

The Car Side

By Rick Cogbill

Taken To the Cleaners

All Walt needed was a little more power to complete his 'passage to Indy.'

But Slim, it just doesn't have the power it used to have!" Walt whined.

"Walt," I said, "it's a 1984 four-cylinder Toyota! Let's talk reality here. It's not gonna move mountains."

"I don't want to move them, I just want to go up them!" Walt was frustrated. "It's the Vancouver Indy, Slim! I gotta be there!"

Tooner had just gone over Walter's Camry three weeks before, installing a new fuel filter, plugs, and even a set of ignition wires. But Walt was convinced the old Camry would never make it over the Rockies. He said it had even come to a complete stop on a steep hill recently. After a few minutes, he was able to start it again and drive away, but it seemed to be a terrible omen about his upcoming race weekend.

"Leave it with us, Walt. We'll figure it out," I said, even though I had my doubts.

I got Tooner back onto Walt's



Camry but figured he could probably use some help solving the problem. I found Basil under the dash of a Taurus, trying to follow a wiring harness by feel.

"The Force, Luke! Use the Force!" he was mumbling, eyes closed in concentration.

"Hey, Basil, would you do me a favour?" I said. "Make a quick call to your friend Nigel down at Toyota."

"Oh, dear," sighed Basil, shaking his head. "Does Walter have his car in again?" He wiped his hands, and headed for the phone.

By now Tooner was testing fuel pressure and volume. "Everything's normal," he said. Suddenly his eyes lit up. "What if we got Beanie to run along behind and push Walt up the hills!"

Just then, Basil returned. "Gentlemen, we may have a breakthrough!"

Before long, we were driving Walt's car down the highway. I couldn't get over how simple the solution was. While Tooner drove, I held a container of water fitted with a small vacuum hose attached to the intake manifold. During coast, manifold vacuum would suck some water into the engine, and upon acceleration, the steam would loosen the carbon built up on the intake valves. According

to Nigel, carbon build-up can be a real problem with Toyotas, and this procedure, along with an injector flush, really improved performance. So much carbon builds up, that the valves will stick open when hot, causing a loss of power.

I checked the water level. "Another kilometer should do it."

"We'll have to change the oil," said Tooner. "There'll be some sludge from this internal steam-clean!"

Walt mumbled something about getting cleaned out, too, when he came to pay his bill. "It's a lot cheaper than removing the head for a de-carbonizing job," I reminded him. "Why, with the money you saved, you could bring back some Indy T-shirts for me and the guys!"