



# Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME XLVI, No. 8

September 2018



First State Corvair “All Corvair Show”

## CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

### September

15 – 43<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://www.bullrunaaca.org).

18 – **Group Corvair Regular Meeting**, 7 p.m. We’re meeting at a familiar restaurant, the Beijing of Greenbelt, 131 Centerway, Greenbelt, MD. 7 p.m. is dinner followed by a business/planning meeting.

20 – 23 – Racer Reunion, Vintage Road Race at Virginia International Raceway (VIR). This is a Sportscar Vintage Race Association (SVRA) event with Corvairs being the featured marque. They expect 21 race prepared Corvairs and they will include a Corvair-only race. The main showing will be on Saturday, 22 Sept. Note that there will also be a SVRA car show as part of the event. More information: <https://svra.com/events/2018-heacock-classic-gold-cup/>

22 – **Group Corvair Outing**. This is a visit to a Stanley Steamer enthusiast in Wellsville, PA, near Gettysburg. Bob

Hall and Gus & Barbara Torbert are arranging this and will provide details at the meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

22 – Central PA Corvair Day at the AACA Museum, Hershey, PA. 9 -4 at the AACA Museum, 161 Museum Drive, Hershey, PA. Rain date, Sunday, 23 September.

29 – GM Baltimore 8<sup>th</sup> annual All American Car Show. 10 – 2 at the GM Baltimore Operations Plant, 10301 Philadelphia Rd., White Marsh, MD. \$15 registration fee, proceeds to the White Marsh Volunteer Fire and Ambulance Company. People's Choice and Plant Choice trophies, food, music, raffles, games for kids. Call 443-425-1500 for more info.

## October

16 – **Group Corvair Regular Meeting**, 7 p.m. We'll decide on a location at the September meeting.

20 – Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show, Glenview Mansion (Rockville Civic Center), 603 Edmonston Dr., Rockville. One of the two best shows in the region! 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 be sure of having a space in the Corvair section. Web site:

<https://www.rockvillemd.gov/667/Antique-Classic-Car-Show>

20 – Asphalt Angles Fall Car, Truck and Bike Show, 9 – 4, Chili's & On the Border, Bowie, MD

## November

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

## December

18 – **Group Corvair Regular Meeting**, 7 p.m. unless we decide upon a holiday season dinner. Election of 2019 officers.

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## An Incentive to Join CORSA!

Allan Lacki sent a note announcing an incentive for new Corvair owners to join CORSA. Until December 31<sup>st</sup>, all new CORSA members will receive a copy of *Corvair Basics*. This is a 190 page manual edited by Bob Helt designed for anyone new to Corvairs or thinking about Corvair ownership. It covers just about all aspects of basic Corvair repair, maintenance and restoration. It's a great resource.

So if you know anyone who is thinking about joining the wonderful world of Corvair ownership, let them know. They can go to the CORSA web site: [www.corvair.org](http://www.corvair.org) for more information.

# First State Corvair Club “All Corvair Show”

Marolyn Simpson

Jim and I had planned to attend the First State Corvair Club’s All Corvair Show in Wilmington, Delaware last year, but then it rained. This year, the weather looked better, but August 11 was also the day of the All GM show at Montgomery College in Rockville which we have attended several times. We have always enjoyed the All GM show and it is a lot closer than Wilmington, DE. However Jerry Yates was planning to go to Delaware and convinced us that we should give it a try.

The car was pretty much ready to go since we had just recently returned from the convention in Pittsburgh. We left home at 7:00 and arrived at the Limestone Presbyterian Church in Wilmington just a few minutes after the show officially started at 9:00. It was a Saturday and most of the beach traffic must have headed across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge the day before because we had very little traffic and only had to stop to pay the toll before crossing the bridge.

Heading up Rt-301, shortly after we entered Delaware we saw a Corvair on the back of a flat bed truck. We speculated that the truck was headed to the car show. We were right, but the truck must have taken a different route than we did because when we pulled into the church parking lot it was already there.

The location worked out well. The parking lot was mostly tree shaded, inside the church we had the use of a room for hospitality, and restrooms were available. The First State Corvair Club provided a free lunch of subs and drinks in the hospitality room to all registered Corvair owners, something we greatly appreciated. Great idea, First State club!



**The Yates & Simpsons represented Group Corvair**

A long table was set up near the entrance to the church that was filled with door prizes. There were enough items that everyone took home several items. We chose a squeegee and a fly swatter; not particularly valuable, but very useful.

There was a people’s choice ballot with the categories of early and late open, early and late closed, forward control, survivor and specialty. There were about 23 cars on the lot, with 10 late-models, 10 early-models and 3 FCs. (We

may have missed one or two that came late and parked off to the sides.) When the awards were given out Jim and I received the first place trophy in the late closed class.

The drive home was mostly uneventful although not as smooth as the trip to the show. At the bay bridge there was a short backup because traffic headed west had to squeeze into two lanes instead of the usual three plus I suspect there were some early home-goers from Ocean City. The sky looked somewhat ominous but the rain held off until we were across the bridge. We got into a real downpour just as we turned off Rt. 50 onto Davidsonville Road, but cleared up within a mile or two. (We were right on the edge of the storm; Jerry Yates reported that he was in heavy rain all the way from the Davidsonville Road turnoff to his home in Bowie.)

We enjoyed the show and will keep it in mind for another year.

## Before and After

### Jim & Marolyn Simpson

As we reported in last month's newsletter, we took a "gold" award at the recent CORSA International Convention. Normally the awards are some kind of plaque that you can hang on the wall. This year, the host club – Western Pennsylvania Corvair Club – outdid themselves with some really great steel trophies. These were 11 x 12 inch sheet metal that was laser (?) cut with the Pittsburgh skyline with a rusty finish symbolizing the "steel city". As I said, the trophy is great, but how do you display it? There was no way to hang it and about the only other option was to prop it up on a shelf.

Marolyn and I did some head scratching; we decided the option best was to frame it and make a hanging display of it and the other "senior division" awards from CORSA. We had some ideas about backing materials to make the skyline "pop", but didn't know how to frame it so we finally turned to the picture framing folks at Michael's craft store. We like the results. Here are the "before and after" pictures:



# Tech Topics

## Protecting Lower Head Stud to Block Attachment

Bob Hall

Whenever valves are adjusted there is always the chance that the rocker stud will loosen as the rocker arm adjusting nut is backed off. As the rocker stud is also the lower cylinder head nut then re-torquing is required. It shouldn't happen because the rocker adjusting nut isn't as tight as the rocker stud and it doesn't happen often, but varnish buildup may increase the effort needed to remove the rocker nut. If the rocker stud does loosen then it has to be torqued back to 32 to 38 ft lbs on the head stud. I have made it a habit to completely remove the rocker stud if it loosens in order to chase the threads with a tap before reinstalling to be sure of an accurate torque value. I have never enjoyed feeling the rocker stud/lower head nut wind up and then let go with a "ping" while being torqued. Especially after a long day on my back methodically reassembling head parts.

**The worst case scenario** is if the **other end** of the head stud turns and pulls out of the crankcase. If it does you are about to enter a whole new chapter of Corvair mechanic training.



To avoid this worst case situation and the rocker stud/lower head stud loosening in the first place you can use a small wire (brass) brush to clean the stud threads above the rocker arm nut before you loosen it. While this has mostly – but not always – worked for me, and seeing a “need” for a new tool, I purchased a set of crowfoot wrenches which included a 13/16ths. I now use that 13/16ths to hold the rocker stud while loosening the rocker bolt. The crowfoot will fit from either side of all but the end valve rocker studs and, so far, I have been able to anchor those from only one side with no problem. Result: No loose rocker studs and no risk of pulling the head stud from the crankcase.

# Check Those Replacement Parts

Jim Simpson

After years of dithering, I finally decided to do some work on the carburetor on my Corsa turbo engine. There wasn't anything wrong with the carburetor itself, rather the changes in gasoline – primarily the addition of 10% ethanol to modern gasoline – has necessitated changing the “tune” of the carburetor.

The Corvair turbocharged engine is very sensitive to octane rating and air/fuel mix when it is being run hard enough to spin up the turbocharger. At low speeds/low loads, it could probably run on the cheapest and lowest octane gasoline you can buy – it's basically a low-compression engine comparable to the base 95 hp engine. But when the turbocharger spins up, the effective compression ratio jumps to as high as about 13.8:1. That requires both the highest octane you can buy and a very rich mixture to keep the engine from destroying itself through runaway detonation.

The mixture (air/fuel ratio) is largely controlled by the needle and jet in the carburetor. The jet is a small brass threaded plug with an even smaller hole (orifice) drilled through it. All the gasoline that goes into the engine passes through this small orifice. The needle is a thin brass rod that goes into this orifice, partially blocking it and controlling the amount of gasoline that flows through. The needle is machined so it has two sections, one thinner than the other. It moves up and down in the jet orifice depending upon throttle position. When the throttle is partially open, the thicker section is in the orifice, allowing modest amounts of gasoline to flow; at full throttle, the thin section is in the orifice allowing more gas to the engine. This controls the ratio of the air to fuel being fed to the engine.

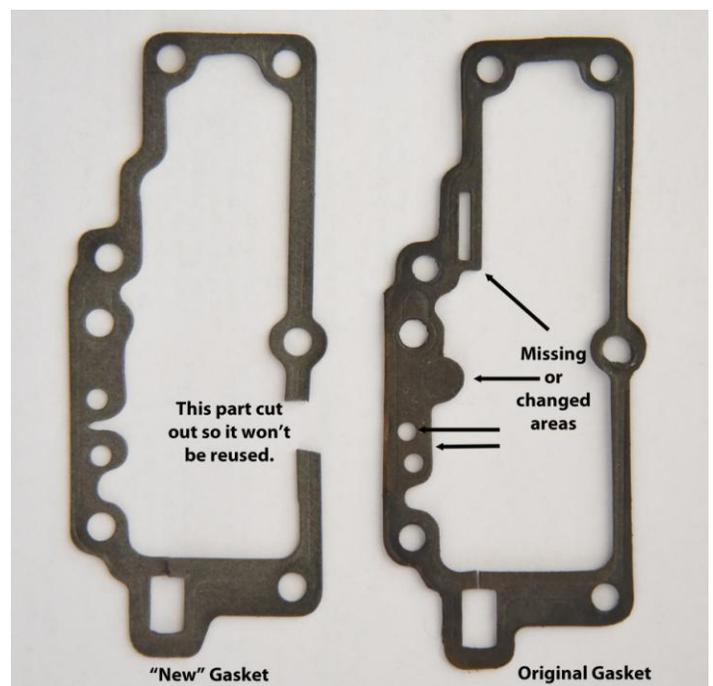
Modern gasoline, with the added ethanol, is less dense than the “pure” gasoline the Corvair was designed to use. Less dense means there is less “fuel” in a given volume of gasoline so to get the desired air to fuel mix, you need to allow more gasoline to flow. The changes in jet and needle dimensions are only a few thousandths of an inch, but that's enough to change the air/fuel mixture significantly.

Changing the needle and jet on the turbocharged Corvair carburetor is fairly easy and can be done with the carburetor on the car. (The turbo Corvair uses a Carter YH carburetor, basically the same carb used on the six-cylinder Corvettes, some old Chrysler V8 marine engines and I think the Hudson Hornet “Twin-H” models. It is an old design.) I swapped my original needle and jet for the first “richer” set that Clarks' sells. But when I fired up the engine, it ran terribly! It wouldn't idle at all – the engine would die if it was allowed to go below about 2,000 rpm. And even at that speed, it wouldn't maintain a constant speed; it would go up and down ~ 500 rpm.

Obviously something was seriously wrong. The first step was to return the carburetor to its previous condition, that is, reinstall the original needle and jet. I did just that and guess what? It didn't run any better at all! So it wasn't the new needle and jet causing the problem. After some head scratching, I thought about everything else that I'd touched in the process. The only other new part was the gasket between the carburetor top and the main body. I have a small stack of spares; they recommend you put a new one on every time you take the carburetor cover off. That couldn't be the problem, could it? The only way to find out was to take the cover off again and check.

Sure enough, the gasket was different than all the other Carter YH carburetor cover gaskets in my collection. Upon inspection, it was obvious that it had a different pattern of holes for the various passages between the main body and top cover. It was the right shape and size for a Carter YH, but certainly not the right gasket for any Corvair turbo carburetor. All the rest of my replacement gaskets were correct; they varied in material a bit, but all had the same (correct) pattern of passages and seal. This one was different. There must have been a variation of the Carter YH carburetor sometime in the past that this gasket fits, but I have no idea what that might be.

Now back to the title of this article – Check Those Replacement Parts. I try to buy parts from Corvair



suppliers when possible, first to keep them in business and also because they “should” have the right parts. While I have no idea where this particular gasket came from, it likely came from a major Corvair vendor. So when you do a repair or replacement on your car, compare the old and new parts. Are they the same size and shape? Does the material seem right? Does it really fit properly? In this case, no harm was done, but if I’d just taken a few seconds and compared the old and new gaskets it would have saved me a lot of time, effort and worry.

## Forty, Thirty and Twenty Years Ago This Month

Jim Simpson

I believe the official September 1978 issue of *Group Corvair Comments* was skipped due to the Freestate Corvair Affair early in the month in Columbia, MD. Instead a mid-September newsletter was issued that covered both September and October. The Corvair Affair had been coordinated by Ron Fedorczak and went off great. All three Maryland Corvair clubs (Group Corvair, Chesapeake Corvair and Baltimore Corvair Club) contributed to the success. The major upcoming event was the Fall Flea Market to be held at Jim McKay Chevrolet in Fairfax, VA. I remember going to that flea market – it was great with vendors from Vermont (the Cotrofelds), New Jersey (CorVega) and Kentucky (American Corvair Parts) along with masses of parts from local members. There were some real bargains!

In September 1978, the *CORSA Quarterly* glossy magazine and *CORSA Communiqués* pamphlet combined into the current *CORSA Communiqué* magazine we know and love. Volume 1, Number 1 of the *CORSA Communiqué* was issued that September. This was the first tangible step resulting from CORSA hiring professional management for the club. The Corsa Classified ads were broken out by state. I guess that made sense given that buying a car locally was usually the easiest, but it made finding a specific model harder. One ad that caught my eye was for a ’62 Lakewood with a mid-engine conversion. For \$900 you could get the car with a 302 cu. in. Z-28 Camaro V8 engine and a complete conversion to late-model front and rear suspension. It still needed some paint, tires and wheels and “detail” work, but an original Z-28 engine was probably worth that much by itself

It was still three years to go before the 1991 CORSA Convention so I don’t think the news that Group Corvair was going to host it had fully sunk in. At least there wasn’t much in the September 1988 issue of *Group Corvair Comments* that would indicate we’d even started work on it. John Moody provided a lengthy Tech Topic article on fuel pumps, one of his favorite items. This one explained how some fuel pumps lacked an important internal feature that was intended to protect the engine from gasoline leaking into the crankcase. Unfortunately there was no way of checking without disassembling the fuel pump. We had five cars for sale in the ‘Vair Vendor; all seemed nice, but nothing noteworthy.

Ten years after CORSA had hired professional management, the team of Harry Jensen and Mike McGowan were in charge. The September ‘88 *CORSA Communiqué* reflected the ten years of experience and was a well polished magazine. As is usual, the September issue was devoted to the convention recently held in Asheville, NC. (Marolyn & I had attended; however our Corvair did not, it was about in the middle of its decades long restoration.) One noteworthy article was an interview with the four people – including our own Ron Fedorczak – who had attended every CORSA convention. (It’s down to three people now; Ron still has an unbroken record.) There were only two and a half pages of ads – prices were good, but there wasn’t anything particularly interesting.

The September 1998 *Group Corvair Comments* was pretty short, only three pages. The editor explained it away by saying that the president (me) and recording secretary (Marolyn) were on vacation. Surely there were other Group Corvair members in town who could have contributed. The only article was a wrap-up of the Group Corvair Fall Flea Fair. Unfortunately the event was shrinking with only 12 Corvairs being shown. The newsletter listed six Corvairs for sale with prices ranging from \$600 to \$6,500.

Keeping with the tradition of devoting the September issue of the *CORSA Communiqué* to convention coverage, the 1998 issue reported on the St. Louis convention. The lowlight of the convention was the concours – it was called off! It rained. Not just a little rain, but a real downpour that started in the predawn hours and continued all day along with wind and lightening. Cancelling the concours was probably a good call. But the rest of the convention seemed to go well and people had fun. The CORSA Classified section was down to only five columns. Two ads caught my eye – a Corvair powered Lola race car and a 150 hp Corvair turbo engine powered boat.

## 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](mailto:ldgray1@yahoo.com) for more information.



**For Sale: 1965 LA built Corsa coupe**, 140 Less than 1K since new clutch, balanced pressure plate and Clarks dual exhaust. Engine sealed. 4spd beige with saddle interior front seats recovered (Clarks) telescoping column, wood wheel, rear antenna, oil bath air filter, front and rear windows pulled when the car was last painted in 1990, window frame areas treated and painted before windows were reinstalled. Licensed and insured. Tires inflated, but old. Always stored on pavement under car cover. **Body poor, but salvageable** with rust in all usual areas. Rear quarter dings repaired in past, but no major accidents. Best price over \$1,800.00 Bob Hall 301-213-9852



**For Sale: '64 Corvair Dune Buggy.** It has a Maryland title and "Street Rod" tags as a '64 Corvair. Asking \$4,450 or an offer I can live with?? Bob Lewis, 301-246-4278, Nanjemoy, MD.



**For less than \$2700,**

These ten cars, just as you see them . . . and 46 others. A grand total of 56 different GM models with price tags under \$2700\* . . . Opel Kadetts, Corvairs, Chevy II's, Chevelles, Chevrolets, Pontiac Tempests, Oldsmobile F-85's, Buick Specials.

They all come well-equipped with 1968 GM features—ignition key warning buzzer, exhaust-emission control systems, seat belts for all passenger positions, and many other GM advances. And they all offer the traditional benefits of General Motors' advanced styling and higher resale value.

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\*Based on manufacturers' suggested retail prices including Federal excise tax, suggested

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budget that much attention. Or that much buying power. After all . . . 56 cars under \$2700. That's quite a lot. For quite a little.

Here's a small taste of our low-priced spread: 1. Chevrolet Biscayne 2-door Sedan, 2. Chevelle 300 Nomad Wagon, 3. Chevelle Malibu Sport Sedan, 4. Camaro Sport Coupe, 5. Chevy II Nova SS Coupe, 6. Oldsmobile Cutlass Sports Coupe, 7. Corvair Monza Convertible, 8. Pontiac Tempest Custom 2-door Hardtop, 9. Buick Skylark 4-door Sedan, 10. Opel Rallye Coupe.

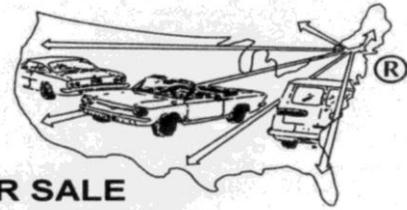


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**CLARK'S 45<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY SUPER SALE**  
**This sale goes from January 20 - December 31, 2018.**

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](http://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.*