

On the Air

Newsletter of the Arkansas Corvair Club ■ CORSA Chapter 722

October 2002

Volume 15, Issue 10

Fan: Great car gets bad rap

Mark Harms
Hastings Tribune newspaper

Editor's note: The following story is reprinted from the *Hastings Tribune Online Edition*, May 14, 1999. Chris Shade, quoted in the story, lives in Hastings, Nebraska, and is a CORSA member.

Some probably cheered when the last Chevrolet Corvair rolled off the assembly line 30 years ago [this] day. [May 14, 1999]

Thanks to Ralph Nader's book, *Unsafe at Any Speed*, the much-maligned car became a national symbol of corporate greed and disregard for consumer safety.

Chris Shade of Hastings did not cheer, however.

True, he was an infant in 1969. But had he been older he would have lamented the demise of a car that was "ahead of its time."

Shade, a band teacher at Hastings Public Schools, owns three Corvairs and is among many devotees nationwide who swear by the low-

lying, rear-engined vehicles.

"They were different than every other car," he said. "That was the problem. People weren't used to different things."

What's so special about them? "What isn't special about the Corvair?" Shade asked.

It was the first American car to use a unibody design where the chassis and body are one unit, a feature of nearly all cars today.

It was one of the first American models to have independent four-wheel suspension and one of the first to have a turbo-charge option.

Perhaps inspired by the Volkswagen Beetle, it also was one of the

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ACC News Clips

Reminder—BBQ and potluck, Saturday, October 12th in Everton

On Saturday, October 12, Clyde and Dee Jones are hosting their second annual Fall BBQ and Potluck at their home in Everton (about 12 miles south of Harrison).

If you missed it last year, you missed out on some serious BBQ—some of the best you'll taste in Arkansas.

As they did last year, Clyde and Dee will be preparing BBQ brisket, smoked ham, baked/smoked beans, along with coffee and tea.

You're asked to bring side dishes, such as salads, cold entrees, and desserts.

Clyde and Dee's home address is 6789 Saddlebrook Loop, Everton, AR, 12 miles south of Harrison. Phone 870 429-6789 (weekend of event); e-mail: clydj@cei.net. For detailed directions see your October newsletter. ■

ACC will meet Tuesday, October 15

Please Note: The Arkansas Corvair Club will hold our regular monthly meeting, 7:00 p.m., at Just Like Mom's restaurant

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"Corvairs bring friends together."

Great car gets bad rap *continued*

first American cars with an engine in the rear.

And the Corvair van is considered by many to be the first mini-van.

"They had an incredible impact on the industry," Shade said.

The engines themselves are remarkable. Air-cooled, they use four carburetors, producing 140 horsepower in the Corsa models. Stock turbo-charged models produced 180 horse-power and racing versions, much more.

The engine's cylinders are horizontally opposed, which means counterweights on the crankshaft are unnecessary. It also means the engine can lie lower in the chassis, giving the Corvair a low center of gravity.

"They handle extremely well," Shade said. "Their basic design is very conducive to autocross."

Autocross is type of racing around tight, winding tracks. Corvairs still are used in competitions, he said.

If Corvairs are so great, what was Nader's beef?

Aside from being a "muckraker" with an anti-Chevrolet agenda, Shade said, the nationally known consumer advocate's main problem with the Corvair was a poorly manufactured rear suspension in the early models.

Nader claimed the suspension was weak and could collapse or

cause spinouts and rolls even at low speeds.

Many of the claims, Shade said, were untrue and "defied the laws of physics."

However, a browsing of the many Corvair Web sites shows that even enthusiasts acknowledge Chevrolet did cut corners off the original design of the suspension's support system.

The problem was fixed in 1964 and the car was redesigned in 1965, the year Nader's book came out.

But the damage was done. Bad publicity and the emergence of Ford's popular Mustang meant declining sales for the Corvair.

Only 6,000 were sold in 1969 out of a 10-year production run of 1.8 million.

Shade's love of Corvairs stems from having grown up with them. His father bought the family's first Corvair in 1972.

"That was our main mode of transportation for many years," said the 30-year-old Hastings College graduate. "It was the only car I drove until I was 23."

His current baby is a restored 1965 Corsa Convertible and his current project is his wife, Stephanie's, red 1966 Corsa Convertible.

Shade gave it to her as part of his wedding proposal. She, too, grew up with Corvairs and always

wanted one of her own, he said.

Would she have said "yes" if he hadn't given her the Corvair?

"I don't know. You'd have to ask her," Shade said.

The Corvairs have become too precious now to be everyday cars so, for a utility vehicle, Shade drives a 1972 Opal GT.

"I'm into different cars," he said.

That much is clear. ■



Happy Birthday
to our ACC associates
born in October.

Brenda Gates
JB King
October 6

James Carter
October 30

Happy Anniversary
to
the 1960 Corvair
October 2 (43 years)

Chuck & Mary Jolley
October 4

Bill & Cathy Smith
October 11 (27 years)

ACC Dues Alert

In an effort to keep everyone informed about the status of your ACC membership dues, we publish a membership *Dues Alert* in every issue of *On the Air*.

The *Dues Alert* lists names of members who are past due, those due for the current month, and those due the following month.

Dues are \$15.00 for regular membership and \$10.00 for associate members. Please mail payments to: **Arkansas Corvair Club, P.O. Box 627, Little Rock, AR 72203.**

Here are the names that are due for **Oct** and **Nov**.

Past Due Julie Agee
Don Coget
Eric Evans
Bill MacSorley
Hank Wangle

Due Oct None

Due Nov None

Please disregard if you've already paid or mailed your check. **We appreciate your support.** ■

ACC September Meeting Minutes

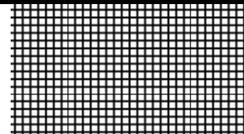
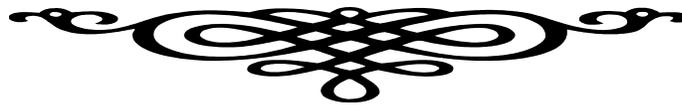


JB King

The Arkansas Corvair Club met at Just Like Mom's restaurant, on Kiehl Avenue, in Sherwood, on Tuesday, September 17, 2002.

The meeting was called to order by president, Stew McLeod. The minutes from our July meeting were read and approved.

Stew mentioned that our members who attended the Cruisin' Branson Lights weekend activity, in August, had a terrific time, due to the meticulous planning and good work of Clyde and Dee Jones. Attending members agreed and expressed their sincere thanks to Clyde and Dee for planning this activity.



Al Embrey encouraged members to participate in the Cruisin' for a Cure event, in Little Rock, on Saturday, September 21. The event, benefiting the Arkansas Prostate Cancer Foundation, features a show and shine, a cruise and march from North Little Rock thru Little Rock's River Market district, and a 1950's style dance on Saturday evening. For more information, visit www.cruisinforacure.org.

Stew reminded members of the barbecue activity scheduled for Saturday, October 12, at the home of Clyde and Dee Jones, in Everton, Arkansas (near the Newton/Boone County line), south of Harrison. See your September issue of *On the Air* for details.

Elvis King presented a treasurer's report. He reported that our club treasury had a cash balance of

\$877.64, on September 17. This balance did not include payments received or expenses paid at the September club meeting.

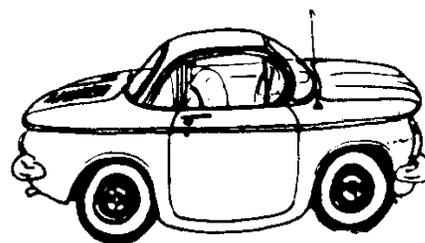
Our next meeting will be Tuesday, October 15, at Just Like Mom's restaurant at 3140 E. Kiehl Ave., in Sherwood.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

JB King

Toadsuck Corvair



The Men That Don't Fit In

There's a race of men that don't fit in,
A race that can't stay still;
So they break the hearts of kith and kin,
And they roam the world at will.
They range the field and they rove the flood,
And they climb the mountain's crest;
Theirs is the curse of the gypsy blood,
And they don't know how to rest.

If they just went straight they might go far;
They are strong and brave and true;
But they're always tired of the things that are,
And they want the strange and new.
They say: "Could I find my proper groove,
What a deep mark I would make!"
So they chop and change, and each fresh move
Is only a fresh mistake.

And each forgets, as he strips and runs
With a brilliant, fitful pace,
It's the steady, quiet, plodding ones
Who win in the lifelong race.
And each forgets that his youth has fled,
Forgets that his prime is past,
Till he stands one day, with a hope that's dead,
In the glare of the truth at last.

He has failed, he has failed; he has missed his chance;
He has just done things by half.
Life's been a jolly good joke on him,
And now is the time to laugh.
Ha, ha! He is one of the legion lost;
He was never meant to win;
He's a rolling stone and it's bread in the bone;
He's a man who won't fit in.

Robert W. Service
from *The Spell of the Yukon and Other Verses*



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On the Air

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FIRST CLASS

*"Promoting the maintenance,
enjoyment, and preservation of
the Chevrolet Corvair."*

Arkansas Corvair Club Information

Meetings

The Arkansas Corvair Club (ACC) meets on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. We are currently seeking a new permanent meeting site and will publish the new location ASAP.

October Meeting

The ACC will meet Tuesday, **October 15**, 7:00 p.m., at Just Like Mom's, on Kiehl Ave., in Sherwood.

Join us at 6:00 p.m. for food and fellowship prior to the meeting. The club offers an array of merchandise for sale—oil filters, gas filters, hats, decals, patches, T-shirts and more.

Officers

President: Stew MacLeod, 28305 Bandy Rd., Little Rock, AR 72211, 501 821-3622.

Vice-President: Larry Levy, 2 Countryside Cove, Little Rock, AR 72212, 501 868-5825 (evening).

Treasurer: Elvis King, 21305 N. Mill Rd., Little Rock, AR 72206, 501 888-1224 (evening).

Secretary: JB King, 21305 N. Mill Rd., Little Rock AR, 72206, 501 888-1224 (evening).

Elected Board: Allan Embrey, 501 834-5373; Ronnie MacLeod, 821-3622; Clyde Jones, 479 774-6789; Bill Smith, 501 843-8413.

Appointed Board: Pending.

Committee Chairs

Membership: Elvis King

Publicity: Bill Smith

Newsletter Editor: Bill Smith, 370 Windwood Drive, Cabot, AR 72023, 501 843-8413.

Newsletter Advertising:

Non-members and businesses:
\$100/year full page; \$60-½ page;
\$35-¼ page.

Program & Events: Open

ACC Webmaster: Ken Franson, 608 Ridgelea Ave., Sherwood, AR 72120, 501 835-6005.

Web Address

Arkansas Corvair Club Web site:
<http://corvair5.tripod.com/acc.htm>

ACC Mission: The mission of the Arkansas Corvair Club (ACC) is to promote the maintenance, enjoyment, and preservation of all types of Corvairs and related vehicles, and to advance and improve driving skills, automobile safety, and the Corvair's image.