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2025 TRADESHOW
Information Enclosed!

AUTO ELECTRIC CORNER
VW Junction Block, Marelli Alternator, Blower Motors

TOOLS OF THE TRADE
Coil Spring Tool

A WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Loyalty Is Still Alive In Our Industry!



I recently received an email from the marketing department of WAI, inquiring about a company located near to me, as to whether they were a customer of mine. It seems this company had applied for an account to purchase products from WAI. They explained to me that they do their best to vet any potential new customer, so not to disrupt an ongoing relationship with an established customer.

Needless to say, I was shocked! I responded to them saying that in over 40 years of my being in business, I had never received an inquiry from any supplier concerned about a customer of mine trying to purchase direct from them. I went on to explain that the company in question was not an electrical rebuilder at all and that I would appreciate it if they would choose not to sell to them.

We have worked hard over the years to protect the sources of our products, removing ID labels and not allowing vendors packaging to leave the building. I would shutter any time I needed to drop ship a unit from a vendor to a customer, wondering if the supplier would sell around me next time, if asked to by my customer.

We rebuilders have often accused our suppliers of selling to our customers, but let's take a moment to analyze the situation. First, we all know that all our customers are the most honest people in the world, they would never try to deceive anyone to save a dollar! How would any of our vendors possibly know who our customers are in the first place? They must make a judgement call every time they set up a new customer. I applaud every vendor that attempts to keep this industry's supply chain intact and us rebuilders in business. It would have to be very tempting to sell to anyone with money!

On the other hand, I would hope our vendors would put some value on the assets of dealing with a reputable rebuilder. We are their first line of defense when it comes to quality and warranties, most of us have worked years to gain their respect and to establish a good relationship with them.

WAI's reply to me was that in their denial letter to that company, they would recommend them to contact our business as they have current distribution established with our company in this area. What a Class Act response! My hat is off to you WAI! You certainly made my day!

I am in no way trying to show any favoritism to any vendor in our industry, I am only publicly sharing a positive action by one of them! I can only hope that all our vendors share the same concerns and will act accordingly!

Mike Schroeder

ABOUT THE COVER

Damaged Blower Wheel
Photo Credit: Mohammad Samii

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& ANNOUNCEMENTS

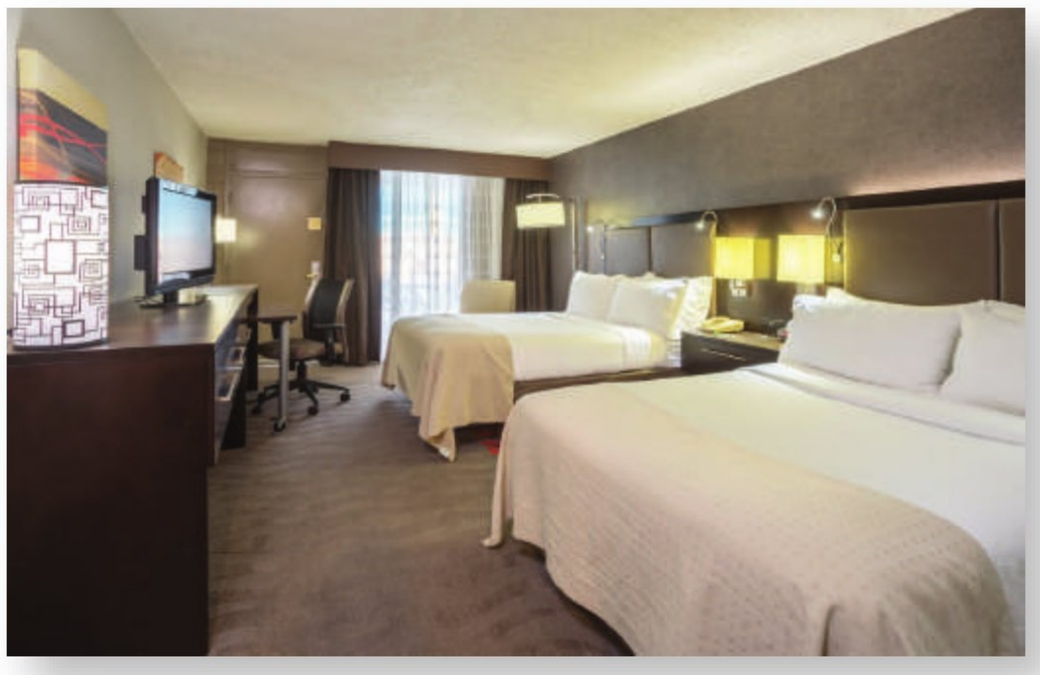


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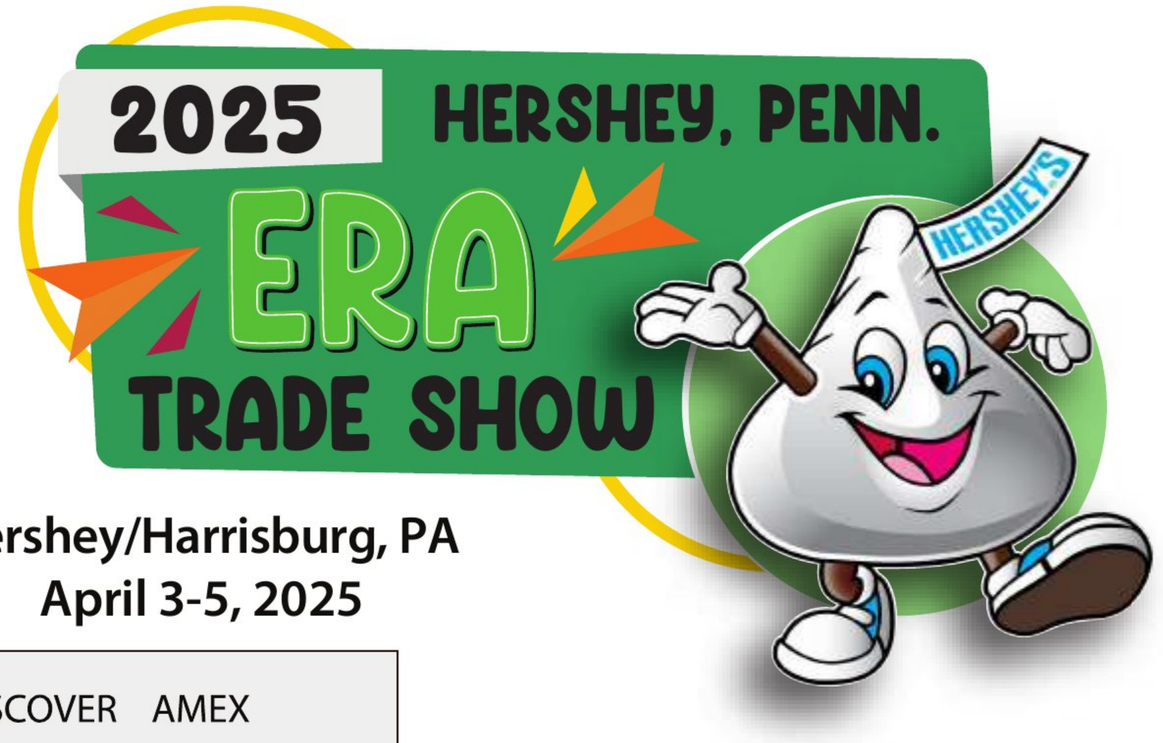
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6)					
7)					
				TOTAL ⇨	

Cancellation Policy: Cancellations are subject to a 15% processing fee. **NO REFUNDS** will be made after February 28th.

Schedule of Events



Wednesday, April 2 (Optional)

8:30 AM	Load buses for Hershey World Tour
5:00 PM	Buses load to return from Hershey World to hotel

Thursday, April 3

8:00 AM	Load buses for AACA Tour
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Buffet Luncheon
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM	***Latest AGM Seminar*** with East Penn/Deka Battery, presenter TBA
3:15 PM - 4:30 PM	***Charger Repair Seminar*** with Rick Polete of PLP Battery

Friday, April 4

8:00 AM - 8:45 AM	ERA Annual Membership Meeting
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Show Expo
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Buffet Luncheon
1:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Show Expo

Saturday, April 5

8:30-10:15 AM	***Latest Testing and New Units*** with Mohammad Samii, ERA Tech Advisor
10:30 AM-12:00 PM	***Heavy Duty Rebuilding*** with Dan Smith of Romaine Electric
12:00-1:00 PM	Buffet Luncheon
1:00-3:00 PM	***Determining Part & Unit Failure Causes*** with Larry Hagemeister of Hagemeister Enterprises, Inc
3:15-5:00 PM	**Roundtable Discussion**

AUTO ELECTRIC CORNER —
VW Junction Block, Marelli Alternator, Blower Motors



BY MOHAMMAD SAMII

Any New Year starts with making resolutions about the challenges regarding business, sales, necessary profit margins, supplier selection for a particular part, and how to handle all of these and the unforeseen as best as we can. The list does not change all that much from year to year unless any major supplier/suppliers change their policies, changes in minimums for free shipping, freight cost and delivery time.

Rebuilders of various sizes have been accustomed to this and there is really nothing new for them, but as the saying goes, we will try to do the best can to adapt.

For me personally as a retired rebuilder things have changed and will change further, far away from the routine that I have been familiar with for the last 52 years being in this business and the 45 years of it on my own running the Sammy's Auto Electric Service.

As you are aware 2024 was my final year of business before my full retirement. My test benches, stock, tooling, parts and all were sold in an online auction. The building is nearly empty and is being prepared to be handed over to the new owners by the end of December of this year (2024). It is a sort of strange and unnerving to realize this is the first time in 53 years that I am not longer able to test an alternator when someone hands me one…!

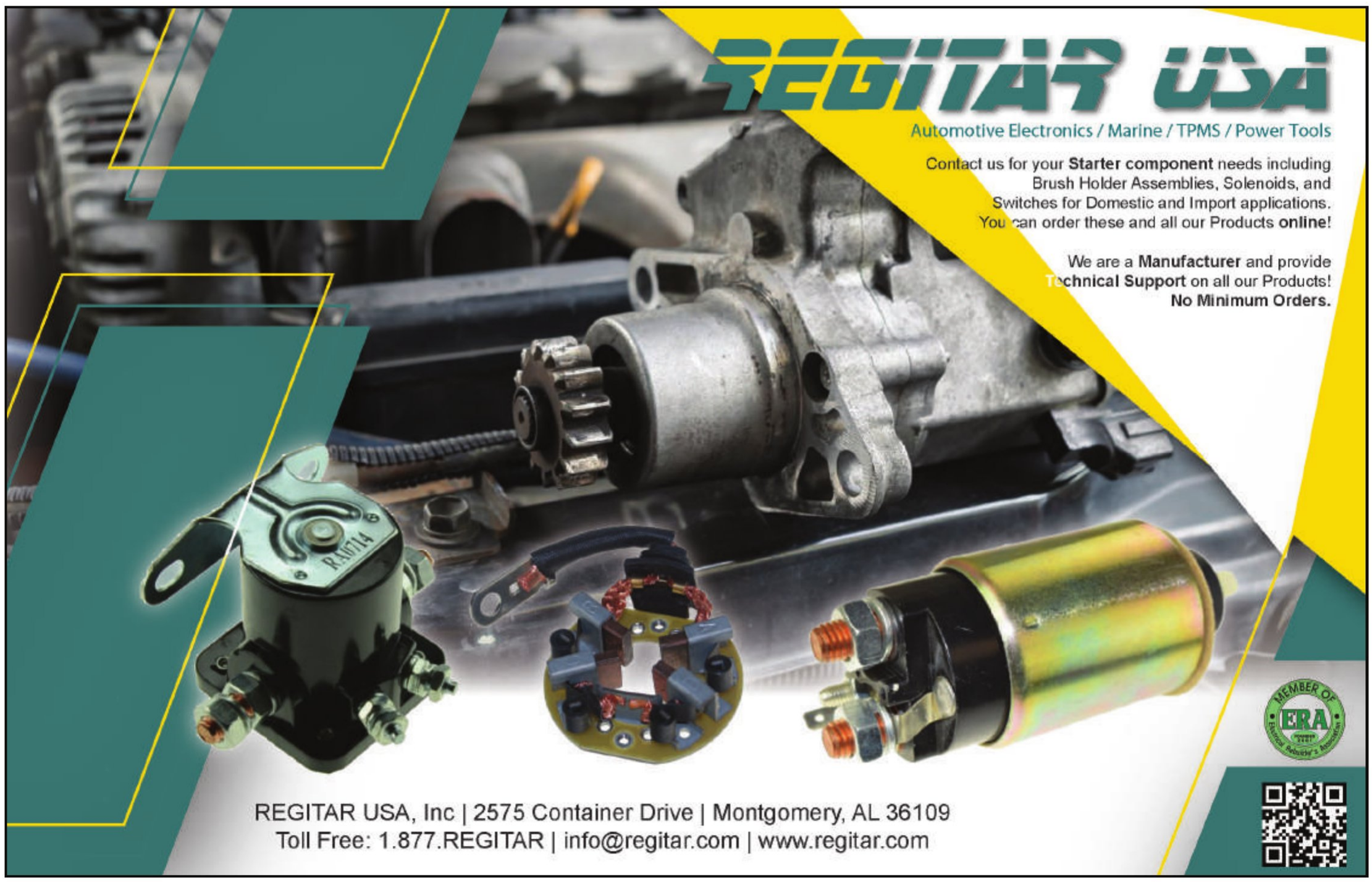
My plan at this time is to be involved with the industry as much as I can. I have some longtime customers locally that at times call me for help on some diagnostic issues regarding the electrical/electronics in general and charging/starting systems in particular that needs to be addressed. I am hoping these sort of calls provide enough material so I can keep on writing this column, albeit with less emphasis on the unit and more toward on-vehicle issues.

I am also going to continue with my self-education to attend major automotive industry training events like the Auto-Value Expo and Training in February in Michigan and annual Vision Hi-Tech training in Kansas City in March which ERA sponsors me for that. I look forward to learning new trends and technologies that are emerging into the automotive industry, and perhaps pass along some information to our membership. So, let's see how that goes…!

VW Fuse Block

There are cases that a wiring or connection issue affects the performance of the alternator where there is actually nothing wrong with the unit but it gets the blame for it.

As one of last few cars we had to work on was this 2006 VW Beatle that the owner was concerned about



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the alternator not charging and a few accessories that were sluggish due to low voltage. He suspected the alternator we had installed some 18 months ago was the problem. I accepted to look into it but explained to him that our year and a half old alternator would not be under any warranty given it is on an 18-year-old car!

So, the vehicle was checked and it was confirmed that the charging voltage was indeed low. Since the alternator was accessible, for a quick test of the connection, we connected a heavy jumper wire from the alternator's output post to the battery positive to get a handle on voltage drop, just in case. As soon as the jumper was connected the charging voltage jumped to above 14V, confirming that we indeed had a voltage drop on the positive side. This is a quick test that does not require much effort and when repeated on the ground side, it will quickly confirm existence of voltage drop on the Positive and Negative side of the alternator.

Having had previous experience with this issue on VW's, our first point of inspection was of course the battery cable connections to ensure their integrity but as I have run into this before, the junction block that sits on the top of the battery needed to be also inspected. (*Figure-1*)

A look inside the junction block showed the culprit as it is not unusual for a lot of VWs as shown in *Figure-2*. The poor connections and resulting heat had deteriorated the wires that had severely affected the charging voltage and the alternator output. It is such a recurring problem that VW dealers always stock this junction block and so common that plenty of aftermarket options with improved features are available to minimize the overheating and deterioration of the wires (*Figure-3*).

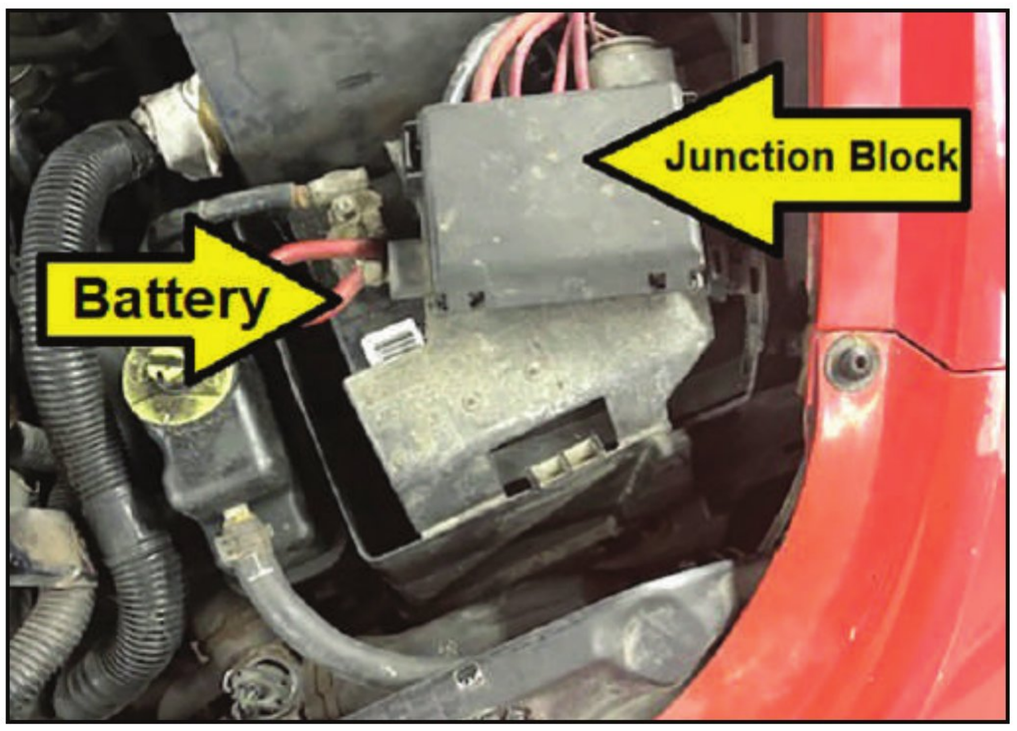


Figure 1 – Junction Block on the Battery

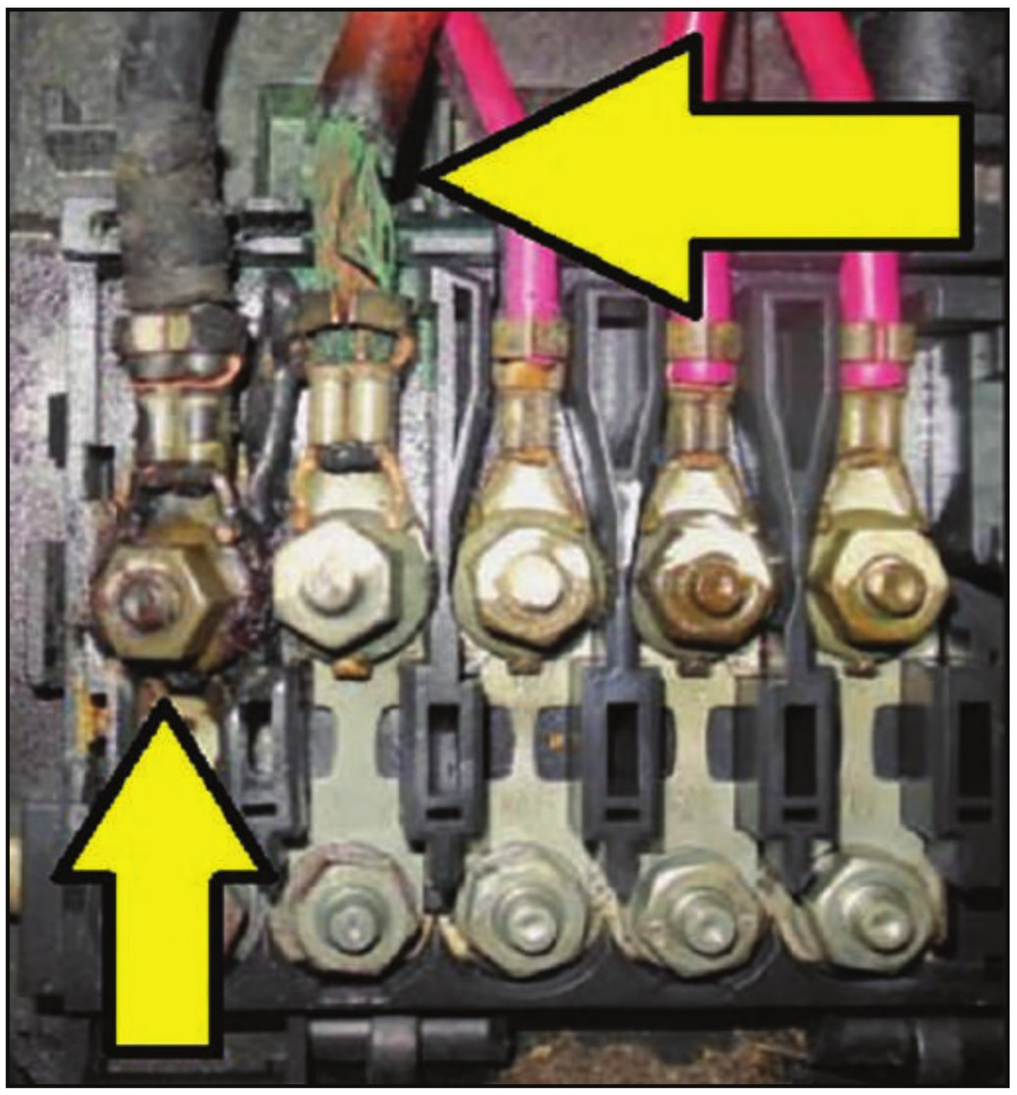


Figure 2 – Damaged wiring (photo from a previous article)

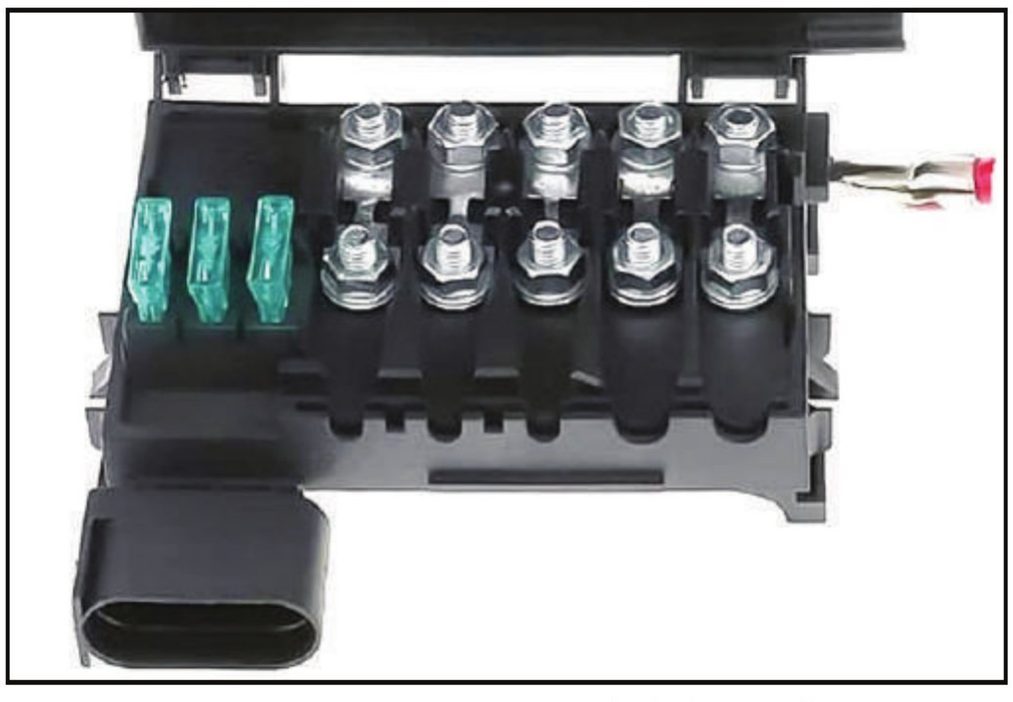


Figure 3 – VW Junction Block (Typical)

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A replacement was ordered and meanwhile we decided to look at some of the ground connections to perhaps address the slow operation of some accessories like wipers and dim headlights.

After the battery and its tray were removed, the main body ground hidden under the battery tray showed signs of corrosion resulting in bad a connection (*Figure-4*). That problem was addressed and the vehicle was turned over to the owner, charging perfectly with the same alternator that we had installed a year and a half ago.

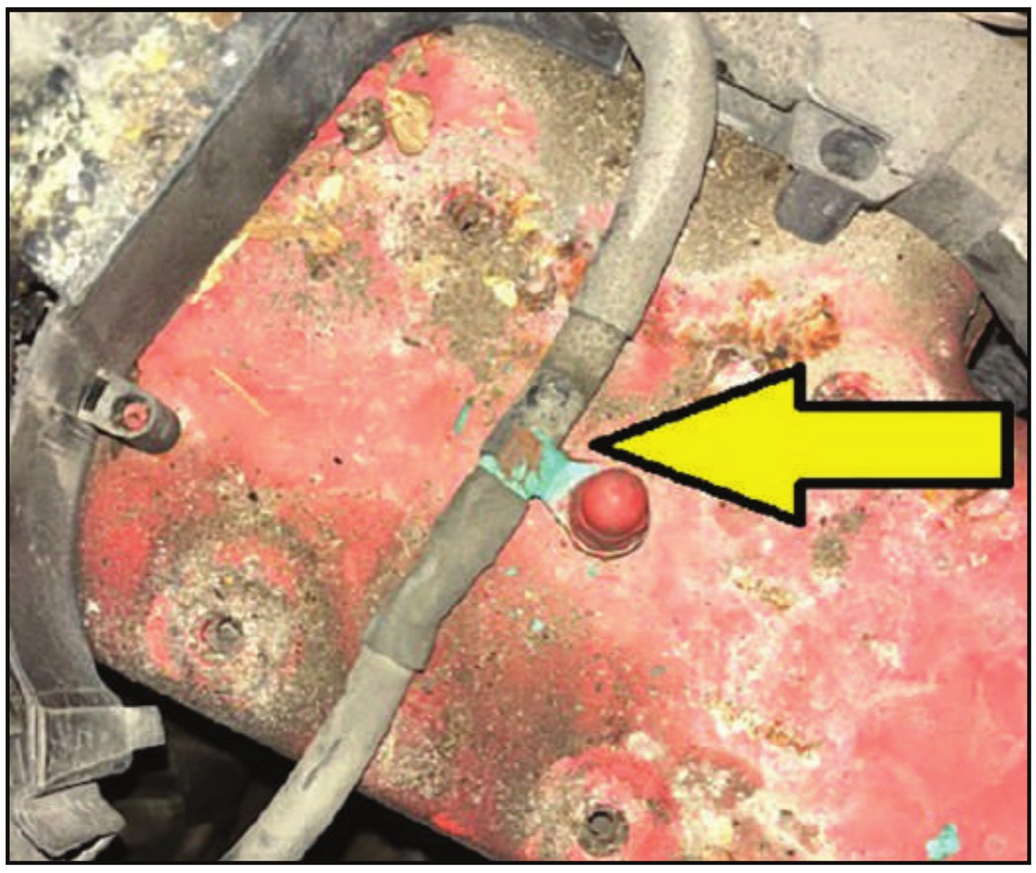


Figure 4 – Poor Body Ground Connection

The point is the alternator or starter is only part of the system, and its proper operation depends on the whole system to function properly. Changing an alternator on a whim would not provide a fix if the other part of the system is not fully investigated and any issues addressed.

Self-Exciting Marelli

A local construction company brought in a Marelli MAN7462 alternator asking for repair or replacement (*Figure-5*). The OE replacement was too costly and we

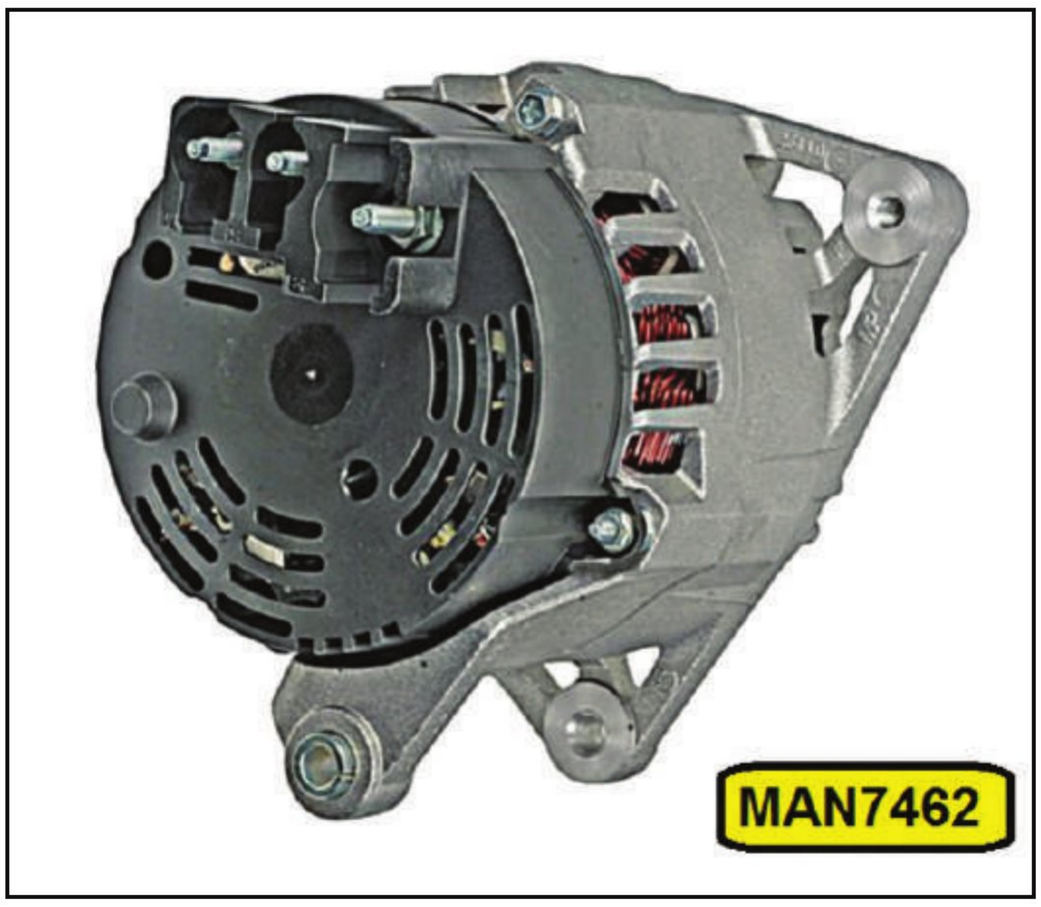


Figure 5 – Marelli (Lester 12738) Alternator

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have had generally good luck with the aftermarket versions (Lester 12738) provided by our major industry suppliers. Looking at the unit what the customer had brought me, I noticed a jumper from output to L terminal of the alternator (*Figure-6*). A call to the owner verified there is no other wire beside the output wire is attached to this alternator; thus this arrangement was making this alternator to be a self-exciting unit.

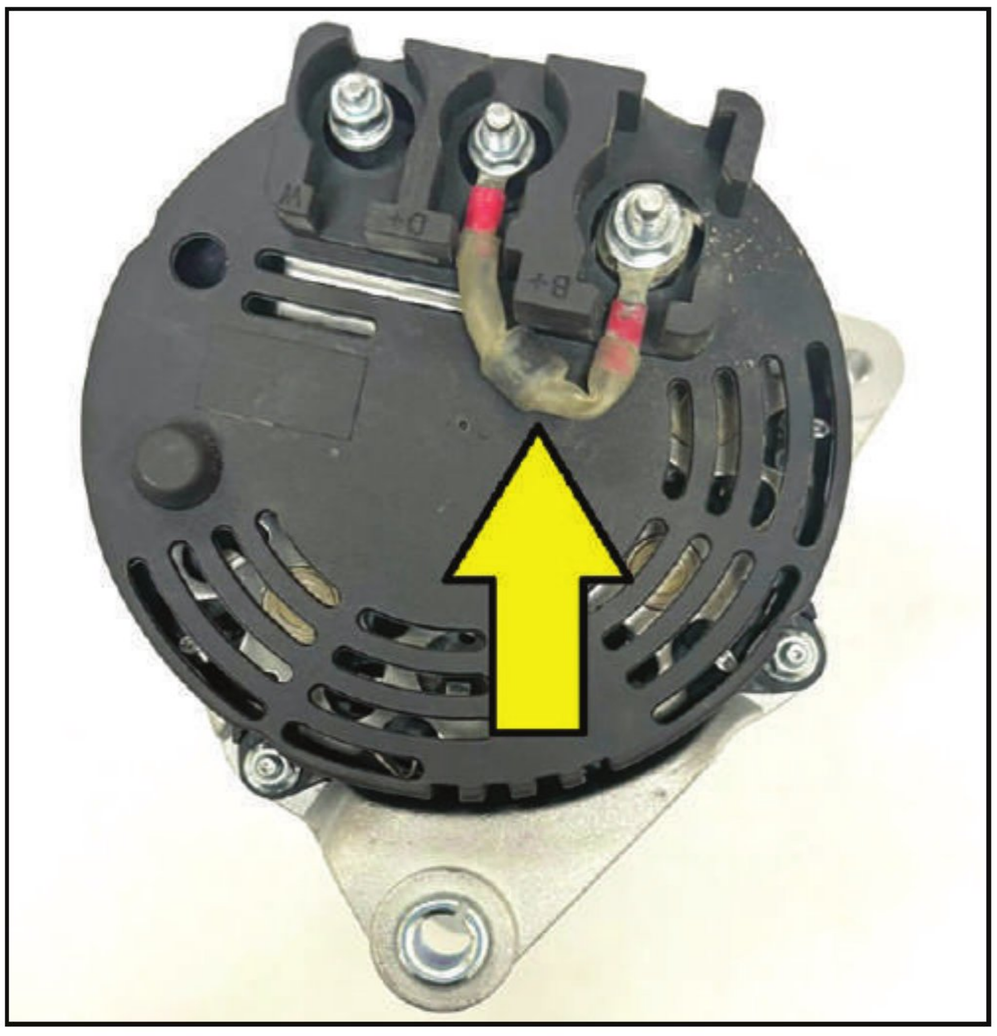


Figure 6 – Jumper Wire for Self-Excitation

A little digging into this jumper, to the best I could figure out showed this jumper to be a small diode with a 200 Ohm resistor in series to energize the unit, control the stand-by current draw, and prevent any feedback into the system. A trick that can be tried with any 200-400 ohm resistor and a diode for modifying the alternators into a self-exciting unit. An experiment that can be tried, since I no longer have the means to do it!

Blower Motor issues

As is customary in my business, the demand for blower motor replacements increases when the temperature changes from cold to hot, such as in spring or summer, or from hot to cold like now, by arriving of the cold winter days.

Like many other components of the modern vehicles, the technology of the blower motors have also changed or are rapidly changing toward more sophistication. The simple DC motors that have been used for ages are changing toward much more expensive brushless DC motor designs which require a pulse-train control signal from the HVAC module or the control head to change its speed from very low to very high with no steps in automatic as well as manual HVAC.

But regardless of the design, there are many older systems around that break down. The extra amperage draw of a sluggish motor affects the connectors on the blower and its resistor block. These connectors need to be replaced along with a new motor for a job to be done properly.

Here is the picture of the cavity where the blower motor of an E-350 Ford van sits (*Figure-7*). The motor needed to be removed and fished out through the cavity by clearing a few obstacles.



Figure 7 – Ford Van's Blower Motor Cavity



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Its resistor block that had nearly melted the pins (*Figure-8*) was also replaced and we were lucky to find a new connector for it. The new motor along with a new resistor block was installed, along with the new connector that we wired back into the system. The customer (a contractor) was happy to see it work after not being able to turn on the blower for a few months.

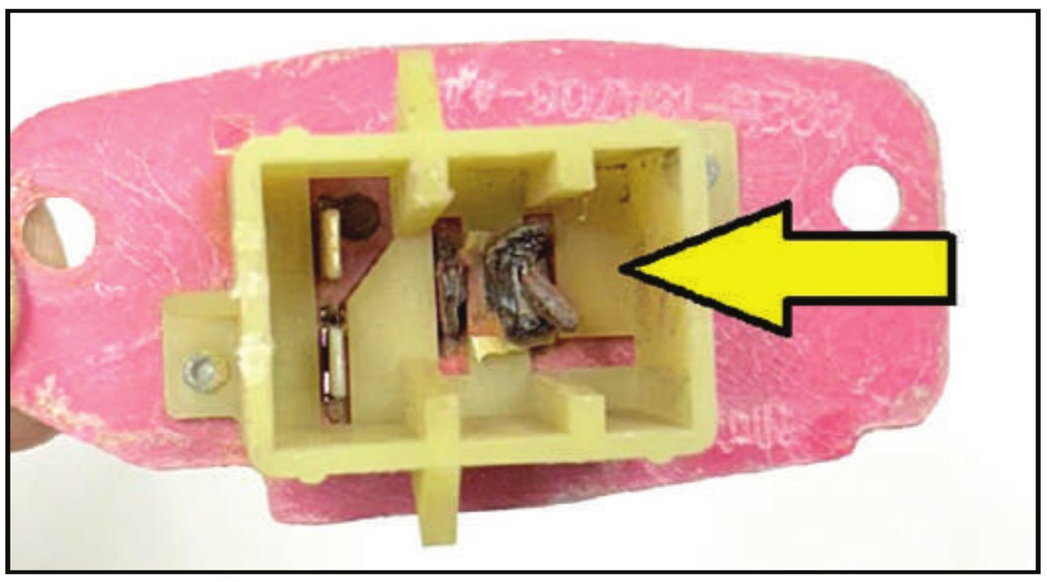


Figure 8 – Damaged Resistor Block

On the same line, we had this later model 2015 Silverado 2500 that the customer complained about sever noise and vibration coming from the right side of the dashboard when the blower was turned on. Since turning on the blower was directly related to the vibration, we decided to start looking at that area.

When the glove compartment was removed. A huge accumulation of debris showed that a mouse nest has been built into the HVAC ducts and cabin filter area (*Figure-9*).

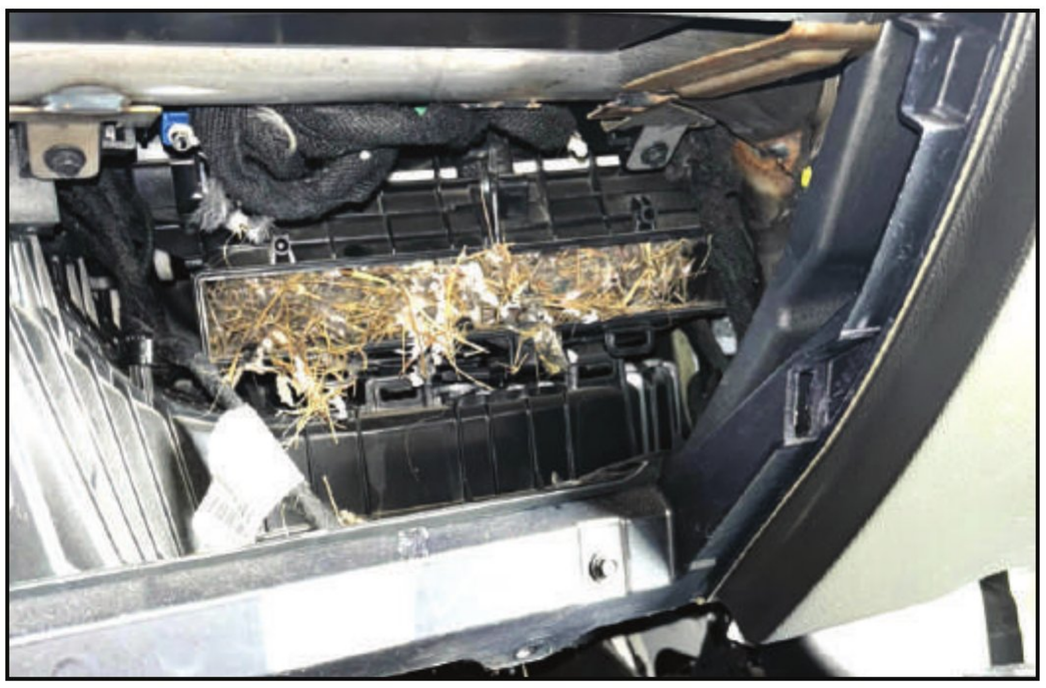


Figure 9 – Accumulated Debris at the Plenum

The vehicle is equipped with an expensive brushless type DC blower motor. After the motor was removed, the reason for the severe vibration became obvious. A mouse had worked its way into the blower cage which the fast-spinning wheel had killed and stretched it, still inside the wheel's cage (*Figure-10*). The dead weight of it had unbalanced the motor and caused the severe vibration that was our customer's concern.

A new blower motor, filter, cleaning and disinfecting the area became an expensive repair just because of a rodent infestation. Oh…Mother Nature…you got to love it!

Have you seen this ERA label?

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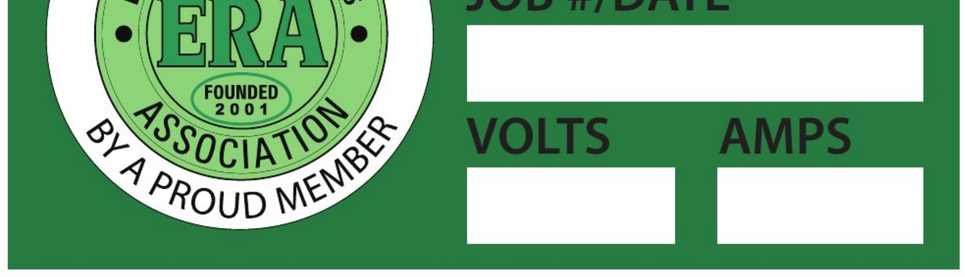




Figure 10 – Damaged Blower Wheel…!

Well, that all for this issue. Until I see you again, keep up the good work and remain healthy.

You can contact Mohammad Samii by email at: sammyselectric@sbcglobal.net, or by calling the ERA Tech Help Line at 636-584-8324.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE —
Coil Spring Tool



BY MIKE SCHROEDER

As many of you already know, holding the coil springs in the brush holder of many versions of Bosch starters becomes quite challenging while bending the retaining tabs to hold the brush springs in place. I made this tool to assist me to hold the springs (*Figure 1*). I started with a short shank gasket scraper, I ground each side of the scraper and the remaining sharpened edge of the tool, making it blunt, to this configuration, leaving the middle of the tool to keep the spring centered (*Figure 2*). With this tool holding the collapsed spring, I can then bend the four retaining tabs to the correct angle to hold the spring in place with a short-jawed needle nose pliers. (*Figure 3*) This tool makes a sometimes difficult task easy and I'm not looking around on the shop floor for an escaped coil spring.

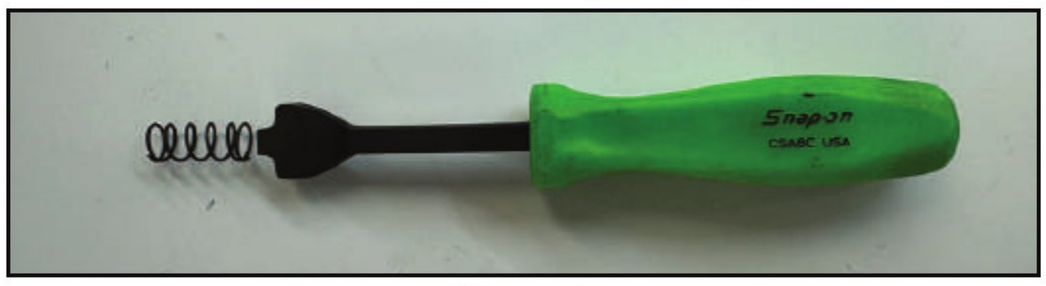


Figure 1

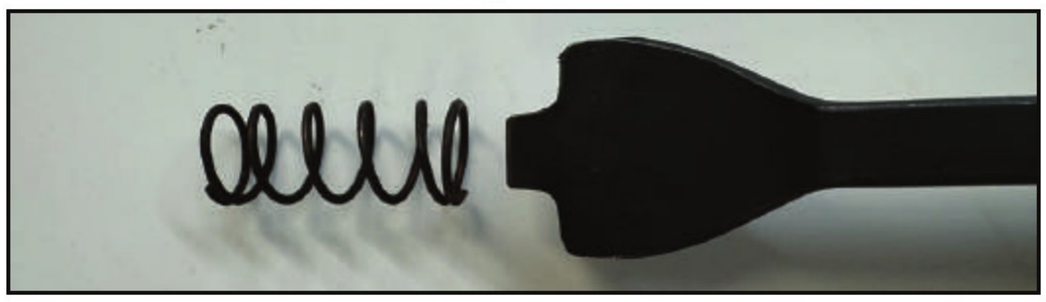


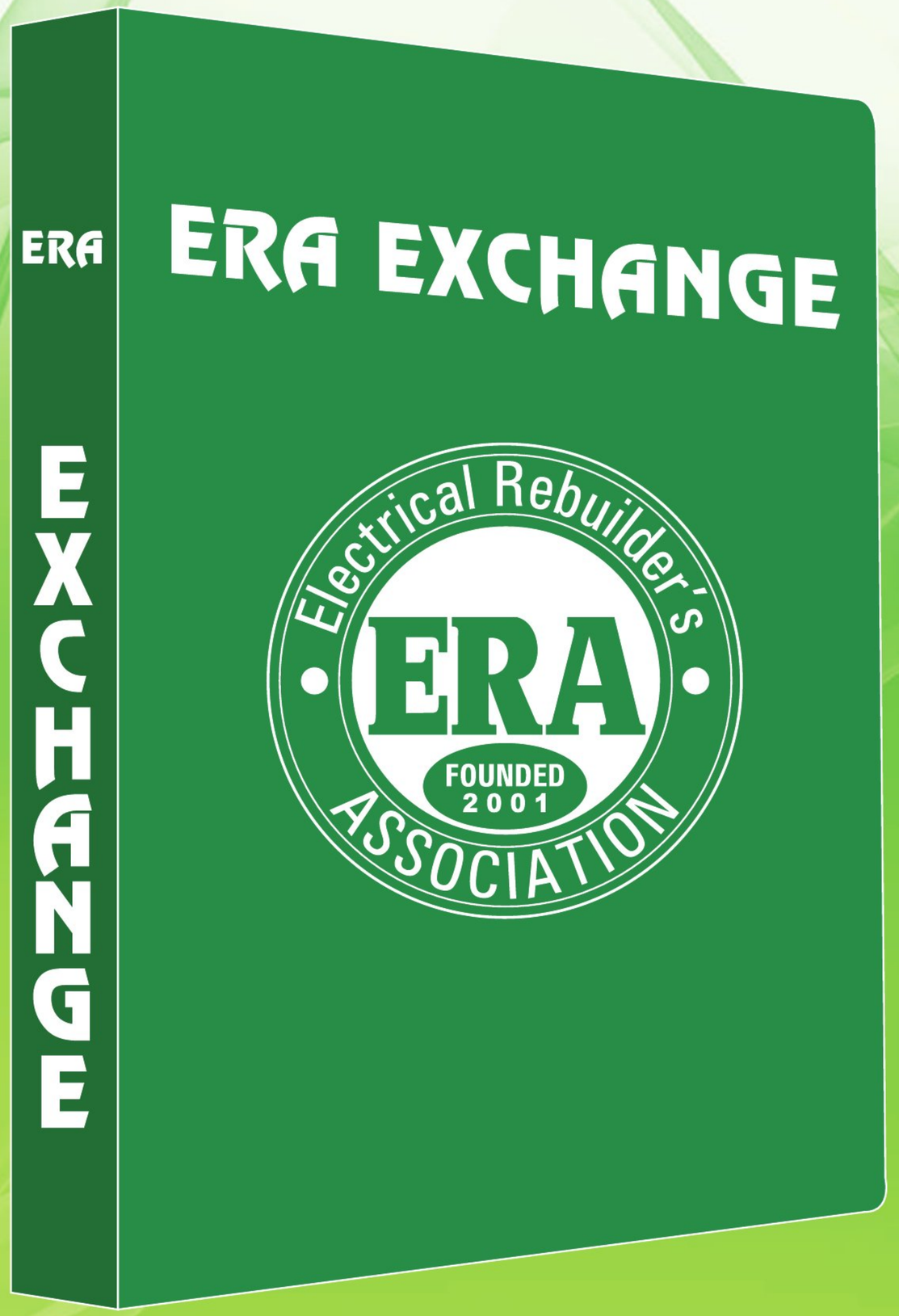
Figure 2



Figure 3



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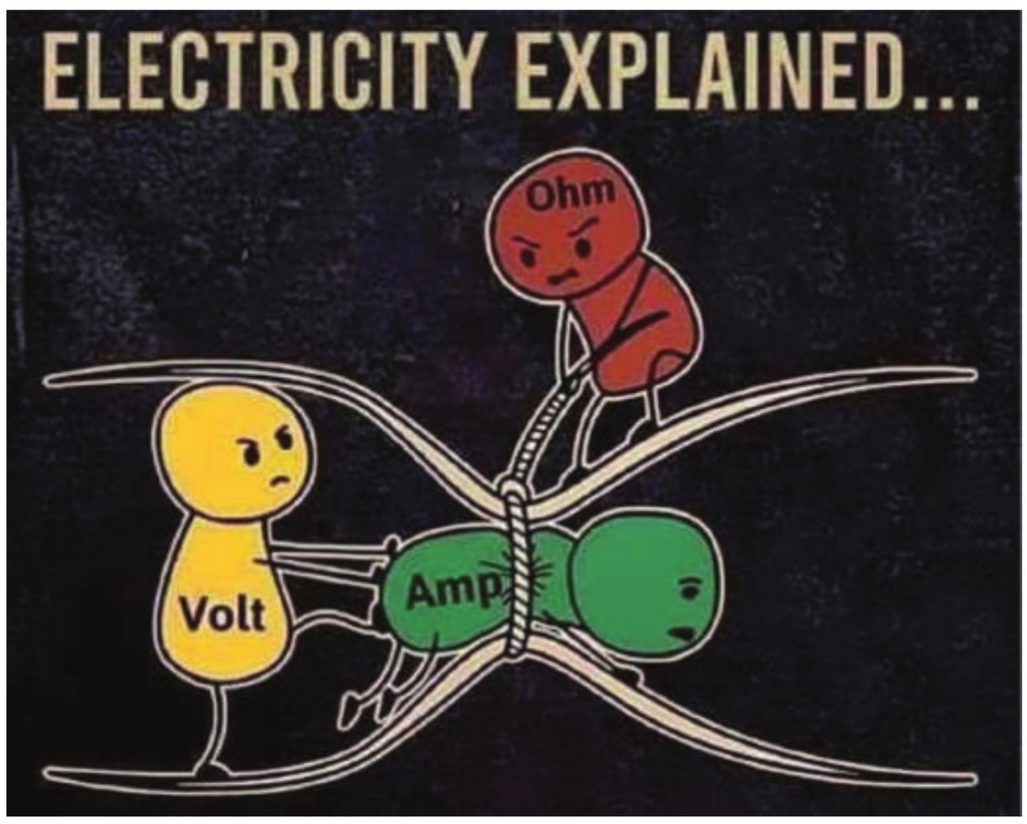
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