



Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME XLVIII, No. 3

March 2020



Who Are These People and What Are They Doing?

(See Bob Hall's *From the Oval Garage* column.)

Are you paid up? Dues are Past 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

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. <http://classiccarcenter.net/>
- 17 – **Group Corvair** Business Meeting; 7 p.m. We'll meet at the Beijing of Greenbelt, 131 Center Way for dinner followed by our business meeting. See you there!

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

6 – 29th Annual Orphan Car Tour. Open to Corvairs, starts from Burkittsville, MD and ends at Bluemont, VA with stops along the way at a car collection, antique grist mill and an automobile restoration shop. For information, contact Jon Battle (tour director) at 540-364-1770, email: tourdirector@orphancartour.org or the web site: <http://wwworphancartour.org/>

13 – NECC track day at New York Safety Track, Oneonta, NY. 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/ .

July

6 – 11 – CORSA 50th International Annual Convention, Crown Plaza Hotel, San Diego, CA. For more information, go to the San Diego Corvair Club website: 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

In February Don Hibbard gave club members a thorough tour of the Riversdale House in Riverdale Park, MD. The late Georgian/Federal style mansion is over 200 years old and was once home to a branch of the Calvert family. Don has been a docent for years at the estate and has wide ranging historical knowledge of early 19th century Tidewater Maryland. Carol and I, as well as other club members, benefitted from all of Don's efforts to give us an eye opening tour. Thanks for a great time Don

After the Riversdale House tour Barbara and Gus Torbert recommended 3 Brothers Italian Restaurant where we had a very good lunch—good food in generous portions.

I hope the warmer weather has been helpful with your projects. I've got the rear seats installed in our 1964 Greenbrier and there is a bit more room in the basement. The right carburetor is still causing problems so it's getting a good soak and then a compressed air clean out of all passages. It's amazing how quickly brass pieces show green corrosion because of the ethanol in today's gas if a carb doesn't get "exercised" on at least a monthly basis.

We are starting to plan for a weekend clean out of Pete Fraley's garage and a garage sale of his shop equipment and car parts. Note that the Corvair Ranch purchased most of his Corvair specific parts, but there are still smaller items that need to find new homes. Watch for an email with specifics in the near future.

This March marks the 52nd anniversary of the arrival of my one and only new Corvair in Bremerhaven, Germany. A 1968 Monza 110, 4speed coupe with F41 suspension, fast steering, AM-FM radio, rear speaker and outside remote control mirror. Probably the best drive of my life was the "break in" run on secondary roads the 400 miles south from the port to my duty station outside Mannheim, Germany. What is your "best drive" memory?

Minutes of the February Meeting
Marolyn Simpson

Eight Group Corvair members met at Fratelli's Restaurant in Hyattsville at 7:00 pm on February 18. After enjoying an Italian dinner, Bob Hall, president, called the meeting to order at 8:05.

The minutes from the last meeting were approved as they appeared in the newsletter.

Jim Simpson gave the treasurer's report. Income during the last month was from dues. Jim reported on the work he has been doing on getting the club reinstated as a non-profit corporation in Maryland. He has completed several steps but still has some work to do. Diana Yates made a motion for the club to pay the \$100 fee to finish the process. Jerry seconded it.

The merchandise inventory included four fans with the 1991 convention logo on them. Jerry took one and Bob took two. Both made a contribution to the club.

Jerry discussed the relationship between the Corvair and Ralph Nader. More discussion followed about Ralph Nader including auto safety features.

Several up-coming events for the club were discussed. Bob had planned a tour of the Heurich House in DC for Saturday, February 22, followed by lunch; Mike Coale is planning to give the club a tour of his facility later this spring; and we may try to do a tour of St. Mary's city.

Jerry and Diana have extended an invitation to their home in Bowie for the Not-Quite-Fourth-of-July picnic. Since the national convention in San Diego is scheduled to start on the 6th of July our picnic will probably be in late June, but a definite date has not been decided yet. Everyone should bring a dish to share, something to grill and a beverage.

The Corvair Ranch is now having its open house every other year, alternating with the Clark's Corvair Parts open house. It will be held this year on Sunday, May 17 starting at noon. We hope to see a good representation from Group Corvair. Is anyone interested in convoying up?

Jim has volunteered to keep a list of Corvair specialized tools that club members own and are willing to make available. If you have any tools to add to the list let Jim know.

There was a discussion of the early days of the club. The question came up: when did Group Corvair start?

The March 17 meeting will be at Beijing of Greenbelt with dinner at 7:00.

At 9:00 Barbara Torbert moved to adjourn.

Rockville Planning Meeting

Marolyn Simpson

The planning meeting for the October 17, 2020, Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show was held on Tuesday, February 10 at the Glenview Mansion in the Rockville Civic Center Park. There were at least 30 at the meeting including Bob, Jim, and me representing Group Corvair. The first order of business was voting in Capital Triumph as a new sponsoring club for the show. On the other hand the National Capital AACA club has disbanded. There are now 32 car clubs sponsoring this event. As for the Chevys, there are only two sponsoring clubs – Group Corvair and

Mid-Maryland Chapter of the National Corvette Restorers Society, both of which have banners and designated parking areas. All other Chevys have to park in available space.

According to the official count, the 2019 show had 580 cars on the field (the field capacity is about 600), and approximately 12,000 spectators. The number of cars was second only to the 582 in 2015.

At the 2019 show there was a drone that flew above the field and took pictures of the show. It was a different perspective than we have seen before and provided a great overall view. We will probably try that again at this next show. The registration went much smoother than it has in the past. It seemed to be well organized and the cars moved through the line without any major backups.

There were several suggestions for improvements. Everyone agreed that we need more food vendors. There were often long lines at the most popular vendors. Another problem was that the portable toilets ran out of toilet paper about 2:00 pm. The organizers agreed to remedy the situation at the next show. Also there was a problem with parking the trailers. There needs to be more space and better access for them.

The special display for the 2020 show will be stock Corvettes – all years – with the new C8 Corvette on display. The 2020 C-8 Corvette is a major departure from all earlier Corvettes being a mid-engine car.

The layout of the field (how many spaces are reserved) is based upon the preregistrations, therefore, it is important to register early. The registration forms for this year will be available on the Rockville city car show web site on July 1. Those who have previously participated in the show should receive a registration form by mail or email.

One more planning meeting will be held in June. The exact date and time have not yet been determined.

Tech Topics

Jim Simpson

Books and Manuals. I was asked recently just which manuals, books and other references I would recommend as the “essential” set for a Corvair owner. Here’s the list I came up with. Most of these are available either from Clark’s Corvair Parts or from CORSA.

Chassis Shop Manual. There are specific manuals for the 1960, 1961 and 1965 model years. In addition, there are supplements that cover the other years. So for instance, if you have a 1964 Corvair, buy the 1961 manual and the 1964 supplement. (Clark’s also sells them as sets for early and late-model cars.)

Factory Corvair Assembly Manual. There is a specific manual for each year for both cars and vans. These manuals will show you exactly how the factory was supposed to assemble the vehicle along with how each of the various accessories were installed. There’s a lot of information here that isn’t in the shop manual!

Chevrolet Corvair Body Service Manual, '65 - '69. As far as I know, there isn’t one available for the early models although the Assembly Manual above would help with some things.

Chevrolet Corvair Parts Book. Clark’s sells a reprint of Chevrolet’s 1970 edition so some of the parts that Chevy dropped earlier aren’t listed. Never-the-less, this is pretty complete for both early and late-model Corvairs.

And here are some non-GM books that you might find useful:

Performance Corvairs or How to Hotrod the Corvair Engine and Chassis by Seth Emerson. This is probably the best overall regarding modifying the Corvair. The original was by Bill Fisher and dates back to the mid-60’s; Seth did a major rewrite and update a couple years ago.

How to Identify and Rebuild Corvair Rochester Carburetors by Bob Helt. Much more complete than the factory manuals. Clark’s also carries the factory carburetor training booklet which has more detailed steps and theory than the shop manual. I don’t know which would be better.

How to Identify and Rebuild Carter YH Carburetors Used on Corvair Turbocharged Engines by Bob Helt. Step-by-step instructions on rebuilding turbo carbs.

Corvair Basics, by the Corvair Society of America. The club has copies of this book and you can have one in return for a donation to the club treasury.

The Classic Corvair by Bob Helt. Clark's describes this as a 300+ page technical manual on understanding, maintaining and upgrading your Corvair and should be the book you buy after you've got the shop manual and assembly manual.

CORSA Corvair Tech Guide. This is a compilation of tech information compiled over the years by CORSA members and includes tips, detailed information, upgrades and more that you won't find anywhere else.

The Yenko Stinger -- Tech Manual by Yenko Chevrolet. Obviously this is focused on the Yenko Stinger race car, but if you are into performance, this has some good tips.

Corvair Secrets by Bob Helt. I don't have a copy of this for some reason, but I've heard good things about it

There are a number of other smaller books and pamphlets that Clark's lists on things such as overhauling the PowerGlide transmissions and the Chevrolet service bulletins. Depending upon your needs, you might browse through them. And let me know if there's a book or manual that you would consider "one of the essentials".

Gas Caps. From the Prairie Capital Corvair Association. (This is a summary of a longer article.) All original Corvair gas caps are vented, that is, they have a small hole that allows air to enter the gas tank as the fuel is used. The down side of these caps is that they allow some fuel vapor to escape and pollute the air as well as leak on hard cornering or if the car is upset in an accident.

New cars use a cap with a pressure/vacuum relief valve and all new caps sold by your local auto parts will have these valves. There are two problems with these caps. The first is that the Corvair fuel pump is not designed to draw fuel against the vacuum these caps create in the gas tank after the car runs a while. Typically you'll get about 25 miles down the road and the engine will die due to starvation. The second problem is that if you fill the tank on a cold day (such as when you put the car away for the winter) and then the weather changes and heats up, gasoline as it expands from the heat can be forced past the check valves in the fuel pump and on into the carburetors and then on into the engine where it dilutes the oil. (Even good float and carburetor needle valves will allow this seepage.)

You can modify a new cap by removing the check valve and in some cases, drilling a small vent hole. Or go to a Corvair parts vendor and buy the correct gas cap!

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

Back in 1980, according to the March issue of *Group Corvair Comments* there really wasn't any problem with where we were going to meet. The meetings alternated between Sport Chevrolet in Silver Spring and Roger's Chevrolet (now Ourisman Chevrolet) in Bowie. We were meeting on Monday evenings at 7:30. Automobile emissions testing were coming to Maryland (or at least to Prince George's and Montgomery counties); the good news was that cars registered as "historic" would be exempt. In the 'Vair Vendor, there was what looked like a nice '68 Monza coupe for

sale – 110 hp, powerglide with positrac, just needed a windshield. The same seller had a stash of parts – wood rim wheels, telescopic steering column, AM/FM radio with the stereo multiplex adapter, a couple transaxles with positrac all for \$450.

The March, 1980 *CORSA Communiqué's* focus was on CORSA related matters. The new Chapter Plan was presented. Covering four pages, it laid out the procedures for creating and maintaining a CORSA chapter as well as the benefits that CORSA would provide to the chapters. Similarly Revision 2 of the CORSA National Concours D'Elegance Rules covered eight pages. These two items pretty much filled the *Communiqué*. But there were still ads. Yenko Stinger YS016 was up for sale; no price listed though. In addition, there was a Kelmark V8 conversion that sounded good for \$3500. The Kelmark conversions were relatively rare compared to the more common Crown V8 conversions. And in the bargain category there was a '66 Corsa with factory air. The engine was partially disassembled, the interior was out of the car and there was the typical rust. But for "\$100 or best offer", a good buy!

A decade later, according to the March 1990 issue of *Group Corvair Comments* the club was meeting on Sundays, apparently at the Skyline Restaurant in Suitland. Planning for the 1991 convention was going full steam ahead with the contract for the hotel about to be signed, convention logos being designed, publicity photos being taken and much more. Several club members were planning on attending the 1990 CORSA Convention in Ontario, CA to present the plans to the CORSA Board as well as advertise our convention. John Moody had an article on how to pressurize the gas tank to overcome vapor lock. (John had been having a long-running battle with fuel problems that he variously attributed to vapor lock and failing fuel pumps. I wonder if he was using a properly vented gas cap – see this month's tech topics.) Another tech tip was to change the early-model front turn signal and late-model rear stop light sockets with Echlin LS6469 sockets. These eliminate the two-part design that Chevrolet used and improve reliability. There were three ads in the newsletter including a '66 Monza with some nice accessories; factory quick steering and AM/FM radio. And up in Delaware, Met Mettler was cleaning house – 20+ Corvairs including 6 late 4-doors sedans that had been driving into covered storage (all 6 for \$1000), a Rampside, Van, '69 coupe, '69 convertible and more – “make offer.”

The March 1990 issue of the *CORSA Communiqué* had two really fun articles. The first was by Smitty Smith down in Norfolk, VA. He wrote about how he built is “1964” Monza Wagon. It started out as a rusted out '62 Monza Wagon that as Smitty said “was held together primarily by the triple layer of Earl Scheib paint”. By the time he was finished making new panels (from the roof of a scrapped Greenbrier), adding '64 trim, a new drive train, new interior, new suspension, it was mostly a '64 wagon. To cap it off, he was awarded 93.17 points at the '89 CORSA Convention concours and assigned to the Senior Division. Unfortunately, this was the car he was driving in his accident last year and I haven't heard anything about its current condition. The second article was by Tom Keosababian of Bonneville speed record fame. In August, 1964, he was on his way from California to Utah for another attack on Bonneville. The car was a '61 Monza with a heavily modified '64 Spyder engine. He'd modified the engine by putting 4-carb heads on it (this was before the factory produced the 140 hp engines) and was planning on two assaults on class speed records. The first would be with a normally aspirated engine and then he was going to put a prototype TRW “F” model turbo (the one used on the '65 and '66 Corsa turbos) on it and pressurize the air going through the 4 carbs. The only fly in the ointment was getting there – his tow vehicle was a worn out '55 Chevy panel van with a stove bolt six cylinder engine. There were mountains to cross and the total load was in the 8,000 to 9,000 pound range. But he had a plan. The '61 Monza was being towed using a “substantial” tow bar; Gary and Tom, two of the crew were riding in it. As they headed up the first major pass, just as Tom predicted, the poor, old panel truck was getting slower and slower even at full throttle. As the speed dropped down below 35 mph, Tom waved out of the window signaling Gary to fire up the Corvair. Within seconds he heard the roar of the open exhausts of the race car engine and after about a minute of warm-up, Gary let out the clutch and started pushing. By then the speed was below 30 mph. It worked perfectly – they accelerated rapidly and were soon passing all the cars and trucks that had passed them earlier. By the time they hit the top of the pass, they were going over 75 mph with their “12 cylinder engine”. They did set a record with the normally aspirated engine; however, the turbo blew up and spoiled their attempt at a supercharged record. In the CORSA Classified, this was the time to buy if you wanted a '65 or '66 Corsa. About a quarter of the cars for sale were Corsas!

As I noted last month, there was a combined February & March 2000 issue of *Group Corvair Comments*. As it turned out, the editor (yours truly) had an excuse. We were just converting from dial-up modem internet service to DSL. Remember either of those? DSL had a phenomenal speed – we'd gone from a 56k modem to about 500k service and were busy revamping our computer and its software. Plus there hadn't been a meeting in January so there was no

business to report. In the minutes, we reported on looking into getting a web site hosted by Hemmings Motor News, the planning for the Rockville show (one car from each year 1900 to 2000 – yes we managed to do that!) and a discussion of the best meeting day and time. There were four local cars in the ‘Vair Vendor, none particularly memorable.

The *CORSA Communiqué* March, 2000 issue continued Tony Fiore’s history of CORSA with its fourth installment covering 1973. Bill Pierson wrote a nice article on the early Fitch Sprints and Lee Olsen told about his rescue of Yenko Stinger YS044. YS044 was discovered in a junk yard in Dodge City, Kansas having sat there for 8 or 10 years. It had 31,856 miles on the odometer and other than some rust around the front windshield and a rather sun worn interior, it was reasonable complete and intact. Needless to say, Lee bought the car and it’s now in safe hands. (There’s a pretty good chance I saw this car back when it was new; Topeka, Kansas was a hotbed of autocrossing back in the late ‘60s and several Stingers routinely showed up from around the state. I’ve identified three Stingers as having been originally sold in Kansas.) There was a single page of cars for sale in the CORSA Classifieds, a good selection and some good prices, but nothing that stood out.

‘Vair Vendor

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.

For Sale: 1965 500 Coupe. This is an unrestored original with about 18,000 original miles. 95-hp engine, 3-speed transmission. Garage kept since new. AACA HPOF certified and CORSA Preservation awards, recently featured in *Generator & Distributor*, the magazine of the Vintage Chevrolet Club of America. This car needs nothing. Must see and drive to appreciate. Asking \$14,000. Rick Sanford, 843-321-2257, ricksanford2020@gmail.com. Call for more information and pictures. Delivery possible. (Car is in South Carolina.)



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