



the fifth wheel

MAY 2011

[HTTP://WWW.CORVAIR.ORG/CHAPTERS/LVCC](http://www.corvair.org/chapters/lvcc)

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Custom Car Corvairs

Chopped, channeled, frenched, nosed, decked, rolled, sectioned, pleated, tufted, shaved and scalloped. These are terms largely forgotten in the lexicon of automotive enthusiasm.

And we've lost not only the vocabulary but also the sense of aesthetics, of style, that rose and fell during the custom car craze.

Like performance cars of today, customized cars filled a need for self-expression. But instead of concentrating on mechanical improvements, their creators worked their craft through bodywork, forming it into different forms and shapes to please and shock the eye.

The fact that custom cars were fabricated rather than merely assembled is perhaps a reflection of what we were and what we have become in terms of our collective automotive skill sets.

This is not to say that custom cars were necessarily pretty. Many of them look very strange to us today.

But some were startlingly attractive, and it is a fact that one

of the very best customized cars was based on a Corvair Monza, of all things!

Turn the page and you'll see an article on the Forcasta, a very special Corvair built by Darryl Starbird way back in 1961. This was the peak of the custom car craze.

The fact that Darryl based his jet-age creation on a Corvair speaks volumes about popularity of our favorite little car and its advanced technology.



Darryl Starbird's Forcasta. Jet-age custom Corvair! Photograph from the Darryl Starbird Collection.

The Fifth Wheel is published monthly by the Lehigh Valley Corvair Club (LVCC), Inc. We accept articles of interest to Corvair owners for publication. Classified advertising of interest to Corvair owners is available free of charge to all persons. Commercial advertising is also available on a fee basis. Please contact our newsletter editors, Wesley Weiss and Allan Lacki, for details.

LVCC is one of the many regional chapters of the Corvair Society of America (CORSA), a non-profit organization that was incorporated to satisfy the common needs of individuals interested in the preservation, restoration, and operation of the Chevrolet Corvair. LVCC caters to Corvair people who live in and around the Lehigh Valley Region of eastern Pennsylvania. This is a very special car club! LVCC dues are \$10 a year for CORSA members or \$15 a year for non-CORSA members.

FORCASTA CORVAIR!

Reprinted from Kustomrama Wikipedia.

The Forcasta was a 1960 Chevrolet Corvair Monza bubble top custom car built by legendary show car builder Darryl Starbird of Wichita, Kansas in 1961.

Darryl designed and built the car for Chuck Miller of Columbus, Ohio. The project started just after Darryl had completed his first full-blown show car, the Predicta.

Darryl said he wanted something with a very low hood which meant that the radiator couldn't be up front. Before he began his project, he was looking at using a Volkswagen, but he decided that it was too small for what he had in mind. Then the all-new Corvair was introduced and Darryl found his perfect donor car. He bought a very clean low-

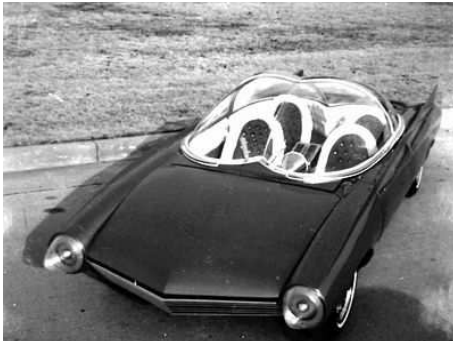


Photo by Richard Fuerholze.

mileage Corvair from a used car lot in Wichita and the build could begin.

Darryl stripped the stock body down, leaving only two door pillars, the rocker panels and the flooring. He built it back up, starting with a pair of 1960 Cadillac rear quarters which he modified heavily. The fins were repositioned, angled outward, and had extensions added to lengthen them. New doors were hand-formed to match the contour of the rear quarters. 20 gauge sheet metal was hand-formed to give the side panels their space age styling. The rear deck was replaced and round rods gave rigidity to the cut out areas.

Up front, new fenders were shaped. The hood panel was highly modified which gave the car the convex shape Starbird sought from the beginning. New rolled edges were welded in place to create a peaked effect. The front fenders were rolled and hand formed in the same way as the rest of the body.

The front and rear grilles were formed in a streamlined "V" from 2-inch chrome-plated tubing. With the body shaped, patterns were made for the bubble top and the bullet shaped headlight and taillight lenses. These patterns were sent to Ray Plastics, the company that had blown the bubble top for the Predicta. The bubble top was split at the door line, and the front half was raised hydraulically for entry and exit.

The interior of the car consumed 500 man hours before it was completed. It was finished in hand tufted white pearl Naugahyde and fuchsia frieze.

The car featured four bucket seats that were contour-formed from the head rests down to the pedals. For the driver, a bullet-shaped console concealed an electronic brain and manual control switches. The instrument cluster swiveled to both sides so the car could be operated from both right or left and the steering was operated by a central stick.

The car also featured air conditioning and an intercom. The rear console of the car included a small TV and radio.

A remote control operates the top, turns the wheels, raises the trunk, starts and revs the engine, turns the TV and radio on and off, and opens the doors without the driver having to touch the car. The interior styling was done by Paul Matz of Wichita. All of the electronics were installed by Jim Patton, also from Wichita. Every movable part on the origi-



Forcasta's chrome Corvair engine.

nal Monza engine was triple-plated and highly polished by American Plating Company. The firewall and inner panels were louvered and chromed, as were all of the suspension system components. The body received 10 coats of hand rubbed grape lacquer.

Over the years, the Forcasta has been restyled at least twice, and the revisions did not retain the purity of line depicted in the photographs shown here. The original car still exists, but Starbird has stated he would not attempt a restoration; instead he'd build a brand new Forcasta using fresh sheet metal.

Let's hope Darryl Starbird builds a new Forcasta someday!



Fins may be passé, but does your 2012 Camaro really need a wing? We still like to decorate our cars with silly stuff!

LVCC MEETING NOTES

LVCC held its regular monthly meeting on April 28, 2011. Vice President Dennis Stamm chaired the meeting. Attendees also included Keith Koehler, Allan Lacki, James Mc Nalley, Jerry Moyer, Scott Oberholzer, and Fred Scherzer.

Welcome Back Scott! It's been a number of months since we have seen Scott Oberholzer at one of our monthly meetings. He explained that he has been on the road for the past five or six months doing glazing work (installing windows) in new high-rise buildings. This is not a job for folks who fear heights!

Show and Tell: Al Lacki exhibited his new "2 into 1" big bore exhaust system, which he designed for his 1966 coupe. It features 1.75 OD aluminized primary pipes and a stainless steel merge collector. Mervine's Exhaust of Reading, PA bent the pipes and welded the system together using drawings that Al provided to Michael Mervine. The system is capped-off by a Heartthrob Velocity muffler, which is similar to a Flowmaster. Al is currently testing the system by driving his Corvaire all over. Call or write to Al if you would like a copy of his drawings.

Heating Your Garage: Although Spring is here, it has been a long-cruel winter, and it was still cold when we



Tank Top Propane Heater

had our April meeting. So, we engaged in a discussion about garage heaters. It seems that everybody uses something different! Some of the guys use wood heaters made from 55 gallon drums. Others use oil-fired heaters, kerosene heaters, propane heaters, and electric heaters.

Dues Update: Secretary-Treasurer Dick Weidner couldn't make this meeting because he was attending the Corvaire Springfest in Helen, Georgia this week. But he remained in contact with us via email and noted that he has received dues payments from several members over the past month. And three members who attended our April meeting paid-up on the spot. Thank you to everyone for keeping your dues up-to-date!

LVCC SHOWS OFF ITS CORVAIRES AT ALL-GM SHOW

Corvairs dominated the "Compact Car" class at the "33rd Annual General Motors on Display" show, held in Macungie, PA on May 1. LVCC was represented by Keith Kohler, Allan Lacki, Carl Moore, Jerry Moyer, Scott Oberholtzer, Fred Scherzer, Dennis Stamm, all of whom brought their Corvairs to the show. Several members of the Philadelphia Corvaire Association brought their Corvairs to the show, too. Many compliments were overheard about our cars by hot rodders who were wishing their V8s had the same fuel economy of our sporty little Corvairs!

WANTED: CORVAIRE ENGINE FOR SWEDISH AIRCRAFT

From time to time, LVCC receives inquiries through its website. And this month, we received an unusual but very special inquiry:

Dear Sir Perhaps this is to be seen as gate-crashing into your club, but is a chance I take that you will at least read my message: I live in Sweden, need an engine for an experimental aircraft. And

the Corvaire is the preferred auto engine to use. Would you possibly know if you have a member willing to part with one of his gems? A standard 164CID 110HP engine? I would of course arrange for pickup and shipping. Cordially Sten Backhans Oriongatan 217 195 55 Marsta Sweden.

Sten is very much aware that new Corvaire engines are not available and that he will need to rebuild a used Corvaire engine for his plane. He wrote,

I am aware of the nature or risk of using a used engine, but the Corvaire has an enviable reputation for smooth running and power to spare for a small aircraft, so it seems worth an effort to rebuild a used one into a first class aviation motor.

I already have William Wynne's manual on Corvaire aircraft engines as my bedside reading... My quest for the Corvaire engine is also based upon his suggestions and which source could beat those who like and care for the Corvaire.

A used engine is quite all right, as long as it meets certain criteria that Mr. Wynne considers essential. So if you will be so kind as to post my "Call for Help", it might be appropriate to quote these criteria, should one of your members have one such and choose to let it go.

Specifically, Sten is looking for 164 cubic inch, 1965-1969, 95 hp or 110 hp engine with codes RD,RF,RH,RX,RK, RA,RE,RG, or RJ. His email hake-skytt@hotmail.com and his telephone number is +46701684624. Can you help him?

CORVAIRES RAID MITTY RACES AT ROAD ATLANTA

Five Corvairs participated in the Mitty Challenge Races at the Road Atlanta race course between April 30 and May 2 this year. They were driven by James



Corvairs in the paddock at the 2011 Mitty Challenge Races. Photo by Frank Mara.

Reeve, Warren Leveque, Rick Norris, Spence Shepard, and Mike Levine. James Reeve hasn't driven in competition in 34 years. But back in the mid-1970's, James was a thorn in the side of the British and Datsun factory teams. Running as a privateer in his 1966 Yenko Stinger Corvair, he was able to beat the likes of the factory-backed Group 44, Huffaker and Datsun racing teams in SCCA D-Production road racing at the national championship level. He hasn't lost his touch; he was the fastest Corvair driver at the Mitty this year.

The Walter Mitty Challenge was started by Atlanta-area road racing enthusiasts in 1978 who were looking for a safe place to unleash their machines and put their "foot to the boards". Road Atlanta, which is recognized as one of the world's best road courses, was the obvious choice of venue. The first event was an immediate success and subsequent races were dubbed the "Walter Mitty Challenge" after the James Thurber short story, "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty", which centers on a quiet man with vivid daydreams about being a race car driver.

Overall, the Corvair guys did well for themselves. Here are some laps times from two of the races:

Group 2H, Race 1, April 30, 2011

James Reeve: 1:46.747
Warren Leveque: 1:52.638
Rick Norris: 1:54.989

Spence Shepard: 2:03.458
Winning time, non Corvair:
Lotus Elan 26R: 1:42.374,

Group 2J, Race 2, May 1, 2011

James Reeve: 1:46.974
Rick Norris: 1:52.855
Warren Leveque: 1:57.413
Spence Shepard: 2:02.928
Winning time overall, non Corvair, ,
Lotus Super VII: 1:43.804

After the races, Warren Leveque wrote, *This is not just a road race for us, it is an extravaganza for old cars and drivers to get together as a racing family and enjoy the ambience. There were almost 400 cars entered and probably 5 times as many drivers and crew.*

The cars entered are absolutely fabulous: famous Indy racers, Can Ams, TransAms, prototypes, GT40s, Stock cars, motorcycles, clubs racers, everything. We were fed and entertained nearly every evening also.

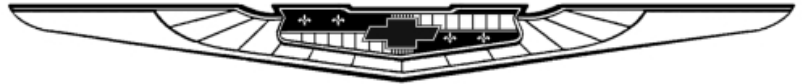
It seems that every one with a Corvair performance interest was there to visit. Even more amazing was the number of non-Corvair owners who stopped by to get acquainted with us and our cars.

NORTHEAST CORVAIR COUNCIL (NECC) UPDATE

NECC continues to make plans for the 2012 CORSA Convention at Stur-

Next LVCC Meeting

Date: Wednesday, May 25, 2011 at 7:30 PM.
Place: LANTA Community Center
2nd Floor Meeting Room
1060 Lehigh Street, Allentown , PA 18103



bridge. NECC has developed an itinerary, signed contracts with the host hotel, confirmed a guest speaker for the banquet, commissioned a graphic artist to prepare a logo, and will be rolling out a publicity campaign in July. Getting interested? Check out the host hotel's classy website at: <http://www.sturbridgehosthotel.com/>

FOR SALE: 1963 Corvair Monza convertible. White exterior with black top. Powerglide. \$1,500. Photos of this lovely car are shown right here on this page. Contact Keith Koehler. (215) 703-0644. kpissant@verizon.net



LVCC Calendar of Events

May 21, 2011 :::: Hempfield Cops & Rodders Car Show.

At Amos Herr Park in Landisville, PA. Show 10:00 am - 4:00 pm. Welcome to all hot rods, classic and modern muscle cars, antiques, imports, trucks, motorcycles as well as in service and retired police vehicles. Food, music, raffle & door prizes. Fire apparatus & mobile command displays. K9 Unit demonstration. Registration \$10.00 per vehicle through PayPal. Hosted by the East Hempfield Police Department. <http://hempfieldcopsandrodders.com>

May 21, 2011 :::: Cruise at Macungie Memorial Park.

Macungie, PA. 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Presented by Wheels of Time Street Rod Association (WOTSRA). The Macungie Memorial Park Association will be charging \$1.00 per car entrance for our monthly cruises. This is just one of several cruises that will be conducted this summer by Wheels of Time. For more information, visit www.wheelsoftime.org

May 22, 2011 :::: 28th Annual "Cruise To The Gap" Car Show.

At Wind Gap Borough Park, 3rd & Lehigh Streets, Wind Gap, PA. 8:30 am - 3:00 pm, rain or shine. Presented by the Wind Gap Athletic Association. No judging. Relax and enjoy the show. Commemorative die cast cars, car corral and flea market, event T-shirts, dash plaques, raffle, door prizes, entertainment, cash awards to clubs, food, drinks and games. See the variety of nearly 500 show cars! Pre-Registration \$10.00 by May 10. After that, registration is \$15.00. Call Tony on (610) 704 6586 or visit www.wgaaa.org

May 25, 2011 at 7:30 PM :::: LVCC Monthly Club Meeting.

Regular LVCC Club Meeting. 7:30 PM at the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA) office building in Allentown Pennsylvania. The LANTA building is located at: 1060 Lehigh Street Allentown, Pa 18103.

May 29, 2011 :::: 16th Annual "Lake Lenape Jamboree" Car Show.

At Lake Lenape Park, Route 152 & East Walnut Street, Perkasio, PA. Rain or Shine. Registration 9:00 am - 12:00 noon. Show 12:00 noon - 3:30 pm. Dash plaques for the 1st 100 cars. Door prizes, food and beverages. Quiet park setting. Sponsored by the Good Time Motorvators, a group that sponsors several shows and cruises every year. For more information, visit <http://www.good-timemotorvators.com/events.html>

June 4, 2011 :::: Fleetwood Rotary 6th Annual Car Show.

At Fleetwood Community Park, 232 West Main Street, Fleetwood, PA 19522. Registration 8:00 am - 11:30 am. Judging begins at 12:00 noon. Awards at 3:00 pm. Pre-Registration by June 1, \$10.00 after and day of show registration \$12.00. Goody bags and dash plaques to the first 125 registered vehicles. Call Jim Long on (484) 575-8113 or visit www.fleetwoodparotary.org

June 5, 2011 :::: 50th North Eastern PA Region AACA Car Show & Flea Market.

At the Luzerne County Community College Advanced Technology Center, 1333 South Prospect Street, Nanticoke (Scranton), PA 18634. Rain or Shine. Over 30 Classes. Show open to cars, trucks, motorcycles, street rods, sport compacts. Parking gates open 8:00 am for vendor and show cars. Pre-Registration \$7.00 by May 15 after and day of show \$10.00. Call Karen Wolfe for vehicle registration on (570) 735-1077 or David Neiman for flea market on (570) 675-6412 or visit www.nepaaca.com

June 16, 17 & 18, 2011 :::: Corvair Olympics at Indianapolis.

Corvair Olympics, in Indianapolis, Indiana. Three days of time trials, autocross and drag-racing. Visit www.neccmotorsports.com for latest information.

June 25, 2011 :::: 6th Annual AACA Museum Car Show & Flea Market.

At the AACA Museum Route, Hershey, PA. Rain or Shine. Show 8:00 am - 3:00 pm. Show is open to all pre-1984 vehicles including antiques, classics, street rods, trucks, buses, motorcycles and sports cars. Other activities will include a 50-50 Raffle, antique car rides and a behind the scenes look at one of the Museum's storage facilities including additional vehicles not on public display. Admission to the vehicle Storage Facility is by donation. Pre-registration \$10.00. Day of show registration \$15.00. Call Don Barlup at (717) 582-3209 or visit <http://www.aacamuseum.org/events>

July 26th-30th, 2011 :::: CORSA International Convention.

Denver, Colorado. <http://rockymountaincorsa.com/denvaireleven.html>

August 5-7, 2011 :::: Das Awkscht Fescht at Macungie.

Macungie Memorial Park, Macungie, PA 18062. Bring your Corvair to the Corvair Display with LVCC on Sunday, August 7! But you must pre-register by July 1, 2011! Full details at <http://www.awkscht.com> Information hotline: (610) 967-2317.

September 9-11, 2011 :::: Annual Corvair Camping Weekend.

At the Pioneer Campground in LaPorte, PA. Ray and Kathy Coker, Pioneer Campground's new owners, are Corvair enthusiasts. This will be there fourth annual Corvair Camping Weekend. You can visit their website at <http://www.pioneercampground.com>. Or call Ray and Kathy by phone on (570) 946-9971.

Lehigh Valley Corvair Club Membership List

NAME STREET TOWN STATE ZIP PHONE EMAIL

Sorry internet readers! We redact our members' personal information from newsletters published on the web.

Legend:

- (1) President
- (2) Vice President
- (3) Secretary / Treasurer
- (4) Newsletter Editor
- (5) Interim Editor and NECC Club Rep
- (6) NECC Club Rep

Our Postal Address:

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Northampton, PA 18067

Club Officers:

President: William Remaly
Vice President: Dennis Stamm
Secr-Treasurer: Richard Weidner
Editors: Wesley Heiss & Al Lacki

