



Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME XLIX, No. 3

March 2021



Bob Hall's Brand New 1968 Monza in Germany

Fresh from being picked up at the port in Bremerhaven, still covered in the original shipping wax and the hubcaps in a cardboard box in the trunk. It had about 450 miles on it after breaking it in driving home on secondary roads.

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

Check with sponsors on all events for the foreseeable future!

March

- 16 – **Group Corvair Meeting**, 7:30 p.m. We are still going to be Zooming right along. Watch your inbox for info.
- 18 – CORSA Monthly Meetup, 9 p.m. Register at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwode-upzkvH9SitVOQ0dN2kJsoDxwvr2Rs>

April

20 – Group Corvair Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

May

18 -- Group Corvair Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

22 – NECC Motorsports Track Day, New York Safety Track. Visit www.neccmotorsports.com for details.

June

5 – 29th Annual Orphan Car Tour from Burkittsville, MD to Bluemont, VA. Limited to “orphan” cars (discontinued makes – yes, they’ve said that Corvairs qualify) at least 25 years old. For information: <http://www.orphancartour.org/> or contact Jon Battle, 540-364-1770 or tourdirector@orphancartour.org. (This will be contingent upon the coronavirus pandemic situation. The organizers will be reviewing things in mid-April so be sure to check their website for updates.)

15 – Group Corvair Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

July

20 – Group Corvair Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

17—23—CORSA National Convention **CANCELLED**. I believe they plan to put this back into the normal rotation so the next west coast CORSA Convention should now be in 2024. Atlanta, GA will host the convention in 2022.

31 – NECC Track Day, Pocono Raceway North Course. Visit www.neccmotorsports.com for details.

August

17 – Group Corvair Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

September

21 – Group Corvair Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

October

16 – Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show – Tentative.

19 – Group Corvair Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

November

16 – Group Corvair Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

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From the Oval Garage

Bob Hall

Daylight Savings Time starts at 2:00 am Sunday March 14th so our Corvair project productivity will increase this month.

It was disappointing to read that San Diego Corsa 2021 was cancelled (to be rescheduled in rotation for 2024 we hope), but as the hotel had been commandeered for housing during the Covid19 pandemic it was a prudent decision.

The Frailey Garage sale was a big success (if more challenging during the pandemic). One of the side benefits was meeting the successful bidders when they came to pick up their treasures. I haven't seen some Corvair people face to face in years—in one case decades—so it was good to hear how their projects were going and how their kids and families were doing.

Jim Simpson is still looking for stories from Group Corvair Members that explain how they first got involved with Corvairs and the Corvair hobby. Jim (and Marolyn) are experienced editors, so you don't have to be an English major to submit. Just do a list of Corvair benchmarks or dates of Corvair memories then expand on each one and send it to Jim's email or home address. We know you have the stories—we've even heard some of them at Corvair shows.

Minutes of the February Virtual Meeting

Marolyn Simpson

Group Corvair's virtual meeting was held on February 16 with 10 participants. Members started logging in at 7:30 and Bob Hall called the meeting to order at 7:39. Byron LaMotte moved that the minutes of the January meeting be approved as they appeared in the newsletter.

Jim Simpson gave the treasurer's report. During the last month he had received eight payments for dues. [Note: two additional payments that were not included in that report were located the following day.] All checks from the sale of Pete Frailey's tools have also been received. Barbara Torbert suggested that Jim should write up an article about conducting the virtual sale and possibly submit it to the Communique.

The club received a good response to the sale of Pete's tools, but the problem child was a tank (about 50 gallons) of cleaning solvent. As it turned out, Barbara Frailey serendipitously found a home for it when she talked to a friend of a friend who knew someone who could use it.

For its monthly meetings Group Corvair has been using a personal Zoom account that Jim S. bought. About 50% of that account has been used for the club. Bob H. made a motion to reimburse Jim for that 50%. Members suggested that for this next year we pay for Zoom on a month-by-month basis. Hopefully, the club can go back to in-person meetings sometime during this coming year.

Bob once again asked members to write up experiences of why they got into Corvairs or interesting memories of life with a Corvair. We have had several stories so far but there are certainly more gems out there just waiting to be written up and shared with others in the Corvair world. That suggestion reminded several members of anecdotes from years gone by—now we just need to get them written down. Along these same lines, Jerry Yates was thanked for submitting the picture that appeared on the front of the February newsletter.

Byron told us about a friend of his who has participated in his rally and might be interested in joining Group Corvair. He knows a couple of other friends who might also be interested. Byron's next rally will be on September 18. More information will be coming on that event.

Jim recently had contact with club member Phil Richardson. He has put a lift in his garage and has been driving his '69 white car. (He also has a red '69 and a '69 parts car.)

Jerry Yates shared some information he had received on some upcoming car shows.

Dave Edsinger brought us up to date on the work he has been doing on his race car along with other projects he is working on.

There was a general discussion on prices of some recent Corvair sales—for example, a van sold for \$13,400 and a Stinger went for \$200,000 (plus the buyer's premium).

It was announced that a Northern Virginia member is selling a lot of parts on Saturday, Feb 21. He is moving and needs to clean out his supply.

At 9:00 Jim moved that we adjourn; Dave seconded it.

The Great Group Corvair Virtual Garage Sale

Jim Simpson

Bob just reported that the final buyer in the Great GC Virtual Garage Sale showed up and picked up his treasures. Barbara Frailey is reportedly very happy to have had us clean out so much stuff from her garage as well as getting some cash in the process.

For those of you who didn't follow along by participating in the sale, the pandemic made this a rather long and arduous process. Normally we would just have advertised a garage sale and on the appointed day, buyers would have shown up, looked over the items for sale, and made their offers. But the pandemic prevented that. Instead, Bob Hall, Jerry Yates, and I sorted through Pete Frailey's lifetime of tools and other odds and ends, inventoried and photographed them, came up with what we thought would be reasonable minimum prices, and finally put things out on the internet to Corvair owners for them to bid on.

We believe that overall, it was a success. While I am sure that some people would have liked a more detailed inventory and more photographs of the items, they still were able to see enough to place a reasonable bid on things they wanted. And Bob, Jerry and I think there were some decent bargains.

While I took care of most of the on-line sale and money end of things, Bob Hall has done yeoman work in coordinating the pickup. He set up dates and times and then was there for every pickup making sure that all the right items went to the right people. Hopefully, we won't have to do this again in the near future, but I believe Group Corvair really came through on this project.

Forty, Thirty and Twenty Years Ago This Month

Jim Simpson

March 1981 seems an age ago. Believe it or not, I was editing the newsletter back then. Our big events were a tech session at the late Lee Hamilton's shop in Annapolis and a Championship Autocross at the Hoffman Building in Arlington. Jim Scott provided a tech tip on rebuilding the manual gear shift tube using commonly available brass plumbing fittings. (Clark's also sells a kit.) There was a partially restored '65 Corsa coupe available for \$1,500 and a '65 4-door parts car (no price given).

You can see the cover of the March 1981 *CORSA Communiqué* at the end of this newsletter. Kudos to Chesapeake Corvair for their imagination and persistence in getting this photo. The Tech Topics were extended somewhat with the inclusion of a "Technically Speaking" section that provided a page of one paragraph ideas. There was also a two-page article on adding cruise control to Corvairs using systems salvaged from '67 and later GM cars. It seemed a bit complex for the benefit added. There were still three pages of cars for sale in the CORSA classifieds; too bad I don't have a time machine so I could put a few of them in storage for today!

Guess what, a decade later in 1991 I was still the newsletter editor. The March issue of *Group Corvair Comments* was all about our upcoming CORSA Convention. We had a practice rally set up to support the convention. There was a rumor that Colin Powell was a Corvair enthusiast and might be amenable to speak at the convention – that turned out to be false, but it would have been interesting to have had both Ralph Nader and Colin Powell there. Only a couple of vehicles for sale; a '65 Corsa convertible turbo, \$3,500 and a '62 8-door van – negotiable.

The March 1991 *CORSA Communiqué* didn't have a lot that would be of current interest with the exception of Dick Spring's "The Finish Line". After months of discussion of paints and finishes, this article focused on the hidden parts of the car where rust forms. The article is worth reading if for no other reason than to be sure you haven't missed any of his tips. Larry Claypool had a good tech article on turn signal flashers. I didn't realize there was a set of industry standard models back then that matched up a flasher with a given set of bulbs. And Group Corvair

published the 1991 CORSA Convention schedule. I noticed a couple typos right away – on one day, it called for registration to be open until midnight rather than noon... Closing out the issue were the CORSA Classifieds with a page and a half of car ads and another two pages of parts for sale. Several vans and Lakewoods for sale, but no Rampsides or Loadsides and all the Yenkos seem to have found homes.

The March 2001 issue of *Group Corvair Comments* was mostly about coming out of winter hibernation with a list of events coming up ranging from a Corvair Ranch open house to the Virginia Vair Fair. We had quite a selection of cars for sale including a free '62 “project car”, a '66 parts car with turbo engine, '65 coupe with Fitch Sprint mods, '66 Monza convertible, and Bob Lewis was thinning his collection offering 9 cars (mostly late models) for \$600!

The highlight of the March 2001 issue of the *CORSA Communiqué* was a transcript of An Evening with Jerry Thompson at the 2000 CORSA Convention in Daytona, FL. Jerry Thompson was a Chevrolet engineer and racing driver who played a key role in the development of the Yenko Stinger. This is a great article to read if you'd like to get some of the inside story on the Yenko Stinger – including the mysterious “Stage V” engine. Finally, the CORSA Classified were down to a single page of both cars and parts – yes, everything has gone to the Internet.

Getting to Know Our Members

Jim & Marolyn Simpson

If you recall back in November, I suggested a regular section devoted to getting to know our fellow club members. The idea was to have something of a “Q & A” section where the members would tell us a little about themselves and how and why they got into Corvairs.

As you might have noted, the response has not exactly been overwhelming. Perhaps Corvair owners are just naturally shy and retiring. Or perhaps someone has to “prime the pump”. So, Marolyn and I thought we'd go first.

Tell us about yourself: I am Jim Simpson, married to Marolyn Simpson. We're rapidly approaching our 50th wedding anniversary. Marolyn and I met while working in the Research Department of the Menninger Foundation in Topeka, Kansas. I was still in college at the time and after graduation went into the US Navy, went through Officer Candidate School (OCS), nuclear power training, submarine school and served on nuclear powered attack submarines. After deciding that I wasn't going to make a full career of the Navy, I found a job with a “Beltway Bandit” here in the DC area. That led back to the Navy reserve, but also to a US Government job that I loved. I finally retired in 2010.

How did you become interested in Corvairs? This was back in the 1960s and my high school and college years were in Topeka, Kansas which was a hotbed of sportscar activity, and from what I read, still is with the former Forbes Air Force Base now a major automobile sports center. As an indication, the local Ford dealer handled Cobras, GT-350s and even had a GT-40 come through. The local SCCA ran regular autocross events and rallies and I participated. I was much too poor to buy a sportscar, but a friend had an MG Midget and believe it or not, my 1960 Chrysler Valiant with 150,000 miles on it was competitive in its class. And then in 1967, a couple of Yenko Stingers started showing up. In addition, our local Chevrolet dealer, Van-T Chevrolet, sponsored a '68 coupe that fall – red Monza, 140 hp/4-speed – that just burned up the courses. I was hooked. (After the autocross season, Van-T Chevy put their autocross car on the lot as a “demonstrator” with the factory 5 year-50,000-mile warranty. I always wondered who bought that car and if they knew its history.)

How many Corvairs have you owned? One! In 1968, my 1960 Valiant was really showing its age. I had bought it used with about 150,000 miles on it and time, more miles, and road salt had not been good to it. Believe it or not, it had been a fun car with a “three-on-the-floor” manual unique to the 1960 model. I'd rallied and autocrossed it. But I figured I needed a new car and started prowling the used car lots. I looked at several; a '67 Camaro (even at just over a year old, it was obviously rather tired – “used hard and put away wet” as they say), several VW Beetles (amazing how even a clapped-out Beetle retained “value”), a '66 Renault R8 Gordini, and then on the Jim Clark Chrysler-Plymouth used car lot, a Marina Blue 1966 Corsa turbo. It had been sold by Van-T Chevrolet, the local dealer, about 15 months earlier and then traded in with 27,000 miles on it. While it had



obviously been driven a lot, it looked great, ran well and most important, the price was right at \$1,600. \$1,648 later (\$48 in sales tax) from the “bank of Mom” and it was mine. That is the one, and so-far only, Corvair I’ve ever owned.

(The Renault R8 Gordini deserves a bit of explanation. It was on the Ford dealer’s used car lot. I don’t know how many of you have ever seen a Renault R8, but it looks like three boxes: one small one in the front, one larger one in the middle and another small one in the rear. In normal form it is a pleasant, but rather unassuming, passenger car that has some interesting features including a rear engine and four-wheel disk brakes, a real rarity in the 1960s. In case you’ve never

heard of it before, Gordini is the French equivalent of Yenko, Shelby and AMG; they transform normal road-going passenger cars into true performance machines. When Gordini was done with the R8, the engine had been transformed with a crossflow hemispheric aluminum head, tubular exhaust headers, twin dual-choke Solex or Weber carburetors that combined to nearly double the horsepower, an oil cooler larger than the radiator along with a close-ratio 4-speed transmission as well as numerous other improvements. Someone had traded it in – for a Shelby Mustang perhaps? A station wagon? Who knows? But I convinced the dealer that I should take it for a test drive. Talk about a sleeper! The tach ran to 8,000 rpm with no marked redline so I was shifting gears around 7,000 rpm. The fully independent suspension, four-wheel disc brakes and chubby radial tires made it handle like a dream. And the typical French compliant suspension gave it a great ride. The only flaw was that it had an engine main seal oil leak. I told the salesman to get that taken care of and we would talk. The car went into the shop and they ordered parts. I checked a couple times to see how things were going and then suddenly it disappeared! It turned out that the Renault distributor in Denver where they’d ordered the parts saw the “Gordini” designation, drove out with a trailer, and scooped it up. In retrospect, that was probably the best thing that could have happened. Imagine if an impoverished college student like me had bought the car and then it needed something R8 Gordini unique such as brake pads? You sure wouldn’t have found them at the local Western Auto or in the Sears Automotive catalog! Yes, Sears used to be a major auto parts source.)



OCS, Newport RI, 1969

As of this past January 24th, I have owned our Corvair for 53 years. (For Marolyn, it’s been a bit shorter since we added her to the registration later.) It’s taken me from Kansas to Rhode Island for OCS, to Mare Island, California for nuclear power school, to Idaho Falls for more training, back to the east coast (New London, Connecticut) for submarine school, and down to Norfolk where I joined my first submarine crew. During that time, it has had a “few” tweaks and some repairs. Almost immediately after I bought the car, I decided the brakes needed upgrading. The original factory brakes just were not up to the performance of a turbocharged Corvair with a

teenage driver. They would fade under heavy braking so out they came and in went a set of metallic brake linings courtesy of the local, very sympathetic mechanic at the nearby Standard Oil station. Same with an Otto parts finned oil pan to aid engine cooling. Besides the extra cooling, that oil pan really did look great. Then some serious work -- a new clutch. The original owner must have run it hard in those first 15 months. But the car was beautiful, ran well, got decent gas mileage (for the time) and I loved it.

(To be continued.)

'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.

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.

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.



Spun Aluminum "Racing/Moon Cover"

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

Miscellanea

Do you Remember J. C. Whitney? For those of you who don't remember J. C. Whitney, it was the ultimate mail order car parts company. If they didn't have it, you didn't need it. And they carried a huge amount of stuff that you almost certainly didn't need as well.

J. C. Whitney began in 1915 as The Warshawsky Company, a scrap metal dealer on the south side of Chicago. Almost from its beginning, Israel Warshawsky, the Lithuanian immigrant founder, bought failed automobile manufacturers and their inventories of parts. They were phenomenally successful and continued to grow even during the Great Depression. In the mid-1930s he and his son expanded their operation with a nation-wide catalog. Their catalog was a huge success and carried parts for just about every make, model and year of vehicle known. And they carried accessories ranging from curb feelers to "zebra skin" seat covers and just about everything in between.

While all those somewhat cheesy accessories in the catalog gave the company a somewhat questionable reputation, their main line parts were generally good quality made by OEM and main-line manufacturers.

The company faded after Roy Warshawsky (Israel's son) retired in 1991 and the ownership changed hands a couple times. But in July 2020, it was acquired and merged into CarParts.com and has been relaunched. I just took a look at their web site and sure enough, they do have at least a modest selection of Corvair parts including carb kits, fan belts and oil filters. I didn't search for fuzzy dice, but who knows, maybe they still stock them! Jim Simpson

Tech Topics

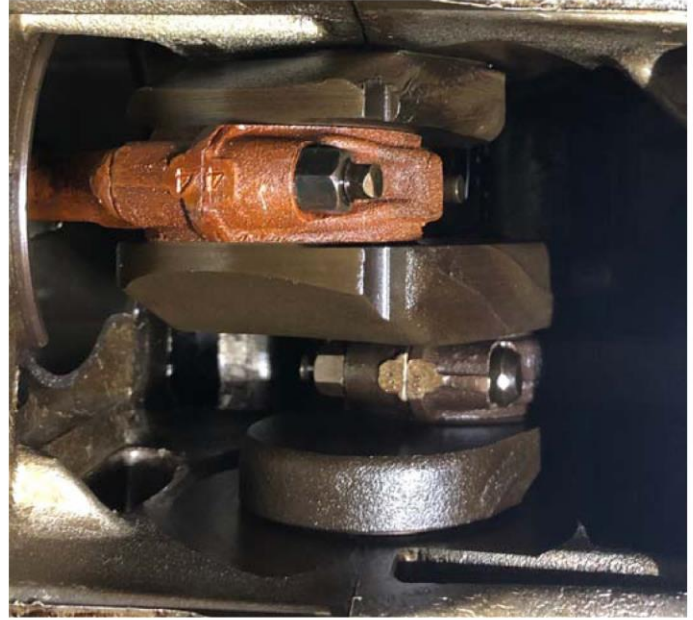
From the March FlatSix Journal (Mid Continent Corvair Association Newsletter)

Golden Rods



By Mark Welte

Six months ago I greased the engine blower bearing on my white '65 Corsa convertible hoping to get a few more years of service. But recently it began howling when cold and needed replacement. Not an easy job because virtually everything on top of the engine had to be removed to gain access to the engine top cover so it could be removed, and the attached blower bearing replaced. The top cover came off uneventfully, but when I removed the baffle plate underneath I had quite a surprise. The No. 4 connecting rod appeared to be covered in slimy rust! But to the touch, nothing



A little closer up shot shows that the rod bolt was left in the rod during the plating process. The plating also created an interesting texture on the rod.

came off and the surface was actually very hard. Puzzling indeed! What was going on?

As it turns out, after discussing with a couple of friends and doing some research on my own, I determined the rod had been copper plated originally from the factory! This was done at the factory to save rods that were finished just a hair too big. If a new rod was a tad bit oversize it was flash dipped in a chemical process to copper plate and restore a few thousandths tolerance so the rod could be re-machined to specification. This could be done to either the big end or the small end, or both, to bring the rod back into tolerance. The process was significantly cheaper than scrapping the slightly oversize rods.

Flash plating copper was a very common practice by all big three auto makers (Chevrolet, Ford, and Chrysler). I found several references of copper-plated rods found in engines from all three manufacturers. Engine types included V-8, Inline 6, and the Corvair flat six. A retired former employee from the Chevrolet Tonawanda engine plant verified the use of flash-plated copper rods there. All references to these plated rods indicate there was no difference in reliability or performance compared to the regular rods.

So the bottom line is, if you find a copper colored rod in your engine there is nothing to worry about. It will provide the same service and reliability as the other rods.



Once to top cover is removed, it is apparent that something is different. The rod with flash copper plating jumps out . . . looks like rust at first.

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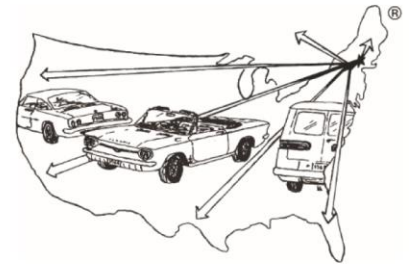
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Did You Know The Ford GT40 Used Chevy Taillights?

By Chris Demorro, dated August 11, 2011

Taken from the Internet "Street Muscle Magazine"

Among hardcore Blue Oval fans, there is one car that stands atop the performance charts; the Ford GT40. It was a battle of Ford versus Ferrari, and the Company that Henry founded defeated the mighty Enzo and his fleet of Ferraris on the racing circuit time and again. The Ford GT40 was the pinnacle of automotive racing technology at the time, and it pulled together all the resources Ford had at its disposal...including a little unsolicited aid from crosstown rivals Chevy.

[Jalopnik.com](http://jalopnik.com) reports (The Ford GT40's dirty little Chevy secret) that in a bid to build the lightest race car possible, Ford installed the taillights of a Chevrolet Corvair on the Ford GT. Who knew?



Weight is the enemy of speed, and Ford designers were singularly focused on defeating Ferrari in the upcoming 24 Hours of Le Mans. That meant changes in design up to the last minute, keeping builders Kar Kraft busy with the ultimate project car.

Since there was no time to build custom taillights, a shop assistant was sent to an auto parts store with a scale, and told to weigh out and find the lightest taillights available.

He returned with the taillights of a 1960 Corvair, which are little more than the bulb's plastic covering, and a very small bezel. Perfect for the GT40's purpose. Guess the Thunderbird taillights were just too heavy, but Ford's win at Le Mans wasn't just a win for the Blue Oval. It was a win for America, proving that embarrassing the Europeans takes precedence over silly rivalries.



Time Warps Do Exist! A Batch of New Corvairs Ready for Delivery
(CORSA Communique, March 1981. Photo arranged by Chesapeake Corvairs.)