OCTOBER 2019

Show and Cruise NEWS

Concours D'Elegance Of America

The Last Corvair's 50th Anniversary

Pin Ups for a Cause

cover photos by Tom Gunsher

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The Last Corvair's 50th Anniversary
Where is '6000'?
by Joe Pendolino

On May 14, 1969, at 1:30 PM, after producing almost 1.8 million hardtop, convertible, station wagon, van, and truck Corvairs through 10 model years, Chevrolet rolled the last Corvair out of the Willow Run Assembly Plant. Bearing serial # 05379W706000, and commonly referred to as '6000,' it was an Olympic Gold Coupe with a 95HP engine and a Powerglide automatic transmission, with the options of an AM pushbutton radio, full tinted glass, whitewall tires, door edge guards, a full set of 4 factory floor mats, custom deluxe seat belts, and an convenience group consisting of an electric clock, a remote-controlled rearview mirror, and a rear window defogger. Its sticker price was $2,868.30

All 1969 Corvairs were built at Willow Run. Willow Run had also built the Chevy II Nova since the 1962 model year, and both cars shared the same production line. But, in 1969, only three Corvairs were built per hour, compared to 57 Novas being built per hour. Using this shared production line led to both production inefficiencies, as the different cars' basic layout differences required more work at different times along the production line, and production down-time, as in the case when a Corvair powertrain was tried to be married to a Nova body. And, using shared assembly workers led to high training costs, as new assembly workers had to be trained about the Corvair intricacies for only 5% of their work.

It was decided to create the Corvair Room, with a 400-foot-long assembly line and five assembly stations. Specifically chosen because of a personal interest in both the project and the Corvair, 43 Willow Run employees were selected to work there.

Only 6,000 Corvairs were to be produced in 1969. There are 3 stories as to how that quantity was decided upon. Some say that 6,000 was about the number of Chevrolet dealerships in the US at that time, so producing 6,000 Corvairs would give each dealership one last Corvair to sell. Others say that production was limited to 6,000 so that no new Corvairs would be left at the end of the model year; this is credible because the purchase of 1969 Corvair included a $150.00 coupon towards the purchase of a new Chevrolet before 1974. Still others say that there were only enough parts on-hand to produce 6,000 Corvairs. This is the most credible because according to Joe Casey, Supervisor of the Corvair Room: "We saved all the parts necessary for that number 6000 so it looked good when it came off the line." (Even with that plan, Dave Polmouter, who was involved in the production of 6000, has told how he had to spray paint the inside door panels to match the interior; the only door panels left were the wrong color!)

The end of a car's production is usually noticed by only those building them, but the end of the Corvair's production drew a great deal of attention; both GM executives and the national media were at Willow Run that day.
The Last Corvair's 50th Anniversary
Where is '6000'?

After the last Corvair was driven down a ramp onto the loading dock area, near a long string of tri-level railroad cars filled mostly with Novas and a few Corvairs, a few pictures were taken, and the executives and press left as the last train to carry Corvairs away from the plant departed. After that, it's a mystery as to what happened to '6000.'

Joe Strathorn, GM Sr. Reliability Engineer in '6000'
(thought to be the last picture of '6000' ever taken)

photo credit: Dave Newell

It is known that there were 2 high-profile orders for the car and that GM decided not to sell the car to either of them. On April 1, 1969, legendary car collector Bill Harrah ordered an Olympic Gold Monza coupe with a 110HP engine and Powerglide automatic transmission, with Positraction and heavy-duty suspension and with the very last VIN. Shortly thereafter, unaware that the very last Corvair had been ordered, Harold Boyer, a former GM Executive Vice President, also ordered the very last Corvair. In order to not displease either of them, James Roche, GM’s Chairman of the Board, and the GM Executive Committee decided that it would not be sold to anyone; they decided that either GM would keep the car or donate it to the Sloan Museum in Flint, Michigan. Boyer was given '5999,' the 2nd-last Corvair built; it is now owned by the Corvair Preservation Foundation and on display at the Chevrolet Hall of Fame in Decatur, Illinois. Harrah was given '5968,' which is on display at the National Automobile Museum in Reno, Nevada, and '5606.'

It is known that, technically, '6000' never existed. The Manufacturer’s Statement Of Origin was never issued, and the car was never invoiced, titled, or registered.

It is known that '6000' was not loaded onto that last train of Corvairs at Willow Run. It is widely-believed that workers rolled it to a waiting van, to be taken to a GM garage in downtown Detroit, Michigan and to never be seen again.

But, it is not known what really happened to '6000.' Just as there are a number of stories as to how it was decided to produce 6,000 1969 Corvairs, there are a number of stories as to the fate of '6000.' Some say that it was, and still is, hidden somewhere. Some say that an unnamed GM director or vice president has it, while others say that it was scrapped due to infighting among GM officials who wanted to own it. Some say that it was 1 of the Corvairs that GM retained on the roof of its Flint, Michigan Assembly Research Building for testing due to ongoing safety-related lawsuits and government investigations. No one has ever confirmed, or has been willing to confirm, any of these stories.
The Last Corvair's 50th Anniversary
Where is '6000'? 

Actually, there is something that is known about what happened to '6000': it has never been offered for sale on the open market. In 1975, Chevrolet auditors wanted the last Corvair in the Assembly Research Building's inventory, a Forest Green 500 coupe ('5214'), to be sold. It went to auction in March of that year, and it later appeared for sale in *Hemmings Motor News*. Misleadingly, it was advertised as “the last one ever produced.”

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*I know you’re all thinking it, so let me address “it”:
Ralph Nader DID NOT kill the Corvair*

*Unsafe At Any Speed* was published in late 1965. It must be noted that only Chapter 1, of 8 chapters, dealt with the 1960-63 Corvair. Overall, the book was a general indictment of automotive safety design at that time.

The book was published was more than 1 year after Chevrolet dramatically redesigned the Corvair. This included a redesign of the rear suspension, which Nader claimed was responsible for handling deficiencies. Obviously, the timing, and allegations, of the book had nothing to do with the timing of the redesign.

Yes, the book did affect sales, but it did not kill the Corvair. Before the book, Chevrolet had already decided to discontinue Corvair production in 1967, in order to focus its efforts on the Camaro; after the book, Chevrolet decided to continue Corvair production through the 1969 model year, in order to avoid any appearance that Nader’s allegations were correct.

So, contrary to the notion that Ralph Nader was responsible for killing the Corvair, he was actually responsible for extending its life!

FYI: In 1970, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration tested the handling deficiencies alleged in the book and, in 1972, reported that the 1960-63 Corvair “compares favorably with contemporary vehicles used in the test.”
Concours D'Elegance Of America

The Inn at St. John’s
July 26-28, 2019

BY TOM GUNSHER
PLYMOUTH, MI

The field had over 250 classic and significant vehicles from early 1900 to modern, classics, muscle cars and drag cars.

My main interest, the AA/G Drag class was made up of 14 original gassers built in the sixties. This class had several cars with Western New York connections. The ‘33 Willys truck was built in LA (Ron Bizio) and is currently owned by Jeff Cryan & Jerry Gasiorkowski. A ‘48 Austin originally built and raced by Jim Oddy then restored by John Cassiol, currently is owned by Matt Nelson of Michigan. Another, a ‘48 Austin (Koehler Bros.) is owned by Carlos & Mary Cedeno formerly of Lockport. Several other gassers were shown at the “Willys Home Run” and/or “Cavalcade of Cars” events.

Saturday morning Cars & Coffee saw the parking lot full by 8:00. Sports cars to muscle cars were shown.

Later, show cars were parked on the field grouped by class. The “Concours” was Sunday. Major classes included Ferrari’s, Bentley’s, Rolls Royce’s, and Gassers.

The “Concours”

1929 AUBURN

1958 BUICK

1961 COOPER T55
Concours D'Elegance Of America

The “Concours”

1929 DUSENBERG

1931 ALFA ROMERO

1932 RILEY NINE

1957 FORD GT

1929 DUSENBERG

1957 MERCURY

1969 COUGAR DRAG CAR

1992 VECTOR

1954 FERRARI 375 MILLE MIGLIA BERLINETTA BY PININFARINA

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)
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The “Concours”

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

1963 Aston Martin DB5

1991 Ferrari F40

American Classic

1963 Chrysler Turbine

New Bentley

1970 Ferrari Dino

Super Car on Display

2017 Ford GT

2018 Vaydora
Concours D'Elegance Of America
The “Concours”

Cars Grouped by Class

Cadillac Collection

Hurst Collection

2020 Vet
Concours D'Elegance Of America

The Gassers

The Judges

1933 Willys

1933 Willys

1948 Austin

(Continued on page 16)
Concours D'Elegance Of America

The Gassers

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14)
Concours D'Elegance Of America

Cars and Coffee

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1929 Chevy

1932 Model B Ford Engine with a Riley 4 port racing head with 2 Winfield Carbs

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Pin Ups For A Cause
2020 Calendar Launch Party
Sunday, November 10, 2019
4-9PM
Matthew Glab American Legion Post 1477
1965 Abbott Road
Lackawanna, New York

by Kim ("Kimmy-Sue") Cich photos by der00 Productions and Kim ("Kimmy-Sue") Cich

In case you’ve ever wondered just who those lovely Pin Up Doll Models selling 50/50 tickets, posing for pictures, and presenting Awards at shows and cruises are, they are members of Pin Ups For A Cause. This is a volunteer organization that assists with the fundraising efforts at those events.

In addition to supporting the causes benefitting from car shows and cruises, the Volunteer Pin Up Doll Models support a number of other causes. Events benefitting a number of Veterans’ causes, Friends Of Night People, Magic’s Mission, Warm It Forward, City Of Buffalo Animal Shelter, and Wreaths Across America are just a few of the over 110 events they are at every year.

Our Annual Calendar Launch Party is our main fundraiser, as well as an evening of fun with all of the Volunteer Pin Up Doll Models. We invite you to attend, and we thank you, in advance, for your support.

FYI: Every year’s Calendar honors a local WWII Veteran, with the Honoree announced at the Party. Should you wish to make a nomination, please send an e-mail to info@PinUpsForACause.com

This is our main fundraiser; your support enables us to keep serving. THANK YOU!!!!
Pin Ups For A Cause
2020 Calendar Launch Party

pictures from our 2019 Calendar Launch Party
Pin Ups For A Cause
2020 Calendar Launch Party

[Images of people and cars]
Pin Ups For A Cause
2020 Calendar Launch Party

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct 2-6 - FALL CARLISLE SWAP MEET, CORRAL & AUCTION - Carlisle Fairgrounds, Carlisle, PA. INFO: www.carlisleevents.com

Oct 5 - CLASSIC CAR / TRUCK SHOW & FALL FESTIVAL, PORK DINNER - St. Aloysius Regional School, 186 Franklin St, Springville, NY. 9am-2pm. Car show, pork dinner, basket raffles, vendors. INFO: Austin 716-365-9750


Oct 5 - COUDERSPORT FALL OUTDOOR CAR SHOW - Main St, Coudersport, PA. 9am-2pm. INFO: Rob 814-203-1143, Jess 814-203-7916

Oct 5 - 29th ANNUAL FALL FOILAGE MOTORCYCLE RUN — American Legion Post 735, 35 Legion Pkwy, West Seneca, NY. Sign in 10:30 - noon. Sponsored by Buf-Erie ABATE. INFO: Damian 716-825-2627, Lee 716-674-7040

Oct 12 - DRIFTERS TRUNK or TREAT- American Legion #928,7353 Erie Rd (Rt. 5), Derby, NY. 1-3pm. Decorate your car, themes, stories, candy.....use your imagination...games for kids. Sponsored by Drifters Car Club. INFO: Joe 716-954-3835


Nov 3 - FALL CLASSIC AUTO SWAP MEET (indoor) - Frontier Fire Hall, 2176 Liberty Dr, Niagara Falls, NY. 9am-1pm. Sponsored by Niagara County Central Rotary Club. INFO: Tom 716-694-0888, 716-693-9713


FULL EVENTS AT: https://showandcruisenews.com/