



# *the fifth wheel*

Winner of the 2014 CORSA Tony Fiore Newsletter Competition

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[HTTP://WWW.CORVAIR.ORG/CHAPTERS/LVCC](http://www.corvair.org/chapters/lvcc)

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## **Next LVCC Meeting: Wednesday 10/26/2016**

Time 7:30 PM. Place: Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority Headquarters (LANta), 2nd Floor Meeting Room, 1060 Lehigh Street, Allentown, PA 18103. Latitude : 40.587607 | Longitude : -75.474405. Bring a guest!

Don't get locked out. If you arrive late, the main door of the LANta office building may be locked. This is for security purposes. But the facility is open around the clock, so ask one of the garage employees to direct you to the second floor.



*The Fifth Wheel* is published monthly by Lehigh Valley Corvair Club Inc. (LVCC). We accept articles of interest to Corvair owners for publication. Classified advertising of interest to Corvair owners is available free of charge to all persons. Commercial advertising is also available on a fee basis. For details, email our newsletter editor, Allan Lacki, at [redbat01@verizon.net](mailto:redbat01@verizon.net).

LVCC is one of the many regional chapters of the Corvair Society of America (CORSA), a non-profit organization that was incorporated to satisfy the common needs of individuals interested in the preservation, restoration, and operation of the Chevrolet Corvair. LVCC dues are \$10 a year for CORSA members or \$15 a year for non-CORSA members. Make your check payable to Lehigh Valley Corvair Club Inc. and send it to Dick Weidner, Secretary-Treasurer, 2304 Main Street Northampton, PA 18067.

# Rat Rod Reaction Spreads to Corvairs

More and more Rat Rods have been appearing at car shows over the past decade or two. The movement started as a revolt against zillion-dollar Pro-Street muscle cars nobody could afford to build or buy.

Those Pro-Street cars with their tubbed fenders, oversize slicks, huge engines, trick paint jobs, chrome-plated 500 cubic inch engines and billet aluminum everything... They show up at car shows with mirrors underneath so you can see their spotless bottoms. Trailer queens of the hot rod world.

A Rat Rod is the polar opposite. Old school cool with cues taken from the early days of hot rodding. The words "Rat Rod" conjure up an image of a Model A Ford with a chopped and channeled body, flathead V8, wide whitewall tires, and just a pair of bomber seats with no upholstery. Repurposed parts salvaged from old junkyards. Perhaps a coating of primer for the paint job or the original paint with a rusty patina of age. Rat rod rust.

Rat rod roots stem back to the 1970s when a few guys built full-size versions

of the over-the-top hot rod illustrations drawn by zany Ed "Big Daddy" Roth. Roth's artwork often included a cartoon character named "Rat Fink" behind the steering wheels of these imaginary rods. The word "rat" thus became associated with this new breed of hot rod.

It wasn't until later that Rat Rod builders began to affix toy rubber rats to the instrument panels of their creations, not to mention wacky over-size shift levers, Maltese crosses, beer keg gas tanks, and other strange forms of decoration. But the emphasis on crude-looking low-cost construction has remained the same since Rat Rodding's early days.

This emphasis on recycling junkyard parts makes it possible for younger guys, who would otherwise be priced out of the old car hobby, to make the scene with their older, more affluent hobbyists. On the other hand, some Rat Rodders don't have enough money to do things right, and the result can be a vehicle that's downright unsafe to drive.

Poorly constructed Rat Rods are accidents waiting to happen, and this has led many of the traditionalists to look

down upon their owners. Often, there is a bit of jealousy too, for Rat Rods often attract more attention at shows and on the street than the \$100,000 confections parked beside them. And let's not forget the element of snobbery that abounds wherever money separates the men from the boys.

Many traditional hot rodders and restorers despise Rat Rods. Former editor of Mopar Muscle and freelance Brad Ocock once wrote,

*"There's a huge difference between Rat Rod and beater. A beater has potential. A Rat Rod is something someone threw together to make a statement, and usually that statement is, 'I don't know how to weld. I had a bunch of crap lying around and realized there was enough to put together a car but didn't want to put any effort into it.'"*

Another automotive journalist, Pat Gahnahl, expressed similar sentiments:

*"I see what are referred to as Rat Rods today comprising three elements: First are the traditional rods and customs. Those are cars built the way rods were*



Over the top Pro-Street muscle cars like this 1970 Pontiac GTO catch the eye but are often hauled about in enclosed trailers because they are impractical to drive on the street. Rat Rods are a rolling protest against this kind of excess.



# *Rat rod menagerie!*



The quintessential Rat Rod. Old-school kool!



Tim Cotrofeld's Rat Rod 'Vair appeared at Sturbridge.



'Vair-powered Beetle with twin center-mount carbs!



Rat Rods can be tastefully done like this early coupe.



Mid-engine V8 'Vair has the Rat Rod look.



Front engine Rat 'Vair. Yes, those are exhaust stacks!

*built in the '30s, '40s, and early '50s, with a primary emphasis on low-buck and home-built, using period-correct components ranging from flathead to nailhead engines, wide whitewall tires to skinny blackwall bias-plys, and black primer to hand-rubbed paint.*

*"Second are what I personally call Rat Rods, as a positive term... They're artistic, fun, and sensational reinterpretations of late-'40s/early-'50s hot rodding as a culture that includes music, clothing, hairstyles, and tattoos. The cars are low, loud, chopped...with giant rear tires, lots of carburetors, open pipes, and tall gearshifts.*

*"Third are...what I derisively call Crap Rods today. They've always been part of the mix, unavoidably. I take exception to those who think that shoddy construction is somehow cool, or worse, those who know they can throw a bunch of junk parts together and peddle it as a cool Rat Rod to some inexperienced buyer who doesn't know the difference."*

Despite the critics, Rat Rods are becoming increasingly more accepted at car shows and in the hobby in general. And the Rat Rod category is becoming broader. Rat rods - or at least the Rat Rod style - now include cars from the 1950s and early 1960s.

The Rat Rod treatment is now being applied to Corvairs, especially early model Corvairs. Some are simply un-restored Corvairs in primer paint. Others are equipped with V8 engines and other modifications. But they all have the Rat Rod look. Rat Rodding provides a low cost path to entering the old car hobby, especially if the basis is an old Corvair.

We have so much to offer prospective Rat Rod Corvair builders in terms of skills, techniques and experience. Application of that kind of knowledge can make the difference between building a kooky fun car and a concoction that is

truly unsafe at any speed. We need to take these people into our fold. I hope we're not too late.

### **SLAMMED!**

The Urban Dictionary provides this definition for the term, "slammed":

*"To have your car very low to the ground. Tucking tires, and minimal clearance between the ground and frame are a must. Lips, body kits, etc, don't count."*

Ever since the 1950s, car guys have been lowering cars to make them look super cool. Dropped front axles and de-arched springs have been part of hot rodding for decades. "Praise the Lowered!"

And now, it's been taken to a new extreme. Slammed cars are now common on the streets. These cars aren't just lowered. They are *really, really* lowered! If you can fit your fist between your oil pan and the pavement, you need to lower it some more!

Naturally, there are some negative consequences to driving a slammed car. You can be sure your chassis will be scrapping the pavement from time to time, especially when you go over a speed bump or drive through a pot hole. Your tires may rub your fenders resulting in a blow out or worse. Hooning on dirt roads is out of the question.

Nevertheless, some guys just can't resist a slammer. The quick and dirty way to slam a car is to cut the coil springs with an angle grinder. This introduces a few minor problems like lack of suspension travel. Your car is basically riding on the suspension bumpers rather than its springs. And unless you're dealing with a solid axle car, you're also affecting the suspension geometry by knocking your camber, caster and toe out of whack, introducing a good dose of bump steer and

other handling maladies.

A much better way to slam your car is to use dropped spindles in your front suspension. That way, you can lower the front of your car without cutting the springs. They're available for only a few cars in the speed shop catalogues, but that's the best way to go. By the way, Corvair guys can use modified Chevy S-10 spindles to achieve this effect.

Lowering the rear suspension is a different animal and the techniques vary depending on whether the car has a solid axle or independent rear suspension. If it's a solid axle, you'll have to cut the springs or de-arch them, depending on whether they are coils or leaf springs. If you're slamming a Corvair, you have another alternative: You can mount the entire power-train higher up in the body by eliminating the engine mounts. This is a radical modification but the road racing guys do it.

Another way to lower your car is to simply use smaller diameter tires, but this runs counter to the trend toward huge donk wheels which are popular amongst this crowd!

The ultimate means of slamming your car is to replace your coil springs with air suspension. That way, you can raise up your car while you're driving and lower it to the ground when you're parked, just like an old Citroen!

### **SILLY SOCKETS!**

Attention late model Corvair owners! Do you find yourself replacing tail light bulbs, only to have your friends and neighbors tell you your bulb burnt out again?

Well, maybe your problem isn't the bulb. It could be your tail light sockets.

The black plastic GM sockets are known to have grounding problems. In

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## **LVCC WECOMES NEW MEMBER STEVE HURST!**

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## *Praise the Lowered! Slam it!*



We often see slammed Honda Civics here in eastern Pennsylvania. This one is tastefully done.



Corvairs can be slammed, too! Here is an early four door Corvair 700. Note the rear camber!



1965 Corvair couple. Surface rust finish puts it in the Rat Rod category, but it is also slammed.



This Lakewood appears to be sitting directly on the pavement, but it has air suspension to bring it back up.



Driving a slammed car can be a challenge! This poor Nissan lost its back bumper while going up a driveway.



This little Mazda Miata scrapes its bottom when two people are in the car. Note the shower of sparks!

addition, the steel shell that grips the bulb often backs out of the plastic body of the socket. It's just a friction fit and there is nothing else that secures the shell in place.

When the shell backs out, the bulb goes with it. So, the electrical contacts on the bottom of the bulb no longer touch their counterpart contacts in the base of the socket.

When you install a new bulb, you need to push it in and give it a turn, and in doing so, you push the steel shell back into place. Voila! The bulb works perfectly. But then, over time, the electrical contacts the bottom of the socket, (which are like little leaf springs), push the shell back out. And so, the bulb stops working again.

The solution is to replace the plastic sockets with metal ones. Many people recommend NAPA LS6469 for the tail / brake / turn signals and NAPA LS6465 for the back-up lights. But you don't have to buy the sockets from NAPA. Here is what you really need:

#### For tail / brake / turn signal lights:

Description: 2-wire double-contact snap-in metal socket for 1 1/8 inch diameter hole. These are after-market replacement parts for a number of Ford, GM and Chrysler cars made from 1965 to 1993. Here are the cross-references:

Replaces Ford #D0AZ-13410-B,  
D1AZ-13410-B, D2AZ-13410-B,  
D2OZ-13410-B.

Replaces GM #88860560.

Replaces Chrysler #2926370.

Replaces AC/Delco #LS166.

Uses bulb #1157 and several others.

Several companies manufacture them. Some are poorly made, but NAPA and JT&T offer nice versions of this socket. Both have a tab which you can use for attaching a ground lead, if you like. I did. The JT&T number is 2578F.

#### For backup lights:

Description: 1-wire single-contact snap-in metal socket for 1 1/8 inch diameter hole. Just like the tail light sockets, these are after-market replacement parts for a number of Ford, GM and Chrysler cars made from 1965 to 1993.

Replaces GM #2978302, 88860430.

Replaces Ford #D00Z-15536A.

Replaces Chrysler #3513162, 3780745.

Replaces AMC #4486949, 4489412.

Replaces AC/Delco #LS128.

Uses bulb #1156 and several others.

The NAPA version of this 1-wire socket includes a ground wire, but its not securely connected to the metal shell of the socket, so I soldered a ground wire directly to the shell itself. The JT&T version does not appear to have any provision at all for a separate ground wire, but again, you can solder one directly to the metal shell, just like I did with the NAPA unit. By the way, the JT&T number for the 1-wire socket is 2579F.

Speaking of solder, I soldered all my connections and used shrink tubing to insulate the hot leads. I recommend you do the same, rather than rely on crimp fittings. (Ground leads, of course, do not need to be insulated from ground!)

Now, before you run out and buy new sockets, check to make sure the old sockets are getting 12 volts. If they are, then go ahead and replace the sockets. But if they are not getting power, you may have a different problem.

Maybe it's just a bad fuse, which is easy to replace. On the other hand, perhaps the electrical contacts in the turn signal switch are worn out. The switch is buried in the steering column, and that's a topic for a different day.

The next page shows photos of the 2-wire and 1-wire JT&T sockets.

Allan Lacki

## **LVCC MEETING NOTES**

Here are notes from our September 28th meeting. Randy Kohler, Allan Lacki, Jerry Moyer, Scott Oberholzer, Fred Scherzer, Dennis Stamm, Bob Weideman and Dick Weidner were present. President Dennis Stamm presided over the meeting.

Dick Weidner gave two treasury reports; one for July and one for August.

#### July:

Beginning balance: .....\$1,218.24  
Dues income: .....\$60.00  
Newsletter expenses: .....\$31.00  
Ending balance: .....\$1,247.24

#### August:

Beginning balance: .....\$1,247.24  
Dues & T-shirt income: .....\$96.00  
Newsletter expenses: .....\$26.36  
CORSA fee: .....\$35.00  
Ending balance: .....\$1,281.89

The attendees unanimously approved Dick's treasury report.

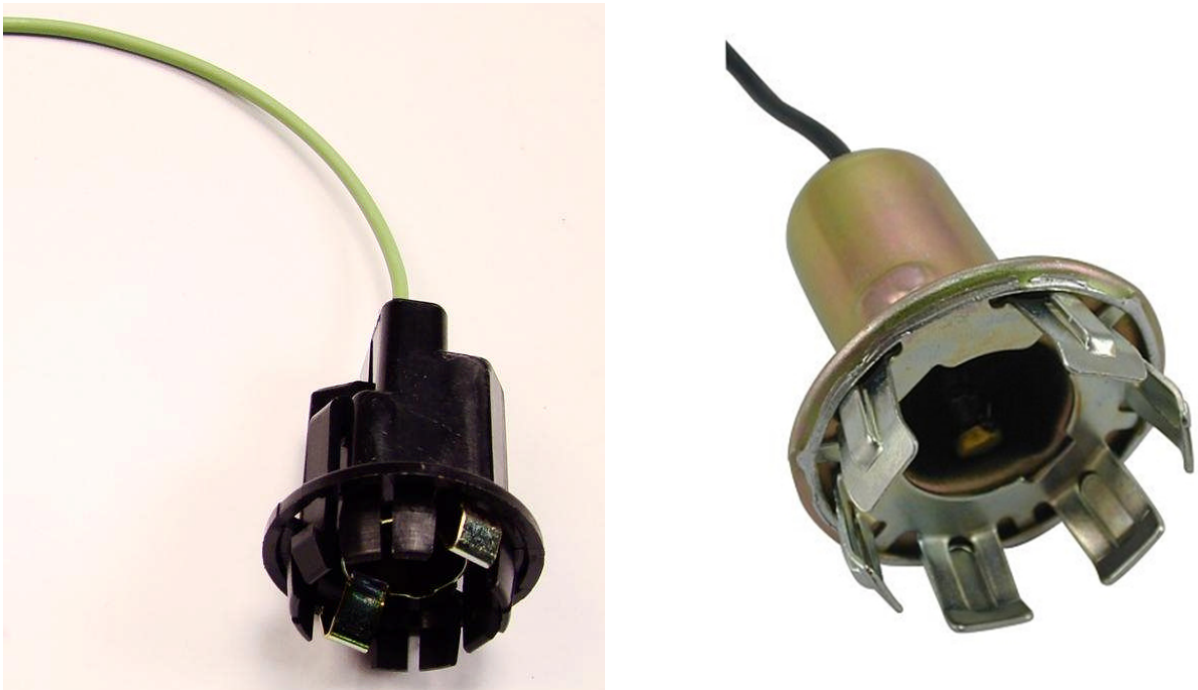
Dennis Stamm gave a report on the Central Pennsylvania Corvair Club's Corvair Day event at the AACA Museum in Hershey. He and Larry Asheuer were there. Larry was vending Corvair parts. Several members of the Philadelphia Corvair Association were also in attendance. Altogether, about 28 Corvairs were on the show field. The event included a free pass to the AACA Museum which now features a wonderful Tucker exhibit.

Dennis also discussed Loctite-brand "Freeze and Release", a rust penetrant he saw for the first time. This happened at the Detroit Homecoming event where a couple of guys were using it while doing an on-the-spot Corvair repair. Freeze & Release instantly freezes seized and rusted bolts, nuts, studs down to -45°F. This ultra shock-freeze causes microscopic cracks in the layer of rust. This allows the lubricating ingredients to wick directly into the rust by capillary action. Released parts remain lubricated and protected from corrosion. Dennis said the product

## ***1965-69 Tail Light Socket Comparison***



Corvair socket for brakes, turn signals, & tail lights. Left photo shows stock version with black plastic housing. Right photo shows aftermarket replacement with all-metal housing. These are for 1965-69 Corvair cars only and will not fit early models or forward control Corvairs.



The backup light sockets are identical to the tail light sockets except they have only one wire. Again, the stock one is on the left and the aftermarket one is on the right.



worked surprisingly well.

Randy Kohler reported on a 1961 Corvair 700 Lakewood for sale in Slatington. It has been sitting indoors for twenty years. It needs some work but appears to be restorable. (Refer to our Classified Ads for details).

Dick Weidner brought several issues of *Automobile Quarterly* to the meeting and passed them around. They contained well-written articles about Corvairs and Corvair show cars.

Dick also brought in a couple of copies of *Corvair Decade*, a book written several years ago by the late Tony Fiore. These beautifully illustrated books are part of the LVCC merchandise collection and are for sale for \$40 apiece, which is \$9 less than the price CORSA charges for them. The club also has one LVCC jacket remaining for sale. Give Dick a call or email for details.

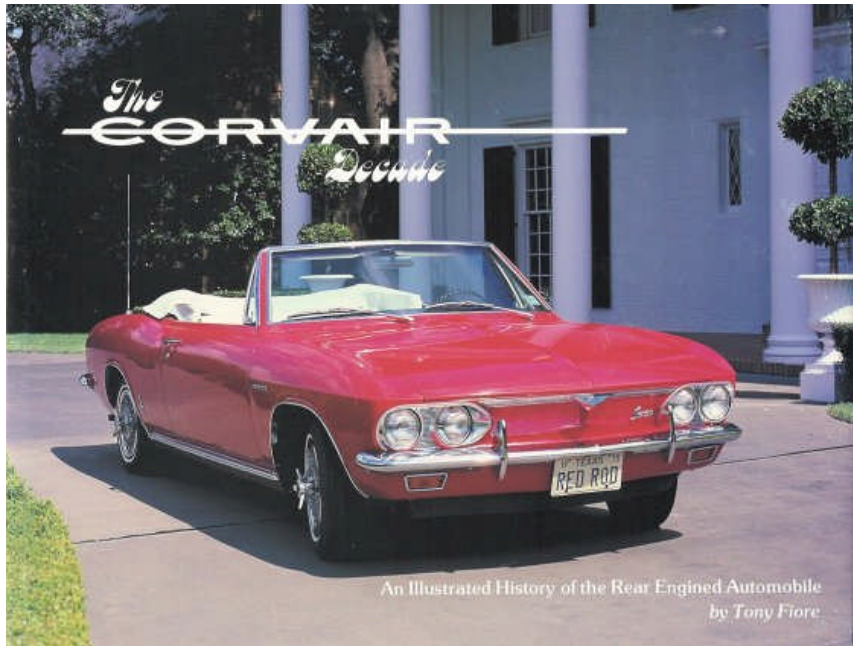
## VACUUM CLEANERS AND SIPHONS DON'T MIX

*Here's an article written by Chess Earman of the old Shenandoah Chapter of CORSA. It was first published in the January 1980 issue of the CORSA Communique.*

A few weeks ago, I discovered a leak in the gas tank of one of our Corvairs. With four of them on the road, it's easy to get them mixed up, and Carrie filled it up with gas. (The leak was a the 1/4 full point). She knew right away she goofed, but I was still faced with the hassle of siphoning gas out and into another car.

I knew how, but I had never really had the occasion to do it before. I found a length of garden hose and pushed it into the tank. The idea of sucking gas through the hose and into my throat didn't excite me. One or two "puffs" on the thing convinced me the stuff would go down my throat and kill me, so I decided to figure a different method.

## Get Your Copy of CORVAIR DECADE By Tony Fiore



The *Corvair Decade* should be Book #1 in anyone's Corvair reference library. This book contains exhaustive coverage of the various Corvair models, design and engineering specifications, and a detailed history of the Car's development. Special price for LVCC Members: \$40. Contact Dick Weidner for details. Phone: (610) 502-1414 Email: rcwvair@rcn.com

I knew I needed to create a vacuum, so my thoughts instantly tuned to a vacuum cleaner. I ran an electric cord out behind my garage to the leaking car and put the hose tightly over the garden hose which led into the gas tank.

Within one of two seconds, I knew the gas was coming, so I pulled the vacuum hose away and the gas started dribbling into a five gallon bucket.

About that time there was an explosion inside the vacuum cleaner that sounded like a backfire, and it shot fire out the exhaust-end of the cleaner. My heart skipped a few beats and I immediately realized what I had done.

But wait - I was still standing there with one hand holding a garden hose dripping gas into the bucket, my other

hand holding the nozzle of a still running vacuum cleaner and there is fire coming out of the cleaner like a jet engine! I was about 25 feet from where the extension cord plugged into the garage.

Any second, I was expecting the big "BANG" when the flames and the gas fumes from the tank connected. They never did. (Maybe that's obvious since I'm writing this article).

For some strange reason, the vacuum cleaner still works, but I no longer use it for siphoning gas!





## LVCC Classified Ads!



**For Sale:** 1965 Corvair. Mid-engine Crown conversion. 350 cid 350 hp Chevy V8. Automatic transmission. Red with flames. Fitch roof. Centerline wheels. Runs and drives. Very nice bodywork and paint but there is a cosmetic crack in the body work at the fuel door and at the Fitch roof. Runs hot when driven for extended periods at highway speed; Members of the CORSA V8 Registry can provide info on how to cure this. Colebrook, CT. Bottom line price: \$7,500. Contact Al Goldstone, owner. (860) 480-3748. corveight@charter.net.



**Wanted:** Do you have a Corvair to sell? Young enthusiastic Corvair fan is looking for a late series Corvair coupe or convertible. Rust-free Corsa or Monza preferred. Is aware of market prices and is willing to pay for a clean solid 'Vair. Contact Kyle Regan, (215) 756-3995, dankbudbankersclub@gmail.com P.S. We met Kyle at Das Awkscht Fescht this year.

**For Sale:** LVCC Member Keith Koehler is selling his 1965 Corvair Monza convertible. Automatic Trans/110 engine. The interior, trunk and engine compartment need some work but the engine was worked on and the brakes have fairly new linings. I have some extra parts that go with the car. Asking price: \$3,500. Interested people can contact me, Keith Koehler, at kpissant@comcast.net or they can call me at home (215) 703-0644. Feel free to leave a message.

**For Sale:** 1970 Corvair Lakewood 700. Comes with extra engines and cylinder heads. The car has been stored indoors for nearly twenty years. It doesn't run and needs new floors but appears to be restorable. The house in Shillington where the car is stored is being sold and so any reasonable offer will be accepted. Contact Andrew Symons to see it. (610) 393-4576.

# ***Car Events In and Around Lehigh Valley***

## **SHOWS & OTHER EVENTS**

### ***Saturday October 15, 2016 :::: Upper Salford Township Car Show & Community Event***

Location: Upper Salford Park, Schwenksville Road and 559 Salford Station Road, Schwenksville, PA 19473. Time: 8 AM to 3 PM. Price: \$10 per car. All years 1900 to 1990. No judging. Dash plaques to first 200 cars. Music, crafts, food, trolley tour.

### ***Sunday October 16, 2016 :::: Wind Gap Oktoberfest Car Show***

Location: Wind Gap Borough Park, 545 West Street, Wind Gap, PA. Time: 10 AM to 3 PM. Prices: \$10 pre-register by October 1, \$12 day of shown. Prizes awarded for 17 classes. (No Corvair class). People's Choice judging. Complimentary coffee and bagels until 11 AM. German music, pig roast, old fashioned cake walk. For more info, call Ed at (610) 657-6196 or email ksbvet@ptd.net

### ***Sunday October 30, 2016 :::: 40th Annual Kempton Car Show & Flea Market***

Location: 83 Community Center Drive, Kempton, PA 19529. Time: 8 AM to 2:30 PM. Rain or shine or snow. Price: \$10. Dash plaques, food, trophies, flea market. For info, call Clarence Getz (610) 377-6130. [www.buickfreespirit.org](http://www.buickfreespirit.org)

### ***Saturday October 29, 2016 :::: Mopar Madness of the Lehigh Valley Cruise Night***

Location: Trexlertown Plaza Trexlertown, PA, Pennsylvania 18104. Time: 5 PM to 8 PM. Price: \$0. All makes of Classic & Antique Vehicles welcome. Contact: [glukow426@aol.com](mailto:glukow426@aol.com). [www.moparmadness.org](http://www.moparmadness.org)

### ***Sunday November 6, 2016 :::: Reigelsville Fall Roll Out Car Show***

Location: Reigelsville Ball Park, Route 611, Reigelsville, PA. Time: 8 AM to 2 PM. Rain or shine. Price: Free for cars. No Vehicles newer than 1991. Vintage, antiques, street rods, customs & trucks. <http://riegelsville.org/fall-rollout-car-show/>

## **Clark's Corvair Parts®**

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## **Our 43rd Year!**

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*Clark's Corvair donates door prizes for our meeting at Das Awkscht Fescht.*

## **LVCC Club Officers:**

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# **Next Meeting: Wednesday 10/26/2016**