

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 1

FIRST QUARTER 2025

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## Last summer’s Henney turnout: a little on the light side

We look back at last year’s summer show season by noting something rather unusual: low turnout of Henney vehicles at major nationals. Last year saw one Henney at the PCS International, and this year was the same: one Henney.

The Packard National saw one Henney—and it came out to Wisconsin all the way from California (our faithful readers have seen it before, in the 3Q 2019 issue: a 1946 Clipper 7-passenger belonging to Doug Moore. We should pause at this point in the narrative to offer apologies for having misidentified the owner as his son, Clint, in that issue.)

Interestingly enough, the *same car* turned up at the Studebaker Drivers Club’s International Meet in Dubuque, Iowa two weeks later. Seems the Californians (and their cohorts in Nevada) have a slew of Studebaker parts for sale.

Henneyway, the point here is: we hope to see lots of Henneys at the upcoming PCS International in Albany. As an incentive, we will point out that The Packard Club every year donates a nice trophy for the highest-scoring judged Packard at this event, and nearly all such cars will be Henneys, of course.

## On the cover: a Henney in ACTION!

This 1948-49 (22nd Series) Henney ambulance is re-

sponding to something, though we don’t know what; everyone is looking down the street at something.

The photo comes to us by way of faithful contributor Rich Litton, and there’s a hand-printed notation at the bottom of the print: Market St. SE. That isn’t much help. The best guess we can come up with is San Francisco.

As an aside, the city banned ALL CARS from the eastern portion of that street a few years back and lots of folks have concluded that idea killed an iconic street.

The pandemic didn’t help, and a \$600-million project was drastically scaled back in 2020 and sits largely unused today. The cars are gone, all right; but so are all the people.



### THE HENNEY PROGRAM OF PROGRESS

George Hamlin, Editor

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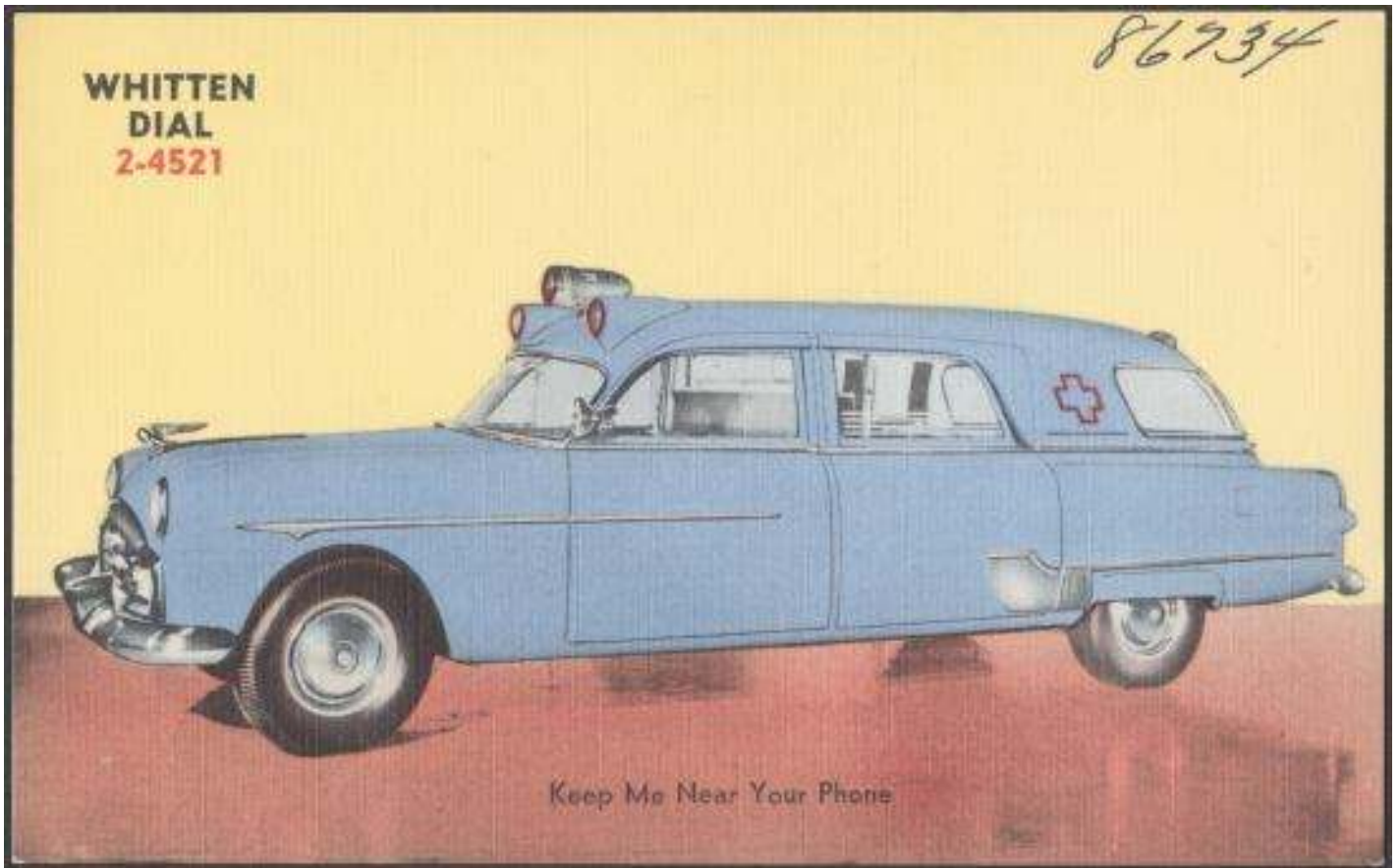
## No renewals due this year

We came to this decision last year, and posted it in the 2024 Number 1 issue: renewals have been changed from yearly to biennially. Not so much a reasoned approach as one emerging from the time spent on calling for and processing renewals.

Eventually we decided, hey, let's just do this every OTHER year and *voila*, the workload is halved.

The dues remain the same: zilch, nada. That's because we do not send printed copies of the newsletter to Henneyone except *Old Cars*.

## Postcard of the quarter



From the Whitten Funeral Home in Lynchburg, Virginia, their new 1952 Henney. And like so many others in this field, Whitten is still there, operating today as Whitten Timberlake.

Our readership will note immediately that this is a drawing—missing excrescences like door handles—

but the car is set up with a spotlight, siren, rear-door etched glass, and tunnel lights.

The card has a phone number and a suggestion: “Keep Me Near Your Phone” in case of emergency. That strikes us as an extremely practical idea, beneficial to both the recipient and, of course, to Whitten.

# "Henney"

## Commercial Bodies

Will Fit Any  
Regular Ford  
Chassis

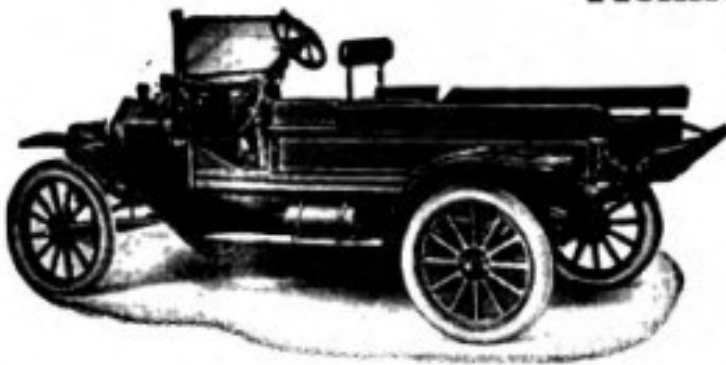


Your regular Ford Car may be easily converted into a delivery car by adding a **HENNEY COMMERCIAL BODY**. Simply lift the body onto the chassis and tighten only six bolts—body can be put on or taken off in a few minutes without the aid of a mechanic, as all Henney Bodies are shipped complete with all necessary bolts and will fit any regular Ford chassis.

**Henney bodies are beautiful in design and built of the best grade of materials throughout.**

We have a body suited for every need—general merchant, dry goods merchant, hardware dealer, grocer, plumber, florist, farmer and dairyman. Catalog describing HENNEY Bodies will be sent on request. Write us today for prices.

**Henney Buggy Company**  
Freeport, Illinois



**Dealers:—** You will find ready sale for Henney Bodies. Will fit used chassis and help you turn over your stock quickly at a good profit. Ask us for special dealer's proposition. It's a money maker.

## A little *deja vu* here

We love it when a story comes together. The car seen at right was featured in 2016 Number 1. It has been refurbed and turned up at auction—ending up in Germany of all places, and you will observe that its status has improved since auction time.

If this is indeed the

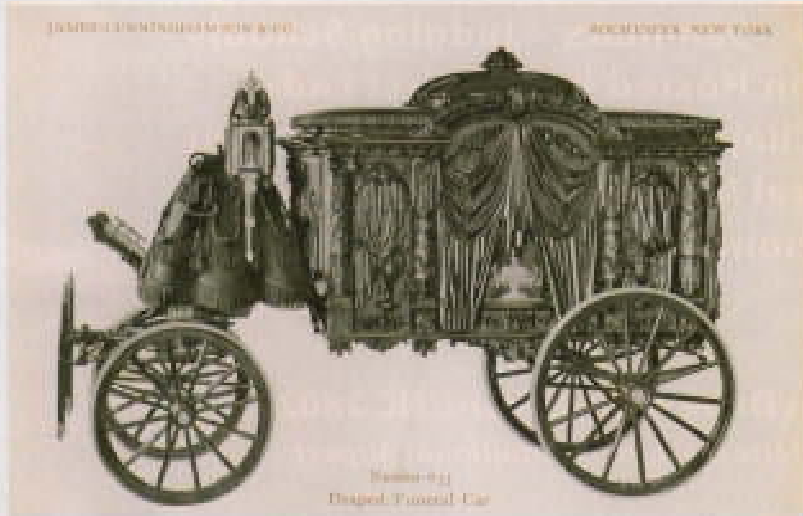




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# Ride In Peace

*Funeral Cars in America*  
by Matthew Hocker, AACA Librarian



1904 Cunningham  
horse-drawn  
draped funeral car

In the July/August issue, Arno Goldman delved into the history of vehicles marketed to physicians, but what happens if you don't want to be caught dead in a doctor's car? For those looking to make an entrance at their final destination, hitching a ride in the friendly neighborhood hearse is the way to go. Automobiles in the funeral industry have remained a mainstay in the profession for more than a century, and ... contrary to their primary function ... the history of the funeral car's development is both rich and lively.

It would be impossible to tell a story about funeral cars without delving into the centuries-old Western tradition of the funeral procession. In fact, the word funeral itself is rooted in the Latin *funeraria*, which means "torchlight procession." With those earliest processions, transport of the body to the grave was done on foot and carried via a stretcher-like vessel known as a bier (meaning to carry or bear, hence the term "pullbearer"). Once coffins arrived on the scene, extra weight necessitated the addition of wheels to biers. While automobiles largely eliminated the need for processions on foot, the bier has remained in use into the present-day as a means of transporting the deceased between the different points within the funeral service, including to and from hearses. Better



known as casket- and church-trucks today, modern funeral cars were designed with special compartments for biers, which in turn fostered demand for easy-to-transport collapsible models.

Another game-changer in the industry came in the form of horse-drawn funeral coaches, which, for a long time, were largely relegated to wealthy members of society. The earliest depiction of a funeral coach was the 1468 painting "Funeral Cortège of Richard II," depicting the late English king's funeral procession in the year 1400. Demand from the affluent for elegant funerary transport would be reflected within the growth of the coachbuilding

industry, which would bring together artisans from diverse professions with an eye for ornate functionality. Intricate carvings and large glass panels for viewing would proliferate. Mastered in Europe, the craft would skip across "the pond" to Colonial America.

By the 1800s mechanized transport in the form of trains and, eventually, intercity streetcars would also be called into funerary service. With the introduction of the automobile in the late 19th century, it was only a matter of time before funeral directors were dying to get their hands on a car for improving business. One of the earliest references to automobiles in use as hearses appeared in print in 1900. In

1926 Studebaker Superior Coach funeral coach



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Funeral Car That Will Carry a Casket and a Company of 25 Persons Can Probably Be Had.

Now comes the funeral car, a motor-vehicle, which carries not only the casket, flowers, undertaker and his staff, but the entire funeral party, and threatens to do away with the old form of procession. It is already in use in several cities and has many advantages for turns, as it not only lowers the cost of funerals, but is far more convenient than the old system, as it moves through the city traffic to its destination with no delay and without the waiting necessitated at burial ceremonies caused by the delayed arrival of the various units of the procession.

1918 26-passenger funeral car.

In its August 1900 issue, *Horseless-Age* reported, "Oliver H. Bair, a Philadelphia undertaker, has an automobile funeral wagon in successful use, and intends to add five more." The body was built in Philadelphia by Fulton & Wilker Wagon Co. A few months later, Bair was highlighted as an

"enterprising undertaker" in the December 26, 1900 issue of *Prisoners Ink*, a journal published for advertisers. Article author John H. Sinberg asserted, "he is also the first and only undertaker to have an automobile hearse." The business continued operations up to the present as Oliver H. Bair Co., a testament to the founder's forward thinking.

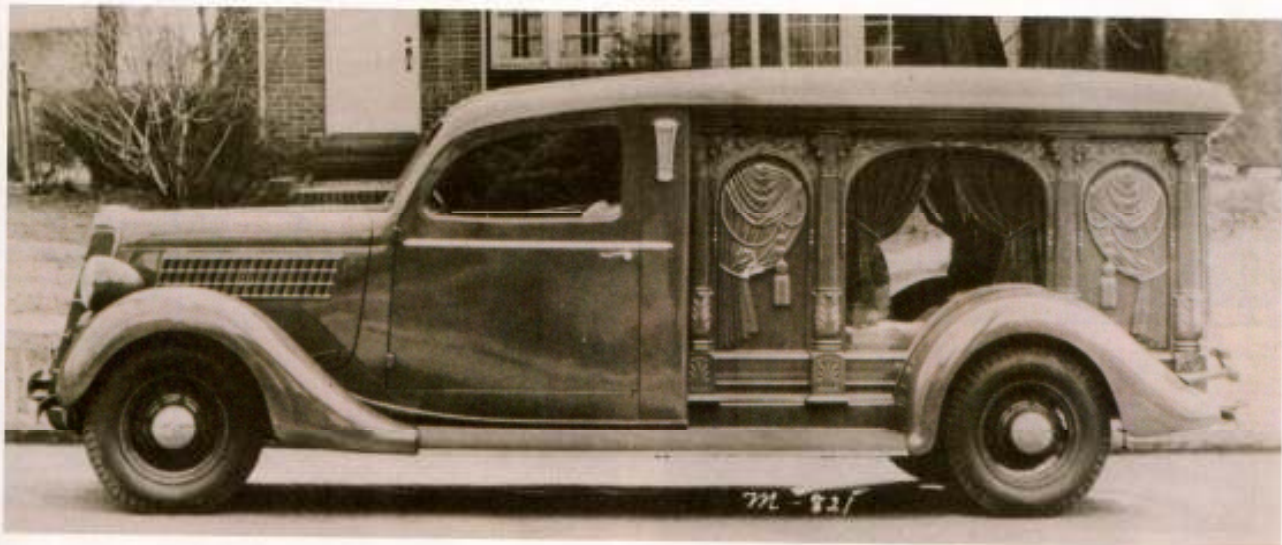
One of the earliest photographed examples was an "Undertakers' Car" owned and operated by Stephens & Bean in Fresno, California, a 1905 Rambler Model 1 touring. Stephens & Bean developed body plans and mailed a request to Rambler, but the company was unable to fulfill the order. Undeterred, the body was built by a local enterprise in Fresno, with the left side designed to hold the casket, and the right side outfitted with two bucket seats for driver and passenger. Meanwhile, the vehicle could be converted back into standard transportation "in as little as 20 minutes." Stephens and Bean were ecstatic about the car's efficiency and reception among customers; the July 4, 1906

issue of *Horseless-Age* reported, "they insured one trip of 100 miles made in 5½ hours and another of 50 miles, on which a corpse was conveyed, in three hours."

While cars would not outright replace horse-drawn funeral transport right away, better roads, improvements in dependability and engineering, and more economical pricing would pave the way for both greater demand and production. Coachbuilders answered the call, with many funeral directors electing to have their tired carriage-horse transferred to a motor vehicle chassis, a practice that continued as late as the 1930s. The year 1909 would be a benchmark year toward widespread adoption, with Cunningham introducing a motor ambulance as a dual-purpose vehicle for both medical transport and funeral professions, a tradition that would persist in the decades that followed as the "combination car." In June of that year, long-established coachbuilder Crane & Breed would be the first to publicly offer production model automotive hearse bodies.

In the tradition of carriage coachbuilding, the earliest hearses were often decorated with highly ornate carvings, fine upholstery, and sometimes even stained glass. Legions of coachbuilders would join the roster of bespoke funeral car manufacturers, from Lutoka and Flexible to Sayers & Seoville and Miller & Meteor (who would eventually merge in 1956 under the umbrella of Wayne Works of Indiana). These companies were proud of their heritage and even reached upon it in their advertising; for example, photographs in Miller-Meteor's 1975 catalog juxtaposed imagery of horse-drawn funeral coaches and drivers in period dress, looking to the future alongside the latest hearses.

While ornate carvings saw a resurgence in the 1930s, there was a push toward simplistic elegance by the 1940s, and this has persisted into the present. Exteriors were about subtle, sweeping body styling, and windows were outfitted with drapes and shades. Flourishes like ornamental finis wreaths were available options, and rear-mounted fixed landau irons



1935 Ford with A.J. Miller retrofitted horse-drawn funeral car body.

(usually attached upside down), introduced by Eureka as ornamentation in 1931, have survived nearly a century of evolution in coachbuilt design. Luxurious interiors would remain available to funeral homes that desired an extra special touch. In 1978, Miller-Meteor described its interiors as a "Renaissance of grandeur in funeral coach design [with] ... luxurious upholsteries reflect[ing] the influence of Gothic architecture."

A quest to reduce the stress on bodies of the living would also lead to engineering innovations in funeral cars. Eureka conceived another game-changer in 1926 with its "Side-Way Burial Coach," which featured large doors on the left and right sides and a swing-out table in order to make for easier and less-strenuous casket-loading. Other coachbuilders adopted and expanded upon the concept, often with quirky names reflecting this feature. In the 1930s, Henney introduced its Nu-3-Way models, which allowed for loading into both sides and the rear. In the 1960s, Flexible of Loudonville, Ohio, offered a rear door that could be opened from the left or right sides, offering "greater 'Flexibility' for all loading conditions." Ford unleashed an even more versatile innovation in its 1966 station wagon models with the Magic Doorgate, owing its name to the rear door being able to swing out sideways or downward like a pickup tailgate. Other major American manufacturers would follow suit, and Amblewagon professional cars

equipped with this door referred to it as the "dual-action tailgate."

When coachbuilders selected cars for conversions, marques conveying a sense of prestige like Packard (prior to the company's demise), Cadillac, and Lincoln became mainstays in the industry. For businesses with smaller budgets and/or those seeking to add first-call and conversion vehicles to their fleets, particularly in the decades following the end of World War II, they could choose from funeral cars on chassis from Chevrolet, Mercury, Oldsmobile, and even DeSoto. Pickup trucks, station wagons, and minivans would also join the ranks.

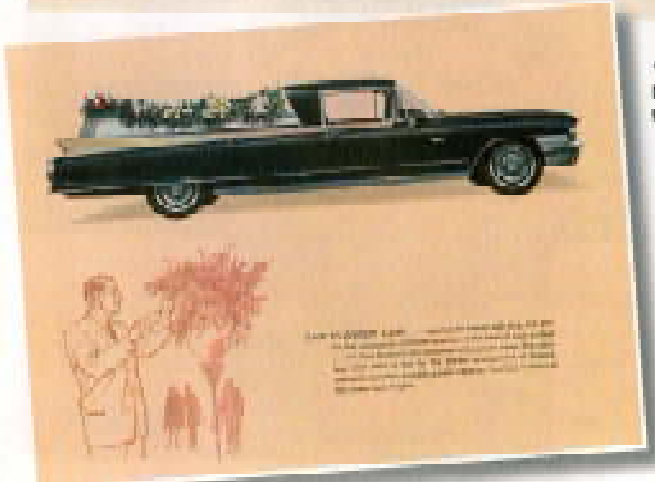
1948 Packard Henney combination car.

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1960 Superior custom styling.

1962 54S Superline Victoria.



1962 Cadillac Miller-Meteor flower car.



1940 Henney Singing Chapel accessories.

Today, you would be hard-pressed to find a funeral parlor in America without a hearse on-hand, standing as a testament to nearly 125 years of service within the profession. If you would like to learn more about funeral cars or other professional vehicles like ambulances and limousines, you can bury yourself in a wide array of resources including books on the subject, *The Professional Car* magazine, more than 40 files on professional cars by various brands, and a dedicated coachbuilder section covering more than 340 different manufacturers. Thanks to a generous donation from AACA member Paul Cichon, we also added more than 140 pieces of professional car literature to our files and, of course, everything here is "open case!" for your own personal viewing!



## A Concise Guide to Types of Funeral Vehicles

When most people think of funerals and vehicles, the first thing they probably think of is the traditional stand-alone funeral car leading processions to the cemetery. There are actually other types of vehicles used by the profession for other purposes, within the procession itself or behind the scenes. Here is an overview of the different types.

### First-Call Vehicles

As the name would imply, first-call vehicles are traditionally used to make the initial conveyance of the deceased to the funeral home. In the early 1900s, many a funeral car acted as a first-call vehicle because they were banned from most American cemeteries due to noise and the smell of burning gas. Today, there are still purpose-built first-call vehicles, but funeral homes also use older hearses in their fleet to serve the same function, saving money in the process.

### Combination Cars

Combination cars are multipurpose vehicles, able to serve as ambulances and funeral cars. Some were also marketed as vehicles for personal use, with companies like Amblewagon assuring prospective customers this would help them fight depreciation. These vehicles were good for smaller funeral directors as well as smaller towns in which it was more economical to have one vehicle serving multiple needs. In the 1950s, Economy Coach pitched their smaller Junior Combination models to larger funeral homes as first-call vehicles, capable of reducing wear and tear on more expensive models in their fleet.

### Flower Car

Transport of large numbers of flowers to cemeteries was traditionally handled by hearses equipped with containers and open touring cars and phaetons. Once these body styles were phased out, professional car manufacturers began building special vehicles to carry on the tradition with models that could be mistaken for elegant-looking pickup trucks. For 1937, Henney introduced a flower car on a Packard chassis and Eureka produced a LaSalle example. In the decades that followed, Cadillac would become synonymous with the vehicle. Far from a one-

trick pony, these cars were marketed for their versatility, often capable of carrying caskets as first-call vehicles or in funeral processions. While not as common today, they are still produced by coachbuilders like Platinum with its Cadillac Cortège.

1976 Cadillac Miller-Meteor combination.

## Versatile combination coaches

Any Miller-Meteor can be ordered as a combination coach. Change over from funeral coach to ambulance takes just minutes, a few simple steps and no tools.

**Funeral service:** Remove warning light from roof. Turn Convert-a-Floor panels so casket rollers are exposed. If the combination coach is a limousine, place exterior landau panels in position.



**Ambulance service:** Install warning light on roof. Flip over the three Convert-a-Floor panels to conceal rollers. Unfold jump seats from stepwell. Remove landau panels. Ambulance identification grills (optional, extra) may be placed in windows.

**Note:** Top of upholstered portion of partition is higher in combination coaches to provide greater storage space for emergency supplies. Air conditioning is standard for the front compartment; optional, extra, for the rear.

## The Henney Trading Post—bargains galore

I'm trying to reproduce a coach light for the Packard. The only information I can find about the light are just from pictures. Did Henney provide any other information about the light other than just pictures? Apparently, Henney only made them for one year. So I'm not sure if that was 1948, 1949, or 1950. JEFF MANDZIUK <mandzi5@aol.com>, cell number 586-808-3838.

We're printing his pics in case someone can help. This variable lighted sign was used, not only to shout FUNERAL, but in at least one specialty case: the television car we've discussed here before. Can Henneyone help? And while we have Mr. Mandziuk on the line, he also has some items for sale; parts are located in Warren, Michigan.

Passenger side fender with wheel cover for a 1940 Henney. Wheel well is rusted out. \$200 or best offer plus shipping; early 1930s Henney wheels \$400 or best offer, plus shipping.



## Trading Post continued

Offering my 1947 Packard Custom Super Clipper (2151-3047). 148-inch wheelbase, 3-speed with overdrive, factory delivered 2/15/47. I purchased this car September, 2010.

\$25,000

Also offering my 1948 Packard Deluxe Eight Formal Sedan. 120-inch wheelbase, 3-speed with overdrive. I purchased this car December, 2006.

\$25,000

I have used these cars for weddings, birthdays, proms and other special events for many years. Very reliable. Buy them both and I'll toss in my 1949 Packard Sedan parts car!

All three are located in Marietta, Ohio. Delivery available.

Bill Peoples  
740-525-1112



## Henneymoney

BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD		\$ 697.77
RECEIPTS		
Contributions	\$ 50.00	
TOTAL INCOME FOR 2024	\$ 50.00	
EXPENSES		
Postage	\$ 11.34	
Printing	68.97	
TOTAL EXPENSES FOR 2024	\$ 80.31	
NET INCOME FOR 2024		-\$ 30.31
BALANCE CARRIED TO 2025		\$ 667.46



## Stuff

A recent study has shown that hobbies “stave off cognitive decline.” That should be all the reason the Henney collector needs to hear to continue membership in The Professional Car Society and to continue ownership of a Henney or three.

§ # & ^ ¶ ¥

Approximately 67 million cars with Takata air bags have been recalled because the things can explode. So if your Henney has these...no, wait...

£ @ γ Σ Ø †

We were grumbling recently about these new words the undergraduates are coming up with, shortenings of real words, like fam, nabe, merch, etc. Then it occurred to us that automobile people have been doing this for a century, with terms like gas, dash, carb, limo, trans, diff, Merc, Olds. For some it amounts to a full circle; Olds, a shortening of Oldsmobile, was derived from Olds in the first place, and most folks probably never heard of Ransom Olds. And dashboards were extensions of the floorboard designed to protect the driver from horses kicking up road dash—stones, droppings, dirt, junk. Nearly all roads were covered with dash, early in the 20th Century.

In several European countries, they set fines for speeding according to how much the government thinks the driver/owner is worth. We’ve seen fines up to nearly \$100,000 for doing 15 mi/hr over the posted limit (both figures recalculated to U.S. units). Be careful out there...

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Years of worldwide travel have revealed that there is one expression found in every language on the globe. That is: “okay.” But, this being a Henney publication, that opens the conversation to another word that is almost universal, based on news reports: ambulance, or at least a very close version of it. Even in countries that do not use the Latin alphabet, they’ll put that one on the vehicle.

♪ ♠ ♡ ♦ ♫

There’s a new model out now: the Nissan Kicks. That accuses one to wonder: is there a Nissan dealer someplace in the U.S. on a highway with the number 66? U.S. 66 is long gone, but maybe a state highway? That way the dealer could advertise, “Get your Kicks on Route 66.” Just a thought.

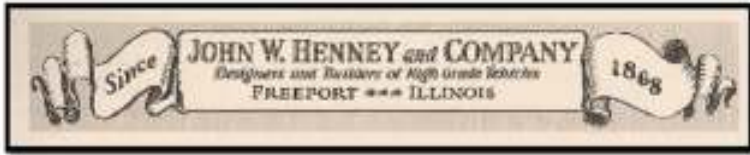
A couple of years ago, an ambulance struck and injured a cyclist in Oregon by making a right turn into him. The crew picked him up and drove him to the hospital. All’s well, right? But then the ambulance company sent the chap a bill for just *over \$1800 for the transport!*

What’s worse, the injured cyclist is also being billed for about \$50,000 in medical expenses and expects about \$50,000 more. So he is suing for \$997,000. Wouldn’t have happened with a Henney ambulance crew, we’re pretty sure.

↔ ® ⊕ ∠ ζ № ∅

We’ve never understood why, for some folks, having a light bulb go OFF and having one go ON mean the same thing.

The Chapter, and the association, recently lost one of its most valuable members: Betty Cole. Long a fixture of Micro-Meets and other PCS events, Betty was part of a PCS asset, the Cole family, which included Donna and Dale. Dale, you may recall, handled the Henney roster for years. We don’t need to go into detail here because her farewell was in the most recent issue of *The Professional Car*, but we could not let it go by unmentioned. Farewell, dear friend.



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