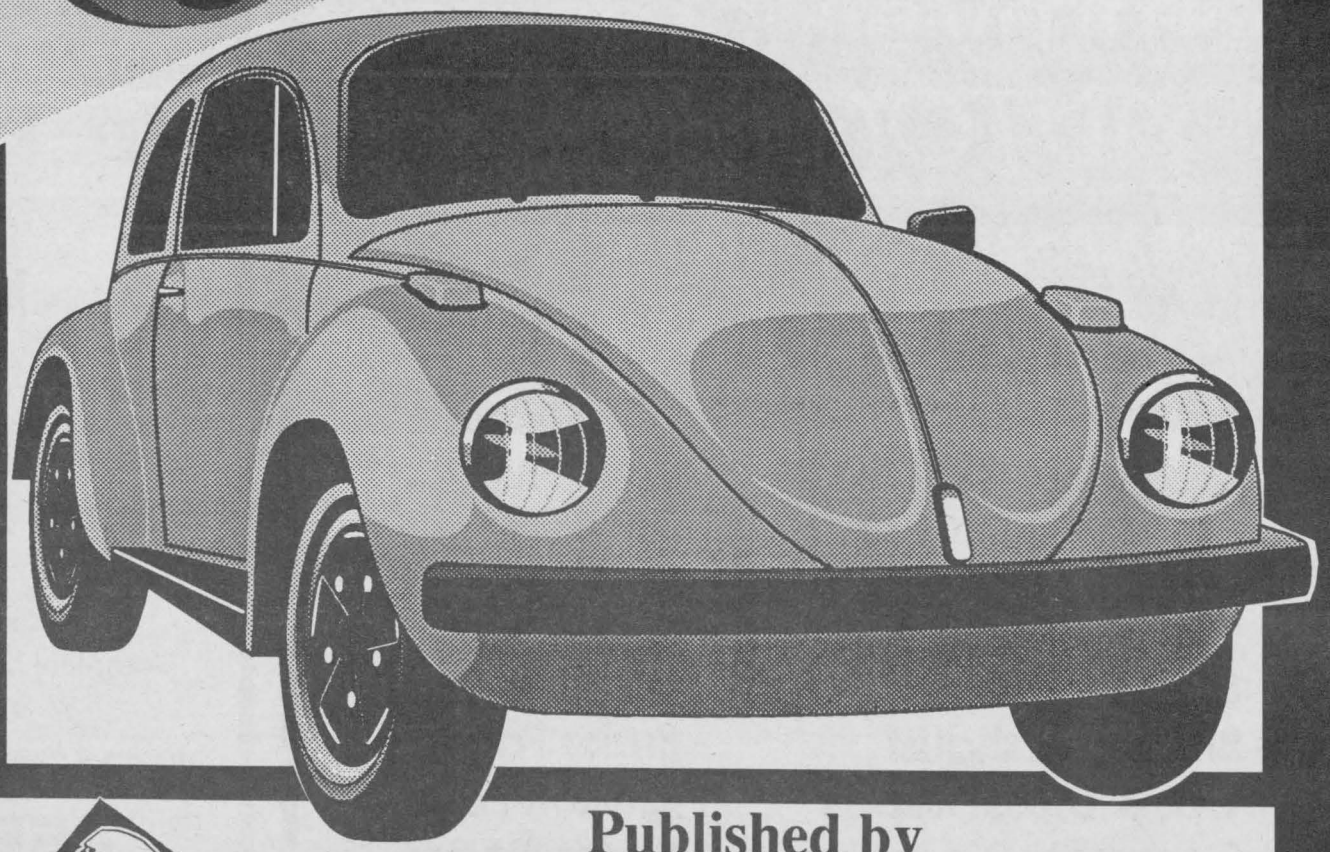
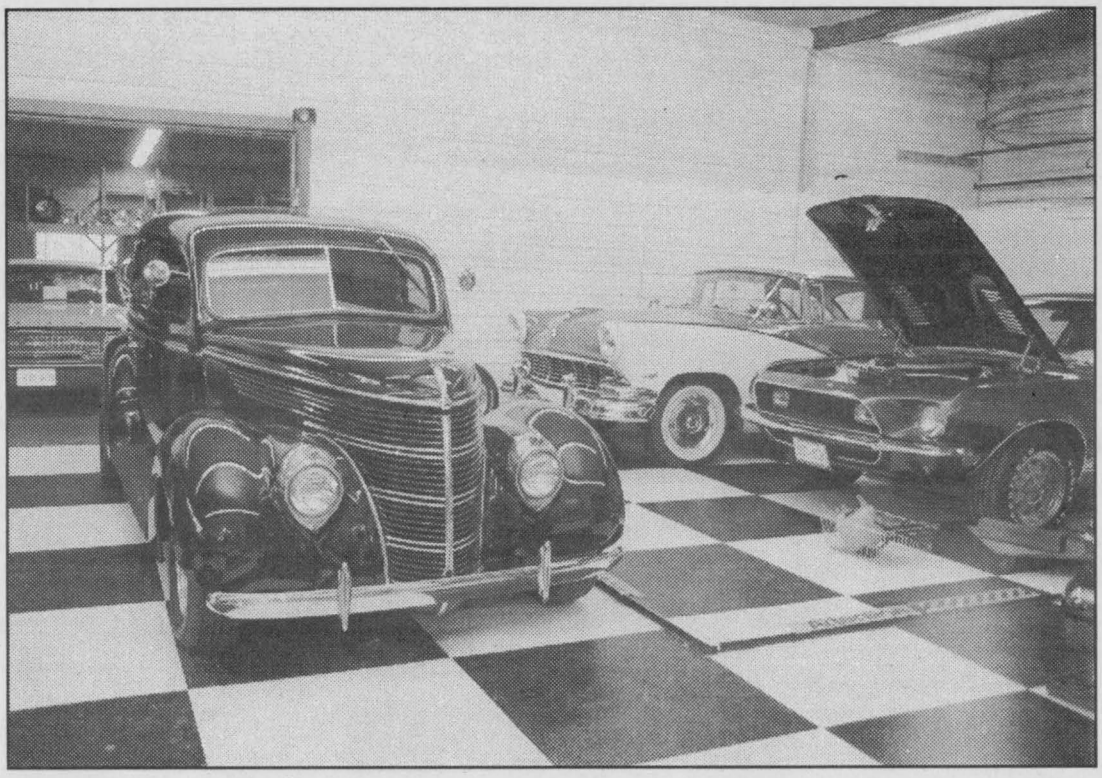
SPRING

CAR CARE & BUYER'S GUIDE



Published by
THE CHIEFTAIN PUBLISHING CO.
APRIL 8th, 1998



Restored with loving care

These oldies but goodies have been carefully restored to their original condition. Attention has been paid to detail and they are for sale at the right price. Here a '40 Ford, a '56 Ford Crown Victoria and a late '60s Shelby Mustang wait for new owners. They are polished and shine with a lustre that belies their age. The engine areas are even bright and clean. They boast plenty of shiny chrome and extremely wide white wall tires. The Shelby for instance has a 428 V-8 under the hood and has the famous Shelby logo throughout. Caroll Shelby, took Mustangs of various years and spruced them up, appearance and powertrain wise, they are very collectable today since he did only a few each year. A good investment collectable cars and trucks will hold their value and bring a good price when you need to sell them.

Chieftain Photo by S.L.Johnston

Put together your own emergency kit

Don't let your next roadside emergency give you a breakdown. Assemble your own travelling emergency road kit to prepare for most problems you may face. Whether you are a new car owner or have not thought yet about emergency preparation, carrying the few essential items listed here can make the difference between inconvenience and disaster. They also make thoughtful gifts for someone you know with a new car. One of the best tools in an emergency can be your cellular phone. Even if you do not know where you are, or are stranded somewhere remote, at least you can call for help. Be sure you also carry the card and phone number of your emergency service.

You won't get far with a dead battery, so carry a good set of jumper cables. Better still, carry a portable power source. This way you do not need to depend on a stranger for assistance.

The CAA (Canadian Automobile Association) answered almost 300,000 calls for tire service in 1997. Be certain your jack and spare tire are in the vehicle at all times. Still, in many cases, you may breakdown in an area that is not safe or convenient for making a full tire change. You can spend less time risking life and limb on the highway by using a good tire inflator. These aerosols quickly seal most punctures and provide enough pressure to let your drive to the nearest garage. One such product is "Prestone Tire Jack" inflator and sealer is the only tire inflator on the market that is both non-flammable and can be used all year round. It contains acrylic resins to seal holes left by nails, glass and other sharp debris. It even passed the "Seven Nail Test"...sealing holes from seven heavy construction nails.

To make yourself visible to oncoming motorists, keep handy in your vehicle a white cloth for tying on your antenna and flares and reflectors for breakdowns at night. Also carry a first-aid kit for emergencies. Bottled water and food are good to have for long waits, but tuck them away so you won't be tempted to dip into them on a regular road trip.

Finally remember that a well maintained vehicle runs less risk of breakdown in the first place. Avoid cooling system failure (The major engine-related cause of roadside breakdowns) by changing antifreeze/coolant regularly. And do not forget to fill the gas tank.

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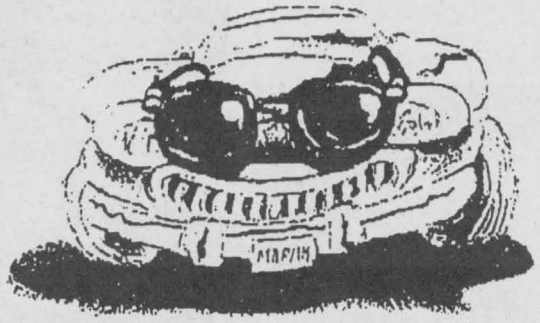

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Have your brakes checked thoroughly for any problems

Top seven brake-problem symptoms: 1. Grinding noises can be signs of worn pads or shoe linings. Delay in replacing pads or shoes can damage expensive drums and rotors, requiring their replacement. 2. Brake squeal may also be a sign of dragging shoes or pads, which can result in poor gas mileage, premature wear of linings and damage to drums or rotors. 3. Brake chatter and pedal pulsation can indicate a warped rotor or drum surface. 4. "Bottoming out" of your pedal can indicate a fluid leak or master cylinder problem. 5. Unreliable and inconsistent stopping or grabbing brakes are often signs of a leaking calliper, master cylinder or wheel cylinder. If this goes on unrepaired, it could cause at least a partial failure of the braking system. 6. A soft pedal or excessive pedal effort can mean any one of several problems, including a leak in the hydraulic system, low fluid level or a failed brake booster. Your car should be taken to a professional mechanic for a Total Brake ServiceTM inspection and an explanation of necessary services and repairs. 7. Excessive pad wear could be the result of the wrong friction material grade for your vehicle or type of driving. Towing or heavy hauling wears pads out faster than normal driving. This also applies to driving in hilly or mountainous areas and making quick or sudden stops. A premium-quality pad or shoe should be installed for these conditions.

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Suspension components are vital

It's late at night and you've been driving so long you're getting a little drowsy. Blinding oncoming headlights cause you to drift far to the right, until your wheels are on the rough shoulder. But you never lose control. You may have avoided an accident because you wisely had taken care of your car's tires, steering, suspension and shock absorbers.

Many accidents attributable to driver error might have been prevented if the vehicle had been more 'forgiving' if every safety and performance function had been effective. Ride control, essentially the ability of the wheels to remain in contact with the road surface, helps the driver steer and brake safely out of a predicament. This is a function of each component connected to the wheels, from steering and suspension parts to the tires. Among these inter-related parts are the shock absorbers or struts. Their role in this drama is to keep the wheels from bouncing or the body from bobbing on irregular road surfaces. Once a wheel loses contact with the road, steering and braking action disappear. You've lost control! Most people driving cars with worn shocks are unaware the condition exists. Then, suddenly, the driver notices his or her vehicle handles poorly.

A recent inspection of 356 vehicles disclosed 44 per cent had ride control parts visibly in need of replacement, mostly due to leaking. Symptoms of ride control problems are excessive roll or sway on turns, excessive front-end drive in braking, bobbing or bouncing of wheels on rough road surfaces and bottoming out of the rear end on bumps.

To be sure your vehicle's ride control system is sound, periodically check the tire pressure and the ride height, to be sure springs and suspension pars support the vehicle properly. You should also check the shock absorber mounting hardware for damaged or missing parts, especially the rubber bushings and check for shock or strut leakage or dents in the exterior.

In addition to the safety considerations, strong shock absorbers and struts help extend tire life and reduce the wear of other components. And they make driving more enjoyable.

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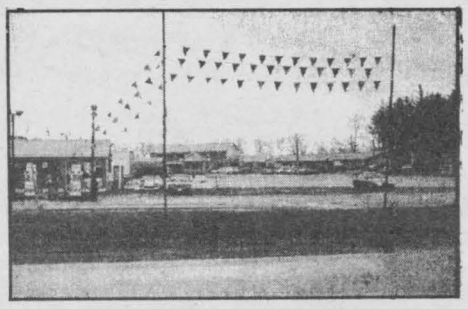

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Getting down to "Fine Details"

One of the most important rituals of spring is to give your vehicle a good old fashioned cleaning. Old or new, all vehicles benefit from being kept clean and thoroughly waxed. Not only will regular cleaning and waxing help prevent corrosion and rust, proper car care may even increase the future resale value of your vehicle. That means without help or expensive detailing, your spring cleaning can take some time.

The best advice is to make sure your tools and cleaners that will be used are the most efficient you can find. Equally important is to collect all your equipment before hand to avoid extra trips to the store or spending time locating the right cloth, sponge or bucket.

Save time up front and avoid smearing during the wash process by first hosing off loose dirt and debris, especially in those areas where the grime and dirt tends to collect.

Good quality car washes help avoid creating hairline scratches that dull the surface of existing polish or wax coatings. For this reason, use proper automotive wash which is especially formulated to produce the best shine for your vehicle...rather than a household detergent. Do not add too much wash to your bucket since while suds are good, too many can leave surfaces looking streaky.

Remember, dried suds leave spots. To prevent this, wash and rinse your vehicle in sections, and then dry thoroughly with a soft cloth.

Waxing your vehicle not only makes it look great, it is vital protection for the paint. And there is no getting around it, today's vehicles need to last as long as possible.

Let the wax dry and then buff gently using a terry cloth or a leather or synthetic chamois.

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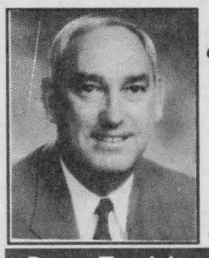

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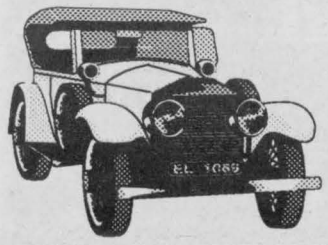
If your transmission for instance is having trouble shifting, or you see red fluid puddling around your car, check your transmission fluid level right away. Transmissions are closed systems and need to be full at all times. But, do nor waste your time continually refilling the fluid, use a stop-leak product and save yourself and your transmission.

Squeaky belts make a sound all their won. That is because as they get older, they start to lose their grip. V-belts and fan-belts can crack with age as well. For these use belt dressing, it will prolong the life of the belt and reduce strain on the bushings and bearings.



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Cellular industry has seen great increase in phone use

The number of cellular phone users in Canada has increased dramatically to over one million since the technology was introduced in 1985. That adds up to a lot of car phones on our roads.

The cellular industry recognizes its responsibility to educate customers about the safe use of cellular phones and encourages cellular users to exercise caution and common sense when using their phones in vehicles.

Virtually all in-car phones sold in Canada today are equipped for hands-free operation, which allows users to keep their hands on the wheel while talking. Well over half of the cellular phones sold today are hand-held portables. Most portable phones can also be installed for hands-free operation in vehicles. The industry cautions customer against using portable phones while driving unless they have a hands-free kit installed in the vehicle.

Canada's cellular service providers work with the Canada Safety Council to put out the message of education and responsibility among cellular users. Based in Ottawa, the CSC helps get the message out to various audiences, including government and driving schools through special driving schools, special information packages and public service announcements.

Cellular phones play an important role in community and highway safety. Cellular users in Canada make over 35,000 calls per month to 911. Most cellular carriers have made every effort to ensure that, even in areas where there is no regular land line 911 service available, cellular calls to 911 are routed to police or the operator. It is important, however, for callers to remember that 911 should only be used when there is an immediate threat to life or property.

Quick response to emergencies can make a difference in the outcome of a situation and many incidents have occurred where cellular phones have helped save a life or prevent a crime. Canadian cellular carriers are patron sponsors of Mobile Watch, a national organization which encourages cellular users to report accidents, suspicious activities and other emergencies to the proper authorities. Every year, cellular carriers recognize "Cellular Samaritans" who use their cellular phones for community and highway safety.

Cellular Safety Tips: •Safe driving is your first priority. Always buckle-up, keep your hands on the wheel and focus your eyes on the road. •Use the speed dialling feature on your phone to program frequently called numbers. Most phones will store up to 99 numbers that can be recalled by touching only two or three buttons. It is also recommended that you program the numbers for local police and fire departments. •Dial only when stopped. Wait for a traffic signal or a stop sign or safely pull off the road. Better yet, have a passenger dial the number. •Make sure your phone is positioned where it is easy to see, easy to reach and firmly in place. Ask for a safety demonstration when your phone is installed. •Use a hands-free microphone when using your phone while driving.

This will allow you to keep both hands on the wheel while using your phone. •Never use a hand-held portable phone while driving unless you have a hands-free unit installed in your vehicle. •Never take notes while driving. •Let your cellular network's voice mail pick up calls when you are unable to answer your phone. It's easy to retrieve messages later on.

The vast majority of cellular users are safe and responsible drivers. The cellular industry encourages its customers to act responsibly and make safe driving their first priority.

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