



# Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME LII, No. 5

May 2024



## *Group Corvair Tech Session; Another Happy Customer!*

### CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

#### May

19 – Corvair Ranch Open House. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., 1079 Bon-Ox Rd., Gettysburg, PA.

21 – **Group Corvair Zoom Meeting.** 7:30 p.m. Zoom link details will be sent out the weekend before; check your email. (Yes, we're still using Zoom. We may be changing in the future.)

#### June

8 – NECC Motorsports High Performance Driving Event – New York Safety Track. Info:  
<https://tinyurl.com/ykn8csks> or <http://www.neccmotorsports.com/>

18 – **Group Corvair Virtual Meeting.** 7:30 p.m. Link details will be sent out the weekend before; check your email.

TBD – **Group Corvair Social Meeting.** TBD.

## July

- 16 – Group Corvair On-line Meeting.** 7:30 p.m. Link details will be sent out the weekend before; check your email. Please note, we may be dropping our paid subscription to Zoom in favor of a free or lower cost alternative. Hopefully, it will be essentially transparent to everyone.
- 20 – NECC Motorsports High Performance Driving Event – Pocono South Track.** Info:  
<https://tinyurl.com/mw6hzray> or <http://www.neccmotorsports.com/>
- 21 – 26 – Corvair International Convention, Dayton, OH.** The 21<sup>st</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> are not officially part of the convention, but the host club includes them in their schedule. <https://www.daytoncorvairclub.com/gallery>

## August

- 20 – Group Corvair On-line Meeting.** 7:30 p.m. Link details will be sent out the weekend before; check your email. Please note, we may be dropping our paid subscription to Zoom in favor of a free or lower cost alternative. Hopefully, it will be essentially transparent to everyone.
- 16 – Group Corvair On-Line Meeting.** 7:30 p.m.

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## From the Oval Garage

Bob Hall

Nine of us attended the April social meeting that was held at the Black Hog BBQ restaurant in Urbana on April 24th. The company, conversations and food were very good – thanks for your recommendation, Dave Edsinger. Note our smiling faces in the photo below.

The Dayton convention is creeping closer so if you are thinking of attending now is the time to firm up your plans. In addition to Corvair people and Corvairs, the Air Force Museum looks to be a fascinating draw. Where else can you see a B-36 Peacemaker up close?

The Corvair Ranch open house will be Sunday, May 19th and always attracts a lot of Corvair people, some great cars, as well as the general public. I've always enjoyed walking the "back lot" to see the latest additions. There is usually a raffle and a good test of attendee's knowledge of Corvair information.

As reported before, Group Corvair is one of the four clubs sponsoring the 2026 Corvair Convention in Gettysburg and preliminary plans are coming together. Tom Rahochik, of Mid Maryland Corvairs and Titus Stewart are



leading the planning and have announced a dinner meeting after the Ranch open house at 5:00 pm that evening at a venue to be announced. If you are interested in assisting, please let me or Jim Simpson know, and we will keep you apprised of the details as they become known to us. You don't have to sign up for a two-year commitment, you just need an interest in the event and be willing to assist wherever you can as things come together.

Our steering box tech session at Jim and Marolyn's house was a success. Mark Shiffler entrusted his '66

Corsa to us to have its steering box adjusted "by the book". We pooled our tools to do the job as not everyone had all the required ones. For instance, we used both Bob Walker's fish scale and an inch-pound beam torque wrench to measure steering shaft torque. They both had advantages with the fish scale perhaps being a bit more sensitive while the beam torque wrench was easier to use. A more detailed report is below.

Let us know how your projects are progressing so Jim can include your experience in the newsletter.

## **Minutes of the April Virtual Meeting**

**Marolyn Simpson**

At 7:35 pm Bob Hall called to order the April 16 Group Corvair Zoom meeting with nine members in attendance. Carl Kelsen, our club member in Melbourne, Australia, introduced himself to those who had not met him before. In response to a question, Carl estimated that there are approximately 60 to 80 Corvairs in Australia.

Mark Shiffler made a motion to accept the minutes from the March meeting as they appeared in the newsletter. The motion passed. Jim Simpson gave the treasurer's report: there were no transactions during the last month.

Another social meeting is planned for Wednesday, April 24. We will gather at the Black Hog BBQ restaurant at 6:30 pm in Urbana. Urbana is just south of Frederick, MD.

Jim would like to drop his Zoom subscription which we are using for our meetings. Members were asked to check out other ways of meeting online. There was a motion to research the various services that are available to see what works best. We will discuss this further during the May meeting.

Earlier in the day, Mark took his car out for a trial run. He found a few problems (some suspension and groans) but overall, it ran well.

Bill Horton, a long-ago Group Corvair member, called Jim concerning a potential new club member, Lorenzo Church, who owns a '64 powerglide. Lorenzo was having what seemed to be vacuum leaks with the engine.

Bob H. talked to Lee Hamilton recently. Lee is still open for us to visit him to see the V-8 car that was formerly owned by Pete Frailey. But Lee is currently recovering from some health issues. Once he's up to it, we'll have a group visit. Lee currently lives in Edgewater, MD.

Jim brought us up to date on his experience with his LED taillight conversion. It now works well.

Jim also mentioned the Lane Motor Museum in Nashville, TN which he and Marolyn visited in April. It is the home of some very interesting cars including Corvairs.

Byron LaMotte is getting ready to build a car barn. He is currently trying to get a building permit. Once again Byron is working on the Oxford Community Center Road Rally. This year it will be on September 14 (rain date September 15). It will be 75 miles long with what he describes as "a great final destination."



Carl will be making another trip to the US which will include the Corsa convention in Ohio in July. He told us that the Chevrolets assembled in Australia, were always considered “high-end” cars. They were trimmed out to higher specifications than the US domestic versions and subject to a more rigorous inspection and quality control regime. At present there are about three Corvairs in Australia that have been converted to right-hand drive.

In a discussion on tech topics, Bob H. said he uses Kable-Ez to lubricate heater control cables. Bob Walker was having trouble with the transmission on his car, but a lubricant and warmer temperatures seemed to help. There was also a discussion on adjustments to the steering box.

Jim moved that we adjourn at 9:10 pm.

## **Group Corvair has a Tech Session – Adjusting a Steering Box**

**Bob Hall & Jim Simpson**

As Bob Hall noted in his report, I hosted a tech session for Group Corvair to go over Mark Shiffler’s Corsa’s steering box. While he had gone over and rebuilt just about everything else in his barn-find Corsa, the steering box was left alone. While it seemed to work well, and had no leaks, he felt that there was more play than there should be and was willing for the club to work on the adjustments. In addition, he was pretty sure the steering wheel was not properly centered relative to the steering box.

Bob put together a check list based upon the shop manuals. He also brought copies of both the early- and late-model manuals. They are basically the same, but there are a few minor revisions.

The shop manuals lay out how to check and adjust the steering box in considerable detail. The key is to follow those steps and not skip any. Too often, Corvair owners will notice there is play in the steering and immediately go into the trunk and start tightening the steering box lash adjustment. That’s not where you should start!

The problem is that there are several other possible places where there might be play. For instance, the idler arm and Pitman arm bushings, and the tie rod ends are all subject to wear and should be checked before trying to adjust the steering box.

Once all the steering linkage is fully inspected and found satisfactory, then, and only then, should you start working on the steering box.

Once you have decided you need to adjust the steering box, FOLLOW THE MANUAL! There are two adjustments that interact and MUST be done in sequence to prevent excessive wear and possible damage to the steering box.

First, you need to check and adjust the worm gear play. The worm gear is the extension of the steering shaft inside the steering box. It’s held between two sets of ball bearings. Assuming those bearings are ok and not excessively worn, the large nut at the bottom/front of the steering box is used to minimize the play in the worm gear. If it is loose, no amount of adjustment of the lash adjustment will eliminate play in the steering.

Once the worm gear play is set properly, then you can adjust the lash. The lash adjustment moves the sector shaft (Pitman arm shaft), which has beveled gears, into

tight contact with the ball nut inside the steering box. (Note that the manual calls for the steering to be centered when making this adjustment. There is a “high point” in these gears.)

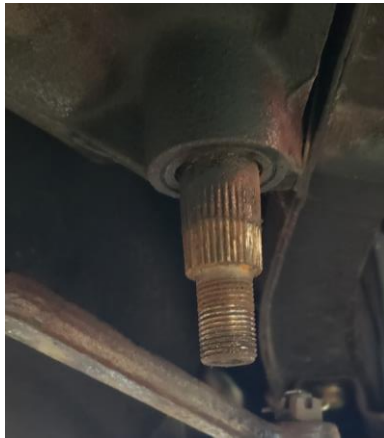
### **Bob’s Checklist**

- Check all moving parts in the steering linkage.
- Pull the Pitman arm.
- Check to be sure upper and lower steering shafts are properly aligned. (The shafts have flats, and the couple should ensure they are aligned.)
- Find the center of the steering box and see if the steering wheel is centered.
- Check steer box lubrication: add EP grease (per manual) if needed.
- Check steering box turning torque.
- If too loose, back off lock nut on worm gear.
- Loosen lash adjuster (from trunk access).
- Adjust worm gear bearing per manual to achieve proper shaft torque; retighten lock nut.
- Center steering box and adjust lash adjuster; retighten lock nut.
- Reattach and torque Pittman arm.
- Ensure the steering box is centered, remove and center the steering wheel if needed.
- Check front wheel position; if needed, adjust tie rods to ensure wheels are in the straight-ahead position. (Note: adjust both tie rods the same amount, in the same direction, so as not to change the wheel toe.)

From left to right, Mark Shiffler provided the car. Behind him, Bill Hubbell brought expertise and some “show and tell” parts. Bob Walker brought tools, particularly a “fish scale” for measuring steering shaft torque. Bob Hall provided the all-important Pitman arm puller along with the check list and copies of the relevant sections of the shop manual. Not in the picture, Jerry Yates came a bit later; and provided the essential service of picking up the lunch pizzas. I (Jim Simpson) provided the garage, a selection of wrenches, lubricants, and the all-important big hammers.



**Pulling the Pitman Arm**



**Using a small hammer to loosen the lock nut – we also needed a big hammer.  
That lock nut was tight!**



**With the steering box centered, the steering wheel was off this amount.**





**Bill Hubbell checking steering box torque.**



**The steering box done, time for some “show and tell” – Bill Hubbell’s collection of different road draft and PCV tubes used over the years.**

## **Mark’s Corsa Restoration – Part 8 – The “Final” Installment!**

**Mark Shiffler**

This is my last installment in this series on rebuilding my 1966 Corsa from a non-running frozen starting place in early February 2023 until the end of April 2024. Much more work than I ever anticipated, and I have spent most of my free time over the past year+ working on it. A summary of the “Before” pictures are below. It was a good “core” starting point. Apologies to anyone that is fond of maroon and black interior, but I knew in the long run that they had to change.



I found at least 8 mouse nests as I worked through the disassembly. The engine was frozen and, after a lot of struggles getting it apart, I found that frozen wrist pins were the culprit. The heads were done by Ken Ellison at his shop in Glen Burnie. Since I don’t plan on doing any racing, he did just a 45/46 deg valve grind and lap job.





Along the way, suspension, brakes, fuel system, etc. – basically anything I could get out of the car -- were removed, cleaned, refreshed, rust proofed, and painted before going back in.

It was so much fun working on the car, which was where you see it parked, up on jack stands and under a cover, during a hot summer. At least the stones were a little cool and it was under a tree (does shade tree mechanic apply??).

About the only changes from stock were the installation of a dual master cylinder and an electric fuel pump. Clark's was the source for most parts, however, there were a couple from California Corvair that Clark's did not have. Bay County Upholstery did the headliner installation.

Now for "finished" product (is anything ever finished?) Trumpets should be sounding, and I think the right words are "Ta Da". Aztec Bronze with Bronze interior. Yes, there are still squeaks and noises to chase down, but it basically runs and is drivable at this point. Plus, and most importantly, I ran out of parts to put back on...

I'm pretty happy with the results and things will continue to be worked on as time and energy present themselves.

Please don't be afraid to reach out if you have questions on how something was done or any help I can offer with your project.







## Tech Topics

### Distributor Bushing Replacement (Mike Dawson, *The Flat Six*, Prairie Capital Corvair Association)

GM Only Supplied the Housing with Bushing Installed.

Many Corvair distributors go a lifetime needing only minor maintenance and sometimes breaker plate replacement. It has one upper bushing and the lower end of the shaft acts as a bearing within the rear housing, keeping the shaft running quite true. Two checks of the bushing while in the car would be to look at side play by trying to move the distributor cam across the shaft. If you note side play, be sure it is not between the cam and the shaft, which can wear if not lubricated. Another indication of a worn bushing is a small (or large) puddle of oil visible in the low part of the housing when you remove the breaker plate. Note: if you remove the distributor, it will appear to have bushing play if you move the bottom of the shaft against the bushing, so check it while installed. The up and down play (0.050) against the three-piece thrust washer is also normal to allow the assembly to have running clearance with different housings and oil pumps.

If you determine you need a bushing, or are doing a complete distributor recondition, the following tips on bushing replacement may help.

Tools you will need include the following: #4 and #6 roll pin punches, a homemade tool for pushing out the old bushing, and a hone to size the new bushing as all bushings that I have purchased recently are slightly oversized (which is good). My pusher is a piece of 1/8" x 3/4" steel stock trimmed to fit between the ribs that surround the bushing. Also pictured is a homemade holding





fixture for removing and installing pins, for which you can substitute a padded vice.

Pictured above is the minimum disassembly necessary to replace the bushing in a '62-'69 ('60-'61 will be similar). This would obviously be the time to also check and lube the advance mechanism.

File off any sharp edges at the two pin holes and polish the shaft before fitting the bushing. During reassembly remember the divot on the gear must align with the direction of the rotor notch.

### **Manual Transmission Shifter Seal Leak** (Mike Dawson, *The Flat Six*, Prairie Capital Corvair Association)

Leaks at the shifter seal can occur from the constant exposure to road grit at high speed or just from old age. The early design had a flange that made it easy to pry out of the case and along with the minimal loss of lube while changing the seal, it was not a major operation. All of the current seals available (4 different brand labels) are all the same design without the flange, which makes careful removal with an ice pick type tool, installation of a small sheet metal screw or similar removal method necessary. Care must be taken to avoid damage to the shaft or the cast iron case.

Installation of the new seal should include polishing the shaft while in 4th or 2nd gear (shaft out as far as possible) and use of one layer of Scotch tape overlapping the pin hole and the end of the shaft to aid in protecting the seal lips until completely installed. Even if you use fine sandpaper or cloth to polish over the pin hole, the seal

lips can drop into the hole and can be cut by a razor-sharp edge at the hole chamfer. The tape eliminates the lips dropping into the hole area. And, as with any double lip seal, add grease in between the two lips before installing.

Note the tape (transparent) over the pin hole and end of shifter shaft in the picture above.



## **Vair Vendor**

### **For Sale: Early and Late Parts:**

'64 3.27 differential, \$40; '64 3.27 4-speed transaxle, \$100; '64 Sypder engine lid, \$120;  
'64 Convertible top frame, \$65; '64 4-door NOS left quarter panel (GM # 6279405), \$200  
'64 2 each front cross members, complete with brakes, shocks, springs. Very good condition: one from a Sypder, \$175, other \$150; '62 – '64 Convertible rear quarter window glass, left and right, \$30  
'65 – '69 underbody plastic heater duct, \$30; '65 – '69 Convertible corner weight, \$15  
? year – Engine cover with fan bearing, \$20; 3 standard transmission bell housings, \$30 each.

Prices are negotiable. Contact Bob Lewis, 301-246-4278, [rtl1936@gmail.com](mailto:rtl1936@gmail.com).

(5/23)

**Wanted: Right Front (passenger side) FC wheel arch and rocker panel.** Prefer NOS but a very clean used one would be acceptable. Michael Coale, 443-994-2559 or [mikecoale@verizon.net](mailto:mikecoale@verizon.net)

(8/23)

**For Sale: Mike Coale is thinning his collection: 1965 Corsa coupe body**, no drive train, gold interior (with '66 front seats), Corsa dash. Fair condition, but highly restorable. \$1,500 or best offer.

- 1965 Corsa convertible body**, power top, Corsa dash, steering wheel, no seats, but has correct door panels. It does have a '64 engine/positrac differential, and empty 4-speed case in it to allow it to roll around. Fair condition, but highly restorable. \$1,500 or best offer.
- 1965 Monza convertible**, complete, 110 hp, powerglide. Silver with red interior, older restoration, decent condition. Asking \$3,000.
- 1965 Monza Four-Door**, 4-speed. White, fair condition, but highly restorable. \$1,500 or best offer.
- 1967 Monza convertible**, 110, Powerglide. Relatively rare – only 2,109 convertibles were produced in 1967. Complete, including the “Protecta Plate.” Asking \$3,500. All have titles. Contact Mike Coale, [mikecoale@verizon.net](mailto:mikecoale@verizon.net) or 443-994-2559.  
(5/23)

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## **Corvair Ranch**

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## **Clark's Corvair Parts**

**400 Mohawk Trail, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370**

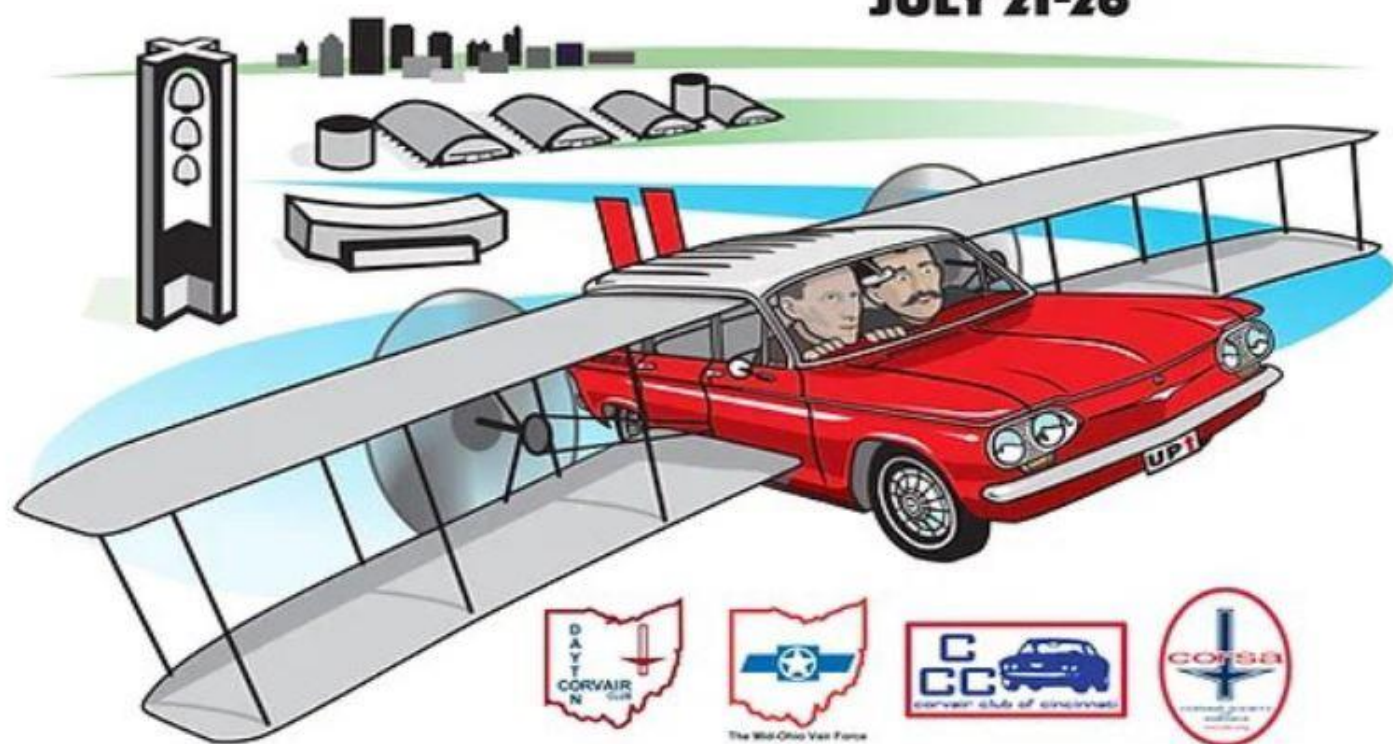
[www.corvair.com](http://www.corvair.com).

Check out their “What’s New” page for Clark’s newest offerings. There is some interesting stuff there including a modern replacement for the “guts” of the Spyder and Corsa tachometers.



# CORVAIRBORNE!

**2024 INTERNATIONAL  
CORVAIR CONVENTION  
JULY 21-26**



**MARRIOTT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON  
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