
The President's Letter

Hey guys I have a question," someone wrote one evening this fall, online at the Facebook page called **AMC Rambler Classic**. "When the tires are spinning I'm hearing like a knocking noise and . . ." I have no idea how to solve his Classic problem, but from recent experience I am guessing someone, somewhere, had the fix. "Crowd sourcing" is the digital-era expression for two-heads-are-better-than-one, and several times now I have used it to successfully solve simple, but also vexing, problems with my Ambassador.

The improvement is that you can now probe so many more heads. The proverb asserts double is better, what about 35? 100? How about 630, the number of Facebook members we have?

Just lately, and since I am not at all a mechanic ("I know how to change the air cleaner," I offered), I mentioned on Facebook that I couldn't start my car.

It was three months unused, this summer. "The 304 turns over well, almost starts," I wrote on our club page, "but burps and wheezes and finally does not fire up."

Starting a stored car is a cinch compared to, say, "I am looking for a Metropolitan wagon" (They exist. See one, yes, on our Facebook page). For my simpler troubleshoot, club members including former president Steve Johnston made their suggestions.

I worked through their ideas. "If it still has points, clean them" (from Ray Harper); "try a little splash of fresh fuel in the carb to see how it reacts" (John Snyder). Just several in, I had the car running.

This does not compare with the effectively crowd-sourced solution to my horrible vapour-lockish problem, that had stumped me and my mechanic. After every drive during

which accessories were turned on, the car wouldn't start, wouldn't turn over, despite a well-charged battery. The more accessories used, the longer this stall would last, days even, which is not very convenient if you are on an errand, parked at the curb.

Lots of AMCs responded, with ideas all over the map. I don't know which one fixed the car, but I worked through them until, now, it always starts. The fix might have been as simple as tightening the battery cables at the terminal, which I did.

Not sure crowdsourcing would have helped me on a more delicate mission, say building a stroker engine, but you never know. Some of you have done even that and -- now do the math -- know a useful thing or two. In these pandemic times, I am taking the good news from wherever it comes. The Internet has transformed us in some unhelpful ways.

But it is gratifying how it has power-assisted the tapping of the accumulated knowledge out there. Thank you, my online army of armchair mechanics.

And: Let's hope 2021 will deliver --- what's the word? -- normalcy. To further that idea I will go out on a limb here -- fingers crossed and trying to stay safe -- and say "see you at Rambler Rama next year."

- ALF

