

January 2021

the *Fanbelt*   
new jersey association of CORVAIR enthusiasts

# Happy New Year! (we hope)

**Why is there a Hudson  
on the cover of the Corvair club newsletter?**



**Because there is a Corvair connection, that's why!  
Read about this – and more – in this issue.  
And join us for our Zoom breakfast on January 2<sup>nd</sup>!**

*The Fanbelt* is published monthly by the New Jersey Association of Corvair Enthusiasts (NJACE), Inc. P.O. Box 631, Ridgewood, NJ 07451. Deadline for contribution is the 20th of each month. Classified-style advertising of interest to Corvair owners is available, free of charge, to all persons. A commercial ad can be placed in an issue of the Fanbelt for \$50 per full page, \$30 per half page, \$20 per quarter page, and \$10.00 per business-card. (Generally, classified advertisers are those offering individual cars and/or a limited number of parts, while commercial advertisers are those offering services and/or parts from stock. NJACE reserves the right to make this determination). All advertising must be PC-compatible or type-able copy.

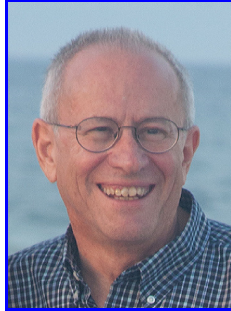
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# The Mysterious Case of the Greenbrier That Would Not Move

## Part One

by Bob Marlow

Back in February of last year, before anyone had heard the term "Covid-19," club President Brian O'Neill and I took a ride to the neighborhood of Broad Channel, in Queens, not far from JFK Airport.



There we looked at a 1961 Greenbrier because the van's owner had gotten in touch with the club. He was seeking a source for having the engine rebuilt.



The original engine started and ran, but not well. At times I kid Brian about his wanting to rebuild engines that I think only need a re-seal and tune-up, but clearly

this engine needed a thorough overhaul and Brian was prepared to take on the job.

Trouble was, the removal and re-installation of the engine could not take place in the incredibly small Queens garage where the van sat, nor was there room at Brian's home for the entire vehicle. As is so often the case in NJACE, Larry Ashley to the rescue! He agreed to have the van delivered to his shop, where the engine could be removed and taken to Brian's workshop while the van waited.

Frank, the owner, had the van shipped to Ashley's, and the following weekend Larry, Brian and I removed the powertrain. At that point the car-repair equivalent of "mission creep" began.

Upon removing the powertrain we were amazed to find a very large chunk was missing from the differential! So large a piece was gone that we questioned how that van could have been driveable in that condition. A replacement

differential would be needed, and Brian obtained one from the Corvair Ranch.

*A significant bite had been taken out of this differential!*



At the same time, Brian took the Powerglide transmission to a rebuilder, because prior to removing the drivetrain the transmission did not perform as expected.

So far, so good, except that Covid had now taken hold and Clark's Corvair Parts had to shut down. Brian had to wait nearly two months until Clark's could re-open to get the parts needed for the engine rebuild. But once Clark's was back up and running, Brian completed the overhaul and tested the rebuilt engine on the club's run stand.

Everything was ready to go back in the van in July, months later than anticipated but hey, there's a pandemic. With Tony Gervasio now joining in to help, the freshened powertrain was installed in the van and fired up. Success!

Or so it seemed. Despite the smooth-running engine, the van would not move, not forward nor backward. Maybe we installed the Powerglide cable improperly, we thought, so it was removed and re-installed more than once. No dice.

The drivetrain was removed and the components separated, in search of something missing, something installed incorrectly, something. We found nothing, so the powertrain was carefully reassembled and reinstalled. Alas, no movement of the van was to be had.

Following yet another removal of the drivetrain, the transmission was taken back to the rebuilder for a look-see, and the torque converter was taken to a speciality shop for inspection. Nothing was found to be wrong. We checked over the differential that had come from the Corvair Ranch and found nothing amiss.

Weeks – months, in fact – were going by. Brian obtained yet another transaxle, lent to the

project by John Egerton, and we installed it. This oughta do the trick, we figured. It didn't. The van would move, at least in the sense that it did not remain totally stationary, but the top speed was about one-tenth of a mile per hour and was accompanied by very unpleasant grinding noises.

It was now November. Frank might be forgetting what his van looked like. Larry was getting impatient with the van's extended stay at the body shop. I was getting tired of the long commute from my Ocean County home to Flanders when we worked on the van. Brian was getting frustrated by the inability to deliver a finished job. Nerves were getting frayed. Friendships were being tested.

Brian was going to South Carolina for Thanksgiving. So he decided to take the Corvair Ranch differential and the rebuilt Powerglide and drop them off at the Corvair Ranch en route for inspection and evaluation. He then spent an enjoyable week away from the van while Larry and I contemplated digging a large enough hole in which to bury it.

Once Brian returned from South Carolina he called the Corvair Ranch and was advised that no real issue had been found other than a missing

"E" clip in the rebuilt transmission. That omission, however, would not account for the lack of movement. Now what to do?

Brian was about to go to the Corvair Ranch to collect the parts when somewhat independently he, Larry and myself agreed that it was time to concede defeat and take the entire van to the Corvair Ranch. On December 9, using his enclosed trailer, Brian and club VP Nick Ford delivered the van there.



Two days later, Levi, the lead mechanic at the Corvair Ranch called Brian to let him know that he had just completed a successful ten-mile test drive of the van! What had Levi found? What was the solution?

Find out in Part Two, on Page 8.

## The Cover Car

The photo on the front page of this issue is the 1953 Hudson Super Wasp belonging to NJACE Lifetime Member Dick Cashion. The photo was taken at this year's Sparta Historical Society Car Show which each year is organized by club President Brian O'Neill.

Dick sends along these notes on the car:

*Janet and I enjoyed the Sparta car show. More cars than we expected, and a well-run car show.*

*The Hudson is painted in the original factory colors, but with a modern base coat/clear coat finish. The car was in terrible condition when we bought it from the original owner in 1995, and needed a complete restoration, which included:*

- *Replacing the original 262 cubic-inch flat-head 6 with a Hornet 308 cubic-inch 6 (over-bored to 317);*
- *Adding dual carbs (the Hudson Twin-H option);*
- *Plaining the head to give an 8 to 1 compression ratio;*
- *Replacing the original cloth interior with HD vinyl in a convertible style.*

This Hudson is a beautiful car and can be seen often at car shows and NJACE gatherings.

Tell us about the other interesting cars that you own! Send photos and text to [rwmarlow@optimum.net](mailto:rwmarlow@optimum.net).





For our Zoom Breakfast Meeting this month, we are adding a “Show & Tell” segment!

Each member is asked to bring to the meeting a small Corvaire-related item of interest. It could be a rare part, a scale model, an old photo, an item of original sales or service literature – anything Corvaire-related that can be shared via the online Zoom platform.

We’ll have some fun seeing the variety of items among our members. Start thinking about what you may have to share!

## Tech Tip

### An Improved Method to Change Corvaire Door Hinges

by *David Rothenberg*

A couple of years ago I needed to replace the passenger side lower hinge on my 1965 Corsa. The double jointed door “holder” pin had sheared off and the door would close on your leg without the holder working properly.



I got the lower hinge from Clark's and had it painted to match my car by Larry Ashley. Jacking up the door I proceeded to unbolt the hinge, keeping track of what bolt went where. The swap went remarkably well with no issues. Larry assisted with the final alignment of the door so it would line up with the body correctly when closed.

Fast forward to 2020. Brian O'Neil asked for assistance to repair a few things on Bernice Fisher's 1965 convertible. Among the items to repair/replace were the driver side lower and upper door hinges. Now that I had some experience in the matter, being retired and in the middle of the pandemic, I had a bit of time on my hands, so I offered to help (masks on for the most part).

Things did not go as well as expected. It turns out that the backing plates for the hinges were held in place at the factory with what was called dum-dum, a sticky body filler. Well, the sticky stuff was no longer sticky after 55 years, so the backing plate fell down into the car body when I removed the bolts.

Luckily, I had not unbolted the hinge from the door side or I would be disassembling the door panel. I needed to remove what I call the “foot vent” to recover the plate from the body cavity. *[Editor's Note: The correct name for this vent was coined by former club member Marianne Van Prooien decades ago: “Crotch Cooler.”]*

This of course requires the removal of the rocker cover plate well as the vent parts. Digging around in the vent opening I finally found the backing plate. The gooey stuff was totally dried up and no longer gooey and that is why the plate had fallen off the pillar.

I could have held the backing plate with one hand while bolting the hinge back on, but it would have been a real contortionist maneuver. We came up with an alternate method.

We went to the local hardware store and purchased two 2.5" X 5/8" bolts with the same thread pitch as the original hinge bolts. After cutting the heads of the bolts off, I used these as threaded “guide pins” to hold the backing plate

in place while I bolted the hinges in place on both the pillar side and the door side of the hinge. Adding a slot to the end of the guide pin will allow the use of a screwdriver to help thread the pin into the backing plate. → → →

TIP: Only remove the top bolt and screw the guide pin in, then remove the other bolts, no pins needed here. You can hold the backing plate in place (on both the pillar side and the door side) with these guide pins while you remove the old hinge and then install the new hinge.



## How I Got Started

by Al Lacki

*Editor's Note: In last month's issue, club secretary Dave Malcolm asked members to submit stories of how they got started in Corvairs. Happily, three such stories have already come in. Here's the first of them:*



I got into Corvairs way back in 1965 when I was twelve years old. My brother John and his girlfriend Janice took me to a pre-season football game between the New York Giants and the Philadelphia Eagles. We took the train to get to the stadium. To keep me from being a pest, Janice told me to select two magazines from the newsstand at Penn Station. She would pay for them.

One was an issue of *Car Model* magazine. I was big into building plastic car models at that time. The other magazine was September issue of *Car & Driver*. It had a picture of a Corvair Fitch Sprint on the cover, surrounded by a ton of Corvair hop-up parts. Inside was a glowing article about the Sprint and there were also writeups about the many show-and-go accessories that were available for Corvairs back then. I was totally hooked!



*Car Model* magazine represented my past. *Car & Driver* – with that Corvair on the cover – represented my future.

I had a couple of other chums who got into Corvairs, too. We'd borrow Chilton repair manuals from the school library and browse through the sections involving Corvairs. They were loaded with photos and diagrams showing how to rebuild Corvair engines. Fascinating!

Naturally, when I got my driver's license a few years later, I wanted to get a car of my own. My Mom was totally against it, but when my buddy John, who just happened to be the Pastor's son, bought a used '65 Corvair Corsa convertible, she had to relent. So, I emptied my piggy bank and bought myself a '65 Corvair 500 from the local Chevy dealer's wholesale lot. It had only 23,000 miles on the odometer. The price? \$300. Corvairs were and remain the used car bargain of the 20th century!

Over the next year or two, I dressed up my Corvair with a set of Corvair Corsa wheel covers, IECO trombone mufflers, GTO bucket seats, quick ratio steering arms and some pin striping that made it look really good. My friends called it "Suzy Corvair" because the license plate said SUE-718.





Suzy Corvair took me through my senior year of high school and most of the way through college, too. With its bias-ply General Jet-Air tires, it was easy to throw into a four-wheel drift. I used to drop it into low gear to make the exhaust cackle to impress the dames walking on Ridge Road. It was a blast.

Eventually though, the oil leaks got the best of me. The heater was blowing smoke and I started having sinus problems. The last straw was when one of the brake lines blew out when I was coming over the Stickel Bridge in Newark. So, Suzy Corvair had to go.

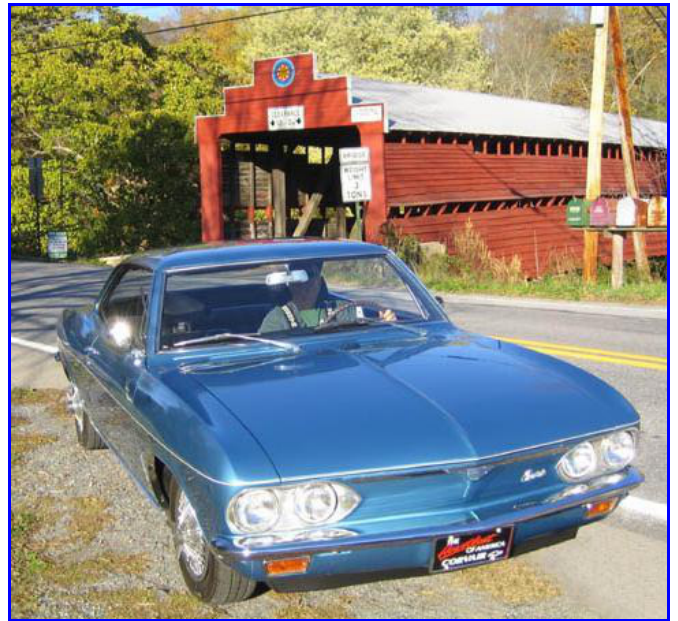
But you can't forget a first love, so when I reached the age of 35, I got a hankering for another Corvair. That's when I bought my current Corvair, a 1966 Monza code-named "LeHeap." That moniker was stenciled on the doors by the prior owner, to acknowledge the car's tired appearance in a self-deprecating way while also sticking a bit of a finger in the eye of the Renault LeCar. The Corvair was still on the road while the LeCars had already begun to disappear.



*"Le Heap" as it appeared before Al bought it*

LeHeap was well used. At one time it had been stored in a chicken coop, and later it was raced, rallied and autocrossed for several years. The paint and interior were beat up a bit and there were the usual rust spots, but it had never been hit hard and structurally, it was sound. And best of all, it was a four-speed.

Over the years, LeHeap has been fully restored and it's a part of the family. My wife Joan and I have driven it all over the Northeast to car shows and CORSA conventions. It's also been my set of wheels for time trials sponsored by the Northeast Corvair Council, a CORSA affiliate. I'm not a very fast driver, but in my humble opinion, it's the prettiest car on the track. Corvairs are drivers' cars, and that's what I enjoy most about mine.



*"Le Heap" as it appears today*

Send us YOUR Corvair story!

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## Minutes of the General Membership Meeting Saturday, December 5, 2020 *Conducted via Zoom*

The meeting was called to order at 9:07 AM by President Brian O'Neill.

Upon motion duly made and seconded the Minutes of the November 8th 2020 Meeting as printed in the December Fanbelt were approved.

Upon motion duly made and seconded the Treasurer's Report as emailed to the membership on December 4th was approved.

Activities Report: Bob Marlow reported on the plans for a Spring outdoor flea market which would replace the Parts Auction this year. Plans are proceeding to hold it at a church with adequate parking near to Ashley's. Details are still being finalized and the tentative date would be the second or third Saturday in April. Plans for a Spring Cruise are also being considered.

Old Business: None was brought forth.

New Business: Brian encouraged each member to consider writing an article for the newsletter on how they got started in Corvairs, as a means of promoting interest in NJACE at a time when we cannot have our normal activities. Bob suggested that in the future we might have a specific topic for each of our post-meeting Zoom sessions.

Nominations and election of Officers for 2021: As no additional nominations have been received the Secretary cast one vote for the reelection of the current slate of officers.

Upon motion duly made and seconded the meeting was adjourned at 9:24 AM.

*Respectfully submitted,  
David Malcolm, Secretary*

### Post-meeting Announcements and Discussion:

Brian reported that his grandson's car had a failure of several of the wheel studs while driving. The need to replace our cars 50+ year old studs was discussed. While the quality of new aftermarket parts can be questionable the Dorman studs are made in Canada. It was suggested that the Corvette studs would be a good replacement.

Curt Stone asked about using 140 logs on a 110 for the purpose of installing dual exhaust.

Brian related the issues with a Greenbrier that after changing the power pack the car will not move. After trying other differentials and transmissions still no luck. The van will be going to the Corvair Ranch. [See the related story in this issue.]

Kevin Vogel told the group about the days when his father raced Corvairs on the ice. He believes that he has pictures and may write an article for the Fanbelt.

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## You Cannot Make This Stuff Up *by Ray Coker*

All car guys and gals who live in the northeast are aware of the long cold winters which at times seem to go on forever. I'm fortunate that the home Kathy and I purchased three years ago had a large heated garage because the original owners used to sell and service Studebakers out of the home.



Early this season, each time I turned the garage heater on it just didn't seem to be working correctly. A call to a local heater repair company and an inspection by their technician determined it was very old, worn out, and parts would be hard to come by. So it needed to be replaced. If it was installed when they were selling and servicing Studebakers then in fact it was very old.

Thus began my search for a replacement heater. If you search heaters on the internet you will find hundreds of companies throughout the USA selling heaters. Within those hundreds of

companies, you can probably count on thousands of salespeople willing to sell you their heater because according to them "it's the one you need."

After completing what I considered a good and reasonable amount of research I decided to purchase a heater from a company in Illinois and install it myself. A 95,200 BTU, horizontal, ceiling mount oil fired heater almost identical to the original one was my choice.

I placed the order through the company's shopping cart but I needed to discuss one more thing with the salesman I had been in contact with before I hit the submit button. This time I phoned him and while he was researching an answer to my question, I mentioned I needed to get my garage back within a working

temperature because I like my old cars and need to continue working them. He stated "I'm an old car guy also and I love driving my Corvair."

*WHAT??*

Nowhere was a Corvair mentioned in our conversation before that. Of the hundreds of heater companies and the thousands of sales personal I get a Corvair owner on the phone.

He drives an Ash Gold 1968 500 that had 12,500 miles on it when he purchased it in April of 2018. We have exchanged personal phone numbers and emails so we can stay in touch with our common interest, Corvairs and the joy they bring.

You cannot make this stuff up.

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## The Mysterious Case of the Greenbrier That Would Not Move Part Two – The Solution

by *Bob Marlow*

**D**id you finish reading Part One? In that we recounted the mystery of the 1961 Greenbrier that refused to move forward or backward despite the best efforts of several members of the club. The story left off with the van taken to the Corvair Ranch, where in a single day the problem was identified and fixed. Did you guess what was the issue? Transmission? Differential? Something else?

First, a little Corvair history is necessary. The Corvair 95 "Forward Control" vehicles were not introduced until 1961, one year after the debut of the cars. As Corvair people familiar with the passenger cars know, there are many differences between the 1960 and 1961 cars. One of these differences would prove to be the "gotcha" that caused us so much extra work.

You'll recall that when we removed the original transaxle from the van we found that there was a large chunk missing from the differential case. So Brian purchased a used

replacement differential from the Corvair Ranch, a correct differential for a 1961 vehicle.

Unbeknownst to us, the differential that we removed from the van was of the 1960 design, not 1961. What's the difference, you ask? In 1960, only, Corvair differentials used identically-sized yokes on each side! Starting in 1961 the yokes were of different sizes on each side, one short and one long. The yokes installed on the van's half-shafts, which remained with the vehicle every time the powertrain was removed, were the 1960 type.

In all our removals and re-installations of the drivetrain, we never noticed this. Each of the 1960 yokes fit into the replacement 1961 differential, since they are both of the shorter design. But they weren't engaging the internal splines properly, rendering the van immobile.

In our defense, each time that we either removed or replaced the drivetrain, one of us was doing the left-hand side and another was doing the right-hand side. Had one guy done both sides he might have noticed the discrepancy.

But Levi, the lead mechanic at the Corvair Ranch, noticed it right away. He installed the replacement differential along with the correct



yokes, installed the rebuilt Powerglide transmission, and went for a successful ten-mile test drive.

Whether the Greenbrier, a relatively early-production 1961 model, was factory-built

with a 1960-style differential, we can't know. It's possible, but it's also possible that the differential was replaced somewhere in the past 59 years.

What we do know is that the van now runs and moves under its own power!

## Caption Contest Winners

Last month we asked for your captions for this screen shot from the old Dragnet television series. In this episode from 1969 Sergeant Joe Friday and his partner Frank Gannon are interviewing a mechanic while the mechanic is working on a Corvair.



Here is the winning submission, from Al Lacki, chosen after weeks of deliberation by our team of judges:

Mechanic: The VIN plate says "105379W706000."

Sergeant Joe Friday: OK, that's the one we've been looking for. Torch it!



## ZOOM with us



Our January Zoom breakfast will take place on **Saturday, January 2, at 9:00 AM.** You can join on your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

This month's meeting will include a "Show & Tell" segment as explained on Page 4.

As before, in advance of the meeting we will send a link via email. Just click on the link, or copy-and-paste it, to join the meeting at 9:00 AM that Saturday.

The pandemic may be keeping us apart but the Zoom meetings are keeping us together!

Join us! Saturday, January 2, 9:00 AM.

### NJACE Calendar of Events

The ongoing pandemic continues to have our in-person activities largely on hold. Our monthly Zoom online breakfast meeting will take place on Saturday, January 2nd, at 9:00 AM. This month's Zoom session will include a Corvair "Show & Tell!"

As always, watch our Facebook page, our periodic emails, and this monthly newsletter for updates.