



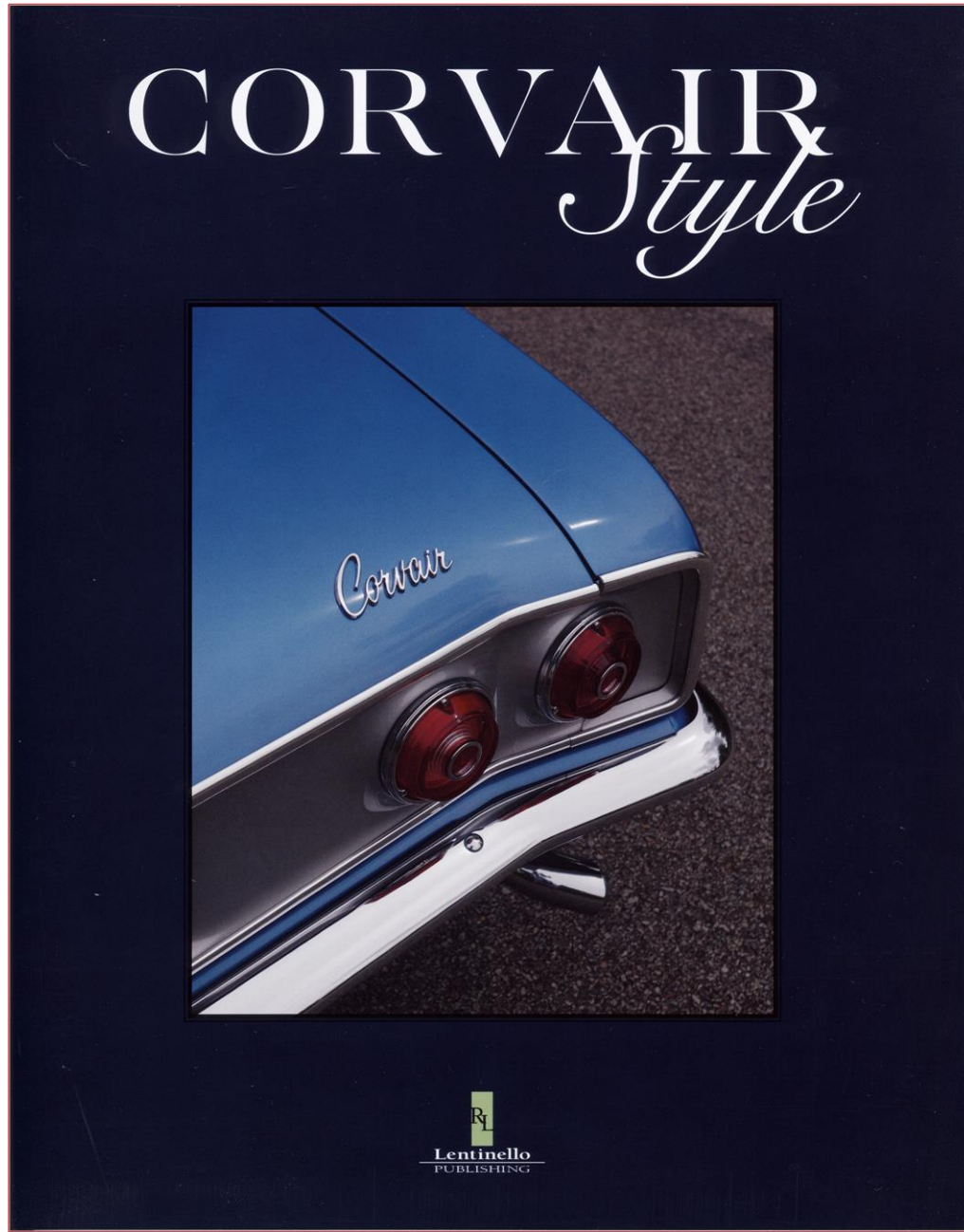
Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME XLVIII, No. 5

May 2020



Corvair Style, by Richard Lentinello

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

Check with sponsors on all events for the foreseeable future!

May

17 – Corvair Ranch open house. **CANCELLED**

19 – **Group Corvair** Business Meeting: **CANCELLED**.

Virginia Vair Fair, hosted by the Central Virginia Corvair Club. **POSTPONED** to 2021.

June

13 – NECC track day at New York Safety Track, Oneonta, NY. www.neccmotorsports.com (No word yet.)

16 – **Group Corvair** Business Meeting: Very much TBD.

20 – Invasion of The American Museum of Tort Law, organized by Frank Winchell. For information, see www.frankwinchell.com/welcome/. (I strongly suspect that this has been postponed or cancelled.)

July

CORSA 50th International Annual Convention, Crown Plaza Hotel, San Diego, CA. Officially **POSTPONED** until July 27 – 31, 2021.

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From the Oval Garage

Bob Hall

Despite the news, life has not been cancelled and I for one have more than enough unfinished projects to keep me busy. Carol and I were really looking forward to the Corvair Ranch open house, the Virginia Vair Fair down in Roanoke (even if we drove there in a less than 50 year old car) and we had plans to join our oldest son in San Diego for the international CORSA convention that will now have to wait until 2021. But we are all in the same boat and this gives us the opportunity to organize our inventory, fine tune an engine and, just maybe, have a Zoom or Facebook Messenger club meeting.....

It is CORSA election time and I encourage Group Corvair members to vote online by the end of the month “to show the flag” so to speak. Jerry Brown has re-upped for another term to helm the Eastern Division and even though he is the only candidate we can let him and CORSA know we’re still actively following their efforts by voting.

The Fraley garage clean out and yard sale is on hold during the COVID19 quarantine, but it will be a club priority as soon as restrictions are eased. We’ll make it a fun day with food and memories of Pete when we help Barbara find a good home for the remaining tools and parts.

I hope we will be able to meet in person for our June meeting. In the meantime, stay healthy and stay safe.

***Corvair Style*, by Richard Lentinello**

Richard Lentinello, Editor in Chief of *Hemmings Motor News*, noted automotive historian and photographer, has formed his own publishing house “Lentinello Publishing”. His goal is to produce a special series of collector-car books aimed at the automobile enthusiasts.

He has now released his second book, *Corvair Style*. Just to show you where he places Corvairs in the automobile Pantheon, this follows his first book, *Cadillac Style*. As you might expect, it is full of “eye candy”, chock full of beautiful color photos of Corvairs. He starts at the beginning with a 1960 Sedan (production number 428) and works his way through the years and models to the very end with a 1969 coupe.

This book is not intended to be a comprehensive guide to originality (although every car in there is very close to stock), nor does it have an example of every version Chevrolet produced (although it is very complete and includes the Yenko Stinger, Fitch Sprints and the Fitch Phoenix). Rather it is a tribute to the cars – and their owners – in all their glory today.

Check it out at <https://www.lentinello.com/> and place your order. I think you will be impressed.

And yes, Marolyn and I have a special interest in this book. The cover photo is of our 1966 Corvair Corsa. Mr. Lentinello attended the 2018 CORSA International Convention in Pittsburgh to gather material and take photos for this book. He selected our car to head up the section on the 1966 models. His photos really bring out the beautiful color and style of the car and the book’s printing quality is excellent!

(And besides our car, Rick Sanford’s ’65 red Corsa coupe was a featured car. I’m sure as you thumb through the book, you will find several other familiar cars – most of the photos are of cars from the east coast.)

Minutes of the April Meeting

Marolyn Simpson

Just in case you think you missed it, no, we did not have a meeting in April. But club business continues. The treasurer has informed me that we made a deposit in the club account from money received from dues and donations for club/Corvair related merchandise.

Meet the Corvair Designers

Jerry Yates provided this link to what appears to be a Detroit Corvair Club event:

<https://www.facebook.com/meetthecorvairmakers/videos/227794591985664/UzpfSTEWnJY0ODY1OTAxMzE4MTE6Mjg0MTU2Mjk4MjYyNDE1NA/>

Elia Russinoff was a GM Assistant Chief Designer and had a major hand in the design of the Corvair. Enjoy.

Jim Govoni, Group Corvair Past President

Jim Govoni, Past President of Group Corvair has a real job, President of the Hardest Funeral Home chain based in Annapolis. He was featured on the cover of the Monday, April 27 issue of *The Capital*, the Annapolis newspaper. Unfortunately, he has been extremely busy lately and hampered by the need to limit staff exposure to the novel coronavirus responsible for COVID-19.

Jim has been doing a very hard, but essential service to the community. Hopefully it won’t be long before he will be able to get back to his favorite pastime, classic cars. Thank you, Jim.

CORONAVIRUS IN MARYLAND

“You cannot steal from someone’s relationship with a decedent because of your own fear and intimidation. I think that funeral service providers have to do everything they can ... to allow people to celebrate the life of the person.”

Jim Govoni, funeral director at Hardesty Funeral Home



PAUL W. GILLESPIE/CAPITAL GAZETTE

Jim Govoni, president of Hardesty Funeral Home in Anne Arundel, has been completing funeral services without a staff in recent weeks in an effort to provide closure for family and friends of COVID-19 victims during the coronavirus pandemic.

Tech Topics

Balancing Carbs

From the May 2000 issue of *Corsa Communicue*, author unknown. To help synchronize carburetors, stop by a pet shop and pick up a “gang valve” for an aquarium air supply. Make sure it has at least two valved outlets. Hook your vacuum gauge to the single inlet and attach an outlet to each carburetor. Follow the shop manual for instructions on how to adjust the carburetors using the valves on the gang valve to switch the vacuum gauge back and forth quickly and easily between carburetors to check for matching readings. Saves a lot of time.



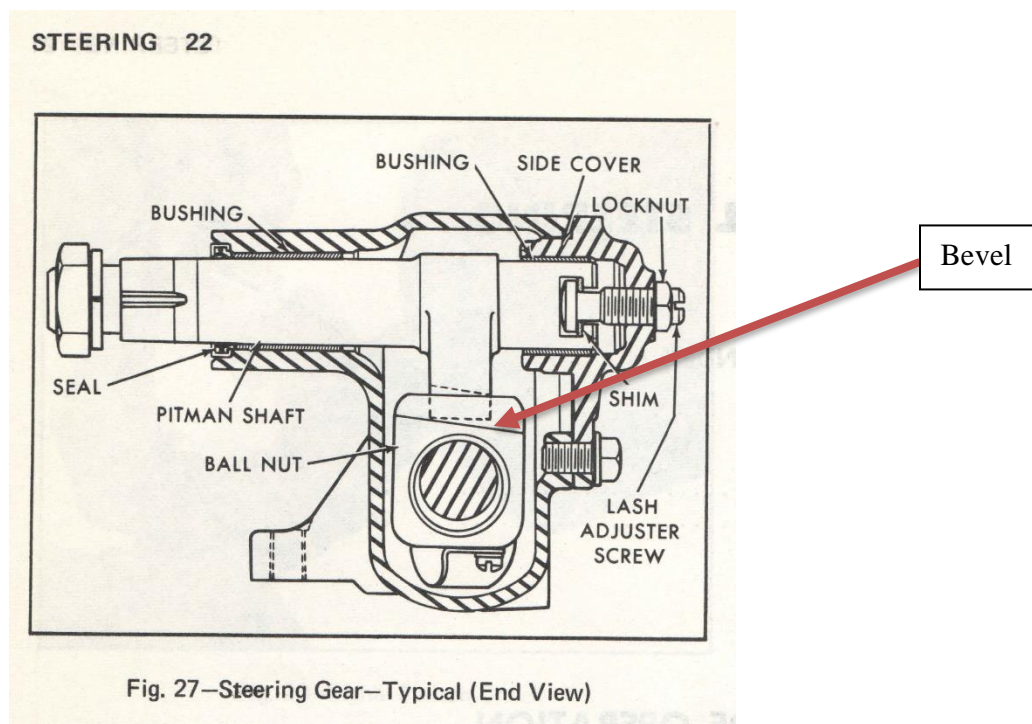
Steering Box Adjustment

Back in the 1970’s a visit to my local Chevy dealer taught me something about steering boxes. My Corvaire had a loose tie rod sleeve and they needed to tighten it. After they were done and the front was re-aligned, I found that the steering wheel wasn’t centered when driving straight ahead and felt loose. I took the car back to have them fix this, but when I got it back, even though the steering wheel was now centered, when driving straight ahead the steering was still loose. It turned out whoever centered the steering wheel had just pulled the wheel and reinstalled it so it seemed centered when the wheels were straight. Now the wheel was not centered on the steering shaft. **He should have adjusted both tie rod sleeves (equal numbers of turn in the same direction) to match the center of the steering shaft to the wheels when they are straight ahead.**

Bob Hall

When the steering shaft (and steering wheel) is off center, as mine now was when driving straight, it isn't as tight. The recirculating ball steering design on our cars, like others of that period, have a tighter fit between the worm ball nut and the sector gear at the center point so the steering box has very little play when driving straight ahead but it allows for adjustment in this area of highest wear after many tens of thousands of miles. In my experience, tie rod ends, idler arms and pitman arm bushings fail well before a steering box needs adjustment. The slack in the steering box when off center is normal and not noticed because, in a turn, the steering box is working against the wheel caster and that caster is pressuring the wheels to return to straight ahead thus taking up all the slack.

From *Theory and Diagnosis: Chevrolet Steering* (one of a series of educational manuals issued by Chevrolet and still available used on line): **“The teeth on the sector, which are an integral part of the pitman shaft, and the worm ball nut are so designed that a tighter fit exists between the two when the front wheels are straight ahead.”** The drawing below from the same source shows the beveling on the sector part of the pitman shaft and the ball nut riding on the worm shaft. This beveling allows adjustment for wear by the lash adjuster screw that is accessible from the trunk.



On page 9-2 of the shop manual the first paragraph under Adjustments Steering Gear says (but could emphasize more) that any fixes for steering looseness should address the steering linkage parts first. The steering box should not be adjusted unless you are sure all sloppiness has been removed from the steering linkage. Check the tie rods, pitman arm bushing, idler arm, the associated nuts and bolts, wheel bearings and tire pressures **FIRST**. Then, if there is still play at the steering wheel when it is **ON CENTER**, the steering gear can be checked **AFTER THE PITMAN ARM IS REMOVED**. Do not attempt to adjust the steering box unless you have the detailed procedure in the shop manual on pages 9-2 and 9-3 available for reference and an inch pound torque wrench. It will explain how to first adjust the worm preload (the big nut) to check for bearing wear, then, **AFTER CENTERING THE STEERING SHAFT**, how to adjust the lash adjuster screw (the one accessed in the trunk) so that the total torque needed to turn an unloaded steering shaft is *no more than 14 inch pounds*.

Just tightening the lash adjuster screw without following the manual, with the pitman arm attached and when the steering shaft isn't properly centered will cause binding at the tighter center of the steering gears, increase wear and can ruin a perfectly good steering box. Don't do it.

FWIW two used Corvairs I purchased had ropey, sloppy steering and the lash adjuster screws were turned down so low they were level with or below the top of the lock nut. But I got lucky--the steering boxes weren't completely worn out. After repairs to the steering linkages of both cars, I adjusted both steering boxes following the instructions on pages 9-2 and 9-3 in the manual. When I was done both lash adjuster screws were now above the lock nut and the steering on both cars was much improved.

Note carefully – the steering box can only be properly adjusted while disconnected from the pitman arm following the detailed procedure in the Chevrolet Chassis Service Manual. (See Section 9 of the shop manual and follow its steps exactly – including removing the pitman arm!)

(Editor's note. Most of us do not have torque wrenches that can go as low as the 3.5 – 4.5 in-lbs torque that the shop manual calls for. But there is a relatively cheap work around. You can get an inexpensive fish scale and use the steering wheel as the "wrench". My wood rim wheel comes with decorative holes in the spokes, one of which is conveniently 6" from the center of the wheel. 3.5 in-lbs torque converts to 0.58 lbs of "pull" at 6 inches from the center of motion. (To make the calculation, simply divide the needed torque in inch-lbs by the distance in inches from the center of motion – the so-called "lever arm". 3.5 in-lbs / 6 in = 0.58 lbs.) So if you hooked a fish scale to the steering wheel 6 inches from the center, 0.58 lbs of pull would give you the specified 3.5 in-lbs of torque. You can buy digital fish scales with 0.01 lbs resolution on Amazon for about \$12.)

Forty, Thirty and Twenty Years Ago This Month

Jim Simpson

Way back in May 1980, things were a little different. The calendar was full of events – meetings, autocrosses, rallies, mini-conventions and more. How times have changed. The newsletter had part 2 of a continuing series of a tech article on engine cooling tips and the *Vair Vendor* was chock-a-block with cars and parts for sale. How about a complete front crossmember from a Corsa with Koni shocks, new ball joints, heavy duty springs and quick steering arms for \$100?

The May 1980 *CORSA Communiqué* had the qualification statements from the candidates for the CORSA Division Directors. Amazing how young those people looked! Corvair Atlanta was in full speed ahead mode for the 1980 CORSA Convention. Among the non-Corvair events planned was a tour of the Lockheed-Georgia plant where they were building C-130 "Hercules" aircraft (still in production today) along with rebuilding the C-141 "Starlifter" cargo aircraft. In the *Tech Topics*, there was an article about installing a "water vapor injection" system. This was a device that allowed air to bubble through a small tank of water or water-alcohol mixture and then into the carburetors. Supposedly it significantly increased gas mileage and cleaned cylinder heads. Based upon the amount of water/alcohol used – less than a pint in a thousand miles – it is hard to see how it could do anything. But these devices did have a large following back then. There were four full pages of cars plus three more of parts for sale. Nothing exotic, but a good selection at what seem like very good prices.

Jumping to the next decade, the May 1990 issue of *Group Corvair Comments* focused on our 1991 convention planning. But in the interim, the calendar was full – in May alone, we had a regular club business meeting, the Virginia Vair Fair, a convention planning meeting, the Mid-Maryland flea market, a SCCA race at Summit Point and finally the Dallas mini-convention. John Moody was still dissecting and modifying fuel pumps. (He discovered that the new Borg-Warner fuel pumps were manufactured with pump stems that were too long and would likely over stretch the pump diaphragms. Amazingly we were down to just two cars for sale.

The *CORSA Communiqué* for May 1990 was also focused on a convention, but this was the 1990 CORSA National Convention in Ontario, California. Several members of Group Corvair were planning to attend to both advertise our 1991 convention and to get a feel for how a national event was run; Marolyn and I did go. The *CORSA Classified* was significantly smaller, two pages of cars and one of parts.

The May 2000 issue of *Group Corvair Comments* noted the weather for early May – a sharp contrast with what we are seeing now. Unlike our well-below temperatures and rain, it was running in the low 90s! There were no tech tips other than a discussion of whether it was better to remove or leave the lower shrouds on the engine during the summer. No, there was no definitive conclusion. Three cars were being offered – a '62 for parts only, a '64 4-door

and a '64 convertible. And the Vermont Independent Corvair Enthusiast were advertising a 4-day tour out of Lake Placid, NY.

In case you haven't figured this out yet, the May issues of the *CORSA Communiqué* are about the upcoming conventions. The May 2000 issue of *CORSA* was no different; this time it was for the Daytona, Florida convention. Under *Tech Topics*, there was yet another article on engine cooling fan performance. (This continues to today, using computer numerical control (CNC) machines, some really innovative fans are being made and tested.) The ever-shrinking *CORSA Classifieds* were down to a single page of cars and a half page of parts, very slim pickings.

Fifty Years Ago

Fifty years ago, I was two thirds of the way through US Navy Nuclear Power School in Mare Island, California. What does that have to do with Corvairs you might well ask? Well I had driven my blue '66 Corsa to Officer Candidate School (OCS) in Newport, RI the previous fall. The Navy was somewhat desperate for nuclear submarine officers and had arranged for about 50 of us to enter the navy via that class so that our graduation would be aligned with the January nuclear power school classes, one on the east coast in Bainbridge, Maryland and the other in Mare Island, California. While we were going through OCS, all our cars were parked in a lot near the base gate, so we got to recognize each other by the cars we drove. Lots of Mustangs and muscle cars, but not many Corvairs.

My orders were to Mare Island and I drove my Corvair across county without incident. But once in Vallejo, the town next to Mare Island, I was at something of a loss as what to do next. The Navy did not provide quarters and I needed a place to stay. I stopped for gas at a Shell station and just as I started to pull out, I saw a somewhat familiar face running down the road waving to stop me. As it turned out, it was a fellow OCS graduate – an owner of a '65 red Corsa convertible – who had spotted my blue Corsa and figured that it must be me from OCS as well. He had teamed up with four others and had found two three-bedroom apartments to rent. They needed a sixth to share the rent.

Now if I had been driving a Mustang or something equally common back then, I would likely still be looking for that place to live.

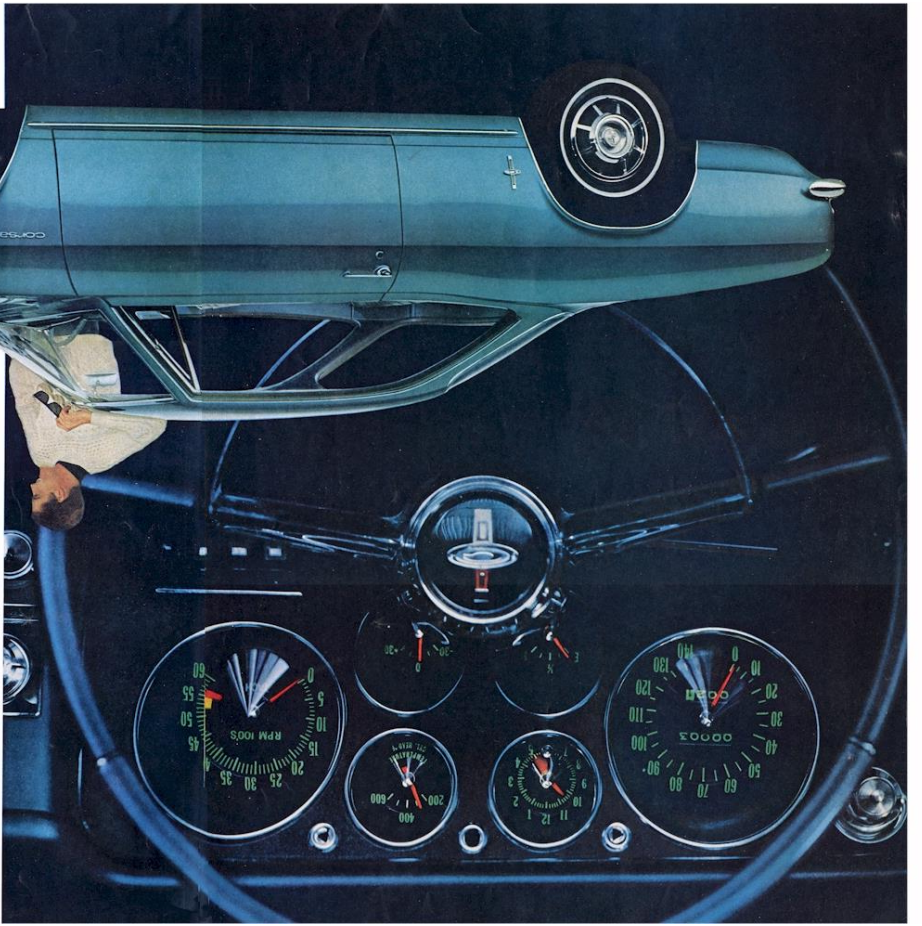
'Vair Vendor

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 is now open for orders. They will have a very limited staff for the near future and cannot make any carpets or interiors so unless they are already in stock, you will have to wait. But most other parts are ready to go. No rush orders, no tours and orders may take a few days to be filled. But they are open again! www.covair.com 413-625-9776. With the reduced staff, I'd recommend doing on-line orders.



66 CORVAIR

You speak independent suspension, four-on-the-floor, bucket seats and like that? We hear you, yes, we do.

Now you can sample America's sportiest Corvair by Chevrolet. For 1966, it's looking sportier and more low-profile car for 1966. Corvair Standard V6 is 227 cu. in., 300 hp. There's a 350-hp edition you can order, too. You can swap buckets just ask. Adjustable headrests you can add if you like. A new fully synchronized 3-speed and will drop in our new Turbo-let 427 under its own lift-down hood. "Street" version's 380 hp with a 4-bbl. engine (special cam, solid lifters and hydraulic lifters. The performance seats in Corvair and Monza. Corvair's other cars won't. It's still air-cooled—Turbo-Charged version you can order in freeze! You still get a big choice in tires. from our 50-hp miter to the 150-hp sports-car steering, four-wheel disc suspension. If a package like this doesn't tempt you into the '66 Corvair, just like to drive.

CHEVROLET



Corvair Sport Coupe