SHOP TIP by Fred Kriszat

Ever blow your top when preparing your favorite Airflow for the next show only to discover that some idiot had left a zipper, buckle or ring scratch on your little beauty--and, right on down to the metal? Well, unless it's a wide gouge, it can be fixed and without all the trouble of an extensive sanding and refinishing. First of all, I assume everyone has a "reserve" supply of paint (lacquer) to match his car. I've found the perfect dispenser is the type of touch up bottle as sold by Chrysler products dealers. Discard what is in there, rinse and fill with your paint and carry it right in the car wherever you go. The secret is, of course, to fill up the cavity or scratch with paint. Apply masking tape as closely to both edges of the scratch as possible. Run the tape slightly beyond the length of the scratch but identify the actual limits of the scratch so as not to apply paint on the undamaged areas. After having masked around the scratch completely, carefully lay in a fairly thick coat of paint being certain to brush into the depths so as not to trap air bubbles. Work as quickly as possible, Then, immediately remove the tape pulling parallel to the surface. This is necessary as the paint may penetrate through the tape and soften the finish around the scratch. This process will have to be repeated several times until the paint is built up slightly above the top of the scratch. Check with a magnifing glass. I would suggest letting this cure for a day or preferably several days to permit all the shrinkage which will occur. Then with some #600 wet or dry paper stretched across a rubbing block carefully sand the excess down to the original level using baby oil rather than water. Finish off with some white rubbing compound, wax and challenge any judge to find the repaired area. Unless yours is a light colored metalic (poly), the fix will be invisible. Among the most difficult body cancer repairs are metal areas with compound curves. If your repair is going the traditional sheet metal and solder route rather than plastic here's a tip that might help. Try sheet copper as available from a roofing repair supplier. It is easier to form into compound curves. Solder adheres to nothing better and if use of the open soldering flame is a problem it is sometimes possible to tin the sheet steel of the body with an iron and with the same iron, solder the two pieces (body and patch) together. Pop rivits may be necessary to locate and hold them. These are then ground down and soldered over. Since the copper is rather soft it can be backed by Epoxy on the inside for reinforcement, and unlike a steel patch, it will never rust.