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# OPENING SOON



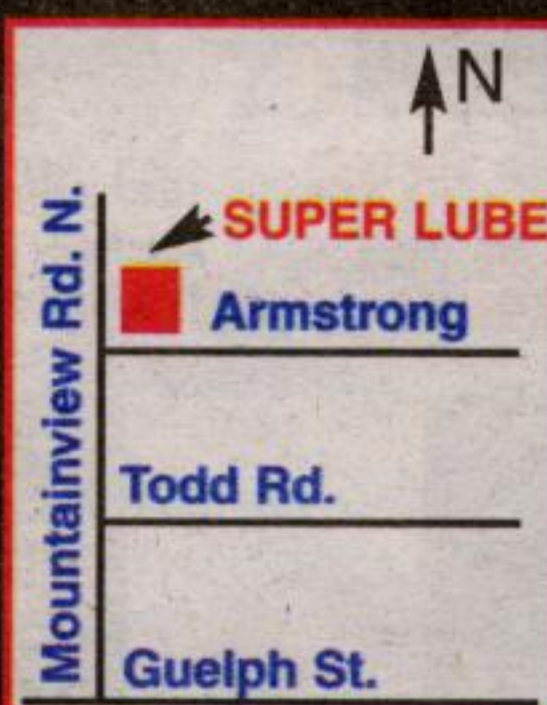
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Featuring



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## Protect that carb and battery

# Motorcycles need winter maintenance

Lots of automotive writers are quick to offer advice on cold-weather car maintenance at this time of year, as drivers need to prepare for snow, slush and road salt. But just because that motorcycle may not get out of the garage for another five months, doesn't mean there aren't certain things to do now to guarantee easy riding in the spring.

According to Bruce Scott of Shade Tree Cycles in Central Illinois, putting a street bike up for the winter means protecting two of the most important components: the carburetors and the battery. Regardless of how you store your motorcycle, keeping the carbs clean through months of idle waiting is extremely important.

As the first order of winter storage maintenance, Scott recommends draining the float bowls in the carburetors to eliminate the possibility of varnish or sediment build-up. Letting old gas sit in the float bowls can result in hard, sputtering starts in spring, or worse, a more thorough carburetor cleaning. If the bike is stored on its kickstand, the greater the possibility of contamination is from settling fuel and sediments.

Second on the maintenance list is removing the battery. A car's battery has the advantage of being started throughout the winter-not so with the motorcycle battery. The battery should be removed as soon as the riding is done for the year, and set on a pallet or stand-anywhere but flat on a concrete floor (it drains the battery quickly). Purchase a 2-Amp trickle charger, and hook it up for an hour or two about twice a month; that should keep the battery fresh until you're ready to reinstall it prior to spring riding.

It's not necessary to drain the gas in the tank, as most street bikes have steel tanks. In fact, draining the gas can actually cause the interior of the tank to rust if any residual moisture is floating inside. Many smaller motorcycles, including dirt bikes, have plastic-lined tanks, so the threat of rust isn't prevalent; there's no need to drain these either. The same rule applies to oil-if it's not really black at the end of the riding season, you can wait until spring for that oil change.

Scott recommends storing your motorcycle on its centerstand through the winter rather than a side kickstand. A commercial centerstand or even a crate and some boards will suffice, as long as the bike isn't leaning for months at a time.

To avoid heavy cleaning in the spring, a nice fall afternoon may be ideal to spruce up your motorcycle after summer riding. Since high pressure hoses at car washes can actually drive road gunk and oily deposits into places you least want it, it's better to wash your bike with a good degreaser and a regular garden hose. Scott likes to use a commercial degreaser, like Red Hot, Simple Green or Purple Power, and cautions against the use of brake cleaners for degreasing. Once these hit rubber, they tend to cause the material to swell, which is bad news for O-rings and other rubber parts.

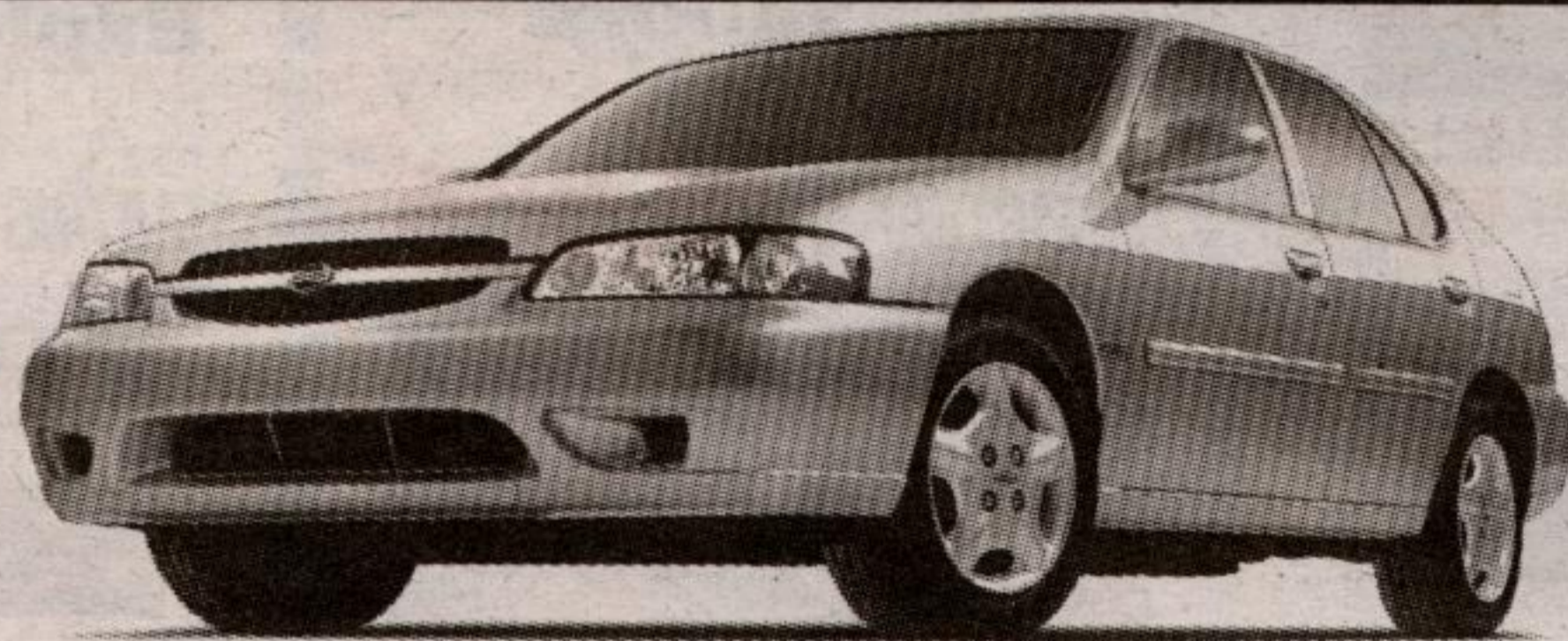
Not all bikes are put away for the winter, however, as many dirt riders continue to hit the trails in cold and slush. For riding when the temperatures dip near freezing, Scott recommends opening up the main and pilot jets to keep your torque up and the thinner, cold air flowing easily.

—By Daniel Aspell, special

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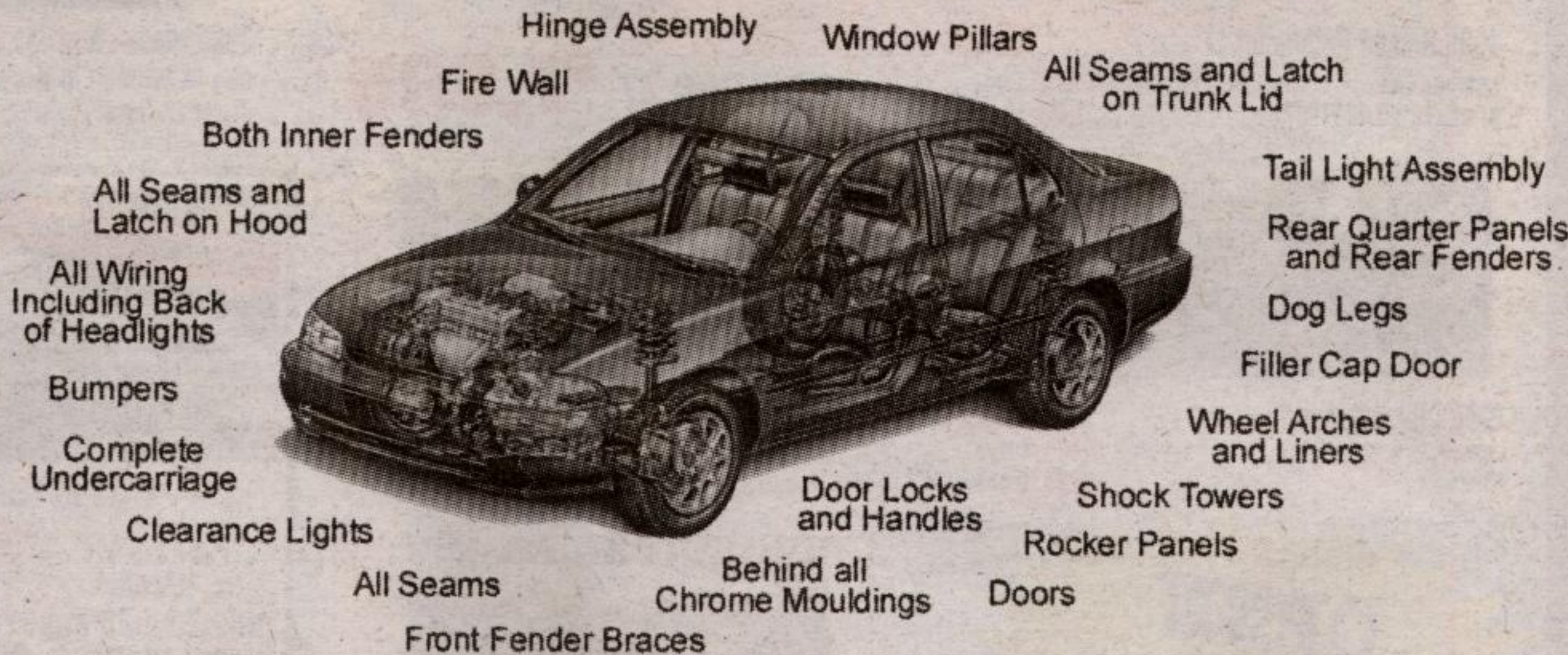


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