



Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME LIII, No. 5

May 2025



After Dinner at “Not Your Average Joe’s” Restaurant.

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

May

20 -- **Group Corvair On-Line Meeting.** Sorry, but our regular virtual meeting has to be either postponed or cancelled due to other commitments. Watch your email inbox for any announcements!

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.

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From the Oval Garage

Bob Hall

May marks 56 years since the last Corvair, #6000 of the '69 model year, was assembled at Willow Run (and also its disappearance). How time flies. Maybe #6000 will show up at the 2025 Convention this month.

Several club members will be in attendance at the Convention from May 20th through May 23th in San Luis Obispo so there won't be a social dinner this month. We do plan to have a regular Zoom meeting so be sure to look for Jim Simpson's email Zoom invitation later in the month. [Still up in the air.]

At least six GC club members will be flying to California for the Convention—Jim and Marolyn, Ron and Eileen and Carl and Arlette. You can read more about Carl and Arlette's 1965 air-conditioned, powerglide Monza convertible (and right-hand drive) show car in the first installment below in this newsletter. Jim will have more info to share about this “down under” Corvair next month.

Eleven of us met at “Not Your Average Joe's” in Bethesda for our April social dinner. Good people, lively conversation and good food made for an enjoyable evening. The upcoming convention was a main topic for discussion. Bob Walker brought his wife Monica from Reston, Virginia so we finally got to meet her after seeing her in the background at our Zoom meetings. Mark Shiffler came from north of Annapolis and won the ACPF4 (blue) oil filter long distance award.

I got a call from the owner of '65 110 PG asking for help locating a mechanic after his car started smoking a lot. He had had the brakes, carbs, steering and alignment done at the Ranch recently and they gave him my email. I referred him to Mike Coale who will try to fit him into his shop's schedule soon. I will try to see the car to do a diagnosis in the next few days.

I'm looking forward to "seeing" you all at the May Zoom meeting soon. *[Editor's note: It's going to be touch and go getting a meeting in this month.]*

Minutes of the April Virtual Meeting

Marolyn Simpson

The April 15 Zoom Group Corvair meeting was called to order by Bob Hall at 7:37 pm with eight members present on-line including our Australian compadre who delayed his breakfast just to be with us.

The minutes of the March meeting were approved as written in the last newsletter. Jim Simpson gave the treasurer's report. Several members have not paid dues yet, which are \$10 per year.

Mark Shiffler, who is working on a club roster has received several pictures of members' cars but is looking for more.

Bob has sent out the PF4 oil filters which were used as long-distance awards for coming to the February club social dinner. Congratulations Phil Richardson and Bob Walker!

There was a discussion on the possibility of a tech session at Byron LaMotte's house in Oxford, MD on the Eastern Shore. He's built a new storage building for his collection and we all felt it would make a nice club tour.

Mike Coale had heard about a Corvair with factory air-conditioning and an original 8-track tape player. The car, a 1967, 4-speed, with 110 hp, had good "cosmetics" but when you did a closer inspection, it needs a lot of work.

Carl Kelson had his car finished, passed all the technical and safety inspections, and it is now fully licensed for the road. But when he took it out for a more lengthy drive, a "metallic sound" started coming from the engine. He thinks it may have dropped a valve seat. He is planning to take the engine out to fix the problem, but he won't start the work until after he gets home from the convention in May. There was additional discussion on fixing the cylinder head problem. [Keep in mind that Carl drove this car over 5,000 miles across the US from Florida to California just after he bought it and shipped it to his home in Australia. There were no signs of any engine problems then. However, the engine has been sitting for about two decades while the body was being restored and converted to right-hand drive.]

Several years ago, Jim Govoni set up the Group Corvair private group on Facebook. It currently has about 2,000 members! But we also need an actual website; Bob Hall has paid for the Group Corvair domain name. CORSA does host club websites, but we do need someone with a little bit of website savvy to set it up.

The next Group Corvair social will be on April 24 at "Not Your Average Joe's" (just off I-270) in Bethesda at 6:30pm. [Note: the dinner went great, see the picture at the front of the newsletter.]

Mark reported that his car runs and shifts fine, but he is still having some problems with it. It hangs at 6000 rpm. This may be another opportunity for a tech session. [This seems to have been resolved finally. It appears that the throttle linkages, where they connect to the bellcrank on the side of the transaxle, were interfering with each other.]

Jim elaborated on the electrical gremlins tech topic he wrote about in the last newsletter and added that he has installed both new turn signal and headlight switches. They seem to have cured the gremlins problem. Next on the project agenda are LED dash lights and hopefully a way to make them fully dimmable. A general discussion followed on dash instruments, including the Vairtrix speedometers and tachometers.

There was no new information about the upcoming PA convention.

The meeting ended and we signed off at 8:48 pm.

Tech Topics

Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) in the Dash. This is a follow-on to last month's article on me (Jim Simpson) chasing electrical gremlins in my Corsa. Specifically, the left-hand brake light didn't light sporadically, and the

dash lights didn't come on when the headlights were turned on. I was able to track down the problems to a bad turn signal switch for the brake light and a worn headlight switch for the dash lights. Problem solved – hopefully for the rest of the life of the car...

But as with any project, the “while I’m in there” bug took over. I had to take the dash out to access everything, so I figured while I’m in there I’d change over to LED dash lights. Potentially they would be brighter and more reliable, although I have to admit that I’d never had a dash light burn out. And I’d also been looking at the Vairtrix digital replacements for the tachometer and speedometer/odometer. And while both original analog units in my Corsa worked fine, it’s just a matter of time before they wear out, right? So, let’s put the new ones in.

For this month, let’s talk about the LED lights. The original lights are #1816 incandescent miniature bayonet base bulbs. LED replacements are plentiful – BA9S. But there are a LOT of BA9S bulbs out there – various colors, many vendors, and very little standardization, so which to choose?

I won’t say I made a random choice but came close. The “KEIUROT” brand on Amazon had good reviews and they were reasonably priced, (About \$12 for ten, pre-tariff pricing) so I bought a selection. Since the Corvair instruments cases are painted a pale green inside, I assume the intent was to give a mild green cast to the dash lights. So how about some green LEDs? And if they weren’t bright enough, how about some bright white ones? And finally, because incandescent bulbs tend to have a “warm” glow, how about some warm white ones to round out the selection.

Here are the results, but be aware that the camera “sees” things a bit differently than the human eye:



**Green LEDs on Left
Original Incandescent Center
Bright White LEDs on Right**



**Bright White LEDs on Left and Bottom
Warm White LEDs on Right and Top**

Well starting with the picture at the left above, it’s obvious that green LEDs are a bit too green and wash out the red instrument needle. The bright white LEDs aren’t too bad and give the instruments a modern look. But I still like the original “warmth”. The warm white LEDs in the picture on the right above seem to work well. So, here’s the dash with all “warm white” LEDs:



All Warm White LEDs

Not too bad! There’s still more work to be done that I’ll get to next month.

Carl Kelson's Marvelous Monza Down Under (Pt 1)

This is an article that the Australian magazine *Unique Cars* just published on Carl Kelson and Arlette Pat's 1965 Corvair Monza. As the title of the magazine implies, it is devoted to rare and unique cars in Australia. If you do an on-line search for the magazine covers, you'll see that Australia has a real bonanza of truly exotic cars – both domestic and imports – that we rarely, if ever, see here in the US.

While Corvairs are fairly common here, they are a rarity in Australia; GM never imported them for sale there. Carl has noted that GM did bring one over when they were first introduced in the US, but the handful that are in Australia today are all private imports.



CORVAIR MONZA



MAGIC MONZA

IN ITS FINAL YEARS THE
ONCE-FLAWED CORVAIR HAD BECOME
**A MUCH-EVOLVED COMPACT CHEVROLET,
AND A FINE DRIVER'S CAR**

WORDS ROB BLACKBOURN WITH CARL KELSEN & ARLETTE PAT
★ PHOTOS NATHAN JACOBS

Given my long-term interest in Chevrolet's boldly engineered but ultimately ill-fated Corvair, I enjoyed the prospect of checking out the remarkable example belonging to Australian Chev guru Carl Kelsen, that's located in the Eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

Carl's Corvair Monza convertible is a second-generation model built in 1965. With the launch of the second-gen Corvairs, Chevrolet engineers had effectively addressed the issues that had dogged earlier

models, the first surfacing some months after Corvair's late-1959 initial launch.

The publication year for Ralph Nader's book *Unsafe at Any Speed* was also 1965 – by which time the deficiencies Nader highlighted (in early Corvairs) were part of history. Progressive improvements over the years, culminating in the all-new, Corvette-style, independent rear suspension in 1965 meant the Corvair had become a unique automobile, a sophisticated hybrid that successfully combined design influences from

As you will see in this article, Carl and Arlette converted their 1965 Monza to right-hand drive to match the road laws of Australia.

The engineering is excellent, but the fit and finish of the car are truly superb as you can see in the pictures and accompanying text. Can you imagine making a complete Corsa dash contoured for the right-hand side of the car? And incorporating the power glide selector in the dash, something Chevrolet never did in the Corsa? And the attention to detail is phenomenal as well as the installation of a correct metric (kilometer) speedometer/odometer in that dash.

Congratulations Carl and Arlette on a marvelous car! And thanks for obtaining permission for us to use the article.

The article is being broken into installments. More will be included in future Group Corvair newsletters.

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If you are interested in their magazine, take a look at their web site:

<https://www.tradeuniquecars.com.au/>

CORVAIR MONZA



THIS PHOTO
'Coke-bottle'
curves are clearly
visible on this
spectacular
angle of the
Corvair.

"WHAT HAD BEEN A WHITE CAR WITH IVORY TRIM EMERGED AFRESH SPORTING A HIGH-GLOSS BLACK BODY WITH RED TRIM"



both the USA and Europe. Before showing me the Monza, Carl took me to his three-car garage housing a trio of The General's finest – a 1962 Chevrolet Impala, a 1983 Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz and a 2017 Holden Caprice. They all present perfectly and they're all black. Something of a pattern there ...

And the pattern continues as you step into the separate space that houses his recently completed 1965 Chevrolet Corvair

Monza convertible. It's perfect. And black ... I kicked off our conversation with a left-field question saying: "Carl, with this being GM-Central, what's that photo of a VW Beetle doing on the garage wall?"

"My first car was a Volkswagen Beetle and I think that it was mainly because my parents didn't think that I could afford the petrol for a bigger car or certainly a V8 at 18, so a VW was my first car.

"So, I became quite passionate about

Volkswagens and I think that early interest in air-cooled cars was one of the things that ultimately steered me toward the Corvair."

It turns out that Carl's wife, Arlette, also figured in the decision to chase a Corvair on eBay in 2004. Arlette is a serious fan of the styling of the second-gen Corvair that overlays the more utilitarian lines of the earlier model with subtle 'coke-bottle' curves. Arlette has also gone beyond skin-deep involvement with cars – there



TOP LEFT After a two-week journey through the USA, Carl was getting to know his new purchase.



ABOVE RIGHT Countless hours went into replicating the dash for the RH-drive conversion.



ABOVE A suitable resto candidate, with a genuine 31,000-miles! The colour transformation was worth it.



Vair Vendor

For Sale: Early and Late Parts:

'64 3.27 differential, \$40; '64 3.27 4-speed transaxle, \$100; '64 Sylder 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 Sylder, \$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).

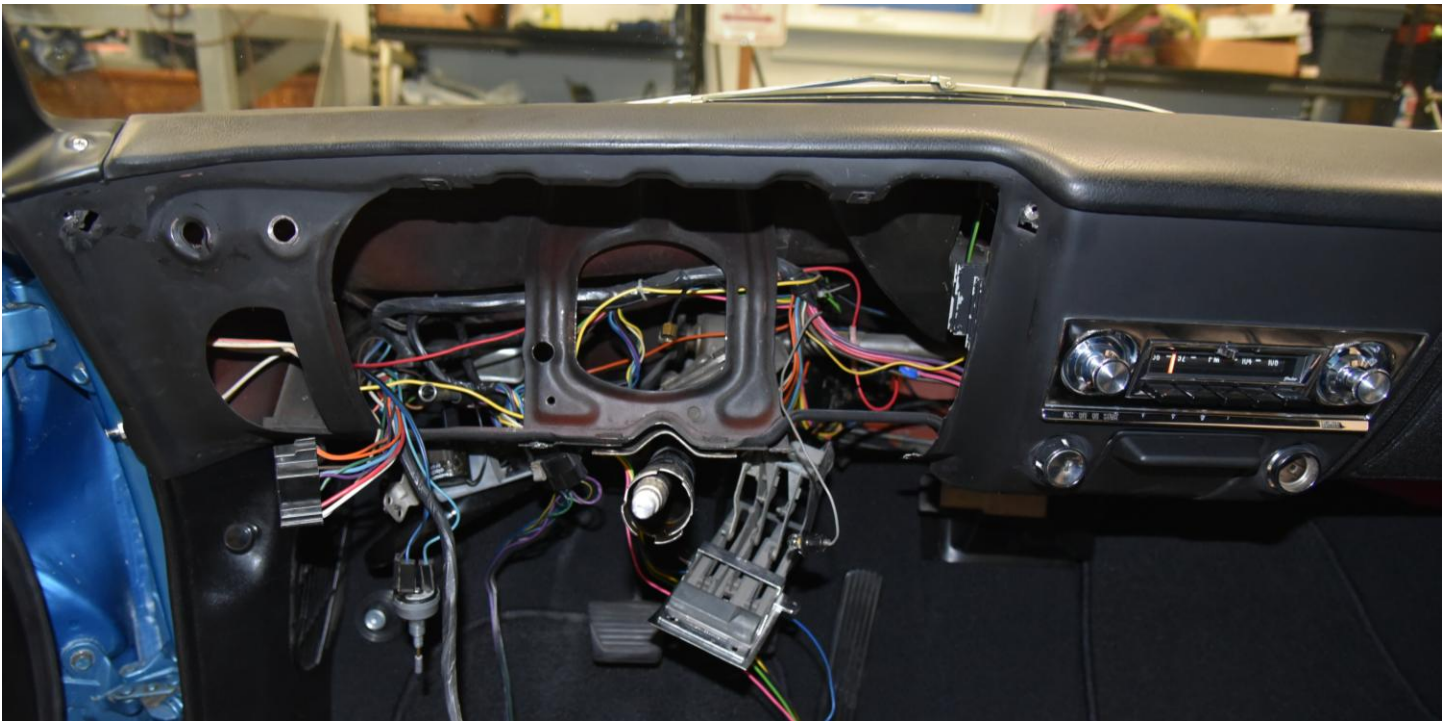
Prices are negotiable. Contact Bob Lewis, 301-246-4278, rtl1936@gmail.com.

(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.

For Sale: '65 Corvair Monza Coupe. 110 hp, power glide. Mechanicals totally gone through, engine recently rebuilt by a professional mechanic. Drives great. Located in Myrtle Beach, SC. (It's a southern car.) Asking \$17,000. Contact Fred, 516-640-8074.

(5/25)



Dashless! Working on my Corsa Dash and tidying up the wiring harnesses.

Jim Simpson

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