



VAIRifiable News

Roanoke Valley Corvair Club

It is Risen Indeed!



It seems as though the trend in car clubs is that they continue to lose membership and chapters as time goes on. CVCC seems to be bucking that trend!

Last year, several members of CVCC from the Shenandoah Valley area decided that they wanted to be able to get together more often in convenient locations. Thus was born the Valley Vairs. Now, it has happened again.

The Roanoke Valley Corvair Club was once a fully chartered CORSA club of their own but membership and interest waned until the group finally dissolved.

Now, there is interest in reforming.

A recent meeting in Roanoke had 11 persons in attendance and plans for more events.

Those in attendance were **Beth Powell, Fredd Southern, David, Katie and Zachary Clemens, Roger Rigney, James and Cissy Robertson, Tony Underwood, Bill Walsh and Alan White.**

We all had lunch at Famous Anthony's Restaurant in Roanoke and swapped tales. One of which, you will read about later in the newsletter!

Calendar

April 9: Monthly CVCC meeting, River City Diner, Richmond, 7pm

April 20: Roanoke Valley Corvair Club (RVCC) meeting. Famous Anthony's Restaurant, Roanoke, 1pm

April 28-30: Virginia Vair Fair, Leesburg (More Info in Newsletter)

May 18: Spring Picnic, Rex and Ann Buel Host, Waynesboro, 12 Noon.



TWO DIFFERENT '62 MODELS

ALAN WHITE



Top: James as a child with the Spyder
Above: Same Spyder, same James!

James Robertson brought his '62 Spyder to the RVCC meeting and there's quite a story behind it. It seems that '62 was a big year at the Robertson household. James' father, AJ Robertson went to Diamond Chevrolet in Roanoke and came home with a '62 model Spyder. That same year AJ went to the hospital and came home with a '62 model James! Yes, the Spyder and James were born into the same household, the same year and his parents never got rid of either one!

Over the years it seems only natural that James would eventually end up with the car and he has restored it and drives it quite regularly.

Upon seeing the old photo, I couldn't pass up the opportunity

to recreate the shot! Other than being reversed in the photos, the Spyder hasn't changed much over the years. Sadly, the same cannot be said for James!

Thanks for sharing the story James!

Do you have any old photos of yourself and your Corvair? Recreate them and send them to me along with your story!

--Alan White



Beth Powell, Roanoke
 Bill Walsh, Roanoke
 Tony Underwood, Roanoke
 James Robertson, Roanoke

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

WADE LANNING

Although there were a number of Corvairs I liked and could have bought over the years, I think the one that stands out is a 1966 Corsa turbo coupe. The car was Madeira Maroon with a black interior. This was about 1976, soon after I caught the Corvair disease, sickness, fever or what ever you want to call it. It was in located in Colonial Heights and being offered for \$1000. It was a solid car with a good interior. After all, it was only 10 years old and had only about 60,000 miles on it. Phyllis & I took it for a test drive, but we didn't get it. I hindsight, that would have been a good buy. There were others I passed up, but I probably should have bought the turbo coupe. At the time we already had a Marina Blue '66 Monza 110 hp/auto and the '65 Monza 4-door that we still own. The 4-door was tired and a little beat up, so it was not on the road when the turbo coupe was up for sale. But let me expand the picture a little more.



In 1973, graduated from college and was driving a '65 Dodge Coronet wagon with a 273 cubic inch engine and 2.73 final drive ratio. I had installed a Roadrunner front sway bar on it and an Addco rear sway bar (through JC Whitney), so it actually drove fairly good for a mid-size American made wagon. But 0 to 60 was about 15 seconds at the best going downhill with a tailwind. I wanted something more peppy and that handled even better. When Phyllis and I married in 1971, she brought with her a '69 Torino with a 302 motor. It was more peppy, but that was her car. I did install a larger Torino Cobra-jet front sway bar and an Addco rear bar on it. Our son now has that Torino. About that time, 1973, the first gas crunch hit. Gas soared from about 25 cents per gallon to a horrendous 50 cent per gallon. Numerous late 60's and early 70's muscle cars were available in good condition at bargain prices as owners bought Pintos, Vegas and Gremlins to get better gas mileage. Although not a Corvair, there

was an excellent '69 Roadrunner, 383, automatic with AC I was considering then for about \$2000.

Then in 1974, I went to work at a company called ICI (which is the site I retired from in 2005), but I was still looking for a sport car. We tried out a Triumph TR6, an MG, a Corvette and a '67 Jaguar XKE. The Jag was offered at \$3000 and had about 40,000 miles. Phyllis was expecting our first child and the Jag had no room for a baby seat, so she exercised her veto power. As it turned out, a person near me bought the Jag, kept it for 10 - 15 years and sold it for about \$40,000 (this is not a typo - four zeros, not three). So, this was probably the first "the one that got away", but since it's not a Corvair, it doesn't count for this story.

Anyway, in my department at ICI of about a dozen people, two or three had Corvairs they raved about. We found the blue '66 Monza mentioned above in January 1975 for \$325. It had 57,000 miles, plus it had a rear seat suitable for a baby and it looked more conventional than a Triumph, Jag or MG, so we bought it. Later that year we bought the '65 Monza 4-door. This brings me back around to the '66 turbo coupe above. We still had the '69 Torino, the '65 Dodge wagon plus the two Corvairs, so the '66 turbo just didn't look to be a practical purchase. Afterall, how many cars do two people need?? I later found that there is no limit to number of cars you have, it's just limited by money, space and other more pressing life factors. So the '66 turbo coupe is top on my Corvair list that got away, but the Jag and others probably would have been nice to have bought.

But there is a Corvair that I did have that I should have kept. As mentioned above, several

people where I worked had Corvairs. One person, Jeff Perkins, had an Artesian Turquoise '66 500 he ordered from the factory as he wanted it. Although it was a 500, he ordered it with a 140 hp motor, 4- speed, 3.27 positraction, quick steering and sport suspension. By the time I went to work there, Jeff had installed red doors for some reason and replaced the original bench seat with red Corsa bucket seats. A rear fender had been hit and Jeff used his best sledge



hammer technique to do the bodywork, then covered the fender and other areas of the body in gray primer. He had installed 14" chrome slotted wheels with radial tires and installed a center mount 4-barrel carb. Although it looked sad, Jeff loved the way it ran and handled. In the early 1980's, Jeff attempted a burnout. With the positraction, he tore up the spider gears. While repairing the differential, he rebuilt the engine. Before he got the Corvair back on the road, he had to buy another car in the meantime because he needed transportation. As I recall it was a nice late 1970's mid-size two-door Oldsmobile with a beautiful velour interior. By the time Jeff got the Corvair back

in service, he found that the Olds was more suited for his bachelorhood status, dating a string of women, so he stopped driving the Corvair as much. Then one day he "popped the question". Not to a woman, but to me, offering to sell me the Corvair. I was totally surprised, but I bought it. This was about 1982. I had a blast driving that Corvair. I found I liked it better with the stock carburetion instead of the 4 barrel.

For some reason I stopped driving it. I was restoring my '65 4-door and needed a motor for it. So I took the 140 motor out of Jeff's Corvair and installed it in the 4-door, where it still resides to this day. I sold the positraction transaxle and the quick steering box to help

fund the 4-door restoration, then the 500 body went to Frank DuVal's Quality Customs shop. Looking back, although the '66 500 needed bodywork, it would have been an interesting Corvair to have put back all original with the 140 drivetrain and other performance options, along with the bench seat and dog-dish hubcaps. Thus, it wasn't "one that got away", but is one that I let go that I should have kept intact.

So what are your stories? If you don't have a "the one that got away" story, maybe you have stories about the one you shouldn't have bought to start with.

April Birthdays

7- Joshua Barnes
 12- Ballard Crooker*
 12-Larry Laughon*
 15- Wendy Bristow
 21- Barbara Gilliland
 22- Renae Eldred

Spring Picnic



Rex and Ann Buel will be hosting a picnic at their home in Waynesboro, VA for all of CVCC on May 18th starting at noon and continuing until we get tired of looking at each other!

There will be all sorts of food but feel free to bring a side-dish, drink or dessert to share.

We will also have corn-hole and other games.

See ya there!

CVCC Meeting Minutes, February 12, 2019

Location: River City Diner

Attendees: Wade Lanning, Mike DeJong, Marty, Andrew Watkins, Chris & Julie Carter, Steve Wright, John Porterfield, David Robertson, Don & Pam Garner, Bill Clemens, Mark & Bow Collette.

2019 Activity Ideas & Events

- Next meeting Tuesday, April 9 at River City Diner.
- Virginia Vair Fair, April 26 – 28, details now posted on www.vairfair.com,
- Looking for place to hold club picnic in Shenandoah Valley.
- Looking for place to hold meeting in Fredericksburg.
- May 2019 will be the 40th anniversary of CVCC. May do something special to recognize the event.

Tech Discussion

- Russell Davis has designed and is fabricating new type of fan belt idler pulley adjusting nuts. Prototypes were displayed at the meeting. They should be available to purchase in the near future.

Newsletter Articles

- Alan White is looking for articles for the newsletter for the topic of the “One that got away”. If you have a story about a Corvair you wanted to buy but didn’t, send an article to Alan.

Meeting adjourned.



2019 Vair Fair Info

When: April 26-28

Where: Best Western, Leesburg (76 East Market St, Leesburg, VA 20179 (703)777-9400

www.bestwesternleesburg.com

Ask for “Corvair Fair” to get \$119/night rate.

Register: www.vairfair.com or fill out and mail the registration sheet on the next page.

Friday, April 26

Hospitality room 6 to 10 p.m.

Registration open 3 to 7 p.m.

Friday evening pizza party 7 to 10 p.m.

Corvair Games 7 to 9 p.m.

Outdoor vendor setup 6 p.m.

Saturday, April 27

Registration open 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Hospitality room 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Indoor and outdoor vendor setup 8 a.m.

Show set up 8 to 9 a.m.

Vending 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

People's Choice Car Show 9 a.m. to Noon

Tech Session 10:30 to Noon

Poker Run 1 to 4 p.m.

Dine at your choice of local restaurant from 5 to 8 p.m.

Please join us at 8pm for the awards presentation, cake, coffee and refreshments, back at the Best Western.

40th Annual Virginia Vair Fair
26-28 April 2019 in Leesburg, Virginia

Best Western Leesburg Hotel & Conference Center, 726 East Market Street • Leesburg, VA 20176
 (703) 777-9400 ext. 303 • FAX (703) 777-553

NORTHERN VIRGINIA CORVAIRS - CORSA CHAPTER 220

Event Pre-Registration (Ends 4/20/2019)

Please complete the form below and mail, along with your check, to:
 A. J. Paluska, Jr, 6839 Brimstone Lane, Fairfax Station VA 22039-1850
 (202) 322-2001, ajjr13@earthlink.net.

(Please make check payable to the NVCC or use PayPal: vfreg@corvair.org)

Pre-Registration \$60 per family (\$69 at show) _____
 Entitles you to participate in all or any of the following activities, plus one T-shirt Specify size _____:

Hospitality Suite, Pizza Party, People's Choice, Model Car Show, Corvair Games, Video Racing Games, and Poker Run.

Vendor outdoor space \$10 per space (\$15 at show)..... _____
 Outdoor spaces are roughly 8'x15' or one parking space.
 Vendor indoor space \$20 per vendor (\$30 at show)..... _____

Awards will be presented Saturday evening at the hotel after dinner.

Additional 2019 Vair Fair Shirts are available at the following prices:

T-shirts: \$15 each (\$18 at the show)..... _____
 Indicate quantity of: MED ____ LG ____ XL ____ 2XL ____ 3XL ____

Sweat Shirts: \$35 each (Preorder Only)..... _____
 Indicate quantity of: MED ____ LG ____ XL ____ 2XL ____ 3XL ____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

The People's Choice Show will include the following seven classes as follows: Early Open, Early Closed, Late Open, Late Closed, Forward Control, Work in Progress (a.k.a. "Beater"), 1969 Corvairs

On the lines-below please specify the year, model, and license plate number of each car you plan to enter, as well as the appropriate class you plan to compete in. Use additional paper if you plan to enter more than two cars.

Entry	Year	Model	License Plate	Class
1				
2				

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number: () _____ CORSA Chapter: _____

Please indicate the number needed and names for 2019 Vair Fair Name tags: _____

THE LOST CORVAIR OF THE DARIEN

RICHARD EMBLIN

(As published in *The City Paper*, Jan 22, 2013)

When the General Motors' Corvaair rolled-off the assembly line in 1959, Fulgencio Batista had been ousted from power by the Cuban Revolution. Although this family car was the embodiment of the American Dream for Chevrolet and designed for the sprawling highways from Detroit to Miami Beach, it also represented what America did best; build cars for the rapidly growing urban sprawl and an affordable machine so that families across a continent could dream of cruising the open road. But there was one tangible obstacle for this rear-engine car that leaked oil and had a heater in the front "trunk", to become the all-terrain, all-American car: the Darien Gap.

Ever since the Spanish settled the Darien during the 17th century and set up their outpost at Santa Maria in the dense and inhospitable rainforest, which



today separates Panama from Colombia, the narrow and hilly area has acted as a natural border between North and South America. Cartographers then attempted to delineate the "Gap" that separated Central America with Colombia and the

first foreign settlers – some Scottish gold prospectors were forced to abandon their alluvial mines when tropical disease set in.

The Darien Gap with its two coastlines, the Pacific and the Caribbean was a dreaded passage for anyone attempting to cross from the North to the beaches and floodplains of Colombia. After

Colombia sold Panama to the United States in 1903 to formalize the building of the Panama Canal, the Darien remained isolated from the growing inter-oceanic commerce and sparsely populated by the local Kuna and Embera-Wounaan.

An impossible journey?

While many governments have debated uniting the

48,000-kilometer long Pan-American Highway and which evaporates in the Darien "Gap" between Yaviza (Panama) and Apartadó (Colombia), in 1961 a team of three red corvairs left Chicago to drive to the capital of Argentina, Buenos Aires. Sponsored by Dick Doane Chevrolet (a Chicago Chevrolet dealer) these hardly-jungle tested cars attempted to cross the impassable. From the Panamanian capital they headed several hours south until the pebble road ended abruptly at the muddy riverbanks of the Yaviza. The drivers – once their cars were placed on wooden riverboats, began the tedious task of clearing thick rainforest, meter upon meter, slashing away with machetes at the Darién's thick vegetation to create tracks and traction in the jungle.

For car and driver, the Darién is the ultimate obstacle course and as they race up slopes and sunlit ravines, they disappear into the "no man's land" of the isthmus. The aluminum rear-cooled engine provides sufficient power to maneuver the first ridges and valleys of the Darién. To cut through deep gulleys and rapid streams, which cross from the east to western shores, trees have to be cut with chainsaws, their logs used to make a string of rickety

bridges. On their way south towards the hamlet of Paya and the first crossing of the Tulé River the Corvair caravan manages to cross 180 of these narrow bridges. The weight distribution of the vehicle makes it easy to steer across bumps and exposed tree roots.

All muscle on the highway, lost in the jungle

As the hills get steeper, the Corvair is put to the test under extreme conditions of terrain and weather. As one of the wettest places in the world the tires skid and glide across the jungle floor. Although the expedition is hailed as an important contribution to



the development of the Pan-American Highway, several Chevrolet trucks accompany the expedition with power winches needed to haul the red corvairs up and across muddy hillsides. Repairs now have to be done on the spot and the only contact with the outside world is a hand-powered radio.

The corvairs' passage takes several months of hard transit and tested nerves. The drivers glide and plunge deeper into the jungle, the soft canopy of light giving way

to thick tree vines and ferns. When the caravan reaches the second crossing of the Tulé River, a corvair must be abandoned in the heart of this dark place. But they are near "Palo de



Letras" (Stump of Letters) – a tree known for a few names carved into its side and which is considered by intrepid hikers as the first mahogany of in the thick jungle of the Colombian Darién.

The expedition makes it to Buenos Aires. In a documentary produced for Chevrolet on the Corvair's impressive balance and engineering, three red corvairs are seen speeding their way past statues and the historic landmarks of Panama City. On the Colombian side of the Darien appear the same rugged drivers, their sleeves rolled up and puffing on filterless cigarettes



after months in the jungle. They could be stand-ins for Clint Eastwood, the accomplished men of the ultimate cross continental drive. But now, just two red corvairs!

Many years ago, I took a treacherous expedition into the Darien. In fact, I crossed it on foot climbing far too many ravines and following the gules of light from treetops in the jungle to illuminate the muddy tracks of my companions. I also made it to "Palo de Letras" and can claim, that I am one of the few people to have reached the base of this immense tree. I



cannot remember how many steps I took from the centuries old ceiba, but rising out of the thick undergrowth and hanging vines, I stumbled upon a red car.

My companions and I gazed in wonder. We shook our heads. We ran out of superlatives. We ran out of water to quench our thirst. How could this machine have arrived here? "Here" being the silent heart of Darien. Days from the nearest hamlet and placed like a meisterstuck in the vast green gallery of jungle. The mystery of the red Corvair has been solved. But the real mystery that is the Darien, lives on.

We have a new website host so if you have it stored in your computers browser, you need to change it to our current site. check it out at:

<http://www.corvair.org/chapters/chapter232/show.html>



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