



# Fanbelt

September, 2011

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

New Jersey Association of Corvair Enthusiasts

---



# Rollback!



**A story about what happens when your Corvair lets you down**

**Plus: Camping with Ray & Cathy, and the All Air-Cooled Show this month**

**And: "ThatCar" – the world-traveling Corvair**

---

*The Fanbelt* is published monthly by the New Jersey Association of Corvair Enthusiasts (NJACE), Inc. P.O. Box 631, Ridgewood, NJ 07451. Deadline for contribution is the 20th of each month. Classified-style advertising of interest to Corvair owners is available, free of charge, to all persons. A commercial ad can be placed in an issue of the *Fanbelt* for \$50 per full page, \$30 per half page, \$20 per quarter page, and \$10.00 per business-card. (Generally, classified advertisers are those offering individual cars and/or a limited number of parts, while commercial advertisers are those offering services and/or parts from stock. NJACE reserves the right to make this determination). All advertising must be PC-compatible or type-able copy.

NJACE is a chapter of the Corvair Society of America (CORSA), Inc., P.O. Box 607, Lemont, IL 60439. Meetings of NJACE are held periodically at locations and times as announced in this newsletter. All interested persons are welcome. Additional events and activities are held throughout the year. Membership in NJACE is open to individuals and families. Information and applications are available at any meeting or by writing to NJACE, P.O. Box 631, Ridgewood, NJ 07451, or by visiting [www.corvair.org/chapters/njace](http://www.corvair.org/chapters/njace).

---

## Happening This Month:

- Breakfast Meeting, September 3
- Pioneer Campground Weekend, Sept 9-10-11
- All Air-Cooled Show, September 18
- Quarterly Business Meeting, September 21

## Happening Next Month:

- Breakfast Meeting, October 1
- Fall Foliage Tour, October 15

## “AAA, May I Help You?”

### What Happens When Your Corvair Lets You Down

by Bob Marlow

I bought my first Corvair, a 1962 wagon, in February of 1970 and I have owned at least one ever since. Not all of them have been running cars, but at all times I have had at least one Corvair on the road.

In all those years, only twice was I ever stranded. In the early 70s, a clutch disc disintegrated during the shift between the second and third gears, and I needed a tow off the highway. In the mid-80s, an ignition coil died in the middle of the night in the middle of nowhere and I needed to wait for a ride.

Sadly, this summer the number of times I have been left at the roadside by a Corvair has *doubled*. On a lovely July evening I set out to drive my 1964 coupe to a local Cruise Night but made it less than two miles from my house when something caused the car to sputter to a stop. The car would not restart, and having no tools with me (I left the tool bag in the Rampside) all I could do was check that the car still had fuel, and then call AAA for a tow back to the house.

(Not wanting to be defeated by this little setback, I hopped into the Rampside and took it to the Cruise Night.)

Just a few weeks later it was the Rampside's turn to conk out, which it did while waiting to go through NJ State inspection (I have regular plates on the truck so that Sue and I can use it freely).

While waiting on the inspection line, suddenly the truck quit, as suddenly as if I had turned off the key. No stumble or sputtering, just instant silence. It would not restart, and even though I had the tool bag with me there was little I could do in that setting. For the second time in a few weeks, I called AAA.

In both the 1964 coupe and the Rampside, the problem appeared to be ignition-related, not fuel-related. But the point of the story is not the diagnosis or cure, it is this: My fellow NJACE members have been generous with their help. And this is nothing new.

When the engine in Al Lacki's 1966 Monza dropped a valve seat a few years ago, one member used his trailer to transport the car and another member lent Al a car to get home.

When the engine in David Main's 1968 coupe breathed its last a year ago, a swarm of members converged upon Dave's house to remove, rebuild, and reinstall the engine.

When the engine in Frank Hunter's 4-door went blooey on the way home from the Hemmings show last summer, NJACE members assisted in getting the car towed at no charge from the side of the New York Thruway to Frank's NJ home.

When Joe Maurella needed a Corvair transported from the midwest, another member made the necessary arrangements.

These are not isolated stories. NJACE membership offers many benefits, but in these days of keeping elderly cars running reliably the greatest benefit may be the friendships one develops and the selflessness that the members demonstrate.

If you are what I somewhat inelegantly refer to as a “checkbook member,” a member who writes a check for the dues but who rarely or never attends a club function, well, we appreciate the financial and moral support but you are shortchanging yourself. By becoming more involved in the club's activities you will become part of a community of distinct individuals who help and support one another.

Yes, you should carry an AAA card or join a similar roadside-assistance plan. But no towing service is going to help you keep your Corvair running as well as your family of fellow Corvair enthusiasts.

## Ubi Superioribus Fuisti Annis, Corvair? Quo Vadis?

**Translation:**  
Where have you been all these years, Corvair?  
Where are you going?

### The Story of "ThatCar"

By Rich Ribble, aka Ribs

A small tale of my maroon '63 Spyder convertible. Many NJACE members know this crate from its summers in New Jersey, but it is now in a storage "closet" at Bergheim, Texas.

"ThatCar" (the term most used by my mother) began roaming after leaving Stohlman Chevy on M Street in Washington, DC on July 16, 1963, prefaced by a \$2787 payment and trade-in of a '58 Renault Dauphine for \$125. (A tame, rear-engine, swing axle, water-cooled four, traded for a smokin', swing axle, air-cooled six, it was.) ThatCar was soon on a ship, bound for six years in Rome, Italy.



ThatCar was actually owned by our next door neighbor and my father's boss, Frank Meloy, the Deputy Chief of Mission for the American Embassy in Rome. ThatCar led a charmed life, garaged and washed weekly by Setimio, the boss's gardener. The boss didn't drive much, and in five years contributed but 18k miles, mostly put on by my father, dragging the boss around to tour US Consulates around Italy.

ThatCar became a bit smoky and anemic in Italy (later attributed to a leaky turbo carbon oil seal ring) and you can just picture a bunch of diplomats pushing it around the Ambassador's pristine circular pebble-stone drive in yet another attempt to get it running. (Of course, today you cannot get within 100 yards of the Ambassador's residence, much less just

drive in off the street, walk the gardens and use the pool or tennis court, but this was still the 60's, where the host country actually protected diplomatic missions, and whack rag-jobs with a car and bomb were not the norm.)

I did not get to touch, let alone ride in, ThatCar until May, 1969, when Meloy left Rome to take up an Ambassadorship, and trouble got to be my father's for \$800. It still looked and smelled like new, and carted us to Olgiata Country Club many-a-time, that is, not counting the time it couldn't drag itself down the Via Cassia because of a major clutch/transmission problem.

I do remember riding my bike into the embassy garage and seeing the pazzo Italian mechanics (who had never seen, nor probably ever again saw, a Corvair) with the rear of ThatCar spread out into a 25ft circle of random miscellaneous. They did get it fixed, however, without benefit of GM parts, since in the 60's they were still adept at machining replacement parts for surplus WWII transports. Cubans? Amateur pikers.

ThatCar got back on a ship to NY in late '69, and my dad drove it (after a home-leave stop-over in Northeast Texas and a ring/valve job by the local "expert" former Chevy Corvair mechanic, "fixing" the smoking and no power problems) to Mexico City for a 3-1/2 year stint in the US Embassy there.

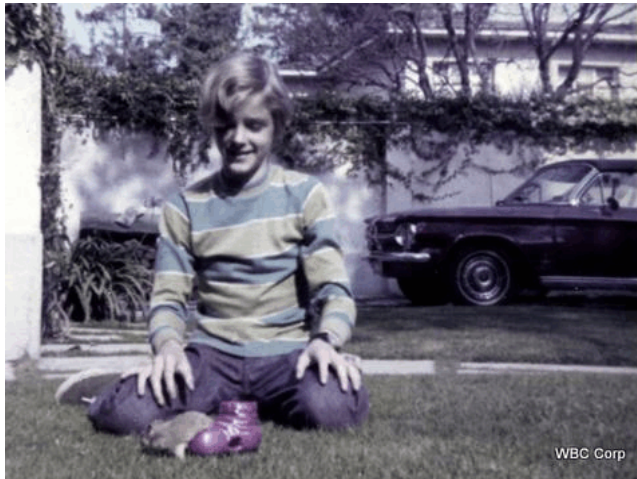
While in Mexico City, I got to steer ThatCar once on the Periférico (Mex beltway) while others pushed it out of lanes of blaring, irate Mexicans-in-traffic because it did not have the power to get itself over small hills. You guessed it, the Corvair-expert fixing never "took," because the suspected issue for years was the turbo oil seal liberally oiling down the cylinders.

After driving around on those hokey 1-inch long "oil fouling-prevention spark plug extenders" popular in the day, the turbo diagnosis was confirmed by the Mexico City GM rep, but said rep could not order GM-US parts, and the GM Tech Services Dept. of Detroit ignored my father's letters, so via relatives, Harrington Chevy-Caddy in Findlay, Ohio, provided \$51.39 worth of turbo parts for Christmas, 1971.

Of course, the oil seal request did not include a new turbine, impeller, and left-hand nut, which were ultimately needed after GM-Mex mechanics got done right-twisting said parts to destruction 'cause they were clueless about turbos and left-hand threads. Eventually everything got fixed, and a 13-year old

Ribs was driving ThatCar 80 mph through the deserted Mexican desert north of Ciudad Victoria on the way to McAllen, while his father dozed – at least until he awoke and got the excrement scared out of him.

There are few to no ancient pictures of ThatCar, save this Mexico City glimpse from 1971...



Christmas, 1972, and ThatCar's foreign travels ended, taking up residence in Northeast Texas. By Christmas '75 I was driving it (in exchange for maintenance labors) when #1 rod bearing spun around at 100k miles. The nerve! Ouch. Buy-A-Clue Ribs had no clue, but I tore the engine apart anyway, and after \$50, the original Spyder crank came back from a journal-welding/restoration outfit in Ft. Smith, AK, accompanied by new Clevite main and rod bearings. (Come on, \$50 was a lotta \$!). Everything got stuffed back together, and things were copacetic, 'cept for a "slight valve-train-speed" noise.

No matter, off to Texas A&M for four yrs, with an "appropriated" ThatCar, since after all, I was the one who kept it running. ThatCar made lots of 256-mile College Station-to-Northeast Texas runs, until one freezing Christmas '77 night south of Mt. Pleasant, the "slight" noise was silenced – the cam gear finally sheered off by what in hindsight was crank gear damage from the journal weldings of 30k miles past.

The kindly nearby farmer unleashed his dog, sending me running back down the road to the dubious safety of a convertible rooftop, but after a rooftop chat, appropriate phone contact was made and a trailer rescue was completed.

A new crank gear and cam gear were appropriated, and from 1980 'til 2006, ThatCar traveled north to New Jersey in Spring, and returned to TX around Turkey Day, without stranding me (if you don't count a few brief stops for fuel pump replacement over the years). A June '85 conversion to a 2-inch SU carb made it finally pleasurable driveable in stop-and-go traffic. The tired '63 engine was retired at 230k miles in 1992, in favor of a rebuild on a '65 110.

Today, ThatCar at 280k miles is mechanically sound, if cosmetically beat, and only escapes the Bergheim "closet" for a loop around the subdivision, sans registration and insurance – alas, I have too many vehicles, but someday, an appearance rehab for ThatCar is in order.

Your story is next!

Historical note: Frank Meloy was assassinated in Beirut in 1976, while serving as US Ambassador. Shortly before that, he could not believe that we still had ThatCar and that I had it running well and was driving it – that I must be nuts to keep such a lousy ride, as he could never really stand its antics. Today, he would say, yes, I am is certifiable. *[Editor's Note: Many NJACE members would agree.]* But I think he would be pleased "ThatCar" still lives.



*"ThatCar" at it's 2011 home*

*Spyder*

# Roughing it Smoothly

by Ray Coker



**Sullivan County's  
Quality Campground**  
P.O. Box 185 • Route 220  
Laporte, PA 18626  
**570-946-9971**  
email: [pioneercg@epix.net](mailto:pioneercg@epix.net)  
[www.pioneercampground.com](http://www.pioneercampground.com)

Some people are under the impression that the adventure of "camping" is still about lying on the cold ground with little to no coverage except maybe a blanket or tent with holes. That was then, this is now!

We have seen mega RV's in our campground in excess of 40 feet in length. Units this size are for all intents and purposes are a traveling home. Fireplaces, washers & dryers, central AC & heat, large screen entertainment centers, leather covered couches, mirrored ceilings, tile floors and Corian kitchen counters... you name it and you can get it.

What I don't want you to believe is that you need units of this size to enjoy camping. You can camp in a tent, a trailer, a van, a motorhome. You can stay in one of our camping cabins or in one of the guest rooms in the nearby Roadhouse. Camping is not about the chosen shelter, it is about friendships, new and old. It's about building a fire and listening to stories. It's about sharing a potluck dinner. It's about hiking on a trail. It's about touring your neighbor's camping unit be it large or small. It's about relaxing and having fun.

I still have fond memories of the "stories with a hole" evening by the campfire last year. If that doesn't sound familiar... you had to be here to enjoy it.

So how does owning a Corvaair relate to camping? It's simple, it's not always about the 4-wheeled mode of transportation we all love. It's the people who own these vehicles that we like as much as the car itself. It is truly amazing how a Corvaair club can have a very enjoyable weekend without a Corvaair in sight.

It allows one another to ask questions about life and not always questions about a car. It allows people who would normally be hovering around the open lid of an engine compartment to hold hands with their loved one and take a walk. It offers the

opportunity to ask about the kids, your job, that recent vacation, did you like that last concert, is the new pastor interesting, parents, grandparents, pets, etc.

Yes, the Corvaair brought us all together... think about that... would any of us know one another without the Corvaair being the vessel that brought us together?

Some people with futuristic thinking brought us the Corvaair but it was regular working people that purchased them. Those same regular working people share some very interesting history and have incredible stories to tell that do not relate to a Corvaair. Sometimes not just interesting and incredible... but fascinating!

Come meet those people at the Pioneer Campground in Laporte, PA, the weekend of Sept 9-11. Share a fire, a meal, a walk through the woods, ask questions. Find out who is related to a well-known baseball team manager. Find out who once had dinner with the President of the United States. Find out who enjoyed an evening at Barry Meguiar's waterfront home in California. Find out who has been a television reporter. Find out who was once a disc jockey. Find out who once had an airplane in their back yard. You will not be disappointed.

The weekend will include a potluck dinner in our activity center Saturday at 5:00 PM. It is also our Ice Cream Social weekend so the campground hosts will be providing free Ice Cream and the fixins. Also, we expect to have on hand something exciting involving race cars... small race cars.

But you do need to make a reservation. Call us at 570-946-9971 or send an e-mail to [pioneercg@epix.net](mailto:pioneercg@epix.net).



## Free Breakfast?

You bet! Every month, one member wins a free breakfast at our monthly gathering at the Pronto Deli on Ridgedale Avenue in Cedar Knolls. It could be you!

But it can only be you if you are there. We draw a member's name from a hat, and if that member is there, he or she wins! But if that member is not there, we draw again – and again and again until we have a winner.

So come on out this Saturday morning, September 3, for breakfast with your NJACE friends. It might just cost you nothing!

---

## Air-Cooled is Cool!

On the weekend of September 17th and 18th, the Central Jersey Volkswgen Society will present the seventh annual **All Air-Cooled Gathering** at the Flanders Swim and Sport Club, located at 272 Emmans Road in Flanders, NJ.

This year, the VW folks have graciously extended an invitation to all Corvair owners and enthusiasts, and we have made the Sunday portion of the event our club activity for this month.

The Sunday portion includes the All Air-Cooled Car Show, which includes trophies, dash plaques, door prizes, plus an on-site bar and kitchen, and live music.

Also on the schedule is a swap meet, plus games and neat activities such as the “push drag races” – just like regular drag races except that the cars aren't running and they are pushed by team of people. The VW club wants us to put together a team!

Admission for the show on Sunday is \$10 per person, including your car. There is a \$20 charge for the swap meet, which includes one admission to the show.

The gates open at 8 AM on Sunday for the show, swap meet, and games. Everyone is encouraged to enter the show, daily drivers to show cars. “As long as it's air-cooled, it's welcome.” A portion of the

event proceeds will go to support Operation Jersey Cares, a volunteer organization that provides support for NJ combat veterans.

Separately, we re sending a flier for this show to all our members. Information is also available at <http://www.allaircooledgathering.com>. But please plan on joining us with the other air-cooled enthusiasts on **Sunday, September 18**.

---

## Meeting!

Our Quarterly Business Meeting will take place on **Wednesday, September 21**, at the Black River Barn on Route 10 in Randolph.

This is the same location we visited in April, and it is easily accessible from all directions. In fact, if you get on Route 10 westbound at I-287, it's just 11 miles west on Route 10.

The meeting will begin at 7:30 PM, but come early for dinner, we'll have access to a private room beginning at 6:30.

You can order from the restaurant's regular menu, and if you want to plan ahead the menu is online at <http://www.blackriverbarn.com>.

Mark the date! Wednesday, September 21!



## 2011 NJACE Officers

Brian O'Neill, President  
973-729-5586, [bmoneill@juno.com](mailto:bmoneill@juno.com)

Bill Cohen, Vice-President  
973-729-8281, [wicohen2@earthlink.net](mailto:wicohen2@earthlink.net)

Frank Hunter, Secretary  
201-934-0244, [fdhunter@juno.com](mailto:fdhunter@juno.com)

Tim Schwartz, Treasurer  
201-447-4299, [tim@bristolnj.com](mailto:tim@bristolnj.com)

Ken Schiffner, Activities VP  
201-236-0786, [scrubbr@ix.netcom.com](mailto:scrubbr@ix.netcom.com)

Bob Marlow, Publicity VP  
201-444-1859, [vairtec@comcast.net](mailto:vairtec@comcast.net)

## Irene, Goodnight

by Bob Marlow

The article about members helping members, on page 2 of this issue, is focused on members helping member *with their Corvairs*. But the recent storm – Hurricane Irene or Tropical Storm Irene, depending on when you judge it – provided an even greater measure of the value of the friendships formed among NJACE members.

Throughout our region there was flooding and there were power outages due to the storm. Trees were down, roads were blocked. Individually, we each were affected to a greater or lesser degree.

At my house, the power went out and stayed out for 2-1/2 days. This posed two problems beyond the inability to use a lamp or cook dinner (we have all electric kitchen appliances): Without power we had no running water (no power to the well pump), and without power we had a dead sump pump, allowing six inches of water to accumulate in the basement.

To our rescue came fellow NJACE members Joe and Helen Maurella, who selflessly drove to our house with their portable generator and helped us power up the sump pump. They even brought a second sump pump of their own, to speed the process of bailing out the basement. They helped us run power to the refrigerator and stayed with us for several hours helping to deal with storm-related issues.

In companion to Joe and Helen's generosity was similar generosity offered by other NJACE members. We received a second offer of a generator. We received an offer of use of a member's home for bathing and for a hot meal. We received an offer of overnight lodging at a member's home.

Ultimately, we were able to remain in our own home and cope with the unusual circumstances. But people who do not join a local Corvair club and who do not become involved in the club's activities have NO IDEA what they are missing.

NJACE is much more than a car club. It is a community.

## Garage Mahal

by Bob Marlow

Years ago some wag coined the term "Garage Mahal" for over-the-top luxury garages. There have been books published on the subject. More recently, the term "Man Cave" has come to encompass any space dedicated to traditional male pursuits, including garages. But the "Garage Mahal" is a distinct entity.

In August, NJACE President Brian O'Neill announced the completion of his own Garage Mahal (which, with greater historical accuracy he terms "Garaj Mahal") and invited everyone to a open house to see it.

His garage is not a sprawling, multi-car extravaganza, but rather it is an ordinary suburban two-car garage remodeled in extraordinary ways.

The walls are clean and uncluttered, with ample electric and air power points. The lighting is daylight-like. The floor is a terrazzo-appearing four-coat epoxy with radiant heat. Vertical posts have been eliminated. Check out the photo.



But, of course, the best part of an open house at Brian's home is that Roberta is a host that makes "the convicted felon," Martha Stewart, look like an amateur. A most pleasant time was enjoyed by all.