



CORVAN ANTICS

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RAMPSIDE/LOADSIDE

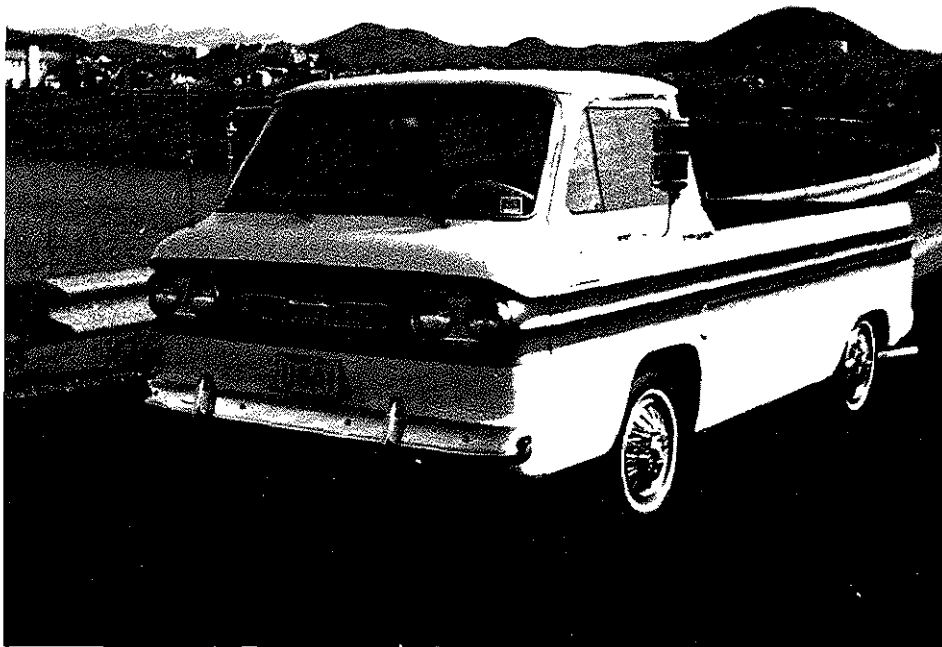


GREENBRIER SPORTSWAGON



CORVAN

(ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHEVROLET MOTOR DIVISION)



1962 RAMPSIDE OF BOB CARRIERE, CANYON LAKE, CA

The Steering Column

by BOB MARLOW

Happy New Year! This is the first issue of 1994, and this message is being written on January 3rd (about two weeks late, thanks to my procrastination).

Are you enjoying your FCs? I'm getting the urge to buy a "beater" Greenbrier again. As regular readers know, I own two 1964 Greenbriers, but I no longer expose either of these vans to regular use or bad weather. They're both unrestored originals, and I'd like to keep them that way.

But lately I've seen a number of older cars on the road here in suburban New York City, including a 1954 Chevy sedan driven each day to a neighboring business, a '56 Olds used for errands, and, just the other day, a '68 VW bus doing battle with a snowstorm. Around here, a 1968 VW bus is rare no matter what the weather, they all rusted away years ago.

Now if all these owners of old cars can drive one every day, why can't I? Well, I still won't subject one of my two Greenbriers to it, so I may just have to buy one more. To drive it to death. It seems cruel to "use up" a Greenbrier, but gee they're fun to drive!

But wait a minute. I have a mid-80s Chevy S-10 pickup as my winter beater, and it's running fine at 127,000 miles and there's no rust yet.

The most recent time that I relied on one of my Greenbriers to get me to work Monday morning (on a clear, crisp, November day) I was flying along the interstate at 75, pestering the BMWs, when the ignition coil gave up and forced me to walk to a phone.

The lady in my life is no car enthusiast, either. She looks at my Greenbriers as nothing more than old curiosities, and why would I need more than one, anyway, much less three?

Another Greenbrier will mean another annual registration fee and another pound of flesh to the insurance company each year.

Here in New Jersey, if I want to drive it regularly, I must then subject it to the State's safety and emissions tests. I do that enough already with the existing fleet.

So let's see. That's (1) existing S-10, (2) old-car reliability, (3) woman-I-love, (4) costs, and (5) inspections lined up against getting another van. In favor, there's (1) fun-to-drive. I could add usefulness in favor, because a Greenbrier carries a lot, but so do several of the newer vehicles. So fun-to-drive is it.

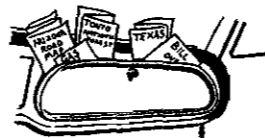
No contest, right? Five reasons against, only one reason for. Guess I'd better just stick to the vehicles I own now... and drive them to look at Greenbriers for sale!

Now that 1994 is here, it's time for one or more Corvanatics members to step forward with program ideas for our 1994 Annual Meeting. It's traditional that the Corvanatics' meeting at the CORSA Convention features a technical presentation of some sort. Please help. Contact me with your ideas, especially if you can make the presentation yourself!

Do you like controversy? Here's your chance. In the last issue, Editor Ken Krol advised you that commercial advertising is under consideration for the CORVAN ANTICS newsletter. So far, Ken's opinion -- a 'no' to advertising -- is the only opinion I've heard. Personally, I'm in favor of advertising. So it's time for you, the members, to weigh in on this issue. Yea or Nay? Drop a note to Ken or myself.

From The Editor's

Glovebox



It is with mixed emotions that I write this column. With the last issue I completed the TENTH YEAR of being the Editor of this little, but interesting, publication. Over the years it has given me great enjoyment and satisfaction (along with a lot of frustration) but now it is time to pass it on to another person with a little bit more enthusiasm for the job and the car hobby in general. You know what they say about ending on a high note... our publication is too good and means too much to a lot of people to start looking shabby due to a lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Editor.

My life has changed dramatically in the last ten years and my interests have also changed. Someone enthusiastic about the FC needs to take over the reins.

The job is very rewarding and not very difficult. At this point all the mailing is done by Caroline, so all that is required is to paste up a nice issue every couple months. It may even be time for someone to take CORVAN ANTICS into the computer age. If you are even remotely interested contact either Bob Marlow or myself.

Ken Krol
a.k.a. ed.

On the trail of Skeletons

by Bob Kirkman

In the town of dinosaur, Colorado, an early model Corvair coupe sits in the front row of an auto salvage yard. Prophetic?

A local chapter newsletter, a few years back, gave the results of a survey concluding the survival rate of the FC's to be better than that of early models. Certainly many FC's have had their day with the crushed. I'm responsible for more than a few that way. However, many remain as faithful possessions, and many are lingering as little more than skeletons.

In a fenced "yard" in Las Cruces, New Mexico are eleventy-seven Corvairs and four FC's. They have not moved in decades. Down the main street at an auto repair garage sit four FC's in a row out front, plus one Rampside "yard car". Someone has thrown a rock at every windshield.

Further west, near Lordsburg, are two Greenbriers. Maybe in a field or some large desert back yard. Not much left of them is the highway drive-by perspective.

Over in Tempe, Arizona Larry Aldrich has his salvage yard and NOS and rebuilt parts sheds. There are, in the lot, about fifteen FC's, plus Larry's scrumptious Rampside. All have gallantly been sources for vital organ transplants and skin grafts. They are now piled with sorted, used parts. They stand ready to yet shed anything needed to keep our "faithful possession" in running order. Believe I recall one with a camper shell contains the salvage compound's rest-room. The compound also contains the world's only Greenbrier registered as a trailer! To qualify as a trailer, the headlights had to be removed and the windshield painted over. The local club tows it to various functions filled with "whatever".

Previous columns described Hidden Valley Auto Salvage in Maricopa, Arizona and the large number of Corvairs and FC's and piles of tons of parts. Rumor has it that the place must be disposed of for zoning reasons. Guess where the parts will go.

Over in Cedar, Utah are two Greenbriers in front of a repair shop. One appeared to have rolled but held together quite well. Great chrome door handles! No glass. The second was an early 1963, somewhat dismantled. Appears it is used to keep snow and sunlight off a small patch of sand and gravel.

A recent story of mine mentioned a Greenbrier in Globe, Arizona that had been glued to the ground for perhaps fifteen years.

Out in the West we see many old VW Karman Ghia vehicles in use, but no Corvairs or FC's. The keepers are all put away, I sus-

pect, and the ones we do see are now skeletons.

In southeast Alaska on an island is the town of Wrangell. The whole island has only maybe twenty miles of paved roads and some gravel backroads that had been for logging. Wrangell has one Corvair! An Early model Spyder coupe. License plate says 1987. Pretty bad shape. You have to wonder what story is behind a Spyder, brought by barge or ferry to the only town on an island that has only that many miles of paved roads.

Alaska is a big state. we travelled there for two months in the summer of 1993 with a 1992 Suburban pulling a 23 foot travel trailer. Alaska is big, but it does not have many roads. Besides all the "nature" lookin', we stay alert for FC's. There's one beside the road now! A 1961 Rampside made in St. Louis. It's on Highway 1, just west of Glennallen. Rough shape. The lady at the house said her husband bought it from someone in a nearby town to "fix up". He never did, and now wished someone else would want to but it.

In Anchorage my brain began to work and I pulled out the CORVANATICS roster. Sure enough! Members in Anchorage! I made some phone calls and took quick notes. Forgive me if I get a few facts mixed.

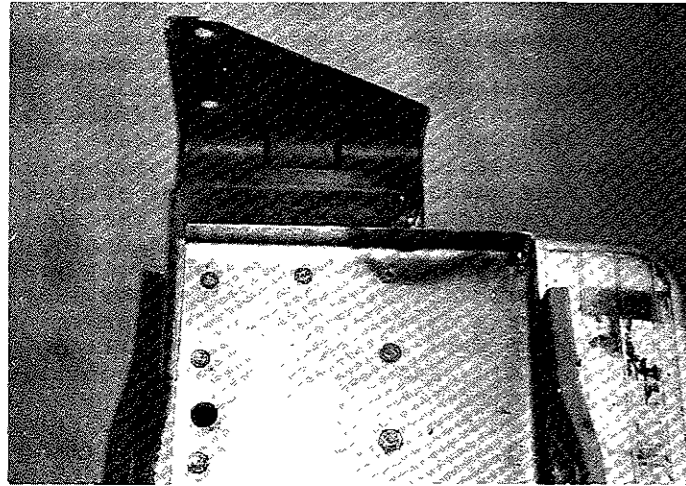
Robert Glashan has a Greenbrier with automatic transmission. The trans is now out to a shop for rebuild and he hopes to have the 'Brier back on the road yet this year. He also has a 95 Corvan that he drove up the Alaska highway in 1980. It is his daily driver. That's all year long! No, it does not have a gas heater, just the standard air heater. He gets along fine. Says part of the secret is proper adjustment of the engine heat doors. The heat needs to go up front, not out back.

Ivar Ostbo has a 1961 95 Corvan with a couple windows added. It's his daily driver! That's all year long! Ivar also gets along fine with the standard air heater, but he has insulated the system all the way with pipe wrap and lined the inside of the van. He has had a Rampside since 1962. My notes are fuzzy. He may have purchased the Corvan for \$75 without an engine and installed a 102HP engine.

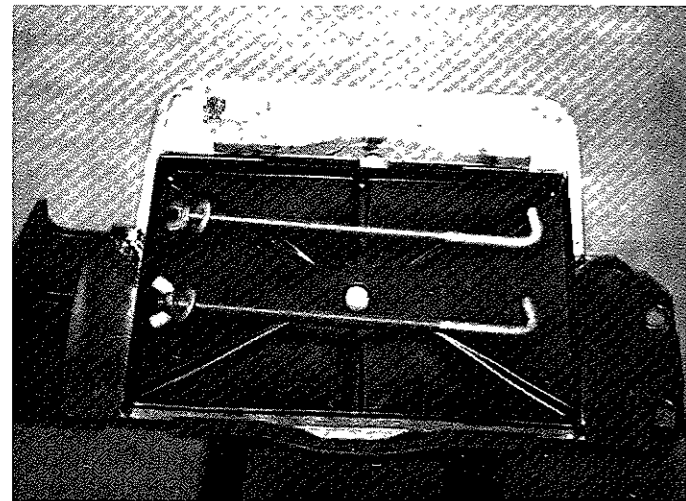
Daniel Townsend is another member in Anchorage, but I did not call him as the word was that his Rampside was sold. Oh, Robert said he had a Greenbrier in Nome. The only way it could have reached Nome would be by boat or barge. Robert also said there was a Loadside "around somewhere" that was in show condition. He also admits to junking out five FC's, one of which was an 8-door Greenbrier. There was a blue Rampside that had been sold by (or to) John McDonald at the Catchachena Lodge, we believe the one parked along Highway 1.

A Bigger Battery Box for the F.C.

I've never liked the long, narrow battery good, old GM put in the Forward Control, so I decided to make a change in my Rampside. After making a few measurements I went to the parts store, made by Delco, naturally. I found an Ultracell 1000 cca, group size 24R sealed battery that I figured I could squeeze in and that would keep all the electronics I planned to add running.

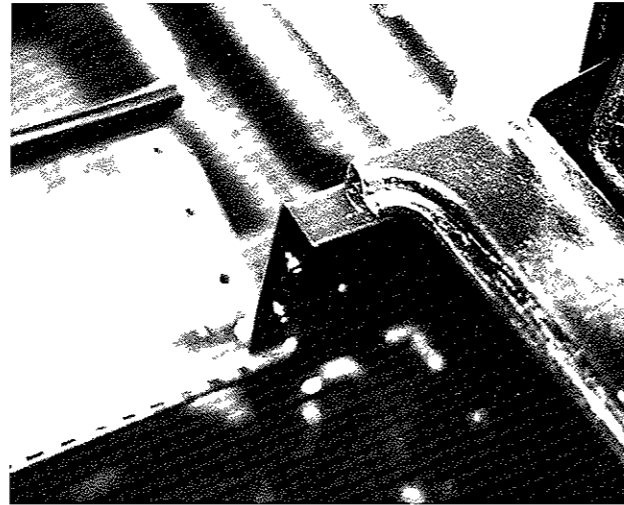


I removed the old battery support and cut off one side, keeping it to be reused later. I then made a new bottom for the box out of 18 gauge steel and flanged it on three sides, 3/4 inch, to fit the battery. After sandblasting the old box, I spotwelded the bottom to it, then welded the cut off side back on. You need both sides for the hold down holes.

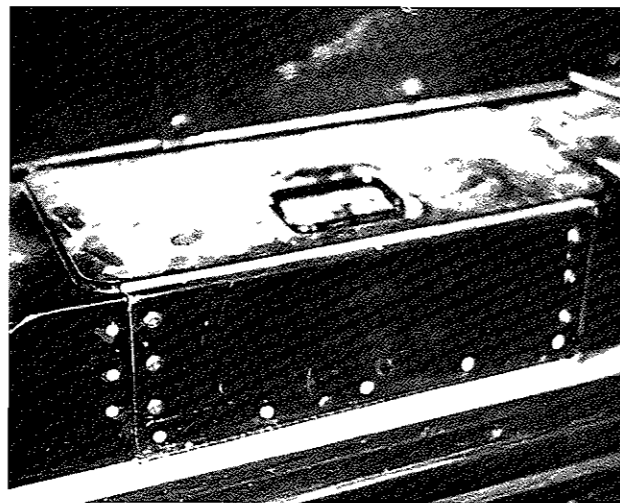


Back to the sandblaster to clean everything up. I then sprayed the whole unit with acid resistant paint. The hold down was short, so I cut it in half and added enough rod to make it span the battery. This was also sprayed with black, acid resistant paint. The hold-down bolts were long enough and worked fine. The tray was lined with a new material designed to absorb caustic runoff from the battery. I then bolt the box back in it's original position and reinstalled the drain hose.

How are you going to get that big, wide battery into that narrow slot, you say? That takes another modification.



Looking at the old opening from the engine compartment side, cut straight down the inside panel, but leave the formed radii at the corners of the opening. Then cut the piece out across the bottom. I installed a short section of piano hinge taken from an old early model seat flap. Make sure there is enough hinge clearance for the door to lay down and line up with the panel it came out of.



Doublers were fashioned to go inside the opening to screw the door to using nuts. Then I pop-riveted the whole thing together and painted it. By opening this door you can easily install the bigger battery.

Dick Campbell

Van Nuys, CA

WANTED: Pair of headlight buckets in non-rusted condition. Preferably left side (has turn signal bulb closer to grill)-Russ Burzio, 817 Ashland Ave., Buffalo, NY 14222. (716)883-6930

A Drunk F.C. ?

I just wanted to share with the membership a recent experience I had with my FC.

The truck had exhibited an increasing tendency to wander down the road; never in a straight line. A drunk truck? This came on so slowly that I just ascribed it to worn ball joints until the steering shaft started making a sharp "clicking" noise on very slow speed, very tight turns. Upon investigation we found:

1. A lateral crack in the steel floorboard running approximately seven inches from below the clutch pedal upward toward the top of the gas pedal. The truck has a steel plate/brace laminated to the inside floorboard at this location to act as a backer board for the installation of the steering gearbox. The crack even ran through this steel plate! We placed a straight edge across the inside cab floor between the accelerator pedal and the clutch pedal and then turned the steering wheel back and forth, noting the floor would deflect upward more than 1/4 inch.

2. Under the floor: a triangular shaped steel carrier which bolts the steering gear box to the underside of the floorboard had broken two of it's three weld points. The steering gear box was literally floating on air.

To solve the problem we fabricated a 1/8 inch steel plate approximately 8" by 12" (with a cutout for the steering wheel) and welded it to the top of the floor. Further, we rewelded the triangular steering gear carrier to the floorboard and the new steel plate. WOW! What a difference! No more steering through a bowl of oatmeal. Solid and firm, with no wander!

You might just check out your truck, too.

Bob Slusher
Portland, OR

"Unadjustable"

Well I thought I'd seen the last of the "new modulator" tech tip a few months back when I wrote a reply to it after seeing it in some chapter's newsletter. But here it was in our December CORVAN ANTICS newsletter, so I guess we ought to run our response again.

The adjustable modulator as described with the instruction sheet is applicable only to modulators used on the GM Turbo Hydramatic 325, 350, 400 and 425 transmissions. These transmissions require a vacuum signal for the proper shift point, thus an adjustable modulator will alter the shift point. The Corvair Powerglide (and the regular Powerglide as well) depend on the throttle valve position and vehicle speed to determine the shift point. The modulator only controls the harshness (or smoothness) of the shift. I'm sure you will find there is no adjusting screw inside any Corvair modulator; and even if there is, twiddling the screw would not change the shift point. The manufacturer was simply putting that instruction sheet in every GM modulator box.

Larry Claypool

Homewood, IL

F.C. Classifieds

Parting out 1962 Greenbrier, 80 HP, 4-speed. Orange color, former Thornwood, NY Fire Department bus? Ron Yaskovic, 522 Saw Mill River Road, Yonkers, NY, 10701-4927. (914)375-1785 (12:00-3:00 PM) home or (914)285-7371 (4:00 PM-1:00 AM) Work.

Instrument panel clock for Corvair-truck, part # 985007. NOS in original box. \$119.00 postpaid. Allan Franz, 31 Sunfish Drive, Defiance, MO 63341 (314)828-5599.

For Sale: 1 pair TRW lower ball joints in boxes, \$35/pair. 8 rear axles with bearings (appear OK) \$15 each. 1 top of dash clock, \$20.00. 2 shifters for through-the-tank design (1963-65) \$20 each. 1 Steering box with steering column shaft \$20.00. 1 boomerang and 1 idler arm, appear tight. \$40.00 for both. Phil Ballantine, 7350 Walnut Hill, Monitor Beach, MI 49253 or 7350 Melbourne, Allen Park, MI 48101. (313) 928-7362.

1962 Rampside. White with blue stripe, new paint in and out. Rebuilt engine and transaxle. 90 point show or parade truck. Drive anywhere. \$4600 obo. Bob Carriere, 29525 Longhorn Drive, Canyon Lake, CA 92587. (909)244-3454.

Tech Topics



Walt Berry (May-June 1993) asked for recommendation and installation for front and possible rear stabilizer bars for the FC. I will be waiting for membership input on this subject.

Also perhaps I can talk to a suspension/development engineer, (in generality) about how adding stabilizer bars to a vehicle might effect roll-over. My gut feeling is that there would be no effect in a broadside collision situation. At the proving ground I have seen roll-over tests. You cannot roll an FC by going in circles. The inside rear tire will lose enough traction and you can't generate enough lateral acceleration to tip it over. The tip over could be accomplished via a "J"-turn. Barrel down a straight strip and yank the steering wheel into a tight turn. The FC being tested had a series of Oak rails bolted to the side. If it tipped over it would slide on the Oak. The vehicle was then put back on it's wheels, undamaged, for further tests.

Simply adding a stabilizer bar to the front suspension adds understeer. Simply adding a stabilizer bar to the rear adds oversteer. Adding both requires experimentation and careful selection. Adding a bar without changing suspension springs makes the suspension feel harder for a one wheel bump. It also accomplishes the intended reduction in vehicle roll, which is generally viewed as an improvement in handling. Only a time and speed check over a handling course would tell.

Bob Krikman

Seatbelts for your F.C.

BY BOB SLUSHER, CORSA OREGON

My thanks to Bob Kirkman for his previous CORVAN ANTICS article on three-point seatbelt installation in a Rampside. Several important features from that proposal were incorporated in the following design.

ASSESS NEEDS: **COMPACT:** The retractor unit has to be as small as possible to fit behind the seat when in the full back position. For us tall people who must run our seats full back, this is critical. **CHEAP:** To be affordable, these units had to be plentiful at wrecking yards. **STRONG:** Why install something that will fail when you need it? **SIMPLE:** Simple to purchase, simple to fabricated and, most importantly, simple to install.

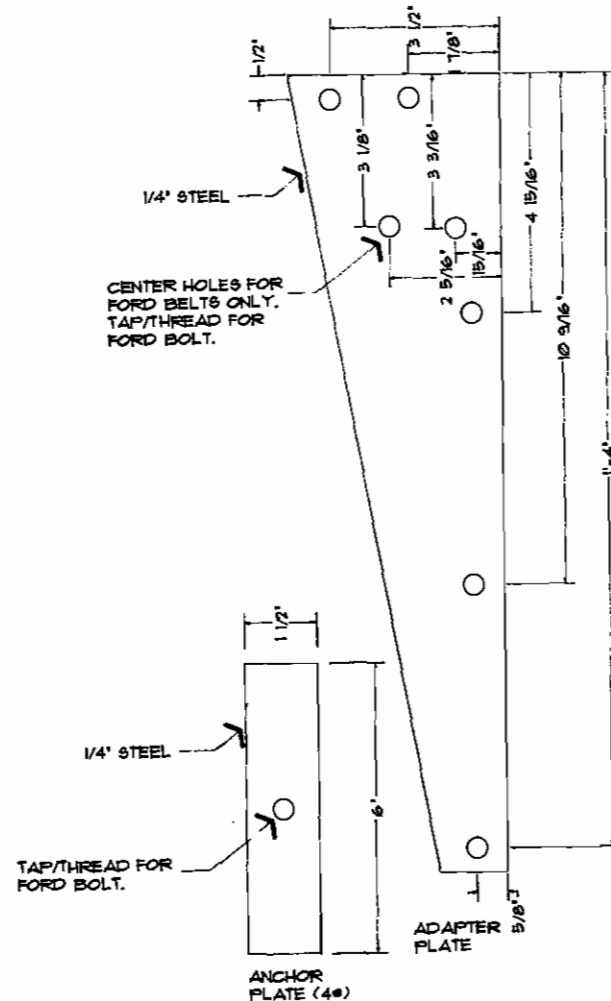
SOLUTIONS: Wrecking yards are really entertainment centers for me so the search for the BEST retractor unit was fun. Small size Dodge, Chevy, Toyota, Isuzu, Ford pickups and utility trucks were logical candidates. The clear winner was the Ford belt system from 1986 to ? for small size Ranger pickups and Bronco II utility vehicles. Colors available are red, blue, tan and black. Tan and black were the most difficult to find. \$40-50 for both units, the center passenger belt and all the bolts and hardware seemed about right. These are slick little units with really long belts that allow the wearer to stretch to retrieve an item off the cab floor without coming to the "end of the rope". Again, for us tall folks... a blessing.

FABRICATION INSTRUCTIONS: Per plans: I feel 1/4 inch plate steel really should be the thinnest material used, especially when one considers how few bolt threads can be cut into that size material. It's your life!

No doubt you're wondering about the "extra hole" (next to the threaded hole) in the center of the adapter plate. Well, the Ford belt-lock relies on a steel bar sticking out the rear of the assembly to prevent rotation of the retractor, especially during a crash. That rod passes through this hole and stabilizes the unit, allowing a small pendulum to swing, which engages the locking mechanism and stops your departure through the windshield.

INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS: If you golf or play chess you will have the patience to install these belts. I believe in simple. SIMPLE IS GOOD! This design is simple and yet, because your life may depend on proper installation, I beg you not to hurry this project. Allocate approximately four hours to complete this project and you will not be rushed.

1. Remove seat
2. Remove and discard five existing 5/16 inch bolts from the side bulkhead as shown.
3. Slice the existing plastic seal covering the side bulkhead hole. The Ford locking bar will pass through here.
4. Using the adapter plate as a pattern, drill 1/4 inch hole through the bulkhead using the "extra hole" as a guide. The Ford mounting bolt is long and will pass through here.
5. Install adapter plate with five new 5/16 inch grade 8 bolts with washers as shown. From here on, use all Ford mounting bolts from the host truck.
6. Install retractor assembly and webbing as shown. Install in reverse order of removal from host truck.
7. Measure approximately 38 to 46 inches from the cab floor and drill 1/2 inch hole in the upper corner of the rear bulkhead as show. This mounting height will determine where the belt will ride on your shoulder or neck. A test fit is recommended. A good guide is to



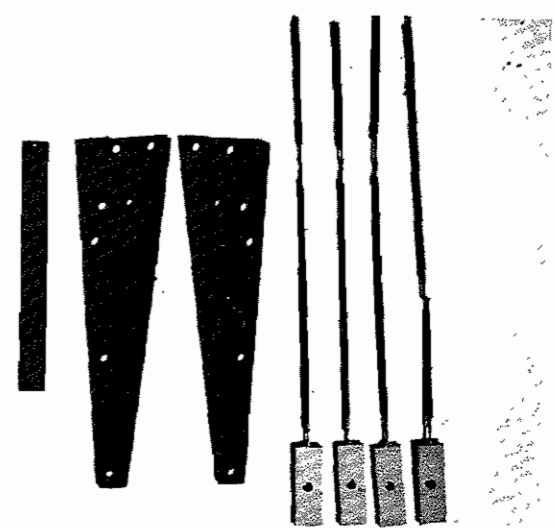
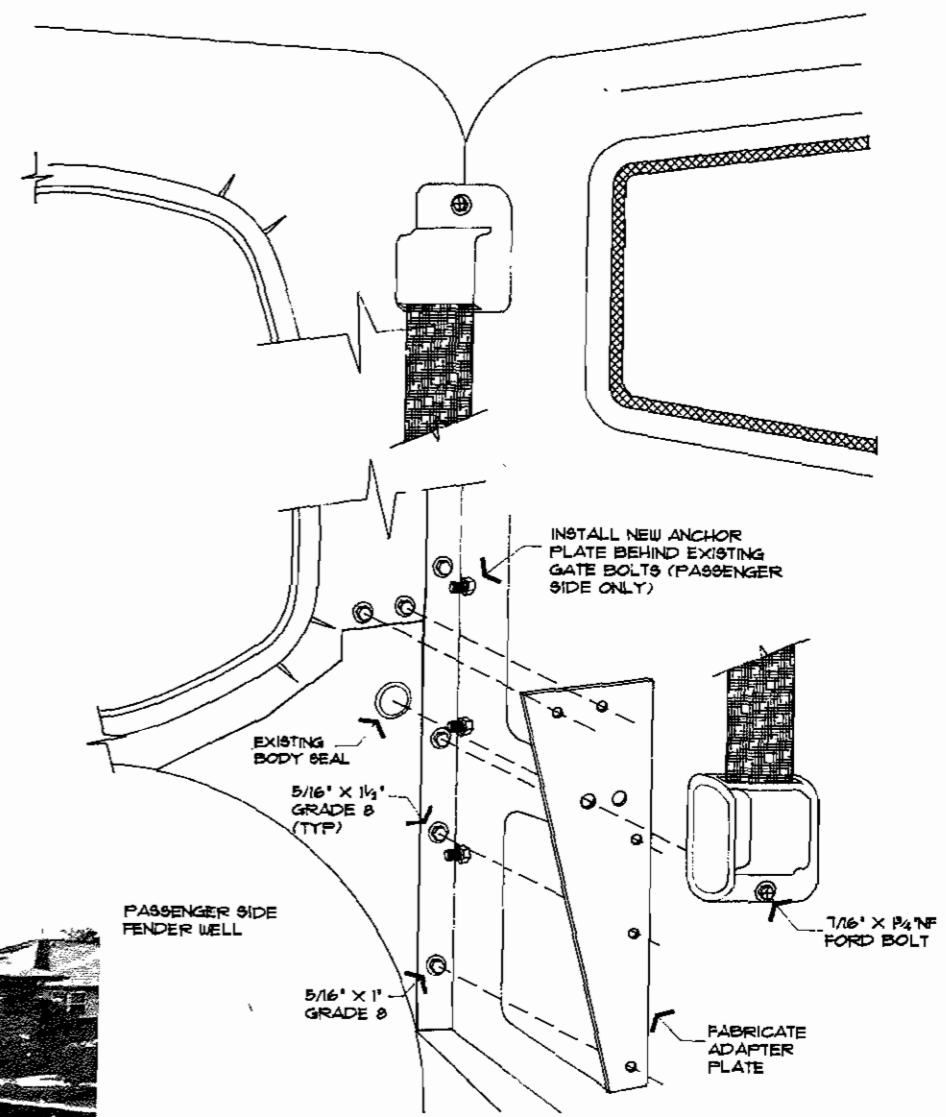
- drill this hole no higher than your eyeball while sitting.
8. Drill the belt floor mounting holes through the double thickness of metal at the REAR of the factory installed broad metal gusset that is surface welded to the curved steel deck just behind the seat. This will form a right angle to the direction of pull from the belts when in use.

9. Loosely tape or glue each 1 1/2 inch x 6 inch anchor bar to a long rod (minimum 22 inches). Slide or "fish" these anchor bars behind each hollow corner vertical bulkhead until you can intersect it with your shoulder belt anchor bolt. Really very easy!

10. For the seat attachment points, "fish" the anchor through the front wheel well. There is a one-inch space between the fuel tank and the bulkhead under the seat.; that is your target. When in place, you will have to tilt the anchors slightly rearward in order to intersect with your floor mounting bolts. Two persons here is a must! Looks simple, but this one was tough for me.



1 PASSENGER SIDE (TYPICAL)



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Stories, articles, photos or anything
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sent to the Editor, Ken Krol, at 17433 N.
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material should be sent to the Tech Editor,
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Membership in Corvanatics is open to
any CORSA member with an interest in Forward
Control Corvaire. Membership applications
are available from the Secretary/Treasurer,
Caroline Silvey, at Bob 68, McCordsville, IN
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