

May 2019

the *Fanbelt* njace

new jersey association of CORVAIR enthusiasts

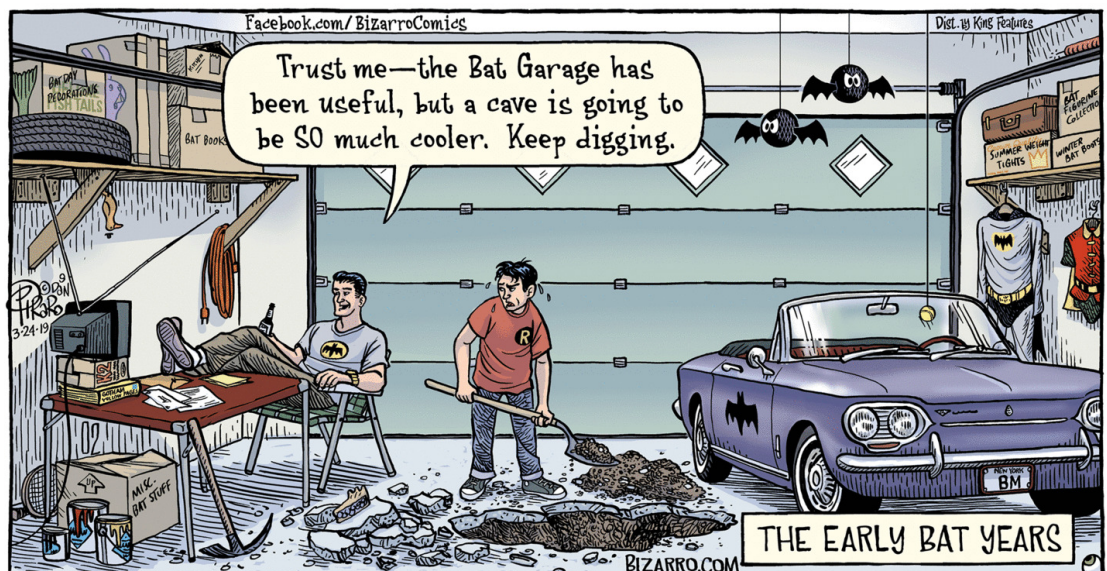
Show It Off!



Illustration by Tomm Scalera, CarShowSafari.com

NJACE is going to the
Restored Rusty Relics'
North Jersey Auto Show & Swap Meet
at Bergen Community College
400 Paramus Road, Paramus
Sunday, May 19
See the complete details in this issue!

This Bizarro cartoon has been making the rounds of the internet in recent weeks. But we have a question: Why does the license plate on the Corvair read "New York" instead of "Gotham?"



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 (COSA), 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.

May 19 Car Show

by Rob Wanthouse

This month, our club activity will be participating in the Restored Rusty Relics' annual North Jersey Auto Show, taking place on Sunday, May 19, 2019 at Bergen Community College in Paramus, near Routes 4 and 17. The show takes place rain or shine!



This show routinely draws up to 350 cars and 80 or more vendors selling car parts, clothing, collectibles, memorabilia, and food. All pre-registered cars get dash plaques; there will also be trivia contests and a DJ playing music. Show time is 8:00 AM through 3:00 PM.

This is a "classic car" show, only open to vehicles from model-year 1994 and earlier. Our Corvairs fit right in! Pre-register online or just sign up at the gate, but you will speed up the process if you print out the registration form from the show's web page and have it ready when you arrive.

Entry fee is \$20 per car, and spectators admission is \$5 per person or \$10 per carload. The proceeds benefit local charities and have kept this show going for more than 40 years!

Sign up online or print out a the registration form at

<https://www.northjerseyautoshow.com/>



President's Message

by Brian O'Neill

Gentlemen, Start The Engine.

Wait, is that a typo? Shouldn't it be "start your engines?" After all, it's May and the Indianapolis 500 takes place later this month.

No, I'm talking about just one engine. It is the engine from Michael Stone's late-model turbo convertible.



Michael's engine dropped a valve seat late last summer. The initial plan was to remove the engine from his car and in its place install a temporary engine on loan from Bob Marlow. We scheduled the tech session at Ashley's Auto Body and we made the engine swap. But, I wouldn't let Michael drive the car home because of the terrible condition of the rear suspension. One of the bushings on the driver's side lower strut rod was completely gone. I had never seen anything like that in all my years of working on Corvairs. The car was flatbedded it to Curt Stone's house (Curt is Michael's father) where it has sat for the winter while I worked on rebuilding the engine.

It has not been an easy task. In addition to the dropped the valve seat the engine suffered from being grossly overheated at some point in its life. As a result most of the gaskets and seals leaked and covered the engine with oil. What a cleaning job! Worse than the cleaning job was the condition of both cylinder heads. Due to the overheating both had severe cracks around the valve seats on the center cylinders. They were beyond repair.

Michael faced spending almost \$500 for used cylinder heads that had not been cleaned nor checked and did not have any kind of guarantee. Larry Ashley stepped in to help Michael by selling him a set of turbo heads that were clean and looked to be in very good shape for a very, very good price.

I took the heads to my local automobile machine shop to have the valves and seats refurbished. It took a lot longer than I expected

because the shop owner had a family emergency requiring him to travel to California and as soon as he returned he came down with a terrible case of flu. When he finally got back to work and started on the heads he discovered the exhaust valve guides were way beyond specifications. So we had to buy a set of oversized guides. Finally everything came together. I was able to complete the engine and now it's time for the next step.

After this Saturday's breakfast meeting, we will adjourn to the shop at Ashley's. We will install the engine on the club's engine run stand. To simplify matters I have not yet installed the turbo set up and instead we will use two 1966 carburetors known to be good. We will start the engine, run it at a fast idle for about 20 minutes, change the oil and then make any required valve adjustments. If all goes well we will then install the turbo set up.

Join us – this should be an interesting day.



NJACE Calendar of Events

Saturday, May 4

Monthly breakfast at the Empire Diner,
Rt. 46, Parsippany, 9:00 AM.

Saturday, May 4

Tech Session at Ashley's Auto Body,
274 Hillside Ave, Flanders,
following the breakfast. See the President's
Message on Page 2 for details.

Sunday, May 19

North Jersey Auto Show at Bergen
Community College, rain or shine!
See the details on page 2.

Saturday, June 1

Monthly breakfast *not* at the Empire Diner;
It's our annual visit to Bucky's on the Lake!

NJACE Treasurer's Report

March 31, 2019

Revised April 29th 2019

Checking Account Balance as reported 12/31/18	\$3,910.18
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INCOME:	
Dues	\$1,199.00
Holiday Gala	
52 people at \$19 each	\$1,508.00
Parts Auction	
club net before expenses	615.00
pending reimbursement	6.48
Checking Interest	0.64
	<u>\$3,329.12</u>
	+ 3,329.12

EXPENSES:	
NJ State Filing fee	\$ 25.50
2018 CORSA Chapter fee	35.00
Parts Auction	
Food & Refreshments	354.99
Holiday Gala	
Entertainment	1,800.00
Caterer & Facility Rental	1,891.20
Sound System Rental	150.00
Flowers	27.70
P.O. Box rent	206.00
	<u>\$4,490.39</u>
	- 4,490.39

Checking Account Balance as of 3/31/19	\$2,748.91
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CD Balance as reported 12/31/18	\$4,824.98
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Interest for the period	<u>24.24</u>
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CD Balance as of 3/31/19	<u>\$4,849.22</u>
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Club Grand Total as of 3/31/19	<u>\$7,598.13</u>
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Note:

The reason for the revision is that the expense for flowers at the Holiday Gala was originally under-reported as 27.20.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tim Schwartz, Treasurer

What's going on in this photo?



See page 6 for the answer

40 Acres in Elizabeth

by Allan Lacki

Editor's Note: Most NJACE members are aware that New Jersey used to be a fairly significant player in automobile manufacturing – Ford assembly plants in Edison and Mahwah, GM plants in Linden and West Trenton. Go back further in history and you'll find the Ford plant in Edgewater, and further back, such items as the Mercer factory in Trenton. All told, New Jersey was host to more than fifty factories making either cars or car parts in the years between 1900 and 2005. Below, we learn the story of one such facility.



Did you know a major car assembly plant was located right here in NJACE territory? It was the Durant factory located on Newark Avenue in Elizabeth.

William C. Durant was a man of high ambition and had no fear of taking big risks. He created General Motors Corporation, but after overextending GM's finances not once but twice, was kicked out by the GM board of directors for good in 1921.

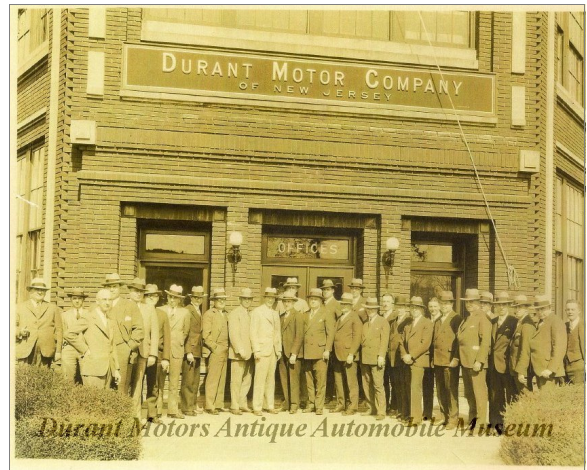


William C. Durant

But Billy Durant was not about to exit the car business. Not yet. He was well connected on Wall Street and was able to raise enough capital to start another big car company with the intention of rivaling GM and Ford. And this time, he put his name on the door. Durant Motors was established in 1921, just a few months after his final exit from GM.

Billy Durant wanted his new company to be a full-line producer of cars and trucks and, among other things, fielded the Durant, Star, Flint, Locomobile, Rugby and Mason brands which were designed to compete with Buick, Oldsmobile, Oakland, and Chevrolet. By the end of 1921, he had assembly plants across the country including Lansing, Michigan; Oakland, California; Long Island City, New York; Muncie, Indiana, Leaside, Canada and Elizabeth, New Jersey.

The Elizabeth factory was originally built in 1917 by Duesenberg Motors, which was awarded large U.S. government contracts to build Liberty V-12 aircraft engines for the Army and Navy in World War I. Although Duesenberg is remembered as an Indiana firm, brothers Frederick and Augustus Duesenberg were actually living in Elizabeth at that time and, in fact, resided just two blocks from the new factory.



When the war ended, the government contracts were terminated, so the Duesenberg brothers sold the factory to John North Willys, another pioneer in the car business. Willys-Overland was a successful company during the teens. But the 1920 recession hit Willys-Overland hard and the company desperately needed to update its cars and economize. Willys hired Walter P. Chrysler, who was widely known in the industry as a production expert, to straighten-out operations at Elizabeth. But by November 22, 1922, Willys found it necessary to divest itself of the plant.

Chrysler, in the meantime, began working on a car of his own design with the able assistance

of Frederick Zeder, Owen Skelton, and Carl Breer, who had just resigned from Studebaker. Recognizing this as an opportunity to procure a manufacturing plant for his own car, he submitted a bid for the Elizabeth plant, but was outbid by Durant, who had the same idea. Durant bought the plant for \$5.2 million and Chrysler moved on to Michigan.

As a side-note, Chrysler quit his lucrative executive position at Buick, GM's top money-making subsidiary, just a few years before getting involved with Willys because of constant meddling by Durant, who was his boss at that time. Nevertheless, they remained friends on a social level, likely because Durant spiced up Chrysler's compensation package with GM stock that took off like a rocket while Chrysler was still employed there. GM stock made Chrysler a very rich man.

Getting back to Elizabeth – Durant expanded the plant from its original 500,000 square feet to 2 million square feet. It was nearly a quarter mile long and covered 40 acres. Over the next seven years, it produced various models of Durant automobiles, mostly Durants and Stars.

To a large extent, these were "assembled" cars, made of components manufactured by other suppliers. For example, most if not all of their engines were made by Continental. It seems a bit hard to believe that this kind of arrangement could be economical, but the Durant Star sold for nearly the same money as Model T Fords in its day.

"It made sense to build cars here because all the elements were local," said Ken Ward, a trustee and vice president of Elizabeth's Historical Society. "It was next to a railroad, port. Everything's there; it was a fantastic location from an industrial standpoint."

Meanwhile, William Durant dabbled in the stock market, riding its highs and lows, and at one time during the 1920s, was reputed to have amassed a fortune of \$100 million for himself. But unlike the executives at Ford, Chrysler and GM, Durant wasn't particularly interested in improving assembly line efficiency and so, as the decade wore on, Durant cars became less competitive in terms of pricing. Although

successful at first, sales began to drop. Unable to make a profit any more, production ceased at Elizabeth some time in 1929. Along with other assets, the plant in Elizabeth was sold in 1933, at which time Billy Durant quit the car business for good.

Durant had the good sense to get out of the stock market before the big 1929 crash, but dove back in a few months later, thinking the market had bottomed out. He was wrong. By the mid-1930s, he was flat broke and died nearly penniless in 1947 at the age of 85.

Meanwhile, the big factory on Newark Avenue was repurposed in the 1930s, first by Big Bear Food, a huge supermarket that, by all descriptions, was akin to today's B.J.s or Sam's Club markets. Later, it was occupied by Burry Biscuit, makers of Burry's cookies which were not only sold under their own label, but also as Girl Scout Cookies. Residents in the neighborhood recall the sweet smell of cookies baking day and night.

Burry's occupied the facility for 40 years, finally closing in 2006. From there, some of the huge interior space was leased for warehousing, like so many old factories in the northeastern part of New Jersey.



On December 22, 2011 part of the plant caught fire, quickly spreading to the old structure and the plant was damaged beyond repair. It was torn down in 2013, a few years shy of its 100th birthday. Today, the property remains a brownfield site. Durant Street, a little side street abutting Newark Avenue, serves as a reminder of the site's history. But during its day, it was a place where giants of the auto industry crossed paths.

Springfest

by Bob Marlow

On Tuesday, April 23, Sue and I made the last-minute decision to drive to Helen, Georgia, for the Corvair Springfest, an annual event that has been taking place for well over 30 years. We hit the road Wednesday morning, less than 24 hours after deciding to make the trip.



It was our first visit to the event, not surprising since it is substantially more than 800 miles from our home. But we'd heard good things about the event through the years, and the trip would give us an opportunity to visit Sue's daughter in Raleigh, North Carolina, where we stopped both on the way down and the way back.

Helen is a former logging town in the mountains of northeast Georgia that reinvented itself after the logging industry fell into decline. Through zoning laws mandated in 1969, the town resurrected itself by becoming a replica of a Bavarian town in the Appalachians instead of the Alps. The classic south-German style is present on every building, even on those housing national franchisees such as Wendy's.



Tourism is now the prime economic activity in Helen, and the Corvair Springfest takes place just before the big summer season gets under way. The Springfest includes a Corvair car show, and autocross, a road rally, plus a swap meet and tech sessions.

We were struck by how many Rampsides showed up. There were more than a dozen Corvair pickups on hand, from ratty beaters to beautiful show cars. One of them, shown here, had been modified with a complete late model rear suspension while retaining its original paint with an appealing patina.



Air conditioned Corvairs were also in abundance, not surprising since we were in the deep south.

Here's a view of a portion of the car show, which occupied two parking lots:



Having now attended a Springfest, it is not likely that's we'll ever return. Not because there is anything wrong with the event, quite the contrary. The hosts were welcoming and generous, the turnout of cars was significant, and the town of Helen was intriguing.

We're glad that we went, but again it is over 800 miles from home, so it will be a one-and-done for us.

And Then There Were 12

NJACE has 79 member households. Back in February we published a list of 53 members due for renewal this year, and now some 41 of those have renewed – thank you!

But this leaves a dozen members who have not yet renewed, and this is their Last Call. We sincerely hope that their failure to renew is simply an oversight and that they will choose to remain members.

So... If your name is on the following list, our records indicate that you are now past due for renewal. Won't you please, print and fill out the renewal form on our web site and send it in with your dues payment? The renewal form can be found under the "Join Us" tab at

<http://www.corvair.org/chapters/njace/>

Now Past Due for Renewal:

Beddow, Jeff	Boynton, Robert
Cohen, Gary	DiCosimo, Michael
Dunn, William	Greenwood, Bruce
Herman, Barry	Mirabella, Nick
Moore, Bill & Karen	Shaver, Russ & Linnea
Sullivan, Brian	Wilson, Vincent



NJACE Eats!



Yes, NJACE still offers a chance to win a FREE breakfast each month at the Empire Diner on Route 46 in Parsippany. Each month we draw a member's name at random and

that member has their breakfast check picked up by the club! But you can only win if you are there! Come on out this Saturday, May 4th!

Quick Tech Tip – correction

by David Malcolm



Last month's Quick Tech Tip under my byline requires a clarification. It read that I recently installed one of the "one wire" internally regulated alternators, but that was not correct. It should have stated that anyone doing this should use a "three-wire" IR alternator which avoids the problems with the alt/gen light.

I also was able, with some judicious bending and elongating of the holes, to reuse the original bracket to support the alternator.

[Editorial Mea Culpa: The erroneous detail in the original tech tip was due to inattentiveness on the part of the newsletter editor. We have arranged to have him executed.]

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Minutes of the General Membership Meeting Saturday, April 6, 2018 *Empire Diner, Parsippany, NJ*

The meeting was called to order at 9:33 AM by President Brian O'Neill. He explained that due to a weather-related low turnout at the February breakfast, the membership business meeting was postponed until today.

Upon motion duly made and seconded the minutes of the December 1st, 2018 membership meeting were approved as printed in the January 2019 issue of the Fanbelt.

Upon motion duly made and seconded the Treasurer's Report was approved as presented by Treasurer Tim Schwartz.

Activities Report: Brian O'Neill, filling in for Rob Wanthouse, discussed the forthcoming April 27th visit to the New York Transit Museum. (See Rob's article in the April issue of the Fanbelt). If you are going, please RSVP to Rob or Brian as we need a count for the restaurant.

Additional upcoming club activities include the May 19th North Jersey Auto Show at Bergen Community College in Paramus, NJ. Note that there is a \$5.00 discount if you register before May 1st. (See Frank Hunter's article in the April issue of the Fanbelt.)

Old Business: None.

New Business: A motion was made and approved to continue our NECC membership for the next two years.

Upon motion duly made and seconded the meeting was adjourned at 9:54 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
David Malcolm



A Depressing Anniversary by Bob Marlow

Tuesday, May 14, 2019, marks the 50th anniversary of the end of Corvair production.

Most Corvair enthusiasts know the basic story: That the Corvair was going to be discontinued at the end of the 1966 model year, coincident with the introduction of the new-for-1967 Camaro. But concerned that dropping the Corvair would appear to be a capitulation to Ralph Nader and other critics, GM elected to keep the Corvair in production but without any further updates aside from those mandated by the government.

Most Corvair enthusiasts also know the story of how the second-from-the-last Corvair would not start when the press assembled to watch the final Corvair come off the assembly line. (The distributor had been installed 180 degrees off.)

Once that car was pushed to the side, the last Corvair an Olympic Gold Monza coupe, rolled off the line, was photographed, and then whisked away – never to be seen again. It's whereabouts remain fodder for speculation to this day.

It was a sad end for a car introduced with such fanfare and excitement a decade earlier. On May 14, take a moment to reflect. If the weather is nice, drive your Corvair. On that day, all Corvairs are AARP-eligible.

