

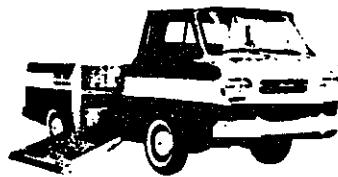


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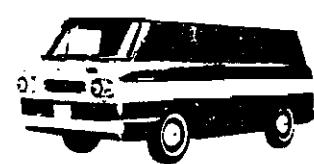
MAY & JUNE 1988



RAMPSIDE/LOADSIDE

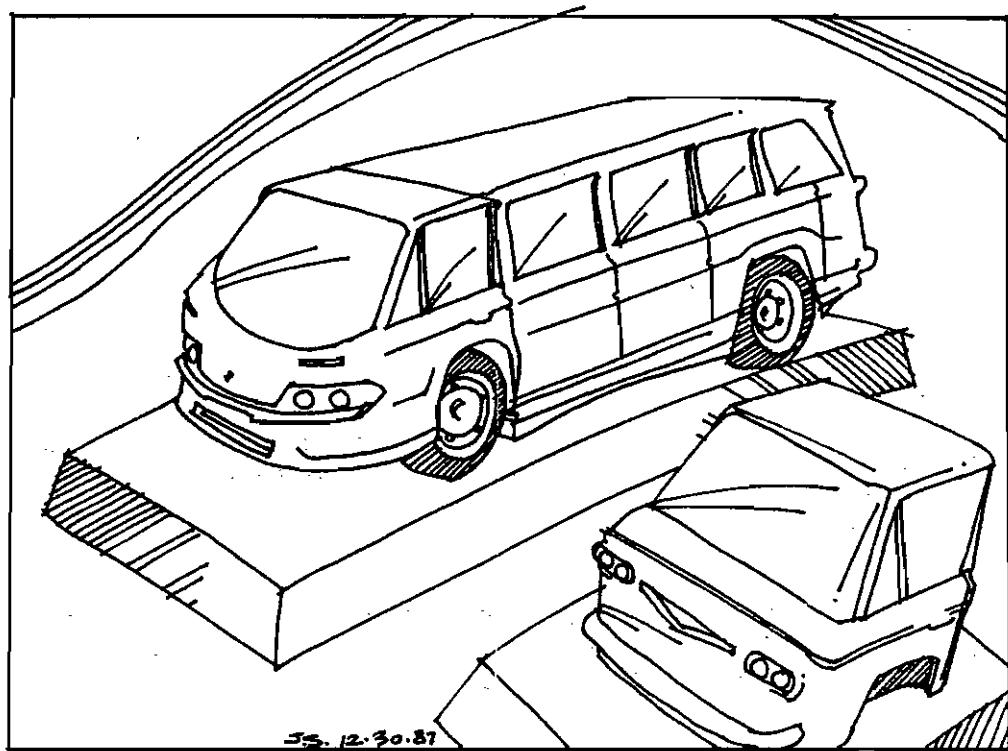


GREENBRIER SPORTSWAGON



CORVAN

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IMPORTANT FIND • XP-76 REVISITED

CORVAN ANTICS

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

Membership - 300

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

XP-76 PROTOTYPE TURNS UP IN FENTON by Stu Shuster

An important discovery reveals the fact that GM did wind tunnel testing of the Corvair Forward Control vehicle design in 1958 at Cal Tech. The code number for the project was XP-76.

Harold Dexter's vigilant search for weird and unusual Corvair models has finally paid off. The purchase of that large-scale Greenbrier model has led our reporter to the aerodynamics lab of General Motors. When we approached the Chief Engineer of that lab and presented a photo of Harold's prize, he responded like it was a long lost friend! Digging into the files, he produced a series of photos that records the history of Harold's very special Greenbrier. These photos are presented on page 21 of this issue. (Article and photos reprinted from the Detroit Area Corvair Club's newsletter "The Aircooler")

(con'd from page 20)

Take your time because there is not much room for error. For the outside roof rack rails I used four fasteners each. For the center ribs I used only three because they will not have side stress from tying down valuable junk.

The final installation is good and secure. The brass screw head bolts will not rust or corrode in place. So there you have it. And now I can add a little more after loading my 'Brier to the roof!

Dave Palmer

Forward Controlling With The President

It's getting late for this article. Today is May 29 and I should have had this written and off to Editor Ken Krol at least a month ago. There is no use telling you how busy we have been because we find everyone else has the same problem. Today I'm writing this, listening to the 500 mile race and attending our granddaughter's birthday party. Caroline has been complaining that we live 25 miles from the race track and haven't found time the last two years to even attend the time trials.

Regardless of how busy you are PLEASE take time to fill out the CORVANATICS Vehicle Registration form found in your last newsletter. I just got mine filled out for four of our good FC's and today I hope to get those filled out for the four rust bucket ones that I may have to cut up sometime.

HELP MAKE OUR SURVEY MEANINGFUL - BE SURE TO PARTICIPATE!!!

Remember, some times it's the little things that count and that Chevrolet did not put little items on just for fun. I put new shock absorbers on a few years ago and left off the small jam nuts (Pal nuts) that go on top of the rod end. The right front shock absorber became disconnected. Apparently when we hit a horribly large hole on I-70 at the entrance to the Mississippi River bridge at St. Louis the shock rod pulled out of the crossmember and punched a new hole just inboard of the old one. With only 4,000 miles on these shocks in about eight years they were worn out. The rods had rusted and damaged the seals badly when the vehicle was used the last time. I have noticed this problem on our other vehicles that have been stored for a long time. The chrome plating on the rods is not waterproof. To waterproof chrome plating so that it does not rust, a layer of nickel must be plated on before the chrome is put on. Therefore, if you are going to store your jewel for the winter it is best to spray the exposed shock absorber rod with a rust inhibitor such as engine oil or WD-40. Otherwise you will be consigning those hard-to-find shocks to the scrap heap unless you live in a dry climate.

Don't forget the annual CORVANATICS meeting at the National Convention in Asheville, North Carolina at 7:30 to 9:00 PM on Friday July 29, 1988. If you have some interesting parts, pictures or experiences to share with us, let us know and we'll arrange time for you to present them.

SEE YOU AT THE NATIONAL CONVENTION!

Tom Silvey

FROM THE SECRETARY/TREASURER - Caroline Silvey

Please send your dues to me instead of the Editor. Also when you do send something at lease print your name and address plainly enough so that we can read it. If some of you have trouble getting your newsletters it could be a result of our having to guess who you are and where you live. The other day, I got a change of address and it had no one's name or their new address, so I have no way to find out who moved and wanted a change of address.

CORVANATICS DRIVE-IN 1988

Come to the Drive-In! This year CORVANATICS will revive the annual driving event called the "Drive-In". In years past there have been several of these events and the turnout was good.

The date for this event will be October 14th through October 16th. It will be held in conjunction with a Fall Color Tour to Frankenmuth, Michigan, hosted by the Detroit Area Corvair Club. You should plan on arriving in Detroit area Friday evening, the 14th. Our host hotel for Friday is the Dillon Inn in Farmington Hills, Michigan. The Dillon is located just off I-696 at the Orchard Lake Road exit. Rates have been quoted as \$42 for a single or double. There is limited parking for RV's on site.

Saturday we will Caravan to the north side of town to meet up with the DACC members. Our tour destination will be Frankenmuth. Frankenmuth is a cute little town done up in a Bavarian theme. Attractions include Bronner's Christmas shop - largest of its type in the world; Zehnders & Bavarian Inn - famous for family style chicken dinners; and many little shops in the town itself.

Our schedule of events in Frankenmuth include a luncheon at the Bavarian Inn, a car - er, make that truck - show with trophies for the cleanest FC, the oldest FC, the most original FC and perhaps the rustiest FC donated by the DACC. There will also be a short one hour econo-run/color tour of the area. Of course you can also shop or browse to your heart's content.

The evening's activities are still somewhat open. Our host hotel will be the Frankenmuth Motel with doubles going for \$50. Across the street from the hotel is the Frankenmuth RV Park for those members who would rather camp out. Full hook-ups are available for reasonable rates. We will have an organized meal function or a forum to hand out the winning trophies. Cost has yet to be finalized - but all details will appear in the next issue of the newsletter.

CORVANATICS members are invited to join the DACC Breakfast Club on Sunday morning. Then it's off to the four winds as we bid goodbye to all our new-found friends in DACC and CORVANATICS.

If you need more information, or want to reserve a spot at our dinner table on Saturday evening write me a note or give me a call. The address is:

Pete Koehler
27446 Beacon Square
Farmington Hills, MI 48018
or call: (313)478-0906 after 6:00 PM EDT.
(313)293-1587 Clark Hartzel

Thanks. See you on the 14th!

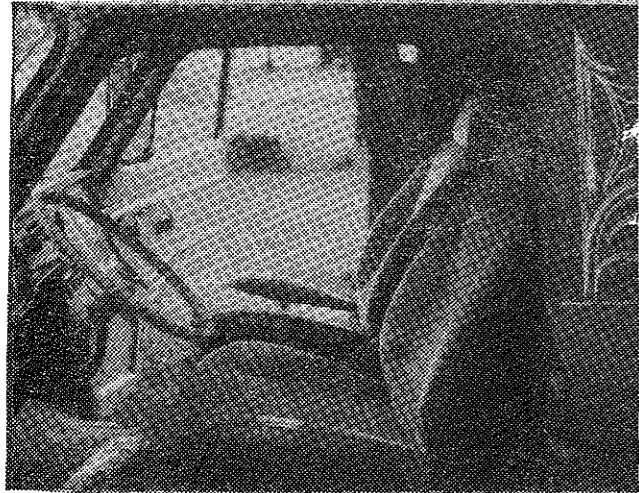
Pete Koehler



Bucket Seat Installation

Bob Kirkman asked that I do a write-up on the seats I have installed in the front of my Corvair 95. It only took four hours to remove the old seat and install new bucket seats. The seats I used were from a Pontiac 6000 or Sunbird.

I started the swap by removing the bench seat and clips on the front where the seat hooks into. You now have an open area between the front wheel housings. Next are some minor modifications. First I switched seat places, i.e. left seat in right side and right seat in left side. Next, to put the seats, especially the driver's seat, in a driving position was to remove the outer seat bracket from each seat. This requires some drilling and disassembly because the seat tracks are riveted to the brackets. You must then drill the holes left by the rivets for a $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 20 bolt $\frac{1}{2}$ " inch long. Remember! Swap outside seat brackets from seat to seat. This enables the seat to be positioned further outboard. Once the seat tracks and the brackets are reinstalled on the seats take the passenger seat and set it into position. You will notice two holes line up for mounting.



But, to take full advantage of moving the seat outboard and to keep the seat relatively straight and use the existing threaded holes, you will have to drill two new holes in the seat bracket. Start the bolts in the existing threaded holes and mark the other side with the seat track in the same position. Remove the seat and drill two holes in the position marked. I used threaded nuts, called rivnuts, drill a hole the size of the OD. Insert the rivnut through the hole and use a special tool to squeeze until tight. Instant threads! Reposition the seat and install.

The driver's seat is much easier as three holes line up and there is only one hole to drill and rivnut. Install the seat and you have soft, good looking reclining bucket seats.

Don't forget to re-install bolts back into the vacant holes left from the original bench seat bracket as these go directly outside.

I hope this might help some of you who might want to change seats. Mine are very comfortable.

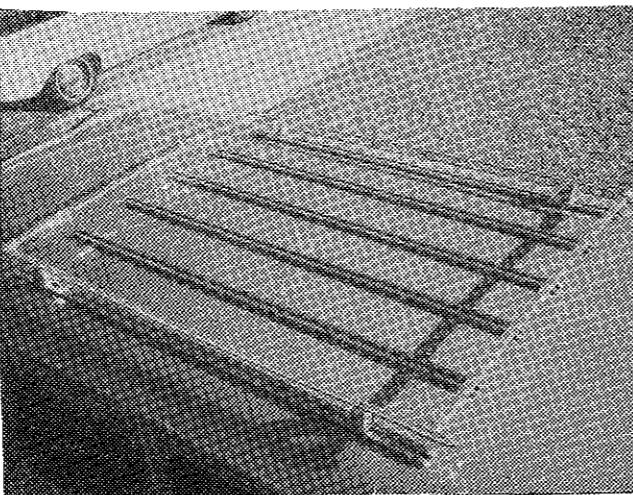
Ken Hand
Detroit Area Corvairs

Mounting A Non-Stock Roof Rack

I figure with the scarcity of stock FC roof racks this tech tip could be of some help to fellow FC fans. First let me warn you that roof racks are not recommended for the Rampsides or Loadsides. Not only will they transfer too much weight onto the front wheels, but they have a tendency to overhang the roofline quite a bit!

The roof rack I installed on my Greenbrier was a used one like what can be found at your friendly local junkyard. Original GM positioning of the roof rack is about center on the roof. Just over the side doors. This may not look as common as some other water pumper vans, but makes a lot of sense for the Corvair. Not only does it center any load you may heap up there, but by standing on the side door sill you can reach almost all the junk stoked on the roof.

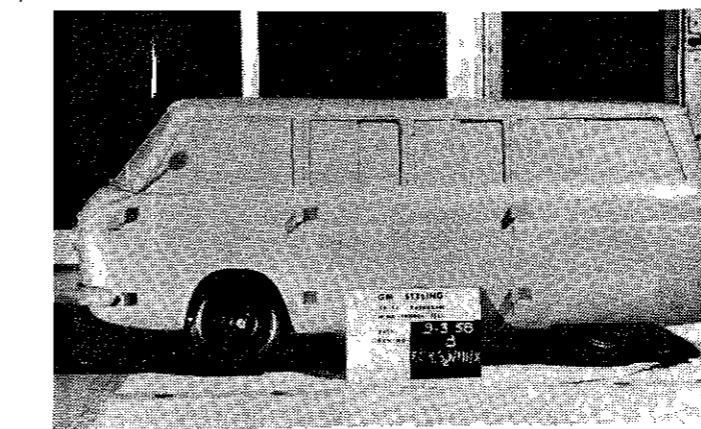
As near as I can tell my unit is an after-market "Jiffy Rack". Most of them you will find are much narrower than the FC roofline. They will have to be attached to the roof, on line with the ribs inside, so there will be no visible clue of fasteners on the inside of the van. Screws, bolts, nails, staples, superglue or bubblegum - you will have to make the final choice of what to use to mount the rack.



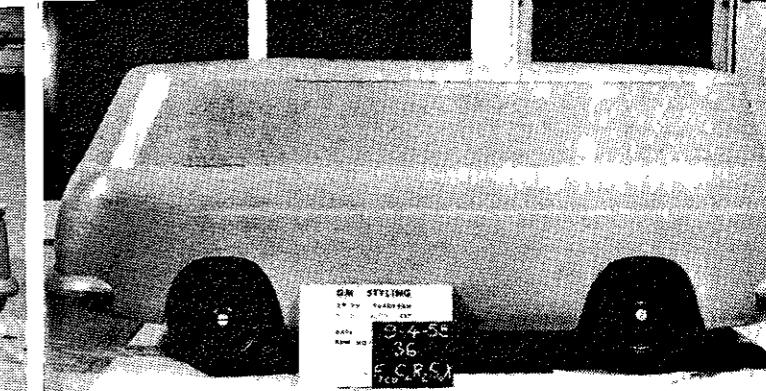
I chose to use $\frac{1}{4}$ -20 nutserts with $\frac{1}{4}$ " inch brass screw-head bolts that are $\frac{1}{2}$ " inch long. Nutserts are like large pop rivets that make an excellent secure thread insert in sheetmetal. To install the sert you have to drill a $3/8$ " inch hole for each. With the center of each rib barely wider than the nutsert there is little room for error. So how do you find dead center in the roof ribs to install twenty or so sets? I decided to take the easy way out. I started with the front of the roof and would work my way back. Knowing the width of the rack I measured outward from center on the inside front rib. With a $1/32$ " drill bit I drilled upward right through the center of the rib and roof. This gave me a topside front line to measure from and the two inside $1/32$ " holes barely look like fly specks. Drill the two holes in the roof to $3/8$ " and install the nutserts. Now all you have to do is carefully measure the other rib spacings and install the remaining nutserts.

(Con'd on page 18)

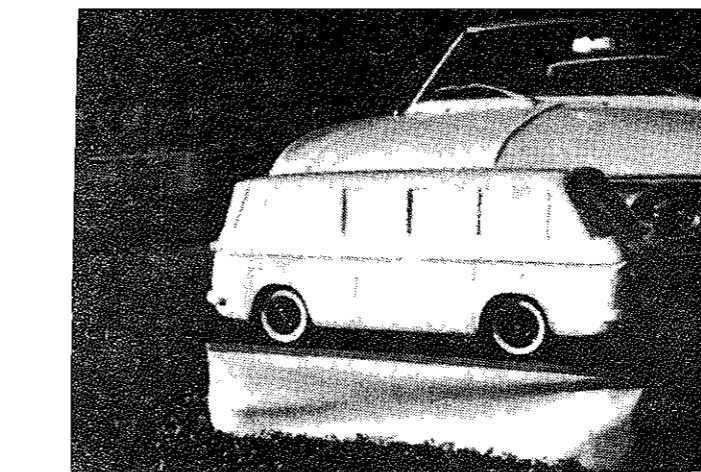
XP-76 PROTOTYPE



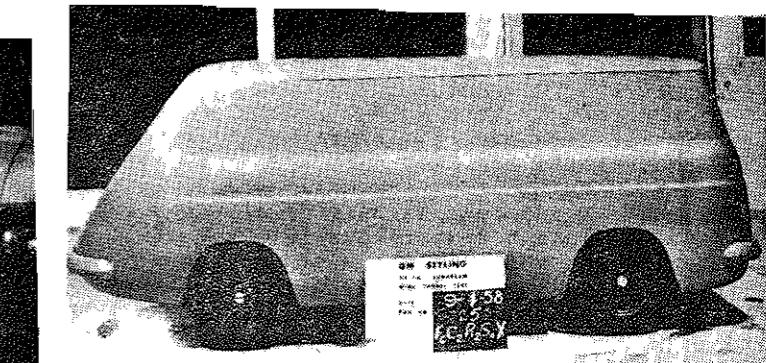
A. This wind tunnel model represents the final design selected for production except for the rear wheel fender skirts. Yes, Virginia, there were fender skirts. Even as I write, Pete and Clark are busy tooling up for the repro skirts.



D. To improve front surface aerodynamics, the small flat area at the windshield is angled to give the front surface a rounded effect (upper front part in photo F).



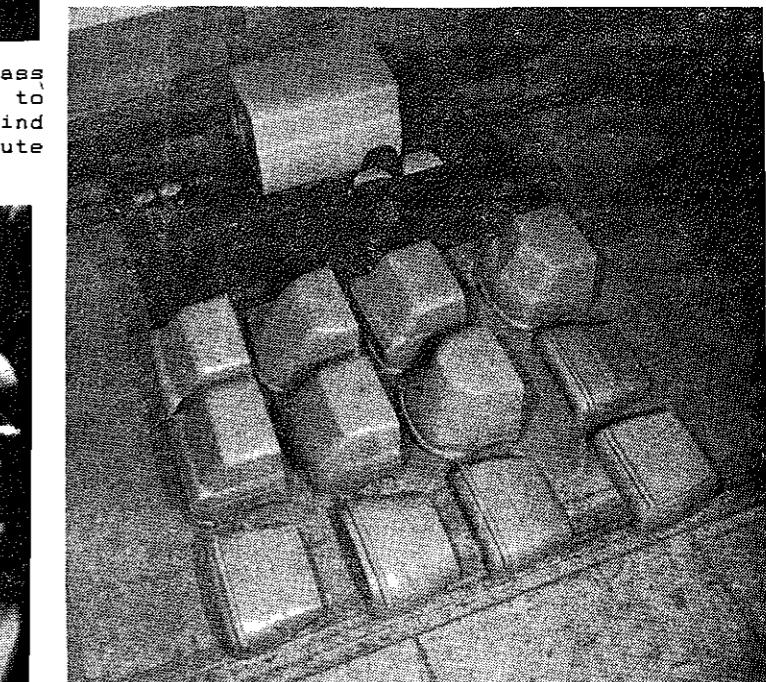
B. Harold Dexter's purchase of this fiberglass wind tunnel model led our intrepid reporter to discover record photographs of the XP-76 wind tunnel tests at California Technical Institute back in 1958.



E. Hey Gang! Check this front end - lots of room for your toes!



C. Note the dotted lines which indicate the separation joints to allow various front and rear designs for wind tunnel tests (see photo F).



F. This is the whole kit, shown together. Front ends and rear ends. Note the little fender skirts!

Tech Topics



DELUXE GREENBRIER SPARE TIRE COVER originally came in vinyl colors to match interior colors. Looked great when new, but quite rapidly the volatiles in the tire rubber compound turned the colors to a cruddy brown. This was especially true where the cover fit tightly against the rubber. Rather than continue with that situation, the cover was changed to a charcoal color for all deluxe models. It still stained but was less objectionable in appearance. I don't really recall if the other colors were actually used in production vehicles, but I believe they were for at least 1961 models.

THE CARDBOARD PANELS IN THE REAR CORNERS, rearward of the quarter windows had a tendency to buckle and pucker between screw attachments due to humidity. A running change was made in their material and also in the heavy "cardboard" backing of all the side and door trim panels to improve their stability with respect to humidity. This probably happened around 1962 models. The trim panels were made by, as I recall, Mitchell-Bently Co., up in the western part of Michigan's lower peninsula. M/B was also big (at least back then) with Corvette trim for Chevrolet.

ALL SEAT TRIM was cut and sewn by Chevrolet Indianapolis (Indiana). Otherwise Chevrolet Indianapolis was a sheet metal stamping plant. Chevrolet Engineering had an experimental "trim shop" that made patterns for all the seat trim. These went to Indianapolis and they, in turn, re-did them. I think there were always some hard feelings between those two groups. Indianapolis felt Engineering didn't know how to properly make sewing allowances, and lay out for minimum material usage, etc. Indianapolis sent sewn seat trim to the assembly plants, who in turn did their own thing concerning how tight or loose or crooked the trim and padding were installed to the framework. I couldn't see it at the time, and certainly the engineers and staff at Chevrolet could not see that the product would have been MUCH better if the trim design and construction and control would have been the Fisher Body type. It wasn't, because the FC people were "truck" people, and trucks were not done like passenger cars. Truck and FC seat trim had raw edges that could be wrapped $\frac{1}{8}$ inch, or 1 inch, or $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches around the frame wires and secured with clips or hog rings. This affected tightness and the feel of the seat. Fisher Body Trim had "envelopes" (I don't know the proper term) sewn into the edge ends of the trim, and some form of a "wire" slipped into it. This then was attached by hog rings to the seat frame. You couldn't do too much or too little, as there was only one place where it fit. The seat trim didn't kill the FC, but in retrospect I wish we had instigated a move toward the Fisher Body style of design.

Bob Kirkman

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A SHIFTY SUBJECT

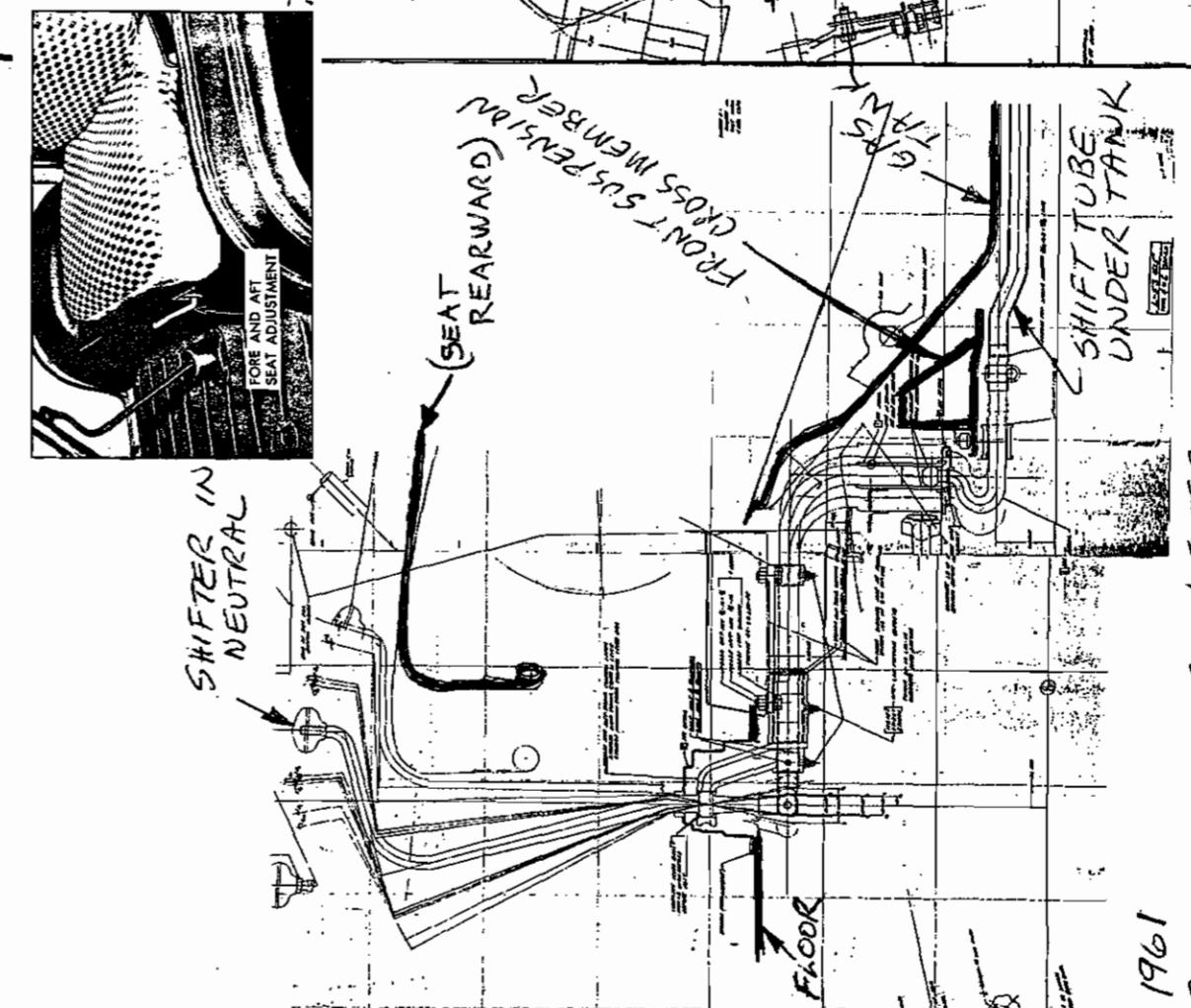
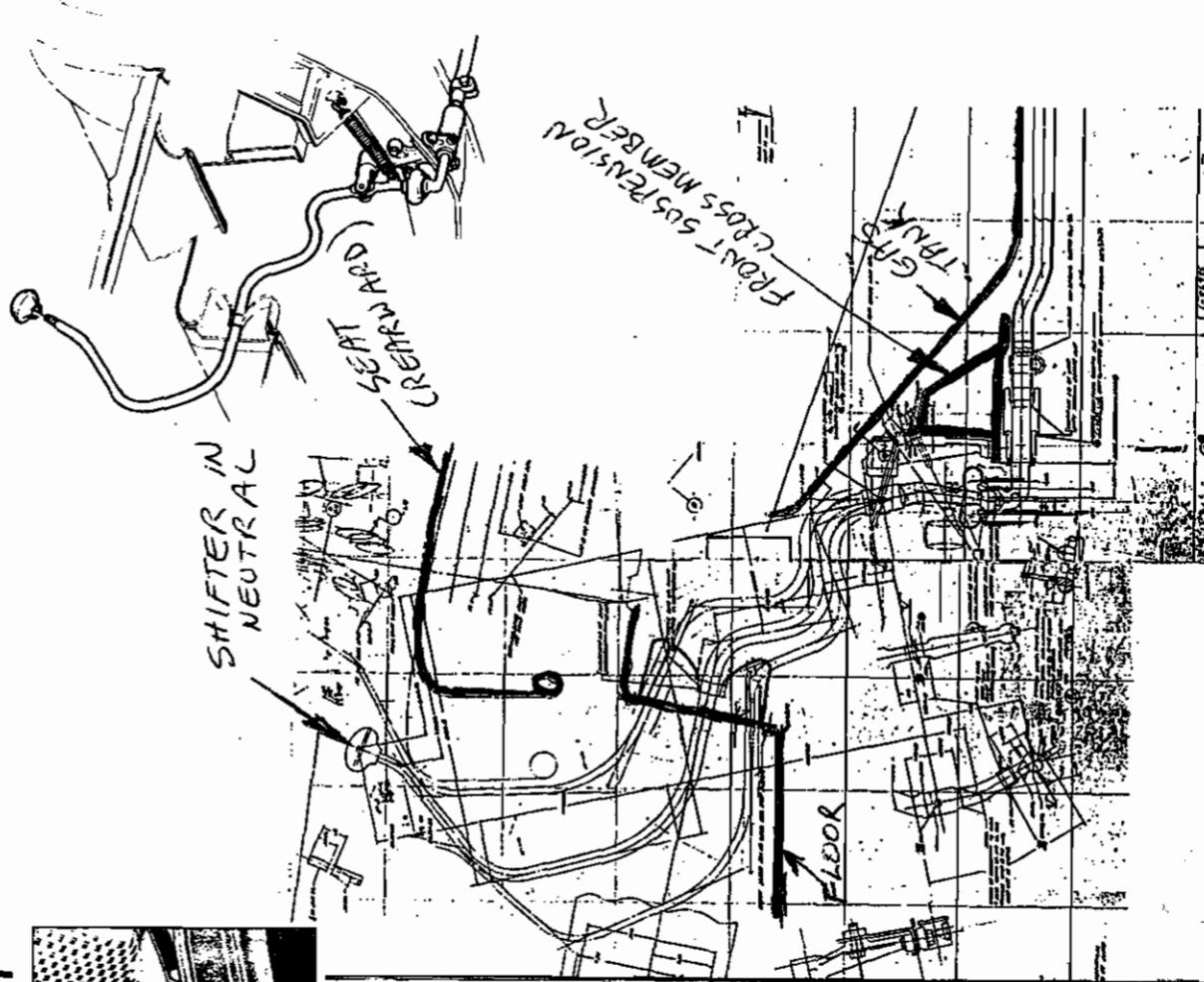
I have been asked in the past about FC manual transmission shifters and always replied that the ones we know of on our vehicles were the only ones. There was the under-the-seat-shift-up & down type of 1961-62-63, and the floor shifter of 1963-64-65. Of course! But what's that FLOOR SHIFTER doing in the 1961 Shop Manual back in the Body Section? A copy of the illustration is included here for most of our members that do not have a shop manual. Did someone just set "something" down on the floor for an early picture? How could there be such a thing? 'Cause there never was a floor shifter that early. Or was there? The 1961 Shop Manual picture was a mystery just asking for a solution.

I obtained shift lever drawings for both the systems we know about, and from them obtained reference to the original design layout drawings, and then obtained them. The floor shifter layout had recorded that the design work was STARTED on 7-23-62 and completed on 8-16-62. This, then, proved it had nothing to do with the 1961 Shop Manual picture (which really can be seen to not have the same appearance). Then the under-seat layout was observed and it recorded that the design work was started 5-9-60. What?!? 5-9-60? The 1961 model went into production in late summer/early fall of 1960. Do you mean the under-the-seat shifter was STARTED in design only 4-5 months before production started? Talk about a rush job to complete design - test - tooling. Well if all that was as stated, what was used in the prototype vehicles before that time? The under-the-floor design layout also had several references to other, earlier layouts. So, out came those from Archives and, wonder of wonders, there was the early floor shifter as seen in the 1961 Shop Manual. Seems it was designed, some parts made, photographed, tested and rejected before production began. This early floor shifter design was started in January of 1960 by my friend Dan Crawford, who is still with CPC Engineering (previously of Chevrolet Engineering). He was later design engineer on many chassis components for modern Corvettes and continues to be a manager in CPC's Chassis Technology Center. His dad, by the way, lives up in the thumb area of Michigan, and owns two Rampsides and a Corvan. One rampside he is rebuilding and the other is kind of going back to nature. But back to the subject. There is no further reference to any yet earlier shifters. Although it seems something must have been used in the early prototypes. Whatever, that trail is stone cold.

Looking at the early floor shifter design it's easy to see why it was abandoned. The shift tube was under the gas tank (not through it) and there was another long wiggle/woggle part to connect it to the floor shifter lever, machined guides, castings, grease fittings, boots, forks and roll pins. Quite a piece of machinery. I believe tolerances, deflections, dirt and water did it in.

So I believe the mystery is solved; put to bed. We end our shifty story.

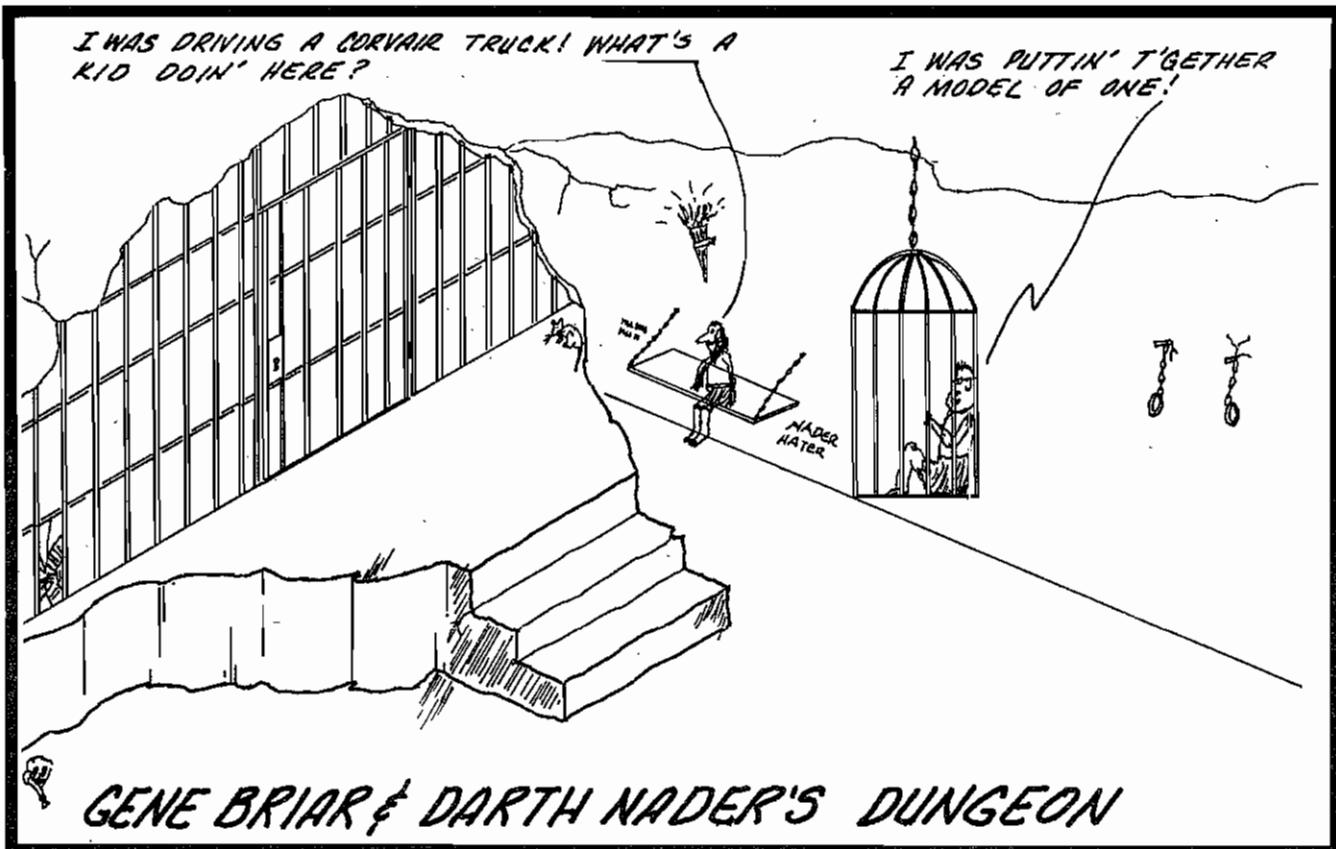
Bob Kirkman



1961
PROTOTYPE FLOOR SHIFTER.
NEVER USED IN PRODUCTION.

PROTOTYPE SHIFT TUBE BUSHING
AND SEALING BOOT. NEVER USED
IN PRODUCTION. SEE CORVAN-AUTOS
MAY/JUNE 1986. REMAINDER OF
SYSTEM IS PRODUCTION 1961-2 AND
SOME OF 1963.

MAY/JUNE 1986. REMAINDER OF
AND SEALING BOOT. NEVER USED
IN PRODUCTION. SEE CORVAN-AUTOS



GENE BRIAR & DARTH NADER'S DUNGEON

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FIRST CLASS



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