There's 'lemon' aid for car buyers

There's no incentive for a car dealer to settle with you if you have a 'lemon' or a warranty problem,' says former lemon owner Chris Andrews.

or a warrany process, age to the lemon owner Chris Andrews.

His new line of work is to belp lemon owners give auto dealers that incentive. From his Southfield home, Andrews runs a non-profit group -called Aid for Lemon Owners (ALO), teaching clients how to persuade dealers to give them satisfaction.

The client learns from Andrews' experience. It was bitter experience.

perience. It was bitter experience.

"TWO YEARS AGO I bought a new car and had problems from the day one," he said. Three months out of the sait I had it, it was in the shop—and I was making payment.

"I was with Century Insurance. When you're in sales and don't have a car, you lose said, and you lose a job.

On and of his trips to lind dealer, Andrews recalled, he asked for all the control orders on his car. "They inadvertently gave me the work orders done on the car before I bought it," he said. Those work orders showed his lemon had had \$500 worth of body work, two or three coats of pain to different parts of the body and different locks. And yet it had been sold to him as a new car.

He went to the state attorney gener-

new car.

He went to the state attorney general, the secretary of state and other agencies without success before concluding: "There's no place to contact."

Andrews' lawsuit was settled out of court two months ago. He figures he's still \$3,000 behind.

LAST JANUARY he formed ALO, essentially to give others what-to-do information which took him many months and several thousands of dollars to accumulate.

car complaints plus uncounted num-bers of warranty of used car com-plaints. "If had had all that informa-tion two years ago, I would have got it (his money) back in two weeks."

He has no statistics on what percent-age of his customers are ultimately successful because not all report back. But there are success stories.

WHAT DO YOU do once you have a

packet?

"First, you write a letter to the dealer. There's a sample letter of complaint.

plaint.

"If you don't get a response, there's a
list of 33 agencies to which you can
send copies. You might as well let the
dealer know you're telling the whole
world."

world."

Andrews calculates that once the dealer sees the customer knows what to do and is willing to do it, the dealer will settle in order to avoid the haste. That is the dealer's incentive. War sto-

will settle in order to avoid the hassle. That is the dealer's incentive. War stories:

• A man who bought a used car for \$4,000 was told two weeks later it needed \$1,000 worth of work. The miles age on the car hadn't been noted at the time of sale — a violation of state law in the sale — a violation of state law in the sale — a violation of state law.

• A mother and daughter purchase price back.

• A mother and daughter purchased a new car late one afternoon, but a different car was delivered to them next day. The dealer made a correction.

• A man spent \$20,000 on a new car and the sale of the sa

formation which took him many months and several thousands of dollars to accumulate.

For or five part-time persons field phone calls (552-8886) and mail out out the conting of the conti

fess to be," Andrews said. "It's knowing where to go and what to do."

IN THE FALL, Andrews will be stalking the corridors of Lansing to seek introduction and passage of a bill similar to a California "lemon law" protecting car owners. He will use 105 cases to demonstrate that people would have had their money refunded or a replacement car if Michigan had a similar law.

lar law.

The gist: "If you brought your car in four separate times for a problem and it can't be fixed, or if your car is out of service a total of 30 calendar days during the first 12 months or 12,000 (miles), you're entitled to your money back.

back."
Other states such as Connecticut,
New Jersey and Florida have passed
such laws, and Andrews expects still
others to follow suit, but admits:
'It's going to be tougher here 'cause
this is the car capital of the U.S.A."



A man spent \$20,000 on a new car and in 18 months took it back to the dealer 30 times for the same problem -





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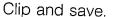


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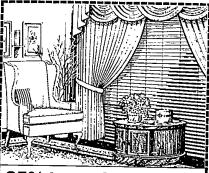




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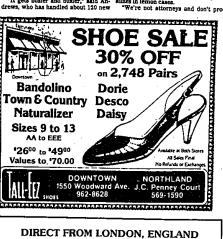
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