

Prairie Capital Corvair Association

P.O. Box 454
Pawnee, Illinois 62558

The Flat Six

October 2026

2026 Officers

President -Chris Hall	(217) 691-6529	Vice-President Brian Nicholson	(217) 891-0808
Secretary-Tim Mahler	(217) 793-3824	Treasurer-Mike Hall	(217) 494-7105
Membership-Chris Hall	(217) 691-6529	Historian/Inventory - vacant	
FlatSix Editor Tim Mahler	(217) 793-3824	Email	PrairieCapital@corvair.org

Board of Directors

Shelby Berta (2026)	(217) 361-7089	Jim Ori (2027)	(217) 725-8049
Jim Collier (2026)	(217) 972-2285	Jim Allen (2026)	(309) 361-5351

From the Prez

Greetings, Fellow PCCA Members,

These past couple of days Fall sure has slightly taken over. As I write this several car enthusiasts will be getting their cars packed up with their luggage for the Route 66 Mother Road Festival. Being involved with Prairie Land Heritage Museum Steam Show & Fall Festival Days the same weekend makes it difficult to attend both events. I'm hopeful for great attendance for both events! Speaking of attendance Tim has planned out a Trip coming up very soon. I'm hopeful that you can attend! I'm hoping to attend! So long as my work schedule will allow it. I'd like to thank our members willing to serve as an Officer or Board Member this coming year! Elections will be here shortly! I hope to see you all soon! I hope you can get to some Car Shows before the season ends!



The 1961 Chevrolets. Ad.

Chris Hall, PCCA President - 2026

2026 Calendar – watch closely, things change

September 25-27 IL RT66 Mother road Festival - Very big Car Cruise and Car Show Springfield IL
September 25th Friday Night (almost free) Cruise - lots of cars may be watched en route downtown.
Saturday - September 26 The “Big Show” Pre-registration by Sept 23- \$50, onsite \$60
Sunday -September 27 Noon - Awards on the main stage

Corvair Museum “open” hours -

September 26, 2026 9 AM to 5 PM September 27, 2026 9 AM to 2 PM Last open weekend for 2026
The Corvair Museum moves back to Ypsilanti end of September.

October 10 Club Tour to Atlanta Illinois and the American Giants Museum.

Meet in Atlanta 10:30 am. Will tour the Giant Museum first, then proceed around town.
Lunch is expected to be between 12:30 and 1:00 pm at the Country Aire Restaurant. You will pass the restaurant on your way to the Museum it's close to the interstate.

This Date has not been cast in stone yet. May still be a week night.

Nov 14, 2026 PCCA Meeting date Details to follow. Expect Toni's Café at exit 82
Meeting will start most everyone has eaten lunch – estimated at 1:45 pm

December 12, 2026 This is the traditional 2nd Saturday of the Month Christmas get-together date
Expect 12:30 or 1:00 pm gathering for lunch. Likely Toni's Café (good food)
With other activities lasting until 3 or 4:00 pm
I will check with the Pres and other officers to confirm

For more Corvair Events Check the calendar on the CORSA Web site: www.corvair.org



Glen Rittenhouse follows sales on Bring-a-trailer. Last month he spotted this Corvair on the site.
1965 Monza Convertible. Sold for a respectable price of \$28,850



This month is a tour to Atlanta Illinois to see the American Giants museum and other sites. Last Year, Brian Nicholson spotted this museum near St Louis. Maybe we should discuss that over lunch to do sometime next year? The Creve Coeur Historic Aircraft Restoration Museum near St. Louis has grown from a passion project into one of the nation's finest collections of Golden Age aircraft.

With 58 vintage airplanes on display across four hangars—including rare Wacos, a de Havilland Dragon Rapide, and even film-famous aircraft—the museum offers visitors guided tours year-round (except winter).

Owned and operated by two women carrying on their families' legacy, the airport and museum remain a living tribute to aviation history.



Meet the Makers of the Chevrolet Corvair

By: Eva "Corvair Lady" McKeel

CORVAIR HISTORY SNIPPITS...Did you know when Bill Mitchell took over as Vice President of GM Design/Styling (replacing Harley Earl) and oversaw the Corvair project; his first proposed idea for what he wanted this air-cooled wonder to look like was based on the "Abarth 207A Spyder?"

The Abarth 207A (see post image #1) was a competition car created in the mid 1950's and Mitchell liked the sporty, low to the ground design. He wanted his staff to create something with similar lines. I am thankful to GM Assistant Chief Designer, Elia "Russ" Russinoff, for sharing this little gem of information with me as he worked and submitted proposed Corvair sketches in the Advanced 1 Studio under the direction of Ned Nickles (who oversaw the design project where the Corvair was created).

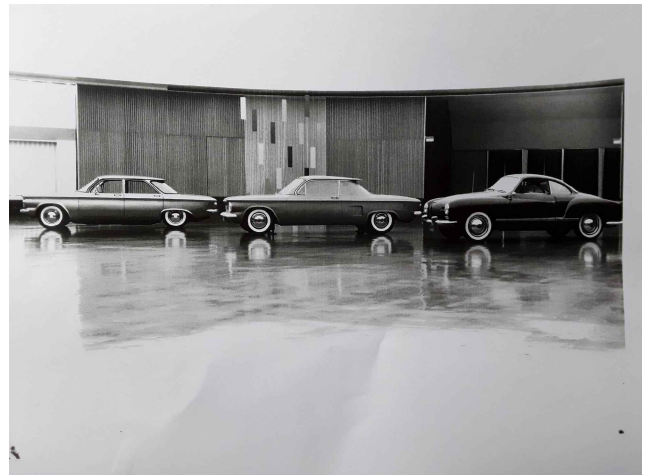
While working on the Corvair Project, General Motors (Ed Cole) knew Russ owned and drove a VW Karmann Ghia coupe to work each day (another air-cooled rear engine car). One day his bosses asked him to bring his car into the studio so they could take a closer look at it. They even took photos of it with other proposed Corvair design cars (see image #2 in post). Russ told me that when Ed Cole came in to take a good look at his car, he turned to Russ (and whoever else was present in the studio at that moment) and made the following statement, "Boy! We can't put that kind of quality in a Corvair!"

Russ noted that it only took one finger to close the door easily on that Karmann Ghia. He said, "You didn't have to slam it like the other cars that we did." Russ warned his buddies to never to slam his car door and to gently close it as everything on that car was aligned so beautifully.

I enjoyed the friendship I had with Russ (see image #3) and the many things he shared with me in regards to his car design history (which includes being credited for the 1966 Pontiac Grand Prix front end), Corvairs, and notable people he knew at GM such as Harley Earl. Russ even told me that his own father worked directly under Henry Ford, Sr. at the Ford Motor Company. Russ was personally hired into GM by Bill Mitchell himself. He told me that he thought one of the reasons he got hired in 1957 was due to him being the 1st Place Sr. National Award Winner in the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild Model Car



The Abarth 207-A Roadster was the first proposal for the Corvair by Bill Mitchell because he really liked this sporty, low to the ground design. He wanted his staff to create something with similar lines.



During his employment in the GM Styling Studio, GM Assistant Chief Designer, Elia "Russ" Russinoff owned and drove a VW Karmann Ghia (another rear-engine air-cooled car) to work. Russ was asked to bring his car to the studio one day (pictured here in the Corvair Studio). When Ed Cole came in, he took a close look at Russ's car, and made this statement: "Boy, we can't put that kind of quality in a Corvair!"

Russ states that on his car, you only needed one finger to close his door easily

Competition in 1949 when he designed a sculptured wooden car fashioned with a rear engine (see image #4). He won a \$4,000 scholarship.

Sadly, Russ passed away in 2020, but we are grateful that we have his stories well documented for future generations of Corvair enthusiasts to enjoy.

Another couple of little insider stories about Bill Mitchell:

#1...I've been told by other GM designers that Bill Mitchell did not like his employees owning/driving VW's. One day, a GM designer (not Russ) who owned a VW was driving to work when he spotted Mitchell on the road nearby. This designer quickly pulled into a gas station and ducked his head down out of fear because he didn't want Bill to recognize him in his VW. Mitchell was known to have a hot temper. Yep...this stuff happened.

#2...Mitchell often enjoyed privately driving (or should I say speeding) around town in some of the Corvair concept cars. One designer said he (and another designer who he shared a ride with) were driving to work one day when they spotted Mitchell in one of the Corvair concept cars (it was the red Sebring Spyder). They said Mitchell was driving crazy and they had a tough time catching up to him. At one point, just before Mitchell went into the GM Executive parking lot; they blew past Mitchell's car and one of the designers exclaimed: "You gotta watch those guys in their hot Corvairs!"

I love learning behind the scene stories like this; I call them little Corvair diamonds...hope you enjoyed it, too. Makes it Vairy interesting.

Eva "Corvair Lady" McKeel,

Creator/Historian

Meet the Makers of the Chevrolet Corvair

For more information about Russ's career at GM and his many contributions to car design, please click on the highlighted article below:

<https://www.hemmings.com/.../for-40-years-elias-russ-inoff...>

*Please contact author at corvailady@gmail.com to obtain permission to reprint article/photos in any newsletter, magazine, blog, web site, etc. Thank you!

(Photos courtesy of GM and Eva McKeel)



Elia "Russ" Russinoff in his private art studio on one of several visits I made at his home. Even after retiring from GM, Russ kept busy with contributing car design work for the "League of Retired Automotive Designers." Sadly, Russ passed away in 2020, but we are thankful to have his stories about the Corvair well documented.



Elia "Russ" Russinoff won a \$4,000 scholarship as the 1st place Senior National award winner of the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild Model Car Competition in 1949 when he designed a wooden sculptured car fashioned with a rear engine. Russ noted that he believes one of the reasons he got hired into GM in 1957 was due to this award winning model.

Road Tour To Atlanta (Illinois)

Editor Tim is again going to try to lead a road trip to the American Giants Museum in Atlanta Illinois. The current plan is to do the tour on October 10, 2026 - this is a Saturday. Start time 10:30 am at the American Giants Museum. There is a large, off street, public parking lot across the street from the Museum. This is where I plan to park. I will walk most of the tour, some may want to drive the half mile or so to the “far away” locations.

Lunch is expected to be at the Country Aire Restaurant somewhere between 12:30 and 1:00pm. The restaurant is just off the I-55 exit (140). Yes, I will drive there. There is a DQ nearby plus other eateries in downtown Atlanta including a bar and grill that reviews indicate has great hamburgers.

The American Giants Museum has added a LOT of giants since last year, so delaying the tour may have been beneficial. After the museum, I will be walking to other stops including the Atlanta Museum, the grain elevator and carriage house and the Arch Street Artisans. I expect will stop at the Library on the way to the Mine Museum (near the Grain Elevator). The Library has interesting items on display, books for sale as well as lending and the Architecture is wonderful.

The typical tourist season for Atlanta ends at the End of September. Seems early especially with Fall Foliage coming into view. This may limit some items but most of the stops open at 10:00am. Have numerous things to see RT66 enthusiasts and artisans shoppers. The October date should provide mild weather – light jacket maybe. With luck, a little sunshine too.

There is also a segment of original RT66 that we could drive including an old pre red Stop sign (its yellow). The turn around is gravel so be warned. If we keep our feet light on the go pedal, we shouldn't throw any rocks. I have visited this location on my pre-visit.

Repeating: Because Atlanta is midway between Springfield, Peoria and Decatur members, Meeting at the Museum makes sense (to me). Exit 140 off I-55, head towards town (west) veer right onto Vine st, parking lot will be on the left. Giants below make it hard to miss. Is also a giant outside the Country Aire Restaurant.

Addresses:

American Giants Museum	204 SW 1st Street, Atlanta IL
Public Library and Clock Tower	100 SE Race Street04 SW 1st Street
J.H. Hawes Grain Elevator	301 SW 2nd Street
Country Aire Restaurant	606 E South Street

If you have thoughts – send Tim an email. PrairieCapital@corvair.org Thanks



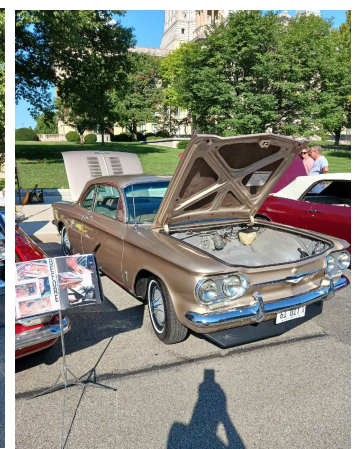
SOS Show

The 76th Annual Illinois Secretary of State Vehicle Show was held Saturday, September 12, 2026. From what I was able to gather, only one Corvair was judged. Several members had registered to participate but other life items popped up. It's a classy show at a very low price. I will try harder to make it again next year.

Meanwhile, in an attempt to find photos from this year's show, the editor found these photos (and brief story) from 2022 – when PCCA hosted a Corvair Museum fundraising event at the Crowne Plaza and used the SOS show to show case all the Corvairs in attendance.

Corvair Museum Weekend September 2022.

Lots has changed since that eventful weekend. But the memories live on. -- Saturday was the car show in conjunction with the Secretary of State Auto show. Corvairs were one of the Marquee featured cars. 20 Corvairs lined up at the hotel, 19 made it to the show. Our Canadian friend Guy, had a rear u-joint fail as he was lining up in the hotel parking lot. Nice V8 car driven to Springfield. He got a part and worked on it while the rest of us worked on cleaning ours. Jim Allen's 1966 four door sedan won the Marquee award. With the 6 Corvair classes, most of us walked away with a 1st, 2nd or 3rd trophy -- all deserved. the few who didn't were just edged out by the "Concours" cars. It was a good day.



Editor's Note: Mike Dawson has been busy, or at least the web master at HACO has been. Several new articles were posted this Spring while I was napping. This is tech Article #210. One part interesting stories and one part how to solve diagnostic challenges. I suppose the PCCA mechanics in the club have similar stories. Brian? Jim? As always, my thanks to Mike Dawson for his excellent writings. Tim

THE PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE SERIES

Mike Dawson

Starter Solenoids Revisited

I recently completed rebuilding 10 Corvair starters and began to test them. For testing I have a low mileage engine on the floor and I use a complete late model Powerglide wiring harness to ensure that the amp draw, voltage drop and mechanical functions all work properly through repeated cranking tests. The new starter drives, solenoids, and some of the small parts that get replaced, came from Clark's Corvair Parts and have been giving perfect service.

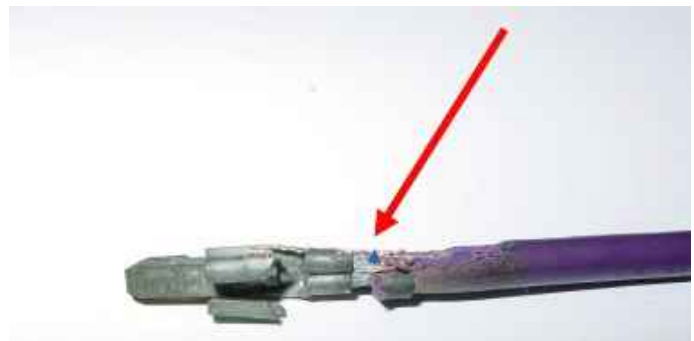
When I began testing this group of starters, several of the units would occasionally click but not crank the engine. I had run into that a couple of years ago and tried several different solenoids which finally cured the problem. This time I found that changing solenoids might lessen the frequency but did not completely eliminate the problem. Voltage testing showed that the drive teeth were not engaging the ring gear but instead clicked against it, which in turn did not allow the starter motor to receive any current through the solenoid internal switch. A voltmeter found between 8-9 volts at the solenoid S terminal. If I jumped between the positive battery cable and the S terminal (remote starter), the starter would work every time. This pointed to a voltage drop between the battery, ignition switch and solenoid. An investigation of my wiring harness was in order.

The approximate length of the wiring needed to start a Corvair is 38' including both directions. It begins at the positive battery post, travels to the ignition switch, turns around and travels back to the starter solenoid. An easily understood routing, however, during that routing the current has to pass through 10 push on connections, 2 switches and 15 crimp connections. There is only one soldered connection in the entire starting circuit. Our electrical system has been exposed for 60 years to humidity, road salt mist, and sometimes added crimp and twist connections done by others.

I ended up cleaning and soldering numerous crimp connections, cleaning push connections and replacing the ignition switch. After the wiring harness tuneup, a retest of clicking starters found the problem was solved.

Pictured below is one example of the 19' long purple 12 AWG solenoid wire with a crimp connection turning green from corrosion and high resistance. It was in a late model 12 pin connector behind the defroster duct.

If you have a starter that has a noticeable



click occasionally (or regularly), use a volt meter and a paper clip to check the supplied voltage at the two wire starter harness in the forward left side of the engine compartment (purple wire). The circuit has to be under a load to check so do not unplug that connector.

Have an assistant turn the key while you watch the meter. If you see less than 9 volts with a click, you have found the cause. If you jump from the positive battery to the purple wire at this point you should find the solenoid works every time. The original GM solenoids were supposed to work with as little as 7.7 volts but all of the replacements I have used weigh less (fewer copper windings) and will not function at that low voltage.

Here are the push connectors, switches, and battery cable parts that make up the cranking circuit. None of them are in the lower two tunnel pans.



- Positive battery cable clamp to battery post
- 10ga positive battery to frame connection on late model (screw in a plastic plug).
- 12 wire connector left front of engine compartment.
- 12 wire connector behind defroster duct late model or under dash early model.
- Connector in to ignition switch.
- Ignition switch.
- Connector out of ignition switch.
- Neutral safety switch connector in.
- Neutral safety switch.
- Neutral safety switch connector out.
- 12 wire connector under dash.
- 2 wire connector in left front of engine compartment.
- Connector at terminal on solenoid.

And there are 2 crimp connections at all of the push connectors and one at each side of the switches.

Last but very important, check the ground side of the system. Folks change parts, parts come loose and they corrode. With the drivetrain mounted in rubber, it has to be solidly connected to body and battery.

If you do determine that the harness voltage drop is the problem and you just want a dependable Corvair without additional time or wiring, you could utilize an early Ford type fender solenoid attached (or hidden) next to the battery or the two wire starter harness. They are \$10-25, and can be purchased at any auto supply. A turn of the ignition switch sends full battery voltage directly to the starter solenoid S terminal, avoiding the electrical trip to the front of the car and back. The Ford solenoid only needs a fraction of the amps previously needed for starting.

PCCA Elections

Please consider volunteering to be an officer or board member. Although the current Officers are eligible to hold office another year, we are always willing to let someone new step up and help shape the club. Besides, the current officers have not yet been asked if they are willing to serve another year Except for the secretary who said yes) .

The Elections will be held at the November meeting for the 2027 calendar year. The below slate are all candidates who have agreed to run for office. But, if you want to run, you still have time to raise your hand. Please let Chris or Tim know if you are willing to serve. email prairiecapital@corvair.org

The ballot will be in the November Newsletter, as a separate email if a position is contested.

2027 Slate of individuals who have agreed to serve for 2027

President - Chris Hall VP - Brian Nicholson
Treasurer - Mike Hall Secretary – Tim Mahler

Board - Jim Ori is the current 2 year board member.
One -year terms for 2027 Jim Allen and Jim Collier
Two year term Sandy Myers

Please Note: The editor has changed the membership for to the 2027 calendar year. Renew early to beat the Christmas rush. New members: PCCA will waive remainder of the year. (Generous of the editor)

Prairie Capital Corvair Association (PCCA) Membership Form **January 1, 2027 thru December 31, 2027**

Type of Membership Individual ☐ \$17
 Family ☐ \$20 (2 adults at one address plus children under 18)
☐ Apply a \$5 discount for receiving the electronic version of the newsletter and other correspondence.
If joining after July 31, dues are: Individual \$8.50, Family \$10.00. If applicable, the discount is \$2.50.

Name _____ Spouse/ 2nd Adult _____

Street Address _____
City, ST ZIP _____

Home Phone _____ CORSA Membership ID _____
Cell Phone(s) _____ Spouse/ 2nd Adult _____

e-Mail Address(es) _____ Spouse/ 2nd Adult _____

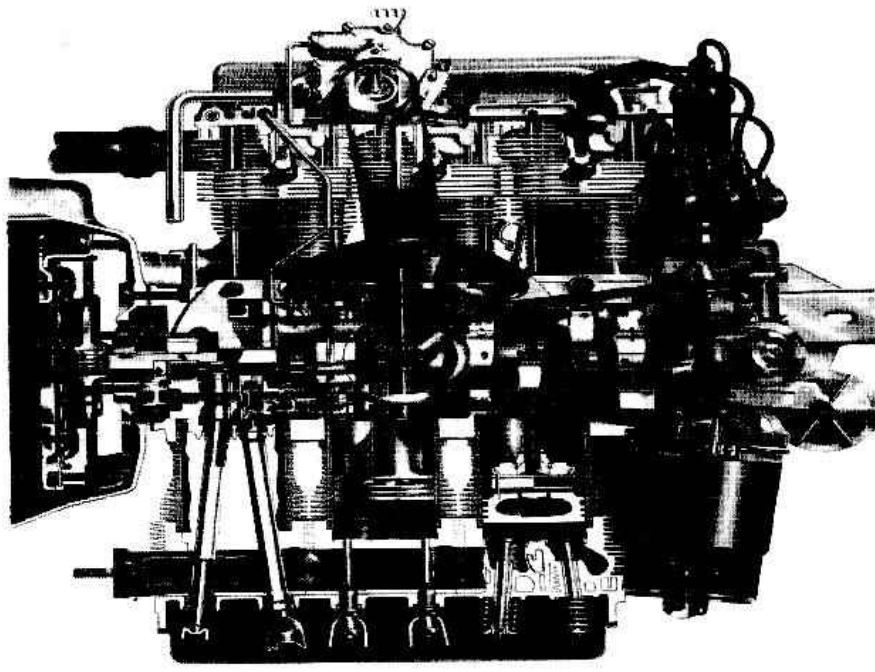
Cars, Corvair and other _____

Other interests _____

PCCA strongly encourages membership in CORSA. Do you want/need information about CORSA? Y / N

Return the completed form and dues to: Mike Hall, PCCA Treasurer PO Box 454, Pawnee IL 62558
Please make checks payable to Prairie Capital Corvair Association or PCCA

The Flat Six



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