

Unique Solutions to Common Problems

By John Sims

In-Car Thermostat Check Device

Whenever it was necessary to verify a Thermostat's functioning, I would remove it, place it in a pot of water and while holding a candy thermometer, heat the water and wait until the thermostat popped thereby verifying the temperature at which it opened.

It occurred to me that there may be a better way.

While holding a meat thermometer in the top tank of the radiator it occurred to me that if I could fabricate something to hold it other than my hand, I would be ahead of the game.

A quick trip to Home Depot gave me the solution. Take a two inch PVC coupler, their part number E940J, notch it for the overflow tube, place it on the radiator fill opening and insert the thermometer. (I used my wife's Pyrex Meat Thermometer – will have to buy her a new one.) With a radiator full of coolant, the tip does not touch metal – just coolant.

As the pointer on the meat thermometer reaches 160, 170, etc. degrees, I lift it out and see if coolant is circulating. I then replace it and remove it at 10 degree increments. This tells me roughly at what temperature the thermostat is opening.



Necessary parts.



Finished Tool

Spray Can Storage Device

In order to keep my spray cans organized, I bought a 24 “bin” over the door shoe rack at Wal-Mart (assume that they are available at other stores as well.) This holds 24 cans visibly making it easier than shuffling through shelves to find the one can that is needed. I have mine hung on a parts cabinet but they can go almost anywhere. For five bucks, aggravation is gone.



Cold weather spot heater

When the temperature falls in the winter it is not easy to do any touch up painting or use adhesives. Working on the car I realized that the floor work lights put out a considerable amount of heat. With this in mind, I aimed them at a spot that I was touching up, the metal temperature quickly raised up to about 80 degrees and I could touch up the paint and have it dry properly. I also used this to use automotive adhesives to glue down some rubber parts.

