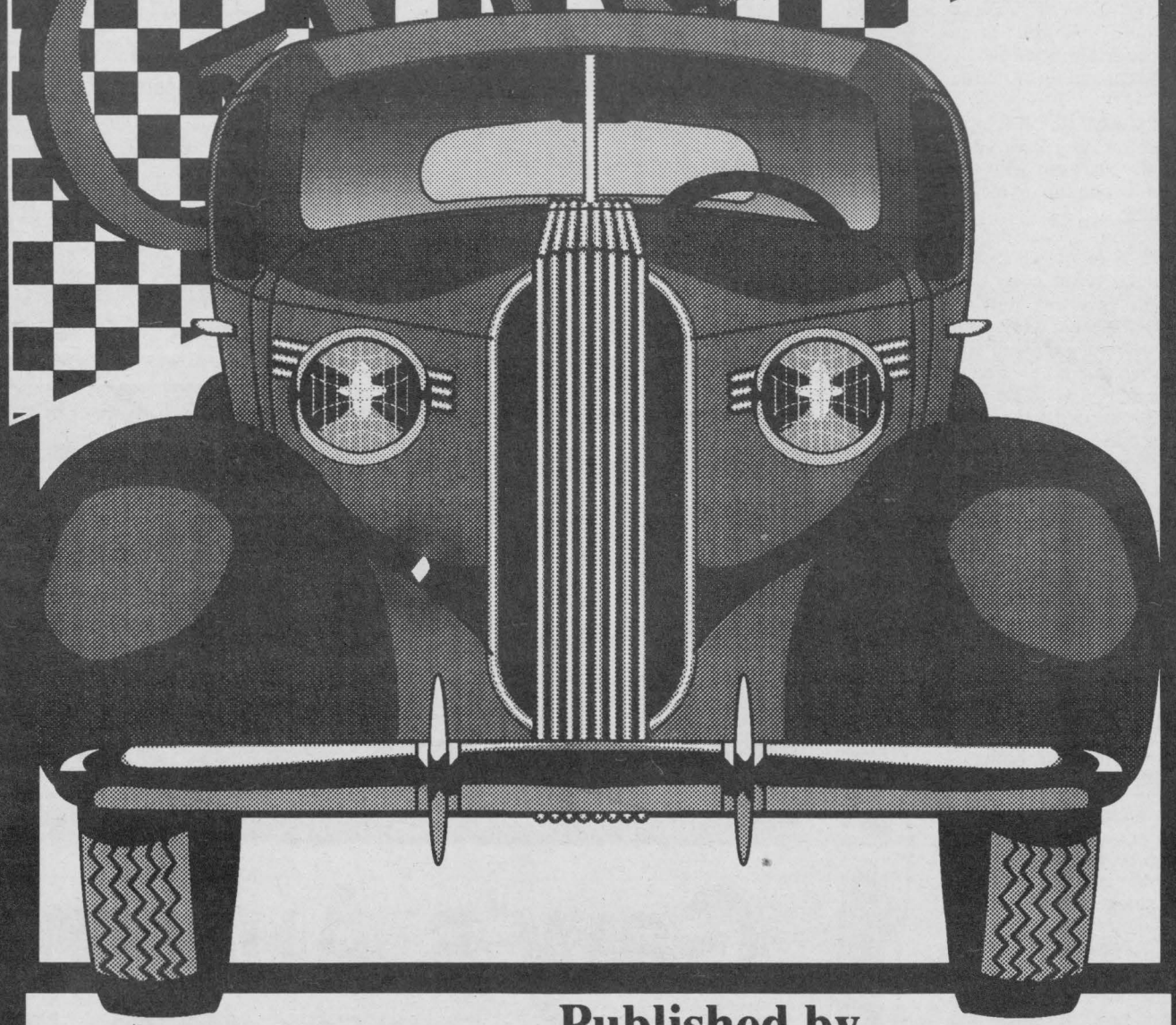
WINTER

CAR CARE & BUYER'S GUIDE



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October 30th, 2002

Celebrate 10 years with Gary's Automotive

Gary McInnis of Gary's Automotive is celebrating his tenth year in business this month. Gary opened his automotive repair business ten years ago, at a Highway 31 location. After a year he moved on to the Notman Motor Sales building where he rented space for three years. In 1996 Gary made his final move purchasing the former Seaway Cycle building, along Highway 2 in Morrisburg.

Since this purchase years ago, McInnis' business has greatly expanded. Starting out with one bay, he now has four bays, and room for six cars inside, and has the intention of continuing to expand. His staff has increased from a one man operation, now employing; licensed technician Adam Hill, second year apprentice, Bryan Verhoeven, service manager Lee Hess, and co-op students from Seaway District High School. All of these changes were made possible by the loyal and expanding customer base.

Gary was always fixing things, growing up on the farm, and didn't initially start out with the intention of becoming a mechanic, switching to the course only two weeks before it was scheduled to start. A move which has put him in the position he's in today. Adam has been part of Gary's staff for three years and specializes in front end repair and engines. Bryan started at Gary's as a co-op student two years ago, and is in his second year of a three year course at Algonquin College. Lee has started recently at Gary's, a mechanic himself puts his knowledge to work in the front office.

Over the last ten years the automotive industry has changed dramatically and McInnis has successfully adapted to these changes. Mechanics now go through constant training, and make use of diagnostic tools.

Gary's Automotive, is a member of "The Specialist" group, which allows him to national warranties, keeping him competitive in the market place. Gary's is a full service garage offering oil, lube, brake, tire, exhaust, and fuel injection services. His facility is well stocked with specialty equipment such as a computerize alignment system, and an emissions analyzer. Though he is not an emissions test site, he can diagnose and repair a vehicle that has not passed the emissions test.

Over the last ten year, Gary's willingness to grow and expand has allowed him to keep up with the needs of his customers, offering them reliable and valuable service.

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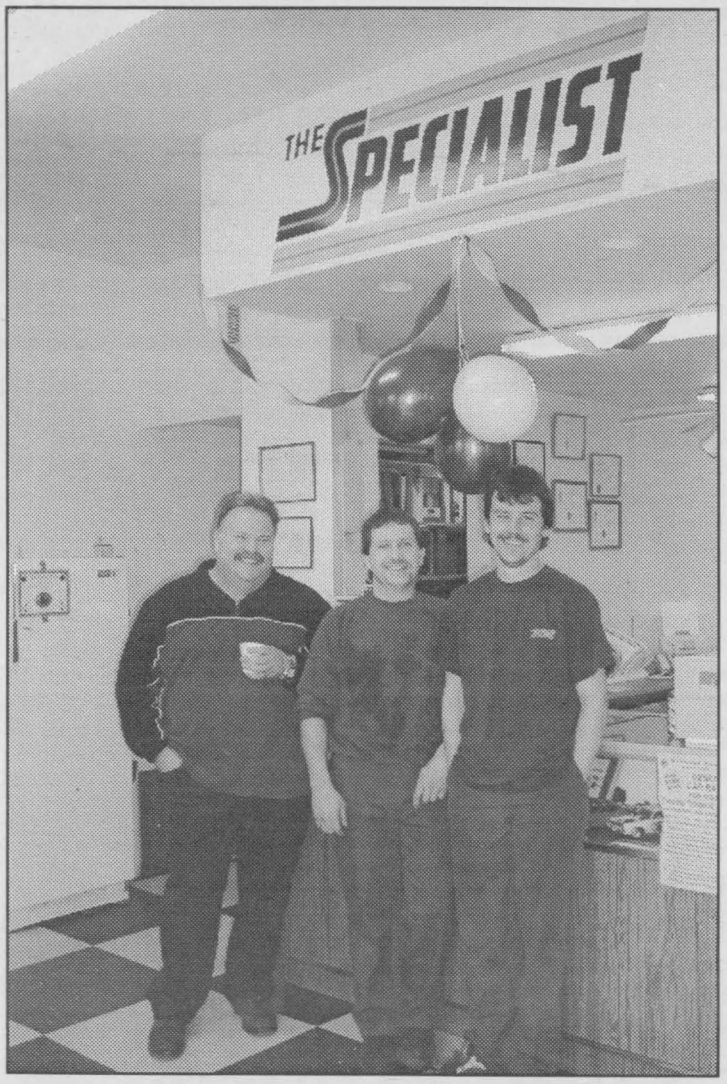
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Gary's Automotive Celebrates 10 Years

Owner, Gary McInnis (centre) and his staff, Lee Hess and Adam Hill (absent; Bryan Verhoeven) have been offering a full range of automotive service for ten years now. Gary continues to grow and expand his business to keep up with the demands of his customers.

Chieftain Photo by Rebecca Comfort

An Idling car can be deadly

You may never notice the small items that appear in the newspaper, but every once in a while, a headline like this shows up: Idling Car Sends Family of Four to Hospital."

There are probably dozens of such stories across Canada. In most cases, the families are treated and go home. Occasionally, however, one or more family members may never make it to the hospital, because they are found dead.

How can an idling car injure or kill someone, you ask? The answer is all too simple, carbon monoxide. All cars emit CO gas from their exhaust systems. Normally the fumes are immediately dispersed in the outside air, becoming perfectly harmless. But, if a car is left running in an enclosed space, like an attached garage, those fumes can collect and eventually seep into the house through the tiniest cracks in the door.

As you probably already know, carbon monoxide is a deadly gas when ingested by humans. It robs the blood of oxygen and at high levels of contamination eventually suffocates a person. You cannot smell, or taste CO and unless you have a carbon monoxide alarm in your home, you may never know it is there, before you start to feel the symptoms. Even then, you may never determine that your symptoms (which are like having the flu without the fever temperature) are the result of CO poisoning.

So a few safety tips this winter may prevent trouble or tragedy: Don't leave your car running inside the garage, or close to the side of your home or apartment. Make sure you have a carbon monoxide alarm in your home. Look for a model listed by ULC and made by a well known manufacturer, like First Alert.

Winterize your car with the Five Point Plan

1- **Change oil and filters.** Trapping up to 96% of foreign particles as well as trapping and holding the dirt filters become clogged and need to be replaced to work effectively.

2- **Change the air filter too.** For every five litres of gas burned, your engine has sucked in 14,000 litres of polluted summer air.

3- **Check plugs and ignition wires.** Slower start ups result from carbon buildup, and will drain a cold weakened battery. Increased exhaust emissions and poor fuel economy result.

4- **Make sure the fuel injectors are clean.** Clogged ones cause higher fuel consumption and sluggish performance. Fuel Injector Cleaner is all that is needed in only one tank of gas.

5- **Antifreeze and coolant does not last forever.** Test the potency of these and replace if necessary.

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Garry checks the brakes as winter approaches

Chieftain Photo by S.L. Johnston

Where the rubber hits the road

Accelerating. Cornering. Stopping. Get a grip!

Have you ever stopped to think how much contact your car actually has with the road? You stay on the road courtesy of about four hand-sized pieces of rubber compound. Without that contact, your car is a candidate for making soup cans. It's well worth your while to keep your tires properly inflated, rotate them at least once a year, and replace them when the tread gets worn.

But there's more to it than that. Your tires can also be an early warning system for other problems such as alignment or a failing suspension. Suppose you look at your tires, and you notice that the tread seems to be more worn on the inside than the outside edge. You probably need your wheels aligned. Getting the alignment fixed will improve your car's handling and fuel economy, as well as giving you a more comfortable ride.

Does your car start to shake when you reach certain speeds? It could be that you need your wheels balanced. All wheels and tires have very slight differences in the weight distribution, and at the speeds they're turning that translates into a powerful vibration. All it takes to fix it is the positioning of those little lead weights around the edge of the wheel.

Feathering is caused by incorrect toe-in or toe-out. The tire drags across the road, instead of rolling easily. You need an alignment.

Wear on one side only means that the camber is out of adjustment. This, too, means you need an alignment.

Cupping occurs when the tire bounces, rather than rolling freely.

Small areas of excessive wear appear. This is generally caused by worn shocks or loose suspension components. You need to have your suspension adjusted.

A series of cups suggest that the tire is shimmying -- you need your wheel balanced.

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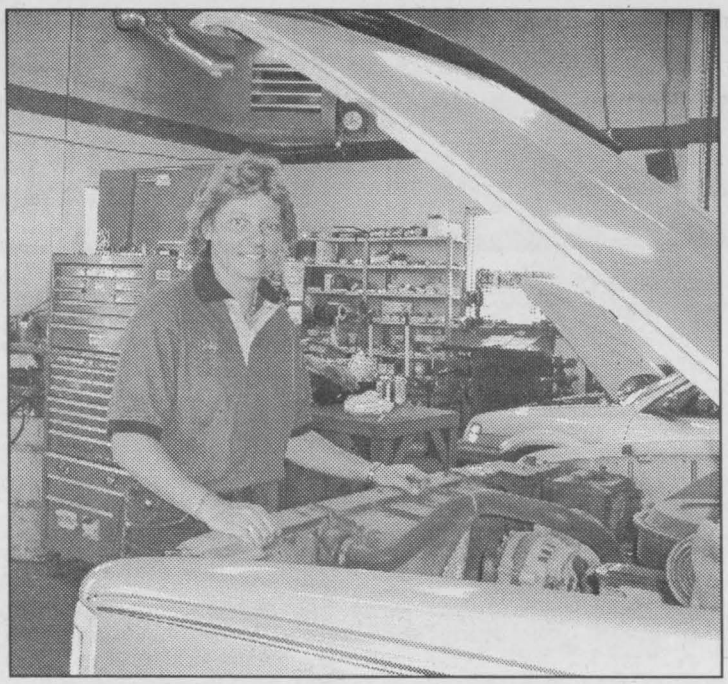
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Cindy Wolfe suggests a fall tune-up before the snow

Time For a clean-up before winter sets in

Summer is over and the hot weather driving has taken its toll on the appearance of your vehicle. Time for a thorough clean-up.

Start by giving the body of the vehicle a preliminary soaking with a hose to loosen the dirt. Then use an auto shampoo wiping off the grime with a soft cloth. Do not do this in direct sunlight as it may leave spots and blotches on the finish and don't use kitchen detergent for the wash, it could affect your finish, taking the brightness out of the paint.

Dry the body thoroughly before finishing off with a good waxing to keep out the winter's salt.

It is a rare summer that comes to an end without leaving the remains of the season's bugs baked onto the vehicle. They should be removed with care to prevent scratching the finish.

For all the coke and chips, cookies and treats that have ended up on the carpet and upholstery, a good interior clean is in order. All traces of back seat snacks will be gone and the smell of clean will permeate the entire vehicle. Have a vehicle that has that showroom look and is protected against the elements.

Is your car ready for winter ?

Read This before handing over the keys to your young driver

by the Car Care Council

Moms are the ones who usually cart kids around from school to scouts to baseball to hockey, etc. More often than not, these women take responsibility for the repair and maintenance of their vehicles. But what happens when the kids grow out of the back seat and into the drivers seat? Who's looking after the vehicles?

Automotive preventative maintenance and repair knowledge is like algebra, says the Car Care Council. We're not born knowing it, it has to be learned. Teach your young drivers the basics about their cars before they get the keys. If you don't know much about automotive maintenance/repair, do yourself a favour and learn it along with your kids. Here are a few tips:

Explain that all cars, new and old, need regular attention. Make sure your teenager knows and follows the maintenance schedule for his/her car. In addition to making a car safe to drive, preventative maintenance can save thousands of dollars during a lifetime of driving.

Don't overlook the owner's manual. This is full of information about the car that your young driver may never know unless he/she is familiar with this automotive bible.

Make it fun. There are myriads of sites on the Internet that are fascinating for young and old drivers alike. Some have Q&A sections. Let your teen send his/her tough questions to the professionals.

It's probably been a while since they went on a field trip. Take them with you to the repair facility, the tire store, the body shop and wherever you have automotive work performed. Get them accustomed to the automotive world - it's people, places, jargon and prices. There are thousands of books available on the subject. Many written specifically for non-technical audiences; some are even humorous. Buy a few and make them required reading for the licensing process.

Make a plan. What happens if

Please turn to page 6

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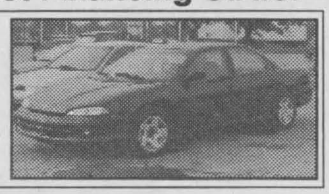
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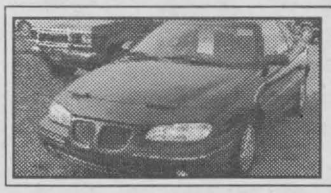
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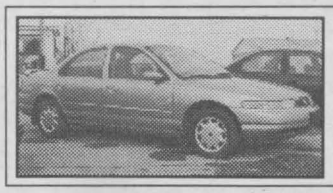


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Checking wires and battery a good idea

Simple Maintenance tips for driving in the cold winter months

Experts urge motorists to take the time to winterize their cars early. A few preventative steps now can spare you from a world of frigid frustrations later.

Harsh winter element such as de-icing chemicals can wreak havoc on your cars finish.

Drivers should wash their cars on warmer days during the winter and follow-up with a professional wax or polish to restore a high-quality shine. Touch up scratches immediately to seal them. Don't neglect the undercoating, get it touched-up to prevent rust from developing in the future.

Window will also require special attention for the winter months. Replace your regular wiper blades with winter blades.

Ensure that your washer reservoirs are filled with anti-freeze windshield-washer fluid. The application of a water repellant will allow you to keep your windows cleaner through the winter months. Be sure to have any cracks in the windshield, no matter how small repaired immediately.

If your battery is two years old, visit a service station to have the charging system thoroughly tested. Older car batteries are less likely to start your car in the winter, when the temperature hits zero degrees, your battery will lose about 60 per cent of its strength. One of the most common signs of a weak battery is a grinding sound, originating from the motor when the ignition is turned. Examine your battery for corrosion or loose cables, to avoid a breakdown. Clean corrosion from a battery terminal with a solution of water and baking soda. Make sure the tension of all drive belts are tight, they should not flex more than half and inch.

Ensure your tires have enough tread for driving in snow and slippery conditions and make certain your spare tire and jack are in good condition.

The rule of thumb for winter road safety is to see and to be seen. Ensure all of your vehicle's lights are functioning properly.

CONTINUED

Read this

continued from page 5

the car breaks down, he/she has a wreck, or the car gets stolen? What if no adults are home to receive the panic call? Whether you want to call a repair facility, or a relative, give them some instruction and put important phone numbers in the glove compartment.

For many parents, driving age is the final frontier. Certainly it is an important rite of passage for teenagers. Don't let your child pass into this stage of his/her life without being prepared. Take the time and necessary materials to make you young driver feel competent and secure in the works of automobiles.

Check Your plugs, winter's coming

One small part of a complex machine, the lowly spark plug is one of the most important components of your vehicle's engine. Often its gets no respect. But, unless your plugs are properly maintained and replaced when necessary, the engine will not provide the performance it promises.

You'll get misfires and gas consumption will rise. More and more harmful pollutants will be released through the exhaust system.

Check your plugs regularly for corrosion, dirt and gap erosion. It is not a bad idea to change the plugs in readiness for winter driving. That way you ensure quick starts that won't drain a cold battery.

Spark plugs have undergone a quiet revolution in recent years, based to a large degree on the continual design improvements made to racing cars.

More than 80% of all engines on the road today use a distributor-less ignition system (DIS).

These plugs fire on the compression stroke and on the exhaust stroke, so they have to fire twice as often as the old distributor ignition system.

Conventionally, electricity flows from the centre electrode and jumps to the side electrode; this is the major cause of most wear on the centre electrode. The DIS system however causes half the plugs in the engine to fire in an unconventional way, where the electricity leaves the side electrode and jumps to the centre electrode causing most of the wear to occur on the side electrode thereby distributing the electricity equally. There are plugs designed to withstand firing in both directions by coating both electrodes with platinum to cut down gap growth and erosion.

Check your plugs regularly, but especially as winter approaches. Light tan or grey deposits on the ceramic insulator are normal and an indication that all is well. If everything is white, with glazed deposits on the insulator tip, the spark plug is too hot for the engine or the conditions for which it was used. A sooty, black deposit means the plug's heat range may be too cold for the application or the fuel mixture too rich. Shiny black or oily deposits are an indication of bad oil seats and or piston rings, not an indication that the plugs are at fault.

Your owner's manual will be your best guide on how often to change your plugs. But; if your car's performance has declined, starting becomes difficult or the engine stalls, check the plugs it may be time to change them.

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Be prepared for Canada's cold weather driving

Canada's cold winter weather conditions can wreak havoc on your car. Snow and ice covered roads can leave it helplessly spinning and sliding out of control. It is important to prepare yourself and your vehicle before you brave those dreaded driving conditions.

To help you get through the worst of winter there are a few simple, but common sense precautions to take before and after you take the wheel to help keep your family safe this season.

First on the list is to make sure your car is in good condition. This means everything from windshield wipers to brakes to proper maintenance. Most importantly, prepare for the onslaught of winter by having the right tires. Winter tires are your best option to maximize driving safety in all possible winter conditions. New advances in winter tire technology have helped to develop high-traction tries such as the Arctic Alpin from Michelin, the BF Goodrich Winter Slalom or the Uniroyal Tiger Paw Ice and Snow with NailGuard.

Secondly you should carry a winter survival kit. This should include an ice scraper and brush, a folding shovel, booster cables, a flashlight, flares, a blanket, a candle, waterproof matches and a supply of nonperishable foods. It is important to wear warm, non-constricting clothing, boots and a wise investment would be a cell phone.

Before your drive off it is best to start the digging out process by starting your engine so it can warm up. Get rid of all ice and snow on your windows, mirrors and lights. When the snow is cleared away and the vehicle is warm,pull away slowly so you do not get stuck before you get anywhere.

Good advice is: "Easy does it on the road." If the roadways are slippery, reduce speed and leave more space between you and the car ahead. Accelerate gently so your wheels do not spin and avoid abrupt steering maneuvres. When braking with an antilock system, hit the pedal as hard as you can and keep pressing to stop quickly. Without ABS, brake firmly, but carefully, trying to keep the wheels from locking up. Pump the brake pedals if the brakes do lock.

Skid control can be vital and practice helps when not in a situation where you need the skills. Release the accelerator gently. If the car's rear end is swinging out to the side, quickly steer towards that side. If the front wheels have lost traction, slowly steer in the opposite direction of the skid until the tires regain their grip, then gently steer back in the direction of the skid.

When you find yourself snowbound, if in a remote area, stay in your car unless you are sure shelter is near by. If you run your engine to use the heater, open a window to prevent buildup on exhaust gas. Clear snow away from your exhaust pipe. Wrap yourself with warm blankets or clothing to keep warm.

Above all rememebr that you do not drive in winter the same as you do in summer, conditions are vastly different in this country. Care and common sense must prevail.



Tim at GT Auto immersed in his brake system job.

Keep Your windshield clear

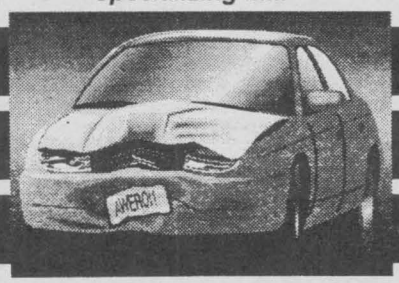
The hazards of driving rain or misted windshields tend to get less respect, but can be just as dangerous, especially in the fall when the weather is damp and temperatures dip. Clear and unimpeded vision is the number one way to safe driving.It is thusly important to keep your windshield wipers in good condition. One school of thought suggests changing the blades once a year and fall is a great time to do so.

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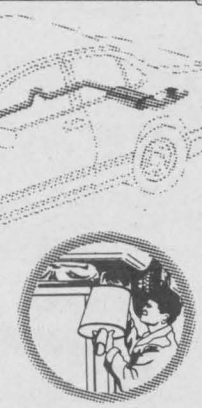
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