



# CORVAN ANTICS

VOLUME 19

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SEPT & OCT  
NOV & DEC 1991



RAMP/LOADSIDE



GREENBRIER SPORTSWAGON



CORVAN

Illustration Chevrolet Motor Division



# CORVAN ANTICS

THE OFFICIAL BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF CORVANATICS, A CHARTERED  
CHAPTER OF CORSA. ESTABLISHED SEPTEMBER 1972.

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.

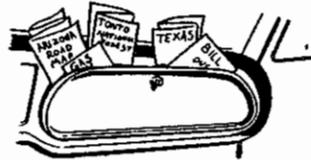
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CORVANATICS - THE FORWARD CONTROL CORVAIR PEOPLE. DEDICATED TO PRESERVING, DRIVING AND ENJOYING CORVANS, GREENBRIERS, LOADSIDES AND RAMPSIDES.

## From The Editor's Glovebox



Well at long last here is your next issue. It really seemed kind of iffy that we would have another issue but a lot of people came through and we filled another one, plus some for next time. We still need a lot more though, SO DON'T STOP WRITING! WE MAY BE BACK TO THAT LOW POINT AGAIN IF THE MOMENTUM DROPS OFF. PLEASE CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR NEWSLETTER!!!

Due to "who knows what" we ended up without a date and issue on the last cover. If you haven't already figured it out, it should have said: Vol. 19, Numbers 3 & 4, May & June, July & August. Sorry about that, I guess you can pencil it in.

Due to the large number of new members and address changes, we are inserting a separate sheet into this issue, rather than taking up a full page that could be put to more interesting use.

We have a lot of interesting stuff in this issue. I think you will enjoy it a lot. Among the material is an article by Jim and Sherian Patterson about their 95 van that was found under an Oak Tree. I've noticed a pattern developing here: a large majority of our FC's have been found under trees. The Oak species seems to dominate for harboring restorable FC's. I would like to instigate a survey on what type of tree YOUR FC was under when you found it. So far Oak seems to be winning but we need to hear from you. Unless we hear otherwise we'll declare Oak trees the winner!

## Forward Controlling With the President



At the CORSA National in Washington DC, president Clark surprized members by posting a note on the bulletin board in the hospitality room saying there would be an election of officers.

It must have spurred some interest as about 70 people showed up for our annual meeting and several of them actually placed their names on the ballot!

Rich Van Handel of Fairlawn, NJ ran against Clark for president. Ken Hand of Pontiac, Michigan (a new CORSA Director) ran against Pete Koehler for vice-president. Pete Koehler ran against Ken Krol for editor.

Nobody wanted to be director so those positions remain unchanged. Nobody felt they knew more about Corvaire history than Dave Newell or tech stuff than Bob Kirkman so they were unopposed. Caroline Silvey (with Betty Gridley's help) has been sect/treas for so long nobody dared run against her. CORVANATICS without Caroline Silvey would be like General Motors without Chevrolet!

The nominations were closed and voting took place.

Results: president...Clark Hartzel  
vice-pres...Ken Hand, 6426 Harriet, Pontiac, MI (313)666-9736  
sec/treas...Caroline Silvey  
editor.....Ken Krol  
historian...Dave Newell  
Tech Ed....Bob Kirkman  
board.....Bob Marlow  
Jim Craig  
Mike Demeter  
Ed Gridley

Just to let everyone know there are no "lifetime appointments" in CORVANATICS, we will be having an election next year, too! So start thinking about running for office and a good way to start would be to volunteer to be a division director and have some FC event in your area. Be sure to write a story about it and send it in to Ken Krol.

A spirited discussion about our Tech Guide took place at the annual meeting in Washington, DC. I informed the members that Bob Kirkman had spent months digging through all the tech stuff he could find, cutting it out of various publications and giving the whole pile to me.

I separated the big pile into many little piles and filed them in a three ring binder in various categories resembling the CORSA Tech Guide. About that time the car show/swap meet season hit full swing and I lost interest.

The members all seemed enthused about having a Tech Guide but I warned them we don't have the money to do a professional job of printing the book. We need volunteers to retype everything and make paste-ups on masters to send to the printer or to the Xerox copier as the case may be!

The group then agreed it should all be done on computers so we could mail floppies back and forth. The following people agreed to help: Charley Biddle, Mike Demeter, John Dozsa, Ron Yonkers, Steve Stimson, Bob Hall, Bob Blissard and Bill Heil. If all the people that can help would drop me a card explaining what equipment you have or what service you can provide, I can divide up the work in some logical order. For example, John Dozsa says he has a scanner that can read print and put it into his word processor program. This can save retyping everything but if more than one person has this equipment it would make sense to split up the work so nobody is overloaded.

As I see it, in order to cut the costs to the minimum, we should eliminate photos that need to be screened or halftoned and repl them with sketches or line drawings that can be copied clearly. We should do it full-size to avoid having to reduce everything. Besides, some of us "over 40" types may have trouble seeing small print!

We should do it on plain white bond paper with black ink to reduce paper and ink costs. We should just print the pages and let the buyer put them in the binder of their choice.

So what do you think? I'm waiting for your cards and letters and suggestions.

Clark

### FINANCIAL STATEMENT

June 30, 1990 to June 30, 1991

Balance as of June 30, 1990	\$2367.79
Receipts: Dues, decals, patches, stationary, newsletters, tech index and misc.....	\$1860.41
	\$4228.20

Disbursements:  
Newsletter.....\$1160.76  
postage..... 706.21  
supplies..... 22.92  
Bob Kirkman..... 38.51  
\$1928.40

Balance as of June 30, 1991	\$2299.80
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Caroline Silvey  
Sect/Treas



REMEMBER ALL THE VANS THAT SHOWED UP AT LASALLE-PERU FOR THE 1984 MIDWEST MINI CONVENTION? MINE IS 3RD FROM THE LEFT.

Ron Sunday

## Bob's do-it-yourself Show Winner!

Ken Krol located an inexpensive, stored 1962 Rampside and in May of 1987 Adele and I motored out to Phoenix to drag it back to Michigan. The dragging bit was to be via tow bar. The old tires would never have made it, so new radials were purchased. Ken gave me several FC wheels that would be better than what was on the vehicle. All wheel bearings were checked out and, amazingly, someone had disassembled and greased the rear ones! The trip home was long, and was reported in CORVAN ANTICS June-Oct 1987.

"Restoration" was completed in August 1991. The 4-speed was removed and an automatic was installed, which would be more convenient for Adele to drive. As it turns out, the vehicle is now more of a "show car" than a work horse, and will not be driven daily.

Along with the automatic, a 1965 FC 95 HP engine was installed. Thinking the vehicle would be a daily driver, the hot air heater was removed and a gas heater was installed for better performance in Michigan's winters. Now that the vehicle is completed it may never venture out into winter's salt roads.



Air conditioning was installed using all new aftermarket components. To my dismay, I couldn't mount the compressor in a place that would allow the oil filler tube to get through the belts. Compressor top-side intake and exhaust ports forced the compressor to be mounted low. Maybe a GM compressor could have been raised a bit to make the oil filler tube possible. Anyway, I had to plug the case hole and add a dipstick and topside filler tube ala Corvair.

The condenser is mounted up front, underneath, and has an electric fan that runs whenever the compressor is working. The dehydrator is also up there, underneath.

The aftermarket evaporator (dash unit) required that a chunk be cut out of the big gas heater cover where there was nothing behind it. The cutout was then boxed in so there is no opening for air leaks. The a/c performance is very good.

Ramp and tailgate locks were rusty and were taken to a commercial de-ruster. Their chemicals "ate up" the diecast handles and internal lever. In the end, a pattern shop helped me out by making a pattern and casting and machining new handles of bronze.

The left side of the Rampside box has an open section where you see those familiar silver oval plugs. I've never liked that open area. Looks unfinished. Another Rampside had recently been scrapped out and the box panels saved. Using them, I was able to close

a commercial de-ruster. Their chemicals "ate up" the diecast handles and internal lever. In the end, a pattern shop helped me out by making a pattern casting and machining new handles of bronze.

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Back to air conditioning for a moment. Doing some measurements, it was concluded that the stock engine rear mount (rubber parts) could be moved rearward enough to permit use of the engine rear bracket intended for Corvair a/c. The vertical walls of the body then just had to be cut back enough engine and a/c belt installation and removal. Maybe other FC a/c units have been done the same. I thought, before measuring, that maybe a Corvair rubber mount had to be used in some way. Not so.

The vehicle had no license plate lamps and stock ones cost too much for my liking. I bought Yugo lamps and adapted them. Look OK and the cost was right.

Steering wheel cracks were routed out and repaired with PC7 epoxy. Wheel was painted with urethane and hardener.

The body was stripped to bare metal and the box inside was sandblasted. All exterior paint is orange urethane plus hardener. Accent color is white. Sections of the body, ramp and tailgate had to be replaced due to accident damage that I could otherwise not repair. Almost every mechanical part was repaired, rebuilt or replaced with new. The only work done by someone else was the interior trim, ramp skin and box topper.

Oh, the topper! The vehicle was driven to Top-Kik Company near Flint, Michigan. The father in the business was old enough to remember this type of vehicle when new. He took the challenge to build an all-aluminum topper for the box and did an outstanding job. The Rampside box sides taper narrower at the rear. We discussed this at length because a straight box construction would hang over too much at the rear corners. He used a technique that resulted in a very modest overhang of the topper to the Rampside box rear curved corners. To me, it simply looks great.

Installation of cruise control and the seat/shoulder belts were covered in previous CORVAN ANTICS issues.

It was a delight, in some respects, to work on this Southwestern vehicle. Unlike Michigan iron (can you call rust "iron"?), all the clamps loosened on the tie rods and drag links and all sleeves moved easily for adjustment. Only two bolts on the vehicle snapped off when removed. They retained the front corner panels below the bumper. Problem was not so much from rust as from being driven in at an angle, cross threaded, when first produced. The reason why this was possible at the assembly plant will be the subject of a future Tech Topics issue.

Hearing local FC stories of vapor lock, an electric fuel pump was added with a pushbutton switch. Pump

works only when the key is on, and only as long as you keep the switch pushed. OK hot weather, I'm ready for you!

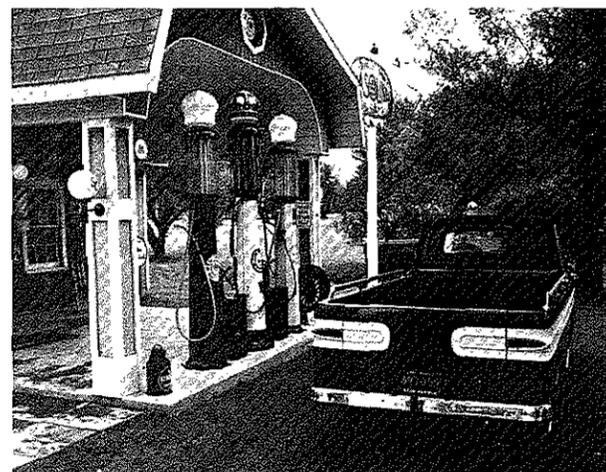


The generator was dumped in favor of an alternator. Despite the conversion wiring kit from Underground, there was a problem with either the alternator internals or the new voltage regulator. I had a local shop change the alternator to internal regulation and then all operations became normal. It makes an easier swap from a wiring standpoint.

Early in the project I wondered about a much bigger rear window. Has anyone ever done something like that? Care to tell CORVANATICS about the project?

Wow, I don't know what to do with all my spare time now that this project is completed!

Bob Kirkman



PREZ HARTZEL SENT THIS PHOTO OF AN ANTIQUE GAS STATION ONE OF DACC'S MEMBERS HAS CONSTRUCTED ON HIS PROPERTY. OF COURSE, CLARK'S RAMPSIDE IS ALSO FEATURED IN THIS CUTE PHOTO.

OK CORVANATICS, I've got one for you! I have recently acquired two Greenbrier seats. These are the ones that go in the middle and rear of the van cab. One thing though - they are 3/4 width of stock FC seats.

Each seat is 41 inches wide and, except for the width, they are identical to stock 'Brier seats.

They are covered in gray vinyl with a pattern I am not familiar with as I am not up on patterns available for all years of 95's. The nice thing about the seats is I can eventually put one in my Greenbrier in the middle position and we will only have to open one side door to access both seats.



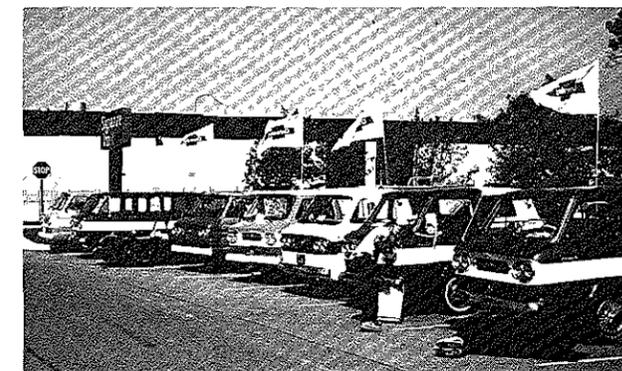
Two floor anchor plates will have to be added due to the narrower width but, as I said, they are virtually identical to stock.

Anyone out there in FC-land have any idea of the origin of these seats? School bus applications? 1965 Chevy van applications? From outer space?

I have two of these seats and only plan to use one. Anyone interested in seat #2? All of the springs are perfect. Send Ken Krol your comments.

Dave Palmer  
Ventura County 'Vairs  
(805)524-5096

## DACC Homecoming



Detroit Area Corvair Club's "Homecoming II" was held late August 1991. A total of 84 Corvairs appeared at the site sometime during the event. Here is a shot of seven FC's in a row. There were a total of ten, which represents a whole of a percentage of that type of vehicle at a Corvair event.

An orange and white Rampside with a custom topper on the box was awarded first place in the FC class and, surprisingly, was first place in the People's Choice Awards! (ed. note: Don't be so modest, Bob K.! We all know it was your beautiful Rampside that won and it truly deserved the honor!)

## A legal settlement at last

Dear Sir:

Alas, I am a man undone! Never had I expected such alertness as that of the "Man from Corvair Underground". Chills and numbness slowly crept through me as I read and re-read that not-so-subtle hint for a cut of whatever government grant I could have received. I was about to ring up my attorney when the realization came that the note's wording presented either an escape clause or a demand for double the sum! All or nothing. The note demanded a check, to be delivered in small, unmarked bills. Obviously this is a contradiction and cannot be accommodated. Therefore nothing is due in tribute. However, if the intent was for a check and cash, both in the amount of \$30,000, then that would be the whole pot! My attorney advised capitulation at the 50% level. Therefore I am forwarding \$30,000 in Nader bucks, which are small and unmarked. I could have sent old bills from various automotive supply houses that totalled \$30,000, but none were small, and all had at least one oily fingerprint.

Sincerely yours,

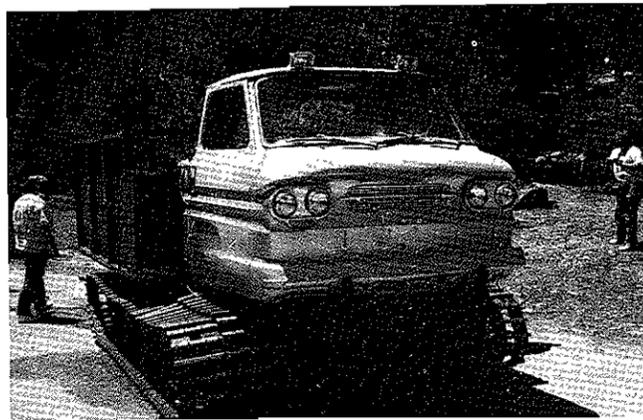
Robert A. Kirkman

P.S. The "Sculpture" will soon be Under Snow

P.P.S. The copy machine went south on me so I had to substitute other bills. My grandson may never miss them, as he does not play that board game very often.

## Corvair Snow Cat

Last winter one of our members, John Stallone, noticed a Corvair-looking snow cat near the maintenance yard of the Bear Valley Ski Resort. The resort is in the Sierra Nevada on Highway 4 in California. John couldn't get close because of the snow, so he took a picture and had it enlarged. There was no doubt about the Corvair pickup cab, but not much else could be determined.



This summer, on the Club's annual Sonora Pass Weekend, we detoured into the ski resort to see if we could find it. After asking a few people, we finally located the snow cat in one of the residential areas. A closer look revealed that the only Corvair

part was the cab and interior. The dash instruments were intact but the steering wheel, of course, had been removed for conventional track levers. The engine was somewhere just behind the cab and the radiator was visible, but not much more.

I am familiar with one type of snow cat that uses aircooled VW engines, mounted in the front of the vehicle, and they seem to work out just fine. Maybe other CORVANATICS members may be aware of genuine Corvair snowcats somewhere.

By the way, when I sold my 1961 Rampside recently, I included a membership in CORVANATICS as part of the sale. As long as the buyer is a CORSA member that might be a suggestion for membership growth. I sold the '61 because I bought a 1964 Rampside, I wouldn't be without one.

Frank Dotson  
Modesto, CA

## From under an Oak tree

I found my 1963 Corvair van in 1982 sitting under an Oak tree in Izora, Texas and used it in my work until 1983. After 1983 until the present we have used it for camping and back and forth to work etc. It has 120,000 miles on it.

During the years of ownership I built and installed a console. Included were a Panasonic cassette player, Marantz 60 watt amp and equalizer. From a 1966 Corssa came a tach, clock and head temp, fuel and vacuum/boost gauges. The ash tray was cut out and a Panasonic AM-FM/CB was installed there. A Dyna-Cruise cruise control was modified and installed and a queen-size bed was built in behind the front seat for camping.

In 1988 I started preparing the van for painting. The cover over the engine (held in by ten bolts) was hinged and a latch from a battery box cover was welded in, making possible easy access to the engine. To prepare the van for dual exhaust, the rear driver's side underbody was modified to accept a stock muffler hung like the passenger side muffler.



Some rust was cut out and panels welded in under the battery and passenger door. The van was painted with Dupont Imron in white and gold, inside and out and a luggage rack was installed. Next year I'm installing a stabilizer bar and roof spotlight.

Jim & Sherian Patterson  
Gatesville, Texas

## Tech Topics



### MISCELLANEOUS CHANGES

Some things were changed in design, but I don't remember exactly when. Take the Greenbrier/Corvan side door handle for example. Originally, with the door locked, the outside handle could be forced enough to break the lock. This didn't set too well with (Big) Bud Olender, the Staff Engineer. The handle design was changed so that it would take only so much torque and it would internally shear. The handle had to be replaced because it now drooped, and probably could no longer open the door, but the lock was intact. I think the handles were made at Chevrolet Bay City, where many hood ornaments and carburetors were made for all Chevrolet lines.

Cardboard trim panels in the rear corners of Greenbriers would warp all out of shape due to high humidity. Perhaps in late 1961 a "low warp" material was used.

A clutch cable would become sticky in operation on early 1961 models. Turns out the nylon liner (that the internal cable runs through) would absorb moisture and swell a bit. This was cured by changing to a delrin plastic liner.

This example doesn't fit into an FC publication but I will tell it anyway. The front engined Chevy van entered production in 1964 as a replacement for the FC. The first winter of production brought many broken windshields before the vehicles left the plant! The plant people found it could be demonstrated to Engineering by starting the engine and letting it fully warm up on fast idle. Heater was not turned on. When the engine was hot the defroster was then turned on fully and BINGO! The windshield cracked. It was solved by modifying the defroster outlet a bit so it would blow a bit further up; not so close to the bottom edge. Of course, FC people would welcome a defroster that hot!

The supervisors in the St. Louis plant went to lunch one day in a Greenbrier. Maybe four or five of them. That trip prompted a design change! Those sitting on the second seat had their feet up on the slanted floor ahead of them. The driver had to stop quickly and the second seat bunch resisted the stopping motion with their feet. In effect, they were pushing on the floor, exerting a force rearward on the seat. The seat pushed backward enough to disengage from the floor! What an "oops!" that was. Here's the whole skinny. The seat floor plates have keyhole type openings for the seat leg carriage bolts to drop into and slide forward before being tightened. As 1961 started, the keyhole edges were turned down just a bit to smooth out the surface. If the bolt wing nuts were not tightened enough, the seat could be forced to scoot back and disengage itself. You can bet that Staff Engineer Bud Olender heard about that! Probably even before he finished his lunch up there at the Tech Center. The floor plate design was changed as soon as possible. The circular part of the keyhole was turned down, or flanged deeper. The narrow part of the keyhole stayed pretty much as original. Now, if the carriage bolt had some force slide it back, the head would bump into the round

opening flange and go no further. 'Twas a slight change that you or I would probably never notice.

### ENGINE ACCESS DOOR CLOSURE

The engine access metal door never seemed to fit right in production. Sure, the latch would latch, but the end corners stuck out. Supposedly it was weatherstrip pressure. Lately I have wondered if the real cause was missed back then.

While trying to fit a door recently, I was doing so on a newly painted body that had not yet had the weatherstripping installed. The door would not close all the way flush. Something was binding. Nope, it wasn't the lower corners. It was the hinge itself. It's a couple of semi-spirals that fit together. They bottomed out before travelling enough for the door to close. Nothing I could do to the spirals would help. As a last resort I removed and discarded the body portion of the hinge and put on another that was laying around. This combination worked. A new seal was cemented to the body opening and the door closes properly all around now. Maybe us engineers let ourselves be snookered somehow way back then into a false conclusion.

### RAMPSIDE RAMP TOP RUB STRIP

When the Rampside was rebuilt it had to have a new ramp top rub strip; naturally! I got a piece of the original rubber extrusion (long enough for two ramps so I have an extra one available) and also an Engineering blueprint so I could duplicate the end configuration. Having seen a couple "restorations", I know that the whole thing usually comes out looking quite unprofessional.

Down to the auto parts store for some adhesive. It looked pretty good until the next day when numerous areas were loose or bumped up. Fairly easy job to peel it off, but a big job to get the adhesive off the strip and body to try it again with some different stuff. Same story. I then switched to black silicon adhesive. Since silicon is not instant stick, I used many pieces of masking tape to hold all the rubber down flat in place. Hurray. The rub strip is adhered everywhere, evenly, just as you would want. And it stays that way.

A word about the proper rub strip you buy. Since it is an extrusion, the total processing leaves it coated with a dry soapy lubricant that doesn't want to wash off. Before use, it must be cleaned, down to the good rubber with a brush. You might try lacquer thinner or whitewall cleaner. Maybe even dynamite! Finish with a detergent wash and water rinse. The rubber has to be clean if you expect it to be glued in place and stay.

Bob Kirkman



Gene Brick  
&  
his buddy "FC"

**BEST  
OF**



HAPPINESS IS FINDING A CASE OF NEW REAR  
WHEEL BEARING FOR FCs ...AT A GARAGE SALE!

CORVAN ANTICS  
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Phoenix, AZ 85023

**FIRST CLASS**



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