

## SERVICE DEPARTMENT SNIPPETS

### Let's Recap Some Facts On Gasoline

With the prices of gas through the ceiling, even as summer travel winds down, and the latest FOX 8 I-TEAM investigation about gas quality, we thought it a good time to present some thoughts on the subject. Some of the ideas submitted here are what I mentioned in my interview with TV-8 when they came out to talk about fuel problems. Following these suggestions will help minimize problems and maximize economy.

**DO:** Use the recommended octane as noted in your owners' manual. This is usually 87. Burning "hi-test," 92 or 93 octane in a vehicle designed for 87 will do nothing but cost you 20 cents more a gallon.

**DO:** Change your air filter, as it becomes dirty. This helps keep your vehicle's air/fuel ration at the most efficient ration.

**DO:** Have your vehicle checked if the "check engine" or "service engine soon" warning light comes on the dash. This is true even if it seems to run okay. Today's sophisticated on board computers can keep a car with a problem running fairly well, even with an emission-related problem.

**DO:** Have your fuel filter changed at the recommended intervals. This helps prolong fuel pump life and injector performance.

**DON'T:** Let your gas tank get near empty on a regular basis. Fuel pumps are in the tank, many times part of a fuel module, and require plenty of fuel around it, as it's only means of cooling. This is a major cause of premature failure.

**DON'T:** Forget to check tire pressure, even if only at every oil change. This is a major cause of reduced fuel economy.

**DON'T:** Buy gas with MTBE if possible. This is an oxygenate to decrease air pollution, but this diabolical chemical is polluting our ground water at an unbelievable pace. Some states are outlawing it. Ethanol is the other oxygenate used, considered the lesser of the two evils. Try to buy 100% gasoline if possible.

## BODY SHOP TALK

### Repair vs. Replace... *that is the question*

When writing an estimate many times we are told: "I want a new door skin" or "I don't want any filler in the quarter panel, so replace it, don't fix it." We are happy to write an estimate any way you, the vehicle owner, requests. But keep in mind the following two guidelines we are using in making our decision.

First, and foremost, our decision is based on the question: What is best for the vehicle? Replacing a welded-on panel, such as a door skin, rocker panel, quarter panel or roof requires quite a bit of cutting, welding and filling—in many cases, as much or more filler than a repair. Besides, factory corrosion protection is still superior to any method used in any shop, hard as we may try.

Second, if we write for a replacement of a panel (against our better judgement) and you turn the estimate in to an insurance company appraiser, who sees the vehicle, they typically will decline payment for the replacement simply based on what is expected of an average journeyman's ability to do such a repair.

If there is truly a situation where we say replace and your insurance wants to repair, the result is typically replace, as our opinion is considered the expert one. This is one reason we at Automotive Excellence maintain our I-CAR Gold and ASE Blue Seal status.

## AUTOMOTIVE EXCELLENCE SPOTLIGHT

*In each issue of the news and views we will be featuring one of our most valuable assets, our employees. Their commitment and pride in their career is one of the reasons for our success. We are featuring employee, **Ken Cooke** in this issue.*

Ken has been with us as a service department technician for seven years. He has recently achieved the level of ASE Master Certified Technician. He also is acting service manager in Gary's absence. Ken has brought a large contingent of clients, from the Broadview Heights/Seven Hills area, who were used to his extraordinary hard work and honesty. So it's not unusual to glance at a repair order and see the words, "requests Ken." His work ethic and cooperative attitude sets a benchmark for others, and makes him so valuable to our shop. Ken and his wife of 22 years, Sue, reside in North Royalton with their three children, Juleyelon, 16, Jonathon, 14 and Bryan, 12. Also sharing their home is Kirby, the beagle. Sue is currently finishing studies on her masters degree in Nursing at Case/Western Reserve University.

# The Side View

*an editorial by Rich Sacha*

*As many of you recall, I had a weekly TV show on the CBS affiliate, Channel 8 in the early to mid 90's. You'll still see me, and other staff members, interviewed for FOX 8 News on a regular basis for consumer related automotive issues.*

In case you have not heard yet, a gasoline additive used in over 70% of the fuel our cars consume is polluting our ground water in every state of the country. On top of this, its use was mandated by the federal government (EPA) earlier this past decade to reduce airborne butyl ether. In some areas, the water coming out of the pipes in people's homes smell like turpentine, and the hotter the water, the more it smells. Studies with animals have produced tumors, yet it has unknown health effects on humans. A small amount – just a teaspoonful – can foul an Olympic size swimming pool. There are leaking underground tanks everywhere allowing this fast moving chemical to spread like a fire through kindling wood. And, once there, we don't know how to get rid of it, it does not just "go away." The chemical industry is still trying to tell the Feds how good it is for air quality. The newer cars run extremely clean on their computer controlled air/fuel mixtures without this. Did you know, up to 10% of your fill up is either MTBE or another oxygenate derived from corn, ethanol. Ethanol is typically used more in and around the Midwest, where corn is abundant. Many experts see it as safer than MTBE. All I know is both add to the cost of gas and reduce our miles per gallon. And MTBE is known to be polluting our water suppl