

# FENNER POWER-TWIST BELTS

BY: CHRIS THOMPSON

On the morning of November 7<sup>th</sup> 2010, my wife Maria and I boarded our M-9, and with about 20 other speeders, headed out of Florence, AL on the Tennessee Southern Railroad. Our destination was Columbia, TN some 75 miles to the northeast where we had started our overnight trip the day before. The weather was cold but the sky was clear and we looked forward to a repeat of the beautiful scenery that we'd enjoyed on the southbound portion of the run. As we putted out of town we spotted a couple of people in a car beside the tracks watching the parade of motorcars roll by. We waved and as I gave them a friendly toot of the horn I noticed that something was not quiet right. It seemed that I had to hold the horn button down for a few seconds for the horn to blow and the sound was low and off pitch. My first thought was that moisture had somehow gotten into the horn button and froze in the low overnight temperatures keeping the contacts from closing. But as we ran along and the car warmed up, the problem only got worse until the horn no longer worked at all. "No problem", I thought. "I'll fix it when we get home."

As we climbed the grades and rounded the curves headed for the state line, the little M9's ROC motor started to lose power. I adjusted the timer and needle valve but this didn't help. Then it occurred to me that the problem might be electrical and could be why the horn didn't work properly. A quick look down through the slots in the control panel confirmed my hunch; the alternator belt was missing! I turned off the headlights and strobe and the car's engine picked back up. We had about 15 miles to our next rest stop, so not wanting to risk the battery being drained completely down we caught a tow from the car ahead.

Several months earlier I read Stanley Wilson's article in the Nov-Dec 2008 SETOFF about Twist Lock belts and how they made it easy to replace the alternator belts on pop cars. They snapped together making it unnecessary to remove the flywheel to install the belt. I ordered one on E-bay and put it in my toolbox just in case. Now I would have the chance to see just how well it would work. As we pulled into our rest stop I unhooked from my tow and with the help of James Hughes, assistant EC on the run, got the belt on in about 15 minutes. All that was needed was a pair of needle nose pliers. The belt made it possible to finish the trip unassisted. To date I have put around 700 more miles on the speeder with no problems, and the belt still looks almost new.

The belt needed for a Fairmont motor is a 3/8" 3L Fenner Power Twist Plus. I ordered one 4 foot section, plenty for one belt with some left over, and the cost was about \$30. The belt is made to be ran in one direction, but I haven't had any problem operating the car in reverse. I would recommend to anyone who owns a popper car to invest in one of these belts and add it to their spare parts. Having one sure beats being towed.

Chris Thompson

