



# Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME XLVII, No. 7

July 2019



**Group Corvair, Chowing Down on the Choptank**

## CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

### July

7 – Celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1<sup>st</sup> Corvair to roll off the assembly line in 1959!

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

28 – Asphalt Angels Summer Sizzler, Chili's Parking Lot, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., 16401 Heritage Blvd, Bowie, MD. \$20 registration fee. Info call Jim: 202-308-6385. (Rain or shine.)

### August

3 – Pleasant Valley Car Show, Rohrersville Road Fire Station. They include a Corvair class.

10 – All GM Show, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., Montgomery College, 51 Mannakee St., Rockville, MD. Contact Cory 240-686-0229 or Franklin 703-869-8434 for information.

10 – First State Corvair Show, 9 – 3, Limestone Presbyterian Church, Limestone Rd., Wilmington, DE.

11 – Car & Bike Show, Sons of the American Legion Post 160 and Bombers Car Club. 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., 2 Main St, Laurel, MD. \$20 registration, Info: 443-336-3700.

## September

17 – **Group Corvair Business Meeting;** 7 p.m., first meeting of the fall – location TBD

21 – Central Pennsylvania Corvair Club 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Corvair Days. 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. at the AACA Museum, 161 Museum Drive, Hershey, PA. There is a banquet dinner at 4 p.m. at the Skyline Diner, 7511 Allentown Blvd, Harrisburg, PA.

## October

15 – **Group Corvair Business Meeting;** 7 p.m., location TBD

19 – Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show, Rockville Civic Center, 603 Edmonston Dr., Rockville, MD; 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Cars have to be on the field not later than 11 a.m. and it is wise to get there as soon after registration opens (8:30 a.m.) as possible – we expect in excess of 500 cars! Group Corvair is a sponsoring club and Corvairs have a dedicated section. Registration at: <https://www.rockvillemd.gov/667/Antique-Classic-Car-Show>

## November

19 – **Group Corvair Business Meeting;** 7 p.m., location TBD

## December

17 – **Group Corvair Business Meeting;** 7 p.m., location TBD. Note: the regular meeting may be preempted by a Christmas Celebration!

## GROUP CORVAIR 2019 OFFICERS and Points of Contact

**President:** Bob Hall

4612 Franklin St., Kensington, MD 21037  
301-493-8405 [HallGrenn@aol.com](mailto:HallGrenn@aol.com)

**Vice President:** Barbara Torbert

5317 Crittenden Street Hyattsville, MD 20781  
301- 927-6029 [barbara.torbert@hotmail.com](mailto:barbara.torbert@hotmail.com)

**Secretary:** Marolyn Simpson

3845 Wayson Road Davidsonville, MD 21035  
301- 262-0978 or 240-232-2820  
[m.simpson7@verizon.net](mailto:m.simpson7@verizon.net)

**Treasurer:** Jim Simpson

3845 Wayson Road Davidsonville, MD 21035  
301-262-0978 or 240-232-2820 [simpsonj@verizon.net](mailto:simpsonj@verizon.net)

**Newsletter Editor:** Jim Simpson

3845 Wayson Road Davidsonville, MD 21035  
301 262-0978 or 240-232-2820 [simpsonj@verizon.net](mailto:simpsonj@verizon.net)

**Merchandise:** Gus Torbert

5317 Crittenden Street Hyattsville, MD 20781  
301-927-6029 [barbara.torbert@hotmail.com](mailto:barbara.torbert@hotmail.com)

## From the Oval Garage

Bob Hall

Group Corvair's "Not Quite the 4<sup>th</sup> of July" outing to the Eastern Shore June 29<sup>th</sup> filled the day with activities. Ten of us got together for lunch at the Sugar Buns Airport Café at the Easton Airport where we watched planes landing and taking off for pilot training and the occasional private party landing or departure. Byron LaMotte drove his beautiful 1964 Super Spyder version of the 1962 GM concept car. Lee Cramp arrived for our tour of some of the planes in one hangar—a T-34 Mentor, a 1942 Stearman, among others and a 1934 Pontiac convertible—but his water pumper wasn't handling the heat well so he couldn't join us for the rest of the day. A more detailed account of our tour of Byron's car



collection, cold drinks at Gus and Barbara Torbert's Eastern Shore house and our dinner cruise on the Choptank, where four more club members joined us, follows in this month's newsletter.

Carol and I still aren't sure if we can get to this year's international CORSA Convention, but it looks to be a great one. We took our kids to the 1987 Chicago CORSA Convention where they had a great time and we met some wonderful people. Hard to believe it's been 32 years.

The Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show organizers will be opening registration for this October's event soon. This year's event will highlight cars of the "9s"—1909....1949....1959.....1969 etc. After discussing the best car to highlight for 1969 with Jim Simpson we decided to recommend the Corvair (surprise!). I

subsequently made a formal recommendation to Rockville and also recommended an exhibit that would span 1959 to 1969 for the years our cars were manufactured with a side exhibit on the Ribicoff Senate Safety hearings that affected every automobile of the time—from Cadillac tail fins, to non-glare windshield wiper arms. If the organizers agree we should make every effort to field a 1960 and 1969 Corvair with as many others from other years in between. We will reach out to other clubs for support as well. We'll keep you informed.

Monthly Group Corvair meetings will resume in September, but there will still be plenty of opportunity for club activities over the summer. If you need help with a project, would like to schedule a tech session or just want to hang out with others who share a love of Corvairs let me or another club member know.

## Minutes of the June Meeting

Marolyn Simpson

There were 10 Group Corvair members present when we met at the Beijing of Greenbelt for the June 18 meeting. As usual, dinner started at 7:00. Bob Hall, president, called the business meeting to order at 7:55. Minutes of the May meeting were approved as written in the newsletter. Gus Torbert, merchandise chairman, reported that he still has oil filters, patches, and some T-shirts. Jim Simpson gave the treasurer's report: there were no changes in the bank balance.

Jim had received a letter from Bank of America announcing a new branch. We still need to print a letter for the bank to get additional signatures onto our account.

Looking ahead into July, we may have a club outing to Mike Coales' establishment. He currently has four Corvairs.

Bob announced that he got no response to his request for a list of specialty tools to loan out. We may try making a list of the tools and then instead of loaning them out we might schedule a tech session where a tool would be used. This would allow us to maintain tighter control of these rare items.

The next order of business was the dinner cruise on the Choptank River scheduled for Saturday, June 29. For those who want to caravan to the eastern shore, the plan is to meet at the McDonalds restaurant on Rt. 50 just this side of the Chesapeake Bay bridge at 11:00. From there we will drive to the Easton airport for lunch. The schedule for the afternoon has not been finalized yet but there are several possibilities in the planning stage. But at 5:30 we will meet in the parking lot of the Suicide Bridge Restaurant. The cruise is scheduled to depart from the dock at the restaurant at 6:00.

Jerry Yates reported that he had been to a car show in Millersville on Saturday, June 15. There were more than 200 cars in the show.

Jim and Marolyn participated in the Father's Day show at the Sully Historic Site in Chantilly, VA. Even with the small dent in the fender they took second in class – "Chevrolet 1958-1968". (Ours was the only Corvair at Sully!)

There was a discussion about the Yenke Stinger and what made it a "real" vs. clone or tribute Stinger.

Jim mentioned that he had picked up the 6.50-13 bias ply tire in Annapolis from Jim Bowersox that he had listed in the May newsletter. Wade Lanning had expressed an interest in it and is arranging for a friend to come by and take it on

the next leg of its journey. A discussion on tires followed; Jim had measured the tread width of the 6.50-13 tire; it's amazingly small at only 4" across. By comparison, the treads on the Maxxis 185/80-13 radials (equivalent to 7.00-13 bias tires) on Jim's car are 5.3" wide. That's a big jump for what should be a 10 mm (0.4") change in section width.

We heard that Jim Govoni drove his '69 Cadillac convertible in the Bowie Memorial Day parade. The organizers were looking for convertibles to carry dignitaries and Jim obliged them.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45. There will not be a regular July or August meeting.

## Group Corvair Goes East

### Jim Simpson

I'll start by giving thanks to everyone who helped make Group Corvair's outing to the Eastern Shore a memorable success. Bob & Carol Hall for doing the organizing, Barbara and Gus Torbert for opening their home in East Newmarket and scouting out the dinner cruise on the Choptank and Byron LaMotte & Ruthie for organizing a tour of the St. Michael's Auto Museum as well as a tour of Byron's personal automotive collection.

For those of you who didn't make it, you missed a busy and entertaining day. We started out fairly informally; the Simpsons, Torberts and Don Hibbard & Ben Thompson rendezvoused at the McDonalds on Rt-50 in Annapolis while the Halls and Byron & Ruthie met at the Easton airport. The 10 of us proceeded to lunch at the Sugar Buns Airport Café; our waitress greeted the Torberts as regulars there. While I can't speak for everyone, Marolyn and I certainly enjoyed our fish & chips – lightly fried cod and hand cut fries and as far as I could see, no one left much on their plates so the rest of the food must have been good as well.

While eating, we enjoyed watching the aircraft operating out of the field. There was an amazing assortment of aircraft there -- everything from twin-jet commercial flights, jet and prop charter aircraft, restored war birds, sight-seeing tours, flight training and private planes just stopping for lunch.

Lee Cramp joined us as we left the terminal and headed over to the aircraft collections in the various hangers at the airport. Unfortunately, there was no one around at our first stop to let us in, but we were able to peek through the windows and caught sight of both a Spitfire and ex-US Marine OV-10 Bronco. But the next hanger was open to us. There we got to get "up close and personal" with a vintage Stearman biplane and a T-34C "Turbo-Mentor" US Navy turboprop trainer.



1942 Stearman



Air Cooled!

what I gathered, most, if not all, the cars in the museum are on loan from local collectors. While there were no Corvairs, how about a pair of MGs? Specifically a '46 TC and a '49 YT? No, I'd never heard of the YT; it's a four seat roadster that looks very much like a TC or TD. Or the '66 GTO with



Dual Roots Supercharger

"tripower" triple 2-barrel carburetion. And something I had never seen before, a hot rod with a twin roots supercharger. That's one supercharger for each bank built as a single unit with Dellorto side-draft carburetors. I don't have any idea if this was a "one-of-a-kind" creation or just very rare.



**Byron's Super Spyder**

From there, on to Byron's home on Island Creek, a tributary of the Choptank. There we alternately sat down for some cookies and ice water while admiring his views and touring his automotive collection. This included the above mentioned Super Spyder, his Fitch Sprint, an Iso Grifo (Italian luxury sports coupe powered by a blueprinted Corvette engine) as well as his Iso motor scooters and a pair of Corvair Monza Junior go-karts. (The Fitch

Sprint has a story behind



**Corvair Monza Juniors**

it. Bryon bought it new from Fitch and like many of us, sold it after a few years. But he always remembered that car and when it came up for sale not too long ago, he bought it back and had it completely restored.)

But we couldn't linger too long – we had a schedule to keep. So it was on to the Torbert's home-away-from-home "Wayside" in East Newmarket for some more refreshments and conversation. But once again, no rest for the weary! It was time for dinner. So we all loaded up and drove the 2 miles or so to the Suicide Bridge restaurant in West Haven. There we met with the last four people in our party – Jerry & Diana Yates and Michael & Liz Coale – and after a short delay we loaded onto the "Choptank River Queen" for a dinner cruise. Just in time as it turned out; a thunderstorm with torrential rains swept in just as the last people came on board.



**Minstrel serenading us on the Choptank. (He took requests!)**

As we cruised down the river to Cambridge, Byron was able to narrate pointing out the estates of the rich and famous. The dinner was either roast beef or chicken, both with crab cake. Unfortunately the caterers had miscounted the number of chicken dinners needed so they had a high-speed skiff bring the extras so everyone was fed eventually. Luckily Marolyn and I had ordered one each of beef and chicken so we were able to share and spread out our dinner for most of the cruise.

We chatted briefly with two of the servers who were over here on summer work visas. One was a young lady from Serbia and the other a young man from Turkey. Both seemed to be enjoying their time in the US.

Once back ashore, we all bid adieu and headed out in the darkness to our various homes. We could see the lightening illuminating distant thunderstorms all around us. But other than our GPS directing us on some rather devious routes (for some reason it liked taking us on two legs of a triangle rather than the shorter direct route), the trip home was uneventful.

In my opinion, a good time was had by all. Thanks again everyone who had a hand in setting this up.

## **Some Tips for Driving Like a Pro**

**Jim Simpson**

Over the years, I've accumulated a small collection of articles on driving. Some are focused on racing, some on rally driving, some on autocrossing, and some are just good advice for those of us who take pride in driving well. Here's an edited distillation of one written in 2008 by Arthur St. Antoine, an automobile journalist who has written for *Motor Trend*, *Automobile* as well being involved in film productions. His tips for driving like a pro are based upon his personal experience racing formula cars and attending over a dozen professional driving schools.

1. **Be smooth.** Your car doesn't like abrupt inputs. Driving well is all about weight management, controlling the ever-shifting mass of the car so the tires are never overloaded. That means rolling the steering wheel gracefully into turns, squeezing on the gas and brakes, moving the transmission lever (if you have a manual) as if the shift knob were an egg. I was lucky enough to ride once with the three-time world champion Sir Jackie Stewart in an original Ford GT-40. The guy made that clattering old race car move as if it were swimming in Wesson Oil. Even though we were blazing around Laguna Seca, I wasn't being tossed around inside the cockpit. Instead, I was gently pushed from side to side, eased forward and back, as the maestro conducted a ballet at the wheel. The sensation had much more in common with riding in an expertly driven limousine – “Don't spill our champagne, Jeeves!” – than with the typical Hollywood portrayal of “expert” driving. Trust me on this: Smoothness at the wheel is the single biggest indicator of driving skill.
2. **Turn later.** Watch the car ahead of you on a twisty road sometime. See how he crosses the yellow line when turning left? That's turning too soon. Even when driving briskly, you should always be able to corner within your lane. Turning later takes practice, but it's the key to balancing your car on the road. In effect, you're slowing down a little earlier, letting the car roll a little farther into the turn, smoothly arcing the wheel so the tires can bite and provide you with maximum grip.
3. **Look ahead.** No, not at the car in front of you. No, not at the car in front of him, either. Look as far down the road as you can. On a mountain road, you're not looking at the corner you're in, you're looking at the next one. On the highway, your eyes are scanning the horizon, often a half-mile or more down the road. Get your eyes up and suddenly you have advance information. Your hands and feet will instinctively follow your eyes; look where you want to go and your car will go there. You have more time to react; you can plan your next move. You're smoother, in better control, a vastly improved driver.
4. **Brake very smoothly.** Remember tip #1, “Be smooth”? In braking, it's especially critical. Brakes are very powerful and can easily upset a car's balance – even if you have ABS. (Don't be alarmed – or back off on emergency braking – if the ABS starts pulsing!) In the words of one instructor “First you squeeze, then you push very, very hard, and then you gently taaaaper off at the end.” Now you know everything there is to know about how Lewis Hamilton dives so deep into the corners.

I don't know if you caught the theme here, but just in case, the four tips all boil down to “be smooth”.

## Forty, Thirty and Twenty Years Ago This Month

Jim Simpson

As it turns out, I do have the July 1979 *Group Corvair Comments* in my collection. The club was just coming off a very successful turnout at the Sport Chevrolet show with Mike Harrison's Corv-8 taking first and Mark Holmlund's Corsa Convertible taking second. Upcoming was a Championship Autocross at Cameron Station and the Fall Flea Fair at Jim McKay Chevrolet. There were only two cars – a '62 van and a '68 coupe – for sale, but there was a real bargain, a complete telescoping steering column for \$85.

The July 1979 edition of the *CORSA Communiqué* didn't seem to have a lot that would be of current interest. There was a fair amount of CORSA and chapter news, some tech tips (replace the rubber brake lines, stack gaskets to lower compression, etc.) that have become standard fair in all the Corvair tech guides and an analysis of Corvair prices for the previous two years (basically flat with the under \$500 cars disappearing). In the CORSA Classified, there was just about every type and model Corvair available – Lakewoods, vans, Rampseys, V-8 cars and Yenko Stinger YS066 (\$1000).

Jumping a decade to the July 1989 issue of *Group Corvair Comments*, when I read the Tech Topic on “The Care of Automotive Electricity”, I had to check the date twice. No, it wasn't the April Fools edition. There was a full page “explanation” of how electricity wears out, that it was lubricated by the water in the battery, and more. On the other hand, there were good notes on changing the pitman arm bushing and using a modern Sanyo AC compressor. Just as ten years earlier, there were only two cars for sale, a '63 van and '65 coupe this time. And there were a couple parts bargains – a complete 140 hp carb setup and a Crown mid-engine V8 conversion kit.

The July 1989 *CORSA Communiqué* was about racing. Jon Brakke had a great 3½ page article on how he got into racing a Corvair, his failures and triumphs and why he keeps going. Ben Brown reminisced about his coverage of drag racing including witnessing Dick Griffin's '65 Corsa turbo running 13.13 sec at 108 mph in the quarter mile.

Under Tech Topics, if you were interested in the late-model FM multiplex and 8-track player installations, you were in luck with Larry Claypool's "Stock Is" column. He traced all the part numbers and installation instructions. Under the CORSA Classifieds, there was a good, though smaller selection of cars available.

Twenty years ago in the July 1999 *Group Corvair Comments* the club was getting ready for an outing to White Post Restorations. At that time, White Post was a second generation business with the colorful Billy Thompson at the helm. (Billy died unexpectedly in 2011 and now the third and fourth generations of the Thompson family run the business.) In my president's column, I lamented the lack of really high octane gasoline for my turbocharged engine and was starting to explore knock sensors, water injection and other fixes. Ward & Carol Bourgondien had just attended the CORSA convention in Lake Tahoe – they reported having a great time there. The Vair Vendor offered 13 different cars for sale, ranging from a '62 van to a '66 4-door sedan.

And finally the July 1999 *CORSA Communiqué* had three articles that I would put in the "might have been" category. The first was by Jeff Barrett who had been contacted by one of the "big" automobile hobby magazines with a proposal that he would buy and drive a Corvair from the east to west coast for \$1000. After running the numbers, and actually buying a rather well used '66 Monza, he concluded that it couldn't be done. (Apparently the magazine tried to entice individuals associated with other marques (Mustang, Edsel, Nash, etc.) and no one took them up on the "deal".) Rich Carol wrote up the "Explorer I", a '63 Corvair show car that had been created by Rohm & Haas a major plastics development company. They built the car to showcase what could be done with modern plastics, ranging from some such mundane items as turn signal lenses to complete roofs incorporating metal flakes that would be shiny from the outside while letting light inside. Unfortunately the car disappeared not long after it was debuted. Closing this nostalgic trio was a picture postcard trip down historic Route 66 in a Corvair. Under Tech Topics, Mike Dawson presented his top tips on engine assembly. They were short and to the point and worth reviewing if you are contemplating rebuilding a Corvair engine. If you were looking for a car, the CORSA Classifieds were getting a bit thin with only a page of listings.

## Vair Vendor

**For Sale:** 1965 4-door, Light blue, powerglide, fair condition. This is the late Ben Petree's daily driver and was last run about 4 years ago. Was maintained by Jack Dempsey until Ben could no longer drive; parked under shelter since then. Asking \$1,000 but willing to listen to reasonable offers. Contact Caroline Inglehart, only between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., 301-775-0379.

**For Sale:** '64 Corvair Dune Buggy. New lower price. It has a Maryland title and "Street Rod" tags as a '64 Corvair. Built in 2009, street legal, tagged as a 1964 Corvair with "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, but it is fun to drive! Asking \$3,900 or an offer I can live with?? Bob Lewis, 301-246-4278, Nanjemoy, MD.

**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](mailto:hallgrenn@aol.com), 301-213-9852.

**For Sale:** 1965 Monza 4-door. 26k miles, recent seat covers, repainted about 10 years ago. Asking \$10,000.  
Denny Shue, 717-818-2904, Dover PA.

