



## Prairie Capital Corvair Association

P.O. Box 954  
Springfield, Illinois 62705

# The Flat Six

February 2012

### 2012 Officers

President -Jim Collier	(217) 875-5841	Vice-President Dick Moon	(309) 382-3903
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Membership-Dick Moon	(309) 382-3903	Historian/Inventory Garry Biggs	(217) 498-8241
FlatSix Editor Tim Mahler	(217) 793-3824	Email	PrairieCapital@corvair.org

### Board of Directors

Bud Laubach (2012)	(309) 374-2572	Jim Allen (2013)	(309) 685-9614
Bob Gwin (2012)	(217) 873-4876	Brian Sellyer (2012)	(309) 697-9428

## From the President

Looking at my thermometer over the past couple of weeks, told me that Winter was still here.

I have been lubricating and adjusting the windows on my second love (Corvair), off and on over the last week. I am getting ready for Spring and hope to be ready when it arrives.

I would be amiss if I didn't give the credit to Jim Allen for his input and loan of manual to work on this task.

Please be careful, stay warm and we will see you next month.

Jim Collier



Chef Sue Biggs and her assistant Joan Cavagna



The Quiz-master presents the Moon quiz





# January Meeting

The January meeting was preceded by the season's first significant snowfall. This kept the Corvairs bundled in their warm(er) garages away from the corrosive salt Illinois road crews use this time of year. It did not keep away the Corvair enthusiasts who came to talk with good friends, exchange a few parts, get some technical advice, and celebrate PCCA's 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Sue Biggs served up mild cheddar cheese and crackers, tomato soup seasoned with basil and sugar cookies, a good meal on a chilly day. Plus everything, with moderation on the cookies, was even healthy. Best part, it was delicious, especially the soup. I was a good boy and only had seconds on the soup, mainly because the soup was flavorful but also because it warmed the insides. Served in cups, it was like healthy hot chocolate. Hmm Hmm Good.

One of the big topics of the general business meetings was the suggestion of doing an overnight tour or a day tour in the next year or so. The board meeting listed several possibilities including Galina, Indiana's Covered bridges, Amana Colonies, Mad Anthony or DACC show events, hill climb weekend and others. No decision was made, but suggestions, and an organizer or two would be appreciated.

Also discussed was the May meeting date. Return to the May car show and "picnic" at the Community building or a day tour or ? Bill Berta has been in contact with Lincoln Land Community College, LLCC, mainly as it relates to the August car show but recently with the new career center on the LLCC campus. The career center has an automotive shop in the rear which could make for an interesting tour. Toward the front is the culinary area – commercial kitchens which could augment the automotive tour. Bill will contact Mr. Rogers about possibilities. More on both May and LLCC at a later date.

After the 50/50 and the "snacks", Jim Allen conducted the main program. This was an automotive quiz developed by Dick Moon. There were 25 multi-part questions and a bonus question on the quiz. Knowledge of 50s and 60s vehicles was definitely beneficial for this quiz as the majority of questions were on the decade between 1955 and 1965. The editor was only able to answer correctly 14 of the 25 questions, I missed the bonus question too as I had the most recent Roadmaster in my head instead of those from the 50s.

Bill Berta scored the highest on the quiz getting 22 answers completely correct. Partial credit for partial answers was not given on this quiz. Tough quiz master. Bill Pierson scored the next highest with 19 correct answers. Mike Hall was third with 15. Dick Moon even awarded the top three with cash awards – \$5, \$3, \$2. The ladies in the back row were not skunked by the quiz, I forget the actual number correct but they did pretty good for "not paying attention to things car related" (Guys, they know more than they let on, be careful out there, <grin> )

Thanks Dick. The quiz was excellent, we look forward to more.



Think, Jerry, Think



I noticed a few "aha!" moments in this pic



These two must be the "A" students. Bill, right, did answer 22 questions correctly

# General Motors Milford Proving Grounds Bill Berta

The Vintage Chevrolet Club of America (VCCA) held their 50th Anniversary Meet at Flint, Michigan this past July. Among the activities planned during the meet was a trip to the GM Proving Grounds at nearby Milford, MI. This caught my attention and, as members of the VCCA, Shelby and I decided that we would like to participate in that tour as part of the meet activities. We joined the 1,625 convention attendees with the idea participating in this “once in a lifetime event” at the proving grounds. Before the meet was over 1,000 meet participants would take advantage of this opportunity.

No private vehicles could be used by the participants, with travel on chartered buses as the sole means for touring. No cameras or cell phones were allowed (this was difficult for Shelby, but she did just fine leaving her camera behind). No one would be allowed to leave the bus while on the grounds and we would have a GM guide to explain what we were going to observe. There would be two buses allowed on the grounds at a time (a mini convoy).

Upon our arrival, the most impressive thing we noticed was the security at the facility and the almost small town atmosphere around us, once inside the facility entrance. The vehicles most prominent on the streets were Chevrolet Volts. There were some GM vehicles traveling about in camouflage so model designation could not be determined. Our guide was a former race driver and currently an engineer for GM. He was a very outgoing and informative young man who answered many questions during the tour. Out on the proving grounds the vastness of the facility was most impressive, giving the feel of a well-manicured interstate highway. There are occasional circular tracks or weaving roadway that have various surfaces for test purposes. The area is 2 miles x 3 miles totaling 4,000 acres!

Rather than my attempting to describe what we saw, I’ll refer you to the handout sheet and map given us at the start of our tour, which is copied in the newsletter. Also, if you will Google “GM Milford Proving Grounds” you will be introduced to an almost unlimited source of information concerning the history, facilities, personalities and procedures relative to the test grounds.

We were several hours on our tour and had a good time as did the whole bus load. Hopefully another chance will be available for us to tour this facility (Maybe in a Corvair... or Corvette?) Let’s hope so since we are ready to go again.



I wanted a Corvair in the newsletter, so I found this 2010 picture of Berta’s coupe from the SOS show. Glen Rittenhouse’s AC Coupe is in the background.

## CORSA/CPF Board of Directors seeking Candidates

CORSA is seeking candidates to server on the CORSA/CPF Board of Directors. This is a self Nominating process, that is, you submit your request to run with a bio/photo. Jason Cesana is the nomination chair. See the Communique for details. The positions are 3 year terms. Serving on the CORSA board can be rewarding. It can also be very frustrating. It is a group of individuals from diverse backgrounds, geographical areas and with diverse goals. Mike Hall is currently on the CORSA board. PCCA has sent numerous representatives in the past including Bill Pierson, Rob Landers, Joe Robbins and myself. See past Communiques (April edition usually) for content in self-nominating. Give it some thought. It is another, good, excuse to attend the CORSA convention as the in person board meeting is typically the day before the convention.

## Frank Mitchell Memorial Corvair Scholarship

CORSA is awarding a \$1000 and a \$500 scholarship to a high school graduating senior. Details for applying should be in the Communique or contact Sarah Betrami. The Scholarship is awarded from the CPF Scholarship fund which is fully funded by donations, mostly, if not all, from CORSA members. To be eligible for the scholarship, the student must be a child, grandchild or ward of a CORSA member in good standing.

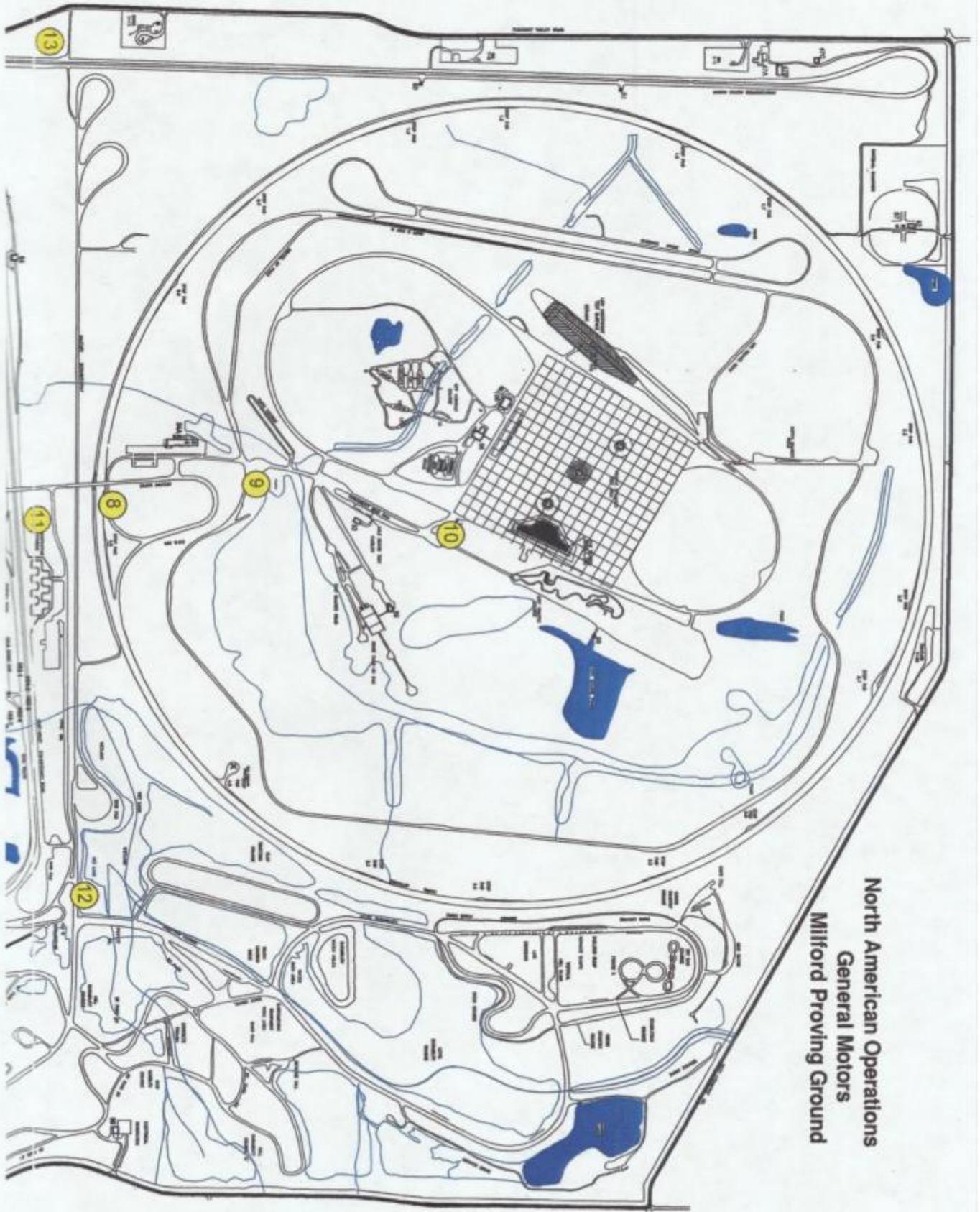
## MPG Self-Guided Road System Tour

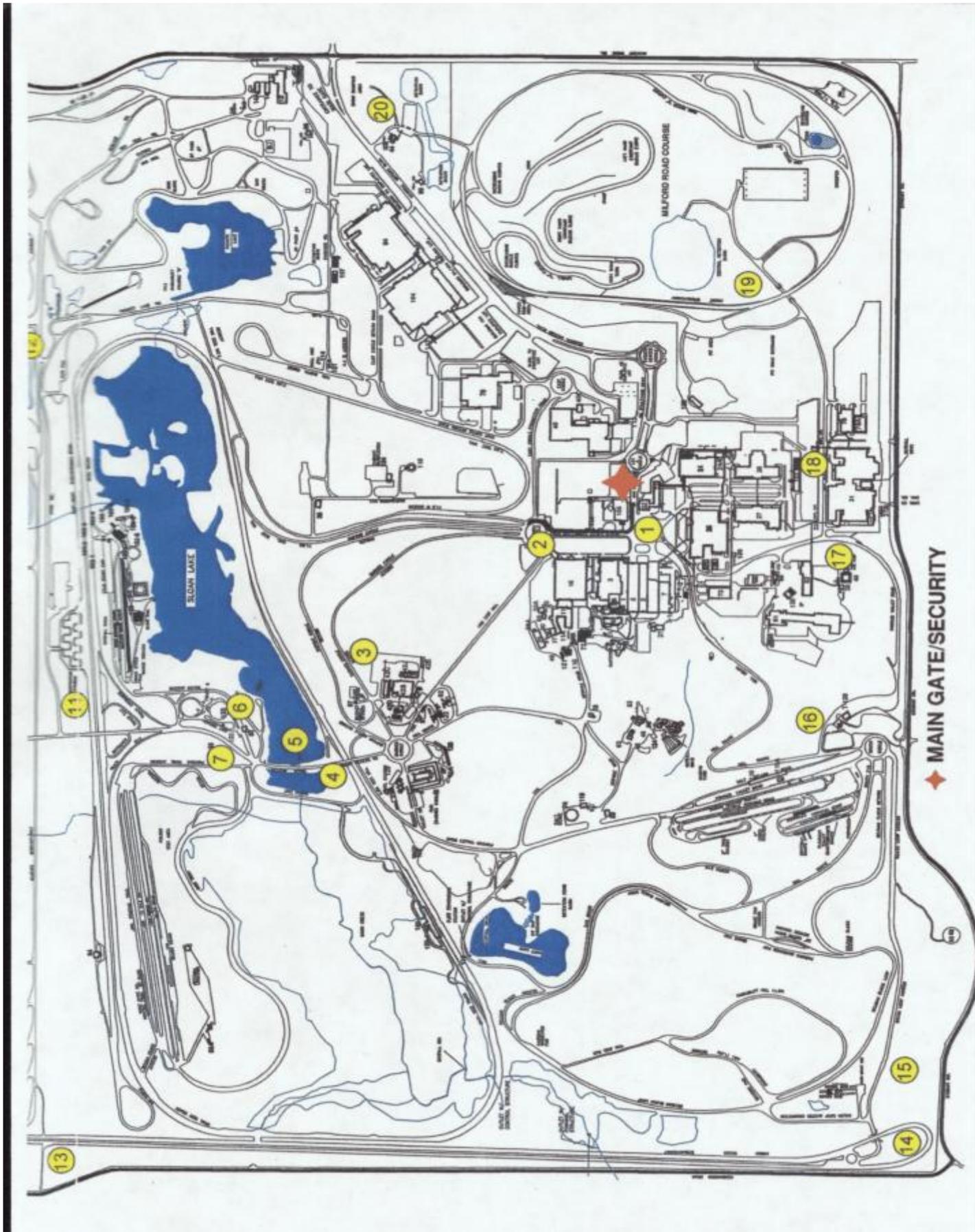
1. Welcome to General Motors' Mildred Proving Ground, the first dedicated automotive testing facility in the world and one of the largest. This site, founded in 1924, is in the process of entering the National Register of Historic Places. If you look straight ahead as you enter the security gate, you will see one of the original MPG buildings and the original water tower, dating back to the 1920's. This campus contains over 140 buildings and houses 4200 residents, like a small city, with operations supported around the clock 365 days a year. Our road system comprises 140 miles (125 paved/15 gravel), and we have 115 acres of parking lots, 175 acres of lawn, and 1200 acres moved along road sides.
2. Before its purchase, this area was nicknamed "The Bluffs" because of its rugged terrain (267 feet of elevation change), and you are now at the highest point in Oakland County. On a clear day, you can see almost 15 miles toward the northeast, into White Lake Township. Building 16, to your left, was the original Chevrolet Engineering building and was rededicated to Hybrid vehicle development in the early 2000's. It houses the team that has been responsible for developing the exciting Chevrolet Volt.
3. To your right, please notice the large solar panels powering MPG's hydrogen production facility. On the left, you'll see our Hydrogen vehicle development center, which is currently working on the GM fuel cell powered vehicles.
4. This is the Oval Test Track, a 3.8 mile long four lane tri-oval with the three banked turns of up to 30 degree bank angle. It was the original high speed test track of the proving ground dating back to 1924, and is currently used for ride & handling development, powertrain development, and brake system development.
5. One of the three large lakes on the campus, this is Sloan Lake, named after Alfred P. Sloan. Mr. Sloan was the leader of the GM Executive Committee in the early days of the company, and the visionary responsible for the creation of the Milford Proving Ground.
6. This is the corrosion testing area of the Proving Ground, comprised of the dedicated gravel road for stone impingement testing (contained in the 1/4 mile long white tunnel) and the salt/grit trough and corrosion chamber (both to your right). In 8 months of testing, the MPG can simulate 10 years of corrosion on a customer vehicle.
7. To your left, please notice the Fenn Holden test area, named after the first MPG Director Fenn M Holden. This area contains a number of important durability and ride development test roads, including the famous Seven Sisters road and accurate duplications of several public roads, such as 12 Mile Road, Pontiac Trail, and M-15.
8. You are now crossing over the Circular Test Track, a five lane banked circular track used to simulate highway driving at various speeds. Its 4.5 miles in length and the banking on the highest speed lane is 30 degrees. This track was designed in the late 1950s by an architect who also helped design Daytona International Raceway, and put into service on a tragic day in American history, November 22, 1963. This track, like all MPG tracks, has a specific safety protocol. Special driver training, safety equipment, and operating procedures have been developed to ensure the safety of our personnel during all vehicle testing and development operations. We are very proud of our safety record, and our accident rate per million miles driven is significantly better (about 40% better) than the public highways on which you drove here today.
9. You are now crossing over the Ride & Handling Loop, a 3.8 mile loop containing various types of pavement, bumps, curves, swells, and simulated railroad crossings. It is used for vehicle durability testing, as well as overall vehicle evaluations and ride/handling development.
10. You are now entering the world famous Vehicle Dynamics Test Area (VDTA), better known as "Black Lake: because after a heavy rainstorm it looks like a large black lake. This test pad is 67 acres in size (about equal to 59 football fields), and contains three different low-coefficient test surfaces to simulate testing on snow and ice. This area is used for all types of vehicle dynamics and limit handling testing, to develop and validate vehicle limit handling properties and the calibrations of ABS, traction control, and Electronic Stability Control (ESC) systems. The MPG Event Center (Bldg 106) hosts a number of MPG visitors including media guest, for vehicle evaluation and demonstration events.

11. Here you will see two of the site's three straightway's, the East/West Straightway on your right and the Military Straightway on your left, both are 1.5 miles in length. The East/West is used for powertrain testing and calibration at speeds up to 85 mph, as well as vehicle durability testing.
12. As you enter the Military Straightway, glance to your right to see the entrance to the Heavy Vehicle Test Area (HVTA), nicknamed the Military area because it was used for testing and development of military vehicles such as tanks, half tracks, and amphibious vehicles. Today, it is used for truck durability testing and off road development, and contains a gravel loop used for ESC calibration development. This beautiful area contains a large pond, wetlands, and a variety of wildlife including a fox den.
13. You are entering (at its mid-point) the world famous MPG North/South Straightway, three lanes and three miles in each direction, including the high speed turnaround loops at each end. This road is used for vehicle high speed testing, including powertrain, brake system, and vehicle dynamics testing, up to the maximum speed of the vehicle.
14. You are entering the south turnaround of the North/South Straightway. Please notice the tall security fences, and the public roads and subdivisions just outside our fence line. This area of the Proving Ground is considered a "Photographic Risk Zone", and many spy photographers have snapped photographs of GM vehicles undergoing testing on this Straightway. GM has developed a strict protocol to minimize photographic risk, including camouflage of test vehicles and performance of certain testing after dark.
15. Please notice the test grades to your left, 30%, 40%, and 60%, used for testing park brake systems and transmission park pawls. You will also see the famous Belgian Block Road, an incredibly rough road with granite boulders to simulate the block roads of northern Europe, which is a critical component of our vehicle durability testing schedule.
16. This is the MPG Contractor's Gate, the primary shipping/receiving area for vehicles entering and leaving the Milford Proving Ground. We have approximately 500 vehicles passing through this area each week, and an estimated 5000 test and development vehicles on the campus, consuming 2.5 million gallons of gasoline and other fuels each year.
17. To your left, you can briefly see the MPG Barrier and Rollover test facilities, which perform system and vehicle development and validation tests. Approximately 300 barrier, 100 rollover, and 1100 restraint (sled) tests are performed annually at our site.
18. The GM Powertrain Emissions facility is on your right, responsible for development, testing, and validation for vehicle emissions components and calibrations for GM vehicles. It contains the High Feature Test Facility (HFTF), a pair of test chambers capable of simulating extreme environmental conditions, including temperature from -40F to 130F, altitude from -700 feet to 12,500 feet, humidity from 10% to 90%, and wind speeds from 0 to 100 mph. This facility enables our engineers to simulate driving a vehicle from Alaska to Pikes Peak, Death Valley, the Everglades, and Nova Scotia, without ever leaving the Proving Ground.
19. You are now entering the world famous Milford Road Course (MRC), a three mile, 17 turn road course designed to simulate the best parts of a number of race tracks in North America, along with Germany's famed Nurburging. One of the newest MPG tracks, it has been in operation since 2003, and contains such engineering features as increasing and decreasing radius curves, very long straightaway's, off camber and "blind" turns, elevation changes, and a 25 degree high banked turn (like the Nurburging's Karousel). A great deal of MRC information exists in the public domain, including a SAE Paper and various magazine articles published about this track and footage of vehicles being testing here, which is available by searching Google or YouTube for "Milford Road Course".
20. As you leave the Proving Ground, you'll pass by the Lundstrom House on your left side. This housed the resident manager's family until the early 1960s, and is actually a historic farmhouse from one of the original farms that was purchased to create the Proving Ground. Today, it houses our Company Vehicle Operations and two conference rooms, and serves as a meeting place for visitors entering the Proving Ground.

We hope you have enjoyed the self guided Road Tour!!

**North American Operations  
General Motors  
Milford Proving Ground**





## Secretary Report PCCA Board Meeting January 14, 2011

Officially, the board lacked a quorum. The board held a discussion of topics with the members and officers present. In attendance were Board members Jim Allen and Bob Gwin, past board member Mike Hall, President Jim Collier, Treasurer Larry Jahn and Secretary Tim Mahler. Also participating in the discussion was Bill Berta.

The first topic discussed was the CORSA non Member fee and how it should affect PCCA dues, if at all. The current PCCA dues are stated in the by-laws so a by-law amendment would be required to change the rates. A suggestion to have the by-laws state the dues generically "as set by the membership" was also mentioned. The non member fee being imposed by CORSA for insurance and other all chapter members benefits is \$3.

The next topic was a suggestion that PCCA go on an overnight tour somewhere. Numerous possibilities were mentioned including but not limited to Amana colonies, Mad Anthony Show, DACC homecoming, Covered Bridge tour, Hill Climb event, and Galena Illinois attractions.

May activity for PCCA was also discussed. Past years have had a May show at the Community building, last year was a day tour to Louisiana, Mo. Bill Berta mentioned LLCC new career center and its automotive shop as a possible local tour location, not necessarily for May but that could be a possibility.

All present agreed that we would like to do the State Fair Corvair exhibit again this year. That would be August 18, 2012. Meeting was adjourned at 1:52pm

## Secretary Report PCCA Meeting January 14, 2011

President Jim Collier opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance at 2:04pm. December did not have an official meeting so the secretary report was not presented.

The treasurers report, for both December and January was presented by Treasurer Larry Jahn. The December report showed income of \$36 for dues and \$18 in other income for a total of \$54. Expenses were \$62 for the PO box and \$120 for the newsletter (several months) for total expenses of \$182.10. Checking Balance stood at \$913.69; pretty cash at \$15 and Savings at \$1626.96 for a grand total of \$2,555.65. The January report showed income of \$87 for dues. Expenses were \$50 for Christmas awards. Checking Balance stood at \$950.69; pretty cash at \$15 and Savings at \$1626.96 for a grand total of \$2,592.65. numbers

There was no old business to be discussed.

New business was primarily programs for the year. Jim Allen was to present a quiz as organized by Dick Moon. February, March and April meetings will be at the Community building. March is the Collectors show. May was discussed but no decision was made. Should PCCA return to a show and picnic, conduct a day tour or opt for something else? Tim Mahler mentioned Bill Berta's thought about a tour to LLCC new Career center. Bill expanded on the concept and indicated he would contact LLCC to check on possibilities and report back.

Another question posed to the membership was PCCA doing a overnight tour somewhere. Request to the membership was to think about it and provide feedback, where, when. (Secretary notes belatedly, someone needs to volunteer to be the leader/organizer of the tour). The tour could be to an area Corvair event such as Mad Anthony or DACC Homecoming.

For a one day tour, Atlanta (Illinois) was mentioned as a possibility. Are numerous interesting historic items in the area plus a restaurant with a reputation for serving good food. Richard Boxdorfer mentioned the Super Chevy Show to be held at the Gateway parking lot June 22-24. The show will also feature Drag races.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:32 pm

Sue Biggs furnished the snacks. Soup and crackers with cookies for dessert. Hmm Hmm Good

## Car and Parts for Sale/Trade

**For sale:** 65 Corvair Engine bored 040 over w, rebuilt 9 years ago, in shed past 8. 4sp tranny and rearend, 3.55 may be posit. 140 heads with center mount intake for a holly 390. Engine stand, hoist. Lincoln IL. Ron Alexander 217-638-3147

**For Sale** 1966 Monza convertible, white interior. Red exterior (over blue factory). 110hp PG. Located in Taylorville, owner lives in Rochester. Car originally from Arizona, has set since 1993. Ronnie Jump 217-836-0056

**For Sale--**1966 500 Coupe 110 auto, A/C, Runs & drives. Needs restored \$950.00 Mike Meyer 618-259-1552

**For Sale--**1966 Monza..engine turns over..4 speed..red/black int..windshield missing..Needs restored \$450.00 Mike Meyer

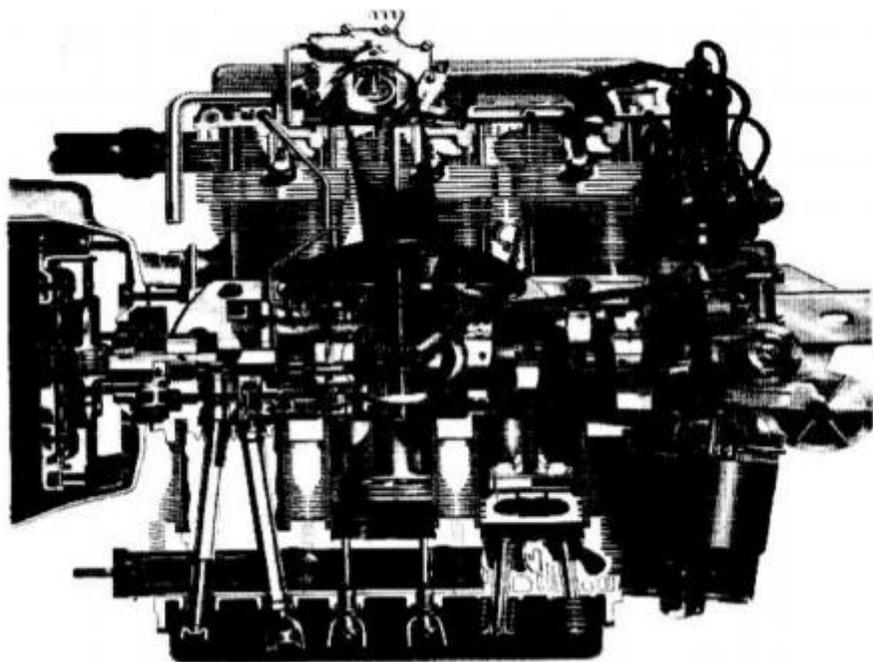
**For Sale** 1963 4 door Monza for parts...decent body parts CHEAP!!!! Call if interested Mike Meyer 618-259-1552

**Bill Pierson** has a set of clear door and rear window glass for an early convert.\$20 for all. (618) 684-3823

**For sale:** 1962 Monza - 2dr, 4spd. Engine completely rebuilt by Jim in 2005. Only 200 miles (if that) on it since then.

Body/Interior needs work. I have photos if anyone is interested. Asking \$2,800 obo. Call Bill Schureman @ 309.267.8158 email: [tuuis@mtco.com](mailto:tuuis@mtco.com) The car is located in Morton IL.

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