SIDE TRIM RETAINERS—ONE MORE TIME

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This topic has been touched on in restoration and servicing guides. Even so it never fails to come up at technical sessions time and time again. I believe it's worth touching on one more time.

The topic regards the side trim molding S clip retainers on 1956 to 1961 cars. The side trim is held in place by two different types of retainers. The first type is a fastener with a T bolt assembly. The T bolt clip slides behind the molding; the end with the bolts fits through a hole in the fender. The bolt is secured from the inside of the fender by a washer and nut. The second fastener is a S clip retainer and is the fastener that is always in question.

This S clip retainer is used to secure the back end of the side fender molding's, top and bottom. It is necessary to use a different type of fastener at these points because there is no access behind this area of the fender to secure nuts to the T bolt style of fasteners.

The S clip is a much different type of clip. It is a small piece of bent metal with a hole in it, and is secured in place with a slotted screw with a totally flat profile head. The screws for this clip, screw right into the fiberglas, securing the clip retainer tightly to the body. The side molding then snaps directly on over the clip by hooking the top part of the molding on to the top part of the retainer and snapping the bottom part of the molding over the bottom part of the retainer. Be sure to screw the clip retainer to the body in the correct position, refer to the sketch drawing view D. The top molding utilizes one of these S snap clips at the first position at the back positions.

The clips are still available over the G.M. counter and also from Eckler's. They run about a dollar each. You will need six clips in total, three for each side of the car. The G.M. description is a "Retainer." The G.M. part number as of 1989 was still 3730268. I did have a problem when trying to find the proper fitting screws that are used to hold the clips to the fiberglas. The screws that have to be used must have a completely flat surface and must have a low enough profile to fit totally flush, with the surface of the clip. This is necessary for the fender molding to seat properly over the clip without hitting the top of a large screw. My problem was trying to find such a screw. I did a great deal of looking but could not find the correct fitting screws. I solved the problem by using a tapered screw and grinding the head flat until it fit flush inside the clip. I finished the job by cutting a screw driver slot back into the screw with a hack saw. The S clips work perfectly as they were intended.

As mentioned previously, the S clip retainer has been described before in several publications. Acquiring a good Corvette library is essential, it enhances your enjoyment of your car and your hobbie.

There is a saying in the coin collecting hobby "buy the book before the coin." The saying could do for many hobbies. I remember the first Corvette I bought, it was advertised as being 95% complete. After six years and more than a few dollars later the car was near 95% complete. The first thing that I bought was the car the second thing I bought was Nolan Adam's Corvette Restoration and Technical Guide, I wish it had been the other way around. Over the years, it has proven to be of most valuable assistance in the restoration of my cars. Buy the book before the part and start your Corvette library.