

Bonus!

# INDY CAR X-RAY PULLOUT

PETERSEN'S

JUNE 1988 \$2.95

# CIRCLE TRACK

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# Inflation Insurance

*An ounce of prevention to help you finish*

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY:  
MICHAEL J. MARRER

■ The scene is typical of the close racing action that occurs at most any short track. Two cars run side by side, rubbing sheetmetal as they battle for position.

Occasionally during the numerous contacts, a bumper or nerf bar may find its way into the opponent's wheel. In the blink of an eye, the valve stem can be either bent or sliced off completely. Then, a three-legged race car is seen limping into the pits.

For the Sherwood Racing team, the above scenario was something it accepted as just another part of the rigors of racing. However, the events of a July 1986 night at Shangri-La Motor Speedway in upstate New York helped change the team members' minds.

In the team's heat, a valve stem was nicked just enough to develop a slow

leak. Due to the unequalized tire, driver Lee Sherwood finished well back in the pack and had to qualify through the consi. His bad luck continued in the feature; the stem on the replaced tire was completely cut off during an encounter with yet another competitor.

The team had arrived at the track that day as the Late Model point leaders. It left five hours later dropped back to the third spot. When the final tally was completed in September, Lee and his crew chief/father Al Sherwood had missed out on a second consecutive track title by a mere two points.

Thinking back to that July night, they realized that things might have gone differently had they been able to avoid valve stem-related tire problems. Their search for a solution led to the development of SAV-A-TIRE, a patented recessed valve for tubeless tires.

SAV-A-TIRE consists of two pieces: the valve assembly and the nut. The valve is designed to fit the standard 0.625-inch hole in a wheel. No changes are required to the rim other than to countersink the hole deep enough so that the valve seats just below the surface.

A room temperature vulcanizing (R.T.V.) silicon adhesive sealant is applied around the valve both inside and outside the rim. The nut is then hand-tightened firmly (the countersunk side goes toward the wheel), and the silicon is allowed to cure. The curing process is dependent upon the weather (R.T.V. adhesive cures in the presence of moisture, not heat) and could be completed in an hour under ideal conditions. However, allowing the wheel to sit overnight is recommended.

Since the nut is countersunk on one side, the combination of that and the silicon create a formed-in-place O-ring. The Sherwoods had tried actual O-rings, but found that they could not get a reliable seal since wheels are generally rough and uneven.

Many gauges and inflator tips will fit directly in the SAV-A-TIRE; however, if you have only ball-end tools, standard extensions available from any auto parts store can be used. Remember to remove the extensions after inflating and measuring, otherwise the purpose of the recessed valve will have been defeated.

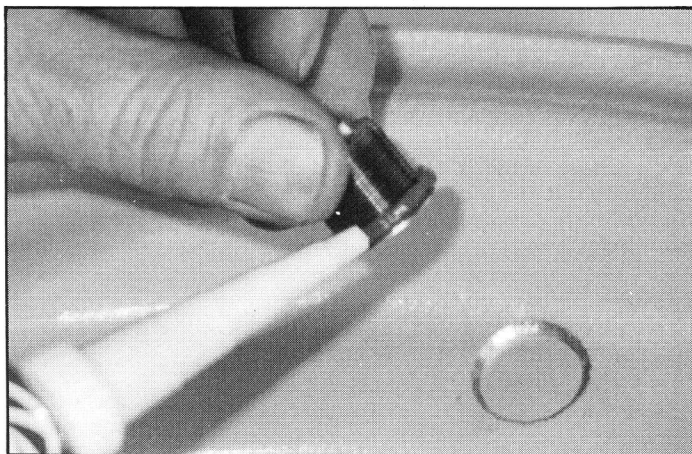
At \$17.95 for a set of four, the SAV-A-TIRE valve can best be described as an inexpensive form of insurance. On those occasions when you find the race you're in has turned into a contact sport, you can rest assured that the valves are now safely tucked away where your competitors can't reach them. **O**

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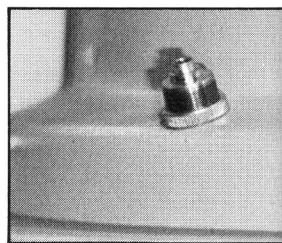
Apply R.T.V. silicon around the valve before inserting it in the hole.

Bottom left: The SAV-A-TIRE valve sits flush with the outside wheel surface.

Bottom center: R.T.V. silicon is also applied around the valve inside the rim. The nut is placed with the countersunk side in toward the wheel.



The assembled valve is in place. The entire process takes only a few minutes to complete but should be allowed to stand for several hours to allow the silicon to cure.



Many tools will fit inside the recessed valve. However, if you only have ball-end tools, screw-on extensions from an auto parts store can be used.

