

On the Air

Newsletter of the Arkansas Corvair Club ■ CORSA Chapter 722

January 2009

Volume 22, Issue 1

Sharing sad news about the loss of an established parts vendor and a loyal supporter of the Corvair hobby

An open letter from Lon Wall, reprinted from the VirtualVairs e-mail list; as a forwarded message dated January 8, 2009

CORVAIR UNDERGROUND 1974 - 2009

It would be trite of me to say that this is the hardest letter I have ever had to write. It would be trite and, well, untrue as well. All of us have had negative events in our life, some worse than others. On a scale of negativity, this letter ranks pretty high, but I've seen worse.

In 1974 I was young and stupid. I started a part time business that, by any rational measure, looked like an eccentric lark. For reasons I still don't fully understand that excursion blossomed into a full fledged mail order business.

When my second wife and I separated in 1982 I almost lost the business. But I kept stubbornly plugging away and, with the help of Linda (whom I married in 1983), managed to rebuild the Corvair Underground into a legitimate International player in the Corvair parts market.

Thirty-five (35) years is a long time

for any business to last, but very little lasts forever. 2009 marks the year that Linda and I will begin to liquidate our corporation. We've seen and had to make many changes in the way we've done things. That's how you survive 35 years.

But the past 3 years have been just a bit much. First we tried to sell the business for somewhat less than it was worth. Then we tried to sell it for a lot less than it was worth. Then we almost gave it away. In every case the "serious" buyers passed up on a real opportunity, mostly because of a lack of funds.

I have had health problems before, but my heart/stroke surgery 2 years ago really threw a monkey wrench in everything. Add that to failed attempts to sell, losing my key employees in the process, and a general downturn in the economy has made the going rough. Truthfully I promised Linda Winter before last that we would not struggle through

continued on page 2

Web log (a.k.a. blog) retells story of the last Corvair and May 14, 1969

For an entertaining and well-crafted retelling of the last Corvairs to roll off from the production line at the GM Willow Run Assembly facility on that fateful day in 1969, you will do well to read the Mazurland Blog, at <http://mazurland.typepad.com/myweblog/2008/05/it-was-39-years.html>.

In his essay, titled "It Was 39 Years Ago Today", writer/blogger Hank Kaczmarek describes what happened at Willow Run on that last day of production and he goes on to pay homage to the wonderful, misunderstood car that many enthusiasts appreciate and love today.

Hank begins his essay ("It Was 39 Years Ago Today") by saying:

No, not "Sgt. Pepper taught the Band to play"--that was 71 years ago by the song, and 41 years ago in actual time.

Actually, on May 14, 1969, Chevrolet Motor Division halted production of the Chevrolet Corvair.

Only 6000 units were produced in 1969, and they were delivered to dealers complete with a certificate for the purchaser giving them 150.00 off the price of their next Chevrolet vehicle for buying one. (885.00 adjusted for inflation). That's how afraid Chevrolet was that the cars would sit on the lots.

For the full story and to read Hank's defense of the Corvair, read his Mazurland Blog. (address above) ■

Inside:

| | |
|---|--------|
| February Birthdays & Anniversaries..... | page 2 |
| January Birthdays & Anniversaries | page 3 |
| November Meeting Minutes | page 3 |

"Corvairs bring friends together."

Corvair Underground *continued*

another Winter (Our traditionally slowest time of the year). And here we are. It's time for me to do something else. What that is, I have no idea. But I do know that it's time to wind this business down.

Our intention is to have Corvair Underground closed by late Spring of this year. Whether that will be possible or not remains to be seen. Even though our operation is considerably smaller than our "heydays" of the past 35 years, there is still an unbelievable amount of inventory here. I would still claim that we are the second largest inventory of new and reproduced Corvair parts in the world. We also have about a quarter mile of shelving and a lot of other equipment and stuff.

Is there a buyer out there? Time's running out. I may have to dump all this stuff on the open market and though "garage" sales. Not really looking forward to that.

If you have even a passing interest

in our clearance make sure you're signed up for our electronic news. It's free and easy. Just log into our website at

www.corvairunderground.com. That will be the primary way I will be announcing open-house sales dates and other breaking news.

So far as continuing to take and process your mail orders, that will not change at all. A number of our reproduced items will NOT be replaced and some inventory that requires large purchase commitments will not be replaced either. In the meantime we'll keep processing orders for the foreseeable future just as we have since 1974.

Has Corvair Underground been a positive force in the Corvair parts market these past 35 years? Well, the age of self-promotion of my business has ended for me. Other people and history will answer that question, eventually.

Lon Wall

Web site lists safety reports from National Highway Traffic Safety database

Anyone interested in Corvair history and related safety issues will want to visit the Web site **Automotix.com** and to drill down to the section that lists original reports, from the National Highway Traffic Safety database, of recalls, defective parts, and other safety concerns for the Chevrolet Corvair. (<http://www.automotix.net/autorepair/recalls/chevrolet-corvair/>) The page lists original text of safety reports, by year model, including number of units affected.

Make plans now for the 2009 CORSA International Convention July 13-17, 2009 Jacksonville, Florida

Hosted by Florida Corvairs; Host hotel is Wyndham Jacksonville Riverwalk, 1515 Prudential Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32207.

Phone **800 996-3426** and **904 396-5100**, mention Corvair Society for \$99 rate. Register online at www.wyndhamjacksonville.com

Click "Search using Corporate, Promo and Group codes," enter dates and **0719886CO** for Group code.

Contact Sarah Beltrami, 386 615-0072.

Happy Birthday to our ACC associates born in February.

Elvis King
February 6 (68)

John Coffey
February 11

Gloria Eddy
February 12

Travis Geaslin
February 17

Arkansas Corvair Club
February 29, 1988

Happy Anniversary to

Don & Beverly Ahrens
February 11 (24 yrs)

Robert & Bobbie Brown
February 13

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 and those due for the current 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 **January**.

Past Due John Dailey

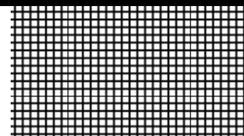
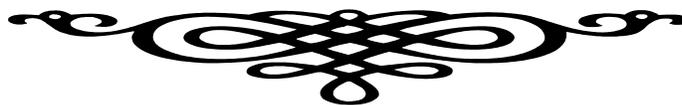
Due Jan David Carter
Al Embrey
Joe Espejo
Camelia Franson
Elvis King
Rafee Luan (Rafee Corvair)
Stew MacLeod
Steve Simmons

Please disregard if you've already paid. Thanks for your generous support. ■

ACC November Meeting Minutes



JB King



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

The meeting was called to order by president Frank Campbell.

The minutes from the October meeting were read and approved as published in the November newsletter.

Elvis King presented a treasurer's report.

Announcements

Elvis King announced that a fellow in Kentucky called him to share information about two Corvairs he is offering for sale.

Bill Smith informed us that he mailed information to two prospective members: Robert Bradley, from Searcy, and Jimmy Brown, from Heber Springs.

Old Business

There was no old business discussed.

New Business

Stew MacLeod announced that he and Ronnie will host, again, the ACC post-holiday party at their home in west Little Rock. The date for the part will be Saturday, January 10, 2009.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

JB King



Happy Birthday
to our ACC associates
born in January.

Jennifer Parks
January 5

Bobbie Brown
January 6

Frank Campbell
January 8

Barbara Coffey
January 16

Jane Carter
Larry Levy
January 20



Rafee Corvair

PARTS & SERVICE

PHONE: 918 753-2488 - Call 7 days a week, with any questions.

Rafee Corvair is here for all of your Corvair needs, whether you are looking for parts--new, used, and some NOS--or service for your Vair. If you want to keep it stock or modify it to gain performance, Rafee can do it. Complete restoration and a full line of rebuilding services, powder coating, and chrome.

Some examples of our great deals:
(Prices subject to change without notice.)

61-9, 8 mm silicone spark plug wires, various colors, \$37.50

60-9 rod bearings, std or .010, \$54.98

61-9, 7mm spark plug HD silicone wires, black, \$23.50

60-9 hp air cleaners w/ chrome tops, pair, \$38.50

60-9 universal electric fuel pump, \$54.25, Sweeto!

60-9 valve cover gaskets, thick cork, pair \$6.50

60-9 correct Corvair fan belt, \$12.95, Buzz!

60-9 carburetor kit, pair, Rochester, \$25.98

60-9 deluxe cork oil pan gasket, \$6.75, order 12, get 13!

60-4 front/rear HD KYB shocks, pair, \$99.98

60-9 ultimate gasket set, \$118.95, stop that leak!

Rebuilt harmonic balancer, tight, \$78.50

60-9 mirrors, Chevy bow-tie, w/ hardware, \$37.95, Nice!



Check us on the Web at www.rafeecorvair.com for more specials, to order online, and view Rafee's work.

Serving the heartland of America--and beyond--from eastern Oklahoma.

2695 Bengal Road, Wister, OK, 74966

Parlons Francais and hablamos Espanol.

Happy 2 B @ your service!



On the Air

Arkansas Corvair Club
370 Windwood Drive
Cabot, AR 72023-8344

Place
first class
postage
here.

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.

January Meeting

The ACC will meet Tuesday, **January 20**, 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: Frank Campbell, 2503 Creekview Lane, White Hall, AR 71602, 870 247-1794.

Vice-President: Bill Smith, 370 Windwood Drive, Cabot, AR 72023, 501 843-8413.

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 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.