

# NORTHERN VIRGINIA CORVAIRS



**HOT  
AIR  
MAIL**



NVCC, CORSA Chapter 220

Volume XXVI, Number 4

April 2009

## CHAPTER CHATTER

By A. J. Paluska, Jr

Compared to the first two meetings of the year, attendance was off at the March 2009 meeting hosted by Jason Matthys. Including Jason, only three members plus one guest were available to work on Jason's Greenbrier. The project for the day was to install a dual master cylinder, but that was sidetracked to work out the vehicle pulling to the left when the brakes were applied and also to diagnose the cause of "loose" steering. Helping out and providing some history on Jason's vehicle was Mike Stillwell from Lexington, VA. Mike actually knew the original owner of Jason's Greenbrier. He is also quite knowledgeable when it comes to working on Corvairs, having seven of his own.

Darrin Hartzler, Greg Walthour and your editor were present to help out. First, the left wheel was pulled and the brake drum removed. All looked OK except for some minor wetness by the wheel cylinder. Next the right wheel was pulled and the same checks were made. That wheel was OK. Darrin suggested a slight adjustment to that wheel and everything was put back on the vehicle. The next step was a test drive. Upon completion there was no pulling to either side when the brakes were applied so one objective was accomplished.

The next job was to tackle the "loose" steering. While the front wheels were off the steering wheel was moved lock to lock and no looseness was detected. A look under the vehicle revealed no unusual conditions present that would affect the steering. Another test drive, with Greg

at the wheel, was conducted. As Greg owns and drives a Rampside and a Greenbrier, it was determined that he would best be able to determine if the steering was "loose". At the completion of the test drive, it was concluded that the steering was OK and that no further work was required.

Despite the cold early morning weather on the first full day of spring and the fact that Jason's house does not receive any sun in the morning the work was performed very quickly. That completed the meeting activities.

The 30th Annual Virginia Vair Fair is rapidly approaching. So don't forget to mark your calendars now for the Vair Fair to be held in the beautiful Fredericksburg, VA area. Events include a free Friday night social, People's Choice Concours, swap meet, Saturday banquet and a rally or autocross. Host motel is the Holiday Inn - North, Fredericksburg with a room rate of \$89 plus tax. Phone 540-371-5550 for reservations and mention Corvair Show to get the special rate. See other details in the club calendar on page 2.

Also don't forget the CORSA International Convention to be held in Jacksonville, Florida. Sponsored by the Florida clubs. Host Hotel is the Wyndham Jacksonville. See details in the club calendar on the next page.

### 2009 NVCC Officers

**President:**

Bryan Blackwell  
6329 Hillside Road  
Springfield, VA 22152  
(703) 569-6908  
[bryan@skiblack.com](mailto:bryan@skiblack.com)

**Vice President:**

Ron Tumolo  
905 North Amelia Street  
Sterling, VA 20164  
(703) 430-6582  
[rvtum@verizon.net](mailto:rvtum@verizon.net)

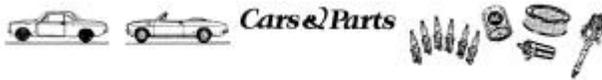
**Treasurer:**

Darrin Hartzler  
8214 Beech Tree Drive  
Bethesda, MD 20817  
(301) 365-7332  
[dhartzler@ifc.org](mailto:dhartzler@ifc.org)

**Secretary/Editor:**

A. J. Paluska, Jr  
6839 Brimstone Lane  
Fairfax Station, VA 22039  
(703) 250-4455  
[ajjr13@earthlink.net](mailto:ajjr13@earthlink.net)

The Northern Virginia Corvair Club (NVCC) publishes the HOT AIR MAIL newsletter monthly as a service to its members. NVCC is a non-profit chapter of the Corvair Society of America (CORSA). The \$10 annual dues are payable January 1st, to "Treasurer, NVCC" at the address herein. A prorated amount of \$5 is accepted for periods of less than six months. All other correspondence and submissions can be addressed to the Secretary/Editor. Newsletter expiration date is three months beyond dues anniversary if they are not current. Original material appearing in the HOT AIR MAIL may be reprinted in other non-profit publications with appropriate credits.



**\*\*\*AUTOMOTIVE CLASSIFIED\*\*\***

**63 Convertible:** Red with good body and nice paint. Asking \$6000.00, new engine, condition 3 to 4 on scale of 5. Contact Jim at (540) 465-5066. (6/08)

**64 Monza Convertible:** Red with white interior. 110HP with powerglide. Original, not running, worth restoring. Located in Gaithersburg, MD. Contact Woody Schwartz at (802) 375-6160. (10/08)

**64 Coupe:** F&A Auto Sales at (804) 224-0588. (9/07)

**65 Convertible:** 140 HP PG, 44K miles, maroon and black. \$15000 OBO. Call Bob at (304) 263-2763. (7/07)

**Parts/Miscellaneous For Sale**

**Parts:** From our club's 65 coupe parts car: Right hand door, 4 Monza Wheel disks. Call Venice Cox at (703) 791-6517. (1/05)

**STILL AVAILABLE:** 2007 Vair Fair T-shirts. Priced for quick sale. Another can't miss opportunity to own rare Corvair Memorabilia! **HURRY** as they went fast at the 2008 Vair Fair!

**Corvair Vendors and Services**

Clark's Corvair Parts, Inc.  
Route 2, 400 Mohawk Trail, Shelburne Falls, MA  
01370-9748 (413) 625-9776

Corvair Underground  
PO Box 339 Dundee, OR 97115  
(503) 434-1648 or (800) 825-VAIR

Corvair Ranch, Inc  
1079 Bon-Ox Road, Gettysburg, PA 17325  
(717) 624-2805, [www.corvairranch.com](http://www.corvairranch.com) Email:  
[corvairranchinc@earthlink.net](mailto:corvairranchinc@earthlink.net)

**WHEELS NEEDED:** Looking for a set of 14-inch steel rims and or 15-inch rally wheels. Also a set of 14-inch wire wheel covers. Don Lintvet: [don@lintvet.com](mailto:don@lintvet.com) or (703) 4431801.

**TECH SESSIONS:** Venice Cox, 4th Saturday of each month, 10 AM to 2 PM. Any member is welcome to assist Venice during these sessions. (703) 791-6517

**NVCC Calendar**

**18 April 2009, 9:00 AM:** The regular NVCC meeting at the home of Greg Walthour.

**8-10 May 2009: 30th Annual Virginia Vair Fair, VA Central Virginia Corvair Club**

Friday night social, people's choice show, swap meet, valve cover race, Saturday banquet, and rally or autocross. Holiday Inn North Fredericksburg, 540/371-5550, mention "Corvair Show" to get special \$89 rate. Wade Lanning, 8015 Driftwood Dr., Prince George VA 23875, (804) 861-5748, [wblanning@comcast.net](mailto:wblanning@comcast.net).

**16 May 2009, 9:00 AM:** The regular NVCC meeting at the home of A. J. Paluska, Jr.

**20 June 2009, 9:00 AM:** The regular meeting at the home of Bryan Blackwell.

**18 July 2009, 9:00 AM:** The regular meeting at the home of Darrin Hartzler.

**13-17 July 2009, CORSA International Convention, Florida Corvair Clubs,** Jacksonville, FL. Host Hotel is the Wyndham Jacksonville, 800-996-3426. Mention Corvair Society for \$99 rate. Register online [www.wyndhamjacksonville.com](http://www.wyndhamjacksonville.com), click "Search using Corporate, Promo and Group codes," enter your dates and 0719886CO for Group Code. Contact Sarah Beltrami, 386-615-0072, [sarahvair@juno.com](mailto:sarahvair@juno.com).

**Next Regular Meeting:**

**Saturday, 18 April 2009, 9:00 AM**

Greg Walthour  
7025 Coventry Road, Alexandria, VA 22306  
(703) 768-6040

**Directions:** Map/directions on the mailing cover.

**Treasurer's Report:**

Balance (2/25/09)	\$3,270.60
NECC Dues	(\$20.00)
Interest	\$.87
Closing Balance (3/31/09)	\$3,251.47

Reprinted from the February 2009 *Corvairations*, the newsletter of CORSA Ontario

### **The POWER GLIDE** by Norm Helmkey

This is an edited version of an article I wrote in the Canadian Old Autos newspaper in March 1993 called "Bulletproof Power Glide." Many of the facts and figures come from the Corvair SAE paper titled: Corvair Automatic Transaxle by F.J. Winchell. A must read for the Corvair enthusiast.

A remarkable fact about the Corvair Power Glide, is how trouble free it is. From a restorer's point of view, the Power Glide is the easiest automatic to service. Also, the drag racers also think it's a darn good transmission. JW Performance Transmissions have made a big business of supplying Power Glide transmissions and parts for both street and strip cars that can handle up to 1,200 h.p.

Today, most Corvair owners (who treat their cars as rare collectibles) would never think of shifting from forward to reverse at full throttle, which happened to be one of the design criterion for the automatic transmission on which we still depend. Dual master cylinder brake systems and handbrake aside, a Power Glide equipped Corvair has a safety brake system not realized by many.

It is a comfort to know, that in an emergency, IF ALL ELSE FAILS (with the brakes, that is), it is possible to bring a 2,500 pound Corvair to a stop by shifting from forward to reverse, without damaging the Power Glide.

A great story was told by Larry Knipe, Ultra Van Manager, back in the sixties. "An 80 year old man spent the mandatory two days, learning everything about the Ultra Van before driving away with his new coach. Six miles from Hutchinson (where they were made), he was so happy with the way his Ultra was running in "D"rive, he shifted to shift to "R"acing to go faster. The vehicle came to a screeching halt. The Power Glide was undamaged, but the Ultra training course was immediately altered to include reversing.

For those interested in how this remarkable transmission came about, very informative reading can be found in the SAE paper mentioned above. The Corvair Power Glide has a very pedigreed heritage. When the Corvair was introduced in 1959, the Power Glide had been in continuous design improvement since 1954, about 7 million had been made.

In 1959, GM statisticians calculated Power Glides had been run over **200,035 BILLION** consumer miles! With this many miles behind it, when the first Corvair was delivered to the public, engineers at GM were confident the transmission could take almost any customer abuse, since Corvair gear stresses were only 60% of a full size Chevrolet V-8. It came as a big surprise when failures appeared in early Corvairs. A few drivers, trying to show off the new Corvair, by power shifting at full throttle. Occasionally (since there is no reverse lock-out) shifts were made from forward to reverse, putting horrific strains on the drive line. GM immediately set new standards for a redesigned Power Glide. To insure adequate "abuse" capacity, the "new" Corvair Power Glide would have to survive shifting from low to reverse with a wide open throttle, no less than **ONE HUNDRED** times on dry pavement.

Surprisingly, even when the changes were made, no reverse lock-out was provided to prevent going from forward to reverse at any speed. Some of the changes involved better air cooling around the

converter which was based on high temperature tests encountered in heavy city traffic, turnpike cruising, desert driving and climbing Pikes Peak.

The "worst case" scenario had to cope with a many variables, such as how much energy was delivered to the clutches, fade characteristics of the clutch material, pump delivery, clutch plate temperatures, and last but by no means least, the engine speed at which a driver might shift from forward to reverse.

The final point of this article, is to make sure all Corvair drivers with automatic transmissions, know they always have a "Brake of Last Resort", ... in panic mode, just move the shift lever to "R"acing.

Reprinted from the February 2009 *Vaircor*, the newsletter of the Heart of America Corvair Owners Association

#### The Preventative Maintenance Series - Mike Dawson

This month: how to deal with lost keys, keys locked in the car, or how to steal a Corvair.

A useful little device than can be carried in your billfold (or purse) for gaining entry into any Corvair is the little spring clip that holds the air baffles up against the cylinders in all Corvair engines: about 31/2 inches long with an eye on either end. To open a wing window, gently push one end past the rubber under the vent handle with the eye to the rear of the car. Push in on the vent window and rotate the clip counter clockwise. The vent handle will unlock and you can reach in to open the side window or door. This method is quick and will not damage anything.

The wiring for the Corvair starter operation begins at the battery, travels twenty plus feet through several connectors and switches (depending on transmission) to end up only two feet from the battery where it started. To bypass all of that, run a jumper wire from the positive battery terminal to the purple wire in the two wire connector found at the left front of the engine compartment. Unplug the connector and touch the jumper wire to the purple wire that leads through the rubber grommet in the sheet metal. Anytime you make the connection, the starter will engage. The engine will only start if the key is on, so you can use this for compression checks, setting dwell, fuel pump testing etc.

In order for the engine to run, the coil receives less than six volts to the + terminal because of a resistance in the wiring. Full battery voltage is supplied only during the cranking to help starting under extreme conditions. If you apply 12 volts during running, the points will quickly burn and the engine dies. To run an engine without using the ignition switch, make up a jumper as follows: cut a length of standard wire (any gage from 12 to 20 will work) that reaches from the positive battery connection to the positive coil terminal. Attach a clamp or clip for the battery end and a smaller clip for the coil + terminal end. Purchase a \$6.00 coil resistor from a parts store and attach it in series in the middle of the wire. Wrap it with tape because it gets hot to the touch. You also could use the original resistance wire from another harness. Anytime this jumper is hooked up, the engine will run until you unhook it. You cannot run other accessories with this jumper, only the ignition part of the engine. Also be sure you don't lay the wire against anything that moves when the engine starts.

When I need to drive a car without keys, I use all three of the above. Next month I'll cover the way to prevent somebody from using these methods.