

# The Denvair News

March 2024

The Official Publication of Rocky Mountain Corsa ↔ Volume 49, Issue 3



## Electrovair! GM Has Been Playing With EVs For Years!

**The EV Revolution** has been in the headlines since Tesla struck a chord with the automotive public, but we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that EVs have been around for more than a century, and, yes, even GM's fabled Corvair has EV history!

In the mid-1960s, GM built the Electrovair as a show car and development vehicle. Electrics lost their charge during Detroit's muscle car era, but the environmental movement of the late '60s kept electric research alive.



*Above, the Electrovair (MIT version) in action. Note how it whizzes by those soon-to-be obsolete gas pumps. The aerodynamics and flat floor pan were key elements that made the Corvair a good choice for electrification. Of course, GM support was probably factored into the decision, too!*

*Below, Herr Doktor Frankenstein was clearly involved as a consultant in the design of the control systems for the electrics in the Electrovair. Or, could that just be the radio?*

### Electrovair Controls...



The Electrovair concept was resurrected in 1968 when GM collaborated (on a limited basis, per the rules) with MIT for a cross-country Clean Air Challenge entry.

Dubbed the Great Electric Car Race, the Corvair left MIT for CalTech, while the CalTech entry, an electrified 1958 VW Microbus, left CalTech for MIT. Sixty-three charging stations were set up, at approximately 60 mile intervals, and the Corvair was first to cover the 3,490 mile route by a comfortable margin.

BUT, the MIT entry was penalized for being towed for many hours due to charging issues, and the penalty handed the win to CalTech. The winning margin, after the penalty, was **ten minutes!** *(continued, next page)*

### Have Your Due Dues Been Paid?

If not, this might be your very last DenVair News, and how can you let that happen? Make your \$25 check payable to RMC and mail it to: **RMC, c/o John Dinsdale, 3240 Billings St., Aurora, CO 80011-2231**. Or, there's always the RMC Paypal link, [www.rockymountaincorsa.org/dues](http://www.rockymountaincorsa.org/dues). Quick, do it now before you forget!



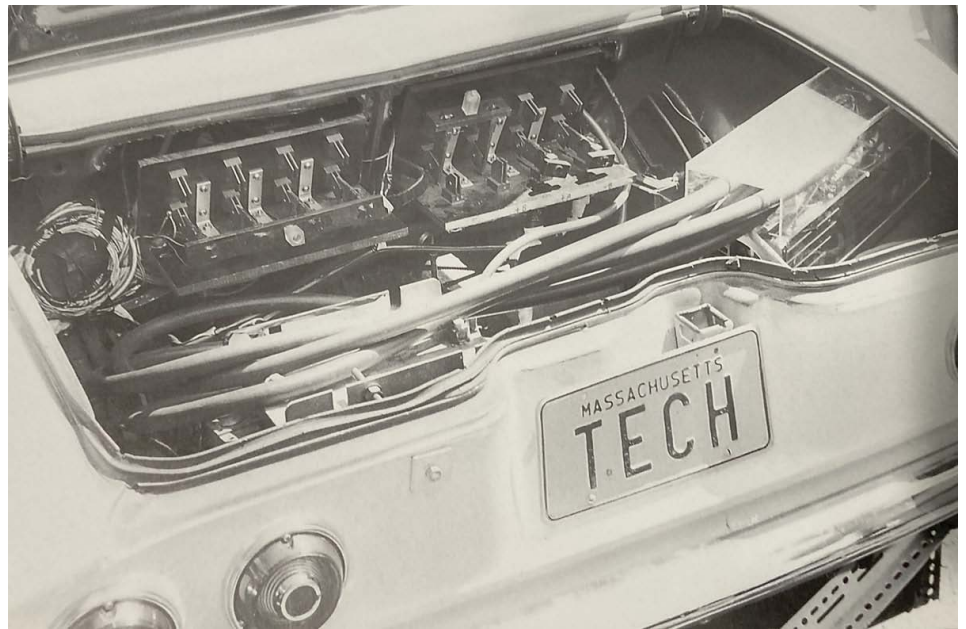
Of course, EV technology in 1968 was at horse-and-buggy level in comparison with today's offerings. The winning VW required 10 days to make the coast-to-coast trip, and both entries required towing when they were unable to make the sixty-mile or so distance between charge stations.

The Electrovaair used NiCad batteries with a stunning 7.5 kWh capacity, adding 2000 pounds to the car's weight. Power was sent to the wheels by an off-the-shelf 15 HP brushed motor - the MIT team had designed a custom-built brushless, but it wasn't completed in time for the event.

And just like our Corvairs today, overheating under load was a serious problem - the students were forced to pour ice water over the batteries during charging and operation to keep them from melting down.

The longest run recorded from a full charge was 86 miles, the shortest less than half of that. Their optimum speed was typically 53 miles per hour, although any variation from level pavement had a notable effect on range.

## Electrovaair Engine Room



*More Frankensteinian technology is evident in the engine compartment, where massive copper contacts and cabling directed the power flow.*

Suffice it to say the MIT Electrovaair would not be an ideal choice for a drive from our Rocky Mountain Corsa territory to the Fanbelt Toss. Conclusions: 1) The good old days weren't always so good after all, and; 2) EV's have come a long way!

Information and images used were taken from **Corvaair By Chevrolet**, Karl Ludvigsen's excellent photo book of Corvaair history. Other info related to the 1968 event was pulled from the Internet.

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## RMC Corvaair Happenings!

- Friday, March 1, 2024 — RMC Meeting at Elway Chevrolet on Broadway, 7:00pm
- Friday, April 5, 2024 — RMC Meeting at Elway Chevrolet on Broadway, 7:00pm
- Sunday, April 28, 2024 — Tri-State Tune-Up at Schakey Acres
- Friday, May 17-19, 2024 — Annual Tri-State Meeting, Las Vegas, New Mexico
- Monday, July 22- 17-25, 2024 — CORSA National Convention, Dayton, Ohio

## Rocky Mountain Corsa Official BS & Contacts

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**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 20th of the month prior to the desired publication month. Electronic files are preferred, pictures are awesome, but please include descriptions!

### Classified Ads

I don't recall RMC doing paid ads in this fine newsletter since the Reagan Administration. Should this section be updated or eliminated now that RMC has a well-maintained web site?

### Business Advertising

Ditto Editor rant above - much the same applies.

### RMC Mailing Address

Correspondence, ads, & articles may be snail-mailed to:

RMC  
PO Box 27058  
Lakewood, CO 80227-0058

### 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**. Dues may also be paid online via PayPal at this link: [www.rockymountaincorsa.org/dues](http://www.rockymountaincorsa.org/dues)

### Monthly Meeting

RMC 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 (above Parts Department).

### RMC Officers & Appointees

President: Mike Piper

[prez@rockymountaincorsa.org](mailto:prez@rockymountaincorsa.org)

Vice President: Ken Schiffner

[veep@rockymountaincorsa.org](mailto:veep@rockymountaincorsa.org)

Secretary: Rob Brereton

[sec@rockymountaincorsa.org](mailto:sec@rockymountaincorsa.org)

Treasurer: John Dinsdale

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Member At Large: Tony Lawler

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Past President: Rick Beets

[void@rockymountaincorsa.org](mailto:void@rockymountaincorsa.org)

Activities Chair: **your name here - help us out!**

[activity@rockymountaincorsa.org](mailto:activity@rockymountaincorsa.org)

Auditor/Trustee: John Dawson

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Newsletter Editor: Eric Schakel

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If one of y'all had sent a really neat image, I'd a put it in this spot with a useful caption, and you and your Corvair would be famous!

- Ed.

## President's Letter, March 2024

Hi all!

On the verge of working without a net because my various ramblings are on a different computer, but I found my January notes in my sent email so I'm a bit relieved.

As usual I'm confronted with both positive and negative issues. The positive ones are my fuel tank is back in the car and I drove it a whole 10 miles on some less than smooth pavement and no squeaks or rattles. Of course, 10 miles isn't enough of a drive and the issues varied according to the amount of fuel in the tank. Staying positive though.

I went through my dash re-lamping project and an attempt to resurrect a tachometer in a Corsa Tachometer case complete with the idiot light. We'll see. Tachometer test is tonight. I can see the numbers on the speedometer and tachometer now. At the same time, I built an instrument cluster the same way for use in the project car. Now all I need is the car far enough along to actually install all of the beautifully reworked stuff sitting in my daughter's garage. Again, trying to remain positive.

Bordering on negative but slightly positive, the weather had been crappy for trying to get the Corvairs out and drive them. There is so much "stuff" on my VW that the exact color is a mystery. BUT, It is not getting too dark to work at 4:00 PM (16:00 hrs) so we are picking up a bit more daylight time each day. The nature of the snowstorms has changed some so they are melting away more quickly and as we go along the days of really nasty cold are less likely. Also, the angle of the sun has changed enough that I don't need a #5 welding lens to drive south in the morning. The various car shows are beginning to show up so there are many events to look forward to. As one PPCC member observed yesterday, there are so many car shows, cars and coffees and so forth now that there is something to do almost every weekend. Sometimes there are more than one possibility in a weekend day.

At the same time, I've had a tennis racket in the face moment with all of the challenges facing members due to health issues. Some issues involve trips to the mechanic for surgical repair, others are systemic difficulties, some are the members themselves, others are their families.

As we can all tell, members in all local car clubs, not just Corvairs are facing aging membership. There is reduced ability to work on the cars or reduced interest in driving long distances. My latest personal moment was a broken blood vessel in my eye, much worse than usual which resulted in a call to the healthcare folks. I had two different physician's assistants tell me that headaches with Warfarin should be followed by a trip to get a head CT to check for bleeding. With my history I saddled up the VW and spent 6 hours in the ER (with a headache to boot) to get a head CT which was normal. Next up is a CT of my aorta which showed up as enlarged a couple of years ago. I'm also generally enlarged but considering what happened to Bud Duncan a while back that also is nothing to fool with. My absolute most recent issue was having cramps in my hamstring muscle while pinned under my steering when trying to put the instrument cluster back into the red car. It is a humorous mental image now but not at all funny then trying to get out of the car so I could walk it off. I'll only limp for a day or two...

Issues still to be considered are how we can attract new members and perhaps do events including PPCC and also northern Colorado folks. We have some ideas. We still need an activities person if we can recruit one, but we can also do the group bringing items and sharing them with the group thing. If several want to do them then they can "group up." Attracting our spouses to meetings and events also remains a goal at least of mine.

There is also the standing plea for articles for Eric to include in the DENVAIR NEWS. In that Spirit I did one on my thrashing about with LED lights and alternate gauges and ground systems for the instrument cluster(S) in my Corsas. I have a couple more in mind about LED bulbs in the turn signals and brake lights and another on LED bulbs in Hella headlight shells. As in the case of the bulbs and gauges in the instrument clusters, I did not invent these items or ideas but maybe my comments will be helpful.

I have again failed to keep this to one page typed (*no problem, squeezed it in! -Ed*). I'll keep trying. Meanwhile, be safe, stay warm and I'll hope to see you all at the next meeting.

- Mike

# Rocky Mountain CORSA Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Date:** February 2, 2024

**Called to Order:** 7:06 pm

**Location:** John Elway Chevrolet, Englewood CO    **# Present:** 20 on site, 4 on Zoom.

**Guests, long distance, new members:** Kurt Lionbecker (sp?) First time owner, new member. Has a '66 Turbo Coupe.

## Standard Business:

Minutes of last meeting: Minutes from January meeting were reviewed and approved.

Treasury report: The end of January balance was \$6,516.81. Treasurer's Report was approved.

Mailbag: PO Box has been renewed for another year. No mail of consequence recently.

## Old Business:

- Thanks Eric for a great newsletter, and thanks again to Paul for many years of service.
- Tri-State Location committee for 2025 is Ken Schiffner, Paul Seyforth, Tony & Diane Lawler. Paul shared the findings. Why the visit to Trinidad? Diane suggested, having looked at map, found a new location within the middle of RMC and CNM. Some locations from last meeting were eliminated for cost of hotels, Pagosa Springs has 148 hotel rooms with avg cost \$200. In Trinidad, looked at 3 highly rated hotels among 7 or 8 others. Holiday Inn, \$160/night, La Quinta, 129/night. Day's Inn, \$110/night. Chosen dates are May 31-June 2. The Trolley around town starts Memorial Day weekend, so will be running by then. Met with Community Relations and Tourism Manager, have a city site for use for banquet. There are walking tours, the Highway of Legends historic drive. The hotel has room for registration. 30 rooms were discussed, but no group rate is available. Need to lock down a hotel. Town will close off Main Street for the car show and advertise the event. Club voted and approved. Do we have a working committee? No, not yet. Lawlers will participate on committee and manage the raffle.
- Rick brought snacks, and Chris Jackson brought make-up snacks. Dale has March. Mario, Wibbons will cover April. Caron Wetter has May.
- Dues are now due for 2024. About ½ have paid so far. Cost is \$25 by check or cash or \$26 on Paypal. Due by End of Feb per "Standing Rules".
- Thanks to Cory and Gail for all the work that went into the Dec / Jan events.

## New Business:

- Mike noted that he was ready at 7, but the conversation continued until the start logged above.
- Keeper of the Roster is the Membership Chair per Bylaws, Article V, Sec 1 A which is an appointed position. The roster is due at March meeting. Rick maintains the RMC-list.
- Per Bylaws, other appointed positions are Activities Chair, Newsletter Editor, Webmaster, and Auditor.
  - Activities Coordinator, Vacant. Auditor/Trustee, John Dawson. Membership, Tony Lawler. Newsletter Editor, Eric Schakel. Webmaster, Dale Nielsen. Historian, Steve Goodman (not listed in bylaws). CCCC Rep, Rick Beets (not listed in bylaws)
- Elected Officers (per Bylaws): President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer.
- Board of Directors (per Bylaws): Above officers plus Member at Large (who is elected as officers are) and past president.
  - President Mike Piper, Vice President Ken Schiffner, Secretary Rob Brereton, Treasurer, John Dinsdale, Member at Large, Tony Lawler, Past President Rick Beets.
- Bylaws Review: Bylaws indicate intent to review and update if needed every 3 years. Last copy is dated 2018.
- Facebook Page for member discussion, was opened up against advice of members. Former member took charge of it and has also become admin for PPCC Facebook. Admin list Michael Timmons, Nate Glade, Fred Bores, Devin Williams, Conrad Trybus, Mike Hulsli. How do we regain control? Garrie Fox had a comment, PPCC has a private vetted FB page and an unlimited page. He suggests having 2 if you want a public one. Tony to discuss with Michael.
- CORSA Administrative Fee, due by end of Jan per Standing Rules.
- CCCC Dues: Pay by end of March.
- Events Suggestion Discussion:
  - Suggest BJ's BBQ event this month (Chris Jackson)
  - Golden Super Cruise is first Saturdays officially March to September, unofficially year-round, so it is unofficially tomorrow.
  - The Forney Museum. A possible group visit was discussed.
  - A visit to the Cussler Museum was discussed. They are closed until May, with no schedule posted at this time.
  - The Tri-State Tune-Up dates suggested by the Schakels was April 21 or 28. The group selected April 28.
  - School of Mines Engineering Days (E-Days) is April 11-14, with the car show likely on Sat 4/13.

## Activities:

- Mar 1 (Fri); Monthly Meeting, 7pm, Elway Chevrolet

## For Sale or Wanted, Recently Purchased, Projects

- Mike Piper has gas tank back in and car will be back on the ground shortly. He ordered Clark's tach module to replace non-working tach with improved modern circuit board and will change the bulbs at same time. Down to 1 working bulb now.
- Lawlers report the yellow car is running well again. Also impressed with 3.27:1 axle that Steve set up.
- John Dawson brought some 20W50, 5W30, and other oil he doesn't plan to use. It was up for grabs and was claimed.

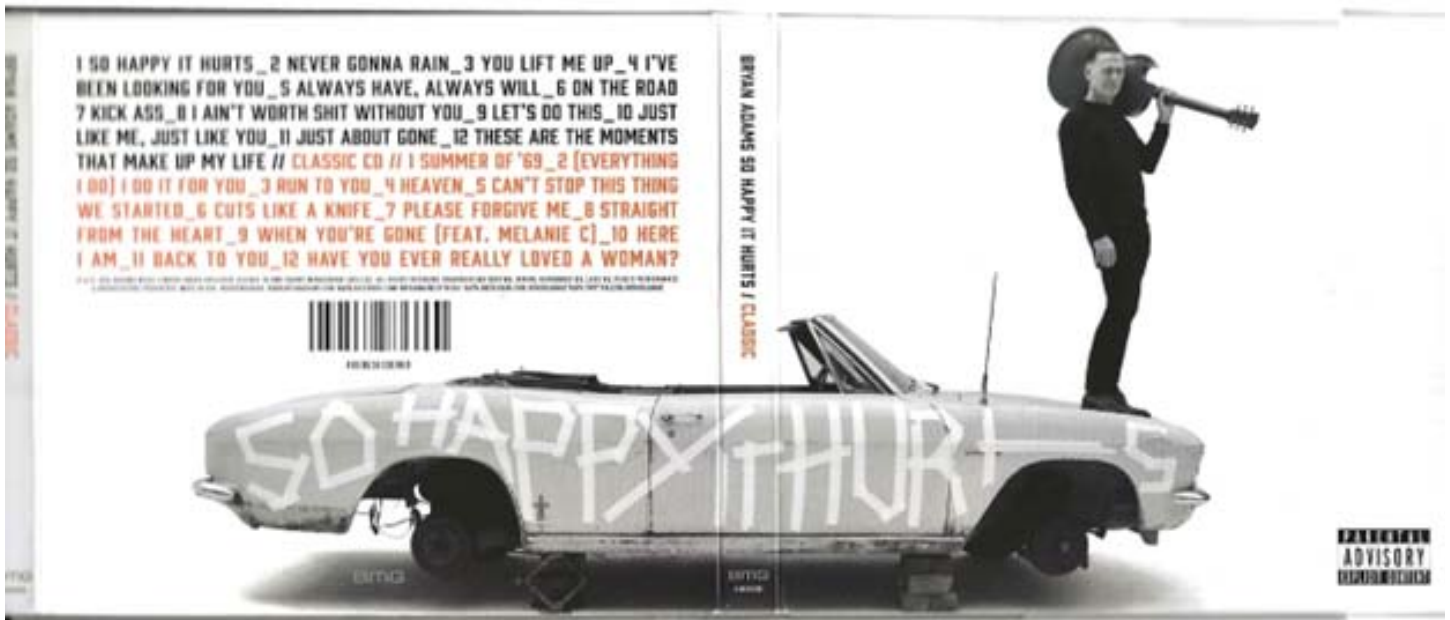
50/50 Raffle: To Club: \$40                      to Winner: \$40    Winner: Mike Piper

Meeting adjourned: 8:49 pm

Respectfully by Rob Brereton

## Corvairs In Music

- John Dawson



### Music Review: So Happy It Hurts / Classic - Bryan Adams

For those of us who (still) listen to “Classic Rock” the name Bryan Adams should ring a bell. As one of the most successful pop musicians of the latter part of the 20th century, this Canadian musician and photographer has sold between 75 – 100 million records and singles worldwide. Surprisingly, I’d never picked up any of his releases - after all, so much of his music was on “heavy rotation” during the 80’s and 90’s that there was no need to buy the LPs or CDs! For quite some time, I had not paid him much heed until Bonnie Raitt showcased him on her 1995 live release “Road Tested” and Warren Zevon gave him a shout-out on a radio live cast from the Boulder Theatre in February 1992. Zevon’s touring band at the time, the Odds, had backed up Bryan Adams (BA); the drum-

mer still works with BA. With two of my favorite musicians giving him some major cred, I had to concede that there may be something to this Bryan Adams guy.

His most recent release “So Happy it Hurts” from March 2022, was recorded in 2020-2021 during COVID lockdown. In October 2022, it was paired with a 12-song disc of classic re-releases on the super deluxe release. The re-recordings were brought about due to his previous label, Universal, not returning his master tapes to him. As with some other musicians such as Suzanne Vega and Taylor Swift who have struggled with control of their music, this was an opportunity for him to “just make some new masters” of some of his greatest hits. Plus, the team had so much fun creating the new music, they just wanted to keep on recording.

When his newest release was

announced in 2022, I could not help but notice the cover art with a picture of a somewhat disassembled, slightly disheveled, and engineless 1966 Corvair Corsa convertible up on blocks. Last month, whilst pursuing the music rack at the local library, the two-disc super deluxe release was in the bins. After checking it out and ripping the CDs to the hard drive, I gave it a listen. The new material is quite good. The songs are quite reminiscent of Adams’ earlier work. Most are what would be considered “rockers” and present an optimistic outlook on life and things in general. Perhaps that’s something we need to hear now-a-days. Production and most of the instruments are done by Bryan Adams (BA) with engineering and mixing done by Hayden Watson in Vancouver. Also making appearances are “Mutt” Lange (the great producer) on background vocals, Keith Scott on lead guitar, and John

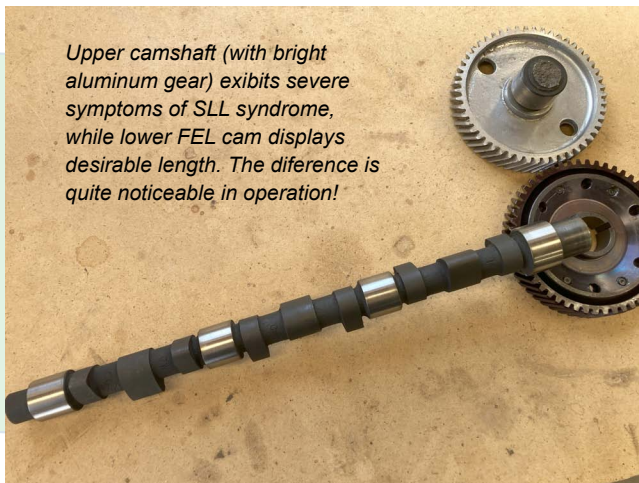


Cleese of Monty Python fame doing the narration in the intro to "Kick Ass". This is a great CD for highway driving. While driving to and from the TSTU on April 30th, the "new" CD was in the player with the volume cranked up to 11.

The "Classic" disc of re-recordings is quite well done. I had forgotten all of the "hits" that BA had created. The disc has a nice balance between "rockers" and "ballads". Mixing for the "Classic" disc is mainly done by the great Bob Clearmountain along with Hayden Watson on some tracks. Disc mastering is by the always very capable Emily Lazar. Most of the instruments are played by Adams himself, with help from his long-time lead guitar player Keith Scott. Quite the trip down memory lane.

Overall rating: 4.8 out of 5. If you're into physical media, go out and get a copy – the Super Deluxe version is only \$15 on Amazon. If nothing else, get it for the photography. BTW: The cover and booklet photography is also done by Bryan Adams. Now, I just wonder if they're going to restore the Corsa!

*In his original e-mail regarding this article, John noted that Bryan Adams' parents had a Corvair when he was young, clear evidence that the disease carries from generation to generation... Ed.*



*Upper camshaft (with bright aluminum gear) exhibits severe symptoms of SLL syndrome, while lower FEL cam displays desirable length. The difference is quite noticeable in operation!*

### **Tech Corner**

*This month we discuss Corvair SLL syndrome, a rare occurrence, but one that stymies all but the most persistent mechanics.*

*SLL stands for **S**ignificant **L**oss of effective **L**ength. SLL typically occurs under load at high RPMs, and the abrupt cessation of combustion results in a very quiet coast-down. It is natural to suspect a failed distributor drive, but a head-scratcher when everything under the cap rotates normally, and oil pressure exists. Remove a valve cover and inspect at this point: No valve motion? Your Corvair probably has SLL.*

*Note that SLL must be remedied by installation of a camshaft assembly with Full Effective Length (FEL), which may require more than an afternoon.*

*- Izzy Guiffe*

## Well, Nuts.

- Eric

2024 was going to be the year of the Ringer, and maybe a long road trip or two to try it out on the famous race tracks I've been reading about since Lyndon Johnson was President. The Ringer has made great progress, now complete with a fresh engine that's been run-in on a stand, bolted to a 3.55 axle with the HD 4-spider conversion and a Yenko close-ratio gear set in the trans case.

There's a nice ATL fuel cell in the trunk, factory close-ratio steering gear and all-new suspension joints with solid bushings held up on shortened springs that are locked in by Koni shocks. The disk brakes, with their 4-piston Wilwood calipers, are all in place.

What it lacks are the basics: Wiring, plumbing, paint, and a functional driver.

It seemed to be going well, right up to the point where I couldn't quite reach the u-joint strap when I'd gotten the axle shaft and strut rod into just the right position. It was only 2 or 3 inches, surely, with a little lurch... I could tear a shoulder tendon? And yes, I did just that, although I did get the strap in place before I screamed.

And once you have a torn shoulder, you have to protect it, so I compensated by doing double-duty with my right shoulder until I managed to tear that one. And since I'm right-handed, I tore three of the four tendons, just to make sure I was serious.

No tendons were fully detached, all can be repaired, but 2024 is literally going to be reserved for recovery. When the clock is ticking, that's a hard thing to swallow. Don't be dumb like me.



*Suspended inanimation...*