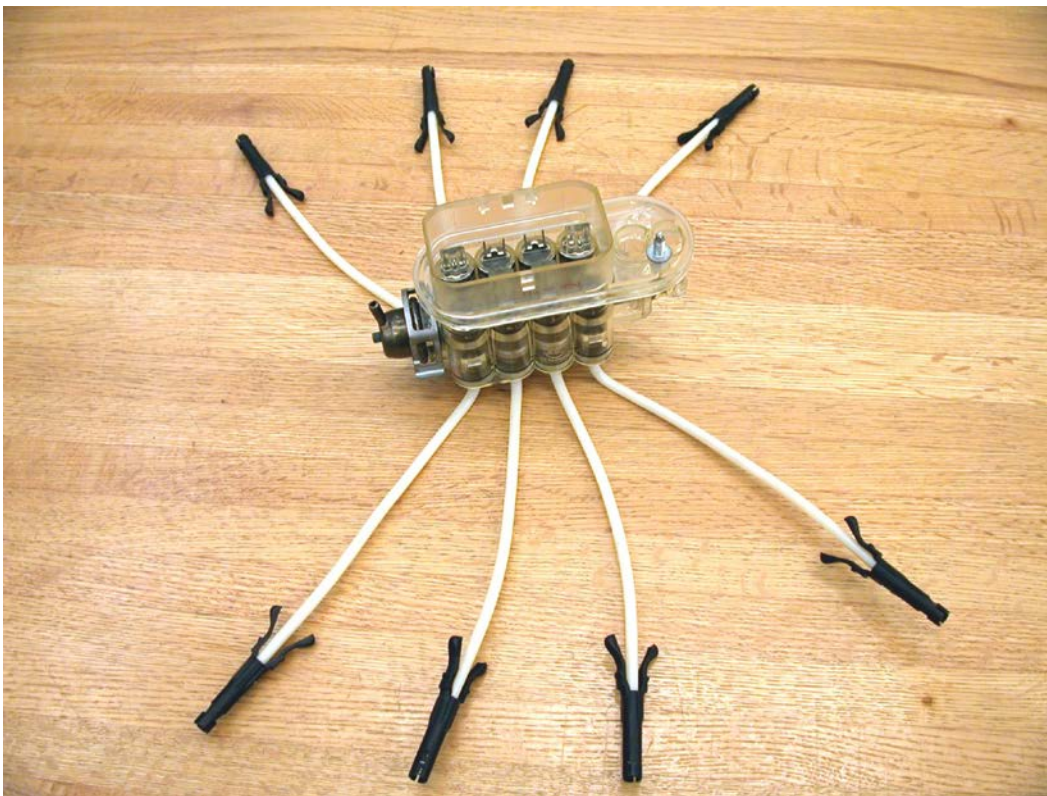


Wheels: A letter from John of Fairborn says, “I have a 1995 GMC van with a 4.3 liter V-6 engine. It has 141,424 miles. I was getting 13 mph on the highway and had the engine overhauled last summer. My gas mileage is now at 11 mph on the highway. I had the engine on the analyzer and the computer thing by the steering column under the dash. No codes/errors were found. The van has been to three different repair places. All three places suggested replacing parts at random. Can you help?”

Halderman: It is difficult to diagnose problems by letter so I am going to make some assumptions. I am thinking that you had the engine overhauled due to oil usage problems, which are usually caused by worn valve stem seals in your engine. While you would think that the fuel economy should increase, the newly rebuilt engine now creates a higher vacuum than before the overhaul. This higher vacuum could cause more fuel to be drawn in through a defective fuel pressure regulator. This unit is a pattern failure on this vehicle and drips gasoline into the intake manifold. A gas smell may also be noticed.

Wheels: What can John do to fix this problem?

Halderman: The first step is to have an experienced service technician verify the fault by visual inspection by partially disassembling the intake manifold and looking for evidence of leaking fuel. After the problem has been confirmed, a replacement fuel pressure regulator (if available) or the entire fuel injection “spider” assembly may be necessary. The cost of the parts could exceed several hundred dollars plus labor, so it is very important that this fault be checked and confirmed.



Wheels: What other faults could cause this problem?

Halderman: There are several other possible causes, including a worn or defective secondary ignition system components or a misadjusted cam sensor. The camshaft position sensor is located inside the distributor and can be adjusted using a scan tool to within plus or minus 2 degrees. While the procedure is similar to adjusting the ignition timing, the camshaft offset angle as displayed on a scan tool will affect driveability and fuel economy. This procedure should be done by a professional service technician.