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# Do-it-yourself tune-up and quest for rights stop

#### **By Jim Williams**

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Holy tunaburgers, Big Brother is on the march! That's what I learned from an advertisement in the March "Car and Driver" (the fey, brilliant auto magazine I steal my good ideas from).

The ad, paid for by auto service industry groups, exlained a proposed amendment to the Clean Air Act of 1970. It would add a five-year emissions warranty you would pay for when buying the car. The warranty, however, could be voided if you did repair work yourself. The ad urged support for a change proposed by legislators, including Nebraska's own Rep. John McCollister, which would shorten the hands-off period to 18 months.

Although I abhor the trampling of individual rights implicit in such legislation, its end product has taken on a hazy allure, like the sleazy barmaid at some dark, smoky dive. It's been a bleak week, people.

#### A glimpse of the pit

It was time for the communal Capri's spring cleaning. The leaking brakes needed repair; the engine was puny; the dented and cancerous front fender demanded anointment with soothing emollients; and the interior required purging of constipated trash, pop cans, books, uneaten food, greasy engine parts and small, amorphous biological enigmas accumulated during the grim winter.

I picked up a tune-up kit at a store, parked the car in a convenient but illegal spot and went to work.

The tune-up parts went in easily, but after all was done I found that the engine would not start. Two days, one parking ticket, four new plug wires, a coil, eight outside consultants and a jump start from a purple Super Bee, later, we found the trouble-I had installed the distributor cap correctly.

Some past gremlin had installed its wires in reverse order, then compensated by putting the cap on backward. When I tidily corrected it, I had acutally. .

### **Confusion** rampant

Right. Now the engine ran like a son of a-er, Swiss watch. I removed the brake master cylinder, cleaned its external seals and put it back. Still no brakes.

While wiping dirty brake fluid off myself I heard my Model United Nations group had received an Out-standing Delegation award in my absence, along with an invitation from some young ladies in General Assembly that we stop by a party that night to collect it. I demurred. I was giddy from brake-fluid fumes.

Next day, frsutrated but determined, I headed for Dean Bros. Lincoln-Mercury for some master-cylinder internal seals. The only transport was the brakeless Capri, so all deceleration was done either with the (crunch!)

## gearbox or the (screech!) parking brake,

And then I found that I needed a different set of parts. Back to Dean Bros., this time in a borrowed Volkswagen piloted by an ex-drag-racing leadfoot, then to Foreign Auto Parts, a nice little place decorated with BMW racing posters and Italian exhaust pipes.

## Teutonic Mind-boggle

They had the right parts-\$17 worth of German-made widgets and doodads. I knew what they all were except one-a little bottle holding about one ounce of pink liquid, cogently labelled "FAB Original Schafer Montageflussigkeit." No problem; the instruction leaflet explained that "Bei der Montage ist auf die richtage Einbaulage zu achten." Oh.

It smelled like mouthwash, but it felt like oil, so I smeared it on all the widgets and doodads and installed them. Then some wag told me the little bottle's label meant "Quick-Drying Cement." I almost believed him.

It was 1:30 a.m. and I was content. I had a beautiful rebuilt master cylinder for a car that did not belong to me; a checking account with \$3 in it and a half bottle of peppermint brake fluid.

An ironclad, government-issue excuse for not touching any car less than 5 years old, huh? Wait a minute, Senator





page 6