

Scranton • Wilkes-Barre Auto Dealers Exchange Making Monday Night Special

by JW Coulter

If the idea of a car auction opening Monday evening, just after the dinner hour strikes you as strange, you haven't thought it through well enough. SWADE, the Scranton • Wilkes-Barre Auto Dealers Exchange has been running their weekly sale that time for 23 years.

A Perfect Fit

It is an industry rule of thumb that dealers drool at big auctions and their 1000s of units to pick from. Like most rules of thumb, this one is a one-size-fits-all concept that doesn't fit any auction or any dealer correctly. SWADE has successfully thumbed its nose at that rule of thumb for more than two decades. They have learned that what the industry considers a given, just doesn't work for many dealers. Many other auctions might have questioned a night auction over those years, but a few are beginning to wake up to something that SWADE's owners, Gene Scagliotti, and Joe Gaughan, have known nearly a quarter of a century. Over the past few years, some other Pennsylvania auctions have branched out into evening auctions and others hold special sales after dinner.



Left: Justin Priblo, Gene Scagliotti, and PIADA Director Kevin Novitsky huddle over a unit coming down the lane. Right: SWADE's office handles paperwork and questions all in one location. Below: SWADE Co-owner, Joe Gaughan, listens to a dealer recap a difficulty. Joe and Gene, 'Squeak', move throughout the lanes non-stop on sale night giving each dealer personal attention as they have done since the auction first opened.



between dealers, the two owners who have repped thousands of units over the years have great expertise in resolving an issue because weekly they walk in dealer shoes.

Aside from Gaughan and Scagliotti, several other family members help keep the auction running. Justin Priblo, Gaughan's grandson is the auction's Dealer Contact. Justin probably covers ten miles in the course of the evening

moving from the lot to the lanes and the offices making sure that everything is running according to plan. During sales, Gaughan's daughter, Ellie Skutnick, and Scagliotti's daughter, Karen Krause, also handle multiple auction duties. Familiar faces and voices to all who frequent the auction are SWADE's office manager, Melissa Smith, 'Missy' who oversees the office operation all week, and Jack Keenan, SWADE's Dealer Coordinator.

If you happen to stop by SWADE for a sale, you'll notice that the entire staff and management and their dealers seem to be one large extended family. On Monday evenings, at a place where all have come only to do business, most feel as though they have come home for a family reunion.

I suppose that is what Gene Scagliotti and Joe Gaughan had in mind at the beginning. The personal touch that they've put into SWADE comes back to them every week many times over from the dealers who go there. And that is why Monday nights on Keyser Avenue are special. 🍷

a beat in the move, and it has stayed at the location ever since.

Keeping with their idea of treating dealers right, Joe and Gene, better known as "Squeak," keep a hands-on approach to the business. Rather than coaching from the sidelines, the pair of owners are a part of the SWADE team. They handle many details, and the dealers that frequent the auction put great trust in them. Many dealers who get tied up or come down with the flu rely on Joe and Squeak to represent



Left: On the left is Co-owner, Gene Scagliotti, affectionately known to all as 'Squeak'. Dealers often have SWADE's owners represent them on the block showing their great trust in their judgment and honesty.



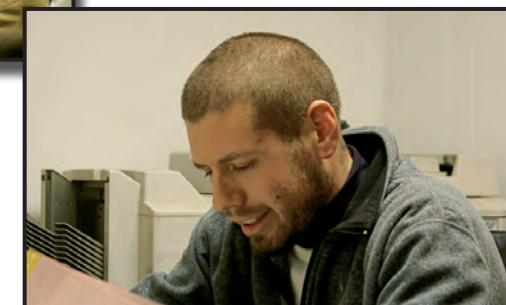
Left: On the right, SWADE's Dealer Coordinator, Jack Keenan, listens to a dealer's story. Keenan is typical of SWADE's management team, hands on with the time and knowledge to help each dealer.

them on the block. Some dealers have them do it because they can't make the lanes on time, and others who have gotten up there in years just make it standard to have the SWADE guys represent them. If a dealer is a newbie, and doesn't really know the ropes, having one of these guys rep his units will allow him to learn the system on vehicles that do well. What a great way to learn the auction business.

Many times, Joe and Squeak are on the block, with the seller in one ear on the phone and bidders hot on a unit in the rapidly moving lane. The two owners handle things quickly and smoothly. As you might also figure when an issue comes up



Some of SWADE's family and maybe its future. Above: Gaughan's daughter, Ellie Skutnick, in the Santa hat, and Karen Krause, Scagliotti's daughter, handle paperwork in the lanes. Right: Justin Priblo, grandson of Joe Gaughan and SWADE's Dealer Contact, at one of the rare times he slows down.



Top: SWADE during a summer's day. Right: Lights! Action! and tonight a camera to capture SWADE on Sale Night.

SWADE'S Beginnings

When Scagliotti and Gaughan contemplated opening SWADE they looked at the dealers they would service. They were looking to start an auction at a time when auction growth was full speed and dealer service at auctions left something to be desired. Making an auction that treated dealers well was their first priority. They were not newcomers to the car world. Joe Gaughan had some years into the service end of the business, and Gene was the GM of a local new car dealership. They set up SWADE's first sale in a drive-in movie lot, along Rt. 315 in Pittston.

One of the keys to their planning of SWADE was that they knew firsthand small dealerships were strapped for time during the day. Bigger dealerships might be able to free up the owner or at least a buyer to go to auctions, but mom and pop dealerships, which are more the rule than the exception, couldn't afford to take a day off each week for the auction or a day off for each auction. Putting SWADE's kickoff time at 6:00 p.m. would mean that dealers could travel

Above: Dealer's flock into the lanes for a large pre-Christmas run. By their very nature, night auctions put dealers into the lanes which means dealers know each other and each unit better.

Right: Dealers intently working SWADE's three lanes.



Above: SWADE's paperwork brigade starts the first of the evening's work. As most auctions, SWADE's sale draws many part-time staffers to the auction. Evening hours are a benefit for SWADE as many staff members simply drive over after their similar regular job. Left: Melissa Smith, SWADE's office manager, handles one of her many sale duties.



some distance, stay for the entire auction, and only lose a few hours. The two partners decided that late Monday afternoon and into the evening would be the best time for the dealers, even if it might mean some weekend work for them personally. Their idea, the evening drive-in auction called SWADE, turned out to be a success.

In time, the owner of the drive-in property looked to cash in on the location, and without giving the auction much notice put it up for sale. The price was too salty for the young auction, so Gaughan and Scagliotti hurriedly got a rental property along Keyser Avenue in Taylor, a subsection of Scranton. SWADE never lost

