

## TCA Cruises to Palm Springs to Attend Great Western Fan Belt Toss and Swap Meet

With the enclosed trailer full of Corvair parts in tow, John and Amy Young left Ryan Field around 10am on Thursday last week. At about the same time, Barry and Chris Cunningham hit I-10 and headed west. Bill Maynard and Lynn Marrs, travelling in their motor home, did most of their driving at night. Don and Bruce Robinson showed up on Friday.

They all met up in Palm Springs to sell what was left of the large collection

parts donated to the Club by Gordon Cauble.

Retiring from the US Army in 1971 after 31 years of service and the rank of brigadier general, Gordon searched for a different kind of service to get involved in. Then in 1976, he became the Corvair Consultant. Doing brisk business as the Corvair Consultant thru 1993, Gordon bought and sold Corvair parts all across the country and

*continued on page 3*

## Members in the News

Lance Gillingham, our Club Librarian, has made a remarkable turnaround since his condition was reported in the October newsletter. Lance has been home for a week now and doing much better. New tests revealed that the blockage in his carotid artery, the chief artery that passes up the neck and supplies the head, was only 47%, and not 80%, as previously thought. Doctors at Tucson Medical Center could not do what was needed to open up the artery. A new procedure was recommended and the only hospital that could perform it was the VA in Tucson.

At the VA, Lance became one of the first patients to have a stint inserted in his carotid artery using the new procedure. But, the blockage was not the only problem Lance had. He was having severe hip pain.

Doctors at the VA performed tests and found hairline cracks on both hips. Further exploratory surgery on his hips revealed terminal bone marrow cancer. Both hips had to be replaced.

As Lance was recovering from the second hip replacement operation,

*continued on page 2*



*On your mark, get set, go!*

## **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 America (CORSA) chapter 857.

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

**Membership Dues** are \$15 for individuals and \$18 for families. Initial dues are \$19 for individuals and \$22 for families (includes name tags). Make checks payable to Tucson Corvair Association.

**Change of Address:** Report any changes 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 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 per 4-line ad to non-members. Deadline for materials submitted for publication in the Corvairsation is the 10th of the month.

**Business Mail Address:** 1026 South 7th Avenue, Tucson, AZ, 85701-3010.

**Web Site Address:** [www.corvairs.org](http://www.corvairs.org)

## **Members in the News** *continued*

new tests discovered that Lance had what is known as type B bone marrow cancer, which is not terminal. It is curable with a regimen of pills and weekly blood transfusions. Radiation treatment is not necessary to treat type B.

**Don Robinson** is recovering nicely from heart surgery, too. His quadruple bypass surgery, done in late September, came off without any complications. With lots of care and attention from his wife Sue, Don is already attempting to lighten his workload in the garage...find out more in the Spares and Vairs section of this newsletter.

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# October 2004 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

October 27, 2004

**Members Present:** Bill Maynard, Lynn Marrs, Dave and Patrick Lynch, Barry Cunningham, Chris Cunningham, Ed Segerstrom, John and Amy Young and Guest Mike Strang.

President Bill Maynard called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

## **Approval of the Minutes for August 25, 2004:**

Chris Cunningham made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Dave Lynch and the motion passed unanimously.

**Financial Report:** Allen reported that the balance is \$3813.22. The finances look good.

**Committee Reports:** No reports at this time.

**Presidents Report:** Bill welcomed Don Robinson back after recovering from major surgery. Bill reported that seven or eight Club members will be taking the new and used parts inventory to the Fan Belt Toss and Swap Meet in Palm Springs November 13-15. John and Amy Young will take their trailer full of these parts. Barry Cunningham has reserved two spaces. Friday morning in Palm Springs will be the set up time. The Club will take chairs, canopy, banner, tarps, etcetera.

**Vice-President's Report:** Barry Cunningham detailed the upcoming venture to Palm Springs and hoped that many people can come. Barry asked Ed Segerstrom to save a space for the Club to show their cars at the Car Show at Rillito Downs on November 28th. 8am is the check in time. Registration is \$15 and one can of food. Registration is \$20 after November 14th.

**Merchandise:** No report at this time.

**Library:** No report at this time.

**Raffle:** Winners were Don Robinson, Ed Segerstrom, and Allen Elvick. Ed Segerstrom, Don Robinson, and Dave Lynch drove their Corvairs tonight.

**Holiday Party:** Lynn Marrs reported that she had made a reservation for the Holiday party at Metropolitan Grill for Wednesday, December 15, 7pm. Be sure to send in your registration and check as soon as possible.

**Corvair Talk:** Dave Lynch reported that he needed a steering box. Dave Baker stated that he needed to repair his window so it will go up and down (instead of side to side? Ed.). Bill Maynard commented that he needed to put new wiper blades and arms on his Corvair, any tricks to get this to work? Bill is also

looking for a new carburetor for his '64 convertible.

Dave Lynch stated that he has found a place that will make front license plates with the Club logo for \$17.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be November 18 2004. That is one earlier than usual.

**Adjournment:** Don Robinson made a motion to adjourn at 7:58pm. Allen Elvick seconded this motion and the meeting was adjourned at 7:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Lynn*

Secretary

## **TCA Cruises to Palm Springs**

*continued*

amassed a very impressive collection of parts. In 1993, the parts were donated to the Club and Gordon retired once again.

For the next eight years, the parts were stored in Al Crispin's garage. Al sold to Club members when they needed something for their car. In 2001, Al retired and wanted to move, so the Club scrambled to find a new storage place for the collection. Enter John and Amy Torpey.

The Torpeys housed the parts in their spacious garage until John took a job in Colorado. From there, the parts were split between Allen Elvick, Bill Maynard, and Chris Cunningham. With very little local demand for the parts, the Club decided to try to sell them at the swap meet in Palm Springs. Herb Berkman and Don Robinson, who have attended the swap meet many times, thought it would be a good idea to try.

The Great Western Fan Belt Toss and Swap Meet was a good choice. All the West Coast Corvair vendors were there along with a few from the East. One vendor brought a trailer-load all the way from hurricane-soaked Florida. Competition was fierce during the three day event and they saw a lot of the same parts. But, that did not discourage the cheerful team from Tucson.

Amy and Lynn took charge and made it look easy once the parts were priced, displayed, and then marked down.

Ironically, many of the parts were sold to an Arizona vendor from the Phoenix area. Mark Aksamit, who operates Southwest Corvair, took home the best of the lot. Southwest Corvair specializes in good used parts. Mark looks forward to serving your used parts needs. Southwest Corvair is located at 5821 W. Hearn Rd. Glendale, AZ 85306 (602) 268-5968. Hours are M-F, 9am to 5pm.

So, now if you want to access some of Gordon's collection of old parts, all you have to do is drive to Glendale. Or shop online at [www.corvairsouthwest.com](http://www.corvairsouthwest.com).



# Poor Man's Porsche, English Style by Al Lacki

*published by two chapters of the Corvair Society of America: the Lehigh Valley Corvair Club (newsletter: "Fifth Wheel") and the New Jersey Association of Corvair Enthusiasts (newsletter: "Fanbelt").*

The late 1950s and early 1960s were a well spring of creative automotive design, especially in the U.K. Most NJACE readers are aware of the transverse-engine front wheel drive Austin Mini, designed by Alec Issigonis. The Mini's basic power train layout, so brilliant because of its compact packaging, continues to serve as the blueprint for almost every passenger car line in production today. However, the Mini was not the only small British sedan worthy of our interest. The U.K. also produced its own 'Poor Man's Porsche'.

At the same time that Chevrolet was developing prototypes for the Corvair, the Rootes Group in England was designing a smaller but similar rear engine economy car, the Hillman Imp. Development of the Imp began in 1955, but production did not start until 1963, three years after the Corvair was introduced. The Imp remained in the Rootes lineup until 1976.



Head-on, the Imp looks like a miniature early series Corvair. The resemblance is more than coincidental. While Rootes stylists were borrowing contours from the Corvair body, Rootes engineers were test driving the Corvair, looking for technical solutions to rear engine design problems. Unlike their counterparts in the styling department, the engineers didn't like what they found. After crashing one 'Vair rather severely at the test track, Rootes rejected swing axles and adopted a fully-articulated multi-link rear suspension for the Imp. And, to minimize rearward weight bias, the Rootes engineering staff insisted on a lightweight all-aluminum engine.

And what an engine it was! Rather than start with a clean sheet of paper, Rootes called upon Coventry Climax, one of the most renown engine designers in the world. Coventry Climax engines powered some of that period's most successful Formula 1

cars, including the Lotus 18 and the Cooper T51. Coventry Climax was eager to capitalize on its racing success and sold Rootes the production rights to a contemporary overhead cam 750 cc four cylinder engine design. Rootes proceeded to modify the design to make it suitable for the Imp by opening it up to 875 cc, laying it over on a 45 degree angle, increasing the compression ratio to 10:1, and die-casting the block and head in aluminum.

One of the problems of an aluminum block is that, without steel liners, cylinder bores are subject to premature wear. However, the process of pressing steel cylinder liners into an aluminum block represents a considerable manufacturing expense. Like the engineers who developed the Corvair engine, Rootes almost specified a hard high-silicon alloy to negate the need for liners. However, Rootes found that it could not master the technique of machining this unproven material.

Rather than give up, Rootes chose another alternative, opting for an aluminum block with iron liners cast in-situ, just like Buick's 1961 aluminum V-8. The quest for weight reduction paid off. The finished engine weighed just 170 pounds, 'including accessories'.

Unlike the Corvair, the little Climax engine was water-cooled, so the engineers positioned the radiator alongside the engine behind the rear seat. This solution, common to the Fiat 600, Simca 1000, Renault R8, and other European rear engine cars, compromised cooling efficiency but avoided the need to mount the radiator in the front luggage compartment. This simplified the plumbing and provided a modest boost in luggage space.

This is not to say that the Hillman Imp was a spacious automobile. It was merely a four seat econo-box intended to compete at the bottom of the English market. Its technical features were innovative but costly to produce and complicated to maintain. Soon after their introduction, Imps gained a reputation for teething problems, again like the Corvair. Rootes worked hard to correct

these problems, but many English car buyers took the practical approach and selected Brand X instead. Over thirteen years of production, fewer than 500,000 Imps were sold.

Sports car enthusiasts, however, recognized that the Imp offered great driving fun at reasonable cost. The Coventry Climax engine was smooth and could be revved with confidence up to 7,000 rpm. English car magazines raved about the Imp's excellent handling, which apparently was as good as the Austin Minis. All over the island, enthusiasts entered Imps in club events for many years. Two specialty manufacturers, Ginetta and Clan, produced hand-built sports cars based on Imp components, quite similar to the Corvair-based Fitch Phoenix in concept.

If you would like to read more about the Hillman Imp, there are a number of web-sites that will satisfy your interest, including 'The Imp Site', which served as the source for much of the information in this article.



## The Corvair and the Imp

### Similarities:

Throughout the 1960s, the Corvair was often called "The Poor Man's Porsche."

It was always considered fun to drive, even though the early swing-axle Corvairs were tricky to handle at the limit.

Aside from the Corvette, the Corvair was the only American automobile that consistently appeared at American rallies, autocross meets, hillclimbs, and sports car racing events.

*continued on next page*

## The Corvair and the Imp *continued*

And while Corvairs were generally reliable, they suffered from nuisance problems, such as oil leaks and heater fumes, uncommon to conventional American cars.

The steering systems of both cars got praised for being light, precise and fast.

Corvair: 15 psi front and 26 rear when cold, or 18/30 psi at operating temperature;

Both benefit from a front anti-roll bar (prototype Corvairs had one)

A flip-open Chevrolet logo on the front, to get to the boot keyhole (which some Imps and 1965 Corvairs have)

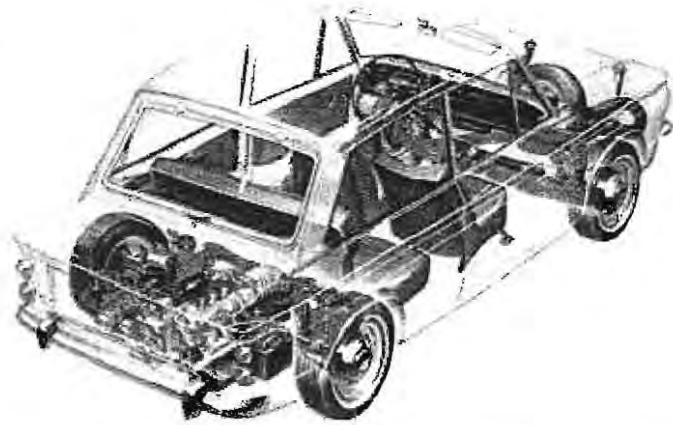
What the Mini was to the Imp, the Ford Mustang was to the Corvair.

### Differences

The Corvair engine was designed with future modifications in mind. The Imp engine could only be enlarged with difficulty.

The Corvair engine was aircooled

Car-journalists were always very pro-Imp. Bad press was one of the reasons the Corvair's sales suffered.



*The baby car (1560 lbs) of the Rootes Group. A true driver's car. First built in 1963, it had many innovative features. Last one out: 1976. Sprightly with its Coventry-Climax derived engine. Really fun to drive. Remarkable gear shift. Great road-holding! The rearmounted engine (170 lbs.) is all aluminium alloy, with an overhead camshaft. It has all-independent suspension.*

*Sporty versions left the factory with 55 bhp @ 6100rpm and a torque output of 55.6lbs.ft @ 4300rpm out of its 875cc. For rallying, 75/80 bhp. could easily be extracted; for racing, if carburation was free, it could produce at least 110 bhp @ 8500 rpm.*

*Imps were built in a specially designed plant in Linwood, Scotland. The Rootes Group produced 440,000 of these extraordinary cars.*



Above: Imp de Luxe, produced from May '63 to Mar '76. Advertised in Belgium as 'a youthful, dynamic car for hip people.'

Left: In front (twin headlights) the Singer Chamois Sport and right behind it the Sunbeam Imp Sport.



*After the tuning firms like Hartwell's had had a go at the Imp's eager engine to produce road-going quick Imps, Rootes left it quite late to produce their own sporting model. It took about two years to develop it, but finally... October 1966 saw the birth of both the Singer Chamois Sport and the Sunbeam Imp Sport.*

## TCA Holiday Party

Wednesday, Dec. 15, 2004

### Metropolitan Grill

7892 N. Oracle Road @ Magee

Cocktails: 7pm

Dinner: 7:30pm

#### MENU CHOICES

Choose One Please

1. **Flame Grilled Shrimp** basted with garlic butter and served on a sweet onion puree with garlic mashed potatoes
2. **Filet Mignon 8oz. (R-M-W)** grilled and topped with brandy peppercorn sauce. Served with fresh vegetables and garlic mashed potatoes.
3. **Spinach and Basil Crusted Halibut**, pan seared and served over sauteed spinach with tomato beurre blanc.

The Club will provide the appetizers and desserts.

Choice of Desserts:

Creme Brulee, Two scoops of Ice Cream,  
Chocolate Chip Cookie with Ice Cream

No Host Bar Available

Cost: \$24 for each person, this includes tip.

There will be a Holiday Gift Exchange,  
so each person must bring a gift to exchange  
and a can of food for the needy.

Mail checks with your order to Bill Maynard,  
3605 N. Vine, Tucson, AZ 85719 or call your  
order in to Lynn Marrs at 297-8969  
by Mon. Dec. 13th - 5pm.

## TCA 2004 Events at a Glance

### NOV

10 WED TCA Board Mtg. Famous Dave's  
BBQ 4565 N. Oracle Road, 888-1512,  
6:30pm

11-14 TH-SUN Great Western Fan Belt Toss &  
Swap Meet, Palm Springs, CA

17 WED Regular Monthly Meeting - 6pm.  
Optional dinner at 6:20, meeting  
starts at 7pm. Mountain View  
Restaurant 1220 E. Prince Road.

25 THUR Thanksgiving Holiday  
28 SUN Kiwanis Car Show for American Cars  
sponsored by the So Ariz Region of the  
Vintage Chevrolet Club of America,  
Registration day of Show 8:30am-10am  
\$20, Awards, Raffles, Music, and Food  
Rillito Downs Park 4502 N. 1st Av.

### DEC

15 WED Annual Holiday Party - 7pm  
Metropolitan Grill, 7892 N. Oracle Rd.  
@Magee.

25 SAT Christmas Day

### JAN 2005

12 WED TCA Board Mtg. Location TBA 6:30pm

22 SAT Santa Cruz Valley Car Nuts 11th  
Annual Car Show, Tubac Golf Course  
I-19 south to Exit 40, 10am-3pm.

26 WED Regular Monthly Meeting - 6pm.  
Optional dinner at 6:20, meeting  
starts at 7pm. Mountain View  
Restaurant 1220 E. Prince Road.



# Spares and Vairs

**FOR SALE:** 1960 Corvair 4-dr parts car. O'Reilly Chevrolet/Tucson car. Rough but complete. Call Allen 883-4337 or Chris at 670-9676.

**FOR SALE:** '62 4-dr 700, 53,000 orig miles, nice Tucson car.  
'62 Greenbrier, 6-dr, 4sp. very orig., '63 Rampside, 4-sp. older restoration, '64 Monza conv. yellow/tan 110-4-sp., '64 Monza conv. white/aqua 110-4-sp. restored in 2003, '64 Monza coupe white/aqua 95hp auto, air conditioning, '65 Monza coupe blue/blk 110 4-sp. ALSO '76 Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTV, '64 Saab Grantourismo 850, '85 Saab 900 Turbo 3-dr. Don Robinson, 2044 W. Shalimar Way, Tucson, AZ 85704 520-297-1356 or fourcorvairs@hotmail.com



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Ads are free to TCA members. \$3.00 for up to four lines to non-members

**Tucson Corvair Association  
Corvair Society of America  
Chapter 857**

Regular Monthly Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of each month.

November meeting is on the third Wednesday.

The December meeting is an annual Holiday Party.

Meeting Place: Mountain View Restaurant, 1220 East Prince Road, 293-0375

Parking Lot Bull Session: 6pm - Dinner: 6:20pm (optional)

Meeting: 7pm.

**Upcoming Events:**

**December 15, Wednesday 7pm - Annual Holiday Party at Metropolitan Grill**

**NOTE: Please don't forget to bring a can of food for the needy and a gift for the gift exchange.**



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