



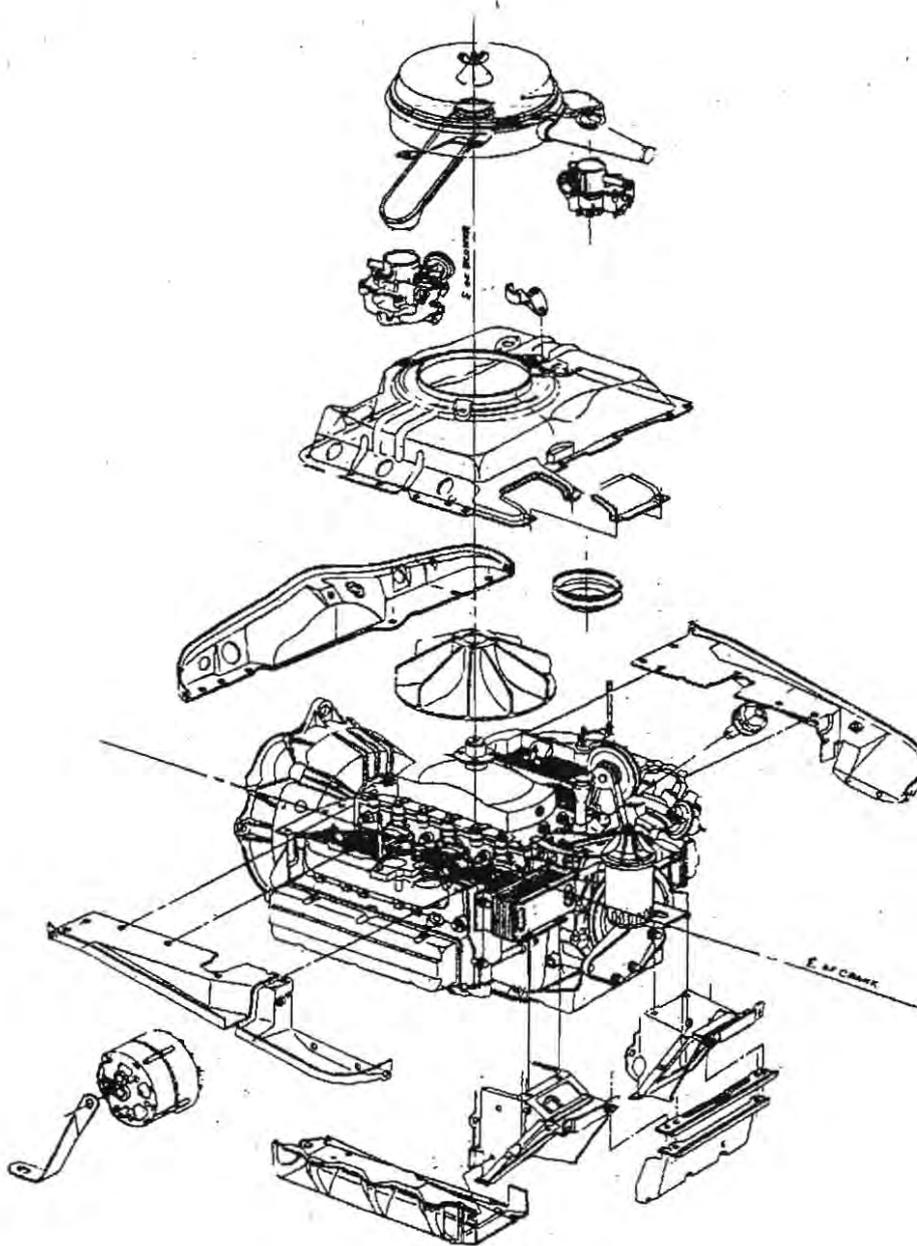
Corvairsation

www.corvairs.org

Tucson Corvair Association
Volume 26, Number 12

Tucson, Arizona
May 2002

COOLVAIR AFFAIR EARLY REGISTRATION ENDS ON MAY 24



GIMMICK RALLYE SATURDAY STARTS AT 9AM AT EL CON

NEW MEMBERS ---- Jack Cunningham, Bill Meyer, Richard Fasanella---- WELCOME

Tucson Corvair Association
Established 1975

Corvairsation is a monthly publication of the Tucson Corvair Association, which is dedicated to the preservation of the Corvair model of the Chevrolet Motor Division of General Motors. The Tucson Corvair Association is a chartered member of the Corvair Society of American (CORSAs), Chapter 857.

Monthly Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of each month, except December. One technical/social event is planned for each month except July and August.

Membership Dues are \$15 per year for singles and \$18 per year for families. Initial dues are \$15 for singles and \$22 for families (includes name tags). Make checks payable to Tucson Corvair Association.

Change of Address: Report any change of address or phone number to the Membership Chairperson. Do not report such changes to the Corvairsation Editor.

CORSA Membership Dues are \$30 per year (\$70 for 26 months) and include a subscription to the CORSA Communique, a monthly publication. CORSA membership is not required for membership in the TCA, but is highly recommended. See any TCA officer for more information.

Classified Ads are free to members and \$3.00 per 4-line ad to all others.

Deadline for materials submitted for publication in the Corvairsation is the 10th of month to the Editor.

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Tucson Corvair Association

Mountain View Restaurant at Prince and Mountain ave.

Minutes of April 24th, 2002 meeting

Chris Cunningham called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

Barry Cunningham called the meeting to order at 8:pm. In attendance were Chris Cunningham, Barry Cunningham, Allen Elvick, Gordon Cauble, Paul Dunn, Art Dunn, Lance Gillingham, Ed Segerstrom, Julius Berky, Amy, Emily and John Torpey, Van Pershing, Dave Lynch, Bill Maynard, Dave Baker, Tim Green, Herb Berkman, Don and Bruce Robinson, Chris Campton and our newest member Bill Maynard.

Guest's that night were Woody and Genie Thomas, Nathan, Dennis and Ryan

The first order of business was to solicit for membership help at the convention. More judges are needed for the concourse show, check-in, swap meet, etc. Herb Berkman gave us a brief description of some of the requirements, there is 5 minutes allotted per car, a strong knowledge of specialty classes, ie yenko, and the stock class.

There will be a tour to the Meteor Crater on Tuesday and Friday at 9am – 3pm, a Corvair model judging contest, fan belt toss, Wednesday there will be a valve cover race at 1pm. A rally run and economy run, and an autocross on Friday (a race through the parking lot against the clock).

Lance went over last months mid month activity, the trip to the Franklin Museum. It's an excellent display of classic, air cooled auto's spanning over a decade. There was everything from coupes to Limo's. We were told a story about one particular model, it's a one of a kind touring car, William Harrah, of Harrah's casino's had offered Hubbard 2 million dollars for the car and his reply "that's not enough"! A quick side note, the Franklin engines are being produced even today, back in the Midwest, for aircraft use.

Paul Dunn is going to hold a rally for this months mid month activity, it will be on May 18th. Everything will be explained later on in this issue.

Allen Elvick reported on the Clubs finances, the beginning balance was \$1267.76, income came from ads, raffle tickets, car raffle tickets and Corsa dues for a total income was \$185.00. Expenditures were \$40.82 total for the February tune-up clinic. Ending balance is \$1411.94. Thanks Allen.

Chris talked briefly of the 1960 coupe that was donated to the club. The car will be sold to help raise money for the clubs activities. First it will be for sale on E-bay, one figure for an asking price came to \$3500.00, this price would be less for any club member wanting to purchase it. Club member price has yet to be set.

Paul wanted to remind all of us of the corvair being raffled at the convention, a 1966 Monza convertible with stock a/c and auto tranny. Tickets are \$2.50 each.

At the meeting that night Bill Meyer (our newest member) had just purchased a beautiful 1965 convertible with a/c, auto tranny and wire hubcaps, from a couple from the Corsa club, Woody and Genie Thomas. They delivered the car from Texas for Bill. Nice car, it caught everyones attention in the parking lot. We took a break and had a raffle, Julius Berky was the winner receiving a book – How to get more miles per gallon (in your corvair).

Herb Berkman brought in a video of the valve cover races held in Daytona Beach. It was interesting to see what some people have come up with for a racer, there was everything from high tech to an oil can (literally) stuffed with a valve cover. I guess it qualified under the rules! (?) Thanks Herb!

The motion to adjourn came at 8:33 by Chris and was seconded by Barry.

A letter from the President:

Selling a used car can be demanding. Selling a forty-two-year old used car can be especially formidable. However, selling the 1960 Monza Coupe that Chuck Pettis generously donated to the Club was like coasting down Mt. Lemmon Highway with the top down. The car (one of 11,926 produced) sold the first day it was advertised on the CORSA website. We have received a deposit from a CORSA member who lives in Ontario, Canada. This brings me to the next turn: transportation to Canada.

The buyer is looking for an interested party to possibly drive the car to the convention in Flagstaff. According to an e-mail, he and his wife are thinking about a "romantic trek across America" to a destination that would connect them with the car. Any ideas; please contact me and I will put the two parties in contact.

Saturday, May 18th marks the return of the rally for the TCA. Rally Master Paul Dunn has created the world premiere of *Trivial Tucson Pursuit*, or was that the *Tucson Trivial Pursuit*? In any case, expect lots of fun. We will meet at 9am in the SW corner parking lot of El Con Mall. Cars will be sent out beginning at 9:30am and continuing a few minutes apart. This rally will be simple so don't feel intimidated if you haven't ever participated in a rally before. It's all for fun and pure enjoyment from driving our Corvairs. (Yes, other cars are welcome.)

Paul recommends two people per car, one to drive, and one to navigate and read the road signs. You will have questions on your printed rally instructions with the answers to the questions found on the road signs along the route. The team that gets the most correct answers wins the rally. The running time is approximately two hours and the finish line is at a nice place to sit down and have lunch.

A special welcome goes out to new Club members Bill Meyer, and Richard Fasanella.

Lastly, we have plenty of raffle tickets left for Cactus Corvair's 1966 Monza Convertible to be given away in Flagstaff on June 29th. Tickets are selling for \$2.50 with a small portion of that staying with the TCA. Tickets will be available at the rally and our next regular meeting on May 22nd. Support the TCA and help sell some tickets.

Happy motoring, Chris Cunningham



from the editor-----

As you can see, I had a bit of problem getting Chris's message off the net, but I think it is all quite clear what he is saying.

The rally this week-end is the last mid-month activity locally until September, so roll those Vairs or whatever will rally for a good time.

We really have a good meeting place at Mountain View Restaurant for the our regular meeting, so if you haven't tried it, please do this month.

Thanks, Van, for more on the Corvair history in this issue. Enjoy!

What's the real reason that the Corvair failed???

From Andrew Gurudata's website: www.vex.net/~guru/corvair.htm

(Read the following with the understanding that it is, of course, just my personal and ever so humble opinion...)

Why did the Corvair fail? It certainly seems to have been because of a combination of factors. Some people and many books blame the success of Ford's mustang for the death of the Corvair, but of course that really doesn't make much sense - if it were true, a great redesign of the Corvair into a sportier car (as was apparently planned, as described in my [Future Corvairs](#) page) would have solved this problem. (And if GM killed off a car line every time it was beaten in sales by the competition, how many would exist today?) There are those who choose to blame Ralph Nader's book "Unsafe At Any Speed"'s attack on the early Corvair exclusively for the Corvair's demise - though others point out quite rightly that Nader's book may have actually prolonged the Corvair's life. Personally, however, I feel that blaming Nader is just blaming the messenger for giving us the bad news.

Unsafe - Thanks To Cost-Cutting

The fact is, no matter how much we try to deny it, there was a definite problem with the 1960-1963 Corvair. And that problem, a weakness in the rear suspension, was not a problem of design - as the original designs for the Corvair in fact took this into account. The problem was clearly that **marketing and cost-cutting won out over intelligent engineering**. The designers that planned the Corvair knew that anti-sway bars would be needed to support the added weight of the rear-mounted engine. But to save a measly \$4 per car, those bars were not included in the final product, and the inevitable disaster struck.

... Or Just Bad Marketing?

It has been suggested to me that perhaps the failure on Chevrolet's part may have been not so much an error in putting cost over engineering as it was an error in misreading the market that would be attracted to the Corvair. This suggestion is based on the fact that Corvair was conceived and marketed as an economy car, and that the rear suspension that was used could have been seen as being quite adequate for a conservative, "reasonable" driving style. What Chevrolet may not have foreseen was the sporty image that Corvair would pick up, leading to the car being driven in a somewhat "unreasonable" manner! This theory, suggested to me by fellow Corvair fan [Kent Sullivan](#), does make some sense... Not that I think this would excuse Chevrolet for having made this poor judgement call!

A Former GM Vendor Employee's Perspective

A former GM vendor employee e-mailed me to give me his recollections of the Corvair's reasons for failure. Here it seems that the cost-cutting blows to the vair went beyond even what I expected...

Having worked for a GM Vendor in the late 60's, we were told to cut cost from the Flat opposed six cylinder engine. It seems it had a \$6 cost penalty when compared to the Cast Iron water cooled sixes in production. I'm sure all aspects of cost were being reviewed by other groups. It was rumored if a Chev-II or low end Full size were sold in place of the Vair there was a \$300 Per Unit greater profit. (tenths of cents are debated) This penalty was realized early on and the car would have died a normal economic penalty demise, except for a nasty book claiming faulty engineering. Dropping the car would not look good. A renewed effort to cut mfg cost ensued thru 68'. No real breakthroughs appeared to meet the critia "It has to be as good or better and cost less" . Better at same cost was unacceptable. Cut the ads & promo's and you can have a natural non-eventful demise. Make the \$\$ on the lower cost to mfg models.

Basically, there wasn't enough saleable profit. Then came the low cost XP-887. That's another story of MoTown's \$\$ first thinking and critical area cost cutting to a good technology.

Car And Driver Saw The Problem Coming

Here's an interesting quote from "Car And Driver"'s 1959 article on the Corvair (the complete text of which can be found at [the Car And Driver Web Page on the 1959 Corvair](#)):

Let us be honest, as usual: The Corvair is fundamentally a profound oversteer. With 62-percent of its weight on the back wheels it could only be otherwise if very ingenious suspension techniques had been called into play. This was not the case. As cornering forces on the Corvair chassis increase there is an initial very mild understeer tendency, probably attributable to the rear suspension geometry, but then, well within the average driver's range of slip angles, oversteer sets in in a gradual way that is easily countered by the excellent steering-whose very lightness, of course, is in part a function of the oversteer. Having heard that Uncle Tom himself had declared that he "tried but just couldn't lose the Corvair", I asked Chevy's affable engine development engineer Bob Clift to keep a path clear to the basement while we tried some very fast turns. By making extremely deep corrections it was possible to hold the car on a line but, as in any automobile ever built, there was a point beyond which it wasn't prudent to proceed. For a moderately skilled driver the Corvair is a genuine ball to drive, it being possible to hustle hard into tight corners and bring the tail around with just a twitch of the wheel, counter-steering until the slide stops and the time for acceleration arrives. This is not, of course, everybody's way of driving.

Chevy spokesmen have said that they didn't feel a front anti-roll bar was

needed because the car's center of gravity was so low that it doesn't roll much. This is true enough, from that standpoint, but such bars are also powerful tools for adjusting handling, and one of the first things that should be done to this car is to replace that anti-roll bar. Since this would only actually counterbalance the difficulties that exist at the rear, however, thorough redesign should commence at that end. With the conventional design methods used, the high spring rates needed to support the rear end weight have resulted in unduly high roll stiffness at the rear, a sure harbinger of oversteer. A solution like that on the Mercedes-Benz 300SL Roadster is called for, having a single central coil or a pivoted transverse leaf spring to support loads without affecting roll. For all its novelty the Corvair is surprisingly naïve in this major respect.

In The End...

Whatever the reason for the problems, by the time that the '65 redesign fixed all of Corvair's shortcomings (except its relatively high cost to build), it was too late - Corvair's name was mud with the public. This would not have been an unsurmountable problem had Chevrolet believed in the Corvair, but the fact was that several Chevrolet executives of the time did not like or understand the Corvair, and as a result Chevrolet's solution to the PR problem was to kill the line... a sad, and completely unnecessary course of action, but perhaps perfectly in line with GM's tradition of picking the lowest cost solution over the most innovative or intelligent.

How else do you explain that the Pontiac Firefly???



2000 Pontiac Firefly

2002 CORSA International Convention

hosted by the Cactus Corvair Club • June 25-29, 2002 at the Little America Hotel—800/865-1410

Registration Form Convention Badge Information (please print)

Additional Name Badges:

Name _____ Spouse _____

Address _____ Child _____

City/State/Zip _____ Child _____

CORSA Membership # _____ Phone # _____ E-mail _____

If you enter a competitive event (Autocross, Concours, Car Display, Econorun, Rally), please fill out the table below:

Vehicle No.**	Year	Model	Body Style	Serial No.	Exterior Color	Interior Color	Trans.	Engine HP	License Plate	
									State	No.
(1)										
(2)										

Registration Fees	Registrant's Name	Vehicle No.**	Registrant's Name	Vehicle No.**	Quan.	Pre.- Reg.*	On Site	Amount
CORSA Non-Member U.S. Dues						\$35	\$35	
Individual Registration						\$20	\$25	
Family Registration						25	30	
Autocross (per competitor)	_____ []		_____ []			15	20	
Concours (per car)	_____ []		_____ []			15	20	
Car Display (per car)	_____ []		_____ []			5	7	
Rally (per car)	_____ []		_____ []			13	18	
Economy Run (per car) <i>(includes gas fill-up at end of event)</i>	_____ []		_____ []			13	18	
<input type="checkbox"/> Edward N. Cole Competitor	_____ []					N/C		
Model Car Concours (per car)	_____ []					5	7	
Valve Cover Races (per entry)						3	5	
Awards Banquet (per person) <i>(Those with dietary restrictions should include a note with specifics with your pre-registration.)</i>	_____		<input type="checkbox"/> Chicken <input type="checkbox"/> Steak <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian					
	_____		<input type="checkbox"/> Chicken <input type="checkbox"/> Steak <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian					
	_____		<input type="checkbox"/> Chicken <input type="checkbox"/> Steak <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian			32	37	
Child Awards Banquet (under 12) <i>(Chicken strips)</i>						10	13	
T-Shirt, adult: <i>(Indicate quantity)</i>	_____ M _____ L _____ XL _____ XXL					12	15	
Polo Shirt, adult: <i>(Indicate quantity)</i>	_____ M _____ L _____ XL _____ XXL					15	18	
Indoor Vendors (per table)						30	35	
Outdoor Swap Meet (per space, two space minimum)						10	15	
Tours & Activities <i>(Descriptions published in the March Communique. Prices are per person and include entry and transportation. We reserve the right to cancel any tour if insufficient interest is shown.)</i>								
Meteor Crater Tour <i>Wednesday, 9:00 AM</i>	_____					\$32	N/A	
Grand Canyon Tour <i>Thursday, 9:00 AM</i>	_____					59	N/A	
Grand Canyon Tour <i>Friday, 9:00 AM</i>	_____					59	N/A	
Sedona Shopping Tour <i>Saturday, 9:30 AM</i>	_____					25	N/A	

*Pre-Registration must be received no later than May 25, 2002.

TOTAL _____

Please make checks payable to the 2002 CORSA International Convention and mail with this form to:

Cactus Corvair Club, c/o Mr. & Mrs. William Hammel, 6812 N 37th Ave., Phoenix AZ 85019

Spares & Vairs

For Sale: 1962 4-Door Monza, automatic, factory air conditioning, 85K original miles. \$3250.
Call Dick (520) 299-4723.

For Sale: Corvair parts - Large outdoor yard full of Corvairs of every model. Call Barry
Cunningham (520) 733-7387.

For Sale: 1966 110 hp Corvair engine. Ran fine until teeth stripped off of the cam gear.
Sitting more than 10 years. Originally equipped for California smog req. No carbs or
alternator. \$150 or offer. Call Herb 95200 751-9500.

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110 or 220vac. Asking \$40. Call Herb (520) 751-9500

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