Odds 'N' Ends

An Opinion On Studebakers And Unibodied Cars

The technology in the design of the unibodied cars of today serves us better in some ways while the cars of yesteryear serves us better in other ways. "I'm sorry, Studebaker Drivers," there is no such a thing as a perfect car for everybody. In designing a car, there are trade-offs and compromises made.

One of the advantages of a high-tech designed car is the fuel economy. This is made possible through size and weight reduction. If the size of an object is reduced with all other factors remaining unchanged, naturally, there will be a weight reduction. This is merely a physical thing that you can visualize. To further reduce weight in most of the modern cars, the driveshaft has been either shortened or omitted. To make this possible, the drive wheels of the car are now put up front.

Plastic are used to reduce the weight and also of the manufacturing costs.

In reducing the size of the car, it does at least a couple of things along with compromising comfort. With the decrease in size, the driver and the passengers are in fact closer to the point of impact in the case of a collision. This is not good but what is good is the fuel economy that these smaller cars give. Right away, there is a trade-off . . . Safety for economy.

There is a certain safety factor built into the unitized bodied car. It is called,"Controlled energy absorbtion."
What this simply means is that upon impact, a larger percentage of the impact energy is absorbed through the collapsing of the area that has been struck than offered in a car with a frame. So, in reality, a unibodied car that is the same size as a Studebaker is a safer car to ride in if impact is coming from the front or the rear of the cars but perhaps side protection on both types of cars are likely about the same.

As you would suspect, the high tech designed cars are followed by high tech wrecks. It doesn't matter the least how much modern technology is used in designing the car, it only take an old fashion slam-bang accident to create a mess. It is apparently not all that difficult to have a car with a unibody front wheel drive"Written off" by the insurance underwriters after a minor accident.

Proper alignment is important with any car but more so with a unitized bodied car that has been repaired. After the car has been involved in a collision, it would be taken to an auto body shop. Consider that the shop owner is motivated by profit. . . That is why he is in business. He wants the car on and off the alignment machine as quickly as possible. One would think that a few of the cars would not be aligned to factory specs or tolerances.

The rusting problems of a unitized bodied car would be more critical than cars like Studebakers with frames. Rust invasion in the car's substructure will undermine it's strength. The front suspension system is held with thin gauge metal. If the thin metal has a rust out, the suspension is gone.

A few things that a person should keep in mind when considering on purchasing a car with a unitized body:

1- Either buy a new car or one that has not been in an accident
2 - Rusting is a car with a frame generally affects it cosmetically but in a car with a unitized body, it can affect the road worthiness. Westerners are well aware of what the salt does to the cars from the eastern part of the country where snowfall is heavy in the winter. On unitized bodied cars, much more awareness must be given to the rust problems.
3 - Improperly repaired unitized bodied cars can look good but they may lose some of the crash protection that was originally built into them.
4 - Proper alignment of the body sections are far more critical in a unibody car than that of a car with a frame. Close to proper alignment may have been good enough for older cars that had a frame. Close is no longer good enough for the modern day car.
The unibody construction may be compared with a jigsaw puzzle. There is strength enough to hold it together when it is properly assembled, but take pieces of it and misalign them and the whole puzzle falls apart when you try to lift it. On the unibody structure, one piece depends on anther to support it and so on.
5 - Stick with Studebakers or refer to item #1.

Either buy a new car or make sure that the one you are considering, preferably has not been in an accident.

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Around The House

Basement sumps;

If the house is 40 to 60 years old and has a basement, it may have a sump which collects rain water from the roof by way of drain tiles around the basement foundation.

The water goes into the sump which has a one way valve. Over the years, dirt that comes with the rain or drain water from a driveway into basement garage that is lower than street level, will accumulate as sediment in the sump. Everything is fine as long as the dirt does not get to the point that it plugs the opening of the one way valve. If the water cannot enter the valve on a rainy day, the water going into the sump has nowhere to go but to flood the basement.

If you have a sump in the basement, perhaps you may want to lift the cover and take a peek into it.

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Psychiatrist to his new nurse: "Just say, we're very busy. Don't say it's a madhouse . . ."