



# Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME XLVIII, No. 2

February 2020



## What is this Mystery Car from 1957?

Answer is later in the newsletter.

**Are you paid up? Dues are due!** They're still just \$12/year! Please send a check made out to Group Corvair to the treasurer: Jim Simpson, 3845 Wayson Road, Davidsonville, MD 21035.

## CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

### February

- 15 – New Jersey Association of Corvair Enthusiast annual Corvair parts auction. Indoors at Ashley's Auto Body, 274 Hillside Ave., Flanders, NJ. 10% buyer's premium goes to the NJACE. Setup starts at 9 a.m., bidding at 10:30 a.m. Pizza lunch is included. <http://www.corvair.org/chapters/njace/auctions.html> for more info.
- 16 – **Group Corvair tour**, 12 noon. We're planning to tour the Riversdale House Museum, 4811 Riverdale Rd., Riverdale Park, MD. (This is just south of MD 410, between US Rt 1 and Kenilworth Ave.) Don Hibbard, a

Group Corvair member, is a docent. There is a fee, \$ 4, per person. The funds go toward the house's preservation.

18 – **Corvair Business Meeting**; 7 p.m. It's Italian this month! We're going back to Fratelli Italian Restaurant, 5820 Landover Road. Hyattsville, MD. This is the old Howard Johnson's. 7 p.m. for dinner, business meeting follows.

## March

14 – Central Virginia Corvair Club swap meet, Classic Car Center, 3591 Lee Hill Drive, Fredericksburg, VA. Both indoor and outdoor spots. No fee for sellers. Pizza and soft drinks for sale. POC: Alan White, [centralvacorvairclub@gmail.com](mailto:centralvacorvairclub@gmail.com). <http://classiccarcenter.net/>

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

## April

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

## May

17 – Corvair Ranch open house. This is a potential **Group Corvair** road trip!

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

29 – 30 – Virginia Vair Fair, hosted by the Central Virginia Corvair Club. Details to come.

## June

13 – NECC track day at New York Safety Track, Oneonta, NY. [www.neccmotorsports.com](http://www.neccmotorsports.com)

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

20 – Invasion of The American Museum of Tort Law, organized by Frank Winchell. For information, see [www.frankwinchell.com/welcome/](http://www.frankwinchell.com/welcome/) .

## July

6 – 11 – CORSA 50<sup>th</sup> International Annual Convention, Crown Plaza Hotel, San Diego, CA. For more information, go to the San Diego Corvair Club website: [www.sandiegocorvair.com](http://www.sandiegocorvair.com)

Date to be determined – **Not Quite Fourth of July picnic** hosted by Jerry and Diana Yates.

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# **From the Oval Garage**

**Bob Hall**

I'd like to start off by thanking Jim Simpson for sorting out banking requirements to bring Group Corvair's bank account into the 21st century. More is required of a club bank account than was the case 50+ years ago when the account was opened. We will now be able to add club officers' names to the bank records as we planned last year.

This is a Leap Year so we have an extra day to plan for club activities in February. We have reserved a tour of the Riversdale House Museum at 12 noon, Sunday, February 16th when Don Hibbard, who is a docent, is scheduled to be there. The cost is \$4.00 per person.

Carol and I postponed our trip to the Heurich House (with a side trip to the nearby Phillips Collection) in DC due to illness. The Heurich Brewery was the largest single employer in Washington, DC about 100 years ago. The family mansion is preserved at its original location downtown near the DuPont Circle Metro stop. Once the most up to date residence in town (more so than even the White House) it is a fascinating time capsule of how a well-to-do German-American family lived over a century ago. We plan to reserve a tour the morning of the 22nd, to be followed by lunch and then a short walk to the Phillips Collection before beating the evening rush hour(s) for the Metro ride home. Let us know if you are interested in joining us.

I've added some special tools of mine to Jim's list of tools available to club members—preferably to be used at a tech session where we can share knowledge. What out of the ordinary tools do you have that are available to share within the club?

We have reserved our room at the San Diego (Inter)National Convention in San Diego. Jim and Marolyn have theirs reserved as well. How many other Group Corvair members are planning to attend?

## **Minutes of the January Meeting**

**Marolyn Simpson**

To start off the New Year, nine Group Corvair members met at Beijing of Greenbelt on January 21. Dinner was at 7:00. We ordered several dishes and shared them family style. After we had eaten and shared some great conversation and a lot of laughs, Bob Hall called the meeting to order at 8:06.

Jim Simpson gave the treasurer's report. He received dues for 2020 from three members. He also has \$80 to return to the account; these are funds that were not used for reimbursement at the Christmas dinner.

Jerry Yates made a motion that the minutes be accepted as they appeared in the newsletter and Bob seconded the motion. The motion passed. Gus Torbert, merchandise chairman, had nothing new to discuss.

Barbara Torbert made a motion that the current slate of officers be re-elected. The motion passed.

Under old business, Jim stated that he still needs to get a federal tax identification number for the club. Bob offered to help.

Under new business, we discussed arranging for a tour of the Riversdale mansion in Riverdale, MD. Don Hibbard is a docent there and thought it would be an interesting activity for the club.

Bob is planning a tour of a mansion in Washington, D.C. He suggested that we could meet for lunch and then do the tour. There is no date or time yet. (Note: Bob is planning this for Saturday, Feb 22. See his article above.)

There was a discussion about two Corvairs that were sold at the Barret Jackson auction recently.

The Corvair Ranch, outside of Gettysburg, PA, is planning their open house on Sunday, May 17. Group Corvair has supported this event in the past and hopes to have a good representation this year.

Bob would like to see a good representation of Group Corvair members at the Vair Fair which will be on May 29-30. We will have more information on this event later.

Another project is organizing the tools at Pete Frailey's house to prepare for a sale. Also Bob discussed possible locations to display Pete's model of the Cutty Sark.

Jerry Yates invited the club to his house for the annual Not-Quite-Fourth-of-July picnic. No date was set. The CORSA International Convention in San Diego is July 6-11 and several members are planning to attend so we will need to work around those dates.

Another possible outing for the club is a trip to Mike Coale's garage. A Saturday in February was suggested but this will depend upon Mike's availability.

The meeting location for February was not determined. When a decision is made the information will be sent out to the members. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50.

## Tech Topics

Jim Simpson

Bob Hall has added these to the Corvair tools that the members of Group Corvair own and are willing to lend out or provide in a tech session:

- LM Heated Windshield/rear window removal tool – a "hot knife" blade removal tool.
- Alternator diode removal and installer tool set. Alternators are very easy to overhaul!
- Wheeled power-train cradle
- Pushrod tube removal tool – use this instead of pliers to keep those tubes from being dented.
- Dash bezel (headlight/wiper switch) removal tool – remove those bezels without scratching them up.

So to repeat from last month, if you are planning on doing some work on your Corvair and need any of these tools, let us know. We can either bring them to a tech session or work out a loan arrangement. And if you haven't been keeping track of this list, let me know and I can provide a compilation of them all.

## Corvair Preservation Foundation Raffle



The Corvair Preservation Foundation (CPF) is raffling off a freshly restored 1966 Corvair Monza Sport Coupe. The drawing will be held on May 15, 2020. You do NOT need to be present to win! The proceeds from the raffle will help support the new Corvair Museum on historic Rt-66, in Glenarm, Illinois. "Thoroughly reconditioned throughout with new paint, upholstery and many NOS parts." The car is painted Danube Blue with a blue interior and has 140 hp – Powerglide power train. Tickets are \$10 each and can be purchased directly from the CORSA web site:

<https://www.corvair.org/index.php/merchandise/corvair-raffle>

## Forty, Thirty and Twenty Years Ago This Month

Jim Simpson

In the February 1980, according to *Group Corvair Comments* the club was alternating its meeting between Jim McKay and Sport Chevrolet, meeting on Monday nights at 7:30 p.m. We were encouraging Corvair owners to participate in some moving events – the Winter Rally Series was underway and the autocross season was coming up soon. We only had two ads this month; a somewhat sad '64 convertible with rust and transmission problems and a want ad for a late model worth restoring.

Just like last month, the February, 1980 *CORSA Communiqué* was significantly meatier than our newsletter. There were two articles about racing – four Stingers participated in the W.O.R. annual race at Indianapolis Raceway Park; three had significant problems. Warren LeVeque's car suffered an engine fire, another was hit by an MG Midget who's driver couldn't make up his mind which way to turn and a third Stinger has a tire failure. But Dan Coughnour with his Dayton Wheel Products sponsored Stinger won D-Production. Unfortunately both Stingers who ran at Road Atlanta suffered brake problems, fading in the high speed turns, and while still running at the end, finished several laps down. In the tech tips section, the only notable article was about increasing the jet size on the carburetors. If you recall, this period was the end of leaded gasoline and the beginning of reformulated fuels. Enriching the mixture

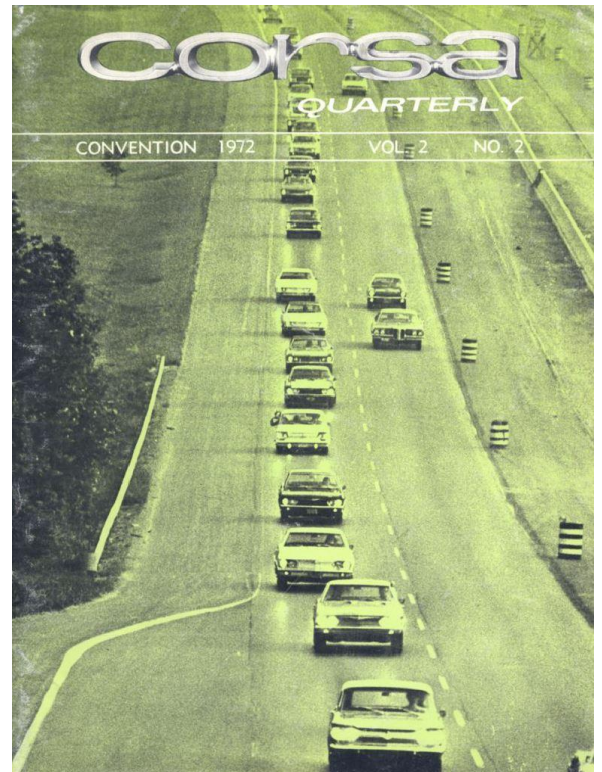
cured a lot of the resulting problems. In the CORSA Classified, high end cars were being offered for under \$3,000, good condition vans and Rampsides around \$2,000. I didn't see anything exotic though – no Yenkos, no V8 cars.

The February 1990 issue of *Group Corvair Comments* shows that the life of a newsletter editor hasn't changed very much. We used to have an intermittent editor's column "From the Editor's Desk" and in this issue there was a plea for input – tech tips, Corvair gossip and memories, trips – just about anything that would round out the newsletter. We did have some good news though; there were 63 people at the January banquet! In the Tech Topics, Smitty Smith pointed out the necessity of having the correct shims installed between the front of the transmission and the front power train support on early model cars. These shims are frequently ignored or discarded when doing an engine swap but are important since they control the rear wheel toe-in/out. Leave them out or have the incorrect thickness and the rear tires will quickly wear out as well as altering the overall handling. There were a couple of interesting items in the 'Vair Vendor; Ultravan #351, \$5,000, a '66 mid-engine V8 coupe and two late models that had to go for \$800.

A letter to the editor in an earlier issue of the *CORSA Communiqué* really touched a nerve with the readers. Apparently that earlier letter complained about having summer conventions as well as the difficulty of scoring well in the concours. In the February 1990 issue, the *Open Forum* section was filled with angry letters in opposition. Talk about tar and pitchforks! *Tech Topics* was almost entirely devoted to fuel pumps, including another in the series by our own John Moody. Dick Spring's The Finish Line series pointed out how the then-new HVLP (high-volume/low pressure) spray guns utilized around 80% of the paint as compared to the roughly 25% that the older conventional spray guns used. Given the cost of modern paints, that's a huge improvement. Closing out the issue, the *CORSA Classifieds* was down to a single page of cars. By today's standards, there were some real bargains, but nothing exotic stood out.

There was no official February 2000 *Group Corvair Comments*. The editor (yours truly) had procrastinated (ok, forgot) and ended up combining the February and March issues. More on this next month.

The editors of the *CORSA Communiqué* were on the ball and did produce a February 2000 issue. The inside cover was of particular note – it reproduced the cover of the 1972 *CORSA Quarterly* convention issue, the year Group Corvair sponsored the second ever CORSA convention. The cover was a photo of the parade of Corvairs heading to Montgomery Mall for the convention autocross. Tony Fiore wrote an excellent series of articles about his recollections of the early days of CORSA and this month's was about 1972 and covered "our" convention. The first CORSA convention attracted about 200 registrants; ours had 314. CORSA was growing. Tony received his brand new (and not quite finished) Solar Cavalier at the convention but was disappointed when a flat tire kept him from showing it in the concours. Donna May Mims showed up at the 1999 Virginia Vair Fair and the interview with her filled eight pages of the *Communiqué*. Just as last month, the ads have migrated to the internet; the CORSA Classified was down to a page and a half with less than a half page of car ads with few of real interest.



## Cover Automobile

Here are a few more photos. By now, you've probably figured out this was the 1960 Corvair test bed.

In 1957, while the Corvair was still a secret project (code-named "La Salle", they needed to test the engine and chassis in road tests. In order to deflect attention they needed something they could "hide in plain sight". Holden – the GM Australian car division – was an obvious choice. So GM created a new "Holden" prototype that was to be developed and tested in Detroit. They continued the deception to the point of having suppliers of parts and machine tools provide bids for delivery to Port of San Francisco for presumably ultimate shipment to Australia. At the end of 1957, the GM Board of Directors approved the overall car and assigned production to Chevrolet. (In spite of all the secrecy and subterfuge, the press still caught on to the Corvair's design. Motor Life magazine published a detailed preview of



the upcoming Corvair in September 1958 allegedly based upon studying Chevrolet's "Holden" parts and tooling orders. Chevrolet finally made an official announcement in May, 1959.)

Thanks to Jerry Yates for finding the photos and Tony Fiore's *Corvair Decade* for details. Also check out the "Ate Up With Motor" website

<https://ateupwithmotor.com/model-histories/chevrolet-corvair-history/> for an excellent article on the Corvair; it's one of the best, unbiased histories I've seen on the car.



## Vendor

**For Sale: 1965 4-door,** Light blue, powerglide, and 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: 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: '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.

## Clark's Corvair Parts®

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**Corvair at OCS, Newport, RI, October 1966**