

# Lifter Noise

Newsletter of the West Michigan Corvair Club



## What's Going On

The next meeting of the West Michigan Corvair Club will be on Tuesday, May 17 at 6:30 PM. We will be meeting at Fricano's in Comstock Park. The address is 5808 Alpine Ave. NW. We're not sure if they'll have their Tuesday night cruise night started then or not (this may be the first night). If not, we'll have our own mini cruise night with our Corvairs.

Also this month is our annual Spring Dust Off on Saturday, May 21. We will be taking a scenic drive to Lansing where we will be visiting the R.E. Olds Transportation Museum. After spending some time in the museum, we will take a very short drive over to Clara's, which was formerly a train depot, for an early dinner. We will be meeting at our customary spot – Burger King at 5136 Broadmoor Ave. SE in Kentwood – at noon. We will not be eating until later in the afternoon so if you want to eat lunch, you can it at Burger King before we leave.

Coming in June we will be heading to the All Air Cooled Car Show at Gilmore Car Museum on the 18<sup>th</sup> and then

## April Meeting Recap

We had a pretty good turnout for an evening of bowling for our April meeting. We were the last customers for High Mark Lanes in Dorr.

After grazing the buffet that was set up in the space formerly occupied by Jake's Goodtime Bar and Grill, we started slinging balls down the lane. We had a contest for highest combined score and lowest combined score after two games. Dave Ziebarth took the honors for combined high score with a 292; mainly because he started his second game with four consecutive strikes. Doug Lectka was a close second with a 288 and Dave Dykwell finished third with a 285. Sean Lectka took the honors for low score with a 146.

We had a great time and were hoping to make this an

## WMCC Calendar

May 17 – WMCC Membership Meeting  
May 21 – Spring Dust Off  
May 31 – WMCC Board Meeting  
June 18 – 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Air-Cooled Gathering  
June 21 – WMCC Membership Meeting  
June 28 – WMCC Board Meeting

## Inside This Issue

What's Going On	1
April Meeting Recap	1
The Circuit	2
April Board Meeting Recap	3
Convention Shirts	4

our regular membership meeting will be on the 21<sup>st</sup> at Culvers in Grand Haven.

We are looking at going to a West Michigan Whitecaps game in June. Anyone who is interested can send an e-mail to Dave Ziebarth (contact info at end of newsletter) so we can get an estimated number.

annual event but with the closing of High Mark Lanes, we will have to go elsewhere if we want to continue it.



## The Circuit or Surviving the Summer of '65

By Dan Konkle

You would never guess that the Taylor boys, who live just up the street, are brothers. Mark is soft and jovial, but John, a year older, leans toward the Clint Eastwood side of the scale. John is the more mechanical of the two, and he spends a lot of time in my - actually, my father's - garage, where he has access to many tools.

Like many young men in their late teens, John has automotive ambitions. He has acquired a Willys pickup, a quarter century in age, a model popular with hot rodders because of its small size and light weight. John's dream is to replace the anemic four cylinder flathead motor with a modern V8 and contend for the Nobel Prize for Street Racing.

That goal will be attempted at the only place that matters, the Circuit, a pattern of downtown Grand Rapids streets that appears after dark, and includes the main drag, Monroe Avenue, to link the Big Boy with a square loop around Veterans' Park. Although both of us are a year or two out of high school, cruising the Circuit is still more than just acceptable, it's expected behavior in our world, and far more socially responsible than doing something like, say, reading a book.

It isn't just for lack of imagination that boys do this - there are girls down there, strange, exotic girls from such distant, romantic places as Forest Hills and Wyoming. They, of course, are the same keen judges of dorkflesh as the girls at one's own school, but the forlorn hope of a seventeen year-old's heart is difficult to extinguish.

I help a little, but mostly just watch as John turns his vision into reality. He uses an acetylene torch to cut the excess length off the pickup bed, and that same tool to fabricate mounts for a powerful nail valve Buick motor up front. Fire makes anything fit. The big V8 under the hood is painted a glossy orange to contrast with the rusty black shabbiness of the truck's body, an immense bright pearl within a nondescript oyster. John's name for the monstrosity he has Frankensteined into life is 'Catch Us If You Can,' after one of the anthems of the summer.

From the beginning, I have expressed reservations

about the feasibility of this project. To me, it seems imbalanced, and a recipe for disappointment. Not only is the front end of the truck now much heavier, but having a motor with six times the power of the original will overwhelm the lightly loaded rear tires, which will not have enough traction for a respectable launch. But I can't resist riding along with John for Catch's cotillion, her formal introduction to downtown society.

How much the quality of light weight is valued in race cars is demonstrated to me rather soberly. There is only a driver's seat in the Willys' cab. On the passenger side, there is just an inverted pail, albeit a nice new one, silver and shiny. Another weight saving measure is not to replace the rusted-away floor. My bucket is perched upon, but not actually bolted to, a frame rail, below which I can see the blur of the pavement hurrying by. And seat belts? Those are for airplanes.

An aside is in order here, about the inherent risk of any activity involving a Taylor boy. At first glance, they do not appear to be dangerous. Their favorite expletive is some form of "cottonpicker," and as non-drinkers who attended church every Sunday, they carry a certain air of respectability, but still... Just two weeks ago I had gone to Ferrysburg with Mark, where we took a ride on a dune schooner, a modified four wheel drive truck with the body removed, leaving only the engine cowling and the seats. There was no roll bar, so the highest point of that vehicle was a passenger's head. The second highest was the top edge of the seat back. When our driver turned around at the crest of a dune, the lower side tires dug into the sand and we flipped, one complete roll, to land upright again. My right shoulder was crushed between the seat and the sand. Lucky thing it wasn't my neck. Mark was unhurt. In reflection, it seems I should have treated the experience as less of a random physical injury and more of a cautionary tale.

When John and I arrive downtown we insert ourselves into the stop-and-go parade. The chance that you will get an opportunity to have a decent race is actually remote. For one thing, you have to be first in line at a red light, which sometimes doesn't happen, and even if that does you must then have the luck to be staged against a worthy opponent. It's no fun blowing off a six

See *The Circuit* on page 4

## April Board Meeting Recap

The April board meeting took place on April 26 at Woody's with Dave Dykwell, Dan Konkle, Doug Lectka, Bob Muir, Jamie Reinhart and Dave Ziebarth in attendance.

### Fall Meetings

- Now that Jake's is closed and being reopened as a brewery, what will it be like in the fall?
- Will the "living room" still be available for us?
- We're not counting on it so we should look for a new venue
- Jamie asked about the proximity of Jake's to where our members live
  - Wondering how long of a drive people have
  - North part of town would be fine for a meeting venue
- Shots on West River Drive in Belmont has a side room that we can use
- Countryside Inn on Wilson was also suggested
- We have a meeting later this summer at Shots so we can check it out then
- Other venues will be considered as well

### Spring Dust Off

- Going over final details
- Dave Ziebarth to send out e-mail reminder in the week leading up to the event
- Dave Ziebarth will call Clara's to make the dinner reservation
- Information will be published in newsletter

### Convention Shirts

- Dave Ziebarth has four boxes of shirts left over from the 2013 convention that we hosted
- Various sizes of t-shirts and polo shirts
- Going to give the members one last chance to get some at our next events (dust off, air cooled show)
- Whatever is left we will donate to a charity

### Overnight Trip

- Dave Dykwell investigated going to the Auburn/Cord Museum in Auburn, Indiana
- Dave realized that other than the museum, there really isn't anything else in Auburn
- There is still a strong desire from the board to

go to the museum and we could still go there and go somewhere else afterward

- Some discussion of going to Marshall afterward and spending the night there
- Go to Dark Horse Brewery
- Great breakfast destinations
- Win Schulers for dinner
- Dave will investigate more

### May Meeting at Fricano's

- May 17
- Fricano's Tuesday cruise night may not be started then but we decided to hold our meeting there anyway

### June Events

- Air cooled show at Gilmore Car Museum
- Meeting at Culvers in Grand Haven
  - Part of a cruise night they have there
- Do we want to go to a Whitecaps game?
  - Dave Z will look into group pricing and see if there is any interest

### Summer Picnic

- Bob Muir will be hosting and coordinating
- Bob has two people lined up to do the grilling for us
  - We will be cooking chicken
- Club to provide soda
- Everyone else brings their own alcoholic beverages and a dish to pass
- Still looking for a second grill to use

### Other Possible Activities

- Race night at Berlin or Kalamazoo Speedway
  - Best night would be July 2 at Berlin but that is the holiday weekend
- "Vairs for Veterans" – give rides to veterans in our Corvairs
  - Is there any liability?
  - Do we just drive on the campus of the veterans hospital?
  - Doug Lectka will investigate

## Convention Shirts

We still have a fair number of shirts left over from when we hosted the 2013 CORSA International Convention in Kalamazoo. We have the following sizes and styles available:

Polo Shirts: S, M, L, XL, 2XL

Men's T-shirts: S, M, L, 2XL

Women's T-shirts: S, M, L, XL, 2XL

We will make these available free to anyone who wants one or three. Dave Ziebarth will have them at the Spring Dust Off and the Air Cooled Show.

Whatever is left will be donated to either Goodwill or another local charity.



### *The Circuit* from page 2

cylinder Lark filled with giggling girls.

Twenty minutes or so pass, just rumbling along in traffic. We can't snag a red, and the mighty Buick motor is starting to run hot, unhappy with being poorly cooled by the low speed airflow through the too-small Willys radiator. Then it's our turn at last, finally first in line. We look to see who's next to us. Sure enough, it's not a Corvette, or one of those new Mustang fastbacks with the wicked HiPo solid lifter motor, but two girls in a Rambler. Catch doesn't care. She came here to dance.

When the light goes green, John's pulls the automatic transmission into low range and nails the throttle. Yikes! How wrong I was. Either the Gods of Friction are smiling down on us, or the mushy Dynaflow is an effective buffer between the torque of the giant motor and the narrow rear tires, for they bite hard on the red bricks of Monroe and we take off like a jailbreak. I rock backward on my pail as we roar across the intersection, and I have to hook my still painful right arm through the open

window of my door to keep from falling down, and possibly through. As the bricks rush past under me, we get up to what feels like sixty in just a few rapid heartbeats, but the traffic ahead is backed up, so John has to haul the truck down almost immediately. Those Willys engineers who didn't foresee the need to design a floor that would last twenty five years were probably the same ones who also could not predict our current situation, the desperate need to have good brakes that work RIGHT NOW.

The ancient brakes do slow our truck, but at a rate that is all too obviously inadequate. To avoid ramming the car stopped in front us, John is forced to swerve into the oncoming lane where, perhaps by divine intervention, nothing is oncoming. Maybe that church thing pays off for these Taylor boys, and it's only their heathen companions who need to worry about their necks.

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**You're ahead with the  
engine behind!**

## About the WMCC

*Lifter Noise* is the monthly publication of the West Michigan Corvair Club. Deadlines for articles and classified advertising is the first of the month and should be mailed to the editor at: Dave Ziebarth, 7769 Burlingame Ave. SW, Byron Center, MI 49315 or e-mail [wmcc@corvair.org](mailto:wmcc@corvair.org). All material is subject to editing. Original articles are the property of the WMCC and are intended for the use in our publications. Articles may be used by CORSA or any CORSA chapter with credit given to the author of the *Lifter Noise*. Any other use must have written permission from the editor. Articles are written by Dave Ziebarth unless indicated otherwise.

Membership in the West Michigan Corvair Club is on an annual basis. Dues are \$18.00 per year. Dues are pro-rated if joining during the year.

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