

TIME TO PACK AWAY MY BABY FOR THE WINTER

CAR WASH BRINGS BACK MEMORIES, WRITES TED BROWN



TED BROWN
Column

I had a bit of a flashback last week - I took my car to the coin-op car wash and actually got my hands wet.

Now that may seem like a somewhat mundane thing. I generally take the lazy man's approach, pulling up to the drive-through car wash, and let the touchless sprayers at the Esso station do the job that I once relegated to elbow grease.

But just this one day, I had an urge to give the Mustang a "real" wash, complete with scrubbing the wheels, hanging the floor mats on the hooks to spray the dirt off them, and I took time to chamois it off outside when I was finished.

Yup, I actually bent over and scrubbed the wheels. I'd forgotten how far away the ground was!

The Mustang goes into storage in mid-October, so I had a couple days left to give my pride and joy a

thorough wash before I took it off the road, pulled the car cover over it, and parked it for the winter.

As I pulled into the coin-op bay, I felt like I was 19 again.

I remembered those days, when the old coin-op car wash was at Guelph Street and Mountainview Road in Georgetown, in the lot beside McDonald's, where Petro-Canada is today.

I can safely say, that car wash was my home away from home. I probably spent more time there - plunking quarters into the coin slot, during my lunch hour from work, before a hot date, late at night after a hot date, and pretty much every Sunday morning - than I did anywhere else.

And my car, a '68 Mustang, was pretty much always immaculate, to the point of being an obsession (according to my girlfriend at the time).

I managed to get washing it for two quarters down to a science. I timed myself to have the car washed, rinsed, and my bucket filled with water, before the timer ran out.

The car wash was definitely a "guys" place.

Some of my friends would swing by with their



EHS photo

This 1960 photo shows the First Acton Girl Guide Company group in front of the brick fireplace in the Acton Scout Hall on School Lane. This year marks the 200th anniversary of the founding of Halton Hills (Esquesing township).

newest girlfriend to show her off to the rest, but they'd never stay too long, probably for fear of someone trying to hustle her away, or, more often, she had to be home in good time.

Or, maybe she didn't really wanna stay at the car wash. (And girlfriends always had a unique form of bargaining power.)

Most guys were more interested in showing off their new wheels, or the fresh paint job, than they were in displaying their girlfriends.

That car wash on Guelph Street was a perfect location. You could park your car out front to cham-

ois it down, (parked with the wheels slightly turned, for effect), and everyone could see it as they drove by.

The Dogs and Suds drive-in was beside it, the A&W across the street - it was great. And washing the car was certainly a labour of love.

When you're 19 and own a hot car, no amount of work was too much effort for that baby. I wouldn't be exaggerating to suggest that some guys would probably do more for their car than they would for their girlfriend. (Their argument, I recall, was that the car didn't complain as much - or want to get mar-

ried.)

And some things really haven't changed. During my recent visit, a couple of guys were there, washing, scrubbing, wiping their cars down, and shooting the breeze, as they made their vehicles shine like the day they rolled off the assembly line.

And it was kind of nice to see that longtime bastion of male dominance hasn't

been totally lost in this equal opportunity world.

Of course, I had to overlook the fact that those guys weren't polishing muscle cars.

Nope, they were wiping down their SUVs or their wives' minivans.

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