

**Newsletter of Air 'Vair, the CORSA Chapter for Air Conditioned Corvairs  
Spring 2006**

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### **The Many Roads to Cool**

Twelve cool Corvair owners responded to the survey in our previous issue and the ten or so questions it included. While I tried to make the questions multiple-choice, we all know that attempts to categorize or regiment Corvair owners is just like trying to herd cats. If there's any vehicle whose owners go their own ways, it's Chevrolet's own Different Drum, our beloved Corvair. So this summary of information covering a total of twenty different vehicles (19 cars and one truck) will similarly lack structure.

But certain trends do seem apparent, in no particular order. For one thing, despite all the concern voiced fifteen years ago about the ozone layer (have we heard about the ozone layer lately?), 55% of our vehicles are cooled with the R-12 for which the stock systems were designed, 30% are cooled with R-134a, and 15% are currently not charged.

Conspicuous in its absence from this tabulation are the blends, some using hydrocarbons, marketed as direct substitutes for R-12. In my own experience, I found my service station using one of these substitutes for R-12 in my Corvair and telling me it "was" R-12 (and charging me the full price for R-12), so some of our 55% may be similarly deceived about what is actually in their systems. For my part, I have taken to evacuating and charging my system myself, as in so many other things. I've included a picture of two of the cans I used, but who knows what was really in there!



Aside from the Rampside, there was only one early model in our returns, a 1964. As in the overall production figures, model years 1965 and 1966 dominated, with 1968 absent. There were two Corsas, one 500 waiting for its first system, and all the rest were Monzas, probably rather like the pattern of factory production, as well as dealer-installed options.

Sixty-five percent of respondents reported their systems working well, while 35% reported their systems not currently operable, possibly because all twenty responses came from places where it

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**To join AirVair and receive Cool Air, fill out the CORSA application and mail to Air 'Vair president with \$5 annual dues plus appropriate CORSA dues if you are not already a CORSA member. Renew the same way, indicating you are renewing on form.**



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was winter at the time of the survey. Sixty-five percent of systems seem to have been put where they are at the factory, five percent by the dealer, and 30% were installed under other auspices, no doubt mostly one's own garage or even shade tree.

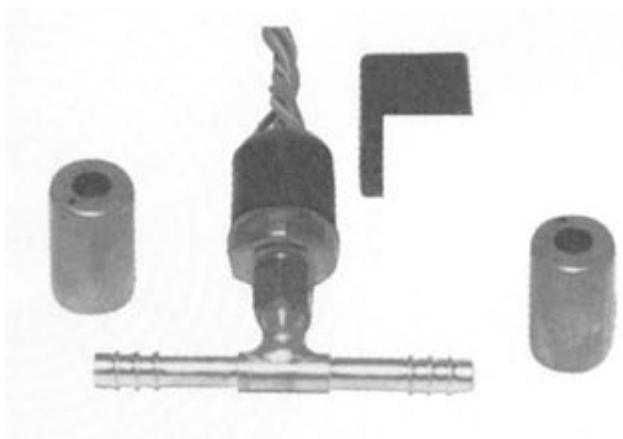
Sixty percent of respondents use the original type Frigidaire A-6 compressor, while the other 40% use Sandens of one persuasion or another. Sixty percent have their condensers at the front of the engine compartment, where the design after 1965 called for them to be, 20% had them in the position prior to 1966 (over the engine), while 15% had them at the front of the car (bottom of trunk) and one respondent had his condenser at the *left* rear of the car!

Fifty-five percent of participants reported that their systems were stock in all substantial respects, 35% reported variations in either condenser or compressor, and the remaining ten percent reported systems made up entirely of components from other types of vehicles, or the aftermarket. My question about conditions in which the system is used was not precisely phrased, so answers varied across: (a) *where* the system was used (e.g., Arizona); (b) *when* (e.g., sunny days) the system was used; and (c) what I intended, which was things like hilly or flat, high or low altitude, high or low humidity, and the like. Suffice it to say, usage seems to cluster around hot, humid conditions. No surprise there.

The commonest extra feature was "none," perhaps echoing the high number of fully stock systems. After that was a pressure switch to shut off the compressor when head pressure exceeds a certain limit, and third was a condenser fan to keep the head pressure down to begin with, and perhaps improve performance at idle and full-load conditions. I don't give percentages in this category because some respondents reported (as invited) multiple features in their systems.

Some interesting comments were included in the responses. George Koenig feels everyone should use a trinary switch (picture), which is a pressure switch that turns the compressor off whenever head pressure gets too high *or* too low, and can also control condenser fans to good effect. It should be noted that switches that are driven by temperature can accomplish similar results, but these are rather less

practicable on Corvairs than they are on water pumps, where coolant temperature is more available. **COOL AIR**'s own Joe Potts wishes he had any kind of pressure switch on his system, but there are no sensor ports on his system, and arranging for one would entail





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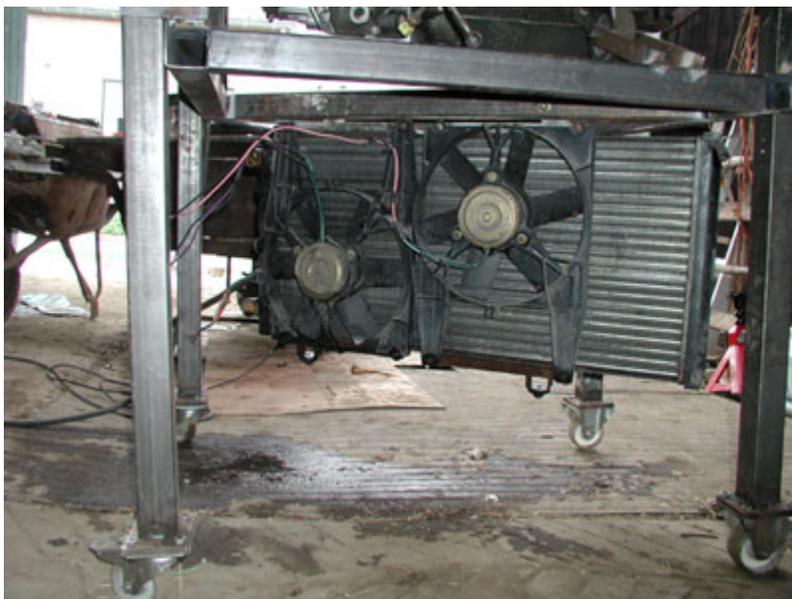
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discharging the system, which is a no-no until something else truly necessitates it. This conundrum and workarounds for it will be discussed in a future issue.

### **Tell and Sell**

The next survey is for *vendors* of A/C equipment and services for Corvairs, which certainly pose distinctive challenges to designers and installers of mobile air conditioning by right of the rear engine and the air cooling of that engine.

Are you a vendor, or could you be? Yes, you could, and you don't need to take credit cards or have a business license either, to be one. If you have parts or materials, new or used, to provide (sell, give) to Corvair owners, please send your information to **COOL AIR** by e-mail. While I do *not* want catalogs or price lists, I *do* want your name (business or individual), a Web site, e-mail address, and/or phone number and, particularly in the case of services, your location. Make sure to identify your entry with your currently paid-up membership in Air 'Vair for eligibility (one entry per member).



After that, tell us what you have (examples in picture) or do that's best for A/C Corvair owners. This is a small newsletter, so we're going to have to edit responses, particularly longer ones. We'll try to convey everyone's unique selling proposition as accurately as we can, but do *not* respond by directing us to your Web site—we won't compose your blurb for you. Make up

your own, in narrative (not list) format, and the result may end up somewhat like what you send me. One thing: we won't include anything that doesn't come to me as a response to the survey. If you're a larger dealer in these things, don't assume you'll be included automatically—the purpose of this survey is more to uncover little-known supply opportunities for Cool Vairists, and not to rehash the big ones that everyone knows about (although we *will* include you if you send a valid entry).

Please respond by July 1.

# COOL AIR

Air 'Vair, CORSA Chapter 004

5474 State Route 19

Galion, OH 44833

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IF LABEL IS PRINTED IN RED, MEMBERSHIP HAS EXPIRED. PLEASE RENEW.

## Air 'Vair/CORSA Membership Application

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Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Prov. \_\_\_\_\_ Post Code \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

One-year membership and subscription (all amounts in US dollars):

	CORSA Member	AirVair+CORSA
Address in United States or possessions	\$5	\$50
Address in Canada	\$6	\$54
Address elsewhere	\$7	\$55

Checks (payable to AirVair) must be in US funds drawn on a US bank.