

WEBERS WANDERINGS

LITTLE LESSONS LEARNED *BY A LARYNGECTOMEE "MECHANIC"*



Since my surgery to remove my larynx the end of March this year, life has been a bit of a learning experience. Or maybe I should say "relearning" experience. One of those came when the trusty '70 Datsun 510 wouldn't start.

One of the things I've found is that I don't have quite the ambition I used to have, so rather than unbolt and remove the air cleaner, I just shot some starter fluid down the air cleaner horn to see if my problem was fuel or electrical.

Engine went, "Vroom" and quit. Aha.

Gave it another shot.

Engine "Vroom, pop!"

Backfire started a little bitty fire of leftover starter fluid on the engine and air cleaner. Not serious, the kind you easily blow out. Except now that my lungs are no longer connected to my mouth, I don't have any "blow"! Flapped my "wings", but couldn't stir up quite enough breeze. Had a fire extinguisher at hand, but didn't want to make a mess. The fire was just on the surface, so I watched the paint on the air cleaner blister a bit until the fire burned itself out in a few seconds. Foo.

Now I at least knew I had a fuel problem. Pulled spare fuel pump out of trunk where it has traveled back and forth across the country for years. Put it on, and nothing happened. Took it off, and some clear fluid got on my hand. Gasoline, or water from its years in a less-than-watertight trunk?

"Sniffed". Forgot that with no airflow through nose, I can't smell things any more! Took wet hand in to Lu - is this gas? Yes.

Put fuel pump back on. No fuel pumped to carburetor. More foo. Something must be plugged. Must blow through each gas hose. Forget I can't blow.

"LU!" Come blow. Only line that seemed plugged was between the tank and the end of the steel tube to the fuel filter. Crawled under car to bottom of gas tank. Realized it is very dirty after 370K miles, and if some piece of crap came dislodged and found a way into the air hole in my throat to my lungs, it would not be good.

Remembered that because of smog rules, the Datsun has a check valve in the gas tank that doesn't allow gas or air to flow that way. Looked at little 6 inch hose from steel pipe to fuel filter. Had a barely visible crack, that wouldn't let air or gas out, but would let air in under the vacuum of the fuel pump. No suck!

Replaced little piece of hose. Engine now goes, "Vroom" on command.

Like somebody once said, life can be tedious! Learning never ends.

Gary Weber

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