



# Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME XLIX, No. 2

February 2021



**The Business End is All in the Tail!**

## CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

Check with sponsors on all events for the foreseeable future!

### February

- 14 – Valentine's Day! What does this have to do with Corvairs you ask? Well just forget this day and then the next you want to buy something for your Corvair, see what your spouse or significant other has to say!
- 16 – **Group Corvair Meeting**, 7:30 p.m. We're still going to be Zooming right along. Watch your inbox for info.

### March

- 16 – **Group Corvair Meeting**, 7:30 p.m.

## April

20 – Group Corvair Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

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### From the Oval Garage

Bob Hall

We've wrapped up the on-line auction of Pete Frailey's garage tools and the winning bidders will be picking up their items in February. Pete's widow, Barbara, is pleasantly surprised by the number of bidders, happy that the tools are going to good homes and thankful to Corvair people for their help getting the word out. Jim Simpson in particular.

We know some Group Corvair members have received their first "jab" (as the Brits call it) to fight Covid19 so we are optimistic that, as vaccinations increase, the chances for car shows and the San Diego convention increase. The Virginia Vair Fair has certainly been missed. So, if you haven't already registered with your local health department to sign up for an appointment to get immunized please do so. We have to protect that Corvair "institutional memory" for the future. If you are in Maryland insert your zip code in the following to go to vaccine info.

[https://maryland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/nearby/index.html?appid=0dbfb100676346ed9758be319ab3f40c&find=\(insert your zip code here\)%2520MD&sliderDistance=15](https://maryland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/nearby/index.html?appid=0dbfb100676346ed9758be319ab3f40c&find=(insert your zip code here)%2520MD&sliderDistance=15). *Editor's note: You should replace the entire "(insert your zip code here)" – including the parenthesis – with your zip code. Once you are on the site, you can use the distance slider to search more closely or over a wider territory.*

Take good care of yourselves.

### Minutes of the January Virtual Meeting

Marolyn Simpson

The virtual Group Corvair meeting was held on January 19. When everyone had logged in, Bob Hall brought the meeting to order at 7:35. There were 10 participants including Dave Edsinger who joined us for the first time since we have held our meetings on Zoom. Dave brought us up to date on the work he has been doing on his race car and other Corvairs before we started the business part of the meeting.

Byron LaMotte moved that the minutes of the December meeting be approved as they appeared in the last newsletter. Jerry Yates seconded the motion.

Jim Simpson gave the treasurer's report. Because of some difficulties with the bank, he has not yet deposited the dues checks, but is working on the problem and should get them deposited soon.

In old business, Jim reminded everyone that he has archived the newsletters and they are available for members to use.

We had an update on the virtual garage sale for Pete Frailey's tools. Bob and Jim have been working on a spreadsheet that went out to Corvair enthusiasts in the local area. Several bids have come in by email or phone calls

so an updated spreadsheet will be sent out soon. [Note: The spreadsheet has been updated and sent out a couple of times since the January meeting.]

The meeting then moved to a more general discussion about Corvair related topics including a Fitch Sprint (not in great condition) that is for sale. Mike Coale in Millersville has been buying several Corvairs and working on several restoration projects. The club is still looking forward to having a tour of Mike's garage. Bob Walker has been making some progress on his Corvair projects. Also included in the discussion was the state of the current used car market.

Jim wants to get a new feature started in the newsletter. He would like members to write stories of their reminiscences with Corvairs such as how they became interested in Corvairs, why they bought their first Corvair, or memorable events involving a Corvair.

We discussed the possibility of getting more Group Corvair decals made.

The meeting ended at 9:15.

## Yes, We're Still Collecting Dues!

Thanks to those who have paid their dues so far, but there are still a few of you who haven't gotten them in yet. You know who you are. Please make the check out to Group Corvair and send it to: Jim Simpson, 3845 Wayson Rd., Davidsonville, MD 20135.

I've worked out the problem with depositing checks that I had mentioned in an e-mail to the club. In that note, I reported that the bank we used had closed its drive-through windows in favor of sophisticated ATM machines. The problem is our club account pre-dates the digital age and hasn't been brought up to date. We were working on this just prior to the onset of the pandemic, but since getting this completely straightened out requires some face-to-face discussions with the bank, it's been put on hold for the duration. Don't worry, we still can access the account. We just can't use their ATM system.

Jim Simpson, Group Corvair Treasurer.

## The Multi-Talented Ralph Nader

Marolyn Simpson

When you hear the name Ralph Nader, what comes to mind? You might think of the book *Unsafe at Any Speed*, Corvairs, consumer advocate, litigious lawyer, or a several-times presidential candidate. But what about chef? Did you know that he has written a cookbook entitled *The Ralph Nader and Family Cookbook – Classic Recipes from Lebanon and Beyond?* (Hmmm, I wonder where he got the idea. After all, our very own cookbook, *Group Corvair is Cooking*, came out in 1983 and given Mr. Nader's interest in Corvairs and attendance at our 1991 CORSA Convention, he might very well have a personal copy. After all, we sold it for a mere \$4.00, \$5.00 with shipping. While Ralph's cookbook contains recipes for such delicacies as Dajaje ma' a' Hashwee (chicken with lamb and rice) and Yabrak Malfoof (rolled stuffed grape leaves), I'll bet that his cookbook doesn't have a recipe for boiling water like ours does!)

Ralph Nader grew up in Winsted, Connecticut where his family owned a combined eatery, bakery, and delicatessen called the Highland Arms Restaurant. His parents insisted on using fresh foods; processed foods were not on the menu. As a result, food and its preparation were a big part of his family's life and reflected his parent's Lebanese heritage. The cuisine was much like what we call the Mediterranean diet today. The cookbook came out in 2020 with a list price of \$24.95. The reviews on Amazon are very good, perhaps you need a copy just to round out your collection; after all, there is a link to Corvairs.

## Newsletter Archives

They're still not complete, but as the minutes pointed out, Ron Fedorczak might have several of the missing issues. I don't want to put a link in the newsletter – it goes to a very wide audience – but if you are interested in having access, let me know ([simpsonj@verizon.net](mailto:simpsonj@verizon.net)) and I'll set you up.

# Forty, Thirty and Twenty Years Ago This Month

Jim Simpson

February had rightly been called the cruelest month. I suspect that may be a bit more true this year than for February 1981. This year, we're locked down by the pandemic, but according to February 1981 *Group Corvair Comments*, we were pretty active with a banquet, business meeting, and opportunities to participate in the Washington Rally Club Winter Rally Series with four events scheduled over a five-week period. In fact, you could even stay at home and compete in the "St. Valentine's Day Coast-to-Coast" rally, a paper and pencil table-top event. (As far as I can determine, this event has disappeared.) The 'Vair Vendor was pretty active as well with four cars and a good selection of parts for sale.

Much of the February 1981 *CORSA Communiqué* was devoted to explaining the in's and out's of CORSA; how it is organized, the management, boards, publications and just about everything else you might want to know about the club. An ad for new products from OTTO Parts caught my eye; now I know where Jerry Yates got the air cleaners for his Yenke clone. One of the Tech Topics also caught my eye. The author, Ralph Poore of the San Diego Corvair Club, said he was able to repair thermostat bellows. He said they normally fail due to a pin-hole leak in one of the many solder joints and letting air in. He fixes them by simply clamping the bellows closed (he used vice-grips; I'm sure a vice would work just as well) and then heating the bellows to the point where the solder would reflow and seal the leak. After they cooled, he unclamped them to make sure the leak was sealed and tested them with a "quick blast" from the propane torch to ensure they expanded properly. I had always thought the bellows had some variety of alcohol in them that would evaporate at around 180 deg F. and expand the bellows. If he's right, and it's just the air expanding with heat, then this is a simple and easy way to salvage all those failed thermostat bellows. I've got to give it a try. The ads make me drool; YS-199 was up for sale -- \$3,500 or \$5,000 with trailer and spares. Otherwise, there were seven full pages of cars and parts for sale! Those were the days.

The February 1991 issue of *Group Corvair Comments* announced we were going to meet at the 1991 CORSA convention hotel, at that time the Sheraton Plaza Hotel, in New Carrollton for a business meeting and convention planning session. This would give us a chance to size up the hotel and pick out spaces for the various events and activities. In the Convention Planning Report, it was noted that Ralph Nader was willing to attend the convention for free. His attendance was something we felt we needed to discuss thoroughly. There was only one car in the 'Vair Vendor, a '65 Corsa convertible turbo with a rebuilt engine, some rust, for \$3,500.

I'm not quite sure why, but the 1969 Corvair was the focus of the February 1991 *CORSA Communiqué*. The issue included a couple of articles on the "Last Corvair" – was it really serial 6000, 5999, or possible 5214? There was even an article by Bill Borland on buying new Corvairs; remember, this was written in 1991, 22 years after the assembly line closed. Bill had acquired four brand-new Corvairs; all four were 1969s – two coupes and two convertibles. Three were from dealers and the fourth from a private party. (He didn't explain how a car bought from a "private party" would be new.) Group Corvair had an article in the *Communiqué* describing some of the activities – tours, dinner cruise, and more – we had planned for the upcoming convention. Not surprisingly, the CORSA Classifieds were down to a bit under four pages. On the other hand, there were three race cars advertised, none of which were Yenkos. One was a Corvair engine sportscar prototype, the second an off-road racing buggy and the third a dirt-track car.

Jumping ahead a decade, the February 2001 issue of *Group Corvair Comments* had Ward Bourgonien's first article as the new president of Group Corvair. He gave a big thumb's up to the banquet – good food, music, and company. Warren Friberg was the new treasurer. Aldo Argentieri reminisced about purchasing their 1960 Corvair. When they went out shopping for one, they got a demonstration ride from a salesman. When it was over, Helen, Aldo's wife, said "We'll take it." The salesman said fine, he'd put in an order, but Helen told him "No, I mean this one, take it or leave it." The salesman sold them the car, despite it being his "personal" car from the dealership. In the 'Vair Vendor, Pete Frailey was starting his sell-off of Corvair parts. He had some good stuff – a rust-free late coupe body, a '67-'69 quick steering box with factory quick steering arms, A/C systems and more.

The February 2001 issue of the *CORSA Communiqué* was something of a potpourri; there really wasn't a central theme. Joe Darinsig provided his annual listing of *Corvairs in Print*; even as late as 2001 there were still a lot of articles being published about Corvairs. There was an update to the Corvair Model Car concours rules. For the tinkerers among us, Charlie Morgan had a good article on his installation of a Chevy V6 in the rear of his late-model. It provides more horsepower, torque and fuel economy than any of the original Corvair engines as well as having

lower emissions. But of course, there is the loss of the front trunk to a radiator; the new engine is a water-pumper after all. Bob Ballew described the myriad of idle cluster castings that went into the Corvair carburetors over the years. If you have a carburetor that was overhauled by anyone but a true Corvair expert, chances are there are mismatched parts in there. The CORSA Classified was down to just under two pages; there were three Greenbriers for sale. Given how prices seem to be soaring on these vans now, don't you wish you'd bought a couple and stored them away?

## Mike Coale Rescues Another One

Mike Coale has found another car to rescue, this time an early, a '64 Monza convertible. It's a bit rough, but Mike says it's a high option car, complete and fairly solid. He's just the steward for now and will preserve it for someone in the future. Otherwise, it was headed for a crusher.



## Tech Tips

**Mechanical and Electric Fuel Pump Notes:** Mike Dawson, in *The Flat Six Journal*, newsletter of the Mid Continent Corvair Association Newsletter, put together a good article on his recent experiences with fuel pumps, both mechanical and electrical. It's a bit too long (2 full pages) to put in here, but I can send the newsletter to anyone who's interested. Just drop me a note ([simpsonj@verizon.net](mailto:simpsonj@verizon.net)).

## Other Media

Bob Winokur (and others) pointed out this video put together by the AACAMuseum. Here's a link: <https://www.aacmuseum.org/video-gallery/> Go down to the lower left and click on the Corvair.

## ‘Vair-ations on a Theme

The 1960 Corvair was the inspiration for a number of one-off and concept cars in the 1960s. Among the designers who used the Corvair was the famous Italian design house, Pininfarina. Thanks to Jerry Yates for the research, here are some of their designs:



For more information and pictures, take a look at this link: <https://customrodder.forumactif.org/t2736-1960-1963-chevrolet-corvair-coupe-speciale-pininfarina> I really do love the '63 version in green. Too bad these designs never made it to production.

## 'Vair Vendor

**Wanted: Used steering box.** I'm still looking for a used steering box. The particular year is not important, I just want a complete box to rebuild. Do you have a worn out one that I can salvage? Jim Simpson, 240-232-2820, [simpsonj@verizon.net](mailto:simpsonj@verizon.net).

**For Sale: Miscellaneous Parts:** EM bumper brackets (8 of 10, not bent or otherwise damaged, some surface rust, 11 bumper bolts included, \$10); LM brake shoes (Clark's, full set front and rear, used for less than 50 miles, \$38); '66 single brake master cylinder (Clark's, used for 4 years w/o any problems, \$30); '62-'63 single master brake cylinder for metallic brakes (Delco part #5464275, nearly new, needs secondary seal, \$35); Widened LM wheel (one wheel, 13", widened to 7", stock 5-bolt pattern, \$18); LM rear brake hose (Clark's, new, 2 @ \$10 ea.); '65 - '69 110 Hp heads (pair, complete with valve, springs, etc., cast #3878566, not used since last refurbishment, \$250/pr); EM dipstick boots (2 @ \$3 ea). Shipping is extra. Contact Bob Walker, [bobrstn@gmail.com](mailto:bobrstn@gmail.com).

**For Sale: Two Sets of 13" Custom Wheel Covers.** Remember "Racing Covers", "Moon Covers" or "Baby Moons"? From Pete Frailey's estate, there's a new-in-the-box set of spun aluminum "Racing/Moon Covers" including the original instruction sheet. Asking \$30 each, OBO. Proceeds go to Barbara Frailey.



And I also have a set of "Baby Moon" covers, same price (\$30 each, OBO) for sale. Contact Jerry Yates, 301-262-8428 or [yatesj@verizon.net](mailto:yatesj@verizon.net).

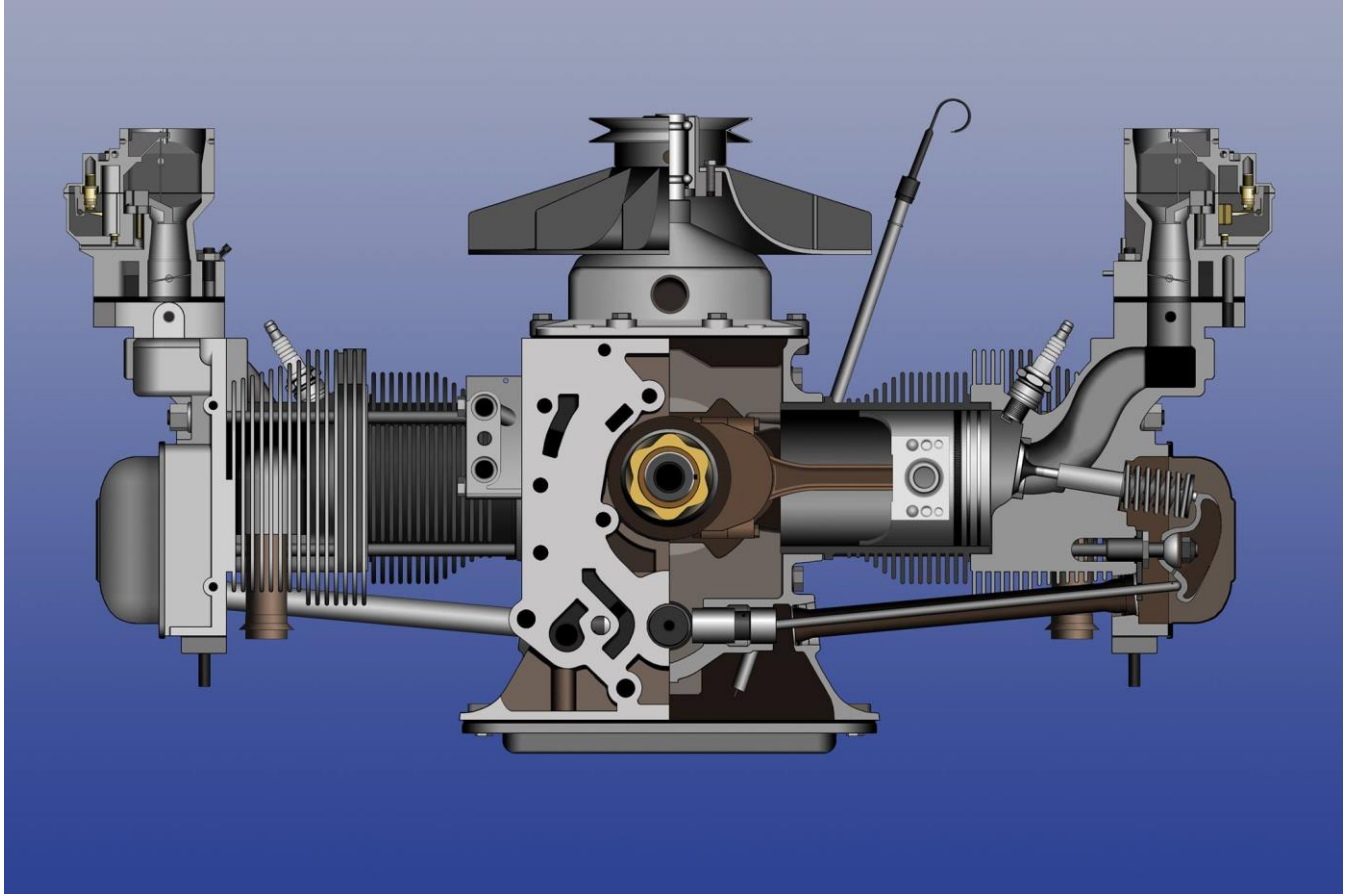


Spun Aluminum "Racing/Moon Cover"

**For Sale: '65 Monza Convertible.** Owner has health issues and needs to downsize. Purchased in Florida 8 years ago, repainted from red to current light blue. 110 engine, rebuilt 5 years ago, powerglide transmission. 67k miles; been sitting under cover last 3 years. It will start, but not keep running, probably old gasoline. Asking \$7,500, contact Tim Stefan, 410-960-3229 or [tim.stefan@verizon.net](mailto:tim.stefan@verizon.net). Fallston, MD.



**For Sale: Set of four 1965 13" wire wheel covers with three prong spinners in excellent condition plus matching set of six 13" x 5 1/2" steel rims. \$750 plus shipping. Don, 302-313-5552 or [Don.lintvet@gmail.com](mailto:Don.lintvet@gmail.com)**



**Back when GM was building Corvairs, they didn't have fancy computer-based graphics!**