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SEEL

CORVAIR MINNESOTA NEWSLETTER

December 2012

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

First of all I'd like to thank everyone for entrusting me with the duties of club president for another year. I would have to say that this was a challenging year as I had many distractions that kept me busy. Not to say that 2012 wasn't fun, I just wanted to have more time to do Corvair things.

As they say, there's always next year. 2013 is shaping up to be a year full of Corvair things. We already have a May trip planned as well as a fall run. The CORSA convention is in Michigan, which is a very doable drive. There's the Hemmings Great American Race that leaves from St. Paul and while it's spendy to participate, it'll be fun to watch the cars take off from the fairgrounds. Of course there will be car shows, drive in meetings, and parades. Get your calendars ready.

Speaking of calendars, it was mentioned at our last meeting that we should put together a club calendar. Obviously it's too late for 2013, but we could certainly do something for 2014. We would need photos of club members with their cars (or just their cars) for each month. We could select the month by birthday. For example my birthday is in October so my '69 could be one of the featured cars in October. A lot of calendars now run 16 months so we would need at least 16 featured cars and owners. This is something that we could sell at events like GMCCA as a fund raiser. The pet rescue groups I use do this all the time. This sounds like a great April event.

I'd also like to feature birthdays in future SEELs (with the editor's approval of course). Just a simple list of names and the date of their birthday for the month is all we need. We don't need the year as everyone knows we're all old (well most of us). If you would like to be mentioned, just send me an e-mail and let me know when your birthday is. I've seen this in other newsletters and think it would make the club even more personable than it already is.

The Holiday Party is coming up fast. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at Latuff's on Dec. 9th with *two* good arms (Cara has still banned me from using ladders). For the migratory members of the club and anyone else who can't make it to the party, have a Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year.



Stay tuned,
Lee Knaut
CMI President



General membership meeting

November 13, 2012

The Meeting was called to order by CMI President Lee Knauf at 7:10 p.m. with 15 members present. New member Ralph Diers of Howard Lake was introduced. Ralph purchased Cliff Picht's '66 red convertible.

Gary Nelson mentioned the car show held at the Black Dog power plant in Burnsville on a Wednesday. Gary said that attendance was good and the club should consider having a presence at next year's show.

President Lee Knauf read the meeting minutes from October. The minutes were approved as read.

Treasurer's report was given. Last month's balance was 3330.75, expenses were \$104.48 with no income; current balance is \$3226.27.

Upcoming events. The only items on the calendar are the voter's meeting (tonight), the Board of Director's meeting on November 29th, and the Holiday/ Dues party (in lieu of a meeting) on December 9th.

The Adopt a Highway event was a success, as reported by Cliff Picht, with 14 people on clean up. Breakfast before, and pie after made the event that much better. Although the movement of cars was initially confusing, Cliff had a good plan for covering the clean up area and moving people efficiently. We will have the next clean up day in the spring.

The Holiday/ Dues party is coming up on Sunday, December 9th at Latuff's Pizzeria. Social hour begins at 5:30 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres will be served (sponsored by CMI) and entertainment will be provided by Dennis Carney. STEP will once again be the recipient of our holiday donations.

Bill Cook mentioned the play Christmas on the Ranch, playing at the Plymouth Playhouse as a possible club activity. Group pricing is \$27 each if 12 or more attends. The club will be polled by a show of hands at the Holiday/ Dues party.

Bill Cook also spoke about the proposed Winona fall tour. He has reserved rooms and will assess interest at the Holiday/ Dues party.

Fran Schmitt has proposed a spring bus trip to House on the Rock. The trip would be a three day tour, with some meals included and will be arranged by Valley Tours of Stillwater.

Fran proposed that we add a position to the board for a person to coordinated events. After much discussion it was decided to not adopt the proposal. With a redesign of the website in the works, upcoming events will be displayed more prominently.

Election nominations were closed with current officers being nominated. Upon unanimous voice vote, Lee Knauf was re-elected as President, Gary Nelson as Vice-President, Chuck Johnson and Secretary and Ray Alexander as Treasurer.

The business portion of the meeting was concluded with the auction of a pair of Corvaire beverage coasters won by Ron Cowden and a Corvaire Parking Only sign won by Ralph Diers.

Fran Schmitt described the modification of axles to accommodate later Chevrolet 5-bolt pattern wheels on his Early convertible. He is using a Late differential which is 2" wider with bolted yokes. Fran used FC axles and had the splines cut longer.

Gary Nelson did a show and tell tech session by displaying an aftermarket tube grill for an Early, a cut off early grill (cut for an exhaust pipe). He also showed an ignition coil he had cut in half and a torque converter that was disassembled.

Gary also discussed two instances that occurred within a short period of time where engines refused to run, or ran poorly. In both cases he cleaned the distributors so they would ground to the engine and the problem was solved.

The meeting was concluded at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Herkenratt
(for Chuck Johnson)



Ky Michaelson – Rocketman

We were invited to visit with the Rocketman and his family. I didn't know of him but apparently he is well known in Hollywood! His house is FULL of rockets. It is also FULL of memorabilia from all of his Hollywood connections....apparently worked on 175 movies over a few decades. He (Ky Michaelson) and a bunch of his kids were ALL THERE TO WALK US THROUGH HIS HOUSE TO SEE ALL THE PATENTS ON THE WALLS and Rockets everywhere. Rocket bikes, sleds, cars, motorcycles, one-man jet packs, etc. were everywhere! I believe they said he was the first man to send a rocket out of the Earth's gravitational field. I snapped a few pictures of him and his house...to show all the rockets would be a couple hundred pictures....go see him sometime....he lives on Penn Ave about 20 blocks South of Gary Nelson's. One of the things we saw there was his indoor waterfall - into a swimming pool - and there was a bandstand where a live band was playing! In another room was an incredibly massive Bull's Horn mounted over a fireplace...doo-dads from Hollywood folks were everywhere. Fran



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UNCLE SCOTT SAYS

By Scott Aho #L-6808

Where we left off last month on our story of Chevrolet's Corvair. Ford's conventional compact Falcon was outselling Chevrolet's radical compact Corvair to such a degree that Chevrolet rushed out a conventional compact car of their own ... the '62 Chevy II.



Despite Corvair not selling as well as Ford's popular little Falcon, Corvair was picking up a following, especially after they added a sporty version of their cute little Corvair coupe in the spring of 1960. It was the bucket seat equipped Corvair Monza and something about this mid-year model hit well with Corvair buyers. It wasn't enough to knock Falcon off its perch, but enough to offer a 4-door sedan version of the Monza for '61. This too became a hit. The '62 Chevrolet offered a Monza station wagon and, later that model year, a convertible and turbo-charged Spyder version of the coupe and convertible. The wagons didn't sell, but, again, the sporty convertible and Spyder versions did. Chevy had stumbled on to something new with the fancy and sportier versions of the Corvairs.

Ford and Chrysler watched Monza sales with interest. If Corvair buyers like Chevy's compact with bucket seats, why not theirs? Late in '61, Ford introduced the bucket seat Falcon Futura. Then in '62, Plymouth started offering the bucket equipped Valiant Signet-200. Chevy even offered a Nova SS package for their Chevy II the second year out and mid-'63 Ford offered an even sportier Falcon 2-door hardtop and convertible called the Sprint.

None of these variations hurt the other compacts but, for whatever reason they never took off in same way the Monza did. Falcon, Valiant and Chevy II buyers were more interested and happy with buying the plain basic versions of each car where Corvair buyers were not. They were willing to spend extra money on the sporty Monza versions.

At this time the head of Ford Motor Company's Ford Division was a brilliant marketing man by the name of Lee Iacocca. Iacocca was very interested why people were buying the fancy Corvairs and not the plain Falcons. Futura and Sprint should have countered the Monza.

The big difference between Corvair and its competition? The Corvair, especially the 2-door had a cute European sporty car look to them. Dressed up Falcons, Valiants and Chevy IIs, still looked like the plain economy models they were based on.

Problems with Corvair? It was too much like a European car for the average American buyer, but, the people who like sporty compacts seemed OK with that. Corvair's next biggest problem lay in its aluminum engine in the back. Americans like cars with lots of horsepower. It was something both most European sporty compacts at the time and Corvair could not really offer. Corvair's aluminum flat-6 was limited in how big they could build it, without totally



redesigning it. It was, after all, originally designed to power an economy compact. It wasn't the performance car buyers really wanted. Since Corvair's engine shared nothing with any GM car engine, it was really too expensive to redesign. One big thing Falcon had going for it, is they could stick their new Fairlane small block V-8 into the Falcon, which they did with the Sprint. But sticking a V-8 in a Corvair was just not practical. Hanging a V-8 towards the rear really screwed up the Corvair's handling so people were putting V-8s in Corvairs and mainly at the expense of the car's back seat and a mid-engine V-8 Corvair at least handled somewhat OK.

Lee Iacocca looked at all of this, and thought, "Can we make a compact car that has the sporty look of a Corvair Monza or a sporty little European GT, but, unlike Corvair, have it share parts with other Ford products so it can be built cheaply, and," (this is the big one) "take a V-8?"

With that, Iacocca and his crew at Ford came up with the true Corvair killer. The '64 Ford Mustang was cute, compact, and inexpensive to build and it was offered with a V-8. We all know what a hit the Mustang was. Yet under the skin it was basically the same car as the Falcon and Fairlane only much cheaper and more acceptable to the American buyers' tastes.

Chevrolet saw the writing on the wall. Even though Corvair continued to sell well, it could not compete with Ford's new Mustang in the long run. Even with its well-received new bodies and suspension for '65, Corvair's time was coming to an end. In April of 1965, GM sent word to its Chevrolet Division to stop all work, except where required to meet government standards, on future Corvairs. It was time for something new.

Here is where we get back to Ralph Nader. If Nader's book *Unsafe At Any Speed* killed the Corvair, how does one explain that Nader's book was released in December of 1965, 8 months after GM decided Corvair's fate? How does Nader play into the Corvair story? And where did this myth begin?

We're out of time for now, but, stay tuned 'til next month.

www.autoswalk.com
for current event notices

The Deadline is close - sign-up by November 30th



Corvair Minnesota Holiday Party

**Sunday, December 9th, 2012 at LATUFF'S PIZZERIA
10820 Highway 55, Plymouth – just west of Hwy 169**

Social Hour: 5:30 pm Dinner: 7:00 pm

Cash Bar with Pizza Appetizers

Cost is only \$20.00 per person (check payable to CMI)

MENU CHOICES:

Baked Meat Lasagna

Chicken Parmesan

Golden Fried Jumbo Shrimp

Italian Sampler (Rigatoni, Ravioli, Spaghetti & Meatballs)

Dinners include: Salad, Beverage & Dessert

Chicken & Shrimp Dinners also include Pasta

Questions/directions: call Bill Cook @ 612-940-9179

Remember to bring your donation for the STEP Program

(See details elsewhere in the SEEL)

**** \$20.00 dues for 2013 are payable at the Party or mail check to ****

Ray Alexander

901- Woodlawn Court

Burnsville, MN. 55337-3627

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***** Annual CMI Holiday Party Response *****

Name _____ Lasagna ___ Chicken ___ Shrimp ___ Sampler___

Name _____ Lasagna ___ Chicken ___ Shrimp ___ Sampler___

Cost: \$20.00 per person (make your check payable to CMI)

Mail this response with your check for the Party no later than November 30th to:

CMI Holiday Party

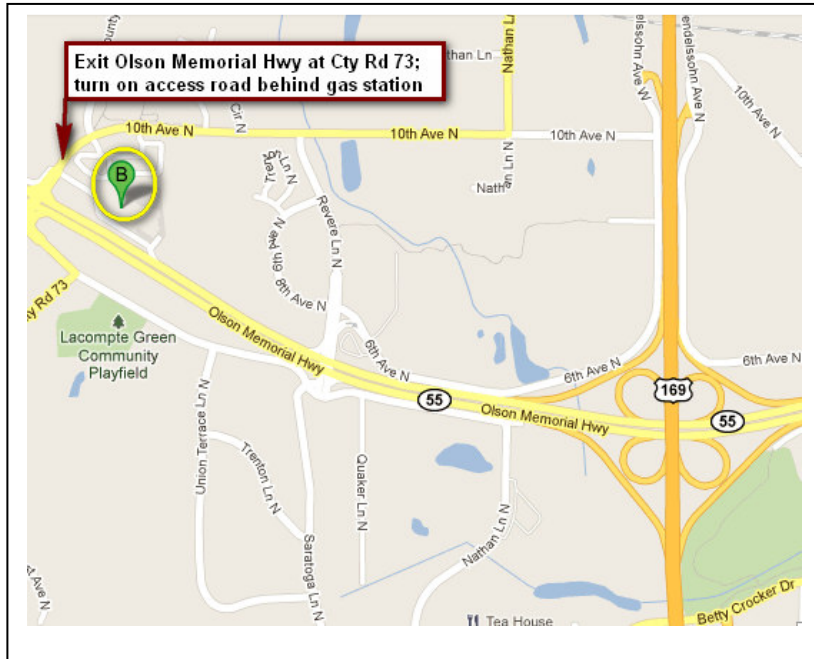
Bill & Carol Cook

1106 - 33rd St SE

Buffalo, MN 55313

Latuff's Pizzeria 10820 Highway 55, Plymouth, MN
(763) 545-2914

Corvair Minnesota's Annual Holiday/ Dues Party



S.T.E.P. will again be our Holiday/Dues Party charity this year. The people at S.T.E.P. have informed us that these items are needed....

- * CASH - STEP can get a better deal on food than an individual can.
- * CUB gift cards.
- * Personal care items: Toothpaste/brushes, Deodorant, Hand lotion/ bar soap, Perfume etc.

As with Susan's charities, "Hotel shampoo and Soap" are always welcome. If you wish to Purchase Christmas gifts:

- * Toys and games for younger children (please no \$-store toys)
- * \$15 - \$30 gift cards for older children - like from Target, are great.

Questions? Call **Mary Schmit** at 952.929.9174
(Thanks Mary!)



Racing legend John Fitch dies at 95

By: Don Klein on October 31, 2012

We lost more than just one of our own early Wednesday [Oct 31st]. We lost a national treasure. At age 95, American John Cooper Fitch--the first Sports Car Club of America national champion and a star in European sports-car racing in the 1950s and '60s--died at 1:20 a.m. from Merkel carcinoma, a rare skin cancer, at his home surrounded by family in Lime Rock, Conn.

Fitch, who went on to become a pioneer in racing safety, was born in Indianapolis on Aug. 4, 1917. After his parents divorced, his mother married an executive at the Stutz company who introduced his young stepson to racing at Indianapolis Motor Speedway. But the boy wasn't impressed by what he saw.

"A bunch of cars going around in a circle. What's the point?" was a question he posed often, even later in life.

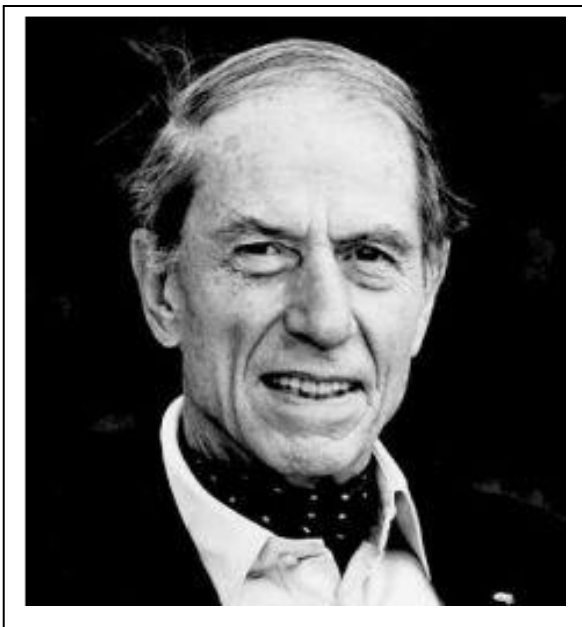
His first passion was airplanes, not cars, so it is not surprising that when World War II broke out, he volunteered to become a pilot. He was in England at the time (1939) on an extended trip to "see the world" and tried to join the RAF, since the United States hadn't yet joined the war. When this proved impossible, he returned to the U.S. and, in 1941, volunteered for the Army Air Corps. Fitch took easily to flying, and attained the rank of captain quickly, serving in northern Africa before entering the battle in Europe.

When Fitch returned to the U.S., he was among the many young pilots who'd developed the need for speed during the war. He had also developed an awareness of road racing, having witnessed an event at Brooklands in the U.K. while on his grand tour. Unlike Indy's "roundy round," this form of motorsport appealed to Fitch, so road racing became his logical outlet.

Fitch's motorsports achievements have been immortalized by numerous awards, including his induction into the Corvette, SCCA (inaugural class), Sebring, New England Racer, and Motorsports of America Halls of Fame. In June of 2012, he was inducted into the Bloomington Gold Great Hall.

Although Fitch and his self-designed Phoenix sports car remained a common sight in the Lime Rock paddock until shortly before his death, the Le Mans reunion marked his last major public appearance. Close friends noticed a marked decline in Fitch's vitality after his wife, Elizabeth, died in 2009. But he was insistent upon remaining in their 1700s "homestead" in Lime Rock, which they purchased in 1956, when Fitch was named the track's first general manager. Despite his on-going soil contamination issues with the state of Connecticut (*Autoweek*, April 14, 2008), he did his best to go it alone at home, even at the expense of his declining health. To no-one's surprise, Fitch remained fiercely stubborn and independent to the end.

Read more: <http://www.autoweek.com/article/20121031/alms/121019873#ixzz2CpGgHeQY>



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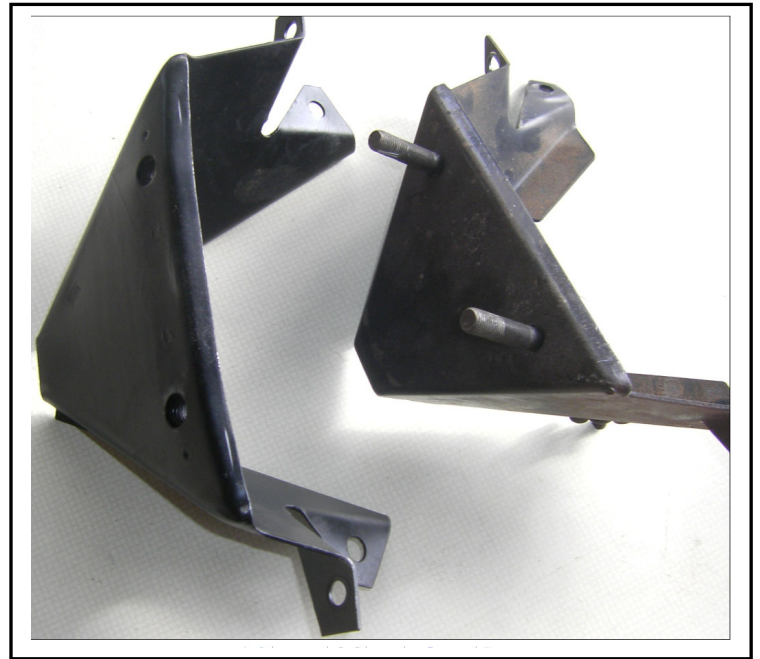


Spare Tire Mounts

I generally don't carry a spare tire anymore, so I have removed the spare tire mount from my engine compartments. The other day CJ was moving Abby's wheel chair from one of his CORVAIRS to the other one and found that where the W'chair fit nicely in the Late's trunk it wouldn't fit in the Early's. Trouble was CJ had put his spare tire in the '62's front as it was in his way - in back....in the process he had also removed his spare tire mount.

SO - - in order to put the chair in the front he needed to move the spare to the rear and didn't have a mount.....upon much digging I came up with these two shown in the photo. When I found one I didn't know if it fit the Early or the Late. The easiest way to tell - see photo - is there are two big studs in the Late and only nuts built into the Early's spare tire mount.

In the future - if you should ever need to know! - You will **forever remember** the Late mount has the studs and the Early does not.



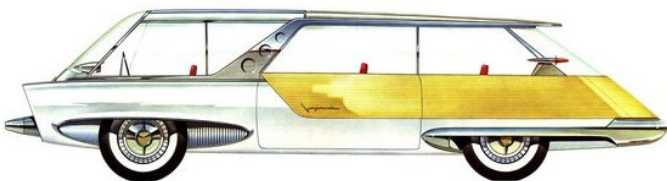
Corvair Futura – Local Connection

Recently some chatter has been noted on the internet regarding a customized Corvair called the Futura. The Futura has been seen in a number of venues including at the GMCCA show here in the Twin Cities. In 2000, Collectible Automobile magazine published a letter to the editor from a gentleman who explained where the Corvair Futura really came from:

"Your article on Rhys Miller in the April 2000 issue was of great interest to me because I pulled some of the Kaiser Aluminum ads of cars in the future in the Sixties and threw them in a file. One of those ads is the Waimea, shown in your article on page 77.

Five years ago, after restoring five cars, I decided to do something different. I dug out the old file, retrieved the sketch of the Waimea and decided to try to build it. Because the driver sits in the middle up front, there is no room for an engine up there, so I started with a Corvair Lakewood wagon. It attracts a lot of attention wherever I drive it.

Henry Larson
New Brighton, Minnesota"



The Waimea (*WY-may-ah*) an all-aluminum car



CMI Classifieds

Parts for Sale:

- '64 - steering box (core value \$145.00) rebuilt \$185.00
- '62 - 3 piece front trim NOS \$250.00
- '65 - front grill - very good \$100.00
- '63 - 700 rocker trim (narrow) NOS
- '62 - 500/700 (narrow) rocker trim NOS
- '61 - '63 car steering box - used (core value \$125.00) \$125.00
- '65 - '66 steering box - used (core value \$125.00) \$125.00
- '65 - '69 headlight bezels NOS (1 right, 2 left)
- '64 rear exhaust air grill NOS

Jerry Berge 480-250-8816

Wanted: 1963 Monza convertible

I am helping one of my fellow writers at Sports Car Market look for a 1963 Monza convert. He's specifically looking for black with a red interior, as that was his first car. No projects; he's looking for a well restored car (think Rich Buratto's Trophy Magnet as a '63) or exceptional original. He's not so fussy about power train, and may even consider a Spyder if it's in good enough condition. Need not be local, as he's in California, so it would be shipped. Contact me with details.

Brian Carlson

bmitchell@juno.com (best)

651-955-2290 (cell, better)

651-739-1608 (home, not so bad)

Mid Engine Trike, Corvair 6 cyl. 4speed, one of a kind, new 10" over, wide springer front end, with new front tire, 1994 corvette rear suspension, new disc brakes and wheel bearings , 325.50.15 rear tires on 12" alloy slots , trailer hitch, Harley gas tank, and a aluminum fuel tank , call ken 952-758-5078 \$6500 /possible trades. New Prague



Restorable **Rampside** plus parts and three engine (one is a180 Turbo) \$1800 OBO. Harry @ 320-594-3011 (Fran has some pictures)

1960-69 (including FC) **Steering Stabilizer**. Clark's part number C1460 (see on page 138 & 152) – new in box. Catalog price - \$98.70 (+ 8 lbs shipping). Your price: \$65. John Herkenratt (952) 935-4596

New: Engine electrical harness, ball joints, Pertronix ignition; headers (110 and 140); custom exhaust; Wallen rebuilt starters generators and alternators; mufflers; rebuilt flywheels; new belly pan for late; crank and rod bearings.
Used parts: complete engines, transmissions, differentials: call for parts – I have a large inventory.
Also: 1969 110hp engine (runs great, sealed & pretty) Rare – aftermarket tube style early air grill – Solid flywheel

I also offer full time Corvair repair

Gary Nelson 612-866-3247 or cell: 612-644-1258

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vincerohr@hotmail.com

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<http://www.corvaairminnesota.com/>

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CMI is a non-profit corporation, chartered with The CORVAIR Society of America. Send CORVAIR Minnesota's \$20.00 annual dues, payable by Jan 01, to the CMI Treasurer. Membership in CORVAIR Minnesota entitles you to the monthly newsletter, "The Leeky Seel", with free ads for members, a club window sticker, discounts on club activities, information on parts availability, and good advice on the preservation and enjoyment of the CORVAIR automobile.... Yeah!

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THE LEEKY SEEL

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TEMP - RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Hope you have safe and happy holidays!