

The Preventive Maintenance Series

Mike Dawson

Continued from last month, 10 more things that can happen :

1. An over full reading on the fuel gage can be caused by a loose or broken ground wire on the outside of the sending unit. It can also be the connector behind the center defroster duct on a late model or in the sending unit itself on any vehicle.
2. Check the outside diameter of your generator/alternator pulley. It must be exactly 3 inches. Anything more or less will cause your belt to operate at the wrong angles; pulleys get changed during rebuilding. Also remember that the belt should be 56" by 3/8" to match the original. (3V560 from Gates). The actual belt length of a GM belt was 55 3/4". Check your fan hub installation by putting a straightedge on top of the fan pulley and measuring down to the top of the head next to the carburetor – it should be exactly 6".
3. A brake pedal that gives the sensation of slowly going to the floor at a stop is a bad master cylinder internal seal (unless you have a leak somewhere). Change it soon, they will fail. If you bench bleed a replacement, you can bolt it on, pump it a couple of times and you are done.
4. Valve lifter noise: starting up a cold Corvair engine and quickly shutting it off will almost guarantee lifter noise after the second or third time. Lifter noise cold that goes away hot is not an adjustment problem. Lifter noise that only shows up when the engine is hot is probably adjustment. A lifter that is adjusted too tight will hold a valve open when cold but work properly when hot. A bad exhaust guide will make an almost metallic noise that imitates a lifter and can change as you adjust the valve.
5. Pull the rear lower seat on late models and check the accelerator pivot welded bolt. Many have rusted badly from water in the depression.
6. Don't use car covers out side in Missouri/Kansas humidity – terminal mildew and rusted brake lines will be the result.
7. Blowing automatic transmission fluid out of the vent after high speed on the highway is probably caused by high temperature and cheap fluid (as well as internal clearances). Install a drain plug in the torque converter and replace all of the fluid with synthetic. It has a higher boiling point and may cure the problem.
8. A battery will only have 30% of its cranking power at zero degrees. Take a battery inside overnight and notice the wonderful difference. Check cranking with a voltmeter, the reading should always be above 9.6 (Corvairs should be over 10). Engines crank slow in extreme weather because of the battery, not the oil (unless it is dirty).
9. Only use the brand of winter gas treatment that contains isopropyl alcohol. Read the label, the yellow bottle of HEET is worthless, use the red (Iso-heet) product. It costs more but you get what you pay for.
10. Do not use starting fluid, the accompanying knocking noise is trying break your top piston rings and loosen the intake seats. Spray carburetor cleaner is a better choice.

More next month-