

Swap Meet News! (See Page 2)

What Might Have Been...



The Corvair-based Fitch Phoenix was planned for a limited production run of 500 units. Unfortunately, the timing of the introduction coincided with the passage of new Federal safety regulations. A requirement for crash-testing was likely, something the small Fitch operation could not afford. So John Fitch returned any deposits and abandoned plans for production. Only the original prototype, which NJACE members helped maintain through the years, was built. That prototype now resides in a private collection after having been sold at auction.

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.

NJACE is a chapter of the Corvair Society of America (CORSA), Inc., P.O. Box 68, Long Lake, MN 55356. Meetings of NJACE are held periodically at locations and times as announced in this newsletter and on our website. All interested persons are welcome. Additional events and activities are held throughout the year. Membership in NJACE is open to individuals and families. Information and applications are available at any meeting or by writing to NJACE, P.O. Box 631, Ridgewood, NJ 07451, or by visiting www.corvair.org/chapters/njace.

President's Message

by Brian O'Neill

I'm excited!

To be honest, the pandemic has not really been that hard on me. I have all my projects downstairs. Finally, great progress on the air-conditioning system for the 1961 four door and completion of the rebuild of one of my race engines. Neither Roberta nor I go out of the house very much and when we do we always wear a mask. Zoom meetings have kept us in touch with our friends. Not the best situation but far far better than many people have had it this past year.



That's not to say that I don't really miss NJACE activities and the chance to interact with all our members. Our monthly Saturday morning breakfasts were always fun and I enjoyed them immensely. The lack of tech sessions is a big hole in my life. But it looks like there is hope on the horizon. We may have some dark days ahead of us but we will emerge at the end of this trial in many ways more appreciative of our friends.

One of the things that I missed last year and will again this year is our annual Parts Auction. After the auctions I would always go home laughing and grinning. The banter between the auctioneers and the audience was hysterical. As the man on television says, 'but wait there's more'. The club officers have put their heads together – figuratively that is – and come up with a great idea to replace the auction this year and start bringing us back together. We are planning a **Spring Swap Meet** for May 1st!

The swap meet will be held in the parking lot at the New Beginnings Bible Church in Flanders. Is very close to Ashley's Auto Body so you'll have no problem finding it. There will be no registration or entry fees. We will comply with whatever social distancing and mask wearing requirements are in existence at that time.

We are expecting a big turnout because I am sure that folks just like me are itching for any Corvair related activity. By the time you read this, our website – capably maintained by Al

Lacki – will contain all the information and have a method for you to sign up for spaces at the swap meet.

So dig out all those parts that have been gathering dust in your basement or garage. Figure out a price for your parts, box them up, and bring them to the swap meet. See you there – in person!

Additional Swap Meet Details:

What: NJACE All-Corvair Spring Swap Meet

When: Saturday, May 1, 2021, 9 AM - 3 PM, rain or shine!

Where: Outdoors at the New Beginnings Bible Church, 104 Bartley Flanders Rd, Flanders, NJ 07836



No vendor fee! No admission charge! (Donations will be accepted for the benefit of the church.)

Vendors, reserve your space (it's free!) by sending your name, phone number, and email address to club Secretary David Malcolm at david.s.malcolm@verizon.net.

Extra Attractions: Music – Door prizes – 50-50 raffle – Refreshments on site. Enter the best/funniest/ugliest mask contest!

All applicable COVID protocols will be enforced. Wear a mask and practice social distancing. Persons not complying will be asked to leave.

Click [HERE](#) to download our flyer!

How I Got Started

Editor's Note: Club secretary David Malcolm has been asking members to submit stories of how they got started in Corvairs. Here's the next installment:

by David Rothenberg

It started when I was about seven years old. My father took me to the New York Auto Show at the Coliseum. It was 1960. I saw hundreds of cars and displays but the one car that made the biggest impression was the bright red Ferrari I saw that day. ↘



It was such a big impression that about 50 years later I found a Ferrari I could afford and bought it. ↘



It was an amazing experience but it was also an expensive experience. I decided my next car would be more "affordable."

I had learned to drive on two of what could be considered the quirkiest cars of the 1960s: a grey 1963 Saab 96 and a maroon 1964 Corvair 900.

The Saab had a 2 cycle engine (add the oil to the gas tank) and had front wheel drive (before it was a fashionable) with a "free wheel" transmission. Lift off the gas and the engine effectively disconnected from the wheels, so there was no engine braking. This feature was not only to save gas but the 2 cycle engine would overheat if you kept on the gas continuously. So the driving method was to get up to speed and periodically lift off the gas allowing the engine to cool down a bit, then back on the gas. The free wheel transmission allowed the car to stay at speed with your foot off the gas. It had 4 on the tree, disc brakes, and three point seat belts. Revved like crazy and blew tons of blue smoke out the tailpipe.



The Corvair was pretty unique too; aluminum rear engine and somewhat small compared to other American cars of the period. Three speed on the floor, no disc brakes, no rack and pinion steering, no seat belts.

So, in 2014 I opted for a Corvair over a Saab. Parts were more readily available and cheaper, plus the late models have a great body style. The Saab just looked like a pregnant roller-skate. It's all about style. If I owned a Ferrari, I had to have a stylish second collector car.

My search lasted about a year. I found a 1965 Corsa coupe on Craigslist that looked good, but it was priced way too high at \$30K. It disappeared off Craigslist and the following week the exact same car appeared on eBay, also priced too high at \$25k. A few days later it was off eBay and back on Craigslist at a somewhat lower price, but still too pricey for me.

I continued my search, but that maroon Corsa called to me. Eventually I found the exact same car online at a consignment shop in Minnesota. I contacted the local Corvair club president in Minnesota and he offered to check the car out and call me with any issues the car had. The car was basically a sound vehicle with a few

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Rothenberg, continued

relatively minor issues. I bargained the asking price down from \$14K to a more reasonable \$10K plus shipping.

The shipper was supposed to arrive around 4:00 PM on a Tuesday afternoon in October. A few issues on the road delayed things and the car eventually arrived at 4:00 AM. The transporter agreed to meet at a local strip mall because his trailer couldn't negotiate the narrow street I lived on, and I would drive it the 1.5 miles to my garage. I used a license plate from my Mazda, and drove the Corvair home at 4:15 AM.

I joined NJACE and CORSA the next week and the rest is history.



Send us YOUR Corvair story!

They're Out There

by Bob Marlow

This past December, I trailered a Corvair to the Corvair Ranch on behalf of the car's owner, who lives not far from me. It was an uneventful trip, unless you consider the heavy snow squall I encountered just east of York, Pennsylvania.



But before that point, I stopped at the King of Prussia Rest Area on the Pennsylvania Turnpike to, um, rest.

Upon returning to my truck and trailer, parked among the "big rigs," one of the drivers of an 18-wheeler approached me, holding out his cell

phone. On his phone was a photo of his Corvair, at his home in Ohio.

We laughed and discussed Corvairs for several minutes before we each went on our way.

They're out there!

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Which Came First?

A Game for our Zoom Meeting

During this month's Zoom meeting, to take place on Saturday, February 6, we're going to have some fun with a simple game: Which Came First?

Each member will, in turn, be asked a Corvair-related question in which they must choose which came first. For example, which came first, early models or late models?

Okay, the real questions won't be that silly but they won't be particularly difficult, either. You'll get a point for each correct answer and a goose egg for each wrong answer but it will all be for fun because no one will be keeping score and there are no prizes or penalties.

Our Zoom meeting on the 6th will also include our first business meeting of the year, but as we all know our business meetings are fairly informal and never lengthy.

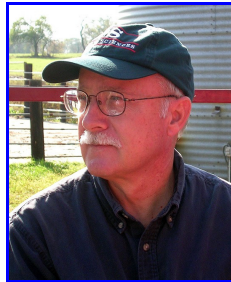
So join us online via Zoom at 9:00 AM on Saturday, February 6. We'll send out the meeting link a few days beforehand.



How I Got Started

by Ken Schiffner

In my senior year of New Jersey high school (1966) my parents said they would buy me a vehicle. I could use it to drive to high school, cool! The budget? About \$500. Fine print: I'd have to pay for gas and maintenance. But I didn't have a job.



Then the local paper had an ad for the New York International Auto Show. This was an annual event for my Dad and me. We went. I saw the latest (indeed pre-latest or future) vehicles on display. I loved what we now call the "late models."

In about a year I'd be going into engineering college (then called Newark College of Engineering but now called New Jersey Institute of Technology). I was fascinated by the rear suspension of the Corvair. And, the Corvair in general. It was unique.

I got home and started to think about a Corvair. Three problems: First, I had a budget of

\$500. Second, I just got my license and the insurance costs were staggering. Third, I didn't have a job.

Only three problems? No biggie. I got a job in a local bakery to work on weekends. I made hard rolls, butter crème frosting, and scraped the wooden floor with whatever the real bakers dropped.

My Dad found a 1961 Corvair Coupe (faded silver) with reversed somewhat chromed wheels that was within the budget (I think it was bit more). He bought it. I paid gas. I put a wrap on the steering wheel from J.C. Whitney. Eventually, dual exhausts were added.

Regarding the mechanicals, I was blessed. My backdoor neighbor, "Red" Topping (real name Ernest but to me he was Uncle Red), was previously a mechanic. His other more recent profession was working for a firm that emptied septic tanks. You didn't want to talk to Uncle Red after he came home from work. He also later scavenged for scrap that included aluminum from Corvairs. With Uncle Red, I learned the importance of listening, of not being afraid to try.

continued

Schiffner, continued

Anyway, Uncle Red helped me tune up the '61. I found it interesting. It gave me confidence to do not only mechanical work but just to have the courage to take on new challenges.

My Dad, as part of a labor union that went out on strike, took me aside one day and said he had to sell the Corvair. I had driven it to high school and gotten a lot of enjoyment from it. He sold it. I went on to college. My Dad fell ill of cancer.

In talking with him one day a month or two before he died, he asked suddenly, "Do you remember the Corvair?" He confessed that he really did not want to sell it. I told him I understood.

I liked that car. Doing so I was eventually committed to buying another Corvair. I did. I joined CORSA. I joined the local clubs when I moved.

How did I become "me?" Parents, auto shows, Red Topping, my Dad, the '61 Corvair, and confidence. I also learned the importance of sharing stories, the "banter." Do you have a story to share?



Not Ken's first car... but similar!

ZOOM with us



Our February Zoom breakfast will take place on **Saturday, February 6, at 9:00 AM**. You can join on your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

This month's meeting will include a formal business meeting (typically lasting less than ten minutes) followed by a "Which Came First" game as explained on Page 5.

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, February 6, 9:00 AM.



How Many Degrees of Separation, or The Rest of the Story *by Bob Marlow*

In Ken Schiffner's "How I Got Started" story, he told us about "Uncle Red," his family's neighbor and a mentor to young Ken's Corvair apprenticeship. Uncle Red, Ken noted, worked for a septic tank service company. Well, here's the rest of the story.

During the winter of 1987-88, I was supervising the construction of the new building for the family business, Nortech Corporation, in Midland Park. The property purchased for that building was next door to Zuidema Septic Service, the company for which Uncle Red worked.

Longtime club members may recall that when we held the "Garage Sale" swap meets in my parking lot in the years 1988-2004, from time to time Zuidema would be transferring their, um, product, from one truck to another. And if the wind was right, we *knew* it.

Not long after moving into the new place, we were hiring, and we hired Ernie Topping, Jr., the son of Uncle Red. Young Ernie was a "car guy," into drag racing in general and MoPars in particular. We hit it off.

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The Rest of the Story, continued

The younger Ernie helped me with any number of Corvair-related tasks and never missed an opportunity to needle me about my low-horsepower cars. I in turn made sure to remind him that the only thing his cars could do was travel in a straight line.

Even before Nortech Corporation was sold and moved to Massachusetts in 2004, Ernie went on to a new job that combined his automotive passion with his machinist skills. One day, at this new job, a fellow walked in the door looking for some machining work on Corvair parts. That customer was our own Colonel, Brian O'Neill.

Soon all the connections were confirmed. Brian knew me, Ernie's former employer. Brian knew Ken, apprentice to Ernie's father, Uncle Red.

To this day, the machine shop at which Ernie works does work for Brian.

Ken has a further "Uncle Red" story to tell:

For Christmas one year, my family bought a new snowblower for my Dad. To surprise Dad, Uncle Red suggested hiding the snow blower in his basement. Red attached a string and placed it strategically around their house, across their back yard, across our back yard, through our kitchen and then under our tree. An attached note just said "Follow Me." Which my Dad did. We all did.

The Toppings were having breakfast and as we walked through their kitchen they pretended it was just another visit.

But there is more. Red's basement was dark but Red rigged up a spotlight that lit up when my Dad pulled the string attached to the snow blower!

A Christmas, and friends, to remember!



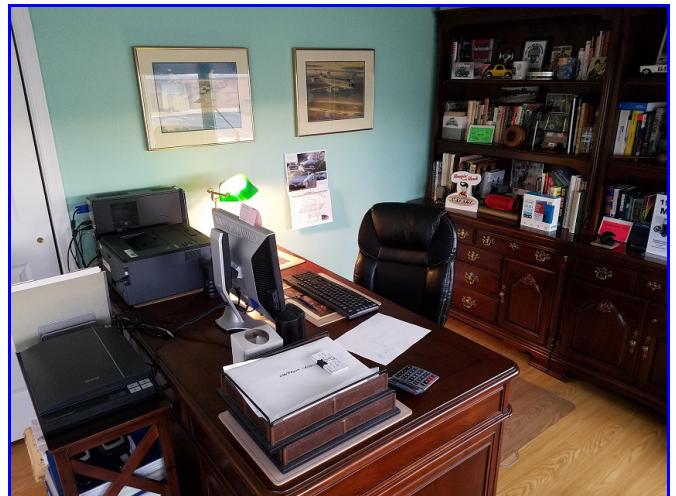
NJACE Calendar of Events

The ongoing pandemic continues to have our in-person activities largely on hold. Our monthly Zoom online breakfast meeting will take place on **Saturday, February 6**, at 9:00 AM. This month's Zoom session will include a brief business meeting and a Corvair "Which Came First" game.

Mark your calendar for **Saturday, May 1**, for our first planned in-person event of 2021, the Spring Swap Meet in Flanders. Details on page 2 of this issue.

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

Where the Magic Happens...



Yes, this is it, the International Editorial Offices of the NJACE *Fanbelt*. Just steps from the Atlantic Ocean in beautiful Lavallette, New Jersey, this is where each monthly issue of the almost-award-winning newsletter takes shape.

Remember, you can see your words and photos published here. Just submit them to the Editor at vairtec@optimum.net. Fame and fortune await! (Well, fame maybe.)

