June 1948, an incredibly short amount of time.

The engineering "package" was laid down by Harold T. Youngren, Ford's corporate engineering vice president. Except for the wheelbase, dimensions were virtually identical to the 1947 Studebaker Champion. In fact, Ford engineering went out and bought one or more 1947 Studebaker Champions and dissected them. Meanwhile, Gregorie was instructed to come up with an entirely new 1949 Ford design in competition with George Walker's outside industrial design firm. But after a few weeks, Walker was not coming up with very much. Then, at just the right moment in time, he was approached by Richard Caleal who had just been let go from Studebaker styling. Walker promised Caleal a \$50,000-a-year job at Ford if he could come up with a winning design in just three weeks. Caleal then asked his Studebaker styling buddies if they could help him, and they agreed. A car was designed and produced in quarter-size clay form by moonlighters working on Caleal's kitchen table in Mishawaka, Indiana.

Caleal presented the model, painted bright blue, to George Walker, who was impressed. But Walker also came up with his own quarter-size model done by Joe Oros and Elwood Engel. This was very similar to the Caleal model. Both models, in quarter-size plaster form, were presented to the Ford Operating Committee, and they chose the Caleal model. This model, along with Gregorie's model, was then brought up to full size at Ford. The Caleal car won out hands-down over the Gregorie car, and became the 1949 Ford that saved the Ford Motor Company. It was also one of the most influential car designs of all time.

The '49 Ford design had pure, unbroken slab sides that completely eliminated traditional fenders. The fenders and body sides were one and the same, with the beltline coming nearly all the way up to the windows. The front fenders were nearly as high as the hood. The rear fenders came nearly all the way up to the top of the trunk. This later became known as the "slab-sided" body that you still see today. There was no fender slope forward or rearward. The body-side molding was one clean line of stainless steel running from just behind the front wheel cutout, directly over the rear wheel cutout, nearly to the rear. The grille is a beautiful spinner. Viewed head-on, it looks like an airplane propeller and wings. The trunk is an extreme bustle with a back that drops straight down. The windshield is split into two pieces of perfectly flat glass. The rear window is very wide and curved.

The design was done by Studebaker stylists Bob Bourke and Holden "Bob" Koto with Caleal supervising them. Koto probably did most of the work, with Bourke doing the front end, including the grille. The clay modelers were John Bird, Joe Thompson and John Lutz. Bourke insisted that the model have a spinner grille very similar to what appeared on the final design. Joe Oros is emphatic that when the quarter-size plaster model came into Ford styling, it had only a center sculpted bar, no spinner.

Now, here is where things really get muddy. Caleal has given himself full credit for the design. Bourke gives himself and Koto nearly all the credit, and Caleal no credit. John Bird gives Caleal only a little credit. Of all three designers and three clay modelers, only Caleal is still alive. What makes the story so difficult to sort out is that no photos of the quarter-size model seem to exist today. If Caleal took any photos, they have never been published, and if any photos ever existed in the Ford files, they were purged decades ago. Caleal claims he kept the plaster mold in his garage for years. Then he gave it to the Henry Ford Museum where it remains to this day.

At the suggestion of Henry Ford II, Elwood Engel changed the back by moving the vertical taillamps to horizontal. They were now sculpted out of the rear quarter sheet metal to trailing "wind splits." The front end derived from Caleal's quarter-size model was considered to be lacking in striking appearance. Joe Oros gave the car the spinner grille theme. Joe Oros also developed the instrument panel that echoed his spinner grille theme. Oros and Engel collaborated on all the details of the instrument panel.

But here is where the story moves into *The Twilight Zone*. I could never understand how Caleal and his crew could come up with such a revolutionary design and model it in just three weeks. I could never fully buy either Caleal's or Bourke's version of the kitchen-table episode. I believed that something had gone on beforehand at Studebaker. I had heard rumors of this for years, but had nothing to substantiate the rumors. Then, about two years ago, I heard that there was a collection of photos in the Los Angeles area of the 1949 Ford as a Studebaker. After many telephone calls, I was able to see these five photos. One is nearly a dead ringer for the 1949 Ford club coupe. All five of the photos are labeled "1946 Studebaker Champion Project." Unfortunately, these photos are not being made available to the public at this time.

November 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 Noon luncheon call the hotline for location	3
4	5	6	7 General meeting at the Vegas 7:30	8	9 Noon luncheon call the hotline for location	10
11 Veterans Day	12	13	14 Cruise to Hardee's South	15	16 Noon luncheon call the hotline for location	17
18	19	20	21 Cruise to Hardee's South	22 THANKSGIVING DAY	23 Noon luncheon call the hotline for location	24
25	26	27	28 Cruise to Hardee's South	29	30 Noon luncheon call the hotline for location	

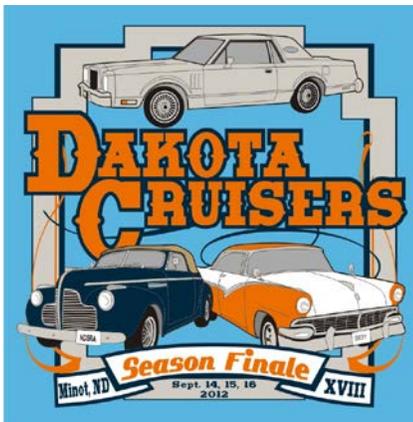
OFFICER/BOARD DIRECTORY

POSITION	NAME	PHONE NUMBER	E-MAIL
President	George Masters	852-5010	gem@min.midco.net
Vice President	Jerry Black	838-8318	jblack@min.midco.net
Secretary	Betty Trzpuc	839-6297	bettytrzpuc@hotmail.com
Treasurer	Joanne Larson	240-9604	jolarson@midco.net
Newsletter Editor	Tammy Kloehn	839-6502	badss@aol.com
Board Member	Dave Alberts	838-4309	mde@srt.com
Board Member	Randy Hysjulien	838-2638	hysh@srt.com
Board Member	Tom Carson	838-1626	tc49@min.midco.net
Board Member	Doug "Spanky" Frazier	721-7203	badss@aol.com
Board Member	Greg Olson		gominot@yahoo.com
Webmistress	Sherie Saltveit		sherie.saltveit@minotstateu.edu

WEBSITE ADDRESS: www.dakotacruiser.com

(701) 852 - KARS

ADDRESS CORRECTION
SERVICES



800 31st Ave. S.E., Lot 900, Minot, ND 58701

Next General Meetings at the
Vegas:
Nov 7 & Dec 8, 2012