

Lifter Noise

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What's Going On

After much deliberation, it has been decided that we will not have a Christmas Party this year. We attempted to find a place other than someone's home to have it but that did not pan out. At this point, there would not be enough time to plan one. Hopefully the Christmas Party will return in 2022.

Our next meeting will be in January. We are looking at planning a special activity rather than having a traditional membership meeting. Look for details in the January newsletter.

Planning is also underway for the return of the Zoup Off. We are looking at holding it on Saturday, February 12.

November Meeting Recap

We had a fairly low turnout for our November meeting. We were going to hold elections for our board of directors but it was tabled due to the low turnout. However, Doug Lectka and Dennis Willson did volunteer to continue on the board. That left one open position. (*Editor's note - Steve Vander Helm has volunteered to fill this open position*). Some potential candidates were discussed. Doug Lectka gave a treasurer's report - \$4902. He also started collecting dues for 2022.

Corvair Year One (AKA the Era of Leaks)

By Matt Zerilli

I bought my 1964 Corvair ~~Spider~~ Monza on a sunny October day in 2020. I had been stalking this one in particular for a few weeks and knew the time was right to pick it up at a price I could marginally afford. The thought of a Corvair had been the subject of my internet browsing for the better part of a year. I can't quite put my finger on what the draw was but I think first and foremost it was a bit of an oddball, unique, black sheep even. Left to rot in gravel driveways and grassy fields while hot rodders focused on bigger and badder offerings with far more ponies underhood. It was a bittersweet choice since I was planning on immediately selling my previous toy, a 1980 Fiat Spider 2000. But alas, with the family now squarely at a headcount of 4 the two-seater was getting more garage time than road time and it was time to think more practically. Enter a 56 year old economy car...



Last Day of the Fiat



First Picture of the Corvair

In any case the Corvair was generally in very good condition with the only obvious issue at the time being a minor drip coming from the lower engine shrouds. In my great wisdom I batted no eye at this, knowing from my previous year of research that the infamous pushrod o-ring leaks were as common as (expletive) Nader bumper stickers. The previous owner even had the foresight to order the right o-ring kit from Clark's in advance, a bonus with purchase. In any case the deed was done and I happily drove 4.5 hours home from the Cleveland suburbs with virtually no interruption, save for the questionable choice of stopping at a central Ohio Big Boy for dinner.

For the next week or so I tooled the car around town becoming increasingly aware of the snail trail of oil which I was continually building behind me. Well, in fairness, trail is a healthy exaggeration but I was realizing that it seemed more or less the complete powertrain was suffering from an overall "gooeyness". It didn't matter so much for the time as the flurries were beginning to fall, so a healthy sheet of cardboard went on the ground and the car went to sleep for a couple months. It was about March before I decided to do anything else, from what I recall it was a cold couple months and the garage heater just wasn't enough to keep me interested in laying on the concrete floor for hours on end.

So March comes along and I set to work on the pushrod tube o-rings. I pulled off the lower shrouds and spent the first couple nights degreasing through layers of caked-on oil residue until I could better make out the head casting surface. Then I pulled the valve covers, loosened the rockers and pulled all the pushrods out in careful order to keep things as they should be. I soaked all the components in gasoline to cut the crud and got to work on the pushrod tubes.



Cleaning Components





Mechanic and Apprentice

It was clear the original o-rings had turned to glass so I felt pretty good about the track I was on. After cleaning everything up I installed the new o-rings, coated everything with oil and re-torqued the heads per the shop manual. I had also ordered a set of rear differential axle half-shaft seals, so I took the time to replace these as well. I was pretty happy that this could be done with relative ease while it was still in the car. I think I must have had a pretty nice day sometime after that since I idled it out of the garage and proceeded with the running lifter adjustment in the driveway. As I am sure my neighbors enjoyed it took me about an hour of idling with the exhaust off before I got the hang of it. I realized that sometimes as you loosen the rocker nut the pushrod can fall out of the detent in the lifter or rocker and give you a false sense of tightness. So you really need to make sure the pushrod is seated as you feel for clatter. This is made all the more special as the motor spits hot oil and backfires six inches from your face.

So mission accomplished. The Spring weather is arriving and the car is ready to hit the road. Except I drive it to work the next week and notice oddly a familiar puddle underneath the motor in my parking spot as I pull away. I acknowledge my fate and spend a couple weeks laying underneath watching the leaky spots and I come to the conclusion that the bulk of the oil seems to be leaking out of the bottom of the clutch bellhousing. After studying the manual schematics and cruising the forums I decide that it's either the transmission input shaft seal or the crank seal at the bellhousing. Either one requires the powertrain to be out on the pavement instead of happily cradled under the chassis. Now, I consider myself reasonably handy, but in fairness pulling an engine was going to be a first for me.

Lucky for me I realized that pulling the Corvair powertrain was ludicrously easy. One night of carefully disconnecting linkages and documenting, then a second for placing the transmission jack and lo and behold there's now a motor occupying the spare half of my garage. Cracking open the clutch bellhousing at this point was also quite straightforward, then I carried the

tranny+axle over to my workbench and set to work on seal replacements. I replaced the transmission input shaft seal and also unscrewed the axle side flanges and replaced the large o-rings as well. Just for good measure I also put new axle half-shaft seals in again, why not. Maybe I didn't get them in square the first time. As I started to put the transmission back together I spent a little while inspecting the clutch and the inner walls of the bellhousing. I decided after some deliberation that the crank side seal and the rest of the surfaces looked clean enough so I had likely solved the pesky leakage issue. Famous last words.

	
Separation Complete	Transmission+Axle Seal Replacement

Loading the motor back in took a little bit longer than pulling it out but all in all it was short work. Now the birds were starting to chirp and the flowers were blooming, it was time to get busy driving. I fired her up and went on to work that week proud that I had checked another issue off the list. I didn't get curious until I got home that night. After parking I came back out to the garage a little while later and saw my old friend inky the puddle staring back at me. As I stared blankly at the concrete I felt the vision of that crank side seal mocking me in my poor decision to ignore it. I checked the date that night, less than two weeks until my newly found WMCC was hosting the Spring Dust Off. I wouldn't accept to leave this unfinished business for a day like that. Alright fine, out she comes again...

So the second time it really went quick. I had the motor on the ground in no time flat and soon thereafter the clutch plate was on the ground and I was carefully loosening the bellhousing from the crankcase. Lucky to have the support of Clark's again the seal kit was shipped promptly and contained everything a leaky Corvair needed. The crank output seal was shockingly brittle, almost felt like aluminum as I pried it out. Now I knew I had really found the culprit. I got the

clutch plate all put back without incident and before I assembled the tranny for the second time I went and replaced that input seal again just because and set it all back in place.



One More Time



The Culprit...

As luck would have it the weekend came and I had a fully functional car to drive the hour up to GR and meet some nice characters for a chilly but fun first meeting. And by that evening (and still to this day) I needed no sheet of cardboard under the rear end.

JINGLE ALL THE WAY



WMCC Calendar

January ??	WMCC Membership Meeting at TBD
February 12	Zoup Off

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About the WMCC

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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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