
Winter Time Fantasies by Terry Brim

They say in the spring time, a young man's fantasies turn to love.....for most corvette owners, in the fall time, their fantasies turn to winter projects on their babies and so it was with me. Maybe it was being around all those beautiful NCRS corvettes last summer that I began to find those pesky little things that weren't quite right on my 70 roadster.

As the last cruise-ins began to wind down last fall, I began to make a list of things Santa Claus needed consider. Those included:

- front & rear carpeting
 - upper shift boot
 - door guide strikers
 - missing wiper arm washer tubing
 - windshield washer bag
 - 5-port washer
 - windshield/headlight washer tubing
 - T3 headlights
 - high speed blower motor relay
 - horn/key buzzer relay
 - hot water shut off valve
 - upper and lower radiator hoses
 - heater hoses
 - A/C , alternator and power steering belts
 - radiator seals
 - license plate frames
 - distributor cap & rotor
- and a host of other little odds and ends.

With the parts in hand and winter finally settling in, the fun started. I decided to first remove the rear

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deck lid, convertible top and hood (thanks to Terry Buchanan for his help here). Removing these made it easy to crawl around the car with very little problems.

I thought I would start by removing the complete interior since I was going to either replace or restore everything except for the seat covers. (I had redone the leather seats about 12 years ago,



but they were still in good shape).

Replacing the carpeting went fairly smoothly. Since I had done this about 12 years ago, I sort of knew what to expect. The one thing I did learn from my previous experience was remounting the seats. This time around, I re-

moved the runners from the seats and fastened them to the floor first to get the correct holes cut in the carpet for the mounting bolts and front flaps. Once this was done, I remounted the seats back on the runners and then bolted the seats to the floor.

The installation of the rear carpet went fairly smoothly, the key here is to take your time and make sure you trim the carpet and padding for a nice fit over the wheel wells prior to applying any adhesive. The rubber carpet plugs up the back side add a nice finishing touch



Next came the door strike bolts and guides. Some unknowing soul had painted these black (now I'm not going to mention any names here, let's just say this was pre NCRS days). After stripping these to get them back to original finish and remounting them back on the car, I spent considerable time getting the striker bolts to align with the door guides. Once completed, however, the doors operate better than new!

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After that came the job of sprucing up the door panels. The carpet strips needed to be replaced along with the faded wood grain trim panel. With the aid of a staple gun, replacing these items went well, or so I thought at the time. What I didn't realize was that I would have to redo the door panels! Lesson here is if you plan on re-dying any part of your interior (especially if it is a light color like saddle) you had better plan on doing ALL the interior parts as the after market dye colors vary from the original which is usually faded after a number of years. Since I had only ordered 2 cans of spray dye that took 3 weeks to arrive, I knew I would have to move on to other things while I waited for the additional



dye to come in.

While I awaited the arrival of more dye, I began to attack the engine compartment. I had plenty of things to do here starting with the radiator seals. After much deliberation, I decided I would have to pull the radiator in order to replace both radiator to fan shroud and radiator to support seals. Since the car had

A/C and the condenser was in front of the radiator, I opted not to pull the condenser, but rather to remove the fan shroud and pull the radiator out leaving the condenser in place and the A/C system untouched. I



did this in part because last spring, I had just replaced the condenser and had converted the A/C system from R12 to R134 and I didn't want to open the system back up.

In retrospect, I'm not sure this was a wise choice! Had I to do it over again, I probably would have opted to pull the condenser and take the radiator out the front. In order to get the fan shroud out, I had to remove the fan blade and harmonic balancer along with the alternator and all the belts. Even then, getting the fan shroud out with the radiator still in place was a very difficult task.....Little did I know the half of it! On the plus side, once I finally managed to get the fan shroud out, the radiator came out fairly easily. I encountered no problems in putting the radiator back with the seals firmly in place between the radiator and the radiator support. The nightmare started when I tried to put the fan shroud back in the car.

Looking back, I remember when I

was pulling the fan shroud out standing on the engine block pulling and tugging and twisting the shroud until it finally broke free, never giving a thought that what comes out must go back in!! (Notice at this point, I have no pictures of the radiator or fan shroud out of the car as I was just so excited just to get the damn thing out!)

To make a long story short, it took me the better part of a day to finally get the shroud back in the car. The GM engineers must have stayed awake at night figuring out how to design every nook and cranny so that there was only one way to get the shroud back in the car with the radiator and engine still intact. I found the key is to start with the lower left hand corner of the shroud first and then push, tuck, bend, cuss and swear until finally it went back in place....All during this time, making sure the self adhesive seals remain on the shroud. If they are not in place when the radiator and fan shroud finally mate, it is all but impossible to get the seals in place once both are back in the car.

Once the seals were all snugged in their place and tightened, new

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radiator hoses and belts were the order of the day.

Next came the

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heater hoses and a new hot water shut off valve. Replacement of the heater hoses was no problem. However, the hot water



shutoff valve was another story in and of itself. Someone in an earlier life had replaced the shutoff valve, but had done so with an after market valve that did not have a mounting bracket. As a result, for years, I had seen the shutoff valve in line with the heater hose visible along the left firewall. When I ordered a new shutoff valve that was correct for a 70 350/350 with AC, it came with a mounting bracket attached to the valve. Now the question became where was the original mounting place for the valve.

After much research and lots of calls trying to find an original 1970 350/350 AC car with the original hot water shutoff valve still in it's original mounting place, I discovered the secret mounting place for the valve. It was hidden behind the egg crate side louver on the passenger side of the car mounted to the inner fender skirt. After removing the side louver and looking at where it should have been, to my amazement, there were the

mounting holes with the right spacing that matched the holes in the bracket perfectly.



While in the engine compartment, I also replaced the horn/key buzzer relay with the correct case markings. Ditto for the high speed blower relay mounted on the passenger side firewall.

Next came removal and re-polishing of all the chrome distributor cover and spark plug wire covers. While the distributor cover was off, I checked the distributor tags for the correct numbers and replaced the cap with an original GM cap. The numbers indicated that the distributor and coil were original!



The 1970 had a 5 port washer pump which supplied washer fluid for the wipers as well as the head lights. Getting into the washer system on

these cars is like opening Pandora's box. I decided to go the distance and start with replacing the washer bag, which sounds simple enough except that on AC cars the only way to get to the washer bag is to remove the egg crate side louver on the drivers side of the car. Once that was done, it was relatively easy to reach the old leaky washer bag and replace it.

Upon inspecting the washer system further, I noticed that the washer hose going to the headlights was gone as was the left metal tube running along the left wiper arm. A complete washer



hose kit was available aftermarket, so out with the old washer hose and in with the new. Replacing the metal tube along the left hand wiper arm along with the new hose and clamps was yet another story. In order to get at it, I had to remove not only the wiper grill, but the entire wiper door.....believe me having fat fingers is not an advantage here!

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Once that portion of the washer system was functional, I turned my attention to the headlight washers. Of course nobody wants to wash just any old headlights, so new T3's were in order. While installing the new headlight washer hose, I noticed the wiring at both head lamp open switches had broken off right at the connector plugs...no wonder my headlight open light in the cockpit never came on!

For a short time, I had visions of having to replace the entire wiring harness, but Pete Tank came to the rescue. Pete had an old wiring harness with the headlight switch connector plugs still attached. He was gracious enough to cut off the connector plugs with about six inches of

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The cast aluminum doors are soft and the threads are very easy to strip. I was lucky however in that I only stripped one. An oversize screw did the trick and should not be visible to the casual eye.

With the work on the engine compartment complete, I turned my attention back to finishing the interior. The additional interior dye had arrived and so the entire interior got a fresh coat of Lt Saddle dye. By this point in time, putting

leave it. (I have the original radio safely tucked away in the attic).

One final thing remained and that was to get the car ready for our June judging meet, I had to dig the old wheels and PO2 hubcaps out of storage and refresh the rubber on the hard-top. With the hardtop back on the car (thanks in part to the help of muscleman Greg Gorniak) and a new set of Coker Firestone tires mounted back on the original wheels, the car took on a totally different look.

The before



and the after look....



Have a great summer! I have already started my fantasy for next winter....have you?



wire which allowed me to splice in the old harness wire where it had broken off from the plugs. Word of caution here when replacing the headlight bezel, be very careful not to over tighten the screws that attach the top of the bezel to the headlight door.



the interior dash, center console, door panels, rear quarter panels, and rear storage compartment back in the car took about a day. The finished product looked pretty much original except for the aftermarket radio which I have had in the car for about 8 years and opted to just

