Newsletter of Lehigh Valley Corvair Club Inc. (LVCC)



# the fifth wheel

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DECEMBER 2016

### HTTP://WWW.CORVAIR.ORG/CHAPTERS/LVCC

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### Next LVCC Meeting: Wednesday 01/25/2017

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, redbat01@verizon.net.

# Cord 8/10 Sportsman. Corvair Power.

This is a short story about the Corvair-powered Cord 8/10 Sportsman replicar, announced to the press in September 1964 and manufactured by the Cord Automobile Company through 1966. It was an 8/10ths scale replica of the immortal coffin-nose Cords produced back in the 1930s.

#### The Sensational Cord 810 of 1936.

The original Cord 810 created a sensation when it first appeared at the New York Auto Show in November 1935. Unlike earlier classic American cars, this was not a limousine to be piloted by a haughty chauffeur. That kind of car went out of fashion with the Great Depression. No, the Cord 810 was meant to be driven by the owner; a driver's car.

Like the wildly successful Miller Indy cars, it had front wheel drive. It was powered by a Lycoming V8 - a sister company that made aircraft engines. It had an electrically-operated Wilson pre-selector gearbox. The instrument panel was filled with gauges. And it was so sleek, so low.

Nobody had ever seen a car like this. In the front, it had pontoon fenders, much like an airplane. Retractable

headlights added to its sleek appearance. The back of the car was equally clean, with flush mounted tail lights. The aerial for the radio was a grid, mounted on the bottom of the car where it couldn't be seen. The fuel cap and door hinges were hidden. And instead of a conventional chrome grill for the radiator, it had horizontal slats wrapping around its box-shaped hood. It became known as the "coffin-nose" Cord. The styling team was led by Gordon Buehrig, whose career spanned into the 1960s and who is also credited for his work on the 1956-57 Lincoln Mark II coupe.

Like most radical designs, the Cord 810 had teething problems that sullied its reputation. It was offered for only two years, 1936 and 1937. In its second year, it was accompanied by a supercharged version - the Cord 812, but sales remained in the tank. The Recession of 1937-38 didn't help. Production was suspended and the body dies were sold. But the coffin-nose Cord was not forgotten. It was an instant classic.

### Glenn Pray's Dream.

When the Auburn Automobile Company declared bankruptcy in 1937, a man named Dallas Winslow, a Buick

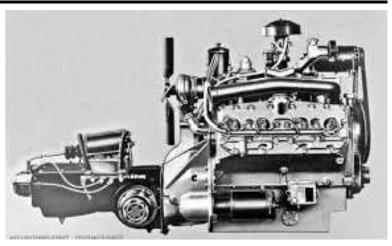
dealer from Flint, Michigan, bought some of the remaining assets which included the complete parts inventory of for Auburn, Duesenbergs and Cord automobiles. The price was \$85,000 plus an additional \$25,000 for the Auburn administration building. Thus, the Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg Company was formed. ACD Co. continued to offer parts and service from the Auburn, Indiana facility throughout the 1940s and 50s.

In 1960, Glenn Pray, a school teacher who was a big Cord enthusiast, bought the remaining assets of Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg Company from Dallas Winslow and moved them to a vacant pickle factory in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. This would continue to be Pray's base of operations into the future. The venture was financed in part by an associate named Wayne McKinley.

Glenn Pray probably could have prospered by simply selling parts for these classic cars, but he had higher ambitions. He wanted to begin building replicas of them for paying customers. And to make his dream come true, he picked the boldest, most beautiful of them all. The Cord 810. While retain-

(Continued on page 4)





Left: Distinctive nose of the original Cord 810. Right: Cord's Lycoming V8 with transaxle.

# Cord 8/10 Photo Gallery



Many but not all Cord 8/10's had side pipes.



Profile shot reveals the compact size of the 8/10.



Glenn Pray used NOS Cord parts for his 8/10 replicas.



All Cord 8/10s were two-seaters. 100 inch wheelbase.



Sitting pretty in red! Early 8/10s had moon hubcaps.



Rock-n-roll promoter Dick Clark owned a Cord 8/10!

ing his interests in ACD, Glenn Pray and several inventors established a new entity to design, manufacture and sell the replicas.

#### What's Inside?

It was important to Glenn Pray that his replica be a front-wheel drive car, just like the original. But during the planning stages, no front wheel drive cars were being built in America. The Oldsmobile Toronado had not yet arrived. Mr. Pray had to get creative. Luckily, Chevrolet was still producing Corvairs at that time.

The original Cord 810 had a unitary power train, meaning that the engine, transmission and differential were all bolted together as a single assembly, with the transmission in the front, differential in the middle and engine at the rear, just like the Corvair Uni-Pack power train. So, it was natural that Glenn Pray would select the Corvair power train as the basis for his replica of the original car. It was simply a matter of positioning the Corvair power train up-front instead of at the rear.

The next challenge was to design the suspension. The original Cord 810 had independent front suspension with half shaft axles. To enable the front wheels to steer as well as transmit power to the road, the axles were equipped with Cardan joints instead of simple universal joints. Aside from that, the suspension was simple: Nothing but one trailing arm on each side. Springing was provided by a transverse leaf secured to the chassis in the middle and connected to the outboard ends of the right and left trailing arms. It could be argued that a DeDion setup as found on the earlier L-29 Cord may have been a sturdier arrangement. In the rear, the original Cord 810 had a simple beam axle suspended on semi-elliptic leaf springs, like a Dodge minivan.

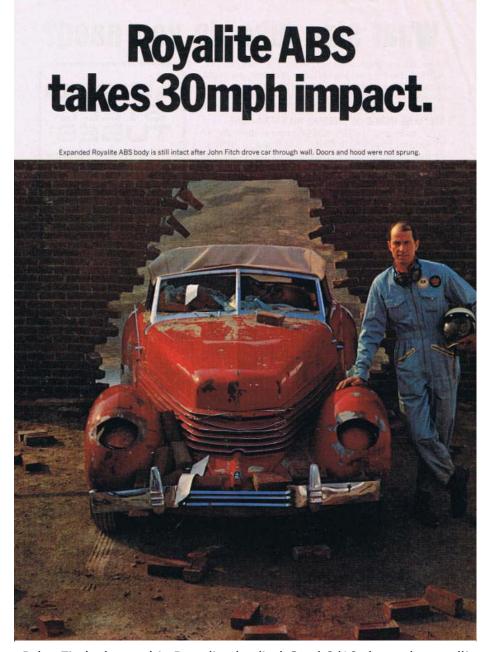
Glenn Pray's replica was more modern in the suspension department. Like the original, it had independent front suspension with half shafts, but instead of trailing arms, each wheel was located by upper and lower control arms. Pontoon fenders don't leave much space for springs, so Pray's engineers specified longitudinal torsion bars, just like those on Chrysler products of that time. At the rear, there was a beam axle located by trailing arms and a Panhard rod.

Like its predecessor, the 8/10 had a conventional steel frame consisting of long box sections running front to rear, cross-members, mounting points for the

suspension, and pads for the body. The frame weighed about 400 pounds. Nevertheless, the entire car was rather light in weight at 2,100 pounds.

#### Plastic Body Beauty.

It would have been more authentic if the 8/10's body was made of steel, like the original. But there was no way this would be financially feasible for a small upstart like Glenn Pray. He had



John Fitch drove this Royalite-bodied Cord 8/10 through a wall!

## 1936-37 Cord. The Inspiration.



1937 Cord 810 Sportsman convertible.





1936 Cord 810 Beverly "humpback" sedan.



1936 Cord 810 Westchester sedan.



All Cords came with full instrumentation.



Cord 810 / 812 interior .

to think outside the box.

Around the same time, U.S. Rubber Company was promoting a product named "Expanded Royalite" as a suitable material for boat hulls and heavy duty truck cabs. A specialty car made of Royalite would be a good promotional tool for U.S. Rubber. And so it came to be.

Expanded Royalite comes in large sheets. It's a laminated ABS-based plastic that has a cellular inner core sandwiched between inner and outer skins. (ABS stands for acrylonitrile butadiene styrene). Nowadays, there are probably dozens of plastics that would be suitable for molding car bodies, but back in the 1960s, Expanded Royalite had a unique combination of characteristics. It was advertised as being exceptionally rigid, light in weight, and resistant to weather, salts, alkalis and most chemicals. But it's main selling point was that it was easy to form into shapes using conventional vacuum molding techniques. That meant low tooling costs for low-volume production.

To get the ball rolling, Glenn Pray provided an original Cord convertible to U. S. Royal to serve as a pattern for the 8/10 replica. U.S. Royal's Consumer and Industrial Products Division in Mishawaka, Indiana took it from there. To get the dimensions right, they made an 8/10th scale clay mockup of Glenn's donor car. Then, to accommodate the sizes and properties of Royalite sheet, they made a five-piece plaster mold. Finally, for production purposes, they prepared an epoxy vacuum-forming mold in which Royalite sheets were formed into individual body parts. It took about five minutes to mold each piece. The pieces were assembled into a complete shell using epoxy-based adhesives and standard mechanical fasteners. The complete body assembly weighed only 200 pounds.

U.S. Rubber manufactured the body shells for all Cord 8/10s at their Mishawaka plant and shipped them to Glenn Pray's facility in Oklahoma. There, they were fixed to rolling chassis units that were assembled by Pray's staff. The rest of the work was performed there, at Pray's workshop.

Glenn Pray and his people did their best to use commonly-available parts throughout to ease maintenance and repair for future owners. Of course, some of the parts were unique, like the NOS Cord instrument panel with its full complement of gauges. Aside from it's smaller size, the Cord 8/10 was a fitting tribute to the original car.

#### Rave Reviews.

Car magazines like Motor Trend and Automobile Quarterly gave reviews when the Cord 8/10 arrived on the scene. In addition to being faithful to the original styling, they were well-trimmed with quality components. Although the body was made of plastic, this was no kit car.

The magazines praised them for their comfort, handling and acceleration. Pray didn't skimp with the engines - Cord 8/10s came with the high-performance 140 Corvair engine, with the turbo 180 being optional.

Whether they were that good is open to debate. Some folks who have driven them aren't too impressed with their roadability. But nobody can debate that they attract attention. They are truly handsome cars.

#### Aftermath.

Glenn Pray and Wayne McKinley were not alone in financing the Cord Automobile Company. There were other investors and a dispute arose when sales failed to meet expectations. In January of 1966, Pray was ousted and six months later, in July of 1966, the Cord Automobile Company stopped producing cars after building just 97.

But that's not the end of the Cord story. In March 1967, the assets of the Cord Automobile Company were purchased by a new outfit underwritten by William P. Lear of Lear Jet fame. The

name of the new company was Sports Automobile Manufacturing Company. SAMCO produced 13 more Cord 8/10 Sportsman cars, probably to use up existing supplies, and then introduced two new Cord replicars. Known as the Cord Warrior and Cord Royale, they were nowhere near as faithful to the original Cord design of the 1930s. Apparently, the car-buying public didn't care. They bought 400 of the them, so sales were much better than Glenn Pray's 8/10 Sportsman. Nevertheless, around 1974, SAMCO made a decision was made to produce motorhomes instead of Cords and Cords were produced no more.

Meanwhile, after leaving the Cord Company, Glenn Pray started yet another venture - to build replicas of Auburn Speedsters. Production continued from 1968 into 1981. Concurrently, Pray's Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg Company continued to sell parts and services for the original cars built in the 1930s. Glenn Pray passed away in 2011. ACD Co. is now owned by his son, Doug Pray.

From time to time, investors announced plans to introduce yet another version of the classic Cord 810, but none were ever built in any quantities. On or about November 25, 2016, another entrepreneur announced plans to build Cord replicas. Maybe so, but they certainly won't be powered by Corvair!

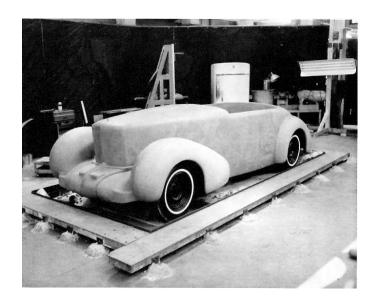
#### Author: Allan Lacki. Sources:

Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg Story http://www.acdfactory.com/acd-costory.html

The Cord 8/10 Sportsman, by Kevin Wilson. http://www.corvairforum.com. Dec 18, 2009.

Plastic-Fantastic: The-Cord-Sportsman-By Glenn Pray Debuts. http://www. forgottenfiberglass.com

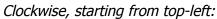
Rebirth of Cord Made Possible with New Material, by L. Scott Bailey, Editor. Automobile Quarterly.





### **MAKING THE CORD 8/10**





- 1. Cord 8/10 clay mockup.
- 2. Bodies being prepared at U.S. Rubber facility.
- 3. Prototype 8/10 engine compartment.
- 4. Final assembly at Glenn Pray's shop.
- 5. Rolling chassis. Corvair Monza seats were not used in the production version.





Celebration to Mark 50th Anniversary of Glenn Pray's Corvair-powered Cord 8/10, by Kurt Ernst. Hemmings Daily, April 21, 2014.

A Brief History of the Cord Automobile. http://www.stutzbearcat.com/

Body Material for New Cord: Expanded Royalite. (Appears to be a U.S. Royal brochure or pamphlet).

Cord 8/10 by John Ethridge. Motor Trend. July 1966.

#### **NEXT MEETING JANUARY!**

Remember, our next meeting will be on Wednesday, January 25, 2017. Elections will take place at our January meeting.

Nominations remain open for officer positions! Submit your nominations by e-mail or postal mail to Dick Weidner, our Secretary/ Treasurer: Here is his contact information: Richard C. Weidner 2304 Main Street Northampton, PA 18067 rewvair@rcn.com.

### MISROUTED FUEL LINES CAN CAUSE VAPOR LOCK

by John Covell, San Francisco, CA. May 1986 CORSA Communique

For a long time, my Corvair was plagued with vapor lock problems. I had no trouble with starting and running the car from cold, but if I shut it off and then tried to run it again without giving the car time to cool down completely, it would manifest vapor lock within a hundred yards of driving off. And of course, the problem was worse in hot weather.

One day, while I was staring at my stalled engine and tearing my hair out, I noticed that my main fuel feed line had somehow gotten bent away from its correct path between the firewall and the fuel pump so that it was lying directly alongside and in contract with the left-hand cylinder head, down by the

carbs.

The mystery was solved! I grabbed my wrenches, loosened the fuel line, realigned it, and retightened the nuts. The problem has not reappeared since I did it.

I think the Corvair fuel system by its design is prone to this kind of malady, so it's good to check this first if vapor lock occurs.

Since making the above repair, I have also fitted a firewall grommet, which should give the car more protection against the possibility of a reoccurrence.

### **TUNE-UP TIP**

by Harry Jensen, CCE May 1986 CORSA Communique

I read in my February Communique about Bill Reider's trip to the national convention in Houston and his distributor that self-destructed on the way there. He probably had done the same thing I had the last time I did a tune-up.

I had changed the plugs, points, and condenser. I gave the rotor a slight tug to remove it, but it seemed stuck; I gave it a good yank and it came off. I put on a new one, set the timing, and went for a test drive. The car was slow, very slow. It would idle fine at low RPM okay, but as the RPM increased, the motor did not develop the power it had before the tune-up.

I took it back into the garage to check the timing - it was still right on the mark. I popped off the distributor cap and checked the mechanical advance by trying to turn the rotor. It wouldn't move, indicating a problem.

That "yank" on the stuck rotor had caused the point cam to pull above the advance weights, rendering the entire mechanical advance inoperative. I had also bent the retaining bracket that keeps the point cam and weights aligned. Without the base of the point

cam in position, the weights had flung out far enough to rub the distributor housing.

So, should you remove a rotor, be sure to give it a little twist when you reinstall it. If you feel no movement against the springs, remove the breaker plate to check the position of the mechanical advance parts.

#### **NECC UPDATE**

2016 was a good year for Northeast Corvair Council (NECC). Our event attendance was up and we're well aware your support is the reason for our success. To all who joined us on the track, and those who considered coming but couldn't, a sincere thank you!

Recently the NECC executive committee met to map out our speed schedule for next year. Get a bunch of speed freaks together in one room, feed them pizza, and great ideas are bound to happen!

We talked about different venues, how many events to stage in 2017, possibly partnering with other sanctioning bodies, whether to offer time trials, and much more. It was a very productive exchange.

Right now on our radar is a possible return to New York Safety Track for a car-only event. We are also considering a car only event at Pocono, which offers a number of challenging track configurations. Many of you expressed an interest in Pocono when we took a survey in September. We are also looking at other tracks in the region.

NECC is already working hard on these possibilities, and we'll absolutely keep you in the loop as things develop.

Meantime thank you again for your support.

We wish all of you a wonderful holiday season and a happy new year!

### **MORE MACUNGIE PHOTOS!**

Kyle Regan, one of the spectators in Corvair Row, sent in these still photographs for our newsletter and so here they are! In addition, Kyle prepared a nicely-edited video of our cars and posted it on his Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/kyle.regan.37













### LANta Community Center Entrance



Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANta) Headquarters

Community Center Meeting Room, 2nd Floor

1060 Lehigh Street Allentown, PA 18103

We Meet Here!
(Entrance to LANTA)

## Corvair Society of America News

### 2017 CORSA CONVENTION HOTEL. NOW TAKING RESERVATIONS!



The host hotel for the 2017 Convention is the Hilton Garden Inn of Independence, Missouri. For this hotel's website, click here. For reservations, call 816/350-3000 or 877/782-9444 and use group code CCA for the convention rate of \$110, or go to: corvair.org/2017hotelreg.html.

Alternate lodging is the Drury Inn & Suites. For this hotel's website, click here. For reservations, call 800/325-0720 and use group code 2276033 for our convention rate of \$120, or go to druryhotels.com/Reservations.aspx?groupno=2276033 For more information on the convention, visit the 2017 Convention website at https://www.corvair.org/2017convention/.

### **CALL FOR NOMINATIONS!**

There are four Directors elected each year for CORSA and CPF Board. This year there are two Director terms to be filled in the Western Division, and one each from the Central and Eastern Divisions. Current Board members whose terms expire in 2017 are all eligible to run again for these Board positions and are encouraged to do so. For all other CORSA members, this is your opportunity to help the organization and become part of the Board to help direct and steer the club into the future. We need lots of ideas, especially on ways to reach out on social media to gain new members. If you have an interest in running and have questions, you can direct them to me or any Director. Being part of the Board is a very rewarding position as we guide the club towards the future, this being the 50th anniversary of the 1967 Corvair, with many more years to celebrate and grow the club. If you are elected your term begins at the CORSA Board meeting during the 2017 convention in Independence, Missouri. To be nominated for election it is necessary to be a CORSA member in good standing, send notice of intent, submit a recent portrait photo, and write a brief bio and statement on how you plan to contribute to CORSA as a Board member. This will be published in the March issue of the Communique, so these have to be received by February 1. The submissions should be sent to Dale Dewald at d66dewald@gmail.com.

Dale Dewald, CORSA Vice President

### LVCC Classified Ads!

**For Sale:** NOS exhaust pipe for a 1965 Corvair & later with a new clamp & two gasket rings. Fits the 110 hp motor. \$35.00 for all. Carl Moore, Mohnton, PA. moo568@ptd.net

**For Sale:** 1964 Corvair Monza 2-door coupe. 110 hp engine. Powerglide automatic transmission. Goldwood yellow with black interior. Great condition. 77,000 miles. \$7,000. Contact Wayne Troxell, Andreas, PA. (570) 386-4347.

**For Sale:** 1969 Corvair 500 2-door coupe. 110 hp engine. Powerglide automatic transmission. Garnet red with black interior. Zero rust. Excellent condition all around. 48,000 miles. Hellertown, PA. \$10,000. Larry Lewis, Hellertown, PA (610) 209-0297.

For Sale: 1969 Corvair 500 coupe. 35,000 original miles. Frost Green with black interior. 110 hp engine. Powerglide transmission. All-new brakes, lines, hoses, wheel cylinders, hardware, master cylinder. Rebuilt front suspension. New gas tank, sender unit, sock, etc. Engine resealed, rebuilt carbs, balancer, plugs, cap, rotor, ignitor, coil, heater hoses, heater motor, exhaust y pipe, muffler, tail pipe. New Coker tires, engine wire harness, battery, carpet. All smog equipment hooked-up and works. Runs great. \$7000.00 obo. Call or email Larry Asheuer, Lansdale, PA. (267) 994-1569. a-lcorvair@msn.com

**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. Telford, PA. Asking price: \$3,500. Keith Koehler, Telford, PA. kpissant@comcast (215) 703-0644. Feel free to leave a message.

For Sale: I have a 1965 110-hp engine that is excess to my needs. Code is TO4I9RH (110-hp with Powerglide). Asremoved from the car in running condition years ago. Turns freely but specific history and condition is not known. Appears to be an original and unmolested engine. Complete with accessories (carbs, distributor, alternator, exhaust manifolds et al. Bellhousing is in place but no torque converter, just the flex plate. Come see it, check it over, no obligation to buy. If you do choose to buy it, I can deliver it in my truck (in which it is pictured) as long as you're in New Jersey or eastern Pennsylvania. But you'll need help to unload it, my engine-lifting days are behind me. \$450.00. Robert W. Marlow, PO Box 155 Lavallette, NJ 08735 Ph 201-444-1859 Email RWMarlow@optimum.net









### Car Events In and Around Lehigh Valley

### November 19 2016 through April 22, 2017 :::: Amore della Strada: Italian Cars

Location: AACA Museum, 161 Museum Drive, Hershey, PA Phone: 717 566-7100 x100. See the latest exhibit at the Antique Automobile Club America (AACA) Museum in Hershey. The array of vehicles ranges from the ordinary, a 1937 Fiat Topolino, to the extraordinary, a one-family owned 1954 Siata 200 CS, Balbo. Rare and unusual vehicles include a 1974 DeTomaso Longchamps Coupe, a 1967 Italia Omega Convertible, and 1977 Piaggio Ape. You'll see iconic cars such as, a 1971 Fiat 850 Spider, 1974 Fiat X 1/9 and 1974 Fiat 124 Spider as well as the more exotic 1978 Ferrari 308GTB and 1995 Ferrari 512M. The Alfisti will delight at the sight of a 1974 Alfa Romeo Montreal, 1974 Alfa Romeo GTV, and 1967 Alfa Romeo GT 1300 Junior. Next best thing to a Corvair show!

### January 20-22, 2017 :::: Automania in Allentown

Location: Allentown Fairgrounds, 302 North 17th Street, Allentown, PA 18104. Hours:

Fri. 12 PM-9 PM, Sat. 9 AM-6 PM, Sun. 9 AM-3 PM. Since 1992, Auto Mania has been Pennsylvania's biggest indoor heated swap meet. Includes car corral. Admission: \$10 daily. For vendor pricing, visit http://www.carlisleevents.com/

### Wednesday, January 25, 2017 :::: LVCC Membership Meeting

Location: Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority Headquarters (LANta), 2nd Floor Meeting Room, 1060 Lehigh Street, Allentown, PA 18103. Time: 7:30 PM. Bring a guest!

### Saturday January 21, 2017 :::: Blue Mountain Antique Engine January Get-Together

Location: Jacktown Grove, 1229 Richmond Rd, Bangor, PA. Make or break engines, steam engines, and other antique agricultural machinery on display. No admission fee for walk-ins. \$15 fee for sellers. Food available including their famous "Hobo Stew". Contact Person: Tom Buist Jr. (610) 588-7360 tbbuist@frontiernet.net.

### Clark's Corvair Parts®

400 Mohawk Trail, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370 (413)625-9776 www.corvair.com



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MAIN CATALOG - Over 420 Pages, over 15,000 parts SPECIALTY CATALOG - Over 220 pages SUPPLEMENT - Price list has over 40 pages

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

### LVCC Officers:

President: Dennis Stamm Phone: (610) 926-4723 Email: dmstamm@comcast.net Vice Pres: Fred Scherzer Phone: (484) 948-5142 Email: jukeboxman44@gmail.com Secretary / Treasurer: Richard Weidner. Phone: (610) 502-1414 Email: rcwvair@rcn.com Newsletter & Website Editor: Allan Lacki. Phone: (610) 927-1583 Email: redbat01@verizon.net

### Next Meeting: Wednesday 01/25/2017