

Hard Top, Side Window REPLACEMENT

By Tony Catalano

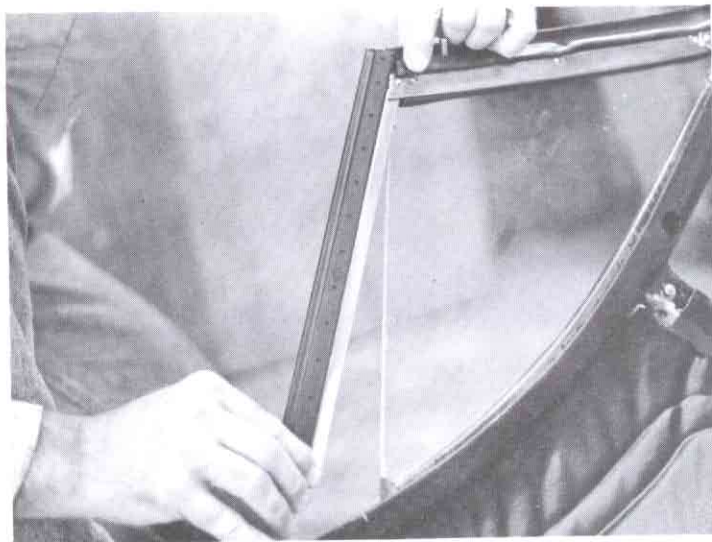
When replacing the small side windows in my hard top, I was reluctant to drill out the side window channel rivets. Having the original side window rivets has been a point to check under some judging standards. The original rivets are of a large domed head style. As well as being original, the rivets lend a more smooth and complete looking finish than other substitute fasteners.

The Corvette servicing guide instructs to drill out these rivets in order to remove the forward vertical weatherstrip channel, then pull side window glass forward and out of channel. A good alternative to totally losing these rivets was suggested in the article "Hard Top Windows" by Roy Braatz (SACE volume 1, number 3). This was to only drill of the inside end of each rivet, pull them out and reuse them by gluing them back in place.

I found, during the replacement of my rear window, that after removing from the hard top the upper door window area weatherstrip along with stainless moldings, retainers, screws and the rear window itself, that the entire frame work loses a great deal of it's rigidity. What is left is the vertical weatherstrip and attached stainless channel window assembly. This is in front of each side window. It is this channel assembly that has the rivets in question. They are located at the bottom of the vertical channel. The rivet at the top side is actually on the upper adjoining channel and is not involved with the vertical channel in question. The vertical weatherstrip is held in place with two philips head screws, side by side, at the top end. The reference to "top end" is when considering the hard top to be in its installed up-right position. You will no doubt be working on the hard top with it removed from the car and sitting on a bench or floor, with it in an upside down position.

After removing the two philips head screws, you will find that the vertical window channel and weatherstrip are free of the upper adjoining channel and independent of the window. As stated before, the top rivet does not go through the channel piece that we are trying to release. So, there is no need to remove this rivet. The bottom of this vertical channel is riveted to its adjoining bottom channel. It is at this point you can take advantage of the structure's flexibility that has been created.

I was able to take a hold of the unriveted top end of this vertical channel and carefully swing it forward in a pivoting manner. At this point the



channel is pivoting out and away from the window on the rivet that we are trying to save. While carefully working at it, I was able to slide the old windows out without damaging the channel from the binding action.

If you have any intentions of replacing the old vertical weatherstrip that is riveted to this channel assembly, this is a time to replace them. As stated, this vertical weatherstrip happens to be riveted. If you drill out these small flat pop rivets and remove this vertical weatherstrip before attempting to remove the side windows, it will give you the room that you will need to swing this channel open without having to remove your rear window at all. I mentioned the removal of my rear window because I happened to be having it replaced, and that it did prove added flexibility but not necessary for the job at hand. The rivets used to retain the vertical weatherstrip appear to be a standard pop rivet and provide no problem as to originality. Keep in mind there could be small differences in hard tops from year to year. I hope it works as well for you as it did for me.

A.C. FILTER

If you have a large A.C. Dome fuel filter and would like to know if it fits the year Vette you have, remove the glass bowl and element. Inside you will see the year cast into the top inside.

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