

The Denvair News

Volume 46 Issue 1

January 2020



The RMC cars at Mimi's

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Christmas at Mimi's

The club gathered at Mimi's for the Xmas party again this year. The venue had a lot to offer. We had a private event room and could order off the menu. This year the event was scheduled for the afternoon so our drivers did not have to navigate after dark. Kory and Gail Levin graciously agreed to host the event again. Our head count was 37 which made it the second largest event of the year. As the picture shows everyone was enjoying a very good time.



The club provided the first drink and appetizers. Jimmy Riley celebrated his birthday by providing a cake dessert for everyone. The Yankee gift exchange was enjoyed by everyone. It's always fun to see what people have brought to give away and sometimes have taken away. Toys for Tots was popular too.



Presidents Column

In the Drivers Seat

A sage member of the RMC family just told me, "Corvairs bring people together, but it's the relationships that keep the club together". I couldn't agree more.

Rocky Mountain CORSA, I am humbled by the history the club represents and the trust you have placed in me to be your club president. As such, I wanted to reflect a bit as I take the wheel as the current president of bit on my history with RMC.

It all started in May of 2015, when I happened to be photographing a RMVR driver training event down at PPIR. As I was wandering around the pits between track sessions, I came across something I'd never seen out in the wild before, a Yenko Stinger, a real live Stinger! As a life long motor head, I'd seen, driven, and gotten rides in a ton of cool and exotic cars, but never a Stinger. As I photographed and admired this beautiful specimen of a Corvair, the car's owner approached me. As we chatted about the Stinger and Corvairs in general, I admitted to have been bitten the Corvair bug and was a Corvair owner as well. During our conversation while Eric got the car ready for the next session, I was told to come join the club at the next meeting (June 2015). I still can hear Linae Schakel say, "Meetings are on the first Friday of the month at Elway Chevrolet on Broadway at 7pm", be there. I did make the next meeting and joined the club. Ever since, I've genuinely felt part of the RMC family. The rest is as they say, history.



That's not the end of the story it seems. Over the last couple months, being 'just a member' didn't seem to be enough to satisfy the needs of the club. The club had given me so much over the last few years, it's time for me to give back.

Join me in looking forward into 2020 and beyond to keep our club healthy and vibrant.

Next meeting: Jan 3, 2020 @ 7pm, John Elway Chevrolet on So. Broadway,

I look forward to seeing you there!

Rick Beets

Club news for 2020

At the Christmas party there was a short business meeting as announced to nominate and elect new officers for 2020. Nominated and elected were Rick Beets for president and Michael Timmons for vice president. Electing to remain in office were Rob Brereton as secretary, John Dinsdale as treasurer, and Ken Schiffner as member at large. Come out to the RMC club meeting at John Elway Chevrolet, 6200 S. Broadway on Friday Jan. 3rd to meet and wish them well.

A reminder that all member club dues are due in January. The dues are the same as last year at \$25. CORSA (national club) dues need to be paid on your own. They will send you a reminder. You can pay our RMC club dues in person at the January club meeting or mail a check for \$25 to RMC c/o John Dinsdale, 3240 Billings St., Aurora, CO 80011-2231.

Mike and Karen Piper attended the Christmas party but it was evident Mike's fall and injury was serious. He still has a way to go to get back to his previous self. We wish him the very best during his recovery.



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A Look Back at the 2019 Highlights

In April Mike Piper led a very stalwart group to the School of mines Edays car show. Ice and snow did not deter these folks. Larry Yoder won best of show.



In May the club met at the Schakel's spread in Sedaila for the traditional Tri-State tune up. There weren't many cars that needed to be tuned up but Steve Goodman was there for the laying of the hands. Linae Schakel's Texmex buffet was to drive for.

Later in May the PPCC club hosted the Tri-State in Alamosa. Our club president Ed Halpin had to scramble to move the venue from Uray at the last minute. It was worth the effort as all 3 club's members enjoyed the balmy weather in south Colo.



A look back at 2020 continued



John Drage's shop, garage tour



RMC August picnic Cherry Creek



RMC Autocross August



Budweiser tour September

Fall Folige tour to Nederland September



A Detective Story

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How a rare, experimental, aluminum V-8 from the Duntov era found its way into a Corvair by Kyle Smith

The small-block Chevrolet was still in its infancy when Zora Arkus-Duntov thought to ditch the iron casting and go to a more weight-conscious aluminum construction. These V-8 engines are pieces of small-block history, cast in 1959 for the Chevrolet Engineering Research Vehicle (CERV) project that became the first seed of the mid-engine Corvette. Officially unveiled in 1960, CERV I was a testbed--an open-wheel, mid-engine chassis that helped shape Chevy performance and the Corvette for years to come.

Strangely enough, an authentic GM aluminum small-block from this era now lives in the back of a Corvair, of all things. How does that even happen, you might be wondering? I hunkered down and performed some detective work to find out.

For context, I am a Corvair enthusiast who has long-lusted after building a Crown Manufacturing V-8 car. Even during the height of its production, Crown was a small outfit in Costa Mesa, California, which only built parts for mad scientist Corvair enthusiasts. Crown Manufacturing is now largely defunct after being sold to fellow performance parts manufacturer Otto in the 1970s, and then finally to Clarks Corvair in Massachusetts in 1991.

The Crown V-8 conversion entails tossing out the air-cooled flat-six out along with the backseat and placing a small-block Chevrolet V8 just inches behind the driver's right elbow. Even a fairly lazy small-block easily eclipses the maximum 180 horsepower offered in the stock Corvair, so the swap made sense for those looking to make a street sweeper sleeper in an era where turbocharger tech was primitive and casual reference the engine in it--an aluminum-block 283, from support for the offbeat Corvair engine was slim. These conversions are not uncommon, but while perusing my favorite Corvair-focused online forum, I watched a video where a guy named Paul Siano walked around his red 1966 Corvair and made in 1959 V8.



Paul Siano's 66 Corsa

I scoffed, thinking it was just bluster. Then it stuck with me. Nobody was correcting him in the comments. I had to know if the engine block in this 'Vair was for real or the value of scrap.

Siano is from Michigan, though he currently resides in Florida. His 1966 Corvair has been a part of his life since he purchased it new on the showroom floor. It was adequate for his daily driving, but when he rode in a friend's Crown V-8 conversion, there was no going back. He started the conversion on his red Corsa in the early 1970s, with a 327-cu-in V-8 taking up residence in the back seat. The 327 wiped a lobe on the camshaft, making way for a 302 sourced from a Camaro Z/28. Still, the greatest engine was yet to come, and it would come from an unexpected place. He had friends who made more than a little cash by picking over the scrapyards in the surrounding area and buying parts and pieces from the piles of metal headed for the smelter. When one of those friends came up with an aluminum 283, Siano bought it from them for his Corvair.

"I have seen a lot of things that some people don't think exists," said Siano told me over the phone. "Being in the Detroit area during that time, there was all kinds of stuff that the manufacturers sent to scrap for one reason or another. I just happened to be in the right place at the right time." Paul doesn't recall the exact year he purchased the bare engine block, and he didn't do anything with it right away. In fact, it was nearly 35 years later when he built the engine up for installation in the red coupe, still unaware of the engine's history. Once it was finished, he dropped it into the Corvair and drove it around to some local car shows. It

wasn't until a discussion at one of those meetups in 2015 that Siano learned that his Corvair's alloy heart might be something more than just an engine.

Zora Arkus-Duntov had a knack for forward thinking and experimentation. In CERV I's lifespan from 1959 to 1964, Duntov tried out seven powertrains, ranging from a twin-turbocharged V-8 to an all-aluminum 283 V-8, the latter of which was the first engine in the chassis. GM Heritage Collection indicates that the first aluminum small-block in the CERV I had 350 horsepower, which matched the engine's 350-pound weight. The engine block, cylinder heads, water pump, starter body, flywheel and pressure plate were all composed of aluminum. The GM Heritage Collection confirmed that the original aluminum engine from the CERV I is no longer in company hands, although it couldn't say for sure that Siano's engine was the real deal. These experimental engines were just that--experiments. They weren't held sacred, which means GM wasn't fastidiously tracking their whereabouts once their usefulness had expired. Is the proof in the casting?

Still, it's hard to imagine something important as one of the first original aluminum small-blocks had so easily found its way into the wild. To help paint a picture, Paul kindly provided me with a photo of the casting on the side of the block.

The raised GM casting in the aluminum, along with the ID number starting with 0- matches up with the style of a known "off-the-books" project--the 1963 Chevrolet big-block "Mystery Motor." That engine was built for racing, NASCAR to be specific, but was also a testbed for advancements that would eventually work their way to production engines. Screw-in rocker studs are one example.

One more intriguing detail--the block has ALCOA markings just below the casting number. Paul was under the impression that the blocks were cast by Alcoa, which is a leader in aluminum technology. I reached out to Alcoa to see if it had any information regarding these old V-8s, and the company responded that it was more likely that Alcoa supplied the material and GM cast the block. Using a third-party's as it did with the aluminum small-block in the past, for example, with the infamous aluminum Vega engines.



The aluminum V8 in the back of Siano's Corvair

The information is there, this engine is connected to the CERV I and Zora Arkus Duntov's skunkworks of the late 1950s. At the same time, there is zero definitive evidence that suggests this is the engine plucked from CERV I. Best guess? This is a pup from the litter, but it ain't Balto.

After learning of the connections his 283 had to GM history in 2011, Paul formulated a plan to remove it from the car and replace it with another lightweight engine--a modern GM Bowtie aluminum block, which will up the displacement to 350 cubic inches. He enjoys driving the car too much to have to worry about damaging a piece of small-block history in his back seat. The swap has yet to take place, but in the meantime Paul is being just a little more careful with the engine. Though he has listed the block for sale a few times in the past, Paul now plans to hold onto it. "It is not an investment, but something that is just too neat to let go of for now," he says.

Considering it's a hunk of history from one of the most iconic engine families of all time, "neat" is a gross understatement. To think that this experimental block ever lived inside a Corvair probably sounds a bit like hanging a da Vinci in your drafty garage, but I think it's outstanding. Chevrolet went way out on a limb with the Corvair. In a weird way, it's a match made in heaven.

Happy New Year to all!

Column from our Member at large Ken Schiffner

Things are going to get exciting! The CORSA Convention is coming up in San Diego in July and the Colorado clubs will be well represented....if we make the effort.

The San Diego Corvair Club (SDCC) is putting together a great convention with the help of multiple Corvair clubs including RMC and PPCC. This is a bit unusual but reflects the reality that a convention can be an intimidating project for just one club. Also, when multiple clubs roll up their collective sleeves, greater participation (and variety of ideas) can be expected. PPCC will be displaying SeeMore and members of both PPCC and RMC will be attending the Convention.

The Convention locations typically move around the country since individual clubs petition CORSA to be the host. CORSA likes to make sure the country is covered, it is unlikely that another "nearby" convention will be available (at least driven by Corvair) for most of us (Tim Shortle is the notable exception) for the next 5-6 years, maybe longer. This year is an opportunity we don't want to miss!

Have a great 2020

Ken



RMC Club Page

Rocky Mountain Corsa (RMC) has been a chartered chapter (#802) of the Corvair Society of America (CORSA) since October 1974 and is dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of Corvair automobiles.

The Denvair News is a monthly publication for members and affiliates of Rocky Mountain Corsa.

Editorial Contributions We encourage your participation! Please forward stories, ideas, jokes, recipes, and/or photos to the Editor. Content must be received by the 15th of the month prior to the desired publication month. Electronic files are *mucho* preferred.

Classified Ads Individual RMC member ads are free. Classified ads are limited to 25 words and may include a photo. All ads will run for three issues. Non-members may advertise for \$10.00. Please submit ads to the Editor, with payment due in advance to the Treasurer. Please make checks out to RMC.

Business Advertising Commercial advertisers are welcome. The following per-issue rates apply:

Business card size – \$2.50 ¼ page – \$5.00 ½ page – \$10.00 Full page – \$20.00

RMC Mailing Address

Correspondence, ads, & articles may be snail-mailed to:
RMC PO Box 27058 Lakewood, CO 80227-0058

Web Site: www.rockymountaincorsa.org

Membership & Dues

Rocky Mountain Corsa annual dues are \$25.00, due each year by February 28. Checks should be payable to RMC, mailed to: *RMC, c/o John Dinsdale, 3240 Billings St., Aurora, CO 80011-2231*

Monthly Meeting

RMC typically holds meetings the 1st Friday of each month at our host dealership, Elway Chevrolet, 5200 South Broadway in Englewood. Join us at 7:00 PM in the upstairs meeting room.

RMC Officers

President:	Rick Beets	prez@rockymountaincorsa.org
Vice President:	Michael Timmons	veep@rockymountaincorsa.org
Secretary:	Rob Brereton	sec@rockymountaincorsa.org
Treasurer:	John Dinsdale	treas@rockymountaincorsa.org
Member at large	Ken Schiffner	m.a.l@rockymountaincorsa.org
Past president	Ed Halpin	

Appointed Chairpersons

Activities Chair:	Chris Kimberly	activity@rockymountaincorsa.org
Auditor:	Jonni Berkman	auditor@rockymountaincorsa.org
CCCC Rep:	Rick Beets	cccc-rep@rockymountaincorsa.org
Historian:	Steve Goodman	history@rockymountaincorsa.org
Membership Chair:	Tony Lawler	membership@rockymountaincorsa.org
Newsletter Editor:	Paul Seyforth	news@rockymountaincorsa.org
Webmaster:	Dale Nielsen	webmaster@rockymountaincorsa.org

Rocky Mountain CORSA Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: November 1, 2019

Called to Order: 7:07 pm

Location: Hagerty Insurance, Golden CO

Present: Not counted, 10 or so.

- Guests, long distance, new members: None.
- Mike Piper presiding in Ed's absence.

Standard Business:

Minutes from past meeting: The October minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report: The end of Oct balance was \$4,976.93. \$24 in 50 / 50 were collected

Mailbag: Nothing.

Old Business:

Activities review:

○ Oct 12 in Parker, show at the Vehicle Vault--a garage condo and museum complex at Parker and 20 Mile Road. 10 Corvairs, 6 Citroen D21's, millions of dollars of cars, Lamborghinis and Ferraris.

Upcoming events:

- 12/14 Holiday Party, 1-4, gift exchange, Mimi's, First drink and appetizers free. Collecting unwrapped gifts for Toys for Tots. More to come in newsletter. This will serve as the monthly meeting with elections and CCC membership renewal vote. If you drive a Corvair, park together for photo.
- 1/1 Brunch has not yet been coordinated.
- 12/7 Christmas Caravan for Kids for USMC Toys for Tots. Supported by a bunch of 4WD clubs. Caravans from various locations end at Lincoln Tech to drop off toys. Check online for details.

New Business:

- No December newsletter. Thanks to Paul for November newsletter, great job.
- Chris from Hagerty is available to speak to car owners if there are any questions. No presentation tonight as speaker cancelled at last minute. Beautiful Aston Martin DB5 on display.
- 2020 nominations—Call for officers given tonight. Ed Halpin is planning to step down. Mike Piper, John Dinsdale, Rob Brereton and Ken Schiffner willing to stay in positions. Appointees Chris Kimberley and Paul Seyforth willing to stay. Mike to send an email seeking further nominations, please share them with Mike and Ed.
- Dues Reminder, \$25 annual dues due at first of year, pay by 2/28 or be dropped from club. Several reminders will go out in various forms.
- Jim Emerson passed away, Steve Goodman was notified by wife. Jim was a long-time member who owned a Cord, a Corvair-powered 8/10 Cord, and several others.
- Ken Schiffner spoke about See More. Asked RMC to list 3 events that we want See More to attend. The car and trailer are stored in Peyton so not as easy to get to. Ken is doing scheduling. They received a donation from Mid America and planning the trip to San Diego. They are seeking CORSA funds for travel but need to show benefit (members). Stored in a trailer that needs some work.
- Kent Sullivan's letter in Communique was discussed, creating a new classification for stock cars at car display. Preservation or survivor or whatever name to be created. Recognition by host club, not by CORSA directly.
- Octoberfest was attended by Jimmy and Caron, Sydney NE where they had a great time.

For Sale or Wanted, Recently Purchased, Projects

- Dave McGill, 1965 Corsa Convertible, yellow, black top. 12K. Colorado Springs.
- Mike Timmons, '68 car sold in 4 days.
- For sale items: send email to Paul to run in newsletter.
- Tech Questions--John Dinsdale shared how to add a diverter to improve the driver's side defrost. He passed the part around.

50/50 Raffle: Not Held.

Adjourned: 7:59 pm

Respectfully Submitted by: Rob Brereton

Rocky Mountain CORSA Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: December 14, 2019

Called to Order: Not Recorded. After food orders placed.

Location: Mimi's Café, Aurora CO

Present: Not counted, about 35.

- Guests, long distance, new members: None.
- Rob Brereton presiding in Ed's absence and at Mike's request.

Standard Business:

Minutes from past meeting: Not reviewed.

Treasurer's Report: The end of Nov balance was \$5,101.93.

Mailbag: Nothing.

Old Business:

Upcoming events:

- New Year's Brunch will be at the Estes Park Resort, 11am on 1/1/2020. "The Other Side" Restaurant closed this year. Location is 1700 Big Thompson Ave, North side of Lake Estes by Marina. \$26 for adults, \$13 for kids 12 and under. Please send check directly to John Dinsdale for your family by Dec 24. The menu is breakfast buffet. No champagne will be provided and any alcohol (or other non-buffet item) you order is additional and paid by you directly. Eric Schakel mentioned that this is where they have been staying overnight on New Year's Eve for a couple of years, so if you want to attend brunch in your pajamas consider staying overnight there.
- Next meeting at Elway Chevrolet, Friday January 3 at 7pm. Please come as we plan for the upcoming year.
- Thank you to Kory and Gail Levin for pulling together another wonderful holiday party.

New Business:

- Election of 2020 Officers. Rick Beets is running for President. Mike Timmons is running for Vice President. John Dinsdale, Rob Brereton and Ken Schiffner are willing to continue in positions as Treasurer, Secretary, and Member at Large. No new nominations were received. Paul Seyforth moved to elect the slate of officers by acclamation, Eric Schakel seconded, and the motion passed. Thank you to our outgoing Vice President Mike Piper. Past President is still an officer position, so Ed isn't leaving the group of officers, just moving around. Thanks, Ed, for your service this past year.
- Thanks to the past year's appointed Chairpersons Chris Kimberley (Activities) Tony Lawler (Membership) Paul Seyforth (Newsletter) Dale Neilsen (Webmaster) and Jonni Berkman (Auditor). The board will make appointments at the first board meeting.
- Dues Reminder, \$25 annual dues due at first of year, pay by 2/28 or be dropped from club. Several reminders will go out in various forms.

For Sale or Wanted, Recently Purchased, Projects

- Not covered in meeting.

50/50 Raffle: Not Held.

Adjourned: Before the food arrived

Respectfully Submitted by: Rob Brereton