



Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME LIII, No. 4

April 2025



The Driver's Door has Finally been Painted Properly!

Many Thanks to George and Jimmy at Glenn Dale Autobody.

If you haven't paid your dues, this is your last issue of *Group Corvair Comments*!

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

April

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

19 – Lehigh Valley Corvair Club Swap Meet. 2510 Community Drive, Bath, PA. 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., rain or shine.

24 – Group Corvair Social Dinner. 6:30 p.m., at Not Your Average Joe's, 10400 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda MD 20814

26 – 42nd **Virginia Vair Fair**. 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., Kitchen 33 Restaurant, 13155 Mountain Road, Glen Allen, VA 23059. Note: Pre-registration ends on April 18! (See the links below.) This is just off I-295 on the north-west side of Richmond, VA. (From the DC area, south on I-95 to exit 84B onto I-295 West. Then exit 49A, onto US-33 West [it's actually toward the north]. Kitchen 33 will be about ½ mile on the left.) People's choice, model cars, parts vendors, buffet lunch and special Corvair memorabilia. Contact Frank DuVal, 540-273-6915 or corvairduval@cox.net to register. And for more information:

<https://sites.google.com/view/central-virginia-corvair-club/vair-fair>

26 – Southern High FFA Car, Truck, and Tractor show, Green Turtle, 3213 Solomons Island Rd., Edgewater, MD. 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. \$20 registration, supports Southern High School agricultural education program.

May

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

20 – 23 – CORSA International Convention. Note the change in venue to San Luis Obispo, CA.

June

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

July

10 – 13 – Detroit Area Corvair Club “Homecoming”. Ann Arbor, MI. Visit their Facebook page for more information or to register go to: <http://detroitcorvairs.com/Homecoming2025.html>

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

August

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

September

13 – Clarks Corvair Car Show, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., rain or shine. Hosted by Bay State Corvairs at Clarks Corvair Parts, 400 Mohawk Trail, Shelburne Fall, MA. 14% discount on pre-ordered parts, 10% on day of show.

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

GROUP CORVAIR 2025 OFFICERS and Points of Contact

President: Bob Hall

4612 Franklin St., Kensington, MD 20895
301-493-8405 HallGrenn@aol.com

Vice President: Mark Shiffler

174 Dividing Ct., Arnold, MD 21012
443-770-4719 mshifty@gmail.com

Secretary: Marolyn Simpson

3845 Wayson Road, Davidsonville, MD 21035
301-262-0978 or 240-232-2820
MarolynSimpson1@gmail.com

Treasurer: Jim Simpson

3845 Wayson Road, Davidsonville, MD 21035
301-262-0978 or 240-232-2820 simpsonj@verizon.net

Newsletter Editor: Jim Simpson

3845 Wayson Road, Davidsonville, MD 21035
301-262-0978 or 240-232-2820 simpsonj@verizon.net

From the Oval Garage

Bob Hall

Our attempts for a social gathering in March didn't work out, but we do have April 24th on the calendar for this month. We have a reservation for 6:30 at **Not Your Average Joe's** for that date. Please RSVP to me (hallgrenn@aol.com or phone 301-213-9852) prior to Wednesday evening, April 23rd to ensure that we will have a

place for you at our table for dinner and good conversation. You can also let Jim & Marolyn Simpson or Mark Shiffler know if you can't reach me.

The restaurant is less than a half mile from the I-270 and Old Georgetown Road intersection and less than a mile from the I-495 Beltway intersection with Old Georgetown Road. If you come from Virginia, you could also continue up the Beltway spur to I-270 and take the Democracy Blvd exit, but traffic will be heavier and, if you miss the Democracy exit, we may never see you again.

Not Your Average Joe's
10400 Old Georgetown Road
Bethesda MD 20814

6:30 PM, Thursday, April 24th, 2025

On our way back from Hershey, PA Carol and I took another look at the area around the Wyndham Hotel that will be the home of the 2026 Corvair Convention. Just east of US/PA Route 15 off of Route 30 east, the Wyndham is close to Gettysburg and all of the surrounding attractions. The Corvair Ranch is an easy drive away if you take the next exit off of 15 going north. Early spring doesn't last long, and we'd recommend a drive to see the area as nature wakes up.

Another reason for an April drive is the Lehigh Valley Corvair Club swap meet about 160 miles north of us scheduled for Saturday April 19th, from 9am to 3pm at 2510 Community Drive at the Egerton Farm near Bath Pennsylvania. Free to buyers and sellers.

We hope to see you on the 24th.

Minutes of the March Virtual Meeting

Marolyn Simpson

Group Corvair members enjoyed catching up on recent events while waiting for everyone to log into the March 18 Zoom business meeting. Bob Hall, president, called the meeting to order at 7:40 pm with nine members participating.

The minutes of the February meeting were approved as they appeared in the newsletter.

Jim gave the treasurer's report. He recently paid the chapter fee for this year. He has recently received dues from five more members. Jim has filled out and sent in the Maryland corporate tax form for both last year and this year. Because Group Corvair is a small nonprofit, there is no fee involved.

Bob H. informed the group that the blue PF4 oil filters were on the way to the "long distance" winners at the last social meeting. Bob is still looking for a restaurant for another social gathering. [Note: see calendar!]

Byron LaMotte has finished his new car barn. He suggested that going to his house on the eastern shore to see the new barn might make a good road trip this summer.

It was noted that Carl Kelson is planning to make a video of his talk at the Dayton convention last summer, but we have not seen a copy of the video yet.

Mark Shiffler now has a new clutch from the Corvair Ranch. The first one he got was not good, so they replaced it. This one has a larger pressure plate. Mark has been installing it after having some problems.

There was a discussion on the type of oil various members are using. Also brought up in the discussion were the types of oil filters being used, the frequency of oil changes, and the length of time required to do the work.

On the club to do list: we need to schedule another tech session or two with Lorenzo Church to install a dual-master brake cylinder on his '64 Monza and to convert it to an electric fuel pump.

There was a discussion on Lee Hamilton's V8 Corvair and what needs to be done to it. Lee is not interested in selling the car, but it shouldn't be left as it is.

The next topic was the California convention. Several Group Corvair members are planning to attend.

Mark is working on a club roster; he needs a picture of each member's car(s).

Clark's Corvair Parts plans to release their mechanical fuel pump in the spring. There was further discussion on fuel pumps in general—both mechanical and electric.

Mike Coale is building a 65/66 Corvair and is finding a number of slight differences between the two years.

Bob H. has been going through his collection of Corvair spare parts and is planning to find new homes for some of them.

The meeting ended at 8:57 pm.

Tech Topics

New Product(s) from Vairtrix: I've been in communication with Pete Faulkner, president and driving engineer behind his company *Vairtrix* which produces modern replacements and upgrades for Corvair instruments. As you might recall, I wrote about his first three products – an improved replacement for the Spyder/Corsa cylinder head temperature gauge thermistor, a tachometer replacement, and a really great replacement for all Corvair speedometer/odometers – back in the June 2024 issue of *Group Corvair Comments*.

He wanted to let me know that he's going to be announcing "another exciting *Vairtrix* product" around convention time. No, I don't know what it is, but if it's anything like his earlier creations, it should be very good. I hope to be at the convention, so I should see firsthand just what he's come up with this time.

But in our discussions, we came up with another interesting idea. I'd been thinking about how to do something useful regarding Corvair instrumentation for some time and had gotten to the point of a concept of how it would work. But I hadn't committed the time to actually test it. Well, Pete took my idea and prototyped a version withing 48 hours of our conversation. No, I'm not going to tell you what it is just yet – we have to make sure it works in the real world and I'm sure Pete has to make a decision if it's economically feasible to produce and market, but if it comes into fruition, it will be a good step in moving the Corvair into the modern world without changing the character of the car.

Electrical Gremlins! Lately, I've been chasing some electrical gremlins in my Corsa. The most critical is that my brake lights and turn signals, particularly the left one, have been flakey for a while. When I first start the car, we check to make sure at least all the taillights are working right – I don't want someone to rear end the Corvair because they didn't see a brake light or turn signa. So, Marolyn watches them while I put them through their paces. Parking lights work, check. Brakes lights both come on, check. Turn signals work, check. Brake lights again – opps, the left one doesn't want to come on. Odd, it was working a few seconds ago. I fiddle with the turn signal lever a bit and nothing seems to change. Ok, I get out of the car, look at things in the engine compartment, make sure that the sockets are all properly seated, scratch my head a little, and then have Marolyn test the brakes while I'm behind the car. Sometime, magically, both brake lights come on. But then after testing the turn signals, the left one stops working again. Weird.

I initially thought it was related to the installation of LED bulbs and the associated flashers. By way of background, LED bulbs are much more rugged and longer-lived than the original incandescent bulbs. At the same time, they require much less current to operate. But that can be something of a two-edged sword. The original flashers depended upon that higher current to operate. The high current would heat a bimetallic strip inside the flasher which would bend and snap open to turn the turn signal lights off while making that characteristic "click" sound. The bimetallic strip would quickly cool and click closed again to repower the bulbs and then the cycle would repeat. If there wasn't enough current, there wouldn't be enough heat to make the bimetallic strip snap open.

When you had incandescent lights – with their relatively short life – this characteristic was a bonus. If the flasher wasn't clicking when you had the turn signal on, it was a good indication that you had a burned-out light.

But with LED lights, the current is too low to operate the original flashers. Luckily there are modern replacements that work well, complete with the clicking sound. One downside is that they won't stop if the bulb fails, but given the reliability of LED lights, that's not much of a problem.

After swapping around bulbs, flashers, and a LOT of head scratching, I finally concluded that the only likely failure point was the turn signal switch in the steering column. So, I decided to remove it and check it out. I know I'd removed it years ago when I did the major restoration of my Corsa, but didn't recall it being very hard. The major

“trick” is to realize there’s a small spring steel wire “snap ring” on the steering shaft just above the bearing in the turn signal. Note that this is not mentioned in the ’65 shop manual but does show up as one of the steps in the steering column section of the ’66 and later supplements.

This time, it turned out to be a bear to remove. Most people are able to get a small scribe or very small screwdriver under one end and pry it out. They might have to pull on the steering shaft to gain a little more access room, the assembly manual says there should be at least 0.005” of end play. But no such luck on mine! For whatever reason, the snap ring was wedged down tight in its groove by the inner race of the bearing with no end play to give me access. It took me most of an afternoon, using dental picks and language I learned in the Navy to get it out.

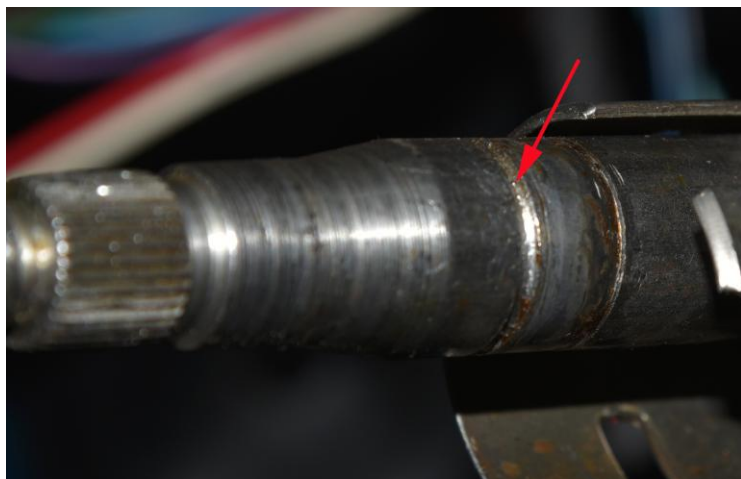
Given all the difficulty, I did make one modification that should help if I ever need to replace the turn signal switch in the future. As originally made, the snap ring is just a piece of very stiff spring wire bent into a circle. They end about 3/16th of an inch apart and are cut off flat. Those flat surfaces do not give much of a way to get any leverage on them if the snap ring is as tightly up against the bearing race as mine



Note the Angled Bevels

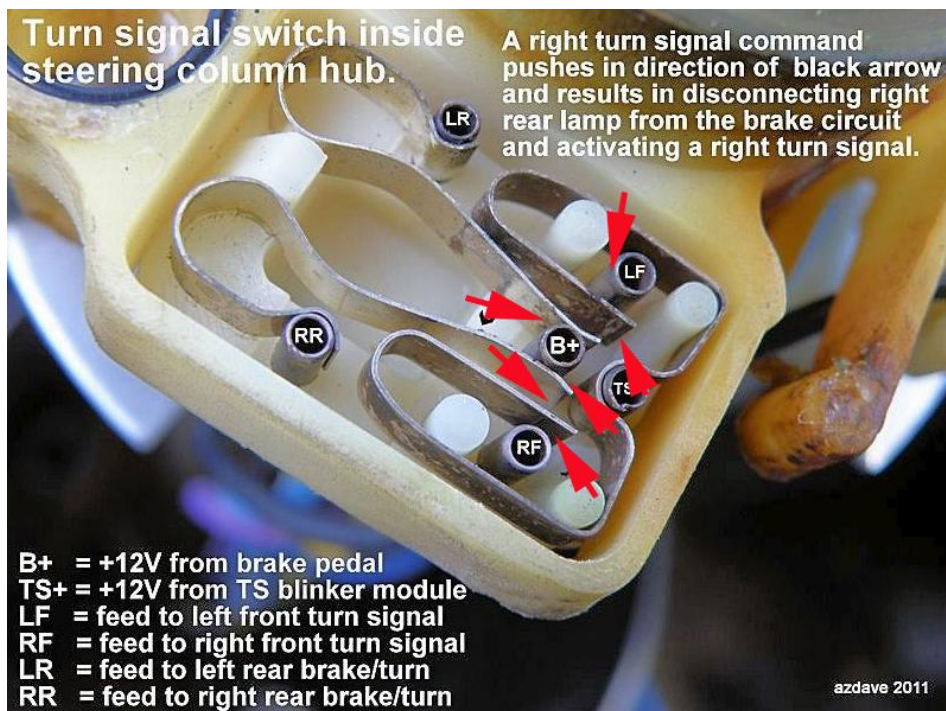
As a side note, based upon my research, early production ’65 Corvairs did NOT have this “snap ring”. At some point they made a running change to add it. I’m sure that Chevrolet had their reason, after all there was a cost involved, and they count every penny. But I can’t figure out what purpose the snap ring serves. The signal switch is held in place by screws into a plate that locks it to the steering mast jacket so it can’t go anywhere. And the steering shaft is held in place by a bearing at the lower end. But it’s there and I don’t recommend leaving it out.

Once the switch was out, the problem was obvious. The contacts in the switch were both greasy and somewhat corroded. And perhaps the LEDs did contribute to the problem. In my experience, a moderate amount of current through a switch can be a good thing. It tends to burn off minor amounts of contaminants when making and breaking contact. Very low currents don’t do this and depend upon having good, clean contacts. (The good side of this is that as long as the contacts remain clean, they will never burn out.) In the picture of the switch above, the red arrows point to the six moving contact points. If any of these don’t make good electrical contact, one or more of the turn or brake lights may not work.



Retainer or “Snap Ring” Groove

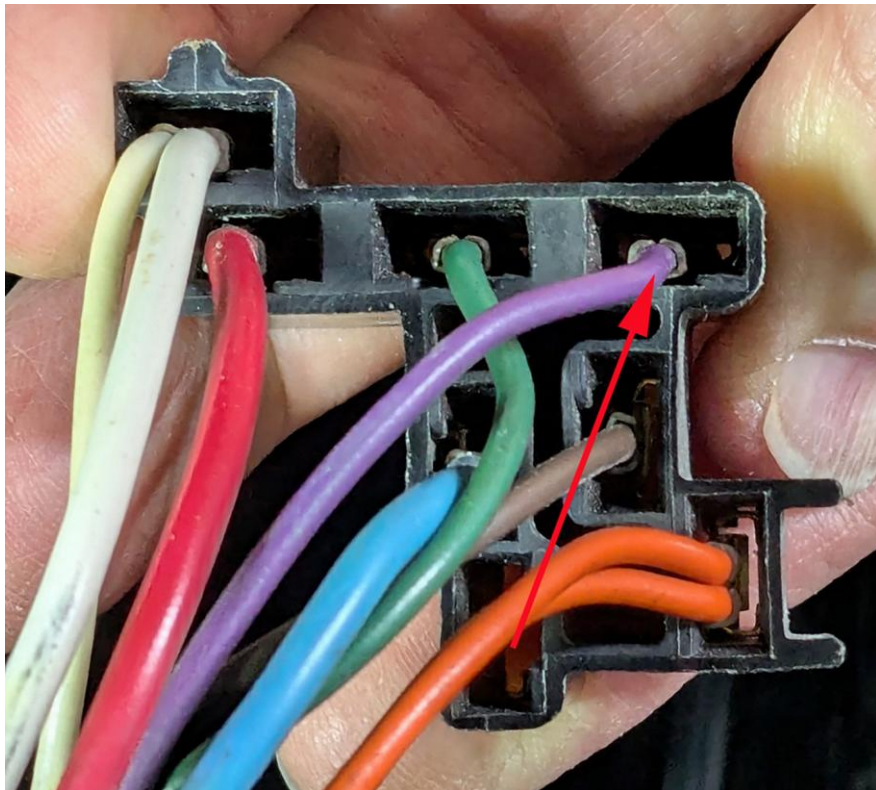
was. Picks and screwdrivers tend to just slip off. To give some purchase and allow some leverage, I ground undercut bevels in the ends. A pick will now go under the spring wire and (hopefully) just pop it out of its groove.



While I could have just cleaned the contacts and reinstalled the switch, I decided to play it safe and replace that 60-year-old piece of plastic with a new one. Even the best plastics do age and become brittle with time. And given the problems I had getting it out, I didn't want to replace this switch ever again!

The second problem was with the headlight switch. A little while ago, I made a modification to make the front parking lights come on with the headlights. It was a quite simple modification that applies to '64 – '67 Corvairs and was written by Lloyd Short and published in the *CORSA Tech Guide*. All you do is move one of the connections on the headlight switch plug from one position to another. The *Tech Guide* has an illustration, but here's a picture that shows the change clearly. The red arrow shows where to move the purple wire from the lower left slot to the upper right one.

My problem was now the dash lights wouldn't come on with the headlights. I thought initially it must have something to do with the modification above. But that didn't make any sense at all since the headlight and dash light power are on totally separate parts of the headlight switch – no common electrical paths.



While you can get the headlight switch out without removing the instrument panel, it's much less painful on both your hands and back if you remove the panel to gain much better access. And besides that, I wanted to do some work on the instrument panel – installing a *Vairtrix* speedometer, tach, and new LED lights. (More next month on that...)

Once the headlight switch was out, again the problem was easy to diagnose. The section of the switch that supplied dash light power wasn't making good contact internally. You can open them and clean them, but again, given the pain of getting to it, plus that it is 60 years old, a new one is going in. That the problem showed up at about the same time as the modification must have been a complete coincidence.

Next month I plan to dissect the headlight switch and see if it can be salvaged and put in my spares collection. I should also be able to give a report on the performance of the LED dash lights and new *Vairtrix* instruments.

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 – including some nice cars! Contact Mike Coale, mikecoale@verizon.net or 443-994-2559 and see just what he has available.

Corvair Part and Services

Clark's Corvair Parts

400 Mohawk Trail, Shelburne Falls, MA
01370
www.corvair.com

Wolf Enterprises

Carburetors & Collectibles
32605 Rhode Island Ave.
San Antonio, FL 33576
GyoungWolf@earthlink.net

Email or call for free catalog at 352-588-0645

Eddie Meadows Automotive

991 Foxfire Trail
Oviedo, FL 32765
407-36-09748

S & S Corvair Parts

1816 Laurel Road
London, KY 40744
Bill Slusher Owner

Phone 606-878-2862, Text 606-224-2207

Handy Car Care – Ken Hand

1896 S. Gregory Rd.
Fowlerville, MI 48836
248-613-8586

Corvair Parts

Nos Late Model
Used All Years
Pete Claffey - Cell 706-830-2818

Bill Cotrofeld Automotive, Inc

America's Oldest Corvair Shop
3630 Route 7A Arlington
P.O. Box 235
East Arlington, VT 05252
Call or write for a free brochure.
802-375-6782

California Corvair Parts

We would like to let everyone know about our
growing online parts store at:

www.CaliforniaCorvairParts.com

More than 30 parts categories including everything
from New, Used, Rebuilt and NOS items. The store
currently features over 560 parts available, and we
are adding more every week. For those of you who
enjoy shopping online we invite you to have a look.

We accept all credit cards and of course Pay Pal
payments too. 951-284-3555, 15090 La Palma Dr.,
Chino, CA 91710.

Corvair Ranch

1079 Bon-Ox Road
Gettysburg, PA 17325
717-625-2805

Glenn Dale Autobody

An "Old School Paint and Body Shop"
Willing to take on "interesting" restorations
and custom work on both Domestic and Imports.
Contact Jimmy
9451 Smith Ave., Seabrook, MD 20706
301-577-7973

Lehigh Valley Corvair Club

All-Corvair Swap Meet

¹⁹
Saturday, April ~~12~~, 2025 rain or shine
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

at the Egerton Farm
2510 Community Drive, Bath, PA 18014

FREE for sellers ● **FREE** for buyers ● **FREE** admission ● **FREE** parking

REFRESHMENTS (okay, they're not free) **50-50 Raffle** (that's not free, either)

Corvairs, Corvair Parts, and Corvair-Related items only, please.
Sellers, bring your own tables or tarps or canopies.
Buyers, bring cash!

Visit our Facebook page

