how to do anything better guide

EXPERT ADVICE

How to...

EXTEND THE LIFE OF YOUR CAR

Tips from the pros on little tricks that help

■ When shifting from drive into reverse, or vice versa, always come to a full stop. Not completing your stop can damage an automatic transmission.

■ When parking on a hill, apply the foot brake, then the parking brake, and *then* shift into park. Otherwise only a tiny pin keeps your car from rolling downhill.

■ Keep your tank full. Allowing the gas tank to run dry or consistently low (less than one third full) can eventually lead to problems with the fuel filter and pump.

How to...

WHITEN YOUR WHITES!

Since bleach can be hard on clothes, here's an effective retro alternative: Launder cotton whites in cold water with a spoonful of cream of tartar (sold in your market's spice aisle) along with your usual soap.

—SUSAN WAGGONER, *CLASSIC HOUSEHOLD HINTS*

How to...

EAT BREAD POLITELY

In a quirky new book about manners called *Elements of the Table*, this bit of etiquette is revealed: If you're always confused as to which bread plate is yours, reach for the plate to your left. Also, rest your buttered-up knife on the bread plate. At a formal dinner with lots of rich courses, the plate—and butter—are often dispensed with. Then it's OK to place your dinner roll directly on the tablecloth, above the fork, where the bread plate would usually be.