



Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME LIII, No. 1

January 2025



New Hampshire, 1971

I had to change a clutch cable in that snow!

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

January

Membership Dues are Due! Dues are \$10 per year. Send your checks to Jim Simpson, 3845 Wayson Rd, Davidsonville, MD 21035. Some of you have paid for multiple years; if you are unsure if you need to pay, please contact Jim Simpson (301-262-0978 or simpsonj@verizon.net).

21 -- Group Corvair On-Line Meeting. 7:30 p.m. This will be a Zoom meeting. Link details will be sent to all Group Corvair members the weekend before the meeting. Keep an eye on your email!

February

18 -- Group Corvair On-Line Meeting. 7:30 p.m.

March

18 -- Group Corvair On-Line Meeting. 7:30 p.m.

April

15 -- Group Corvair On-Line Meeting. 7:30 p.m.

May

NEWS FLASH: CORSA International Convention has MOVED from Santa Maria to San Luis Obispo!
Dates (May 20 – 23) are unchanged. More news from CORSA to be coming soon.

20 -- Group Corvair On-Line Meeting. 7:30 p.m.

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From the Oval Garage

Bob Hall

Best Wishes for a Happy and productive New Year to everyone. I've mailed Jim my \$10.00 2025 dues payment to start the year off right. Despite inflation Group Corvair still manages to give us a big bang for our \$10.00.

We're a month closer to the 2026 Gettysburg Convention and the lead club sponsoring the event, Mid Maryland, plans to have another meeting soon so if you haven't volunteered to help yet, please give it some thought.

We've postponed our club officer election, because no one has volunteered to replace our current officers. So, you still have a chance to volunteer to take one of the club positions. Your input will be welcome.

For those of you without a garage who are spry enough (or determined [i.e. crazy] enough) to keep working on your Corvair during winter weather, don't forget the insulating value of a piece of plastic and a couple of sheets of cardboard between you and the (snow covered) ground. Amazing how much you can do before frostbite occurs and if accurate torque values aren't necessary.

On the other end of the weather spectrum my heart goes out to our fellow Corvair owners in the Los Angeles area and the ongoing tragedy on the largest fire emergency to hit the area. At least five deaths so far and thousands of structures burned to the ground. Our oldest son, who lives in the area, hasn't had to evacuate from his home, but he is wearing a N95 mask when he goes outside. I thought I saw a burned-out late model on ABC7's coverage in the ruins after the Altadena area fire. Lucy Jourdan posted a story on the Corvair Owners Group page of their escape from the fire in the Topanga Canyon area. They went back to rescue their 1965 Monza convertible (with an inoperable top) and made it out OK. "I watched my man doing about 80 mph, with his helmet and goggles on (to protect him from the blowing embers), top down, blasting Metallica and racing out of the canyon."

I hope your Corvair adventures are nowhere near as exciting or dangerous but remember that we'll be happy to share them with everyone if you just send your photos and stories to Jim for the newsletter.

I hope to "see" you all at our next Zoom meeting.

Minutes of the December Virtual Meeting

Marolyn Simpson

The December 17, 2024, Group Corvair business meeting started at 7:30 with six members participating. Before starting the business meeting, we had a discussion on speed limit compliance differences between the US and Australia. Carl Kelsen, our Australian member, noted that in Australia the limit is strictly enforced, whereas in the US it appears to be more of a suggestion. Carl also told us about the telescopic steering he is working on.

The meeting was called to order by Bob Hall, president, at 7:40 pm. The minutes of the last meeting were approved as they appeared in the newsletter.

Jim Simpson gave the treasurer's report. There was no income or expenses for the last month. Club members approved a reimbursement to Jim for postage during the last year. Dues of \$10 a year are due as of January 1, 2025. There was a discussion on various payment methods such as checks, credit cards, or electronic transfers.

Carl's car is now fully registered. He is putting together a picture presentation for the May CORSA convention in California. His talk at the Dayton convention was a big hit so he may put it on a USB and mail it to us.

Next year's Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show will not have a special display. The registration will be capped at 630 vehicles, the same as this year. Next year's show will once again be pre-registered cars only – no on-site registration. Early registration will go from \$10 to \$15 and regular registration from \$20 to \$25. All expenses for putting on the show have increased recently.

Carl brought up the topic of cylinder head temperatures. He was getting an indicated 400 on the highway. That seemed high and he was wondering if that was normal. The gauge might have been reading high; also, the days he checked it were fairly warm.

The club had tried to have a tech session to work on Lorenzo Church's Monza but the kit he had for the job didn't have all the parts needed. We will try to reschedule it, hopefully with all the right parts.

There was a discussion on the relative merits of DOT-3 (conventional) vs DOT-5 (silicone) brake fluid.

Phil Richardson has signed up to help with the 2026 Gettysburg convention—possibly with model cars.

There was a discussion on various payment methods for dues. For now, it's checks (preferred) or cash.

The election of officers usually takes place in December, but this year we will do it in January.

Bob's philosophy on running the business meetings is to do the official business first and then the general discussions can take place the remainder of the meeting.

At the end of the meeting Carl took his iPad down to his garage and gave us a tour of his garage and Corvair Monza convertible. His car is a black with red interior, converted to right-hand drive—including a Corsa dash -- with air-conditioning, an electric fuel pump, rear passenger courtesy lights that came from a Buick, rechromed front arm rests, and a license plate that reads VAIR. It is a beautiful car in a fantastic garage (tiled floor, 4-post lift!). We hope to have an article and a full set of pictures of this conversion!

The meeting ended and we signed off at 9:37 pm.

Tech Topics

Zolatone Your Trunk

by Lee Olsen, from the *The Flat Six Journal*, the newsletter of the Mid Continent Corvair Association, May 2024

One year ago, I was able to get my Yenka Stinger #44 back after selling it in 2006. The car was just as it was when I sold it. The interior still smelled the same as when I finished restoring it. The only issue was that the splatter paint that I had applied in the trunk with rattle cans 23 years ago was flaking off, a respray was needed.

After researching, I determined that a product called Zolatone was the best quality paint to replicate the factory applied paint. I purchased a quart for around \$70. The application instructions recommended a pressure pot sprayer, I don't have one of those and they are expensive. Further research showed that a spray gun with a 2.0mm spray tip could also be used. I purchased an inexpensive gravity feed gun from amazon to use. Zolatone is a strange paint, it is somewhat grainy from the small paint balls that give the finished product the splatter effect.

The instructions call for a light coat to be applied at 50psi with the needle screwed in for a light coat, let it dry then apply the topcoat with the needle opened up at 20 PSI. Everything was going OK with the topcoat until the gun quit spraying. I dumped the paint back in the can, unscrewed the cup and found the small plastic filter under the cup was plugged. I pitched the filter and rinsed the gun with starting fluid to clean out all passages. After this procedure the gun worked great, and my trunk turned out great. If you are considering painting or repainting a trunk, I would recommend Zolatone, it is a very durable hard finish that looks great.



With some elbow grease, a cheap spray gun, and Lee's advice, a Corvair trunk can look brand-new.

Press On Regardless! Or “Just Wanna Make It Back Home”

by Larry Claypool, Chicagoland Corvair Enthusiasts Club *Airhorn* newsletter, December 2024

Driving an old car can have its ‘moments’, regardless of the make. The newest car I own wasn't even built during this century, so I guess all my cars could be considered old ones. When you drive an old car often, you become adept at “MacGyvering” stuff to get home.

Way back in the early 70's, I was driving a '62 Monza convert that began to have fuel starvation troubles whilst on the Dan Ryan expressway towards Chicago. I coasted over to the shoulder and after about 15 minutes of fiddling, determined the fuel pump eccentric or pump pushrod must have become worn out as I could push the pump manually up and down and make it work, but it would not do so when correctly secured by its positioning bolt.

As it happened, I was quite near the public transit “L” line that could take me to 22nd Street, three blocks away from the famed Warshawsky (A.K.A. JC Whitney “Everything Automotive”) location.

That I did, and one hour later returned with an inexpensive electric pump, a little wire, some hose and clamps. I by-passed the mechanical pump with the precariously routed rubber hoses, just laid the pump loose on the rear frame rail and hooked the power wire to the positive terminal of the coil; all things I shudder to think of now (but still see people doing it that way on YouTube). But it worked and I was able to drive away under my own power until I could address the problem correctly.



Warshawsky's big store. Chicago, IL.

Another time the CCE Slalom Team was up at an autocross in a suburb of Milwaukee, some 140 miles from home. Being young and on a slim budget, nobody had a trailer back then, we'd just tow bar our 'race' cars if it was a long

trek. Another club member whose name shall not be mentioned (but his initials are Harry Jensen) was racing his Stinger when it came to a screeching halt in the middle of the course. The differential had locked up, probably due to diminished gear oil. We had to use a floor jack under the diff to be able to push it off the course. A car that won't move, and no trailer, tow dolly, or freewheeling hubs to be found. What to do? As the diff wasn't a posi, and figuring it was already toast anyway, I surmised if we removed one axle shaft and somehow made something to wedge between the trailing arm and the diff case, we could let the one connected axle turn through the spider gears and tow it home. A suitable 2x4 was located and crudely hacked into something that looked nothing like an upper suspension link, but performed that task admirably, or at least long enough to make it home.



Corvan versus Greenbrier - Do You Know the Difference?

My girlfriend way back then had a well-used Corvan she drove (including all the way to and from the first Seattle convention in '75). I got a call from her one day explaining the accelerator pedal suddenly dropped to the floor while engine remained at idle. Figuring the linkage just fell apart somewhere I was dismayed to find the inner cable itself had broken somewhere in its tortured and mostly inaccessible route to the back of the van - a job that would require more resources than the parallel parking spot it had stopped at.

We found (or bought, I can't remember) a piece of clothes-line, and with the engine cover removed, tied one end to the carburetor cross shaft, and the other to the front seat adjuster lever, with just enough extra to run over my left shoulder.

Throttle action was now possible by leaning forward, which pulled open the cross shaft and thus the carbs. Drove it back to the shop that way.

Much more recently at the '17 convention in Independence, I came across my good friend, the late Burt Neuner, sitting on the shoulder of the road during the rally with smoke billowing out of the right rear wheel. He explained that brakes were getting hot and was dragging badly. Experience told me it was a collapsed brake hose, having suffered a similar fate myself in 2009 at the Jacksonville convention.

We could have called a tow truck, but I put forth the proposition I could 'fix' this enough to get back to the hotel. With that, the tire was removed (important note—don't hold onto those hot lug nuts!) and a quick turn of the bleeder screw released the trapped fluid pressure, and the brake was released. To make sure it stayed that way, I beat the trailing arm steel brake flat with a suitable hammer, thus preventing any further brake application on that wheel. Burt then drove it back to the host hotel without further ado.



Corvair wheel cylinder with bleeder screw

Such repairs are not confined to Corvairs. Many of you have seen my 'driver' Cadillac Deville, now celebrating its 26th birthday. Last year while driving to Indiana to Shelly's mom's, the power steering pump began whining, and eventually quit being power. Once at our destination, I didn't have to investigate very far to find the power steering oil cooler, located in front of the air conditioning condenser, had gotten rusty enough to spring a leak (big clue - oil was dripping off the outside of the grill). I reasoned that since none of my other big cars had a power steering cooler, the old Cad could probably get along without one as well.

A quick stop at the Logansport Rural King store, conveniently open at 7 AM, armed me with a pair of cheap pliers, a screwdriver, two clamps, and two quarts of steering juice.

They didn't have much in the way of actual auto parts besides batteries and oil, but they did have a marvelous plumbing department where I picked up two six-inch pieces of galvanized 1/8" steel pipe and a coupler to join them. About 20 minutes of fiddling to remove the hoses from the leaky cooler later, the old hoses slid onto my foot long 'bypass' pipe rather nicely. Clamps tightened and steering pump refilled, it worked perfectly and will remain so until that car's dying day.

Some things are just too severe to MacGyver up - like when the clutch disc flings off all its lining into the extremities of the bellhousing or a front wheel/tire/brake drum and remnants of the glowing red hot wheel bearing go

careening off your car towards the shoulder and beyond. But Rick Herda did relate to me he saw some unmemorable rear wheel drive car plodding down Western Avenue in Chicago on a nice summer day sans right front wheel. In its place was the bottom half of some store's now long missing shopping cart, placed strategically under the lower control arm. Confident in this solution, the driver wheeled along as if nothing was out of the ordinary. As long as he avoided the big potholes and manhole covers, I am sure he made it home.

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.

Free – CORSA Communique from 2016 through 2023. Pickup or mail (\$14.38 for USPS).

Prices are negotiable. Contact Bob Lewis, 301-246-4278, rtl1936@gmail.com.

(5/23)

For Sale: Mike Coale is thinning his collection: He's constantly acquiring cars and parts and likely has what you need and maybe even something you didn't know you needed! Contact Mike Coale, mikecoale@verizon.net or 443-994-2559 and see just what he has available.

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Thanks, Jeffrey Williams, CCPI



CHEV CORVAIR GOES RALLYING

TAKES FIRST PLACE IN 1961 CANADIAN WINTER RALLY—Any rally is a soul-testing endurance run. Competing cars must maintain specified average speeds (within legal limits) over a route revealed just before take-off time. You don't even enter rallies—especially this one—unless you've got an abiding trust in your car's traction, braking, handling and reliability. The Canadian Winter Rally involves 1,265 miles of what drivers called "North America's worst roads," from Toronto to North Bay, Ontario, and back. Twenty-three hours of virtually non-stop driving the first day, thirteen the second... and dozens of checkpoints along the way to make sure competitors kept to the murderous route. Nearly 200 cars started, 43 of them in Corvair's engine class. Of the starters, some fifty succumbed to the treacherous ice and snow—but every 1961 Corvair entered came through without mechanical difficulty. And—for the first time in the rally's nine-year history—one make and model was first overall and swept the first five places in class: Corvair! **CORVAIR TAKES FIRST PLACE OVERALL: FROSTBITE 500** After the

Canadian Winter Rally, winning team Dick Doyen and Clay Gibbs of the Corvair entries decided to go on to Wisconsin's Frostbite 500 (a wonderfully apt name) Rally. Their '61 Corvair got a grease job, an oil change and three new front wheel bearings. And—just one week after the CWYR's 1,265 thoroughly miserable miles—it started another 500 frozen miles of rallying! This time Corvair licked all 79 starters, to win the icy grind. Remember, both of these events involved open competition with some of the world's best automobiles. You can't buy success in rallying. You don't luck your way through. A car wins on its merits, pure and simple. And these are the same merits so important in your own driving: traction, handling ease and sureness, braking, durability. Proud of Corvair's performance? Of course. And we think you'll get a kick out of experiencing the Corvair's remarkable driving abilities for yourself. Your Chevrolet dealer's the man to see, naturally. Make it soon—and enjoy yourself!... Chevrolet Division of General Motors, Detroit 2, Mich.

