

Prairie Capital Corvair Association

P.O. Box 454
Pawnee, Illinois 62558

The Flat Six

January 2023

2023 Officers

President -Tim Mahler	(217) 793-3824	Vice-President Jim Allen	(309) 361-5351
Secretary-vacant	(Call Tim)	Treasurer-Glen Rittenhouse	(309) 472-3882
Membership-Chris Hall	(217) 691-6529	Historian/Inventory - vacant	
FlatSix Editor Tim Mahler	(217) 793-3824	Email	PrairieCapital@corvair.org

Board of Directors

Mike Hall (2023)	(217) 494-7105	Chris Hall (2024)	(217) 691-6529
Jim Collier (2023)	(217) 972-2285	Brian Nicholson Jahn (2023)	(217) 891-0808

From the Prez

Well, here we go again. I'm back as Prez and am still the PCCA editor. I enjoy both, keeps me active in the club which makes the club more fun. We do need more active members - even if only for a meeting or two such as giving a presentation of some type - it doesn't have to be specific to Corvairs, but old automobile related would be nice - models, another classic car, restoration effort, or Q and A on some aspect of the Corvair all work.

The CPF Corvair Museum is now officially the National Corvair Museum and has the blessing of GM folk. Yes, GM has acknowledged the Corvair Museum after a visit in the Fall. The Museum still needs your support, not just monetarily but also help staffing the museum so it may be open more frequently. Contact Mike Hall for more info.

January is the 46th anniversary of the start of PCCA - the first meeting was January 1977. Bill and Shelby Berta and Sue Biggs are two remaining members from those early early days. Others joined in the following year or two. Yeah PCCA. May the club continue for many many more years.

Also in January, the editor is celebrating his 25th year. With help from Mike Hall, Tim published his first FlatSix newsletter for January, 1998. Bob Long was the prior editor (for 15 years) who did the old fansion cut and past for each newsletter - by hand. Tim has used a computer for every issue. Easier.

Board Meeting at 1:00pm January 14, followed by the general meeting at 2:00pm. Working on a presentation. We meet in the Corvair Museum, so presenting details on one of the many special Corvairs in the museum is a distinct possibility. Who will present and which car is still a question mark.

If you have any ideas, shows, presentations that you want to see, Please let me know. Together, we can make it happen. Oh at least, have fun trying.

Stay warm and safe - Spring is just around the corner.

Tim



Calendar of Events - 2023

PCCA Home Page may be found at <http://www.corvair.org/chapters/chapter627>

Directions to the CPF Corvair Museum near Glenarm Illinois. Take exit 88 from I-55, from either direction, head west – turn right if you are traveling south on I-55, left if traveling north. Follow the road as it curves to the left, south. Go straight at the stop light (turning right takes you to Chatham). The Museum is 1.3 miles from the stop light on the right hand side – just past the Double J campgrounds.



2023 Calendar – A start to the upcoming year

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| January 14, 2023 | PCCA Board Meeting 1:00-2:00 pm. At the Musuem. Everyone is welcome. |
| January 14, 2023 | PCCA Meeting 2:00-4:00 pm. LOCATION: the CPF Museum in Glenarm
Refreshments: Rich Grooms Program: Fitch Sprint Demo Corvair |
| February 11, 2023 | PCCA Meeting 2:00-4:00 pm. LOCATION: the CPF Museum in Glenarm
Refreshments: Carrie Allen (Bernie and Jim Allen) |
| March 11, 2023 | PCCA Meeting 2:00-4:00 pm. LOCATION: the CPF Museum in Glenarm |
| April 8, 2023 | PCCA Meeting 2:00-4:00 pm. LOCATION: the CPF Museum in Glenarm |
| May 13, 2023 | PCCA Meeting 2:00-4:00 pm. LOCATION: the CPF Museum in Glenarm |
| June 10, 2023 | PCCA Meeting 2:00-4:00 pm. LOCATION: the CPF Museum in Glenarm
This may become the Pawnee Prairie day Show in Pawnee. |
| June 19-24, 2023 | 2023 CORSA International Convention June 19-24, 2023
Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells, WI
Concours, Road Rally, Economy Run, Autocross, swap meet, tech sessions, More |
| July 8, 2023 | PCCA Meeting 2:00-4:00 pm. LOCATION: the CPF Museum in Glenarm |
| August 12, 2023 | PCCA Meeting 2:00-4:00 pm. LOCATION: the CPF Museum in Glenarm |
| September 9, 2023 | SOS Auto Show, downtown Springfield 8:00am to 3:30pm
PCCA Meeting 1:00pm. At the show. |
| Sept 29,30, Oct 1 | Great Plains Corvair Roundup. Guthrie Oklahoma (just North of Oklahoma City)
Car display, Corvair Concours, swap meet, other activities |
| October 14, 2023 | PCCA Meeting 2:00-4:00 pm. LOCATION: the CPF Museum in Glenarm |
| November 11, 2023 | PCCA Meeting 2:00-4:00 pm. LOCATION: the CPF Museum in Glenarm |
| December 9, 2023 | PCCA Christmas get together, luncheon. Need location and ideas, please. |



For more Corvair Events Check the calendar on the CORSA Web site:
www.corvair.org

PCCA December meeting

Thanks to Mike Hall, we were able to meet at Abe's Hideout for the annual PCCA Christmas get-together. We had to move the date from Saturday to Sunday because we made the reservation for the room late in the holiday season. You got to book early for the best places. The food was good and the camaraderie was great.

I counted 15 attendees at the get-together. This is close to the number of members at the monthly meetings but far shy of the usual number for the December get-together. The late shift in days (to a Sunday) plus winter snow birds traveling south were the two main culprits. We will try to do better next time. If you have an idea where to meet, let us know. In the past, we had one or two couples who enjoyed checking out new locations.

The meeting was mostly a casual - no official business was conducted but we did announce the PCCA enthusiasts of the year awards, you need to sign the attendance record to be eligible.

Mike Hall did announce the Corvair Museum is now officially the National Corvair Museum. Mike also gave a brief recap of the show which featured 5 Corvair wagons in the Chicagoland areas. Great exposure for the Corvair amongst a bunch of muscle cars. The wagons were a hit.

The 2023 CORSA international Convention is slated for June in Wisconsin Dells. 2024 and 2025 are still being discussed but at least a destination or two have been identified.

Oh. PCCA Enthusiasts of the year awards. Would it surprise you to learn that Mike Hall won the Male PCCA Enthusiast of the year? He did, mostly by attending meetings. Mike does a lot for PCCA and lately even more for CORSA and the CPF. Thanks Mike.

The Lady PCCA enthusiast of the year was surprised. Attending meetings for most PCCA members has been a hit and miss affair (except for Mike). The member with the best attendance proved to be Bernie Allen. Congratulations and thank you to Both Mike and Bernie for being such good Enthusiasts.

One final award was presented – to our outgoing President Chris Hall for his service as President. It is a position that few seem to want but it really isn't that difficult, especially with fellow PCCA members always chipping in to give a helping hand. Thanks Chris.

As an added treat, Gloria Jahn brought treats – cookies and fudge. Thankfully, it's the holiday season and we are allowed to have a few extra sweets – just not too many. Thanks Gloria.



Historic Corvair Story - Route 66

Highway 50 Christmas tree, between Grand Junction and Delta, circa 1960s.

On U.S. Highway 50, between Grand Junction and Delta, just north of the sharp curve known as Fool's Hill, on the west side of the highway at an abandoned rest stop, a lone evergreen tree has stood sentry on the barren hill. Nearly every year since a tree was first placed there, locals have driven out to tree to decorate it for Christmas.

The tree was originally a native Colorado juniper, one of two that were repositioned by equipment operators Pat Springer and Bert Cross when they and his co-workers with John Algers Construction were paving Highway 50 sometime between the late 1950s and early 1960s. Rather than tearing though one of the few large signs of green life in the dun-colored desert, they scooped them up and replanted them. While the smaller of the two relocated trees died, the larger one took root and soon became the roadside Christmas tree of yore.

The little juniper in the inhospitable landscape was considered a bit of a miracle to the people who drove by or took the time to stop and pull over and marvel at the lone survivor along the dusty road. One Christmas locals decided to decorate the tree. Other travelers joined in the spirit each year, and soon the decorated juniper became a holiday tradition.

The lone tree became so famous that the journalist Charles Kuralt featured it in one of his television segments in 1978, and in his book, "On the Road with Charles Kuralt."

Kuralt wrote: "Just looking at it makes you think about how unexpected life on Earth can be. The tree is so lonely and so brave that it seems to offer courage to those who pass it-and a message. It is the Christmas message: that there is life and hope...even in a rough world."

The original tree died in the late 1980s, but there have been several replacements since then. A few of the trees died in the inhospitable desert, but a blue spruce planted in 2002 in a basin of rich, non-desert soil and watered a few times a year by Delta County road crews, managed to survive, and the tradition of decorating the tree continues.



This photo of the original tree was taken by "Grand Junction Daily Sentinel" photographer Bob Grant, in the early 1960s. The car that can be seen in the photo is a 1960-1964 Chevrolet Corvair Monza.



Obituary for John Cavagna

Long Time PCCA and Show Me Corvair Member, John Cavagna passed away December 22, 2022 at the young age of 85.

In recent years, you could spot John cruising thru the vendor areas at CORSA convention looking for that perfect part for his latest Corvair restoration project. John was a perfectionist when it came to his restorations and it showed in the Corvairs he showed.

Rest in Peace John. We will miss you.



June 2012 photo: one of John's Corvairs

Happy 46th Anniversary PCCA!

Editor: The following notes are from albums put together by Sharon Rogers.

Prairie Capital Corvair Association. Founded January, 1977 by Paul and Judy Abbott; Bill and Shelby Berta; Rick and Debbie Bright.

January 14, 1977 was PCCA first meeting. It went very well, we signed up 12 members. Some of the things discussed were CORSA benefits which are a quarterly magazine, monthly Communique both having many good tech. tips. Friendly Chevrolet has been kind enough to give us the use of their meeting room at no charge. Our first members were: Paul and Judy Abbott, Bill and Shelby Berta, Garry and Sue Biggs, Rick and Debbie Bright, Stan and Janet Carls, Gordan and Margaret Davis, Robert and Marjorie Dawson, Doug and Sandy Dennis, Wilbur and Gerry Goedtko, Robert and Ann Hansen, Robert and Betty Nicholson, Joel and Pamela Tjelmeland.

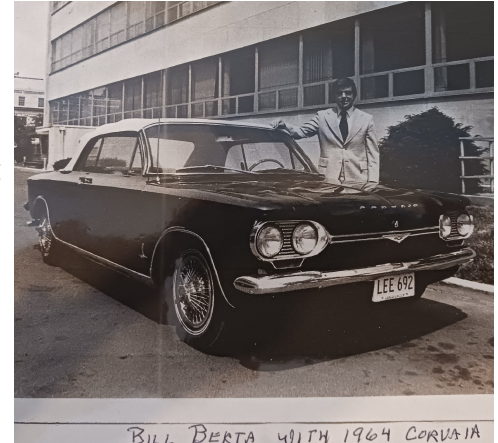
The February meeting had 16 people in attendance. Printing and postage expenses totaled 17.35. Two speakers were noted. Bill Berta talked about fund raising ideas including a tech tip guide and 50-50 jackpot. Paul Abbott discussed prices for jackets, patches, decals and membership cards. The Secretary of State Auto show was also mentioned with the possibility of a Corvair only class.

At the April 1 meeting, the newsletter got its name - "The Flat Six". The name was the suggestion of Garry Biggs. Garry also designed the initial cover for the newsletter which were presented at the March meeting.

At the May meeting, the first "permanent" officers were elected. The note in the scrap book, referred to the elected officers as being "drafted." Co-chairs: Doug Dennis and Paul Abbott. Bill Berta elected Treasurer, Bob Dowson Secretary, Garry Biggs Publicity and Judy Abbott as Program Chair.

June 5, 1977 was PCCA first outing, a picnic at New Salem. PCCA got some free publicity in the State Journal as an inquiry was made to the paper about information on a local Corvair auto club. Bill Berta and his 1964 Corvair were part of the response to that inquiry.

PCCA participated in their first SOS Auto show September 10, 1977. It was the first year Corvairs were permitted at the show. The Corvairs were grouped in the 1961 thru 1966 special merit group which included 61 Studebakers and a 66 Toronado. Five Corvairs were present in a class of 18. Warren Moody and his family brought two



Bill Berta with 1964 Corvair
Bill Berta and his 64 convertible in the photo used by the newspaper.



Paul Abbott's Sprint at the SOS Auto show, 1977



The Biggs 63 convertible at the Decatur Corvair Display. People's choice gave the car First place

outstanding sedans from Mattoon. The 62 red 4 door won 2nd place in class while their CORSA Concours national champion took 1st in class. The following year, the Corvairs garnered their own class.

Skipping ahead. I noted this newsletter article by Nick Whitlow (December, 1977 or Jan 1978)

“That Was the Year that Was

It’s pretty hard to believe a whole year has gone by since the Prairie Capital Corvair Assn was formed. It all started as a result of Paul Abbots, Rick Brights and Bill Bertas attending the St. Louis group’s mini convention in ‘76 and then deciding to form a CORSA chapter in this area.

The first meeting was held on Friday, Jan 14, 1977 at Friendly Chevrolet with the signing up of 12 members, some of which were already CORSA members and others who were interested enthusiasts. The next few meetings produced more members and increasing enthusiasm. By June the meeting night was changed to Wednesday and location moved to the Dutch Pantry, where we presently meet.

One of our first activities was a picnic at New Salem State Park on June 5th with representation from the Chicagoland Corvair group which went over very well. July 9th saw three PCCA Families attend a joint meet in Peoria with the Central Illinois Corvair Enthusiasts. The “Judge it Yourself Concours” was enjoyed by everyone. The Gaiedtkas and Dawsons represented PCCA at the National CORSA convention in Minneapolis Jul 28-31.

On August 11th, seven Corvairs participated in the Illinois State Fair parade. August 20th, six Corvairs were displayed on the Old State Capitol Plaza. It was a delightful day for everyone and besides getting some new members, we got a lead on the oil filters that are now selling as a fund raiser.

Four Corvairs participated in the Pana Labor Day parade including the Bertas, Nicholsons, Smiths and Whitlows. The group was later joined by the Abbots and Biggs for a post parade picnic. Also, Smith’s car won a second place trophy in the special interest car judging.

Paul Abbott entered his recently completed ‘65 Fitch Sprint in the Secretary of State’s Annual Car Show in September. Several other Corvairs were entered also. Because of their excellent showing, 1978 will see a special class for Corvairs at this show.

Several members attended the Annual Hoosier Auto Show at Indianapolis September 16-18 and got to drive their little jewels around the 2 ½ mile Indy raceway. On October 29th, eight Corvairs were displayed at Decatur on Market St. with a picnic following in the afternoon.

Other achievements during our first year include selection of our logo, and the acquisition of jacket patches among other things. As you can see, our chapter is pretty active for being in existence for only a year, and the best is yet to come.

On the first anniversary of PCCA, special thanks is given to interested members who have worked at various events and all the officers who have served this year. Let’s make next year even better!”
Nick Whitlow

PCCA Flat Six editors through the years.

1977 -1978	Bill Berta,
January-April were “preliminary” newsletters.	
Vol 1, no 1 was May 1, 1977	
1979 and 1981	Wilbur Gaedtka
1980 and 1982-1983	Garry Biggs
1984	Steve Bell
1985-1997	Bob Long
1998-2022	Tim Mahler

Tim just completed his 25th year as editor. Yep, he’s proud of that accomplishment.



Note: This article appeared in the *Leek Seel* - the newsletter of Corvair Minnesota June 2021. The Suthor is Fran Schmit, who's writing style is a bit different from Mike Dawson, but informative nonetheless. Now I tend to just have several coils around or just go get a new one (have a few of those in the parts pile too) because they are not that expensive. But, we are, after all, Corvair folk, and saving a penny is saving a penny. Besides, I didn't know you could check a coil without simply trying it in the car. Now I know. Thanks Fran.

Checking a Coil

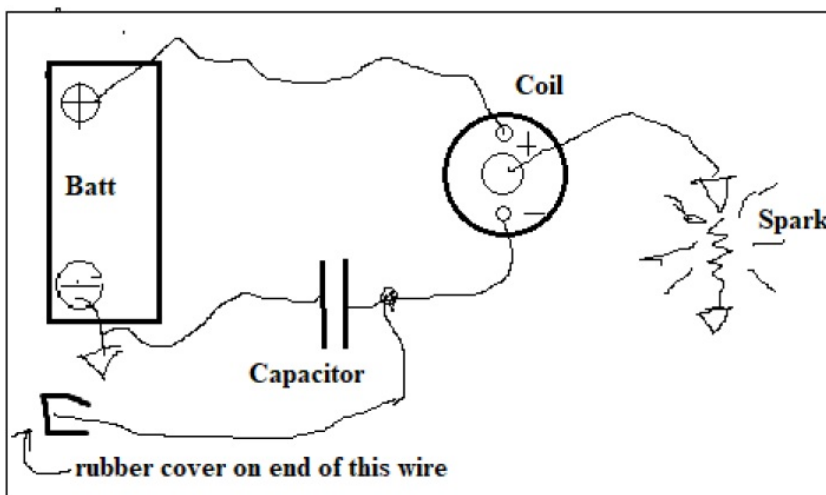
Coil Check needs a Capacitor

Fran Scmit, June 2021 Leeky Seel, Minnesota Corvair

At the January meeting Jerry Berge asked if there was some way to check a coil. Either at home going through his inventory or to actually check a coil when there is a suspicion it may have failed... like on the road when the engine craps out - right out there in front of God and everybody!

The answer is, not only YES, but it's not too hard to make a little gadget to carry with you as you drive along that road. All you need is a couple wires and a spare capacitor. I'll draw a picture and then snap a photo... everyone is free to jump in on this if they can do it better, quicker, faster, cheaper because Jerry's problem is still 'hanging fire' after several years of trying to tease out his elusive cut-out. So, please comment or suggest: to help CMI come to Jerry's aid.

Here's my device:



Take a capacitor out of a Distributor or buy a new one. They usually have just one wire on them with the case grounded. Bring or get a clamp, too. So, use the factory clamp to make contact - around the middle. Attach a wire to the outside sleeve of the Capacitor using the clamp and put a foot-long wire on the factory wire that comes out of the Capacitor.

Now you have a capacitor of the correct size, with two wires on it. If you are doing this on your bench, at home, you will have to have a wire to bring PLUS to the + terminal of the coil. Half of this setup is bringing + to the coil, so get that part right! The second part of this is a 'manual' Neg terminal connection.

On your bench setup just clip one wire from the Capacitor to the minus terminal (-) of your test coil and the other Capacitor-wire back to the battery's negative (-) terminal. See sketch, above. Also check the outside of your coil for cleanliness, see foto of a dirty coil.

Now you have a loop, from Batt + to the coil's +...through the coil to one of the Capacitor's wires... through the Capacitor and back to the Batt's negative (-) post. Just make your wires long enough so that, later on, you can reach down into your CMI vehicle with ease.

OK, you're getting close to some snapping time (!) Ready?!?!?

On your bench...take another wire and connect it to the coil's (-) terminal wire, maybe where it connects the Capacitor's factory wire. Make this wire long enough to reach ground over by the battery. Cover the exposed end of this wire.



CAUTION! Anytime you are working with an old-time car battery, especially a battery with 6 screw caps in a row along the top, don't make even small sparks near the battery - - let's say within a foot! On the bench you can use a battery charger.

OK! Hang-on now, you're getting close!

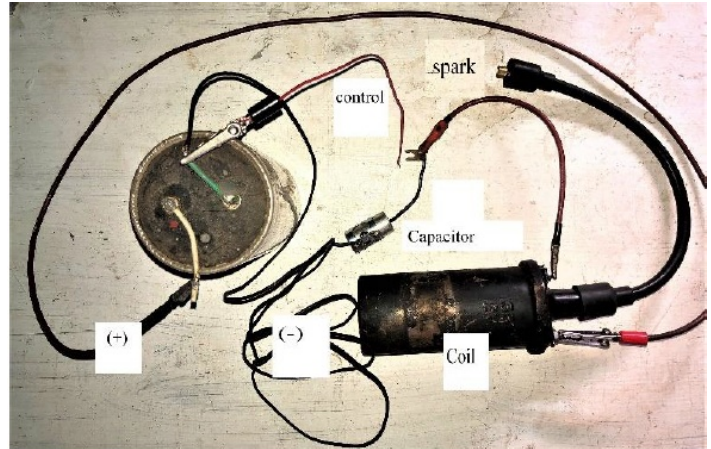
Take the high voltage Coil-wire or any spare plug wire, and plug one end into the coil's tower and loop the rest of it around to be positioned where you can see if/when you get a SPARK!

After all that's what we're doing here, right? Trying to make SPARKS!?!

A 10,000 Volt spark is going to happen, so just be prepared.

You've got your Capacitor and Coil in the loop, as shown, and the sparker is away from your hands, right?

Now, take that other ground wire that is lying there - loose - the one with the rubber cap (piece of tape will do) on it, that is attached on one end to the (-) coil wire {attached between the Capacitor and the coil}... and (after removing the rubber cap) strike the end of the wire on something connected to the Neg batt terminal. AWAY FROM THE COIL, so if you get a spark you will only look at it, not taste it! When you are setting this up, try to do it on a metal bench or something like that, so the coil can be sitting on the „ground“ - - simulating the engine block that also holds the spark plug. This lets the spark go all the way around from the high end of the coil through the sparkplug and back to the low end of the coil - to close the loop.



Do not lay that "control" wire down or drop it on the bench - just quickly touch and release, or maybe scratch it along a ground wire across by the Batt cable. The point is to make lots of quick touches so you will make lot of sparks out the end of your plug wire - - over there, where your fingers are not holding on to anything.

On the bench you can check all these connections and practice not getting Zapped.

Now, let's talk about OUTSIDE!

Let's say you now have your CMI vehicle out on the road and it falters and stops - - let's also say you suspect your coil may be crapping out because it got too hot or something, and now you want to check that coil, on the road. If you have a coil that you suspect, do this test on that car, at home, before you set out on the test run. So, you will know how it sounds and looks - - and maybe FEELS!

We are assuming you took along the harness you made from the drawing above!

To test your coil on the road you'll have to disconnect the Distributor to Coil wire (that little black wire that often gets stiff and breaks) before testing that HOT coil. Then repeat your bench setup. If you originally put clip leads on the ends of these wires - that would help. Clip your (+) lead to the (+) Battery Post and your long Capacitor wire can be clipped onto the (-) Battery cable. If you have an Electronic Ignition system you "have to take off both its (+) and (-) connections before doing this test - on your vehicle. In the engine compartment it is probably easiest to pull the Big Coil wire out of the Distributor cap and dangle the loose Distributor-End near some metal engine part. Remember your bench setup, and give the spark about a half inch of space to jump. OK, you are now ready to check that suspect coil. Scratch the uncovered end of your „control“ wire on some engine metal and observe!

You should look for the same sparking you got while working on the bench. When you are outside in the sunlight it may not look the same, so measure the distance it jumps - a half inch is good.

If there is no spark (!), you may have discovered a bad coil! Change it out with a cold coil and see if you can make it back home!

Enjoy!!!

Whatever you are doing, remember to have fun and,

Keep on CORVAIRing, Fran

HEY PCCA Members

– Let's get the year off to a roaring good start. A third of PCCA members have already renewed, the goal is 100%.

This is PCCA's 46th anniversary.

Prairie Capital Corvair Association (PCCA) Membership Form

January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2023

Type of Membership Individual ☐ \$17

Family ☐ \$20 (2 adults at one address plus children under 18)

☐ Apply a \$5 discount for receiving the electronic version of the newsletter and other correspondence.

If joining after July 31, dues are: Individual \$8.50, Family \$10.00. If applicable, the discount is \$2.50.

Name _____ Spouse/ 2nd Adult _____

Street Address _____

City, ST ZIP _____

Home Phone _____ CORSA Membership ID _____

Cell Phone(s) _____ Spouse/ 2nd Adult _____

e-Mail Address(es) _____ Spouse/ 2nd Adult _____

Cars, Corvair and other _____

Other interests _____

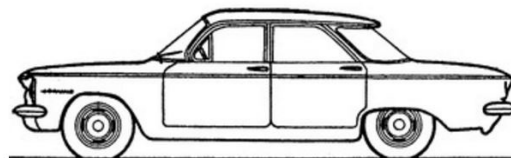
PCCA strongly encourages membership in CORSA. Do you want/need information about CORSA? Y / N

Return the completed form and dues to: Glen Rittenhouse, PCCA Treasurer
1804 Columbus Dr, Pekin IL 61554

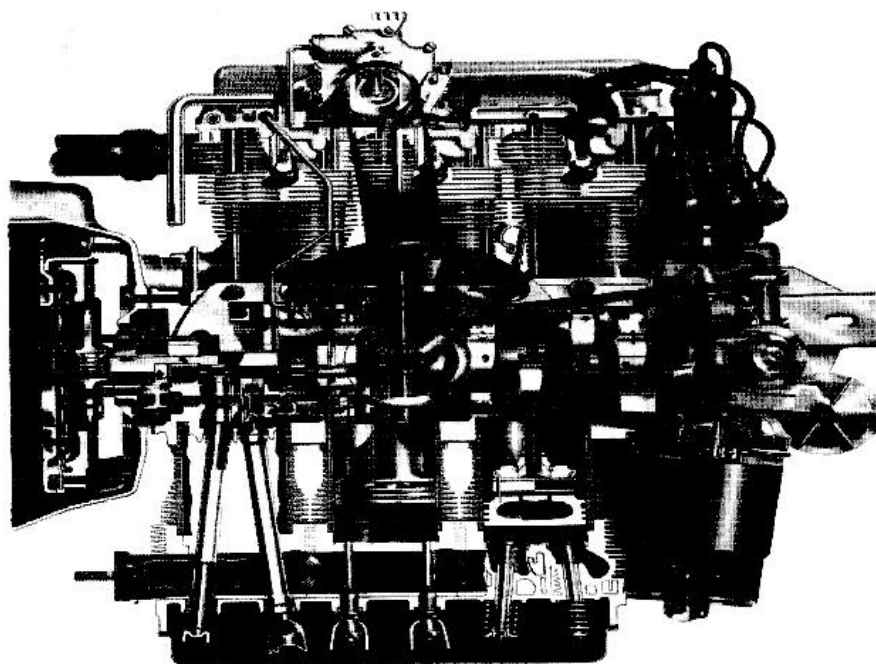
Please make checks payable to Prairie Capital Corvair Association or PCCA

General Meeting Notes December 11, 2022 taken by Tim Mahler, acting secretary

President Chris Hall got everyone's attention as members finished lunch and started on the Cookies and fudge brought by Gloria Jahn. Chris presented the PCCA Corvair Enthusiasts awards – Gentleman - Mike Hall, Lady - Bernie Allen. He also thanked everyone who brought a unwrapped toy for the Toys for Tots campaign. Mike Hall took delivery responsibilities. Tim Mahler presented a thank you certificate to Chris Hall for his two years of service as president of PCCA. Glen Rittenhouse was unable to attend as he had the sniffles, but he did send a Treasurer report. Expenses included \$100 donation to the Ace Sign company for the November tour, \$270 to the CPF for registration fees that were sent to PCCA, \$82.40 for newsletter expenses, and \$100 for Year end awards. Income included \$87 in dues paid for 2023. (More was collected at the luncheon). Ending Checking balance was \$4,520.91 with \$5 in savings and \$151.63 cash on hand. Total funds available was \$4,677.54 as of 12/11/2023.



The Flat Six



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