

Car Talk

# Over The Top: Convertible Tops Wear Out Over Time

BY RAY MAGLIOZZI  
King Features Syndicate, Inc.



Ray  
**MAGLIOZZI**

**Dear Car Talk:**  
I recently had to put my older convertible into service during an extended rainy period when my regular car started acting up. The convertible top is original, with no tears, but it didn't hold up well against the heavy rains, and water came into the interior. It got to the point where I started to experience some weird electronic problems. Sounds were coming from my audio system even when the system was off. I immediately stopped using the car, pulled the battery cable and then covered the car with plastic, and left the windows cracked open. The rain kept coming for days after that. Well, the rains have stopped for now, and I no longer hear the sounds, but I have what appears to be mold inside the car. How screwed am I? Would a professional interior detailing, if the detailer was given the facts, do the trick? Thanks. — **John**

Sounds like you bought one of my brother's old cars. He used to have to shovel snow out of his convertibles in the winter.

Even though there are no visible tears in your convertible top, it's no good anymore. You're probably saying, "Duh!" about now.

But people don't realize that old tops shrink over time and the rubber weatherstripping dries out. The cloth top itself

even can become porous, and you'll see drops of water seeping through.

So, if you're really invested in this convertible, you need a new top. And you may be surprised to find that it's going to cost you a couple thousand bucks! But at least that'll stop things from getting worse, which is always the first step in dealing with water damage.

I suppose if you're not committed to this convertible for the long haul, the cheaper solution is to just get a car cover and never drive it in the rain. In fact, to remove any temptation to drive it on a day when it might rain, you might want to just remove the top entirely. Or put in a bad set of plug wires, so it won't start in damp weather.

Then you've got to deal with the mold. We're not experts on mold remediation. When a customer drives into the shop with a mold problem, all of my guys barricade themselves in the men's room.

But the first thing you have to do is dry everything out. The sun is your best friend here. Start by removing the carpeting (this will require removing at least the front seats). Underneath the carpet is a

cheap padding that's called the jute. You probably want to just throw that away and replace it.

Then park the car out in the sun for a few days, and lay out the carpeting and seats next to it. Once everything is really dry, you can treat the carpet and seats with a biocide product that's designed to remove mold from fabric.

Of course, you want to test an area first so you don't end up with white carpeting — not the most practical choice for the floor of a car.

If that treatment is unsuccessful, you may have to replace the carpeting and the seats. Or get the seats reupholstered. Or you could do what my brother used to do, and just drive around in a biohazard suit. Good luck, John.

Stop the madness! You can stop driving like a knucklehead, and you'll help your car in the process. Learn how your driving habits can harm your car in Click and Clack's pamphlet "Ten Ways You May Be Ruining Your Car Without Even Knowing It!" Send \$4.75 (check or money order) to Ruin, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475.

Got a question about cars? Write to Car Talk in care of this newspaper, or email by visiting the Car Talk website at [www.cartalk.com](http://www.cartalk.com).

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American Life in Poetry

## Putting A Shine On Old Regrets

BY TED KOOSER  
U.S. Poet Laureate

I don't think I've ever sold anything that, later, I didn't wish I had back, and I have a list of regrets as long as my arm. So this poem by Melissa Balmain really caught my attention. Balmain lives in New York State, and her most recent book is "Walking in on People," from Able Muse Press.

LOVE POEM

The afternoon we left our first apartment, we scrubbed it down from ceiling to parquet. Who knew the place could smell like lemon muffins? It suddenly seemed nuts to move away. The morning someone bought our station wagon, it gleamed with wax and every piston purred. That car looked like a centerfold in Hot Rod! Too late, we saw that selling was absurd. And then there was the freshly tuned piano we passed along to neighbors with a wince. We told ourselves we'd find one even better; instead we've missed its timbre ever since. So if, God help us, we are ever tempted to ditch our marriage when it's lost its glow, let's give the thing our finest spit and polish — and, having learned our lesson, not let go.

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## Film To Be Shown At Vermillion Library

The Edith B. Siegrist Vermillion Public Library will host a screening of the documentary "Alive Inside" on Wednesday, April 8, at 6:30 p.m., followed by a facilitated community discussion. (Note the new time.)

An award-winning film, "Alive Inside" highlights a ground-breaking Chicago-based wellness program called "Music & Memory," developed by social worker Dan Cohen. The film documents how Cohen has achieved amazing results in engaging with dementia patients, and others, through the use of music.

Ariadne Albright, program coordinator for Sanford Arts Vermillion, will facilitate a community discussion with Cohen, via Skype, following the film.

Filmmaker Michael Rossato-Bennett chronicles the astonishing experiences of individuals around the country who have been revitalized through the simple experience of listening to music.

More about the film can be found at <http://www.aliveinside.us/>.

This event is free and open to the public. Arrive early for best seating; the film will start promptly at 6:30 p.m.

The Edith B. Siegrist Vermillion Public Library is located at 18 Church Street in Vermillion. For more information, call the Library at 605-677-7060.

## So To Speak



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Pictured are, from left: Sydney Tramp, Hannah Van Heek and Taylor Arens

## St. Rose Oratory Contest Held

CROFTON, Neb. — Seventh and eighth grade students at St. Rose School competed in the 38th annual school Modern Woodmen Speech Contest. Sydney Tramp won this year's contest. Hannah Van Heek took second place, and Taylor Arens took third.

Other speakers included Rob Poppe, Mikenna Stevens, Taylor Schieffer and Elyssa Tramp. Also participating in the program

were Josie Sanger and Alexis Arens.

The topic this year was "An Interesting Landmark."

Modern Woodmen has sponsored the speech contest at St. Rose School since 1977. Tramp and

Van Heek will move on to the district contest, set for April 21 at Cedar Catholic High School in Hartington.

## Wayne State College Hosts Star Party April 22

WAYNE, Neb. — Wayne State College will host the Wayne State College Star Party at Ike's Lake just north of Wayne on April 22 from 5:30 to 10 p.m.

Directions for Ike's Lake: take Highway 15 north, turn left on 860th Rd, turn right on 574th Ave. and in 0.3 miles turn right into Ike's Lake — look for the white fish sign.

This star party is a service-learning project for the Honors Astronomy class. The early evening will include kinesthetic astronomy, a solar system walk and a

viewing of "Cosmic Voyage." When the sun goes down, the telescopes will come out. Look in the sky for Venus, Mars, Jupiter, a crescent moon, the Andromeda galaxy, the Hercules cluster and the Dumbbell nebula. Honors students will show visitors where the center of the galaxy is located.

Tours of the constellations will be given. Anyone with a telescope or binoculars are encouraged to bring them. Other suggested items to bring: coats, blankets and outdoor chairs. Refreshments will be provided, but feel free to bring your own. More information can be found at [www.wsc.edu/plane](http://www.wsc.edu/plane)

tarium, and any questions and/or comments should be directed to Dr. Todd Young (402-375-7471; [toyoun1@wsc.edu](mailto:toyoun1@wsc.edu)).

Wayne State College, a regional, public four-year college located in northeast Nebraska, is a proud member of the Nebraska State College System.

**Look Who's 65!**

Send **Geraldine Kotalik** birthday wishes to:  
**906 W. 15th St.  
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*God saw you getting tired  
A cure was not to be  
He wrapped his arms around you  
and whispered come with me  
With tearful eyes we watched you suffer  
and saw you fade away  
Although we loved you dearly  
we could not make you stay  
A golden heart stopped beating  
Hard working hands laid to rest  
God broke our hearts to prove to us  
He only takes the best*

Thank you for your act of kindness in which we hope will be carried forward in all our lives. Your love, prayers, words of comfort and tributes meant so much to our family. There are so many of you we need to offer "Thanks" for your help. God bless you all.

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## Report

### One-Third Of Teaching Candidates Placed Outside South Dakota

PIERRE — One out of three teaching candidates who graduated from a South Dakota college or university recently took an out-of-state position.

The latest collection of data from South Dakota's higher education institutions by the South Dakota School Administrators (SASD) revealed 260 of the more than 770 graduates who obtained an education related degree were placed in a position out-of-state.

SASD's latest survey comes after a study in November found the number of South Dakota teachers eligible for retirement exceeds the number of students enrolled in teacher education programs.

"This information is scary," SASD Executive Director Rob Monson said. "We suspected this to be true, but now the data shows we're losing potential teachers to other states. We already know we don't have enough candidates to replace retirees. When you look at over 1,100 educators eligible for retirement, 726 in the teacher pipeline and one-third of those being placed out of state, we are in trouble in preparing our K-12 students here in South Dakota for their future, and the future of the South Dakota workforce."

An additional 52 graduates chose to do something besides teaching, according to the figures provided. "Nearly forty percent of our new graduates aren't going into South Dakota class-

rooms," Monson said. "South Dakota is running out of teachers."

SASD began compiling data last year on the teacher shortage facing South Dakota school districts, finding that one in five schools started the school year without a teacher in a classroom and 1/2 of S.D. districts cited salary, relocation — many to districts in other states — or a change in profession as reasons given by teachers who left South Dakota schools.

"Who's going to educate our kids? That's the question we need to be asking right now," Monson said. "The data continues to show we've reached a critical point where we need to address that question."

The K-12 community will have help answering that question when Gov. Dennis Daugaard's Blue Ribbon Task Force convenes.

"Gov. Daugaard's previous studies of adult and juvenile justice, as well as roads produced impactful legislation and we're optimistic the Blue Ribbon Task Force will do the same," Monson said.

The task force will examine the teacher shortage, as well as school funding and student achievement, and will be comprised of stakeholders in education.

"We have a crisis in our schools," ASBSD Executive Director Wade Pogany said. "We need everyone to come together and commit to finding solutions for the shortage. Our schools can't afford for us to wait any longer."

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