

Joy ride



CHRISTINA CATURANO FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

SIDE KICK

Martha Friend was sick of her husband's car breaking down. The 1994 Ford Taurus had a weird electrical problem the mechanics couldn't figure out, yet Ed Smith, a lawyer who practices in Davis Square, continued to drive it — even after it had broken down 15 times, once leaving him stranded on the Mass. Pike.

Smith was reluctant to buy a new car, so Friend, an artist and health teacher at Revere High School, took matters into her own hands. In August she invited her friends and her two grown daughters to help her turn it into a rolling piece of art. A big, bright, embarrassingly tacky piece of art.

They gathered up colorful, lightweight plastic toys from around the house and bought more at the dollar store — Barbie dolls, bowling pins, lizards, high heels, tea pots —

and glued them all over the car. They stuck a herd of plastic sheep on the hood, surrounded a troll doll with a ring of plastic firemen, and formed a row of naked Ken dolls holding onto a bar on the roof.

"The whole idea was that I would make it impossible to drive," says Friend, 53.

She never dreamed that Smith, or Eddie Spaghetti Esq., as it says in game tiles on the driver's side door, would keep tooling around town in his tricked-out Taurus. He even drove it to New Jersey — 285 miles each way — prompting other people on the road to slow down and take pictures with their cellphones.

The car hasn't broken down in a few months, but Smith, 57, knows the joy ride won't last forever. "I doubt I'll pass inspection next May," he says.

As for Friend, she freely admits that her attempt to get rid of the car has completely backfired: "Ultimately, the joke's on me."

[Katie Johnston Chase]



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to a
Better Day



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SOUND CHECK

CD reviews of DJ Clue, Tracy Byrd, and more

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Big feet

If you think snowshoes have gone the way of the dinosaur, think again. At "Take A Walk" at Gore Place in Waltham, adults and children can rent snowshoes (providing there's some white stuff) and an activities backpack (for ages 3-9) to wander around the 45-acre grounds looking for animal tracks, pine cones, and trees. The backpacks include binoculars, a magnifying glass, and activities. Say hi to the llama, sheep, goats, and chickens. Walks are Monday-Friday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. (closed Jan. 1). Hourly price: \$5 per backpack, \$5 for snowshoes. Reservations are recommended. Gore Place, 52 Gore St., Waltham, 781-894-2798. goreplace.org [June Wulff]