



# Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME XLV, No. 5

May 2017



## Group Corvair's Spring Outing

### CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

*(There are **many** local events over the year, too many to list here; search Google for "Maryland, DC or Virginia Car Shows" to find more.)*

## May

14 – Last Corvair rolled off the Willow Run assembly 1:30 p.m. 14 May, 1969.

16 – Group Corvair Meeting, 7 p.m., Fratelli's Restaurant (the old Howard Johnson's), 5820 Landover Road, in Hyattsville, MD.

21 – West Friendship 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Car Show, Howard County Living Farm Heritage Museum, 12985 Frederick Rd, West Friendship, MD. For info: Al Zimmerman, 410-560-0237, email: [ximmcol@comcast.net](mailto:ximmcol@comcast.net)

27 – Bowie Memorial Day parade. GC participants will meet at Jim Govoni's home (12713 Keswick Ave., Bowie) at 9 a.m. and then drive to the staging area.

27 – 4<sup>th</sup> Annual FIRST Classic Car & Hot Rod Show, Greene Turtle, 3213 Solomons Island Road, Edgewater, MD.

## June

2-4 – Virginia Vair Fair, Lexington, VA. The host hotel is the Howard Johnson, Lexington on I-81. Call (540-463-9181) and ask for the Vair Fair rate (\$74.95) which includes breakfast. Contact Anne Davis (757-471-5207) for more information and the registration form is at:

<https://sites.google.com/site/centralvirginiacorvairclub>

10 – “Wings ‘n Wheels” show, Frederick, MD. 10 – 2, Frederick Municipal Airport, 421 Aviation Way, Frederick, MD. <https://www.aopa.org/community/nacc/aopa-wings-and-wheels>

18 – Sully Plantation/George Washington Chapter Model A Club sponsored annual Father’s Day show.

20 – Group Corvair Meeting, 7 p.m.

23-25 – Carlisle Chevrolet Nationals (This replaces the old GM Nationals, but all GM brands are welcome.)

27 – July 1 – CORSA International Convention, Independence, MO.

## July

2 – “Not Quite Fourth of July” picnic, 1 – 5 p.m., Jerry & Diana Yates’ home, 13461 Overbrook Lane, Bowie, MD.

14 – 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Collector Car Appreciation Day. For info and local events:

[http://www.semasan.com/page.asp?content=celebrate\\_collectorcar\\_day&g=SEMAGA](http://www.semasan.com/page.asp?content=celebrate_collectorcar_day&g=SEMAGA)

30 – Asphalt Angels “Summer Sizzler” car show, Bowie, MD.

## Minutes of the April Business Meeting

Marolyn Simpson

The April 15 meeting of Group Corvair was at the Fisherman’s Inn in Grasonville, MD. After a sumptuous lunch, Jim Govoni called the meeting to order at 2:25.

Jim Simpson gave the treasurer’s report: It was pretty short -- there was neither income nor expenses during the last month.

The first item on the agenda was the Bowie Memorial Day Parade on Saturday May 27. Four members signed up to participate: Rob Neighbour, Jim Govoni, Jerry Yates, and Jim Simpson. Marolyn Simpson will send in the registration form and Jim and Marolyn will attend the parade meeting on May 10. Jim Govoni invited all the participants to meet at his house (12713 Keswick Ave, Bowie) at 9:00. We will then drive as a group to the staging area at the Bowie High School Annex.

Jerry and Diana Yates have invited all club members to their home (13461 Overbrook Lane, Bowie) for the annual Not-Quite-Fourth-of-July picnic. It will be on Sunday July 2 from 1:00 to 5:00. More details of the picnic will be discussed at the next meeting on May 16.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40.

## Spring Outing to Fisherman’s Inn

Marolyn Simpson

In the spring when the weather warms up and the days are getting longer, thoughts often turn to getting out on the road. Group Corvair members were no exception. So, we decided to convoy to the Fisherman’s Inn in Grasonville. On a beautiful Saturday, April 15, Gus & Barbara Torbert, Jerry & Diana Yates, Jim Govoni, and Jim & I gathered in the parking lot at the McDonalds on Rt. 50 just before the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. At noon we headed east across the bridge, enjoying the view of the water and a number of sail boats. Several miles later we crossed the Kent Narrows Bridge, took the first exit, and arrived at the Fisherman’s Inn.

At the restaurant we met up with Rob and Andrew who had driven from Rehoboth Beach to join us for lunch. Shortly after we were seated at a long table in the middle of the restaurant Bob and Carol Hall arrived. They had been delayed

on the beltway and didn't get to the rendezvous point (McDonalds) before we left. And short time after that, Lee Cramp arrived. The staff at the restaurant was very accommodating in spite of the busy lunch time crowd, bringing in another small table and adding it to our already long table.

We ordered a variety of food, all of which looked good. After a lot of lively conversation it was time for the dessert menu. The deserts all looked too good to pass up so of course we had to give them a try. (On the way into the restaurant Rob had notified the servers that it was Jim S.'s birthday, so when the deserts came, the whole staff brought out a piece of chocolate cake with a candle in it and after some "singing" they presented it to him.) You want to talk about "rich" chocolate cake! The layers of cake and fudge chocolate icing were about equally thick. Delicious!

After lunch we had a short meeting and then we all went out to the parking lot for our mandatory group photos. There were two Corvairs so we all gathered around them for the pictures.

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## Jim Govoni Preps His '60 for Upcoming Outings

Jim Govoni's beloved 1960 "Caveman" Corvair was showing the rigors of its long winter slumber. In particular, the battery had died during the long sleep. Of course the early Corvair uses a unique battery size – a "group 53" battery to be exact. It's a relatively long and narrow battery that is shared with only a handful of other cars, some 60's vintage Nissan pickups and the 1971 Plymouth Cricket(!). So that makes them somewhat rare and with rarity comes higher prices. But Jim was able to source one locally from Tri-State Battery in Gambrills, MD for \$129.50.

As you can see in the picture, it's a perfect fit and very vintage looking with its screw caps.

While Jim was at it, he installed the correct beauty rings and "dog dish" hub caps for his car. Now it's all ready for the upcoming Bowie Memorial Day Parade!



## Forty, Thirty and Twenty Years Ago This Month

Jim Simpson

May 1977 was an exciting month according to *Group Corvair Comments*. This was the month for the Freestate Corvair Affair miniconvention in Columbia, Md. Two major national vendors were planning to be there along with several local Corvair enthusiasts/businesses who will be bringing a good supply of hard-to-find parts. (I can only imagine how rare some of those parts are today, 40 years later!) In the Vair Vendor, we had seven cars plus a number of parts available. (Jim G. – there was a “mint” 1960 available with 10,000 miles on it!)

The sad news in May 1977, as reported in the *CORSA Communiqué*, was the death of Ed Cole in a private plane he was piloting. Ed Cole had been at General Motors for 44 years including seven years as president. During his long and illustrious career, he had been involved in everything from the development of military tanks during WW-II to the “small block” Chevrolet V8 to – most important for us – the Chevrolet Corvair. He was both a brilliant engineer and great corporate executive. 15 people were contending for CORSA Board of Director positions. Election results would be announced at the upcoming CORSA Convention in Minneapolis at the end of July. In the Corvair Classified, there was over a half page of '65 and '66 Corsas for sale – coupes, convertibles, turbos, 140s and even a Corsa Fitch Sprint conversion that had been featured in Motor Trend. Two Yenke Stingers were up for grabs along with the other six columns of Corvairs for sale along with another four pages of parts and accessories being offered.

The major club event reported in the May 1987 *Group Corvair Comments* was our participation in the 101<sup>st</sup> Hyattsville Parade. As it turned out, Group Corvair was moved to the front of the parade – the early T-Birds who were supposed to carry the dignitaries only turned out two cars. Six Corvairs, including a '63 van, were available in the Vair Vendor along with a major stash of late-model parts. (Someone was cleaning house!)

The May 1987 *CORSA Communiqué* focused on “international” Corvairs with letters from owners in Switzerland, Norway and Turkey. And it was CORSA Board of Directors election month with a somewhat smaller slate than the previous decade – only seven candidates! Larry Claypool was continuing his “Stock Is” series, this month examining the wheel well and rocker panel trim. And as usual for this time of year, the CORSA International Convention preparations were well underway; this year it was to be held in Chicago, IL. There were nowhere near the numbers of cars available in the CORSA Classified as there had been 10 years earlier, but still a good mix of years and models plus lots of parts were being advertised at what today seems like great prices.

In 1997, the CORSA International Convention was going to be earlier than usual, in mid-June to be specific. I wrote an article for the May 1997 *Group Corvair Comments* updating our progress toward getting my '66 Corsa restoration done in time. Marolyn and I had shifted into high gear to get the car completed; we'd finished the trunk and were now into the interior. The front seats had just been recovered, the floors cleaned and repainted, a new “Fitch Sprint” carpet for the rear cargo shelf had been made, and I'd rebuilt the carburetor. We'd even made a quick trip to the Virginia Vair Fair down in Williamsburg (down and back in one day) to pick up some essential parts from Clarks and Lon Wall who were vending there. There were some more notes on our plans for restoring the cut-away Corvair drive train. After a close examination and dividing the project into subtasks, it was starting to look a lot more doable. If you were looking for a car, the Vair Vendor had 16 available; the only model not represented was the Loadside/Rampside.

The May 1997 *CORSA Communiqué* had the schedule for the upcoming CORSA International Convention which was to be held in Lake Placid, NY. It was to be hosted by the Vermont Independent Corvair Enthusiasts (VICE) with Bill & Cathy Cotrofeld in charge. CORSA announced that they had a web site on this new-fangled “World Wide Web” thing. Bob Helt and Tom Schrum published an article on the Devin sports car, concentrating on the Devin “C” – the version that used early Corvair suspension and drive trains. Its performance was comparable to some leading commercial sports cars including Porsche, '62 Corvettes, Maserati and Jaguar XK-E. Not bad for an economy car engine... Among the Tech Topics was yet another method of attaching the late-model rear strut rods. Gary Baxter recommended installing a front side bolt and then using a bottle jack under the rear edge of the bracket to raise it into position. (Don't forget the jack stands when you are working under a car!) The CORSA Classified continued to shrink, now down to just over a page long – two pages if you include the wanted and parts ads.

## Other Newsletters

CORSA and other clubs have greatly improved the electronic distribution of club newsletters. I now receive 8 – 10 each month. While I skim them all for information that might be of interest to Group Corvair, I suspect that other's in the club might be interested in seeing them. If you are interested, just let me know ([simpsonj@verizon.net](mailto:simpsonj@verizon.net)) and I'll add you to the redistribution list.

## Tech Topics

Jim Simpson

**New Distributor!** I picked this up from the "Leaky Seal", the Corvair Minnesota newsletter. Fran Schmidt, the author, has been having problems with the Pertronix ignition system he had been using in his Corvairs so he decided to go a different route and move to an entirely new distributor. Seth Emerson ([sethracer@aol.com](mailto:sethracer@aol.com)) sells a complete replacement distributor using modern components – most are commonly available GM parts. It's a bit taller than the stock distributor but there is plenty of room. It has a vacuum advance and a user adjustable mechanical advance. (See last month's tech tips for a method to plot the advance curve.) According to Seth, these new distributors will fit any '61-'69 Corvair with the exception of cars with "low mounted" AC compressors. Unfortunately there is no pressure retard for turbo engines so some other provision for pressure sensing ignition retard has to be made. The distributor is available with several options so the best thing to do is check Seth Emerson's web page: <https://www.perfvair.com/stinger-ignition-distributors/>. While you are there, you might take a look at the other Corvair enhancements he's produced.

**Speaking of Distributors:** Mike Dawson in the Heart of America Corvair Association "VairCor" newsletter described a tool he made designed to assist changing the bushing on a stock Corvair distributor. Normal bushing drivers won't fit – the Corvair distributor body has ribs that prevent it from fitting. His solution is to use a piece of steel bar stock (3/4" wide x 1/8" thick about 4" long). He grinds or files the sides down to about 5/8". This will now fit down between the ribs and can be used to press the old bushing out. It would be best to use a press, but gentle use of a hammer would also work. Since the new bushing will go in from the other direction, standard pressing tools will work for installing the new bushing.

**Late Model Rear Camber:** This is something else I picked up from the "Leaky Seal". Fran Schmidt was not only having problems with his Corvair distributors, but apparently one of the rear suspension camber adjustment bolts on one of his late-model Corvairs was a bit loose. When that happened, the camber self-adjusted itself to a "maximum negative camber state" – that is, the affected rear wheel tilted with the bottom of the tire leaning way out from the car.

While negative camber may help in extreme cornering, the rest of the rear suspension is not exactly designed to operate with this much negative camber. In fact things begin to rub, particularly the drive shaft. When the drive shaft rubs, it wears. Since it is essentially a piece of thin-walled tubing, it doesn't take a lot of wear before it gets cut in two. Then all sorts of "interesting" things happen as the drive shaft starts flailing around in the rear wheel well. Of course if the rear camber adjustment does fail in this way – a pretty rare event -- you'll have lots of warning. The affected rear wheel will certainly look very strange with its extreme negative camber and I'm sure the rubbing will make lots of noise.

**For the Instrument Geeks:** If you are like me, you really don't like inaccurate automobile instruments. Take the gas gage; typically it may be more or less correct when the tank is full and when it is empty, but in between way off. I'd like to have a gage that when it says there's a half tank of gas, there really is a half tank of gas. Well here's a potential solution.

Technoverions (<http://www.technoverions.com/MeterMatchHome.html>) makes a black box that goes between most common sensors (gas tank senders, electrical oil pressure senders, resistive temperature senders, etc.) and makes corrections to the signal so the panel gage will read correctly. It will record and store up to four calibration points and interpolate between them to give a more accurate gage reading. It also has an optional LED alarm indicator which can be used to give high and/or low alarms. For instance, you could install a low gas indicator and set it for 1/4 tank or wherever you would like. Isn't it amazing what you can do with modern, inexpensive microcomputers?

## Vair Vendor

**Still For Sale:** 1964 Spyder Engine, best offer. Contact Bob Wildes, 410-778-8184 for more information.



**Someone needs to save this engine! It looks a bit neglected but complete. While the seller hasn't said so, I suspect it will end up in the dump if no one makes an offer soon.**

**For Sale:** 1961 Corvair 900 (Monza), 4-door, 21,000 original miles. Excellent condition inside and out, never any rust. Repainted a teal green (acceptable, but not a great paint job) with the original blue/green interior. Powerglide automatic, resealed engine with later model magnesium fan and alternator, fresh carburetors. Have all original books and paperwork as well as receipts for parts from Clarks Corvair Parts. Asking \$7,000. Contact John Mays, 410-221-8735 for more information.

**For Sale:** '61-'69 Gas Tank. Used, but cleaned and sealed by Jeff at the Corvair Ranch. Hasn't been used since, ready to go in your car. Asking \$60 or best offer. (Clark's reproductions are \$170 plus shipping!) Bob Lewis, Nanjemoy, MD. 301-246-4278, [rtl1936@gmail.com](mailto:rtl1936@gmail.com)

## Clark's Corvair Parts

**Clark's Corvair Parts** is keeping up with the times and going "green". Their 2017 Supplement is now on line on the Clark's Corvair Parts web site: [www.corvair.com](http://www.corvair.com) It includes their SALE PAGE on page 26. Clark's will provide a printed copy if you request one with your next order. You might also want to check their web site to see which shows they will be attending (they won't have their big display at the CORSA Convention this year but will be taking orders and providing a show discount on those orders).

**Group Corvair** welcomes anyone in the Washington, DC area who has an interest in the Chevrolet Corvair. We sponsor a variety of events including shows, tech sessions, and social gatherings. Dues are \$12.00 a year, payable to Group Corvair and sent to the treasurer's address. Group Corvair is a chapter of the Corvair Society of America (CORSA), P.O. Box 607, Lemont, IL 60439-0607, website: [www.corvair.org](http://www.corvair.org) CORSA memberships are available at various levels with corresponding dues. As a member, you will receive the award-winning CORSA Communiqué and be eligible to attend all CORSA national events, including the annual convention.



**Jerry Yates and his Yenko Stinger at the “Crescent Wine & Beer” Car Show,  
Bowie Marketplace, April 9**



**Group Corvair at the Fisherman’s Inn.  
(Barbara Torbert seems to be hiding behind Lee Cramp!)**

**NOW!**  
**THE REVOLUTIONARY**  
**Corvair**

**BY CHEVROLET**  
**WITH THE ENGINE IN THE**  
**REAR WHERE IT BELONGS**  
**IN A COMPACT CAR! ★ ★ ★**



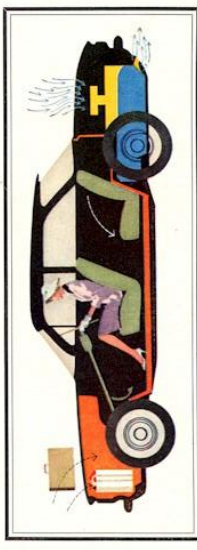
You have your choice of two Corvairs—the one's the 4-door Corvair 700.

*The only American car with an airplane-type horizontal engine!*  
*The only American car with independent suspension at all 4 wheels!*  
*The only American car with an air-cooled aluminum engine!*

The rumors about this one were right—but they didn't go far enough. Because here, for the first time, is a truly compact, economical American car that retains the ride and 6-passenger comfort you're used to in a big one. The key to this small miracle: America's first and only rear-mounted aluminum engine—a revolutionary 6-cylinder power plant that combines compactly with the transmission and drive gears in one lightweight package. You'll get up to 30% more miles to a gallon and—because this engine is air-cooled—you'll never have to fuss with antifreeze.

**Floor is genetically flat for more foot room.** Corvair's size—some 5 inches lower, 2½ feet shorter, 1,300 pounds lighter than conventional sedans—makes it a joy to jockey through traffic and park in tight spots. Yet its unique Unistrut Body by Fisher offers plenty of room for 6 broad-shouldered passengers. And, thanks to Corvair's rear engine, the floor is practically flat, front and rear, so there's generous foot room for everybody. **Easy handling without power assists.** Shifting engine weight to the rear also adds extra ground-gripping traction and

gives better compact car handling and braking. And with independent suspension at all 4 wheels, Corvair rivals much more costly cars in the poised, unflinching way it rides. **A price your budget will appreciate.** Wonder of your money buys! . . . Chevrolet Division of General Motors, Detroit 2, Michigan.



**THE FLOOR IS PRACTICALLY FLAT** for more foot room. Trunk's up front—and you can also have a handy folding rear seat, optional at extra cost, for added storage space. Lightweight rear engine, smooth power of horizontally opposed pistons. And wrapping up all these brilliant features is Corvair's brilliant new styling—pure and simple as modern architecture. THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A NEW CAR—AND NO COMPACT CAR LIKE THE CORVAIR! . . . BY CHEVROLET!