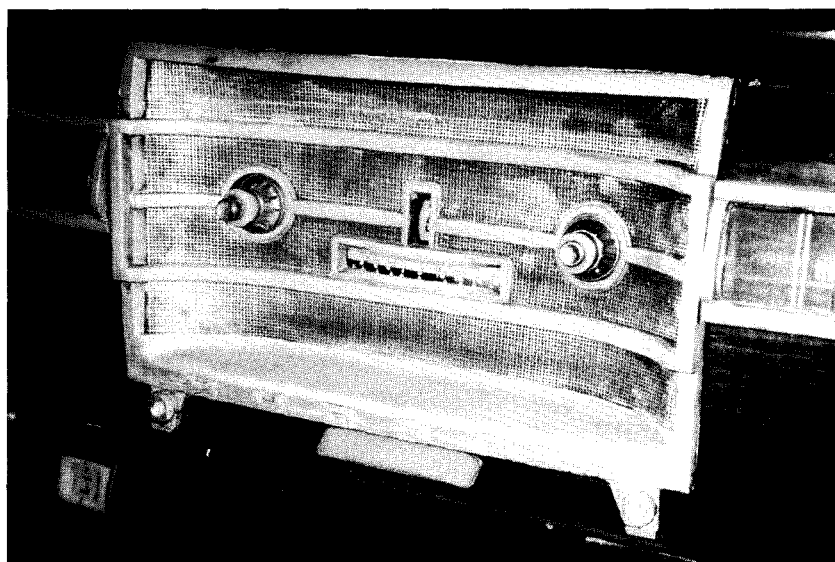


Tissues and Trivia

by George Schmidt

THE PACKAGING geniuses have done it again. Since the 1930's, "Kleenex" brand paper tissues, with their interleaved "pop-up" feature and their standard flat box measuring about 9.5 x 4.75 x 2 inches, have been a familiar U.S. icon; and numerous tissue dispensers for home or car have been designed to fit this standard container. Best-remembered automotive version was probably the "Auto-Serv" pull-down unit available with a chromed faceplate bearing the Hudson or other U.S. car name, and marketed through new-car dealers (including Hudson 1948 and up). "Generic" car dispensers of this size, often of the swing-out type, were also available for years from J.C. Whitney and other sources. Some service stations which offered free premiums with gasoline purchases (anyone remember those?) often included a box of Kleenex as one of the choices.



1942 type
Hudson radio in a
1941 Hudson 8.
Photo by William Ritz

Last autumn, however, when I attempted to buy a replacement box of tissues for the car, I found an astounding assortment of Kleenex packages—miniature, square, jumbo, and more—but not the classic flat dispenser-size box! I phoned the factory (Kimberly-Clark, Neenah, Wisconsin) at its "consumer" number, 1-800-553-3639, and later also at its "professional" number which was given to me. In both instances the ladies who answered were cordial but not extremely helpful. I suggested that while the Hudson (or the entire old-car) market for Kleenex was very small, it could offer good publicity value when the cars were displayed complete with an authentic dispenser and tissues.

QUITE BY CHANCE, at a restaurant near here, I noted a box of pop-up tissues which was just the right size—

but of another brand, from S C A Tissue North America (also of Neenah, Wisconsin). A call to S C A—whatever the letters stand for—at 1-866-722-6659 revealed that these boxed tissues are made in this "Park Avenue Ultra" and one other quality grade, but are distributed for professional or institutional use only, and are not ordinarily offered for retail sale. Go figure.

I've saved one empty Kleenex box which can perhaps be opened carefully at one end and refilled. Also, a friend recently gave me some "Guest Supply" pop-up tissues (from "a Sysco company," it says), in a flat box which is nearly standard size and should fit most dispensers.

On an Auto-Serv unit, the side prongs can be bent slightly for a better grip on the tissue box if necessary, and a few inconspicuous strips of black plastic tape can also be added at the

upper rear edge of the box.

WHATEVER BECAME of all of those hang-up plastic litter bags for cars? They were nearly ubiquitous from the late '50's through the '70's or longer, with many being giveaways from repair shops and other businesses. A few Brand X's also had a built-in litter pocket at one side.

The bags simplified floor and upholstery care, but today they are almost never seen—and of course some compacts barely have room for two people and their credit cards, let alone a litter bag.

Though the bag was most often merely hung on any handy dashboard knob, a better location on most Hudsons and many other cars is probably on a small chrome hook (or spring clip) placed just at the top of the passenger-side front kick panel. For rear-

seat use, a bag can be placed inside the pouch on front seatback of most stepdown sedans. If original litter bags cannot be found, perhaps plain plastic ones can be adapted.

IT'S "OH, DEER" AGAIN, because of an error in the November/December column item about those deer-repellent whistles for autos. These devices are claimed to be effective from 30 (rather than 50) MPH and above. We'd like to hear from readers who have used them, on either a collector vehicle or a prosaic late model...successfully or otherwise.

AMONG LETTERS received during 2003 was one from William Ritz, Pennsylvania, who enclosed photos of his '41 Hudson Commodore 8 (the 128"-wheelbase model). It appears that this car has a '42 Zenith radio, neatly installed, rather than one of the '41 Stewart-Warner or Detrola units. Very likely this is an original legitimate installation, since the factory offered a special kit for the purpose. We are not sure of the reason, but one possibility is that a surplus number of '42 radios had been built before new-car production was ended early in that year.

One answer to the query in November/December '02 *WTN* about a possible source for re-flocking of parts such as radio speaker screens came from Norman Puls (Fabric Technology Co.), California. He is able to do flocking work, but his tentative price of \$25 per unit (plus shipping) does not seem practicable for most of us. Note too that only the screen is flocked on these 1948-54 Hudson radios—the speaker grille is merely painted. However, no one to date has suggested a present-day source of low-luster "crackle" or "wrinkle" paints to match the original finish. These finishes were much used during approximately 1920-1960.

AN EARLIER letter from Fred Specht, New York, noted that on most Hudson straight-8's, one hole (second from rear) in the coolant distribution manifold or water jacket cover is partly obstructed by a slender metal post in the engine block. He wonders

whether this could be a factor in problems such as a cracked valve seat at the #6 cylinder.

Although thousands of these engines had extremely long-running lives with no sign of trouble at this point, it probably would do no harm to enlarge the hole (very slightly!), and to be sure that there is no casting roughness on the post—and then to use the thicker optional cork gasket for the jacket cover, rather than only the thinner vellumoid paper one. Also be sure that the water chamber—and all water holes to the engine head—are clean, and that any rust holes in the water distribution plate are properly repaired.

SOME MECHANICAL problems—on a collector car or a later model—can occur so gradually that the owner does not readily notice them. To help find minor troubles before they become serious, it may be wise to allow someone else—perhaps a family member or friend—to drive the car occasionally for a few miles. Items such as a low brake pedal (or high clutch), loose steering, sticky shifts, poor acceleration or road holding...maybe even cross-eyed headlights...will soon be brought to the owners attention.

As one example, my own first car, long ago, was an old '41 Nash Ambassador which I liked; but when a teenage friend (unlicensed) drove it, he immediately complained about the sloppy steering. I had the steering gear—evidently untouched before then—adjusted that same week.

On most Hudsons it is also possible to make this adjustment at home (see columnist Walt Mordenti's instructions in July/August '03 *WTN*, which may be clearer than some found in manuals). At the same time, check for looseness elsewhere, notably at the center steering arm bearings (ball type before '42; needle roller type thereafter); but perhaps also at the kingpins, drag link, and tie-rod ends.

I NOW HAVE apparently a complete file of the *White Triangle News*, 1959-2004. My own collection, from May 1974 on up, needed only two

issues (found long ago) to fill in. For all of the early mimeographed *WTN*'s, 1959-65, I am indebted to Robert Dybas and the Hudson Mohawk Chapter for the book of reprints which was first published in 1984.

Nearly all of the smaller-size monthly issues, from 1965-74...along with many tools and Hudson parts...were a gift from a late friend, Orville Voeks. The three missing '68 and '72 issues were kindly supplied by Lawrence Crowe (*WTN* Back Issues) for the price of just one. Illustrations in the earliest *WTN*'s were few (using electrically-made mimeograph stencils or an occasional enclosed picture postcard); but with the lithographic printing introduced for the small 5.5 x 8.5" issues, photographs were easily reproduced—of members' cars, original factory ads, club events, and more—and after December 1968, 2-color front covers also were the rule.

Page size was increased to 7 x 8.5" in January 1975, and the change to bi-monthly publication began in September '75, although classified-ad and tech-bulletin supplements continued to be mailed in most in-between months until late in 1978.

The "Technical Service Bulletins" were produced by the late Art Adams, Connecticut (subsequently a *WTN* Editor) in authentic factory style, as inserts removable for filing—usually several of them with each ad-supplement issue, January 1977 through September 1978. A later series appeared on the regular *WTN* center-fold pages 1980 and up.

Full-color artwork—from Hudson ads—had been featured on four *WTN* covers during 1975, and full-color photography first appeared on the six front and back covers for 1976 (now in horizontal format, and all of them printed at one time to reduce costs). The present larger standard-size issues began with November/December 1979; and since 1981 a gradually increasing share of them have included full-color covers (and occasionally even full-color centerspreads or other pages).

THERE IS A WEALTH of information and pictures in these issues from

the past forty-odd years, much of it still of permanent interest... especially if it can be found when wanted. Helpers include John O'Halloran at the Club Library, and Lawrence Crowe with *WTN* Back Issues—and for 1963-1984 the late Louis Backhus, California, published his loose-leaf “*WTN* Table of Contents” book, along with a matching “Swaps Manual” of interchangeable parts for Hudsons. Have we any volunteers willing to attempt an update of either of these books? Two *WTN* columnists have also included listings of their own past work: Walt Mordenti in July/August 2000, and this writer in March/April 1988 and July/August 1999. (This is a veiled hint to our other columnists, who have written much—about automotive history and other topics—which should not be lost.) Or do we need to consider any additional means of reference or retrieval—either now, or perhaps for HET's 50th anniversary in autumn 2009? It might again be in book form...or it might even be electronic, or computerized in some way. Much as the latter notion raises my cybernetophobic hackles, it could be of use to some of our members. What do readers think—and does anyone know what other old-car or hobby clubs have attempted in this direction? Let us know.

It seems there is also a complete set of the HET Club Rosters here. The first separate printed roster booklets were for 1968, with a supplement issued for 1969. All previous Club Rosters (except one 1965 mimeo pamphlet) had been published in the *WTN*, the first one being in the May 1960 issue, with 145 members listed. Zone Improvement Plan (ZIP) numbers were first added to the roster addresses in 1966. Club Rosters continue to be issued on approximately a 3-year cycle. All members should now have the 2002-2004 edition (white cover).

One mystery remains. I do not have *WTN* for December 1964, and possibly this is a “phantom” issue which was never published, owing to various delays at the time. A January 1965 editorial states: “Better Late Than Never.” (There were also a few

“phantom” Ad Supplements in 1978.)

THE BIG PULL-DOWN center armrest for the rear seat was virtually a Hudson trademark on 1948-54 Commodores and Hornets. A smaller one was featured on several Brand X vehicles of the era, and one Nash “Airflyte” model had a permanent rear-seat divider, evidently meant to suggest airplane seating.

Similar fold-down armrests for the front seat have not been as common, especially in those pre-bucket and pre-console years. However, my present “wheels” include a large 1984 Olds wagon complete with rust and a sizable number of extras, some of which still work—among them the clock, FM radio (four speakers), lighted vanity mirror...and a pull-down front armrest. This last appears previously unused, but I like it.

Aftermarket center armrests were formerly available from J.C. Whitney and similar sources, apparently of tie-on or strap-on design, and sometimes including a built-in storage compartment. Probably a few of them were also custom-made. They fitted most bench-seat cars, although a taper to the rear would be necessary to allow for the pivoting of the front seatbacks on 2-door models. Possibly one of these armrests would not profane even a Hudson, especially if finished to match the car's upholstery and panel fabrics. A throw pillow, or perhaps a child's accessory seat—either from the car's own time, or of the present “approved” variety—could also be made to harmonize in this way. Youthful cynics, it's true (if we have any of those in the HET Club) may regard the center armrest merely as a superfluous obstruction.

Next time: Lights, miscellany,
and perhaps your own suggestions.

A HAPPY EASTER...and a good
springtime to you and your Hudson:



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