

# On the Air

Newsletter of the Arkansas Corvair Club ■ CORSA Chapter 722

February 2003

Volume 16, Issue 2

## Hemmings Motor News sizes up the late-model Corvair

*Though all generations of Chevrolet's Corvair are unique and intriguing automobiles, it is those that were manufactured from 1965 through 1969 that represent the most fun for the money for enthusiasts seeking a sporty small car that offers plenty of fun driving, unique engineering and instant recognition.*

**T**he handling faults of the early Corvairs, built from 1960-64, helped lead to its downfall, although they had been largely corrected with the fully independent rear suspension installed in the 1965-up models.

Yes, the cars were tricky handlers when being pushed well beyond normal limits, but a government study investigated the claims made in a certain alleged consumer advocate's book, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration report, released in 1970, (far too late to be of any use for an already dead platform) refuted

all claims made in said advocate's book.

Yet, because of a successful restyling and re-engineering of the car for the 1965 model year, this buyer's guide will focus on the 1965-69 models because they represent the Corvair most commonly sought after by those looking for their first one.

The 1960-63 cars are typically, but not always, sought by enthusiasts well versed in all aspects of this unique automobile. You'll also find many Corvairs being raced in vintage

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## Virtual Vairs carries word of a soon-to-be-available die-cast model of the 1969 Monza convertible

**E**lvis King, a venerable and charter member of the Arkansas Corvair Club—who just reached the Social Security “milestone age” of 62—passed along a February 5th message, from the Virtual Vairs e-mail list, that might interest you, if you collect Corvair scale models.

The February 5th post to the V V list, by Charles Lee, announced the forthcoming availability of a 1-to-18 scale, die-cast model of the 1969 Corvair Monza convertible. Although not yet available from the Asian manufacturer for delivery, Mr. Lee is taking advance orders for the scale model Corvair at \$30.00 each, plus \$8.00 for shipping and handling.

The seller, Charles Lee, claims to be a 30-year-plus member of CORSA and that everything about the product and the offer is legitimate. He claims that the scale models will be of good quality, as compared to SunStar products, and that they'll be available for delivery at the end of February. Although he is advising those who order to allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery.

There is a “Charles Lee” listed

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## Arkansas Corvair Club

2003 Spring Rally & Reunion, April 25-27  
Days Inn Hamilton Resort, Hot Springs

This April weekend event will include a two-night stay-over at the Hamilton Resort with Corvair activities to be announced. For reservations, phone **501 525-5666**. Watch for more information in coming weeks, both in your newsletter and in separate mailings. Direct any questions about lodging or activities to **Al Embrey**, 501 834-5373, BigALinLR@msn.com.

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**“Corvairs bring friends together.”**

**Hemmings reports** *continued*

and club racing events; it's an ideal platform for this and represents one way to get into a bargain racer that's a bit different than the typical Mustang, Camaro or Porsche 911 one sees in so many numbers out on the racetracks.

Featuring an air-cooled powerplant, rear-engine and transaxle drivetrain configuration with independent swing-axle rear suspension, there were, with the exception of the early versions of Pontiac's Tempest, no other American automobiles of its type.

It was economical, affordable, had excellent styling for its day and was a more than capable handler; and although it can't be classed among the muscle cars, it offered decent levels of performance from the horizontally opposed Six.

Available in 2-door coupe, 4-door hardtop sedan and 2-door convertible body styles with 500, Monza and Corsa trim and performance variations, the Corvair really offered a good variety of choices for small-

car buyers of the 1960s.

Today, these same body styles and differences in trim and powerplant offerings will determine the amount of cash you'll have to spend to get into one. Project cars of all body types and model variations typically fall into the \$1,000-2,500 range, dependent upon just how much work is necessary to bring it back to life. Spending in the range of \$3,500-\$5,500 will get one a decent driver.

This is not a show car by any stretch of the imagination, but it should be a solid, running example needing a repaint or new interior, or engine/suspension rebuild. Getting into a show quality, turnkey Corvair can run as high as \$20,000 - that's for an absolutely original, perfect condition, final-year Monza convertible.

As far as support from fellow Corvair enthusiasts, this is a car that brings with it an enthusiastic following. The Corvair Society of America ([www.corvair.org](http://www.corvair.org); 630-257-6530) has many regional and local chapters and its newsletter, the *Corsa Communiqué* offers a wealth of informa-

tion for the Corvair owner to take advantage of.

**The Good**

A dedicated following always goes down in the plus column, even if it may mean that demand for a finite resource will be ever-increasing.

The Corvair's popularity means that there is a wealth of information, but because it isn't the typical solid-axle or mid-year Corvette or '57 Chevy, prices are excellent, and one shouldn't need to invest much over \$10,000, unless a 100-point trailer queen is the ultimate goal.

A large total production run (for a sporty car) means that used parts are readily available, and performance modifications are well known and easy to accomplish to enhance an already fun driving experience.

Did we say they're inexpensive? It bears repeating! The styling of the '65-up Corvairs is much sleeker and pleasing to the eye than the 1960-64 versions, especially in the two-door body style with its semi-fastback roofline. It's also a less-than-common car to see out on the roads on a Sunday drive, giving it a top rating for those seeking a bit of attention.

**...and the Bad**

As is the case with nearly every automobile more than ten years old, corrosion is the primary deterrent. The Corvair, though its followers may cringe, can be a veritable rust bucket, and an unsuspecting buyer who doesn't know where to look can be saddled with a money pit.

There are also a number of structural components that must be inspected before parting with one's cash. We'll start with these, and point out that this is a car that should be put up on a lift and inspected prior to purchase. There's no

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**Please pay your Arkansas Corvair Club dues**

*The Corvair hobby needs your support.*

You'll notice that we are repeating nearly the same ACC dues information published in your January newsletter. We're doing this to remind some of you that your dues are in arrears, from January or from months before. We hope you'll review the lists below of members names who are past due from 2002, or who were due this January.

If you see your name listed below, please send your check right away to help sustain the Corvair hobby in Arkansas.

We need and are most grateful for your generous support. ■

**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 **Jan** and **Feb.**

**Past Due** ..... Julie Gillaspy  
 Marcus Hargrove  
 Freddie Horne  
 Bill Reves

**Past Due (cont)** ..... Steve Simmons  
 Ron Toll  
 Hank Wangle

**Due Jan** ..... Frank Cahill  
 Butch Chapman  
 B.J. Daugherty  
 Al Embrey  
 Stephen Franco  
 Ken Franson  
 Larry Levy  
 Stew MacLeod  
 Mike Shroyer

**Due Feb** ..... Bill Smith

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

Happy Birthday  
 to our ACC associates  
 born in February

Elvis King  
 February 6 (62)

Gloria Eddy  
 February 12

## ACC January Meeting Minutes



Bill Smith

The Arkansas Corvair Club held an informal business meeting, on Saturday, January 11, 2003, at the home of Stew and Ronnie MacLeod, in West Little Rock. The meeting was held in conjunction with the MacLeod's Holiday Open House for ACC members.

ACC president, Stew MacLeod, presided over the informal meeting.

### New Business

Al Embrey proposed that our club host another weekend event in Hot Springs, as we did in April 1998 (for our 10-year anniversary) and again in April of 2001.

Members were in favor of Al's proposal, if we could plan for a

weekend after the close of Oaklawn Park's racing season.

Al suggested that we hold the event at the Days Inn Hamilton Resort, the site of our two previous Hot Springs events, and he volunteered to check with the Days Inn about available dates in late April.

**Editors Note:** *Since the discussion, on January 11, Al Embrey has reserved a block of 12 rooms at the Days Inn Hamilton Resort for the weekend of April 25-26. See page one of this newsletter and your January newsletter for more information. Or phone Al Embrey at 501 834-5373.*

Look for more Hot Springs event details in your march newsletter.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Smith

### Corvair die-cast model *continued*

in the 1999 CORSA Membership directory, with a California address that matches information associated with the scale model offer.

Mr. Lee is taking orders for the scale model 1969 Monza convertible on Ebay's auction site

You'll find more information about the scale model offer on Charles Lee's Web site. That Web address is:

[www.foresightsoftware.com/CorvairModels.htm](http://www.foresightsoftware.com/CorvairModels.htm)

The Web site shows a picture of the proposed scale model, along with information about features and ordering.

The 1969 die-cast model can be ordered direct from Mr. Lee or through his Ebay listing. Charles Lee claims no affiliation with Sun-Star manufacturing. ■

### Hemmings reports *continued*

other reliable way to confirm that you're getting your money's worth.

Inspect the front cross-member for cracks and or extensive rust. These problems will lead to a droopy front end, as will worn springs. Ride height from the ground to the peak of the wheel opening is 26.5 inches. Inspect this first.

Then look at all front suspension mounting points for hole elongation, frozen hardware, etc. The upper portion of the front spring tower is also subjected to high levels of stress; again, look for cracks or excessive rust. If present, decide just how much work you're willing to do.

Fenders, floors, rear quarter panels and the cowl area around the windshield are all moisture traps, especially if road debris and dirt have blocked the drain holes.

Though the previous are expensive "cosmetic repairs," you should pay extra attention to the door pillars in both two- and four-door models and to the rear shock absorber's upper mounts.

If these two areas show heavy rust, move on to the next Corvair on your list. ■

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## CORVAIR PARTS!

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# On the Air

Arkansas Corvair Club  
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Place  
first class  
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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 at **Just Like Mom's** Home Cooking restaurant, 3140 E. Kiehl Ave., in Sherwood.

### February Meeting

The ACC will meet Tuesday, **February 18**, 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.