

The Official Publication of the
San Francisco Bay Area
Chapter of the Corvair Society
of America --- *Chapter 947*

Dedicated to the enjoyment, history and preservation of the **Chevrolet Corvair** produced from 1960 through 1969. This unique, rear-engine, air-cooled automobile grabs as much attention today as it did 60 years ago!



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Look for us on the Web!
<https://www.SFBACorsa.org>

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A "Slightly" Modified
V8 Corvair

Next SFBA Zoom Meeting Thursday, Apr 6th
@7:00PM (#243 888 8339)

Letter From the Editor

I hope you were able to attend our last meeting. By my count we had thirteen people attend. We had a very enjoyable meeting with lots of interesting discussions and trouble shooting.

At the meeting Josh talked about installing heated seats or possibly an add-on window defroster. I looked around on eBay and was surprised to find LOTS of heated seat replacement kits. These were priced from \$50 to \$200 and usually offered High/Low temperature range (some offered multiple heat settings). These all seem to be running 50 watts per side (25 watts on the seat bottom and 25 on the seat back). The total current draw would be about 8 amps if driver's and passenger's side were turned on high. These come with a wiring harness with a 10-amp fuse and a controller which you would presumably mount in some convenient, central location. These do require that the seat covers are removable and not attached to the foam. One such kit is shown at the top of page 9. Josh also sent along a link to an external window defroster he found. It just mounts on the dash and claims to be able to defrost the windshield in 30 seconds. At \$35 it seems worth a try. See <https://verniershop.com/products/12v-automotive-portable-car-heater>.

Also at the meeting Hayden mentioned that someone was selling replacement thermostats that used a bi-metal spring rather than a bellows. This has long been a source of irritation for Corvair owners as replacement bellows have become hard to get and expensive (and they don't seem to last). I searched around eBay and found a link from GT Engineering. The description reads in part "Engineered replacement Cooling Air Door Thermostats for 1961-1969 Corvairs. New design using dependable calibrated Bi-Metal Thermostat Springs for low cost dependable Air Door Operation. Kit includes New Ther-

Current SFBA Corsa Officers

President Ray Welter, 5240 Belvedere St, Oakland CA 94601 - Ray.Welter@gmail.com

Vice-President Harry Kypreos, 7840 Creekside Dr, Dublin, CA 94568 hkypreos@sbcglobal.net

Secretary Clark Calkins, 1907 Alvarado Ave., Walnut Creek, CA 94597 - (925)478-8909 CaCalkins@astound.net

Treasurer Harry Kypreos, (address above)

Committees

Membership Joshua Deitcher, 375 Harris Ave, Rodeo CA 94572 (510)388-4986 SFBACorsa@gmail.com

Library Dave Newell, 1481 Hamrick Lane, Hayward, CA 94544 - (510)782-4265 chevrobilia@yahoo.com

Newsletter Clark Calkins (address above)

Internet/Web email : CaCalkins@astound.net
<https://www.sfbacorsa.org>
<https://www.instagram.com/sfbacorsa/>
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<https://facebook.com/CORSA-San-Francisco-Bay-Area-Chapter-579950135376455/>

Merchandise <https://www.etsy.com/listing/1163514879/san-francisco-bay-area-corvair-club>

mostats, Brackets, Bolts, Clips, Rods, and Cooling Air Door Bushings, and Complete instructions..." I haven't heard from anyone that has tried these kits but apparently, they have been on the market

(see **Letter** on page 10)

On The Cover: Over 5,000 Hot Rods Made Their Way to the Turkey Run in Daytona including this Corvair(ish) V8 Hot Rod. I didn't find any other details but it does look interesting. It must be fun to drive! As strange as it looks it showcases excellent craftsmanship!

The Spyder Web is published twelve times a year by SFBA Corsa, Chapter 947 of the Corvair Society Of America (CORSA). The group meets monthly on the first Thursday at 7:00 PM at Black Bear Diner on Sycamore Valley Rd in Danville except for special occasions. Membership costs \$25/yr (membership in CORSA, \$38/yr, is encouraged). An associate membership (newsletter only) is available for \$15/yr. Memberships begin on January 1 of each year (first year is prorated).

Advertising space in the Spyder Web is available for \$50/yr (1/4 page), \$75/yr (1/2 page), and \$100/yr (full page). Business card size ads are \$25/yr but do not include a subscription to the newsletter. All material should be sent to the editor (address above) or emailed to CaCalkins@astound.net. Material must be received at least two weeks prior to the next meeting date.

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Minutes of the Last Meeting

March 2, 2023

The regular meeting was opened by Josh around 7:00 PM. He said he was feeling his old self again. It's been a rough few months with Covid, RSV and other ailments. The attendance this evening was Josh, Harry, Ray, myself, Carl, Herb, Hyden, Don, Christy, Craig, Paul, Jeffery, and Seth. I hope I didn't miss anyone.

Treasury Report: Harry paid our dues to CORSA. We did not have our usual Board Meeting so no direct report from Harry. But the balance from last month stands at \$4582.23 after all expenses.

Membership: Josh reported there are no new members this month but there are a couple of prospects. He let them know what we do, how to join, etc. A nice personal touch. Josh will send Clark a list of who has renewed for 2023 for the newsletter.

Old Business: Nothing reported.

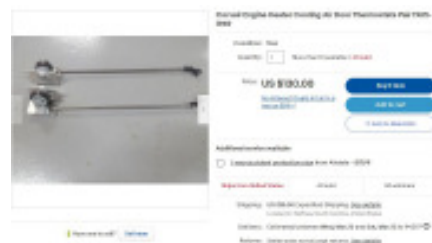
New Business: Josh said that our meeting lately have been going just a bit over an hour and since Zoom will give you an hour free maybe we should opt out of our paid account and save a few \$. We currently spend about \$150/yr. (Josh was not sure of this amount as the last check covered both the web site and Zoom). This is something to think about. We have a few months to make up our minds.

Events: Clark went to Perk's in Lafayette but there were no cars. The Meet-Ups have probably been postponed until Spring.

Tech: Christy was joining us this evening from a local café as the power

(and Internet) were down at his house. He said in the Communiqué there was an ad for a '65 Pilot Car. What was a "Pilot Car" anyway? Paul; said maybe this car was made before the production line was setup. Built to test the production process. He thought these had special body tags. Christy asked if that made it worth \$45k?

Hayden said he was about to replace the weather stripping on his '66 Convertible. He couldn't find out how it was supposed to be mounted. Josh said that it was attached with adhesive. No bolts. Herb said he replaced his '64 Convertible top himself (years ago). It came out OK but he wishes he had taken it somewhere. Carl said when he did his 2 or 3 bows were filled with a dense cardboard material. He cleaned this out and replaced it with many layers of material from Clark's over a period of weeks. Came out perfect. Hayden said he had a few wrinkles that he just ignores. Carl said that when you do your own work you become your worst critic as you know about every issue. Others will think it looks wonderful, but you know of those places where it's not perfect. How true. Hayden said that someone was making replacements for the Corvair thermostats. These use a bi-metal spring to actuate the doors. This has long been an issue as replacement bellows are hard to find and expensive. But these replacements aren't cheap going for \$130 a set.



He has been selling these for a couple of years, but others hadn't heard about it. He will send Clark the details for the newsletter. Hayden will be replacing the exhaust donuts and will take care of the thermostats at the same time. Ray said he solved his thermostat problem. He just took the doors off! But Hayden wants his car to warm up quicker. On the highway Hayden thinks his car runs too hot. He plans to take the "turkey roaster" off and asked if he had to take off the carbs? Seth said yes, you will have to take at least one carb off. But you will be able to get to most everything from the top. To deflash the heads you can put a tube light below and you will be able to see your progress. Hayden asked if anyone had installed one of the Clark's Blue Tooth radios they have now? He did and it works great. Seth asked which speakers he chose? Hayden used the higher end speakers. It took about 8 hours to install. Not bad he thought.

Seth said he saw where someone installed an internally regulated alternator but the jumper wire required to bypass the normal regulator was put inside of the regulator so it looks stock. Interesting idea. But Seth added that when you do something like this, be sure to put a note in the glove compartment to indicate what you have done so the next owner will have a clue on how to fix issues. After all these cars will probably outlive us. We are temporary caretakers. Good point!

Josh is considering adding seat heaters to his Corvair. He saw some on CP

(See *Minutes..* on page 8)

Coming Events in 2023...

April 6 th	Regular SFBA meeting at 7:00PM via Zoom, ID = "243 888 8339"
April 28-30 th	ACCC SACRAMENTO AUTORAMA, Cal Expo, Sacramento, CA. Entry deadline is 2/1/2023. See " https://hotrodshows.com/sacramento-autorama/ " for details.
April 30 th	Meet Up at Perk's in Lafayette. 10:00 AM
May 4 th	Regular SFBA meeting at 7:00PM via Zoom, ID = "243 888 8339"
June 16 th - 24 th	CORSA National Convention, Wisconsin Dells, WI
June 23 rd - 25 th	Vairfest, Arroyo Grande, CA
August 5 th	SFBA/Valley Picnic. Quarry Lakes Park in Fremont. 12:00 AM - ??

SFBA CORSA Meeting Schedule 2023

Thursday Jan 5, 7:00 PM SFBA Regular Zoom meeting, ID = "243 888 8339"

Thursday Feb 2, 7:00 PM SFBA Regular Zoom meeting, ID = "243 888 8339"

Thursday Mar 2, 7:00 PM SFBA Regular Zoom meeting, ID = "243 888 8339"

Thursday Apr 6, 7:00 PM SFBA Regular Zoom meeting, ID = "243 888 8339"

Thursday May 4, 7:00 PM SFBA Regular Zoom meeting, ID = "243 888 8339"

Thursday Jun 1, 7:00 PM SFBA Regular Zoom meeting, ID = "243 888 8339"

Thursday Jul 6, 7:00 PM SFBA Regular Zoom meeting, ID = "243 888 8339"

Thursday Aug 3, 7:00 PM SFBA Regular Zoom meeting, ID = "243 888 8339"

Thursday Sep 7, 7:00 PM SFBA Regular Zoom meeting, ID = "243 888 8339"

Thursday Oct 5, 7:00 PM SFBA Regular Zoom meeting, ID = "243 888 8339"

Thursday Nov 2, 7:00 PM SFBA Regular Zoom meeting, ID = "243 888 8339"

Thursday Dec 7, 7:00 PM SFBA Regular Zoom meeting, ID = "243 888 8339"

Progress on Brodie's '64 Corvair Monza

We have made some rapid progress on Brodie's 1964 Monza. Gabe at Sterling Restoration pulled off a really fine and fast paint job on the car. The body was completely rust free and straight so the work went quickly. The Desert Beige paint was a perfect match. Really nice work again from Sterling.

We have added some NOS and reproduction trim to update the look. We added rechromed bumpers from CA Corvair. My older son Trent had helped me refresh the wire rims a few

years ago - so we pulled those out of storage. We also added a Corvair wood steering wheel.

The Clarks interior kit and carpet kit turned out great. If you need seats - take them over to Freddy Diaz in Concord. They look amazing.

We are waiting for a new top from Clarks - they are on back order. Brodie has learned a lot about parts polishing and working with screwdrivers and wrenches.

The car is not running yet - when we get it all together we will pull the motor for complete inspection, tuning, and sealing. Hopefully next spring we will be ready to roll!

We will send along pictures when the top goes on and motor work proceeds.



see "Vair Photos..." o- page 7

Is Chevrolet's Corvair dangerous? "...at any speed"

Carl L. Kelsen

It's been over 50 years since the last Chevrolet Corvair rolled off the GM Chevrolet assembly line, but the myth that Chevrolet Corvairs were unsafe continues to circulate.

This is despite the fact that by 1972, Chevrolet's Corvair was independently proven to be as safe or safer than any other car of the period. This false reputation for being unsafe was pure nonsense and completely unwarranted. Here's the background:

The first generation Chevrolet Corvair was produced from late 1959 and ran until mid-1964. It shared a rear suspension design that during this time was also used in Porsches, Renault Dauphines and Volkswagen Beetles of the period.

During high-speed cornering, all of these early rear engine cars displayed the same extreme camber angle changes that are associated with Chevrolet's first generation Corvair, but of course nobody ever suggests the Porsche, Volkswagen or Renault were dangerous cars.

It's important to understand that Ralph Nader's well-known book "Unsafe at any Speed" was critical of all rear engine cars including the well regarded Porsche. Ralph Nader only mentions the Chevrolet Corvair once, as an example, in the first chapter of his book and Nader used the Corvair simply because it was more visible on American roads. Ralph Nader's criticism was of all rear engine cars, regardless of the brand name.

During the early 1960s, before Japanese cars had become mainstream,



Volkswagen almost had the Australian small car market to itself. VW beetles were sold in record numbers and many were owned by young, inexperienced drivers. Not surprisingly, this combination resulted in a high percentage of serious road accidents involving the humble VW Beetle. The car itself did not cause the accident, the combination of an inexperienced driver and quite possibly incorrect tyre pressures were very likely the primary causes.

The humble VW beetle had:

- (1) An unrestrained swing-arm rear suspension
- (2) Required 15 lb front and 26 lb rear tyre pressures

Failure to maintain correct tyre pressures in 2023 is still the most overlooked item by car owners today, but these facts were never considered with respect to rear engine VWs or Porsches. The early 911 Porsche had questionable handling but of course Porsches sales never reached the numbers of VW or Chevrolet Corvair.

While considerable evidence exists that proves beyond any question, that the

Chevrolet Corvair was indeed safe, the most compelling and totally independent evidence comes from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

It's well documented that in 1971, the U.S. Department of Transport tested an example of the original Corvair by comparing it against directly competitive cars. The outcome was that the Corvair was "not especially dangerous". This independent determination that Corvairs were indeed safe vehicles attracted little attention, as by 1971 Chevrolet's conventional front engine Camaro had replaced the Corvair, so it was a little too late.

The development of the second generation 1965-69 Chevrolet Corvair commenced in late 1961 and even today is highly regarded for its re-designed rear suspension, styling, handling and engineering. This exceptional re-style was not forced on GM by Ralph Nader as some believe. It was at least 4 years after GM had finalised its 1965 Corvair specifications that Ralph Nader published his book titled 'Unsafe at any Speed'.

(See "Dangerous?" on Page 7)

Dangerous?...

GM had completed work on the second generation Corvair design long before Ralph Nader published his book. Accordingly, Nader's book did not, in anyway, influence Chevrolet's 1965 redesign. There is no basis to suggest otherwise.

The major reason why Chevrolet killed off the Corvair was Ford's unquestionable financial success with its 1964 Mustang. These first Mustangs amounted to an attractive pillarless coupe body being bolted on to quite agricultural Ford Falcon underpinnings. They were cheap to build and most importantly kept Ford shareholders happy by producing record profits!

Ford's success with the Mustang, almost certainly convinced Chevrolet to dress its Chevy II in a sporty pillarless coupe body and call it a Camaro. These conventional water cooled front engine coupes were far cheaper to build than the Corvair, and this fact more than anything else put the final nail in the

coffin for the Chevrolet Corvair.

Bottom line: Chevrolet Corvairs were proven to be safe cars.

Direct quotes;

- "1972 Texas A&M University safety commission report for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration which found that the 1960–1963 Corvair possessed no greater potential for loss of control in extreme situations than its contemporaries." (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chevrolet_Corvair#cite_note-04)

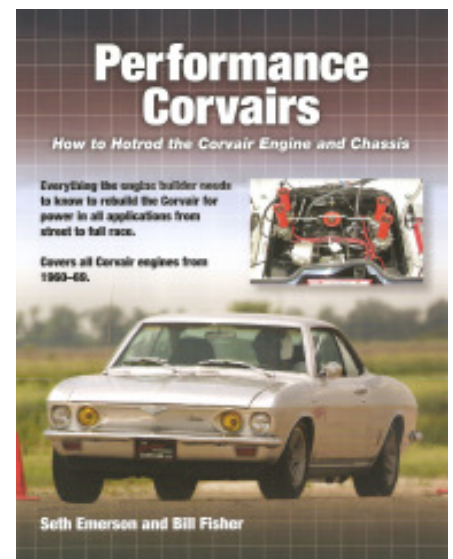
- "Ralph Nader's accusations were proven false by the 1972 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration safety commission report. Support for the tests, conducted at College Station, Texas, was provided by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) Texas A&M University Research Foundation. The investigation concluded:

- "The 1960–1963 Corvair understeers in the same manner as conventional passenger cars up to about 0.4 g lateral acceleration, makes a transition from understeer, through neutral steer, to oversteer in a range from about 0.4 g to 0.5 g lateral acceleration. This transition does not result in the abnormal potential for loss of control. The limited accident data available indicates that the rollover rate of the 1960–1963 Corvair is comparable to other light domestic cars. The 1960–1963 Corvair compared favorably with the other contemporary vehicles used in the NHTSA Input Response Tests. The handling and stability performance of the 1960–1963 Corvair does not result in an abnormal potential for loss of control or rollover and it is at least as good as the performance of some contemporary vehicles both foreign and domestic." (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chevrolet_Corvair#cite_note-NHTSA-36)

Vair Photos...



Here is Brodie standing next to his soon to be on the road Corvair convertible. What a nice looking car!



Minutes...

Pony Parts' web site for Mustangs. Actually, there are several makers of replacement heater pads. You need to be able to remove the seat covers and the covers can't be attached to the foam. These range in price from \$50 to \$200. The power is about 50 watts per seat so max current draw is less than 10 amps for both seats. Jeffery asked if his generator would handle that but Josh thought this would be no problem. Josh mentioned that when he was at Zacky's a while back someone drove up in a poorly running Corvair and wanted Zacky to look at it. Zacky found that the PCV valve (a small orifice) had been drilled out (probably trying to clean it) and made the hole too large. This effects the vacuum at idle and makes the car run poorly.

Jeffery re-did his padded dash. Using material from Clark's you have only one chance to lay it down and it has to be right. If you are off by 1/4" it stays 1/4" off forever. He thought his came out pretty good. He said that Clark's instructions tell you not to cut Vs in the material as it may tear further. Cut Us instead. When he took off the original material, he noticed it had Vs rather than Us so he doesn't think this makes much of a difference. Jeffery is looking for a single 3-prong spinner. He only has three and Clark's doesn't sell them anymore. Hayden said he may have one, but he will have to check. Carl said he had one and could bring it to the Convention and mail it from there. That's a great offer! Jeffery will let him know if he can't find it locally. Also, he said he has to replace the rubber in the wind-wings on his '65 and doesn't have an assembly manual. Josh said he had one that he doesn't need anymore, and Jeffery can have it. He will mail it.

Carl said that he received a nasty letter in response to his Corvair article in Re-

stored Cars a few months back. It was the same dribble brought up in Nader's book. He ask how he should respond. Hayden suggested he mention the facts but not to make the response personal. The Corvair was just as safe as any other car of the era. Issues related to the rear-engine design were shared with VWs and Porsches. Remember Nader was primarily lobbying for tougher automobile safety measures and just used the Corvair as an example. This was an era when seat belts were optional and forget about air bags or crumple zones.

Harry said he was having trouble closing the driver's side door on his '63 convertible. It won't latch. Seth asked if he tried adjusting the striker? He tried but it does not seem to be adjustable. On late models it is movable. Craig also has door problems. He finally got the passenger's side door to open and latch properly by using lots of PV Blaster



and working the mechanism. His driver's side door is another issue. It will not open so you can't get the striker at all. Seth said that some have had success by loosening the bolts from the rear seat side. Tough but you might be able to do it. Craig said over the years the grease can harden and prevent the mechanism from latching. PV Blaster can work to loosen the hardened grease.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25

Respectfully submitted,
Clark Calkins, secretary

SFBA Club Dues Status for 2023


According to our records we have the following list of members that have not paid for 2023. If you find an error please let us know. Keep the Treasury health, send in your dues today!

Rafael Arroyo
Joe Balderamma
Chris Breen
Mike Chamorro
Phil Dalforno
Johathan Duckworth
Seth Emerson
Travis Fowler
Brian Goldin
Dwight Greenhouse
Matthew Harris
John Heiser
Terry Hofer
Laurence Jones (paying soon)
George Josol
Darcy Langolis
Terry Leake
Don Matthews
Adam McPhillips
Bruce Mooers
Chuck Pope
John Rice
Tony Richards
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David Stobb
DJ Swan
Kevin Thompson
Greg Vargas (paying soon)

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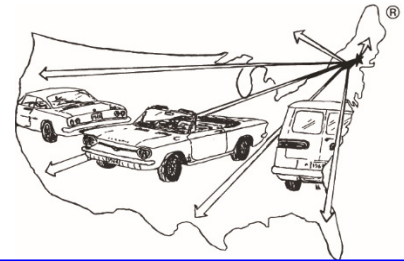
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Letter...

for a few years now. They aren't cheap (\$130/set) but should last a very long time. See the ad at the bottom of page 9.

Carl mentioned that he had received a very negative response from one reader of his Corvair article in Restored Cars (an Australian equivalent to our Hemmings). This reader was adamant about how unsafe these cars were and how could a magazine of this caliber run such an article. Carl drafted up a suitable response and sent it in to the magazine's editor. I thought this was very well written and I am including it on pages 6 & 7.

This month Bruce has sent in more pictures of the '64 Monza convertible he

is restoring for his son Brodie. He has made great progress as you can see on page 5

Our Sunday, in-person Meet-Ups will return when the weather becomes more "normal". I am hoping for April 30th at Perk's Drive Thru in Lafayette. Lots of nice cars show up at 9 or 10 AM. Come and enjoy the cars and coffee and donuts.

It's time (actually past time) to renew your SFBA membership for 2023. At this moment about half of the membership has renewed. We know everyone is busy and this is easy to put off, but check the list on page 8 to see your status. This is our best estimate of those that have not yet renewed for this year.

Keep the newsletter interesting by sending in pictures and stories of you latest projects. Even if you only adjust the carburetors or rebuild the transmission, take photos and send them in! When we see others working on their Corvairs it gives us more incentive to do the same.

Our next Zoom meeting will be Thursday, Apr 6th starting at 7:00 PM. Remember our permanent meeting ID# is 243 888 8339.

Corvair Classifieds

CORVAIRS FOR SALE

'65 Corsa 140 coupe. Blue with black stripes. Los Angeles built car #148 Comes with replacement engine block and overhauled 4 speed. Has seat frames. Needs interior. Has telescoping wheel. All glass. Will need tow. Open to offers. Steve Heater (408) 505-1860 (08/22)

CORVAIR PARTS FOR SALE

The Sacramento club is selling two turn key engines.

1962/1963 102 hp engine \$1500

1962/1963 80 hp engine \$1000

interested persons should email sfbacorsa@gmail.com

Skip Polacchi has the following parts for sale. Best to call evenings (530)474-4227.

1 Pair Late 110 rebuilt heads - \$250

1 Pair Big Valve Heads, Bill Thomas.all new parts, angle port exhaust, rotated manifold, w/mod carbs, linkage - \$1700 firm

1 New complete Clark's Ultimate 140 carb kit, linkage & air filter - \$700

1 All New Parts for an early 102 hp NOS crank, cam, 0.030 pistons & barrels+heads etc. You assemble - \$700

We still have other misc items

CORVAIR MECHANICS

David Gray: Fairfield - Retired GM/Corvair Mechanic. Can do minor repairs, engine rebuilds, tune-ups. Located in Fairfield but can travel. Also has parts for sale. (916)531-0905 (corvaireguru@gmail.com)

FREE CORVAIR PARTS

Cleaning Out The Shop: '60-61 Turbo/ 4 Speed engine case and heads. T1226YR, no tin, exhaust, turbo, etc. '63-64 engine long block THO3Z, with distributor, auto bell housing, some tin, no exhaust. Might be good for restoration. All likely need rebuild. Engines in Carmel Valley, you pick up. Buck Jones (831)917-5952. (06/22)

Treasurers Report - Harry Kypreos

March 2023

Date	Activity	Check #	Credit	Debit	Balance	Status
02/01/2023	Beginning Balance				\$4,977.45	
02/12/2023	Renewals		25.00		5002.45	
01/05/2023	Newsletters (Mar)			(45.28)	4,957.17	(**)
01/31/2023	Ending Balance		\$489.25	(\$178.71)	\$4,977.49	

(**) These expenses have been turned in yet.




SFBA CORSA

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