



# *The Canadian Avanti*

Official Newsletter for the Canadian Avanti Owners Association

March 2022

## **In this issue:**

- Pg. 1 President's Message
- Pg. 2 Editor's Message
- Pg. 3 Canadian Avanti Owners Association, Chapter Officers and Support Personnel
- Pg. 4 2022 Avanti Calendar and CAO and AOA Membership dues
- Pg. 4 AOA 2022 International Meet – June 14-18, 2022, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- Pg. 5 Do You Remember This?
- Pg. 6 The Avanti
- Pg. 7 Membership (CAOA and AOA)

## **President's Message**

Well, I guess it's been a while, I've been caught up with one of those "full time" winters it seems. Ah but Spring approaches and finally many opportunities and events seem to be on the near horizon. Also, as of April 1st. various border restrictions test requirements etc. should be lifted which will make it much easier to attend events in the USA and vice-versa. Perhaps the most difficult part of this return to all of the people and places we formerly enjoyed is overcoming the apathy and, in some instances, neglect toward both participation and involvement with the clubs, organizations, and even our own cars that unfortunately have been mostly idle for the past two years. I know that for me, one of the best ways to re kindle interest in any activity is to go to a show or event just as a spectator, and seeing others involved in like pursuit. Likewise, "visiting" a collection on line and realizing that there are so many others out there with similar interests and abilities always gets me 'fired up' to get going with my own likeminded projects, or offer to help a buddy getting their car up and running. They say it takes about 4 to 6 weeks to form a habit, and months or years to change one. Unfortunately, we have been somewhat constrained into forming new habits of isolation and non-activity. Limited engagement with friends and even relatives. Staying close to home etc. and now at last we need to shake our heads, come out of this stupor, dust off those tires and get back on the road!



Canadian Avantis at Dover International Meet 2014. L to R Steve Wohleber 1989, Bill Harris 1963, Mike Emmerich 1984



A big welcome to new members Steve and Rhonda Steinberg who recently purchased a 1971 Avanti RQB1634 and hope to be up and running in time for the Milwaukee Meet. We look forward to meeting you soon.

Also, something which is long overdue, I would like to acknowledge our long-standing appreciation, participation and association with SDC Vancouver BC, Hamilton ON and Ontario Chapters as well as SDC International. Being a relatively small club considering we represent an entire country, many if not most of our get togethers, meetings and events on a regular basis are in conjunction with one SDC Chapter or another. Many of our members also own other Studebakers as well. I'm sure many other AOAI chapters are similar and that we all look forward to seeing old acquaintances again.

Another issue that I have mentioned previously is that once again there are no Canadian Avantis in this year's calendar. There are some great cars out there and no reason why you shouldn't show them off. Lew Schucart is always looking for new cars to feature and can accept photos into June. Why not consider sending in a pic of your Avanti for 2023! Likewise, I'm sure all of you are aware of the International Meet taking place in Milwaukee Wis. It looks like some of us plan to attend and look forward to another fine event. Continue to check out our website as well as AOAI for upcoming events.

CAOA continues to contribute to the sponsorship of the Ron Hall Avanti at the Studebaker National Museum as well as our annual contribution to the AOAI International Meet.

Cheers and all the best as always.  
Steve Wohleber

Also, some sad news to report, one of our members Neil Grant passed away in February. Neil purchased his Avanti in 2010 and has been a valued member of CAO, AOAI and SDC since. He also owned other Studebakers as well as a collection of Cockshut tractors. Some even designed by Raymond Loewy! He will certainly be missed by his family and all of his friends and associates. Our heartfelt condolences to his wife Bobbi and family.



Neil and Bobbi with their 63 Avanti

## **Editor's Message**

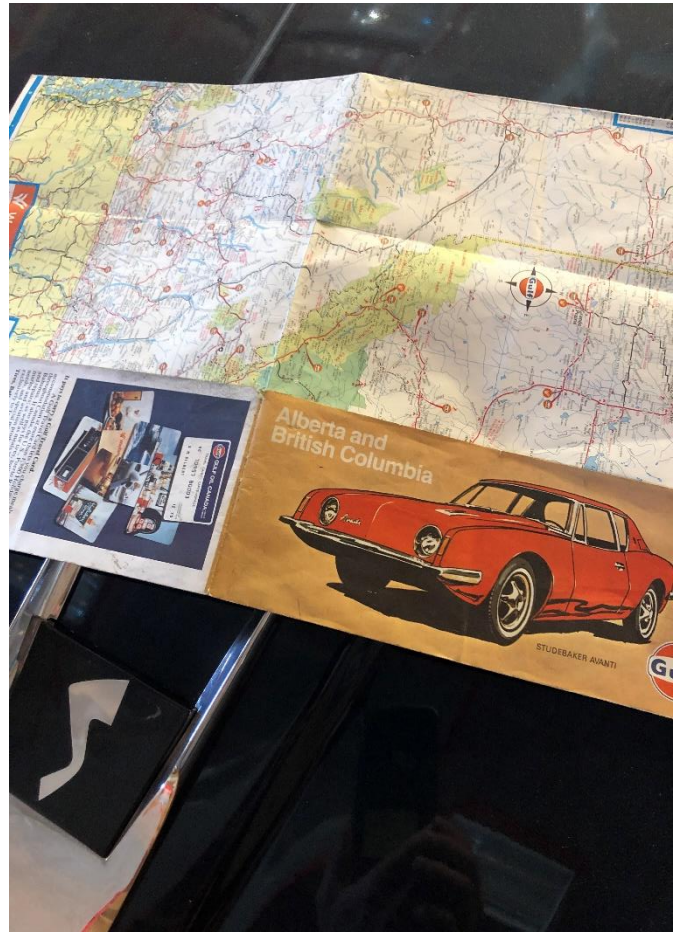
YAY, the days are getting longer, already there are two more hours of daytime outside my home! In six weeks or less, I am hopeful spring comes early and my area roads are snow free for Avanti and other warm season motoring again. (Albeit some of the membership may already be enjoying salt free roads, whereas where I live abundant road salt may still be in use through to late April!) Additionally, I look forward to some normalcy returning, as it's been a while since pandemic mandates prohibit me from inside visitation of restaurants, entertainment venues, museums, and so on. Soon my provincial government is relaxing pandemic restrictions, thus I am going to be a free man again (even if that may be just within my provincial borders for the interim.)

While visiting Ireland several years ago I thought how neat it would be to live somewhere where you could possibly drive your entire country circumference in just one day! As for Ireland, that would amount to a total drive of just under 1,200 kilometers, and crazily I have driven 1,200 – 1,400 kilometers during a day for work purposes and even whilst riding a motorbike on occasion.

Comparatively, to drive my entire Alberta home provincial borders (presuming there were bordering roads), that would amount to a total distance of approximately 3,200 kilometers. Only a superhuman could drive that without an overnight break, most normal human beings would require several! Alberta has prairie, forests, mountains, lakes, and rivers. It has paved and unpaved roads through wildernesses, farmlands, and towns and cities. However, travelling across/around Alberta - same for almost everywhere in Canada - always requires more driving time.

Nonetheless good riddance to my winter's minus-thirty and minus-forty below Celsius weather! Happy upcoming warm weather motoring my Avanti cherishing friends!! And resuming with this warm season's travels, let's look forward to possibly seeing exposed (mask-less) smiles again!!!

Safe travels,  
Shawn Brockhoff 😊



## **Canadian Avanti Owners Association, Chapter Officers and Support Personnel**



The Canadian Avanti Owners Association (CAOA) is a non-profit organization committed to preserving the history of the Avanti automobile. We are a Chapter of the Avanti Owners Association International (AOAI) organization [www.aoui.org](http://www.aoui.org). Our group strives to promote the research and study of the Avanti and the companies that have produced it over the years. We wish to share our knowledge with others and encourage the acquisition, preservation, restoration, and maintenance of all Avantis produced by Studebaker and successor companies. Our Canadian Chapter also promotes fellowship and camaraderie by publishing a newsletter quarterly, participating in local CAOAI or Studebaker Drivers Club events and our general meetings held quarterly at various members' homes. Ownership of an Avanti (Studebaker or successor) is not required.



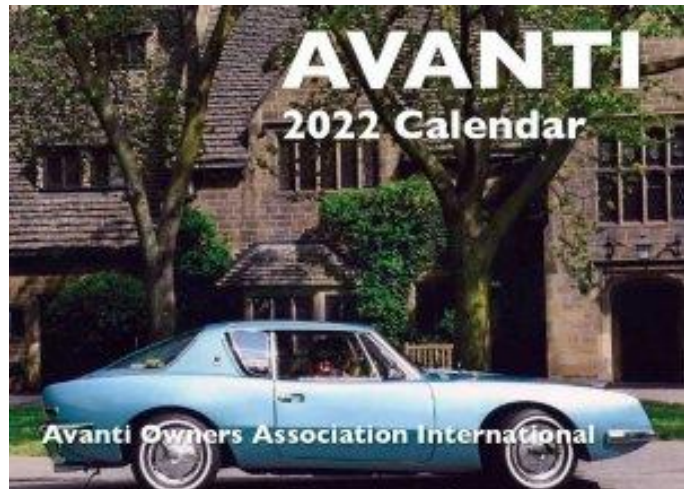
Should you have any questions for the CAO A please contact any of the following:

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**2022 Avanti Calendar and CAO A Annual Membership dues**

Don't forget to renew your 2022 CAO A annual membership if not already done, which for \$20.00 you may still get sent to your mail address (shipping and handling included) a 2022 Avanti Owners Association International calendar. Please contact Dave Moxham, CAO A Treasurer, for CAO A membership renewal or enquiry, and calendar availability.



**AOAI 2022 International Meet – June 14<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

**Get Ready for the AOAI 2022 International Meet!** Once in a lifetime opportunity, many never before seen or heard videos, photos, and audio recordings with surprise speakers at seminars. The event will take place June 14-18, 2022 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Click the following link for more information:

[AOAI 2022 International Meet | Avanti Owners Association International](#)



**Do You Remember This?** Forwarded by Brian Chappell

This was the cover of the Motor Trend July 1962 magazine featuring the first road test of the 1963 Studebaker Avanti for their readers. If you remember this, than you are older, oops I mean wiser than me, heh heh I wasn't yet born, your editor 😊.



## **The Avanti** *from Pet Yuen*

From approval in the Spring of 1961, it took under a year's time for the Avanti to transition from being an in-house pipe dream to something customers could—theoretically—buy. Sadly, some ghosts from Studebaker's last attempt to make a huge splash in the marketplace with a stylish new coupe reared their ugly heads. The rush to get the car into production meant outsourced fiberglass bodies that didn't fit together. Eventually Studebaker did the job themselves, but spent plenty of time doing their best with body production they weren't exactly familiar with.

By the time the Avanti was truly ready for sale, it found itself in an interestingly crowded field of competitors for 1963. In addition to competing somewhat with the Thunderbird in price, two surprising rivals for attention leapfrogged from General Motors in the fall of 1962. The razor-sharp Buick Riviera and the stunning Corvette Sting Ray were both within shooting distance price-wise of the potential savior from South Bend. It can also be argued that both held a higher quotient of prestige, if not all out snob appeal, compared to the sinewy new Studebaker.

It does beg the question of just where the Avanti did fit into the 1963 automotive market. It was initially conceived as a sports car, but due to limitations of the available chassis, it evolved into more of a Grand Tourer. The basic bones were essentially a Lark Daytona convertible frame that had roots in the same Old Testament frame that sat under every "standard" Studebaker since 1953. Tarting up basic bones is far from anything new in the automotive world; however, there were inherent flaws and dated aspects in Studebaker's chassis in 1953, never mind ten years down the road.

Studebaker did do a good job in making the old bones perform well enough though. The hardly "Spring Chicken" 289 V8 was still able to scoot a basic R1 Avanti to 60 in under 10 seconds, which was a pipe dream for the deceptively overweight Thunderbird. Choosing R2, or R3 grade Avantis brought you into parity and beyond what a Buick Riviera was capable of in the straight line. You could potentially scoot right up to what all but the most ferocious of Corvettes could do.

Where the Avanti was truly let down was the aging chassis. While it was beefed up from Lark Daytona duty, and it probably was among above-average cars in 1963, it couldn't match the polished refinement of rivals in its price class, especially for those leaning more to the luxury side of the equation of personal coupes. There was no hiding the fact that underneath it all, despite having three distinct-appearing car lines in showrooms, Studebaker was selling different branches of the same tree. No matter how long the list of features available larded on top off the variety of models (like the built in roll-bar and front disc brakes of the Avanti), it took a very unfocused eye to not notice all the new glitz, glamor and foliage hid some rotten roots.

The Avanti does bring up more why questions than why-nots. It seems at cross purpose that Studebaker kept selling the cheaper but somewhat similar in terms of market position Gran Turismo Hawk in production alongside it. That begs the question of whether the Avanti was more a personal luxury coupe or more an authentic attempt at a four-seat sports car. Content-wise, the lushly appointed interior and reality that the majority of the units sold were set up as capable boulevard cruisers sides with the Personal Luxury assessment. The blazing (optional) performance tips the needle into "four-seat Corvette" territory.



How the Avanti landed, however, was a curiosity that few indulged. A switch to square headlamp bezels dates our subject car as one of a depressing 809 of the 1964 models built before Studebaker shuttered their South Bend plant five days before Christmas 1963. Surprisingly, no one thought to fill the place in the automotive market that the Avanti once sat. Not as outsized as the Thunderbird, or Riviera, Oldsmobile did come close with the original concept of what would eventually become the Toronado. The American market was left void of a proper sized grand tourer, sort of.

1965 was the Avanti's Easter Sunday, as the Altman brothers and Leo Newman resurrected it as the Avanti II. In the greatest form of irony, the Avanti found its Frankenstein monster pulse by using a Corvette-grade 327 small block V8 from Chevrolet. The Avanti found a second life as a bespoke grand tourer. In a lot of ways, the Avanti II developed into a softer four-seat Corvette that General Motors was too lazy or afraid to commit to. If you thought the Studebaker Starlight/Hawk was the Personal Coupe that wouldn't die, variations of the Avanti II on the Studebaker Chassis lasted clear through 1987. Other variations and detours using the Avanti name came later, including a convertible and even a four-door sedan.

The Avanti lived a raucous life befitting its conception. Misunderstood at the time of birth, the concept of fine motoring that it offered whispered appeal to select converts once it was resurrected. Though not for everyone, it does offer a heady mix of design distinction and performance wrapped up in a fascinating origin story. The Avanti was a purely American confection, yet also one of the most internationally-flavored items conceived on American soil. As we move further into the 21st Century, I hope we keep the faith that one of our existing brands can bring this particular brew back to the marketplace. We could use a little grand touring magic that looks this gorgeous during evening dinner hours.

### **Membership Forms for the CAO and the AOAI**

If you have enjoyed reading this newsletter and currently aren't a member of the CAO please consider joining us. Should you have any questions or like further information please contact me anytime. My contact info (as earlier in this newsletter for Shawn) is phone calls or texts (780)812-5452, or email [sb58regent@outlook.com](mailto:sb58regent@outlook.com). Likewise, a membership form for the CAO can be accessed at <http://canadianavanti.ca/membership.html>, and the website for the Avanti Owners Association International (AOAI) is <http://www.aoui.org/index.php>. Neither membership requires ownership of an Avanti (Studebaker or successor). Please take care & thank you for reading 😊

