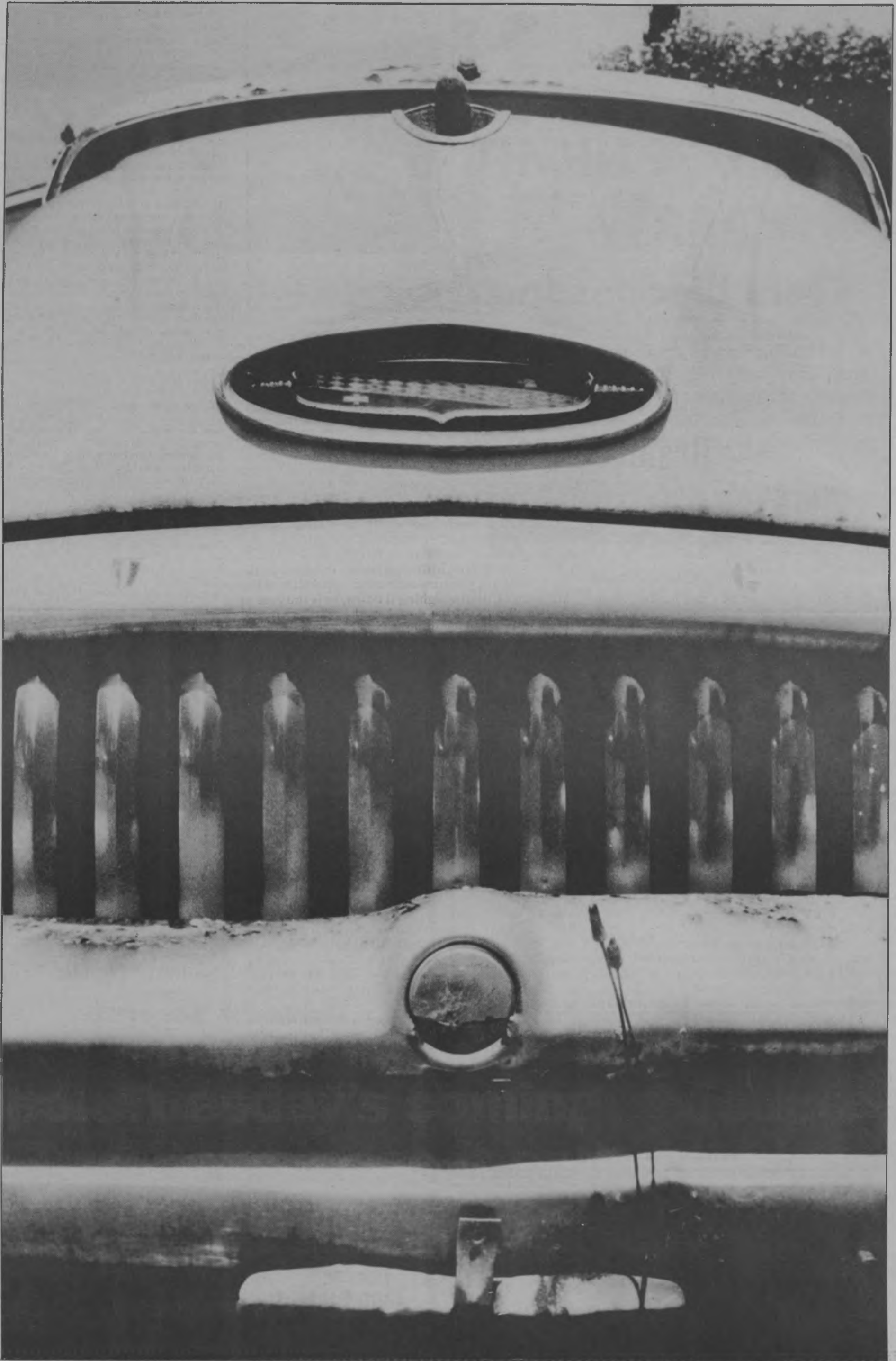


Nexus Car Care '94

A Daily Nexus advertising supplement from the people who bring you "Weekend Connection"

May Eleventh, Nineteen Ninety-Four





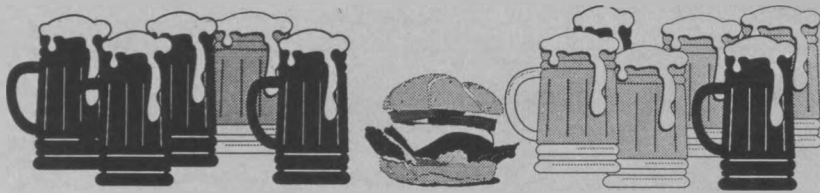
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PARTY



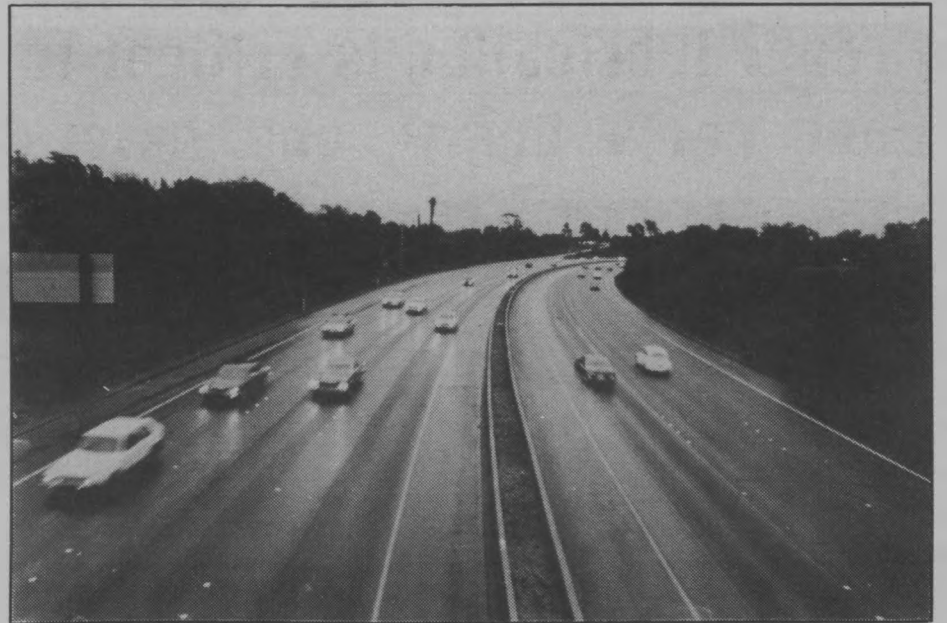
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Flat? Don't Panic!



Nexus File Photo

By Gringolet Rafalo

It's a shame that not many people know how to maintain their cars anymore. I can remember stories my father would tell me about Uncle Duffy. He could, within 14.7 minutes, disassemble and then reassemble the engine of the old Ford Roadster he drove in High School in the '50s. Nowadays, your average uncle doesn't know the difference between a distributor cap and the radiator cap.

But there is one aspect of automobile maintenance knowledge absolutely necessary for operating a car, and that is how to change a tire. Take this scenario: You're cruising along a lonely country

road by yourself on a sunny Sunday late afternoon. Suddenly, you hear the dreaded "pop" followed by the "thump-thump-thump-thump" that means you've got a flat. You pull over and there's nothing around for miles. This road looks scarcely traveled, and there's no phone for acres. AAA ain't gonna bail you out this time, baby.

The first thing to do is to not panic. Being the responsible motorist you are, you made the preliminary check of the vehicle before leaving the driveway, including measuring the oil, the brake and transmission fluids, plus making sure all cables in the engine were hooked up to the right places and

that the car was properly equipped with all tools needed to change a flat on the chance that you'd get one. What? You say you never make such a check every time you drive? Well, I highly recommend that you make it a habit.

Anyway, assuming you have everything you need, the first step is to check the owner's manual. It will detail the precise positions of the tools you want: the jack, the wrench and, of course, the spare. If your spare is flat or nonexistent, you should have another implement to remedy the problem: a good pair of walking shoes.

Once you get all of the tools, place the jack next to the flat tire in a place

See TIRE, p.6A

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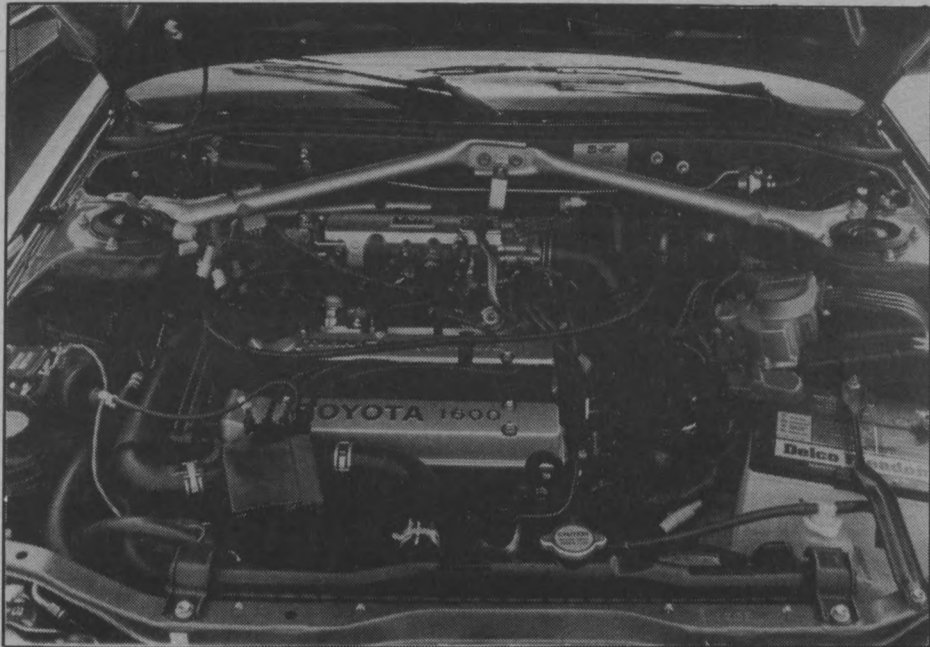
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The insides of your car determine your fate in a much more powerful way than the outside does, my children. Learn from this.

By Odessa Robinson

Not too long ago, right here in this very town, a funny thing happened. My car stopped working. Well, it didn't exactly stop working, it would just stall each time I had to slow down or turn the corner. Not only would it stall, it would make this horrid "clunk clunk clunk" sound.

So I went to work and began asking what others in the office thought was wrong. Over and over

again I heard the same disturbing diagnosis: engine trouble.

For the next couple of minutes the words "engine trouble" hung over my head in bright flashing lights. All I could think about was how upset my parents would be and how there was no way I was going to be able to afford the damage.

Home I went, as quickly as possible, and up came the hood for an oil check. "Please let there be oil, please" kept running through my brain. But

considering I couldn't remember the last time I had bothered to change the oil, chances were slim.

Nonexistent, actually, not a snowball's chance in hell. Bone dry is a good description of the dip stick as I slowly pulled it toward me.

"Damn" was basically all I could think. Damn, now what was I going to do?

Well, I ran down to the store to grab a couple jugs 'o' oil and jogged home to

See OIL, p.7A



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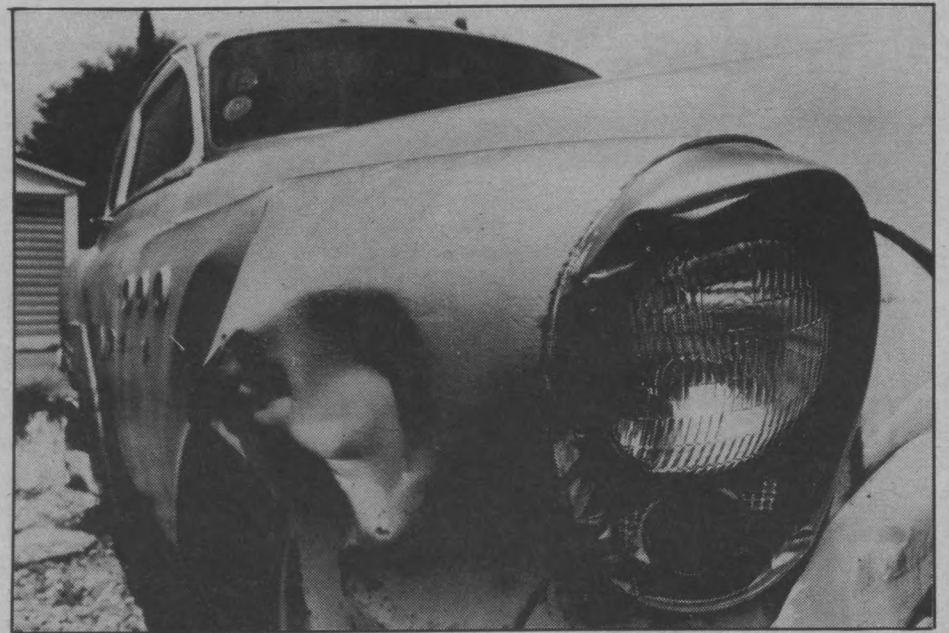
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Beware the Mysteries Haunting Your Vehicle



GERRY MELENDEZ/Daily Nexus

By Anselmo Watkins

My car is cursed. Not in the Steven King fashion. So far it has not chased down any old lovers, nor has it, as far as I know, changed my psyche. All it has done is make money fly quickly and painfully out of the wallets of my parents and I.

The fact that my parents have helped me out with my car... oh, why lie. They paid for the new engine that went into it two years ago, then paid for the replacement when the crankshaft of that engine snapped, turning it into a very expensive and immo-

bile oil mixer. But anyway, my folks have basically saved my butt on that sucker. If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't be writing this.

Don't take that too literally.

But I guess if it wasn't for them, I wouldn't be experiencing the curse of the automobile equivalent of Alzheimer's disease that my poor baby '85 Chevy is suffering from.

It started with the engine transplant. Then things started breaking from left to right. Literally. First, the spring in the door handle snapped, making it so the handle doesn't snap back into place like it is supposed to.

Not a major problem, but an annoyance.

Next, the left front tire started showing irregular wear, the sign of needing a wheel alignment. I bore with it, getting a new (used) tire when necessary. A wheel alignment was, and is, financially out of the question.

Then it was my electrical system. The left parking lamp is already dead, the victim of a mishap under the previous owner. But suddenly my dashboard lights started flickering, and I discovered the ground wire to the dashboard is loose. I fix it, but it invariably comes loose

See CAR, p.6A

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Isla Vista: the Sea's Breeze Is Nice to Live Near, but It'll Eat Your Car for Lunch if You Don't Watch Out



By Wade Daniels

Let's face it: Most of us are semi-impoverished students who drive old heaps Uncle Chester pawned off on us for beer money when we turned 17. We also live amid 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 and Paint in Goleta. One of the most common factors contributing to body rot is design flaws that allow water to accumulate and eat at the paint and the metal.

Windshield moldings and fenders are the easiest targets for this. Water often accumulates in the bottom of car doors as well.

Although some body shops boast that they guar-

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

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 avoid buying automobiles from areas where salt is poured onto the 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 farfetched, but, he said, 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, at which time we 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 casting or paint primer (both available for a few bucks at car parts stores) and layer on a couple of coats. You can also purchase aluminum tape, which helps, but tends to fall off.

Both of these methods leave your car in less-than-showroom condition, but

See RUST, p.6A

In some ways, the whole town is like an expanded high school parking lot



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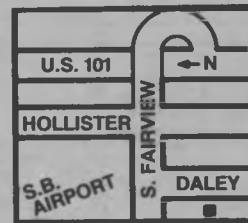
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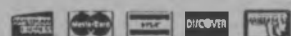
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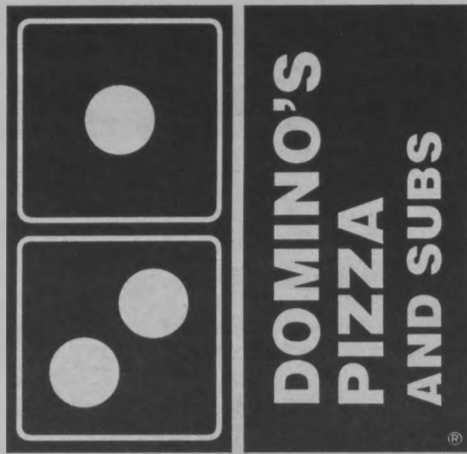
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Doin' the State Street Crawl?
 Read the Weekend Connection and find out what's happening where—where to eat, where to dance, where to drink—this weekend. In Friday's Daily Nexus.

TIRE

Continued from p.3A where it will push up on the frame of the car, not the body. Then, crank the jack until the tire is roughly one or two inches off the ground. Now that the tire is suspended, you must take off the hubcap, if it isn't already gone from flying down Highway 5 as fast as the old heap can go. Once the hubcap is out of your way, you take the wrench and unscrew the nuts holding the wheel in. I hope you're not wearing white during this process, because this is not a clean situation. Once you have the nuts off, taking care not to lose them down that gutter you pulled over by, remove the whole wheel and place it aside. Now it is time to fetch the spare. There are

two kinds of spare tires: the kind that is an actual tire that you will be able to put on and not have to worry about until your next flat, or the kind that looks like the tire from a kid's tricycle. The second type will go about 20 miles before exploding under the pressure, leaving you really out of luck. However, the latter kind of tire does have the advantage of not weighing 85 pounds, and is quite easy to lift out of the trunk.

into the cornfields. Don't worry about getting the hubcap back on, it's not important at this stage of the game. However, make sure you get everything back into the trunk so that you will be prepared for the next flat tire crisis. Finally, crank the jack in the opposite direction that you used to lift the car until the tire is fully supporting the weight. After replacing the jack you are ready to go.

Once you have the spare out, carefully hoist it up to the screws and place it on the axle. Once it is there, some make the mistake of thinking they are done, but remember, you still have to screw the nuts back onto the wheel. If you don't, the spare will go flying off the axle after about three minutes of driving, sending you careening

Once again, remember to check your owner's manual before beginning the job, and to always use extreme caution when working around the elevated portion of the car, because jacks have been known to break while the driver had his legs under the frame, crushing his knees and leaving him trapped to die painfully. Happy Motoring!

RUST

Continued from p.5A slowing down the decay 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 appearance. 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 "bubbling," you may end up making a hole all the way through. There is a good demonstration of do-it-yourself hole-filing 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 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

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 will come in handy. Some people do body work with a blowtorch and a sheet of fiberglass, but this does not work especially well with 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 you can put some flowers in there.)

CAR

Continued from p.4A again, causing dashboard lights and gauges to completely go away at the most inopportune times, like when I'm driving down the freeway at 10 p.m. Next came the trip odometer. I pushed it in to reset it, and it snapped. Now it records the miles

when it feels like it, but often in multiples of 111. The latest problem, and hopefully the last, has been the emergency brake pedal. I pushed down on it one day and noticed that it seemed to give a little more than usual. I looked down to discover that that was because the pedal had bent at a 90-degree angle, effectively rendering it useless. I now get by with-

out an E-break. So what is next? Working across the dashboard, the next thing that fails could be the radio, air conditioner, stick shift or speedometer. Or maybe it could be the engine itself. It is starting to run rough of late. Maybe it just needs new plugs. Or maybe my car just won't start when I get into it tonight to go home.



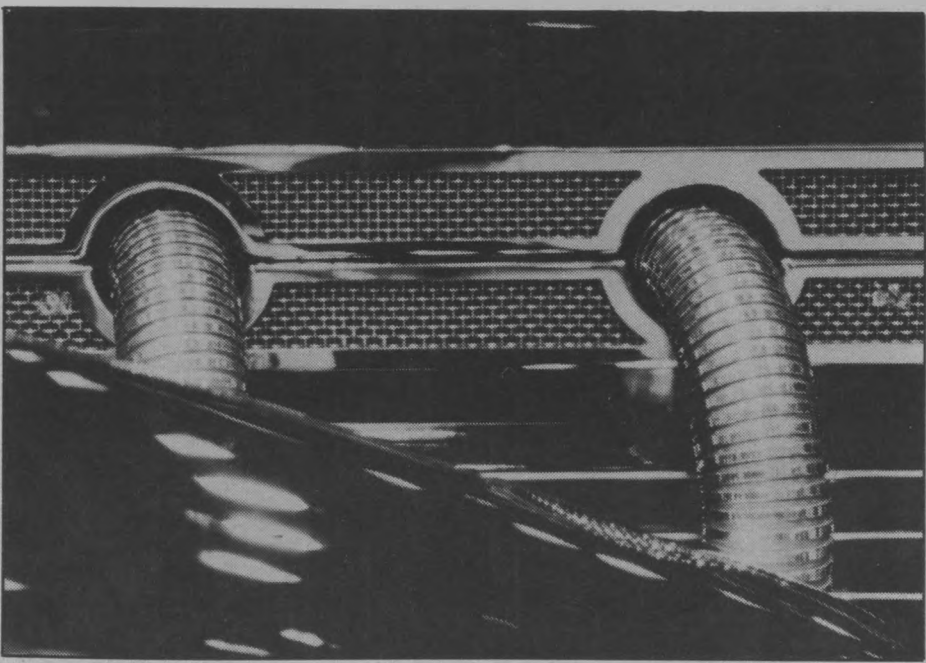
Speed and the Mach 5, James and the Aston-Martin coupe, Tom and the Thunderbolt Grease-Slapper, Luke and the Landspeeder, Fred and the Mystery Machine, Michael and KIT, Lindsay and the Ford Probe, Bo and Luke and the General Lee ... The link between human and car is mystical.

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Nexus File Photo

OIL

Continued from p.3A
down the yellow container's contents into my car.

After this I started up the engine again, not a good move I was later to find, and it ran fine, until I had to slow down again, and then it was the old "clunk clunk clunk clunk" followed by a stall.

So I put off doing anything about it. Basically, I was too damn scared to find out my worst nightmares were true. Finally, a

friend of mine came over to take a look and see if perhaps he could figure out what was wrong.

He had me run the engine, revving it a few times to hear the sound. "Sounds like it's running fine, sounds good," he said. "Well, it works fine when I start it," I replied back.

After looking for a second time, he seemed to have found the answer. "Was it always raining when you were driving before?" he asked. "Looks like you have a loose wire, and it probably got wet

and that's why you stalled."

Turns out he was right. Despite weeks of worrying that I had destroyed the car, everything was OK.

The moral of this story, however, is that you have to check your oil regularly, at least every 3,000 miles, and ideally every month just to make sure.

I got lucky. If it hadn't been for that loose wire, it's extremely unlikely that I would have ever checked on the oil status before it was too late, and my worst nightmare would have come true.

Remember "Hot Wheels?" I used to have this one with Satan's head on the hood. My mom gave it to me.

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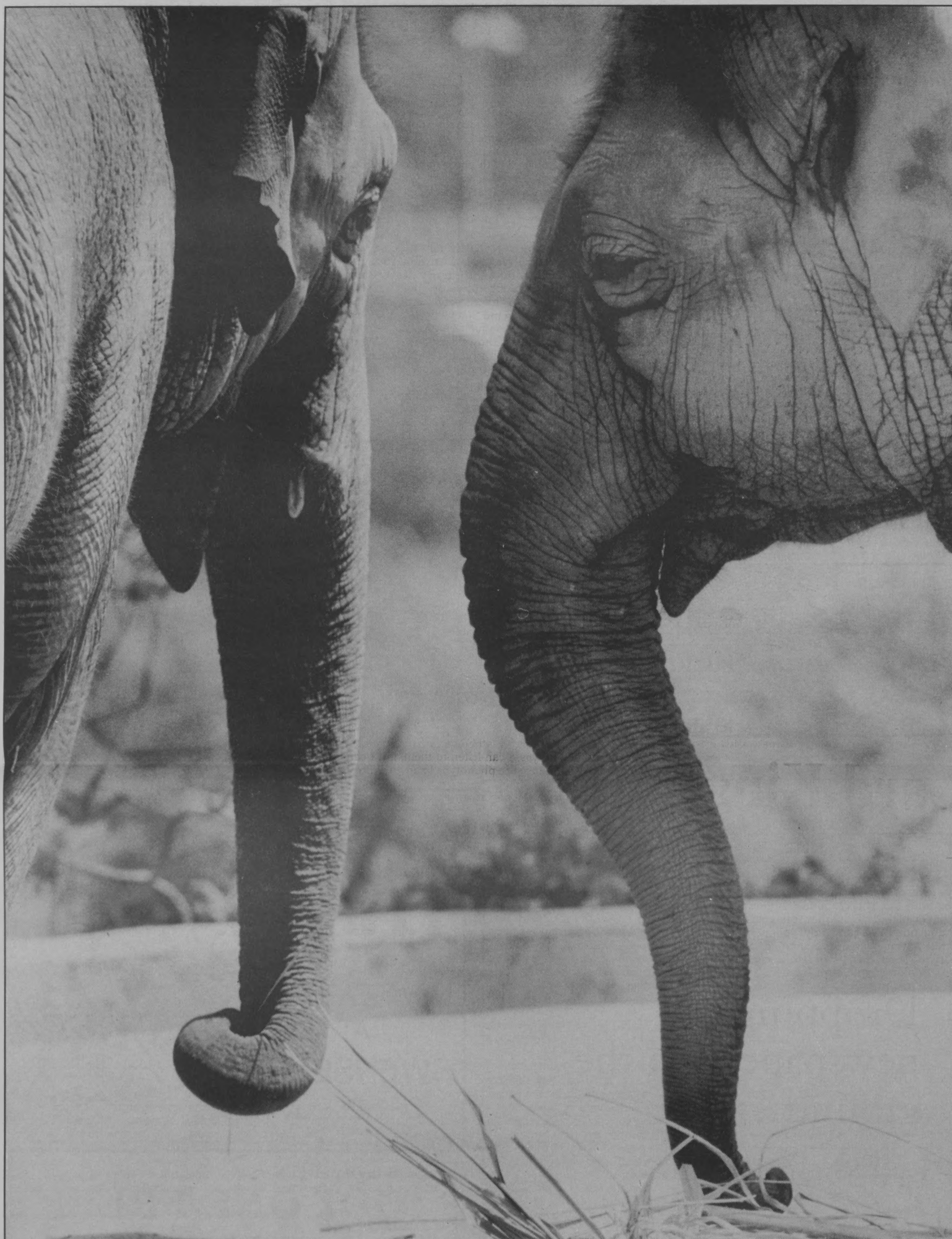
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