

# On the Air

Newsletter of the Arkansas Corvair Club ■ CORSA Chapter 722

June 2004

Volume 17, Issue 6

## Nader's Glitter

by Thomas Sowell

*Editor's note:* The following essay, by syndicated columnist Thomas Sowell, dated March 3, 2004, is reprinted from [www.townhall.com](http://www.townhall.com). This opinion piece underscores the fact that, regardless of his endeavor, in the minds of many observers, Ralph Nader's name is forevermore connected to that of the Chevrolet Corvair.

Ralph Nader may have performed a real public service by running for President again, despite the pleas and outcries of his liberal admirers. Oblivious to charges that his candidacy cost Al Gore the 2000 election, Nader has again put his own agenda first and foremost.

By doing so, Ralph Nader may at last force some people to actually think about him, especially in quarters where gushing about him has been the only accepted response in the past. Liberal columnist Albert Hunt, for example, says that Nader is "tarnishing a glittering record."

Nader does indeed have a glittering record. But all that glitters is not gold.

I must confess to being taken in by

Ralph Nader when he first hit the headlines, back in 1965, with his book *Unsafe at Any Speed*, which is what put him on the map. The thesis of this book was that American automobiles in general were unsafe and a new car called the Corvair was especially unsafe.

Since I was driving a Corvair at the time, this book really got my attention—and, for a while, my belief. Over the years, however, facts began to emerge and tell a very different story.

Anyone studying the art of persuasion might well begin with *Unsafe at Any Speed* as a classic of that art. It managed to insinuate into the public mind many spectacular—even glittering—conclusions, with hard evidence

being neither asked for nor given.

Nader's first sentence in the preface says it all: "For over half a century the automobile has brought death, injury, and the most inestimable sorrow and deprivation to millions of people."

He denounced the Corvair in particular and blamed "engineering and management operations within General Motors which led to such an unsafe vehicle."

Let's do something that slick lawyers hope we never do—stop and think. Death and injuries are caused by many things: electricity, boats, knives, matches, vaccinations, etc., etc.

Why do we have such things then? Because they also provide benefits, and adults in real life weigh benefits against costs, since nothing is 100 percent safe. The automobile is no exception.

As for the Corvair, being a rear-engine car, it was more prone to certain kinds of accidents. Nader stressed those accidents, with gory details. On the other hand, front-engine cars are

*continued on page 2*

### NO TUESDAY MEETING IN JUNE

Our Arkansas Corvair Club will **NOT** hold a Tuesday meeting in June, since many will be attending the CORSA International Convention. Our next regular monthly meeting will be Tuesday, **July 20**, at Just Like Mom's, on Kielh Ave, in Sherwood.

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**"Corvairs bring friends together."**

**Nader's Glitter** *continued*

more prone to other kinds of accidents. Nader ignored such trade-offs.

Some critics said that the Corvair was hard to handle. Nader quoted them. Others said the Corvair had great handling. Nader ignored them. It was the simplicity of great art.

Years later, extensive government tests showed that the Corvair's safety was comparable to that of similar cars of its era. But, by then, the Corvair was extinct—killed off by the crusade that earned Nader a place as a kind of secular saint in the media.

Even those who disagree with some of Nader's conclusions or methods often make obeisance to his "idealism" as a "consumer advocate" and credit his work with improving automobile safety. But again, evidence is seldom asked for or given.

For decades before Ralph Nader came on the scene, automobile fatality rates were declining, despite more cars on the streets and highways, traveling at faster speeds. The automobile fatality rate per miles driven was less than one-third as high when *Unsafe at Any Speed* was published as it was back in the 1920s.

But facts never carry as much weight as a dramatic vision of "corporate greed" sacrificing helpless consumers until they are rescued by

"consumer advocates" and federal regulations. For the left, Nader was playing their song and they danced to it.

Although the term "consumer advocate" has acquired a certain halo in the media, there are no qualifications whatever required to be called a consumer advocate. Moreover, Nader was never a consumer advocate in any real sense. He was a Nader advocate then and he is a Nader advocate now, when he runs for office oblivious to his friends and supporters.

In one of his earliest writings, Nader said, "the consumer must be protected at times from his own indiscretion and vanity." In other words, he wanted the Ralph Naders of the world to be able to dictate to consumers and producers alike.

It's all about him. So is running for president.

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**Mark your calendar**

Arkansas Corvair enthusiasts will be joining local car hobbyists at the **Frostop Drive-In**, 4131 JFK Blvd, in North Little Rock, on Saturday, **July 10**, at 6:00 p.m. for an evening car show, tasty food, and fun. Please shine up your Corvair and join us in July.

Happy Birthday  
to our ACC associates  
born in June.

Tommy Painter  
June 3

Kay Agee  
June 4

Eric Evans  
June 6

Matthew Brophy  
Buddy Murray  
Mike Still  
June 15

Chuck Jolley  
June 16

Keith LaCrosse  
June 17

Happy Anniversary  
to  
Kim & Carol Armstrong  
June 20

Keith & Cindy LaCrosse  
June 29 (25 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 **\$20.00** for regular membership and **\$15.00** for associate members. Please mail payments to: **Arkansas Corvair Club, P.O. Box 627, Little Rock, AR 72203.**

Here are the names that are **past due** and due in **June**.

- Past Due** ..... Kim Armstrong  
Mike Barrett  
Andy Cobb  
Eric Evans  
Stephen Franco  
Lynn Gates  
Gary Higgins  
Jerald McKown  
Jerry Snyder  
Charles Springer  
Bill Reves
- Due June** ..... Frank Campbell  
John Coffey  
Bill MacSorley  
Granville Tyson

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

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**Corvair**  
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**IN A COMPACT CAR! ★ ★ ★**

## ACC June Meeting Minutes



JB King

The Arkansas Corvair Club met at Just Like Mom's restaurant, on Kieh Avenue, in Sherwood, on Tuesday, May 18.

The meeting was called to order by president Cathy Smith.

Cathy extended a warm welcome to members Steve and Betty Simmons, from El Dorado. Steve is a charter member of our club and we really appreciate he and Betty making the trip to Sherwood for the meeting. They definitely drove the longest distance!

We were also glad to be joined by members Aaron Swift and Charles Springer. Aaron is a past ACC member and we're glad to have him back with us. The May meeting was the first that Charles has attended, since joining us last year. We hope that both Aaron and Charles will be joining us for future meetings.

### Old Business

Cathy thanked members who attended the weekend retreat in Mountain View, April 23-25, and also the car show at the Cabot Tastee Freez, on May 15.

Cathy reported that, as of May, our club membership had reached 55. This is our highest member total since the club was founded, in 1988.

Also, Cathy thanked Jim Latture, Hot Springs, for his \$20 contribution to the club.

### New Business

Bill Smith recognized and thanked George Koenig, Mountain Home, for sending a number of 8-by-10 color prints of Arkansas Corvairs, belonging to members who attended our weekend retreat in Mountain View. Bill distributed photos to those attending the May meeting.

### Upcoming Events

#### June

CORSA Convention, Lexington, Kentucky, June 15-19. **Note:** Our

club will **not** hold a Tuesday meeting in June.

#### July

Car show at the Frostop Drive-In, 4131 JFK Blvd, North Little Rock, Saturday, **July 10**, 6:00 p.m.

#### August

Baseball - Clunker Car Night at the Arkansas Travelers, Ray Winder Field, Tuesday, August 10.

#### September

ACC Picnic, Maumelle Park, Sunday afternoon, September 12.

#### October

ACC weekend meeting, Hot Springs Country Club, Saturday, October 2 (tentative date).

#### Tech Topics

Butch Chapman repeated the tech sessions he presented, in Mountain View, for benefit of members who were unable to attend our April

meeting. The tech topics covered pushrod tube removal tools and LED replacement lamps for brake/turn signal bulbs.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. Respectfully submitted,

JB King

### Two Corvairs for sale in North Little Rock by ACC member Jef Higdon

- 1964 Monza coupe, four-speed, asking \$300.
  - 1962 Greenbrier van, four-speed, asking \$500.
- Surface rust on both, but otherwise solid, with few very minor dents. Both need complete restoration. Van has no engine in place but comes with two engines and four 14" Crager rims. Great project cars. Contact Jef Higdon, 501 231-6269.

# CORVAIR

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# On the Air

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*"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.

### No Meeting in June

The ACC will **NOT** hold a meeting in June, at Just Like Mom's, on Kiehl Ave., in Sherwood.

Our next regular monthly is planned for **Tuesday, July 20**, 7:00 p.m., at Just Like Mom's. Join us at 6:00 p.m. for food and fellowship prior to the July meeting.

### Officers

**President:** Cathy Smith, 370 Windwood Drive, Cabot, AR 72023, 501 843-8413.

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

**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.