



Fanbelt

July, 2011

New Jersey Association of Corvair Enthusiasts

www.corvair.org/chapters/njace



**Here's another
one-owner NJACE Corvair!**

Then

1967

and **Now**
2011



**And it's an unrestored original!
Read the story of Phil D'Alesandro and his pampered 1967 Monza coupe,
in this issue!**

Our annual summer picnic is this month. So is the Hemmings show. Read on...

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 camera-ready or 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.

Happening This Month:

- Breakfast Meeting, July 2
- Summer Picnic, July 9
- Hemmings Show, July 17-18-19
- CORSA Convention, July 26-29

On the Cover

Two photos of Phil d'Alessandro and his 1967 Monza coupe, one taken shortly after he purchased the car brand-new, and one taken recently.

The first photo was taken on the roof of a parking garage in the Bronx, and the second photo was taken near Phil's New Jersey home.

(Check out the "Breezeway" Mercury in the background of the first shot!)

Phil shares the story of more than 44 years of ownership in this issue of the newsletter. What's your Corvair story? We'll publish it here!

Name Tag Update

by Dick Cashion

We heard from our name tag vendors, Ron and Dee Brown of Joplin, Missouri. Happily, they are alive and uninjured following the recent devastating tornadoes in Joplin, but their house was completely destroyed.

They both went into the basement just in time. Right after the tornado, they had six inches of rain. They are currently living in Kansas.

In going through the rubble, Ron found the CORSA badge blanks, but not the ones for the Hudson club for which I also coordinate name tags.

Even though Ron wants to continue to supply our badge needs, I'll delay our order for a few weeks. They have a lot on their plate right now.



NJACE Summer Picnic Saturday, July 9

It's an annual tradition: Every summer NJACE has a picnic. And we mean every summer – we've been doing it without fail for more than 40 years!

This year's picnic will take place at the same location as last years, Larry & Donna Ashley's home in Succasunna, just around the corner from the body shop. But unlike last year, there is now a POOL in the yard! And this year there will be *no rain!*

The picnic will begin officially at 12 Noon, but the pool opens at 11:00 AM so if it's a hot day feel free to come early to swim. We'll start grilling at 1:00 PM. The club will provide hot dogs and buns, burgers and rolls, soft drinks, water and fixins. You are welcome to bring other items for the grill if you wish, and you are invited to bring a side dish, munchie, or dessert.

Please RSVP to Donna to tell her that you are coming, how many of you are coming, and what comestibles you may be bringing. Contact Donna by e-mail at dashley726@optonline.net or by telephone at 862-251-4163.

All club members, families and friends are welcomed! The yard is spacious, the pool is clear and cool, and we will have canopies for shade. There is plenty of parking.

What: NJACE Summer Picnic

When: Saturday, July 9, rain or shine

Where: 3 Radcliffe Drive, in Succasunna.

If you have been to Ashley's Auto Body in the past for one of our tech sessions or auctions, this is just one block away from the body shop. If you need directions (today, with online maps and in-car GPS, it seems that few people need directions) just send an e-mail message to Donna before the day of the picnic.

Time: 12 Noon, but see above for flexible details

Don't forget to RSVP to Donna

You don't have to drive your Corvair to the picnic, but why would you want to drive anything else?

Corvy

by Phil D'Alesandro

I was first attracted to the Corvair because of its innovative engineering and design: air-cooled, rear-mounted engine; independent rear suspension and unit body construction. I also found the body styling appealing with its simple, rounded lines, long rear deck and tastefully applied chrome trim.

My first new car was a 1960 Corvair 700 coupe. I special ordered the car in Royal Blue with a matching blue cloth and vinyl interior, the standard 80 hp engine, Powerglide transmission and a long list of options, including a gas-fired heater, padded dash, radio, arm rests and sun visor on the passenger side, wide white wall tires, chrome wheel trim rings, back up lights and almost everything else on the option list. I took delivery of the car in April 1960.

It was a joy to drive with its compact dimensions, quick handling and comfortable ride. I have many fond memories of my first Corvair. I proposed to my wife, Rosemary, on a country drive in the car and used it on many subsequent vacation trips after we were married. It served me well and was used for several years for my daily commute from my home in the Bronx, N.Y. to my job in Manhattan.

In late 1964, the second generation Corvair was introduced for the 1965 model year. When, a few years later, I began to hear rumors that General Motors was considering ending Corvair production, ostensibly because of attacks on the car over safety concerns (which subsequently proved unfounded), I decided to buy a new one just in case the rumors were true.

I hated to part with my first Corvair, which was still running well with over 50,000 miles on the odometer and still on the original set of tires and brakes, but I nevertheless went ahead and placed an order for a new 1967 Corvair Monza coupe with my local Bronx Chevrolet dealer in April 1967.

I special ordered the car in Tahoe Turquoise with a black vinyl interior, 110 hp engine and Powerglide transmission. Other options included a Corvette-style steering wheel, narrow-strip whitewall tires, pushbutton AM radio, rear seat speaker, electric clock, luggage, ashtray, courtesy and under hood lamps, bumper guards and spare tire lock. The sticker price, including all the options and a \$55 destination charge, was \$2,821.55. The actual selling price was \$2,487. I still have the original order form

as well as the cashed, certified check used for the purchase.

I took delivery of my 1967 Corvair on June 16, 1967 accompanied by my wife, Rosemary, who had been discharged from the hospital a few weeks earlier after successful open-heart surgery. After completing all the paper work, I got behind the wheel for the first time, the salesman assisted Rosemary into the car, and she became the first passenger in the Corvair as we drove off together for our first spin. To celebrate her successful surgery and delivery of the new Corvair, we later had dinner at a local restaurant.



Bronx, NY, 1967

For the next several years, we used the Corvair for many vacation trips to the Finger Lakes, the Catskills and the Adirondacks in New York state, and to parts of New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine. Rosemary christened the new car "Corvy," and to this day we still refer to the Corvair by that name.

This second generation Corvair was greatly improved. The drive train was basically the same. However, the major engineering change was in the rear suspension, which was now fully independent, with universal joints at both ends of each half axle. The engineering was actually taken from the contemporary Corvette design and resolved criticisms about over steer and handling. I also thought the styling was greatly improved. The lines were sharper and cleaner with a slight bulge (the so-called Coke bottle effect) over the rear wheel opening, and a character line running the length of

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Corvy

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the car from above the headlights to the rear cove. Relatively little chrome was used, and except for the accents on the rocker panels, windows, wheel wells and the rear cove, the lines of the car required little adornment.

While the first generation Corvair now appears a little dated, although widely copied by some European makes at the time, the second generation has held up very well and still has a modern look with the sharply angled rear back lite sloping into the long rear deck. I also liked the improved handling of my 1967 Corvair that resulted from the redesigned rear suspension. There was less lean on sharp curves, and it had a feeling of being in better communication with and better connected to the road. The ride was a bit firmer but still comfortable. Overall, as much as I loved my first Corvair, I considered my second a jewel of a car.

I have sometimes been asked why I have kept my Corvair for so long. At first, I had no intention of keeping this car for over 44 years, let alone in original, unrestored, factory stock condition. Initially, I used it as I had my first Corvair, for my daily commute to my job in Manhattan. I did this for almost two years, when the rumors I had been hearing about termination of Corvair production turned out to be true. I realized then with great sadness that there would be no more new Corvairs, and that if I still wanted to enjoy Corvair ownership, I would have to take very good care of this one. Therefore, I retired my Corvair to weekend and vacation duty, and bought a second car for daily driving.

Sadly, on May 14, 1969, the last Corvair rolled off the production line, but mine and an estimated 70-80,000 still roll on.

Ironically, I probably have Ralph Nader to thank for my ownership of a 1967 Corvair. In the mid 60s, General Motors had decided to end production of the Corvair. The great success of Ford's Mustang

prompted the introduction of the Chevrolet Camaro in 1967 to counteract falling sales of the Corvair. (Another irony is that the Corvair Monza, introduced in the spring of 1960, actually started the so-called "pony" car trend.) But the publication of Nader's "Unsafe at Any Speed," and all that followed, gave General Motors second thoughts about ending production of the Corvair at that time. Had G.M. done so, it would have been a tacit admission that Nader's charges were true. Therefore, all the development plans for future Corvairs were abandoned by G.M., but production limped along until 1969 with only minimal changes mandated by federal safety regulations.

In ten years of production, 1.78 million Corvairs were produced. Of this amount, first generation Corvairs (1960-1964) represent 78%, and second generation Corvairs (1965-1969) 22% of the total. 1967 production was about 27,000, and production fell to a miniscule 6,000 in 1969 when all production ceased. Therefore, relative rarity has provided an added incentive to keep my Corvair.



New Jersey, 2011

Currently, I use my Corvair sparingly. It has about 26,000 miles on the odometer, and is still in original condition, with original paint, chrome, interior and trim. In 1979, I replaced the original bias two-ply

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Corvy

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tires with steel belted radials for improved handling, although the original spare is still in the engine compartment. I've replaced the battery several times as well as the fan belt, and in 1995 had Viton O-rings installed, rebuilt the carburetors, installed new spark plugs, points, condenser, and ignition wiring. Lastly, in 1999, the brake master cylinder and wheel cylinders were rebuilt. Other than these common maintenance items, the car has required no major mechanical work and is in basically the same condition as when it left the factory, including the usual small manufacturing and assembly defects that were typical in those years, unlike the improvements in quality control we take for granted today.

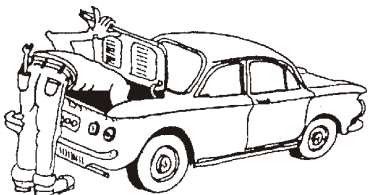
A key factor in the preservation of my Corvaire is that it has always been garaged. I currently have a one-car garage that is occupied by the Corvaire; our two family cars, which are considerably newer, reside outside in the driveway.

After all these years, I still take pleasure in admiring the styling of my Corvaire, contemplating its innovative engineering, and getting behind the wheel for a spin on back country roads. It has a special place in American automobile history, and it's unlikely we will see its kind again. I often try to imagine what the Corvaire would be like today if General Motors had continued production and implemented its original development plans. I'm sure a modern Corvaire would be spectacular. I would buy one without hesitation.

And now after more than 44 years of ownership, I am beginning to feel more like the Corvaire's custodian, waiting to pass it on to someone who will continue to care for it and appreciate its qualities as I have.

Tech Session Hiatus

Our monthly tech sessions at Ashley's Auto Body in Flanders are taking the summer off! The tech sessions will return in the Fall.



Hemmings' New England Concours d'Elegance 2011

Celebrating **100 Years of Chevrolet**. Other featured marques include:

- Aston Martin
- Pierce-Arrow
- Dodge Daytona & Plymouth Superbird
- Micro cars
- Fifties-era station wagons
- Ducati motorcycles

July 15-16-17, 2011
Stratton Mountain Resort
Stratton, Vermont

The weekend begins on **Friday** with a cruise-in at the Hemmings Motor News headquarters in Bennington, Vermont, followed by a tour through the Green Mountains to Stratton. All collector cars are welcome on the 45-mile tour up the famous Ethan Allen Highway to start the weekend. The rally ends at the Stratton Mountain Resort.

On **Saturday**, Hemmings hosts an all-day open car show at Stratton, with awards ceremony in the afternoon. This Cruise-In Spectacular is open to any pre-1986 domestic or foreign car, truck or motorcycle, with the winning cars appearing in the pages of a Hemmings publication. Saturday finishes with an available formal dinner at the Lodge at Stratton, with a presentation by automotive historian Pat Foster.

On **Sunday**, The Concours d'Elegance take place. This is an invitation-only show, featuring some of the rarest, most desirable and best-restored collector cars in the country. The Concours concludes with an award ceremony at 3 PM honoring the winners, who will appear in the pages of Hemmings Motor News.

For more information about attending the event, visit www.hemmings.com, or contact Trisha Grande at tgrande@hemmings.com

Yes, Virginia...

There *IS* a breakfast at the Pronto Deli on July 2nd. Typically, we skip it due to the Independence Day holiday. But last year we tried it and it was well-attended, so the breakfast is *ON*.

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. ==> *The Tech Sessions are on vacation for the summer, and will return in the Fall!* <==
- ✓ **Saturday, July 9**, Our Annual Summer Picnic, in Succasunna. The pool is open! Complete details in this issue.

Weekend, July 15-17, Hemmings' 5th annual New England Concours. Last year Corvairs were a featured car, this year it's 100 Years of Chevrolet. More details appear in this issue.
- ✓ **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 marked ✓ are counted toward our annual Mary Paxton Participation Award and Bill Ableson Corvair Driver Award.

Hardyston Car Show

Our Event for August

The Hardyston Fire Department's 2011 car show will take place on August 14th (rain date one week later) at Wheatsworth Field in Hardyston, Sussex County, and this year NJACE is participating.

This is a car show, not an *antique* car show – there are classes for everything from 100-year-old classics to race cars to the latest tricked-out rides. It is not clear at this point which class or classes our Corvairs might fall in, but the organizers state that they reserve the right to adjust classes based on what shows up.

The show hours are 9 AM 'til 3 PM, and there will be coffee, food and drink available. (No alcoholic beverages are permitted.) The first 100 cars receive dash plaques, and a 50-50 raffle will be conducted during the day – last year's 50-50 winner won more than \$1,100 dollars!

The location is 183 Wheatsworth Road in Hardyston (Hamburg/ Hardyston ZIP 07419), at the Hardyston Middle School and right up the road from the famous Gingerbread Castle.

We'll have additional details in next month's newsletter, but for now, mark the date!

Breakfast, with Entertainment

by Bob Marlow

When NJACE members met at the Clinton Station Diner prior to visiting the America on Wheels museum last month, we received unplanned entertainment with our breakfast.

The diner is immediately alongside I-78 in rural Hunterdon County, directly across from the women's correctional facility. But you'd never notice the correctional facility, it looks more like a farm than a prison.

You can sit your table in the restaurant and watch the traffic in the foreground and the green hillsides in the background.

As we ate on this Sunday morning, some "police activity" took place outside the window. A driver traveling eastbound on the highway was detained and given a field sobriety test, which apparently he failed. He was handcuffed and hauled off! Before we left his vehicle was picked up by a rollback wrecker, to be taken to an impound lot somewhere.

Not the Usual Suspects

by Bob Marlow

When NJACE met up with the members of the Philadelphia Corvair Association at the America on Wheels museum in Allentown, Pennsylvania, on June 12, geography and timing brought out a different-than-usual selection of members.

The “geography” was the fact that this museum is 15 miles into Pennsylvania from the border at the Delaware River. That brought out virtually our entire roster of Pennsylvania-based members, including Ray & Kathy Coker, Al Lacki, Joe Maurella, and Curt & Pat Stone. This list would have likely included Ken Klingaman had he not been recovering from recent foot surgery.

The “timing” was that the event took place the day after a big Northeast Corvair Council meeting in Sturbridge, Massachusetts, a meeting which “stole” some of our loyal members who are active in planning the 2012 CORSA Convention.

Another ten members either made the trip to Allentown or met up with us at one point or another. These included Steve Calandra, Dave Carney, Howard Horne, Tony & Helen Gervasio and Greg Gorski, Bob & Sue Marlow, and Ron & Gloria Peles..

Our group converged on the museum at the stroke of Noon where we found the Philly club members already there along with representatives of the Lehigh Valley Corvair Club. Also visiting the museum were members of a BMW car club, but there were more Corvairs on hand than BMWs! The assembled Corvair owners were courteously extended the discounted group admission to the museum and split into several small groups each with a tour guide.

The tour guides quickly pointed out that the America on Wheels facility “is not an antique car museum.” Rather, the guides stressed, it is “a transportation museum,” albeit one that focuses almost exclusively on road transportation. Being in Allentown, it has an outstanding exhibit dedicated to Mack Trucks – made in Allentown for generations – as well as a display about the Pennsylvania Turnpike (America’s first limited-access highway) and exhibits featuring the area’s rich racing history.

Cars, trucks, motorcycles and bicycles are all part of the museum’s displays, but the reason for our visit was the just-opened “100 Years of Chevrolet” exhibit. This modest but well-staged display

presents Chevies from all eras (except the 1940s), the earliest car being a 1912 model and the most interesting one being, of course, a 1960 Corvair. The Corvair, as noted here last month, is owned by Philly club member Larry Asheuer but previously belonged to our own Ashley family.

Once the museum tour was completed we all engaged in an impromptu car show in the parking lot, as the museum reserved an areas just for the Corvairs. During this time somebody fired up a sweet-sounding V8 car – except that it wasn’t a V8 at all. It proved to be Al Lacki’s Corvair with his attention-getting custom exhaust system as featured in last month’s newsletter. A stock Corvair engine has never sounded so good!

From there the clubs said their goodbyes and the Philly contingent headed out to a diner while the NJACERs went to a Five Guys burger joint (by way of an unplanned detour through the A-B-E airport – how long have you been a Pennsylvanian, Ray?). The Five Guys location proved highly popular with the ladies, since it was surrounded by stores. The result was that the women went shopping while five guys – Bob, Curt, Greg, Ray, and Tony – swapped lies on the Five Guys patio.

It was an excellent change-of-pace NJACE outing and it was great to see the Pennsylvania members whom we see too infrequently. If you have never been to the AoW museum, it’s worth a trip. The “100 Years of Chevrolet” exhibit continues through March of next year.

More photos appear on the next page.



Larry Asheuer’s 1960 Monza coupe on display as part of the America on Wheels museum’s “100 Years of Chevrolet” exhibit.



Another reason to visit AoW

Just three weeks after our visit to the *100 Years of Chevrolet* exhibit at the America on Wheels museum in Allentown, Pennsylvania, comes another good reason to visit.

On Saturday, July 2, the museum is the starting point for the "100th Anniversary of Chevrolet Car Cruise," which will be an all-Chevrolet drive from the museum in Allentown to the PNC Plaza at SteelStacks in Bethlehem.

▲ *A flash mob forming? No, it's NJACE members in the parking lot of the America on Wheels museum.*

SteelStacks is an arts & cultural campus in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, located at the former site of the Bethlehem Steel plant.

The Pocono Raceway pace car will be leading the way, and "Chevrolet 100 Anniversary" cruise dash plaques will be given to the first 100 participants. A "Participant's Choice" Trophy will be awarded at 3:00 pm.



Cars from the Philadelphia Corvair Association in the America on Wheels parking lot. ▼

▲ *A subset of the NJACE group blocks the view of the Corvair in the America on Wheels museum.*



All types of Chevy vehicles are welcome. A \$5 per car registration fee is required, and proceeds benefit the America on Wheels museum.

You can download the registration form at www.americaonwheels.org.

Photos by Gloria Peles