

Feelings of safety for all

A recent poll of North Carolinians shows that we feel safer in our communities than we did three years ago. And it appears that we are optimistic in those feelings, especially here in the Raleigh-Durham area. And it is right that we should feel this way; after all, violent crime has decreased 10 percent in the past year.

From the Editor

Well, that's just great news for the folks living in the gated communities popping up like orange roadwork barrels around

Raleigh.

But what about the rest of us? What about those of us who live in normal neighborhoods, or apartment complexes, or even dormitories? We don't spend all our time behind locked doors; we exercise, we buy groceries, we go to and from school.

What about Robert Baumgart, an N.C. State University sophomore who, last Thursday, was shot in the shoulder on State's campus? Do we honestly think he feels safer than he did five, three or even one year ago? Most likely, the answer is no.

Feeling safe while walking around the block or stopping by a store is important. And it is reassuring to know that we are not simply imagining this safety.

But we cannot forget, for all our feelings of security, those who do not have such feelings.

We cannot forget about Baumgart, and we cannot disregard the motorist in Durham who, on Monday afternoon, was shot in the head while driving through an intersection.

While wealthier areas of the Triangle are able to provide more and more security for their neighborhoods and schools, the poorer neighborhoods cannot provide these same protections. Why should we feel scared to retrieve our car from a towing company in a neighborhood that, historically, is not "the best part of town?"

Don't forget that we don't live only in our homes; we live in this world; we share it with everyone else. And it is up to us to make sure that everyone feels safe in it.

Become car expert in few steps

LINDSEY MCADAMS
Staff Writer

Helpless no more: Society traditionally portrays women as helpless creatures. We are incapable of fending for ourselves and must rely on men to rescue us.

I say that this myth needs to be debunked, and it's high time that someone did.

Even in today's society, men prefer women who aren't capable of being self-sufficient. They like these women because they can impress them with their macho-esque qualities.

I can do it myself: Ever had car trouble and a man stopped to ask if he could help?

When my car broke down and someone of the male gender asked if he could help, I just shook my head and very sweetly said, no, I was fine.

I knew exactly what was wrong, so I could fix it. The choke was not opening at all, meaning my car was not getting any air to mix with the gas to cause them to ignite, so my car would cut off.

This situation happened frequently, especially on the way to school. It was very embarrassing.

I would have to get out of my car, pray I wouldn't get hit, open the hood, take off the carburetor cover and stick a screwdriver in the choke of my car. Then I'd start it and be on my merry way.

Transmission fluid vs. Oil: Getting back to the story,

women can and should be self-sufficient. We can even do small car repairs and maintenance.

The easiest maintenance to perform is checking and adding washer fluid, brake fluid, oil and transmission fluid.

Transmission fluid and oil are the most critical fluids for the car. If there is too little oil, the vehicle will quite running.

If there is not enough transmission fluid, the gears cannot shift properly. If you go long enough, the gears will grind metal on metal--this is bad.

Fortunately, I can tell you how to check and add transmission fluid to a car.

Nuts and bolts: Checking and adding transmission fluid is a very simple task. Before you get started, however, there are a few items you must have on hand.

1) One bottle of transmission fluid

2) One funnel (metal is best)

3) One rag (to clean up any mess)

The car hood should be cold to the touch.

First, open the hood. Some cars have latches in the car; others open in different places. After opening the hood, secure it open.

Next, comes the semi-difficult part. You have to look for the dipstick in order to check the fluid level. This process can be difficult because the dipstick for the oil and the transmission fluid look exactly the same. The only difference between the two is that the oil stick has a yellow handle. Also,

the location of the sticks differs on each car. Just hunt for it.

The stick usually looks like a metal curly-cue. Once you've found it, simply pull it out. The owner's manual can tell you where it is.

When you pull the stick out, you will see a long stick with a thick, reddish fluid on the end. Turn the stick so the fluid is toward you. On this end of the stick will be some measuring increments. The stick usually says "full" and "add."

There are also marks between the two words. Check to see where the fluid line lies on the stick.

If you need to add some more transmission fluid (that's the red stuff), get your funnel and put the narrow end in the opening for the dipstick. Pour the fluid into the wide end of the funnel and you're done.

Not sure how much to add? Go with half a quart and check it again a day later. Add another half quart then if necessary.

Use the rag to wipe up any mess. Remove the funnel.

Put the dipstick back in its place, close the hood and you're finished.

Store the unused portion of transmission fluid in a cool, dry place. Instead of keeping the leftover fluid in my car, I put a new bottle in there. That way, there's no chance of a spill.

Now, then, aren't you proud? You are now on the road to becoming a self-sufficient woman. Congratulations!

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