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Car Care Tips

Ask Monique



I have a 1993 Honda Accord with about 74,000 miles on it. Recently I've noticed that it's giving me a bumpy ride.

Sometimes when I go over humps in the road, the steering wheel turns to the left by itself. One day, I was about to apply the brakes when the car started leaning toward the right. I had to fight to keep it straight.

I had the shocks replaced two months ago and an alignment done. I even bought new tires two weeks ago.

My mechanic doesn't seem to understand what I am talking about.

Help!

Marcus, Headweeble@aol.com

Sounds like you did everything you were supposed to do. Bumpy rides usually signal the obvious -- worn shocks or tires, or unaligned tires. This one is difficult to assess without seeing your vehicle, as there could be damage to some not-so-obvious areas.

Vehicles that travel daily over shoddy, bumpy roads may experience wear and tear over time on the ball joints and the control arm. Both are very important to your steering and suspension. A ball joint

is designed to fit comfortably in a socket, with just enough play to provide a smooth ride. If the joint gets damaged, the ball will move loosely in the socket, and that can cause a bumpy ride.

Another area to consider are brake calipers. If only one of your calipers is working, that would cause your car to pull to one side when you brake.

Fortunately, you can do some checking yourself. Roll down your car window and drive the car in a circle or turn corners. A clicking noise suggests possible problems with your bearings. If your car feels like it's wandering when you apply the brakes, you may want to have your ball joints checked.

Again, take your Honda to a mechanic for a closer inspection. Now, you have a little more information from which to ask questions.

McGill is a certified technician at Antwerp Toyota in Clarksville, Md.

Questions may be e-mailed to her at AACW2@aol.com or faxed to (313) 255-1321.

LETTERS AND E-MAIL



I greatly enjoyed participating in your recent Golden Wheel Awards ceremony in Detroit recently. At 89, it was a crowning moment in a long life.

In the way of some history; I was the only member of the Patterson family to have worked in the factory at Greenfield, from

1935 to its closure and the only woman there with a mechanic's license.

I remember that toward the end, we found it impossible with so little money to compete with Henry Ford. That's when we made the decision to build buses, delivery trucks and moving vans.

The trucks were made for the Baby Bear Bread Company in Manchester, Ohio. The vans, which received much acclaim, were made for a company in Dayton. The buses went to the government of Haiti.

Kathleen Patterson
Dayton, Ohio

Editors' note: Kathleen Patterson is a descendant of C.R. Patterson, a black automaker in the early 1900s. AAOW's Company of the

Year Award is named after Patterson-Greenfield Motor Car Co., and Mrs. Patterson presented the award to this year's recipient, Ford.

I enjoyed reading your nostalgic look back at our "Love Affair With Cars" in the Spring 1998 issue. I hadn't thought about how the automobile served such a vital purpose for African Americans in the early days. After all, it provided us with a means of circumventing the racial problems involved with traveling then.

I also wanted to give your readers some additional information about using "electronic keys" at the gas pump, which was highlighted in your "VOICES" segment.

I have been using the Mobil Speedpass for several months now and I think it is fantastic! There are two options -- a key tag that you can carry, and a car tag that goes in the rear window of your car. It does work like a credit card.

Your gas purchases are automatically charged to your Mobil card or a credit card of your choice. Currently there is no additional charge for this service.

Thanks again for your obvious commitment to educating African-American consumers about the automobile industry.

L. A. Clayton
Centreville, Va.



I really enjoyed the historical piece, "A Love Affair with Cars." It made me realize just how much automobiles have affected the lives of African Americans. Also, I had no idea that the Ford Foundation made so many contributions to the development of African Americans.

As a young African-American male, I can really appreciate *African Americans On Wheels*. Finally, we have a source about automobiles that we can trust in.

e-mail: Damon.Redmond@mortgagesvcs.com

I would like to thank you for featuring me on the cover of *African Americans On Wheels* Summer 1997 issue.

As an African-American female in motorsports, I am positive that people of color will eventually make our mark in the sport.

Thanks again,

Athina D. Corbett
Clinton, Md.

Editor's note: Athina Corbett is a 15-year-old racer in the Junior National Hot Rod Association.

Please send your letters to:

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Letters are subject to editing for content and style.

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1998 MOTOR TREND TRUCK OF THE YEAR - THE MERCEDES-BENZ M-CLASS

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