

By Bailey White

Someday the old junker will be a neat car again



It really makes you feel your age when you get a letter from your insurance agent telling you that the car you bought, only slightly used, the year you got out of college is now an antique. "Beginning with your next payment, your premiums will reflect this change in classification," the letter said.

I went out and looked at the car. I thought back over the years. I could almost hear my uncle's disapproving voice. "You should never buy a used car," he had told me the day I brought it home. Ten years later I drove that used car to his funeral. I drove my sister to the hospital in that car to have her first baby, and I drove to Atlanta in that car when the baby graduated from Georgia Tech with a degree in physics.

"When are you going to get a new car?" my friends asked me.

"I don't need a new car," I said. "This car runs fine."

I changed the oil often, and I kept good tires on it. It always got me where I wanted to go. But the stuffing came out of the backseat and the springs poked through, and the dashboard disintegrated. At 300,000 miles the odometer quit turning, but I didn't really care to know how far I had driven. A hole wore in the floor where my heel rested in front of the accelerator, and the insulation all peeled off the fire wall. "Old piece of junk," my friends whispered. The seat-belt catch finally wore out, and I tied on a huge bronze hook with a fireman's knot.

Then one day on my way to work, the car coughed, sputtered and stopped. "This is it," I thought, and I gave it a pat. "It's been a good car."

The mechanic laughed at me. "You know what's wrong with that car?" he asked. "That car is out of gas." So I slopped some gas in the tank and drove ten more years.

The fuel gauge never worked again after that, but I got to where I could tell when the gas was low by the smell. I think it was the smell of the bottom of the tank. There was also a little smell of brake fluid, a little smell of exhaust, a little smell of oil and, after all the years, a little smell of me. Car smells.

And sounds. The wonderful sound when the engine finally catches on a cold day, and an ominous *tick tick* in July when the radiator is working too hard. The windshield wipers said "Gracie Allen Gracie Allen Gracie Allen." I didn't like a lot of conversation in the car, because I had to keep listening for a little skip that meant I needed to jump out and adjust the carburetor. I kept a screwdriver close at hand, and a pint of brake fluid and a new rotor, just in case. "She's strange," my friends whispered. "And she drives so slow."

I don't know how fast I drove. The speedometer had quit working years ago. But when I would look down through the hole in the floor and see the pavement, a gray blur, whizzing by just inches away from my feet, and feel the tremendous heat from the internal-combustion engine pouring back through the fire wall into my lap, and hear each barely contained explosion, just as a heart attack victim is able to hear her own heartbeat, it didn't feel like slow to me. A whiff of brake fluid would remind me just what a tiny thing I was relying on to stop myself from hurtling along the surface of the Earth at an unnatural speed. When I arrived at my destination, I would slump back, unfasten the seat-belt hook with trembling hands and stagger out. I would gather up my things and give the car a last look. "Thank you, sir," I would say. "We got here one more time."

But after I received that letter I began thinking about buying a new car. I

read the newspaper every night. Finally I found one that sounded good. It was the same make as my car, but almost new. "Call Steve," the ad said. I went to see the car. It was parked in Steve's driveway. It was a fashionable wheat color. There was carpet on the floor and the seats were covered with soft, velvety-feeling stuff. It smelled like acrylic, and vinyl, and Steve. I turned a knob. Mozart's Concerto for Flute and Harp poured out of four speakers. "But how can you listen to the engine with music playing?" I asked Steve.

I turned the key. The car started instantly. I fastened my seat belt. Nothing but a click. Steve got in the passenger seat, and we went for a test drive. We floated down the road. I couldn't hear a sound, but I decided it must be time to shift gears. I stomped around on the floor and grabbed Steve's knee before I remembered the car had automatic transmission.

"You mean you just put it in 'Drive' and drive?" I asked. Steve scrunched himself against his door and clamped his knees together. He tested his seat belt. "Have you ever driven before?" he asked.

I bought it. I rolled all the windows up by mashing a button beside my elbow, set the air-conditioning on "Recirc" and listened to Vivaldi all the way home.

So now I have two cars. I call them my new car and my real car. Most of the time I drive my new car. But on some days I go out to the barn and get in my real car. I shoo the rats out of the backseat and crank up the engine. Even without daily practice my hands and feet know just what to do. My ears perk up, and I sniff the air. I add a little brake fluid, a little water. I sniff again. It'll need gas next week, and an oil change. I back it out and we roll down the road. People stop and look. They smile. "Neat car!" they say.

PLEASE REMEMBER

THIS IS OUR SEPTEMBER EVENT

DINNER AS A GROUP FOLLOWS
AT THE GROVE

ALL CHEVY SHOW

Sunday, September 13, 1992

Hills Department Store Parking Lot - Century III - West Mifflin

Registration 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Registration Fee \$5.00

**Open to all Chevrolets, 1974 and older
All Welcome ... Cars, Trucks, Stock, Modified**

Trophies awarded for each category

There will be NO parts vending

Vehicles must be registered by 1:00 pm - Awards at 3:30

Kid's MODEL CAR SHOW - 16 and under

**Make checks payable to STEEL CITY CLASSICS, INC.
Mail to: Ray Ford 701 Prestley Ave. Carnegie, Pa. 15106**

**For information call:
(412) 276-0384 or (412) 469-3659**



All Chevy Show Registration Form

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _____

Year: _____

Address: _____

Model: _____

Class: _____

Phone: _____

Stock/Modified ? _____

Steel City Classics Member ? Yes No

"VAUN'S WORK OF ART"

Last Month's V.S.J. reported that I joined WPCC five years ago. In those five years, I have not seen 16 Corvairs at once in attendance at a WPCC monthly meeting.

That is, until last month's meeting at Art Klos' Body Shop in Bethel Park. Our own Vaun Hamlin, Jr., did a spectacular job of organizing the catered meeting event. The custom cars arranged there for our viewing pleasure were works of art (no pun intended!).

I think I speak for all of us who regularly travel the Parkway, the Fort Pitt Tunnel and the Squirrel Hill Tunnel (for me a 75-minute trip), the South Hills site for this meeting was a welcome relief.

I'd vote for an occasional change of venue if given the chance, especially if member and Corvair turnout were similar to this great night's.

BRAVO è MOLTO GRAZIE, VAUN!

Laurie Maglietta

PARKWAY CLEANUP

The Parkway cleanup for this quarter is Saturday, September 26. This date has been picked to coincide neatly with our meeting. Hopefully, someone will not only volunteer but actually show up. I think everyone agrees wholeheartedly that this project could and should be handled by PennDOT workers who are overpaid to sit in their trucks and watch us, or probably a collection of people who do nothing and still manage to get a welfare check. However, all of those thoughts aside, we all must remember that we have a prime section of the Parkway, and we have two nice signs that thank us as a Corvair Club. Those signs are one of the best advertisements our little Club has, so let's put aside all our personal feelings and have a good turnout to make this the short couple-hour project it should be. See you all Saturday, September 26, at 8:00 a.m.!

Laurie Maglietta

FIVE YEARS AGO IN THE JOURNAL

John and Gayle Gunlach reported on the great time they had at the Choo Choo Corvair Show in Chattanooga. Bob Donnelly was planning a convoy to Fallingwater for September, 1987. Prez Dale Smith gave a good pep talk, and a 56-year young clergyman named Lee Parker, Jr. was signed up as a new member.

Al Friend

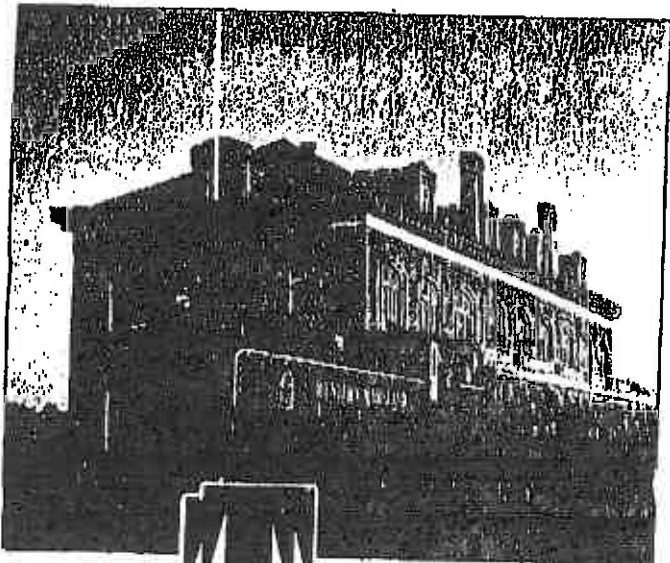
10 YEARS AGO IN THE JOURNAL

The August '82 Journal told about WPCC's adventures at the Corsa National Convention in Syracuse, NY. Editor Luke Lucas wrote a long story about the fine performance of his 1964 convertible on that 400-mile trip. Jim Artzberger took a third place in the Edward Cole competition and also received an award for his scale model Corvair 4 X 4!

Luke mistook the pool at the Marriott for Sea World when he noticed three whales swimming there -- Bill Artzberger, Bill Brill and Isadore Krouse!!

Al Friend

Visit Yesterday... Today!



COLOR PHOTOGRAPH BY
WILLIAM P. PRICE

The Western Maryland Scenic Railroad is an excursion railroad based in Allegany County, Maryland. Our spectacular 32 mile round trips mix mountain scenery with the rich history of the Western Maryland Railway, captured in a special 1992 offering.

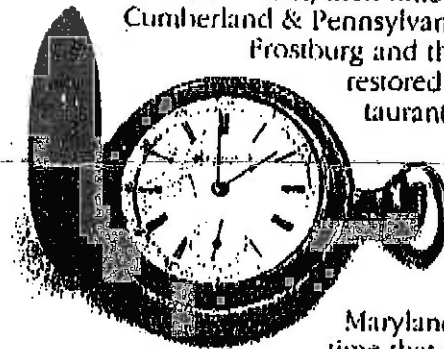
Leaving Cumberland, the scenic railroad crosses a dramatic breach in the Allegheny Mountains, through a bridge, around Helmstetter's Horseshoe Curve and through the 914 foot Brush Tunnel under Piney Mountain.

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1221 to reserve tables for groups of five or more.

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<p>Railroad Theme Restaurant Mon. - Sun. 11 am - 11 pm</p> <p>Bakery and Ice Cream Parlor Mon. - Sun. 7 am - 11 pm</p>
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Western Terminus For The Western Maryland Scenic Railroad

PREZ SEZ!

Well, people, those of you who missed last month's meeting "Just Lost Out." That was one of the best-attended monthly meetings ever -- don't know the count, but I did hear that 15 Corvairs were there! The hosts, Art & Vaun, did a great job. The food was great -- the weather cooperated -- and the cars on display, as the kids would say, "AWESOME".

I think this shows that if the Club presents something good to the members, they will show up. It tells us that we don't have to have the meetings in the same place every month. Maybe in the winter, but in good weather let's move them around, at least three or four. So think -- come up with a place, with or without an attraction. Let us know so we can do something with it. Next time you see Vaun, thank him for a very good night out!

See the article on the train ride for this month. Let's try for a large turnout. We plan to meet at Randall's Restaurant on Route 51 South, near Perryopolis, below Route 70. We will be departing at 9:00 a.m. Anyone wishing to join us, please do. We will go South on 51 to Uniontown -- then West on 40 to 68 -- then on to Cumberland -- but if you want to go on your own, just meet at the train station. Also, if you could call me by Friday, August 21, I can call the restaurant and train to let them know an approximate number. THE DATE IS SUNDAY, AUGUST 23!!!

BEST TECH TIP EVER

This article may be the most valuable, money-saving tech tip ever! We suggest that each of you review any tech tip you may be going to use with your own inspection mechanic familiar with that particular vehicle.

We read and discard many per month. If one looks good, or at least safe, we solicit at least one additional opinion before printing it in the VSJ.

However, occasionally a not-so-good idea gets printed. On the other hand, the bulk of the ideas that make the Journal are interesting, workable concepts. The important factor is before you try any idea or concept from any publication, review the idea and possible consequences with your mechanic familiar with your car. If it doesn't make sense to you, don't try it!

Dale Smith

LOTS A HOT AIR!!

The Make-A-Wish Foundation is sponsoring a Festival and Hot-Air Balloon Race on Sunday, September 20, at Hartwood Acres from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. There should be 30 balloons there, and Club members are invited to assist Hal & Debbie Goff launch their balloon. Make-A-Wish will rope off the car display area and give us all a free lunch (they won't run out of food like the Vintage Grand Prix).

Hal Goff

FOR SALE: '64 Greenbrier -- 4-sp. Delux -- part restored

Wayne 412-882-2109

Minutes of WPCC Meeting

July 28. 1992

Aug., 1992

Officers Present: President, Wayne Jones; V.P., Don Baker; Secretary, Pat Greenwald; Treasurer, Carole Friend.

Board Members present: Sandy Artzberger, Bill Brill, Dave Fabyonic, Hal Goff, Bob McCune.

The minutes were approved as printed in the Vair Street Journal.

The treasurer's report was read and approved. The July balance was \$830.84. There are 73 paid members.

Old Business

Wayne reported that the club received \$60 for the Brentwood parade. Six cars participated. Vaun Hamlin reported that 3 cars participated in the Cannonsburg parade and everyone had fun.

Bill Artzberger thanked everyone, on behalf of the children that benefit from the proceeds of the Vintage Grand Prix, for all their help.

Laurie Maglietta reported that only four people attended the last highway clean-up. The next clean-up date is set for September 12.

Wayne distributed fliers concerning the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad trip that Bill proposed at the June meeting and asked for a show of hands of those interested.

New Business

Hal Goff spoke about the Make-A-Wish Hot Air Balloon Race at Hartwood Acres on September 20. Plans are to have Corvairs on display on Sunday. Security and free lunch will be provided and members can be part of the launch crew.

Dave informed the members that we no longer have the big room at the church available to us for meetings; we will use a classroom instead.

Bill Artzberger reported that the Transportation Museum will be moving to the Miller Printing building at The Carnegie on the North Side.

Dick Brier announced that the bus trip to the Hershey car show is on again this year. The date is October 10. He suggested that the meeting place be moved to the South Hills.

Wayne proposed that we have more special focus meetings at different sites.

On a motion by Bob Heiber and a second by Sandy Artzberger, the meeting was adjourned.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

That sure is a great little car you're driving. In fact, the Corvair is probably the most courageous, creative and potentially the best-engineered automobile to come out of Detroit in modern times. As you may already know, a two-year study conducted by the U. S. Dept. of Transportation, and suggested by Mr. Ralph Nader, concluded: "The Corvair qualitatively meets or exceeds standards set by contemporary automobiles in stability, cornering and roll-over tests." It is also the only car ever proven safe in a court of law!!!

Next time a fellow Corvair driver waves to you, hold your head high and wave back, since you have something in common. The "Vair", however, is far from a common car. They are now quite rare, gaining in value, and have so many sensible features when compared to today's plastic and cardboard cars. Isn't it great NOT spending money on antifreeze and snow tires for example!

We are a chartered chapter of "The Corvair Society of America" (CORSA), a rapidly growing international organization now boasting over 8,000 members. We encourage all WPC members to maintain membership in CORSA -- The International Corvair Club.

The long-range goals of both clubs is simply to increase the enjoyment and preservation of the Corvair automobile. We provide technical and historic information, parts procurement, professional publications and an international classified ad service. We love driving to local points of interest, touring style, in Corvair convoys. We have parties, picnics and dinners, there's always plenty of Corvair talk, and all of our events are FAMILY affairs. Our membership includes people from every imaginable age group, background and profession. Our chapter provides a monthly newsletter, and CORSA provides a beautiful monthly magazine named "The CORSA Communiques".

MEETINGS: The 4th Tuesday of every month, 8 p.m., at the Good Shepard Lutheran Church, Monroeville, PA. DUES: LOCAL \$10 per calendar year, or \$1 for each remaining month of the current year. Includes membership for immediate family members. Payable to WPC.

MAIL TO: W.P.C.C. c/o J. DALE SMITH

634 Arden Lane
Pittsburgh, PA 15243

NAME _____ Age _____ Occupation _____ Phone _____
Address _____ Zip _____ Date _____

CORSA Member: Yes _____ No _____ #Corvairs owned, yr., model _____



Corvair Society of America

Founded by and for those who still appreciate the Corvair Automobile
P.O. Box 607, Lemont, IL 60439-0607 • 708/257-6530

Membership Application

Last Name _____ First Name _____
Street Address _____
City _____ State/Prov. _____ Zip Code _____ Country _____
Telephone Number (_____) _____
Occupation _____
Fee Schedule 1 year membership \$25

1. How did you hear about CORSA?
2. What is your primary interest in Corvairs? (Transportation, restoration, etc.) _____

3. How many Corvairs do you have? _____
Racing _____ Restorable _____ Parts cars _____

4. Are you a long time owner? _____
First time owner? _____ Previous owner who has reacquired a Corvair? _____

5. Approximately how many Corvair-miles do you drive in a year? _____

6. Do you do your own mechanical work? _____
Body work? Major _____ Minor _____

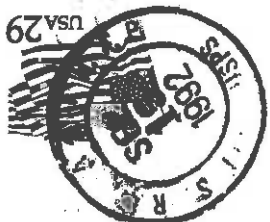
7. What other cars do you own or use for daily transportation? _____

8. What do you hope to gain from membership in CORSA? (Technical information, parts availability, compellion information, social information, etc.) _____

AUG 92

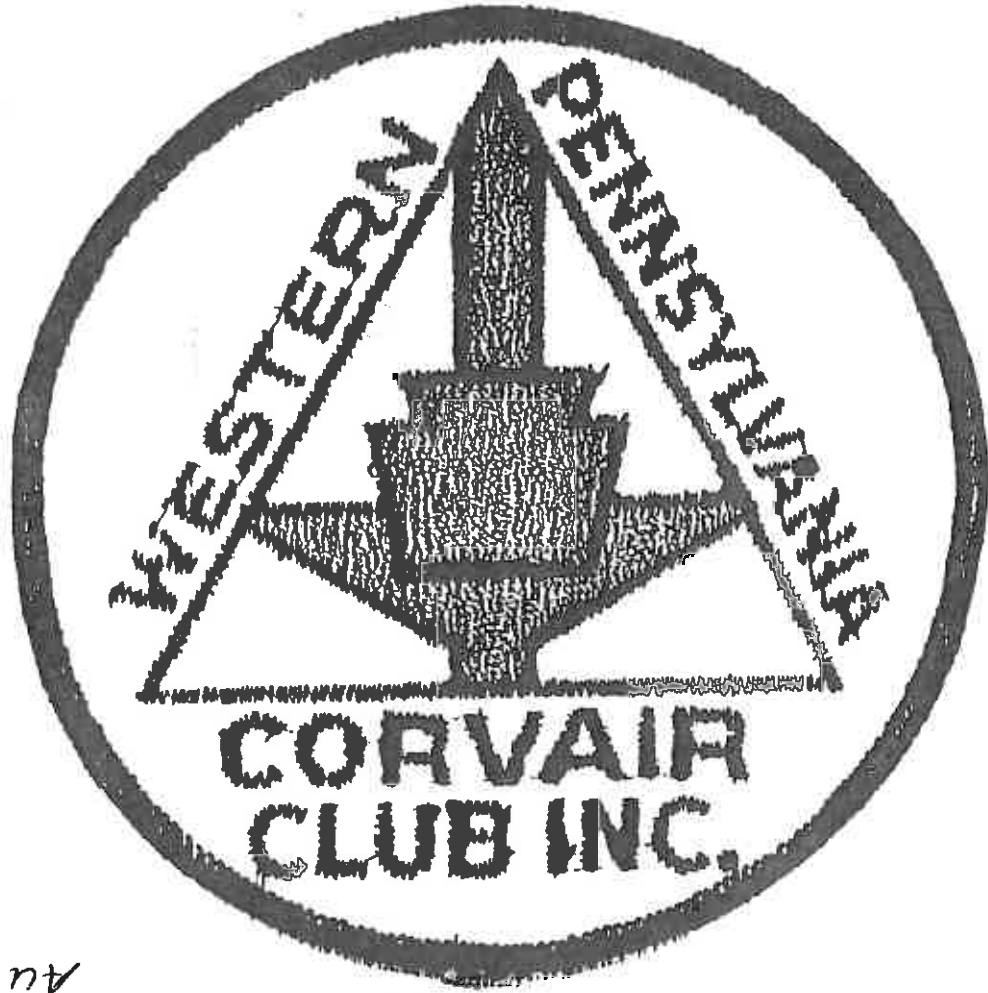
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WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CORVAIR CLUB

THE VAIR STREET JOURNAL



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