

Features

Lemons 'R' Us

Mark Looks For A New Car

by Mark Owens
Collegian Staff Writer

My car died.

Last week, after a brave and at times very disgusting struggle it succumbed to Car Leprosy.

I have a lot of fond memories about that car, like the time it stranded me on the west side of town at 9:30 at night in a rainstorm or when it stalled out on Burton avenue while I was on my way to class.

A very kind lady driving a 1989 Plymouth Sundance helped me push my car off the road and gave me a ride to school. Later on it started right up, as if to say "TTHHPPPPPPP!!!"

It was a nice car though (snicker) and I'm (haha) really sorry to see it go (Ahahahaha!!).

Actually, I dreaded getting rid of my TC3 because it meant that I'd have to look for a new car. This meant that I'd have to go to car lots, meet salesmen and maybe drive one or two cars.

I know it sounds like I'm making a big deal about this. You're right, I am. Personally I'd rather have my wisdom teeth removed by several blind intoxicated dentists than look for a car. It's a scary deal.

But as a public service I'm here to share some insights I've gained by looking for a new car.

First there's the newspaper ads. Usually you'll see things like this:

81 Ford Escort, stran,exsys,sunrf, cass, GOOD DEAL!

What is this ad saying? Your guess is as good as mine. In most cases people go out to look at the car, kick the tires, look at their bank balance and either a) buy it, b) don't buy it or c) go home and cry.

Car lots are different. These are what cemeteries would look like if they were run by Barnum & Baily and Liberace's relatives. Lots of flags, tinsel and banners. Anything to distract you from the cars.

My advice is to take the free hot dog and ignore the dancing girls.

What you have to watch out for is the salesmen. For people that wear bad polyester (it's true- there is such a thing as bad polyester. Ask any weatherman, he'll tell you) they move pretty fast. A good salesman can swoop down on a customer from across the lot in 3.7 second. That's counting the time it takes for him to stop and get a hot dog.

I think all car salesmen go to the same school. Everyone I've ever met 1) smiles and says "Hi! Welcome to ___," 2) shakes your hand, and 3) asks you what he can do for you.

You must 1) smile and say "Hi!" 2) shake his paw and 3) state the incredibly obvious that "I'm looking for a car" while

resisting the urge to say "I have to use the bathroom. Where do you keep it?"

Quickly (usually before you can get the word "car" out) the salesman will be showing you several cars, everyone of which will be out of your price range.

This means that your first task is to convince the salesman that you can't afford anything he's showing you. *Be firm.* You're going to hear lots of lines like "but for just \$10 more a month..."

Eventually you and the salesman will find a few cars that you can afford. It is important that you look the cars over very carefully, as you will spend the next year of your life as an indentured servant paying for it.

Mark Owens

After a week of searching, which consists of shaking many paws, eating many hot dogs and looking at too much repulsive polyester, you'll have narrowed down your list to two or three cars. The next step is taking them for a drive.

Test drives are interesting, as you get to take the car off the lot and into the world, forcing it to do more than idle.

Important things to remember about test-drives:

- never grip the wheel too tightly - it might fall off
- don't flip switches randomly - the car might blow up
- ignore the salesman and kindly turn down his offer of a hot dog
- don't talk to the rust

After the test drives, you will either pick one of the cars or come to your senses and buy a skateboard.

Actually buying the car involves lots of paperwork, more than it takes to build a small office building. All I can say is good luck and bring a change of clothes - this is going to take awhile.

After you get your new, shiny, clean car home it will be necessary to put all your junk from the old car in it. After all, you don't want anyone to think you have a new car do you?

As for me, I bought a nice little foreign car. It's an adventure everytime I get in it, as I keep discovering little buttons, switches and compartments. Everything opens up for storage, including the dashboard, the hubcaps and the seats. Heck, theres even a map compartment in the engine.

I've got only one complaint. I'm having a hard time getting that hot dog smell out of the car. Any suggestions?

Roadhouse Theater

Cat On A Hot Tin Roof

Cat On A Hot Tin Roof. Directed by Scott McClelland. Starring Kim Mc., Stanley Tuznic, Louise Haladay, Leonard Dombrowski, Charlotte Haas, Jimmy Mehs. Appearing at the Roadhouse Theater, 1505 State, April 27-30.

by Rob Prindle

I have been a steady patron of the Roadhouse Theater since the first midnight production of "Danny and the Deep Blue Sea," a searingly sexy, deadly funny ultimately serious and shocking play. There was something very exciting about climbing the aging steps of the Clay Space Building at midnight to see the first production of a new theater.

The excitement didn't end with the dripping candelabras that lined the flight of stairs. The play, with its explicit nudity, was well suited for the late night run, but a definite star arose from that first endeavor. Kim Mc. oozed sexuality in a manner not unlike Melaine Griffith, but Kim's sexuality is a little more frightened, a little more dusky.

Since that first midnight, I have religiously followed the theater company, but although I was always pleased with the plays, I was always slightly disappointed when Kim Mc. did not appear in the cast of actors. My wait has finally ended with "Cat On A Hot Tin Roof."

I am happy to say that Kim's performance did not disappoint me or anyone that saw the production. Her security as an actress allowed her to portray the insecurity of Magie in Tennessee Williams' finest play.

The play was probably the best dramatic production that I have seen in Erie. The now-defunct Lincoln Theater was the king of the farce but the Roadhouse has a flair for dramatics that is the trademark of all truly great theater companies.

Kim Mc. is a big reason for the play's success, but certainly not the only one. From the totally right and somehow fresh portrayal of Brick, Magie's frustrated husband (Stanley Tuznic) to the stunningly energetic performance of Big Daddy (Leonard Dombrowski).

The play takes the audience through a day in the life of a rich plantation family. The plot revolves around a the imminent death of Big Daddy and the ensuing struggle to gain control of the Mississippi Delta plantation. Told in three acts, all contained in the bed-sitting room of Magie and Brick, the play shows how each character relates back to Big daddy.

Perhaps the real plot in this

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complicated story is the relationship of Magie and Brick. Brick, one of big Daddy's two sons, is an ex-football player turned sports announcer who has recently suffered the death of his best friend. The loss, along with his wife's orbital role in his breakdown, has led Brick to alcoholism. For those of you who are not familiar with the play, I will not reveal too much, but the audience does learn that Magie was less than secure with the friendship that the two men shared. In some ways Brick blames his wife for his friends eventual alcohol-related death.

The other players in the fight for Big Daddy's power are Sister woman and Brother man (Charlotte Haas and Jimmy Mehs) and Daddy's wife Big Mama (played perfectly dotingly by Louise Haladay). There is no question in my mind that Tennessee Williams was the king of character naming.

Brick is tired of the games that he sees being played around him. Parts of his character betray his cool exterior and we see a real love for both Daddy and his best friend. Brick calls what he sees happening in the house "mendacity" and that word sets the tone for most of the play. The fake lives that these people live pale in comparison to the real friendship Brick had shared. Part of the mendacity also deals with the way the family hides the tragic test results from Big Daddy.

The best scene of the play involves the conversation between Brick and his father. I do not know how long the encounter lasted but Tennessee Williams' cutting dialog along with the soothing power and frighteningly calm humanity expressed by the actors made the scene an integral part of every man's life. The thousands of reference points that popped in my brain as I watched made the scene eternal.

Kim Mc.'s performance was slightly marred in the first act by

her unsteady southern drawl. On some occasions when she missed the timing of a line she would catch up by speaking without the accent. No matter, because here real performance began in the stunning third act. Her play between her husband and her father-in-law was flawless. She needed her husband's love and the audience saw that in her eyes long before they heard her speak the words.

If you never see another performance, you must see the final encounter between Magie and Big Daddy. It will make you squirm and at the same time compel you to understand.

The roles of Sister, Brother and Mama all lay in the shadow of Brick and Magie and obviously this is what the author intended. The names all represent the viewpoint of the couple and this says a lot about their roles. Sister woman was the slightly flat character of the bitchy society wife. This role must have been played well because it fit so nicely that it was hardly noticeable. If she had played her role poorly, I would have noticed her, played well, I notice the play. The pole of Brother was played equally as well, but perhaps with slightly more viscosity. Mama was irritating and nosy and reminiscent of Edith Bunker. The part was perhaps slightly overplayed, but thoroughly enjoyable.

The acting was nicely complimented by the genius of the lighting. There were no slow lights-up in this production. The room was dark and then it was immediately illuminated in naked white. The set was also of uncompromising quality, something rarely if ever seen in small productions.

Show times:

Thursday - Saturday
8pm. Sunday at 7pm.
Tickets \$5. Reservations
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