**Accident #2! (from 2019)**

It was a nice Thursday afternoon in February. Louis went to the local Woodland Hills Post Office to pick up a package. Afterwards, I was just driving up the one-way aisle at 10 kilometers per hour (kph) when suddenly a car appeared in front of me traveling about 90 degrees across my path. WHAT!? I hit the brakes hard, but with cars parked on either side of me there was nowhere else to go. I hit the other car with a thump, probably going straight ahead at 5 kph. I backed up a little and looked at the damage. The other car had sustained a 3-centimeter scratch on the front left bumper. The 1999 purple color (actually black currant pearl) Honda Accord that I was driving had sustained right front bumper damage of about one meter across and half meter deep with several tan scratches from the other car. Where had that other car come from? It appeared right in front of me! It turns out that the car was going through the lot between the parked cars at a right angle to the roadways.

I talked to the other driver to exchange insurance information and took pictures of the damage with my cell phone. She could not believe that the damage to my car was caused by the collision since all she had was a small scratch. I assured her that the car did not have that damage previously. I had just visited the Modern Paint store on Sherman Way to get a paint spray can to cheaply fix the badly faded paint job on top of the hood and the trunk. Actually, my next stop was going to be that paint store to get another can to spray the faded roof of the car. She then said she did not want to go through her insurance company since she had been in two accidents recently and was afraid of insurance cancellation. She wanted to know what it would cost to fix, and she wanted to pay me for the damage. I said that I would try to find a repair shop for an estimate. Her foreign accent was hard for me to understand, but her attitude was quite frightened (language independent).

So off I went to the next stop which was the paint store when I realized that I would be better off getting the repair estimate. Once I decided to change objective, I was already at the paint store that just happened to have an auto body repair shop right next door. The shop seemed quite large with a full parking lot of cars behind it. So, I pulled in and asked for an estimate. The manager took a quick look at the car and said that the bumper was plastic and needed replacement. After a phone call to determine the price of a bumper, he said he could get the job done (in the correct color) for $550.

I then called the lady to tell her the estimate. Again, with an almost unintelligible accent, she asked me to go to her body shop in Chatsworth, and they would repair the damage for free. I got the address from her and went there. I found that the owner was a friend of the lady and could speak the correct language. He operated a body shop there. After looking at the damage, he asked if I had an estimate. I said yes, the estimate was $500. He said that was a good price and I should accept it. He then called the lady (he did not need the phone number) to explain the situation. She then called back and asked him to give me a $500 check, which he did. He assured me that the check was good; I believed him.

I then drove back to the auto body shop, and gave them the car. He said “no problem”, the car would be done by Saturday. Since I was going to Palm Springs for the weekend, I said how about next week. Chris came to pick me up. Instead of using the Honda to go to Palm Springs as planned, we used the 1990 Dodge Ram Van. The next week, the car was done with almost unnoticeable repairs, the check cashed, and the problem was over with. A few friends thought I was crazy to do things this way, but it worked out quite well and I could then forget about the incident without any paperwork hassles.

Moral 1: Do not drive across parking lots except in established lanes. You can not see cars coming down the aisle and they can not see you because of the parked cars in the way.

Moral 2: Sometimes, trusting your instinct on an alternative settlement of the situation can work out well for all people. Neither of us had to deal with the insurance issues for this minor accident.

Moral 3: Be careful in parking lots for cars backing out behind you while you back up (that was the previous week for mutual bumper scratches) or cars crossing your pathway.

**Epilog:** After getting everything fixed, we decided to continue the repaint job in the original Honda color which was black currant pearl. Another $25 spray can was purchased, the car went to the car wash, and then Chris did a great job masking the moonroof, the windows, and the lights. The badly faded roof was given three coats and then the hood and trunk were given another coat of paint. The car started to look more acceptable. I suggest this low-cost tactic for any of the late 90’s Hondas and Toyotas that seem to have the paint fade-out problem. It is better than doing nothing and going around in what looks like an old-mobile (oh that’s right, those are not made any more).

When we were all done, we used the car to go to the park and ride lot in Porter Ranch for a bus trip to Mammoth. Chris dropped off the equipment, and then moved the car to a parking spot on the other side of the lot. She drove forward to the curb. Unfortunately, the other side of the curb had the ground washed away from the recent storms. When we returned and reloaded the car, we found that the front plastic fender had been trapped by the curb, bent, and was rubbing against the ground badly. AAA came by and bent the fender the other way and said we could drive it slowly to a repair shop. We took it to the same body shop and they were able to strap the formerly brand-new fender up off the ground while you wait for only $50. Later the rear bumper ran into a stationary car while getting a scratch, but doing no damage to the other car. What is the point of plastic bendable, foldable, and re-paintable bumpers? My Dad used to comment that bumpers were used to push cars that were out of service or needed a start. Not any more!.

Current 2019 list of 1999 Honda idiosyncratic items:

1. Check Engine light comes on every few months due to Exhaust Gas Recycle (EGR) value. The computer has to be reset. No problem can be found with the EGR valve, located at engine front.
2. The Check Brake light comes on and off at random. Repair seems unlikely.
3. There is a consistent oil leak from the engine in front. If driven over 1000 miles, a quart of oil needs to be added.
4. The low gas warning comes on way too early, there is still over 100 miles of gas left. The gas tank holds 17 gallons, the car gets 22 miles per gallon, so a full tank is 374 miles on average. Please reset the odometer when filling gas tank.
5. The speed of the on/off on turn signals is inconsistent.
6. The purple paint repair job is not perfect, but he car is a lot more consistently colored.
7. According to my friend, Bob R., Hondas should last 300,000 miles. Toyotas should do better. My Dad liked Subaru and his two examples have lasted 340,000 miles and 275,000 miles (so far).