

Politics is the roadblock to fuel economy

by BYRON S. WINE III

Gary D. Shoemaker's "Guest opinion" "Downsizing American cars or families?" *Potomac News*, June 6) shows he has not been informed of the facts concerning some decades-old technology that makes it unnecessary to "downsize" an automobile to increase fuel economy.

For example:
■ Page 42 of a book by Shell Oil Co., "Fuel Economy of the Gasoline Engine," states: "No less a person than Charles Lettering, when General Motors president in 1929, predicted 80 miles per gallon by 939."

■ In the same book are photographs of three automobiles that participated in Shell Oil mileage marathons. A 149.95 mpg 1947 Studebaker from a 1949 marathon; a 24.35 mpg 1959 Fiat from a 1968 marathon; and a 376.59 mpg Opel from a 1973 marathon. The book says about the mileage marathons that "driving style was not restricted, but the extent to which a normal production car could be tuned was limited to changes in carburetion and ignition timing. The event was run on a closed airfield circuit with a minimum average speed of 30 mph (40 km)."

Another book, "Secrets of the 200 Carburetor," has photocopies of Ford Motor Co. tests conducted in 1936 on automobiles with V-8 engines. A carburetor, U.S. Patent No. 2,026,798, designed by Charles Pogue, was installed and tested on three automobiles. The Pogue device produced, worst case, 25.7 miles to a pint of gasoline (The tests were conducted in Canada and I calculated the mpg with a U.S. gallon, to be 171). A device, J.S. Patent No. 4,177,179,



designed by Tom Ogle, was installed on a Ford Galaxie. This 4,600-pound V-8 achieved more than 100 mpg. Ogle states in his patent: "I have been able to obtain extremely high gas mileage with the system of the present invention installed on a V-8 engine of a conventional 1971

American-made automobile. In fact, mileage rates in excess of one hundred miles per gallon have been achieved with the present invention."

The August 1977 issue of *Argosy* magazine carried a five-page article about a media-witnessed test of the 100 mpg device. (Unfortunately, the Library of Congress copy was missing from the files when I attempted to locate the article in 1978.)

Other devices were also patented. At least three completely sealed reciprocating engines, with no inlet or exhaust, were designed. One U.S. patent, No. 3,640,494, was designed "to provide a precharged

engine ... capable of generating power for a period of from 2,000 to over 10,000 hours continuously or until mechanical breakdown without the addition of fuel, injection of air or discharge of gases." The test prototype engine was a modified Volvo four-cylinder engine. Two other U.S. patents for sealed engines are Nos. 3,977,191 and 4,428,193.

If the loss of natural resources were a consideration, our vehicles could burn water. At least four devices have been patented that generate hydrogen and oxygen gases, on demand, from water, for use as an engine fuel. One U.S. patent No. 3,980,053 reads: "This invention relates to internal-combustion engines. More particularly, it is concerned with a fuel-supply apparatus by means of which an internal-combustion engine can be run on a fuel comprised of hydrogen and oxygen gases generated on demand by electrolysis of water." Two other U.S. patents are No. 2,1006,676 and 2,373,032. A French patent, No. 75 06619 (1976), also exists.

I agree that the Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards proposed by Sen. Richard Bryan, D-Nevada, are absurd and wrong. Congress should demand 100 mpg by 1995. Our problem is not a technical problem, it is a political problem. A visit to the local public library and the U.S. Patent Office in Crystal City will disclose many other energy-saving devices that could be implemented for the benefit of our nation.

■ Mr. Wine's interest in energy conservation began during the oil shortage of the 1970s, when, in his words, he realized that what the government was saying didn't agree with the facts. He lives in Lake Jackson.

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Downsizing not tied to better fuel economy

Reading the letter to the editor from William H. Craig Jr., of the Coalition for Vehicle Choice, ("Don't give up safety for energy savings," *Potomac News*, Nov. 19), it is apparent he is not aware of decades-old technology to improve fuel economy without downsizing an automobile.

Mr. Craig should refer to my July 16 column in the *Potomac News*, "Politics is the roadblock to fuel economy," which lists facts about the technology, including eight-cylinder engines equipped with patented gasoline vaporizing carburetors with, in a worst case, 25.7 miles to a pint of gasoline.

For other ways to improve fuel economy without downsizing, Mr. Craig could contact Jerry Ralph Curry, an administrator with the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Administration.

I mailed Mr. Curry 95 pages of energy information on March 16, 1991. Mr. Curry might respond to Mr. Craig. Mr. Curry did not respond to my letter.

Byron S. Wine III
Lake Jackson

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