

May 2021

# the *Fanbelt*

new jersey association of CORVAIR enthusiasts



## Once Upon A Time

this was a Corvair station wagon, but a group of guys in Utah built it into a totally cool front-engine big-block-powered off-road recovery vehicle.

If you're not a purist easily offended by customs, you can check it out by going to <https://gmauthority.com> and searching "Corvair." You'll find this story and others about our favorite cars.

## **NJACE All-Corvair Spring Swap Meet** **Saturday, May 1st** *Get all the details in this issue!*

*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.

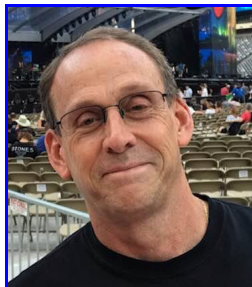
NJACE is a chapter of the Corvair Society of America (CORSA), Inc., P.O. Box 68, Long Lake, MN 55356. Meetings of NJACE are held periodically at locations and times as announced in this newsletter and on our website. All interested persons are welcome. Additional events and activities are held throughout 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](http://www.corvair.org/chapters/njace).

## 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 Main*

The end of 2020 marked the 15th year that I have owned my 1968 Coupe. Probably nothing remarkable about owning a Corvair that long, except that I never intended to buy one.



I have been interested in "Classic Cars" for as long as I can remember. Years ago, the hobby was not what it is today with multiple shows each weekend. Most of my "classic car" calendar was attending the annual "Lead East" show and falling in love with every car that had a "for sale" sign displayed. Prices always seemed to be out of my budget, funny now as I look at prices that have skyrocketed with the likes of Barrett-Jackson and other auctions.

Prior to purchasing the Corvair, I had looked and test drove a number of other cars ('46 Oldsmobile, '64 Thunderbird, '80 Corvette). I drove the '46 Oldsmobile three blocks and realized that steering, acceleration, and braking were all somewhat theoretical. The '64 Thunderbird looked nice parked but must have had the same wiring guys that built the 60's Lincolns. The '80 Corvette experience led me to buying new ones... first a 1994 and later a 2002.

While having a bit of fun driving late model Corvettes (the '94 was far more unsafe than any Corvair), they never satisfied my desire to own a "classic car."

So, with a relatively modest amount of funds in early 2005, I started to look at classic car ads with a little more intent. The plan was to buy the "best" of what my budget would allow, in an acceptable color, and had to be at least somewhat interesting.

Being a "GM Guy" at heart (owned many Pontiacs) my search quickly eliminated Impalas, Chevelles, Novas etc. due to budgetary restraints. And then one day while searching "Old Car

Trader" online an ad for a '68 Corvair popped-up. The price was right, the color was right, and it clearly was interesting.

The car was owned by a gentleman in Totowa NJ. It had spent its entire life in Ohio until the original owner passed away, and then it was willed to his nephew in Totowa. It was advertised as a low mileage (25,000 miles) original car. Well, I can confirm that it was a car and is titled with the low mileage... but to this day I would debate if that odometer just might have turned over once prior.

I scheduled an appointment on New Years Eve 2005 to go look and test drive the car. My wife thought I was crazy to look at the car on a holiday... didn't seem weird to me and the owner was glad to show it.

When I arrived, the owner was working on a '48 Packard in his garage. The Corvair was out back in a makeshift plastic garage with a plywood floor. He started up the Corvair and the plastic garage quickly turned into a cloud of white smoke. The test drive revealed poor handling and the absence of the ability to stop.

Every impulse I had was to walk away. However, I just thought that maybe all older cars were junk and that I needed to lower my expectations. So, after completing the test drive I decided to give him an offer on the car with one stipulation, it needed to be able to stop when I came back with the money.



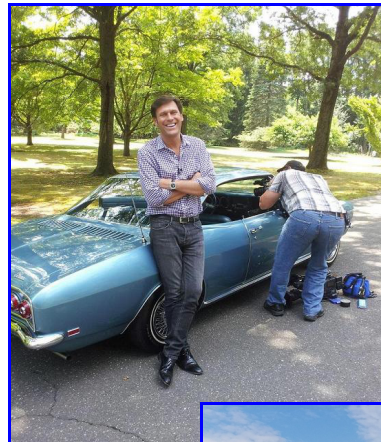
A couple of days later I picked up the car and drove it just a few miles (Totowa to Clifton) to my father-in-law's house where I intended to store



it for the winter. The drive confirmed to me that I didn't really know a great deal about what I just bought.

Filled with great enthusiasm and desire to learn, I searched the internet for information. A place called Clark's seemed to be interesting, and some club named NJACE appeared. I filled out a club membership form and sent it in. Just a few days later I received a phone call from some guy named Tim that welcomed me to the club. I was suspicious that all I needed to join was to send in money... no interview or request for references.

So, the rest, as they say, is history. The smoky car in the plastic garage changed my life forever. Had I bought a perfect car I would never have learned anything. And simply sending money to a PO box in Ridgewood led to a 15-year membership in the best car club in the US.



Reporter Lee Cowan relaxes with Dave's Corvair while a technician affixes a camera to the car for a "CBS Sunday Morning" segment in 2012



NJACE members pitch in to help Dave. Isn't that what the club is for?



Another day, another trophy for Dave and his Corvair

Send us your "How I Got Started" story!



## Can You Spare One Hour?

For our Swap Meet on May 1st we need help, in one-hour segments.

We'll have a "club table" to sign up new members, answer questions, and generally be hospitable to our guests. We need member-volunteers to spend an hour at that table, so that no one person has to be there all day.

We also need volunteers to help direct parking in the lot across the street from the swap meet site, to ensure that our guests park where they

should and that they do not block an aisle or the loading area of that business. Here again, we need several volunteers so that no one has to be there for an extended period.

Can you help? Please contact club President Brian O'Neill at 973-729-5586 or by email at [bmoneill@juno.com](mailto:bmoneill@juno.com) or say "yes" when asked.

There are additional volunteers tasks to be done during the day, from helping direct vendors to their assigned spots in the morning to cleaning up at day's end. The more members who volunteer, the less work any volunteer needs to do. So please pitch in!

# It's Time for the Swap Meet!

**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.)

50-50 raffle! Door Prizes by Clark's Corvair Parts! Refreshments! Music by DJ Steve!

Sellers, if you have not yet reserved your space (it's free!), don't wait! As of this writing only a handful of spaces remain available. Reserve your spot by sending your name, phone number, and email address to club Secretary David Malcolm at [david.s.malcolm@verizon.net](mailto:david.s.malcolm@verizon.net).

Here are some important last-minute details:

All applicable COVID protocols will be enforced. Yes, this is an outdoor event but everyone must wear a mask and practice social distancing. All visitors need to sign in when they arrive. We ask all attendees to comply with these directives.

The church parking lot is the site of the swap meet, so only vendors will be permitted to drive into that lot. General parking will be across the street, at Triumph Plastics. Please exercise care when crossing Bartley Flanders Road.

The church rest rooms will be available for our use beginning at 9:00 AM.

NJACE has pledged a minimum \$250 donation to the church, plus the proceeds from the 50-50 raffle. The church and its members will be offering the refreshments, and donations to defray their costs will be received gratefully.

As noted on the previous page, additional volunteer help is needed on that day. Please donate an hour of your time by contacting club President Brian O'Neill at 973-729-5586 or by

email at [bmoneill@juno.com](mailto:bmoneill@juno.com).

To download the swap meet flyer, visit <https://www.corvair.org/chapters/njace/swapmeet.html>

Here's a street view of the church:



And here's an aerial view:



The swap meet is our outdoor replacement for the longstanding indoor parts auction that could not be held due to the pandemic. We are aware of visitors coming from at least six states – including from as far as Colorado! Zoom meetings have been great but this is our first in-person event since last October's Fall Foliage Tour and only our second in-person event since the pandemic took hold. Be there!



## President's Message

by *Brian O'Neill*

### Spring is Here!

The daffodils came up along the side of the house. The weather is getting warmer. The vaccination rate is skyrocketing. I even saw a robin! So for sure spring is here.



There are a lot of old-time traditions associated with the coming of spring. Spring cleaning anyone? I'm not sure it qualifies as a tradition but it is certainly a part of the NJACE history. Back in prehistoric times we used to have a swap meet every spring hosted by our own esteemed newsletter editor at his former place of business. One spring we had snow in the morning and T-shirt weather that afternoon.

*[Editor's Note: It wasn't quite prehistoric. The original "Garage Sale" swap meet at Nortech in Midland Park was 1987-2004.]*

The weather for Saturday, May 1 will be gorgeous. I guarantee it. Why you might ask. Because that's day when NJACE resurrects the swap meet. There are details about the swap meet

here in the newsletter and you may have already seen e-mail messages and online postings about the meet.

But I want to restate a couple things. Even though the vaccination rate is going up we still need to comply with social distancing, mask wearing and signing in. Everyone attending must stop at the registration booth. There, after you sign in, we will give you a wristband and a door prize coupon.

The other item I would like to mention is about parking. It will be across the street at a plastics manufacturing company. Be careful as you cross the street because it is often heavily traveled with people hell-bent to getting to their destination 30 seconds earlier.

If you are a vendor you have already registered or you plan to. Good, right now we have about 25 registered vendors – all Corvair stuff. No macramé hangers, Shamwows or parts for other cars. If you want to vend and you haven't registered please do now by contacting club Secretary David Malcolm at [david.s.malcolm@verizon.net](mailto:david.s.malcolm@verizon.net).

As I have promised it will be a gorgeous day. The very talented Steve Calandra will be our DJ, there will be door prizes, refreshments and a 50-50 raffle! So don't miss it.

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## New This Month

This month we have several changes and new additions to our "classified ads" web site, <http://garagekey.blogspot.com/>.

The two Corvair convertibles offered last month by long-time club member Dave Cavagnaro have been sold, as has the nicely-optioned convertible offered by Bob Boynton. But several other very nice cars (and at least one project car) remain available.

In just the past few days we have added some new and used parts to the site, many of which will be available at our swap meet. Check 'em out!

The web site includes clear color photos of the cars and parts being offered, most of which are "clickable" to give you an enlarged view.

As we mentioned last month, the site is now averaging more than 50 individual visitors *per day*. That's nothing in internet terms but great for a local car club's ad site.

Have a Corvair or something Corvair-related to sell? Seeking something? Placing an ad on the site is FREE. Just send good photos and complete description to us at [vairtec@optimum.net](mailto:vairtec@optimum.net).

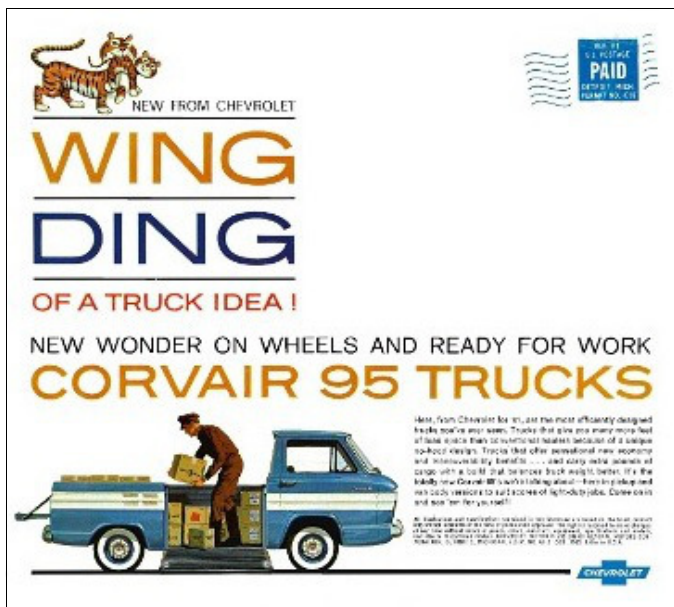


# New Old Idea

by Bob Marlow

There may be truly nothing new under the sun.

"Wing Ding of a Truck Idea" was an advertising tagline used by Chevrolet to promote the then-new Corvaire 95 trucks. The trucks, as we all know, debuted for the 1961 model year as an expansion of the Corvaire line. The "Wing Ding of a Truck Idea" advertising phrase may seem dated and lame today, but the Corvaire 95 Rampside pickup was and is a distinctive and capable vehicle.



I first bought a Rampside in the early 1970s and quickly came to wonder how anyone got along without a vehicle so handy. Today I own my fourth Rampside. But while the Rampside I bought nearly 50 years ago was my daily-use vehicle, the one I own today is a weekend plaything. Years ago I stopped using Corvairs as regular transportation and bought newer vehicles.

My latest new car is a 2019 Honda Ridgeline. No surprise there, Hondas are top sellers and many NJACE members drive them. But, since buying my Honda I have come to realize that the Ridgeline is in many ways a modern re-invention of the Rampside.

Consider: The Rampside is physically smaller than traditional pickups of the time. The Ridgeline is physically smaller than traditional pickups of today. The Rampside employed a unit body design at a time when body-on-frame was the norm. The Ridgeline employs a unit body design where virtually all other pickups remain body-on-frame.

The Rampside is powered by a six-cylinder engine adapted from the Corvaire car. The Ridgeline has a six-cylinder engine shared with the Odyssey minivan. The Rampside has independent coil spring suspension all around when all trucks of the time used solid axles with leaf springs in the rear and some at all four corners. The Ridgeline has independent coil spring suspension all around when most of today's pickups still have a solid rear axle, most still with leaf springs.

But wait, you say. What about the distinctive side loading ramp that gave the Rampside its name, along with the rear-mounted engine that created a cargo box unlike any other pickup?



Well, the Ridgeline has its own distinctive cargo box features. These include a clever two-way tailgate (which I have found to be immensely useful) and the unique in-bed trunk which enhances significantly the truck's flexibility.



And in their time, both vehicles have been derided for not being a "real truck." The sin for the Rampside was its modest torque and horsepower, while the

*continued*



New Old Idea, continued

Ridgeline gets criticized for its limited (relatively speaking) towing limits. I say "nuts" to both complaints.

The Rampside can carry up to 1800 pounds of cargo, more than what the standard "half ton" pickups of the day could tote, and it can reach any US speed limit – and exceed most. The Ridgeline can tow up to 5,000 pounds, less than the big boys but enough that I have towed Corvairs on trailers with mine. Fellow NJACE member Michael Stone also has a Ridgeline and has used it to trailer his Corvair as well.

The Rampside’s rear-engine layout gives it outstanding traction in mud and snow, especially when equipped with the optional Positraction rear axle. The Ridgeline’s All Wheel Drive (not four wheel drive) makes it remarkably sure-footed.

Living with both a Rampside and a Ridgeline has made me realize that, despite how different they may seem from one another, they each are a "Wing Ding of a Truck Idea."



**The End Is Near, Part 2**



**Y**our club leadership at work: President Brian O’Neill (left) and Vice-President Nick Ford (right) adjust the carburetors on Frank Malone’s Greenbrier, aka “The Greenbrier That Will Not Leave.”

**NJACE Officers for 2021**

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Publicity VP, Bob Marlow  
 Phone 201-444-1859  
 Email [rwmarlow@optimum.net](mailto:rwmarlow@optimum.net)

## Heading to Springfield?

During our Zoom meeting on April 24 we learned that at least five club members are planning to attend the CPF Mini-Convention in Springfield, Illinois, later this month.

Ray Coker, Frank Hunter, Bob Marlow, Ken Schiftner, and Tim Schwartz each raised their hands when the question was asked.

Ken may be having the most interesting trip, as he is coming from his adopted home of Colorado and bringing "SeeMore," the Pikes Peak Corvair Club's cutaway Corvair.



Although billed as a "mini-convention," the cancellation of the annual CORSA convention due to complications from the pandemic has caused this event to grow in size and stature. It now features a full slate of traditional convention activities, including a Concours d'Elegance, an autocross, a road rally, a car display, and more.

There will be tech sessions and special presentations, among them a distinctive presentation by Corvair aviation guru William Wynne. A Corvair powered fly-in is expected at a nearby airport.

Visits to the Corvair Preservation Foundation's Corvair Museum, just ten miles south of the host hotel, are planned also.

The host hotel is the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield, Illinois, site of the 2016 CORSA convention. The facility is well-suited to events of this sort.

We expect the entire event to have the "vibe" of a full CORSA convention, limited only by some of the COVID restrictions still in effect in Illinois. These include size limits on indoor gatherings (tech sessions and the like), and mask-wearing directives.

The event dates are May 18-22, and full information is available at the event web site:

<http://www.corvair.org/chapters/chapter627/mini2021.htm>

### NJACE Calendar of Events

**Saturday, April 24:** You missed it! Our monthly Zoom online breakfast meeting was moved up by a week (but we sent email notifications to everyone, so you probably didn't miss it). We'll be back to the "first Saturday" schedule in June.

**Saturday, May 1:** Our first in-person event of 2021, the Spring Swap Meet in Flanders as detailed in this issue and on our club web site, <http://www.corvair.org/chapters/njace>.

**May 18-22:** Corvair Preservation Foundation mini-convention in Springfield, IL. Details at <http://www.corvair.org/chapters/chapter627/mini2021.htm>

Saturday, May 22, 2021: NECC's Performance Driving event at New York Safety Track. Details at <http://www.corvair.org/chapters/necc>

**Saturday, June 5:** Our monthly breakfast. Will it be on Zoom? Will it be in-person? Stay tuned!

**Saturday, July 31:** Car show at Pocono Raceway in conjunction with the NECC's track day. Details at <http://www.corvair.org/chapters/necc>

*As always, watch our Facebook page, our email messages, and this monthly newsletter for updates.*