

## Cut cost of car insurance

CHARLES ROSS

### Your Personal Finance

Americans have become so savvy about shopping for auto insurance that insurers are actually reducing premiums nationwide. But today's average annual premium is still \$800, so consumers are looking for ways to shave the cost wherever possible.

To find the least expensive insurer, call your state insurance department for a free listing of insurers by price. After selecting the best rates, check their financial health in the A.M. Best rating guide at the library.

Raising your deductible can cut your collision premium by fifteen to thirty percent. If your car is more than five years old, consider canceling collision coverage altogether.

Another important tip: be sure you buy only the insurance you really need.

Other ways to cut your car insurance costs that you may not know about: Check out commission-free insurers. This can cut as much as 5 to 15 percent off your premium. Look for direct writers. They don't charge commissions because they sell directly to consumers over the phone.

Another possibility is discounts. You probably already know that you can get a discount for air bags and anti-theft devices. But you also may qualify for lower rates if you are over 50, take a safe-driving course, or have a driving-age kid with a school average of B or better.

If you belong to a professional or trade organization or an auto club, ask about a member discount. You may be able to save five to ten percent on auto insurance premiums.

### Your spouse's finances

In many marriages, one partner takes over financial affairs for the couple, leaving the other partner more or less in the dark. However, married couples who file income taxes jointly are each fully responsible for any errors or inaccuracies on their returns, no matter who completes the forms. If your spouse can't or won't pay any penalties or taxes due, you are responsible for the whole amount, not just half as you might expect. The IRS does permit an "innocent spouse" defense, but most people can't adequately prove that they had no knowledge of the error or underpayment.

To protect yourself, ask your spouse to go over anything that looks doubtful, and never let your spouse sign the form for you. If you have serious doubts, file separately.

### Credit card debt

If you and your spouse hold credit card accounts jointly, See CREDIT on page 8A

## YOUNG PIONEER



PHOTO/PEPSI-COLA

Former Commerce Secretary Ron Brown (second from left) appeared in this 1949 Pepsi ad.

## Former Commerce Secretary was a pioneer in advertising with appearance in 1949 Pepsi ad

By Herbert L. White  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Former Commerce Secretary Ron Brown is remembered as a political pioneer, but he also made advertising history.

Brown, who was killed in a plane crash last month over Bosnia, was featured in one of the first black-oriented advertisements for a major consumer products company. Brown appeared in a 1949 Pepsi-Cola Co. ad as a 7-year-old, which featured an African American family at home enjoying the soft drink. Brown is in the foreground reaching for a carton of Pepsi in an ad that was used as a display piece in stores serving black neighborhoods in the 1950s.

"It was an ad about Pepsi, sure, but it was about so much more," said Maurice Cox, Pepsi's vice president of corporate development and

"It was an ad about Pepsi, sure, but it was about so much more."

Maurice Cox., Pepsi vice president

diversity. "It made you think, whoever you are, in this country you could reach for and attain the American dream just like that little boy Ron portrayed was reaching for that Pepsi."

Ed Boyd, a former National Urban League housing official and one of Pepsi's first black marketing specialists, headed the team that conceived the ad. In pre-civil rights America, the ad broke new ground in corporate advertising targeting African Americans.

"It was a landmark in marketing because up until then I don't think advertisers thought of blacks when they wanted to sell their products

to American consumers," he said. "The ad turned out to be the first national point of sale advertisement featuring blacks ever done by Pepsi, or any other company."

As an adult, Brown made his mark as the first African American to be named chairman of the Democratic Party, where he helped engineer Bill Clinton's successful presidential campaign in 1992. He also was credited with opening doors to previously-closed European and African markets to U.S. businesses. His last trip, to the former Yugoslavia, resulted in the crash that killed him and 32 military personnel and business leaders.

## Take this job and love it

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOSTON - Most U.S. workers are satisfied with their jobs, and few worry about losing them, according to a survey sponsored by Inc. magazine.

The Gallup study of 803 adults who work at least 30 hours a week also found that those working in small businesses of 50 or fewer employees were more satisfied overall than employees in larger companies.

While many workers are pessimistic about the state of the economy, most feel surprisingly good about their own jobs, according to the survey, which will be published in the May 15 issue of Inc.

Some of the key findings about worker attitudes were:

- 71 percent said they were satisfied with their jobs;
- 90 percent said they were not worried about losing their jobs;
- 69 percent said they were paid fairly last year;
- 82 percent are able to "do what they do best" every day;
- 72 percent said someone at work encourages their development;
- 84 percent had opportunities to learn and develop in the past year;
- 70 percent said management does its best to make the company a great place to work;
- 88 percent do not worry about their jobs becoming obsolete due to technology.

A related survey found American workers were given more praise and recognition for good work than their counterparts in Canada, Germany and Japan.

The surveys were conducted last November.

### Business Today

## Troy Watson named to National Chamber board

Charlotte Metro Black Chamber of Commerce founder Troy Watson has been named to the National Black Chamber of Commerce's board of directors.

Watson is one of nine new board members, which represents 25,000 black-owned businesses across the U.S.

Watson has managed Business Development Center contracts for the U.S. Department of Commerce and is active in community development projects in North Carolina.

Other notables appointed to the board include: - Arthur Fletcher, who is known as the "father of affir-

mative action" because he was a principal in the writing of federal laws as Deputy Secretary of Labor during the Nixon administration. Fletcher also served on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and ran for the Republican nomination for president briefly. He withdrew when anti-affirmative action candidate Gov. Pete Wilson of California dropped out. Fletcher owns a consulting firm in Washington, D.C.

- Joshua Smith, president and chief executive officer of Maxima Corp., who presided

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Watson



Fletcher

## Some smart ways to save for a new home

By Amanda S. Danchi  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

Chances are, if you're looking to buy a house, you have a mental image of the type of home you want. But do you have a clear picture of how you plan to pay for it?

Failing to devise and follow a smart savings strategy is one of the biggest impediments to home ownership. The North Carolina Association of CPAs says that people who want to buy a home need to take a long, hard look at their financial

situation, determine what they can realistically afford, and then develop and stick to a savings plan to accumulate the necessary down payment and closing costs.

If you're like most prospective home buyers, you'll need one to five years to save enough money. However, you'll want to do more than keep your money in a typical passbook savings account. Here are some investment strategies that CPAs suggest:

- Treasury Notes. One of the safest investments, "trea-

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