Not Starting Checklist

By Lawrie Alexander

Carburetion / Fuel

Fuel Lines

- Make sure your fuel is fresh. Drain out the old stuff.
- Empty the tank, blow through the lines,
- Replace any in-line filters,

SU's

- Empty the float bowls,
- Check the filters
  a. In the float bowl inlets,
  b. In the base of the fuel pump and
  c. The screen on the fitting that goes into the bottom of the fuel tank to which the fuel line attaches.
- Remove the carb dashpots and clean the inside surfaces.
- Clean the edges of the pistons, remove the old oil
- Use carburetor cleaner, and spray some down through each jet so that clean spray comes into the bottoms of the float bowls.
- Spray in through where the banjo bolts go after removing the needles and seats.
- Reassemble, checking the float height and seeing that the needles go up and down freely.
- Also check that there is no fuel in the floats by shaking and listening.
- Reassemble the carbs, tightening the jet adjusting nuts all the way up.
- Make sure the pistons rise freely (without the damper rods in) and fall with a nice metallic clunk. If they don't, re-center the jets till they do
- Then lower the jet nuts six flats, add 20 wt. oil to the dashpots and re-install the damper rods
- Manually pull each choke open and make sure the return springs pull the chokes closed freely
- Finally, adjust the choke cable so that both chokes open at the same time and come out of the carbs 1/4" to 3/8"
- Adjust the link that joins the two choke levers so that the pins can go through the arms without moving the arms.

Ignition

- Make sure you have 12 volts arriving at your coil when the ignition is switched on. If your car is wired Positive ground, the white wire from the switch goes to SW (early coils), the White w/Black to the coil. If your car is Negative ground, the opposite applies. If your coil has + and -, then + equals SW and - = CB.
- Remove the coil wire from the center terminal of the distributor cap, hold the end about 1/2" from the block, turn on the ignition and crank the engine. You should see a 1/2" blue/yellow spark jump as the engine turns over. If no spark, check points are opening properly, .015" is the recommended gap.
- Replace the condenser with a different one, ditto the rotor. When you have achieved spark from the coil wire to the block, replace it in the cap and pull one wire from a plug. Ignition on, crank while holding the wire end close to the block, you should see a fat spark.
- Replace the plugs with new ones of the correct type.
- While the plugs are out to be changed perform a cranking compression test. On a low-compression engine (supercharged) you should see 110 - 120 psi; on a non-supercharged engine, anywhere between 135 psi and 160 psi, depending on the compression ratio.
- Next, rotate the engine until the timing mark indicates that the engine is at top dead center.
- With the rocker cover off, wiggle the rocker arms of Nos. 1 and 4 cylinders. Two will be loose, two won't move. Rotate the engine 360 degrees if necessary so the loose pair are at No.1. The pair that are loose indicate that that cylinder is firing, so the wire from the distributor cap's terminal that the rotor is pointing to must go to that cylinder's plug. Note also that the points should be just beginning to open, i.e. the distributor has its rubbing block just about to rise up a cam lobe. Remember it turns counter-clockwise.
- Then check that the plug wires are in the correct order. From the wire that is pointing to No.1, moving counterclockwise, you should set your wires to 3 - 4 - 2.

With all that done, with fresh gas in the tank and the choke out it should start.