

Winter driving: the challenge

by Lindsey Parsons

Although it has been warm for February, we can't forget that the groundhog predicted six weeks of bad weather earlier this month. Since snow and ice are probably still in our future we need to be prepared for what may be yet to come.

One of the trickiest parts of this time of year is driving through all of the winter gunk. Whether this is your first time taking the winter driving challenge or you're an old pro, there are some simple tips that can make your winter treks much smoother.

Let's take a look at safe winter driving through the day of a typical teenager.

School's been called off and you're feeling hungry. You decide to drive to McDonald's for lunch. There's a problem—the roads are

icy, it's snowing outside, and you've only driven on beautiful sunny days. What are you to do?

Well, safe driving starts with a safe car. Make sure the car you will be driving is dependable and ready for winter weather. (see *The car you save may be your own*)

Always keep a blanket in your car for an emergency, and wiper fluid and an ice scraper to clear the windshield of ice. It is also recommended that you have salt, sand, or cat litter handy in case of an emergency, but almost anything can give your tires traction.

A teen driving website (www.teendriving.com) suggested putting the floor mats under the wheels if you become

"The snow was so deep, my roommate and I couldn't even get out of the parking lot."

They poured all the cereal they could find under their tires, and it worked.

So, you're now ready to go, with a safe car and emergency equipment. But wait! There's one more thing to do to ensure your trip is the safest it can be. Before leaving, listen to traffic

reports and choose the best route possible. Also, let someone know the route you're taking and the approximate time you'll be gone.

When you finally make it to the

road, be sure to turn on those headlights. Common sense should tell you that in any kind of precipitation, they should be lit. It helps you to see, other drivers to see you, and it is the law in many states.

As you're cruising along to McDonald's, drive with caution. You may want to test your brakes starting out to see how far it takes you to stop. Double the space you normally leave between you and other drivers, and remember that golden driving rule about bridges and overpasses freezing before roadways.

If the worst comes to worst and your wheels start to spin, let up on the accelerator until traction to the tires return.

continued to page 15

Driving on wet roads increases your chances for an auto accident. If the unexpected happens, follow these steps:

compiled by C. Cadena from www.cottonstatesinsurance.com

1. Contact the nearest law enforcement agency.
2. For each involved party, make a list with their name, address, license number, and phone number.
3. Get the name and contact information for any witness to the accident.
4. Do not discuss the facts of the accident with anyone EXCEPT the officer or your insurance representative.
5. Do not admit fault!
6. Report the accident to your insurance company.

stuck.

A teacher here at the high school revealed her secret for getting out of snow: Grape Nuts and Corn Flakes.

The car you save may be your own

by Nikki Wood

No one wants to be walking on the side of a dark country road in subzero weather, so maintaining the health of your car is one of the most important things you can do.

Preventing this long, cold, dark walk is a relatively simple task. All you must do is follow a few simple rules of car maintenance.

First thing's first, read the manual. This rarely crosses the teenage mind, but it is vastly important. The vehicle owners manual should tell you the location of the spare tire, jack, and other repair tools.

The owners manual tells you the type of oil, fuel, air, and other filters. Also listed are the inter-

vals between various fluid changes and a few trouble shooting items.

Another key maintenance area is your own education in regards to your car.

Everyone should learn how to change a flat tire, the oil, and spark plugs in their vehicle. These things will save you money in the long run, as well as taking away the danger of trusting strangers to help you with minor problems away.

According to former mechanic, Dewey VanWinkle, there are several signs that could indicate your mode of transportation could be in trouble.

These include slow starting,

change in brake or steering operations, dimming headlights, loss of engine power, loud knocking, grating, squealing, or other strange noises in general.

If there are any indications of unusual smoke, vibrations, or strange smells you may have reason to worry.

Mr. VanWinkle also warns that you should pay attention to the warning lights that built into

the dash display; these are there for more than decoration.

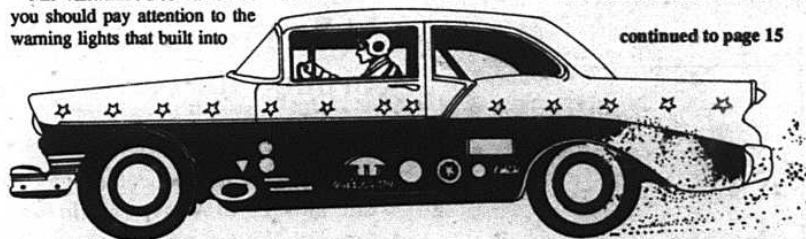
If any of these stay on for more than a moment, or come on at any time during the course of vehicle operation, then you should immediately have your car checked out by a professional, or at least a person experienced with car maintenance.

Felicia Smith, a junior at our school, said she began to notice a grating noise when she applied the brakes.

"It really bothered me, because the brakes are what stops you from hitting what's in front of you, you know?"

She eventually got them checked out before it was too late.

continued to page 15



FORD BROTHERS, INC. AUCTIONEERS - REALTORS

WE SELL: Real Estate,
Farm & Industrial Equip-
ment, Livestock, Antiques
& Business Liquidations



Mt. Vernon, KY
(606) 256-4545
1-800-435-5454

London, KY
(606) 878-7111
1-800-526-1637

Somerset, KY
(606) 679-2212
1-800-526-9430