



# Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME XLIX, No. 6

June 2021



**On the Set of “The Spook Who Sat by the Door”  
a Disney production being made in Baltimore**

*(Don Hibbard’s ’63 Monza Convertible)*

## CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

Check with sponsors on all events for possible COVID-19 restrictions!

### June

15 – **Group Corvair Meeting**, 7:30 p.m. Yes, another Zoom meeting. Details will be out on Sunday, 6/13.

25 – 26 – GM Nationals in Carlisle, PA. Featured car this year is the Vega. For more information: <https://www.carlisleevents.com/events> and scroll down to the GM Nationals section. The Northern VA Corvair Club is considering caravanning up.

## 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](http://www.neccmotorsports.com) for details.

## August

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

21 – FSK Antique Car Club 36<sup>th</sup> Rose Hill Manor Show, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. (Rain date 8/22) \$15 entry fee, judging by other participants from other classes. Raffle tickets benefiting three charities. 1611 N. Market St., Frederick, MD.

## 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.

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## From the Oval Garage

Bob Hall

As I had hoped, I was able to attend our May Zoom meeting from our oldest son's Los Angeles home. While there he allowed me to drive his 2020 Toyota (BMW) Supra GR. It sure put a smile on my face, though its "notice me" exhaust and red color would make it too conspicuous to the authorities for my taste.....maybe not.

The LA area museums were still closed so Carol and I did day trips as far north as Morro Bay with our son in his VW GTI (which seats four) where we enjoyed California Route 154 as it wound its way to the coast through a beautiful landscape. If anyone reading this has driven the same route in their Corvair please let me know what your experience was.





Another day drip was to California Corvairs in Chino where Jeff Williams let us roam his warehouse. Recently Jeff purchased a nice looking 1964 Greenbrier from a seller in the Midwest with the deluxe option and a well-preserved interior. He is now working on the brakes and mechanicals. The warehouse is clean, well-organized, and full of Corvair parts. He had a '62 Monza, '65 or '66 500 four door and an early coupe in bare body shells in the side yard. All three would be considered excellent for restoration on the east coast with much less rust than we are used to. I purchased a needed piece of engine shrouding and a two-speed wiper motor for my '64 Greenbrier while there and had them shipped home in time for our return.



Two other reasons for visiting Chino are the Planes of Fame and Yanks Air Museum, both of which have over 150 historic aircraft on display. Many of the planes are airworthy and those that are undergoing maintenance or restoration are fascinating to see. Both museums are well worth the admission.

My work on our Greenbrier continues with the wiper motor and brake upgrades current priorities. Even though the gas tank was professionally repaired and sealed (with a lifetime warranty) 30 years ago I may replace it with a new one when I replace the front brake lines.

I hope all your own projects are going well.

(This is a "Corvair" bicycle, part of the California Corvair collection.)

## **Minutes of the May Virtual Meeting**

### **Marolyn Simpson**

The May 18 Group Corvair virtual meeting was started by Bob Hall at 7:30 pm with six members participating. The meeting began with a general discussion on recent Summit Point racing. Bob Walker was there as a spectator and Dave Edsinger raced his Yenko Stinger. There was also a discussion of a recent posting by Motor1.com that featured a drag race between Tim Allen's '66 Corvair Corsa turbo and a '08 Mazda MX-5. In two runs, the Miata soundly beat the Corsa, however, the times posted suggest the Corsa was rather anemic. It ran several seconds slower than the contemporary magazine road tests said it should. If it were running as it should have, the two cars would likely have been pretty even. The Miata, by comparison, seemed to match the magazine road tests. (If you want to watch, here's the link: <https://www.motor1.com/news/507665/chevrolet-corvair-races-mazda-mx5/> )

Jim Simpson gave the treasurer's report. He paid \$100 to Maryland to reinstate Group Corvair's corporate status. There was no new income during the last month.

Bob Hall moved to approve the minutes of the April meeting as they appeared in the newsletter. Bob Walker seconded the motion.

Bob H. reported that he had talked to Byron LaMotte about organizing a tune-up tech session at Byron's home on the eastern shore. Bob planned to send out an email to see who would be interested in attending. This was followed by a discussion on making a throttle adjuster.

Jim S. wants to do an article for the July Corsa Communique featuring the 1991 convention that was in New Carrollton. He is looking for pictures and stories about the convention. Ron Fedorczak has been looking through his picture library for pictures from that convention. There are not many Group Corvair members who were at that convention who are still in the club. Both Bob H. and Bob W. said they had been there only briefly but did not participate in the organized events. Bob H. volunteered to try to find some archival material from the Washington newspapers and Jim S. noted that he had a DVD with three of the news broadcasts that covered the convention.

We discussed some possibilities for future club meetings such as doing some hybrid meetings—either meeting at a restaurant (possibly outdoors) or at someone's home, while also setting up a Zoom link for those of our members who couldn't be there in person.

We signed off the Zoom meeting at 8:35.

## A Star in the Making!

Don Hibbard's 1963 Corvair Monza convertible was chosen to be the "car used by the star of the movie" during the filming of the pilot for an upcoming Disney FX production "The Spook Who Sat by the Door". At least parts of the pilot are being shot in Baltimore. (There must be something special about Corvairs, movies, and Baltimore. The movie "Tin Men" which featured a Corvair was shot in Baltimore as well.)

According to Don, the "Auto Program Director" for Disney movies fell in love with the car and wanted it in this production. Right now, we don't have any more information on when (or even if) the movie (or series) will be released, but once again, a Corvair is a star in the making.



## Forty, Thirty and Twenty Years Ago This Month

Jim Simpson

Things seemed to be slowing down over the summer based upon the June 1981 issue of the *Group Corvair Comments* calendar. We did have business meetings (Palazzo Restaurant in Annandale) and two tech sessions scheduled. And we'd started planning for our "fabulous fall flea market" in September. (I'm not entirely sure why it wasn't "fabulous fall flea fair", but I suspect that one of the Virginia clubs had already laid claim to the name.) We had a tech note regarding NGK spark plugs – their BP6HS is a projected tip equivalent of the Delco 44FF. IECO sold these plugs as part of their performance tune-up kits. (They're still available as NGC 7331 plugs.) We also had a '65 Corsa coupe with a 140 engine (with a broken connecting rod) for sale. Make offer!

Rich Harris' '66 Yenko Stinger graced the cover of the June 1981 *CORSA Communique*. And speaking of Stingers, there was an article by Seth Emerson about disc brake conversions. The upshot was that while this was a good idea for race cars, it was unnecessary for street driven Corvairs. While there was a page on the upcoming Denver CORSA National Convention (and yes, it was a "National", not International, convention), most of the issue was devoted to tech topics. In 1981, we were still in the pre-internet ages and Corvairs were plentiful as demonstrated by the number for sale in the CORSA Classifieds – a full four pages with just about any year and model you could want. There was even a Yenko Stinger (YS108) for sale.

June 1991 was the penultimate month before our CORSA International Convention. And the *Group Corvair Comments* certainly reflected that. In the previous month we'd held a practice rally and by all reports, it went very well. Our final tune-up autocross was on the calendar for the end of the month. Planning meetings, convention registrations, deposits on events were all proceeding apace. We were busy! Ward Bourgondien reported that he'd seen a Rampside (white with red stripe) with a "For Sale" sign in the window. (I strongly suspect Ward bought that truck. It's since gone through a couple more owners, but Ward's truck – white with red stripe – was just sold on eBay Motors.) There was one item for sale in the newsletter – a gas station! Charlie Reinert's Gulf gas station in Pottstown, PA, along with about 100 Corvairs, six truck loads of Corvair parts, a wrecker, state inspection license and even a rented beauty shop were all up for sale. Asking price was \$300,000.

Based upon a look at other years *Communiqués*, the June 1991 *CORSA Communiqué* was about average regarding the upcoming Washington CORSA International Convention advertising. By June, just about everyone who is planning on coming to a convention has already registered and put in their hotel reservations. So, we only had a single page on the convention and that was describing the model cars concours. (We also had a “pocket version” convention schedule included.) The prime article in the *Communiqué* was “Plan Nine from Ottawa Space”, the saga of trying to retrieve a barn find Spyder about a dozen miles from home. It ultimately involved three different tow vehicles, towing chains, a trailer, several jump starts, locked brakes, dry gas tanks and many hours to accomplish. Worth reading! We are starting to enter the internet age and of course Corvairs are getting older but there’s still about a page and a half of car ads. Considering how many Corsas were made, it’s amazing the number in the ads.

A decade after our 1991 convention, Group Corvair has slowed down a bit. According to the June 2001 issue of *Group Corvair Comments* we had a business meeting scheduled for June but only a picnic for July and a pool party for August. We’d finally succumbed to the Washington summers. There were some shows coming up in the area, but overall we were waiting for the cooler fall weather to arrive. We had four cars being offered, including one “give-away”.

The June 2001 issue of the *CORSA Communiqué* noted that the *Communiqué* had been awarded a “Golden Quill” award for excellence in car club publications by *Old Cars Weekly News and Marketplace*. Chicago was revving up for its upcoming CORSA International Convention. This was going to be held at the Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, IL, just south-west of Chicago proper. Rich Thompson had an article detailing how he’d prepared his ’64 Spyder coupe for the concours. He did a great job and took a gold and made senior division in his first time out at the Daytona CORSA International convention. I saw the car in Daytona, and he would have scored higher except a brake light bulb chose to burn out between the hotel and the show field. I know it was working when he left; I helped him check all the lights! The CORSA Classifieds had only 1 ½ columns of cars and a similar 1 ½ columns of parts for sale. The internet age has taken over!

## Getting to Know Our Members

Jim & Marolyn Simpson

In the May newsletter we recounted how we were driving home in somewhat of a daze after our car took a gold and was promoted to CORSA Senior Division in its premier showing at the 1997 Lake Placid CORSA International Corvair Convention. Luckily, that “daze” didn’t keep us from getting home safely!

Over the ensuing years, we have driven it to many other shows as well as to CORSA conventions when they were within reasonable driving distance, roughly 500 miles maximum. And we’ve been successful in maintain our Corsas’s Senior Division status with gold awards at five east coast conventions so far. But there have been several other events that have really stood out.

The first of these began as a telephone call one evening. Since this was before caller ID and the current surge of spam calls, we picked up and asked who was calling. “Deeb Keemy” was the reply “and I’m looking for a Corvair.” Okay, we do have a Corvair, but this was still a bit mysterious, so we continued to talk. As it turned out, Mr. Keemy worked for the Lebanese-American Society. As he explained, they were planning a fund raiser for the St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital. (St. Jude’s had been founded by Danny Thomas, a Lebanese-American, and as part of its charter requires a Lebanese-American on its board.) But what was the Corvair connection we asked? As it turned out, Ralph Nader is a second-generation Lebanese-American and was going to be the headliner for the fund-raising event. This was going to be a small, private affair and since it was also the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his book “Unsafe at Any Speed”, they thought it would really be appropriate to have a Corvair on display. We explained that our car was late model a and not the version castigated in the book, but he said that didn’t matter; they just wanted a nice looking Corvair to display. And “how much did we charge to show the car? And by the way, there’d be a free meal as well.”

Wow, no one had ever offered to pay us to show our car! And a free dinner! How could we refuse? After a little hemming and hawing, I came up with a figure that would allow Marolyn to buy at least part of a new outfit for the occasion and we struck a deal.



The fund raiser was certainly something we'd never been to before. It was held in a high-rise condominium near National Cathedral; we parked our Corvair right outside the entrance and stood by with Mr. Keemy to greet the guests. That was great fun; as it turned out, many of them had owned a Corvair, learned to drive in a Corvair, or in one case, had wrecked his sister's Corvair. And they invariably complimented our car. When Ralph Nader arrived, we got some pictures of the three of us posed next to the Corvair. We then went up to the apartment for the fund raiser.



There were roughly 35 invited guests, a handful of caterers and us. Besides Ralph Nader, there was the deputy director of St. Jude's, four ambassadors and the rest were "high rollers" from the Washington area. They all seemed to know one another which made us, as owners of the Corvair, something of a curiosity. Many of them tried to meet us and share their car stories and tell us how much they liked our car. We came away from the evening with some great memories, some photos of Nader with our car and an autographed copy of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary reprint of "Unsafe at Any Speed."



**Note how Ralph blocks some of the sign!**



Having a "show car" means we must show it once in a while. In the summer of 2004, we were looking for a show we hadn't been to before and noticed that the Bowie chapter of the American Legion was sponsoring a show the next day. We hadn't been to one of their shows before, but they were close by, and it seemed like something different. It wasn't a huge show, probably fewer than 50 cars, and as we expected, most of the cars were hotrods and muscle cars with lots of chrome under the hoods. Our "little" stock Corvair did seem a bit out of place. Once we got the car parked and set up for the show, we wandered over to the table where they had all the trophies set up. Most were the usual 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place in-class trophies but there were also some for "Best Paint", Best Interior", etc., and then there was the "Best of Show" trophy. It stood a full three feet high and looked as if they'd gotten a special deal from a trophy shop trying to clear out its inventory. Marolyn and I looked at each other and commented along the lines of "thank goodness that the show was dominated by hotrods so there was no chance at having to take that thing home with us."

We did hang around until they gave out the awards. After all, the show was relatively small, and we might have a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> place in class trophy. They went through year classes and when our year group came up, we didn't win anything. Disappointing but not unexpected. Since it's not polite to just drive off in the middle of the awards we stayed and applauded the winners of the other years. Besides, they had awards for "Best Paint" and such and perhaps we still had a chance. But no, all those awards went to other cars. We were ready to start heading toward



our car to beat the rush out when they announced the “Best of Show” selection. And what do you know, but they awarded it to our car! Yes, we had to take home that three foot “masterpiece” of a trophy. But we’re not complaining! We were incredibly pleased that the judges had the taste to select a Corvair out of that field of muscle machines and custom hotrods.

To be continued!

## Tech Topics

CORSA Technical Guide Volume 4 has been released, \$25 a copy. This is a revision and update to the previous three volumes and is not meant to stand alone. Go to <https://www.corvair.org/index.php/merchandise/other-merchandise> to make a purchase. Note that CORSA plans to issue all four volumes in digital form (on an USB data stick) in the not far future – release date and price is not yet available.

## ‘Vair Vendor

**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: 1965 Corvair Monza 4-door sedan**, 140 hp/4-speed. Restoration completed in 1984 at which time it scored 92 points at the CORSA N.C. concours. Less than 20,000 miles and garage kept ever since. Tinted glass, reclining Volvo front seats, under-dash AM/FM/CD with four speakers, Corsa instrument panel, recent gas tank replacement. Painted 1979 Corvette “Frost Beige” with black interior. The main issue is some cracking of the lacquer paint applied in 1984. There is a small oil leak near the oil cooler. This is a nice driving Corvair with good power. Located near Petersburg, VA. Asking \$7500. Wade Lanning, cell/text 804-586-1023. Email [wblanning@comcast.net](mailto:wblanning@comcast.net) for a pdf file with more details and lots of pictures.



**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).

## And All Good Things Must Come to an End



This 1965 Corsa belonged to Louisa Dillard, a Group Corvair member in the 1980s and 90s. She quit driving it about 20 years ago. From 20 feet, it didn't look too bad, and even close up, there was very little significant rust. But at some point in its life, it had been involved in a chain collision on the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. Hit from behind, it was pushed into the cars in front. The frames front and rear were badly bent and never straightened while the sheet metal "repair" involved a LOT of Bondo.

Mike Coale

acquired the car recently and after a lot of thought and consideration, decided that it would require far too much work to get it right again. So, it's now donating parts to his other projects, including a new rear floor pan for an air-conditioned Monza shell he's rebuilding. (Yes, those "white spots" are all rust holes! The floor panel pictured above from Louisa's Corsa will replace this section.)

