

By MARTIN BUNN

Gus stood behind the auto and a little to one side. "All right," he called. "I'm a car about to pass you. Can you see me?"



Look Where You're Driving

"AND just as I was about to give her the gas and go after that son-of-a-gun, I spotted the motor-cycle cop behind me," young Braxton was saying, when a car drove up to the gas pump.

Gus Wilson, half owner of the Model Garage and mechanic of the establishment, who had been listening to Braxton's yarn, stepped over to the pump as the driver of the car thrust out two hands with eight fingers extended. Gus pumped in the eight gallons, took a bill, and handed back the change. The car rolled off, with a smiling wave of the hand from the driver.

Meanwhile, Braxton had been eyeing the car. As it pulled away he turned to Gus.

"What's the idea of the mirrors that fellow has on his car?" he asked. "Did you notice them all? There was a regular mirror inside above the windshield, another one mounted on the left fender, and still another fitted on a long bracket on the right front door so he could look in it through the door glass. He must be afraid a cop will sneak up on him or something!"

"That's all you young fellows think about," growled Gus. "Driving like maniacs and watching for cops! That chap needs those mirrors. He's assistant superintendent at the Vocational School down the road a piece. He's in charge of the deaf-and-dumb classes, and is a deaf-mute himself. He has to make his eyes do what other people think they can do with their ears. If you ever pull up behind him and

you want to pass, don't bother to blow your horn. He couldn't hear it. But he'll spot you right away in his mirrors and pull over anyhow. He always does that when a car comes up from behind.

"I'd feel a lot safer and surer of staying out of the cemetery riding with him, than I would with a lot of you speed demons!" Gus finished, with a grin.

"How do you get that way?" Braxton snapped. "I can see what's in back of me without any extra mirrors."

"You can, eh?" grunted Gus. "Climb in your bus a minute." He stepped over to the position, behind and slightly to the left, that would be occupied by a car that was just about to pass Braxton's.

"All right," he called. "I'm a car behind you. Can you see me?"

Braxton moved his head, first to one side and then to the other, in an effort to see Gus, but the left rear portion of the body hid the garageman completely from the inside-mirror view.

Finally, he poked his head out of the window and looked back at Gus. "You win," he admitted sheepishly. "I couldn't see much of a car in just that position."

"Now we'll try again," said Gus, and he stepped over to the corresponding position at the right rear of the car.

Again, Braxton had to admit a partial blind spot.

"Now you can see where those extra mirrors would come in handy," Gus pointed out. "And the worst of it is, the blind spots come right where they are most likely to cause accidents. That is, when a car

is swinging out to pass you on either the right or left. Or if you happen to be parked at the curb, and you have to back up in order to clear the car parked ahead of you, you can't see anybody about to step off the curb right under your wheels.

"Of course," Gus went on, "the size of the blind spot varies with different body constructions, rear and side window sizes, and so on, but it is there as long as the whole body isn't made of glass. A wide, curved mirror helps some, once you get used to the curved effect."

"It's funny the makers don't go into the mirror question more carefully," Braxton observed.

"Well," said Gus, "as long as the public is willing to rubberneck around to see what's behind, and outside mirrors spoil the sleek looks of a car, you can bet the makers won't fit them. So, if you want real rear vision, you've either got to keep on kinking your neck or have special mirrors fitted."

"They'd be mighty useful to spot cops sneaking up behind you," Braxton commented with a grin. "Guess I'll look into it."

"Humph!" Gus snorted. "Always thinking of speeding and cops! Still, a mirror on the left of your car may do something more important than spot a cop for you. It may save you from shooting out from a curb right into a car that's passed out of range of your regular mirror."

"Almost got caught that way yesterday," Braxton admitted.

"And if you (Continued on page 129)

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LOOK WHERE YOU DRIVE

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don't fit a special mirror," Gus advised, "you can keep out of trouble by glancing in your mirror when you're ready to start away from the curb. If there's no car in sight, wait a few seconds, in case a car may have swung into the blind spot as you glanced at the mirror. If there is a car coming, wait for it to pass in the same way, meanwhile keeping your eye on the mirror to make sure no other car will get close enough to slam you when you do swing out."

"That's a good stunt—I'll remember it," Braxton said, as he climbed behind the wheel again and began to watch in his mirror for cars coming up the road and mentally timing how long it took for them to get by after they passed out of his view in the rear-vision mirror. "Too bad we can't see backward as well as forward in an automobile," he grumbled.

"SOMETIMES you can see better backward," Gus observed. "In a sleet storm, for example. If you keep going, the rear window stays clear, and so does your mirror."

"I meant to ask you about that, Gus. What's the best cure for sleet? I had to get out every few miles and scrape the sleet off the windshield by hand during that storm we had two weeks ago. It was a blamed nuisance."

"Best cure I know of is to keep the windshield glass so hot that sleet won't form on it," Gus suggested.

"Oh! You mean that idea of burning a candle right close to the windshield with a reflector behind it so the light won't shine in your eyes?"

"I wasn't thinking of that way, although it's a good stunt in an emergency," Gus replied. "There are two good ways to keep the windshield above the freezing point. One is to use a special electric heater made for that purpose. It has a grid of heating wires enclosed in a transparent shield, and draws current from the car's battery. Then, there's the latest idea, which is a car heater fitted in such a way that a part of the hot air is thrown against the windshield."

"I don't like anything in my line of vision on the windshield," Braxton objected, "and besides, I leave my car standing around so much nights with the lights on that I have to have the battery charged every so often all winter. I don't want any gadget that'll run my battery down, any quicker."

"How about a special heater?" Gus suggested.

Braxton laughed. "I've got a heater now, and I'll be darned if I'm going to throw it away and get a new one just to keep the windshield hot in snow and sleet storms. After all, you don't get caught in a sleet storm or a heavy snow so very often. Aren't there any good emergency stunts that will do the trick?"

"WELL," replied Gus, "the candle stunt is one of them, but it has its disadvantages at night. Even with a shield behind it, there's some light glare. If your headlights are giving poor light because of the sleet or snow that's stuck to them, even a small glare may make it hard to see the road."

"But there are plenty of other ideas you can try," Gus went on. "A simple one is to carry some small bags of salt in your tool kit. They can be about two or three inches in diameter. Then, when you get caught in sleet, or if snow starts freezing to the windshield, tie a bag of salt to the windshield-wiper shaft so it bumps against the glass at the top out of the way of the swipe of the blade itself."

"Wet the bag a little before you tie it in place. As the salt slowly melts, the wiper will keep sweeping the salt water back and forth across the glass (Continued on page 130)

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LOOK WHERE YOU DRIVE

(Continued from page 129)

and the solution will keep the sleet or snow from freezing. When the salt is all gone and she starts to freeze up again, hang up the next bag."

"But salt water freezes, too, if it's cold enough," Braxton objected.

"That's true," Gus admitted, "But if you've got a heater in the car, the air inside will keep the glass from reaching the salt-water freezing point. And when it gets as cold as all that, there won't be any sleet—it'll come in the form of snow, and the snow won't stick to the glass because it wouldn't melt when it struck it. In fact, if the windshield-glass temperature is actually much below freezing on its outside surface, you won't even need a windshield wiper, because the wind that rushes by when you're driving will blow the snow clear of the glass."

"So it does when it's real cold," Braxton agreed.

"And if you don't want to be bothered with bags of salt, you can get the same effect with any one of a number of special wipers on the market. They're filled with a chemical powder that melts to form an anti-sleet solution."

"Sounds like a useful gadget," Braxton exclaimed. "What do you do? Just keep one of the special blades in your tool kit and snap it on when you get caught in a snow storm or it starts to sleet?"

"That's the idea," answered Gus.

"But supposing your windshield wiper is kind of old and hasn't much kick to it, so it won't swing any trick wiper blades, then what?"

"You're a chump if you start out with a wiper in that condition, but if you do get caught, then the only thing to do is pull your coat collar up around your ears, stick your head out of the window, and make for the nearest service station!" Gus grumbled, as he headed for the gas pump to take care of another customer.

THREE-COURSE DINNER WEIGHS SIX OUNCES

Less than six ounces of concentrated food was shown, in a recent Russian demonstration, to be sufficient for the preparation of a nourishing three-course dinner. The new foods were developed by scientists who were faced with the necessity of providing emergency rations for the airmen who maintain communication between isolated arctic outposts, replacing the traditional pemmican with foodstuffs that are compatible with today's knowledge of dietary requirements. It was found that ordinary foods could be highly concentrated by eliminating the water content, along with such unnecessary substances as bone and fiber. Stranded aviators and explorers need merely to melt ice or snow, soak the condensed food in the hot water, and eat their dinners. A full-size plate of meat-and-vegetable soup, a main course of veal cutlet and mashed potato, and a fruit-jelly dessert course can be prepared from five and a half ounces of concentrate.

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THAT some insects can live as long as five years without food of any kind has been established by recent experiments conducted by Dr. Edward Francis of the U. S. Public Health Service. Tiny insects called ticks, taken from a Texas cave and stored in wooden pill boxes, were found to be alive after five years on a starvation diet. More important than their ability to live without food is the fact that the tested ticks still harbored disease germs of relapsing fever, which they spread.

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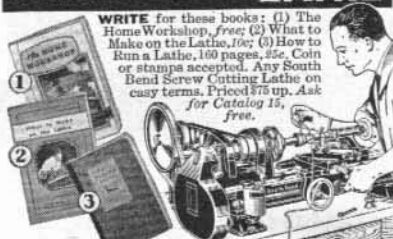


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