

TECH TIP

Brake Bleeding the Gravity Way

By John Logan

You don't need a fancy brake bleed contraption or even a helper if you want to bleed your Tiger or Alpine brakes. It's called the Gravity Method. This method will work with other cars that don't have large vertical loops in the brake lines, valves that can trap a lot of air, or master cylinders mounted low like an open wheel race car. This method is meant for bleeding a system that has been in use, not a bone-dry system you are filling for the first time or flushing.

Where does the air come from?

Often air can be suspended in the brake fluid after a complete refilling or flushing. After a few days or weeks, the air will come out of suspension and gravitate towards the master cylinder. There it will rise through the fluid and escape. It may, however, go through the lines to the brake wheel cylinders where it will be trapped. Air in the system will cause a spongy brake pedal with excessive travel.

Here is the process. First, loosen the master cylinder cap so air can easily enter. Check the fluid level in the master cylinder. Then open a wheel cylinder bleed valve. Air will come out first, then a few seconds later the fluid will start flowing. The longer it takes for the fluid to come out, the more air there was in the cylinder. Don't worry, air can't flow into the bleed valve because of the hydrostatic pressure caused by the fluid in the reservoir at the higher elevation.

This process does not require that you start with the cylinder furthest from the master cylinder, as would be the normal procedure. You can do any number of cylinders until you have achieved satisfactory pedal pressure.

Try it. It works!

Trademark Ownership

By Jim Anderson

A perfectly legal scam threatens the future of Sunbeam clubs, parts dealers and publications. The scheme has worked against other organizations, and it may work against us. It has to do with the trademarks and the commercial "ownership" of names.

Michael Hughes of 5805 State Bridge Road, Duluth, Georgia has applied to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office for the ownership of the brand names "Sunbeam," "Sunbeam Tiger," and "Sunbeam Alpine." His claims would cover commercial sale of all items, including t-shirts, caps and jackets. According to our club roster he is not a member.

If his claims are granted (he had to swear that he is the first to use the names) he could sue anybody who sold anything with those names unless they paid him a licensing fee, the cost of which he would set. (No, you would not have to delete the names on your cars).

Hughes is not the first person in this litigious society to use the ploy of claiming ownership of a word. The New York Times reported an Illinois man, Leo Stoller, claimed ownership of the word "stealth". Even Northrop-Grumman, the giant corporation which manufactures the stealth bomber, signed an agreement rather than engage in an expensive law suit. The corporation has given up the right to license stealth bomber model kits. (Stoller also claims ownership of the word "chutzpah").

Anybody with \$129 or so can get a trademark attorney to file an application for the ownership of a word or name, such as "Sunbeam".

A search of the Patent and Trademark Office files shows that the application by Hughes for "Sunbeam Alpine" was denied; the claims for "Sunbeam" and "Sunbeam Tiger" are still pending.

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