



Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME L, No. 11

November 2022



Rockville Antique & Classic Car Show

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

November

15 – **Group Corvair Meeting.** Looks like another Zoom meeting. 7:30 p.m., connection details will be sent out the weekend before.

December

20 – **Group Corvair Meeting.** Hope springs eternal -- perhaps an in-person meeting? Actually, we're thinking of perhaps two meetings, one at a restaurant (Beijing of Greenbelt?) and a second Zoom meeting for those who can't make the restaurant meeting. Send Bob Hall your thoughts.

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From the Oval Garage

Bob Hall

The Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show was a big success from my point of view. We had a beautiful day, over 500 cars to appreciate and hundreds of nice people. It seems to me that Corvairs are getting more respect every year as all the comments I heard were very positive. Bruce Culp “showed the flag” for the Central Pennsylvania Corvair Club by bringing his great looking 1966 140, 4 speed 500 and was first in the Corvair line. Marolyn and Jim Simpson’s better than new ’66 turbo Corsa and Jerry and Diana Yates’s beautiful ’66 Yenko tribute were joined by a very nice red ’66 140 4 speed convertible owned by Barbara and Barry Grofic. Frederick Seone showed his well-preserved Cosworth Vega (the early Vegas also had a Tonawanda aluminum engine—albeit water cooled) to buffer our Corvairs from the other Chevrolets.

Paul Bergstrom forwarded a copy of the CORSA insurance policy to me for our review to ensure that Group Corvair can meet the requirements for CORSA coverage where necessary for future club activities. We discussed insurance liability requirements and how members and club officers would be protected at our October Zoom meeting. If anyone has any questions, please let me know.

By all accounts the efforts to get Ron Fedorczak’s Corvairs to the next level of use went well with Group Corvair members help. Ron’s 4-door Monza then went to Mike Coale’s repair shop for additional work. See Jim Simpson’s update below for a full report.

I hope to “see” everyone at our November Zoom meeting (again courtesy of Jim and Marolyn’s Zoom paid subscription). I suggest a December in person get together for dinner or brunch to finish out the year in addition to a Zoom meeting.

Minutes of the October Virtual Meeting

Marolyn Simpson

On Tuesday, October 18, six Group Corvair members “met” for the monthly Zoom meeting. Members started logging in at 7:30 pm. Bob Hall, president, called the meeting to order at 7:40. Bob Walker made a motion to accept the minutes as they appeared in the newsletter, and Jim Simpson seconded it.

Jim gave the treasurer’s report. There was no income, and the club had no expenses for the last month. Jim had two meetings with Bank of America since our last meeting and finally the name of the club on the bank account has been changed from Group Corvair to Group Corvair, Inc. Jim will soon get a debit card and then we can get another signature on the account. [Note: Jim has now received the debit card.]

Ron Fedorczak has been having some issues with his Corvair and needs to get it running well. Mike Coale agreed to work on the car. Ron is also available for a tech session at his house in the near future. (See the report below.)

Bob has been checking on Corsa insurance for a get-together at Andrew Dan’s house. Rob Neighbour wants to invite several of the other area Corvair clubs. Since we are now getting into the colder months, this event will probably take place in the spring.

The Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show took place on Saturday, October 15. The field at the Civic Center can hold about 580 cars and 631 cars were pre-registered. That meant that no drive-ins were allowed on the field. However, only about 500 cars showed up so there were some empty spots. [Note: The Rockville wrap-up meeting will be on Nov 9, and we should get the official numbers then.] There was a discussion on several YouTube video postings of the show. In addition, Ron was there and took pictures of the show. One of the Corvair participants at the show is not in any club, so we may pick up a new member.

The club has been meeting on Zoom for quite some time now. There was a suggestion that we start meeting in person at a restaurant again. We may try a combination of meeting types – hold the official meetings on Zoom and meet in person for the social part or alternate in person meetings with Zoom meetings. That way members who live further away can still participate in the club activities.

Mike Coale would still like to host the club and show off his shop. Everyone at the meeting was interested in the idea. We will discuss this further at a later meeting.

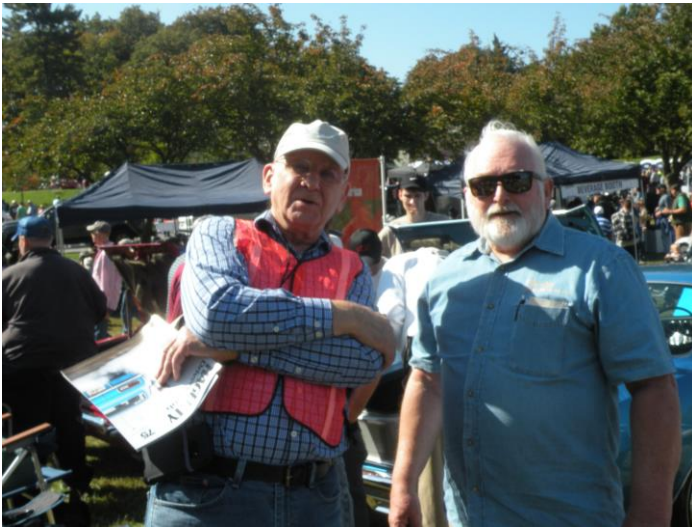
Jim made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Bob seconded it. The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 pm.

Rockville 2022

Well, the Rockville Antique and Classic Car show is now in the books. To sum it up, it was great! 500+ cars, huge numbers of spectators, weather to die for. All-in-all, just about a perfect Corvair day.

While we could have used a few more Corvairs on the field – particularly some early models – the ones there gained a lot of attention. Here's a sampling of the show:





Rockville Post Meeting

Marolyn Simpson

Every year the Rockville event planners hold a meeting after the show to sum up the event and discuss what worked well, improvements we could make, and start planning for next year. The post meeting took place on Wednesday, November 9 at the Glenview Mansion. This year the attendance was somewhat less than usual with only a dozen participants.

To recap the October 15, 2022 show: There were 631 preregistered cars (a record -- the previous high was 458), and 503 cars on the field. As usual there were quite a few no-shows among the preregistered cars. Apparently, this year there was a lot of competition from other events in the area. Given the large number of preregistered cars, the city decided that there would be no on-site registration. However, because of the no-shows, this did leave several empty spaces on the field.

The Rockville event planners estimated there were about 15,000 spectators, although they admitted that number might be a little high. The city had reserved several parking lots not far from the site to handle all the visitors and used shuttle buses to take them to and from the show. The large spectator turnout was probably due to pent up demand to return to the show (it had not been held for two years) and to the beautiful weather, which had been special ordered for the day.

While this is not a judged show, there is a Mayor and Council Award; this year it went to Bob Ridolfi's 1957 Cadillac Biarritz. His car will grace the cover of next year's program.

There was a discussion about the process of checking in the cars and getting them on the field in a timely manner. The hill leading up to the check-in station continues to be a problem. Several options were suggested but there was no real solution.

We noted that there were a few cars on the field that were beautifully restored but had been highly modified and should not have been allowed in the show. In future shows we need to be more vigilant about allowing only relatively stock antique and classic cars on the field. (This is always a bit of a judgment issue.)

We did make a major decision. In the future, **all cars must be pre-registered**. The field can accommodate about 580 cars, but because of the inevitable no-shows, we'll take 640 preregistrations. It will be much easier to set up the field and make sure there is reserved space so that all cars in one marque can be displayed together.

Next year's special display will feature Lotus, to celebrate the company's 75th anniversary.

Tech Tips

Jim Simpson

A Caution on New Starter Solenoids: This is from Mike Dawson in the Heart of America Corvair Owners Association *Vair Cor*. He had recently rebuilt a batch of Corvair starters and had them lined up for testing. All went well until he got to the last three. They'd make a loud click as the solenoid was engaged, but the motors would only run erratically. After checking them over, the common denominator was that they all had recently purchased "Standard Motor Products" brand solenoids.

He disassembled them and found that they all had a slightly shorter plunger (~0.080") and a change in the solenoid case that made it slightly longer. That combination made the connection of the contact disk loose at best. And with any wear at all, there would be no contact. Mike did modify the plunger with a small screw to lengthen it and indeed then it worked just fine.

Previously "Standard Motor Products" brand solenoids had been manufactured in Mexico; these new ones were from China. Apparently, something was lost in the transition (or perhaps translation). Note that most auto supply stores have a "no returns" policy on electrical components. So, if you are replacing the solenoid on a Corvair starter, check the brand and source as well as the store's return policy.

Ignition Firing Order: I don't know if anyone has ever noticed, but if you look in the late-model Corvair Shop Manual, figure 17 in "Engine Tune-Up", page 6-9 is **wrong!** It shows what purports to be the spark plug wires connected to a distributor cap. This is under a section where it is explaining how to detect a weak cylinder. **The ignition wires are connected to the distributor cap in the wrong sequence!**

The correct sequence is shown in a different section of the manual, figure 8i, "Ignition System", page 6Y-19. So, if you are changing the spark plug wires, and you have any question as to the correct installation use that illustration to be sure you have it right.

I have no idea where the figure 17 illustration comes from or why Chevrolet used it in the shop manual. It's certainly not for the Corvair, nor does it match the venerable Chevy straight six engine. So be aware and double check!

Ran When Parked

Mike Coale has a knack for finding buried treasure. One of his recent acquisitions was this 1961 Greenbriar. This is (or perhaps I should say was) VIN 400, a very early production example of this newly introduced van. As they say, it “ran when parked”. But the intervening years were not kind so by the time Mike recovered it, there wasn’t much left. He’s salvaged everything that might be useful including all the identification plates. Now it’s, to paraphrase the King James Bible, “Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, rust to rust.”



Tech Session

Jim Simpson

Ron Fedorczak has been having problems with his Corvairs. He has three; a '64 Greenbriar (with ~580k miles!), a '65 Corsa, and a '67 four-door sedan. The later is normally his daily driver, but it's been having some “running issues”. More specifically, it's been running a bit rough, occasionally backfires, and won't idle properly. The club offered to come take a look and see what, if anything, we could do to fix it.

Three club members descended on Ron's home in Columbia – Jim Simpson, Bob Walker, and Jerry Yates. Between the three of us, we have at least a modest understanding of Corvairs and thought we should be able to at least not make it any worse.



Our first test was to give it a road test. We took it out on the highway for a short run and it seemed to be doing just fine. I drove, Ron rode shotgun and Bob followed in his car “just in case”. Other than being a bit more leisurely than I’m used to, it seemed to accelerate well and otherwise keep up with the traffic. (Ron’s car is a 110/Powerglide; I’m used to my 180 turbo w/4-speed.) But it didn’t like idling.

We went over it, checking the usual suspects – plugs, spark plug wires, rotor, distributor cap. It has electronic ignition and that was timed correctly and seemed to be working fine. And we played with the carbs to both balance them and get the idle mixture right. But no matter what we did, we couldn’t get it to idle smoothly. And if we tried to drop the idle down to something reasonable, it would eventually die, sometimes accompanied by a backfire through the carburetors. Something was obviously still wrong, but it had us stumped and we really didn’t have the time and tools to dig much deeper. Besides, Ron had another chore for us.

We closed up the ’67 and went over to his Corsa. He wanted to move it out of the garage so he could get some work done on the overhead lights. The only problem was that the car hadn’t been moved in something over six years! The tires were nearly flat but did hold air, so we pumped them up. But the parking brake had been left on and now the rear brakes were locked in place. Since we didn’t happen to have a brake drum puller with us, it took about 1 ½ hours of heavy pounding with a good hammer along with lots of prying to get them off. But we persisted and got them free. Once that was done, it was just a bit of muscle to roll the Corsa out. We called it a day.

Ron’s plan all along was to get the ’67 running well enough to get it to Mike Coales’ garage and have him go completely over it – everything from engine to chassis grease. Since he didn’t trust the car, he had it towed over. Mike poked and prodded at it for a while without any immediate success. Then one of his fellow mechanics asked about which way the distributor rotates – clockwise – and then it hit him. He told me the spark plug wires were installed in reverse rotation!

How that happened, and how the car would even run with the wires in reverse rotation, I don't understand at all. We did change the plug wires but did them one-at-a-time to ensure we didn't get them wrong. And Mike said they were indeed in the correct sequence, but just going in reverse. As to how the engine would even run in that condition, only cylinders 1 and 2 would fire at the correct timing; all others would be 120 degrees out. Weird.

Overheard at the Rockville Car Show

Marolyn Simpson

Jim and I have attended many car shows over the years and many of them display a variety of cars. Often the cars will be lined up in a row with the front hoods up showing off the engines. On several occasions we have seen spectators walk along the row and then stop and do a double take at our empty "engine compartment" and then ask, "where's the engine?"

We decided that if the spectators want an engine in the front, we should put one in. Jim searched the internet and found a small visible V8 Hemi engine that looked like it would work just fine. That engine gets a lot of laughs and has had its picture taken many times.

However, not everyone gets the joke and that was proven once again at the Rockville show in October. There were three twenty-somethings who stopped and looked at the engine. They studied it for a bit, looking at one side and then the other, and then one of them very seriously said, "It must be an electric engine." Then they moved on down the row of cars looking proud of themselves for having figured it out.

Later in the day while I was busy talking to some "customers", two more twenty-somethings stopped and studied the little engine for a bit and then started walking toward the back of the car. On the way back they stopped and looked inside the passenger compartment. We had folded down the rear seat and used the smooth surface to display our *Unsafe at Any Speed* book. One of our visitors saw that raised surface and said "Oh, I see. It's a mid-engine car." They never did get to the back of the car where several other spectators were checking out the real turbocharged engine.



Vair Vendor

Wanted: Complete 140 hp Powerglide transmission. Usually, the governor is marked with orange paint or a pink stripe. Contact: Mike Coale, (443) 994-2559

For Sale: Going fast! Group Corvair is down to our last copy of *Corvair Basics*, both the book and CD. We'll beat the Amazon, Clarks, and CORSA prices. Get the set from us for only \$15! Or we'll split them up and you can get either the book or the CD for \$10. Contact Jim Simpson, simpsonj@verizon.net or phone 240-232-2820.

For Sale: Group Corvair has just acquired a bunch of NOS Group Corvair paraphernalia – sweatshirts, tee-shirts, some mugs and more. These all date back to the last century but are in great condition. I still need to make a full inventory but give me a call or email if you think you need to add to your club collection.

For Sale: Multi-speed drill press, Rockwell/Delta heavy duty bench-top drill press, S/N: BR 3650, belt drive, moveable head and table, heavy duty, no play in shaft. Comes with 3 phase motor that need replacement. Make Offer.

Porta-power type hydraulic frame-body jack, complete, pump needs seals. Make Offer.
Local pickup only. Contact Bob Walker at bobrstn@gmail.com.

Free to a Club Member: Engine parts washer. Harbor Freight brand originally purchased by the late John Moody. He passed it on to me. I haven't used it as I thought I might, so I'd like to pass it on. It's in good condition although the legs could use a good wire brushing and repaint. Pickup only from my home in Davidsonville. Jim Simpson, simpsonj@verizon.net, 240-232-2820.

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