

Corvan Antics

Founded in 1972 by Ken Wilhite

January/February 2012
Volume 40 Issue 1

Celebrating our 40th year.



The Bi-monthly Newsletter of the

Corvanatics



Chapter 001 Of the Corva Society of America
The Forward Control Corva People

Riding with the President

By John Nickel

Happy New Year to you all! I hope that all your New Year's Resolutions are successful and that your winter projects go well.

As we begin 2012, I am happy to tell you that we are progressing on the project of actually having a set of By-Laws that we can use to continue to improve the functionality and success of Corvanatics. Ken Hand has really done a great job in putting together a proposed set that includes many great innovative ideas. Now it is time for our Board members and a few other volunteers to work out the final details before we introduce it to you for review and approval. It is interesting that the last time Corvanatics tried to update the By-Laws was 1994. I think we've waited long enough to get this job done.

There is also progress in updating the Corvanatics website with many improvements that will make it more informative and current.

Thank you to Corvan-Antics Editor Gary Moore, current Webmaster Brian Seibenick and our new Assistant Webmaster Steve Spilatro for their work. The website should begin to reflect their efforts soon.

I had thought that car shows had ended for a while here in western North Carolina, but I was invited to a 100th Anniversary of the Chevrolet show in mid-December that was being put on by one of our local Chevy Dealers. There were about 50 Chevrolets (and a few Fords!) at the show, and somehow I won a Top 10 Award with my '64 8-Door Greenbrier! Just goes to show that even in cold weather climates car shows can be put on and people will participate too.

Now it's time to begin to get our cars/trucks ready for spring shows. I am going to try to get the exterior of the Greenbrier more presentable and maybe even fix some of the ugly rust on the Rampside before the next show that I want to attend in March in Myrtle Beach, SC.

Have a great new year and may all your parts arrive on time.

John Nickel
President
Corvanatics



photo by Barbara Sammons

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CORVANANTICS is the bi-monthly publication of Corvanatics, a Chartered Chapter of the Corvair Society of America (CORSA). Established September, 1972, Corvanatics is dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of America's most original and innovative small vans and light trucks, the Chevrolet Corvair 95 Series.

Corvanatics is open to any **CORSA member** with an interest in Forward Control Corvairs. Dues are \$10.00 per year and must be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer accompanied by a membership application. See directory on this page for address. Applications available on website or from Secretary/Treasurer.

Stories, articles, photos, memorabilia, or any other item for publication should be sent to the editor. All of these can also be sent by email to: **Corvanatics@gmail.com**. Technical material will be sent to the Technical Editor for review. Authors are also asked to submit a photograph of themselves for the article.

Classified ads are free to Corvanatics members and should be sent to the editor. Display advertising is also available at the following rates: Full Page: \$25; Half Page: \$15; Quarter Page: \$10; Business Card (2 x 3.5): \$5; Please submit print-ready or typed copy and pre-payment to the editor. Photos for ads are \$6.00 each and can be color or black/white. Authorization and payment must be received for each issue. Deadline for publication is the 15th of February, April, June, August, October, or December.

Web Page Address: www.corvair.org/chapters/corvanatics/

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Note about classified ads:

With options like Craigslist and ebay the CORSA website and the Communique advertising in a bi-monthly publication is not a best way to sell items. While I will run your ad, I suggest that you first try the above. If you are offering a FC related service and would like to have an ad please send your business card. Corvanatic members are free. GM

Our '61 Rampside: What a Great Truck

by Rich and Donna Greene



Rich and Donna Greene of Whitehall PA pose with their work truck.

Donna purchased her 1961 Rampside on February 18, 2006 in South Carolina and we have been working on it ever since. I thought that it was going to sit for a couple of weeks until I completed my '66 Corsa convertible project. As things normally go, it was going to take me a lot longer than a couple of weeks to complete the Corsa. So Donna and I decided to tackle the items that were required to make the Rampside run and stop.

When we bought the Rampside it was obvious that the muffler was bad since it was falling down and was being held up with a bungee cord. I definitely dislike the sound that a Corvan engine makes without a muffler, so the first thing that we completed was the addition of dual exhaust. It sounds great now, although it could be a little quieter.



The engine compartment needed a little TLC.

The next important repair was the gas lines in the engine bay. Evidently someone had replaced the fuel pump and had not used a back-up wrench in the process of disconnection the fuel lines. They looked like someone had rung them out like a twisted dishrag. This same person repaired the existing lines with a piece of gas hose cut length wise and held in place with a clamp and a clothespin. I kid you not; there were four clothespins at different locations on the fuel lines. This was a relatively easy repair using "Clark's" pre-bent lines that are a good fit.

While I was in the engine area I decided to look into the PCV piping that had to be incorrect because there was oil all over the engine. A quick look in the manual and I found the problem. The '65 110 HP engine tubes and hoses were run like it was the original '61 80 HP engine. The fix for this was to install a hose connection in one of the air cleaners and reverse the original setup so that it would work properly. Problem solved – no oil on the engine now!

Another problem found in the engine bay was the wiring. Several major wires had signs of an electrical short, burned insulation and frayed wires. It almost looked like it caught fire. Most of the bad wires had been repaired with wire nuts or (again) held together with electrical tape and clothespins. Many other minor wires were damaged, broken or disconnected. I say minor wires but in fact I should consider them major because only one taillight was working and the license plate lights did not work either. I purchased a new harness and repaired all of the wiring that was damaged. I also corrected the grounding system at the battery and now all of the lights work great, including the dash lights that had not worked.



New wires, new lines, new paint and a hinged lid.

I installed a new cassette/radio, dual speakers and antenna so that the truck would run better (LOL). We cleaned up the interior and the bed to see how much damage there was; not bad at all.

The next project was the most difficult project to date and that was the brakes. I replaced the master cylinder with a dual set-up, all new brake lines from front to back (steel tubing and flex lines), wheel cylinders, brake springs and brake shoes. Stops pretty good now!

See *Our '61 Rampside* on Page 8

Greenbrier Stimulus Package

By Ron J. Bloom

There it sat, “my” ’62 Greenbrier across the street, all complete and intact, with 20-year-old tires, and sitting on blocks. The only problem was it belonged to my neighbor, Dusty. From time to time I would venture over and ask Dusty, “Want to sell?” His answer was always the same, “No, one of these days I’m going to fix it up.” So I would take a look at it through the windows. It was so full you could not get one more thing in it.

So, on a nice sunny day in May of 2009 the mailman brought me a stimulus check for \$250.00. Good, I can use that money; buy more parts for my ’61 two-door. But instead, I went to Dusty and again asked him, “Hey, Dusty, want to sell the Greenbrier?” This time he hesitated. My heart was pounding, was this the day? Dusty finally took a big breath and said, “You know, I believe I will. I turned 80 last week; don’t really have the time anymore to fool with it.” I could not believe it after all these years. “Great! How much?” He said, “Make an offer.” O boy, now what am I going to do? He is my neighbor; I sure don’t want to offend him. So I said, “Well I can get my hands on \$500.00 would you consider that?” Dusty asked me if I was going to keep it or sell it. I said, “O my! I am going to fix it up and drive it. I would never sell it.” “Good,” he said, “how about you give me \$250.00 and take it home.” I said, “Don’t move I will be right back.”



Ron’s Greenbrier not long after he brought it home from Dusty’s.

When I returned with the money from my stimulus check, Dusty said, “I will have to find the title, but go ahead and take it home.” Then added, “I just want you to know the last time I drove it, I just barely made it down the drive way. I think the clutch is out.”



Ron and Lynn Bloom with their finished Greenbrier.

Photos by Jerry schneider Tucson AZ.

I asked him if he knew the history of this Greenbrier. I was thrilled to find out he was the original owner, brought it brand new in California and drove it home. WOW, that makes me the second owner. I have the original title dated September 11, 1962, with a sticker price of \$2385.00 and a California Registration fee of \$2.50.

The next day the guys went with me to push my Greenbrier home. After all the stuff had been removed, I was able to see the inside for the first time. The headliner was perfect—not a mark on it. The front drivers seat was down to the springs, no problem I can recover that. However, the rear seats were not in it. I asked Dusty about the seats he said they were in the garage hanging up; he had taken them out and never used them. They looked brand-new, right off the show room floor, original fabric and all.

I said to myself, “it don’t get any better than this.” But my next discovery was even more surprising. In the back I saw an A/C evaporator. I went to the front and sure enough, there was another one. Whoa! Dual A/C! Dusty said, “I had A/C put in, got to have air, beings we are in the desert. I have a whole bunch of spare parts, if you want them. One

See Greenbrier continued on Page 5

Greenbrier *continued from page 4*



The front A/C cluster, yes that is a row of gauges underneath.

of these days I will dig it out and you can have it all.” Wonderful! Was I ever happy!

Pushing the Greenbrier home I said, “Wonder if it will run?” The gas tank was half full of 25-year-old gas. So I changed the oil and filter, put in a new battery and primed the carbs. Thirty seconds later the 80 hp is running, quiet, no noise, unbelievable!!! Talk about Corvair tough.

I installed brand new brake shoes, rebuilt the master cylinder and the wheel cylinders, and added new 14” whitewalls. Let’s see if this thing will even drive. With much revving, I coaxed the van a few feet—for sure, the clutch is out.

So out comes the drive train and a new clutch gets installed. The undercarriage is all but perfect. The desert is so kind to vehicles—no cancer, maybe one day I will do the rotisserie thing but not now, I just want to drive it.

Next step was the interior. The front seat gets upholstered, the headliner is painted white, it is perfect. All the inside panels get recovered, red and white. The windows get tinted, lots and lots of cleaning with Awesome. I removed dog dish hubcaps, storing them in a safe place, and replaced them with three-prong spinners wheel covers.


Now I need tags and registration. A trip to the Arizona DMV for inspection, and the agent informs me, “Guess what? It is not in the system.” (Wonder how come?) “So now what?” I asked. The DMV agent said, “Its not stolen, but you will need to have a notarized bill of sale.” I head back to see Dusty for a bill of sale. No problem, I am soon headed back to the DMV with bill of sale in hand. I was told I would need to sign a non-operation paper stating that the van had not been driven, no accidents or tickets. Really! OK, I’ll sign it. As she slid the new title over to me, she asked, “You want the old title?” I replied, “You bet I do!” I have my new tags and can now drive the “barn door.” (Reference to the van’s wind resistance.)

For the first trip in the Greenbrier I chose Palm Springs. All is good, great gas mileage (18mpg) A/C cooling; really having a nice day. People are going by giving the Greenbrier thumbs-up making me proud. Everything went smoothly until people started going by blowing their horns and giving the good luck sign. That is when I looked out the rear view mirror to see that I was laying down a nice deep blue haze, some refer to it as mosquito control. The last 100 miles took 12 quarts of oil. Fortunately, my good friend, Jim Mills, was there with his motor home and trailer. I drove his Rampside back to Tucson and he trailered my Greenbrier.

Back home, I pulled the engine to find the # 5 cylinder with busted rings; maybe because I had put 102 heads on, maybe the timing was too fast, or maybe old age had finally caught up. I had access to a XXZ 110 replacement engine that was in a '65 convertible. The engine was rebuilt and, because it was a replacement engine it had provisions to be used by a car or a truck. We were able to move the oil filler tube to the correct position. I also decided I was tired of shifting and converted to a Powerglide. My friend Everett Ray painted the van white with red stripe, and a clear coat. Oh how it shines! Everett Ray, you did an outstanding beautiful job.



Ron and Lynn’s Greenbrier is ready for its next trip

I added new red carpet from Clark’s and put in new window fuzzies to quiet the window rattle and wind noise. I put on a valance spoiler from a '93 Ford Aerostar on the front, and it drives and hugs the highway so nice. The AM radio works great. I was going to put up a sign “have waterbed will travel,” but my wife nixed that idea. It takes a trophy every now and then to make my labor of love all worthwhile. 

Installing Retractable Seatbelts in 8-door Greenbrier

Photos and Article by
Steven Spilatro
Marietta, OH

We purchased our '61 8-door Greenbrier in 1980 in Bloomington, IN. Paperwork indicated that it originated in NM, accounting for its good condition, and after removing the chipmunk nest inside the 4-barrel carb on the 140, it drove pretty well. Nevertheless, the intervening years had taken their toll, and in 2009 I began a full restoration.

Seat belts were a practical automotive innovation, so adding retractable belts on the front bench seat seemed a good idea. I researched what others had done. An earlier article by Bob Slusher suggested mounting the center belts to the bulkhead channel under the seat, an idea I adopted, and Mike Mauro has posted images showing installation of belts obtained from Andover Restraints, Inc., and I used their 3-point retractable with 18" buckle ends, #8407E.

Seatbelt attachments need reinforcement since bolting to body panels alone is inadequate. I fabricated reinforcement plates from ¼" steel with nuts welded behind ½" holes. Plates in the door posts and seat bulkhead were inserted through access holes cut in the body panels and welded in place, allowing the belts to be easily removed as necessary.

The first image shows positions of the retractors and door post pivots. The retractors are mounted behind the furthest rearward position of the bench seat. Positioning the left side retractor was tricky because the check-arm assembly is inconveniently located in the door post (it's an 8-door GB!) and the wheel well is expanded over the gas filler tube. My solution is shown in the second figure (page 7). The retractor mounting bracket was modified to pass through a "C" slot in the wheel well cut with a Dremel tool. As shown in the image lower inset, the modified bracket allows it to bolt to the strut in the undercarriage through which the gas filler tube passes. A small reinforcement plate fills the gap between the seat belt bracket and the body strut. The bracket hole can be sealed with silicon.

Installation of the right side retractor was relatively straightforward. The retractor bolts through the body panel above the wheel well in the same relative position as the left side retractor. The reinforcement plate is unobtrusive in the upper reaches of the wheel well.




Figure 1

The third image shows installation of a 3" x 2" reinforcement plate in one of the door posts. Using Dremel 409 cut-off wheels the body panel was cut away, allowing the reinforcement plate to be inserted, and later rewelded over the access hole. The bolt hole must be drilled all the way through an interior metal panel, and two additional holes were used to plug weld the plate to the body panel. Spacers behind the belt pivot brackets, and behind the right side retractor, give clearance of the door post contour ridge.

Installing 8-door Seat Belts continued from page 6

The buckle-end belts attach to a 7" x 2" reinforcement plate under the seat in the channel over the bulkhead. As shown in the fourth image, a small access hole was cut in the front of the channel and an improvised spatula was used to easily guide the reinforcement plate into position. The plate was temporarily bolted so that it could be plug welded into place.

Finally, the brackets at the ends of the retractor belts were also modified. From the factory they are designed to attach behind the retractor unit; I shortened the brackets to mount on the sides of bench seat where the seat back attaches.

With the plug welds filled, access holes sealed, and body panels refinished, only a Corvair aficionado would know the seat attachments were add-ons. Other images and exact size patterns can be downloaded at <http://www.marietta.edu/~spilatr/Corvair/seat-belt-installation.pdf>. 

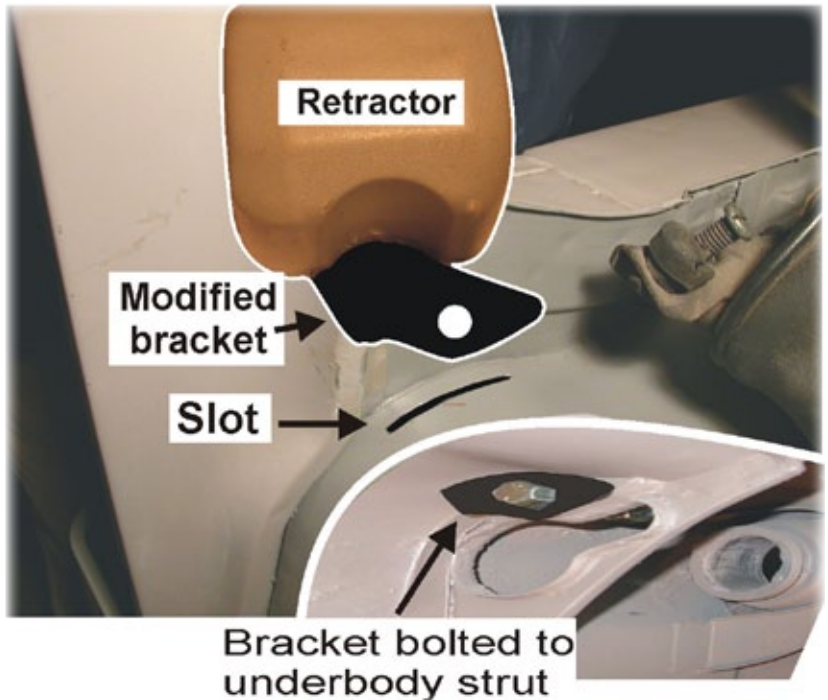


Figure 2



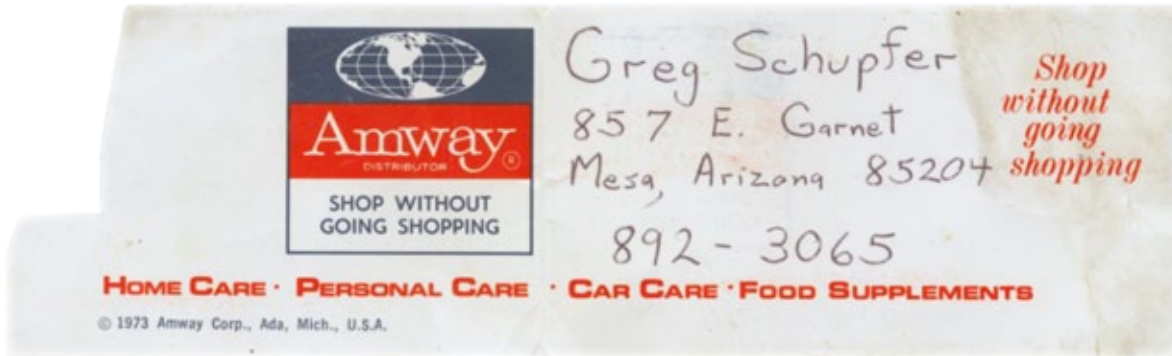
Figure 3



Figure 4

Running Low on SA-8?

At the Denver 2011 National CORSA Convention Greg Schupfer had his Amway Distributer Business Card from 1973. The fold-out card featured a Chevrolet Corvan on the front.



Our '61 Rampside

continued from page 3

When I was under the car I also replaced the fuel line from the tank to the engine. There was a rubber fuel line running along side of the original rusty fuel tubing. The rubber line was dry-rotted and cracked. When we filled the tank we found that the gas was spilling on the ground. There were several pinholes in the tank filler tube, the vent and the tank. We replaced all tubes, lines and the hoses, and eventually the tank, with used parts from the Corvair Ranch and new parts from Clarks.

We bought new tires and put on a set of wire wheel covers that came with the truck.

After completing all of this work we took it out for a spin and it ran terrible. So I changed the plugs and installed new wires. On the following Saturday; we took it out for the day to do some antiquing and it ran and stopped great. We were literally out for hours in the Rampy stopping at many antique shops in the area and we didn't have even a hint of a problem. Since that time we have improved many items on the truck and enjoy driving it anywhere we want. The Rampside is used as our Pick-up truck. We haul furniture, mulch and everything else that is required for work around the house. What a great truck.



Coming off the trailer back in 2006.



Our work truck shows off pretty well.

From the Secretary

Welcome new members:

Ray Freidhoff Camas WA 8 Door, Rampside, Corvan
 Jerry Lentz Valley Falls KS Rampside, Corvans, Greenbrier
 Bill Wallace Knox IN

Please use Corvanatics@gmail.com for any mail related to address or phone changes or patch/decal orders or anything else for me. You can also use it to pay dues by [PayPal](#).

Last Chance list

This list is folks who are more than a year overdue. If you are on it, this is your last newsletter unless you pay your dues. There is no penalty. Please pay up so this list goes away.

Tim Colson	8/2010
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Due Now

John Lantz	3/2011	Don Hudock	1/2011
Ralph Loewinger	2/2011	Darrell Woofter	1/2011
David McChesney	3/2011	Steve Geddes	4/2011
Doug Bell	5/2011	Fran Schmidt	5/2011
Robert Grieshaber	6/2011	Leroy Rogers	6/2011
Gerald Berge	7/2011	Herb Duplant	7/2011
Tom Fricker	7/2011	Ken Hand	7/2011
Elvis King	7/2011	Mike Moyer	7/2011
Clay Wispell	7/2011	Steven Yeomans	7/2011

Please take a moment to send me your CORSA ID as we need to report to CORSA. Drop a post card or e-mail.
Corvanatics@gmail.com
 Larry Schmuhl
 4563 Deep Grove Ct
 Jacksonville, FL 32224

Thanks,
 ...Larry

That Photo ought to be in a Magazine

Forward Control Photos wanted.

Have you taken a photo of your FC at a local point of interest, at your favorite restaurant, in the park or just in your front yard while the flowers are in bloom. Send it in, share it with your fellow Corvanatics.

Email your digital photo to:
CorvanAntics@gmail.com

Include a description and who took the photo. A photo of you, your significant other and/or kids with the FC is always good.



During a trip to Kansas City's Nelson-Atkins Art Museum with several other members of the Heart of America Corvair Owners Association members, Helen Moore positioned her truck to make it appear it was carrying one of Claes Oldenburg Shuttlecock sculptures. Photo by Helen Moore



Ron Bloom with his 1962 Greenbrier is joined by Van Pershing and his 1966 Corvair "Yenko inspired" Coupe at the Kitt Peak Observatory 56 miles southwest of Tucson.

CorvanAntics newsletter

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