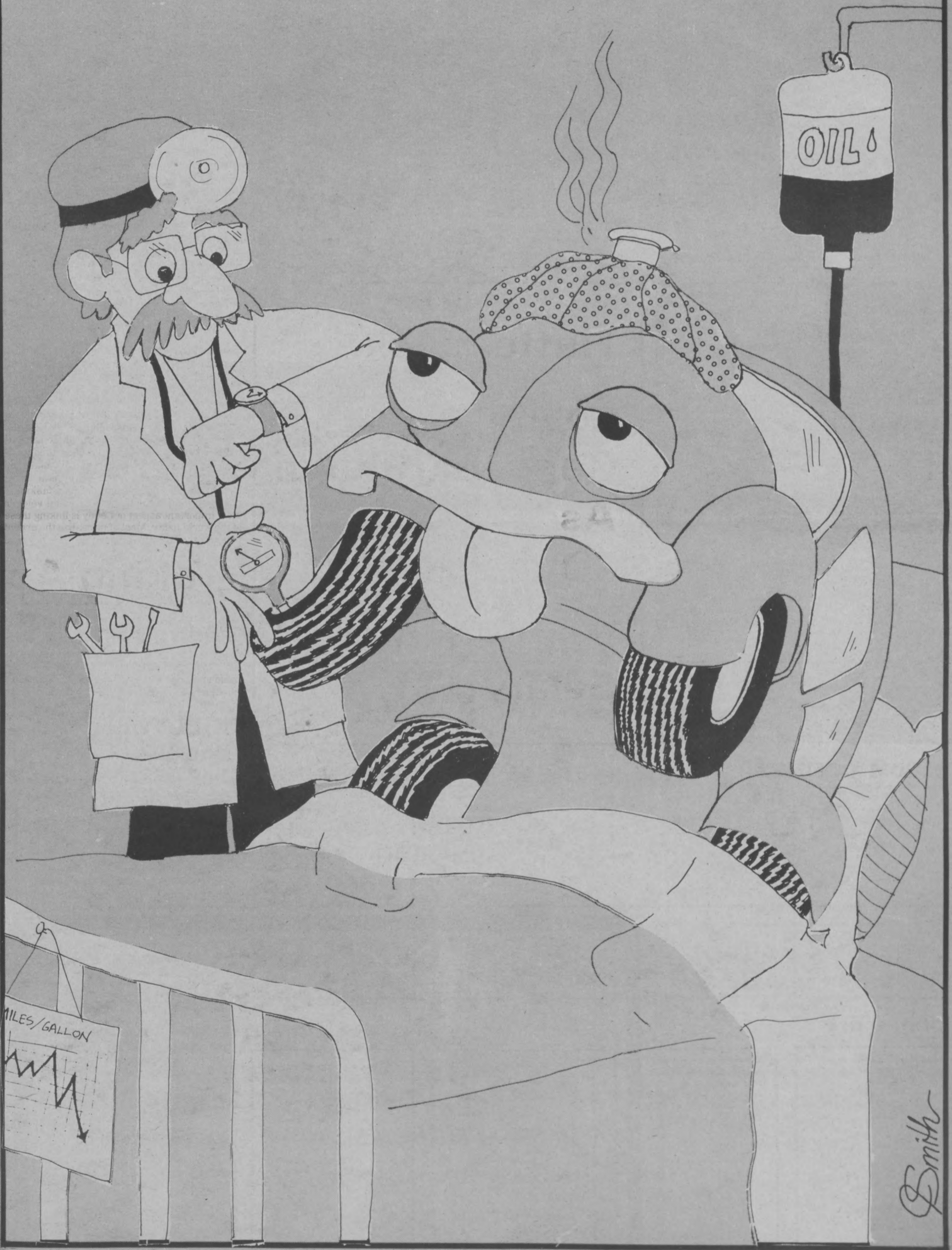


CAR CARE



When a Breakdown Leads to a Break-Up



TONY POLLOCK/Daily Nexus

By Jason Spievak
Staff Writer

My car weighs 2,024 pounds with me in it. I know because I've taken it on that truck scale on I-5 on the way to Tahoe. It's one of those nasty temperamental German monsters with mysterious electronic wiring wrapped around some high-tech fuel-injected carb. Not the kind of thing you adjust with a screwdriver.

I've had it for about two years now; it's my fourth used car, and we've developed a special relationship — which kind of scares me, because the guy I bought it from referred to it as "she," and his "little red devil."

It's fast ... and the stereo will rattle your brain. It's the kind of car I dreamed about when I was younger. No, it's not a Porsche and it's not a

BMW. It's a Volkswagen ... and it's hungry.

It's been kind of a give-and-take with me and the ticket-magnet that takes me from point A to point B. It takes all my money and it gives me a hard time. But sometimes I really feel that she was looking out for me. Last month, for instance, I wanted to go to Vegas and waste some of my hard-earned dough at the craps table. She said no.

I wanted to get reckless and irresponsible one night last quarter — blow off work and school and visit some friends in Santa Cruz ... but she knew better. "Too irresponsible," she said, "better to stay here and work, and ride your bike to school."

We celebrated our 19-month anniversary a few weeks ago. She told me where she wanted to go — Top Shop Automotive in I.V. — and I took care of

everything. It was a dream date. New alternator, front shocks, shock housings, bearings, head gasket, exhaust valve, brake shoes and a 5-year battery.

It was a \$400 night, but one that I won't soon forget.

She purred like a kitten for a week after that; not a single argument. Anywhere I wanted to go was fine with her. Worth every penny, I thought, as we screamed down the 101 southbound, hand-in-hand, my eyes searching the mirrors as trees did 90 north.

But then we were fighting again. I hadn't asked her out all last week, and when I finally did, it was just for lunch and maybe to cruise into Goleta and pay the rent. But she didn't want to go. So she sat at home and she refused to go anywhere. I sat with her for a long time the other day, but she wouldn't even turn over.

Everyone said I should dump her ... even my dad wanted to fix me up. But I'd put a lot of time and money into this relationship, and I wasn't about to give it up just like that. But, sometimes, I just ... well.

Sometimes I'd start to think that maybe I've got it pretty bad, and then I look at some of my friends and I realize just how lucky I am. Of course, some of my friends are still on their own, and they're in pretty sorry shape, too.

Don't think I'm clinging on because I'm afraid to go it on my own or find another. I've been with plenty. Like I said, she's my fourth. Sure, I had

troubles with all of them, but this is different. Things used to be simple ... when something went wrong it was only a matter of twisting a few things around ... some duct tape here, a little fluid there. But this one was different. We're talking serious commitment. Sure, I love her, but I just wish she was a little less demanding and a little more understanding of my other commitments. Maybe, just maybe ...

Well, I did it. It wasn't easy. I took her to a really nice place downtown, and I didn't tell her until we got there. I felt awful when I handed over her keys, but why make them change all the locks on my account?

I guess you could say I'm keeping an eye on the market these days. Okay ... I have been reading those magazines, but not just for the photos. It all seems so

easy though, with the phone numbers right there and everything. There's a couple I've been thinking about calling. But can I really support that kind of relationship? Financially, I mean.

I called one the night before last. I was a little uncomfortable, but I didn't hang up. I told her that I'd seen her ad, and I was interested in getting together. She wanted to get together right away. How about her place, she suggested ... something about her car being blocked in.

I put on a clean pair of jeans, brushed my hair and checked my wallet. At the last minute, I grabbed my checkbook — you just never know in these situations — and headed over there.

She was sitting just outside the apartment building. She was absolutely beautiful ... a perfect body. She was

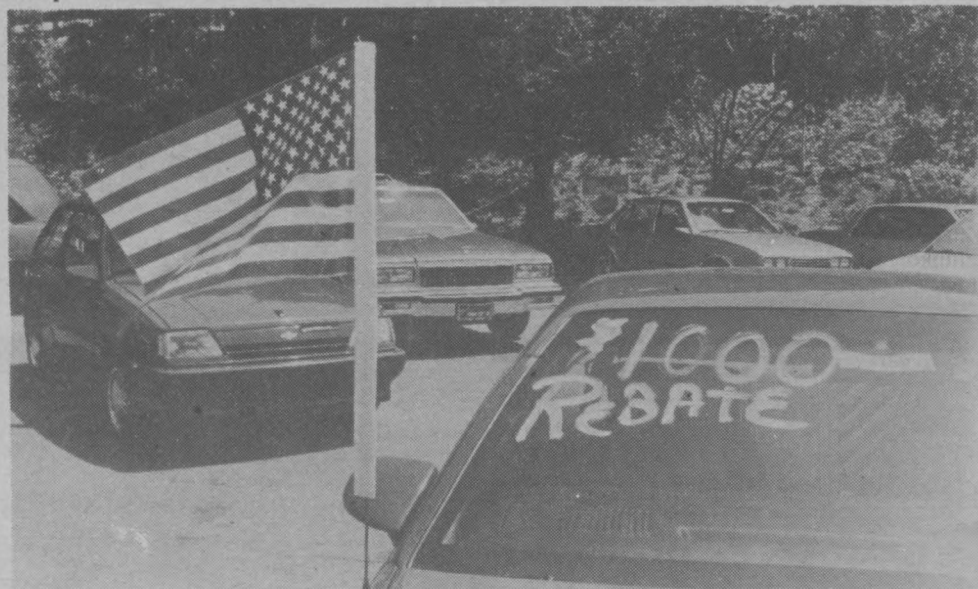
parked in, though. I walked over to her and, without saying a word, ran my hand down her side.

She was a clean Toyota 4Runner. Not a scratch on her. I felt a presence behind me, and I turned to see a woman motioning to me from a second story balcony. "Go ahead," she seemed to be saying.

More than a little nervous about what I might find, I slowly lifted her hood. A beautiful straight six with dual overhead cams and a reinforced suspension that wouldn't quit. She was built like a truck.

To make a long story short: I took her home last night. Oh, I know what you're thinking ... didn't I even have her checked out by a professional? Well, no. I trusted the woman, and I didn't want to hurt her feelings.

Besides, I think this is finally the real thing.



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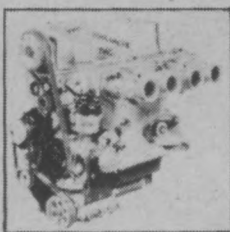
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A CHEAP HEAP

By Ben Sullivan
Race Car Driver

Into every life a little rain must fall, and into every garage a few clunkers must crawl.

So goes the millenium-old truism of automotive zen, passed down from generation to generation since the first car was built in ancient Babylon in roughly 2000 B.C.

Actually, I just made the phrase up, and as anyone knows, automobiles are an invention unique to the twentieth century.

But regardless, it's really true. Try as you might, no one gets through life without having had at least one clunker.

I don't mean a car whose air conditioning occasionally goes on the blink, or whose power-steering fluid needs replacement every month. No my friend, I'm talking about a car that takes pleasure in eating you out of house and home. One whose greatest joy is breaking down in rush hour traffic while you are on your way to work. A car, nay a beast, who goes through more parts than a Shakespeare play.

Yes, I'm talking about ... the Car from Hell.

Maybe I'm lucky. The first car I ever bought was a clunker. Although there's no law of nature saying each

person gets just one per lifetime, it only seems right that the fates would spread the clunkers of the world around so that no one person would have to suffer repeatedly. Anyway, that's what I'm hoping.

I guess I should have known when I first laid eyes on it that my automotive purchase wasn't going to be a barrel of laughs. The posted note on the exchange board in the basement of the University Center had read:

'64 VW Bug. Good fixer-upper. Some rust. Great for short trips (3 blocks or less.) \$200 Or Best Offer. Call Suzie at 685-5698.

Seeing as my financial situation was rather bleak, and my desire for wheels quite strong, the ad fit my bill. I snatched that little note off the bulletin board and hustled over to the nearest pay phone to give ol' Suzie a jingle.

A very sleepy sounding female voice answered after about ten rings. I apologized for having woke her, but she said she wasn't sleeping. I let it drop.

When I told Suzie why I had called, however, her voice perked up ever so slightly. "Oh really, you want the car?"

Yes, I told her, I was interested, but I wanted to see it first. She agreed that I

probably should and we set a time to meet later that day.

Oh, the anticipation! The wonder! Imagine, I might very soon actually be mobile once again. The few hours between the phone call and our appointed rendezvous at her apartment seemed to drag on for days, but finally it was 4 p.m. and I could check out the car.

Bicycling over to the Del Playa address she had given me, I quickly scanned the nearby curbs for older-looking Volkswagens. There was a nice red one about 20 feet away. A little rust on the chrome bumper, but nothing terrible. Then on the other side of the street a little further was a faded green VW convertible. The paint was a little flaky, but the tires looked new. Boy, I thought, this girl doesn't know what she's doing. At \$200 either of these cars would be complete steal. It seemed too good to be true.

It was. The car I was destined to purchase was a rust covered "white" number which hadn't been started in more than three months. After being push started by several burly dudes she recruited, I drove the car around the block a couple of times, and, feeling rather dejected, wrote her a check for \$200.

What went wrong first, I don't quite remember. It

might have been the clutch which needed to be replaced twice in a period of 1,000 miles, the "just rebuilt" engine — with the word "just" signifying more than 70,000 miles, the electrical system which successfully drained and killed three batteries, or the brakes which, when applied at speeds in excess of 30 mph, produced a sort of shuddering effect throughout the

entire car.

Despite all the hassles, however, I don't view the entire experience as a waste. After all, I did learn a thing or two about cars, their problems and solutions, what to look for in a used car and what not to look for.

And like I said before, I got my junker out of the way early. I can now go on to

enjoy a life of blissful driving experiences. At least I hope so.

Anyway, I guess the point of this is that no matter how hard you try, you aren't going to be able to avoid owning a clunker at least once in your life. Let's just hope when that day comes someone will pay you to write a story about it to help cut your losses. I know I'm feeling better already.



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Life Without
a Car



I.V. Cars: Can

By Wade Daniels
Staff Writer

Isla Vista is no place to have a car.

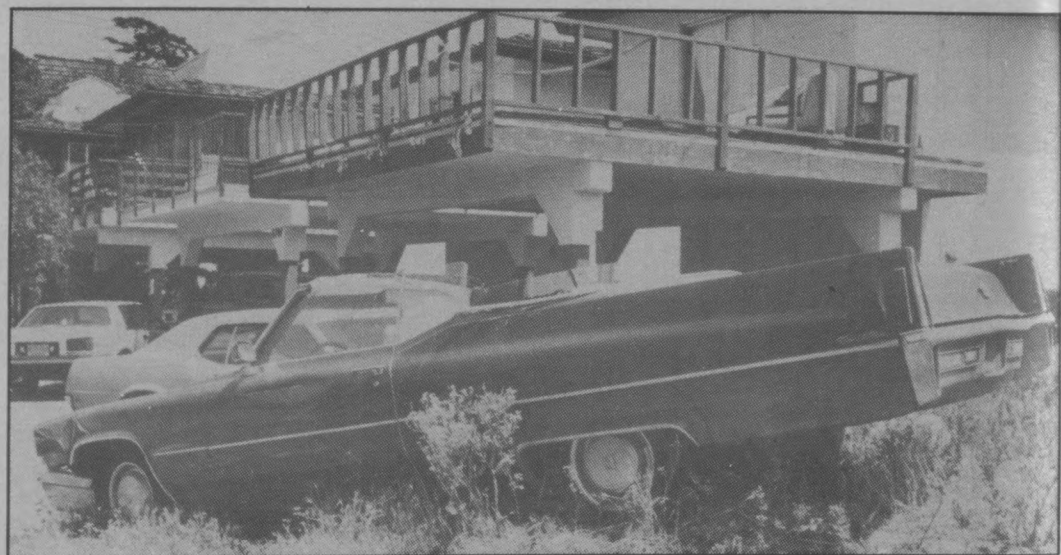
Think about it. First of all, driving in almost any part of the community is like moving through a gauntlet, what with all the nutty people moseying around to places of study and party and also doing things like playing frisbee in the streets and all.

There's a lot to look out for. The heavy-dutiest of scary places to drive would obviously be at the intersections of the 6500 block of Pardall where it crosses the Embarcadero roads. Sometimes, usually right before or after class sessions, bicycle multitudes swarm up and down like a salmon run, causing a back-up of cars a half-dozen or more thick. And as the car people inch out to try and cross, the bike people, seeing their path becoming blocked off, start cursing and sometimes hocking loogies at the intruders. Actually, that's probably an exaggeration.

Anyway, it does seem fortunate that whoever engineered those intersections had the foresight that, for the most part, packs of bike people aren't going to stop and give the right of way to big kooky cars. It's



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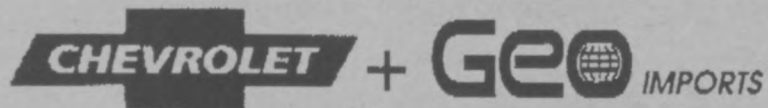
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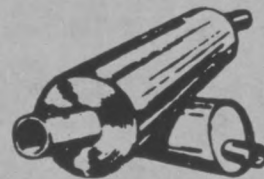
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They Survive?

probably prevented lots of accidents and fistfights.

Also, one has to watch out for I.V.'s roving packs of friendly tongue-wagging dogs. And where else do people regularly get pulled over by cops on bikes?

It seems like there's really no escaping putting the car in jeopardy in I.V., even when it's parked — in fact

kickfights with rear-view mirrors or keytips scratching paint jobs. Isla Vista Foot Patrol Deputy Sol Linver said their office received 14 reports of vandalism during April, about eight to 10 of which were likely car-related.

But one would figure that the actual number of cars vandalized would be significantly higher than that. People will maybe

doesn't exactly make for much freedom of choice.

And how is vandalism preempted? As mentioned earlier, the more drunk or stoned a person is, the more likely he or she is to bash you like KTYD.

However, even moving the machine to one of Isla Vista's *no moleste* zones can be hazardous. Some of the I.V. community's parking areas are secluded enough

seems worthwhile to move it on over a few blocks, unless busted into. Sometimes bad guys even take the whole car.

Linver said that Camino Corto, which is the street that hits El Colegio right across from Francisco Torres, is a real problem area because there are vacant lots along a rather long stretch of it. This means that nobody hears anything when a bad guy busts a window. The Foot Patrol received 11 reports of cars getting broken into during April, and a whopping total of 48 so far this year.

Mostly, people whose cars are broken into are victims of opportunity, says Linver, and all you really have to do to protect the car is not leave valuable-looking stuff lying around in plain view. This is all-too-obvious, but just bring the goodies home or even stuff 'em under the seat. Stick it in the trunk; thieves hardly ever bust into trunks because they can't see what's in them.

What this all amounts to is that, as mentioned before, Isla Vista is no place for a car. A pessimist sees too many cars for basically not enough parking spaces, drunk people vandalizing and/or breaking into cars, and the gauntlet to slalom through whenever one has to drive somewhere.

However, the optimist sees that insurance rates are relatively inexpensive around here.



almost especially when it's parked. Hunter becomes the hunted.

A few weekends ago, some person or people went up and down an I.V. street yanking and tearing every automotive appendage they came across.

Seems like a good deal of this goes on, especially on weekends, when people get loaded and roam the streets — antenna swordfights,

report to the police that all four of their tires are slashed, but who is going to call the cops to report something relatively minor like a twisted antenna? Actually, not having an antenna for a car radio in these parts is a rather dark spectre, as in such a case you're pretty much prohibited from picking up anything besides KTYD, Y-97 and maybe KCSB. That

that cars parked in them are prime targets for being cars. Deputy Linver said that the Foot Patrol receives vandalism reports mostly on weekends, when there are more uninhibited partiers tearin' up the streets.

The first measure is obvious — not to leave the car on Del Playa Drive or even Sabado Tarde, especially on weekend nights. Sure, parking is butt-tight, but it



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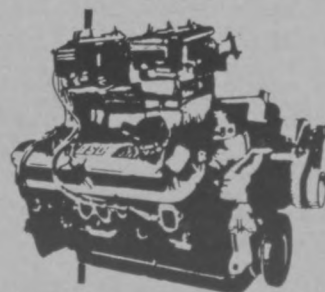
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JAMES FOWLER

Granny's Caddy

By Tony Pierce
Cool Cat

My first car was willed to me by my grandmother, who died in Arizona. It wasn't supposed to happen that way, but because the court procedures took over a year and because my dad already had a car, I wound up with a 1976 Cadillac Sedan De Ville.

Don't get too excited, like I said; it took over a year to get it and she died in Arizona, so what I got was two tons of rusted, gas-guzzling American luxury. The AM/FM 8-track was broken, the roof was literally peeling off, the dash board was crackling, and the paint was baked and chipping.

I was 17 though, and I didn't care, because it was a Cadillac.

It had these buttons on the side that would recline the front seat back and forth, up and down, and some other directions. The seats were made of sleek maroon leather so slippery and long

that if you hadn't fastened your seatbelt you'd either wind up hugging the passenger's window or you'd be the next driver. Dates liked it.

In 1976 Cadillac decided to make the longest car it had ever made. So it put in the biggest engine ever for a Caddy (a 500) and all the bells and whistles possible. Electric trunk, too.

Old women interested in power, plushness and safety bought it and kids in Night Ranger cut-off T-shirts ended up with 'em. I was happy and so was my first girlfriend, who let me get to second base with her in the back seat of that car. She was 5'11" and I was 5'7", but I loved her ... really ... and there she was and there I was and there was this back seat that was longer and wider than my single bed, what could you do?

When I was 19 I worked in this place where I was forced to wear suits and sell televisions on commission. I had this girlfriend who lived

in Malibu, I lived in Inglewood and my job was right in the middle of us in W.L.A. After dropping her off way out in Malibu, some late nights I'd sometimes just sleep in the back seat of my grandmother's Cadillac that I had been willed. It's always a good idea to keep a blanket or two in your trunk for moments like those and I'm sure even your mother would rather you sleep in your car than try to drive home tired and sleepy. The sun'll wake you up around 6 a.m. — or bums or cops will, so don't worry about nothin'.

I lost my virginity in a Honda, though. It was a '80 Accord and it was alright, but I really wished it had been in my grandma's Cadillac that I wound up getting, and I often wonder why, after owning that wonderful automobile, did Destiny or God or Luck choose me to lose it in a foreign sub-compact instead of an American legend with three armrests. This is a question I have no answer to

and I'll probably never know until I die, but that's the beauty of car stories, sorta, isn't it?

When I was 19 and a half I worked at this gas station in Beverly Hills. Adam Ant came in in a 1958 T-bird, Charles Bronson had an '86 Jaguar, Heather Locklear had a Jeep, Don Knotts had a 450 SEC with some blonde girl young enough to be his granddaughter drivin' it, Lorraine Neuman had a 450 SL, Joe Theisman was going out with Cathy Lee Crosby but she wouldn't let him drive her brown '87 Corvette — but she let me do the windows ... everyone likes you to do their windows except for those jerks that just get their cars washed and don't want you to mess up their wax job. Funniest times were when you already squirted some of that blue windshield stuff on the window and the guy goes, "Aw, don't do the windas, can't ya tell I just got it

washed?" And you go, "coulda fooled me" and you walk off. A few seconds later they ask ya to wipe the blue stuff off the window and then you can look at them funny like "make up your mind already" and if you're really bored you can say, "Yeah, this is a nice car alright, but ya see that rusted piece of crap over there, yeah, that Caddy? Yeah, my grandma died and I got it. Lost my virginity in a Honda, though, wouldn't ya know it."

It'll drive 'em crazy.

When I was 21 the car kept screwing up; it died in the middle of the street once, it lost a drive shaft in Hollywood and it started getting flats for some reason. That, and the fact that I was getting a whopping six miles to the gallon, forced me to get the Pontiac piece of crap that just recently blew a rod on me. On its last days, I was getting threatening letters from

my neighbors pleading me to move my "hunk of ———" off the street, but the transmission was gone and I couldn't do anything but call the junkyard to tow it away.

I got \$65.

When I looked out of my window the next morning and didn't see that huge hunk of metal out there, I did what most intelligent beings would do, I cranked up the new David Lee Roth record and tried to forget about my first car, the Cadillac my grandmother used to throw me in the back seat of when I was 10, along with three of her German Shepards and they'd lick my face until we got near people and then they'd just bark real loud. My grandmother would look in the rear-view window and shout over the Joe Pass, "Y'all gettin' enough air back they'ah?" I'd always say yes, but she'd always turn up the air conditioner, anyway.

Preventative Maintenance

By Wade Daniels
Staff Writer

Let's face it: most of us are semi-impooverished students who drive old heaps Uncle Chester pawned off on us for beer money when we turned 17. We also live amidst the salty mist of the Pacific. We're prime candidates for body rot.

It usually takes about five or six years for corrosion to set in, according to Dave Boytis of McLean's Auto Body and Paint in Goleta. One of the most common factors that contributes to body rot is design flaws which allow water to accumulate and eat at the paint and then the metal.

Windshield moldings and fenders are the easiest targets for this. Water often accumulates in the bottom of car doors which become clogged.

Although some body shops boast that they guarantee

their work, repairs done on these areas cannot truthfully be guaranteed since the problem is design-oriented, Boytis explained. These sorts of problems have, for the most part, been eliminated in newer model cars.

Salt in the Isla Vista air is a more indirect culprit. It attacks the paint, thus making the body itself more vulnerable to the elements. For this reason it has been widely recommended that one should avoid buying automobiles from areas where salt is poured on roads for traction in icy conditions.

Perhaps the best advice for keeping your paint intact is to keep it washed and waxed. This may seem a little far-fetched but hey, it's only advice.

Beer cans, careless drunks, meteorites — all are common problems in I.V. and all scratch and dent our fair autos laying naked their flesh of ore to the monsters

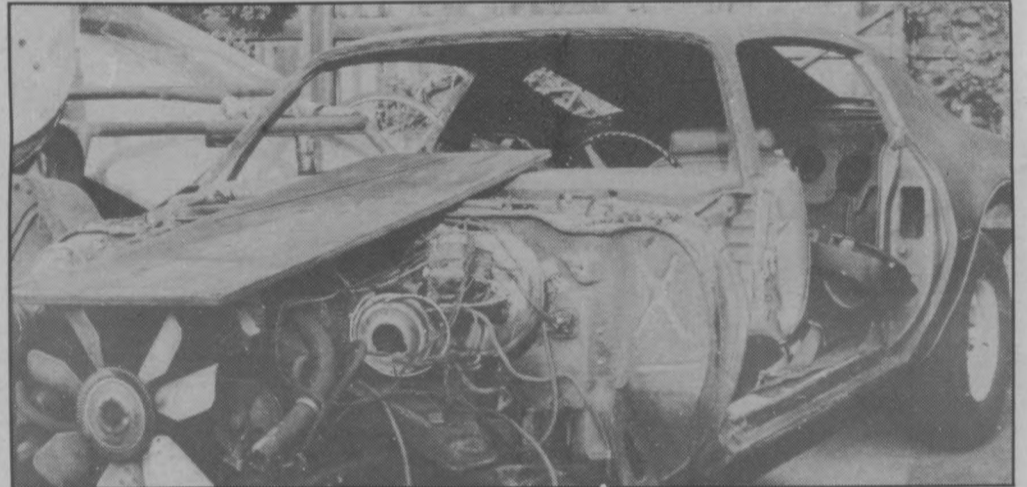
of the sky. But we ourselves can at least slow down the progress of decay until we graduate and can either trash the hunk or get it fixed by someone who knows what he or she is doing.

For scratches and nicks, you can buy some very fine-grained sandpaper and painstakingly remove all the rust. You'll probably take out some of the surrounding paint, but that's all right.

Then, take a spray can of silicon coating or paint primer (both available for a few bucks at car part stores) and layer on a couple of coats. You can also purchase aluminum tape, which helps, but tends to fall off, and looks really tacky.

Both of these methods leave your car in less-than-showroom condition, but slowing down the decaying may save you a good deal of cabbage in the long run.

When body rot is initiated internally, the exterior will have a sort of bubbled ap-



pearance, and the paint won't seem affected much at first, but you can bet there's water in there working away. If you can, feel the other side and see how far it has progressed. If not, start sanding. If the metal is "bubbly", you may end up making a hole all the way through.

There is a good demonstration of do-it-yourself hole-filling in the May 1984 issue of *Popular Mechanics*.

For starters, you have to tear or snip off every bit of rust or it will start spreading again immediately. It's kind of like operating on a cancer patient.

Now comes in the infamous Bondo. It either takes a lot of luck or an artistic hand to make this look good. You have to gob it in there, smooth it out as best as you can and wait for it to dry. Then start sanding and do your best to make it

match the rest of the car. This is where luck or skill comes in handy.

Some people do body work with a blow torch and a sheet of fiberglass, but this does not work especially well on metal cars.

If your car decay is at a very advanced stage, you will either have to spend a lot of money to get it fixed or just live with it (maybe plant some flowers in there).

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News on the Used

By Jeff Solomon
Staff Writer

At this time of the year, most students are either preparing themselves for graduation, vacation, or summer employment. However, at the same time, these students are most likely realizing that they probably can't fulfill all their summer goals on their skateboards or bikes, because the rest of the world simply isn't as centralized as Isla Vista. In order to get anywhere in this world, or if you want to take your date somewhere other than Freebird's, you need wheels. Sure, you could take the bus, if you don't mind standing for long periods of time on street corners waiting to be a victim of a drive-by shooting. And even though taxi cabs often times have vomit and sperm stuck to the seats, they can still be kind of cool because you sort of feel important being driven around by a sort of chauffeur. Problem is, riding a cab is actually more expensive than riding a limousine, really. For example, it'll run you damn near \$20 to get from downtown Santa Barbara to Isla Vista. Forget it. Unless you enjoy the

of accident. Question the seller about any previous damage to the car. I mean, wouldn't you like to be the first one to wreck your car?

of accident. Question the seller about any previous damage to the car. I mean, wouldn't you like to be the first one to wreck your car?

Check Paint

Besides looking at the overall paint job on the car, take a look at the rubber moldings surrounding the windows and doors. If there is any paint on them, chances are the car has been repainted, because in a car factory, the moldings are placed on the car after the body has been painted. While a new paint job may not necessarily mean that the car has been damaged, question the seller just to be sure.

Listen to the Engine

If you can't take a mechanic with you when you go used car shopping, or you don't know diddly-squat about cars, there is a way to check the engine, or parts of it, without getting your hands all greasy. Start the engine, and listen. If you hear a tapping noise, known as "lifters" or "tappets," it could mean a problem with the top end of the engine, or a valve problem. If you don't hear anything, put the car in drive, push the brake down

Check The Oil

When you locate a car that appeals to your aesthetic tastes, be it a Nova or a Porsche, be sure to open the hood and check the oil. If the juice is black, you're Okay. But, if it's cream-colored, shut the hood and leave, because the strange coloration signifies there is water in the oil, probably signifying either a cracked head or a bad head gasket, which could be quite expensive to repair.

Check Body

Stand in front of your potential automobile and look carefully down the side of it. If the side of the car looks straight, fine, but if it appears to be somewhat wavy, be wary — most likely, the car has undergone body work due to some kind



real hard, and pull up the emergency brake. Then, push down on the accelerator slowly, all the while keeping the car stationary with the brakes. If you hear a knocking sound, known as "knockers," it could mean a serious problem with the bottom end of the engine, such as problems with the camshaft or the bearings, a bad cylinder, a bad rod — in short, bad news.

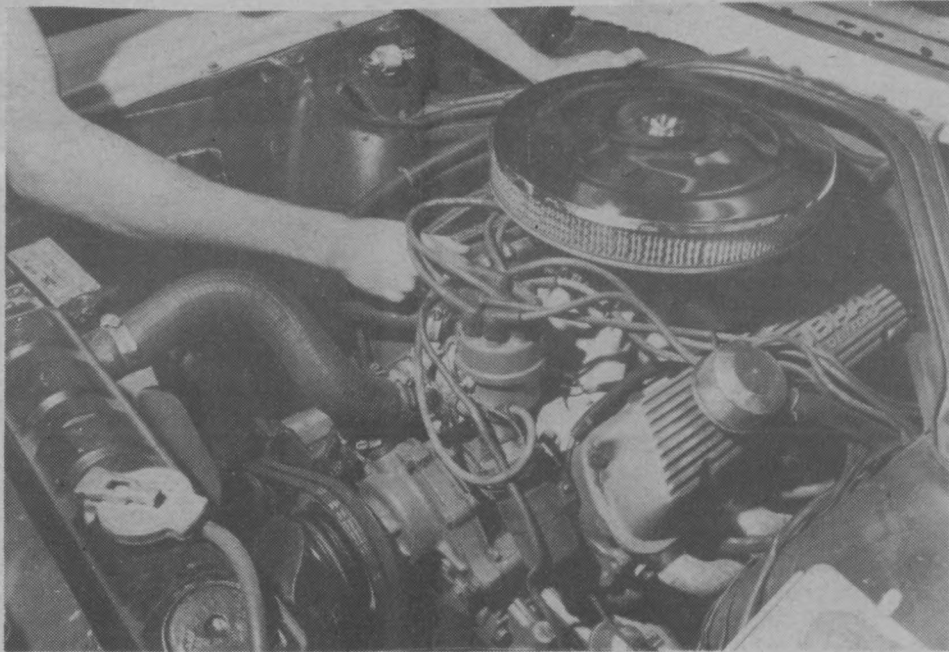
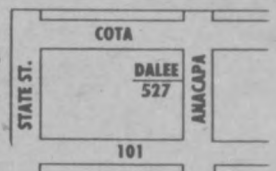
Other things to do include checking any receipts left in the glove compartment for past repairs or checkups, and check the pedals and interior for excessive wear and tear. Kick the tires and slam all of the doors, because if the car can withstand your brute strength, it surely can drive away unscathed after a confrontation with a tree or another car.

Of course, the best advice is not to buy a used car at all. Save your dough, sell your body, steal from your grandparents, and buy yourself a new car.

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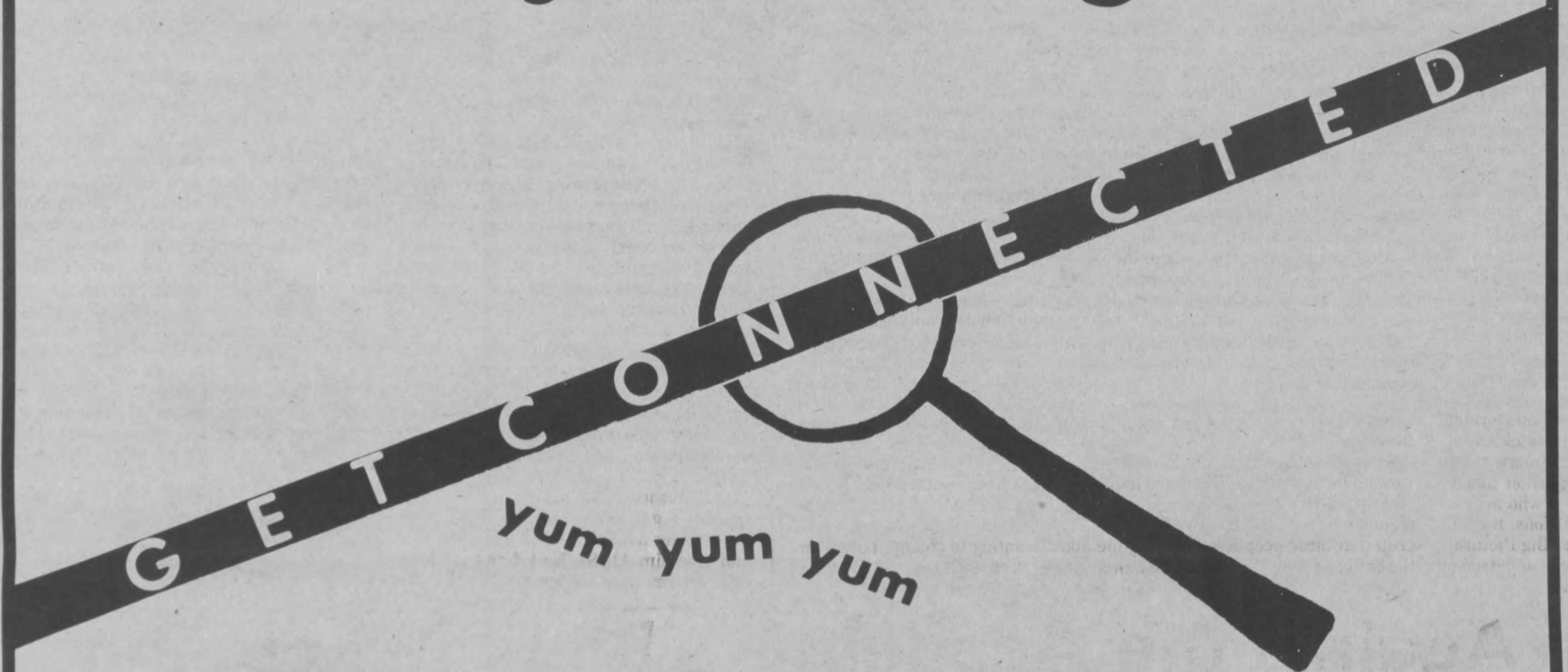
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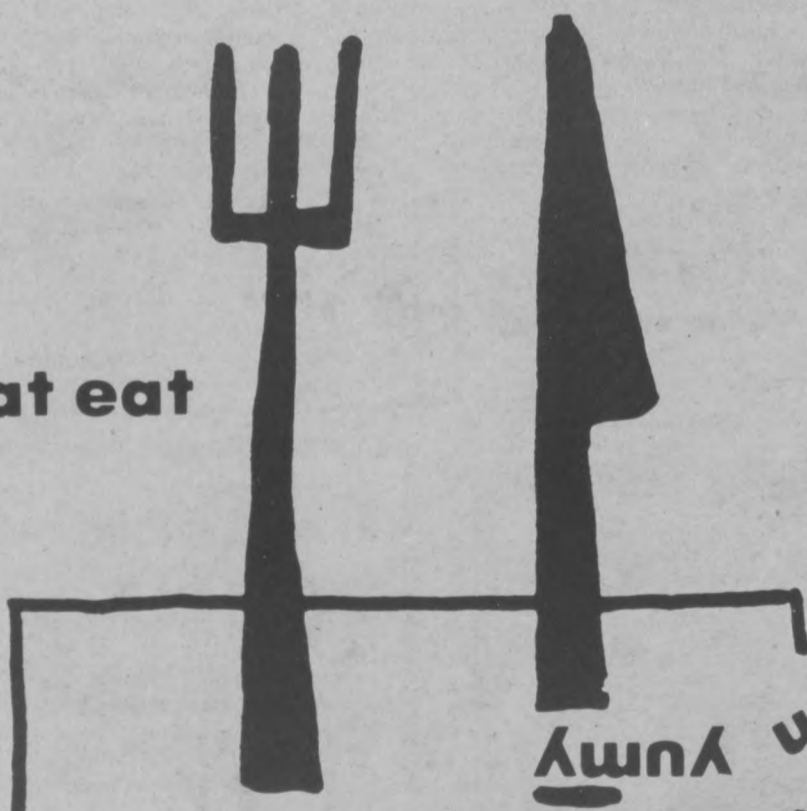
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yum yum yum

yum yum yum yum yum

eat eat eat eat eat



yum yum

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friday