

## PAGE THREE | *Random Acts*

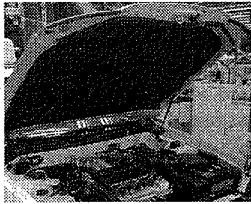
# Mechanic's Honesty Shifts Into Overdrive

*A curious development has come to our attention. We now get three times as many letters from readers who say they enjoy Random Acts than we do submissions from people who have experienced such kindness. Perhaps those of you who are so fond of this column need to get out and practice some flagrant acts of goodness to perpetuate your own enjoyment?*

This is a story of a businessman who turned away thousands of dollars worth of work because it was the right thing to do.

My Toyota had just turned five, the odometer had rolled past the 60,000-mile mark and the last payment had been made just weeks ago when, of course, the car started to act up. My trusted local mechanic sent the car to his transmission guy in Silver Spring.

Barry Weller, owner of Superior Transmissions, looked at the car, ran a test on the computer system and determined that we needed a new transmission. Ouch! Particularly hurtful because our transmission warranty was good for five years or 60,000 miles.



But Barry didn't give us an estimate or even talk to us about replacing the transmission. He said the car should go to the Toyota dealer's service department. He did research and found that these cars were experiencing problems of this sort, so he took it upon himself to provide us

with documentation showing that the warranty should be extended.

The dealer balked. No ma'am, the dealer said, this covers only the computer module that may have caused the problem, but you already have the new module. The new transmission will cost \$3,848.

I called Barry to ask how can this be? It turns out that dealerships do honor the warranty for the problem that was not helped by this new module, but Barry said those dealers are few and far between. Call the dealer back, he said, and let him know that you've been doing research on this and that reputable dealers honor this warranty. On the phone again with the dealer, the service agent told me that he would check with his manager in the morning but that he thought it highly doubtful the manager would relent. Barry, in our fourth phone conversation that afternoon, told me he would check further with his transmission-fixers association.

The dealer's service agent called first thing in the morning. Ma'am, the agent said, as an act of goodwill, we will replace your transmission at no cost and supply you with a loaner. I called Barry. The first thing he asked: Did they act like they were doing you a favor?

Barry turned away thousands of dollars of business because it was the right thing to do, but he went further by helping me battle the titans by providing me with knowledgeable advice and documentation.

I was blown away by his honesty and willingness to help an unknown customer whom he never even met in person. He saved us \$4,000 and has earned our loyalty and deep gratitude.

— Lisa Carr, Washington