

Spring Car Care Maintenance

Don't forget to change your wipers

A clean windshield is a safety feature you can't drive without.

Rain is not the only hazard that can cloud your ability to clearly see the road. Mist, mud, salt, road grime, heat, smog, insects and even bird droppings can challenge the performance of your windshield wipers.

No matter what climate you live in, when it's your windshield against the elements, you want dependable wiper blades.

Have you checked the condition of your wiper blades lately?

Why wait until it's drizzling and your wipers only smear dirt on the windshield to inspect the blades?

- Check the condition of your

windshield wiper blades at least once a month when performing routine car maintenance or cleaning. Don't wait until you're driving in hazardous weather.

- Clean the wiper blades with a damp rag when cleaning the windshield. Wipe free of dirt, grime and bugs.

- Wiper blades should be firm and smooth from end to end, not "dried out."

- Immediately replace blades that are chipped, torn, cracked or split.

- Blades should clear, clean and squeegee the glass completely for optimum visibility without skipping or chattering.

Would 'Old Faithful' leave you stranded?

Any motorist who's been stalled in a precarious situation knows the value of a dependable vehicle. To help reduce this risk, the Car Care Council lists early warning signs of engine trouble. They symptoms often are subtle, sometimes camouflaged by computerized engine controls designed to compensate for deterioration of components.

Periodic engine diagnosis can keep Old Faithful running trouble-free for years. But if you do note a change in performance, report the symptoms to your auto technician for diagnosis.

Hard Starting: This is the most common form of car trouble and the one motorists fear most.

If the starter cranks the engine, the electrical system probably is OK. The culprit could be a starting sensor or choke mechanism. Also, starting trouble can be traced to an electronic component or computer control. Expert diagnosis may be required.

Knocking (or pinging): This noise generally is heard when the engine is under load, such as when accelerating or climbing a hill. While it may be caused by inferior gas, ignition knock often is a sign your engine needs service. It also can be due to carbon deposits inside the combustion chamber. Newer engines have a sensor which hears a knock and makes corrective adjustments, but cannot compensate for a severe malfunction. Don't ignore engine knock; it can affect

performance and, in extreme cases, can damage the engine.

Poor Fuel Economy: Regular records of gas mileage can tell if your engine is losing efficiency. Poor gas mileage may be accompanied by other symptoms listed by the Council.

Possible causes of poor gas mileage; underinflated tires, engine running too cold, malfunctioning transmission or dragging brakes.

Stalling: This can be caused by incorrect idle speed adjustment, a malfunctioning sensor or switch, dirty fuel system parts, worn spark plugs or other engine deficiencies.

Does it stall when hot? Cold? With air conditioning on? Note symptoms and report them to your technician.

Power Loss: How long since it's had a new fuel filter? This is a common cause of power loss, which also can be due to some of the same condition that cause poor gas mileage.

Exhaust Odor: The smell of rotten eggs comes from the catalytic converter. The odor can be due to an engine problem or it may indicate the converter is malfunctioning.

Dieseling: This is also known as after-run. The engine keeps chugging and sputtering after the ignition is shut off. Causes range from inferior gas to excessive idle speed. Carbon in the combustion chamber may cause an engine to run rough.

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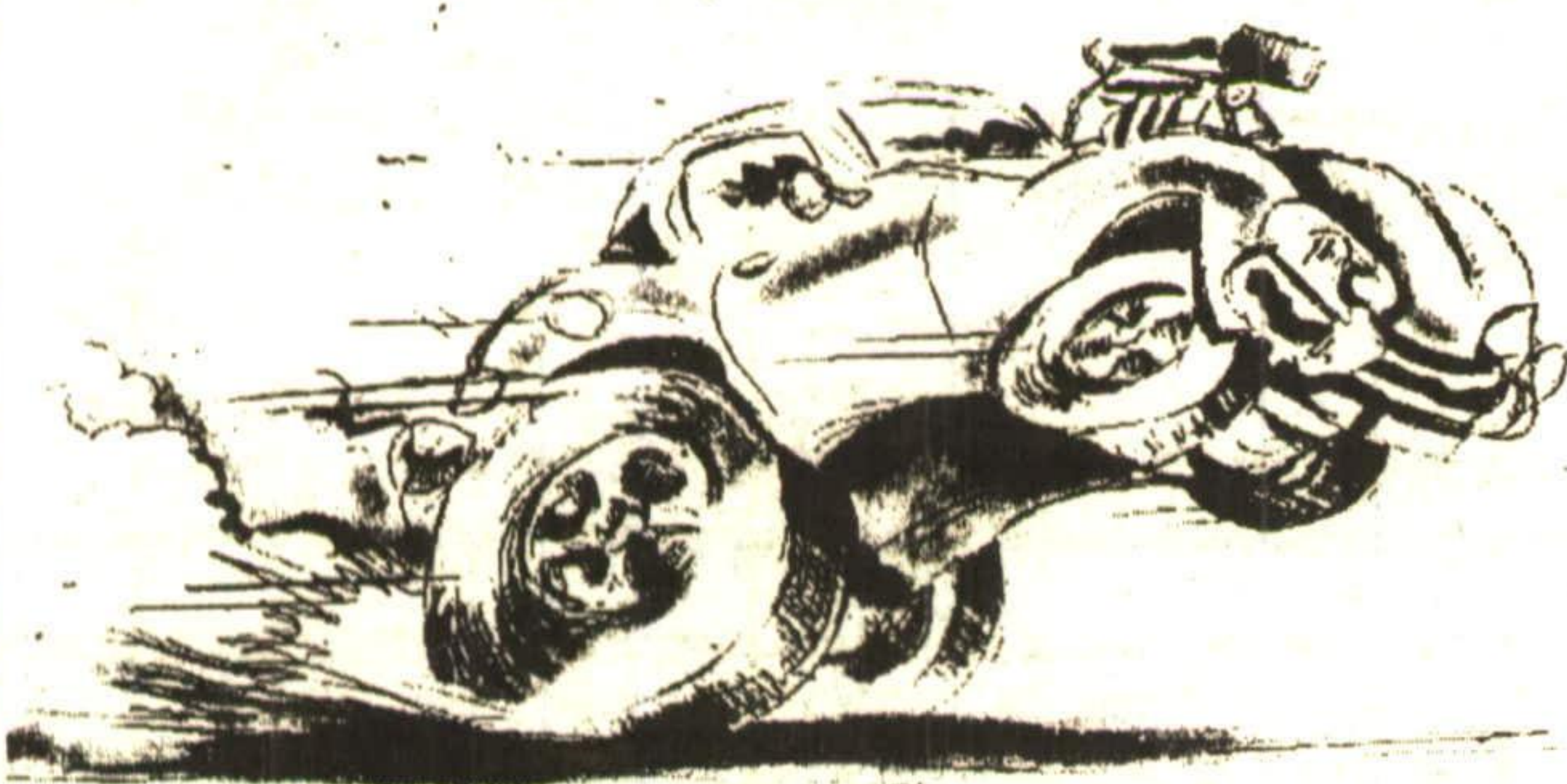
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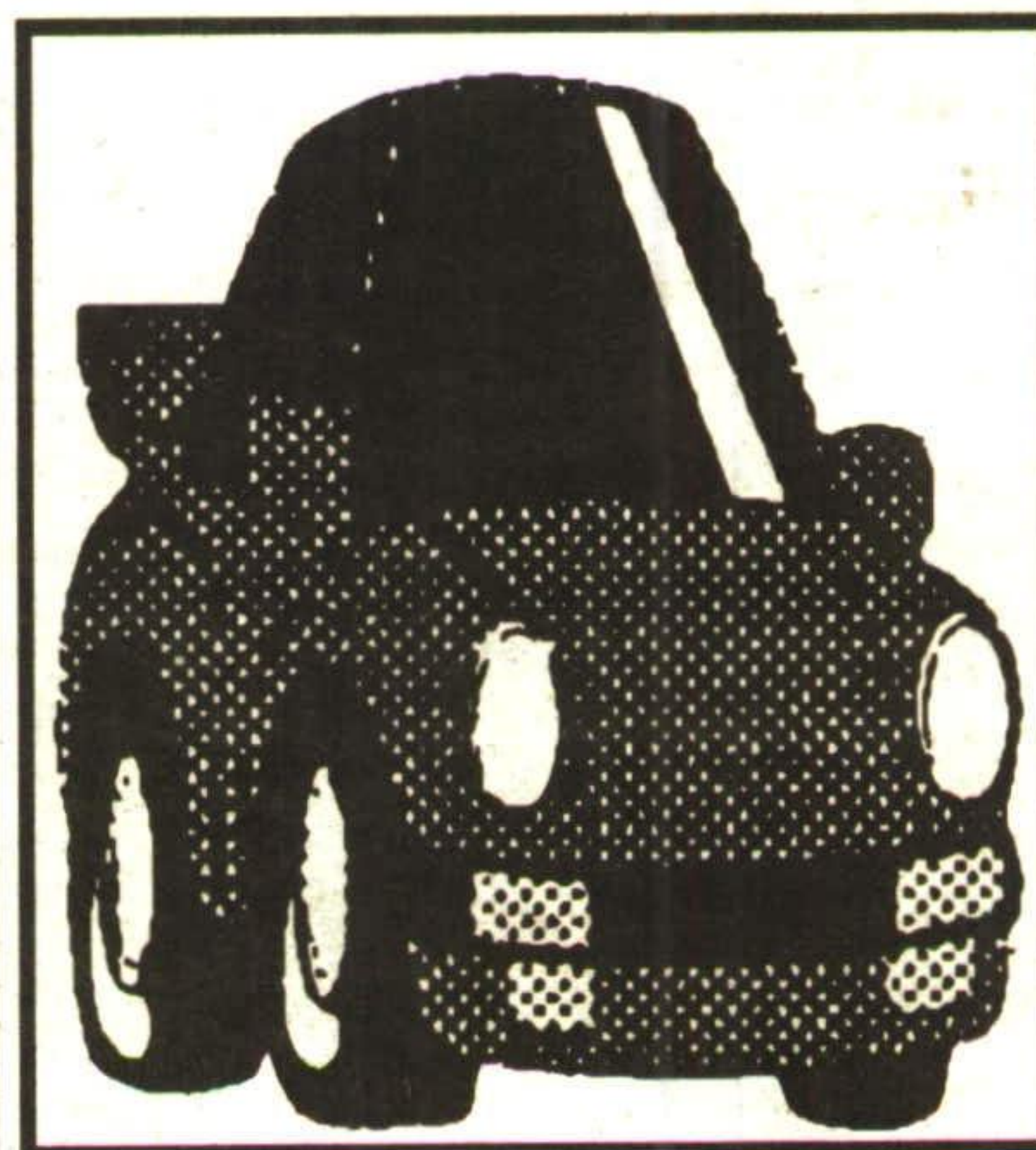
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