



# Leeky Seel

*Corvair*



**February 2025**



Corvair Minnesota Newsletter

## *President's message*

Thanks to everyone who came to our CMI holiday party in January, it was a great event! Heidi Olson brought merchandise for purchase and thanks to **Gregg Peters** and **Paul Schuler** we had many prizes as well.

At the January meeting we announced our car show winners for 2024. Join me in congratulating:  
**Dave S**-1st place, **Ross M**-2nd place and **Paul S**-3rd place.

Last month we asked for a volunteer to hold the chili party for 2025. **Steve Eckman** stepped up and offered his farm in Maple Plain. A special thank you goes out to **Mike Bednarchuk** for hosting last year's event.

Mark your calendars for our upcoming events:

- **February 22nd, Saturday:** CMI will be going to the Old Chrysler Museum in Isanti, 117 Main St. We will meet for lunch first at the Wintergreen restaurant in Isanti at 1pm and head over to the Museum around 2 pm
- **March** (date TBD): We will tour the prop area at the Guthrie Theater.
- **April 5th, Saturday:** Our annual Chili party in Maple Plain.
- **May 10th, Saturday:** Our Spring Car show/breakfast.

The next monthly meeting is Tuesday, February 11th.

- Board meeting at 5pm
- Food and beverage is available from 5:30 to 6:30
- Meeting starts at 7pm.

**Reminder:** Annual club dues of \$20 were due January 1st. You can pay at our February 11th meeting or mail a check to our Treasurer.

Send payment to: Paul Schuler  
23350 Wood LN  
Rogers, MN 55347

Failure to pay dues by February 28th will result in the suspension of your Leeky Seel newsletter.

See you at our next meeting,

*Dave Pedersen*

CMI President



## CMI Meeting Minutes

January 2025

Meet started at 7:00pm SHARP

**David Quinn** opened by reading our creed- YEAH!

**Tom Quinn** read our previous month (December) meeting notes.

Tom read the January birthdays. Happy birthday to all that have a birthday in January.

**Dave Pedersen** discussed our January Holiday Party. Great turn out! We are still needing some member dues. If you have not paid your yearly dues, connect with **Paul Schuler** as soon as possible.

Our winners for our Car Show Contest from 2024:  
1st: Dave S  
2nd Place: **Ross McDaniel**  
3rd Place: **Paul Schuler**

Board Report:

**Jim Brandberg** will be reporting on interiors tonight and is looking to talk about specialty parts coming up. Alignment discussion is planned as well at a future meeting.

**Dave Pedersen** discussed our upcoming events for the next few months:  
February we are planning on visiting the Chrysler Museum - Date Feb 22nd  
March we are going to be visiting the Guthrie to tour the prop department- Date TBD  
April 5th we have our chili feed. **Steve Eckman** has graciously volunteered to host this year. Get your recipes ready for the competition!  
May 10th is our CMI Car Show and Breakfast.  
CORSA Convention is in May this year.  
June is our GMCCA Show and BTT50s. GMCCA is June 1st. BTT50s show has changed their registration process and it will be electronic this year. Registration opens February 1st.

The club talked about opening the food donations for members to help support. **Steve Eckman** has a

contact with a non-profit that we can donate to. We are hoping to get more information soon and the club can make a donation at our Chili Feed April 5th.

**Jim Becker**- nothing to report

**Heidi Olson** is looking into moving our embroidery work to a new shop. She will be meeting with them later this month and looking to bring in new inventory. We have the popular mugs that we had at the holiday party for sale. \$15 per mug.

Tech session presented this evening by **Jim Brandberg** who talked about interiors. Clarks has good options at a reasonable price. Purchasing interior carpet at Menards and molding it the the floor is also a fairly inexpensive option. Great conversation around everything from paint, headliners, and seats.Â

Dave opened the floor or anyone that may have an issue that may want guidance or help. Open forum to discuss issues the club is having with their Corvairs. If you are having an issue that you'd like to bring to the club for support, let us know at the February meeting.

**Tom Quinn** has some canisters that would be helpful for an easy storage solution. If you are interested, let him know and he will bring some to the February meeting for you.

Thanks to **Kay McDaniel** for providing our treats for the night.

Meeting adjourned at 8:22pm.Â

Stay warm everyone!

This months notes were written by January's stand in Secretary, **Ali Long**  
*(Ali politely requests that someone make a motion that we accept the meeting minutes as printed in the Leeky Seel for the February meeting. Please and thanks!)*

*Ali Long*, substituting for

*Amber Leah*

Amber Leah, CMI Secretary

## **Corvair Tools**

I usually tend to be reflective around New Years. Not the first dictionary definition of giving back light but the second definition of inward thinking as in pause to reflect. My birthday is around that time so it's a double reason for thinking about what I've done, what I'm doing and what I intend to do. My odd introduction to a prayer at the Holiday Party was a sign of that. I've been walking daily again which is often a good time for reflection, away from the distractions.

I really like our Corvair Minnesota tradition of Tech Sessions at the monthly meetings and though my knowledge and expertise can't hold a candle to many of you, I can get the discussion going and I really appreciate your additional comments and input. Come let us reason together. In that vein I thought it might be interesting at the February meeting to have a Show and Tell of our Corvair tools.

Many of the fixtures I have for engine work I slapped together from wood chunks or metal scrap and I've been using them for decades. Nothing fancy but it works for me. Many years ago I bought a cylinder hone and ring expander off Ebay from someone in Florida that came with a nice note explaining that these were the tools of someone who had passed away and they were glad that they could be of use somewhere for Corvair work to continue. Some of the tools I have are from folks still around but unable to continue the work. I'm honored to be able to continue on but would much prefer they were the ones still around doing it.

Let's see, I've got a little bench to hold a crankcase half; a little stand to hold a cylinder head standing up or laying down; a narrow puller for a crankshaft pulley in the chassis; a slick ring compressor that was a Fastvairs forum group buy; a likewise 11/32 thread tap; a steel plate and dummy lifters for cam timing with a dial indicator; a steel plate for dial indicator on rocker arms; light valve checking springs; rudimentary measuring of valve spring pressure and travel; ring end gap grinder; head deflashing tool; pushrod tube remover; flywheel rebolting and centering apparatus; oilpan straightening dolly; rod cap removal tool; double flaring set; tube bending tools; bleeder screw socket; bench bleeder; plumb bob for oil leaks; penetrating oil; head stud installation tool; Oil pump tool; Uni-Syn and other carburetor tools; hydraulic press tools; suspension tools; turbo tools; differential side adjuster; windshield trim clips; door panel tools... Many of these things are not expensive tools but things that have been fashioned or accumulated and one has to be careful not to throw them away, they don't look like anything special when you pick them up. It's a good idea to paint them red or something .

My brother made an aluminum block with studs and a hole to mount a Rochester carburetor in the vise. I'm pretty sure he took it home but neither of us can find it. I've looked high and low so I'm suspicious of his efforts to find it but I can't hardly go over there with a search warrant. I need to make something else because the irregular shape of the carburetor does not lend itself well to clamping in the vise when a main jet is stuck, I do have a special screwdriver and vice grip.

Linda Soukup used to laugh at me for always saying "I made up a little deal"... I ran into her and Tony a few times at Back To The 50s but it's been more than a few years now. There's a lot of people who did Corvair work and were very active in our club but then up and moved away. Other people come and it's sort of the same but different, if you know what I mean. I'm largely self-taught at the school of hard knocks and my efforts are often bungling. I'd sure be happy if you could bring a tool you are especially fond of when doing Corvair work or please speak up if you have a better way. Ignorance is bliss. I sure don't fancy myself an expert, I'm just a guy who doesn't mind digging in and finding my way as I go.

*Jim Brandberg*

Corvair Minnesota, Vice President

There's a new guy on the Corvair Forum, Bob Ballew, Jr. I remember his father Bob Ballew wrote some technical articles for the Communique. I think Fran Schmit visited him at Twenty Nine Palms, CA when he went to the Fan Belt Toss and I remember Fran being impressed by Bob's engineering mind. I think Fran and Gary would get a kick out of it. The article is from 2010, I'm not sure when Bob Ballew died. I found it interesting that his wife Grace built a Corvair engine for it as a project at a college. The car still exists.

**Jim Brandberg**

<https://clunkbucket.com/a-shrunken-corvair-named-kumquat/>

## A Shrunken Corvair Named Kumquat

February 5, 2010 By Mike Bumbeck



From the West coast division of the Corvair shortening department comes this 1963 convertible dune buggy variant of the American air-cooled rear engine sports car. The car originally rolled off the assembly line as a factory turbocharged Spyder in 1963. An accident that buckled and creased both doors landed what was left the Spyder languishing engineless behind a gas station until 1971. What was left of the turbo convertible was purchased for 50 bucks to acquire a still complete dashboard. The catch was that the entire car had to go with the dashboard. Where it went began the journey of car shortening, engine transplants, and an orange paint job that lent the shrunken Corvair its name.

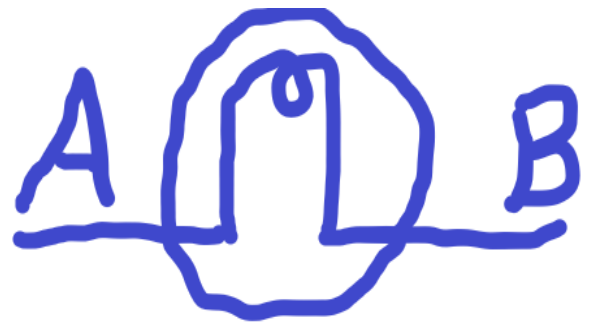


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## The 'SMART' Lite

At the January meeting a question was asked about the GEN Lite's going out (dark) when a fuse was put in. repeat: replacing the fuse turned out the light. The GEN Lite had come on when the Tranny was put into reverse and the Lite went dark when the fuse was replaced.

The LITEs that come on with the key are the GEN Lite and the OIL Lite. They are not Instrument panel lights although they are housed in the same hardware. Each bulb is housed in a socket with two wires on that socket...the socket is not grounded into the dash hardware. The bulb is essentially hanging on a wire making it appear to be a bulb with wires that go out both sides and neither one to ground. See sketch. If A is hooked to Plus and B to Minus then the bulb glows brightly. If you disconnect either A or B from its terminals the bulb will go dark and 'disappear'. This 'smart' bulb works when the key is turned on. One side of the bulb is HI and the other side goes to ground through the GEN, lighting up our 'smart guy'. The GEN Lite is telling us all the connections in the charge circuit are A-OK. When the Engine starts, and the GEN begins to make juice - both A and B are HI. This bulb would today be considered a SMART device as it figures out that the wiring is correct, the motor is running and the GEN is working – so it sends you a message ..TaDa!- Good to go.



This bulb was dark, then it was bright, and now it disappeared. Most of us take it for granted and feel comfortable knowing our smart machine has told us the 'check-engine' light is not showing. Remember, you can turn off a light by bringing both side HI (making both sides HOT!).

When our CORVAIR mechanic replaced the fuse, he brought the Plus terminal to the other side of the smart bulb. B was HI, as the engine was running, and current was going backwards through the bulb into the wiring. When the replacement fuse brought the A side HI, the bulb went dark. The OIL Lite is the other smart bulb with two wires on it and its A wire goes HI when the key is turned ON and its B side is wired to ground through a pressure switch which opens when the Engine Oil Pressure hits about 3 or 4 psi. Also telling us the engine is running. Opening this ground connection, in the Sending Unit, makes the bright red Lite on the Dash go dark into the night. Get those Garage Queens tuned up. Spring is coming....*Fran*



# CARS / PARTS FOR SALE

1962 CORVAIR (JUST SITTING)  
WRITE RUSS OBERG BOX 192 VALLEY ROAD  
BAY CITY, WISC 54723 01/84

BUTTONHEAD BOLTS FOR BOLTING FLYWHEELS  
\$3.50 SET

FLYWHEEL BOLTING SERVICE AVAILABLE  
FOR LATE FLYWHEELS

BRYAN LAPLANTE 560-0345  
WORK 635-5541 01/84

2 64 AUTOMATIC TRANSAXLES W/CONVERTOR \$35 EA

1 62 4 SPEED TRANSAXLE \$35  
BURT ELLEGAARD 941-3700 (DAYS) 01/84

FOR SALE (ALL OR PARTS)

1965 110 4 DOOR 3 SPEED  
WHITE 941-4611 01/84

'65 MONZA COUPE, LIGHT BLUE, 110/AUTO, GARAGED  
SINCE NEW, DAILY DRIVER. 59,000 MILES BEST  
OFFER

GEORGIANNE ERRIGO - 222-1698

'66 COUPE 110/3 spd, AIR CONDITIONED, ARIZONA  
CAR, CUSTOM INTERIOR. \$2000/OFFER

RON DAHLEN - 941-0215

Corvaire-chassis MOTORHOME, built new in 1975,  
21 feet long, less than 8 ft. high. Olds  
Toronado-powered, full camper equipment + air  
conditioning. Sleeps 4. In Seniors Division in  
every Concours entered. \$7200

JIM ZELEN 3510 So Broadway Springfield Mo  
65807 (417) 887-5926

'66 MONZA 110/4 Spd. Includes spare motor  
ready to be assembled. New pistons, lifters,  
valves, gaskets, rings, all balanced. -New u-  
joints, alarm system. All kinds of parts.  
\$4000 Package only.

STEVE JOHNSON 861-4936 If not there leave  
name and phone.

'63 4 Door 95/AT New paint, new o-rings, new  
brakes, good runner. \$700/Offer  
JEFF HOFFMAN 824-7344

'63 Monza Coupe 110/stick Silver-blue in and  
out. Arizona car. Asking \$1350  
RICK VERNER 433-2008

'64 Coupe A/T Asking \$300  
TODD LAWRENCE 488-1094



STEVE JOHNSON'S  
CAR FOR SALE

40 Years ago:  
LEEKY SEEL January 1984

# CARS / PARTS WANTED

SIDE EMBLEM FOR 65 CORSA  
RUSS RANKIN 789-2661 01/84

150HP (EARLY) TURBO HEAD  
2 LATE MODEL CARBS  
MIRROR GASKET FOR OUTSIDE LATE MIRROR  
BRYAN LAPLANTE 560-0345  
WORK 635-5541 01/84

WILL BUY YOUR EXCESS PARTS,  
PREFERABLY NEW, FOR CASH  
SHEL STRAUSS 522-3443 01/84

DRIVERS SEAT (OR JUST THE BACK PART OF IT)  
FOR 1963 LIGHT BLUE  
DOOR HARDWARE - SAFETY LATCH AND HANDLE  
FOR A RAMPSIDE  
MIKE GAYNOR 884-4360  
WORK 733-8093 01/84

Front air dam '66-'69  
RAY OSOWSKI 561-7418

Side Corsa Emblem for '65  
RUSS RANKIN 789-2661

Need 1 - 140 head, 3 pistons and jugs '65  
RAY McMONIGAL 489-0630

Tail light and backup lenses '65  
CRAIG DOWNEY 881-3558

WANTED: Corvaire Models in plastic, kits,  
promos, or toys in 1/25th scale, as well as  
other model cars. Please call if you have any  
for sale in built or unbuilt condition.  
BOB DIERLING 535-2615 4201 Ewing No  
Robbinsdale

## PARTS FOR SALE

More parts than you can shake a stick at. I  
specialize in NOS items that sometimes are  
hard to find. Mufflers, shocks, tune-up parts,  
some sheet metal, some upholstery, lots of  
turbo parts, dress up goodies too. Give me a  
call.  
SHELDON STRAUSS 522-3443

'66 Front cross-member, good condition, '66  
140 engine and 3 spd transaxle, '66 front and  
rear suspension, 3-spoke wire wheel covers  
JOHN MAXWELL 434-4586

'65 New Front left fender, '65 new front of  
car. \$300 for both  
FRAN SCHMIT 929-9174

Parting out '69 Monza coupe. 110/4 spd  
RAY OSOWSKI 561-7418

Parting out '64 Monza convert  
RAY McMONIGAL 489-0630

Seal up that sweet little buggy that you love  
so much! Don't let others kid you about the  
only minor problem that our favorite cars  
have. NCCA sells a dandy VITON O-Ring set that  
cures leaks once and for all. For details -  
Call  
RUSS RANKIN 789-2661

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Bob Ballew tells us that his brother Jim Ballew was the man with 50 bucks worth of Corvair in 1971. The dented shell got hauled to Bob Ballew the elder's backyard in Twentynine Palms, California. Dad Ballew, also named Bob, looked at the dashboard-less and front seat-less once-turbo coupe and thought the remaining back seat looked a lot like a deluxe sofa with built in ashtrays. The smashed doors were removed. The unibody floor pan was shortened up accordingly. A little welding, and presto! Rear seats were now front seats. Since the body was already rough from whatever accident crumpled the doors, a can of Bondo and a few coats of Fruehauf Orange finished out the exterior.

The now orange body needed an engine. A naturally aspirated 164 cubic-inch air-cooled flat six cylinder was put together as a class project at Copper Mountain College by Bob's wife Grace Ballew. With a few of Bob's tested upgrades built-in, the engine kicked out more than its factory rated 150 horsepower. This same engine still runs great today. Early test drives around town had residents yelling "Hey, Kumquat!" as Bob and Grace motored by. The name stuck. A roll cage and larger rear tires were joined by a 4:11 ratio ring and pinion in the four-speed manual transaxle with the intent of taking the Kumquat out to the sand drag races. The car wasn't competitive against the lighter fiberglass-bodied Volkswagens, so all the street-legal stuff went back in.

Bob and Grace motored about in the Kumquat on and off the road for years. While tanking up one day the car was spotted by an entertainment scout. The Kumquat passed the screen test. The 1978 movie *Just Me and You* stars not only Louise Lasser and Charles Grodin, but also features the Kumquat in a cameo role. The shortened Corvair rolls up to the flat tire stranded couple, and carries disgruntled girlfriend Louise Lasser away from the scene. A hapless Grodin is left alone in the high desert. In the real world the Kumquat was capable of travel over paved roads or no roads at all, and could lift the front wheels off the ground at any stoplight with proper use of the gas pedal and clutch.

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Around the same time the Kumquat was created, son Bob Ballew was 800 miles away in South San Francisco putting the finishing touches on a shortened 1956-57 Chevrolet two-door Handyman wagon. Bob and his wife Diane motored down to Twentynine Palms in the just finished Shorty to surprise his Dad. When the couple pulled up in the shrunken Chevrolet wagon Bob's Dad fell over laughing. Once Dad regained his composure, he walked over and pulled the cover off the recently painted Kumquat. The father and son had unbeknown to each other simultaneously built shortened Chevrolets!

While Bob and Grace Ballew have since passed on, the shortened Corvair is still with us. When son Bob went to the high desert to gather memories and the Corvair, he found a completely rebuilt show-quality Corvair engine in the garage with a note on it that read *save for Bobby (Kumquat four-speed)*. The Kumquat is ready for more, and still wears a factory turbo emblem to keep 'em guessing.

<https://clunkbucket.com/>

*There are two distinct schools of motoring. On one side are those who aspire to purchase the best and fastest automobile money can buy. On the other side are those who find a machine they can afford, and somehow make it the best and fastest automobile their money can buy. Clunkbucket tends to fall onto the other side. Clunkbucket was founded on the tradition of buying an automobile and making it better and at least running better than it was. A 40-plus year chronicle of owning and maintaining econoboxes and classics alike has honed our skills in this area. Follow along as we do everything from change the oil to swap engines into the world's finest automobiles. Clunkbucket is the place for the unsung heroes of your automotive universe.*



**OBITUARY****Elisabeth "Beth" Agnes Peterson**

**July 11th, 1944 - January 17th, 2025**

**Beth Peterson** leaves behind her husband of 46 years, **David Peterson**; children Stephanie Wasgatt, Grant Wasgatt, Nathan Wasgatt and wife Lorie; grandchildren Alexander Odegard, Miranda Cole-Wasgatt, Tyler Wasgatt, Olivia Wasgatt, Riley Wasgatt, and Julia Wasgatt, brother Greg Mengelkoch and wife Becky, brother-in-law Brian Peterson and wife Marnie, cherished niece Jennifer McDonald and husband Mike, dear friend Judi Koch, her tuxedo cat Buddy, and first husband Stephan Wasgatt as well as extended family and friends.

Beth was predeceased by her parents, Martin and Gladys Mengelkoch, sisters Marilyn Eischen (and husband Jim) and Marcia McDermaid, niece Carolyn Eischen, dear friend/sister-in-law Nancy Kangas, and lifelong friend Sue Davis, as well as extended family, friends, and beloved pets.

A private celebration of life will be at a later date.

Memorials are preferred (donor's choice).



**Check us out...**



For more information on  
Corvair Minnesota,  
visit our website:  
[www.corvairminnesota.com](http://www.corvairminnesota.com)

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Facebook:  
Corvair Minnesota



705 members

(as of 01/28/2025)

## February Birthdays



\*Ashley Akley  
\*Sue Edwardy  
\*Mike Jenkins  
\*Mike Manthe  
\*Vince Rohr



*As always, let me know if I have missed your name  
on the Birthday list - Thanks!*

**Gail Quinn**, Director of Treats  
[Gailquinn263@msn.com](mailto:Gailquinn263@msn.com)

**CMI** is a non-profit corporation, chartered with the CORVAIR Society of America. Send CORVAIR Minnesota's \$20.00 annual dues, payable by **January 1<sup>st</sup>**, to the CMI Treasurer. Membership in CORVAIR Minnesota entitles you to the monthly newsletter, the **Leeky Seel**, with free ads for members, a club window sticker, discounts on club activities, information on parts availability and good advice on the preservation and enjoyment of the CORVAIR automobile. **Yeah!**

## THE LEEKY SEEL

408 7<sup>th</sup> St S  
Hopkins, MN 55343-7722

**TEMP – RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



*The next CMI meeting will be held on the  
11<sup>th</sup> of February at Ideal Hall in St. Paul*