

July 2014

the *Fanbelt* 
new jersey association of CORVAIR enthusiasts

The Stars Align...



This month, NJACE members will enjoy an exclusive private show at the Longo Planetarium on the campus of the County College of Morris, followed by an outdoor barbeque party.

**The date is Saturday, July 12,
and all the details are on Page 2.**

**Breakfast at the Empire Diner this Saturday, July 5, on Route 46 in Parsippany.
Yes, it's the Independence Day weekend, but we we never miss a chance to eat!**

Twinkle Twinkle Lucky Stars

**Daytime
Stargazing
with NJACE**

Saturday, July 12

by Brian O'Neill

Lucky? Stars? Yes, that's right. Stars. You going to see a lot of stars. Lucky? Yes, lucky because after you see a lot of stars you going to have some good food. Okay, you say, I'm up for good food and stars too. So what's the deal with all this?

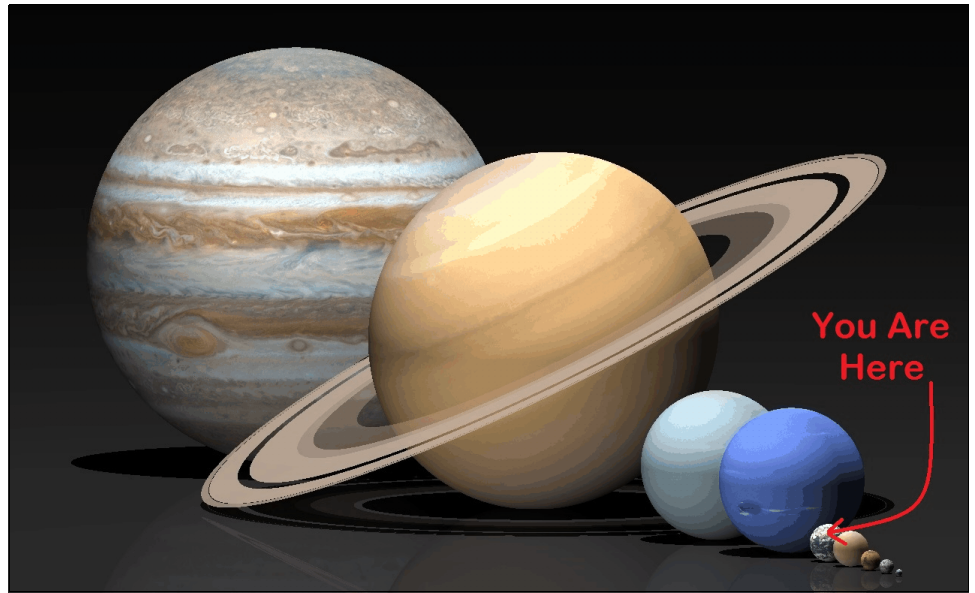
On Saturday, July 12, NJACE will be visiting the new Longo Planetarium at the County College of Morris. There we will get a private showing of the renowned astronomical show. Then we all retire to the O'Neill's for a sumptuous spread put out by Roberta O'Neill.

Here's the plan. Arrive at the County College of Morris at 10:30 AM on Saturday, July 12. Use the entrance off the Dover Chester Road. Dover Chester Road is about 7½ miles west of I-287 along Route 10, and the College entrance is just a short distance south of Route 10 on Dover Chester Road, on your left, opposite the CVS Pharmacy that is on the right.

Follow the entrance road to the end and make a right turn. Follow that road around for a short distance until you come to Parking Lot Eight.

After you park, face the gymnasium building which is just across the road go around to the left side of the gymnasium building and follow the signs to the Longo Planetarium. It's only a short two-minute walk.

As you enter the building bear around to the right and go down to the end of the hall. The



planetarium entrance will be on your left and it's not hard to find.

After the amazing show we will take a scenic 17½-mile drive to the O'Neills for lunch and socializing.

To make all this happen smoothly, we need to know who will be coming to the planetarium and who will be coming to the O'Neills. So please let us know as soon as possible so that we can plan. Call me at 973-727-5586 or send an email to bmoneill@juno.com.

If for some reason you find at the very last minute you're able to attend don't hesitate, we can always squeeze in one or two more. And be sure to bring your Corvair. Not only do we want to have a good showing at the County College of Morris, but I want to show off for the O'Neill neighbors.



Le Heap Gets a Clutch Job

by Al Lacki

Al Lacki is a longtime NJACE member who, despite a job transfer to Pennsylvania many years ago, has kept his NJACE membership current and who in fact maintains NJACE's web site. Many members know Al's car, nicknamed "Le Heap" based on its derelict appearance when Al bought it. But Al restored the car, and only the nickname remains from those derelict days. This article appeared originally in The Fifth Wheel, the newsletter of the Lehigh Valley Corvair Club.

Since last year, the oil leak from my Corvair's transaxle became much worse and the pilot bushing started to squeal like a pig. And so, the time came to drop the powertrain and split the transaxle from the engine.

This was the first time I had ever done this alone, all by myself. As I was doing so, the split ring washer simply fell out of the snout and was dangling on the input shaft. The snout seal was shot, the clutch was covered in oil, and of course, the pilot bushing was toast. In addition, I found that a couple of the rivets on the clutch cover on the pressure plate had been replaced by a prior owner, many many years ago.

Brian O'Neill drove all the way out to my place in Pennsylvania to help me reassemble everything and put the powertrain back into the car. We replaced everything, including flywheel, clutch disc, pressure plate, throw-out bearing, pilot bushing, snout ring, and split ring washer. I also replaced the Swepco GL-5 transaxle lube with Pennzoil Synthetic GL-4. The hardest part was removing the old snout seal; it wouldn't come out until we attacked it with a slide hammer.

Overall, the parts weren't cheap, but it worked, and my Corvair is a pleasure to drive once more.

In addition to Brian, there were other people who provided great suggestions and advice. Rick Norris published an article in the Corvair Society of America's "Communiqué" magazine a couple

of years ago about his powertrain cart, and that inspired me to build my own. Other Corvair experts have advocated the use of "guide pins" for splitting the transaxle from the engine; I took their advice and that saved me from any concerns about cracking the snout. Also, Corvair racer Ken Hand sold me one of his Kevlar clutch discs and gave me advice on how to install it.



Al's homemade engine cradle, with the entire Corvair drivetrain on it

Naturally, no big project like this goes completely smoothly. While I was dropping the powertrain out of the car, the transmission crossmember snagged the shift rod and bent it. But Lehigh Valley Corvair Club President Dennis Stamm gave me a replacement from his own stash of fine used Corvair parts.

You may be thinking that all my problems are solved, and indeed, the new pilot bushing is silent and my powertrain no longer leaks. It's the first time in 27 years that I have not had to keep a drip pan on the floor of my garage. But I'm a bit disappointed that all of this work did not cure another problem.

Seven years ago, I had the engine and transmission rebuilt. The engine runs great, but after a brief honeymoon, the transmission started to give me trouble. It's a long story, so I won't bore you with all the details, but when the powertrain is up to temperature, the gearbox makes a "crunching" noise when I upshift and downshift with third and fourth gears. I was hoping it was caused by my clutch problems, but apparently not. It still "crunches", leaving me to

believe the synchronizers are shot. And so, I now have a new project on my agenda: rebuilding the transmission!



Le Heap's powertrain, out of the car and transaxle separated from engine

NJACE Classified Ads

Your Ad Here: Classified-style ads are available free of charge to all members! Sell or trade your extra Corvair parts, or seek parts that you need. But & sell entire Corvairs here. Improve your social life! Meet new friends! Enjoy better health!

Wanted: 1966-69 Corvair 4-speed Saginaw transmission. To be used as a core for rebuilding. Would prefer a unit that has not been abused. Contact Allan Lacki. Phone: (610) 927-1583. Email: redbat01@verizon.net.

**NJACE Breakfast
at the Empire Diner
Route 46 East, Parsippany
This Saturday, July 5**

The Empire Diner is located at **1315 U.S. 46, Parsippany, NJ 07054**. This is on the eastbound side, a short distance east of I-287, and easy to get to from I-80 or I-287.

Somerville Cruise Night

Friday, June 20

by Rob Wanhouse

A relatively small number of members attended with their cars, but the night was warm, the cars were cool and the beer was cold!

Unfortunately, we will not be in the paper, as the VW's outnumbered Corvairs five to one!



This month we welcome new member **Norman Preston**, who has a Corvair that he describes as a "1963 work in progress."

Mark Your Calendars

Saturday, July 5

Breakfast at the Empire Diner

Saturday, July 12

Planetarium Show and Barbeque Lunch

Saturday, August 2

Breakfast at the Empire Diner

Saturday, August 23

Annual Summer Picnic

Corvair Paranoia

by Bob Marlow

Recently, Dave Cavagnaro sent us a story from the *Hemmings Motor News* online blog concerning the display of the Ford Mustang I and Mustang II show cars at the Henry Ford Museum.



Ford's 1962 Mustang I concept, on display at The Henry Ford. Photo by Michael Barera.

The Mustang I show car was a driveable mid-engine concept car that was developed, according to the *Hemmings* article, "in part by the paranoia over Chevrolet's innovative Corvair."

I might argue that the paranoia was due not to the Corvair per se, but to the introduction of the 1962 Spyder and to Chevy's own concept cars such as the Super Monza and the Super Spyder, each of which indicated a more upscale and sporting future for the Corvair.



Chevy Super Spyder

Ford needn't have worried. Chevy never correctly embraced the Corvair's true potential, and continued to market the car as a low-priced economy car right through to the end. Ford meanwhile developed the production Mustang and positioned it above the Falcon. From that position Ford sold style and performance.

While Chevy had the better car, Ford had the better idea – at least in terms of marketing.

You can read the complete *Hemmings* article [here](#).

The Mustang II show car, by the way, bears no relationship to the Mustang II production car of a decade later. The original 1963 Mustang II show car was more of a presaging of what the production Mustang would look like.



Ford's 1963 Mustang II concept. Ford Motor Company photo.

Ford's "paranoia" over the Corvair would have been justified had Chevy realized what it has on its hands with its own concept cars, and moved the Corvair upmarket (above the new-for-1962 Chevy II) and focused on the car's strengths of sporty style and distinctive performance.

As much as I like the Corvair wagons and trucks, Ed Cole's original vision of a full line of Corvair-based vehicles was a flawed vision, and Chevy's stubborn commitment to the Corvair as a low-priced economy car was a flawed strategy. The Chevy II needed to be the car marketed against the Falcon, and the Corvair needed to be the "sports car for the family man."

The Flight of the Phoenix

by *Tim Schwartz*

On the morning of June 1, 2014, I was off to the Greenwich Concours D'Elegance in Connecticut, which this year included the auction of the Fitch Phoenix by Bonhams Auctions.

The Fitch Phoenix, the Corvair-based prototype for John Fitch's proposed production sports roadster, is well-known to most NJACE members since we have had the car in our midst on several occasions, both for maintenance and for show.

Arriving around 8:15 in the morning afforded me the ability to look around before the crowds made it difficult to get unobstructed views of the cars. The Phoenix, lot 357, was in prominent display at the Bonhams tent, with the car having been well detailed.

Bidding started on the car at 3:39 PM, with an opening bid of \$100,000. There were a total of 18 bids, with the final bid being \$230,000 just three minutes later. That does not include the 10% buyer's premium, so the new owner paid \$253,000 for the car.

The bidding, in thousands, proceeded thusly: 100; 110; 120; 130; 140; 150; 165; 170; 175; 180; 185; 190; 200; 210; 215; 220; 225; 230.

As it happened, I had lunch with the buyer a few hours before he bought the car. I am waiting for a proper introduction from the gentleman who introduced us, with the intention to congratulate him and tell him of some of the NJACE history with the car.

