



Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME XLVI, No. 3

March 2018



Group Corvair at the Ranch

Now is the time for all good Group Corvair members to renew their membership!

\$12/year! Make out your check to Group Corvair and send it to Jim Simpson (Group Corvair Treasurer), 3845 Wayson Road, Davidsonville, MD 21035. If you are uncertain if you have already paid, call or drop me (Jim Simpson) an e-mail and I'll check.

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

March

20 – **Group Corvair Regular Meeting**, 7 p.m. Beijing of Greenbelt, 131 Centerway, Greenbelt, MD. For the second month in a row, a chance to explore the Chinese menu.

23-24 – Sugarloaf Mountain Region AACA Swap Meet, Carroll County Agricultural Center, Westminster, MD.

April

17 – **Group Corvair Regular Meeting**, 7 p.m. Location is TBD.

18-22 – Spring Carlisle

May

15 – **Group Corvair Regular Meeting**, 7 p.m. Location is TBD

18-20 – Virginia Vair Fair, Winchester, VA. There is a group rate at the host hotel (Hampton Inn) but you have to reserve your room before April 20. For more information call Jeff Roadcap, 540-908-0010 or go to their web site at www.sites.google.com/site/centralvirginiacorvairclub/home.

18-20 – Corvair Museum Grand Opening, Chevrolet Hall of Fame, Decatur, IL. Host hotel: Hampton Inn, 4855 E. Evergreen Ct., Mt. Zion, IL 62521. Phone: 217-864-3297. Room rates are \$129/night using reservation code COR. There should be a welcoming party Friday night, car display on Saturday. The museum ribbon cutting is expected about noon on Saturday with possibly a banquet Saturday night.

20 – Corvair Ranch Open House. Car show, lunch, door prizes, etc.

June

2 – Orphan Car Tour through Harford and Baltimore counties in Maryland. Starts in Jarrettsville and ends at Friendly Farms Restaurant in Upperco with stops at points of interest along the way. See www.orphancartour.org for info.

19 – **Group Corvair Regular Meeting**, 7 p.m. Location is TBD

July

23-28 – CORSA International Convention, Pittsburgh, PA. See the *CORSA Communiqué* or www.CORSA.org for more information.

GROUP CORVAIR 2018 OFFICERS and Points of Contact

President: Bob Hall

4612 Franklin St., Kensington, MD 21037

301-493-8405 HallGreenn@aol.com

Vice President: Barbara Torbert

5317 Crittenden Street Hyattsville, MD 20781

301- 927-6029 barbara.torbert@hotmail.com

Secretary: Marolyn Simpson

3845 Wayson Road Davidsonville, MD 21035

301- 262-0978 or 240-232-2820

m.simpson7@verizon.net

Treasurer: Jim Simpson

3845 Wayson Road Davidsonville, MD 21035

301-262-0978 or 240-232-2820 simpsonj@verizon.net

Newsletter Editor: Jim Simpson

3845 Wayson Road Davidsonville, MD 21035

301 262-0978 or 240-232-2820 simpsonj@verizon.net

Merchandise: Gus Torbert

5317 Crittenden Street Hyattsville, MD 20781

301-927-6029 barbara.torbert@hotmail.com

Minutes of the March Meeting

Marolyn Simpson

The February 20 Group Corvair meeting was held at the Beijing of Greenbelt restaurant with seven members present. We met at 7:00 for dinner and ordered seven entrees which we all shared family style. During the dinner there was a general discussion about Corvairs, spring repairs going on, and preparations for the show season.

The meeting was called to order at 8:12 by our new president, Bob Hall. The minutes from the January meeting were approved as written in the newsletter. Jim Simpson gave the treasurer's report. He also submitted a bill for the last two years for printing and postage expenses.

There was a short discussion on the feather flag. The design, which will probably be on a white background, has been narrowed down and hopefully the final version will be agreed on at the next meeting. Jerry Yates has been working on the design.

The national convention is coming up in July. It will be in Pittsburgh, which is a reasonable drive from the DC area. We hope to have several club members there as well as several Corvairs.

While discussing the convention, we brought up the topic of various film wraps to help protect the cars while driving them to Pittsburgh. Jim S. used a wrap when he drove his Corvair up to the Hemmings New England Concours in 2010 and it worked quite well. The one he used was ordered from Groits Garage.

For an early spring tour Bob Hall has been planning a trip to Gettysburg on March 3 [because of the weather the date was changed to March 10]. He has proposed meeting at the Corvair Ranch at 11:00. After lunch the other points of interest on the agenda are visiting the Gettysburg museum and battlefield.

There was a brief discussion on the Farmer's Insurance commercial in which two barely disguised Corvairs (a red early model and a gold late model) have a fire in the engine compartment.

The next meeting on Tuesday, March 20, will also be at the Beijing of Greenbelt, 131 Centerway, Greenbelt, MD.

Group Corvair Outing to Gettysburg and the Ranch

By Bob Hall

Group Corvair made the trip to the Corvair Ranch and Gettysburg on Saturday, March 10th. Unfortunately, because we had to postpone our trip from the prior Saturday due to high winds, six Group Corvair members who had planned to join us had conflicts and couldn't attend on the new date.

Gus and Barbara Torbert, Jim and Marolyn Simpson and Carol and I had a chilly, but beautifully sunny day for the drive to the Corvair Ranch where we met Jeff Stonecifer, the owner of the Ranch. Our first order of business was to deliver some "spare parts" for Jeff to add to his collection. Gus Torbert gave Jeff an early model part to add to his inventory while Jim Simpson dropped off a single speed windshield wiper motor and a bracket for a late-model smog pump. Of course we couldn't go to the ranch without making some purchases. I bought some 53 carb jets and Jim Simpson picked up a new fuel pump, a Corsa turbo exhaust housing, a pair LM lower trailing arms and a pair of front seat belts.

After all the business transactions, Jeff led us on a tour of the ranch. In the machine shop, Jeff showed us the engine they're building for the Fitch Phoenix. It's going to have about 3 liter displacement, using Volkswagen cylinders and a pair of three barrel Weber carbs. The tour continued through his machine and repair shops where he discussed some of the current projects which include Corvairs from several states being made ready for spring—and, we hope, for the Pittsburgh convention. The Ranch had pending orders to ship to Spain and France while we were there. We saw a beautiful Rampside that was back from the collaborating body shop nearby and the partially restored LM convertible belonging to Tom Rahochic, President of Mid-Maryland Corvair Club.



Soon to be installed in the Fitch Phoenix

Since Jim was purchasing a new fuel pump to replace the brand new, but very leaky, spare he had been carrying in his tool box, Jeff discussed his experience with recent fuel pumps. Jeff and his crew test pumps to ensure they don't leak and put out the correct pressure. Jeff has found that since GM/Delco has stopped making Corvair fuel pumps, the aftermarket manufacturers don't really understand the Corvair pump specifications. One major problem has been that the pumps put out too much pressure. That can be a problem for all Corvairs, but particularly for the turbocharged cars; the Carter YH carburetor used on the turbo engines cannot stand more than about 3 psi without flooding. Some of the pumps he was getting were putting

out as much as 8-10 psi. One solution was to replace the spring in the pump with good used original ones; Jeff has a plentiful supply of those. Recently, though, he has found a vendor which produces a good pump for the Corvair and that's what he supplies now.

After the tour Gus, Jim and I walked the yard of "retired" Corvairs in back and I visited the 1968 Monza I bought new while in the Army in Germany. It was a little sobering to realize that it had been almost 50 years to the day when I



Bob with his '68 Monza. More about this in a future issue.

picked up my only new Corvair in Bremerhaven in March 1968. At least it is resting among other Corvairs.

After we left the Corvair Ranch we drove to Gettysburg and the Appalachian Brewing Company restaurant where Gus and Barbara Torbert's son Bruce and his girlfriend Darlene joined us for lunch and good conversation.

Next stop was the Gettysburg Visitors Center where we saw its first-rate movie describing the history leading to the Civil War and the prelude to the battle itself. Narrated by Morgan Freeman the film does a great job of describing the tensions that led to our bloodiest war and, arguably, most significant battle as well as the Gettysburg Address. The restored, almost 150 year old, Gettysburg Cyclorama by Frenchman Paul Philippoteaux and his team of painters was impressive and made even more so by the audiovisual presentation that added the sounds of battle and narration based on the memoirs of those who were there. Afterwards we were able to visit the museum with its thousands of artifacts from the battle.

The Gettysburg Visitors Center is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year and is worth the entrance fee (Note: National Park Service passes aren't valid at this joint NPS/Gettysburg Foundation facility). We recommend a visit – especially if you haven't been in over ten years – and before the very busy summer tourist season. [Note: The Gettysburg Battlefield Cyclorama alone is worth the visit. Marolyn Simpson]

Farmer's Insurance TV Ad

Jim Simpson

I'm sure everyone in the club, or at least everyone in the club who owns a television, has seen the Farmer's Insurance ads "featuring" a fire in the rear of a Corvair. Just to recap, the ads show an early model Corvair convertible in a parade with an engine fire. As is the pattern for the Farmer's ads, the ad then cuts to a display in their "insurance museum" with the rear end of a Corvair (now a late model) mounted on the wall with a simulated fire burning in the engine compartment. There are at least two versions of the ad out there. In the first version, it was very plain that the

cars involved were Corvairs. Later versions made an effort to disguise the car(s) for instance by changing the late model Corvair tail lights from the original distinctive pair of round lights to a single rectangular light.

Recent postings on the Virtual Vairs told a bit more of the story. Apparently the original automobile fire claim was for an engine fire in an MG in a parade. The next unit in the parade was the local fire department and they reportedly took care of the fire very promptly.

My guess is that when Farmer's decided to use this insurance claim in an ad, the film company decided it would be a lot easier and safer to simulate a fire in the back of a car rather than in the front. And what easily available car has an engine in the back? Our very own Corvair. And when it came time to put a display up, the ad company made the assumption that to most people, a car is a car and either couldn't tell the difference between an early and late Corvair or wouldn't care anyway.

The upshot is that we'll probably hear more comments and questions at car shows about how Corvairs catch fire easily. After all, we all know how easy it is to mistake a Corvair for a Pinto. Perhaps we should just file this away under the category of "there is no such thing as bad publicity". People who really care will know the facts and for the rest, it's just another piece of obscure automotive trivia.

Forty, Thirty and Twenty Years Ago This Month

Jim Simpson

(This column will reappear next month – editor.)

Tech Topics

Jim Simpson

Late-Model Convertible “Cocktail Shaker”: Anyone who has taken a close look at a late-model convertible will likely have noticed large cylinders mounted in the four corners of the car; two up in front at the very forward corners of the trunk and two more back in the engine compartment in the rear-most corners. Most Corvair enthusiasts know that they have something to do with reducing vibrations in the LM convertible. But what's inside them and how do they work?

Well while we were at the Corvair Ranch, we got a chance to take a look at the inner workings of one of these “cocktail shakers”. (Chevrolet calls them “Dampeners” – not in the sense of making thing wet, but in the sense of dampening vibrations.) Jeff Stonecipher had received the remains of a burned out LM convertible. It had been in a garage fire and was totally destroyed. The dampeners had been well cooked in the fire, but were sufficiently intact so that he could cut one open and see what is inside. And here it is:

Not a lot to see, is there? Just a hunk of cast iron supported at both the top and bottom by springs. Normally the case would be filled with oil, but it was boiled out and burned in the fire.

The problem these dampeners were designed to solve was the flexure of the LM convertible body. After they removed the coupe roof as the first step in making the LM convertible, they added reinforcements inside the rocker panels. These may have given enough strength to the body, but the result was essentially two masses of metal (the front end with its suspension and gas tank and the rear end with the suspension and drive train) connected by the floor and rocker panels – a near flat piece of metal. That flat piece of metal acts like a spring! Try this; take a ruler and hold one end tightly to a table. “Twang” the free end and watch it vibrate. That's what happens to a LM convertible when it goes over a bump or railroad track. (The roof structures on the coupes make the body much more rigid!)



The dampeners are intended to reduce that vibration – “dampen” it out! The way they work is that hunk of iron acts as a counterweight supported by the springs. When the front of the car goes up (hitting a bump) and the dampener canister goes up with it, the inertia of the iron inside tends to keep it in place compressing the lower spring. As the front of the car goes down again, the inertia of the iron tends to keep it in place, this time compressing the upper spring. If that was all that was to it, there wouldn’t be much effect on the car. But the canister is also full of oil (reportedly ATF)! When that iron mass moves through the oil, it has to displace it. That requires energy and that energy comes from the up and down vibration of the car. And that energy is converted to heat. So ultimately the flexure of the LM convertible body is converted to heat in the four dampeners! (It might be interesting to attach a temperature sensor to one and then run the car down a bumpy road. I wonder how much heat would be generated.)

Some people remove the dampeners to reduce the weight of the car; after all they do weigh something like 26 lbs each. While this might give slightly better performance (every pound counts in racing!), this also accelerates the flexure and ultimate fatigue failure of the welds in the body. Not a great idea. (The early Camaro and Firebird convertible also used them for the same reason. Reportedly the idea came from the ’58-59 Ford Thunderbird convertibles...)

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 with a “RM” code (Monza/500) 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 \$2,000. Please contact the owner at ldgray1@yahoo.com for more information.



**Corvair 500 gives you
a true hardtop.
And it's Chevrolet's
lowest priced hardtop.**

Perhaps one word best describes Corvairs, including, of course, Corvair's most economical model, the 500 Sport Coupe. That word is "balance." Balance of rear-engine design that matches superb traction with easy steering. Balance of body design that gives you aerodynamic lines with true hardtop styling. Balance so keen, power steering and power brakes are unnecessary. Even Corvair's trim dimensions make for balance and maneuverability: 108" wheelbase, 183.3" overall length. Width is 69.7" and overall height 51.5" (Monza Convertible), 51.3" (sport coupes). Front tread 55.0", rear tread 56.6". All this balance gives you that sure feeling when you drive.

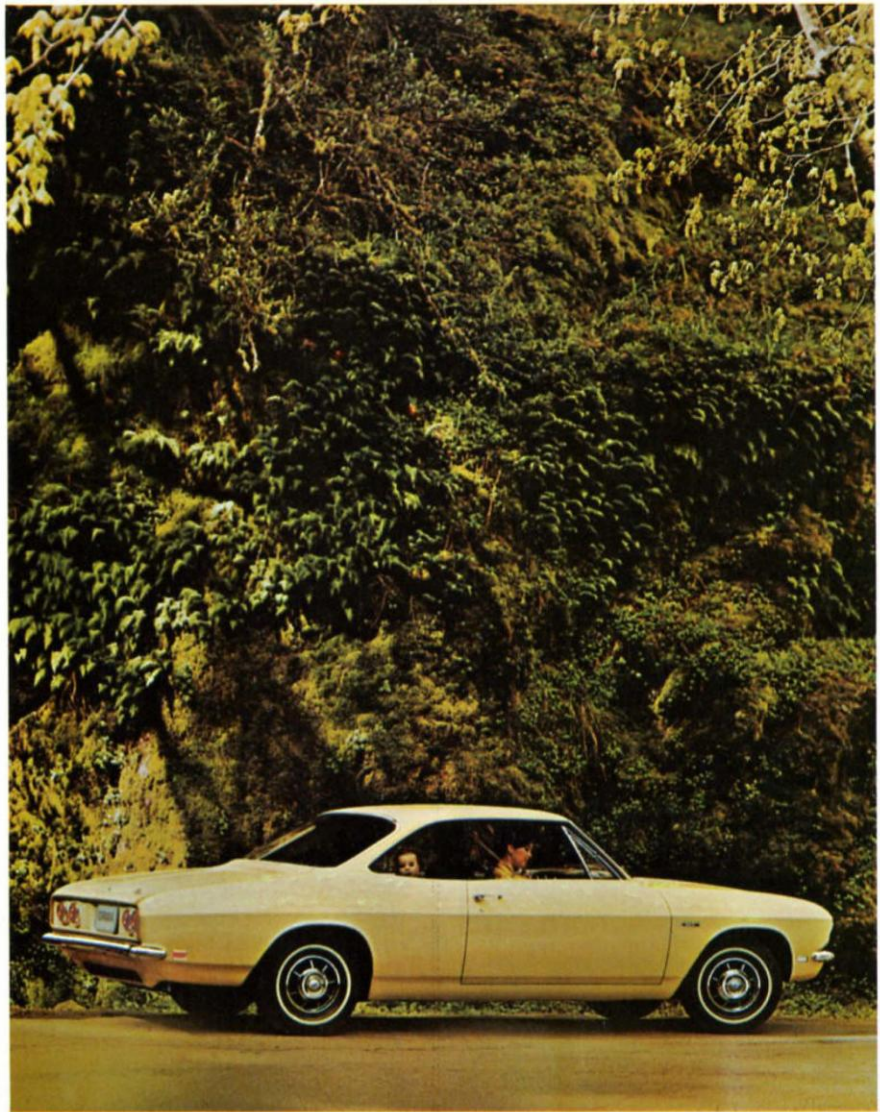
In the 500 Sport Coupe, Corvair also balances rock-bottom cost with good looks. Inside, select from handsome blue, black or gold all-vinyl interiors. The full-width seats, like sidewalls, use a combination of textured and pleated vinyl. Black rubber floor mats tidy up quickly. Order your 500 (or a Monza) in a choice of 15 lustrous Magic-Mirror colors — 12 new for 1968. Interior colors are keyed to exterior choice.

All Corvairs — Monzas and the 500 — share the quality Body by Fisher, fully unitized for strength and quietness. Corvair's value is enhanced by inner front fenders, four headlight system and curved body side glass. Other value worthies: latching ventipanes, two-position door checks, flush-mounted windshield and rear window (both bonded to the body), flush-and-dry rocker panels, high-level ventilation system, parallel-action electric windshield wipers, fork-type door latches, forced-air heating and keyless door locking.

You'll also like such quality touches as hand-operated parking brake with trigger release, 14-gallon fuel tank, individual air intakes with control knobs, cigarette lighter, foam cushioned front seat (rear, too, in Monzas) and self-adjusting brakes.

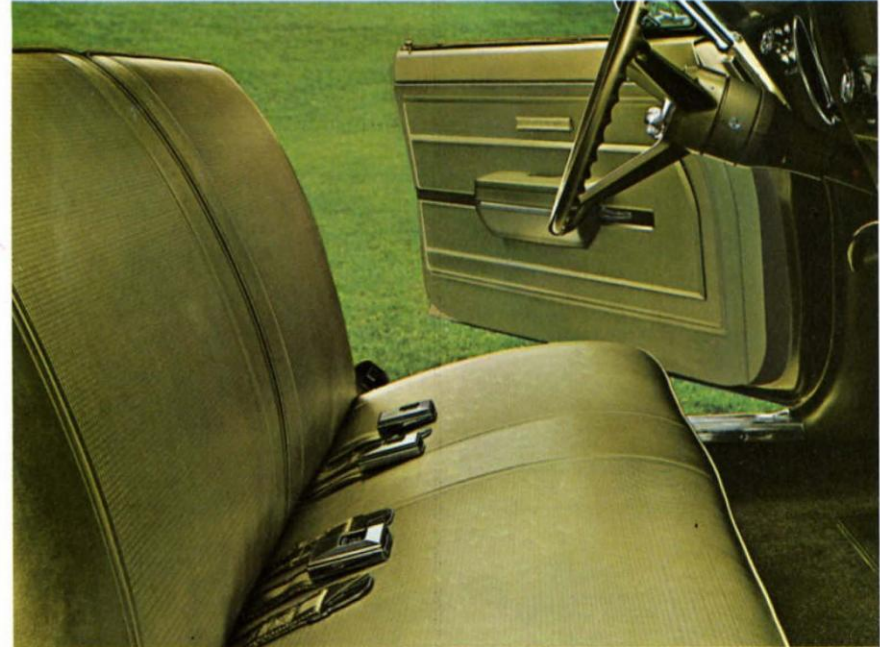
Power team combinations are the same for Corvair 500 as they are for Monza. Check the back page for particulars.

Dress up your Corvair from the list of extra-cost Options and Custom Features on the opposite page.



Corvair 500 interior. ▼

▲ Corvair 500 Sport Coupe.



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 86, Maple Plain, MN 55359, phone 630-403-5010, website: www.corvair.org CORSA memberships are available at various levels with corresponding dues. As a member, you will receive the CORSA Communiqué and be eligible to attend all CORSA national events, including the annual convention.