



Packard



PELICAN PAPERS

SPRING/SUMMER 2020



THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF
NORTH ATLANTIC PACKARDS
A Region of Packard Automobile Classics, Inc.



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North Atlantic Packards

2020 Activity Calendar

date

activity

October 2020

Studebaker Packard Day

Larz Anderson Museum, Brookline MA

November 14, 2020 NAP Tech Seminar





Director's Comments

Hello all,

As we roll into September and the temperatures are cooling a little, I realize that the 2020 car show season is nearly over (not that it ever started). I certainly hope that everyone in the NAP club understands our decision to postpone our annual events this year and know that we (the board) decided upon this decision with heavy hearts. I hope that everyone has been able, despite the world around us, to get out and drive your cars this year. I know we have. It's a satisfying feeling of at least getting out and driving our Packards even if we can't see our Packard friends.

The Board has been meeting over Zoom calls to discuss our future plans and what we can do to make our club events for 2021 fun- filled and

something to look forward to. I hope you all will consider sticking with us to see what we have planned for next year. We are working to pull together a membership meeting over zoom so stay tuned.

Even though there are not any club sanctioned events, there are still fun car activities going on around in our area. The Museum of Transportation is scheduled to still have it's Studebaker day lawn event in limited numbers. There have been several car cruises hosted by some car show organizers. Some of our neighboring states are having cars and coffee events. Club member Tom Laferriere from Smithfield RI is having one such event in September. Hershey is having a car show-only event during what normally is the mecca swap meet event of the year. Klingburg in New Haven CT is another event that is having a limited number of spectators for their annual event. These are some recommendations that come to mind and could change at any moment. Please follow up online, or by phone to see if any of these are still happening before you embark in your Packard.

2020 will be in the books soon enough and hopefully we can get back to seeing each other out in our cars, touring and exploring what our New England region has to offer. Until then, stay healthy and get out for a drive!

- Parker

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From the Desk of
Drusilla Carter, Editor

Welcome to the annual roster issue of the *Pelican Papers*! Please hold on to this issue, as it has all of the contact information for your fellow NAP members.

Since we are not holding our usual club activities, I am holding an activity of my own in this issue. Please share the included coloring page with your children or grandchildren (or color it yourself) and then send me pictures of the result. We'll have a special guest judge the entries and will publish them in a future issue.

Also, for those of you looking for some quality viewing experiences, NAP is starting its own YouTube channel. Find it by searching YouTube for the North Atlantic Packards channel and stay tuned for some fun videos from our members. (You can submit your own Packard-related videos to share on the channel to northatlanticpackards@gmail.com.)

Hope you all are staying well and making sure to get those Packards out on the road before cold weather comes!

- Drusilla





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Flying Cars with Venetian Blinds: 1942 Predictions for the Car of the Future

By Jeff Nilsson

In 1942, the *Saturday Evening Post* asked several auto designers what Americans could expect to see when Detroit began making passenger cars again. Author Edward R. Grace reported, “If our seven prophets are accurate, the postwar era will see more people than ever going places sitting down and they will go faster, more cheaply, and more comfortably, and in lighter, handsomer motorcars.”

Predictions that Missed the Mark

While some of the designers’ predictions proved accurate, others were wildly fanciful

- **Car bodies of molded plastic and plywood**
Designers believed plastic could be developed that had 90% of the impact strength of steel. Molded-plastic auto bodies would reduce the weight of automobiles, making them more fuel efficient. The idea of plywood had been borrowed from the combat gliders developed by the Army. The plywood-construction idea was still a promising concept back in 1942, before the gliders were used in the European invasion and earned the nickname “flying coffins.”
- **Plastic roofs with venetian blinds**
“Plastics which permit the transmission of ultra-violet rays will give the passenger a good tan without the discomfort of sunburn, due to the elimination of the infra-red rays,” said a Ford Motor Company designer. “A lightweight venetian blind will control the amount of light desired.” He made these comments at a time when few were aware that tanning could lead to skin cancer. Also, he appears not to have known that it is ultraviolet rays, not infrared, that causes sunburn (although both kinds of radiation can cause cancer).
- **No steering wheel or windshield wipers**
Steering levers were proposed as more powerful, responsive alternatives to steering wheels. Heated windshields would somehow eliminate the need for windshield wipers.
- **Competition from the aviation industry**
America had been remarkably successful in producing aircraft and training pilots on a massive scale for the war. Some auto designers believed that, after the war, aircraft manufacturers would “turn out practicable planes at prices about the same as present-day automobile prices,” said Grace. The idea of Americans owning their own planes inspired some of the more fantastic ideas. A designer who’d worked for Packard expected to see “homes, offices, and public buildings designed to accommodate travel by air, which will give an entirely new functional value to roofs. I am confident that there will be many air-colony settlements. You are going to see service stations along our highways designed to accommodate both motorcars and planes.”

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Predictions that Came True

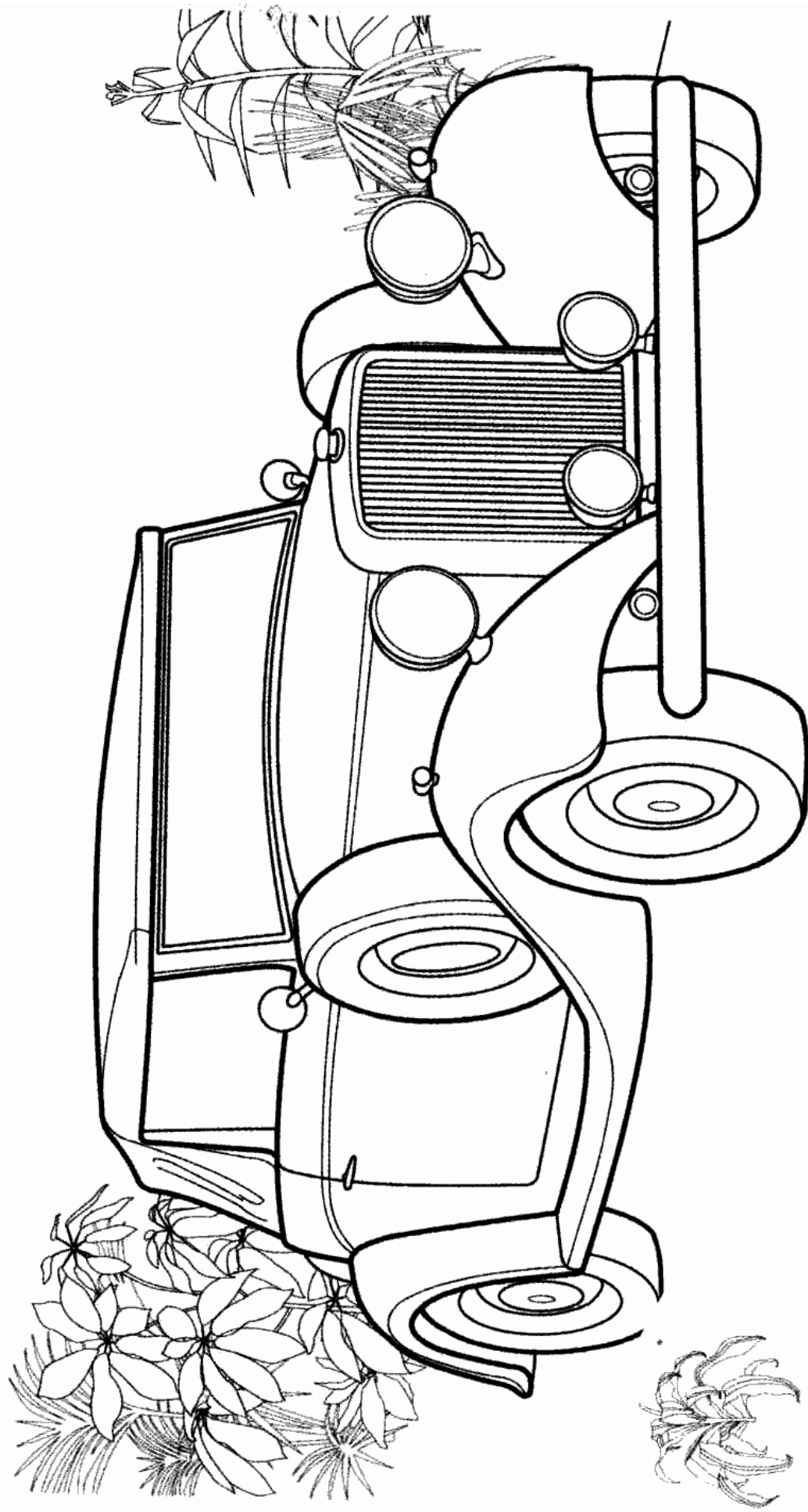
But some predictions were spot on:

- **Lighter engines**
Building aircraft for the military had taught the auto industry a lot about reducing engine weight. A Chrysler engineer said pre-war auto engines weighed five times as much as an airplane engine that delivered the same horsepower. “It’s possible to eliminate two hundred and fifty from the prevent average of six hundred pounds” — which is close to current range of engine weights.
- **New, sleeker designs**
GM Vice President Harley Earl said the days of the traditional, boxy sedan were over. Postwar cars would do away with the static look. “The public wants low, racy styles,” he said, “fast-looking, graceful cars that are functional in appearance.
- **A lot more cars on the road**
Even though many planners were expecting America would go into a recession when the war ended, GM’s Earl predicted the auto industry would see unprecedented growth. By 1952, he said, the number of automobiles in America would reach 50,000,000, almost twice the number registered in 1941. He was only off by 10%.
- **Tires that automatically adjust pressure**
One designer predicted tires that would automatically adjust pressure according to the road on which they’re travelling. While this feature hasn’t yet arrived, Michelin is developing an airless tire, made of recycled materials, with 3D printed treads that can be changed to accommodate road conditions.

Regardless of what America expected in postwar automobiles, what they got, when commercial-vehicle production resumed in 1945, were 1942 models with new front grills and trimmings. Detroit didn’t turn out any fully new automobiles for another four years.



Henry Joy on his 1915 trip across the US. Aren't you glad roads have improved since then?



Packard for sale: 1948 Standard Eight. \$6500.
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