Unit Body Backbone!

Stiffen Up Your Corvair

Unit body cars rely on the roof and the drive train tunnel to provide a degree of rigidity to the structure, but convertible Corvairs have no roof and they have no drive train tunnel. Chevy compensated for this by equipping Corvair convertibles with wider, heavier gauge rocker panels to stiffen them up. The rocker panels serve as torque boxes that keep the structure from sagging in the middle. Chevy even installed damper units in the four corners of late series Corvair convertible bodies to mitigate cowl shake. But as our Corvairs begin to age, stress cracks and rust begins to take its toll, and Corvair convertibles are known for loosening up a bit.

LVCC member Ron Peles has a sharp 1965 Corsa convertible. For a number of years, he raced it at Lime Rock. In those days, he upgraded it with a number of performance parts. Since then, Ron retired his convertible from track duty, but he continues to think of ways to improve it. Currently, he's looking for a shop that can fabricate and weld-in a pair of rocker panel stiffeners from square or rectangular steel tube stock. His Corsa is by not a rust bucket by any measure, but he wants to save it from the inevitable body flex as the unit body loosens up.

Out there on the Corvair message boards, enthusiasts have posted thoughts on convertible rocker panel repair. Most of the messages concern the complete removal and replacement of the outer rocker panel skins with new sheet metal. This big job is the ultimate solution for a convertible that is really rotted away. But

Aftermarket suppliers like Steeda make neat unit-body stiffener kits for Mustangs, but Corvair people have to make their own!
there are other approaches, too. On March 26, 2009, Mike Stillwell posted a message on the Corvair Center Forum. Here is what he wrote:

"I've seen late convertibles repaired with less than traditional methods that still turned out well. One was a '69 that had a piece of 1/2" angle iron welded full length to the inner rocker. It was a good repair and the car was stiff as a board. ... The bottom portion was welded along the base of the inner rocker, slightly above the floor pan. The top part was welded to the pinch weld where all 3 factory rocker panels are welded together. I seem to remember there were some minor cuts in the floor pan to allow the angle iron to run from the very front of the rocker to the very end, uninterrupted as it were."

A few months later, on June 09, 2009 another poster named Aaron wrote that he made the modification that Mike had described, and it apparently worked. "If I jack it up at the rear torque box, the front wheel will come off the ground. After several hours, the door will close hard, but it will still open and close."

Not content to merely increase the stiffness of the rocker panels, Aaron took it one step further by installing "frame connectors" underneath the car to tie the front and rear stub frames together. On September 05, 2009, he posted another message on the Corvair Center Forum, in which he wrote,

"The frame connectors are easy if you can weld. I bought two pieces of 4 feet long, 1 inch box steel tubing from Tractor Supply. Then, get the car in the air enough so you can safely work underneath it. I cleaned the areas on the subframes with a wire wheel and angle grinder and sprayed the backsides of all metal with cold galvanizing compound (zinc primer). You will need to bend the tubing to match your subframes in a few different spots. I welded the back of the tube to the bottom of the rear subframe, right next to the rear torque box. It then needs to bend upwards at about a 10 degree angle toward the front subframe stubs. Once there, it will need to take about a 25-30 degree turn toward the middle of the car. You'll need to tweak it here and there for your car. I heated the areas to bend with a MAPP gas torch and immediately made the bend with my vise and some muscle. Where it needed to be tweaked, I used two blocks and a big
hammer (sophisticated, I know). Finally, when it was in shape, I clamped the tube to the front stub and used a jack to hold the rear of the tube to the rear subframe. Then I welded away until solid. Make sure you have clean steel. It'll weld a lot easier! Make sure the weight of the car is on the suspension while you do this. I used ramps in the rear and jack stands under the front control arms. Before welding, I lightly jacked the car up (while still supported on its wheels) under the door to try to spring the car a little, as it's sagged a little bit over the years. Just make sure the weight stays on the wheels. These connectors stiffened the car significantly, in my opinion, and I drive the car often, so I should know.”

Corvair owners are by no means alone in this quest. The Mustang guys also spend great effort to improve the structures of their unit-body cars, and because their market is so much larger, there are a number of aftermarket suppliers that offer pre-fabricated braces, bars, torque boxes, and stiffeners, ready for welding into place. In fact, there is at least one supplier who offers a complete kit for converting an early-model Mustang into a body-on-frame car!

Why is there so much interest in the Mustang community about stiffening the unit-body? Although a 1965 Mustang unit body was reputed to be relatively stiff compared to other unit body cars of its era, drag racers have been stuffing huge engines into them. And that is a trend that continues to this day.

We have some guys who are stuffing LS-1 V8s into the engine compartments of their Corvairs. Perhaps they may be able to provide additional advice on how to stiffen the unit-body structure of the Corvair.

**NEXT LVCC MEETING**

Our next LVCC meeting will be at the Das Awkscht Fescht show on Sunday, August 4. (We will NOT be holding a meeting in July). To show your Corvair at Das Awkscht Fescht, you had to pre-register, and registration ended on July 1st. But if you forgot to register your Corvair for the show, don't despair! You can still walk into the show grounds as a spectator, enjoy all the cars, and join us for the meeting.

Here's a helpful hint for those of you who didn't register your Corvair for the Das Awkscht Fescht Show. As noted above, you can still attend as a spectator. If you walk-in at the gate, the organizers will charge a $7 admission fee. But if you ride in with one of the show cars, you can get in for free! So, hitch a ride with one of your buddies from LVCC who has already registered and come to the August LVCC meeting. It will be held at the club's EZ-up in the Corvair section! (There is a limit of four people per vehicle).

We typically get together at the LVCC tent in the Corvair section between 1 and 2 PM. ‘See you there!'

**ANNUAL DUES ARE DUE!**

Pay-up at Das Awkscht Fescht or mail your check to Dick Weidner at the address on Page 8. Annual dues for LVCC are $15, but if you are also a member of the Corvair Society of America (CORS)A, then you pay only $10.

**LE HEAP GOES TO THE NECC OLYMPICS!**

By Al Lacki

I'm guilty! As your trusty LVCC rep on the NECC Board, I've been sounding off about the how great it is to drive Corvairs on the track. Such fun! Such excitement! Such bravado!

"But have you actually done it?" you may ask. To which I would have to answer, "Well, yeah, kinda sorta..." NECC has been conducting time trials at racetracks all over the country for 40 years or so. And I have driven with them several times... With my Escort GT, Mazda MX-3, and my Toyota Yaris.

With a Corvair? Not so much. I did the time trials at Lime Rock in another guy's Corvair about twenty years ago. And then, with LeHeap (my trusty Corvair) at BeaveRun Raceway about five years ago. And once again, this year, I drove my Corvair at the Corvair Olympics. Was fun and exciting? You betcha!

I just had to do the Olympics this year in my own Corvair, LeHeap. Who knows when we'll ever have a chance to do this again? Three days of time trials, drag racing, and autocrossing at Virginia International Raceway and Roxboro Dragway. LeHeap did it all!

These high-performance driving events are hard on any car, and I doubled-down by not only driving at the tracks, but also driving to and from the tracks. I don't have a trailer and I don't have a tow vehicle, so LeHeap had to make it all the way down to Danville, Virginia and back under its own power.

Was it trouble-free? Not exactly. Each day, LeHeap gave me a little surprise.

My daughter Karen accompanied me on this adventure. We drove to Virginia the day before the Olympics began. As we were cruising up Route 419 to the Interstate, a cute little gopher started to run out in front of the car. Instinctively, I honked the horn.

The gopher ran back into the weeds on the side of the road. He was safe. But the horn kept blowing. And blowing. It was stuck! I found a place to pull over, ran to the front of the car, opened the trunk, and disconnected the horn relay. After fiddling with contacts inside the steering column, I threw up my hands and gave up. We drove the rest of the trip with no horn.

The next day, at Virginia International Raceway, the car ran flawlessly throughout the time trials. Almost. We did the practice session and the time runs. The engine ran strong and the car handled just fine. I flew by the checked flag at the end of my timed runs and did my cool-down lap. And just before
entering the pits, while I was negotiating the very last turn on the track, (the famous “Big Oak Bend”), I grabbed the shift lever to downshift. The lever moved, but the transmission remained in third. Uh-oh!

When I drove back to the pits, I found that LeHeap had lost second gear. And reverse gear. And as I drove the car back to the hotel that night, I also lost fourth gear, too. But there were no strange noises. No crunching gears. What could have happened?

Ah! The clamp on the shift rod coupler had loosened! So, that evening, in the hotel parking lot, I jacked LeHeap up and readjusted the coupler. Problem solved. Sigh of relief. It was time for a beer.

The next day, at Roxboro Dragway, LeHeap ran nice and strong once again. But during my last practice run, the exhaust got very loud. I poked my head under the rear of the car and found that the inlet pipe to the muffler had completely broken off the body of the muffler! Sure, I could do the drags without a muffler, but it would be an awfully loud ride back to Pennsylvania! It had to be fixed.

And once again, I was lucky. It just so happened that the folks at Roxboro Dragway do business with Clayton’s Welding Shop, located just a mile or two away on Molly Mooney Road near the border of town. I handed the muffler and inlet pipe to Mr. Clayton, and in fifteen minutes, he proceeded to lay down a beautiful double-lap weld joining the pipe back to the muffler. Cost: A mere $10. I wanted to give him a kiss, but he didn’t seem to be the type... I reinstalled the muffler on LeHeap just in the nick of time for the bracket races.

Saturday was autocross day, and I’m happy to report there were no problems with LeHeap that day. Actually, most of the day, I was operating the timing system, so I didn’t get much time to practice.

My autocross lap times were terrible, but I know it was my fault. Just for fun, I asked John Egerton to drive LeHeap through the traffic cones, and with no practice, he ran the course in 52.8 seconds. My best time was 68.5 seconds!

But I did my runs, and by doing so, I was one of only six Corvairs that had completed all three events in the Olympics: the time trials, drags, and autocross at the 2013 Corvair Olympics.
autocross. By doing so, I qualified for NECC’s John Fitch Award.

How did I score for the Fitch? Sixth out of six. Dead last. But LeHeap survived! And aside from Andy Kinzelman’s ’62 Monza coupe, LeHeap was the only street Corvair that ran as a competitor in the Olympics.

The other Corvairs were highly modified. And many of them, owned and driven by the most famous Corvair racers in the USA - broke down completely. LeHeap and I were very lucky.

Sunday, Karen and I drove back home, cruising northbound on I-84. I usually put my cell phone in the ash tray while I’m driving along the highway. So, I proceeded to open the ash tray, and as I did so, I heard a popping noise. The ash tray fell to the floor. The tang on the back snapped off! My ash tray broke!

Well, it could have been worse. But I still think LeHeap is trying to tell me something...

**AMAZING SURVIVOR CARS AT AUCTION!**

By Justin Hyde at Yahoo.

On the Weekend of September 28th, 2013, VanDer-Brinck Auctions, LLC will sell the contents of the virtual Time Capsule. The man behind the mystery is Ray P. Lambrecht, owner of Lambrecht Chevrolet Company from 1946 to 1996.

Lambrecht Chevrolet of Pierce, Nebraska was like many Midwestern, small-town dealers, owned and operated by a family, with minimal overhead and little need for advertising since most customers were neighbors. Ray and Mildred Lambrecht ran the dealership with just one employee for 50 years before closing up, and later this year the Lambreichs will sell off a trove of 500-odd vehicles they’ve held onto over the decades, including roughly 50 with less than 10 miles on their odometers. It’s less a car sale than a time capsule auction.

While many of the cars in the Lambrechts’ collection were customer trades-ins that were left outside to rot, the Lambrechts would occasionally take something they couldn’t sell and just put it in storage. City folk might find it unthinkable to leave so many vehicles lying around for so many years, but there’s always more space in rural Nebraska, and the annual costs fall to zero quickly. Jeannie Lambrecht Stillwell, the Lambrecht’s daughter, says the decision to sell wasn’t an easy one for her parents, and that the cars “comprise a lifetime of hard work, tears, and joy.

Fortunately for collectors, the Lambrechts’ preservation-through-neglect has created the type of barn finds that many search years to discover. Among the dozen low-miles pickups sits a 1956 Chevrolet Cameo pickup with an odometer reading of just over one mile, and a 1964 Chevy Impala with six miles that still has its original window sticker and the plastic sheeting that covered its red leather seats. Although even ardent Corvette fans look askance at the late ’70s models, the ’78 version here with five miles has an appeal that’s grown over time.

The rest of the 500-car list reads like an inventory of popular models from the ’50s and ’60s — Bel Airs, Corvairs and even a couple of Vegas — which the Vander-Brinck Auction company is still documenting ahead of the sale in Pierce on Sept. 28-29, along with dozens of pieces of memorabilia, hubcaps and even a Corvette pedal car.

You can see photos of this amazing collection at:

http://www.vanderbrinkauctions.com/

**LVCC MEETING NOTES**

Our June meeting was attended by Jason Hewitt, Keith Kohler, Allan Lacki, Larry Lewis, Jerry Moyer, Fred Scherzer, and Dick Weidner.

Dick Weidner presided over the meeting, read the minutes, and gave the treasury report. The minutes of our May meeting were accepted as read.

Dick reported that the club currently has $1,406.10 in its checking account.

Dick reminded everyone that the club still has merchandise available for sale, including CORSA Tech Guides, LVCC T-shirts and more.

Issue #2 of the Tech Guide is available in hardcopy form for $20, which represents a $5 discount from the price posted on the CORSA website.

The members discussed plans for future meetings. Normally, we have our meetings on the fourth Wednesday of every month. But we also have a meeting every year at Das Awkscht Fescht, which will occur on August 4th this year. To avoid having two meetings so close together, the members unanimously agreed to cancel the July meeting and proceed with our usual meeting at Das Awkscht Fescht instead.

Having dispensed with old business, the members proceeded to discuss new business. Fred Scherzer and Jerry Moyer announced that they are teaming up to go the CORSA International Convention in Kalamazoo in a couple of weeks. We look forward to hearing stories of their adventures at our next meeting. Also, Jerry recommended the First State Corvair Club show, scheduled for August 10. It will be held in New Castle, Delaware, which is only an hour-and-a-half away from Allentown. The New Holland Show was also recommended by Jerry and Fred. Pre-registration is required.

Al Lacki talked about the autocross timing system he developed for the Northeast Corvair Council. He set up the photo sensor and reflector on tripods to show the basic features.

Dick Weidner gave another in his series of slide presentations with great photos from the massive “Turkey Run” show he attended at Daytona Speedway in Florida. He also showed photos of Earl Jones’ “Chick House” in North Carolina. Until quite recently, Earl rented space for Corvairs in this huge old chicken house for a mere $50 per year!
LVCC Calendar of Events! (Page 1 of 2)

Saturday, July 13, 2013 :::: "Cruise for a Cause" Car Show.
Marshalls Creek, PA. 1st Annual "Cruise for a Cause" Car Show to benefit the Toys for Tots Foundation Pocono. Location: Palace Resort, 5241 Milford Road, Route 209, Marshalls Creek. Trophies, door prizes, live DJ and more. Price: $10.00 per vehicle. Registration 10:00 AM - 12:00. Show 12:00 Noon – 4:00 PM. Phone: 570-994-3196. E-mail: chubbsworth@hotmail.com Website: www.lostintimecarclub.com

Saturday-Sunday, July 13-14, 2013 :::: Wings & Wheels Show.
Bethel, PA. 7th Annual "Wings & Wheels" Vintage Aircraft Fly-In & Vintage Automobile Show & Big Band Swing Dance. Location: The Golden Age Air Museum, 371 Airport Road, Bethel, PA 19507. Show 9:00 AM - 9:00 PM. Bring your antique, classic or unusual aircraft or 1977 or earlier automobile, or motorcycle for public display. Event Theme: "The Great War", WWI with WWI aircraft, automobiles, re-enactors, and memorabilia collectors invited and encouraged to attend. Biplane rides will also be available along with breakfast, lunch and refreshments. People's choice awards for best aircraft & automobile or motorcycle. Registration $8.00 for automobiles 1946 to 1977 (no newer cars please; registration fee covers passenger as well). Aviation & automobile flea-market spaces available. Phone: 717-933-9566. Email: info@goldenageair.org Website: www.goldenageair.org

Sunday, July 14, 2013 :::: New Holland Antique Auto Show. (Includes Corvair Class).
New Holland, Pennsylvania. 32nd annual show in the New Holland Community Park. Live big band music and lots of food. 29 classes. Pre-registration only. You must register by noon Saturday July 13. There is no day of show registration. Registration forms and details available at http://www.newhollandband.org/NHCARSHOW2013.pdf Phone: 717-354-2200

Sunday, July 14, 2013 :::: Road Angels Show and Shine 2013.
Doylestown, PA. Road Angels Show and Shine 2013 on the park grounds of the historic Moravian Tile Works. Location: Route 313 and Cold Spring Creamery Road, 5 miles east of Route 611 in Doylestown. All street rods, customs, muscle cars, trucks and antiques Up to 1979 are welcome. Time: 9:00 AM - 3:30 PM. Price: $15.00 per vehicle. Phone: Claude at 215-679-4992 or Dale at 215-997-2907. Email: www.roadangelsdoylestown.com. Website: http://www.roadangelsdoylestown.com/RA5_04.htm

Sunday, July 14, 2013 :::: Annual Crazy for Cars Show at Memorytown USA.
Mount Pocono, PA. 4th Annual Crazy for Cars at Memorytown USA. Location: Grange Road, Mount Pocono, PA 18344. Price: $10.00 per vehicle. Registration begins at 10:00 AM. Show 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM. All makes, models, years, welcome. Trophies, music, raffles, 50/50. Phone: Jim or Janice at 570-894-5676. Email: Jantak75@aol.com Website: https://www.facebook.com/groups/129653417076820/

Sunday, July 14, 2013 :::: Blue Moon Fun Run & Trophy Show.
New Kingstown, PA. Blue Moon Cruisers Rod & Custom Association Fun Run and Trophy Show. Location: New Kingstown Fire Company 277, Locust Point Road, Route 11, New Kingston, PA 17072. Rain or Shine. Show 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM. Open to all makes and models including motorcycles, trucks, and imports. Includes flea market, craft show, bake sale, DJ. Registration: $12.00 per car. Phone: 717-697-2728. Email: bmcinfo@bluemooncruisers.com Website: www.bluemooncruisers.com

(Continued on page 7)
LVCC Calendar of Events! (Page 2 of 2)

Sunday, July 28, 2013 :::: Tatamy Historical Society Annual Car Show.
Tatamy, PA. Tatamy Historical Society Annual Car Show. Location: Broad Street, Tatamy, PA. Rain or Shine. Time: 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM. Peoples’ choice awards. Commemorative dash plaques to the first 100 pre-registered vehicles. Club having the most pre-registered vehicles to receive $100. Pre-registration fee is $9.00 prior to July 23. After and Day of show registration is $15.00. Food and entertainment available. Entry forms available at the Tatamy Municipal Building and Breidingers' Auto Parts. Phone: 610-258-3380, 610-759-6268, 610-258-3832. Email: jduel@rcn.com

Sunday, August 4 2013 :::: LVCC Membership Meeting at Das Awkscht Fescht.
Announcement: Our next LVCC meeting will be at the Das Awkscht Fescht show on Sunday, August 4. (We will NOT be holding a meeting in July). To show your Corvair at Das Awkscht Fescht, you need to pre-register, and registration ended on July 1st! But if you forgot to register your Corvair for the show, don't despair! You can still walk into the show grounds as a spectator, or better yet, avoid the spectator entry fee by hitching a ride into the show with one of a fellow LVCC member who did remember to pre-register. Enjoy all the cars, and join us for the meeting. A 'cast' of 34 car clubs, including LVCC, puts on quite a show with over 1,000 vintage autos. We typically get together at the LVCC tent in the Corvair section between 1 and 2 PM. 'See you there!

Friday-Sunday, August 2-4, 2013 :::: Das Awkscht Fescht. (Includes Corvair Class).
Macungie, PA. 50th Annual Das Awkscht Fescht Car Show Flea Market & Car Corral. Location: Memorial Park along Route 100M, 6 miles South of I-78, Macungie, PA. You MUST be pre-Registered by July 1, to show at this event! Friday: Limited to street rods, street machines, customs, race cars, trucks and sport cars from years 1895 through 1991. Saturday August 3: Limited to factory stock cars manufactured prior to 1988. Sunday August 4: Car club day. Limited to vehicles permitted by the respective car clubs identified on the registration form provided on the website. Car corral and flea market. Phone: 610-967-2317. Email: info@awkscht.com Website: http://www.awkscht.com/

Saturday, August 10, 2013 :::: First State Corvair Club Show. (Includes Corvair Class).
New Castle, DE. Corvair-only show. Location: New Castle Moose Lodge, 621 S. Dupont Highway, New Castle, Delaware 19720. Time: 9 AM to 3 PM. Trophies, hospitality room, door prizes, games, 50/50, DJ. Price: $10 pre-registered. $12 at the gate. Contact Mike Slotwinski for details. Phone: 302-377-5268. Email: slinkyslot@verizon.net

Friday-Sunday, August 9-11, 2013 :::: Annual Bloomsburg Nationals.
Bloomsburg, PA. The 10th Annual Bloomsburg Nationals. All cars, trucks and motorcycles welcome at the massive 227-acre Bloomsburg Fairgrounds. Weekend activities will include the car show itself with awards presented to participants, bull riding, a mainstream country music concert, food, games and so much more. Phone: Lance Miller at 717-243-7855. Website: http://www.carsatcarlisle.com/ce/events/bloomsburg-nationals/

Sunday, August 11, 2013 :::: Kramer Memorial Fund Car Show.
Moscow, PA. William R. Kramer Memorial Fund Car Show. Location: Moffat Estate, 10 Moffat Drive, Moscow, PA 18444. Rain Date: August 18. Registration 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM. Show 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM. Price: Pre-registration $8.00 by July 28, after and day of show $10.00. Phone: Bill Kramer at 570-604-2227. Email: wmkrramer1930@verizon.net Website: www.wrkmemschlr.com

Sunday, August 18, 2013 :::: Duryea Hill Climb Car Show.
Reading, PA. Duryea Hill Climb Car Show. Location: Reading City Park at Hill Road and Clymer St, Reading, PA 19602. This show is being held in conjunction with the 62nd Annual Duryea Hill Climb racing event. The hill climb races will be held on Saturday August 17 and Sunday August 18 between 9:00 AM until 4:30 PM each day. The race line-up/start line with spectator areas is within a short walk from the car show location. There will also be a shuttle bus available that will take you from the base to a number of turns for spectators. The car show is only on Sunday. Car show entry begins at 9:30 AM. Car clubs welcome. This will be a non judged event. Website: http://www.bmr-scca.org

Hershey, PA. Hosted by Central PA Corvair Club. Location: AACA Museum, 161 Museum Drive, Hershey, PA. Rally, show, scavenger hunt, social hour, and banquet. Phone: 717/991-7341. Email: earlzgames@comcast.net Website: http://www.centralpacorvairclub.org/
LVCC Classified Ads!


FOR SALE: 140 motor block, bare with all head studs. Came out of a 1965 Corsa with 4 speed trans. The block number is T1216RB. Best offer takes it. Contact Carl Moore. Email moo568@dejazzd.com.


LVCC Merchandise for Sale!

LVCC license plates and hat pins: $3.00 each. LVCC T-Shirts: $6.00 each. Call or email LVCC Secretary/Treasurer Richard Weidner at 610) 502-1414 rcwvair@rcn.com

Next Meeting: Sunday, 8/4/2013 at Das Awkscht Fescht
Club Dues Are Due: $15. ($10 for CORSA Members).

Mail Dues to: Lehigh Valley Corvair Club c/o Richard Weidner 2304 Main Street Northampton, PA 18067

LVCC Club Officers:
President: William Remaly (484) 809-1081 (New phone number).
Vice Pres: Dennis Stamm Phone: (610) 926-4723 Email: dmstamm at comcast dot net
Seer-Treasurer: Richard Weidner. Phone: (610) 502-1414 Email: rcwvair at rcn dot com
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