



Wheelin' around



by Charlie Moore

By the time you read this, most of the 1973 American cars will have been announced to the public. This year is a special milestone. It is the first year, since the government started meddling with automotive design in 1967, that the styling of cars has been dramatically affected as a side effect of legislation.

The safety legislation in question is a new standard requiring all 1973 cars to be able to withstand a five-mile per hour barrier crash with no damage to safety-related parts. Compliance with this standard has caused the '73's to have a severe case of protruding lower lip or a modern version of an old railroad locomotive's cow catcher.

The "new look" is in some

cases quite shocking at first glance and does not improve much even after you get used to it. Most of the comments I have heard have been unfavourable. About the only models that look half decent with the new noses are the somewhat bizzarely restyled GM intermediates, the Chevrolet Chevelle and Olds Cutlass et al. These cars were restyled with the new bumper standards in mind and as a result they fare a little better in the looks department.

The big question is: What do these new bumpers prove aside from increasing the price of every new car fifty to seventy-five dollars? They WILL withstand a five mph crash with no damage providing the impact is directly head-on. Angle shots don't count.

They may conceivably save

some money in reduced repair bills for parking lot dings, but this saving will be more than outweighed by higher costs for repairing these expensive bumper assemblies in higher speed crashes. Unfortunately, most crashes occur at speeds higher than five miles per hour.

As with much of the new so-called "safety legislation," these new bumpers are no more than an appalling waste of the consumer's dollar. What they contribute to safety is minute compared to their high cost. As long as the government continues its ill-conceived meddling with automotive design, we can expect nothing better. Politicians are not automotive engineers and are definitely not qualified to tamper with the design of cars. Even if they have the best of intentions, the

great majority of their half-baked schemes only end up costing the hapless car buyer lots of bread.

If they would only realize or admit it, the place to concentrate on saving highway lives is in better driver training, law enforcement and stricter licensing laws. It is a proven fact that if we could get the drinking driver off the road it would cut the accident rate by

more than 50 percent. The only thing is that stronger enforcement of drunk driving laws would step on too many voters' toes and the government definitely does not want to do that.

All we can look forward to is automobile design being used as a convenient scapegoat on which to blame the rising death toll on our highways.

Ontario vote on fees boycott

TORONTO (CUP) — A referendum will be held October 10-12 on all campuses belonging to the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS) to decide if students want a second term free boycott.

The action, decided at a July OFS meeting, is part of an intensive educational campaign to protest increased tuition fees and decreased student award grants.

The provincial government announced the increases of up to \$600 in March and faced immediate opposition. More than 1,000 students demonstrated at the provincial legislature shortly after the announcement and 800 Ottawa students descended on Toronto in early April to protest the increase.

Undergraduate tuition fees increased \$100, graduate fees, \$395; and teachers' college fees, \$600. At the same time the loan portion of the student award program increased by \$200.

As a result of several OFS meetings in June and July, five demands were made of the provincial government:

1. The grant portion of the student awards return to its original level \$200 more than the present level;
2. Part-time students have access to the student awards program;
3. The age of independence (which is a determining factor in student loans) be lowered from 25;
4. Fee increases be deferred; and
5. Full public and formal consultation before changes in fees, student awards program, etc.

The third demand was partially met by education minister George Kerr following a meeting with OFS representatives. He agreed to reduce the age of independence from 25 to 24, making up to 2,000 persons eligible for more student financial assistance. In past years, students had to be married or 25 before family financial resources were not counted in determining eligibility for aid.

Another \$500,000 may now be given out this year in provincial grants and federally-backed bank loans

to post-secondary students. This will also cover the weekly miscellaneous allowance increase from \$8 to \$9. OFS representatives had asked for an increase of \$1.80 to \$9.80. The federal government has also suggested the \$9.80 level.

OFS representatives and supporters are now organizing students around the issue. Forty thousand pamphlets urging students withhold second-term fee installments are being distributed to be used in pre-registration mailings and at registration. Carleton University in Ottawa, for example, will have students at the registration lines informing others of the OFS stand and asking them to support it. This would leave open the option of a January fee boycott.

During the fall, OFS organizers hope to negotiate with the government for a return to original fee levels and a \$200 decrease in the loan portion of a student award before a student is eligible for a grant.

According to the OFS pamphlet "at stake is the integrity of the University Community and government responsibility and honesty... This is only the first step. We must act and act now, before another fee increase and another tightening of the financial noose."

"The decision to spend increasingly massive sums of money in previous years was a political one," the pamphlet tells the students. "The government must now have the courage to meet the consequences head on. It cannot be allowed to transfer either the responsibility or the cost to the University Community."

The pamphlet also deplores the hypocritical talk of accessibility to higher education in Ontario. "We have been told that there is as much money available for students as there always has been," it says. One could easily end up with a \$5000 debt now compared with \$2500 debt over four years under the old regulations, it adds.

The OFS represents ten of Ontario's fourteen universities, and Ryerson Polytechnical Institute.



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