



Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME XLV, No. 10

November 2017



Happy Hour at John Bassford's Double Gate Farm.

Visit arranged by Gus & Barbara Tobert. Thanks!

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

November

21 – **Group Corvair Meeting**, 7 p.m., at the Old Bowie Town Grille, corner of Chestnut & 11th St, 8604 Chestnut Ave, Bowie, Md. This is in the “Old Bowie” section of town, next to the railway museum. As usual, we’ll meet at 7 for dinner to be followed by a business meeting.

December

17 – **Group Corvair Christmas Meeting**, 4 p.m. Note this is a Sunday afternoon! Marolyn & Jim Simpson will be hosting the club for a Christmas season dinner and meeting. The address is 3845 Wayson Rd, Davidsonville, MD. Details, including menu, to be discussed at the November meeting.

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Minutes of the November Meeting

Marolyn Simpson

The original plan for the October 17 meeting was to meet at Kilarney House in Davidsonville, but as they say, the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry. When Jim Simpson called to make the reservation he was told that there was another function there that night but they could reserve a table for us. When Jim Govoni arrived at the restaurant shortly before 7:00 the parking lot was full. That generated a flurry of frantic phone calls and we decided to meet instead at the Broadneck Grill in Edgewater--a short distance down Central Ave.

In spite of the sudden change, shortly after 7:00 eight club members had arrived at the Broadneck Grill for dinner. Jim G. called the meeting to order at 8:15. Jim S., treasurer, reported that during the last month he had paid \$35 for the CORSA chapter fee.

Jerry Yates has been working on the design for the Group Corvaire feather flag. He has a couple of designs worked out but he did not have them at the meeting. He said he would email his ideas for club member comments.

The Rockville Classic Car Show was held on October 14. Because the early morning was overcast with occasional light rain the number of cars was down a bit from previous years with 502 cars on the field. Although there were four Corvairs pre-registered, there were only two on the field--Jim S. and Jerry. The two cars, though, did draw a lot of attention. Of course having our assigned location down by the food didn't hurt. The rest of our row was filled with 18 VWs. In addition, there were some interesting cars in the for sale section. The planned show within the show (a collection of custom cars) did not happen.

There was a discussion about the Holiday dinner/meeting. It was set for Sunday, December 17 starting at 4:00 at the Simpson home in Davidsonville. The details will be discussed further at the November meeting.

The November meeting will be at the Old Bowie Town Grill, 8604 Chestnut Ave, Bowie.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55.

Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show

Jim Simpson

The Saturday after the AACA Fall meet in Hershey rolled around once again and with it came the annual Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show. The day dawned overcast with some drizzle but the forecast was for it to gradually clear with reasonable temperatures and most importantly, no rain. We made a quick call to the Rockville show hotline to confirm that the show was a "go" and we were on our way.

Marolyn and I met up with Jerry Yates in Bowie and bombed our way around the Beltway. Luckily traffic was light (you never can tell on the Beltway, even at 8 a.m. on a Saturday morning) and we arrived at the Rockville show at about 8:30. We were the first Corvairs to arrive. Unfortunately, we were also the only Corvairs to be there! In past years, we've regularly turned out somewhere between six and eight cars, sometimes more. Last year we had eight. I can only hope that it was the gray skies that scared them off.



That said the gray skies didn't seem to discourage too many other car owners. I assisted in the registration and I know I was busy right up until we closed the gates at 11 a.m. (The Rockville show has a firm cutoff on arrival time. At 11 a.m. the show starts and the city officials don't want cars driving across the grounds and potentially endangering spectators.)

I guess the morning overcast did discourage a few people since the car count was down about six percent this year. The official count (I make the count based upon registration packets given out) was 502; last year we had 535. But the weather didn't seem to bother the spectators. We'll get the estimate at the Rockville show review and planning meeting this winter, but it seemed there were about as many spectators as usual, or something like 10,000 visitors.

As usual, both Jerry and Marolyn had a steady stream of people stop by to view our cars and tell their own Corvair



experiences. These conversations are always interesting and in some cases give us a chance to squash another Corvair

myth or two. I did have a lengthy chat with a gentleman who has an amazing racing resume. He and his son are both Ferrari drivers. (His son trained as a racing driver but went into finance instead.) This gentleman regaled me with his experiences racing during what many people consider the golden era of sports car racing, the late 1950s and early 1960s. He ran in some of the legendary races both here and in Europe and knew the great names of the era. I just wish I could have recorded that conversation. For what it's worth, he admired our Corvairs.

Forty, Thirty and Twenty Years Ago This Month

Jim Simpson

This month forty years ago, the November 1977 *Group Corvair Comments* was once again rather short. Winter was setting in and the autocross and show season was at an end. Group Corvair was planning a winter tech session to "winterize" your Corvair. (Mostly shifting the air recirculation plate and putting on snow tires if you had them.) We listed five cars plus two engines for sale. And that was about it! Mike Lienhard, the editor, closed the newsletter with a mostly blank page saying "This space was reserved for your contribution to the newsletter." I know how he felt.

The *CORSA Communiqué* for November 1977 led off with a report of how Stinger drivers Jim Reeve and Eric Meislahn took 4th and 7th respectively at the SCCA Road Atlanta race! Two of the first three cars ahead of Jim were factory backed proving that even 11 year old Corvair Stingers were still pretty competitive. In a tech tip, it was pointed out that a common brake adjusting tool could be easily modified to be used as a push rod tube removal tool. Just grind or file the large end of the tool square then heat and bend it to the contour of the push rod tube. It will then fit up along the push rod tube and can be used to tap it out of the cylinder head. Did you need a car? If so, there were two and a half pages of Corvairs available. Pick a year and model and it was likely available.

Jumping ahead ten years and the November 1987 *Group Corvair Comments* calendar showed we were planning a "Fall Flea Fair Recovery Run". This was going to be a drive into the Virginia Piedmont region to visit a winery, buy a winter supply of apples and otherwise enjoy the late fall color. It was to be topped off with a dinner at Al & Peggy Harris' home. The newsletter also announced that Group Corvair was going to put in a bid for the 1991 CORSA International Convention and host it here in Washington. We were really into cooking back then. There was a full page of tempting recipes! Under tech topics, there was a discussion of a problem I'd never heard of before – radio static generated by the harmonic balancer. As it turned out, some of the rebuilt harmonic balancers used silicone rubber between the inner hub and outer ring. This type of rubber is an excellent insulator and when the engine is running, the harmonic balancer acted as a "Van DeGraff Generator". You've seen them in science museums and horror movies – big metal spheres with foot-long sparks jumping off them. The cure was to provide an electrical leakage path between the hub and outer ring. Conductive paint worked just fine. We had five Corvairs for sale, one of which was a parts car.

The cover of the *CORSA Communiqué* in November 1987 was devoted to vintage racing at Monterey. Of course it was backed up with a six page article about the race and racers. Corvairs were well represented with the Bill Thomas/Doug Roe 1960 race car, Jim Schardt's Yenko Stinger and even an appearance by the prototype Monza GT. Under Tech Topics, there were several interesting articles. Do you own a late model? Have you ever noticed that there seems to be a fair amount of free play with the U-joint saddles? Well, don't worry about it; the specs on even a brand new differential allow about 0.03" of play. Larry Claypool continued his series of "Stock Is" with a discussion of rear license plate lights. Based upon the CORSA Classified, the supply of used Corvairs was shrinking. There was just over one page of cars for sale – 1969 models were the most numerous. The back cover featured a "four-door Corsa" with just under 200,000 miles on it. Yes, it was a conversion from a Monza, but featured all the Corsa refinements.

Twenty years ago the November 1997 *Group Corvair Comments* reported on visiting the Corvair Preservation Foundation museum open house near Richmond. Marolyn and I had visited the museum during its grand opening a couple of years earlier but since then they had expanded the exhibits with additional cars and other memorabilia. In particular, they had the Astrovair and Electrovair. And if you are following the discussion on Virtual Vairs about the new experimental cooling fan you would be interested to know that the museum had one of the very few remaining Delrin fans that Chevrolet had tested on the Corvair on display. And in something of a flashback, there was a report on the '97 Rockville show; just like this year, there were very few Corvairs – three to be specific. But the spectator interest was just as great then as it is today. Closing the newsletter, the Vair Vendor had five cars for sale including two Rampsides.

Did you know that the Corvair engine was largely made from cast aluminum? If you didn't before, one glance at the front and rear covers of the November 1997 issue of the *CORSA Communiqué* would have shown you just how much aluminum went into the Corvair engine. This was backed up with an eight page article based upon a presentation given by John Debbink, the manager of the aluminum foundry in Messena, NY. In his words, they gained 20 years of aluminum casting experience in three years and successfully overcame a myriad of difficulties to make the castings that became the Corvair engine. His presentation closed with a little bit of a heartbreak. At the end of Corvair production, there were still some possible applications for the Corvair engine. In particular, General Dynamics was competing for a military vehicle contract that would use the Corvair engine. Chevrolet built 250 blue-printed engines for General Dynamics but they were never delivered. They went into storage, but as far as anyone knows, they were eventually just junked. In a related article, Dave Newell wrote an article about the experimental Corvair Modular Engine. The Corvair Preservation Foundation had just taken possession of one of the three known surviving complete modular engines. These modular engines were experiments to build anywhere from two-cylinder up to 12 cylinder air cooled engines for applications ranging from very small compact cars to military vehicles. Under Tech Topics, Lew Rishel had an article on Late-Model Shifter Adjustment; probably something worth checking out if you are having problems shifting a late-model transmission. And in closing, the CORSA Classifieds were down to a single page of cars for sale. In contrast to a decade earlier, the most numerous were the 1964 models.

Tech Topics

Jim Simpson

CORSA QR Code. Perhaps this isn't exactly a normal Corvair tech topic, but it does involve both high tech and Corvairs. What do all 20-somethings carry? A smart phone. How do commercial companies make it easy for those 20-somethings to get information on products? They use "quick reaction codes" or QRC for short.

Take a look at just about any piece of commercial paper – advertising, bank statements, etc., or many store shelves and you'll see a small square block of smaller black and white squares and rectangles. This is a 2-dimensional version of the now familiar barcode. It is now being used to provide a URL (internet address) to manufacturer's web sites so you can get more information on a product or service. To use it, you need a smart phone with a camera and the appropriate app. Just image the QRC with the phone camera and magically you will be connected to the appropriate web site. CORSA, not to be left out now has its own QRC! Just image it with a smart phone and you will be transported to the CORSA home page.



Vair Vendor

For Sale: 1965 Corvair Corsa Coupe, 140 hp, 4-speed. Yellow with black interior. This car belonged to a former Group Corvair member and has been parked in a dry garage for about the last 27 years. It was running when parked; the odometer indicates 63,779 miles on the car. There is paperwork that indicates that the engine was replaced at one time; the block is a "RM" code (Monza/500 140 hp manual transmission) vs. the "RB" Corsa 140 hp manual transmission engine. The engine can be turned



by hand. The interior is in generally decent condition although the side of the driver's seat has been patched with tape. The body has some rust in the usual places but it is not excessive; the floors and trunk seem to be in good condition. There has been some sheet metal damage that appears to be relatively easy to straighten out. The car will need a brake overhaul, tires and a cleaning of the fuel system in order to make it run. Overall this Corsa appears to be a sound basis for a restoration. Asking \$2,250. Please contact the owner at ldgray1@yahoo.com for more information.



For Sale: 1963 Monza Coupe. Low mileage – 40,555 miles at the moment. White with blue interior. Asking \$6,500, will consider most things as part of a trade. Kenneth Stone, 301-370-5824, Dayton, MD.

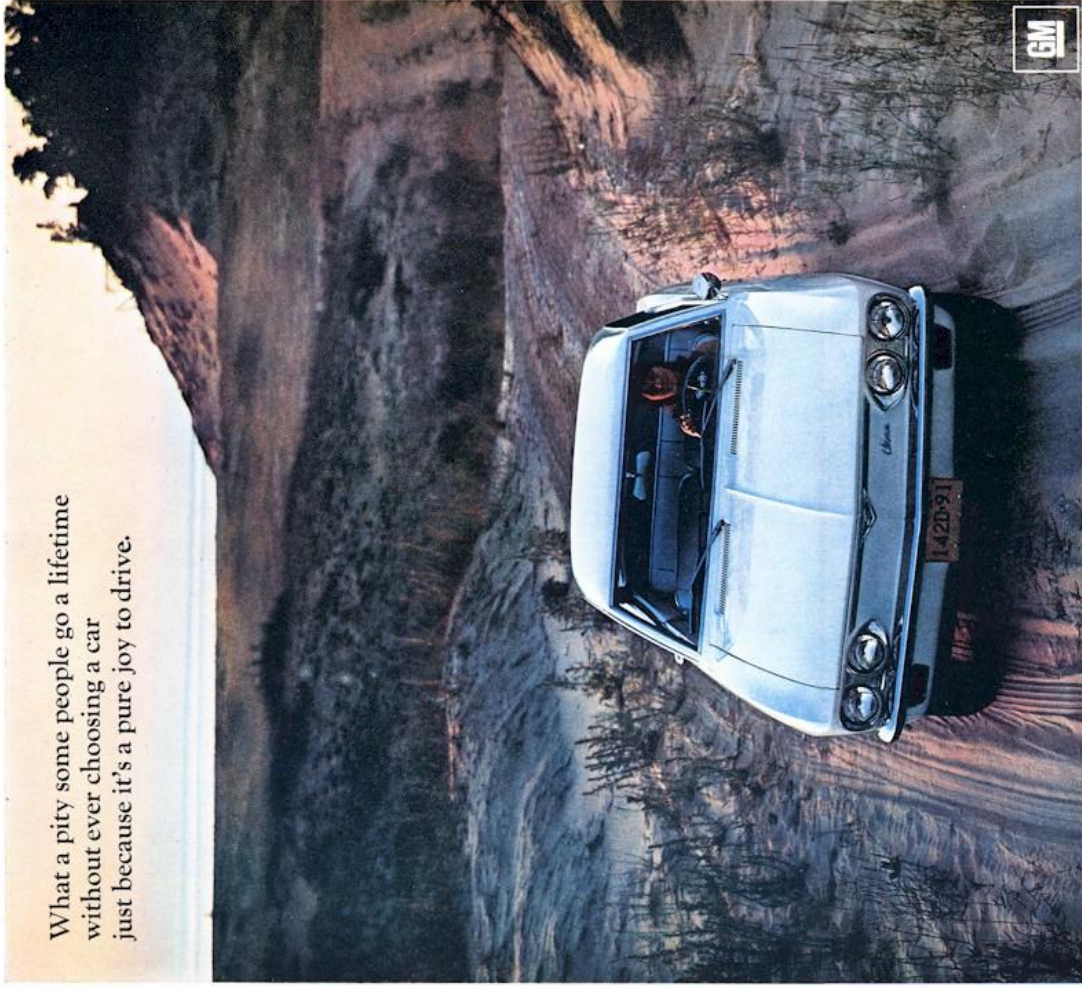


For Sale: Convertible Rear Window replacement. This is the Clark's Corvair Parts replacement late model convertible top rear window – black with zipper. I'm not sure just how old this one is, but it seems to be in excellent condition with the window very pliable. Clark's currently wants \$127.85 for theirs. Please make me an offer! Jim Simpson, simpsonj@verizon.net, 240-232-2820

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 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.



What a pity some people go a lifetime
without ever choosing a car
just because it's a pure joy to drive.



(Especially when it also happens to be America's lowest priced hardtop)

Corvair 500 Sport Coupe—with vinyl-upholstered body by Fisher interior

Everyone should have at least one love affair with a car like this new Corvair.

And that can happen the minute you feel how responsive its steering is. Or feel its even-keeled four-wheel independent suspension ride through a curve. It can also happen for a lot of practical reasons—like the way its rear-engine traction grabs hold and goes, even in mud or snow.

There are lots of little touches you'll like, too—such as the new tapered Strato-bucket seats in Monza models. Also, you'll find extra peace of mind in the new standard safety features, including the new GM-developed energy-absorbing steering column,

four-way hazard warning flasher, dual master cylinder brake system with warning light, and passenger-guard door locks on all doors.

And if you happen to like to save money, you've got one more little reason for choosing a car that's such a joy to drive. The price.

'67 Corvair

The rear-engine road car

