

make it to Auburndale Speedway in Winter Haven, Florida last February could keep track with INEX Winter Nationals timing and scoring by checking out the Race Monitor app or website to find out what lap the races were on, or keep tabs of practice and qualifying as occurred. Locally, the folks at the road course of Atlantic Motorsports Park in Shubencadee, Nova Scotia use the Race Monitor app to keep those in the paddock up-to-date on the racing program and the Parts for Trucks Pro Stock Tour will use the software at select races as well. Unlike most of the apps mentioned in this article, while the app itself is free, Race Monitor requires a subscription for you to use. For those tracking their drivers though, a \$4.99 yearly subscription or a \$.99 monthly subscription is very affordable for the tool that is provided.

Some of the underlying apps we have not touched on are popular social media apps like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Facebook can keep you updated with race tracks, series and race teams as they go through the grind of a racing season and may give you the most up to date info on like we mentioned before with some apps like weather, traffic and up-to-date race information as it happens. Twitter and Instagram can offer fans a closer look at a driver's personal life outside of racing, for example. Maybe they're soaking up rays at the beach, or attending a family function; some drivers are more apt to share that kind of info with their fans, and social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram can be perfect stages to do so.

So there you have a brief look at some of the apps available to you if you are a racing fan. I suggest that if you have a smart phone, do a search for racing apps. You never know what you may find that can keep you captivated for hours!

Until next time, keep the hammer down and we'll see you at the track! 🏁

APPS GOING OLD SCHOOL

By Kenneth E. Seaton

IT MAY BE HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE SOME READERS OUT THERE WHO HAVE NEVER HAD THE PLEASURE OF REFOLDING A TRAVEL MAP BACK INTO ITS ORIGINAL SHAPE.

Or had the fun of making a “mixed tape” in preparation of that long road trip. Readers who have never experienced that sinking feeling you felt in the pit of your stomach when you realized that the short-cut directions that you got from – your friend's father's barber – have gotten you hopelessly lost.

It used to be that when you saw someone who appeared to be all alone in their vehicle talking to themselves it was because: A) they were maybe having a psychotic episode B) singing along to their music C) or just having a little quiet chat with themselves. Now-a-days it's most likely because they are on their cell phone. It's easy to tell, just keep watching for their hands gesturing in the air!

Here's a question. What would you do if you were on a road going on a trip and your vehicles' GPS failed? Probably the first thing you'd do is grab your smartphone and turn on its GPS app. But, what would you do if that didn't work either? Would you:

REBOOT BOTH WHILE CROSSING YOUR FINGERS?

Hold your smartphone out the vehicle window to see if that got you better reception?

Toss the GPS and smartphone into the backseat in frustration?

If they still refused to work you'd have to go old school and look around for a signpost or with any luck you would find someone on the street who you could ask for directions. Do you see the conundrum here? We are getting so used to having all sorts of do-dads, gizmos and whatchamacallits doing things for us that we are forgetting how to get by

without them.

We once lived in simpler days, a time when we really had to do things for ourselves. Things like actually having to physically start our cars on those snowy cold winter mornings. Now – Thanks to apps, with the push of a button on your smartphone (all from the comfort of your living-room) you can start the car's engine and even unlock its doors. THEN – The closest thing I can think of in the way of remote starting was, when I was able to convince my roommate into going out and starting the car. If I was lucky – usually with the promise of a ride to work – I could get him to scrap the snow and ice off the windshield. That wasn't an easy task as my ancient AMC Rambler was notoriously cranky in the mornings and the car door locks would usually freeze overnight.

NOW – We have all sorts of social media apps that let us, not only stay in almost instant communication with our friends and family, but also allow us to bore the pants off them. THEN – We'd pick up the phone, jump in car, or walk over to visit someone merely to touch base with them. When I was a teenager, I lived in the country and I can remember hitch-hiking 25 kilometers to my pal's house just because I was bored. And then, having to turn around and hitch-hike home because he wasn't there.

NOW - We have apps that not only track the weather but also keep an eye on the traffic ahead for us. They will even send us alerts when the weather or traffic changes. THEN - We used to stick out heads outdoors and look around. Maybe we'd sniff the air, lick a finger and hold it up to check the air flow. Some of us could and still can tell what the weather is doing thanks to our trick knees. As far as traffic was concerned you used to have to hope for the best or have faith that your “Good Buddy” on the CB radio was as eagle eyed as he claimed he was.

NOW - There is an app that will mark where you parked your car with a GPS pin. It will even keep track of the time left on



the parking meter and alert you when the time is almost out. When parking underground some folks will use their smart-phone to take a photo or make a voice recording of where they parked. THEN - We used to look around for something noteworthy near where we parked and mark it our memory. Of-course if our spouses were along for the ride we'd just say "Remember where we parked." And just like that, it was taken care of and we never had any trouble finding our vehicle.

LET'S NOT FORGET ABOUT THE WEE ONES AS YOU GET READY FOR THAT FAMILY TRIP.

NOW - We have all sorts of apps that are aimed at not only keeping the kids busy but are also designed to motivate them to learn through positive incentives and encouragement. THEN - We had my Dad. He was always ready and willing to drag out his "Keep m Busy" games. Games like; looking for out-of-province licence plates, I Spy, telling silly Knock-knock jokes, or my personal favorite the "Punch Buggy" game. You may remember that this was when you kept your eyes peeled, so that you would be the first one to spot a Volkswagen Beetle and then you'd haul off and punch someone in the shoulder. Of-course this game always came to an abrupt end when either my brother or I would get carried away and smack the old man in the shoulder!

I know that it's necessary to move with the times and it can be fun making technology work for us. Who amongst us hasn't giggled like a school girl when we discovered an app that was just the thing that we were looking for - even if we didn't know that we were missing it. But it is important to remember that at some point the power may go off or our smartphone batteries may die and then where will we be.

Now, I wonder if there is an app telling me where I kept my spare smartphone battery!

LEARN TO EDUCATE THE CLIENT WHAT THE LABOUR COMPONENT STANDS FOR

By Bob Greenwood



SUCCESSFUL INDEPENDENT SHOPS ACROSS CANADA HAVE BECOME FOCUSED ON THEIR KNOWLEDGE BASE WITHIN THEIR OPERATION.

A shop's skill level and knowledge base is expressed through its labour rate/door rate. No shop has the right to charge top rates to the public if they are incompetent in terms of vehicle maintenance/repair knowledge. Conversely, too many shops do not charge enough for the skill level they have acquired. Skilled shops must charge "the right" dollar for their skill level. Don't sit there and look around the market at everyone's pricing to determine the door rate because every shop is not the same in their depth of knowledge capabilities.

For 10 years now we have been talking about the necessity of two door rates. One is obvious; the basic mechanical rate used for mechanical work such as brakes and suspension. The second is a diagnostic rate representing the skill required to diagnose a drive-ability problem or interpretation of information. If your shop is still stuck on one "catch-all" rate, then I would recommend getting into a proper business class to learn how, and the benefit of implementing two door rates as a minimum requirement. Vehicle complexity requires a broader depth of knowledge and to maintain the right skill level in terms of technician capabilities to handle the technology, the right dollars must flow into a shop to support its capabilities. Drive-ability and analysis problems, requires a diagnostic rate. Those shop owners who ignore this business strategy and stick with one catchall rate will find each year getting more difficult. They are not changing their business model required to stay up with the times in our industry. Inertia in this business is a road to bankruptcy.

The basic "mechanical" door rate is established for "remove, replace and repair." The second door rate is established for "elec-

trical diagnostics" and is usually referred to as the shop's "diagnostic rate." This labour rate is used for "interpretation of numbers, graphs, electrical, and codes". This rate is critical in a shop today in order to bring in the right dollars if a shop wants to sustain the right skill level. In this category, more training, equipment and more one-on-one time with the customer/client is required to sustain shop credibility. Consequently, the lower "mechanical" door rate is not sufficient.

INTRODUCE YOUR CLIENTS TO A THIRD DOOR RATE

Our studies have shown that a third door rate is also required within the shop today. The importance of understanding the logic of this point is to realize that a shop must acquire specific skills over a period of time in order to complete the "loop of knowledge" to serve a client professionally. The critical business philosophy to understand is that a client is not paying a shop "to fix a problem now." The client is paying the shop for "the knowledge obtained to this point in time." To gain this knowledge a shop has and does incur costs, and future knowledge will incur additional costs if the shop wants to remain "on top of their game." Rates will be adjusted as these future costs are continually evaluated.

The client today requires the "right service" backed up with the business philosophy of "I will not let you down." Free service is not the right service and yet, many shops still run their business model this way. The right service simply means applying the right skill level in the shop to deal with the problem that is required to be solved. Obviously skill levels vary dramatically within a shop and it is important for management to deploy the right skill level on a job with the end result being a totally satisfied client leaving the building.

This new third door rate represents a skill level that is often over looked. Our studies have shown that it can represent in the range of an additional \$25,000 to \$43,000 per year in a four- to-six bay operation when implemented properly. With this much money involved, it is definitely worth consid-