



# Fanbelt

May, 2011

[www.corvair.org/chapters/njace](http://www.corvair.org/chapters/njace)

New Jersey Association of Corvair Enthusiasts



## Then

July, 1965

and **Now**  
April, 2011



Read all about Dick Kellner's 46 years, and counting, with his 1965 Monza convertible, in this issue!

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## Happening This Month:

- Breakfast Meeting, May 7
  - Tech Session, May 7
  - VCCA Car Show, May 29
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## On the Cover

Two photos of Dick Kellner and his 1965 Monza convertible, one taken in 1965 shortly after he purchased the car brand-new, and one taken recently when it returned from a restoration at the Corvair Ranch.

The first photo was taken by his father and the second photo was taken by his son.

Dick tells the entire fascinating story in this issue of the newsletter. What's *your* Corvair story? We'll publish it here!

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## On Page Six

A photo of club treasurer Tim Schwartz's BMW 600, taken last month at the New York International Auto Show.

Tim's diminutive Beemer was part of a distinctive Micro-Car display conducted during the show, and Tim *drove* the itty-bitty Bimmer to and from Manhattan for the event.

What interesting cars do *you* own besides your Corvair? Let us know!

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## At This Month's Tech Session

The Fitch Phoenix is back! While this car is a priceless hand-built Corvair-powered prototype, it is now suffering from a problem common to many Corvairs – poor fuel delivery.

The problem may be the fuel pickup in the tank, it may be the fuel pump, or it may be something else. At the tech session we are going to investigate the problem and, we hope, effect a cure.

## Hooray for May!

*by Bob Marlow, Publicity VP*

The month of May is perhaps my favorite time of the year. We have broken free of winter's cold and spring's dampness, and the entire summer lies ahead of us. The trees and flowers are beautiful, and the Indy 500 takes place. I love it.

In recent weeks I've put the snowblower away for the season and tuned up the lawnmower. I've changed the oil in the Corvairs and gotten them out for a springtime drive. Sue is planting all manner of things in her vegetable garden, and I have been cleaning the garage and barn.

They say that Spring is a time of renewal, and "they" is right!

There was a time where Corvairs were fabulous wintertime cars. They still are, except that very few of us drive them in the winter these days, preferring to "save" the cars instead of "consuming" them.

But what if springtime renewal for your Corvair is elusive? If you are experiencing difficulties or problems. Well, that's one of the reasons we now have monthly tech sessions at Ashley's Auto Body following the breakfast meeting. Come on out and lend a hand, learn from others, and bring your car if your car needs some attention. Call Larry Ashley at (862) 251-4163, or send him an e-mail message at [lashley327@optonline.net](mailto:lashley327@optonline.net) to add your car to the tech session calendar.

Note, my own 1964 Greenbrier will be the subject of a future tech session, because this spring I have noticed what I think is the rumbling of a failing rear axle bearing. The bearing design is common to all 1960-64 Corvair cars as well as the trucks and vans, so if you own one of these vehicles the tech session will be an opportunity to diagnose and service these bearings.

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## Joke of the Month

*submitted by Ray Coker*

Why do scuba divers always fall backwards out of their boats?

Because if they fell frontwards they would still be in the boat.

## One Owner Corvair

by Dick Kellner

A little over one year ago, on April 19, 2010, my wife Barbara and I were pretty excited about our plans for the day. We were taking a 3-1/2 hour trip from Long Valley to the Corvair Ranch in Gettysburg to bring home a 45-year-old member of our family, absent for the last 2-1/2 years. Accompanied by our youngest son, Mike, who flew in from San Francisco for the occasion, we collected my just-restored 1965 Monza Convertible. A real beauty: 110 HP, 4-speed, in original cypress green with saddle interior and beige top and boot.

This was a big deal for us because this was my first-ever car. I bought it new on July 20, 1965, at Means Chevrolet in Ipswich, Massachusetts, near my parents' home.

Rewind to July, 1965: LBJ was in the White House, Elvis was still "King," I'd just finished school and was getting ready to start my first full-time job at Warner-Lambert in Morris Plains, New Jersey. I needed a car. My plan was simple: Buy a Corvette convertible. I wanted it; I deserved it.

One surprise at the dealership, though: I didn't fit! My head was higher than the windshield. Sales guys thought this was funny – offered me free goggles. No sale, and what a disappointment as I prepared to leave empty-handed and still needing a car.

On the lot, I spied a 1965 Corvair Monza convertible. Nice. It had been ordered for a dad's daughter who decided she really didn't like cypress green. Yes, this Corvair was available, so I got in for a test drive. The convertible had enough headroom and was fun to drive, far stronger than the borrowed Beetle to which I was accustomed. I loved this car and bought it that day. Cost was \$2,579 which included the following advice from my sales guy (Henry Jaquith): "The only bad thing you can do to this car is not to drive it." Turns out, this was pretty good advice.



1965

And drive my Corvair I did; logging 29,000 miles the first year including round trips to Philadelphia while dating my future bride and then 1,200 miles to Florida for our April honeymoon in 1966. As poor newlyweds, adventures in the Monza were a major source of entertainment. Whichever way we felt like going, we did. No maps; we'd just point the Corvair and go exploring until we'd had enough for the day. Barbara is a good driver, she loved the 4-speed and enjoyed driving as much as I did. We drove to Georgia in 1967, Ohio in 1968 and countless trips all over New England, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

By 1973, we'd had four children (Lisa, Rich, Beth and Mike). Each was taken to Morristown Memorial Hospital to be born and brought home afterwards in our Corvair. Traveling with our first two kids was never a problem - - Lisa and Rich loved car rides. One slept on the rear seat, the other on the flat floor in back. They still remember the center heat duct which kept them warm in the cold weather.

For Christmas 1969, our annual 90 mile holiday visit to Barb's family in Haddonfield, NJ was made in a blinding blizzard. The Corvair loves to go in the snow and we were just about the only car braving the NJ Turnpike that day. Baby formula was heated on the defroster vents. I guess we were nuts, but there wasn't any place we couldn't get to safely in our Corvair; regardless of the weather. That's what we believed; that's what we did. I drove my Corvair for 8 winters before finally buying snow tires in 1974. Then, it truly laughed at the snow.

For 12 years through 1977, the Monza served as my daily driver. I washed and waxed it often, had it serviced regularly and kept records that I still have today. But with four kids, a station wagon became the family car. By then, the Monza had traveled 115K miles averaging 19.0 MPG, but needed some repairs to engine, transmission and body. No longer could I use my car daily, so it was retired to the garage "temporarily" until I had the time and money for the needed work.

You know what happened next -- raising four kids, building a new house, furniture, college. There was always another more important priority, so my Corvair sat in the garage for 30 years, unused except for the occasional start-up or "pretend drives" by Mike, my youngest, years before he got his license.

Sometimes, I was teased by friends and neighbors about "the old car." But Barbara and our kids knew how much the car meant to me and hoped someday

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## One Owner Corvair

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I'd get it back on the road. Even my Mom supported the cause, encouraging me to "fix your car," and leaving me an inheritance when she died at 97 in 2005 which helped me to finally do it.

On November 4, 2007, Jeff Stonesifer arrived from the Corvair Ranch to transport my Corvair for its' long-awaited restoration. The Ranch process took 29 months (that's a whole other story).

When we picked up my Monza last April it sparkled. I took pictures and videos. The pancake 6 started with the familiar sound I hadn't heard for a long time. I'd bought vanity plates with the same NJ number as in 1965 (KFC 894) and Mike installed them. Barbara and I drove home and it was like good times with an old friend. Mike followed us taking pictures along the way. When we got home, our other kids were there to take videos and pictures of the arrival. It was a good day, with oohs and ahhs and stories we hadn't told for years.



2011

In its' first year back on the road, I've driven my 1965 Corvair about 1,800 miles, averaging 21 MPG highway and 18 MPG overall. Now, it's the grandkids who marvel at the engine in the back and the sound of a drive with the top down. My Monza went to the Franklin Lakes VCCA show last May (its' first) and on drives, I regularly have people stop to admire and ask about my Monza. I had no idea this would ever happen! It is a marvelous thing and

I'm learning that just about everyone has a good Corvair memory and loves an excuse to talk about it.

Since joining NJACE, I've discovered more ways to experience my Monza in our community of Corvair enthusiasts. I plan to rejoin CORSA, hearing the case made by Brian O'Neill at our April Quarterly Business Meeting. Meanwhile, Barbara and I are planning new trips and adventures. I usually drive my car several times a week and never a week without a drive (except in the snow).

The Corvair sales guy was right: "the only bad thing you can do to this car is not to drive it."

*Editor's Note: Dick also provided a copy of his original sales invoice from July of 1965. The price was \$2,579 net for the Monza. Dick then checked the Consumer Price Index to calculate that the price in today's dollars translates to \$18,234. A 1965 Corvair was a bargain!*

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## Name Tags

*by Dick Cashion, Treasurer Emeritus*

NJACE is again assembling an order for club name tags, for the first time in many years. I "volunteered" to coordinate this.

I'll be out of state and cannot attend the May 7 breakfast at the Pronto Deli. So, if you would like to order a name tag (I have 14 NJACE orders already), please tell Bob Marlow at the breakfast, or you can send me an e-mail at [jkcashion@verizon.net](mailto:jkcashion@verizon.net). No money is required up front, but I will be ordering the tags in mid-May so get your request in right way.

By the way -- and many of you probably know this already -- there is a good article on the Cotrofels and Cotrofeld Automotive in the June issue of *Hemmings Classic Car*, pages 66-69.

### NJACE Officers for 2011

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## Important Date Change

Our annual **Summer Picnic**, one of two events that have been on our club calendar every year since the club was founded more than 40 years ago, has a new date for 2011: **Saturday, July 9**.

This is a change from the originally-published date of June 25, so please update your calendars accordingly. The picnic moves from one week before the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday to one week after the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday.

The other event that has been on our club calendar every year since the club was founded in 1970? The Holiday Party!

## 36<sup>th</sup> Annual VCCA Show

by Bob Marlow

Several NJACE members are also members of the Jersey Lakeland Region of the Vintage Chevrolet Club of America (VCCA), and each year that club's centerpiece event is their annual all-makes car show in Franklin Lakes. It's a great show.

Last year, in recognition of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Corvair's introduction, the Corvair was the show's "Feature Car" and NJACE pulled out all the stops to ensure a strong turnout of our air-cooled machines.

This year, the Corvair is not the feature car but we as a club are returning to the show anyway – it's that good.

Recently, we e-mailed the show registration materials to the membership, and these same registration forms are available on the JLR-VCCA web site:

<http://clubs.hemmings.com/frameset.cfm?club=jlr/vcca>

The show takes place on Sunday, May 29 (the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend) at McBride Field in Franklin Lakes, on Franklin Lake Road at the intersection with High Mountain Road.

There is no judging. Participation awards are given for the first 250 registrants, who also receive goodie bags, dash plaques, and a chance to win door prizes. Other fun prizes will also be awarded to

those who can answer questions about the oldies that are played.

The show field closes at noon or earlier if full. Day-of-show registrations are welcomed but once the show field is full, no additional day-of-show registrations will be permitted. (Pre-registered car spaces will be held until noon no matter what.)

As noted last month, I have already registered but I signed up for a swap meet space instead of a show space, to market some miscellaneous automotive excess from my garage. I will be using my Rampside as my "swap meet wagon."

The cut-off date for pre-registering is May 18th. Wash that Corvair, sign up, and we'll see you there!

## Corvair Differential Gears

- 3.27:1 axles have 11-tooth pinions and 36-tooth ring gears.
- 3.55:1 axles have 9-tooth pinions and 32-tooth ring gears.
- 3.89:1 axles have 9-tooth pinions and 35-tooth ring gears.

The 9-tooth pinion gear for a 3.89:1 axle and the 9-tooth pinion gear for a 3.55:1 axle are not the same gear. They cannot be "mixed and matched," nor can any other combination be used such as using a 9-tooth pinion gear with a 36-tooth ring to get a 4:1 ratio. The cut of the gears won't mesh properly and it won't work.

Opinions as to which ratio is best vary widely. Many people like the "taller" ratio of the 3.27:1 axle to obtain lower engine RPM at highway speeds, while others prefer the "shorter" 3.89:1 ratio for better performance at low speeds. The 3.55:1, arguably the most commonly-found ratio, is a good all-around performer.

## Condolences

We express our condolences to club member Greg Gorski and his family on the recent loss of Greg's mother.

## Calendar of Events for 2011

*Mark your personal calendar with these great NJACE events and activities for the coming months:*

- ✓ **First Saturday** of each month, informal breakfast gathering at the Pronto Deli on Ridgedale Avenue in Cedar Knolls, 9:00 AM.
- ✓ **First Saturday** of each month, informal tech session at Ashley's Auto Body on Hillside Avenue in Flanders, following the breakfast.
- ✓ **Sunday, May 29**, 36<sup>th</sup> annual VCCA Franklin Lakes Car Show. Registration information is available on the Jersey Lakeland Region VCCA web site.
- ✓ **Saturday, July 9**, Our Annual Summer Picnic, this year one week after the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend.
- ✓ **Weekend, July 15-17**, Hemmings' 5<sup>th</sup> annual New England Concours. Last year Corvairs were a featured car, this year it's 100 Years of Chevrolet and we are returning.
- ✓ **Saturday, August 13**, Corvair Night at the Races at Wall Stadium *or* **Sunday, August 14**, Hardyston Fire Department Car Show at Wheatsworth Field.
- ✓ **Weekend, September 9-11**, annual Camping Weekend at the Pioneer Campground in LaPorte, PA.
- ✓ **Sunday, September 18**, the Central Jersey VW Society's All Air-Cooled Show at the Swim and Sport Club of Flanders.
- ✓ **Saturday, October 15**, our annual Fall Foliage Tour.

*All events listed, except Camping Weekend at the Pioneer Campground, are counted toward our annual Mary Paxton Participation Award and Bill Ableson Corvair Driver Award.*

Below, the BMW 600 owned by club member Tim Schwartz is up front in this photo of the Micro-Car display during the recent New York International Auto Show.



As noted earlier in this newsletter, Tim, who is not afraid to drive his vintage cars, drove this vest-pocket-sized Bimmer from his home in Bergen County into Manhattan for the display, and drove it back home again once the display was over. This included a trip made in the rain.

This photo, taken by a staffer at Hemmings Motor News, was posted on Hemmings' blog, from where we swiped it. Tim's front-door rear-engine BMW has been invited to participate in this year's Hemmings New England Concours at Stratton Mountain in July.

But Tim allows that for a trip of that distance and duration, he will likely be using a trailer. A small trailer, we surmise.

## Testudo

Would you like to own the unique, Bertone-bodied Corvair in these photos?



Some 30 or so cars from the onetime Bertone Museum are being offered at auction this month, six of which are actual Bertone creations and the oldest of which is this 1963 Chevrolet Corvair Testudo.

Unveiled at Geneva Motor Show on March 3rd, 1963, this Corvair-based one-off design was highly influential in numerous other designs, and was an early career highlight of young designer Giorgetto Giugiaro. You've seen countless other Giugiaro designs, among them influential Ferraris as well as less exotic cars such as the original Volkswagen Scirocco and the star-crossed DeLorean.

Founded in 1912, Bertone is the oldest surviving Italian coachbuilding company. From its Corso Peschiera works in Turin, the company grew steadily between the wars and acquired a solid reputation for the quality of its craftsmanship and the elegance of the models it offered.

Hit by post-Second World War austerity, the concern owed its salvation partly to the American

market through a lucrative agreement with Chicago-based importer Stanley Arnolt to deliver special-bodied MG and Bristol sports cars to the US. Soon after, large contract work for Alfa Romeo allowed Bertone to expand drastically. From the mid-1950s onwards, the company gained exposure through a series of striking show cars exhibited at the world's leading motor shows and has continued that tradition to this day.

Of the countless dream cars and one-off prototypes the company has produced over the past six decades, a few stand out for the far-sighted vision they presented and the impact they had on subsequent styling trends. And without a doubt, the Corvair Testudo ranks as one of the most influential Bertone concepts.

With this show car, Bertone effectively demonstrated the strength it had gained both stylistically and industrially through big manufacturing contracts in the 1950s, and its creation was a signal to the American market. The Corvair on which the car was based was supplied by General Motors, who also delivered one to Pininfarina that same year. The Testudo started life as a 1962 Monza coupe, serial number 20927W207657.

The Corvair's impact in Europe was significant, and some people believe that GM styling boss Bill Mitchel was investigating the possibilities of promoting the Corvair in Europe with a locally-styled variant, a dashing Italianate coupe. I tend to disagree – I think Mitchell was merely investigating the design ideas of others.

The Pininfarina car, shown in the photo below, was penned by Tam Tjaarda. The process started in 1960, and the design evolved somewhat, but the final 1963 version is certainly superb. The airy roof line certainly hints at the direction the 1965 production Corvair would take. Both the Pininfarina car and the Bertone car featured headlight designs that were new at the time but which later became far more common.



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## Testudo

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The Italians, of course, were not the only ones to take a swing at a futuristic Corvair. GM itself went at it with the Monza GT, the Monza SS, and the Astro I, and there is of course our NJACE favorite, the Fitch Phoenix.



*Monza GT*



*Monza SS*



*Astro I*



*Fitch Phoenix*

Styled and engineered in Connecticut, the Fitch Phoenix nonetheless is correctly identified as an Italian car, having been built at Intermeccanica in Turin.

The earliest photographs of the Testudo show the car still sporting Corvair wheels with whitewall tires, but these were soon replaced by a more flattering set of Spyder wire wheels which remain with the car to this day.

The name Testudo – a Latin root for the word turtle, hence the turtle badge adorning the car's rear – was chosen to symbolize the aesthetic theme. A sharp waistline crease running around the car (extended by the front and rear bumpers) divided the body into a bottom and top half, somewhat reminiscent of a turtle's shell. In a 1974 interview of Giorgetto Giugiaro by Karl Ludvigsen, published in *Automobile Quarterly*, Volume 49 No. 3, Giugiaro commented, "A car had two parts: one part was the side view and the other part was the plan view. In the Testudo, I broke down these two parts. This was my first attempt to avoid having two separate parts but rather to have one part blending into the other... That was a car with which I really felt I contributed to car design."

Originally exhibited in metallic silver, the Testudo was soon repainted in pearlescent white, pioneering this type of finish.

The famous pop-up headlights rotated upwards, and a neat touch indicative of Bertone's attention to detail were the flaps at the base of the fairings which seamlessly filled the opening created in their upright position.

The taillights were unobtrusively integrated in the rear bumpers, thus leaving the bodywork totally uncluttered to leave the shape extremely pure. With no need for an air intake, the front end was particularly smooth and streamlined.

Access to the cockpit was through a forward hinged canopy, a feature it shared with the almost contemporaneous Corvair Monza GT and which would be mimicked by many other American and Japanese concept cars for many years afterwards. The Testudo, however, added a full glass roof to its wraparound windscreen. Inside the cabin, the rectangular steering wheel had more in common with aeronautics than cars.

As one would expect, there is great all-around  
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## Testudo

*continued*

visibility from the driver's seat. Instruments are laid out in an inverted L-shaped cluster with the dials set vertically ahead of the gearshift, leaving the view straight ahead unobstructed. The seat inclination is extreme, to comply with the car's impossibly low overall height of 41.7 inches. Giugiaro's period sketches show headrests which were not incorporated into the car as built.

The car did see some road use in its early life. An anecdote recounted by Giugiaro himself tells of an evening when he used it to go and pick up his new bride, Maria Teresa, from Fiat's design studios where she worked at the time: "I came across several hundred Fiat employees who were just leaving work when I arrived and it was a shambles. It was more than twenty minutes before I could escape from the car to go and get her. I guess that the men who were so excited over the Testudo all managed to miss their trains and buses. It was rather exciting."

Famously, Nuccio Bertone drove to Geneva by road in the Testudo. Less known is the fact that Giorgetto Giugiaro drove it back to Turin at the end of the show. In his *Road & Track* report on the show, Henry Manney noted that the car had "photographers running from all over."

Besides photographers, there is more than a passing chance that the Testudo was the spark that caught Ferruccio Lamborghini's eye and triggered a long and fruitful association between him and Nuccio Bertone. Besides the clear lineage with later Bertone creations such as the Miura and the Montreal, Porsche design director Anatole Lapine acknowledged his love for the Testudo when he penned the 928 coupé. The influence the one-off Corvair had on other designers was enormous, with references to its lines almost too many to list.

A couple of years after its Geneva debut, the Testudo was damaged during the shooting of a promotional film for Shell. The car suffered from a rear impact when it collided at speed with a second Bertone one-off motor show dream car, the Alfa Romeo Canguro. With so much money invested in the two show cars, accounts of the incident tell, quite understandably, of a positively furious Nuccio Bertone. The Testudo was placed in storage but Nuccio Bertone did not want to spend money repairing it.

To understand why the Testudo wasn't immediately repaired after the crash, we can rely on comments Nuccio Bertone made in later years regarding the cost of building such a car in the first place: "The construction of a prototype involves around 15,000 hours of work, often 'stolen' from the normal work of the establishment." Of the two cars, the Canguro suffered by far the worse damage, being judged beyond repair by Bertone and ending up abandoned in derelict state.

Giugiaro asked to have the Testudo once he left the design house, but to no avail. In 1974, it was offered for sale by Bertone at \$10,000 despite its damaged condition. The Testudo was finally brought back from oblivion in the early 1990s when newly hired chief designer Luciano d'Ambrosio supervised a full restoration. The Testudo subsequently made its first public appearance in over 30 years at the 1996 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance.

In a 1980s interview, Giugiaro acknowledged: "There's something special and affectionate about what I feel for the Testudo. It was the first prototype with which I had been given a free hand, without restraints, and the end result captured the attention of the entire automobile world." Nearly five decades on, the impact this truly seminal dream car had on car design is still apparent.

This month's auction marks the first time that Bertone prototypes such as the Testudo have been offered to private bidders. The sale is set for the evening of May 21 at the Spazio Villa Erba in Cernobbio, Como, Italy (in case you were thinking of dropping by), during the Villa d'Este concours.

But you had better double-check before you board your flight: Late rumors now indicate that the sale may not go forward as planned.



*Testudo Engine Compartment*