

Happiness is a well-tuned Rolls Royce

By W.W. EDGAR

There are no gold letters on the door. There are no bright lights in the window. Neither is there an electric sign on the roof.

Motorists could drive pass the brick building at 9135 General Court in the Plymouth Township industrial park and never realize that behind those darkened walls is one of the highest

ranked automobile hospitals in the country. Just as many persons go to St. Joseph Hospital in Ann Arbor or the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., for

specialized treatment, the Enthusiasts Garage Inc. takes care of the ills of automobiles and specializes in Rolls-Royces.

FOR THE PAST 2½ years, Wally Donoghue, a mechanical engineer who studied at Carnegie Tech in Pittsburgh, has been the "head doctor" in one of the most interesting activities in the Plymouth community.

At the moment, there are 12 members of the famous Rolls-Royce family undergoing treatment for all sorts of ills. They range from a simple check-up to a complete restoration job. The Enthusiasts group, which has been doing business without much fanfare and bluster, now has customers from all sections of the country.

In fact, the automobile hospital is much like the similar institutions for humans in that it is crowded. Aside from eight receiving immediate treatment, there are at least a half dozen Rolls Royces in a side building.

Checking the "patients," Donoghue found that two were from Los Angeles, two from Columbus, Ohio, one from Minnesota, another from Des Moines, Iowa, and still another from Allentown, Pa.

How did the hospital get to be known nationally?

"I belong to a lot of special auto clubs and the fact that I have been at it ever since I have been in high school helps to get me acquainted with the

owners of the big, classical cars. The word gets around."

SITTING IN HIS office while phones were ringing and mechanics coming in to ask advice, Donoghue said he became enthusiastic about work on automobiles in 1952 while a high school student.

He started with a 1929 Model T Ford touring car. From there, he gradually took on greater jobs after earning his engineering degree at Carnegie Tech.

Twenty years ago, he became interested in the Rolls-Royce and made a trip to the plant in England to learn more about the Rolls. In that year he obtained a 1935 model of the famed English car that is rated the most prestigious in the auto industry.

With his knowledge, he worked for General Motors for 11 years and finally opened his own business in Dixboro. He and his staff remained there

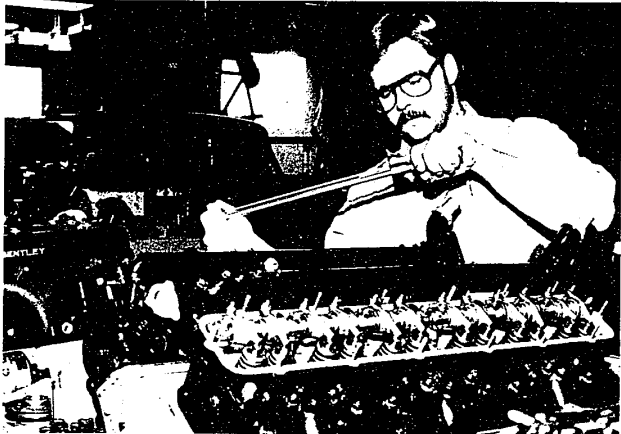
until 2½ years ago when they moved to their present location.

Donoghue was quick to point out that while his company specializes in the Rolls-Royce, it also works with such top-rated cars as Cadillacs and the Packard of recent vintage.

While the majority of "patients" in the automobile hospital are the pride and joy of their owners, there are others ready to be sold.

The price? Some of them will bring \$50,000-\$100,000, Donoghue said. But the majority can be had in the \$10,000-\$20,000 range.

Meanwhile, new patients arrive, and there is a steady stream of parts, all designed as "medicine" to bring back the most famous models of another era.



Mike Sikorski uses a torque wrench on a V-12 Rolls engine. (Photo by Robert Cameron)

Four major roads to be widened in '79

Segments of four major roads on the Oakland County system will be widened as part of the Oakland County Road Commission's proposed 1979 construction program.

Heading a list of \$18.3 million worth of projects countywide is widening of Orchard Lake Rd. between north of Twelve Mile Rd. and Maple in Farmington Hills and West Bloomfield Township.

In Troy, the program calls for reconstructing Big Beaver Rd. as a four-lane boulevard from Dequindre west to the existing two-lane pavement, and widening of John R. to five lanes between Fourteen Mile Rd. and Maple.

In Southfield, the first stage of widening Ten Mile Rd. to five lanes between Telegraph and Northwestern is proposed.

John R. Grant, Jr., road commission board chairman, said the Orchard

Lake Rd. is a carryover project from 1978 for which environmental impact analysis and other requirements for federal funding are now complete.

He said the project will cost \$5.5 million, of which federal funds are to pay \$3.9 million and the road commission will pay \$166,000 from its share of state-collected fuel and weight taxes. The City of Farmington Hills will contribute \$658,000 and West Bloomfield Township will contribute \$251,000.

The Big Beaver project is scheduled for \$210,000 of federal funds, \$45,000 of road commission funds and \$45,000 from the city Troy and \$473,000 will be road commission funds.

The Ten Mile Rd. project is scheduled only for right-of-way acquisition as part of the 1979 program at a cost of \$300,000 to be shared \$210,000 by federal funding, \$45,000 of road commission funds and \$45,000 of City of Southfield funds.

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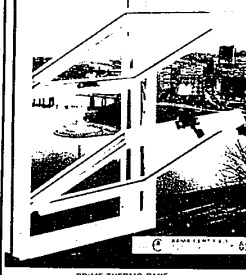
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