

January 23, 2007
31 chevy progress - 12th status



A lot of progress has been made since my last report. The old running board rubber has been stripped off. I used a propane torch to melt the rubber and used a putty knife to scrape it off. I sandblasted off the rest of the rubber residue. I have started a search for running board mats and trim. Both are currently out of reproduction, but are supposed to be available soon.



I removed the door hinges and blasted them, removed the hinge pins and have ordered replacements. After some research, I learned that the hinges were installed in the door post with both machine and wood screws and have ordered correct replacements. I removed the hood hinge pins with a punch and a drill motor, after using lots of WD40, and ordered stainless replacements. I used a chemical stripper to remove most of the paint from the body and fenders, and I sandblasted or sanded the fenders, fender braces, splash aprons, doors, gas tank cover, hood, cowl, exterior sun visor, and front bumper bracket to remove the rest of the paint and rust. I chose to sand parts

with flat panels that could have been warped by sandblasting. I will sand and sandblast the body the same way after the rest of the wood is installed in the roof area, and the body is off the frame again. Unfortunately, I have not received the rest of the wood yet, even though it was ordered before Thanksgiving.



Most of the parts I blasted have now been primed with etching primer, to assure good adhesion to the bare metal. After priming them we noticed that the left front and rear fenders are pretty rough. Tommy can save the front one, and I have started a search for another left rear. Unfortunately, the suppliers have advised that reproduction ones are not available 'til March.



I temporarily installed the fenders, splash aprons, running boards and gas tank cover to make sure things fit together properly, and Tommy has done some of the initial straightening of those parts with his hammer and dolly.

He will finish working them off the car. The patch panels for the door bottoms have been received, and I have removed the two pieces of wood from the bottom of each door to make room for Tommy to install the patches. I found that wood to be rotten, and my friend John and I have discussed making replacements out of ash. With a little effort and a lot of WD40, the same key will now operate the passenger door and trunk locks. To prepare them for re-plating, I will remove the lock cylinders from each by drilling out a small lock pin. I removed the steel channels from the bottoms of each door window and sandblasted them. They appear to be in very good shape. The old glass will make good patterns for safety glass. The windshield glass is broken and will not be good for a pattern, but a friend on the Vintage Chevrolet Web site has sent me a pattern for it. That site also provided me with a diagram for the firewall, showing where the holes for cables and wires should be. As a result, I found that I have only one extra hole, and Tommy can patch that. When I blasted the lower radiator shell, I noticed that parts of it were made of bronze and probably were chrome plated originally. After verifying that, I ordered one that has the re-plated chrome panels already installed. When buying new tires for my pickup last week, I learned how to read the date codes on tires, and yesterday I checked the dates on the 31's tires and found that 4 were made in 1982 and 2 were made in 1989. All six appear to be new and never driven. Apparently, they were stored inside all those years. When I remove them to sandblast the wheels, I will inspect them further to be sure they are road-worthy.