

Ask Ronny

by Ronny Shaver @ Ronny's Garage

Answering Your Questions About Classic Car Care Service And Restoration

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Is Your Silver Cloud Wandering?

by Ronny Shaver

Many Silver Clouds will tend to wander and follow the grooves in freeway pavement. A number of problems can cause this unnerving condition: worn rear spring bushings, Z-bar bushings, idler arm bushings, steering column coupling and loose steering box adjustment. When combined with old bias ply tires, any of these problems can make freeway driving wearisome.

The most effective quick-fix is to replace those bias ply tires with some new radial tires. For those of you who prefer the wide white-wall tires (myself included!), Goodyear and Coker both make radials with wide white-walls. Good radials will drastically reduce the groove following on the freeway.

Worn rear spring bushings are a common problem on the Silver Clouds. They can cause rear end of the car feel like it's shifting from side to side while driving. The culprits are the small end bushings at the rear of the springs where they attach to the frame. These are difficult to change but will make a world of difference. It is always good to re-arch the springs at this point to correct any ride height issues. Worn or broken Z-bars will also cause this condition. Tell tale signs of these problems are scuff marks on the inner rear fender panels and also scrapes on the inner sidewalls of the rear tires.

Loose steering will also cause wandering. The most common problems are deteriorated steering column coupling, worn idler arm bushings and loose steering box adjustment. When the steering coupling is bad, one can feel and hear a clinking noise when lightly turning the steering wheel back and forth about 15 degrees. Worn idler arm bushings will make a popping noise when applying moderate turning pressure and also sometimes make a rattle noise over rough road surfaces. Loose steering box adjustment is more difficult to detect. With the steering wheel in the center position and car off the ground, watch the pitman arm while turning the wheel back and forth about 15 degrees. The pitman arm should move instantly in conjunction with the steering wheel. Steering box adjustment is tricky, if it is set too loose the car will wander badly, if it is set too tight the car will not recover center position after a turn. Be sure not to confuse a worn steering coupling with a loose steering box setting.

The Silver Cloud is a wonderful highway car. When every thing is correct, one should be able to let go of the steering wheel at high speeds and have the car track straight with ease.

Thank you for the questions and keep them coming. Please send your questions to Ronny at ronnyshaver@ronnysgarage.com.

Happy Motoring!
Ronny