



Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME XLVI, No. 4

April 2018



Group Corvair 1988 Fall Flea Fair Flashback

We certainly had healthy appetites back then!

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

April

17 – **Group Corvair Regular Meeting**, 7 p.m. Fratelli's Restaurant, (the old Howard Johnson's), 5820 Landover Road, in Hyattsville, MD. This is just west of where the Baltimore-Washington Parkway crosses over Landover Road, right beside the exit from the south-bound side of the Parkway, on the north side of Landover Road. As usual, we will meet at 7 p.m. for dinner and then conduct a business meeting.

18-22 – Spring Carlisle

22 – Group Corvair Outing. 12 noon, Erwin & Sylvia Mack, 8107 Chester St., Silver Spring, MD. Bob & Carol Hall have arranged a visit to Erwin Mack’s two story garage to see his Model T collection. Food & drink will be provided. Contact Bob Hall (hallgreen@aol.com or 301-213-9852) to confirm that you are coming.

May

5 – CAT (Center for Applied Technology) North Car Show. Setup starts at 8, show is 9 – 1 with awards at 12. The link is: <http://www.catnorth.org/> Scroll down to find the link to sign up. (Note, the times and registration price are different on the actual signup page.) CAT North is part of the Anne Arundel County school system and is effectively what we “old-timers” think of as vocational technical high school. They offer three courses relating to automobiles – collision repair, automobile refinishing and automobile technology. This will be their first car show and may be an opportunity to get some younger folks interested in Corvairs and perhaps even get the school to take on a Corvair as a project.

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**, 1079 Bon-Ox Rd, Gettysburg, PA. Car show, lunch, door prizes, tech demos and more! Should we plan a caravan up there?

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

TBD – Group Corvair “Almost Fourth of July” meeting/picnic. Date, time and location are all TBD.

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

Sometimes the weather in March can be fickle. That was the case on March 20, our regular meeting date, with a forecast for rain, snow, and wind. As a result we decided to delay the meeting a week to March 27. The shift in date cut our regular attendance down to six Group Corvair members who met for dinner at 7:00 at the Beijing of Greenbelt restaurant.

Barbara Torbert, Vice President, called the meeting to order at 8:20. Once again a main topic of the meeting was the feather flag design. After some discussion the group was pretty much in agreement on a final design. It will include the Group Corvair and Corsa logos on a white background with blue lettering.

Jim Simpson brought a letter he had received from the AACA Museum in Hershey, PA concerning legal proceedings with the Antique Automobile Club of America. There seems to be a major squabble over just who owns and can use the name "Antique Automobile Club of America" – the actual club or the museum of the same name. Just to confuse the matter further, if you have membership in the "club", you get free admission to the museum. And the "club" is building its own building in Hershey, not far from the AACA Museum.

There was a discussion on stock items on the Corvair and what is accepted in Corsa rules. That was followed by a discussion of fuel pumps and how they work with reference back to the discussion at the Corvair Ranch and their difficulties in getting a reliable pump that meets the Corvair specifications. Bob Hall has been trying to get his van to idle properly and he and Jim S., who has been helping him, have recently had some first-hand experience with fuel pumps and their failure modes.

Jim and Marolyn recently saw Emma McMannis at the Andrews commissary. She had mentioned a number of Corvair parts she still has and would like to get rid of. [Note: George and Emma were long time members of Group Corvair. George died about 9 years ago.]

The club has received the information on the Bowie Memorial Day parade. It will be on Saturday, May 28. If you want to participate in the parade, please let Marolyn Simpson [301-262-0978; m.simpson7@verizon.net] know by May 1 so the application can be turned in to the parade organizers. We will need at least two vehicles to participate.

The next Group Corvair meeting will be at Fratelli's Restaurant, 5820 Landover Road, Hyattsville.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50.

Forty, Thirty and Twenty Years Ago This Month

Jim Simpson

As you might expect, late winter and early spring is a slow time for Group Corvair and the March 1978 *Group Corvair Comments* reflected that although it did show that the club was growing having picked up seven new members. Planning was underway for a spring (April) flea market to be held at Sport Chevrolet. But by April things were picking up. A British television company was making a documentary about the American consumer movement including a segment on Ralph Nader's attack on the Corvair. They requested help from the club and we provided it. In particular, Bill Holden brought his '64 silver Spyder coupe to a photo shoot in front of the Washington Monument and Gary Segal and Doug Wolfe showed them just how well Corvairs performed in the first autocross of the season. (Doug Wolfe took fastest time of the day in the autocross – how much better could it get?) And the April *Comments* reported gaining another six members. In the Vair Vendor, you could make a great deal on three cars that had been collected to make into one – a '66 automatic with factory air but shot body, a '65 4-door automatic with great body but bad engine and a '66 parts car with great engine. Put the best from these three together and you'd have a nice four-door with automatic and air conditioning.

The Spring 1978 issue of *CORSA Quarterly* was, in my opinion, a good one. Three articles in particular caught my eye. The first, "Who Killed the Corvair" by Eric Neilsson was originally published in *Autocar*, a British publication. It presented a pretty fair and balanced report of the decisions by GM to discontinue the Corvair. One thing that I learned from the article was that Chevrolet deliberately cut back on production starting with the second half of the 1966 model year. (The first half of '66 saw about 56,000 Corvairs sold implying a total production of over 110,000.

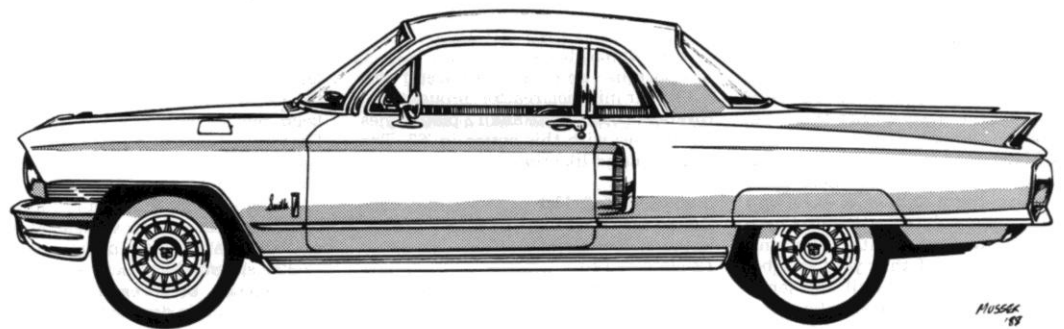
Chevrolet ramped down the production in the second half so that the total ended up at about 89,000.) According to the author, similar decisions were made for '67, '68 and '69 – produce the bare minimum to warrant the continued use of the tooling. GM had made the decision to terminate the car, but not to stop so quickly that the plaintiffs in on-going law suits would gain any support as well as to spite Mr. Nader. The second article was “Living with the World’s Fastest Corvair”, an article from *Car Life* about Tom Keosababian’s Bonneville record car. It reviewed the modifications that Tom had made to the car. Apparently it was an amazingly docile car on the street – it was Tom’s daily driver -- but could still do 0-60 in under 6 seconds and the quarter mile in 13.39 seconds at 105 mph under “gentle” handling and in street trim. Finally there was an article By John Fitch on “How to Slalom Drive” with emphasis on the Corvair. He provided some excellent guidance on preparing the car as well as on how to negotiate the course.

The March 1978 *CORSA Communiqués* had a still useful tech tip: Replace the gasket between the carburetor and air filter horn with a seal from a used oil filter. (You will need two or four; one for each carb.) The smaller seal on the oil filter is a good fit and is made from more heat and oil resistant materials than the original gasket. In the Corvair Classified, there were two Yenko Stingers for sale: YS077, Dona Mae Mim’s original factory car, fully race ready with spares and trailer for \$5500. YS082 described as “factory stock, purchased new from Yenko in May of '66, no Yenko modifications, excel. cond., sterile, \$2300.” I’m not at all sure what a Yenko Stinger with no Yenko modification would be. They must have sold since they did not appear in the April *CORSA Communiqués*. Both months had five and a half full columns of cars for sale plus another three columns of parts for sale. Those were the days!

A decade later, 1988, things in Group Corvair were still pretty slow at this time of year. The March 1988 *Group Corvair Comments* had a number of tech tips gathered from other newsletters, but that was about it. No major events in planning, not even any cars for sale. By April, things had picked up a little – there were three cars for sale – but still not much other activity. One tech tip that is perhaps even more pertinent today is to check the “hi/low” beam switch. It is mounted on the floor where winter water and salt can get to it. If the connections or internal contacts corrode, you won’t have any headlights! It is a good idea to remove it and clean things up periodically. When you reconnect the wires, it wouldn’t hurt to use a little silicon grease to keep the connections dry.

The 1988 March and April *CORSA Communiqués* were worth reading. In March, there was a good article on repairing loose outside rear view mirrors. The author, Jim Becker, offered two solutions. One was to insert a thin metal shim between the ball and spring. The other was how to drill and tap for a screw to reattach a loose spring. (I have an outside mirror that needs tightening up – I’ll let you know how well these suggestions work!) In the same issue was a great article by Bill Cotrofeld (Bill Cotrofeld Automotive, East Arlington, VT) about his adventures on the road. At that time, he and his wife Kathy were regulars at the various Corvair meets and flea markets around the county, including our very own Fall Flea Fairs. As you might imagine, driving a truck with a trailer and a couple tons of Corvair parts around the county can lead to some “interesting” situations. The April issue was equally as good with such articles as “1961 Styling Studies Discovered”. As you know, GM considered building a Pontiac version of the Corvair, the “Polaris”. But according to this article, the other divisions also considered their own versions; I particularly liked the “Cadillac Seville” sports coupe with some very tasteful tail fins! (Keep in mind this was an April issue...)

On a more serious note, Seth Emerson contributed a discussion of the Corvair telescopic steering column and the variety of steering wheels that would fit while Larry Rollow gave guidance for installing dual master cylinders on both early and late model Corvairs.



And both issues had over three full pages of cars and parts for sale.

Jumping to a mere 20 years ago, Group Corvair seems to have become a bit more active in the late winter and early spring. In the March 1998 *Group Corvair Comments* we had several events scheduled – a pot luck dinner meeting, a tech session, a trip to the Corvair Museum (in Richmond) and an opportunity to go on a rally. There was a good article extracted from the Virtual Vairs talking about the relationship between fuel economy and engine efficiency. As it turns out, most automobiles have vastly more power available than they normally need so most gasoline engines are not operating in a particularly efficient regime, hence less than optimal gas mileage. Cars with small engines get better gas mileage, at least in part, because the engines are working harder and operating in their most efficient mode. Back then the Internet was something new and mysterious so there was a short tutorial on the Virtual Vairs and how that mailing list worked. The tech session was a rousing success; the club installed an electronic ignition in Warren Friberg's late convertible without any blood loss. In the Vair Vendor, there were eight cars available including a '63 Spyder and a '64 Rampside.

The *CORSA Communiqué* for March 1998 had an interesting article on the Stirling engine powered '64 Corvair, the "Calvair". This was an experiment to explore the suitability of this external combustion engine in an automobile. While technically interesting and having very low emissions, this particular implementation was impractical – large, heavy and not particularly user friendly. (Stirling engines have found a home in conventional submarines where their very low operating noise and low vibration make them desirable.) People must have been having a run of problems with differentials – the Tech Topics had two full articles on rebuilding and setting up differentials. The cover of the April *Communiqué* featured a right hand drive '63 convertible. Not an April Fool's day joke, rather it was an Australian car; there was a three page article on it being shipped to Australia and subsequent conversion to right hand drive. And in the realm of unusual cars, the Corphibian made a reappearance. (It has since been restored and was shown at the 2017 Independence, MO convention.) The number of cars in the CORSA Classified had shrunk to just over a page with a total of only three pages devoted to cars and parts for sale, parts wanted and service ads.

Tech Topics

Jim Simpson

Four wheel steering: Did you know that the late-model Corvair has four wheel steering? No, I didn't know that either. But it does! The late-model Corvair has standard "active" steering up front and "passive" steering at the rear.

Do you recall the discussion in the March 2017 Group Corvair Comments of the origin of the design of the late-model Corvair's independent rear suspension (IRS) and it's close relationship to the IRS in the Jaguar? Well that article made the rounds in the Corvair world and I got a note from Ken Rölt, the Chief Scientist at AIRMAR Technology Corp, up in New Hampshire. He pointed out to me the patent that General Motors took out on Independent Rear Wheel Suspension (patent 3,327,803; June 27, 1967). This is the patent on the late-model Corvair's IRS. (You can find a copy on the internet at <https://patents.google.com/patent/US3327803>)

The patent never says that this is for the Corvair; however, one glance at the drawings makes it perfectly clear that this is the design of the late-model Corvair. I won't try to go through the specifics of the design here; you really need to read the detailed explanation in the patent. They make a number of claims for the design including superior roll steer, minimal camber change, lower rear roll center and roll axis with improved vehicle stability. But the really novel feature was that the late-model drive train and rear suspension is designed as a unit to allow the rear wheels to passively "steer" in such a way as to reduce oversteer when cornering hard. This is something that automobile engineers have experimented with for years but in most cases passive rear steering has been limited to some very high end sports cars. An example is the current Porsche 911 GTS; it uses an active system to control the direction of the rear wheels to improve "high speed maneuvers".

To summarize the design, the entire power train is designed to pivot slightly at the rear engine mount under hard cornering. With the proper selection of engine mounts and bushings, and the addition of the traverse tie rods that essentially go between the front of the transmission and the rear trailing arm, the rear wheels change direction under hard cornering to counteract the Corvair's tendency to oversteer. The amount isn't specified (and I doubt it is more than a degree or so), but they turn into the corner thus bringing the rear end in rather than letting it just "hang out there."

I know a lot of racers like to change the engine mounts and suspension bushings to get rid of the compliance built into the suspension. Perhaps they are right, but based upon this patent the GM engineers (Thomas Cote and Edward Nash) really knew what they were doing when they designed the late-model Corvair rear suspension. You didn't know just how advanced a car your Corvair was, did you?

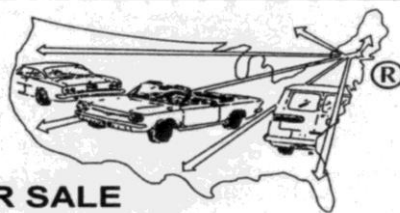
Vair Vendor

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 shows 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.



Group Corvair Comments will run ads for Corvairs, Corvair parts and Corvair related services for free subject to space available. Please send any material to the editor at simpsonj@verizon.net

Clark's Corvair Parts®
400 Mohawk Trail, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370
413-625-9776 FAX: 413-625-8498
www.corvair.com email: clarks@corvair.com



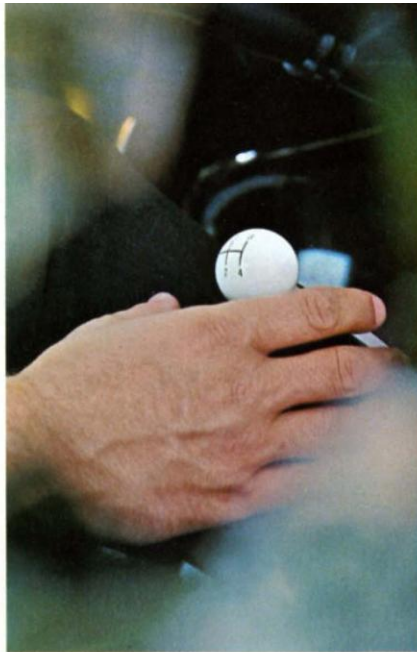
CLARK'S 45th ANNIVERSARY SUPER SALE
This sale goes from January 20 - December 31, 2018.

Sale prices for all items are on the internet order site.
Page numbers refer to the 2013-18 catalog unless otherwise noted.

The 2018 Supplement is on our website. For those who would like a printed version, you can request one with your parts order.



1. Wire wheel covers.



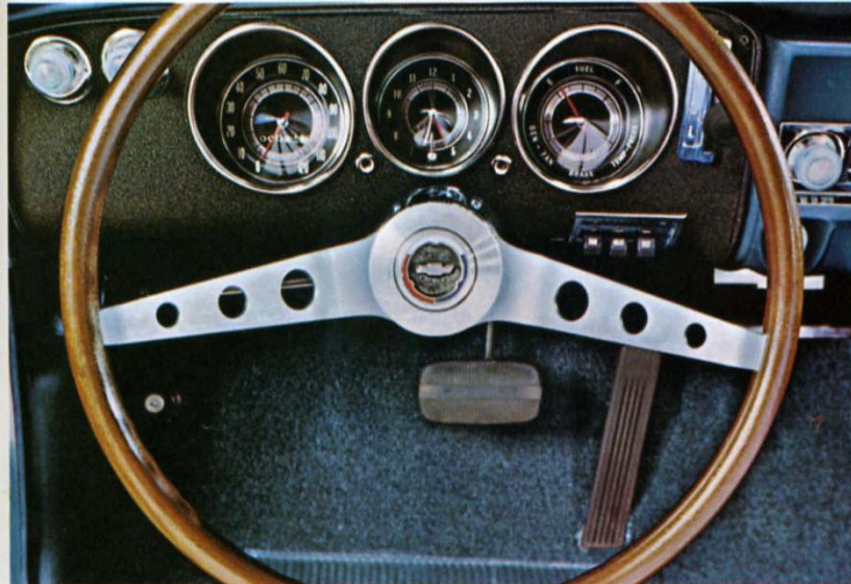
2. Four on the floor.



3. Luggage carrier.



4. AM/FM radio.



5. Sports-styled steering wheel.

For very little extra, you can turn your Corvair into a special personal experience.

To mark your Corvair with your personal touch, consider some of the following items* you can order: 1. Wire wheel covers — look just like the real thing. 2. For four-on-the-floor buffs. Available with all engines. 3. Luggage carrier for the rear deck. Chromed, versatile, handsome. 4. AM/FM radio. You may specify tape stereo, FM stereo or both. 5. Sports-styled steering wheel. Looks like real walnut. Other new options include rear seat shoulder belts for all models, standard style or Custom Deluxe; front shoulder belts on convertibles (standard on sport coupes), and rear window defroster for sport coupe models.

Also, you can specify these goodies to suit yourself: ■ Auxiliary lighting — includes ashtray light, instrument panel courtesy light, glove box light, luggage compartment light and underhood light ■ Special purpose front and rear suspension includes stiffer front and rear springs with matching shock absorbers ■ Special steering with 16:1 overall ratio supplied by quicker ratio box ■ Positraction rear axle □ Stratocase front seat head restraints □ Speed warning unit □ Custom deluxe color-matched seat belts and shoulder belts □ Remote-control outside rearview mirror □ Thinline whitewall tires for extra sportiness □ Adjustable steering column can be positioned fore and aft to provide maximum visibility and comfort for the driver □ Door edge guards □ Front and rear bumper guards □ Car-to-trailer electrical wiring harness; convenient plug-in system requires no splicing or drilling of body holes □ Ski rack □ Fold-down rear seat for Corvair 500 (standard on Monza Sport Coupe) ■ Soft-Ray tinted glass □ Mag-style wheel covers □ 3.55:1 or 3.27:1 axle ratio. ■ Appearance guard group — includes door edge guards, front and rear bumper guards and floor mats. Items may be ordered individually. □ Full wheel covers for Corvair 500 (standard on Monza) □ Windshield-mounted auto compass □ Electric clock □ Power top on convertible.

*Availability of these and other extra-cost items determined by model and other equipment. Check details at your Chevrolet dealer's.

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.