



Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME XLVII, No. 2

February 2019



Our first meeting of the year

Last call for dues! Group Corvair dues are \$12/year, payable in January. Please send your checks to the Treasurer (Jim Simpson, 3845 Wayson Road, Davidsonville, MD 21035), made out to Group Corvair.

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

February

16 – New Jersey Association of Corvair Enthusiasts annual Corvair Parts Auction. Ashley's Auto Body, Flanders, NJ. Free admission, free lunch! https://www.corvair.org/chapters/njace/2019_parts_auction.html

19 – **Group Corvair Regular Meeting**, 7 p.m. We're going back to the Beijing of Greenbelt restaurant for the second time in a row! It's quiet and they have provided good food and service. The address is 131 Centerway, Greenbelt, MD. We'll follow the 7 p.m. dinner by a business/planning meeting.

March

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

22 – AACA Museum “Car Club Open House, 6 – 9 p.m., 161 Museum Dr., Hershey, PA. Hor d’Oeuvres and light refreshments.

22-23 – 49th Annual Sugarloaf Mountain Region AACA In/Outdoor collector car parts and swap meet, Carroll County Agricultural Center, Westminster, MD. \$2 admission.

April

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

26 – 28 – Virginia Vair Fair, Best Western Hotel Leesburg, 776 East Market St; phone 703-777-9400. If you plan to stay at the hotel, ask for the VairFair rates.

May

14 – Last Corvair rolled off the assembly line this date in 1969 at Willow Run.

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

June

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

July

23 – 27 – CORSA International Convention, Pheasant Run Resort, 4051 E. Main St., St. Charles, IL

GROUP CORVAIR 2019 OFFICERS and Points of Contact

President: Bob Hall

4612 Franklin St., Kensington, MD 21037
301-493-8405 HallGrenn@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

From the Oval Garage

Bob Hall

...or in my case the straight driveway. We are well into February and a taste of the arctic with a low of 6 degrees and of spring with a high temperature of 70 degrees (both here in Kensington). I've been trying to solve a weak ground problem at one of our Greenbrier's tail lights and need another warm day to finish up.

Jim and Marolyn and Carol and I attended the first meeting for the 2019 Rockville car show and the only real change mentioned was Rockville's plan to delete the flags that marked each marque's row location (for liability reasons) – which was not welcomed by the various clubs in attendance – which is Rockville's prerogative. There was generally positive discussion all around and everyone is looking forward to the 2019 show this coming October. Maybe we'll have ten Corvairs this year. More info to come.

There was been discussion at our January meeting about future trips and several suggestions were made then and in the subsequent weeks. Eastern Shore sites got a lot of support. Other suggestions included visiting the Massey Museum, Kent Island, Cambridge, and, on our side of the Bay, Mike Coale's repair shop in Millersville to see how his Corvair projects are going. Give us your input between now and our February meeting on the 19th at the Beijing of Greenbelt so we can make a final decision then. As always club members suggestions are critical to a successful event and are welcome.

Minutes of the January Meeting

Marolyn Simpson

On January 15 twelve Group Corvair members gathered at 7:00 p.m. at the Beijing of Greenbelt restaurant for our regular dinner and business meeting. We ordered two each of five different dishes and served them family style. Bob Hall, president, called the business meeting to order at 8:05.

The minutes from the December meeting were approved. Jim Simpson gave the treasurer's report. He had recently deposited several checks from dues. Five more members paid their dues at the meeting. There were no expenses during the past month.

There was a motion by Jim that Bob (president), Barbara Torbert (vice president), and Jim (treasurer) should all have signature authority for our Bank of America club account. Recent changes in the banking regulations have rendered our previous arrangements void. In order to process the new signatures, the bank needs minutes of a meeting documenting this club decision on a club letterhead. When talking to a bank official about what we needed to do to get more people with signature authority, Jim learned that the club account has been open since 1969.

There was no written correspondence during the last month--most correspondence comes by email and if appropriate is directly forwarded to the members or included in the newsletter.

Rob Neighbour has a friend who is looking for a 4-door, air-conditioned, automatic Corvair. He lives in New Jersey. As it turns out, there may be a suitable car at the Corvair Ranch; that information was forwarded to Rob's friend.

There was a suggestion that the club might take a trip up to see Mike Coale's (one of our newest members) shop some Saturday.

There was a discussion on different types of gas (leaded, unleaded and alcohol-free) and the various octane ratings. Gus Torbert brought some Corvair literature and brochures which he distributed to anyone who wanted them.

Since no one had a good idea of a meeting place for our next meeting, Bob made a motion for the club to meet at Beijing of Greenbelt in February and then decide where to meet in March.

Bob made a motion for club members to go to the Udvar-Hazy Air and Space Museum in Chantilly, VA (near Dulles Airport) sometime in February followed by a movie. Rob seconded the motion; the motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50.

Tech Topics

Just How Much Horsepower Does Your Corvair Have? I know, Chevrolet advertised anywhere between 80 Hp and 180 Hp depending upon the year and specific engine installed. And of course there are many ways of rating engine horsepower – Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) Gross, SAE Net, SAE Certified, DIN (Germany), CUNA (Italy), JIS D 1001 (Japan) and many more. But for pinch-penny Corvair owners, there's really only one that really counts. And that is Taxable Horsepower!

Taxable Horsepower was devised in 1910 in England as a way of calculating taxes on motorcars. They wanted a system that would provide a progressive tax with the owners of larger and presumably higher powered cars paying more. At the invitation of the British government, the Royal Automobile Club came up with a formula:

$$\text{Taxable Horsepower} = \text{cylinder diameter squared} \times \text{number of cylinders} / 2.5$$

This formula approximately calculated actual horsepower for gasoline fueled engines at that time. (It wasn't very long before it became obsolete, but never let reality bother entrenched bureaucracies.) One significant use of this

formula was to make taxes on then-new Ford Model T with its comparatively large engine (3 ¾ inch diameter pistons for 22.5 taxable horsepower) significantly higher than a typical British car such as an Austin 7 with 7 taxable horsepower. This formula was adopted and used in the US under the title “NACC horsepower” (National Automobile Chamber of Commerce) or “ALAM horsepower” (Association of Licensed Automobile Manufacturers) by several states to tax cars and establish license fees.

As it turns out, based upon that formula, Corvairs have only two horsepower ratings! No, it doesn't matter how many carburetors your Corvair has, nor does it matter if it has a turbocharger, dual exhausts, high compression heads, or hot camshaft. All that matters is the piston diameter. So 1960 Corvairs which use 3 ⅜” diameter pistons have **27.3 Hp** and all 1961 through 1969 Corvairs use 3 7/16” diameter pistons for a grand total of **28.4 Hp!**

As far as I've been able to determine, Missouri is the only state that still uses this for taxing cars. Their tax tables say that automobiles with taxable horsepower between 24 and 35 Hp will cost you \$24.25 plus a \$3.50 processing fee for a one year renewal of your Corvair's license plate. *Jim Simpson, Group Corvair*

Try to Avoid Starting Fluid! Spray starting fluid is based upon ether. What makes it useful for starting a car is that it is very easy to ignite over an extremely wide range of air/ether mixes and that it also has a very low autoignition temperature – 320 deg. That's so low, that even a low compression engine (8:1 compression ratio) will heat up the fuel-air mix to well above that temperature so even without any spark, an air-ether mix will autoignite just as in a diesel engine. But Corvair engines, just like all gasoline fueled engines are NOT designed to operate as a diesel. The components (pistons, rings, rods, bearings, etc.) are simply not strong enough to withstand the pounding.

If you've ever used ether starting fluid, I'm sure you've heard the banging as it detonates. That's potentially damaging to the engine. Try using something like a spray can of Gumout carburetor cleaner instead. It will provide good mixture enrichment and is less prone to knocking. (I assume the combination of the aerosol propellant – propane or butane – and the mix of hydrocarbons in the cleaner is less prone to detonation.) *Adapted from “The Flat Six”, Prairies Capital Corvair Association.*

Favorite Tools: Most, if not all, of us have favorite tools. Tools that work well over and over again – especially for jobs that look simple and straight forward, but which often aren't. Removing wiper arms is one such job. My first effective tool to remove a wiper arm without scratching paint or damaging the mechanism was a large spoon that I still keep in my smallest, “carry to the salvage yard”, toolbox. Used with a piece of cardboard or other pad to protect paint, the large stiff spoon used at the correct spot will easily lift a wiper arm off of the post without sending it skittering across your paint.

The nicer KD tool designed for this job works just as well and is in my stash of specialized tools that I keep at home. But the large spoon is cheaper and easier to find at a Prevention of Blindness or Goodwill or other second hand store. Both keep a “simple” job simple. *Bob Hall, Group Corvair*



Forty, Thirty and Twenty Years Ago This Month

Jim Simpson

Unfortunately, my collection of newsletters is incomplete so whatever happened in Group Corvair during February and March of 1979 will have to remain a mystery lost in the mists of time. (If anyone has Group Corvair newsletters from 1979, I'd appreciate borrowing them so I could make copies for the archives.)

I do have a full set of the *CORSA Communiqués*, including the February 1979 issue. While the January issue had a full color front cover photo of Bill Artzberger's '67 coupe with a rainbow set of stripes set against the base white paint, in February the *Communiqué* reverted back to a monochrome cover (mauve toned). Bob Helt contributed an article comparing the aerodynamics of the new 1979 Mustang – touted by Ford to be exceptionally aerodynamic – with the 1960 Corvair. Not to get too technical, but coefficient of drag (Cd) is a dimensionless number that reflects how air flows over a body, the lower number the better. For example, the Cd for a simple sphere is 0.47. The 1979 Mustang fastback was a bit better than a sphere at 0.44. But a 1960 Corvair coupe, with the trunk loaded so that the car was raked down by 1.5 degrees, was 0.40! (Of course there's been some progress since; a 2019 Mercedes A-class is rated at 0.22, BMW has a "EfficientDynamics Edition" 5-series at 0.22 as well, Tesla Model 3 at 0.23 and even the Ford Focus hatchback at 0.275.) And in something of a coincidence, Bob Helt also contributed an article titled "Gross vs. Net" that explained the difference between the two with "net" essentially being the useable horsepower with "gross" being more or less an advertising figure. And for those of you who've heard about the Yenko Stinger that just sold for \$200,000 at auction, race prepared YS-300 was being offered for \$2,500 complete with spares and trailer. While it was not one of the first 100, still...

Would you believe that in 1989 Group Corvair had 58 people at the annual banquet? That's what the February 1989 issue of the *Group Corvair Comments* reported! There didn't appear to be too much on the calendar, but Ward Bourgondien was thinning his Corvair collection. He had five Corvairs for sale including a '63 Corvan, '62 Rampside, '63 coupe, '64 convertible and a '65 coupe with only 12,000 miles on it.

The February 1989 *CORSA Communiqué* had a full color cover, this time featuring a stretch Corvair six-door limo. No, it didn't have a pool, but the 42" added to its wheelbase made room for a video entertainment systems and luxurious seating for the passengers. The owner/builder noted that even with a 150" wheelbase, the body was still stiff enough that when jacking up the rear wheel, the front wheel would also lift off the ground. Under Tech Topics, there was a comprehensive article on finding powerglide transmission leaks, installing a Corsa dash in a powerglide car and one of the first (of many) articles by our own John Moody about the Corvair fuel pump. Larry Claypool continued his *Stock Is* series with notes on items under the car. How many of you are still using the original GM "tower" hose clamps? Even Larry admitted that they were terrible, but they're required if your car is to remain "factory stock". There was less than one page of cars available in the *CORSA Classifieds* with nothing particularly exotic being offered.

Jumping to just 20 years ago, the February 1999 edition of *Group Corvair Comments* reported that 33 people attended the banquet. I was presented at the banquet with a 1967 Corvette convertible, big-block, side pipes, knockoff wheels – the works! Unfortunately it was only a 1:24 die-cast model, but good news is that it doesn't take up any garage space. Did you know that Group Corvair had a "Member of the Year" point system? You could earn points via a wide range of activities including submitting an article for the newsletter (hint!) to signing up a new member. We had five cars for sale in the 'Vair Vender.

Finally the February 1999 *CORSA Communiqué* had a seven page article titled *Return to Willow Run*. In case you didn't know, Willow Run was the main assembly plant for the Corvair. It's an historic site having been built by Ford during WW-II to build B-24 bombers. After the war it was sold to Kaiser-Frazer and then General Motors. From 1959 through 1969, Chevrolet built Corvairs there. The authors – Mark Ellis and Dave Newell – talked to a number of workers who had been there during the Corvairs days. The *CORSA Classifieds* were definitely shrinking; there were only two columns of cars for sale.

Vair Vendor

For Sale: Four quarts of Amsoil synthetic GL4 gear oil at \$18/quart. (You need four quarts for a complete fill of a Corvair manual transmission and differential.) This is the correct gear oil for our Corvair transaxles with “yellow metal” (brass) synchronizers. Bob Hall, hallgrenn@aol.com , 301-213-9852.

For Sale: '64 Corvair Dune Buggy. New lower price. It has a Maryland title and “Street Rod” tags as a '64 Corvair. Asking \$3,900 or an offer I can live with?? Bob Lewis, 301-246-4278, Nanjemoy, MD. For Sale Dune



Buggy Built in 2009, Street Legal tagged as a 1964 Corvair has Street Rod tags. Never been off road, street driven only. Specs: 1964 Corvair 110 HP Engine, Automatic transmission. Front and Rear Suspension are 1964 Corvair. The frame is square steel tubing factory built for complete running gear from a Corvair and was probably built in the early 60's by Devin of El Monte Calif. Tires are 13" on front and 14" on rear with only have 600 miles on them. Fiberglass body was new old-stock, a Berry Mini "T" 2 built in California by Berry in late 1960 / 70's. I have only driven it about 600 miles, it's fun to drive.

For Sale: Price Reduction! 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 \$1,800.** Please contact the owner at ldgray1@yahoo.com for



more information.

1969 CORVAIR

Putting you first, keeps us first 



Front Cover of the 1969 Corvair Brochure
(Page 1 of 4; the rest will be in forthcoming newsletters.)

And Speaking of the 1969 Corvair

Hemmings Motor News just published an article titled “Half a century later, the fate of the last Corvair ever built remains unknown”.

Here’s a link to the story:

<https://www.hemmings.com/blog/2019/02/11/half-a-century-later-the-fate-of-the-last-corvair-ever-built-remains-unknown/>

I don’t think it will come to anyone’s surprise, but while there are several theories as to what happened to the last Corvair – VIN 6000 – there’s no real evidence as to its fate. The article is well worth reading.

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 also 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.