

## Sensitivity and my mechanic

Most people are familiar with Tim Allen as he made his name in the sitcom Home Improvement.

Through his humour, he made a point most males can actually relate to—you can go to a new doctor, dentist, even a new barber, they all just take a little getting used to.

But change mechanics? Not in million years! That's THE most stressful thing a guy can do.

Let's face it, a guy's mechanic is his soul mate, his security blanket, and his ultimate connection with the love of his life—his car.

He keeps that little beauty out in the garage purrin' like a kitten, and shows compassion when you're concerned about its well being.

My mechanic is Lawrence, and he's had his head under my hood for a few years now. (*Let me clarify that—I meant under the hood of my car.*)

Lawrence seems to know every nuance of my car, every bolt and nut, and along with a few notes scribbled on a notepad attached to his toolbox, he knows what probably needs some attention a bit further down the road.

I know I demand a great deal from my car. I won't tolerate things that are less than 100 per cent. A squeak, a rattle, or an annoying vibration is something that bugs me to no end.

And it then becomes Lawrence's problem.

When I complain about a squeak, or a creak, versus a thump or a bump, Lawrence knows what I'm talking about.

Who else but your mechanic could you talk to about things that sensitive?

There was a time when a mechanic was simply a nuts and bolts sort of guy, with a knowledge of cars and their inner workings, from a hands-on point of view.

But that's changed. Now a mechanic is an information technology person who not only is required to understand the mechanical functions of a vehicle, but also to understand the high-tech side of it, including the on-board computer that

A  
TED  
BIT



Ted Brown

acts as the nerve centre of the car.

Just this week, I had a problem for Lawrence. It concerned my 'check engine' light which kept coming on, and staying on. He assured me it wasn't serious unless it was flashing, but it still bugged the hell outta me.

I dropped by to let him have a session with my car. Connecting into the on-board computer under the hood, he watched the dash as it relayed a bunch of flashing codes to him.

I felt like it was a private moment between my car and my mechanic, so I turned my back.

After a few minutes, he returned, heading for the computer database in the back of the garage.

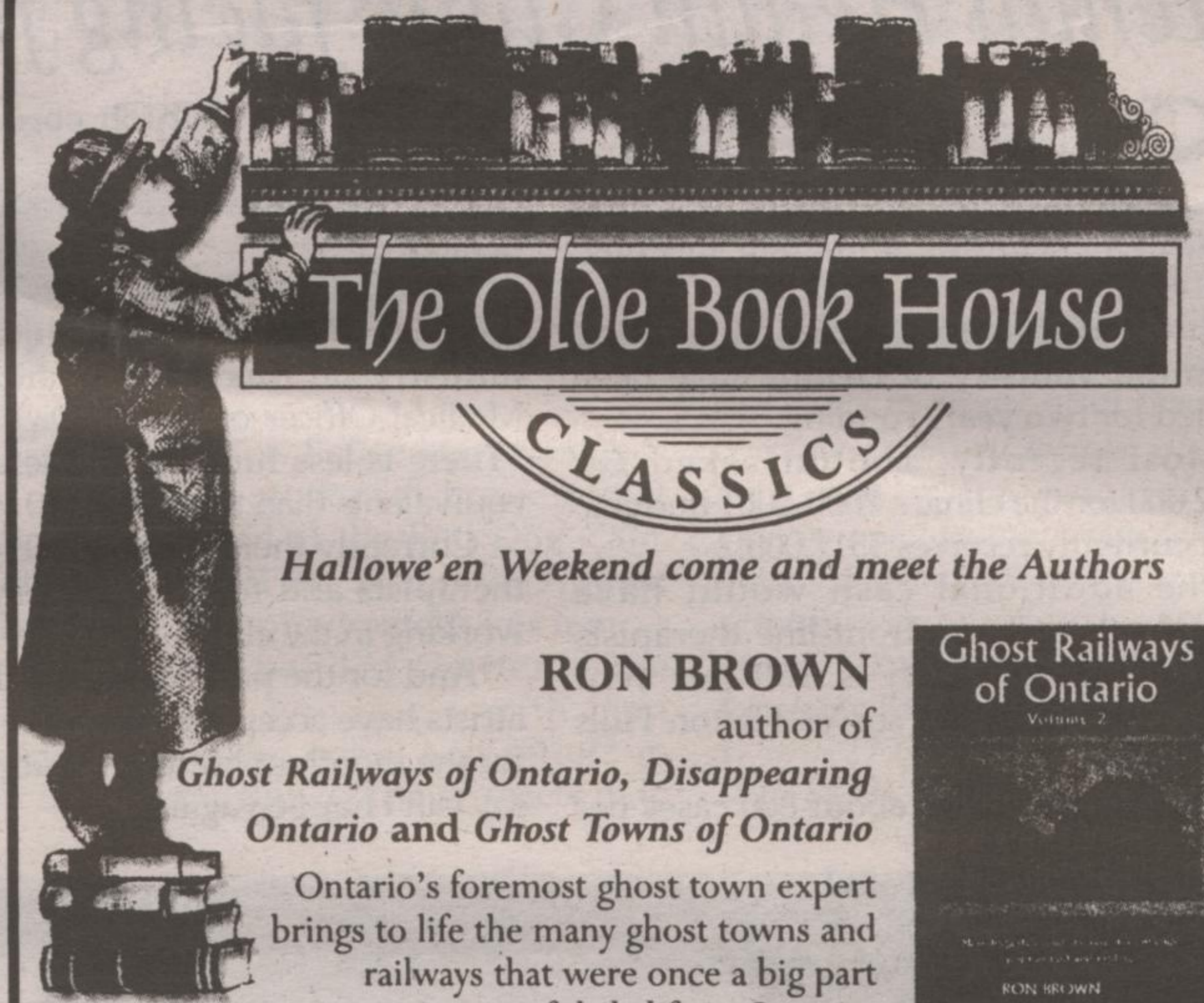
"It's an oxygen sensor Ted," he said like a doctor announcing bad news. "They can be a nuisance—and expensive."

He then switched to some language like Greek as he explained how he'd probably need the car for a morning to do a thorough check, connecting the car's 'flimflamfloosal' to the gizmo to check the connectivity of the... and so on.

But, being sensitive type, he also went on to reassure me by saying the sensor was more than likely just carboned up from in-town driving.

And his next bit of advice was something I could really relate to.

"In the meantime Ted," he said with professionalism, "Take it out on the 401 and drive the hell outta it for an hour—that may be all it needs."



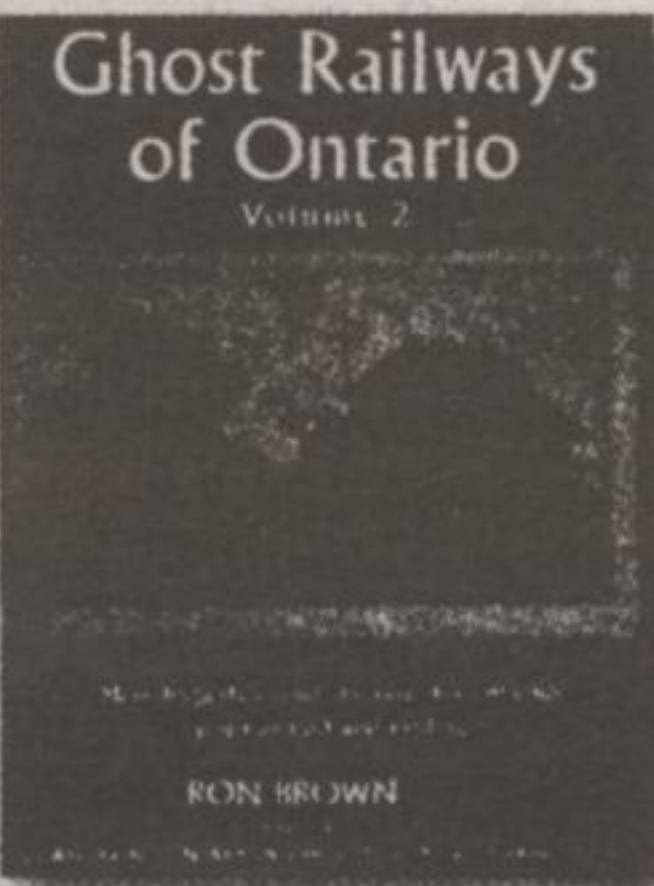
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### BOOK SIGNING

Ron Brown: Saturday Oct. 28 from 2:00-4:00p.m.

Terry Boyle: Sunday Oct. 29 from 2:00-4:00p.m.

Mon.-Thurs. 10am - 5pm Fri. - Sun. 10am - 6pm

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