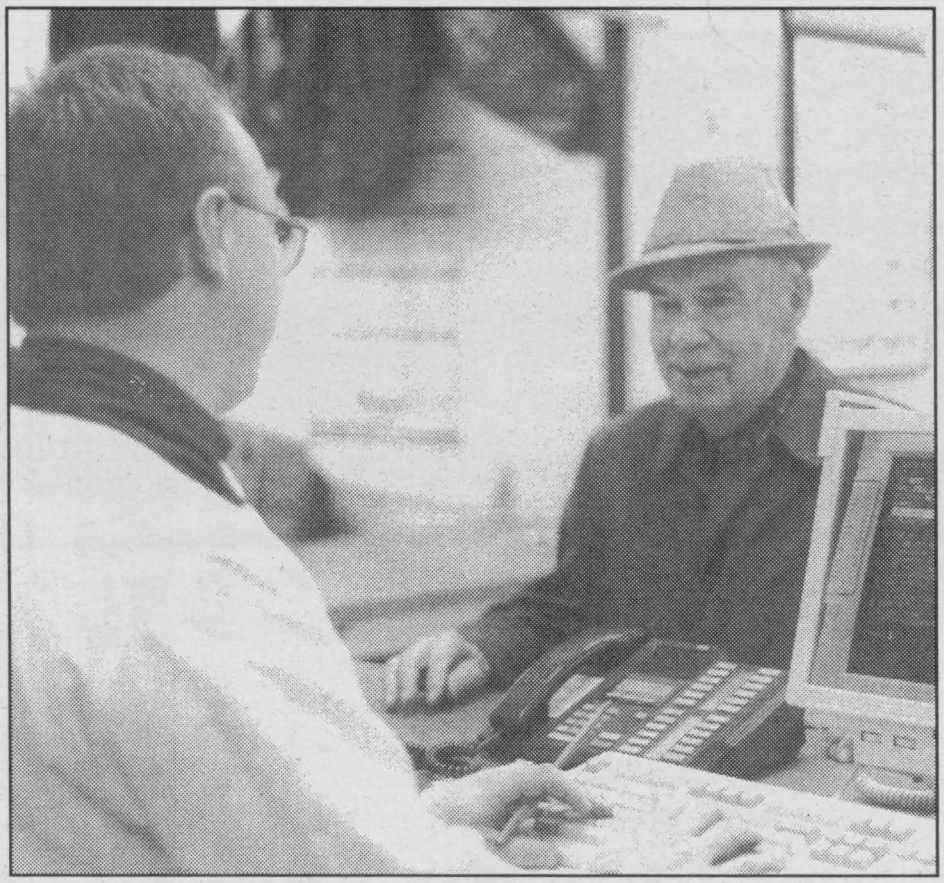


SPRING CAR CARE

A special supplement to the

WINCHESTER PRESS

Wednesday, April 22, 1998



At your service

Remy Gervais (left), service manager at Embrun Ford, discusses annual spring tune ups with customer Hume McConnell. Press Photo – Cooke Erwin

A litre of prevention does a ton of good for the environment

The average new car sold in Canada consumed 8 litres of gas per 100 km driven, churning out 188g of CO^2 per kilometre. That's new cars. Older cars consume more fuel (due to less efficient engines possibly needing maintenance) and emit more CO^2 into the atmosphere. Typical drivers go through about 2000 litres of gas a year. That means each car produces roughly twice its own weight in CO^2 per year.

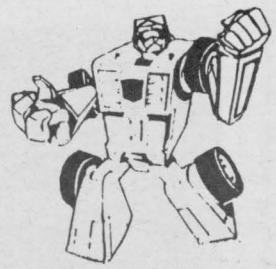
If you want to do your part to help reduce the tonnes of pollution that cars pump into the atmosphere each year, and save money, the trick is to keep your car running in top condition. The best way to do this is to take it in for a tune up twice a year. Spring and fall are the best times to do this. Let the specialists check your carburetor, fuel-injection, ignition and air-conditioning systems, and ask them to make sure your engine's emission controls and electronics are in good working order.

If you don't mind getting your fingers a bit dirty, you can inspect and replace filters, change the oil and rotate the tires yourself. In addition, don't forget to remove winter extras (snow tires, ski racks etc.). This will reduce the weight of your vehicle and save you gas. Every litre of gas you save does a ton of good for the environment.

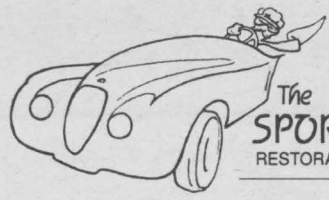
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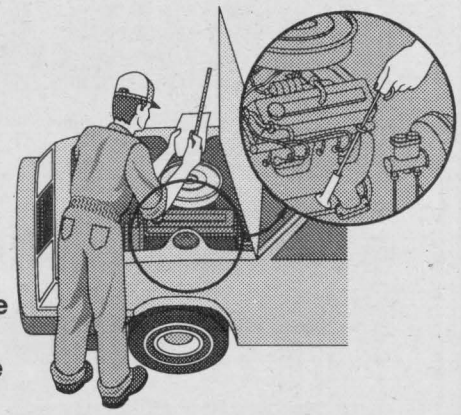
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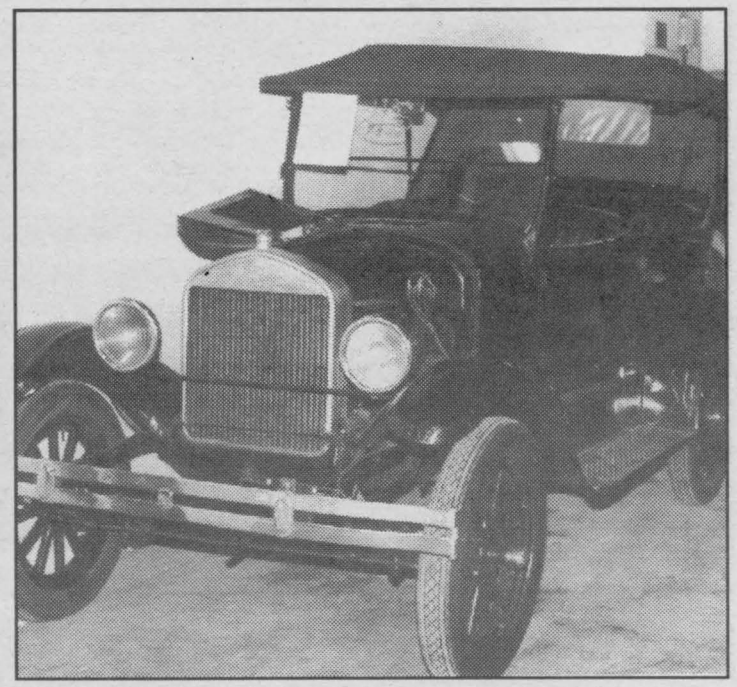
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At left: Wayne Morgan looks under the hood of a 1955 Cadillac Coupe DeVille in his showroom. Photo above: a 1926 Ford touring car. Shown on our Spring Car Care cover: Morgan sits in the driver's seat of a 1953 MG TD.
Press Photos – Bierworth

Collector has passion for cars of yesteryear

by Sandy Bierworth
Press staff

WINCHESTER — Each car in Wayne Morgan's showroom is a history lesson with a motor. One has wooden spokes on the wheels, another has a wooden dash, many have tiny window wipers attached to the top of the windshield and one doesn't even have doors.

The cars are all antiques, ranging in makes and models from 1919 to the mid-1970s. There are 55 of these cars inside the showroom and more than 100 are parked on the lot surrounding the building, which is located beside Lannin's Lumber on the south side of Winchester. Some are replicas of ancient buggies, others are the real thing: rare, expensive and awe-inspiring.

The cars come from all over the country and some are shipped in from the United States and overseas. Some Morgan has bought, others are for sale on consignment. But he takes pride in caring for each one.

"It's a lot of work, a lot of maintenance," he said. "But it's worth it. I love working with them."

Part of the rising popularity of these cars, Morgan attributes to the aging baby boom generation.

"The baby boomers' kids grow up and get out of school, then the parents decide to treat themselves to something," he said. "A lot of them want the same kind of car they had in the '50s and '60s. It's nostalgia."

The younger crowd, he said, is more into 'muscle cars', adding that the power under the hoods of some of his older cars could blow away some of the modern cars on the road.

But what is it that keeps Morgan hooked to these classics?

"It's the simplicity of the mechanics, the timelessness and the feel of total freedom behind the wheel," he said. "It's a really different feel behind the wheel of a nostalgic car than a modern car."

This Forestwood Heights resident has always had a passion for antique cars. He started his working life in the farming industry, then went on to Century 21 for a few years before chauffeuring senior citizens to and from Ottawa. It was during that time that he rekindled his passion for the hobby and travelled to various vintage car shows to buy, sell, trade and learn about antique cars. Two years ago he opened his business.

"I always had one or two (vintage cars) in my driveway," he said. "And I saw a potential for a business in antique cars. I started out at the corner of Morewood Road and Hwy. 31 with only 10 cars and encouraged people to place their cars with me."

Last August, he moved to the corner of County Rds. 31 and 43, just south of Winchester and the business has been growing ever since.

"My goal is to see 200 to 250 cars here at one time," he said. "I'd like this to be the place in Ontario, if not in Eastern Canada, to go to find an antique car."

Morgan makes sales worldwide and some of his classics have won awards in antique car shows. But a lot of the time, salesmanship isn't the key to keeping his business thriving. The cars just seem to sell themselves.

"We sell the cars, some of them to private owners, with a hassle-free sale for the owner," he said. "I try to make deals possible where they sometimes wouldn't otherwise be possible. The other thing too, about these cars is that they don't depreciate in value or go down 30 per cent when you drive off the lot. You could buy a car and then sell it a few years later for the same amount, if not more, providing you keep it in good condition."

Part of the popularity of vintage autos can also be accredited to the difference between the various makes and models. Some are nicknamed boats for their gigantic size while others are so small the steering wheel sits between the knees of the driver and the tires are more narrow than some of today's bike tires.

"With these cars, you could see one coming up the road and be able to tell exactly what it is, just based on a tail light or a bumper, but with modern cars, you have to go right up to the back of them and look for a name because they all look the same."

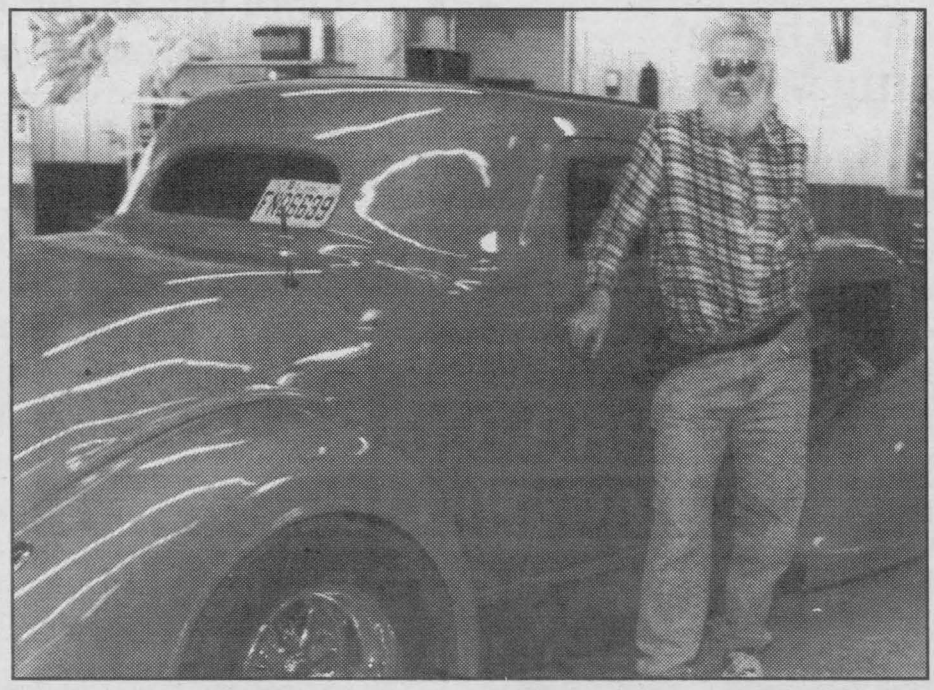
The large showroom is wall-to-wall with antique cars. And Morgan is only more than happy to explain what model each car is, where it came from and how few of its kind are left in the world.

"It's working out like a museum," he said of his showroom. "I get a lot of people who just want to see the cars, but don't want to buy them. So I charge a $2 admission fee and that gets you a pass for the year. A lot of people just like looking at them and getting a picture of themselves sitting in the driver's seat. One person suggested I have a chip stand out front, but that's the worst thing I could do because then people would come in here with their greasy fingers and get prints all over the cars. And you can't wipe them off either. You have to wax them."

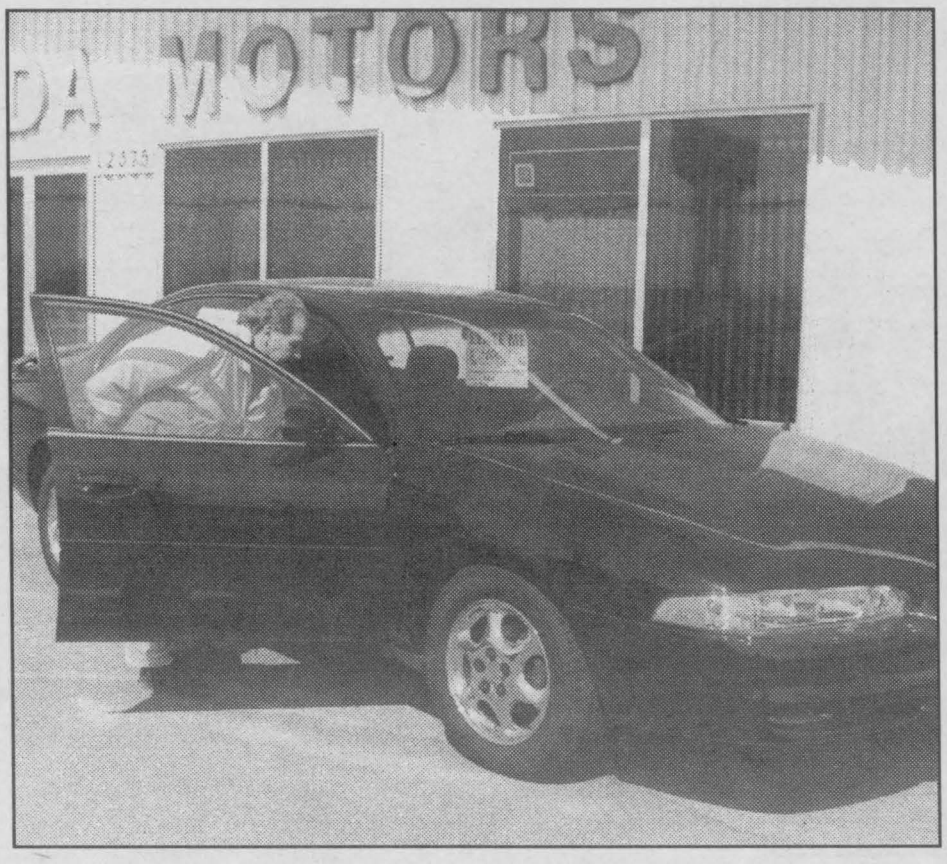
Morgan does minor tune-ups and repairs on the cars in his showroom and test drives them when necessary before the price tag goes on. But he won't make general repairs on cars, he said. And if anybody asks him to, he'll send them to a good mechanic.

But for now, with summer well on the way, the sight of antique cars cruising the pavement is becoming more common and it's a sight Morgan is proud to be a part of.

"These cars always draw a crowd," he said. "It really is timeless. These cars catch your eye every time. A modern car will make you look once, but these cars get you to stare, no matter how many times you see them."



Morgan shows off a1939 Plymouth 3-window coupe.

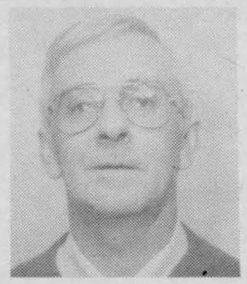


Checking it out

Walter Cassell of Morrisburg gives a new car the "once over" at Upper Canada Motors in Morrisburg. *Press Photo — Culliton*

Auto$mart tip

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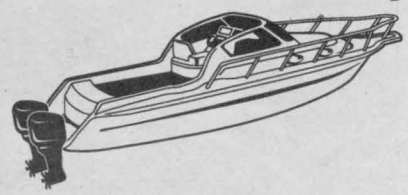
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Summer automotive maintenance tips

Sure, everyone knows winter is tough on vehicles, but summer is no day at the beach either. In fact, according to the experts, breakdowns occur most often during the summer season. Summer's heat, dust and stop-and-go traffic can really take a toll.

The following tips should help with summertime maintenance. Some are easy to do; others should be performed only by a skilled auto technician.

Getting started — The best planning guide is your owner's manual. Read it, and follow the manufacturer's recommended service schedules.

Air conditioning — A marginally operating air-conditioning system will fail in hot weather. Have the system examined by a technician who is certified in air-conditioning repair and service. You'll be doing the environment a favor, too, since poorly maintained air conditioners can leak ozone-depleting chemicals.

Cooling system — The greatest cause of summer breakdowns is overheating. The tightness and condition of drive belts, clamps and hoses should be checked by a pro. The cooling system should be completely flushed and refilled about every 24 months. The level, condition and concentration of the coolant should be checked periodically. (A 50-50 mix of antifreeze and water usually is recommended.) Do-it-yourselfers, wait until the engine has cooled before removing the radiator cap. Do not dump old antifreeze/coolant into streams or sewers.

Oil — Change your oil and oil filter as specified in your manual — more often (every 3,000 miles) if you make frequent short trips, plan extended travel with lots of luggage or if you tow a trailer. Many repair shops will accept your used oil; never dump it on the ground or into streams or sewers.

Engine performance — Replace other filters (air, fuel, PCV, etc.) as recommended; change more often in dusty conditions. Have engine driveability problems (hard starts, rough idling, diminished power, etc.) corrected at a good shop with modern testing equipment and certified technicians. In addition to getting better gas mileage, you'll help lessen air pollution by keeping your engine at peak performance.

Windshield wipers — A dirty windshield causes eye fatigue and can pose a safety hazard. Replace worn blades and keep plenty of windshield-washer solvent on hand to combat insects and road dust.

Tires — Tires should be rotated about every 5,000 miles. Check tire pressures once a month, but let the tires "cool down" first. Examine each tire for tread life, uneven wearing and cupping; check the sidewalls for cuts and nicks. An alignment is warranted if there's uneven tread wear or if your vehicle "pulls" on a flat, level roadway. Don't forget to check your spare and be sure the jack is in good condition. Properly maintained tires last longer, saving you money and reducing the burden at landfills.

Brakes — Brakes should be inspected as recommended in your manual, but if you notice pulsations, grabbing, noises or longer stopping distance, do it sooner. Minor brake problems should be corrected promptly.

Battery — Batteries can fail any time of year, not just in the winter. The only accurate way to detect a weak battery is with professional equipment, but most people can perform routine care: scrape corrosion from posts and cable connections, clean all surfaces, and retighten connections. If battery caps are removable, check fluid level monthly. Wear protective eye gear and gloves.

Lights — Inspect all lights and bulbs and replace those that are burned out. Periodically clean dirt and insects from all lenses, using a damp rag to prevent scratching.

Emergencies — Ask a technician for suggestions about basic tools to carry. Be sure to include a first-aid kit, flares and a flashlight. Consider a car phone.

Finding a good auto technician — To find a good technician, ask friends and associates for recommendations.

Poor wheel alignment means big gas bills

According to the Automotive Handbook (Bosch, 1993) distributed by the Society of Automotive Engineers, proper wheel alignment is the single most important factor influencing fuel consumption.

In order for your car to get the best possible gas mileage, your wheels should roll freely without slipping. As much tread as possible should be touching the road. This requires proper alignment.

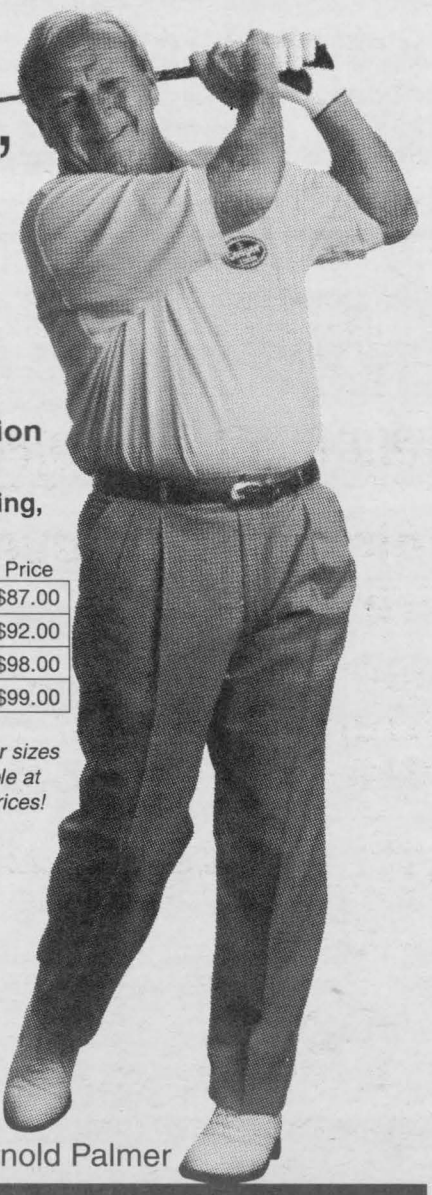
Alignment is important because it affects the lateral movement of your car (the camber), steering and stability (the caster), and suspension (toe-in). See diagrams.

Misalignment causes the wheels to "scuff" rather than roll freely, which means more gas is required to power your car. Alignment should be checked at least once a year.

If you experience pulling to one side or shaking or shimmying as the vehicle reaches highway speeds, you've got a problem. Chronic alignment problems also show up as uneven tire wear patterns, either as excess wear on the inside or outside edge, or as a "feathering" or shredding of the tread.

For a complete preventative car maintenance schedule, check your owner's manual. For more information on how to maintain your vehicle to save fuel and money, visit the Auto$mart web site at http://autosmart.nrcan.gc.ca, or call 1-800-387-2000 to order your free Auto$mart Kit.

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Air bag debate: On again, off again

To air bag or not to air bag, that is the question.

For the past few years, the debate over whether these safety devices actually do save lives — or take them away — has many consumers confused about the facts.

As of November 1997, air bags have saved the lives of approximately 2,620 drivers and passengers, primarily in moderate and high-speed crashes, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Conversely, air bags have caused the deaths of 87 people — mainly in low-speed crashes — most of whom were improperly seat belted or not belted at all. But, for those who were properly belted, what went wrong?

It isn't a person's size, age or gender that determines risk, but his or her position in relation to an air bag. Anyone who is close to, or on top of, an air bag as it begins to inflate can be seriously injured or killed.

To avoid injury risk, a driver of any age or size always should wear a seat belt, not only because of the fact that an air bag alone isn't enough to prevent injury or death in the event of an accident, but because driver and passengers move forward during hard braking, bringing them closer to the point where an air bag inflates.

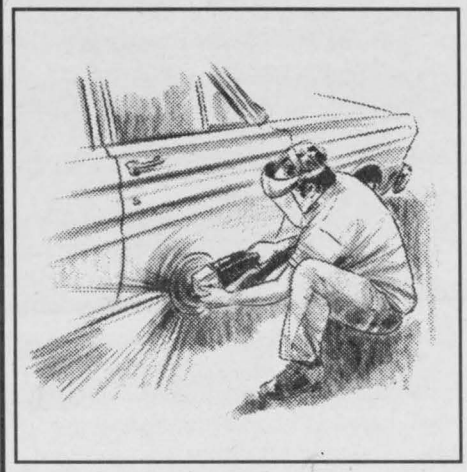
How close is too close? The NHTSA says 10 inches or more from breastbone to the point of an air bag's deployment is considered safe. If moving or tilting the seat back to gain more distance from the steering wheel prohibits comfortable driving of the car, consider pedal extenders.

Infants riding in rear-facing restraints in the front seat are especially at risk — the baby's head is too close to the point of an air bag's deployment. Rule of thumb: children always are safer buckled up in the back seat. If they do sit in front, make sure they don't lean forward to play with anything on the dashboard.

As of January 19, 1998, consumers have been able to apply for, through the NHTSA, a manual air bag on/off switch, a device that has sparked its own controversy. Critics of the switch predict driver forgetfulness in returning the switch on or off, and some foresee unnecessary legal liability for auto manufacturers and dealers. Advocates cite a list of existing medical conditions, extreme short stature (four feet, six inches or less) and outweighed risk as reasons enough to allow individual drivers to determine for themselves what is safest.

For more information about air bags, seat belts, on/off switches or other transportation issues, call the NHTSA Hotline at 1-800-424-9393. Or, visit their Web site at http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/airbags/.

Spring rust got you down?

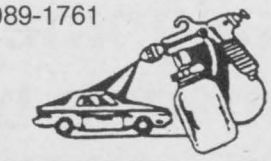


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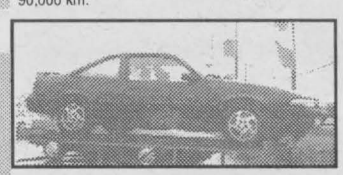
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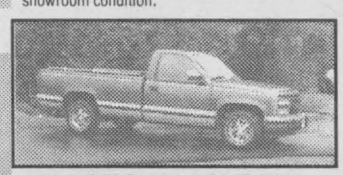
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Gear up your steering for springtime drives

For many of us, the arrival of spring heightens our desires to get out and eliminate the remnants of winter "cabin fever." Whether it's a weekend getaway to the country or a trip to visit the kids at college, the roads will be filled with drivers looking to shake the winter blues. Buckling seat belts, keeping a safe distance between the car in front and using directionals all are precautions commonly associated with safe driving. However, when it comes to making sure that the car's systems are in safe working order, many of us fall short.

Most people probably have never looked deeply into the innards of our car to examine the steering system. Unlike warning indicators for antilock brakes and low fuel, modern automotive systems can't alert the driver to an absence of fluid in the power steering system.

The following is a guide to help you examine your power steering system, which should be performed on a monthly basis.

Power steering fluid is the lifeblood of a vehicle's steering. An improper level can make steering difficult, can cause squealing and vibration, and possibly shorten the life of expensive components. Using your owner's manual, locate the power steering reservoir, a belt-driven assembly usually located on the driver's side of the engine, and remove any surface dirt or grime that could contaminate the fluid. Examine the hose connections for leaks — if leaks are found, have the vehicle looked at by a professional. Don't take chances with your steering!

Next, twist the filler cap and remove it. Find the attached dipstick and wipe it with a clean rag. Reinsert the dipstick, pull it out and check the level (it may be a good idea to repeat for an accurate reading). If the car recently was driven, the fluid level should register at the "full hot" level (if the car is cold, make sure it's at "full cold"). If not, fill the reservoir with a quality power steering fluid. Check the level, fasten the reservoir filler cap, and you're done!

Checking your power steering fluid is not only an important safety precaution, but can be performed relatively easily when you know how. When adding fluid to the system, it's important to use a quality fluid that provides you with great high- and low-temperature performance for effective steering response.

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Regular rotating extends life of tires

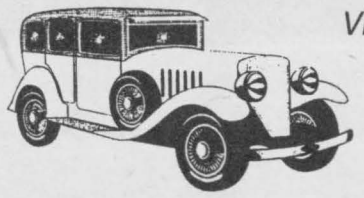
You'll get more value for money if you rotate your tires regularly, not to mention a smoother more comfortable ride.

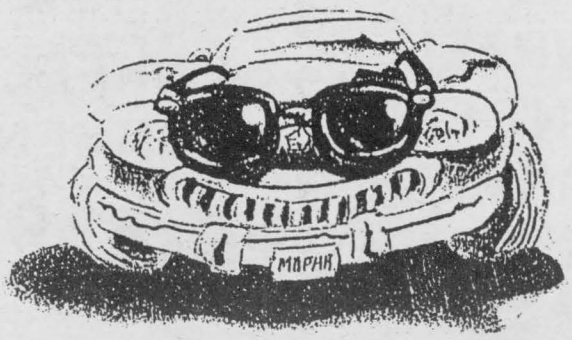
Because front and rear tires perform different functions, they wear differently. Life for a front tire is harder because it must bear the scrubbing action of steering plus rolling wear.

The load is even heavier with front wheel drive vehicles. To get the most out of your tires rotate them regularly so that front tires become back tires for part of their life (see your owner's manual for recommended patterns and frequency of rotation).

This will prolong the service that each tire provides, plus it'll save you from having to go to the tire store as often.

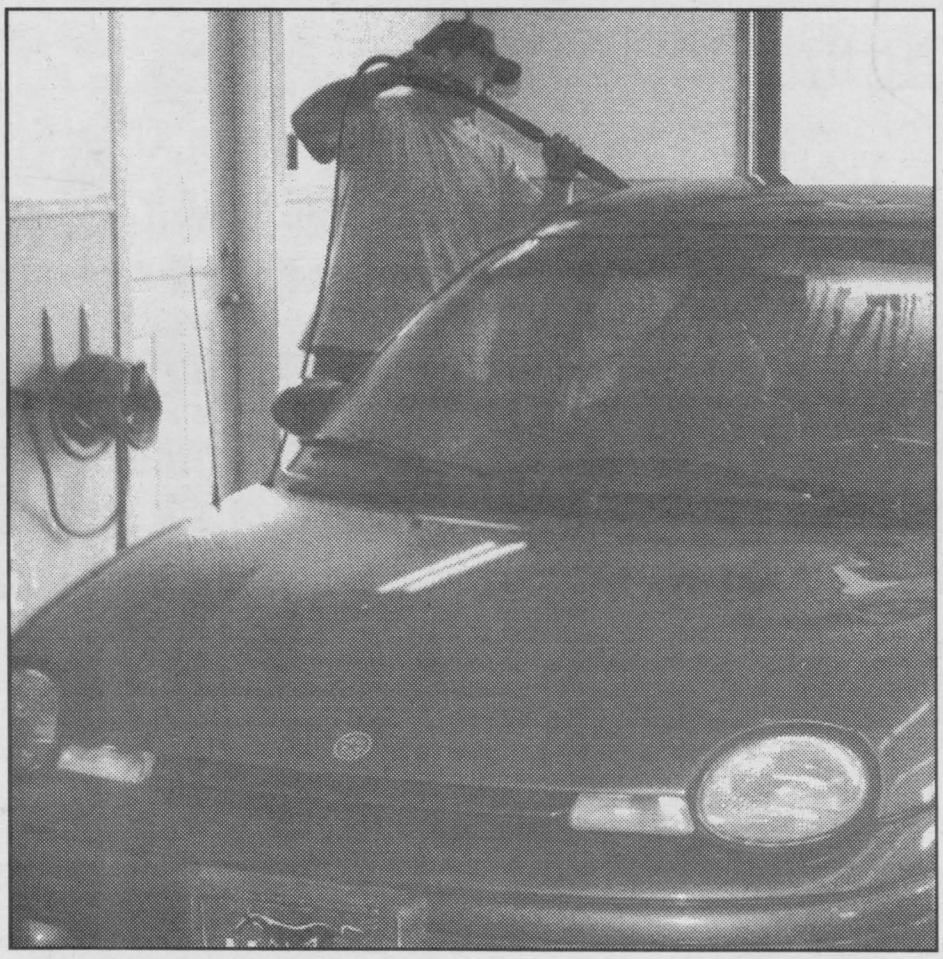
If you have a full size spare tire, it should be included in the rotation. Experts recommend that tires be rotated every 10,000km - 12,000km, or every second oil change.

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Sparkling clean

Rob Barkley of Akcent Motor Sales, Winchester, takes the power washer to one of the cars for sale.

Press Photo — Culliton

Inspect and replace air filters

Cleaning and replacing dirty air filters will prolong engine life, improve fuel economy and lower pollution emissions.

Fuel mixed with air is what makes your engine go. Today's cars are equipped with computers that control the air-fuel ratio. If you can believe it, your engine requires about 8,000 litres of air for every litre of gas it consumes.

All of this air must pass through air filters, which gives you an idea of why cleaning and replacing them is so important. For every 10,000 km of driving, an air filter can collect up to 500g of dust.

Since a lot of air is required for optimum combustion, air flow management is almost as important as fuel management. All of the air going into your car's engine passes through an air filter which screens out damaging dust and dirt. If that air filter gets clogged, it restricts air flow, which in turn lowers performance and fuel economy. A dirty air filter can cost you an extra ten percent in gas.

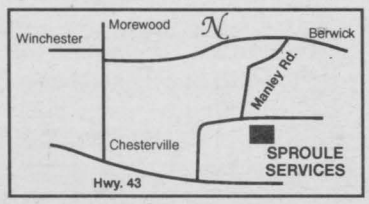
For more useful information on how your car works, visit the Auto$mart website at http://auto$mart.nrcan.gc.ca or call 1-800-387-2000. Because, the more you know about your car, the less you'll spend on fuel and maintenance.

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Put your car on a diet

Understanding how a car engine works will help you save fuel and cut down on maintenance costs.

The first thing to know is that in order to get the best out of your engine, you must put your car onto a strict maintenance regime.

While older engines require regular tune-ups to adjust things like ignition timing, mixture and idle speed, thanks to the miracle of technology, today's sophisticated, electronically controlled, fuel injected engines don't need as much maintenance to operate efficiently. They do, however, contain moving parts which wear out over time. As a result, its important to keep newer engines clean and cool. This means regular oil changes, cooling system check-ups and spark plug maintenance.

Following the preventative maintenance schedule in your Owner's Manual is also a must for clean, energy efficient operation.

For more information on how to keep your car on a healthy diet, visit the Auto$mart website at http://autosmart.nrcan.gc.ca or call 1-800-387-2000.

Your pocketbook and the environment will thank you.



Leaning in

Doug Liezert and Jim Primrose of Jim's Performance Plus in Iroquois concentrate on replacing a head gasket.

Pre-trip maintenance a necessity

Whether it's a weekend to the lake or a summer vacation, your first priority is getting there. Breakdowns are unpleasant whenever they occur, but especially when you are away from home. Be sure to check fluid levels before you hit the road, including brake fluid, transmission fluid, window-washer fluid, battery water, radiator fluid and motor oil. Moving parts produce friction, and friction produces heat, wear and stress. Eliminating friction with synthetic motor oils, lubes and greases helps gears, bearings and critical engine parts run more smoothly and last longer.

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If you're in the market for some new wheels, be sure to look for the EnerGuide label. Its the one with the fuel pump logo displaying estimated annual fuel costs.

For complete information on how to buy drive and maintain your vehicle to save fuel and money, visit the Auto$mart web site at http://autosmart.nrcan.gc.ca, or call 1-800-387-2000 to order your free Auto$mart Kit.

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Answers to common questions about motor oil

Q: I found a few old cans of motor oil in the garage during spring cleaning. Is it safe to put them in my car?

A:Even though motor oil has a fairly long shelf life, you want to be careful about some of those old cans. The worst case scenario is that they may contain sedimentation due to condensation inside the container. In addition, it is likely that the oil does not satisfy current American Petroleum Institute (API) performance expectations. Today's smaller engines with tighter tolerances have led the API to upgrade the performance standards for motor oil. Motor oil for cars today currently carry an "SJ" rating. For late model, mechanically sound engines, use a high-quality synthetic motor oil and properly dispose of those old cans at either a recycling center or any of your local oil change facilities.

Q: What does motor oil do?

A: While motor oils serve a variety of functions, they primarily are necessary to lubricate and cool the engine. When the engine is at rest, the motor oil sits in the bottom of the engine block in what is called the oil pan. Upon start-up, an oil pump feeds oil from the pan to the oil distribution system, a network of passages, tubes, grooves and holes leading to the engine bearing and other surfaces that need pressurized oil for lubrication. Other parts, like the overhead valve system, receive a carefully controlled quantity of non-pressurized oil through splash or spray.

In addition to lubricating and cooling engine parts, motor oil must allow easy starting, protect the engine from corrosion and oxidation, keep the engine clean, form a tight seal between piston rings and cylinder walls, and help the engine use fuel efficiently.

Q: What is the difference between conventional and synthetic motor oil?

A: Conventional lubricants are refined from crude oil, which has thousands of types of molecules. Refining is a process of physically separating the impurities from the oil and further separating the light and heavy components. Because refining separates products by weight, it groups molecules of similar weight and dissimilar structure. The result is a lubricant with a wide assortment of molecules. Some of the substances in crude oil are detrimental to lubrication. Paraffins, for example, are a common conventional oil contaminant that causes motor oil to thicken in cold temperatures.

Synthetic motor oils are made from pure chemicals, not refined crude. Their components are chemically reacted to produce finished products with pre-designed performance characteristics. Because of their molecular uniformity, they excel in reducing friction, which improves fuel efficiency, controls heat and reduces wear. This molecular uniformity also helps synthetics resist thinning in hot temperatures and thickening in cold.

Q: My friend says synthetic oils are better for the environment. I say that improperly disposed synthetic oils aren't really any better. Who's right?

A: You both are right. The environmental benefits of synthetic lubricants are most apparent when you consider their extended drain capabilities. Synthetic compressor oils last eight times longer than their petroleum counterparts. This means eight times less waste oil to dispose of. Synthetic motor oils for cars and light trucks last two to 10 times longer than conventional petroleum, depending on the product and the manufacturer. Fewer oil changes means less waste oil, as well as less container-waste disposal. If oil-change intervals were extended universally, there would be less making its way into our drinking water.

It should be noted that synthetic motor oils still require the same disposal care as traditional petroleum motor oils.

Q: What does the slogan "Change your thinking, not your oil" mean?

A: Changing oil is a hassle. If you were to use a longer-life synthetic motor oil, you could lengthen oil-change intervals. One of the biggest impediments to embracing extended drain intervals is fear.

Q: Are there any advantages to conventional petroleum oils?

A: Petroleum-based motor oils do have an initial price advantage over synthetics. In advancing the cost issue, it helps to keep in mind that even the most expensive motor oil is cheaper than engine repairs due to inadequate metal-to-metal protection or general lubricant failure. Synthetics have been proven to give superior year-round protection and performance.

In fact, when motorists evaluate their lubricant costs on a per-year or per-mile basis, rather than on the basis of cost per oil change, synthetic motor oils with extended drain intervals actually will cost less than conventional motor oils.

Q: Will synthetic motor oils void my warranty?

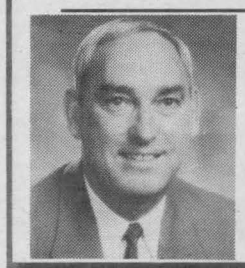
A: No. Manufacturers call for API SJ-rated motor oil of specific viscosity grades and usually do not distinguish between conventional or synthetic lubricants.

However, some high-performance cars, like the Chevrolet Corvette, are filled with synthetic motor oil right at the factory and recommend the use of synthetics.

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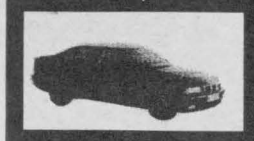


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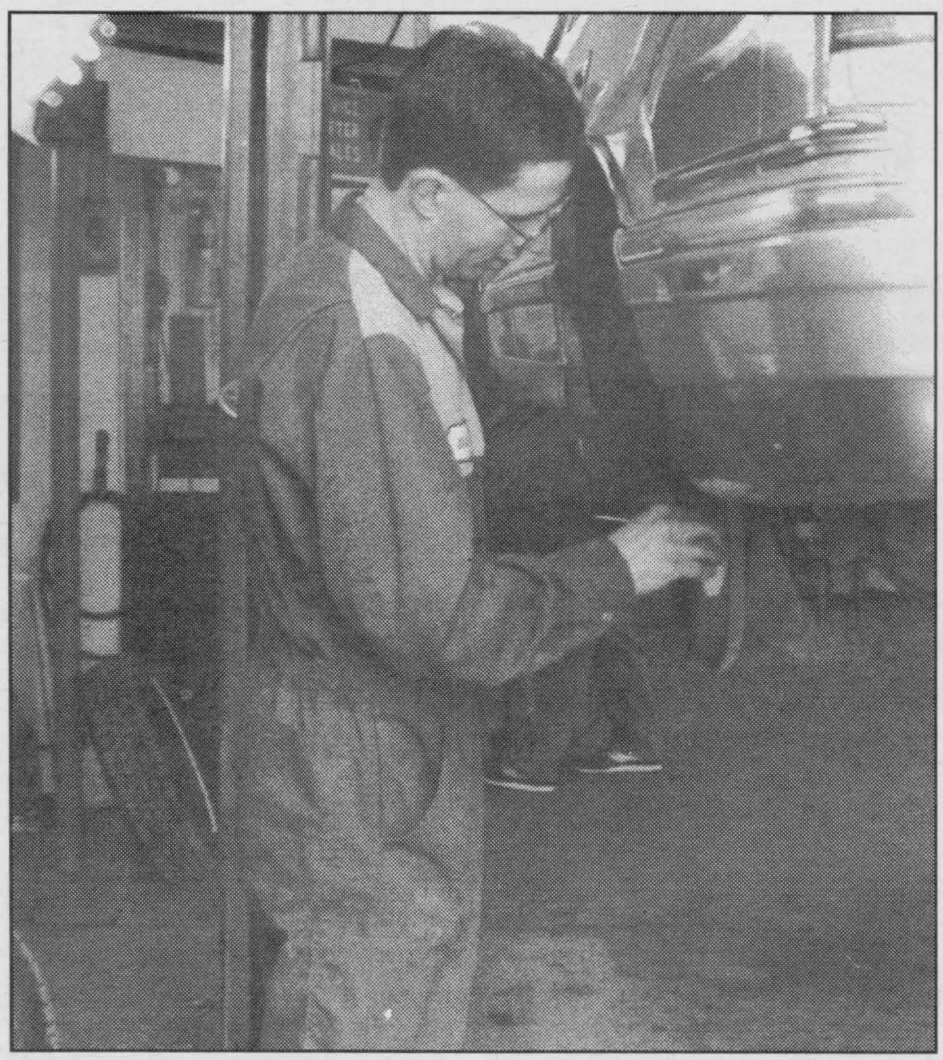
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Taking a brake

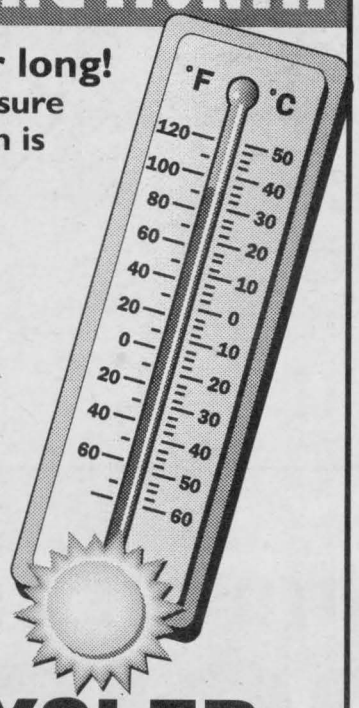
Danny Fischer of Boyd Chrysler Jeep Eagle in Winchester cleans the rear brakes on a vehicle in the shop.

Press Photo — Culliton

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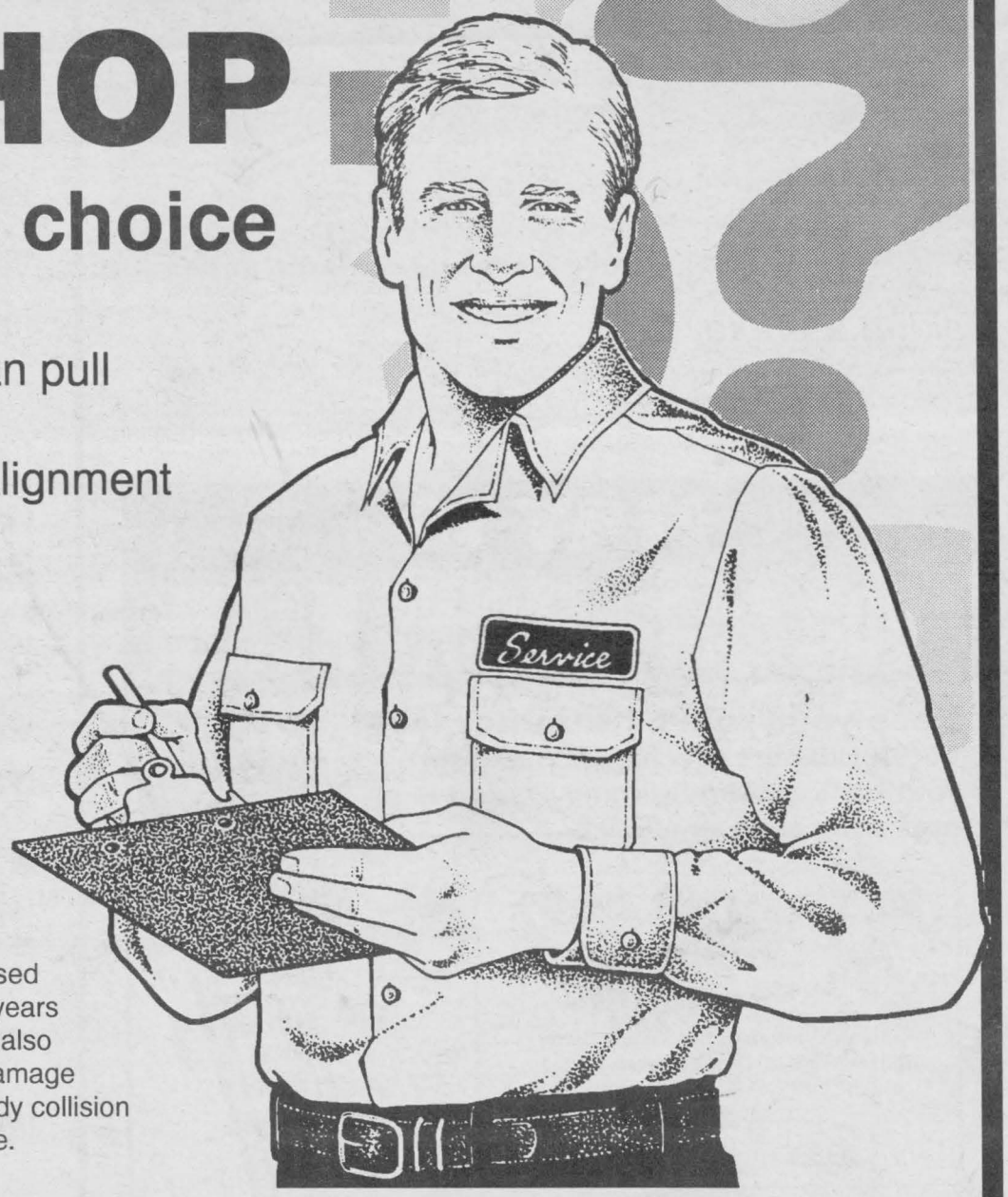
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