

RUMINATIONS AND RADIOS

A HOLIDAY GIFT to me this past year was a 2002 old-car calendar (Ronnie Sellers Productions, publisher). For April it shows a handsome '54 Hudson Hornet. Other cars featured include '63 Studebaker Avanti, '67 Ford Shelby Mustang, '88 Ferrari Testarossa, '59 Edsel Corsair, '52 Kaiser Henry J (!), '61 Volvo P1800, and more. The Hudson pictured is credited to Mike and Margaret Collins.

ORVILLE VOEKS, an HET member for more than twenty of the club's early years, and a very good friend, died in a fire at his home near Wausaukee, in northern Wisconsin, on December 8, 2001, only a few days short of his ninetieth birthday. He had lived and worked in the Sheboygan, Wisconsin area during most of his life, and was also a U.S. Army Air Corps veteran. He is survived by eight children, other relatives; and also special friends Mark and Andrea Stevenson of Wausaukee.

Orville's first Hudson-built vehicle reportedly was a Terraplane, in the mid-1930's. He later owned numerous other Hudsons including a '40 sedan and a '50 Super convertible. I first met Orville in 1965 when he noticed my '49 Commodore parked along a street, and it was he who first told me about the HET Club and the *White Triangle News*. His friendly interest, generosity, willingness to help, and his sense of humor will not be forgotten.

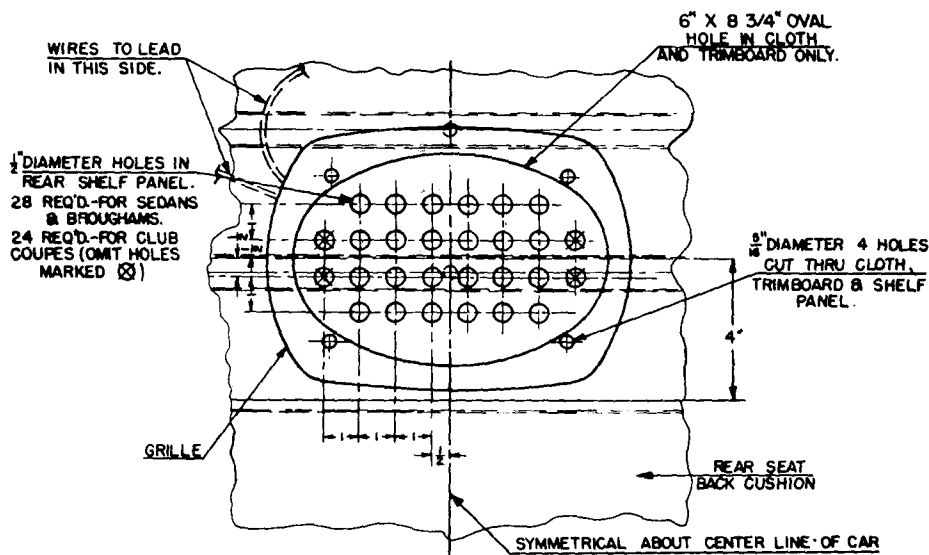
IF YOU WRITE to me, please note that our local postmistress has now assigned me a box number: 451 Elizabeth Street, Post Office Box 294, Mishicot, Wisconsin 54228. I'm always happy to hear from fellow HET members, especially on tech topics.

Thanks are due several people who have written in recent months. Ken

by George Schmidt

Hudson Rear Seat Radio Speaker 215925

High Temperature Paint (from PJH Brands of Scottsdale, Arizona apparently a supplier mainly for the motorcycle trade). Color of the finish is satin black, and it still looks good after about two years and 1500 miles of use on his Hudson, Norm notes.



Taplin, Maine, recommends a paste called "Noalox" for use on the ends of electric wires, especially when terminals are being crimped onto them. It is anti-corrosive, intended mainly for household and similar wiring, especially aluminum-to-copper or all-aluminum connections; but it also has automotive applications. Its purpose is to prevent oxidation and formation of resistance between parts, which would cause power loss or dangerous overheating. It comes in an 8-ounce can, with brush cap.

Two people wrote me about high-temperature finishes suitable for exhaust manifolds. Norm Blackmer, California, reports that he has had good results on the manifold for his 308 Hornet engine by wire-brushing it thoroughly (off car), and then painting it with a spray can of "PJ1-Fast Black"

Bob Icenberger, Oklahoma, sent a page from a recent Eastwood Company catalogue illustrating two of the "High Temp Coatings" which he has used, in silver and in stainless-steel gray colors. Satin black and factory cast-iron gray colors are also available. List price is \$19.99 per pint. The secret for success, Bob tells us, is to get the surface really clean before coating. Wire-brush or sand well (Eastwood recommends sandblasting), and be sure to wipe down with acetone before painting. A foam brush is better than a bristle one for applying these finishes, Bob suggests, adding that if they fade in a few years, they can be cleaned again with acetone solvent and then re-coated. One pint will coat many manifolds.

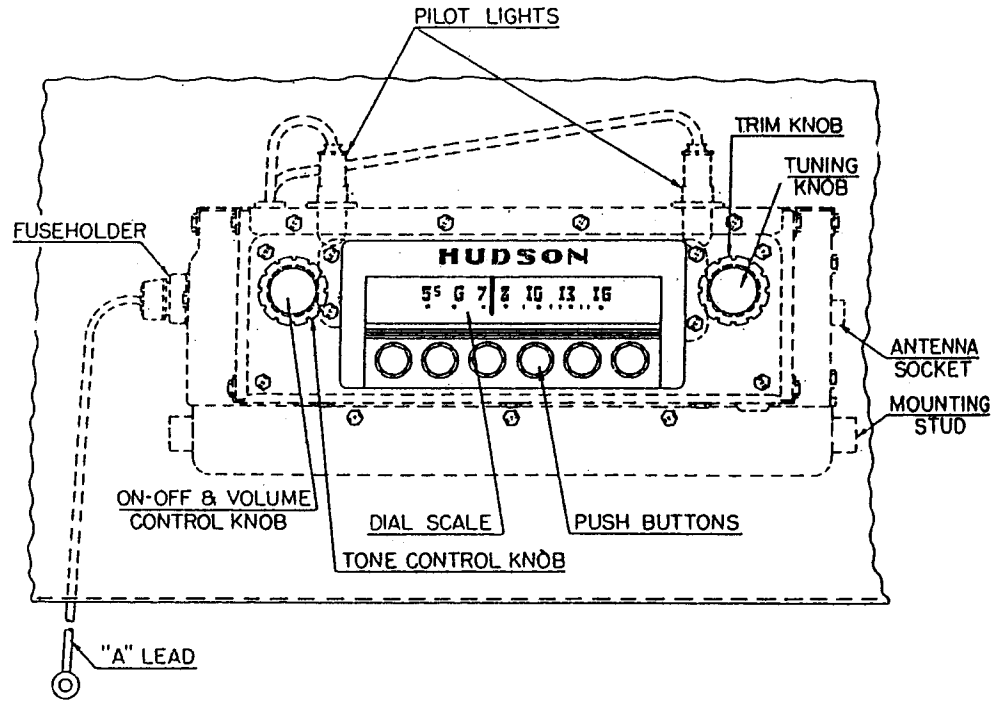
MY DOCTOR tells me that if I expect to retain an unrestricted dri-

ver's license, I had better remember to take all of my prescription medications correctly. He's probably right, and no doubt there are others in much the same situation. I'm thinking of starting a support group for them, to be called BADD (Bachelors Advocating Drugged Driving).

ALTHOUGH MOST RADIO repairs are beyond my ability, I've found that a large share of car-radio troubles have external causes, and can be remedied without taking the radio apart or using specialized test equipment. Leaving aside the obvious (battery dead or disconnected; outer case of radio not well grounded to car body), check 6-volt power to the lead wire, fuseholder, and fuse. Does the dial light up? If not, check the bulbs (most are 6-volt #44's), and perhaps also the on/off switch (usually built into the volume control, or sometimes into the tuning pushbuttons). For a quick test, bypass the switch by feeding current to a dial-light wire. Maintain original polarity (negative "hot" wire and positive ground, on most Hudsons).

Next, if the dial bulbs light, be sure that all of the tubes do too. Some vacuum-tube problems may be hard to trace, but a burned-out filament is usually obvious - with glass tubes, or even with a metal one which never warms up. Also, tube prongs must make clean contact. Handle tubes with care to avoid loosening glass from base.

Now, if a tube-type car radio lights up, but fails to buzz softly when turned on, the trouble is probably in the vibrator - a problem which I shall leave to a professional repairman. Purpose of the vibrator and its transformer and filter condenser is to raise 6 or 12 volts D. C. to the higher voltage needed for the plate circuit of each tube, thus eliminating the need for a separate "B" battery in the car. Today "solid-state" replacement devices may be available to do this same job, but of course they are not authentic (and do not buzz). If an old vibrator works O.K. but seems too loud, check the soft foam mounting for it which is used on most models. Also, because of the vibrator and other



parts, it is probably not wise to let these old radios remain unused for too many months or years. Store them in a dry cool place if possible, and if they are in working order, turn them on occasionally and allow them to operate for perhaps an hour or so.

THE NEXT EXTERNAL radio connections to be checked are to the speaker and to the antenna. The antenna plug (a standard style for many years) must be tight and corrosion-free. To check antenna, plug in a substitute one (with cable long enough so that staff can be placed outside car).

Hudson's familiar overhead antenna, with manual knob and with lead-in wire run along the center windshield post, is usually reliable, but can be checked for continuity from staff to plug tip, and also for inadvertent grounding-out, by disconnecting from radio, and then using test light and battery. The staff is held in its elbow by a small setscrew (with 4-point spline in head - not Allen type). This mounting must be clean and tight to avoid static noises. Sometimes a longer replacement staff can be found which will fit (or require only slight drilling-out of the elbow). This is useful for picking up weak signals.

For pre-stepdown Hudsons, 1940-47, radio antennas in several styles

and lengths were available, including one power-operated type (which used vacuum rather than an electric motor). We'd like to know whether anyone in the HET Club has a working one of these on his car.

SPEAKER IMPEDANCES for Hudson and most other old-car radios are typically 3.6 to 4 ohms. When installing a rear speaker, especially, note that with this low impedance and also the relatively low-wattage amplifier output, adequate wiring is essential - preferably #16 gauge. Do not use the present-day lightweight "speaker wire" with these radios, since it can cause both audio power loss, and distorted sound due to insufficient damping of speaker cone.

Since one side of the speaker circuit is usually grounded to the car body, only a single-wire feed should be needed to the rear speaker, but you may wish to compare the polarity of the two speakers in car, using a 1.5 volt dry cell, and watching movement of the cones. Do both of them "push" and "pull" simultaneously (which is the usual wiring plan), or does one "push" while the other "pulls?" This latter out-of-phase arrangement sometimes gives slightly better sound by eliminating "standing waves" inside the car on some low notes. To change

the phasing, simply reverse the connections at rear speaker terminals (sometimes it is necessary to cut the ground wire at speaker frame, and use an added wire from the opposite speaker terminal to ground on body instead).

Though Hudson specified only a 3-position speaker switch (front, rear, and both), you may wish to install a variable "fader" control (non-stereo type) instead, especially if one can be

less of this "dynamic" type. If it produces sound, but only at much reduced volume, check to be sure the field coil is not burned out and is receiving current. With the improved magnetic alloys such as "Alnico" which became available after World War II, permanent-magnet speakers soon regained their early-day popularity.

With a standard phone-type jack, which may be inconspicuously placed at bottom edge of dash, it should be

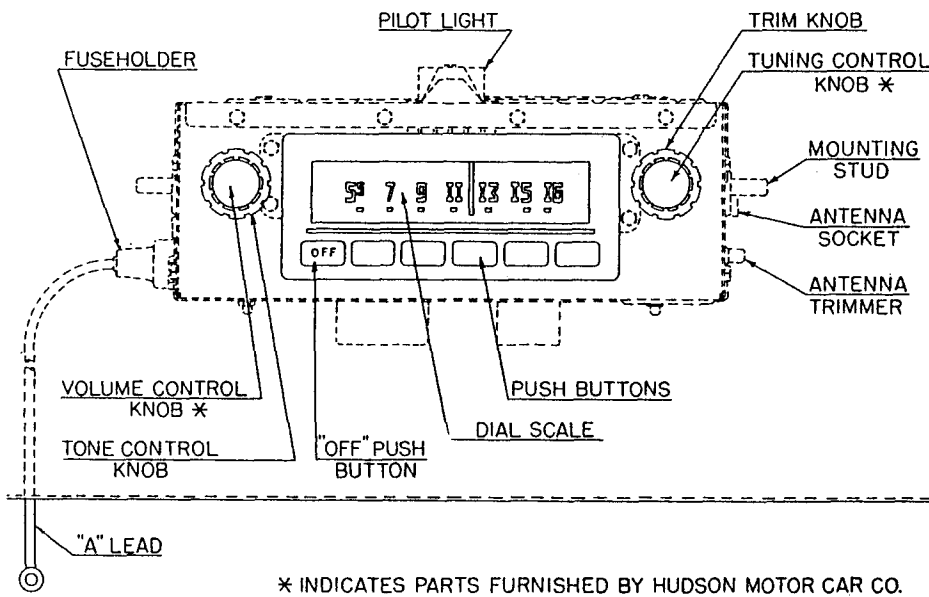
1950 finally was made with a pre-cut hole to fit a 6 x 9" oval speaker. On earlier sedans and on all stepdown coupés, it was necessary either to drill 24 or more half-inch holes (as factory specified), or to hacksaw one larger diamond-shaped hole (as I have done), in order to install the rear speaker. On convertibles, about the only available location is in the vertical metal wall between rear-seat area and trunk. On all of these cars, a die-cast speaker grille matching the front one gives best appearance; and the sound, if still not quite "hi-fi," is definitely better with two speakers. Note also the "crackle" finish paint used on grilles.... can anyone match this at present?

Up to about 1947, speaker repair kits were available, including a new cone and voice coil assembly, but such parts are no longer found. They required exactly uniform clearance of about .002 inch around center pole piece of speaker, and thus were difficult to install. Any contact or off-center mounting at this point will cause rattles and noise.

Another cause of such noises is any grit or small particles (especially ferrous metal) which have dropped into the speaker, from work on rear shelf or other sources. They are nearly impossible to remove once in contact with pole piece. It is best to clean any metal bits from the area with strong vacuum or magnet before putting speaker into place.

ALSO DATING FROM the 1942-1947 era are Zenith car radios with a solenoid-driven tuning mechanism which could be operated either by a dash button or by a foot control. These were available on Hudson, Nash, and perhaps other cars. Any working survivors in our club at present?

Fuses for most Hudson radios were 14-ampere size, generally in-line even though radio cases usually included space for a fuse socket. The 14-amp. fuses, typical small glass cartridge type, were made in two lengths, nearly identical, but the longer ones may not fit unless one turn is removed from coil spring in fuseholder.



found to fit a Hudson dash knob and mounting nut. Many such controls were used on Brand X car radios, notably Nash c. 1949-51.

For slightly brighter treble response, coat the center inch or two of cone area with thin lacquer to stiffen it. Do not coat rest of cone, but mend any small tears, especially in the pleats at outer edge with a non-hardening rubber trim cement.

NOT ALL SPEAKERS

before 1950 or so had permanent magnets. Many of them produced their magnetic field with a piece of soft iron and an extra winding, the "field coil," which was fed with low-voltage direct current, usually at 6 volts from the battery. If your speaker has three or four wires instead of two, it is doubt-

possible to use any good 4-ohm (or 8-ohm) headphones with these old car radios if desired. Although definitely not recommended for the driver, this might be excellent for a passenger or two. The jack may include contacts or a switch to allow silencing of front speaker when phones (or an extension speaker) are in use.

When a radio appears normal but the speaker remains completely mute, check for a bad connection or a burned-out voice coil (try with headphones or another speaker). This has been an especial problem with some later Brand X radios which apparently had more output wattage than speaker stamina.

REAR SHELF METAL

on Hudson 2- and 4- door sedans for

from coil spring in fuseholder.

As with most car radios, the fuses rarely burned out. If the 2-ampere fuse in a 1942-46 radio blows occasionally, be sure to check the power-driven tuner (and foot switch).

HUDSON RADIOS from 1942 to about 1950 were made by Zenith. Those 1948 and up were 6-tube units with pushbutton tuning but without foot control. Later Hudson radios including those with square pushbuttons, were by Sylvania, some of them with 8 tubes. In 1954 both pushbutton and plain manual-tuned versions were available. Earlier, in 1940-41, Hudson featured 6-, 7-, and 8-tube radios by Stewart-Warner, and also a smaller 5-tube "Junior" by Detrola. This last was an underdash unit with integral 3-inch low-fi speaker. It was also available for most Brand X's, sometimes aftermarket or under the "Pee-Wee" name, and it listed for about \$9.50 wholesale.

We are trying to discover who made the first radios for Hudsons, and in what year; and we'd also like to know about the ones from the 1930's (makers, special features, etc.). Some car radios of those years had a "control head," with knobs and dial, mounted in the dash, and had flexible-shaft control cables connecting this to the radio chassis. For earlier cars which had no provision in dash for mounting the control head, it was sometimes designed to be clamped to the steering column.

We're grateful to Harry Kraus for his help with the present article, and we are hoping to hear from readers with additional information about Hudson radio history, repair tips, etc. Even though most present-day AM programming may no longer be very relevant to many of us, the radio is one more Hudson accessory which one wishes to maintain in authentic working order.

More about radios in a future Hudsonotes. Best wishes to everyone for a Happy Easter and a good spring-

