CORVAN-ANTICS



Nov-Dec 2024, Vol. 52, Issue 6

The Bi-monthly Newsletter of Corvanatics

The Forward Control Corvair People



https://www.corvair.org/chapters/corvanatics

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Besides the critical business of nominations for the upcoming 2025 election below, we have so many fun things in this edition. 2025 Cling debut, lots of great Found on Facebook photos, and "*drum roll*" an unbelievable, you can't pass up this one, promotion on new Corvanatics hats. Read on!!

Corvanatics Board Of Director Member Openings - Need Nominations

Nominations are now open for 2 of our 6 Board of Director positions. This is an opportunity to jump in with an active voice and opinion for the club.

You can name yourself or someone that you feel would be a good fit (be sure to check with them

first!)...BOD positions are about steering the club's general direction and helping it run smoothly. It can be as fun or intense as you want to make it – it's basically about sharing your ideas to benefit Corvanatics, and then working together to set some assignments towards actionable goals. BOD membership is also a step towards becoming a Corvanatics Officer if that's of continued interest. An added bonus is that bi-monthly BOD mtgs are all online on Zoom, and usually happen on Wednesday evenings.

If you ran last year, but did not get voted in, please try again. We also had a couple of nominations for members who did not meet the qualification of being a member for one year. You are now qualified, so send in that nomination this year. Nominations are due by December 15. Please send them to corvanatics@gmail.com or mail to: Corvanatics, 5425 Morrow Rd., Gladwin, MI 48624.

WE NEED YOU!!!



Corvan - Antics is published for the benefit of the members of Corvanatics. We're the largest chapter of the Corvair Society of America and are **supported solely by membership dues**. If you are not a Corvanatics member, please consider joining us. Membership information can be found here.

2025 MEMBER'S WINDOW CLING

The Corvanatics BOD is pleased to announce that Ron Lehman's 1962 Corvan Camper, aka "ButterCup", has been selected for our 2025 Member's Window Cling! Ron's van was chosen from a total of 17 entries for its unique camper design and overall relaxed appeal. Everything about this van just feels fun!

We're working again w/ talented sketch artist Darrell Thompson, creator of last year's cling treatment, for another terrific design. He has mad skills! Final artwork will be approved by early December, and members can look forward to our 2025 cling arriving via mail after the holidays.

Congratulations Ron! Thanks to those listed below who submitted their FC for our review and consideration. This is a fun program but also a hard decision to make. Every one of them would have also been a fine choice.



Thanks to all of the other entrants:

Darren Praille Doug Rojas Eido Walny Eric Taylor Greg Renfro

Larry Woodfin Michael Slotwinski

Patrick Skiver
Sam Schneider
Steve Jabben
Bill Vecchioni
Simon Pike
Val Doppenberg
Bill Vecchioni
Stephan Håbet
Steven Simon





ALL NEW CORVANATICS CLUB HATS AVAILABLE NOW!

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DON'T MISS OUT! CLICK THIS AD TO VISIT OUR MEMBERS ONLY STORE NOW!!!

Special Thanks To Bev Farley of Custom Sportswear for her tremendous help w/this promotion.

https://corvanatics.itemorder.com/shop/home/



Found on Facebook



John Miller Steam Truck and Tractor Show

Pictures of our members/their vehicles randomly found posted on Facebook

Visit the Corvanatics—Corvair Trucks & Vans Facebook group

Gary Rubin

Jim Williams



Odin Turner Commerce Cruise, Longview, WA





James Reich







MiLana Wright

New member John Jackson - first hundred miles









More Found on Facebook

DOW TOWN

Dan Reis Doubles as a camper



New Member Michael Bednarchuk



Eido Walny Best Truck at Village of Bayside Car Show





William Vecchiono new windshield Thanks to Corvanatics' President, Ken Hand



Patrick Pilon 45th Annual Antique Boat and Car Show



Stephen Simon





Start preparing for the 2025 CORSA International Convention. Put those dates on your calendar now.

Link to more information

Don't miss the Corvanatics Annual Meeting

We are looking for suggestions for both meeting presentation topics and speakers to present at the Corvanatics Annual Meeting at the Convention.

In addition, we are hoping to get a group FC photo taken at the Convention. We need someone to coordinate this. Find a great location close by to stage the FCs with a nice background and someone to take the photo. There must be some western people who are familiar with the area and/or hotel grounds layout and can help with this. It would wonderful to have something like the one from the 2019 Convention.

Please send all suggestions to corvanatics@gmail.com



From the Secretary & Newsletter Editor

by Molly Bacon

Hi all,

Another action/information packed edition. I hope all of you are getting ready for the holidays. We do need Director nominations so we have a slate of candidates on the ballot next edition. Think seriously about it, please.

Since the last newsletter:

325 members

12 new members

24 members renewed their dues

7 members dropped







WELCOME!! to our new members

Scott Allen	AZ	1962 Greenbrier	Steve Morton	ID	
Edward Warzee	CA	1962 Rampside	Simon Pike	UK	1961 Greenbrier
Randy Howell	ID	•	Linda Steiner	MT	1963 Rampside
Scott Akrie	CA	1962 Rampside	Michael Bednarc	huk MN	1961 Rampside
Mark Thompson	TN	•	R.B. Doran	OR	-
John Jackson	TX	1964 Corvan	Joseph Pierce	TX	1961 Rampside

Dues Expiring

Easily renew online **here**.

You will not be penalized for paying early, your due month stays the same.

Due in November

James Crossland	Steve Walker
Bob Weideman	

Due in January

	•		
Jess Corrigan	Seth Emerson		
Travis Fowler	Jack Green		
Terence McKenna	Stacy Milnes		
Lisa Mitchell	Jeff Rapp		
Mike Richardson	Russ Thuleen		
Charles Wingate			



Due in December

Ron Bloom	Tony Gerhold
Ronald Hoff	Stig Holm
Eva McGuire	David Newell
Vincent Rohr	Doug Rojas
Michael Simmons	

Due in February

Michael Burgio	Thomas Curran
Phil Domser	Kenneth Drye
Ralph Gubser	Paul Leimer
Mark Lewis	Jerry Murray
Dave Wenzlick	

The Winner Is

Eddie Meadows

\$10 Clark's Gift Certificate

Remember, you can only win if your dues are current

Riding with the President-Ken Hand

Wow, time can really slip past when you are not paying attention! Here we northern people are getting ready to put our cars away and the southern folk are getting geared up for the fun time.

The BOD has been busy as usual, one of the topics was the upcoming convention out in California. There was talk of trying to get a group photo again, do we have any volunteers for just that? This show is *Vairy* early in the season so plan for that.

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As you will read later in the newsletter, we have arranged getting custom hats available for the members to order at a reduced price. At a later date we plan to offer the hats on the FaceBook page to the public at a higher price plus possibly offering a virtual membership with the hat.

Did you know, Corvanatics' board meeting Zooms are open to anyone who wants to attend. Just email corvanatics@gmail.com and asked to be placed on the email list for the meetings.

We have also been discussing trademarking our logo. This came about because some other "company person" did a blind objection to a merchandise vendor we were using, and that image design was removed from the store selection. There was no amount of objection or explanation that could change anything. More will be said about the trademark as things develop.

This may sound funny but start getting your FC's ready for the MAY convention out in California (see page 6), which is several months earlier than it usually is!

Ken Hand

vairmech@aol.com, 248-613-8586

VIEWS FROM A BOD MEMBER...

Rod Murray, Corvanatics Director

1964 Greenbrier, Pittsburgh, PA. Rmurray8996@gmail.com

My primary focus on the Corvanatics Board of Directors has really leaned into club PR, promotion, and membership. Among the things you can blame me for are the occasional cheeky "Join Corvanatics" graphics you might see on various online forums, FC surveys and "Admin" posts you see on our FB Groups page, and maybe even an unexpected phone call or email, etc. Trust me, I'm harmless, and I enjoy connecting with you.

Anyway, I thought I'd share a few thoughts, and I'd welcome your feedback on any of this...

Corvanatics Facebook Group

Did you know that our Corvanatics Facebook Group has a membership of over 2,600 while our actual chapter membership is much lower, hovering in the 350-member range. Why the large discrepancy? To me this shows the continued broad interest in Corvair FC's is there but there's also an obvious hesitation to step over to full club membership. A few reasons could be...

Lack of chapter club awareness?

* We can't assume people know our club exists. Hence the importance of self-promotion like window clings, wearable merch, and members talking with non-member enthusiasts.

Does the availability of online information and general support (including Corvanatics) negate our club's purpose?

Open access information is not exactly a bad thing. It's a great entry point for all enthusiasts into our Corvair FC hobby. In fact, our own club not only provides the FB Corvanatics Group forum, but our chapter website has an incredible amount of Corvair FC content, history, Registry, and other resources that's accessible to anyone. Thanks to Steve Spilatro's for his continued efforts.

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Joining a local club or Corvanatics seems to be the "next step".

- * Lack of (or at least awareness of) the kind of club perks that motivate a person to join? This, to me, is our opportunity! I think we have a good baseline of club benefits, but need to always be working on more! And promoting them for broad awareness both within and outside our club. Promoting outside the club creates interest in joining the club! What ideas do you have for benefits of Corvanatics membership?
- * Aversion to any kind of club membership? "I don't need no steenking club." Does this mean "I'm too cool for you."? Or "I can't handle the pressure of membership."? Or "I don't have 10 bucks."? Hey, not everybody is cut out for membership it doesn't mean we shouldn't be cordial. They're the ones missing out on Member Perks. Thoughts?

Corvanatics Social Media Chair/Committee

Don't confuse me with being the Corvanatics Social Media Person – I'm just a village idiot. We are working on a job description and philosophy to create such a role and we'd like to target a younger club member (i.e. under 40?...maybe even under 30?) with a good sense for promoting Corvanatics on various social media platforms. If you or someone you know would like more info on this, please ping me. This has to be one of the funnest club gigs we would ever have.

Corvanatic\$ Ca\$h & More

This Member's Perk is something new and is still in development mode, but it deserves a little hype. We hope to have more in the January issue..

Your gift circle knows all about your Corvair hobby, but probably have no idea what kind of gift to get you that's hobby-related, right? Instead of making them guess, in which case you might end up with a tie with a Ford Econoline on it, invite them to simply buy you **Corvanatic\$ Ca\$h** that you can then spend with the club to get what YOU want...a pin, decal, patch, even your membership! Unfortunately, right now in this stage of development, it will only be able to be spent on the merchandise on the Corvanatics website. It does not include our on-demand stores, Zazzle and TeePublic or the hat promotion. **Corvanatic\$ Ca\$h** will be available year-round, so is great for birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, and more!

More...speaking of Corvanatics Gifting – it goes both ways. Do you have a friend/family member in Corvanatics, or maybe a friend/family member w/ an FC that isn't a Corvanatics member? How about buying membership for them as a gift?

Corvanatics Hats - Super special deal!!

Hats off to Molly for this one. See details on page 3.

Did you know...

Corvanatics doesn't profit from our members. As a general rule, membership dues, merch sales, etc, simply cover the cost of said item and/or to otherwise operate the club and enhance the value of membership. Also, all Corvanatics officers, Board Members, Chair Persons, etc. are volunteers – nobody gets a dime.



Also, don't forget about Corvanatics gift memberships.

The perfect item for anytime gift giving.

Reminder:

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With the newsletter only being published bi-monthly, it is not practical to publish advertisements of vehicles or parts for sale. Too often they sell before publication date frustrating potential buyers. With so much online, the best bet for selling is either eBay, Facebook, or the ever-popular Corvair forums, Corvair Center and Corvair Forum. Thanks for your understanding.

Bell System FCs - Part 1

by Steven Spilatro, Corvanatics Historian [We are rerunning here an article that was recently published in the CORSA Communique.]

Corvair 95s were part of a major transition during the 1960s in the types of service vehicles

used by the telecommunication Industry. Initially viewed with great enthusiasm for its innovative design, Corvair 95 vans and pickups joined the fleets of many regional phone companies. Although records of the number and types of Corvair 95s used by phone companies are largely lost to history, in this article we will explore what is known beginning with a history of the Bell System and its fleet of service vehicles.



Some back History

The "Bell System" was the group of subsidiary ("operating") companies headed by AT&T

("Ma Bell") prior to its divestiture in 1984. There were 23 continental U.S. regional operating companies that provided local phone service, sales, and infrastructure support. Other divisions included AT&T Long Lines, Bell Labs, and Western Electric, which were the long-distance service, research, and manufacturing arms of the corporation, respectively. GTE (General Telephone & Electronics Corporation) was AT&T principal competitor and also encompassed a number of operating companies.

The Bell System regional operating companies employed a variety of vehicles, including cars, half-ton, three-quarter, one ton, and larger trucks to provide customer and line services. Standardized vehicles first entered the fleet in the late 1920s, typified by Ford Model A "Runabout" trucks, which evolved into the more substantial half-ton trucks of the 1940s and '50s. The typical



Figure 1. Typical 1950s IU-76 Installer truck

"installer truck" that provided customer service was a conventional half-ton truck cab with a box-like storage unit mounted on the chassis rear. The J.H. Holan Company designed many of the truck bodies used by the Bell System and their half ton "IU-76" installer truck (Fig. 1) was so common in the 1950s that it was almost emblematic of the Bell System.

Installer trucks carried over 150 different items including repair parts of all sorts, spools of interior wire, reels of exterior "drop line" cable, tools for inside and outside work, clothing should the weather turn inclement, ladders tall and short, a small library of directories and manuals, and more. These trucks were also a mobile retail store. The Bell System "Craftsman" was expected to sell the latest in wall-mounted, desk set, and Princess tele-

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phones, and the truck needed to stock these phones for the sale to transpire.

The carrying capacity of installer trucks was increasingly strained by additional new equipment and expanding product lines, such as with the "Color Comes Calling" campaign of the mid-1950s which brought colored telephones to the market. The basic design of the truck

body was problematic as well. The storage lockers, bins, and drawers were accessible "from the outside looking in" through doors along the sides and rear of the truck, which left contents exposed to the elements and subject to pilferage.

Cost-effectiveness is important for any large fleet and especially for a utility company such as AT&T for which rates and profits were regulated. Of its almost 100,000 fleet vehicles in 1960, around 60,000 were in the half-ton class. They represented a \$130 million investment with an annual operating cost of \$67 million. And the cost had been mounting. Cab interiors had become more luxurious than needed and fuel economy had diminished as the weight and HP of the truck engines increased. Installer trucks had a service life of 6 - 8 years and averaged only around 8000 miles per year. At 11 mpg, gassing-up the half-ton fleet ran to \$13.5 million annually (\$140M in 2023 dollars). By the late 1950s, AT&T was actively seeking an alternative.

New vehicles for the 1960s

Bell Labs explored a variety of alternative truck designs. It drew upon a survey of subsidiaries to build and test several prototype vehicles. Also tested were vehicles from overseas markets, including the VW Kombi, Mite, and the Renault Petit-Panel and Hi-Boy vans; however. None were found satis-

Figure 2. Vintage images of Bell System Corvair 95s. Top: Bell Laboratories van prototype with storage rack; Middle: Installer van Ford Thames, International Harvester Metro- showing ladder dismounting, from 1969 NY **Bell Installation and Maintenance Handbook**; **Bottom: Unidentified.**

factory. The Bell System was more enthusiastic about the new U.S. made compact vans and pickups that entered the market in 1960, the Chevrolet Corvair 95 and Ford Econoline. These short wheel-base, forward control vehicles introduced a light weight unibody construction that provided improved cargo space, load capacity, and security, at an economic price. The moderate vehicle height was also important to allow access to extension ladders carried on the roof.

Bell System Corvair 95s

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There is very little historical documentation about Bell System Corvair 95s, and, like the Bell subsidiary companies themselves, most have long since passed into oblivion. Actual documentation confirms that Corvair 95s were in the fleets of the British Columbia Telephone Company, Conestaga Mutual Telephone Company, GTE, Michigan Bell, New England Telephone and Telegraph, New York Bell, Pacific Southwest Bell, and Pacific Northwest Bell, although many other companies undoubtedly also tested Corvair 95s.

The phone company FCs in the Corvanatics Corvair 95 Registry are either Rampsides or Corvans. Although none of these are 8-door vans, some vans with left-side doors reportedly were from phone companies. These were unlikely to have been standard service vehicles, considering the added cost and potential interference with shelving space. Pickups would have been purchased for use by lineman crews and may have received gantry arms to help load and unload large reels of transmission cable on the side ramp. The metal bracket visible in the Rampside in Figure 3 probably served in phone company functions.

Windows

Bell System companies characteristically ordered Corvans with windows added to the right side or both sides (Fig. 3). Unlike Greenbriers,





Figure 3. Three extant Bell System FCs. Top: Restored 1962 Corvan sn118307; Photo credit: Bob Bentz. Middle: 1962 Corvan with windows on both sides, sn113126; photo credit: Sean O'Dell. Bottom: 1963 Pacific Bell Rampside.

the windows in the doors lacked roll-down mechanisms. Ford also provided Econoline cargo vans with right-side windows that were used by the phone companies. These were regular production model "89E" and called a "Display van". From Chevrolet, the additional windows were available only as a special Central Office Production Order (COPO). It seems likely that windows were added to provide interior illumination. Standard installer vans received windows only on the right side, allowing a Bell Labs-designed shelving rack (see below) to be positioned along the left side panel. Corvans with windows on both sides possibly carried rear seats for passengers or received shelving designed by a conversion company such as the Utility Body Company.

A Corvan retailed around \$300 less than the Greenbrier and adding fixed-place windows to a Corvan was less expensive than buying a fully windowed Greenbrier. To give an idea of what COPO windows may have cost, in 1963 when windows in the rear door of the Corvan were made optional, adding those windows (RPO A12) cost \$12.95. Because the COPO windows were occasionally added to other commercial FCs, their presence is not proof of prior Bell System service.

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Paint

The classic green color of Bell System trucks originated in the early 20th century and was used through the 1960s. The color was referred to as "Bell System Green" or sometimes "Bell Green" and varied somewhat among paint manufacturers and subsidiary companies. For example, in the early 1960s, the Dupont code for "Bell Green" was "93-546", "JX-6047" for Sherwin Williams, and "98L-1640" for Martin-Senour. The monotone color theme was formally phased out in 1969 when bell system adopted a multicolor theme. Concerns had long been raised about the poor visibility of Bell System Green, and some subsidiaries (such as NJ Bell) tested an orange exterior in the mid-1950s.

I have observed three vans that have good quality original or restored Bell System Green paint, and a half dozen or so with well-patinaed exteriors and potentially restorable. Others exist that display little evidence of their earlier life, although remnants of original paint confirm the vehicle's history.

The data plate of a Bell system FC typically shows "SPEC" (special) as the Paint Code (Fig 4), meaning that a non-standard RPO exterior paint was applied at the factory. However, this alone does not confirm Bell System origin since the SPEC (or "SPC") codes were used for Figure 4. Data plate codes many commercial FCs. An interesting case is the 1964 Rampside, S/N S111357, with the paint code "0780-546". Much sleuthing by Kent Sullivan and Dave Newell eventually connected the "546" to the Dupont Bell Green color code. The "0780" may be a special Chevrolet Class-A fleet code.



from Bell system FCs. Top, typical "SPEC" paint code with STD trim; Middle, with deluxe trim code; Bottom, nonstandard paint code photo by Kent Sullivan.

Part 2 of this article will run in an upcoming issue of Corvanatics and describe the interior features of the Bell system FCs, company emblems and markings, and other topics.



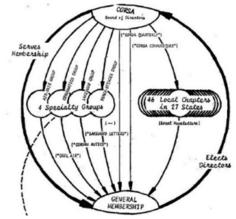
Patiently waiting for the January edition and Part 2.

Corvan - Antics - thru the years

Steve Spilatro - Historian

50 years ago, Corvan - Antics, Volume 2-5, December 1974

There had been long gaps in publication of the newsletter during 1974, and this was the first since September. Around this time the club officers were discussing becoming a chapter within Corsa and this diagram was published to show the organization of the chapters within the club. Membership stood at 81 and a membership drive was initiated – a free year's membership (\$5 value) for any member who brought in two new members.



40 years ago - Corvan - Antics Volume 12-6, November-December 1984

The cover of this newsletter identified it as a Special Vacation Issue. Appropriately, Pam Stone recounted her vacation trip with husband Al (Stoney) in their '61 Greenbrier from Phoenix to points east. Overall, they traveled through 20 states plus Ontario, Canada, and covered 7061 miles.



30 years ago, Corvan - Antics - 1994

There was no newsletter in 1994.

20 years ago - Corvan - Antics Volume 32-6, November-December 2004

Bob Marlow made this a vacation issue, of sorts, as well. He wrote an article about what he didn't do on vacation, which was drive his Greenbrier, as his attention had been focused on his two Corvair cars. Fran Schmit also contributed an article on a variety of tech issues involving the gas tank of his '61 Rampside.

10 years ago - Corvan - Antics Volume 42-4, July-August 2014

Speaking of '61 Rampsides, this issue includes the remarkable travel and maintenance diary of the one owned by Sam Muirhead as transcribed by Sam's great nephew, Jeff Barret. Sam purchased the Rampside new in 1961, installed a custom camper and logged 183,000+ miles over the next 36 years. From its home base in Texas trips were made several times to Mexico and/or Guatemala, California, Utah, Nevada, Oregon Washington, Grand Canyon, Alaska, and British Columbia.



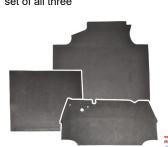
Camper in compacted form. The camper would telescope upward to full height.

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CORVAN - ANTICS is the bi-monthly publication of Corvanatics, a Chartered Chapter of the Corvair Society of America (CORSA). Established September 1972, Corvanatics is dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of America's most original and innovative small vans and light trucks, the Chevrolet Corvair 95 Series.

> Corvanatics is open to anyone with an interest in Forward Control Corvairs. Annual dues are \$10 for an emailed full color newsletter and \$15 for a mailed black and white newsletter. Application and payment is made to the Secretary/Treasurer either through the Corvanatics website at

www.corvair.org/chapters/corvanatics/membership.php or by mail. If mailed, include a completed membership form. Forms can be printed from the website or obtained directly from the Secretary/ Treasurer.

Stories, articles, photos, memorabilia, or any other item for publication should be sent to the editor. They can also be sent by email to CorvanAnticsNews@gmail.com. Authors are asked to submit at least a photograph of themselves for the article with any other photos.

Technical material received will be sent to the Technical Editor for review.

For advertising in the newsletter, please contact the Secretary/ Treasurer. Members can have a free small ad in the newsletter. Display advertising is also available at the following rates:

Full page \$25

Half page: \$15 Quarter page: \$10

Business card (2" x 3.5"): \$5

Photos for ads are \$6 each and can be color or black/white

Please submit print-ready or typed copy and pre-payment to the Secretary/Treasurer. Authorization and payment must be received prior to each issue. All ads must be Corvair-related.

Deadline for publication is the 15th of February, April, June, August, October or December.

Awards

Old Cars Golden Quill Compact Chapter Award - 2023, 2022, 2021 2020, & 2002

CORSA Chapter Newsletter Award - 2024 2nd place, 2020 1st place, 2019 2nd place, 2018 2nd place, & 2015 3rd place

Corvan - Antics uses material from many sources and may not always give appropriate credit. If your material appears without acknowledgement, we thank you for your contribution. It was used in good faith to help preserve, maintain, drive and enjoy our Corvairs.



Founded in 1969, CORSA is group of automobile enthusiasts working to satisfy the common needs of individuals interested in the preservation, restoration, and operation of the Corvair. CORSA's long range goal is to promote reproduction of parts and render technical assistance to increase your enjoyment of the Corvair, and to further the general public's appreciation of the car.

Corvanatics encourages membership in CORSA. Visit their website, www.corvair.org