

SANT AUTOMOTIVE NEWS VOL X, NO.2 **SPECIAL EARTH DAY EDITION**

“COMBINING AUTOMOTIVE NEWS AND HOLIDAY CHEER SINCE 1992.”

In a highly unconventional move, the editorial staff of *THE SANT AUTOMOTIVE NEWS* has elected to produce two consecutive “special editions “ of our fine journal without benefit of any regular editions in between. Critics may assert that such a move is merely self serving and points up the highly egotistical nature of our staff. “Balderdash,” say we; “...all of our editions are special, some just more so than others.” That said, we welcome you to our edition and hope that you enjoy our captivating discussions primarily relating to the holiday at hand.

What Happens to Your Used Tires?

Due to concerns regarding landfill use and the fact that whole used tires provide excellent habitat for mosquitoes and rodents and snakes (Oh my!) coupled with the fact that large piles of tires are highly flammable, can combust and can create an oily runoff that can contaminate ground water, it is required that used tires be disposed of properly.

THE SANT AUTOMOTIVE NEWS editorial staff was pleased to learn that a local tire chain is having their used tires turned into play ground equipment. (Not much research was involved in this endeavor; Mike saw a commercial during a Cardinals game.) Anyway, we figured that maybe we could have our used tires turned into hand crafted tire swings that could be distributed free of charge to displaced orphans in Iraq. It seemed like the least that we could do.

So we called the local tire hauler to request that our tires be used as described, and we learned some startling facts. In 2003 alone, over 209 million tires were scrapped in the U.S. Of these, 44.7% were converted into Tire Derived Fuel (TDF) and burned at one of 89 industrial plants throughout the country. The largest consumers of TDF include power plants, cement kilns, and paper mills. Roughly 29% of used tires are either converted into “crumb rubber” or used in civil engineering projects. “Fine,” we said, “...but we’d like ours sent to the orphans.” We were then told that it would be too expensive to do this and that all scrapped tires in St. Louis are mixed together anyway, so ours couldn’t be segregated, crafted, and distributed as we had hoped. Oh well, maybe we can have our tires turned into play ground equipment, too.

Local Celebrity Sinks to Lower Class

A local newsman/humorist reported in *A Whole ‘Nother Story* that he was driving his 1992 Chevy Cavalier station wagon when his window regulator broke causing his window glass to slide down into his door. The celebrity realized that he would either have to fix the window or use a piece of plastic to cover it if he wanted to avoid rain. As our friend put it, “with one crank of the window, I dropped into the lower class.”

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Humorous? Yes, but the story is not entirely accurate. The slide actually began some time ago when our friend declined routine brake repair. Failing to replace brake pads in a timely manner necessitated the replacement of brake rotors. The expense of the brakes coupled with the cost of window regulator replacement and other deferred maintenance brought into question the wisdom of repairing the vehicle. The moral of the story is that with proper vehicle maintenance, our friend would still be teetering on the edge of the lower-middle class.

Teen Driver Safety Update

My daughter was scheduled to turn 16 right after publication of *THE SANT AUTOMOTIVE NEW SPECIAL GROUND HOG'S DAY EDITION*, so smugly, I, your humble scribe, thought that it would be quite timely to share some of the wisdom that I had gained through training her to drive. In the article, I covered a variety of subjects and concentrated mainly on training a young driver to avoid distraction. In addition to the advice that I gave, we spent hours driving together, and we practiced parallel parking right here at World Headquarters. As you may have guessed, she had an accident. No one was hurt. Sadly, and despite conventional wisdom, that is not quite the only thing that matters. Anyway, her accident involved a dispute over who had a green light and who had an arrow. The two sides disagree, and I'll never know for sure who was right. The important thing is that I got the opportunity to tell her that she must pay better attention and that a traffic signal alone will not save her life.

Price Increases Announced: Update

Just months after receiving notice of price increases in tires and other petroleum based products, we have received notice that more are on the way. Look for tire prices to increase another 10-15% by July. If you will need new tires soon, act appropriately.

Gas Saving Tips: This Time We Mean Business

Periodically, The Sant Automotive News has published tips to help our readers conserve fuel and money. A quick check of our extensive archives reveals that the last time that we published such information, gasoline was reaching the unheard of price of nearly \$2.00 per gallon. With the price of gasoline expected to double that mark this summer, it is more important than ever to conserve. Here are a few simple tips.

- 1.) Reduce the number of miles that you drive.
- 2.) Make sure that tires are properly inflated.
- 3.) Reduce excess weight by removing unnecessary items from the trunk.
- 4.) Perform routine maintenance like oil and air filter changes.
- 5.) Use your air conditioning.

With the exception of the fifth tip, these items are fairly self evident. Regarding air conditioning, for most models, the excess drag created by driving with windows down will outweigh any savings in fuel economy that not using the air conditioner would

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create. Alternatively, you could drive with the air conditioner turned off and the windows rolled up, but any savings here would probably be offset by medical expenses which are rising fairly quickly as well.

Dealer Liability Shield

A bill, HB 1970, that supporters say will shield auto dealers from nuisance law suits sits on Governor Blunt's desk awaiting signature. Basically, opponents of the measure claim that if it becomes law, it will be more difficult for consumers who are victims of fraud. The Missouri Auto Dealers Association says that its members should not be responsible for hidden damage on the thousands of vehicles that members wholesale because inspecting each one thoroughly costs about \$300 per vehicle. Herein lies the rub. Because it is not practical for used car dealers to inspect each vehicle they sell, even reputable used car dealers may not be aware of defects. Be sure to have any used car thoroughly inspected before you buy, or hope that the governor vetoes the bill and you at least have someone to sue.

\$30 Free Gas Card, Sort of

Federal Mogul, the manufacturer of Wagner Brakes, National Wheel Bearings and Moog Chassis Parts has announced that through July 31, 2008, customers who have \$250 worth of their parts installed (including parts and labor) will receive a \$30 gas card. Thirty bucks worth of gas won't get you too far, but it certainly beats a poke in the eye with a sharp stick.