

# CARSIDE MANNER

REAL-LIFE LESSONS IN CUSTOMER RELATIONS



## Spring Cleaning

This month, we'd like to use this space to clean our closet of an accumulation of odds and ends, and bring you up to speed on a number of issues—

issues we hope will be of interest to you.

## Tech Tips

The response to the new Tech Tips prizes offered by NAPA Echlin has been great. Even with inflation, the picture of Mr. Franklin on the hundred dollar bill still has a strong appeal. Competition is fierce, however. We're receiving as many as a dozen tips each day, and many are very good indeed. For the time being, choosing the pick of the litter is difficult when so many of the pups are beauties.

It's also encouraging to see that there is a sense of humor alive and well in the repair field. One tip, sent tongue-in-cheek from Busted Buns, Idaho, suggested replacement of the drain plug after each oil change. Wish we had an award for a good laugh.

If you don't see your tip in print right away, don't get discouraged. As we mentioned, competition is very strong, and many of the tips we receive are first rate. If you sent a great tip that simply wouldn't fit in this particular month's issue, you may see it a month from now.

We'll call winners and inform them that their tips have been selected, and do our best to inform each winner when his tip will be printed.

There does seem to be some element of confusion in some readers minds about how the contest is run, however. We are receiving some cards which are blank except for the name and address of the sender. Aside from proving that the postal service can deliver at least some of the mail, these blank cards don't do much to get you into the competition. To enter, you must use the rest of the card to submit a troubleshooting, or time saving tip.

Okay?

## Dead Engineer's Award

A friend of mine used to offer a quick verbal award to an automotive engineer who had designed a car to ensure that certain types of repairs would be almost impossible without the help of a contortionist, cutting torch, or wrecking ball. If

you've ever wondered if they actually place a heater core in the middle of the floor, and then built the car around it, you know what we mean. My friend called this accolade for the slide rule psychopath the "Dead Engineer's Award."

We've started work on an article dealing with these inaccessible bolts and buried components designed by engineering departments to make our lives miserable. (The awkward choice between removal of the cylinder head, or removal of the entire engine to replace the starter on a Renault Le Car, is one real life example.)

Here's your chance to get even. Drop us a line—and a good clear photo if possible—of your nominee (or nominees for that matter) for the award. If you're also a member in good standing of the "Bent Wrench Club of America," and have devised some way to outwit the boys with the taped glasses and pocket protectors, include that information as well.

We'll print your tip, list your name and the name of your business. If your nominee is chosen, we'll send along a certificate listing you as a member in good standing of the *Import Service Bent Wrench Guild*, and a suitable prize. (Maybe a year's supply of antacid and a quart sized bottle of aspirin would be appropriate.)

Send your nominations to:  
Dead Engineers  
c/o Import Service Magazine  
306 N. Cleveland-Massillon Road  
Akron, Ohio 44333

Let's have some fun with this one.

## Larger Photos

Beginning last month, those of you with an eye for detail noticed that the photos in our numbered photo repair sequences are larger—about 20 percent larger than before. (Sounds like an ad for laundry detergent doesn't it?)

Photos have always been the heart of *Import Service*, and we wanted to use some of the unused space on each page to make the photos larger, and hopefully clearer. If you've ever tried to take photos under a hood, or even worse, under a car, you know that used automobile parts aren't exactly photogenic. Some readers have requested that we get in closer on each subject, while others have suggested that we stand back a bit so they could get their bearings from a photo with a wide angle view.

We hope the larger photos in the numbered sequences, as well as the photos we'll use in the *Snapshot* articles, will do a better job of accomplishing both tasks.

See there? We do read the mail.

—By Ralph Birnbaum