

I put poor planning as the cause of my accident. I was working on the top section of my new 80' tower. When I had completed my work, I discovered that my many trips up the tower, brought up about 300# of tools and spare hardware. Rather than make many trips down & up, I decided to lower the items all at one time, using a pulley, a rope which I secured at ground level, went to the top with a small barrel. After loading the barrel, I returned to the ground, untied the rope, holding it tightly, expecting to be able to lower the barrel at a slow pace. Surprise to me that my 155# of weight didn't do the job and was jerked off the ground so suddenly that I lost my presence of mind and forgot to let go of the rope. I proceeded at a rapid rate up the side of the tower, meeting up with the barrel at approximately the 40' mark. This accounts for my fractured skull and broken collar bone. Slowed only slightly, I continued to the top where my right hand had the fingers two knuckles deep in the pulley, but I held firmly to the rope. However, when the barrel of tools hit the ground, the bottom of the barrel came out, reducing the weight to about 20#, so I started my rapid descent and met the barrel coming up at the half way point. This accounts for the two broken ankles and lacerations of my legs & lower body. The encounter with the barrel slowed me enough to lessen my injuries when I fell onto the pile of tools, so only three vertebrae were cracked. I'm sorry to report, however, that as I lay on the pile of tools in pain, unable to stand, I again lost my presence of mind and let go of the rope, and watched the barrel.

By Dan Gilmore - Avion Travelcade Club Int., Pres.

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THE VAIR STREET JOURNAL

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CORVAIR CLUB

DECEMBER 1996

END OF THE YEAR NEWS FROM W.P.C.C. = The Holiday Party went off as usual, without a fault. The unannounced entertainment chairmen was Al Friend. In his bag of tricks, he was able to get a black bear to appear behind the restaurant. A bear trap was set up a little later, a TV crew appeared, but the bear was smarter and left the area.

Don Cekus is the '97 President, Don Baker is the Vice President, Laurie Maglietta is Secretary, Bill Brill remains Treasurer. The announced board members are Bob Heiber, Pat Greenwald, Steve Puskas, Al Friend, and Dale Smith. Please call Don Cekus if you would like to help the club by serving on the board, at 364-8224.

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CORVAIR - The most significant car ever made?

The American Automobile Centennial Commission of Detroit compiled two lists of the "most significant" milestones in American automotive history. One list covered the most significant cars while the other covered the most significant innovations.

On the list of innovations, safety items were included. On the list of automobiles, the Corvair was ignored, but the Corvair started it all.

The Corvair lies at the root of today's litigious and law driven society. Ralph Nader and his attack on the automobile industry in Unsafe at any Speed, laid the foundation for modern consumerism. As we know, the effects of this on today's society and economy are far reaching. Huge settlements for spillage of McDonald's coffee can be traced to it. So can today's staggering auto insurance and health insurance costs. Unsafe at Any Speed dealt with the domestic auto industry as a whole, but he first chapter was devoted to the Chevrolet Corvair. The Corvair automobile immediately became synonymous with the title. Practically overnight, product-liability lawsuits became not only big business, but big news.

The lawsuits against General Motors, citing the Corvair's design as the cause for accidents (which were previously considered to have been caused by driver error) were part of that news.

While he was practically unknown before Unsafe at Any Speed was published, Ralph Nader became a celebrity and he made a career as the founder of modern consumerism. His professional training was as a lawyer.

While it can be said that consumerism has allowed us all to benefit from better and safer products, the greatest benefits have been accrued not to consumers, but to contingency-fee trial lawyers. William Safire, writing in the New York Times (3/21) said of Nader, "His consumerism has long been the lawyer's gravy train. Nader inveighs, the lawyers sue; he gets principlled satisfaction, they get filthy rich."

In a 1991 speech to the Corvair Society of America's (CORSA) convention in Washington, D.C., Nader said that he targeted the Corvair not because he considered it to be any more dangerous than other cars, such as

Beulah Presbyterian Church
2500 McCrady Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15235

Ladies & Gentlemen:

I am writing you on behalf of the Western Pennsylvania Corvair Club. The enclosed \$150.00 check is in memory of Bob McCune. Bob and Mary had been much loved and valued members of our club for many years. On numerous occasions we were the recipients of their hospitality as we met in the party room of their building for our annual Holiday party and other fun-filled occasions. They were as active as possible in the later years of their lives.

At our Holiday party on December 14, '96, it was decided that the proceeds of our Chinese Auction would be sent to your church in memory of Bob. Unanimously, the Club decided to match the funds raised in the auction, thus totaling the enclosed amount.

Please use this small contribution in a way that would have pleased him.

Best regards,

Ellen M. Smith
for the Western Pennsylvania Corvair Club

the Volvo-swagen Beetle or the Renault Dauphine, but because it was a clean-sheet-of-paper design by the world's largest automaker. If anyone had the opportunity to build a safer car, Nader reasoned, General Motors had it with the Corvair and, in his opinion, the company squandered that opportunity.

This kind of reasoning - what you do versus what a lawyer thinks you should do - has brought us to the point where, today, there are warning labels on everything from plastic bags to soft drink cans. The Model T Ford put Americans on the road. The Corvair put us in the hands of lawyers.

This is why the Corvair is clearly the most significant car of the past 100 years. It's influence on modern American life has gone well beyond the subject of automobiles, and well beyond the time of the car's production. The Corvair has affected the lives of all of us over the past three decades - and it still continues to do so, even today.

This year - after spending 30 years passing opinions on product-safety issues, corporate-responsibility issues, and political practices, Ralph Nader became the presidential candidate of the little-known Green Party. During the campaign, he said that he was a serious candidate, and that he did not allow his name to be placed on the ballot simply to draw attention to the party.

I'm in this campaign to stay and said, "I know I can't win but this is to break the paradigm, to end the two party duopoly."

Nader's presidential aspirations prompted concern among the pundits about the effect a trial lawyer's candidate might have on the election. It was suggested that Nader could hurt Clinton - the incumbent president - in much the same way that Ross Perot might hurt Bob Dole. A pole conducted earlier this year, showed Nader pulling seven percent of the vote among California voters.

No other car in the 100-year history of the automobile provided the first platform for an influential future presidential candidate. No other car prompted the creation of the National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration, and all the automotive & non-automotive product standards legislation (over

that have followed. No other car triggered an ongoing explosion in product-liability lawsuits. No other car gave consumerists their very careers.

No other car has the significance of the Cheve Corvair. --- This article is from 'Old Cars', written by Robert Marlow, an automobile enthusiast whose collector cars have ranged from a '36 Chrysler Airflow to an '88 Pontiac Fiero. He still owns the '66 Corvair his father bought.

My apology to Bill Artzberger for not mentioning that he was responsible for the article last month about the jet assisted suicide car article.

Old Cars has given Al Friend permission to reprint some interesting articles they have published as of late. Vair Street Journal will reprint these in the near future, as space permits. Below is the form for you to use if you'd like some interesting reading.

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