

# The Car Side

By Rick Cogbill

## The Good, The Bad... And The Boring

**My guys don't mind getting trained... as long as the subject is relevant and well presented!**



It was after 11 p.m., and the crew and I were heading home from another after-hours training seminar.

"Wake me up when we get to my place," yawned Tooner from the back seat. "I'm gonna catch some shut-eye."

Sitting up front, I could hardly keep my eyes open. "Sounds good!" I mumbled, drowsily. "I think I'll do the same."

"You can't, Boss," reminded Beanie, cranking down the window for some fresh air. "You're driving."

"I suggest some conversation to stimulate our minds," offered Basil. "How would you rate tonight's seminar?"

"Boring!" droned the three of us.

"Regrettably true," agreed Basil, "but there have been some good ones in the past."

"Yeah," chimed in Beanie. "Remember a while back there was that one with the full Mediterranean buffet? There were candles on the tables, and the food was served on *real plates!*"

"Better than the stale donuts and luke-warm soft drinks we had tonight!" grumbled Tooner, opening one eye.

I was miffed. "Look, guys, I don't pay for these clinics so you can eat; you're supposed to learn something!"

"Hah!" exclaimed Tooner, suddenly wide awake. "Like how to test PCV valves at an ABS seminar?" The floodgates opened.

"Having piston part number lists read to you at a suspension course?"

"Being told that four noisy after-market fuel pumps in a row were the result of poor installation, when an OEM pump finally fixed the problem?"

"Trying to watch a CV joint tear-down with the 500 other guys in the room?"

"OK, OK," I conceded. "But *some* training seminars have been worth it."

"Remember that fuel injection course?" asked Basil. "It was spread over nine months, two eight-hour days per month, with a particularly

gifted instructor."

Tooner agreed. "By the end, you really understood what it was all about."

"Yeah," laughed Beanie. "And they didn't kick you out of that one, either!"

"Well, it ain't my fault if some of these 'instructors' can't answer my questions," huffed Tooner. "If they don't

know their stuff, why do they bother coming?"

"So what are the marks of a worthwhile training clinic?" I asked, trying to put a cap on all this discussion.

"Knowledgeable instructors," said Tooner.

"Smaller class size," added Basil.

"Good training materials?" I offered.

"Yep, and good food!" added The Bean.

"Beanie!"

He cringed. "OK, OK... but at least comfortable surroundings. We are professionals, after all."

"Hear, hear!" sang the peasants.

No one mentioned "comic relief" but we'd certainly had some that night. The instructor had accidentally tipped over the 3.1 GM test engine with a crash. Once it was righted again, it still ran, but it shook at idle.

"Hey, Beanie," Tooner had muttered, loud enough for the whole room to hear, "he fixes engines just like you do!"