



# Corvairsation

[www.corvairs.org](http://www.corvairs.org)

Tucson Corvair Association  
Volume 28, Number 8

Tucson, Arizona  
January 2004

## CORVAIR TO RUN CANNONBALL



JANUARY MID-MONTH  
COLLECTOR CAR SHOW AT TUBAC  
BREAKFAST AT THE COW PALACE  
JANUARY 24

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 (COSA), 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.

COSA Membership Dues are \$30 per year (\$70 for 26 months) and include a subscription to the COSA Communique, a monthly publication. COSA 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 10<sup>th</sup> of month to the Editor.

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## DUES ARE DUE

It's January and time to pay your annual Tucson Corvair Association dues. You can pay at the January meeting or mail it to Allen Elvick, 4210 S. Preston, Tucson AZ. 85742.

## 10<sup>th</sup> COLLECTOR CAR SHOW

The Santa Cruz Valley Car Nuts car show at the Tubac Golf Resort is this weekend, January 24. Make it an outing with or without your Corvair (hopefully with) and enjoy breakfast at the Cow Palace in Amado. Breakfast is at 8 A.M. Take exit #48 off I-19 and turn right to restaurant. Corvairs are scheduled for row #3 and arrival at 9 A.M. After breakfast continue south on I-19 to exit #40, then under I-19 and south on the frontage road one kilometer to the Resort entrance.



from the editor.....

The election of officers for 2004 is just around the corner, February. Barry and Allen (nominating committee) need you and your expertise to fill the roster for a complete board; better yet, step up and volunteer, your input is appreciated.

Thanks to Chris Cunningham and the board for their effort in preparing the calendar for the first four months of this year. Take a look at "TCA Events at a Glance" and plan for a great year 2004.

Congratulations to Herb Berkman on receiving the Bryan Lynch Award. Good job, Herb !

Enjoy!

## A Letter from the President

**Happy New Year!** to all Corvair lovers out there. 2003 was another busy year for the Club. The officers did an excellent job running the Association throughout the changing fall schedule. We experienced adventurous cruises through the backroads of Arizona. Our members traveled many miles to show off their Corvairs. Over thirty attended the superb holiday feast at Metropolitan Grill. The Club donated food to Casa Maria Soup Kitchen. In more ways than one, the Club made a positive impact on the members and the community in 2003. We look forward to an exciting schedule in 2004.

TCA tours to Tubac this weekend for the annual Santa Cruz Valley Car Nut car show at Tubac Golf Resort. For any car nut not attending the Barrett-Jackson auction in Scottsdale, this event is a must see. Hundreds of cars of all makes are displayed on the lawn adjacent to the Clubhouse. See event details elsewhere in this issue.

Check out the **Events at a Glance** for 2004, you will see some familiar events and some new ones. On Saturday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, (*Parts without a Garage Ceremony*) the Club's wall of parts will be transported to a new location(s). Anyone interested in taking part will receive a free part. Details will be discussed at the January regular meeting. You can't win if don't play!

February is election month for the Club. Newly elected officers will take over in March. Our Club depends on your participation. Let's keep it going and be open-minded when the nominating committee comes calling.

Happy motoring,

*Chris*

## Berkman Gets Lynched in Absentia

Herb Berkman received The Bryan Lynch Award at the annual holiday dinner in December while he was flying around the East Coast. The award is given out at the end of each year to individual members for continued support and dedication beyond the ordinary. In addition to being an officer in our Club, Herb has done much locally and nationally to promote the mark.

Bryan Lynch, who succumbed to cancer in the early eighties, was a long-time member of the Club. Bryan's award-winning 1969 Corvair convertible was an inspiration for any car enthusiast. Congratulations Herb for your sustained support and dedication!

## TCA Events at a Glance

### JANUARY

- 24 SAT **10<sup>th</sup> Annual Collector Car Show**  
Tubac Golf Resort 10-3pm.  
Meet at 9am at Cow Palace in  
Amado for breakfast.
- 28 WED **Regular Monthly Meeting** - 6pm.  
Optional dinner at 6:20, meeting  
starts at 7pm. Mountain View  
Restaurant 1220 E. Prince Road.

### FEBRUARY

- 7 SAT **Parts without a Garage Ceremony**  
Torpeys 9165 N. Desert Ironwood  
Place, 531-0875.
- 11 WED **TCA Board Mtg.** Crossroads  
Restr. 36<sup>th</sup> St. & 4<sup>th</sup> Av. 6:30pm
- 25 WED **Regular Monthly Meeting** - 6pm.  
Optional dinner at 6:20, meeting  
starts at 7pm. Mountain View  
Restaurant 1220 E. Prince Road.  
(Election of Officers)

### MARCH

- 10 WED **TCA Board Mtg.** Wildcat House  
1801 N. Stone 6:30pm.  
5975 E. Speedway 6:30pm.
- 14 SUN **Fred's Arena Breakfast Run**  
9am meet at Tuc/Pima Library  
(3770 S. Mission at Ajo)
- 24 WED **Regular Monthly Meeting** - 6pm.  
Optional dinner at 6:20, meeting  
starts at 7pm. Mountain View  
Restaurant 1220 E. Prince Road.

### APRIL

- 7 WED **TCA Board Mtg.** Location TBA  
6:30pm.
- 10 SAT **Herb Festival Rendezvous w/**  
Cactus Corvair of Phx. Boyce  
Thompson Arboretum State Park.  
9am Wild Oats 7133 Oracle Rd.
- 28 WED **Regular Monthly Meeting** - 6pm.  
Optional dinner at 6:20, meeting  
starts at 7pm. Mountain View  
Restaurant 1220 E. Prince Road



# Corvair owner enters turbo-charged Corsa in *Tire Rack® Cannonball One Lap of America*

From [www.corvaircorsa.com](http://www.corvaircorsa.com)

While at least three Hollywood movies have been made on the subject of the Cannonball Run, many people remain unaware of its roots in the early 20th Century. The depictions of the coast-to-coast auto race were not simply the product of vivid imaginations and skilled screen writers. They were based on real events.

## **The legendary Cannonball Baker**

In 1914, after careful preparation and with an iron will, Erwin G. "Cannonball" Baker mounted a pure stock Indian V-Twin motorcycle and set out on a cross-country race against time. He encountered such poor road conditions that he chose to stand for much of the 3,379 miles (5,438 kilometers) from California to New York. He persevered through merciless weather, was forced to defend himself against attacking dogs, and—after running out of gas—had to push his motorcycle through 119° desert heat.

Imagine his frustration when Cannonball had to struggle for a whole day to find a suitable place to cross a large mountain stream! In Kansas, he had to deal with six flat tires and a dog that took an interest in his moving motorcycle's front tire, bit into it, and caused a nasty spill. Baker was bruised and sore for the remainder of the journey. In Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania, he rode through heavy rain and near knee-deep mud. As he got closer to his final destination, he had to work through the night to repair a number of problems. In New Jersey with a guide rider accompanying him, he got lost two or three times before crossing by ferry from Weehawken to New York City, ending his epic ride in 11 days, 12 hours and 10 minutes.

The Big Apple greeted Cannonball Baker with a hot meal and a crush of reporters seeking a firsthand account of his story. He answered questions until 2 a.m., and then turned in for a good night's sleep. He must have realized that night that his achievement had brought him fame, but even in his wildest dreams, he may not have seen how far into the future his legend would carry him.

## **Car and Driver's Brock Yates writes the next chapter**

In the early 1970's, the now legendary automotive journalist Brock Yates honored Baker by creating the Cannonball Sea-to-Shining-Sea Memorial Trophy Dash, a race from New York City to Redondo Beach, California. The no-holds-barred, trans-continental orgy of speed became an annual event and the subject of three major motion pictures: the 1976 movie *Cannonball*, starring David Carradine, 1981's *Cannonball Run* with a star-studded cast—including, among others: Burt Reynolds, Roger Moore, Farrah Fawcett, Dean Martin, and Sammy Davis, Jr.—and its 1984 sequel, *Cannonball Run 2*.

The real-life Cannonball was repeated five times in its original format, before evolving into the Cannonball One Lap of America in 1984. Since then, the Cannonball One Lap has been successfully run each year. Amazingly, and to the surprise and possible relief of its critics, it has resulted in only one injury in all that time; a broken collarbone resulting from a roll-over in 1987.

In mid-September, 2003, Cannonball originator Yates made a guest celebrity appearance at the First Annual Saratoga Car and Craft Festival at the Saratoga Race Course in upstate New York. There, he encountered Corvair owner and enthusiast, Ron Blachut, who told him he was considering entering his 1965 Corsa turbo in the Cannonball One Lap. Brock responded that to the best of his knowledge, no other Corvair had ever been entered. That news sealed it. The decision was made. Ron signed on as an official Vintage American Class entrant in the 2004 event scheduled to be run over ten days between April 29th and May 8th. (For more event info, click the Cannonball road sign at right.)

Then, after investing over \$2,000 in the registration fee, circumstances made it virtually impossible for him to properly prepare his entry in time for the 2004 event, and he was forced to postpone his plans by a year. In spite of the unfortunate setback, he remains fully committed, and now plans to run in 2005.

During the process of researching the history of—and purchasing—the Corvair, Ron learned of Mike's successes in Ohio's Akron Sports Car Club (ASCC). From 1985 to 2003, he racked up an impressive number of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place finishes in a variety of cars and classes including but not limited to an E/SP Mustang GT, a D/SP VW Jetta GLi and, most recently, and a Subaru WRX wagon he ran in STX Class.

This is Ron's Corsa. It was prepped for E/SP racing by a previous owner, Mike Mekinda, of Painesville, Ohio. Mike added Crane ignition, water injection, HD lowered suspension, a '66 Saginaw 4-speed, Positraction, racing seats with harnesses, and 16" IROC Z wheels shod with low profile 205x50R16 rubber on the front and 225x50R16 on the rear. An appropriate cliché to describe this car? How about, "Beggars to be driven!"



Ron wondered if Mekinda could be convinced to co-drive the Corvair in the Cannonball One Lap of America. It would mean several days on the road and an exciting but grueling tour of some of America's most popular race tracks, such as Sears Point or Pike's Peak International. When Ron put his question to Mike, he was delighted to discover that the previous owner of the Corvair still had a passionate interest in the car. He agreed to take a break from his duties as a husband and father of two, take vacation from his job at Kucera International, and put a hold of other favorite activities like flying and mountain bike racing. He would make time to Cannonball!

#### **A Corvair to run with the pack**

Ron and Mike share one vision - to tweak a nearly 40 year old turbo-charged Corvair to a reliable 250 horsepower and run it to the finish line in the Cannonball One Lap of America. Success, they determined, will require a duo of experienced racers and the support of committed sponsors. They hope to build a network of believers—Corvair experts, parts suppliers, owners and enthusiasts—to shadow their progress and cheer them along the 6,000 mile (9,656 kilometer) route.

With a little luck, they will do the Corvair proud within the federation of fast...the men and women of the Cannonball in their Ferraris, Vipers, C-5 Corvettes, and the inevitable pack of stealthy American big-block muscle cars. For the Corvair, this is a tall order, but hey, have you priced a Lamborghini lately?

#### **Vintage American Class**

Running in *Vintage American Class* means you don't have to beat the big-timers flogging that Maserati in the next lane. Still, it's no cakewalk, and it's not cheap. Added to the expense of prepping the car are the travel expenses; the nightly hotel stops, food and fuel, and of course, potential emergency repairs, which might require some serious homage to the money god.

There is much to do in the time leading up to the event. Ron and Mike are recruiting a third team member to co-drive the Cannonball Corsa. Blachut prefers to ride shotgun, where he can assist as required with navigation and other duties, such as managing the finances.

#### **Countdown to the 2005 Cannonball**

After registering for the Cannonball, Blachut started work on the Corvair. He freshened up the brakes and seals before turning his attention to the interior. He reasoned that because Cannonball racers spend very little time in hotels—some only have enough time for a shower and quick nap before moving on—the car's interior should be as comfortable as possible for its three busy occupants. He installed a new headliner, visors, and new carpet, including the rear parcel area for noise reduction. Once the carpet was in, he bolted in two Halon 1211 Liquefied Gas 10-B:C Fire Extinguishers.

Meanwhile, Spence Shepard of Charlotte, North Carolina, was retained to build a Corvair engine to approximately 250 HP. This is an output that can easily be handled by the Corvair's stock block.



[www.corvaircosra.com](http://www.corvaircosra.com) will monitor the progress made by the Cannonball Corvair team, and will post periodic updates. Racing fans can also track developments by visiting the Cannonball Corvair website at: [www.Cannonball-Corvair.com](http://www.Cannonball-Corvair.com) Ron and Mike welcome your support and suggestions at the following email addresses. Simply click on an address to open a mail window. [Ron@Cannonball-Corvair.com](mailto:Ron@Cannonball-Corvair.com) or [Mike@Cannonball-Corvair.com](mailto:Mike@Cannonball-Corvair.com)

## Spares & Vairs

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For Sale: 1966 Monza coupe, 110h.p., automatic, new interior, good project car. Best offer. For details, Call Chris (520) 670-9676.

For Sale: Late Model rear bumper, rechromed, near perfect. \$ 50. Dave Baker (520) 747-0840.

For Sale: 1964 Monza convertible, Automatic. Needs restoration. Extra parts. \$495. John Torpey. (520) 531-0875.

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TUCSON CORVAIR ASSOCIATION  
CORVAIR SOCIETY OF AMERICA  
CHAPTER 857

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING IS THE FOURTH WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH


November meeting is on the third Wednesday.

The December meeting is a Christmas party

Meeting Place: Mountain View Restaurant, 1220 E. Prince Road

Parking lot bull session at 6:00 pm - Dinner at 6:20 (optional)

Meeting Starts at 7:00 pm

  
**The Cannonball is coming !**

**HAPPY NEW YEAR**

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First Class Mail

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