



Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME XLVII, No. 11

November 2019



2019 Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show
(We're up at the top, near the food vendors!)

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

November

19 – **Group Corvair Business Meeting**; 7 p.m., Fratelli's Italian Restaurant, 5820 Landover Rd., Hyattsville, MD. This is the old Howard Johnson's motel restaurant, just off the BW Parkway on Landover Rd (Rt-202). We'll have dinner to be followed by a business meeting.

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

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

Group Corvair is one of the Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show's sponsoring clubs and 2019's show was a big success with 580 cars and trucks on the field looking their best on a beautiful Indian summer day. Once the early frost burned off the day turned warm and large crowds came out to see everything from AMXs to Willys. Greg Walthour's 1963 Greenbrier with factory camper package and Darren Palle's 1961 Rampside represented early models. We had six late models on hand: Byron LaMotte's 1966 Corsa Fitch Sprint, Rick Sanford's 1965 Corsa turbo, Jim and Marolyn Simpson's 1966 Corsa turbo, Jerry and Diana Yates's 1966 Yenko Stage II, a 1966 Monza Convertible owned by Barbara Grofic and a 1965 Corsa convertible owned by Chip Cecil. Jim Govoni brought his beautiful 1966 Cadillac as well. With the exception of a strong odor of gas drifting down from the line of Buicks just uphill from us it was a perfect day to discuss our cars and hobby.

Our October meeting and road trip to Kent Island and the Fisherman's Inn worked out well despite the Chesapeake Bay Bridge construction. The trip out was uneventful and we had a good meal with lively discussion. The bridge traffic delays on the way home added 20 minutes to our travel time, but that was a small price to pay for a fun day out—as you can see from our photo.

We hope to have a November road trip to an historic manor home in Bladensburg to be arranged by Don Hibbard once we decide on a date. November can be busy with the Thanksgiving holiday so please take a look at your schedules and let us know what weekend days you have free. Our November meeting will be at Fratelli's at 7:00 pm on the 19th. Carol and I hope to see you all there.



Minutes of the October Meeting

By Marolyn Simpson

On Sunday October 13, eleven Group Corvair members met at the Fisherman's Inn in Grasonville, MD on the eastern shore for a combination fall outing and monthly meeting. Several members met at the McDonalds on Rt 50 just before the bay bridge and then caravanned to the Fisherman's Inn. We all met at the restaurant shortly before it opened at 11:00.

After enjoying an early lunch, Bob Hall, president, called the meeting to order at 12:36. Jim Simpson gave the treasurer's report. Income from merchandise that was distributed at the September meeting had not come in yet; there were no expenses for the last month.

There was a discussion on the work being done on Jerry's car. Also there was a discussion about Bob, Carol, Jim, and Marolyn getting together for lunch sometime during the month and then trying to get another signature on the club bank account.

The Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show is scheduled for October 19 at the Rockville Civic Center. It looks like we will have seven or eight Corvairs in the show. To reserve a Corvair section from the other Chevys in the row, we plan to use a Corvair Parking Only sign.

Other business at the meeting included a discussion on fuel pumps and the springs in them.

In a mini tech session, Jim and Jerry had continued to work on Jerry's car and its habit of stalling while out on the road. As part of their "experiment", they tried installing a Pertronix II ignition in Jerry's car but that particular one did not work. Jerry suggested that if you want to get one, you should get it from Clarks. And while we were on the subject, Bob Hall is looking for suggestions for future tech sessions.

A suggestion for the next meeting (at our regular third Tuesday at 7:00 meeting time) was Pasta Plus in Laurel. [Note: This wasn't workable for November so the November 19 meeting location has been changed to Fratelli's in Hyattsville.]

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15.

On the Show Trail

Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show: For most of us, this is the final, blow-out show of the year. And this year's show certainly lived up to all the anticipation and hype. First, the weather couldn't have been any better. It was a great, cool and dry fall day. We've had some rain so the grass had greened up but the ground was firm and dry. It was sunny with just a hint of a breeze. All in all, just about a perfect day.

The Corvairs started arriving at about 8:15, shortly after registration opened. Jerry Yates and Marolyn and I were the first to arrive with Jerry's white Stinger clone and our blue Corsa. I left Jerry and Marolyn to set up the cars and to direct other Corvairs as they arrived to our reserved section as I trotted up the hill to help with registration. (All of the sponsoring clubs, including Group Corvair, are expected to lend a hand in running the show.)

Working at registration is a great way to see all the cars as they arrive for the show. The down side is that you are busy! Way too busy to stand around and admire the cars. Here's the math: This year, we turned out 580 cars. Registration runs from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. That's 580 cars in 360 minutes or 1 car every 37 seconds! In that 37 seconds, you have to greet the driver, find out his or her name, ask if they have a wheel chock, collect \$20 if they're not preregistered, get the registration packet (including sorting through the pre-registration packets – thankfully they're in alphabetical order), get a wheel chock if needed and deliver it all to the driver and give him or her directions on how to get to the field entrance. And do this while dancing around the cars as they moved through registration. It's fun, but sure is busy.



Meanwhile, down on the field, Marolyn and Bob Hall guarded the Corvair reserved section and arranged the new arrivals. Eventually we had eight Corvairs on display – Bob Hall’s *From the Oval Garage* article lists them all, but here are some pictures:



The crowds, as always, were great. Corvairs get a lot of attention – if you look carefully at the drone image, you’ll see a cluster of people around both the front and rear of the Corvairs. Some couldn’t believe there wasn’t an engine up front, others were fascinated by the air cooled “boxer” engines out back. Of course, there was the usual discussion of Ralph Nader (we showed our photos of him along with our autographed copy of *Unsafe at Any Speed*), what “killed”

the Corvair, how the Camaro was originally to be the third generation Corvair, and a variety of memories and myths about the car.



As Bob noted, there were other cars at the show including our own Jim Govoni's '66 Cadillac. And if you take a look at the drone picture, you might just be able to figure out where the Ferraris and other Italian sports cars were placed. Yes, you got it, the bright red row on the right side. (You'd think that the Italians would have a larger range of paint colors available...)

Jim Simpson

Tech Topics

Corvair Special Tools: The Club is trying to get an inventory of "special tools" that people have acquired for Corvairs. The idea is to make them available as needed when people are working on their car. For instance, I have a Kent Moore "J-21928". This is a special tool designed to adjust the tension bars on the Corvair hood. Similarly I have tools designed to remove the headlight and windshield wiper switch nuts without damage. What do you have in your inventory? If you have some special tool for working on Corvairs – and are willing to loan it out under whatever conditions you specify – how about dropping a note to Bob Hall or Jim Simpson and we'll put together a list.

Jim Simpson

Car Stalling, the Saga Continued: As I'm sure you recall from last month's newsletter, Jerry Yates reported on how his Corvair began stalling while out on the road. The symptoms were that it would be running just fine and then suddenly the engine would quit, just as if it had been switched off. After sitting for anywhere from a few seconds to a few minutes, it could be restarted and then run fine until it quit again. To recap, we thought about a number of possible issues, but then focused on the ignition. Some quick checks with an ohmmeter indicated a problem in the distributor – either the points weren't opening or the capacitor had shorted. Sure enough, when we opened the distributor, we found there was essentially zero point gap. We weren't sure if it was due to a worn rubbing block or just maladjustment, but it was surprising that it would run at all. A new set of points, capacitor and rotor went in and we fired it up and set the timing. It ran great! Score one for the home team!

But as the postscript in last month's newsletter indicated, nothing is ever that simple. The next day it was stalling again with just about the same symptoms – run great then just quit. So back to the drawing boards. Jerry and I got back together and decided there must be something wrong in the ignition wiring; somehow it was losing power to the ignition or possibly even a short in the tachometer wire. I started poking around trying to trace the wires and when I started moving the large main engine compartment connector, we both spotted what was likely the problem – the connector was loose! There are two retainer prongs on each side of the connector; one was firmly in place (that was the top and easily visible side) and the other, on the hidden bottom side of the connector, was not. And of course that end of the plug, the loose end, was the end that carries all the ignition related wires!

I pulled the connector apart, cleaned all the connections, did a little stretching of the connectors to ensure a tight fit and put it back together. Would you believe the car fired and ran just fine?

As best as we can figure out, the problem with Jerry's car was a double whammy – the initial problem with the points that we fixed the first time and the loose connector. The loose connector apparently was making just enough contact to let the car start and run and then when the car hit a bump or possibly the current heated the connector contacts a bit, it would quit. Jerry would let it sit a bit and they'd remake contact and then he could start the car again.

Of course we couldn't leave well enough alone. I use a Pertronix I ignition system on my Corsa turbo and have had no problems with it. (That might not be entirely true – look for a future tech article!) It seems reliable and of course requires no maintenance. I also have a Pertronix II sitting on the shelf, so we thought we'd give it a try on Jerry's Corvair. Installation wasn't a problem, everything fit properly and we wired it according to the Pertronix instructions. But it just wouldn't run! Jerry's Corvair and the Pertronix II just didn't like each other. We could get the car to start, but the idle was all over the place and we couldn't get the timing to settle out. It was a fiasco. We pulled the Pertronix and reinstalled the standard ignition and it ran just fine so we called it a success.

The Pertronix II is in its original box and as far as I can tell has never been used but I inherited it from another Corvair owner so I don't know its full history. Now I need to set up a distributor tester and see what it does on the bench. It's always possible that it's defective. Or just possibly the original diagnosis is correct – Jerry's car and the Pertronix unit don't like each other.

Jim Simpson

Forty, Thirty and Twenty Years Ago This Month

Jim Simpson

I do have the last two issues of *Group Corvair Comments* for 1979 in the club archives! The November issue reported on the September Fall Flea Fair; apparently in spite of a thoroughly soaking rain on the day before the weather turned out great. We had indoor space at Jim McKay Chevrolet in Fairfax and a number of out-of-town vendors showed up. CORVEGA Rebuilding from New Jersey came with a load of parts in their limousine, Bill Cotrofeld from Vermont was there with a whole truck load of goodies, and Jack Dempsey brought his parts but also represented American Corvair Parts. And then there were the "real" flea market sellers including Woody Schwartz, Waldo Davis, Chess Earman, Lloyd Anderson, and several more bringing literally pickup loads of choice parts. Of course Group Corvair's ladies were there running the food and refreshment stand. In the Vair Vendor, it was all late model cars. How about a freshly restored '65 Corsa turbo with a power top and AM/FM radio for \$4,300 or a restored '66 Corsa 140 hp with a power top and AM/FM radio for \$4,000? If you were looking for a bargain, then there was a '66 Monza convertible for \$500!

The November, 1979 issue of the *CORSA Communiqué* continued the reporting on the Detroit CORSA National Convention. The cover photo (by our own Ron Fedorczak) showed a GM representative giving rides in the original Monza GT. Marolyn and I were at that convention and somehow missed out on that! In the Tech Topics, there was what was probably the first article on how to substitute a late-model alternator for an early model generator. I noted lots of what would be fantastic bargains in the CORSA Classified section. I counted at least a half dozen Loadside/Rampside pickups, a couple wagons, another half dozen Greenbriers, bunches of Spyderys and Corsas and to top it off, Yenko Stinger YS-133 was being offered for \$3,500. If only I had a time machine!

It was obvious that the upcoming 1991 CORSA International Convention was on our minds in the November, 1989 issue of the *Group Corvair Comments*. There was an appeal for ideas on the design of our convention logo; something that would be immediately recognized as having a Washington theme but also identifies Group Corvair and CORSA. I reported on a trip to watch the vintage racing at Summit Point. We spent the weekend up there and had great fun watching – and listening to – race cars from my youth. John Moody had his third of three articles on Corvair fuel pump design and construction. Closing the newsletter, the Vair Vendor listed only three cars; a '61 sedan, '62 Spyder convertible and a '69 500 coupe.

The November 1989 issue of the *CORSA Communiqué* focused on local shows and events, particularly the 1989 Lime Rock meet. The track event was limited to 45 cars and new noise standards were in place so at least one race car was rejected for being too loud. But John Fitch drove his one-of-a-kind Fitch Phoenix to the event. (We got to see it "up close and personal" at the '91 CORSA Convention; we had it trucked down as a special display!) In the Tech Topics, Dick Spring continued his series on paints and Larry Claypool his series on "Stock Is". This month Larry covered seat upholstery. The list of cars for sale in the CORSA Classified was down to a single page. There were a few of most years and models, but the only "exotic" was a '66 Cords 8/10 powered by a Corvair 180 turbo engine.

A mere 20 years ago, the November, 1999 *Group Corvair Comments* had a report on the Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show. That year, the show turned out just over 450 cars including six Corvairs. (By comparison, this year the show had 580 cars and eight Corvairs! We must be doing something right.) Group Corvair was planning to assist the Children's Inn at NIH with their Santa's Workshop; we were looking for participants and donations of gifts and wrapping paper. The Vair Vendor closed the newsletter with five cars for sale. A couple of them were project cars but one caught my eye. It was listed as a '65 Corsa convertible with an automatic transmission. In so far as I know, Chevrolet never built a Corsa with an automatic transmission.

Do you remember the Devlin sports car? Particularly the Devlin-C? The November, 1999 issue of the *CORSA Communiqué* featured two of them on the cover and included a seven page article of a conversation with Bill Devlin, Tom Schrum (raced Devlins) and Tom Keosababian (world's fastest Corvair). In case you don't remember the Devlin-C, it was a fiberglass bodied sports/racer that used the Corvair power train. It weighed about 1400 lbs and was

(is) wickedly quick. Mike McGowan owns one and brought it to the Pittsburgh and Chicago CORSA conventions. Under Tech Topics, there was a recommendation for all you 140 hp engine owners. Buy a set of four 1/4" inverted flare plugs and carry them in the car. If the secondary carbs ever start flooding, you can remove the fuel supply lines and use the plugs to block off both the supply at the "tee" and close off the inlet to the carburetor. It's best to buy some in advance; they're hard to find! And closing the issue, the CORSA Classifieds was down to about 3/4 of a page of car ads. I think this was the first time I didn't see a single Corsa and only one '64 turbo (not listed as a Spyder).

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., on 301-775-0379.

For Sale: '64 Corvair Dune Buggy. New lower price. Built in 2009, street legal, and Maryland titled and tagged ("Street Rod" tags) as a '64 Corvair. It's never been off road, street driven only. Specs: 1964 Corvair 110 HP



engine, automatic transmission. The frame is square steel tubing factory built for complete running gear from a Corvair (front and rear suspension are 1964 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 600 miles on them. Fiberglass body was new old-stock, a Berry Mini "T" 2, built in California by Berry in late 1960s / early 70s. 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: 1965 Monza 4-door. 26k miles, recent seat covers, repainted about 10 years ago. Asking \$10,000. Denny Shue, 717-818-2904, Dover PA.



For Sale: Doing some house cleaning: 4 Clark's Extra Heavy Duty U-Joints, used less than 25 miles, excellent condition, \$50. 1965 Rear Engine Mount (NOS), \$35. Early model bumper brackets, 8 of 10, not bent or damaged but some surface rust plus 11 bumper bolts, \$10. Late model brake shoes – Clark's relined, full set, front and rear, less than 50 miles on them, \$45; AC Delco Professional, full set, front and rear, less than 50 miles on them, \$35. Two sets of brake hardware kits to convert to manual adjusters, \$25. Four tires, Toyo Extenza A/S 195/70-14, full tread, less than 200 miles. Carter P4070 electric fuel pump, new, in box, \$45 – note, too large for under body mount on Corvair. Also manuals, new shocks and sway bar for Vega. Bob Walker, bobrstn@gmail.com or 703-709-7246.

Clark's Corvair Parts®

Clark's Corvair Parts®, 400 Mohawk Trail, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370, phone: 413-625-9776

Email: clarks@corvair.com, web site: www.corvair.com

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They Just Couldn't Get Enough Corvair Pictures