



Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME XLVI, No. 8

August 2018



Welcome to the 2018 CORSA International Convention

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

August

No Group Corvair meeting this month. We normally don't hold a regular meeting in August although we might consider some kind of club outing.

18 – Francis Scott Key Antique Car Club/Sugarloaf Mountain AACA 33rd Annual benefit car show. Rose Hill Manor Children's Museum & Historic Park, 1611 N. Market St., Frederick, MD. Registration 8 – 1, awards 2:30. Check their Facebook site for more information.

September

15 – 43rd Annual Edgar Rohr Memorial Antique Car Meet, Manassas Museum, 9101 Prince William St., Manassas, VA. Sponsored by the Bull Run Region, AACA. Contact Bill Sessler, 703-368-2367, www.bullrunaaca.org.

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

22 – Central PA Corvair Day at the AACA Museum, Hershey, PA. Details to be announced.

October

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

20 – Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show, Glenview Mansion (Rockville Civic Center), 603 Edmonston Dr., Rockville. The field opens at 8 am, come early, all cars must be on the field by 11, ends at 3:30 p.m. Group Corvair is a sponsoring club and we have a reserved section but you must preregister to get in the Corvair section. Web site: <https://www.rockvillemd.gov/667/Antique-Classic-Car-Show>

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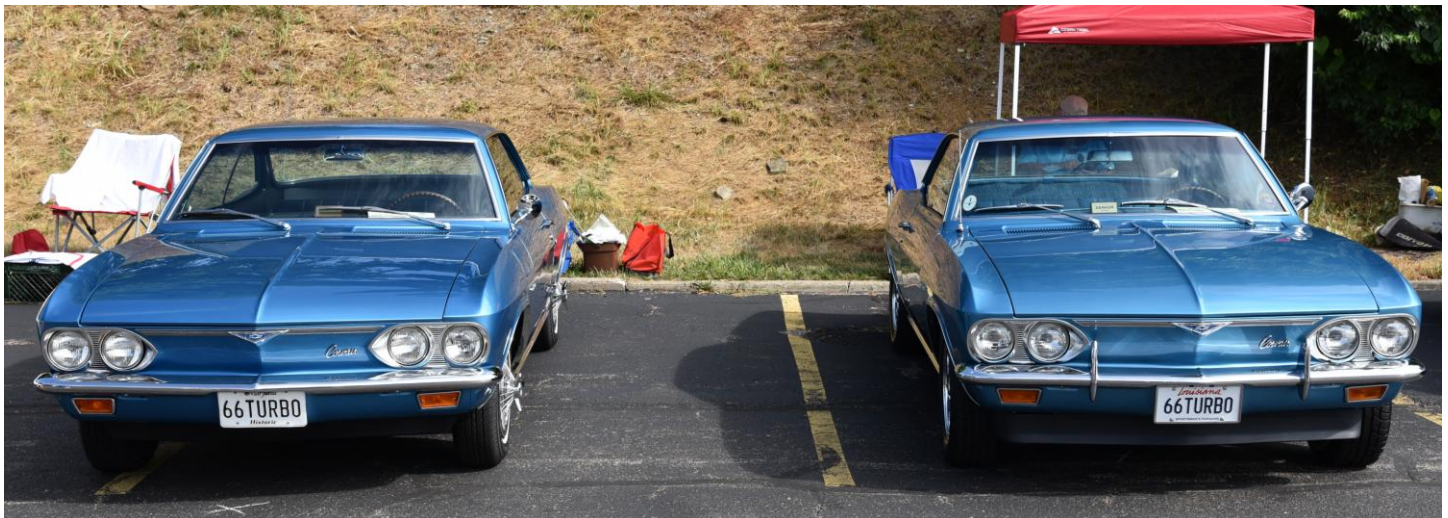
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2018 CORSA International Convention

Jim Simpson



A Pair of '66 Turbos at the Concours. Ours is on the left

Marolyn and I attended the 2018 CORSA International Convention in Pittsburgh at the end of July. I won't go into too much detail here – the *CORSA Communiqué* will have full coverage and all the results. But I did want to present some pictures and a little of our personal experiences at the convention.



Bob Hall checking the Banquet

All things considered, Group Corvair had a fair representation at the convention but as far as I could tell, only Marolyn & I and Ron Fedorczak & Eileen were there for the full week. Curt Shimp (a GC member from New Mexico) was there for most of the week. Rob Neighbor was there for a couple days in mid-week and participated as a navigator in both the econorun and the rally. Dave Edsinger brought Mike



Seth Emerson at the Wheel

Harrison's old '72 convention concours Corsa – now pretty much a beater – to the autocross where he shared it with Bob Walker (GC member) along with Seth Emerson (out from California). Bob & Carol Hall came up for two days at the end of week to check things out, looking in at the banquet on Friday night and checking out the car show on Saturday.

The major event for Marolyn and me was the concours. Ever since the '91 Lake Placid convention, when we first showed our just restored '66 Corsa, we've participated in the concours whenever the CORSA convention was close enough for us to drive. That's averaged out as being once every five years. In the first four, our car was awarded a "gold" award and was promoted to and subsequently maintained its "Senior Division" status. We hoped to continue that string. We'd spent the previous months getting the car ready including such things as refinishing the shock absorbers. It paid off; at the awards banquet they announced that our

car had scored a 97.30 which placed it as third out of seven cars that earned a "gold" award. We accomplished our mission – the car remains in the "senior division".



Freshly refurbished Koni Shock



Ron Fedorczak with Richard Lentinello

At the concours, we met Richard Lentinello, the Executive Editor of Hemmings Motor News. We'd met him once before, at the 2010 Hemmings New England Concours awards and again at the 2012 Sturbridge, MA CORSA convention where he was the banquet speaker. As you might guess, Corvairs rank high in his list of favorite cars. He was scouting the CORSA convention for cars to put in his pair of forthcoming books on Corvairs, one "stock" and the other "modified". He did a photo shoot of our car along with several others; perhaps it will appear in one of the books.

Pittsburgh is a rather confusing city. It's situated at the junction of three rivers (the Monongahela and Allegheny rivers join and become the Ohio) plus it's in the Appalachian mountain range.

These bits of geography mean that there are no straight or level roads. The roads all wind along the valleys or are crossing ridges to get to another neighborhood. And Pittsburgh holds the dubious honor of having the most bridges – 446 – of any city in the world. And no city or state has enough money to keep up with all the necessary maintenance. So you might say travel in Pittsburgh is something of a challenge. But it does make for some great scenery and one of the best ways to take in that scenery is to take a cruise. One highlight of the convention was the dinner cruise. Tuesday evening, after cleaning up after the concours, we boarded rented school buses at the convention hotel which took us down to the riverfront where we boarded a stern wheel paddle boat. Dinner was a buffet and was surprisingly good. As we ate, the Captain narrated, pointing out the various bridges, parks, monuments, stadiums and other points of interest as we traveled up and down all three rivers that trisect Pittsburgh.



Pittsburgh, Looking upriver from the Ohio River

Our final event of the convention was the car display. For various reasons it was held downtown, next to Heinz Field (yes, Heinz of catsup fame), the home of the Pittsburgh Steelers football team. The city had blocked off a street for the Corvairs; unfortunately for some of the latecomers it filled early. One problem with the location is that like most sports complexes, there is little pedestrian traffic in the area, particularly on non-game weekends. So we had relatively few spectators.

Marolyn and I headed home directly from the car display and unlike our trip out, took the Pennsylvania turnpike. We were pleasantly surprised by both the condition of the road and the relatively low traffic. The car ran like a champ and we were home in time for dinner!

A \$6,605.50 Corvair in Germany in 1968

Bob Hall

American cars imported for Europeans were much more expensive than in the USA. Limited demand meant that, with the exception of specialty models like the Corvette, only knocked down units (CDK) manufactured in North America, shipped over and assembled in Europe, were available to European customers. These cars were expensive to operate due to high road taxes for our larger vehicles and engines and because gasoline was (and is) much more expensive. What was a reasonably priced car at home in America was an expensive luxury car that the average European family couldn't justify buying as a daily driver despite their reputation for robust reliability.

Members of the American military, Department of Defense civilians, diplomats and other government personnel who wanted to drive a new American car in Europe didn't buy these cars because they could purchase US made versions at US prices and have them shipped over through military shipping at no or reduced cost.

I was the assistant manager and, later, manager of a GEICO office in Heidelberg Germany near US Army European Headquarters in 1972 and 1973. We provided auto insurance, auto loans and signature loans to American military and civilian personnel stationed in Europe in competition with other German subsidiaries of American insurers and lenders. Our Heidelberg office also had final approval on loans submitted to our smaller branches near other bases in Germany so we saw a large section of the new and used car business. Most of the new vehicles we financed were American, but many were popular European models (BMW, VW, Porsche, Mercedes, Peugeot, Volvo and Ford/Mercury Capris) that were built for the American market and taken home and not meant to be re-sold in Europe. We didn't finance new European specification vehicles due to higher loan to value risk because, if shipped to the USA, they wouldn't be released on the road at home without first being converted to US specs and some simply could never meet US standards.

The overwhelming majority of our loans were for used European cars so the monthly German Schwacke booklet of car values was an invaluable guide. It was our German Kelley Blue Book.

Jahr der Erstzulassung				1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966	
Durchschnittslaufzeit (km) für Fahrzeuge	bis 999 ccm	Neupreis		13700	20000	32600	45200	57800	70400	83000
	bis 1499 ccm	Brutto		16300	23800	38800	53800	68800	83800	98800
	bis 1999 ccm	Netto		18200	26600	43400	60200	77000	93800	110600
	über 2000 ccm			20800	30400	49600	68800	88000	107200	126400
BUICK (USA)	Skylark V 8 * Coupé 5657/182 2 tür	26 918 **	16 250	15 200	11 900	8 100	6 200	3 200	1 350	
	Riviera V 8 * Coupé 7325/269 2 tür	24 250 **	18 200	17 000	13 100	9 100	7 100	3 850	1 850	
** keine Preisbindung		39 405 **	24 000	22 600	16 850	12 000	8 200	3 750	2 100	
		35 500 **	26 900	25 300	18 550	13 200	9 200	4 450	2 650	
CADILLAC (USA)	60 Spec. Fleetwood V 8 * 7636/220 Lim 4 tür	49 700 **	31 850	30 050	22 050	16 000	11 100	6 000	2 950	
	Eldorado V 8 * Coupé 8080/235 2 tür	44 775 **	34 850	33 050	24 250	17 600	12 200	6 850	3 550	
** keine Preisbindung		50 100 **	31 550	29 650	21 750	15 850	11 000	5 800	—	
		45 135 **	34 550	32 650	23 950	17 450	12 100	6 650	—	
CHEVROLET (USA)	Corvair 6 Zyl. 2640/97 Lim 4 tür	[21 600]**	—	—	—	—	4 650	2 150	kM	
	Camaro SS V 8 * 5657/200 2+2Cab.	[19 463]**	—	—	—	—	5 450	2 700	—	
		24 900 **	16 850	15 800	11 150	8 700	6 200	3 450	—	
		22 432 **	18 750	17 700	12 250	9 700	7 100	4 100	—	
		21 500 **	14 250	13 450	9 550	7 550	5 700	3 050	1 650	
		19 369 **	15 950	15 150	10 550	8 500	6 550	3 700	2 150	
	24 100 **	16 150	15 250	10 650	7 350	5 650	2 800	1 400		
	21 712 **	18 050	17 150	11 750	8 300	6 500	3 400	1 900		
	25 800 **	16 450	15 450	11 350	7 950	6 150	3 350	1 800		
	23 243 **	18 350	17 350	12 450	8 900	7 050	4 000	2 300		
	38 100 **	24 950	23 500	17 550	12 450	8 700	4 900	2 500		
	34 324 **	27 450	26 000	19 350	13 650	9 700	5 700	3 050		
CHRYSLER (USA)	Newport V 8 * 7206/380 Lim 4 tür	26 973 **	16 000	15 000	11 000	8 050	5 800	2 350	1 350	
	New Yorker V 8 * 7206/380 Coupé 4 tür	24 300 **	17 800	16 800	12 100	9 050	6 650	2 900	1 850	
** keine Preisbindung		31 746 **	18 800	17 750	13 150	9 350	6 700	3 250	1 600	
		28 600 **	20 900	19 850	14 150	10 350	7 700	4 100	2 100	

If you look at the Chevrolet table under the “Neupreis” column you will find a price of DM21,600.00 or \$6,605.50 at DM 3.27 to \$1.00 in 1968 for a new Corvair (a 4 door is quoted, but coupes predominated) when the last Corvair was listed—look across the chart to 1968. The “Netto” price is just that—a net price, but because relatively few American cars were registered in Germany we had more leeway in valuation than more common European models. Note that cars are listed based on what year they were first registered and not the model year so, for instance, a left over 1967 new car first licensed in 1968 would be counted in that year. This is also an indication that new Corvair sales had dried up by 1969.

I spent five years in Germany—two years of my Army service 1967-1969 when I owned a 1965 110 4spd Monza coupe (totalled in 1967) and a 1968 110 4spd Monza coupe with F41 suspension and quick steering that I brought home. However, as a civilian working and studying in Germany from 1970 to 1973 I couldn't afford to buy, register or run a Corvair so I drove old VWs. I had the most fun with the Corvairs.

The One that Got Away

Jim Simpson

That was the title to Bob Lutz's column in the August 2018 issue of *Road and Track*. In case you've never heard of Bob Lutz, he was a senior executive at BMW, Ford, Chrysler and finally GM. He had a hand in developing such cars as the BMW 3 Series, BMW's motorsport division, Dodge Viper, the reborn Chevrolet Camaro and even the Chevrolet Volt. He retired from GM in 2010. He's had his pick of cars over the years!

In his column, he reminisces over his lifetime favorite cars. His criteria were simple; “vehicles that were more than a car, but were also constant sources of pleasure, demanding to be driven for the sheer joy of being in the car. Not coincidentally, those are the ones that stick in the memory – their sounds, smells, and idiosyncrasies easily recalled, despite the passage of many years. They are the ones that were sold or traded, for one reason or another, and their departure is regretted to this day.”

In 1962 he received an ad – a “mini-magazine” in fact – for the 1962 Corvair. It was richly endowed with cutaways and technical drawings and described the Corvair basically as a large, affordable four-door Porsche 356. That “masterfully written piece” drove him to a Chevrolet dealer. Actually several of them; some tried to sell him a full-size V8 “for the same amount of money”; others categorically refused to place his special order. He wanted a Monza four-door, four-speed manual, 3.55:1 final drive. Finally one dealer, an MG fan, took his order.

After nine “endless weeks” it arrived – it was spectacular in a metallic autumn gold. “I loved that car after the first hundred feet. The ergonomics were excellent, the gearing well chosen; 102 hp motivated the relatively light car well. And the engine sound, rumbling from the stern, with a bit of cooling-blower whine thrown in, was magic.”

Mr. Lutz modified that car extensively to make it his own – Koni shocks, EMPI camber-compensator, shorter steering arms, metallic brakes and most importantly, steel-belted Michelin X radial tires.

His closing words are “It was my all-time favorite car. Not the best, but my favorite.”

Forty, Thirty and Twenty Years Ago This Month

Jim Simpson

The August 1978 issue of *Group Corvair Comments* was rather abbreviated, stretching out to only three pages and over a page of that were ads. There were 14 cars for sale, ranging from a rusty, but mechanically sound '61 Monza to a '63 Greenbrier (\$500!) to a '67 Monza coupe described as “running, but needing work” for \$100. Otherwise, the club was preparing for the Freestate Corvair Affair to be held in Columbia followed only two weeks later by the Fall Flea Market. September was going to be a busy month.

Continuing the summary from last month of the last of the *CORSA Quarterly* magazines, there was an excellent article by Bob Coffin describing his first year out racing Corvairs. In that year, he managed to build a competitive race car, make his way through SCCA driving school and get his novice racing license and finally qualify for his Regional racing license. He even managed to take a third place trophy at Lime Rock. Another article, primarily of technical interest, was an excerpt from the “Air-Vair” newsletter. This had highlights from a 3-day meeting at the 1977 Oshkosh experimental aircraft meet. There was quite a lot of discussion on the basic engine design, improvements that would apply to automobile and aircraft use as well as some things that were specifically targeted toward the aircraft users.

The August 1978 issue of the *CORSA Communiqués* was the last one of the pamphlet style publications. In September, CORSA combined the monthly newsletter and the glossy magazine style quarterlies into a single glossy magazine. CORSA was growing up! Frankly, there wasn't a lot of news in this issue other than a couple of notes from chapters and notifications of upcoming shows. The Tech Topic section talked about preparing front crossmembers to last indefinitely. They are notorious for rusting out, particularly in the snow/salt states. Most of the advice was to clean, neutralize rust and paint the crossmember. There was one final step with which I strongly disagree – that was to fill the crossmember with foam. The idea was to seal out moisture. Unfortunately, filling steel box members with foam has been shown to be a bad idea – the original British Mini had foam-filled rocker panels. They found that moisture would still manage to get in there and be trapped by the foam resulting in the rocker panels rusting out faster than if they'd been left empty. The five pages of ads did list two Yenko Stingers and a full selection of years and models all at prices that would make your mouth water today.

Ten years later, the August 1988 issue of *Group Corvair Comments* had some big news. Group Corvair had been awarded the 1991 CORSA International Convention. There were three years of hard work to make it all come together, but we pulled it off! John Moody offered a tech tip that I haven't seen anywhere else. When cleaning your Corvair's engine, seal the small vent on the top of the fuel pump. If you don't, any water that gets in there will say and help rust the spring and other steel parts inside the top of the fuel pump. There was only one ad; this was a carryover from the previous month and offered a '62 Monza and a '63 700.

The August '88 *CORSA Communiqués* was filled with tech tips. Do you want to put a sun roof in your late-model? There was an article on how to do that. How about testing your Powerglide transmission fluid? There's a procedure for that as well. Larry Claypool relayed some “interesting” stories of dramatic failures in Corvairs. The “best” was when the inner left U-joint failed on a car. The now free axle half shaft proceeded to flail around under the car destroying everything in its path – the starter, accelerator linkage, powerglide transmission case. But to add insult to injury, it hooked the Powerglide shift cable. In the owner's words “I sailed into this corner and about halfway

through, this terrible clanking and thrashing starts. I look in the mirror and all these bits and pieces are rolling off in every direction. Suddenly, there's a shower of plastic pieces *inside* the car and the Powerglide shifter just disappears, right out of the dash, into a black hole." Ouch! Luckily there were two full pages of cars for sale in this issue so he shouldn't have had too much of a problem finding a replacement...

The **Group Corvair Comments** in August 1998 had our plans for the upcoming Fall Flea Fair. This had been a big event for the last couple of decades but attendance was falling off. Ward Bourgondien had attended the CORSA Convention in St. Louis. He was particularly impressed by the number and size of the parts vendors, both inside and out. But there were thunderstorms that forced the cancellation of the concours. In his opinion that was the right call. Two and a half pages of the newsletter were dedicated to a discussion of electronic ignition systems – the various types available, their pros and cons, and a discussion if they were right for you and your car. Seven cars, including what sounded like a nice '63 Spyder coupe, were being offered in the 'Vair Vendor.

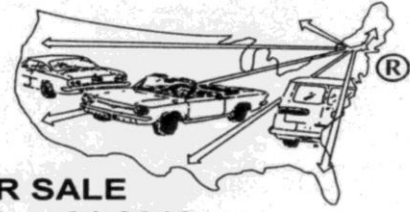
There was nothing to top the “*Stupid is as Stupid does*” article from the previous month in the August '98 **CORSA Communiqué**. But the August issues have become the annual issue for major technical discussions. Two articles focused on ignition systems, one by Dale Langsather on distributors, the second by Ray Sedman electronic ignitions. (Group Corvair had also printed this article; Ray had posted it on the internet.) Bob Helt offered his views on piston ring break-in. Basically he points out that modern manufacturing techniques and materials have essentially eliminated the need for the old-fashioned break-in periods. Even with a rebuilt engine, if the cylinders are finished to essentially mirror smooth surfaces and using high quality rings (preferably molybdenum – “moly”), any break-in is accomplished very quickly. Similarly he dismisses the old advice of using a non-detergent oil during break-in. Cam manufacturers recommend using an additive to minimize wear during break-in of a new cam, so why would you want high wear on other engine parts. So use the highest finishes, factory tolerances and the best modern oil on a new engine. In the page of ads closing the Communiqué, YS-172 was up for sale. From the description, there wasn't a lot of original Corvair left on this car – tube frame, fiberglass body, disk brakes, new suspension and more for \$14,500.

Vair Vendor

For Sale: 1965 Corvair Corsa Coupe, 140 hp, 4-speed. Yellow with black interior. This car has been parked in a dry garage for about the last 27 years. Running when parked, 63,779 miles on the car. 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 at least 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.



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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.

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.