

Hibernation Projects for T-bird Lovers

With winter upon us, many of us experience cabin fever. However, there are small projects one can do during this time to make our Thunderbirds flight worthy coming this spring. I have collected cars since the early nineties. I have done small tasks on my long -term projects during the winter months, these include but are not limited to:

- *Upholstery work, winter time is a slow time for upholstery shops, and a good time to have those seat covers, convertible tops, or vinyl tops replaced on your beloved thunderbird.

- *Re-chroming bumpers or trim items, this is also a slow time for chrome shops.

- *Having that radiator boiled and rodged out or rebuilt, it is much better to tackle this task now than in the summer with temperatures in the high 80's or 90's, I know, because I did this to my daughter's Explorer this past summer at Jefferson Pointe's parking lot.

- *Simple projects, such as repainting, air cleaners, valve covers, manifolds, bumper jacks, and other accessories. Authentic decals and spray paints are available from many T-bird vendors. Make sure the temperature is close to 50 degrees for the paint to adhere.

For the mechanically inclined, rebuilding many of the complicated systems on a Thunderbird:

- *Rebuilding, replacing, or lubricating power window motors, window tracks, and gears. Use caution, and read all safety warnings in the shop manual when working on this system.

*Rebuilding, replacing, or sending out carburetors, fuel pumps, and gas tanks during the winter time. During show season, any delay can keep you from driving and enjoying your car.

*Maintaining the convertible top on 1958-1966 Thunderbirds, the convertible top mechanism is the most complicated system of all these years on Thunderbirds. If your top works, more power to you, many of them don't, and following the thoroughly written shop manual and trouble-shooting guides available, can make a convertible top operational. Before contemplating making a top operational, study the shop manuals and electrical diagrams to familiarize yourself with relays, circuit breakers, fuses, and the hydraulic system on this complicated system. Many times a faulty circuit breaker or relay will cease the top's operation. After the electrics are sorted out, one must evaluate the operation of the top pump, lift cylinders, for the deck and top, to evaluate their function. This was an engineering marvel in its time, I will discuss its history in the future. I have two vehicles, a 64 Lincoln and 64 T-bird with this coveted convertible top.

*Maintaining the convertible top electrics of my 64 T-bird, include wire brushing and spraying contact spray and di-electric on the many electrical connections, this provides trouble free convertible top operation. I also do this on power window and seat connections on my cars. This is a good winter time project.

During the winter time, a heated garage or building would be ideal, however, most of us do not have this luxury, and many people use portable heating devices, be acutely aware of any hazards when using portable heating units. Our club does not want to lose any member from poor shop safety. This is the topic of our next tech newsletter.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry L. Sneary

P.S. Congratulations to new club member Keaton Irwin on the recent acquisition of his 62 Landau, and Keith Landis on the recent purchase of a nice 63 convertible in the rare color, Tucson Yellow, as younger members of our club. We welcome you. If you have any questions regarding the maintenance, restoration, or operation of your T-bird. Please feel free to contact the many knowledgeable members of HVTC.