

Pit Stop

Do-it-yourself tune-ups can help car's gas mileage

By Jim Williams

With all the weird complaints in this paper's letters to the editor section, it's nice to read an intelligent one by someone who knows what he's talking about—even if I'm the target.

William E. Speece's letter Wednesday must be the penalty for writing a column at 3 a.m.

I didn't write the headline for last week's piece, and didn't mean to imply that wicked politicians were tampering with the county's bridges—only that some hadn't yet been inspected because the money wasn't available. I warned others not to use the bridge in the contest notice, because I realize that what's safe for me to do once in a one-ton sportscar isn't safe for someone in a ten-ton truck to do every day.

The bridge analogy was a bad one. The point of the column was that not all safety decisions are made by experts such as Associate Professor Speece. Some, like the air bag rule, are wholly political—and my thoughts on that remain unchanged.

Suggestion to the Roads Dept.—why not block off those weak bridges so nuts like

me can't use them at all? Some people don't read signs.

Laurel leaves

Three more Czechburg-finders reported in too late for last week's column. So congratulations to Kent Pearson, Jayne Polacek and Lynn Crandall.

Lynn Crandall's note had a comment: "You guys aren't helping the fuel crisis—especially mine—very much."

True, motor sports use more gas than sitting home watching Kojak—but you enthusiastic readers can do something about it. The hot tip for good mileage is a tune-up.

A tune-up covers minor adjustments that keep an engine at top efficiency. You can pay a garage to do it every six months, but on older cars it's easy enough to try yourself. '75 and '76 models are more difficult because of their smog controls.

But wait, you cry, I can hardly find the engine. That's where a good book comes in.

Hip car tips

Carma, by David Rosenblum (Harper & Row, \$4.95) is such a book. Rosenblum first taught auto repair in a meadow in

Woodstock, N.Y., so you can imagine his writing is hip and flip—as hip and flip as one can be about breaker points, anyhow.

To really learn from this book, you should actually do everything it says—right down to groping in your toilet tank to learn about carburetors. If you follow through, you'll learn to do a good tune-up and fix some common troubles.

Local bookstores usually have *Carma* and another good one, *Most Miles per Gallon* by Dick O'Kane. Read and learn.

Mileage and myth

Once you can tune your car, you can defend yourself against those who say "motor sports waste gas." The enthusiast's car is likely to be more efficient and better tuned than the average car. In fact, motor sports consume less fuel than sporting activities such as vacations, football and baseball. Of big-league sports, only golf uses less.

But I'm not advocating carelessness. If I couldn't get another, I wouldn't trade my ten-speed bike for a Ferrari.

Stranger than truth

Finally, I have an event to announce, but it's weird. The "Trans-Nebraska

Open" is a sort of statewide 980-mile scavenger hunt and endurance test, planned for Thanksgiving break (Nov. 26-Dec. 1). Its organizers insist on anonymity—I had to interview one in a shower—but you can write TNO, 1217 Love Hall, 540 No. 16th St., for information.

"Our entrants don't feel the Trans-Nebraska is illegal—merely that it's impossible," said one organizer. You can't say you weren't warned.

sports shorts

Two UNL women's softball players have been awarded scholarships for 1975-76, announced softball coach Myreen Loveless.

Julie Marie Geis, a senior from Beaver Crossing, Neb., and Paula Pritchard, a sophomore from Falls City, Neb., were awarded tuition and fees scholarships.

Geis and Pritchard are the only women to receive softball scholarships this year Loveless said.

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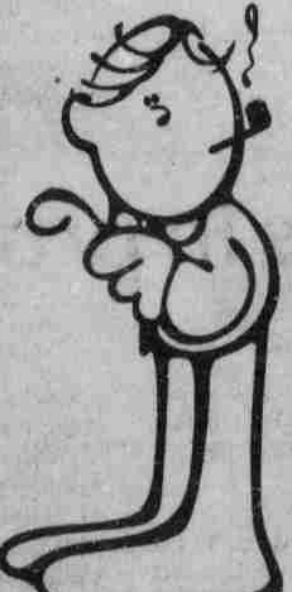
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