

# features

## Auto adviser helps select the 'right' car

United Press International SEATTLE — "Most Americans believe they have the right to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness and a car that runs well for 100,000 miles," jokes Ashley Knapp, a consultant for bewildered auto buyers.

For the past six years, Knapp, 30, who calls himself the first "auto adviser," has helped hundreds of Seattle residents, and other motorists around the country, avoid the "Kleenex" (buy one, throw it away) mentality of automobile buying.

"The automobile is now the most expensive product many people will ever buy in their whole life," he says. "There is an incredible amount of deliberate ripoff and a tremendous amount of incompetence. All too often, a person buys the image and not the product."

After a few hours and \$135 with the "Auto Adviser," a client is armed with information, the key to making a safe and sane auto purchase.

"My job is to study all the available technology, so you buy the product, not the image," says Knapp, whose small consulting business has grown by leaps and bounds. "I study all the available

automobile technology, engines, transmissions, the way cars are built, and the relative dollar value."

Then, Knapp shows individuals and corporations how to get the best possible product for the least amount of money.

The process begins with a simple phone call to the man who modestly claims to be the automobile expert of the Pacific Northwest.

The decision of new or used car usually is made during this first brief exchange.

Things really get going during the "needs assessment" sessions, which are much like a few rounds of analysis in a psychiatrist's comfortable office. Only in this case, the malaise is easily identifiable: What to do about those several tons of steel already owned or about to be acquired?

Clients are asked to fill out a questionnaire setting priorities on performance, safety, comfort, reliability, economy and image.

Each choice has its tradeoffs, Knapp explains. For example, more durable cars generally get lower gas mileage.

During this process, the client

outlines his or her specific automobile "uses and abuses."

Then, Knapp tries to break assumptions.

He says the most common is that people think it's best to buy last year's model at the end of a model year.

"The best time of the year to buy a car is actually when the new cars come out," Knapp says. "Buy the new model. Over the last five years, car prices have gone up dramatically during the model year."

Knapp recommends test-driving a few prospects. From those, usually three, there's a reliability and use comparison. Without much more fuss, a car model is selected.

Despite requests, Knapp doesn't actually go out and buy the car with individual clients, although he does for corporations.

But he does help people pick options. He also helps the client sell the old car. More accurately, he provides the information needed to get the best sale or trade-in for the car.

Domestic cars, he says, have improved dramatically in terms of "fit, finish and quality." Gas mileage and pricing also have gotten better.

"American cars offer more safety for the dollar," he says. "American cars are the safest and most durable."

Generally, Knapp is against diesel and four-wheel drive vehicles.

He's not always against purchasing a car in its first model year. He says he recommended the Mazda RX7, GLC, 626 and the Nissan Stanza in their first model year.

This year, he's pushing the new Thunderbird. As a matter of ethics, he never suggests buying a car that gets less than 20 mpg in the city and 30 mpg on the highway.

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## What's Up

### Thursday

**TEXAS A&M EMERGENCY CARE TEAM:** A meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. in 510 Rudder.

**PRE-LAW SOCIETY:** A field trip to Texas Law School is scheduled March 21 (first day after spring break). For more information, call Greg McCarthy at 696-0747.

**CAMPUS CRUSADE FOR CHRIST:** A meeting is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. in 113 Kleberg. Everyone is welcome.

**MSC HOSPITALITY:** A fashion show is scheduled for noon in the MSC Lounge. Spring into fashion with the latest spring attire.

**SCHEDULING OFFICE:** All student organizations are encouraged to submit room reservation requests for Fall 1983 by April 15.

**SPRING STUDENT ELECTIONS:** Filing for elections will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Main Hall MSC.

**MEXICAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION:** International Week activities and other semester activities will be discussed at 8 p.m. in the MSC Lounge.

**CHI ALPHA CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP:** A brief study on Intercession then Practical Application will be discussed from noon to 1 p.m. at the All Faiths Chapel library.

**SIERRA CLUB:** Ron Kaiser of the Recreation and Parks Department will speak and show slides on "Issues in Water Policy" at 7:30 p.m. in the Brazos Valley Museum.

**INSTITUTE OF TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERS:** Ms. Emily Braswell, transportation planner for the city of Victoria, will discuss "Transportation Systems Management" at 7:30 p.m. in 503 A&A.

**INTRAMURAL-RECREATIONAL SPORTS:** A water polo and innertube water polo team captains' meeting is scheduled for 5:15 p.m. in 164 E. Kyle. A volleyball triples team captain's meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. in 164 E. Kyle.

**UNIVERSITY LUTHERAN CHAPEL:** The group meets at 6:30 p.m. at the University Lutheran Chapel to go to the Sherwood Nursing Home to sing and visit the residents.

**TEXAS A&M EMERGENCY CARE TEAM:** A general meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. in 510 Rudder.

**VENEZUELAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION:** Elections will be held at 7 p.m. in 404 Rudder.

### Friday

**VIETNAMESE AMERICAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION:** A welcoming party for other Texas and Vietnamese student associations is scheduled from 8 p.m. to Midnight at Rumours.

**TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL:** Aggie Toastmasters meet March 22, April 5 and 9, and May 3 at 8:30 p.m. in MSC to sharpen their speaking, listening and thinking.

**MSC POLITICAL FORUM:** Admiral Stansfield Turner CIA director 1977-1981, will speak on "International Spots" March 22 at 8 p.m. in Rudder Theater.

**SPRING STUDENT ELECTIONS:** Filing for elections scheduled from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. in the Main Hall MSC. Applications for elections must be in by 7 p.m.

**UNIVERSITY LUTHERAN CHAPEL:** Graduate and students over 22 years old will meet at 6 p.m. at the University Lutheran Chapel, 315 N. College Main, College and go out for supper.

**I.E.E.E.:** Oral presentations of papers for the area scheduled for 10 a.m. in 342 Zachry.

Keith Kelly of T.R.W. will speak on "Satellite Communications" 7:30 p.m. in 103 Zachry. Everyone interested is welcome.

**If you have an item for "What's Up," you can fill out a Room 216 Reed McDonald at least two days in advance. No items are accepted by phone.**

## Disco, country being rivaled

# Big Band music returns

Maybe it's nostalgia that is drawing the crowds back to the dance floor, but many say the Big Band music has returned as the newest fad, replacing worn out disco and country as the music of the day.

"This is the emerging new fad, a new version and a mixture of the music of the '30s and '40s," said Buddy Brock, leader of his own big band for more than 40 years.

"The Big Band music is the most dramatic and elegant of all dance music forms," Brock said. "If you analyze it, it seems to be the strongest when economic conditions are bad."

At a recent gathering in Houston, the dance floor was crowded throughout the evening as Brock's band delighted the audience with a mix of oldies but goodies, and some modern day swing tunes. Fingers start snapping, hands begin clapping and toes start tapping when songs such as "Stardust," "In the Mood," "Begin the Beguine," "String of Pearls" or "Sunny Side of the Street" are heard.

Brock said he remembers when swing was THE music and people would come to the show mainly to see its stars — Miller, Goodman, the Dorsey brothers, Count Basie, Woody Herman, Harry James, Stan Kenton, Artie Shaw.

He said the melodic Big Bands were replaced in the 1950s by the early rock and roll greats such as Bill Haley and the Comets, Elvis and Sam Cooke, and Beatlemania topped the charts in the '60s and, by the time of his and '80s, the short-lived House of Rock and the disco era.

Country-western music is the popular in many parts of the country.

But in New York and other major cities, they have music to turn away from. The Reagan White House has reduced aid for a broad-based and popular music and performing arts program. The city is gaining popularity in Angeles and Chicago.

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