



President's Message



January already!?! Happy 2013!!!!

I hope everyone had a safe and happy New Year. We didn't do much at home - in bed around 10:30 as Karen had to work in the morning.

Life has been busy with work and the boys' afterschool activities. Both boys are playing basketball and each has one practice and one game a week. Plus Andrew had extra activities that he does on top of all that. Watching first graders play basketball is the best!

I really would like to have a little get together in the next month or so. I will pick a place, set a date and time and let you know. This seems to work best. If you have a suggestion that is fairly central to everyone, I would love to hear from you.

I don't have much going on Corvair-related here. The Corsa is hibernating until the salt is clear from the roads this spring. I do have quite a few parts that I need to go thru and organize at some point.

I hope this reaches everyone in good health. Here's to a spectacular 2013!

Ronnie Tinkham
Gorham, ME

Welcome to New Member

We want to take a moment to welcome new member Robert Perry, Benton, ME and his '65 Monza 110/4 convertible to Dirigo Corvairs. A member of CORSA, Robert saw mention of the club in the *Communique* and contacted Ron Tinkham about membership.

Robert said he's been working on his Corvair for a couple of years and looks forward to seeing it on the road. He hopes he can make a future meeting and connect with other members.

Dune Buggy Gets a Corvair Upgrade

Two years ago Ron Tinkham and I enjoyed a visit to Tom Hall's home workshop in Ocean Park, ME. We certainly enjoyed staring at his EM convertible with its optional air conditioning and the FC waiting for restoration in the back yard.

What really caught our attention was the dune buggy frame and body hanging from the rafters and wall. Tom contacted me in late November with an update on his work.



“The dune buggy is a Meyers Manx look-alike; it has no markings on it to indicate it’s a genuine Meyers.”

“It also has a ‘64 Spyder dash and glove box custom made to fit. I installed a 4-speed with 3.89 gears and a positraction axle. I’ve converted it to 5-lug Crager wheels using rear axles from a Corvan.”



“It has a 140 engine with .60 over pistons, a race cam, roller rockers and MSD ignition.”



“The front hubs came from an LM Corvaire. It also has a hydraulic clutch and a Line Lock roll

control system [allowing me to lock up the front wheels while spinning the rears]. A line lock also acts as a 'hill holder,' too. "

"The tail lights are from a '64 impala. They have the correct design slant to match the slant of the rear body."



Winter Work

Dana MacEwen, Bucksport, ME, owns three Corvairs: a stunning '66 Corsa, a '65 Corsa, a '63 Spyder (in storage) and a '69 500.

"It's still a work in progress. Kylie, my 4-year old granddaughter has helped with the build."



He reports "I have been working on the '65 Corsa wet sanding and buffing the paint; it's

looking a lot better. I still have paint issues around the trim on the front windshield. After that I need to install the heat shields and doors, install a new emergency brake cable, and then paint the nose where the previous owner had done some work on it. I plan to put it up for sale in the spring."

"Then I'll move onto the other Corsa to install the heat shields and doors as the previous owner never installed them. I'd like to get the brake problem solved and then it should be ready to go. For now it's covered up, as are both the Spyder and the '69 500."



Good news for anyone who wishes they could have a Corsa!

715 Mile Corvair Trek

For the past few years a summer family on the island has invited me to spend time as their guests around Christmas. This year I chose to complete the 715 mile round-trip from Maine to southwestern Connecticut in a 46-year old

car notoriously labeled as "Unsafe at Any Speed."



Yes, it's the maroon one buried in the snow in this photo.

The decision to drive the Corvair on a work/vacation trip was not made lightly. I'd completed the trip in years past in my '66 Land Rover II-A and my '80 Triumph TR-7 Spider. Driving that same 715 miles in the Land Rover had left my ears ringing, my body vibrating and my wallet lighter due to its 18 mpg.

The same distance the following year in the TR-7 made for 25 mpg, less vibration, less emotional assurance [it is a TR-7 after all] and a feeling that I'd sat in a space capsule for 6 hours. It also left me with a December dilemma at a Portland, ME motel one morning - how to get the door locks thawed out? The only successful method was to heat the key with the room's hair dryer so hot that it popped the circuit breaker in the dryer, then to run down two flights of stairs to insert the key into the lock before it cooled down. The second time was a charm.

So this year I felt the Corvair should do the honors. Work schedules meant that I could not allow myself an extra day [in case of

breakdowns]; I would absolutely, positively have to get there on time on Saturday. My hesitation was based on the car's annoying habit of these past two years of wanting to die off on the side of the road when underway for an hour or more. No mechanic or Corvair expert had been able to figure out the source of this problem.

I booked the Corvair into the island's garage for the mechanic to check under the car. All the suspension pieces, steering components and wheel bearings seemed tight. I did the usual tune-up of points, condenser, rotor, distributor cap and spark plugs, and checked the timing. An oil/filter change had been done in October. I ordered a spare fan belt and fuel pump from [Clark's](#) and bought a used oil cooler from Ron Moller in Cape Neddick. I packed tools, charged the cellphone and said a prayer.

On Friday I boarded the ferry for the 90 minute ride to the mainland and then started on my way south. I made it to Portland late that afternoon, booked myself into an inexpensive motel and then joined a group of Land Rover friends as the [Sebago Brewpub](#) in nearby Scarborough.

Saturday morning I packed up again and headed out on the Maine Turnpike, to I-495 in Massachusetts and then onto the Mass Pike towards Connecticut. After stopping for fuel and water [for me, not the car], I started the car and noticed it did not want to accelerate out of the rest area. Just as it had done in the past it began to bog down instead of going faster. As I approached the turnpike entrance I wondered about proceeding ahead at all; you could not turn around and go back on the highway. Instead I plowed ahead and suddenly the car

seemed to run on all 6 cylinders and both carburetors. This would happen again at a rest stop in Connecticut but other than that, the car ran flawlessly. Oh, and I got 28 mpg at 60-75 mph.

The car received a few odd stares and one memorable moment. On I-91 between Hartford and New Haven I drove in the center lane when I noticed a Mazda sedan, driven by a young guy, close to my rear bumper. I pulled over into the right lane and he followed me. When I looked in my rear view mirror I saw the passenger with a camera and noticed a flash. The car pulled up alongside me as they continued to take photos of the car from a few angles. Less surprising but equally pleasurable was a time when a new Corvette, with a man and a woman aboard, passed me as the driver gave the Monza a "thumbs up."

Seat technology, particularly for "compact cars," had not advanced far in the 1960's. Add to this the reality that my driver's seat consisted of some crushed foam and a sheepskin seat cover and you wind up with an uncomfortable perch for a 6 hour drive. Also, as is often the case with rear engine cars the pedals sit a bit skewed towards the right; you feel as though your right leg is stretched out rather far to hold the accelerator towards the floor. This really became an issue on the trip home.

While in Cos Cob my hosts noted they had seen a Corvair for sale and we visited it, right near Greenwich's public beach. A '68 convertible it looked good from a distance but showed some minor rust bubbles and mismatched paint up close. Nonetheless, it was still fun to see.



The late model convertible always looked terrific and in this light color, especially entertaining. To my dismay it had the s-l-o-w Powerglide 2-speed transmission and an aftermarket Edelbrock 4-barrel carb [instead of the 4-carb 140 hp setup implied by the air cleaner].

My hostess told me of her cleaning woman's reaction to seeing my Monza in their driveway. The young woman, a recent immigrant from Poland, stared out the window to ask "whose car is that?" When she was told it was mine [we had met last year] she asked "he really drove it here?" "Yes," my hostess replied, "from Maine."

This astounded the woman, "he drove all the way from Maine? In that?"

The drive home to Maine really demonstrated the Corvair's capabilities. On the Friday I chose to drive home a powerful storm hit all of New England: heavy constant rain with winds from 40 - 55 mph. Rear-engine cars can tend to yaw in high crosswinds like this and, of course, any required repair in the pouring rain would be most un-fun.

As I drove northeast on the highways I came to realize the weather would not improve throughout the entire drive, that any truck passing the Corvair would engulf it sheets of rain and mist. Visibility would become a problem; as the car leaked a bit around the windshield, so, too would defrosting the windows.

I also realized that I had never driven this car in a significant, long-lived storm. I had no idea if the windshield wiper motor would run for 6 hours or whether the heater motor would function for that length of time. I found I had to open the vent window to assist in airflow to clear the left edge of the windshield. I stopped for fuel in Charlton, MA, along the Mass Pike, and then made it to New Hampshire and finally, Maine. The car, however, never faulted in speed or handling. While I could certainly feel the gusts of wind slam against the car, their shoves were handled easily by the excellent suspension. Everything worked the entire trip.

As I approached Portland I realized the winds had only strengthened and that I should find out if the Rockland-Vinalhaven ferry would even run that late afternoon. A quick phone call indicated "no" so I stopped in Portland for a

break. Stepping out of the Corvair the wind shot rain onto my face with such force that the water drops hurt when they landed on me.

I continued on to Rockland and booked a motel room for the night. My right leg now felt like I had stretched a ligament or tendon around my right knee. I could not bend it very comfortably, whether seated or lying in bed. That's the aftereffect of the driver's seat - it should be reupholstered one day.

I know that many classic car owners avoid driving their cars in inclement weather - at times, myself included. This work/vacation trip showed me that the Corvair could be used as a daily driver in any weather. I still don't know the cause of the "bogging" [vapor lock?] after long drives but I now feel much more comfortable about jumping in the car and relying on it.

Oh, it passed the 130,000 mile mark during the trip. (I've posted this story and others on my blog, <http://landroverwriter.blogspot.com>.)

Share Your Corvair Stories



I'm always looking to include stories from a wider range of members, so please don't hesitate to email me, Jeff Aronson, at jrh@foxislands.net. If you have stories or photos you'd like to share with Dirigo members.

Also If you meet up with anyone with an interest in your Corvair share this issue of

Dirigo with them and invite them to join you at a 2013 meeting.

Dirigo Corvairs Web Site

Remember that I always post every issue of our newsletter at www.dirigocorvairs.com. You can download any issue in the Adobe Acrobat format [.pdf]. Most every computer comes with Adobe Acrobat built into its operating system; if you don't, you can download it for free at www.adobe.com.

You can also read the by-laws of the club, find contact information for the club's officers and for the club's tech advisors. You'll also see photos taken at past events.

Dirigo Corvairs is also a chapter of CORSA, the international organization for Corvair enthusiasts.

I want to thank everyone who has donated to the annual cost of the website [approximately \$150/year] hosting; donations before Christmas helped me meet most of last year's expense. I have renewed the site for another year and I am happy to donate services as webmaster.

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Howdy Corvair fellows
Welcome to rafeecorvair.com

The collage features several images: a collection of bolts and nuts, a car's interior dashboard, a set of braided hoses, a car wheel and brake disc, a man standing between a dark blue and a red classic car on a golf course, a set of headlights, a car's engine bay, a car's front end, and various tools and parts.