

Is your cooling system ready?

Now that autumn has arrived, be sure to give some thought to the fact that after a long, hot summer of driving, your car engine will soon have to contend with sub-zero temperatures and harsh operating conditions.

There are few things worse for a motorist than a frozen engine, so now is the time to check the antifreeze. The most careful car owners change their antifreeze-coolant every fall, "but at the very least, it should be changed every two years," says Colin Phillip, technical services manager for Prestone. "With today's aluminum engines, the cylinder heads tend to oxidize over time due to antifreeze agents breaking down. This leads to rusting as well as wear-and-tear on the water pump."

While antifreeze is vital protection, the coolant is also important because it prevents the car engine from running too hot, possibly warping the cylinder heads and blowing the cylinder head gaskets. Also, the cooling system has a tendency to leak, so check it regularly and keep it topped up. A high proportion of vehicles are found to need engine coolant during routine maintenance inspections.

To maintain the cooling system at peak performance, flush it thoroughly and replace the antifreeze-coolant regularly. Consider using a product that works around the clock to remove rust and oil residue, such as Prestone's Super Flush. Read the label for best results. Most products call for a 50/50 mix of fluid and water, but some require a 70/30 or 60/40 blend.

And lastly, prevent leaks in the cooling system by using a detector. A product called Stops Leaks for example, is a radiator additive that locates and effectively seals leaks at the four main sites: the heater core, the water pump, the head gasket and the radiator itself. More information on winter car care is available on-line at www.prestone.com or call toll-free at (800) 333-1106.

—News Canada

Car care tip: Clean oil a priority

It takes more than a clean oil filter to give your automobile engine the protection it deserves. Most motorists recognize the need to change filters regularly but many ignore the need to change the oil itself.

A complete and regular oil change is vital to engine care, advise the industry experts. Modern engine oils contain additives that clean and protect. But as the oil ages, the additives lose strength and offer less and less protection.

"Over time, the oil in your engine loses some of its viscosity and picks up dirt and water so it needs to be replaced," says Colin Phillip, technical services manager for Honeywell, makers of Fram filters. He recommends an oil and oil filter change every three months or 5,000 kilometers.

"If you do nothing else in the way of preventive maintenance, do these oil and filter changes," Phillip said. "They are the single most effective thing you can do for long engine life."

—News Canada



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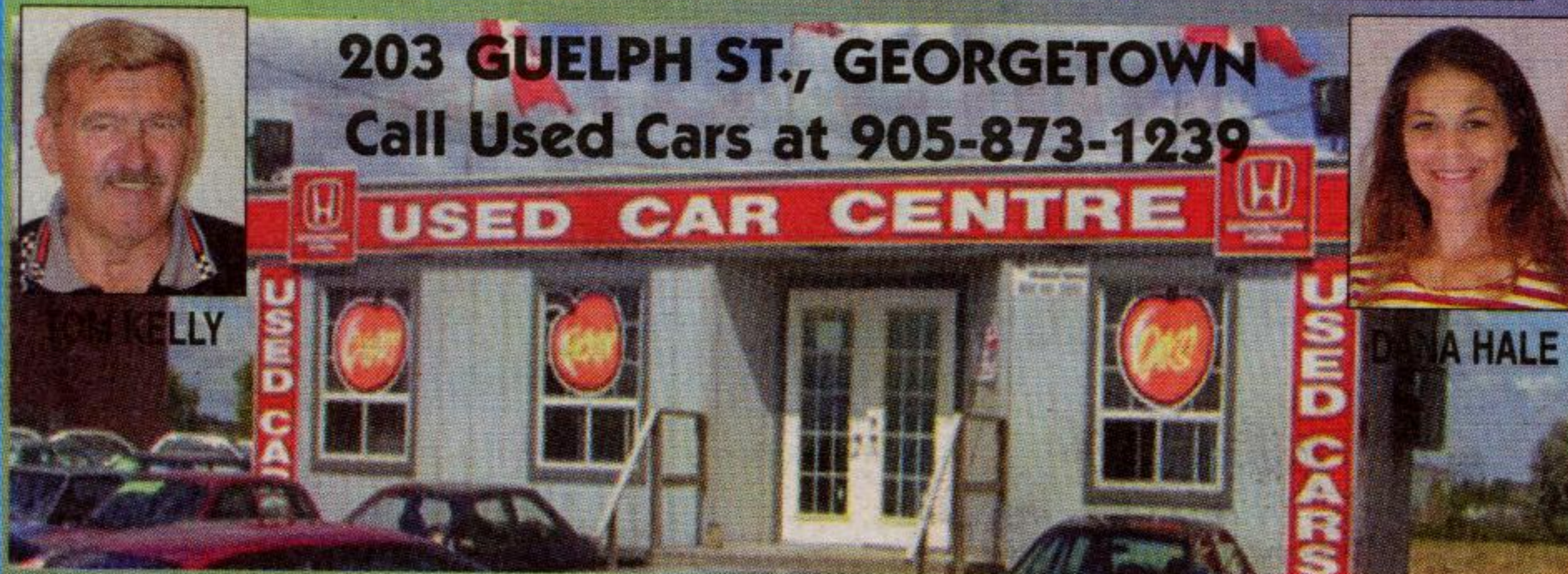
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