

On the Air

Newsletter of the Arkansas Corvair Club ■ CORSA Chapter 722

March 2009

Volume 22, Issue 3

The Power Glide

by Norm Helmkey

Reprinted from *Corvairations*, February 2009, newsletter of CORSA Ontario (Canada)

This is an edited version of an article I wrote in the Canadian Old Autos newspaper in March 1993 called "Bulletproof Power Glide." Many of the facts and figures come from the Corvair SAE paper titled: Corvair Automatic Transaxle by F.J. Winchell. A must read for the Corvair enthusiast.

A remarkable fact about the Corvair Power Glide, is how trouble free it is. From a restorer's point of view, the Power Glide is the easiest automatic to service. Also, the drag racers also think it's a darn good transmission. JW Performance Transmissions have made a big business of supplying Power Glide transmissions and parts for both street and strip cars that can handle up to 1,200 h.p.

Today, most Corvair owners (who treat their cars as rare collectibles) would never think of shifting from forward to reverse at full throttle, which happened to be one of the design criteria for the automatic transmission on which we still depend. Dual master cylinder brake systems and handbrake aside, a Power Glide equipped Corvair

has a safety brake system not realized by many.

It is a comfort to know, that in an emergency, *IF ALL ELSE FAILS* (with the brakes, that is), it is possible to bring a 2,500 pound Corvair to a stop by shifting from forward to reverse, without damaging the Power Glide.

A great story was told by Larry Knipe, Ultra Van Manager, back in the sixties. An 80 year old man spent the mandatory two days, learning everything about the Ultra Van before driving away with his new coach. Six miles from Hutchinson (where they were made), he was so happy with the way his Ultra was running in "D"rive, he shifted to shift to "R"acing to go faster. The vehicle came to a screeching halt. The Power Glide was undamaged, but the Ultra training course was immediately altered to include reversing.

For those interested in how this remarkable transmission came about, very informative reading can be found in the SAE paper mentioned

continued on page 2

CORSA dues will increase in August 2009

Reprinted from *Vair-iations*, March 2009, newsletter of the Niagara Frontier Corvair Club

Please be advised [that the information] below [represents] the new dues rates, effective August 1, 2009.

You may want to take advantage of the time frame and sign up for an additional two years prior to August. And, while you are at it, pick up a copy of the latest CORSA Membership Roster - I did not see it on the web site, but we will try to get it on line in short order.

Motion Identifier: CORSA09-1

Moved by: Tim Mahler

Seconded by: Bob Dunahugh

Motion: I move to raise the CORSA membership dues, effective August 1, 2009, as follows:

1-year US student: \$18

1-year US: \$45

26-month US: \$90

1-year Canadian: \$49

26-month Canadian: \$98

1-year overseas: \$59

continued on page 2



Inside:

April Birthdays & Anniversaries.....	page 2
February Meeting Minutes	page 3
Rafee Corvair Parts & Service	page 3

"Corvairs bring friends together."



The Power Glide *continued*

above. The Corvair Power Glide has a very pedigreed heritage. When the Corvair was introduced in 1959, the Power Glide had been in continuous design improvement since 1954, about 7 million had been made.

In 1959, GM statisticians calculated Power Glides had been run over **200,035 billion** consumer miles! With this many miles behind it, when the first Corvair was delivered to the public, engineers at GM were confident the transmission could take almost any customer abuse, since Corvair gear stresses were only 60% of a full size Chevrolet V-8. It came as a big surprise when failures appeared in early Corvairs.

A few drivers, trying to show off the new Corvair, by power shifting at full throttle. Occasionally (since there is no reverse lock-out) shifts were made from forward to reverse, putting horrific strains on the drive line. GM immediately set new standards for a redesigned Power Glide. To insure adequate "abuse" capacity, the "new" Corvair

Power Glide would have to survive shifting from low to reverse with a wide open throttle, no less than **one hundred** times on dry pavement.

Surprisingly, even when the changes were made, no reverse lock-out was provided to prevent going from forward to reverse at any speed. Some of the changes involved better air cooling around the converter which was based on high temperature tests encountered in heavy city traffic, turnpike cruising, desert driving and climbing Pikes Peak.

The "worst case" scenario had to cope with a many variables, such as how much energy was delivered to the clutches, fade characteristics of the clutch material, pump delivery, clutch plate temperatures, and last but by no means least, the engine speed at which a driver might shift from forward to reverse.

The final point of this article, is to make sure all Corvair drivers with automatic transmissions, know they always have a "Brake of Last Resort," ...in panic mode; just move the shift lever to **"R"**acing. ■

CORSA dues to increase *continued*

26-month overseas: \$118

Lifetime US membership: \$900

Voting Yes: James Hogarth, Jackson Weaver, Tony V., Ned Madsen,

Dexter Minnick.

Voting No: Sarah Beltrami, Scott Morehead, Jerry Brown.

Votes not recorded for: Tim Chew, Tom Lugar, Bob Dunahugh.

***** ■

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 **March**.

Past Due David Carter
Butch Chapman
Bill MacSorley
Julie Pearce
Steve Simmons

Due Mar James Carter
Ernie Gray
David Schneider
Mike Shroyer

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

Happy Birthday
to our ACC associates
born in April.

Laura Kuizin
April 2

Kermit Parks (70 yrs)
April 9

Cortney Claypool
Mary Beth Claypool
Christel Espejo
April 12

Jim Latture
April 13

Ernie Gray (78 yrs)
April 22

Larry Drannon
April 26

Pam MacSorley
April 30

Happy Anniversary
to
Butch & Meredith Chapman
April 11

Larry & Pat Drannon
April 25

ACC February Meeting Minutes



JB King

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

The meeting was called to order by president Frank Campbell.

The group welcomed several ACC members who traveled from outside of central Arkansas for the February meeting. They were new member, Michael Kuizin, from Jonesboro; Clyde and Dee Jones, from Everton (south of Harrison); Todd and Shirley Sanders, from Danville; and Kermit and Jennifer Parks, from El Dorado.

The minutes from the January meeting were read and approved as published in the February newsletter.

Announcements

Frank Campbell announced that we will solicit nominations for club offices at our March meeting. At our April meeting, we will vote on the slate of nominees.

Bill Smith reminded us that, as stated in our bylaws, each year we should elect four board members, with our officer election. Bill observed that our elected directors have remained relatively unchanged for many years and that it might be time to reinvigorate our board by electing directors who can represent different regions of state. Also, Bill suggested that it might benefit our club if we planned for our full board to meet once each year.

Elvis King read a letter from correspondence that he received from the Florida chapters of CORSA. The letter announces that these chapters are preparing a Corvair to be raffled in July as a fundraiser for the 2009 CORSA convention, in Jacksonville, Florida. The raffle information includes pictures of the car--a 1964 Monza Coupe, 110 hp, 4-speed, with 19 thousand original miles. Elvis received 40 raffle tickets

and 31 of these were purchased by members at the February meeting. The cost of these tickets is \$5 each, 5 for \$20, 13 for \$50, and 27 for \$100.

Remaining raffle tickets will be available through March 17 (our March meeting), after which Elvis will return our payment, ticket, and any unsold tickets to the sponsoring clubs.

Frank Campbell showed members two shirts he had custom made with pictures of his 1964 Monza convertible. He ordered the shirts from a company named K C Vairbrush. You can find this company on the Internet at <http://www.kcvairbrush.com>.

Old Business

Clyde Jones announced that he and Dee are proceeding with plans for a spring Corvair event to be held on Saturday, April 18, at their home in Everton (south of Harrison). Watch for more information in your March or April newsletter.

New Business

There was no new business discussed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

JB King

Rafee Corvair

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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.

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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.

March Meeting

The ACC will meet Tuesday, **March 17**, 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:
\$150/year full page; \$100-½ page;
\$50-¼ 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.