

TRUCKSTOP

By - Rich Tatarka

Maintenance. It's an important part of all our daily lives, and today I find myself on day 4 of a much-needed break from hauling to catch up on my truck maintenance list. I was just through yet another DOT Inspection and passed, but a few things on the truck are close to the point where passing one soon might be a problem. So away I go on yet another round of rebuilding, changing, and re-fabrication of the wore out parts of the ol' truck. I've done it so many times that I'm thinking the only part of the truck that's original is the frame and the cab. Mag-Chloride has added an astronomical amount of time and money to the whole maintenance equation... For example, I had two of my suspension air-bags that were still the originals, (the other six having dissolved long ago... Not sure why the last two lasted as long as they did...) but they looked kinda like they might "Pop" at any second. Ordinarily changing an air-bag should take oh maybe 20 minutes or so, but changing these took about four hours. Mag-Chloride had effectively glued them to the truck and it took forever to get the old ones off and restore the spots where they go before I could put the new ones on.

Then there was the trip to town for a few parts that could have easily landed me in jail for slapping the Parts Guy... I was in search of a few air brake lines, so off I went to the large truck dealership with the gigantic parts department with several Parts-Guys with matching shirts running around, and when it became my turn at the parts counter, I handed the nice man one of the old hoses I was searching for. "Got any of these?" I asked. "What is it? That a gas line?" He quizzically replied. "Seriously?" You don't know what this is?" I head-shakingly asked back. "Give it to me." I grabbed it from him and headed for the door, not wanting to go insane dealing with a Parts-Guy that didn't have a clue what an air-brake line was. My next stop was at my friendly neighborhood parts-house and that particular Parts-Guy knew exactly what I needed and had plenty on hand. (A good Parts-Guy is worth their weight in Gold...) It was late on day 3 of truck maintenance week when it started... I was grinding away on the head of, yet another bolt corroded to oblivion when I heard "When is it going to be my turn?" it asked. "This is important, and I've got to get it done first". I replied. (You remember the movie Castaway when Tom Hanks started visiting with the volleyball? Well, my Boat was visiting with me...) "Don't you think you should finish the pole storage project soon?", the Boat asked. (I've got 16 poles on the Boat because one needs to be ready for several different fishing situations and storing that many is a bit of a challenge. The Boat was referring to the storage project I had started a few weeks ago but had only half finished..) "I will get to that as soon as I can." I promised the Boat. "Well you better hurry, the Walleye Tournament is only 18 days away..." Good idea I decided and tossed the grinder aside and headed for the Boat. Just about to step up and into it I looked at my coveralls. I've religiously greased my truck, trailer and loader nearly every weekend for the past 97 years it seems, and I've always wondered where all that grease goes... Well I found it... It collects on your coveralls and the backs of your arms from the wrist to the elbows and is darned hard to remove. Perhaps a trip thru a car wash on my four-wheeler might work...

That said, I must close now as the Boat is right. There's not very many days left until the Tournament, and it's going to take a few of them to untangle my fishing pole glob just so I can finish the pole storage project.

Maintenance is critical, and so too is Fishing...

Until Next Time,

That is All.

Rich T.