

My Corvair Story

by Scott Earehart

I guess that my love of Corvairs started when I was about 5 or 6 years old on my grandfather's farm. He had several cars setting around that my brother and I used to play in. I always thought that the overhang on the rear window was really cool.

My mom had a late model convertible and I only remember that because my youngest brother was almost born in it. You see she had to drive herself to the hospital and made it there just a few minutes before he was born.



When I was about 14 my grandfather bought me my first Corvair and told me that it was for when I was able to drive, legally. The car was a 1966 500 4 door with a 110 power glide. He let me drive it on the farm and through the clover field to help clean off the bottom side so that we could see what condition it was in. When we got out of the field and into the garage there was gas leaking very badly from the tank. I guess it had about 20 holes in it that we fixed with screws and rubber washers and bondo. We were working on replacing the fuel pump when his house and attached garage burnt with my car in the garage. I lost a car but they lost everything they had.

I had several muscle cars with big blocks when I got my license and started to drive. I went to the drag races on Labor Day and was hooked. I have never raced on a drag strip but have run mirage cars on a Grand Prix style track. I guess going fast is in my blood.

It was another 20 years before I was able to get another Corvair, this time a 1965 Monza 110 4 speed. I bought it from my brother who bought it from Mike McKeel. The body work had been done by my brother and the engine rebuilt by Mike. The car became my daily driver for just over the next year when it was time to get something a little safer. The brakes were nonexistent. Every time before I would drive it I would have to fill the master cylinder and that was after replacing all 4 wheel cylinders. I loved driving it but not with Bev or the kids in the car with me.

I had regretted selling that car and would on occasion look for another one as a project. I had heard about the mid-engine conversion but had never seen one. From time to time I would search the internet looking for a project v8 but the prices were too high or the car was too far gone.



I don't remember how many times I searched for that car, you know the one that just calls out to you, but about 15 years later I was at work one night, at lunch, and found it. The one that I have now, a 1966 500 mid-engine converted monster. I was searching through adds and found this car for sale at a dealership in North Carolina. I sent a picture of it to Bev with a brief description and she said ok. That was on a Wednesday and we both took off work that Friday and drove down to look at the car in person. I had reserved a trailer just in case. Needless to say, the car followed us home.

We had a wonderful trip back to Indy. Everywhere we stopped for gas would take an hour. Everyone would ask if we were going to the car show and a ton of other questions about the car and stories of their Corvairs from the past. The first stop for gas there was actually a car show going on just a few blocks away but we were already behind schedule so we didn't go. We were on our way to meet our daughter and grandkids for lunch.



It isn't the v8 that I was looking for but it has about 8 inches more leg room than a v8. It is a 3.8 L based v6 from the grand national series of Nascar from the mid 1990"s. It is a crown style conversion with stock transaxle. 4:10 4 spider rear with 4 speed and what I think makes it different is the bench seat.

I tracked down the builder of the car and he told me that he had a lot of fun trying to get the engine from the owner of the racing team. He told me that the engine had actually won a race and the owner didn't want to get rid of it. The next year the series was allowed to use a v8 instead of the v6 and the rest is history.

The first year we've had it we went to several shows and done a lot of work to it. It had sat for 20 years before we bought it. We rebuilt the:

front suspension -Clarks
Transmission -Mike Levine
Differential -Micheal Leveque
New radiator -Saldana Racing
Upgraded to 4 wheel disc brakes -Micheal Leveque brackets
New gas tank- Clarks
New flywheel -Taylor Racing

While we were headed to the CCC car show we stopped for ice and the car wouldn't start. I thought it was the starter but turned out to be the flywheel, and as it turns out that is a custom piece that we had to have a race shop in Texas make for us.

Scott McVickers came by one day to help put it all back together and we found another problem. There is too much thrust on the crank. Too much end play front to back. Now the engine had to come out to find out why. And this is where we are now. New interior, carpet ,seat , & door panels are in the spare bedroom. The carpet is from Clarks and the rest was done by Unique Hotrods and Upholstery. The car is in the garage with the rear wheels 2 feet in the air so that the engine can be removed. Most mid-engine Corvairs the engine comes out the passenger door but we have a roll bar in the way so it must come out the bottom, just like the original.

The engine is out as of today, sitting on the floor, just waiting its turn to go to Hooker Racing Engines to see what needs to be done. None of this would have been possible without a loving and understanding wife. When she wasn't able to help with the work on the car our grand daughter Emma was there. She isn't afraid to get dirty and wants to know all about how things work under the car. She says that when I'm unable to drive that the car becomes hers because of the sweat equity that she has in it. We don't know if we will get it ready for any shows this year or not but we are trying. Wish us luck.

