



# the fifth wheel

OCTOBER 2018

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

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## Next Meeting! Wednesday, October 24, 2018

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

LVCC Meeting Information: 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. 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), a chartered chapter for the Corvair Society of America. 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](mailto:redbat01@verizon.net).



# Hands Aluminum Wheels

*Editor's Note: We would like to thank several folks who are active on the Corvair Center Forum. They provided many of the facts in this article. Special thanks go out to Rick Loving and Craig N. Coeur d'Alene.*

Hands aluminum wheels are well known in the Corvair community because they were sold by John Fitch as part of the Fitch Sprint accessory package. But their background is a mystery. There are few if any ads for them in old car magazines and little factual information about them on the internet.

## Where Did They Come From?

Hands wheels were manufactured by Hands Engineering based at 4159 Whiteside Street in Los Angeles. You may be wondering where the name "Hands" came from. It's an acronym from the name of Hands Engineering's predecessor, H and S Metal Products Company. The fact that Hand Engineering was preceded by H and S is corroborated by the fact that they shared the same street address in Los Angeles.

It's not clear how and why H and S got its start, but it must have been around a long time for a magnesium fire was reported at their factory in 1952. Sometime during the 1950s, H and S began using the trade name "Hands" and became the go-to choice for go-kart wheels. By the late 1950s, Hands was also manufacturing wheels for quarter midget racing cars.

## Introduction of the Fitch-Style Wheel

Sometime around 1961, Hands introduced its iconic eight-spoke road wheel. Sizes included 13" x 5.5". John Fitch liked what he saw and soon offered them in his Corvair Sprint accessory catalog. A 15" version was proba-

bly manufactured by Hands for Porsches although it's unclear if these came later.

Although we associate Hands wheels with the Fitch Sprint, they were not exclusively made for Corvairs. They appeared on at least two Detroit prototypes: the 1963 Ford Mustang II and the 1963 Rambler Tarpon as well as Tex Smith's innovative XR-6 T-bucket hot rod built in 1962-63.

According to Fitch Sprint expert Rick Loving, "*Hands Engineering offered the Hands style rim with the cast in raised hub up and 3 ear spinner thru the mid 60's...One would assume that production on that pattern stopped around late 64 mid 1965 as John Fitch could not get a set for the Fitch Phoenix right around its debut in 66.*"

## Where Did Hands Go?

Word has it that Hands sold its manufacturing equipment to National Sprint Car Hall of Fame inductee Gordon Schroeder in the mid-1960s and that his firm, Schroeder Racing Products, continued to manufacture the same wheels for a some time afterward. However, the name "SRC", not "SRP", is cast into the backsides of the wheels, so there is some doubt about their provenance.

Irrespective of the actual manufacturer, SRC wheels were optional on Sunbeam Tigers and, aside from the SRC marking, are identical to the original 13 x 5.5 inch Hands wheels.

SRC apparently made the Hands-style wheels in larger sizes, too. For example, Jack McAfee sold SCR wheels under his own label to Porsche owners who wanted something wider than the 4.5 inch wide Fuchs wheels then being offered by Porsche. The McAfee

wheels measured 15" x 5.5." Again, it's unclear if Hands made a 15 inch version.

## Copy Cats.

Dan Gurney Racing Wheels, Performance Specialties and Western offered variants of Hands wheels. 'They are easily distinguished from the originals because none of them have the unique cast-in hub snout that was characteristic of the original Hands wheels.

## **LVCC Meeting Notes**

We held our last meeting on September 26th. Here are notes from that meeting.

President Dennis Stamm opened the meeting at 7:30 PM. In attendance were John Egerton, Tom Hambel, Steve Hurst, Allan Lacki, Jerry Moyer, Dale Parkhurst, Ed Prescott, Fred Scherzer, Dennis and Dick Weidner.

Dick read the minutes from our June meeting and presented the treasury report. In June, we had a checking account balance of \$1,453.85. Since then, we collected membership dues amounting to \$190 and spent \$19.07 on newsletter photocopies and postage. As of September, the balance was \$1,604.78. Motions were made to approve the minutes and the report. Both were approved as read.

Dick reported that 47 Corvairs were shown at Das Awkscht Fescht on August 5th – a great turnout. Fifty Corvair owners had registered but three did not turn out, probably due to soggy weather over the weekend.

Dick circulated a number of items from his collection including an issue of the

*(Continued on page 5)*

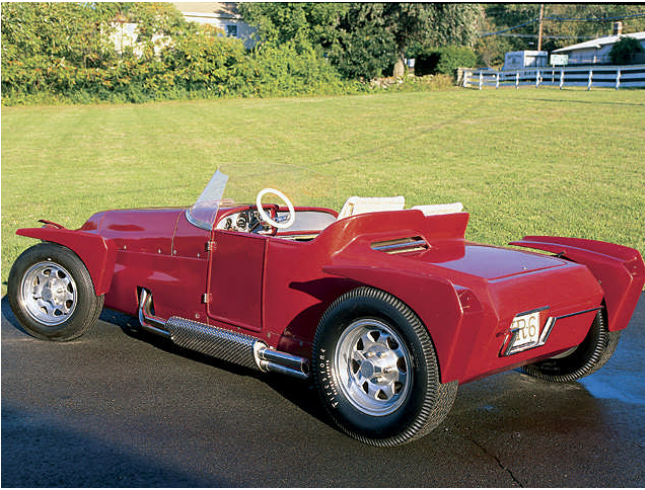
## Genuine Hands Wheels



True Hands Engineering wheels had cast-in hub snouts. Top left: Snout is in evidence here! Top right: Knock-off spinner mounts to the snout. Left: Hands Engineering wheels are usually marked as such on the backside. Although it may be hard to see in this photo, the casting says "Hands Engineering." At least one other company, notably Offenhauser, sold Hands wheels under its own label. Photos by Rick Loving and Craig N. Coeur d'Alene. Below: A convertible 1965 Corvair Fitch Sprint and a Corvair-powered Devin C, both equipped with Hands wheels which were offered as options by Fitch and Devin.



## *Hands Wheels on Non-Corvairs*



Top left: Hands wheels on Tex Smith's 1963 XR6 hot rod. Top right: Hands wheels on the 1963 Ford Mustang II show car. Left: Hands wheels on the Rambler Tarpon concept car.

Jack McAfee wheels aren't true Hands wheels, but they're true to form in all respects except one: they were available in larger diameters. They were manufactured for McAfee by Hands Engineering's successor, SRC and were quite popular among Porsche owners. Here, we see a Porsche 356 equipped with 15x5.5 McAfee wheels. True Hands wheels are marked as such on the backside.



“Junkyard Primer” book. This popular periodical, published annually, provided part number cross-references for all popular cars including Corvairs. He also circulated a copy of “New '62 Cars” by Bill Carroll. And to top it off, he circulated a very rare hardcover book titled, “Everthing I Know About Corvairs,” by “Ralph Nader.” All the pages inside are blank. This would make a great gag gift for any Corvair enthusiast!

Ed Prescott told of his encouraging experience with classic car insurance. He has a policy with Hagerty. While working underneath his Corvair, his socket wrench fell on his face and broke his tooth. The dental bill amounted to nearly \$3,000. At first, he doubted if Hagerty would cover it, but just for giggles, he filed a claim. And surprisingly enough, Hagerty paid the claim. Ed said, “It's worth checking with them!”

For Show and Tell, Dick demonstrated how to use a UniSyn and a vacuum / pressure gauge for synchronizing carburetors. Either tool works fine.

After that, Fred Scherzer showed everybody his “Portable Ignition System for Highway Breakdowns,” known more formally as K-D Tool 2632. This handy device is intended to be used when ignition problems arise. When hooked-up, it provides a temporary by-pass around the ignition coil, points and condenser; making it unnecessary to do tiresome troubleshooting while stuck on the side of a highway. They come up for sale from time to time on eBay.

Fred actually used his K-D 2632 on his 1963 Chevy Impala. One afternoon, while coming home from a car show, the normally-reliable Impala began to sputter and eventually came to a halt. Coincidentally, Fred had his K-D 2632 in the trunk, so he decided to try it out. He bought it second hand and had never used it before, so he was unsure if it would help. But it worked just fine and Fred was able to drive back home

*(Continued on page 6)*



### CORVAIR CONTINENTAL

This fiberglass wheel carrier may be installed on all '60 Corvairs, giving additional luggage space up front. On the '61 models the tire is removed from the engine compartment for added protection of tire and engine. Installation is said to take only 30 minutes; there are no holes to drill. Painting is unnecessary, as matching colors are impregnated into the units. Priced at \$125.00, the Kompak Wheel Carrier is available from: EPCOR Corp., Dept. CL, 127 Dyer Rd., Santa Ana, Calif.

*Ah! Just what a Corvair needs! A bit more ground-hugging weight over the rear!*  
*Source: Car Life magazine, March 1961.*

without getting a tow. Fred noted that it makes a buzzing sound - a continuous spark inside - while it's in operating. Incidentally, he later traced the problem to a faulty condenser. It happens more often than you think.

Tom Hambel passed around his brand-new OPGI Corvair parts catalog which had just arrived in his mailbox this week. He hasn't had a chance to compare OPGI's prices to Clark's, but it lists sheet metal for early Corvairs, and that's something Clark's does not offer.

John Egerton discussed his '64 Corvair track car. He autocrosses it and runs it in time trials conducted by the Northeast Corvair Council. Originally, it was a \$50 car. The prior owner

couldn't get the engine to start, but after bringing it home, but John and his son got it running in a few minutes. Over the years, he has put much more time and effort into it, including the installation of a race-prepared engine. John's coupe was featured in our September issue of The Fifth Wheel.

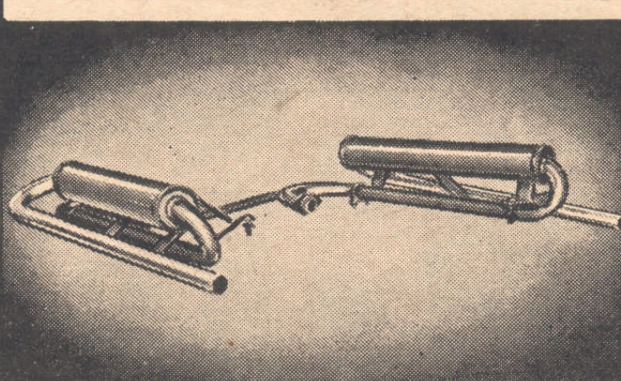
Dennis Stamm said he and five other folks from the Philadelphia Corvair Association participated in Corvair Day at Hershey this month. Dennis drove Mrs. Stamm's '65 Corvair to the event and was awarded first-place in the daily driver class.

We also had a discussion about antique license plates. Stories were traded about people who tried to by-pass the

state inspection laws by licensing their cars as antiques. Dennis noted that, if you have antique plates on your pickup truck, you'll be fined if the police see you hauling anything in the bed!

One of the members mentioned that he had to replace a fuel tank on his Corvair. Dennis said it's much easier to access if you first remove the entire front suspension assembly. It may sound like a huge project, but only six bolts hold it in place. Dennis' secret is to whack the bolt heads with a punch and sledge hammer and then soak them with WD-40. That loosens the rust. Turn the bolts ever so slightly with a breaker bar and then spin them out using an impact wrench.

## DOUGLASS CORVAIR TROMBONES



Here is the newest and hottest Corvair dual exhaust system available for all passenger cars, 1960-63. Because of the Trombone design a much longer exhaust pipe, muffler and tailpipe is possible. This Trombone design develops a much deeper tone quality which really shouldn't be coming out of a Corvair but does! No typical raspy hard sound. Douglass DS-569 gives the realistic impression of a big V-8. Performance increase of 19% with up to 4 additional m.p.g.

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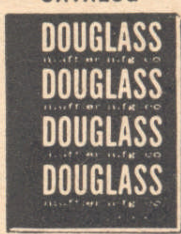
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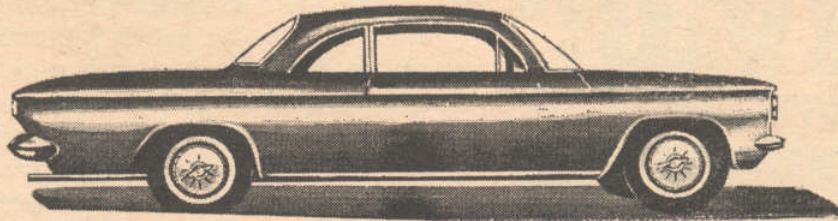


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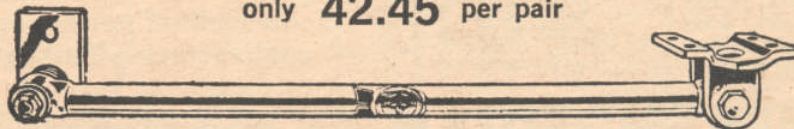
*if you're the lucky owner of a*  
**CORVAIR**



**THIS MESSAGE IS FOR YOU!**

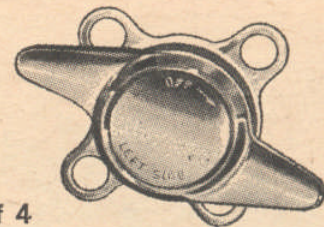
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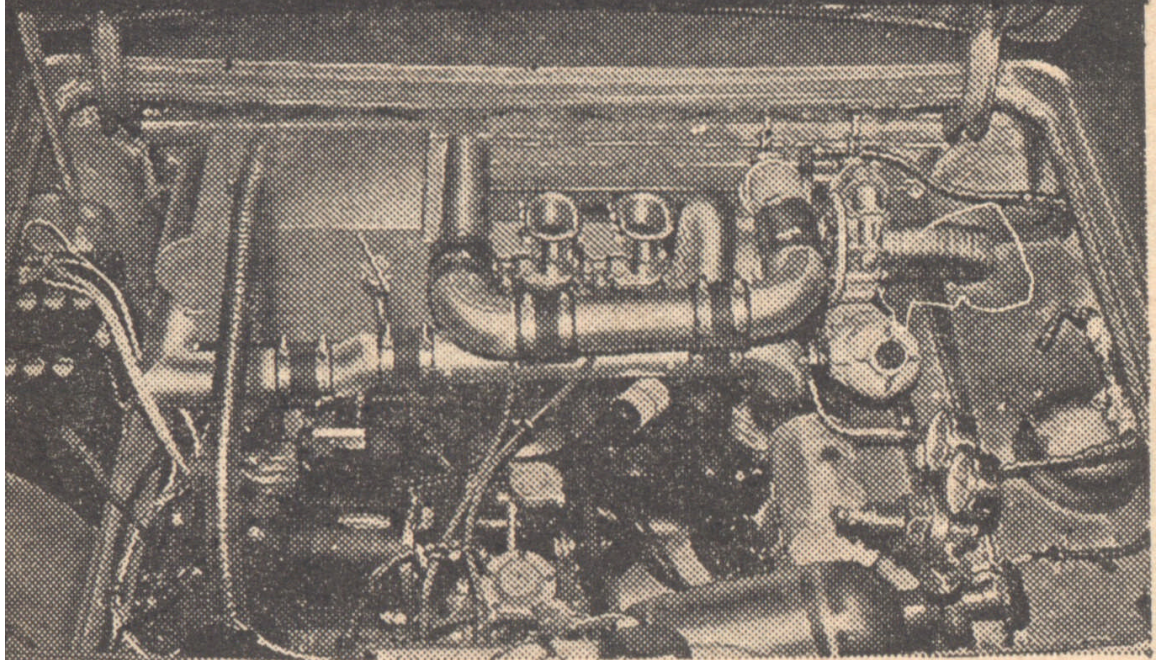
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## Local Car Shows and Other Events

### Sunday October 21, 2018 :::: Cabela's Car Show To Benefit Disabled Veterans

Location: Cabela's, 100 Cabela Dr, Hamburg, Pennsylvania 19526. Time: 9 AM to 1 PM. Price: \$15 day of show. Rain or shine. Features Trunk or Treat, open to all makes and models, door prizes, dash plaques and goodie bags for first 100 registered, Chinese auction, 50/50. Hosted by Berks County Mustang Car Club, Inc. [berkscountymustangcarclub.com](http://berkscountymustangcarclub.com)

### Saturday October 27, 2018 :::: Curt Rhine Memorial Car Show, Blandon

Location: Maiden Creek Community Park, 753 Park Road, Blandon, PA 19510. Time: 9 AM to 3 PM. Price \$10. Benefits Northern Berks Emergency Medical Services. This is our 4th annual show. Contact (610) 926-3858 or [communityoutreach@northernberksems.com](mailto:communityoutreach@northernberksems.com)

### Sunday October 28, 2018 :::: Old Car Show & Flea Market, Kempton

Location: 83 Community Center Drive, Kempton, PA 19529. Time: 8 AM to 3 PM. Price: \$10 day-of-show. Rain, shine, or snow. All makes & models welcome. Judged show, no Corvair class. Conducted by the Free Spirit Chapter of the Buick Club of America. Website: [www.buickfreespirit.org](http://www.buickfreespirit.org)

### Sunday November 4, 2018 :::: 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Riegelsville Fall Roll Out Car Show

Location: Riegelsville Ball Park, Route 611, Riegelsville, PA. Time: 8 AM to 2 PM. Price: No entry fee. Rain or shine. No Vehicles newer than 1993. Vintage, antiques, street rods, customs & trucks. Vendors space approx. 20x30. \$25- Vendor pre-registration available. First 475 exhibitors receive dash plaques. People's Choice Trophy Awards. Borough Ordinance NO pets or bicycles! <http://riegelsville.org/fall-rollout-car-show/>

*Also, be sure to visit the Corvair Society of America website to see events being conducted by our neighboring CORSA chapters! Go to [www.corvair.org](http://www.corvair.org) and click on "Events".*

### Postscript:

Left: A real Hands wheel. Notice the hub snout!

Right: Dan Gurney Racing wheel. No snout!



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Clark's supports LVCC by donating gifts every year for our door prizes at Das Awkscht Fescht.

## LVCC Classified Ads!



**For Sale:** 1964 Corvair Monza 2-door coupe. 110 hp engine. Powerglide automatic transmission. Goldwood yellow exterior. Black vinyl and deep weave fabric interior. Great condition. 77,000 miles. \$7,500. Contact Wayne Troxell, Andreas, PA. (570) 386-4347

**For Sale - Make Offer:** 1964 deck lid. 1964 left convertible door. Two 1964 rear cross springs. 1964 used wheel opening moldings. 1964 used rocker panel moldings. Various 1962 13" spinner wheel covers. Various full 13" wheel covers. 1962 right & left front grill moldings (pitted). Four 1962 13" rims with belted tires. Late drums (non-finned). Early door side glass. 1961 engine, rear, trans for parts. Various starter parts. 1965 used single exhaust pipe. 1964 Turbo block with cam and crank. Call or email Fred Scherzer. (484) 948-5142. jukeboxman44@gmail.com



**For Sale:** 1966 Chevrolet Corvair Monza 4 door sedan, with working factory air conditioning, it was repainted the original willow green 3 years ago, the front seats have fresh upholstery from Clark's Corvair parts and the carpet is new. It is powered by the 110 hp motor with Powerglide transmission. It has tinted glass all around. The mileage is believed to be original 36,557 as of this writing. Also have the original owner's manual with Chevrolet Protect-O-Plate. Located in Cherry Hill, NJ. Asking \$8500 or best offer. Call Curt Stone at 201-776-8328

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