



Meeting Location: Dad's Kitchen

- Thursday, Mar 28, 2024
- 6:00pm Social / 6:45pm Meeting
- 8928 Sunset Avenue
- Fair Oaks, CA 95628
- 916-241-9365

Membership Dues 2024:

Memberhip Dues are due by the last day of February annually. The price per year is \$20.00. Please send checks or cash to Dean James, CCRC Membership. Make checks payable to: "CCRC". Please contact CCRC Treasurer Jim Kindley for additional questions.

Features

1. Message From the President
2. Latest CCRC News
3. Meeting Minutes
4. Ongoing & Upcoming Events
5. Classified Section
6. CCRC Stories & Club Member Corner
7. Article of the Month

Board Members

President	Jim Brown
Vice President	John Heiser
Activities	John Heiser
Secretary	Open
Membership / Web	Dean James
Treasurer	Jim Kindley
Sales & Acquisition	Wes Nicholas
Editor	Kari Emery-Cotner
Historian	Michael Nyberg

Finding Us

www.northern-california-covairs.com
 Facebook; [Classic Corvairs of River City](#)
 Instagram; [classiccovairs_rivercity](#)
 (Maintained by: Dean James)

Corvair Chatter

President's Ramblings

Hello Classic Corvair of River City Members:

The new meeting place effective THURSDAY, MARCH 28th is Dad's Kitchen, 8929 Sunset Ave, Fair Oaks, off Hazel and Sunset Ave. The meetings are moving to Thursdays instead of Wednesdays due to a conflict at the new restaurant. We can change back to Wednesdays when things change if desired.

I want to personally thank the officers for 2024-2025 who volunteered in order to keep the club alive. We need to work on greater member participation and willingness to be in a leadership position. We need to make the club more appealing to the younger Corvair car enthusiast and possibly broaden our base. This will be an ongoing discussion.

The work days at Leo's scheduled on Feb 10 and Feb 24 to inventory our parts and clear out what we don't need was well attended. Thanks to all who participated.

The idea of sponsoring scholarships at the high school/junior college level has been the object for a fair amount of time trying to figure out how to accomplish this. Ken Edwards has worked on it as have I, and we have come to the conclusion that with today's environment at these institutions, we might as well throw our money in the wind for all the control over the process we would have. Ken and I jointly came to this decision, and we will look for other ways to support those going into the auto repair/technology fields. This subject will be discussed at the officer's meeting.

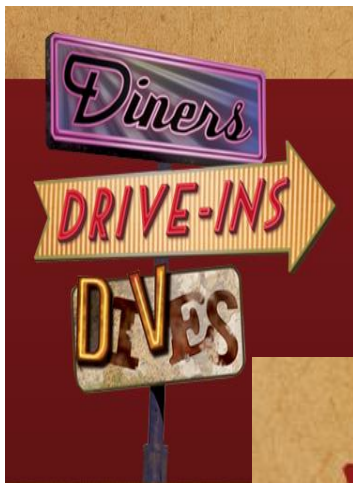
The spring picnic is also on the agenda for this month's officers meeting. More will be coming out in the future.

Til next newsletter,
 Drive Life Safely
 Jim Brown



****NEW****

Meeting Day Now Thursday



Dad's Kitchen



FAIR OAKS
(916) 241-9365
**8928 Sunset Ave. Fair
Oaks, CA 95628**

Latest CCRC News

Meeting Minutes: February 28, 2024

Meeting was called to order by President, Jim Brown, at 6:52pm. 11 members were in attendance along with two prospective club members. Approval of the January meeting minutes was motioned and seconded for approval and the vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

Jim Kindley presented the treasurer's report of positive balances, expenditures and income, and it was unanimously approved.

The sales and acquisitions report was presented by Wes Nicholas, and it was unanimously approved.

John Heiser presented the Vice-President/activities report: Updates were provided on the California Auto Museum Monthly Car Cavalcade, Cal Expo Autorama, and 2025 Corsa Convention.

Reminders of reoccurring gatherings at varied Cars N Coffee locations; Sacramento Hollywood Park Auto Club Classic Cars meets every 3rd Sunday at 10am at Leonardo DaVinci School, Carmichael Bel Air Sunday Cars and Coffee at 4005 Manzanita Avenue at the intersection of Fair Oaks Blvd and Manzanita Avenue near the corner of Cypress from 7-10am, Folsom Cars n' Coffee at Town Center El Dorado Hills from 7-9:30am and the air-cooled drive in gatherings at the Red Bus Brewery on Reading Street in Folsom the second Thursday of each month at 6pm. See club's website for Calendar updates.

Kari & Danita Emery-Cotner were not present to give the newsletter report.

Dean James reported that we currently have 38 paid members. No new members were added.

New business was discussed:

- New monthly meeting place, Dad's Kitchen, was voted on and approved.
- The Spring BBQ picnic was discussed. A committee will be formed.
- The club will reimburse up to \$50 to cover the Autorama entry fee.
- Ken Edwards presented a proposal for scholarships to auto shop and automotive technology students. Further discussion at the Officers meeting on March 13th with recommendations to follow. Thank you Ken for all your work on this!

Old business was discussed:

- The Club needs volunteers to take the following positions: President – Secretary

Meeting adjourned at 8:02pm

Information

Corvair Resources (Online)

Q&A - www.corvaircenter.com
www.corvairforum.com
Parts - www.corvair.com (Clark's)
www.californiacorvairparts.com
www.mikescorvairparts.com
www.rockauto.com
Sale - www.jaxed.com
www.corvairtrader.com (Parts & Sales)
Resources –
<https://www.corvair.org/chapters/corvanatics>
Car Building – <http://autoexer.skiblack.com>
Fun-www.youtube.com/user/davemotohead1 /
www.deansgarage.com

Welcome New Members

- **Rafael Arroyo**
- **Russell Magee**

Birthdays (Current & Upcoming)

Mar 01 – Bill McDonald
Mar 30 – Jim Kindley
Apr 01 – John Heiser
Apr 10 – Nora Meadows
Apr 16 – Casey Cockrell
Apr 17 – Chris Myers
Apr 20 – Robert Miller
Apr 27 – John Hafkenschiel
Apr 28 – Nancy McCormick

CCRC CLUB MEMBER ASSISTANCE:

In order to get more cars on the road, the club leadership is offering assistance to members that have Corvairs that need help to get them running. This help will be in the form of technical expertise, mechanic labor, and possible financial assistance. If you have a Corvair that needs work, **contact John Heiser at JohnHeiser6@gmail.com** and give him the details on what you require in the way of assistance.

***A committee will review the requests and select the best candidates. Remember the goal is to get more Corvairs at our club events. Those chosen will be expected to participate and help the club increase the number of cars that we put on display.**

Let Us Hear From You:

CORVAIR CHATTER Newsletter - Let us know if there is something that you'd like to see in our monthly newsletter. Members can write articles to review events (event photos, etc.) and submit for consideration to be included in the newsletter. Email your thoughts, articles, and photos to Kari Emery-Cotner at 4484.business@gmail.com.

Club Activities - You may have some great ideas for club activities. We want to hear them! Better yet, we'd like you to participate in the planning of your activity idea. Email your ideas to John Heiser at JohnHeiser6@gmail.com.

Classified Section



FOR SALE: Wes Nicholas at (916) 989-8929

Item:

	<u>Amount</u>
LM nitrited polished crankshaft	250.00
LM 891 Camshaft 110 and 140 engines	75.00
LM dash with instruments	50.00
LM automatic transaxle	400.00
EM Four speed transmissions	200.00
EM wheels (4) lug	35.00
EM differential 3.55	200.00
LM rear windows in good condition.	125.00
LM rear bumper in good condition.	100.00
LM wheels (5 lug)	35.00
62-63 Simulated wire wheel covers-good condition set of 4	175.00
Front Bucket seats (3) for LM price each.	125.00
LM Ball bearings, wheel front and rear	10.00 ea.
Tires 13" and 14" in good condition.	Price varies
FC chrome bumpers F/R	200 ea.
Corsa dash complete with gauges	150.00
LM and EM Bumper guards PR	75.00
Started motor	75.00
LM 65 mid telescopic steering w/ wood grain steering wheel	800.00
65 Corsa bright rear grill inserts	40.00
Cylinder Heads 80, 95, 110, 140 HP	Ask
Alternator adapter	35.00
Rebuilt alternator	150.00
Oil Filters	10.00
EM Air Filters (2)	18.00
Engines: 110, 140 HP	Ask

WANTED:

#1:
1966 Corsa
Convertible
turbo, 4 speed
car, either a #2
or a #3 if its
original,
straight,
complete and
running.
Contact
Chester
Keeton: (832)
281-8009

#2:
Corvair
engines in any
condition.
Contact:
Wes Nicholas
at (916) 989-
8929.

Much more...give us a call.

Additional Corvair parts are available for purchase. Please contact us to see if we have what you have been looking for to complete your project. Contact **Wes Nicholas at (916) 989-8929.**

FOR SALE

1964 Corvair Greenbrier Nine Passenger Van

The Greenbrier is offered with a clear California title. The true mileage is unknown. It has all three seats for a total of 9 passengers. The body has white primer and is close to ready for a paint job of the owner's choice. The white with red stripe is the original color.

The van has had extensive work done to the body and engine. It has a 110 HP engine and 4-speed manual transmission. The engine has new "O" ring seals as well as plugs, condenser, distributor cap, rotor, ignition wires, oil, oil filter, fan belt and air filters. A newer harmonic balancer has been installed. The chassis has new brakes, gas tank, chassis lube, shock absorbers, tires and American Racing wheels. The engine compartment has been cleaned up and a new perimeter seal installed. The underside has some rust however it is structurally sound. The Greenbrier is running and ready to enjoy.

For more information contact Wes Nicholas. nicholas.tds@gmail.com
or PH 916-989-8929

COME SEE IT AT THE MEETING ON THE 28TH



Events & Activities

Full Calendar of Events available on <http://northern-california-corvairs.com>

Current Events:

California Auto Museum: March 2024. Six member vehicles are on display. See Jim Kindley for **FREE** tickets for members (1st come 1st serve-until they run out). Go check it out!

Upcoming Events:

Kaiser Employee Event: April 19 (11:30-1:30), Kaiser Roseville Roseville Parking Lot. They requested that we show off our cool cars at their event. Contact John Heiser at JohnHeiser6@gmail.com to sign up.

Cal Expo Autorama: May 3-5, Butch Gardner Clubhouse, Sacramento, CA. Those who wish to display their vehicle(s) still have time to send in their entry form to John Heiser at JohnHeiser6@gmail.com, **but there is now a \$50 late fee.**

2024 International Corvair Convention: July 21-26, Marriott at the University of Dayton – OH.
More information: www.daytoncorvairclub.com

2024 Club Picnic: We need volunteers to assist, please contact Kari Emery-Cotner if interested in helping out at 4484.business@gmail.com.

Ongoing Events:

Sacramento Hollywood Park Auto Club -Classic Cars: Meets every 3rd Sunday 10:00 am at Leonardo DaVinci School. CCRC Club Member started this gathering, so let's join in.

Carmichael Bel Air Sunday Cars and Coffee. 4005 Manzanita Avenue at the intersection of Fair Oaks Blvd and Manzanita Avenue near the corner of Cypress. Time: 7:30am to 10:00am.

Folsom Cars and Coffee: 1st & 2nd Saturdays -Town Center, El Dorado Hills, 3rd & 4th and occasional 5th Saturdays, 430 Palladio Parkway in Folsom at the Palladio. 7:00 am – 9:30 am.

Red Bus Brewery: Air-cooled drive-in gathering at Red Bus Brewery on Reading Street in Folsom –2nd Thursday of each month at 6pm. There will be specials on beverages and pizza.

Article of the Month



A Brief History of the Ultra Van

By Norm Helmkey, A Past President (1971) of the Historical Auto Society of Canada, Archivist of the UVMCC, has been a Director of the Willys-Knight Registry since 1976 and a member of the Antique Automobile Club of America since 1968. Norm is also a member of the Society of Automotive Historians, Corvair Society of America, a staff writer for the Canadian Old Autos newspaper and has freelance articles published regularly in antique auto magazines.

Motor camping is by no means a recent innovation; there are articles in the early years of this century covering motor camping. Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, Harvey Firestone, and John Burroughs regularly camped together in motorized vehicles from the early teens until the twenties.

The latest old vehicle collectibles are early motorhomes. Some, like early Ultra Vans, may even qualify for historic vehicle tags. Its interesting to look back on these unique vehicles, to see how they began and what has happened to them since.

Back in the fifties, what did one do when you had both trailer and boat to tow? That's the dilemma Dave Peterson faced every time he wanted to go on vacation with both his Spartan trailer and boat at the same time. Peterson an aircraft designer, at Beech and Boeing, dreamed of motorizing the trailer, so he could tow his boat. The idea was to put the motor in the rear under the bed, design it low to the ground with a flat floor, have an unobstructed forward view with seating for four and insulate it well for winter use. A true, Class "A" rig, just 22 feet long, over 8 feet wide with more than 6 feet of headroom. In this rig you can really rise from the seat and walk into the living area in a standing position, one of the true tests of a Class 'A' motorhome.

When General Motors announced the Corvair in 1959, the power-package was just what Peterson needed for his dream. Living in California, in the fall of 1960 (a year after the Corvair was introduced), he rented a large garage and four months later, the "Go-Home" as the first Ultras were named, rolled out with its 80 horsepower, 140 cubic inch engine. Soon he was asked if he could build more. Using a unique technical school apprentice program, Peterson and his students built around 15 early Ultra Vans which were advertised for under \$7,000.

The original prototype (#101) was recovered in 1990 and is now being restored in southern California by a number of Ultra Van enthusiasts under the direction of Jim Craig, Vice President of the Ultra Van Motor Coach Club (UVMCC). The Prescolite

Article of the Month, Cont.

Corporation saw the Ultra as an ideal lightweight mobile showroom weighing only 3,420 pounds dry. They were licensed in 1963 and offered eleven configurations. Called the Travalon, it is believed they built eight of which at least three survive..

During 1964, John Tillotson, a Kansas publisher noticed the Ultra Van and made enquiries about getting the rights to build this unique vehicle. In 1965, Tillotson negotiated a license with Peterson and then formed Ultra Incorporated, at the World War II Naval Air Base near Hutchinson, Kansas, home of many skilled workers, who built thousands of military aircraft during the war in the Wichita area. Peterson was retained as a consultant.

Several unfinished units were moved from California to Kansas as pilot models. A production line was setup in the huge hanger and by the end of 1966, Ultras were rolling out at an average of 8 per month, at a base price of \$8,995. The first factory showing was at the 1966 Family Motor Coach Association National Convention in Glenwood, Minnesota.

John E. Tillotson or Mr. "T" as he was known, ran Ultra Inc., from his Modern Handicraft offices in Kansas City. Between April 1966 and May 1967 he add a number of people to the staff. First, Larry Knipe as Sales Manager, then Bob "Corky" Corkins for Customer Orientation, John Holmes for Service, Charles Burgess for Research and Development, Jerry Knight on Special Products, Lewis Ediger for Personnel and Bernie Hartnell as Production Manager. To better service Ultra owners, a new headquarters, sales and service center was opened at 101 West 5th, in downtown Hutchinson.

Unlike other motorhomes, the Ultra Van was built like an aircraft, with monocoque construction and no frame or chassis. The front and rear are mostly molded fiberglass and the center section is all aluminum, made with "C" shaped ribs to which the aluminum skin is riveted. Cast aluminum "A" frames are mounted in aluminum front wheel-wells which double as seat platforms. Unique front-end geometry allows the wheels to turn 50 degrees right or left, providing a shorter turning circle than most pickup trucks.

The 110 hp Corvair engine (optional 140 hp in later models) and PowerGlide automatic transaxle were tucked under an enormous rear bed measuring over seven and a half feet square. Forward of the bed is a toilet/shower on one side and a clothes closet on the other. Overhead, all around the rear are lightweight cabinets neatly fitted to the curved hull. At the front, a full galley with sink, refrigerator, three-burner stove and oven. Again, overhead cabinets are sculpted to the ceiling curve much like cabin bins in modern airliners.

The whole UltraVan is light enough to run on four inexpensive, easy to find, 14" automobile tires. Unlike the huge bus tires used on many motorhomes, these can be changed easily on the road by anyone with a simple car jack and tire wrench. Ready for the road, with fuel, water, food and two people aboard, the Ultra Van usually weighs under 5,000 pounds, contributing greatly to the fuel economy of 15 to 18 miles per gallon achieved by most Ultra owners traveling 55 to 65 miles per hour.

Article of the Month, Cont.

The fuel and water tank design was another stroke of genius. Made of aluminum, the tanks run from one side of the coach to the other, under the floor in such a way to be integral parts of the whole structure and greatly contribute to the incredible strength of the hull.

Fresh water is delivered by a demand pressure pump. Waste water goes into the "gray water" tank. Toilet flushing water from the "gray" tank goes into the "black water" tank. Water at eight pounds per gallon is very heavy, but with this system, only half the usual amount of water need be carried. Another unique idea was special grinding pumps that allowed the contents of the holding tanks to be pumped out through a regular garden hose right into a toilet at home, eliminating the need for access to an RV dump station. Later Ultra Vans, have thick foam insulation covering the bottom of the tanks as well as inside of the hull walls, so heat radiating from the cabin keeps the tanks from freezing. On the road, heat from the air-cooled Corvair engine is more than adequate to keep the inside very cosy. When parked, an optional 13,000-BTU thermostat controlled propane furnace does the job.

Ultra Vans were mostly sold through the factory, with a unique sales idea offering owners a \$250 rebate should a sale result from showing their coach to a prospective buyer. Almost all units were made to customer order from over 80 available options. Later, there were a few Ultra distributors.

In 1966, three California Ultra Van owners and their wives, under the leadership of Ernie Newhouse owner of Newhouse Automotive Industries and Pacific Lubricants, organized the UVMCC for mutual fellowship and assistance. Right from the start, the UVMCC was family oriented and encouraged activities at rallies for both men and women. Owner loyalty is another strong suit of the Ultra Vanner. The Ultra 50th Wedding Anniversary Honor Roll has over 20 couples, some of whom like Louis and Maybel Griggs (#334) are original Ultra Van owners.

The initial Ultra Van Owners Manual was a simple 16-page handout, which was sadly lacking in vital maintenance information. Recognizing the talent in the UVMCC, Ultra Inc. asked club technical people to rewrite the original 16-page factory owner handout. This effort became a 50 page owner manual. In 1978, after several years of dedicated work, UVMCC members Len and Edy Ryerson published the Ultra Van "Bible," a two inch thick, 21 Section, 558 page manual, covering every conceivable aspect of the Ultra Van. This manual, now officially known as "The Ryerson" is an essential item in every Ultra Van coach.

By 1968 the cost of making this unique vehicle had spiraled. The price reached nearly \$10,000, much too high when other motorhomes were selling for less. Orders dwindled with rumors GM would end Corvair production. Corvair-powered Ultra Vans were finally phased-out in July 1969, with 305 being made in Hutchinson. In all, around 330 Ultras were Corvair-powered.

Ultra engineers tested several alternative power units. An Oldsmobile Toronado

Article of the Month, Cont.

front-wheel drive package was installed in both the front and rear end of the Ultra Van. This led to a front-wheel drive motorhome called the Tiara. Ultra Inc., and the follow-on company BELCO made 42 Tiaras.

Two experimental coaches called Ford and Dodge Ultra Rovers were tried using a regular truck chassis, but were rejected as being too heavy. These units were offered for sale in 1970, but neither has surfaced since.

Eventually, the "Corvette" Ultra Van emerged with a reverse facing Chevy small-block 307 water-cooled engine in the rear coupled to a two-speed aluminum case PowerGlide. The transmission outputs to a marine "V" drive, which in turn drives the Corvette rear-axle, complete with rear-disc brakes, providing independent rear suspension similar to the original Corvair-powered Ultra.

Corvair-powered Ultra Vans have a power-to-weight ratio from 35 to 45 pounds per horsepower, comparing favorably to current motorhome ratios of up to 50 pounds or more. When the V-8 Corvette Ultra was introduced, even though the new design added 1,500 pounds, the increased horsepower of the V-8 dropped the power-to-weight ratio to 30 pounds per horsepower, providing sparkling (almost sport-car) performance. It can cruise easily at 70 mph, climb hills in 'Drive' and give a respectable 12 to 15 miles per gallon at 60 mph. The downside, was the price had climbed to over \$11,000 without options.

Ultra made 47 of the V-8 Corvette coaches called the 500 series, beginning with #510, first shown at a national motorhome rally in 1969 at Traverse City, Michigan, along with the new Tiara. In a market where mass produced motorhomes could be bought for under \$10,000, the end was inevitable and in June 1970 production ceased.

Following the closing of Ultra Inc., Peterson organized "Ultra Coach" as a new west-coast company, first to repower a few early Corvair coaches with the Toronado front-wheel drive package in the rear of the Ultra Van. He once stated "had there been an Oldsmobile Toronado in 1960, the Corvair Ultra Van, as we know it, would likely never have been built." In 1972 and 1973, Peterson's new Ultra company built five longer 23 foot Ultra Coaches known as the 600 Series, weighing about 6,500 pounds dry. An Oldsmobile V-8 Rocket engine was offset to the left side, partly through the floor, allowing a full walk through bedroom at the rear. The engine cover was a cleverly designed armchair. All five 600 Series survive.

Finally, the 1973 energy crisis in North America ended all attempts to revive the marque, although a Peterson prototype of a smaller version (700 Series) is owned by Jim Craig of Joshua Tree, California.

The UVMCC has continued through the years and its members (some with two, three or more UltraVans) collectively accounted for nearly 250 of the 373 or so Ultras built, an unusually high number of survivors, considering the age of these vehicles.

Article of the Month, Cont.

In 1989, the Ultra archives were established to preserve the history of this unique vehicle. All kinds of Ultra literature, letters and memorabilia have been saved. An Ultra Van Owner Master Registry List of owners has been compiled. As of the end of 1998, 1,218 names and addresses are on record for the 373 Ultras made.

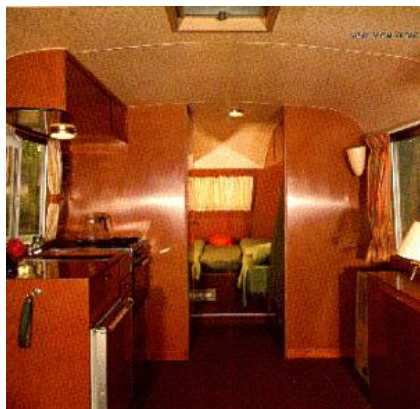
At the club rallies, tech sessions plus "show-and-tell" walk-arounds keep both new and old members up-to-speed on maintenance and any modifications. The club bulletin includes "Whale Tips" on "how-to-do-its." Since 1966, owners have contributed over 800 technical tips. Referring to an Ultra Van as a "whale" is a "club" joke, which began when truckers were heard talking on the CB radio about the funny little "white whales on wheels."

Almost every Ultra Van has an owner-customized interior, and a few have installed V-6 or V-8 engines, in place of the Corvair motor. However, because of the basic soundness of the hull structure, little has been changed in this area over the 30 odd years since production ended.

Ultra Vans are also recognized as a unique Corvair marque by the Corvair Society of America (CORSA) with the Group Ultra Chapter, which has a quarterly publication called "Whales on Wheels." Corvette enthusiasts have yet to realize how rare the remaining 40 or so V-8 powered Ultra Vans are. Car shows and cruise nights always bring much crowd interest and many questions, so recognition by the "Corvette Crowd" is just a matter of time.

In 1991, the movie "My Girl" was filmed in Florida starring Dan Aykroyd, Jamie Lee Curtis, Macaulay Culkin and Anna Chlumsky. An Ultra Van was chosen from many early motorhomes, as the home on wheels of the leading female character, played by Jamie Lee Curtis. Universal Studios shipped the Ultra to California in 1993 and it subsequently was sold.

Every time we see a lumbering old RV or pass-by a current monster basement model (often towing a "dinghy car" which Ultra Vanners don't need, as an Ultra will go just about anywhere and fit in a regular parking spot), it is cause for a thank-you to the genius responsible for our wonderful little Ultra Van Motor Coach. "Thanks again, Dave."



Wham Bam Bagels – Ultra Van Bagel Truck – But is it a Corvair? Interview with owner Marco Fiorilo



Whambamatx.com

415 E Saint Elmo Rd, Austin, Texas 78745

By Kari Emery-Cotner
3/16/24

Meet Marco Fiorilo's 1970 Ultra Van (Corvair?). Yes, this pink motorhome, bringing smiles to everyone who sees it, is an Ultra Van, but not a Corvair Ultra Van! How could this be? Well, let's see...

First, let's talk about how this Ultra Van, #535 to be exact, came into being the Wham Bam Bagel food truck. In 2018, Marco had a vision. Being a seasoned air-cooled connoisseur for many years with VWs, he knew of the Corvair Ultra Van and that the width would fit perfectly into a regular parking space. He started looking around for Ultra Vans, but unfortunately what he was finding was significantly rusty and outside of the realm of repair for his endeavor. Then, one day it happened...there it was, in Utica, up-state New York. He struck a deal and immediately flew there. Two mechanics drove it back, fixing it along the way. It was doing pretty well, until New Orleans when the heads started to leak extensively. But it limped across the border into Texas and so began its restoration. The restoration took a year and approximately \$75,000 to paint and retrofit into the bagel truck it is today.



Wham Bam Bagels, Cont.

Now, why isn't this a Corvair? Because this one is powered by a reverse-facing Corvette Chevy small-block 307 water-cooled engine in the rear and the transmission outputs to a marine "V" drive which drives the Corvette rear-axle.

But then, maybe you decide...Corvette? Or Corvair?



<https://www.whambamatx.com/thevan>