



# Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME XLVI, No. 10

October 2018



## Group Corvair at the Hemingway's Restaurant "Harvest Festival and Car Show"

### CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

#### October

16 – **Group Corvair Regular Meeting**, 7 p.m. It's been six months since we met at Fratelli's Restaurant in Hyattsville, so this month we'll return there. Fratelli's is in the old Howard Johnson's at 5820 Landover Rd., Hyattsville, MD. This is just west of where the Baltimore-Washington Parkway crosses over Landover Rd. The entrance is right beside the exit from the south-bound side of the parkway, on the north side of Landover Rd. As usual, we'll meet at 7 p.m. for dinner and then have a business 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. Bob Hall, Jim Simpson, Rick Sanford and Jerry Yates have Corvairs registered for the show. Hopefully other Corvairs will show up. <https://www.rockvillemd.gov/667/Antique-Classic-Car-Show>

20 – Asphalt Angels 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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## Breaking News!

*Group Corvair Comments*, our very own club's newsletter, was judged as being in the top ten Corvair newsletters. The latest issue of the *Corsa Communiqué* (October 2018) has the results of the annual Tony Fiore Memorial CORSA Chapter Newsletter Awards. Club newsletters from 2017 were evaluated by a team of judges; they awarded the top three spots to the *Dayton Corvair Chronicle* (1<sup>st</sup>), *CorvanAtics* (2<sup>nd</sup>) and *Corvair Houston Newsletter* (3<sup>rd</sup>). They didn't say how many newsletters were in the running, but did single out another seven as being noteworthy and in the top ten without putting them into any particular order. *Group Corvair Comments* was among them. Perhaps the article that YOU contribute will be the one that gets us into the top three next year!

## Minutes of the September Meeting

Marolyn Simpson

After a break during the summer months, eight Group Corvair members met at the Beijing of Greenbelt restaurant on Tuesday, September 18 at 7:00 for dinner. After a meal that everyone seemed to enjoy, Bob Hall, club president, called the meeting to order at 8:05. Jim Simpson gave the treasurer's report. The club received \$24 income from dues; we gained one new member. There were no expenses. There were no minutes since there was no meeting last month.

We discussed a number of upcoming shows, not all of which were listed in the newsletter calendar. At the time of the meeting there were four Corvairs registered for the Rockville show on October 20. There was a reminder that Corvair Day at the museum in Hershey will be on September 22, and on September 29 there is a car show in Baltimore. On September 30 there will be a car show at the Crescent Market in Bowie. Then in October, on the 6<sup>th</sup>, there will be the first annual fall festival and car show at Hemingway's restaurant in Stevensville, MD -- just across the Bay bridge.

The Stanley Steamer club outing will be on September 22 in Wellsville, PA. Everyone will meet at Bruce Torbert's home in Wellsville at 11:00 and we will then go to the main event. After the tour the plan is to go out to lunch.

Jerry Yates had an album of pictures from the 1972 national convention. Woody Schwartz had won the best of show that year.

Bob and Jim S. had gone out to inspect a rust-free project car in Severn, MD. The owner had started the project but died before it was finished. This would be a good car if someone is interested in a major restoration project.

There was a discussion of an ad by Saab claiming that they were the "inventors" of the turbo-charged sport sedan. Reading the ad carefully, they may have been technically correct. While Saab's turbo introduction was in 1990, long

after GM's Corvair Spyder and Oldsmobile Jetfire, neither of the GM cars were "sedans." Both were two-door coupes. That's Madison Avenue advertising for you!

Although we had put some work into designing a club feather flag, we will not be going forward with it. The special that had been offered at the 2017 CORSA International Convention is no longer in effect.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45.

## **Group Corvair Tours**

### **Charlie Johnson's Stanley Steamer Restoration Shop**

**Jim Simpson**

This year's summer has been unusually hot, humid and rainy – basically "blah" weather. As an antidote, Gus & Barbara Torbert, along with their son Bruce, arranged a tour of Charlie Johnson's Stanley Steamer restoration shop. Charlie's shop is in Wellsville, Pennsylvania, a small town northwest of York. Charlie lives in an 1890's vintage house which fits well with his profession of restoring these vintage cars. His shop is out back of the house and houses both his workrooms and a garage with his personal collection of steamers.

By way of background, the Stanley Steamer was produced between 1900 and 1924 by the identical twins Freeland Oscar and Francis Edgar Stanley. Their first steam car was built for personal use, but it gained immediate attention and they quickly had 200 orders on hand for them. By comparison with the early internal combustion (IC) engine cars, Stanley Steamers were light, quiet and fast! They had full torque from a standing start (they didn't require a transmission!) and none of the thrashing, banging, smell and internal complexity of the IC cars. They were premier cars, popular with the wealthy. Their ultimate downfall, however, was the time they took to get started in the morning. It might require up to a half hour to get the boiler up to full steam. With the continued improvement of IC engines, particularly the introduction of electric starters 1912, steamer popularity waned. The production line finally closed in 1924 after about 11,000 steam cars had been produced.



**One of Charlie Johnson's personal Stanley Steamers. He drives it regularly on tours and parades. It requires refilling with water about every 50 miles and has a built-in pump so that you can get water from just about any convenient source such as from a river below a bridge. The large white mass under the hood is the boiler.**



Charlie doesn't take on all Stanley Steamers; he restricts his work to the early versions, up to 1915. (After 1915 the car was restyled, taking on a much more conventional appearance, complete with what looked like a grill up front.) His work is meticulous; he only restores Stanley Steamers to "Pebble Beach" show standards. As an example of the time and attention, he cited the amount of time it took to completely restore one (wood) wheel – about 100 hours of labor. No one dared ask what his hourly rate was...

He currently had one car in his shop for restoration. This was a car that he'd advised the owner not to buy, but had gone ahead



**Chassis and body above, running gear, fenders and hood to right**

with anyway. According to Charlie, the car had been "restored" but in the process "everything was done wrong" with many of the original parts destroyed, lost or thrown away. Charlie had to completely disassemble the steamer and start from scratch. I didn't catch just how long it had been in his



shop, but did get the impression it had been a while and was going to be there for some time to come.

Charlie says that you don't need a key for a Stanley Steamer (they don't have one anyway); take a look at the controls to the left! That's not all of them, there are more on the steering column plus floor pedals. In spite of not having a transmission, it does have a reverse – just change valves on the steam engine and it runs in reverse. In fact, in an extreme emergency you can reverse the engine while going forward to stop the car. Charlie said that it's "a bit hard on the car."

After the tour of the shop, Bruce Torbert took us to the local pizza emporium where we all enjoyed lunch. Thanks Gus, Barbara and Bruce and of course Charlie Johnson for setting up this great outing.

# Hemingway's Harvest Festival and Car Show

Marolyn Simpson

In mid-September Jim received an invitation for our club to participate in the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Harvest Festival and Car Show on October 6th at Hemingway's Restaurant, located just on the other side of the bay bridge. Jerry and Diana Yates thought it sounded interesting so on that Saturday morning the four of us met at the McDonalds on Rt. 50 just before the Bay Bridge and continued to the show together. When we got there, shortly after 8:00, we discovered that we were the first to arrive. That gave us our choice of where to display our cars. But soon after, four cars from the Lincoln Continental club arrived as well as three other vehicles (including an Andy Griffith show "Mayberry Police Car") for a grand total of nine cars.

As the morning progressed, several tents were set up to sell items such as gourd birdhouses and homemade jewelry as well as a tent for face painting, all part of their harvest festival. Unfortunately there were very few spectators but we did talk to some interesting folks who loved old cars.

The judging was done by the organizer. The first place award went to the police cruiser that had been restored to look like the car on the Andy Griffith show. Adding to his car, the owner displayed autographed pictures of cast members from the show. Jim and I received a second place award which consisted of a small galvanized bucket containing several "goodies," one of which was a gift card to Hemingway's Restaurant.

About noon we packed up and the four of us went into the restaurant for lunch. We had a table by the window with a spectacular view of the bay and bridge. Of course sea food dishes were featured on the menu and that's what we had. The gift card from the restaurant for our second place win turned out to be for \$15 which we used to help pay for lunch.

Even though there was a small turnout in both cars and spectators, we all had a really fun day. Maybe with a little more experience in organizing an event like this and a bit more publicity the show will gain in popularity.

## Tech Topics

**Check Those Replacement Parts:** Just a quick update on last month's article. The Carter YH carburetor cover gasket that Jim Simpson said was the wrong one for his car's carburetor is a correct gasket for at least some of the earlier designs. After checking around, it turns out that most Carter YH rebuild kits include two cover gaskets, effectively and "early" and "late". You just have to pay attention! And that was the point of the article in the first place. Don't just assume that you are using the right part.

**Need Upholstery Work?** Bob Hall recommends Main Street Upholstery based on the work done for him and the other jobs he saw in his shop: Robert Jewell, Main Street Upholstery, 311 West Main Street, Thurmont MD 21788. Phone: 301-271-2298, Open Mon-Fri 9-5.

## Forty, Thirty and Twenty Years Ago This Month

Jim Simpson

As reported last month, the October 1978 issue of *Group Corvair Comments* covered both late September and October; the contents were reviewed in the September issue of the newsletter.

The second issue of the new *CORSA Communiqué* (October 1978) magazine introduced a full color front cover. The internal photos were still in B&W, but CORSA was entering the modern age. The lead article was Jim Pettengill on how to prepare a Corvair for off-road rallying. It's hard to condense six pages of recommendations, but the overriding theme was to strengthen everything for reliability. If the car breaks, you can't finish, let alone win. The annual Lime Rock meet was popular with 50 drivers participating. Under Tech Topics, Bob Helt reviewed the camshafts Chevrolet installed in Corvair engines with a particular emphasis on the 140 hp and 180 hp engines. It appears that Chevrolet never did quite find the perfect cam, but his recommendation was to use the 180 hp turbo cam (part # 3872304) in both 140 and 180 hp engines. The CORSA Classified had four pages of cars (still sorted by state) and another two pages of parts for sale.

In the October 1988 *Group Corvair Comments* it was clear that we were getting serious about preparing for the 1991 CORSA International Convention that we had been awarded. We moved the business meeting to a lunch meeting with a major planning session for the convention. Committees and working groups were being formed along with setting up a contest to design the convention logo. Al Harris had set up one of his famous “Fall Flea Fair Recovery Runs” – a tour of the fall Virginia countryside complete with a stop at a winery and evening refreshments. In the ‘Vair Vendor we had only two cars – a ’64 convertible for \$4000 and a ’65 4-door “restored to excellent original condition” for \$2,200.

If you own or just want to know about the Yenko Stinger, make sure you have a copy of the October 1988 *CORSA Communiqué* in your collection. It is the Yenko Stinger edition! There was a great article (reprinted from *Sports Car* magazine) by Don Yenko which is probably the most authoritative piece on the origins of the Yenko Stinger. Supplementing that are articles on the number built, some great photos of special features of the Stingers, and a number of stories by owners. And by coincidence, YS-116 in full racing trim was for sale (\$5,900) in the CORSA Classifieds.

Twenty years ago, the October 1998 edition of *Group Corvair Comments* was fairly short with only three articles. One was a rather long-winded piece by the then president (me). Actually, rereading that article brought back a lot of memories – trips, shows and even the GM “AutoShow in Motion”. That was a traveling show that brought a batch of the current GM cars, along with samples of their completion, to town for people to try out. Marolyn and I got to drive the EV-1, their first fully electric car. It was an amazing vehicle; as I said back then “...once they get the range problem solved, there is a future for electric cars...” The ‘Vair Vendor had six cars for sale including a ’66 Corsa convertible.

The lead article for the October 1998 issue of the *CORSA Communiqué* was an inside story about one of my favorite Corvairs, the Monza GT. For those of you who aren’t familiar with this car, it was one of a series of (loosely) Corvair-based show cars that Chevrolet produced in the early 1960s. The Monza GT was a two-seat coupe with a mid-engine Corvair engine. The styling was lovely and got rave reviews. While there was some effort to make it into a production car, unfortunately GM concluded that the market was too small and the overall design too impractical. Besides, it would have competed with the Corvette, their “flagship” sports car. One of the perennial discussions about the Corvair engine is its fan. Rad Davis gave a good overview of the existing fan designs and their limitations in the Tech Topics. And just to show that Yenko Stingers did change hands every so often, the CORSA Classified section had two – YS-87 and YS-172 – for sale. Overall, though, there was just a single page of car ads.

## 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

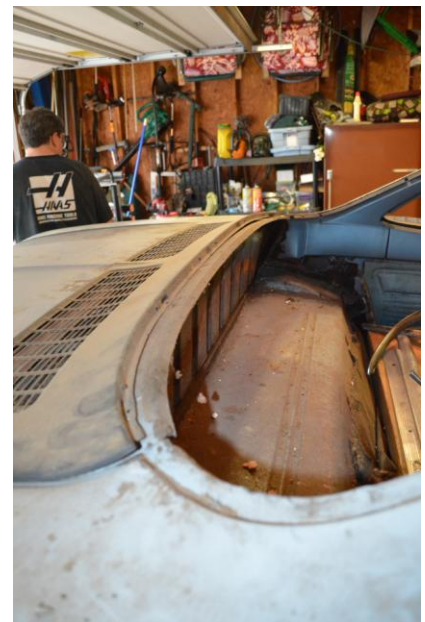


**For Sale: '64 Corvair Dune Buggy.** It has a Maryland title and "Street Rod" tags as a '64 Corvair. Asking \$4,450



or an offer I can live with?? Bob Lewis, 301-246-4278, Nanjemoy, MD.

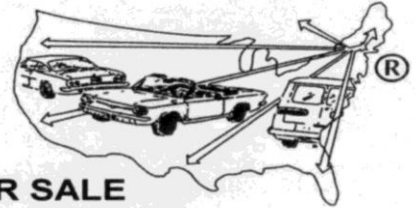
**For Sale: 1965 Monza Coupe Body.** Totally dissembled -- no engine, no suspension, no drive train and in pieces, BUT an almost rust free body in primer with a clean title—see photos. Originally an air conditioned, automatic car; ac is still installed. No signs of front or rear collision damage. Includes rear floor, front windshield and lower door patch panels, Softseal weather strip kit for doors. Two doors are included—one original '65 one '67-69. Car is sitting on a Chevy S10 frame. Contact Bill at 410-370 3539.







**Clark's Corvair Parts®**  
400 Mohawk Trail, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370  
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www.corvair.com email: [clarks@corvair.com](mailto:clarks@corvair.com)



**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.*