

I Do Windows After All

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Geez, it's 2010 already! I was just noticing that I've been doing this column for almost 4 years. Time flies and all that. I guess there's another reason why the license plate says 2 WINDY, huh? Actually, I was looking back through my folder of previous prose due to the topic this month. You see, in our July 2008 issue, I did an article that proclaimed "I Don't Do Windows". Well, necessity being the mother that it can sometimes be, it turns out that I do windows after all.

Recently, my friend Jim Miller called and mentioned that another Miata family friend was having trouble with the manual-crank windows in their '93. Specifically, the driver's window was really hard to crank and would b-a-r-e-l-y move. After warning him NOT to force the window crank, our friend found himself in a drive-thru, in the cold and you guessed it... forced the window crank and broke the cable.

Of course, we didn't know the cable was broken until we took the door apart. (*Here's where it may pay to look up that July 2008 article*) It didn't take much to realize there was only one cable still coming out of the window crank! Out of curiosity, I took the crank assembly apart to see how it worked to perhaps attach a new cable. Be aware that the crank assembly contains what some mechanics refer to as a "Jesus spring". It's called that because after it goes "twa-a-a-ng", only Jesus knows where it went. I wouldn't be surprised if The Lord has a closet full of springs somewhere in heaven. I bet he recycles them... into kangaroos, wallabies and 3-year old little boys.

At this point, it was pretty obvious that a new window regulator, with cable included, (*insert rolled-eyes here*) was required. I've heard of using a motorcycle shop to repair or install a new cable in the regulator, but I don't see how in the world they'd get it back together (*especially post twa-a-a-ng*). So with a call to Moss Motors and \$75 + shipping later, the new assembly was on its way. BTW, don't force those power windows and burn up the motor... that's a hefty \$250 or so!

That left one rather chilly issue... how to hold the window up in the door for the next 4 or 5 days until the part arrived. Did I mention this was a couple weeks ago when we were averaging a brass-monkey chilling 5 degrees at night??? Being the resourceful guy he is, Jim took a piece of 2x2 I gave him and made a window prop. A little notch in one end to hold the window was all it needed to go from the bottom of the door and hold the window up.

A few days later, the part arrived and we were ready to tackle the install. I won't bore you with those details, instead, I'll point you to the very detailed instructions I found at: <http://www.blueridgemiatclub.org/technical/windows/index.htm>. There you'll find all you need to tear the door apart and fix or replace whatever you need. Isn't the internet great?

So what if your windows are just a little slow and not really gummed up yet? What can we do as preventative maintenance? How many times per minute does a fully-laden swallow beat its wings? Before you're cast into the chasm, check out that July 2008 article for the maintenance tips and the instructions mentioned above for the disassembly procedure!

The other "thing" I've learned better is how to lubricate that front track for the window that is actually the channel along the fixed triangular window. It's basically a rubber track which means the window glass rubs against rubber. That's not exactly the slickest substance known to mankind in the 21st century. Lubricating just THAT channel makes a big difference in how easily the windows move. In my previous article I suggested a dry lube like graphite. What I discovered this time is that a Teflon-based lube really works the business.

So yes, I can do windows. It's not that hard really, but it pays to do them before they get bad. Sort of a pay me now, or pay me later kind of thing. Perhaps you should look at this as part of your Spring maintenance... you do that, right?

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