



Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME LIV, No. 1

January 2026



2025 Chauffeuring 2026 in Style. (AI image by Google Nano Banana Pro)

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

January 2026

It's time to pay your annual Group Corvair dues!

The Club needs YOU! Dues are a mere \$10/year. Please send a check, payable to **Group Corvair**, and mail it to Jim Simpson, 3845 Wayson Rd, Davidsonville, MD 21035. (I'll also be at the Holiday Social – see below.)

20 -- Group Corvair On-Line Meeting. 7:30 p.m. Zoom link will be sent via e-mail the weekend before.

29 -- Annual Group Corvair Winter Holiday Social. 1 p.m., Nonna Angela's Italian Bistro, 2225 Defense Hwy, Crofton, MD. Let Bob Hall know if you are coming to ensure a seat.

February

17 -- Group Corvair On-Line Meeting. 7:30 p.m. Zoom link will be sent via e-mail the weekend before.

March

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

April

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

May

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

June

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

22 – 26 – CORSA International Convention, Gettysburg, PA. Note several Group Corvair members will likely be there a day or two early to set things up. Group Corvair is responsible for the opening day car show!

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From the Oval Garage

Bob Hall

Happy New Year to everyone and best wishes for the successful completion of your Corvair projects prior to the 2026 CORSA International Convention June 22-26. Jim Simpson forwarded the latest convention information on Christmas Eve and some Group Corvair members have already made their reservations. Now is the time to start checking the CORSA website periodically to stay in touch with any changes to the schedule, events etc. Group Corvair continues to work with CORSA at their monthly Zoom meetings to pin down details and this newsletter will also keep you up to date with the preparations for the June 22nd, first day cruise in/people's choice activities we are sponsoring.

Group Corvair will meet for lunch at 1:00 pm at Nonna Angela's Italian Bistro in Crofton MD on January 29th . Please let me know if you plan to attend by the evening of January 28th to be sure to have a seat at the table.

In regard to Convention planning we would like to visit the Wyndham Hotel in March or April with as many Group Corvair members as possible so we can become familiar with the parking lot and hotel layout and get member input and questions answered well before June 22nd. Please look at your calendars and let Jim, Mark and/or me know what dates work best for you. As many of us are retired, a weekday trip would work well and avoid some of the crowds visiting Gettysburg.

Remember that Jim Simpson (and his coeditor, Marolyn) puts a lot of work every month into creating Group Corvair's newsletter. He needs the input from our club members to do so. Jim's hard work was recognized by CORSA's best newsletter award in 2024. Send Jim info on your latest projects—challenges and successes—so he can share them with the rest of us.

“See” you at or next Zoom meeting and see you on the 29th.

Minutes of the December Virtual Meeting

Marolyn Simpson

Group Corvair's Zoom business meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, December 16 at 7:30 pm. Bob Hall, president, was unable to attend the meeting so Mark Shiffler, vice president, took over. While six members were logging on, Jim Simpson gave us an update on the work he has been doing with Pete Faulkner of VairTrix. Pete has a project where he uses the stock Corvair radio, but it has a much better speaker and Bluetooth connection.

Mark started the "formal" meeting by asking Jim to give the treasurer's report. There has been no change in the treasury since the last meeting—no new income or expenses. Minutes of the November meeting were approved as they appeared in the newsletter.

Carl Kelsen brought us up to date on his projects. He is making good progress with his engine rebuild. Fortunately, he has confidence in those working on it. The shop is very impressive, and they have extensive experience with Porche and other air-cooled engines. They found the problem – a washer had fallen in one of the intakes and had made its way into a cylinder. The damage was minimal and fixable. Carl's primary objective is to make the engine as reliable as possible. And, as luck would have it, he had just received seven boxes from Clarks.

There was a discussion about parking for the car show, outdoor vendors, and parking for the concours cars at the Gettysburg convention. We've contacted the Northern Virginia Club for their help with directing traffic and parking.

We have added a couple new members to Group Corvair recently and we may be getting another new member—this time from California.

Mark suggested that we keep the same club officers until after the convention. We will bring up the topic again at the January meeting.

The meeting ended at 8:30 pm.

2025 Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show Wrap-up

Marolyn Simpson

Amanda Knox, the Rockville city staff member in charge of the show, hosted the Rockville Wrap-up Meeting on December 9 at the Glenview Mansion. There was a good turnout of the representatives of the show's sponsoring clubs. The purpose of the meeting was to share the statistics from the last show, recognize the things that worked well, and discuss those that still need improvement.

The mayor and council award winner was a 1923 Model T Huckster owned by Richard Bassett of Rockville. The body of this Model T had been found in Rock Creek and was restored to show condition. (This was one of a half dozen cars that Jim Simpson and Sandy Kemper [Porsche club] narrowed out of the field for the mayor and council to select from. Out of the many, many show quality cars, we picked ones that were in some way iconic or unique.)

For the last two years, all entries for the show have had to be pre-registered. The registrations included 626 show cars, 3 sale cars, and 24 flea market spaces. At the show there were 522 cars on the field, 2 sale cars, and 23 flea market spaces. This year the field was slightly larger than last year, which had 513 cars. It is estimated that 550 is the maximum number of cars that will fit comfortably on the field.

The estimated number of spectators has remained consistent at about 12,000. (The city provides shuttle buses and monitors the parking which gives them a way to estimate numbers. And from Jim Simpson's experience watching people walking up the hill at the front entrance, this is a highly believable number.)

Everyone agreed that the pre-registration requirement worked well. It was much easier to set up the field and more efficient at getting the cars lined up on the field on show day. There were very few would-be participants who had not gotten the word about the pre-registration requirement and had to be turned away.

One area that still needs improvement is food—we need more food trucks. At times there were long lines at the food trucks, and we could also use more variety.

Next year the show will be on **Saturday, October 17 with pre-registration starting July 13.** The entry fee of \$20 will not change for 2026. The field will be open for spectators from 11:00 am to 3:30 pm. BE THERE WITH YOUR CORVAIR!

You **Do** Want Some Group Corvair Apparel!

Group Corvair is going to purchase another batch of club logo apparel. We're evaluating a couple sources, one local and the other a mail-order company where we purchased our last ones some 15 years ago. We can't match exactly the ones we got back then since they are no longer made, but we will look for good quality materials that stand up to wear and are easy to clean.

We're discussing the default color, but we want our logo to stand out and that the shirts can be worn in the sun without overheating. We also plan to get ballcaps.

Apparently, the logo will have to be simplified to fit on a hat, but it still should be recognizable as Group Corvair's. We're not entirely sure about pricing – best guess right now is in the \$30 range for a polo shirt and \$15 - \$20 for ballcaps.

Right now, we need a count of how many people want them and a general idea of quantities. Don't forget, Group Corvair is a sponsor of the week-long CORSA Convention in Gettysburg this year and you might want a change of clothes. And of course, your significant other will want some matching apparel as well!

So send a note to Mark Shiffler (mshiphty@gmail.com), Bob Hall (HallGrenn@aol.com), and me, Jim Simpson (simpsonj@verizon.net) so we can start putting an order together. We will get back to everyone to get final numbers, sizes, and colors as well as the prices before we put in any orders.

Tech Topics

Fan Belt Maintenance: Courtesy of Mike Dawson via the **Central Pennsylvania Corvair Club** and **San Francisco Bay Area Corvair Club**.

FAN BELT MAINTENANCE

The Corvair boasted a specially designed belt that G.M. used only after rejecting at least four different designs. Since G.M. discontinued the original design years ago, no other company has duplicated it exactly - I kept an original and compared all of the reproductions. Some are close but not exact. Anybody can have good luck with a \$5.00 belt, but if you want one close to the original, use a 3V560 wrapped, industrial belt. The original belt was 55 3/4" x 3/8". The 3V560 belts are sold by most Corvair vendors as "super belts"; the Gates and the Bando belts work great on any Corvair with the correct items as noted here. (Here is a link for Clark's who sells their belt made specifically for your Corvair: https://ssl.corvair.com/user-cgi/catalog.cgi?show_page=14)

INSTALLATION CHECKS

Drive pulley or balancer should be checked for rust, wobble or separation and the timing notch checked for a sharp edge that can wear the belt. Idler pulley should be checked for rust, wobble and dents caused by pry bars. The big washer on the slide end of the bracket must be between the nut and the slide, not between the slide and the casting. Check fan pulley for rust, wobble and dents and most important for proper height. On the car reference: lay a straight edge across the top of the pulley, measure down to the shroud next to the choke rod (intake flange) on the left side. It should measure exactly 6" for 62-69 and 6 5/32" on original 60-61. This dimension will be wrong if your fan bearing was installed incorrectly or if it has moved in the top cover where it should be an interference fit.



ALTERNATOR/GENERATOR ALIGNMENT

The pulley must be exactly 3" outside diameter. Rebuilders often change them and even a 1/4" size difference will change belt alignment. Look for a loose generator mount on the left end, check for the proper alternator/generator adapter. As with other pulleys, check for rust, dents, wobble and wear.

BELT TENSION

There should be a 3/8" deflection with a 15 lbs. load between the idler and the fan. The book calls for 55 lbs. if you have a strand tension gauge. You can barely turn the alt/gen fan with your thumb when correctly tensioned. Tension should be checked after a break in period. (*Editor's note: I have a strand tension gauge, but when the belt is tensioned to 55 lbs. it seems to be much too tight. I prefer to use the "just be able to turn the alt/fan with your thumb approach.*)

BELT GUIDES

The rear guide can easily be installed on any year; the top guide should be in place on any that have the mount holes in the top shroud. Clearance between belt and guide is 1/16".

If the GEN/FAN light comes on, stop ASAP. Determine if the belt is working or not. If it is, you can drive the car but have the charging system checked as soon as possible. If it is off, replace it before driving. Once a belt comes off, the cords are bent, and it will continue to flip.

If you must drive, follow the owner's guide instructions for operation without a belt. (Short drives with the heater fan on high.) **NEVER** drive a Corvair when the TEMP/PRESS light is on; you are already at 550+ degrees. (*Editor's note: Stop and let it cool for a while before taking your next short drive.*) Remember, if you ruin an engine by overheating, it probably cannot be rebuilt due to softened aluminum in the heads and crankcase.

*SFBA Note: *On top of carrying a spare fan belt, every Corvair owner should have this handy wrench -- <https://ssl.corvair.com/user-cgi/search.cgi?part=C3773> -- sold by Clarks: . Not only will it cut your time down on a belt change, but it is also very handy for removing carbs and disconnecting battery terminals.*

And Speaking of Heat

Dave Newell, the Corvair Historian, has provided the following article on a rather obscure piece of Corvair history. As I'm sure you know, the 1960 Corvair debuted with a gasoline-fired heater. The combustion chamber was in the trunk, air was drawn from the passenger compartment, heated by this small furnace, and recirculated back into the car. It was very effective, producing plenty of heat within seconds of being turned on. Unfortunately, it cut significantly into fuel economy and occasionally gasoline fumes would accumulate in the trunk leading to explosions! Chevrolet quickly transitioned to the "Direct Air" heating system in 1961 that continued through 1969. But first there was another "Direct Air" heating system that was briefly advertised but never made it into production. Here's the story as published in the January 2026 issue of the Central Virginia *VAIRifiable News*:

"Corvair Hot Air" by Dave Newell – December 2025

The optional 1961 Corvair "Direct Air" hot air perimeter heating system was designed in Chevrolet Engineering as a crash program to replace the 1960 gasoline-fired heater option in Corvair cars. The gas heater had to go but was kept alive one more year for Corvair cars as a 1961 dealer installed accessory.

Designed jointly by Southwind and GM's Harrison Radiator Division, the gas heater could cut Corvair fuel economy by 5 mpg in constant operation. The heater worked well after initial bugs were fixed and produced almost instant heat, but lingering gasoline fumes continued to cause explosions in the trunk. Already challenged with defending their Corvair fuel economy advertising claims, Chevy's Sales Department was screaming for a different heating solution. Thus, Chevrolet General Manager Ed Cole set up a Saturday emergency meeting at his home. Together with a few top engineers from Fisher Body, Harrison and from Chevrolet's HVAC and body design groups, Ed directed the air heater design on that day.

The drawings done at the meeting showed hot air from the bottom of the engine routed up to the heater box where it passed through a copper-finned Harrison heat exchanger. The exchanger in turn transferred the heat into fresh air destined to be blown into the car's interior via ducts below the rear seat and through hoses inside the body's rocker

panels. The volume of the air flow and its temperature could be independently regulated by the driver via air valves or shut off completely.

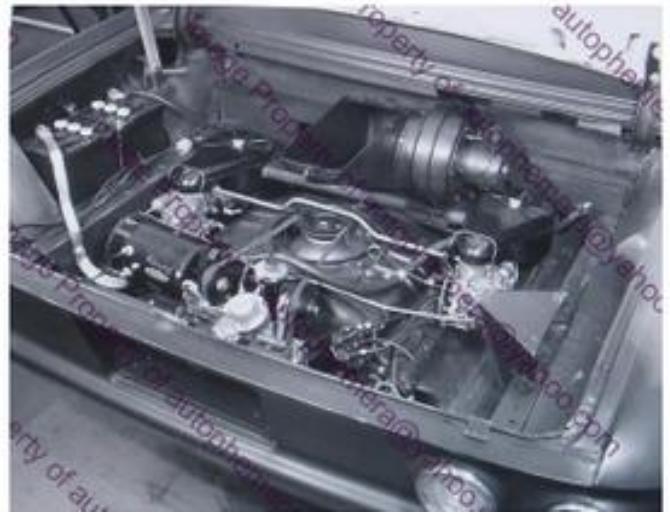
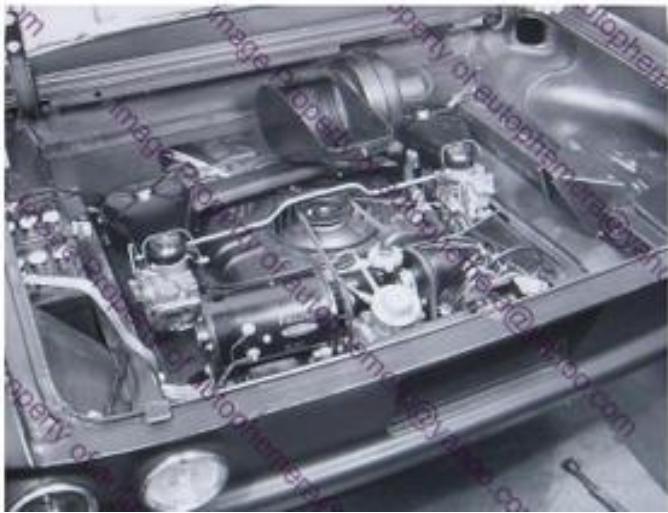
This new system wouldn't have been possible if the Corvair's body design hadn't allowed space for hoses in the rocker areas. Nor could it have worked if Chevy engineers hadn't already designed the engine's new-for-1961 damper door arrangement which controlled cooling air flow at its exit. These factors were indeed design serendipity amid chaos!

The new air heater had the same problem in Corvair test cars as VW had with its own heat exchanger design: very anemic heat output. The upcoming '61 Lakewoods and FCs would have been four wheeled Frigidaires in Buffalo winters. So, Ed Cole ordered the removal of the heat exchanger despite warnings from some of his engineers about potential carbon monoxide entrance into the car's interior.

With the heat exchanger, the heater blower had to be located in the engine compartment on the firewall. Without it, there was room for the blower to be mounted below the heater box itself, which now served as a mixing chamber for combining temperate engine compartment air and hot lower engine air. The temperate air was then given a boost up to the heater box by the engine's fan via a hole in the front of the top shroud, and then through a short hose and duct.

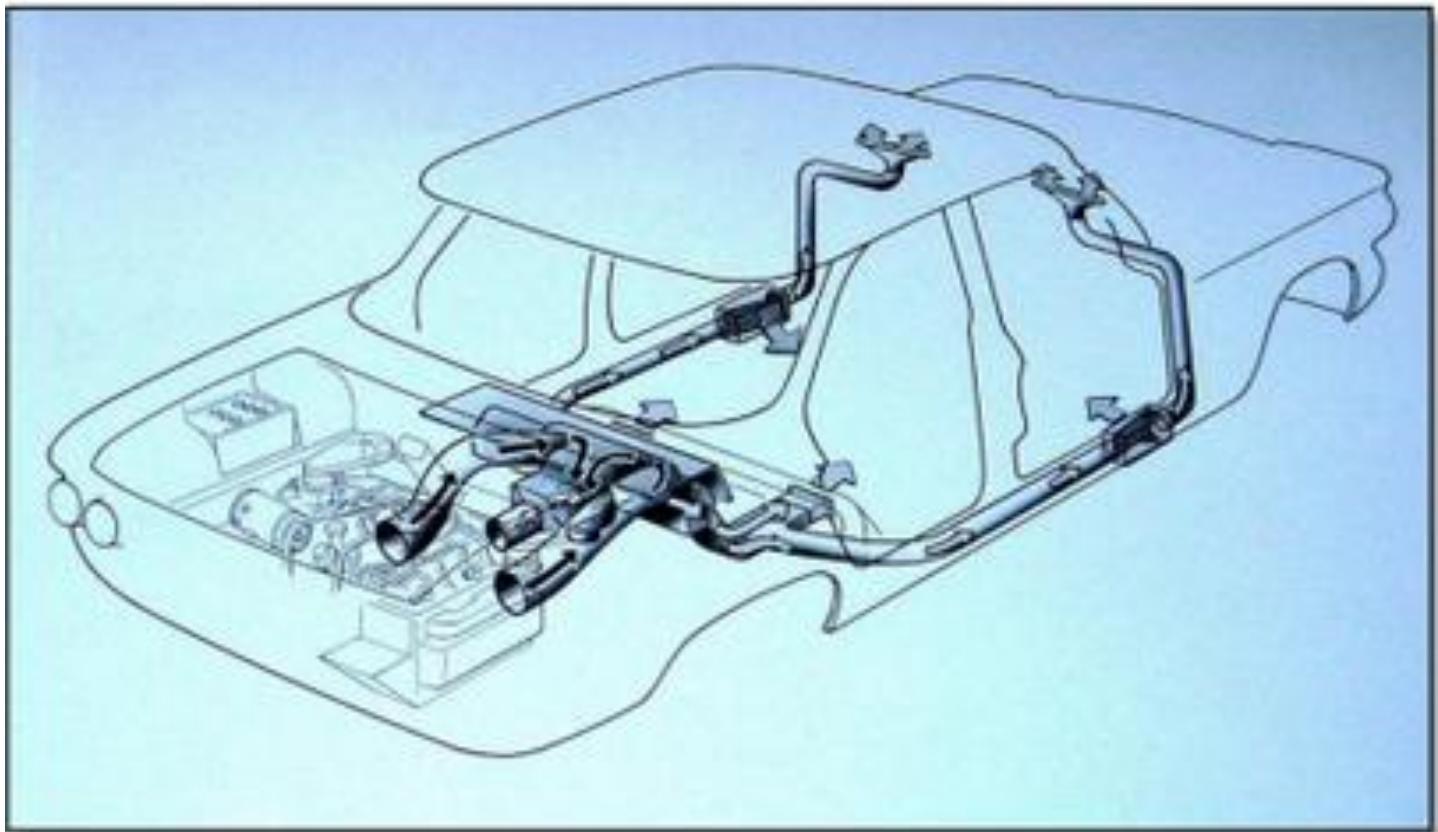
The Corvair Direct Air Heater story had yet another twist. The hurried design of the heater and the ultra-late removal of its heat exchanger caused unrevised text to slip by and be published in the 1961 Corvair car consumer accessory brochure and in the '61 Chevy dealer accessory album. The air heater text in both of those publications merrily describes the operation of the HEAT EXCHANGER including its hundreds of copper fins! The embellished illustration of the heater's layout is correct for the production heater but one of the added callouts points to the air mixing chamber and dubs it the "Heat Exchanger".

Neither 1961 publication was ever revised, but the 1962 editions have properly corrected text which doesn't mention a heat exchanger. The callout, though, stayed the same. None of this really mattered because the air heater was made standard equipment on all 1962 Corvair cars at the last minute. That move killed the air and gas heaters as dealer installed accessories for cars. Both heaters remained available as either factory or dealer installed for FCs through 1965 as they had been in 1961.

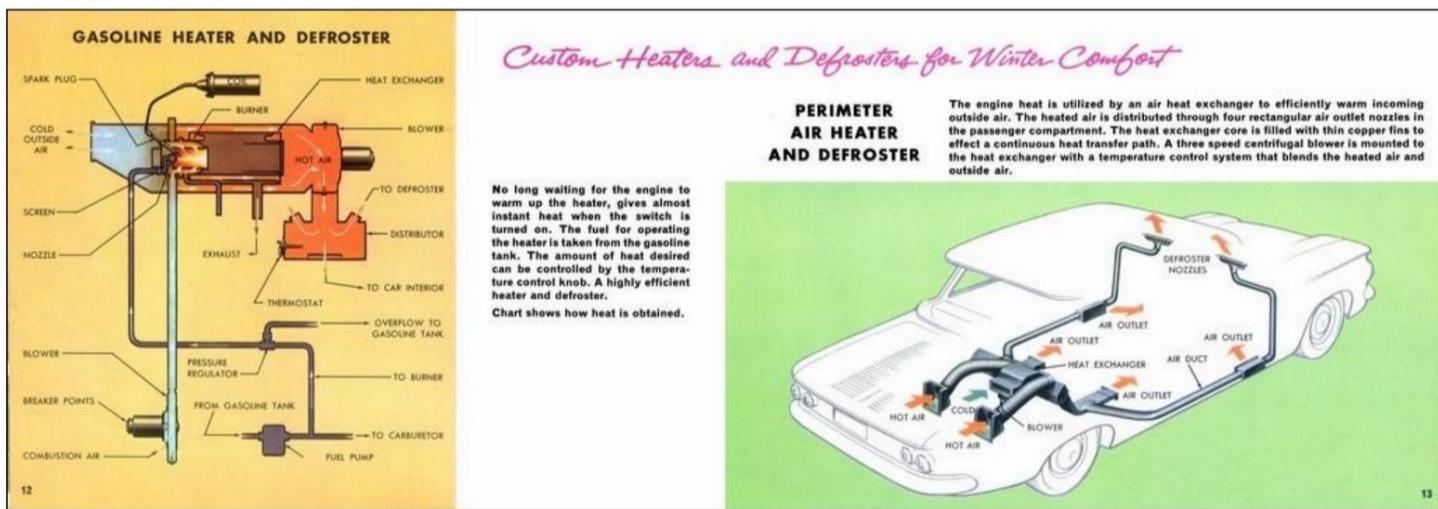


Above left and right: First design perimeter heater blower layout in prototype 1961 test car. The heater box forward of the firewall had not yet been installed in these two photos. The car in the photos is a Chevy Engineering prototype incorporating all the 1961 changes made up to that time including the manual choke, redesigned firewall, left hand battery, air cleaners etc. All the new parts had to be physically test fitted for tolerances before they could be road tested. Note absence of production firewall duct and hose which routed fresh air from the top shroud to the heater box. Those weren't needed with this heat exchanger system.

(Text and water-marked photographs courtesy Dave Newell.)



Above: Embellished catalog art was based on this drawing done by Chevrolet Engineering.
(Drawing courtesy Dave Newell)



Above: Corvair heater options as shown in the "consumer's" 1961 Corvair Custom Features Accessory booklet. On the left is the gasoline heater. On the right is the Perimeter Heating System with a call out for the "Heat Exchanger" that did not go into production. The text for the Perimeter System reads:

"The engine heat is utilized by an air heat exchanger to efficiently warm incoming outside air. The heated air is distributed through four rectangular air outlet nozzles in the passenger compartment. The heat exchanger core is filled with thin copper fins to effect a continuous heat transfer path."

The 1961 Chevy dealer Accessory Album uses the same diagram as shown above in the consumer booklet, but provides a more detailed description as follows:

"A new type heater and defroster embodying principles unique in automotive heating with more complete air distribution throughout the passenger compartment. The engine heat rejection is utilized by an air to air heat exchanger to efficiently warm incoming outside air. The heated air is then distributed through four

rectangular air outlet nozzles arranged about the passenger compartment boundaries to produce effective cross flow perimeter heating. The heart of the heater system is a large rectangular air to air heat exchanger core and is located over the transaxle. The heat exchanger core has 72 passages, and each passage is filled with thin corrugated copper fins to effect a continuous heat transfer path. A high capacity three speed centrifugal fan is mounted to the heat exchanger with a temperature control system that blends the heated air and outside air."

Vair Vendor

(It's a new year and I've deleted ads that have been running for a considerable time. If you have something Corvair related you'd like to sell or buy, please send in an ad – they're free!)



2026 CORSA Convention Hotel Reservations are Open

It's time to get your hotel reservations for Gettysburg 2026! **June 22-26th, 2026**. In the new issue of the Communiqué, you will find all the information needed to make your reservations for the convention, along with a high-level schedule. **Wyndham Gettysburg** is the host hotel. It has both King and Double Queen rooms available for the convention. The rate is \$159 per night, not including local taxes. Please make your reservations early to ensure we fill our room block. To get the convention rate, reservations must be made before May 21st. After that date, the rate may not be available. There are two ways to make reservations:

To simplify the reservation experience, contact Wyndham Gettysburg directly. Do not call any corporate toll-free number or third-party site. Phone the hotel at 717-339-0020, extension 3 for reservations, and use the name CORSA National Convention for the convention rate. A credit card will be required to hold the reservation.

Another way to make a hotel reservation is to log into the CORSA website at corvair.org, select News and Events, then choose "CORSA Headlines", for the link. [CORSA Headlines](#)

To extend your vacation, the hotel will offer the convention rate three days before and after the dates of the event, if rooms are available.

Registration for the convention will open soon! So, check the CORSA Website page often. Reminder: Convention registration is open to CORSA members only, so be sure to renew to attend.

SAVE THE DATE!



The 2026 CORSA Convention is being presented by four clubs:

- *Mid-Maryland Convair Club*
- *Central Pennsylvania Convair Club*
- *Group Convair*
- *Northern Virginia Corvairs*

We hope that you will join us for what is gearing up to be the biggest and best convention to be held on the East Coast! Come join in the fun and the history of Gettysburg- tour the battlefields, take a ghost tour, and dine at historic restaurants!

You can even visit wineries, tour car museums, and even spend time at the world-famous Hershey chocolate factory and the fun-filled Hershey Park.

Like the country life? Gettysburg is a short hour drive from the heart of the Amish communities in Lancaster PA where you'll find fantastic dining and shopping.

What's the schedule of events? Take a look at what we have planned:

- Monday, June 22nd: Welcome Party
- Tuesday, June 23rd: Concourse
- Wednesday, June 24th: Road Rally
- Thursday, June 25th: Autocross
- Friday, June 26th: Econo-Run
- Friday, June 26th: Banquet and Awards
- Tours, technical sessions, and other fun and exciting activities and

"See You There in Your 'Vair!"



Gettysburg and Vicinity. Note the locations of the CORSA International Convention hotel and the Corvair Ranch – Easy to get to.

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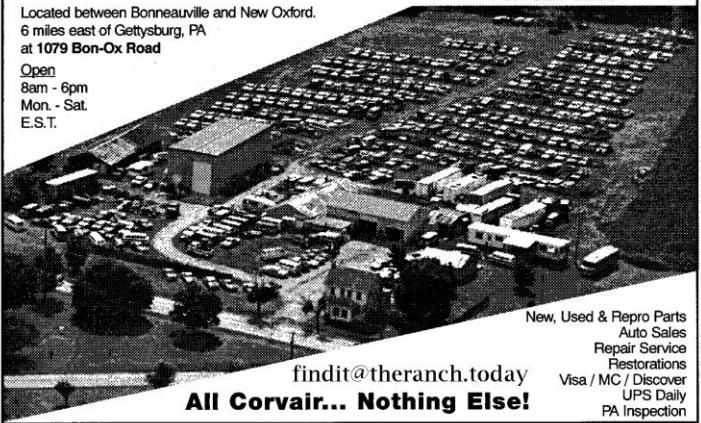
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