NOVEMBER 2008







YOUR GUIDE TO THE BEST IN FALL CAR REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE AND SALES

Car Care Inside & Out

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE WINCHESTER PRESS



- The Re-introduction Of The Challenger
- Local Racing Duo Place First In Class
- Tire Tips To Avoid Winter Slips
- Money Saving Fuel Efficiency Tips
- Dialing and Driving Don't Mix

Tire tips to avoid winter slips

WINCHESTER — We've already had the first winter wallop, and motorists should be thinking about safe winter driving; winter tires are a must.

Winter tires have an aggressive tread design that provide a better grip while throwing off snow and slush, providing more stability when braking and better vehicle handling.

The rubber compound of a winter tire is relatively soft. The rubber in an all-season tire starts to lose elasticity and harden at temperatures around -8 C to -10 C, greatly reducing grip. At -15 C, this type of tire will have lost all its elasticity, whereas a winter tire will only harden at around -40 C.

When purchasing or installing winter tires, remember the following:

1) Install four winter tires. To help maintain control and stability of your vehicle in icy conditions, always install winter tires in sets of four;

2) Mixing tires with different tread patterns, internal construction, and size degrades the stability of the vehicle and should be avoided;

3) As a tire wears, snow traction is reduced. Tires that are worn close to the tread-wear indicators have reduced traction and should not be used on snow-covered roads or in severe snow conditions;

4) Proper air pressure extends tread life, improves safety, and reduces fuel consumption — all vital factors in saving energy and protecting the environment. Tire pressure decreases as temperatures drop, so be sure to check the pressures at least once a month when the tires are cold, preferably after the car has been out all night.

Cold enough for ya?

Does your car have difficulty starting in cold weather? A cold engine is a stiff engine — it is hard to get the pistons moving, to draw in the fuel, and get started. It needs more battery power.

In cold weather, your battery may produce only 40 per cent of the power it produces in warm weather, so give it a break — use a block heater. A block heater, with a timer to turn it on a couple of hours before you need your car, will make starting much easier. Starting warm can save you money on gas, too.



Look for the peaked mountain with snowflake symbol when shopping for winter tires. Tires marked with this symbol meet specific snow traction performance requirements and have been designed specifically for use in severe snow conditions.

Take a look at your battery terminals. Is there any white deposit on them? That corrosion can insulate the terminals and prevent the battery giving your car its first boost of power in the morning to get it going. If your battery is getting a little elderly, you may not get a second chance.

It can take up to 40,000 volts to zap a spark into your cylinders. If the ignition wires are worn or cracked, some of that power may not make it, and you could have starting troubles — especially in damp weather.

Another tip — keep your gas tank at least half full. That limits any condensation in the tank, so you are less likely to get gas line freezing. Add a little gas line antifreeze every second time you fill up the gas tank just to be sure.

One of the most important things to watch is your cooling system. Watch the concentration of coolant, and the amount. In most parts of Canada, a 50-50 mix of coolant and water keeps the coolant from freezing, lubricates the water pump, and protects the cooling system from corrosion. In very cold areas, it may be necessary to increase the concentration of coolant — but never more than 70 per cent coolant to 30 per cent water.

But if you are like most Canadians, you are more concerned about heating than cooling at this time of year. The only heat you get is from the engine, which is why your heater blows cold when you first start your vehicle (before the engine warms up). If your coolant is low, your heater is the first thing to suffer, so keep your antifreeze topped up.

You may also hear a squealing noise (audible over your own teeth chattering) from the heater fan. That could indicate a worn bearing in the fan motor, which will probably seize up on you when you need it most.

If you travel or commute, it is worth taking a little extra time to make sure you have an emergency kit in the trunk. Winter additions to the usual emergency kit include the following:

1) A good scraper and snow brush;
2) A blanket, hats, and mittens;
3) Matches and candles;
4) Canned fruit, nuts, and survival rations;
5) A can opener and a tin cup;
6) Traction mats;
7) A small shovel;
8) A red cloth (help signal) or a "call police" sign;
9) Jumper cables.

For more information about vehicle maintenance and safety, visit the Be Car Care Aware website at www.carcarecanada.ca. The Rubber Association of Canada also offers more information about tires through their "Be Tire Smart" program. Visit www.betiresmart.ca.

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Rare car races to first in class

by Sarah Kelford
Press staff



Route navigator Kurtis McPhee (left) of Long Sault and driver Kees Van Winden of Hallville placed first in the classic small displacement modified class in the 2,000-kilometre rally race Targa Newfoundland 2008.

Photos courtesy of Kees Van Winden

HALLVILLE — After six days of racing along bumpy roads, making tight corners, and hitting speeds up to 175 kilometres an hour, the 1966 NSU TT that Hallville resident Kees Van Winden drove, navigated by Long Sault resident Kurtis McPhee, called it quits on the final day of the 2008 Targa Newfoundland.

"With the conditions of the road we tore the front engine mount out of the chassis," said Van Winden, who co-owns KnR Repair Inc. on County Road 43. "The chassis was cracked and the transmission wouldn't shift anymore."

Luckily for the racing duo, they had already completed enough stages of the rally to receive a medal and place first in their class (classic small displacement modified). To receive a medal, contestants must complete 75 per cent of the Targa; Van Winden and McPhee finished 82 per cent before calling it quits Friday afternoon.

"Our goal was to go and get a medal, and we did that," he said. The other goal was to zero two stages. We zeroed 10 of them."

Van Winden has been stock car racing for 10 years, but Targa Newfoundland was his first crack at rally racing.

"It's different cars, it's asphalt only," said Van Winden, adding that he was used to DIRT racing.

After a motion-sickness prone uncle backed down from the navigator position, Van Winden turned to racing friend McPhee to take on the challenge.

The navigator's job is to tell the driver when a curve, bend, turn, or hill is approaching.

"I was super impressed with the navigation because my uncle backed out a month before the event," said Van Winden. "I don't know if he'll (McPhee will) do it again because he's a driver. It's a real team effort and you put a lot of trust in each other. It's totally different from a DIRT track."

Van Winden explained that it's Targa courtesy to stop if you see an accident and to help the other team out.

"We didn't put a scratch on the car," he said, adding that a lot of cars rolled, broke down, and some were even totalled.

Prior to Targa, Van Winden and McPhee took a training course, which is being made mandatory for the 2009 Targa Newfoundland.

Van Winden explained that the schooling gives drivers and navigators tips on the course and driving. The course was instructed by Targa racer and Mountain resident Glen Clarke, who won overall in 2006.

"He gave us a lot of insight to the competition," said Van Winden, adding that the two crews drove to Newfoundland together.

Van Winden noted that he wouldn't have been able to compete without the help from his sponsors, and will be looking for more sponsorship for next year's competition.

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Kees Van Winden geared up for another stage of the Targa Newfoundland rally race this September (13 to 20).
Photos courtesy of Kees Van Winden

First in class

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His sponsors included Zollinger Custom Work, BGM Autobody, Guy Fuels, No Limits Auto Parts, Morewood Tire, Sybrengson Farms, Thurler Farms, Donevelyn Farms, Vanadrichem Farms, KnR Repair Inc., Carol and Trevor Stewart, the Dundas Milk Producers, and Milk. He said he is also thankful for the support from his family members, who doubled as crew members.

"It wouldn't have happened without all of them," he said.

Fatherly inspiration

"In the mid-70s my dad (Bas Van Winden) used to race a NSU 12TT in Holland," said Van Winden about his choice of car. "In 1979 we came to Canada and I wanted him to bring the car with us, but he gave it to a neighbour. Seven years ago I found a car identical to my dad's old car and my objective was to restore that car."

While searching for parts for the restoration, Van Winden found the same car in Niagara-on-the-Lake, but it was in better condition.

"Rather than buying the parts, I bought the car," he said, adding that it had been used for racing before, so he just had to make it rally-ready.

Van Winden explained that his father watched last year's Targa Newfoundland on TV and showed him a video of the race.

"The reason I went was because of dad," he said. "He showed me the tape, and I said it looks like fun."

Targa

There are only three Targas worldwide; Targa Tanzania, Targa New Zealand, and Targa Newfoundland, which began in 2002 and is the first in North America. The event was created for motorsport enthusiasts who "know that limits were made to be pushed and cars were designed to be driven."

Targa Newfoundland has contestants racing over 2,000 kilometres for the duration of one week. The first day consists of preliminary races to determine start positions, and the actual event, which is done on closed roads, is split into a number of timed stages with the longest being 40-kilometres.

"We finished the longest stage in 12 or 13 minutes," Van Winden said.

He also noted that every night there was a car show where fans would ask for autographs and see the cars up close. It also gave the crews a chance to fix any problems that occurred that day.

"A lot of people were interested in the car because it's so rare — you just don't see them," he said.

The Targa Newfoundland website (www.targanewfoundland.com) states: "We have winners, but our prize isn't money — it's bragging rights and personal fulfillment. Completing or just participating in Targa Newfoundland is reward enough and beyond anything you have ever experienced. It's an accomplishment like no other and the week long adventure that is your real prize. You'll return home with memories, friends, and war stories that will make you the envy of your friends."

Van Winden couldn't agree more. He plans to race again next year and place higher.

"We need a better suspension package, better brakes, and (to tend to some) engine needs, but there is no reason we can't win with that car," he said.

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Dialing and driving don't mix

TORONTO —Texting or talking on a hand-held mobile phone while driving will be banned in Ontario under new legislation.

Ontario Minister of Transportation Jim Bradley unveiled the proposed bill Tues., Oct. 28, saying drivers could face fines of up to $500 if caught chatting on or dialing an electronic gadget that requires the use of hands.



"Research shows that drivers using hand-held devices are four times more likely to be in a crash than drivers who are focused on the road," Bradley said before intrducing the bill. "Our hands-on-the-wheel, eyes-on-the-road bill would make it illegal to use any sort of communication or entertainment device that is held in their hand."

Under the proposal, drivers caught breaking the cellphone law would not lose demerit points and calls to 9-1-1 would be exempt. The legislation also bans tinkering with iPods, portable DVD players, or laptop computers while behind the wheel.

But drivers would still be allowed to chat and to drive if they use a hands-free device. The legislation also would permit the use of popular GPS systems, provided they are mounted on the dashboard.

Less than a year ago, Premier Dalton McGuinty dismissed the idea of the ban, saying laws already on the books "dealt sufficiently with distracted driving." At the time he said such a law would "lead down a slippery legislative slope."

"I guess one of the issues then becomes 'so, where do we draw the line?' Do we ban coffee drinking in cars?" McGuinty said at the time.

If passed, the legislation would make Ontario the fourth province to ban hand-held cellphone use. Newfoundland and Labrador introduced similar legislation in 2002 followed by Nova Scotia and Quebec.

The Ontario Medical Association (OMA) released findings about the significant impact that cellphone use has on driving safety. The research clearly shows that speaking on a phone while driving puts drivers at significantly greater risk of collision.

"The evidence is clear that driving while using a mobile phone is dangerous to the driver, their passengers, and others on or near the roadway," said Dr. Ken Arnold, president of the OMA. "Doctors know all too well the consequences of driving while distracted and its time that the right steps are taken to ensure the safety of all Ontarians."

Government initiatives to curtail the use of cellphones while driving have been implemented in Quebec, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, a number of American States, Australia, and much of Europe.

Studies show there is a strong association between phone use and vehicle collisions. The OMA has found evidence that cellphone use (regardless of whether it is hands-free or hand-held) has a significant impact on the driver's cognitive functions, visual concentration, the speed at which they can process information, and, as a result, their reaction time.

OMA research found that talking on a cellphone while driving:

1) Led to a large reduction in the driver's functional field of view;

2) Changed average driving speed;

3) Decreased safe distance between vehicles;

4) Slowed brake reaction time;

5) Slowed response times to traffic light changes;

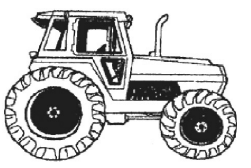
6) Resulted in a 15 per cent increase in non-response to stoplights;

7) Slowed braking by 18 per cent and slowed the time it took to come back up to speed by 17 per cent;

8) Reduced visual monitoring of mirrors and instruments with some drivers abandoning them entirely;

9) Fewer inspection glances at traffic lights and an increased tendency toward hard braking.

"Too many drivers treat talking on a phone while driving as a harmless practice," said Arnold. "It's not an easy prescription to give, but this practice has to be curtailed."

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Ottawa eyeing mandatory ESC for new light vehicles

OTTAWA — Due to the impressive preliminary results of the safety benefits of electronic stability control, Transport Canada is developing a proposal to make ESC mandatory on all light vehicles available for sale in Canada that are manufactured on or after Sept. 1, 2011.

Preliminary analysis of crash data by Transport Canada shows that light duty vehicles equipped with ESC were involved in approximately 30 per cent fewer serious crashes involving loss of control than were vehicles not equipped with ESC.

ESC can help you maintain control of your vehicle during an emergency manoeuvre, such as when you need to swerve or brake suddenly to avoid an obstacle. ESC monitors your steering and compares it to the direction the vehicle is travelling. When these don't match, ESC will automatically activate the brakes at one or more wheels for short periods of time, reduce engine power, or both. And unlike air bags, which only help once a collision has happened, ESC can help you avoid a collision in the first place.

In Canada in 2006, vehicle crashes involving loss of control resulted in the death of approximately 768 occupants, as well as causing serious injuries to 2,578. While ESC can prevent many types of crashes, it is especially effective in preventing those crashes that result from a loss of control. Transport Canada estimates that there would have been about 225 fewer deaths and 755 fewer people seriously injured on our roads if all passenger vehicles had been fitted with ESC that year.

Transport Canada and the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) are encouraging all Canadians to ask for ESC when they shop for a new vehicle.

For more information on ESC, check out www.tc.gc.ca/ESC.

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Money-saving fuel efficiency tips

WINCHESTER — Fuel prices have come down in recent weeks, but efficiency is still on the minds of most drivers.

"Over the life of a car, poor fuel efficiency can lead to hundreds, if not thousands of dollars in added expense," said Scott Blanchard, marketing operations manager with 3M Canada. "Properly maintaining the vehicle and watching your driving style are two of the best ways to maximize fuel efficiency and reduce long term expenses."

Blanchard offered five tips to maximize your car's fuel performance to help stretch your gas dollars:

1. Check tire pressure — Natural Resources Canada's Office of Energy Efficiency estimates each tire, under-inflated by two pounds per square inch, causes a one per cent increase in fuel consumption. Make sure tires are inflated to the manufacturer's recommended pressure. The correct tire pressure will also provide a safer ride and help reduce tire wear.

2. Let your engine breathe — Replacing a dirty, clogged air filter will go a long way in improving fuel efficiency. According to the United States' federal government, a car's gas mileage could improve by as much as 10 per cent with a clean air filter. In addition to the fuel savings, the new filter will help protect the engine.

3. Keep the fuel system clean — Carbon and resin buildup in a car's fuel system reduces fuel efficiency. Have your fuel system including the fuel injector, intake valve and combustion chamber professionally cleaned. Keeping the fuel system clean helps you maximize your engine's performance and extend its life.

4. Take it easy and slow down — Driving a car at a high speed, "jackrabbit starts," and aggressive driving in traffic greatly reduce fuel efficiency. A European study cited by Natural Resources Canada's Office of Energy Efficiency found rapid acceleration from stoplights and hard braking resulted in a 37 per cent jump in fuel consumption. Also, every time you "hit the gas" you get closer to the next refill. It takes 20 per cent more fuel to go the same distance at 120 kilometres an hour than it does at 100 kilometres an hour according to the Canadian Automobile Association and Natural Resources Canada.

5. Remove excess weight — Remove any unnecessary, heavy objects in the vehicle. An extra 100 pounds can reduce fuel efficiency by as much as two per cent.

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