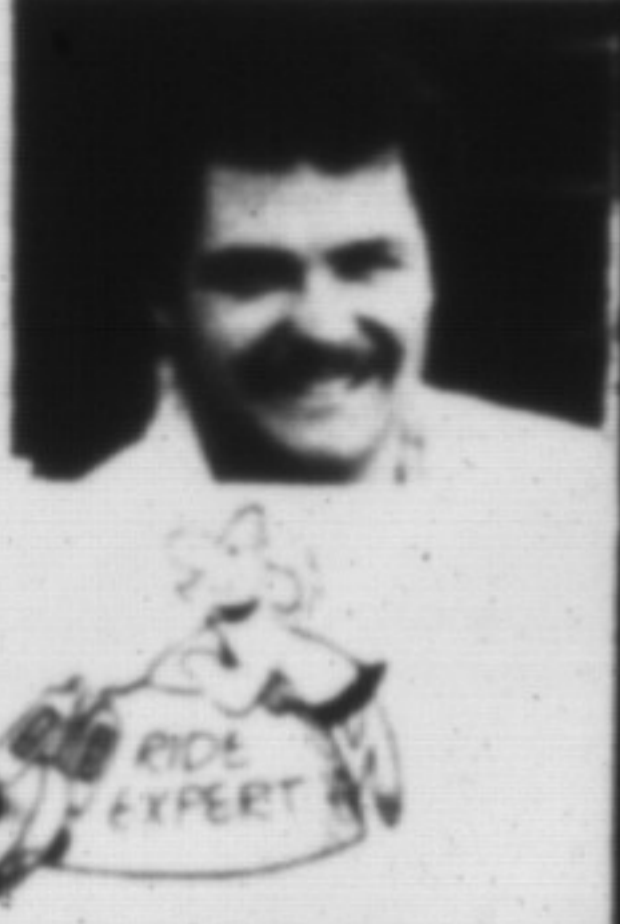


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Are your brakes shuddering? It's wise to get them checked as soon as possible

A tip-off that you may need brake service is when you feel the pedal pulsating or moving up and down under your foot. Instead of smooth, even braking, your car will shudder to a stop.

While this condition may be due to loose wheel bearings or brake parts, the most common cause is warped brake rotors or drums that are out of round. Assuming the drums or rotors are still safe for further use, the problem usually is easily corrected.

The accepted cure, generally, is to have a brake service shop remove the distortion by machining the parts on a brake lathe.

If the condition has gone on too long, however, you may need new parts — a case for taking corrective measures as soon as the condition becomes apparent.

What causes warping of drums or rotors? Heat is the most common cause, says Car Care Council. Extended periods of heavy braking, such as might be encountered on a long down grade with a travel trailer in tow, can cause extremely high brake temperatures. This heat, in addition to damaging brake shoes and/or pads, can distort drums and rotors.

Motorists should make note of changes in braking action and, as soon as possible

after abnormalities are noticed, have a qualified technician inspect the system, says the Council.

When the brakes are serviced, be sure to inspect pads and linings and replace as needed. Have wheel bearings repacked. It's a convenient time to have this work done and, if an overheating condition had existed, the bearings may require re-packing with fresh grease.

Learn to love that car

I like cars — always have.

When I was a kid, few things possessed the splendor of a purring engine, or held as much pleasure for me as spending endless afternoons bent blissfully over sick carburetors or seized valves, up to my elbows in grease.

Long-lasting affair

I can't deny it: the internal combustion engine and I were — to borrow a quaint expression from that bygone era — going steady. And though we've both matured and grown more sophisticated, the affair has endured to this day.

The difference is now I teach people, who remind me of my younger self, how to become good technicians, and people who are already good technicians how to become even better.

And, I'm happy to say, that can only be done — as you might have guessed — by spending endless afternoons bent blissfully over sick carburetors and seized valves, up to our elbows in grease.

One of the most important things I do as a teacher-technician is to encourage people, who have no mechanical training, some of whom wouldn't know a timing chain from an eggplant, to take a keen interest in their automobiles and the 15 thousand bits and pieces that make it up.

As I travel around the country talking with people, I try to impress on them how important car care is, not only in terms of economy, but in terms of safety, too.

While it's not my intention to turn everybody into mechanics, I do try to make people more aware of what I like to call the alert signs, which signal that something is in need of attention.

And sometimes — as in the case of your battery — you may only get one warning.

You turn the key in the ignition — click, click! You turn it again, and the car starts. You've just had your first — and, very possibly, your last — warning that your starting system is soon going to let you down.

A confidence builder

If you follow along, after several weeks, you should have enough basic knowledge about the efficient and safe operation of your car to speak to your technician with considerably more confidence than you have previously been able to muster.

It may, for example, no longer be necessary to refer, in exasperation, to your car's air filter as "that round ~~who~~ jackapivee with the neck on it."

Here's a suggestion: check your owner's manual; it will describe the safety features on your car, tell you when it should be serviced, how to conserve fuel, when the various fluids should be checked and replenished, and more.

Pretty modest stuff, I admit, but worthwhile nevertheless. And you might even begin to enjoy your car, just a little more.

IF YOUR EXHAUST SYSTEM IS GIVING YOU BIG PROBLEMS...

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