

# Joyce!

*A newsletter for married women in their forties  
-written by someone who isn't Joyce.*

## Christmas 2003 Issue!

- Tips for owning used cars!
  - Wilderness camping in NW Ontario!
  - New Fiction! *How I Renovated Our House and Spent Less than \$1000*
  - Fantasy! *My Kids are Perfect Angels*
  - Travel! *Family Vacation HotSpots in New Sarepta*
  - Finance! *Charging Your Credit Card Bills*
- Much, much more inside!!!**

**You too can lose your savings in the used car business...**It's really quite easy, once you get the hang of it. Let's use Rick and Joyce Glasel as an example of how to do this.

It all began shortly after they moved to Winnipeg in 1999. The faithful, reliable '85 Mustang had served as the family's second car for about seven years and didn't look at all like a fourteen year old car with nearly 300,000 kilometres on the odometer. But the Glasel family had grown accustomed to air conditioning and other unnecessary options, and by the spring of 2000, Rick buckled under pressure from the rest of his family and went shopping for a four-door sedan with A/C and an automatic. He thought he struck a fine bargain when he purchased a 1992 Taurus, but alas, it had spent a few years in Quebec, and by the spring of 2001, the lovable purple Taurus was showing signs of rust. The A/C would not hold its refrigerant because the metal lines had pinholes from corrosion. The paint was bubbling off the door frames and the wheel wells.

By the fall of 2002, all the metal brake lines had to be replaced, the floorpan in front of the left rear seat had fallen out and there was a possibility that if the rust was removed from the doors they would no longer be attached to the rest of the car. But the Taurus still ran, in fact it had survived trips to Kingston and Prince George pulling the Glasel tent trailer. It wasn't pretty, but it still worked. In the summer of 2003, a decision had to be made, and the Glasels decided to run the Taurus until it died, and they embarked on another vacation trip, this time to Jasper and Banff.

They never made it past the hamlet of Sherwood Park, just east of Edmonton. The transmission seized and the car was towed to a transmission shop for an estimate. Rick estimated that it took the mechanic 20 seconds to determine that the Taurus wasn't worth fixing. What to do now? The rest of the family was waiting at Inge and Marvin Westlin's acreage in New Sarepta, and Rick needed to make a cost-effective decision. If he needed to replace the old car, anyway, why not buy a car in Alberta to drive back to Winnipeg? After some disappointing experiences with used car salesmen, he found a shiny white 1995 Taurus parked in a field with a For Sale sign on it. It was low mileage, felt as solid as a new car, and had not a single sign of rust anywhere. It seemed like Divine Providence had brought Rick and that car together. A fair deal was struck, and Rick was soon preoccupied with finding an auto wrecker to buy the purple Taurus. However, dark clouds were already infringing on this idyllic scene. Twenty-two



The only thing Jeffrey caught on this four day canoe trip in NW Ontario were 8 wasp stings.

hours after getting the keys for the white Taurus, its engine changed its tone from a quiet purring to a racket of ticking, knocking and clattering. A quick trip to a dealership at the end of the day confirmed the bad news. A piston rod was hammering away inside. Phone calls were made, the sellers of the white Taurus picked up the keys and returned the money paid for the car. So far it hadn't cost very much, but the Glasel's still didn't have a car to go back to Winnipeg with.

Rick decided to buy a used transmission, which cost a couple of days phoning auto wreckers. Finally, Charlie McKeil found a place that not only had the right transmission, but they would install it for a reasonable price. Rick and Jeff were still hoping to get back in time to go on a wilderness canoe trip. But replacing the transmission is a time consuming job and many mechanics were on vacation (presumably driving cars that work). The long weekend came and went, the canoe trip was postponed, and finally the purple Taurus was refitted with its hitch for one last trip on the Yellowhead, almost two weeks after leaving Winnipeg.

So far, less than \$1000 had been spent on the purple Taurus. Rick's insurance agent knew of a way to avoid paying PST on a used car bought in Alberta, so Rick bought a plane ticket to fly back to Edmonton three weeks later when the white Taurus had the engine replaced. With a guaranteed engine, the white Taurus also cost a few hundred more to buy the second time. It also turned out that the insurance agent was wrong, so PST still had to be paid on the car when Rick tried to insure it in Winnipeg. So Rick was really hoping to sell the purple Taurus for enough money to cover the cost of transmission. But it was too rusty to pass a safety inspection, so the purple Taurus was sold for parts in November. End of



**Rick loads headless scarecrow into back of his truck**

### **The Humbug**

Once upon a Christmas season, while I stumbled, weak and broke,  
Over many a pricey and useless gift for some forgotten bloke—  
While I fussed, nearly snapping, suddenly there came a tapping,  
As of someone wildly laughing, laughing and chortling even more.  
“ ‘Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “from the department store—  
Only Sears and nothing more.”

Open wide I flung the window, then, with many a bang and clatter,  
In here landed a wretched Humbug of a type I'd never seen before;  
Not the least apology made he; not an insult stopped, or courtesy;  
But, just like Allan Rock, perched outside the Bayer drugstore—  
Wanting millions of Cipro in case of a bio-terror war—  
Fickle, a rat, and nothing more.

Then this grumpy beetle bemoaning all those Christmas tidings,  
By the third or fourth comment and the sad trappings it wore,  
“Though I live so close to the mall, true,” I said, “be sure to save all  
Charge receipts and wrapping paper pertaining to the Disney Store—  
Tell me what else you need beyond that purchased the night before!”  
Quoth the Humbug “Nevermore.”

But the Humbug, sitting firmly on my window sill, spoke only  
That one word, as if everyone in the world he did so scorn.  
Nothing sharper could be uttered – not meaner could be stuttered—  
Till I nearly began to shudder “Others have felt this way before—  
Tomorrow you will believe me, may we hope for this and more.”  
Then the killjoy said “Nevermore.”

“Buy it!” said I, “think of the Bay, buy it now and do not pay! —  
Whether your money is spent, or Walmart bars you out of their store,  
The crowds yet so frightening, all this still seems so exciting —  
On this final week of shopping — tell me truly, I implore —  
Is there — is there one gift left? — get it for me, I implore —  
Quoth the Humbug “Nevermore”

If this doesn't make Edgar Allan Poe turn over in his grave, nothing will. [Written for 2001 newsletter, but there was better material available for that newsletter, so this “poem” has never been published before, and “Doth quote the raven, ‘Nevermore’”]

**W**e would like to wish each and everyone of you a wonderful Christmas and a peaceful New Year. The past twelve months have gone by in a blur. Amanda and Jeffrey are growing up too fast, with bad attitudes far beyond their years. Joyce is working half days as an instructional aide in kindergarten, Rick is still travelling across Manitoba and Saskatchewan selling farm tires. Amanda plays fastball in the spring and summer and is a superb catcher and hitter. Jeffrey plays basketball in the winter and soccer after the snow melts. His soccer team finished second in the Winnipeg “B” city finals and Amanda's ball team went to the “C” provincials in metropolitan Arborg. Joyce was a camp director this summer, and after a brief hiatus, has started painting our house again. Our two birds and two fish have survived to see another birthday. No one in this household contracted West Nile or SARS this year, and other than a fractured bone in Jeffrey's foot, we are all healthy. May you enjoy God's blessings, and find comfort in Him in times of trouble.