



# CORVAN ANTICS

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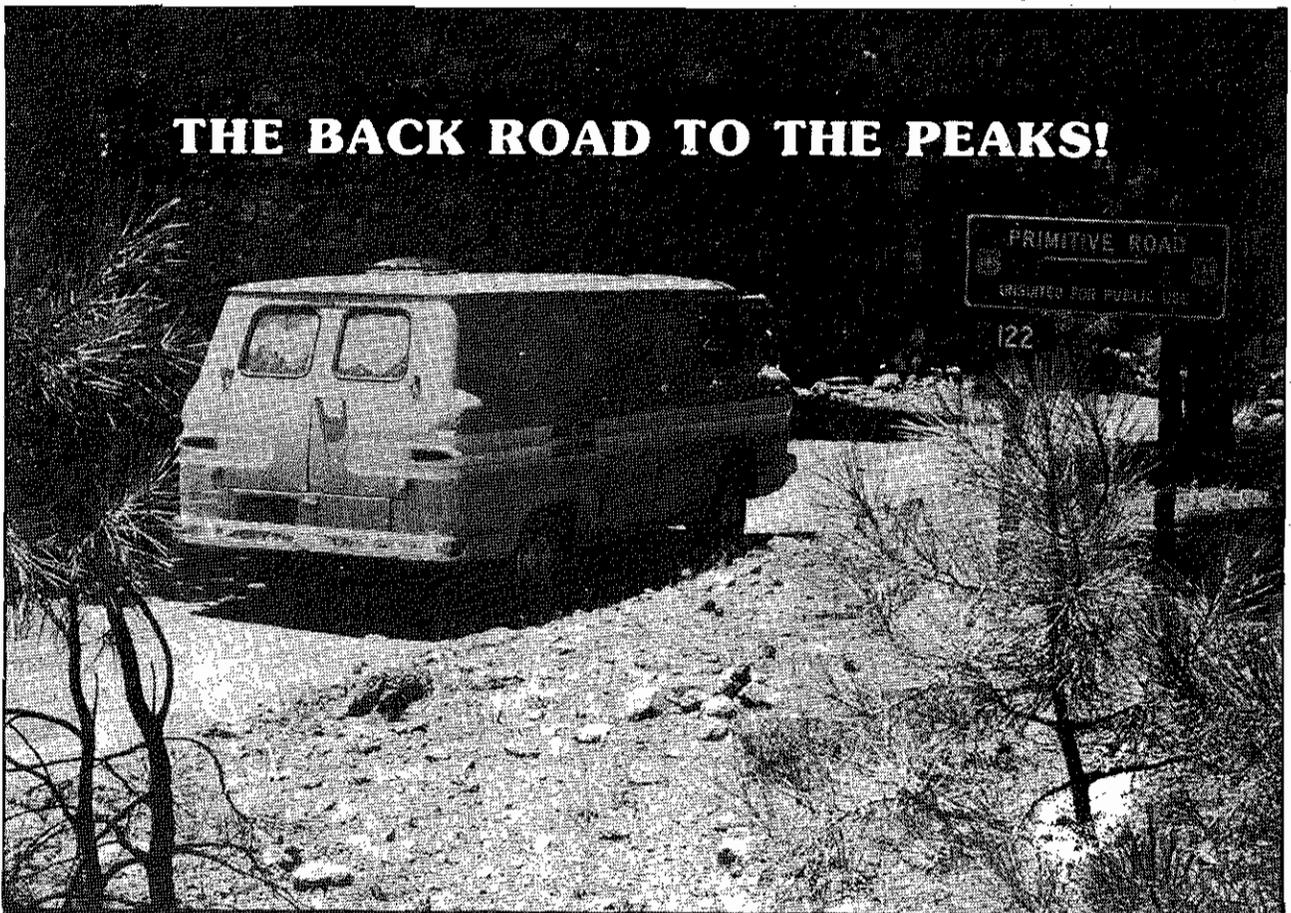
GREENBRIER SPORTSWAGON



CORVAN

Illustration: Chevrolet Motor Division

## THE BACK ROAD TO THE PEAKS!



# CORVAN ANTICS

The official Bi-monthly publication of CORVANATICS,  
a chartered chapter of CORSA. Established Sept. 1972.

Membership **305**

Stories, articles, photos or anything of interest to CORVANATICS members may be submitted to the Editor. Deadline is the first of each odd numbered month.

Membership in CORVANATICS is open to any CORSA member with an interest in Forward Control Corvairs. Annual dues are \$6 (US) and should be sent to Caroline Silvey.

Changes of address should be sent to Caroline Silvey as soon as possible.

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## On The Cover

"The back road to the Peaks", or those rigorous GM durability tests continue! You probably remember the photo on the cover of the CORSA Communique, July 1985 issue, of Mike Downey's Corsa Coupe with Northern Arizona's incredible San Francisco Peaks in the background. Well we in CORVANATICS do things just a little bit different. On vacation this Summer your Editor drove his Corvan in the "back way" to the inner basin of these five incredible mountains. Forest roads #122 and #553 form the five mile trail into the Aspen, fern and wildflower covered inner basin. It is incredibly rough, rocky and steep (several thousand foot climb in five miles), the kind of road that would really challenge a Jeep. The scenery was absolutely breathtaking. I had to call it quits at the 3 mile mark - the point at which the rocks got too big and my senses took over where my courage left off - even a Corvan has its limits! Actually I drove further than I wanted to - but it took some time to find a level spot to turn around. (With the steep grade, the lack of power at the very high elevation and the questionable traction it would have been a real challenge to get started again if I came to a full stop.) Amazingly, churning along in 1st gear on the steady uphill pull (must have been 20% in spots), picking my way through boulders and gravel, the Corvan never lost traction, and only scraped bottom once (a mere scratch on the oil pan on the way down). The old faithful 95HP engine sure groaned at 9000 feet though!

We still need cover photos and articles from you! If you're getting tired of all my photos on the cover, there's only one way to change this...

## Forward Controlling With The President



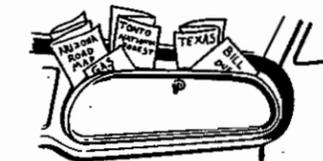
If your newsletter is a little late, blame it on me, not the editor. Caroline and I have been traveling a lot and our work has piled up on us. Do remember that I indicated previously that this might happen when I asked for some of you to consider taking over some of the Club duties. Isn't there one person in about 350 members that could be president of this Club?

Let's beat the FC rear wheel bearing issue a little this month! While our bearing survey gave fairly good results, the numbers just don't justify a vendor investing in a large and costly inventory at this time or probably never at any time in the future. It has been brought to our attention by one parts vendor that there are rear wheel bearings available. Prices are usually near or slightly higher than the \$120 considered in our survey. There are usually bearings offered for sale in the Communique each month, and we seldom go to a Corvair related swap meet or show without finding some rear wheel bearings for sale. However they don't seem to move too fast. If rear wheel bearings are so much in demand then why are these people still in possession of the bearings they are advertizing? The reason, as I see it, is simply this. Most of us got accustomed to the low prices for Corvair parts in the past (I used to buy FC rear wheel bearings from JC Whitney for \$12 in the late sixties) and many people hate to spend \$120 for a spare bearing for a vehicle worth only a few hundred dollars. I find that those with the most valuable FC's don't mind spending the money for a needed bearing or spare. Some people indicated in the survey that if they had to spend \$120 each for bearings they would scrap their vehicles.

So, in conclusion, how can we expect some vendor to invest money in reproducing our so-called scarce bearings when we won't even buy the ones that are available. I would also like to ask those who think \$120 is too much for a scarce bearing to go to their friendly Chevrolet dealer and see what it costs to buy one of the New Departure-Hyatt unitized and non-regreaseable bearings for a contemporary car - take along a "C note" and don't plan to have much left.

Tom Silvey

## From The Editor's Glovebox



Hello, Corvanatics! If you were one of the many members that received a "less than perfect" issue last time, I apologize. We are now working on finding a new printer that will work toward our standards, rather than the status quo of mediocrity.

To beat the wheel bearing issue totally to death... I received a very nice but very long letter from Bill Cotrofeld on this very subject. Due to our very limited space I will not be able to publish this, but Tom Silvey gave the jist of it in his column. I for one would like to see an inexpensive and unlimited supply of these bearings, but facts are facts, and in the overall picture of Corvair parts supplies, these limited demand items must rate a pretty low priority for vendors. Driving Corvairs everyday for so many years, I think I lose track of just how old our vehicles really are, and how our parts demand must look to an "outsider". I would guess many of you, our members, are probably in the same situation. Keep on Corvairin'!!!

"A CORVAIR WINDOW VAN?"

"I NEVER SAW ONE!"

"I DIDN'T KNOW THEY MADE ONE!"

20 or so years ago I was driving for a Providence caterer. They had the usual fleet of wing-side catering bodies on various chassis, including the worst truck I ever drove, a small International. But they occasionally bought a few stock models, experimentally, to find something suitable and beat the exorbitant cost of the custom made bodies.

Of course there was the inevitable VW Bus, a Datsun pick-up with a box on the back, and finally a Corvair Panel Van with the serving area accessible at the side doors. After driving the VW I didn't want any part of another air cooled rear engine. Already there were bad stories about the Corvair. They handled dangerously, they all had incorrigible oil leaks and fumes, and there was that long crooked belt that was always breaking (and running five minutes without the belt was sure death for the engine) etc. etc. etc.

I soon learned that this little bunny moved like a scared rabbit, rode like a baby carriage, handled like a dream and was very dependable. These trucks were not sheltered at night, and the only adverse thing I can remember was going in at 5:00 AM and finding the clutch cable frozen. I don't remember who left the job first, me or the Corvair, but I never gave them much thought after that.

One of my brothers in Kennebunkport, Maine drives up through New Hampshire periodically to visit his daughter and on one occasion he spotted a Corvair Greenbrier with a FOR SALE sign on it. He had his daughter check on it and then gave me a call. "I remember you saying you would like to have one." (I did?) Well if I had never thought about it before, I was intrigued now. I drove up myself to investigate. Bodywise it was not bad but the interior had been gutted. The front seat had been replaced with bucket seats and the other two passenger seats were missing. We had no way of trying the engine because it had no battery. The lady that owned it claimed they used it regularly till the day they parked it there in 1981. I told her it wasn't worth to me the \$2000 she was asking for it but if she didn't make to let me know and I would give \$1000 for it. So I went home and forgot it.



1963 'BRIER 4-SPEED MANUAL

Six months later I received a letter accepting my offer. I got in touch with Norm Chicoine and we drove up with the carrier and picked it up. Now I had no room for it in my yard, and I knew it was going to need the help of a good mechanic, so we went out and dumped it in Oscar's yard. (Mr. Model A)

The following Saturday Oscar and I started looking it over - neither of us knew beans about it or what to expect. The last inspection sticker on the

windshield was 1981. We installed a new battery Oscar had acquired for me and before turning it over we changed the oil and filter. Not knowing whether the gas guage was believable we dumped a little gas in the tank and a few drops in each carburetor. "Okay, now let's see what's next" I said as I jumped into the seat. I put the key in and slowly turned it. VA-ROOM! I didn't even hear the starter and I couldn't believe what I was hearing was that damned engine! We eased it out of the garage, filled it with kids and Carolyn and went for a ride. (I had registered it before we went after it.) Sitting in a New Hampshire field since 1981 and we had never so much as checked the points or anything else. I am driving it as a second car and will renovate and restore it as money becomes available.

Just like my other old car, the Model "A", it was not planned, it just happened.

ONE YEAR LATER...

Since this article was written for my local club paper a lot has taken place. The first thing we did was beat up a pinion bearing in the differential. I made a flying trip up to Clark's in Shelburne Falls only to be told that he didn't do any over the counter business. But since I was there and had come such a distance, he graciously helped me out anyway. We got another differential and all the necessary rebuild parts. A new muffler and all the necessary fittings came next. Of course it had the usual oil leak so the push rod tubes were sealed with Viton "O" rings, and recently a new clutch disc, pressure plate T/O bearing and resurfacing of the flywheel, all to eliminate clutch chatter.

In between these operations it spent 12 weeks in the body shop (he's a slow worker) for body work and paint. I am enclosing a Polaroid shot which was taken in the evening sunlight and comes out blue, when it is actually Chevrolet Glenwood Green.

I may never live to see the interior finished, but in the meantime I will enjoy it.

Norman Smith  
Pawtucket, RI

## Tech Topics



Boomerangs are returning (Har, Har!) The first rebuild prototype has been completed by a CORVANATICS member. He is in the process now of obtaining sufficient OEM component pieces to "be in business" of rebuilding the relay rod end of boomerangs. Addition of a grease fitting is part of the rebuild operation. All details should be available in the JAN/FEB issue. For those of you that have never experienced a new part, the stud takes considerable torque to rotate. You don't just tweak it around with your pinkies or with a cotter pin through the stud hole. Rebuilt parts are the same. I need guidance of our Club president and perhaps editor on how to handle announcement details. The rebuild project was instigated by CORVANATICS, but is a private venture not sponsored by CORVANATICS.

## FC Classified Ads

1962 Greenbrier 3 seat window van, 110hp PG. Mechanically very good, body fair. Combination CB-AM-FM-Cassette Stereo, steel belted radials. SASE & \$1 for photos and details. \$650 OBO. Don Myers, 15 Blue Ridge Rd. Voorhees, NJ 08043. (609)428-2933 eves.

# A Day To Dothan

This is just a little story about a hard working 1963 Greenbrier. The Greenbrier is owned by Walter White, a good friend of mine. It was used as a school bus in Escambia County (Pensacola, Florida) when new. Walter is the third owner. It has 91,000 miles plus on it with a 4-speed and an 80 HP engine. It doesn't look like it could move, but it does. It's been wrecked, rusted, cussed, kicked, misused and abused. The white paint is flaking off, showing through the school bus yellow. It's mildewed and unwashed but we still respect it. Now that you have a little background on the van, I'll give you a little endurance story about it.

Our journey began on a Friday night. Walt wanted to replace one of the rear axles and bearings. We got a good used one off of another van we had, cleaned it and regreased it. Well, we started on the job about 6:00 PM. Pulled off the tire, easy enough. Unbolted the axle, took off the U-joint, that was easy too! Now for the axle yoke. We tapped it, oiled it, beat it, and fussed at it. We even took a pipe and sledge hammer to it. It didn't even knock the dirt off! Well, it was about 9:30, we put some more Liquid Wrench on it and decided to let it soak overnight.

Saturday morning, about 5:45 AM, I came back over to Walt's house. Originally we planned to leave for Dothan at 6:00 AM - we weren't on schedule. I hit it with a hammer and it still didn't move. We almost gave up on Liquid Wrench and the trip. Walt said, "Let's try the sledge again", so we did, and finally success! It came off! We had the new axle and bearing on in about 15 minutes and were ready to go. We gassed up, got a McDonalds breakfast and were on our way at 8:30 AM.

We took I-10 East and about 50 miles out we heard a whinnying. I didn't say anything until Walt did, about 20 miles later. He looked at me and I looked at him and he said "You guess its going to make it?" "I guess it will or it won't", I said. We stopped at a rest stop and took a "nature break". I checked the engine oil and we added about two-thirds of a quart to the inside of the engine and one-third to the engine access door and engine compartment. We looked at the transaxle - no sign of oil leaking from it.

Next it was my turn to drive. We got about 27 miles down the Interstate and the engine skipped, lost power and then was OK. We pulled over just to check. Idled fine. We passed it off as trash in the carburetors. Walt drove the rest of the way to Dothan, Alabama. If it broke, I didn't want it to break on me. We got to Dothan and decided to stop and get some transmission oil and additive to try and quiet down the rear end. It was still whinnying and whined the whole way - no better, no worse.

We got to Walter's uncle's house to pick up some furniture (idea of the whole trip). We loaded up, then jacked up the van (strange way to do things huh?) and I crawled under to check the axle oil.

Well, as far as I could put my finger in that hole, it still came up dry. I said to Walt, "I figured out why it was whinnying, no oil!" First the additive, then one whole quart of oil. Checked it, still not full. We went and got another quart of gear oil - that one topped it off.

We jumped in and off we went. Stopped in at a gas station and filled up. I checked the engine oil and it was still full. We got in and it wouldn't start. We tried and tried. Pushed it out of the way and decided it was vapor lock. Sat about five minutes and tried again. I got out and opened

the access door, felt dumb, and told Walt to try it again. Started right up! I got in and Walt looked at me and said, "What was it?" I laughed and told him that the coil lead to the distributor fell out (I guess when I checked the oil). We laughed about that and about the oil, or lack of it, in the transaxle all the way back to Pensacola. It sounded great cruising at 60 to 70 miles per hour. With no more problems and 18.7 MPG we made it back in about three hours. Talk about being built to stay tough, come on Ford, try this out!

Don Richmond

West Florida Corvair Club

## STUCK!

TECH TIP - HOW TO GET YOUR FC STUCK ON DRY LEVEL GROUND...

How? Why? How could I be stuck??? While backing to turn around in the woods the left rear tire rolled into a "saddle" between two large rocks, requiring hefty torque to pull out. Freak coincidence: at same time that the van rolled into the "saddle" on the left it rolled back onto a rotting log, which wedged under the head, valve cover and muffler. This lifted the weight off of the right tire, not allowing it to "dig in". The result was spinning of the right tire and digging in even deeper, with even more weight taken off this tire. The cure? I removed the log by digging dirt out from under it and pulling hard! Then I dug the loose dirt out from under right tire. I let the van roll back a few inches after log was removed. This allowed removal of front rock of "saddle". Stuck flat wood under tire that was spinning (just in case!). The van pulled out with NO wheelspin!!! The moral of the story? If you ever get stuck DON'T PANIC! Just get out and analyze the situation and determine the reason for the loss of traction.

Ken Krol

## Club Boutique

CORVANATICS merchandise available through Caroline Silvey: Window decals - \$1.00 each. Jacket patches - \$2.15 each. Club stationary and envelopes - \$ .05 each. Back issues of CORVAN ANTICS - fifty-eight - all volumes up to and including vol. 2 #3 are 60¢ each (nine issues). Vol. 2 #4 thru present issue are \$1.00 each. Complete set is only \$50.00.

FC Paint Mfg. codes, Paint combinations, prices and options (21 pp.) is \$4.50.

Binders with index dividers - 1972-80 - \$8.50. 1981-90 - \$9.50. Without index dividers - \$8.00.

CORVAN ANTICS Technical Index - Complete listing of technical material published between 1972 and 1984. 8 1/2 x 11 bound - \$1.50 ppd.

### FINANCIAL STATEMENT

June 30, 1984 to June 30, 1985

Balance as of June 30, 1984

\$1929.76

#### Receipts:

Dues  
Decals  
Patches  
Stationary  
Newsletters  
Paint index  
Misc.

\$2338.10

#### Disbursements:

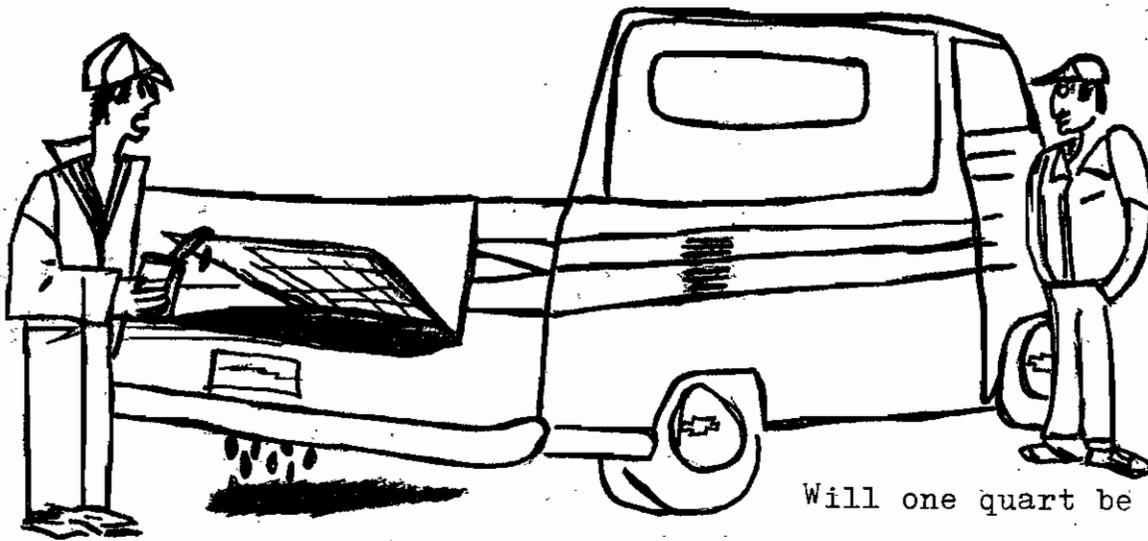
Newsletters/stamps \$1854.39  
PIP 134.02  
Supplies 89.28  
Telephone 31.83  
\$2109.52

\$4267.86

Balance as of June 30, 1985

\$2158.34

Gene Brier  
his buddy "FC"



Will one quart be enough?

CORVAN ANTICS  
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**FIRST CLASS**



**CORVANATICS**

**THE FORWARD CONTROL CORVAIR PEOPLE**