

Car Care Corner

Changing The Oil Is A Family Affair

by Rhonda Hartman-Smith

(NAPSA)—Recently my husband John surprised me. Not with diamonds or roses, but an oil changing kit he put together with our sponsor, FRAM®.

Since I was a teenager, I dreamed of racing Top Fuel Dragsters. I spent hours with my father and brother working in the garage and learning everything there is to know about engines.

My dream came true and today my husband John and my three-year-old daughter Megan cheer me on at every race.

Since I began driving, I started to spend less time in the pits, leaving the engine work to my expert crew. When my own Chevy Tahoe SUV needed its routine maintenance, my husband decided I needed a refresher course.

Changing the oil now is a lot easier than I had remembered. I can recall searching for the right tools, struggling with the oil pan drain plug and worrying about getting the hot oil on my hands and face while lying under the car, working to get the stripped drain plug loose.

This time, however, we used a great new tool called the FRAM SureDRAIN oil change system. The new, fast-access oil change system made the change so much easier and safer. I remember from my teenage years getting splashed by the hot oil and I always dreaded that moment. The SureDRAIN oil change system, however, doesn't let the oil flow until you give it the "green light" and open the actuator valve, which replaces the standard non-functioning drain plug.

While we were changing the oil we also made other routine maintenance checks. We looked at all the other fluids in the engine, transmission, brake, coolant and the windshield



Dragracer Rhonda Hartman-Smith with her husband and pit crew chief John Smith.

washer fluid. A quick fluid level check can save a lot of frustrations down the road. We also looked at the tire pressure and windshield wipers. If your wipers are streaky and the rubber blades are cracked, it's time to replace them. Incorrect tire pressure is like wearing shoes that are the wrong size, it's a hazard. Once we topped off all the needed fluids and checked the tire pressure, we finished the oil change.

It was so neat, I didn't even need the gloves I was wearing to protect the manicure I had treated myself to.

My husband gave me a little piece of independence and that's a great gift in any marriage. I'll be back under there in 3,000 miles.

• *As she enters her eleventh year of racing, Rhonda Hartman-Smith is poised to make 2002 her best year yet. Competing in the Top Fuel Dragster, Rhonda set a career best time in 2001 of 4.59 seconds and a career best speed of 318. Her husband and crew chief John Smith showed her that changing the oil on her car is now easier and safer recently presented with the new SureDRAIN oil change system from FRAM.*