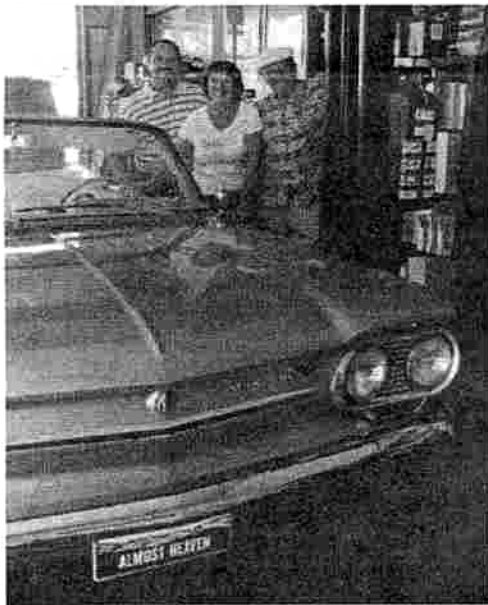


German couple stranded in Shelbyville

Reprinted from the Shelbyville Times-Gazette
Saturday, July 1, 2006 By Clint Confehr

Shelbyville resident Wayne Hitchcock, left, met Greta and Dirk Bensinger of Rosenheim, Germany, while walking around the Shelbyville public square one evening last week. The vacationing couple was stranded because their car broke down. Dirk is a retired Daimler-Chrysler vehicle sales chief. While visiting America, he bought a Chevrolet Corvair. Go figure.



T-G Photo by Clint Confehr

A German couple vacationing in America bought a Chevrolet Corvair to drive through these Southern states, but it broke down in Bedford County on their way to the Jack Daniel Distillery.

"The car gives me more headaches than the whiskey," said Dirk Bensinger, 64, of Rosenheim, a town 40 miles southeast of Munich and just four kilometers from the Autobahn, where he retired as a Daimler Chrysler sales executive.

While stranded in Shelbyville, Bensinger and his wife Greta took it all in stride. It was the fifth time the Corvair broke down in 10 days, but they saw it as another opportunity to meet people and get a unique view of America.

Tuesday evening, they took a walk around Shelbyville's public square where Wayne Hitchcock, a local insurance agent, was doing

the same with his family. They said hello. Hitchcock realized they were from Germany. Hitchcock had lived in Germany both as a member of the U.S. military and a civilian; he is fluent in the language.

The two families ate Italian food together just off the square Wednesday night and Thursday and Hitchcock introduced Bensinger to Dwayne Pogue's body shop.

So, what does a retired Mercedes Benz sales chief think about the price of gasoline in America? And what about hybrid vehicles generating electricity to increase gas mileage?

"The price that Americans are paying for gasoline now is about half of what Germans pay for their vehicles' fuel," Bensinger said,

Turning to the question about hybrid vehicles -- powered by a combination of electric and internal combustion engines, "We have the buses in the big cities that work that way," Bensinger said.

"People who can afford a new car are buying low-consumption vehicles," Bensinger said, quickly noting one of the company's diesel cars gets 35 mpg.

But what about his affection for the Corvair, described by environmentalist and political gadfly Ralph Nader as "Unsafe at Any Speed" in his book of that title decades ago?

"It wasn't as bad as that," Bensinger replied about the allegation that the independent rear suspension was prone to rolling Corvairs sideways in sharp turns.

"Ralph Nader also took after the Volkswagen, and Germans loved the Beetle" since it was the "people's car" after World War II, he said. "It was a very solid car; not safe, but solid. You could replace parts and get them for nearly nothing."

Both the VW and the Corvair had rear engines and were rear-wheel drive vehicles.

"The VW had a higher consumption than the Corvair," Bensinger said, also criticizing the size of the VW's front trunk and small storage area behind the back seat.

His preference for backroads touring would appear to be an extension of his career. Bensinger led "world-wide sales," he said. His customers were tourists, the American, French and British military, their soldiers individually, and civilians touring Germany.

Two of Frank Sinatra's daughters bought Mercedes Benz cars from Bensinger, including Nancy Sinatra, who may be best known for the hit single "These Boots Are Made For Walking." In 1970, the sole of one of her boots pushed the gas pedal in a 250 SL that cost about \$5,000.

At that price, the car's a bargain now, but all things being relative, Bensinger notes that the currency exchange rate is now about \$1.25 per euro.

"Three years ago, it was 85 cents for one euro," a decline in the dollar's spending value overseas, Bensinger said.

continued on page 6

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 \$35 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



Air Cooled Friends: This photo of a 1923 Franklin 10B Sedan and a 1962 Corvair were spotted recently on the Internet. The Franklin is for sale in Greenville, GA and shows a Corvair convertible parked alongside. Advertised as being stored under a roof for 30 years, the car(s) are in original unrestored condition. For more information, visit www.franklincar.org

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1907 Columbus Auto Buggy:

This high-wheeler sports a one cyl. air-cooled engine. Designed by WWI flying ace Eddie Rickenbacker, the Auto buggy was a horse drawn buggy with an engine and brake system added later. Don Boulton collection, OKLA.

TCA 2007 Events at a Glance

MARCH

25 SUN *Arizona Renaissance Festival*
Meet at 9am at Metropolitan Grill-Oracle and Magee rds. Festival opens at 10am. Free Parking

28 WED *Regular Monthly Meeting* Micha's North, 1220 East Prince Road, 6pm. Optional dinner at 6:20, meeting starts at 7pm

APRIL

4 WED *TCA Board Meeting, Risky Business*, 250 S. Craycroft - ground level of KB Homes 4-story bldg.- 6pm.

25 WED *Regular Monthly Meeting* Micha's North, 1220 East Prince Road, 6pm. Optional dinner at 6:20, meeting starts at 7pm.

28 SAT *Lost Dutchman Mine Picnic with Cactus Corvair* 10am. 8 miles NE of Apache Jet. For information and planning, call John Frugoli at 312-3574.

CAR SHOWS

MAR 31- APR 1 Good Times Rod & Customs 16th Annual Swap & Show - Beaudry RV Center 3200 E. Irvington Rd. INFO: 661-9610.

APR 7, 21 Little Anthony's Car Show Nights 7pm-10pm
7010 E. Bdwy.

APR 14 Rotary Club of Cienega Charity Car Show 10am-3pm.

APR 28 Chevy Showdown Reid Park Soccer Field 9am-4pm

Tucson Corvair Association Regular Membership Meeting Minutes

February 28, 2007

Members Present: Bill Maynard, Lynn Marrs, Dave Lynch, Don Robinson, Ryan Green, John Deeb, Van Pershing, Marci Tucker, Bill Leslie, Amy and John Young, John Frugoli, Lisa Leon, Allen Elvick, Dave Baker and new member Jackie Hilkemeyer, Chris Cunningham, Barry Cunningham, Bob Wilbee, Ed Segerstrom, Bruce Porter, Mike Strong, Two new members - Al Day, who purchased Mrs. Haskell's Corvair.

President Bill Maynard called the meeting to order at 7:29pm.

Approval of the Minutes for January 2007: Motion to approve by Chris Cunningham, seconded by Dave Baker, and approved as written.

President's Report: Bill Maynard introduced new members and some members that had not been to a club meeting in a while. He gave a warm welcome to all the people who were there. Bill Maynard spoke of the upcoming event to the Renaissance Festival on March 25. We shall all meet at the Metro Grill parking lot at 9:30am and caravan with our Corvairs, or in any vehicles that runs, up to the Renaissance Festival for the day, or as long as you wish. There is a whole village, people in costume, horses and jousting, crafts, glass blowing. Food, food, food, theater productions, story telling, face painting, animal performances, fine jewelry, junk jewelry, silks, fabulous time-period clothing, hats, leather, head dresses for men, etc. Do not miss this. It is not a carnival or fair, it is an EXPERIENCE.

Bill reported on the Corvair gathering at the Sonic Saturday night Feb 23, 2007 and the fun they had. Perhaps we can do this more often. Rumor has it that someone had two 2-foot long hot dogs, with chili, cheese, big onions, but (sadly or maybe gratefully) no BEANS!

Nomination Committee: Chris Cunningham, Bill Maynard and Van Pershing, presented the Names of the Board for 2007 will be Dave Lynch - President.....John Frugoli - Vice President.....Marcy Tucker -Recording Secretary...Barry Cunningham - Treasurer.... Bill Maynard - Member at Large. There was a unanimous vote to approve these officers.

Special thank you to Chris Cunningham for his continuing excellent job as Editor of the Corvarisation Newsletter. Thank you to Allen Elvick (retiring in two days from career at the VA) for the 10+ years he has taken care of the Club treasury. A standing ovation was given for Bill Maynard for serving as President for three years and doing an outstanding job.

Treasurer's Report: Allen Elvick reported that the beginning balance was \$3505.96. The ending balance today is \$3569.62. Dues were due in January. If you have not paid, please send your dues in.

Committees:

Website - Van Pershing would like people to e-mail him pictures and events to post on the website and/or for sale items.

Library: The Corvair Library is stored at the home of Bill Maynard. It has tools and books for your use.

Raffle Tonight: The Club had eight raffle winners. There were 10 Corvairs in the parking lot. The raffle winners drawn from the license plate number were Chris, Jerry, and Midge. Congratulations to all!

Corvair Talk: Bill Maynard has created several tools for making repairs easier. He donated them to the Tool Library. Bill Leslie brought in his mysterious blower vent for show and tell. No one had seen one before. They were not sure what it was. It came from a van and was factory installed.

John Frugoli found a 2002 DVD movie called *Corvair Summer* depicting late model racing Corvairs. He will donate it to the Club Library.

Mid-Month Activity: Sunday, March 25. Time: 9:30 at Metro Grill parking lot at Oracle and Magee. Place: Renaissance Festival. You can save money by buying your tickets ahead at Frys. Don't forget-be there!

Adjourn: A motion to adjourn was made at 8:35 by Dave Baker and seconded by Bill Leslie. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Marrs,

Recording Secretary

Cienega Charity Car Show April 14

The Rotary Club of Cienega will sponsor the **2007 Inaugural Charity Car Show** (rain or shine) on April 14, 2007 at Cienega High School, 12775 E. Mary Ann Cleveland Way in Vail Arizona. The event starts at 7am for registration with judging beginning at 10am until 1pm. Awards consisting of huge trophies up to five feet tall will be given at 3pm.

Proceeds will benefit local charities. Club members desiring to park together should plan to arrive together. DJ John will provide his usual accompaniment.

There will be a 50/50 Raffle, door prizes, jumping castle, rock climbing wall, food, drink, vendors, and t-shirts available.

There are 12 ranging from antique to Modified 1980

different vehicle classes car pre-1949, to Tuners, to present.



Pre-registration costs \$20 if received prior to April 7th, \$25 for late registration and day of show. Registration includes a T-shirt, dash plaque, goddie bag, and door prize ticket. For information: Rich Hillman 520-5548-1555, rich@novahomeloans.com or Sean Collins 520-270-8078.

22nd Annual Chevy Showdown April 28

50th Anniversary of the 1957 Chevrolet

The Classic Chevy Club of Tucson has once again secured Reid Park for their Annual Show. Mark your calendars for the last weekend in April of 2007 (as it has been for a number of years now) for Chevy Showdown.

The soccer field at 22nd Street and Randolph Way will be the location. The theme: Celebrating 50 years of the "classic of all classics" the '57 Chevrolet! Last year we broke all records for day of show registration and total cars.

This show is growing so we encourage early registration as we will probably have to limit the show this year to the first 175 cars.

Mark your calendars and fill out the application. Contact Rick Nowak for more details at nowakccct@comcast.net or 520-721-9541.



Inside Automotive History:

An encounter into the dynamic past, present, and future of the transportation marketplace in the United States and beyond.

See-through tire a breakthrough for Michelin

In the not too distant future, airing up your tires could be a thing of the past if Michelin's new technology takes hold. Calling it the "Tweel," Michelin has found a way to fuse a tire and a wheel into one.

The Tweel comprises a rubber tread bonded to the hub by flexible spokes. The spokes are fused to a deformable wheel that can absorb shock and rebound with ease. The Tweel doesn't resemble a conventional tire; you can actually see right through it.

Flats, a reality with pneumatic tires, are no problem with Tweels. They can even run over explosives and keep rolling. This puncture proof feature has some definite benefits for U.S. military situations where stopping to fix flats can be very dangerous to soldiers.

Motorists today, on average get a flat every 80,000 miles. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says that three out of four vehicles have at least one tire that is under-inflated. We all know what an under-inflated tire can do for performance and economy, not to mention, what a blowout will do while driving at highway speeds.

Michelin claims that a Tweel with the same tread thickness of a conventional tire, "under research conditions" lasts twice as long. And Tweels will have the capability of being re-treaded.

Michelin also claims in their April 2006 announcement that ride comfort (lateral stiffness and vertical

stiffness) can also be enhanced with Tweel technology.

This fine tuning is just not possible with air-inflated tires.

So far, this new technology is only available on a wheel chair called the iBOT. The iBOT can climb stairs and handle uneven terrain without a problem.

Don't throw out your tire gauge and radials yet. Michelin says that we are still about ten years away from seeing Tweels in the showroom. After Michelin introduced the radial in the late Fortys, it took almost thirty years for radials to replace bias ply tires and become the industry standard.



Corvaire in Shelbyville, Tennessee from page 1

Currency exchange rates made gas cheaper here for the German, who points out his government imposes a 75 percent sales tax on gasoline.

And, like Americans, he complains about the administration.

"They don't just take it for roads," while Tennessee's gas tax is dedicated to highway projects, Bensinger said. "They take it for whatever they get in their heads."

Meanwhile, Bensinger's changing attitude on Corvairs is exceeded by his admiration for the 1959 Chrysler-manufactured Imperial Southampton. He owns one and says it "represents the best way of style of a big auto industry with lots of technical efforts." He likes the smooth-shifting automatic transmission controlled by dashboard pushbuttons.

The front swivel seats are nice too, he said. They help an overweight passenger turn to get out of the car.

Bensinger's father designed motors for Mercedes Benz and his son sells trucks that weigh more than 40 tons, he said.

So, he's steeped in the industry and his fascination with the Corvaire -- despite its frailties -- caused him to stay in Shelbyville while Bill Cassidy's Auto Works got the car back on the road.

Bensinger said he bought the car in Bridgeport, W.Va., for \$7,500, plus another \$500 for brake repair. During the five subsequent brake-downs, the distributor failed.

"You would have thought a tank fired its gun behind you," he said. "In Bowling Green, Ky., the engine started making noise like crazy."

The turquoise Corvaire is the Bensingers' second. His wife liked their four-door model, but "Mercedes didn't like me to keep it and that's why I had to sell it," he said.

"Problems are to be expected from vintage cars," Bensinger said. "Besides, it gives us a chance to meet people and make friends."

While in Nashville, they went to the Good Guys Car Show, then visited friends in Franklin before they started to drive to Lynchburg to tour the distillery. During their tour of West Virginia, they went to a vintage car show and won the prize for being the visitor from the most distant location. The prize was free accommodations for five people at a motel between Charleston and Morgantown.

How could that be better than three nights at the Super 8 Motel on North Cannon Boulevard?

New Officers on Board to Steer TCA for 2007

The newly constituted Board of Directors for the Tucson Corvaire Association took charge this month and are busy planning for the coming year.

Dave Lynch, formerly vice-president, has assumed the position of president from Bill Maynard. Bill Maynard will continue to be on board as Board Member at Large and Librarian.

John Frugoli is the new vice president and in charge of organizing activities for the coming year. Barry Cunningham takes over the financial responsibilities from Allen Elvick who was in office for a long time (so long, we can't remember who was in before him). Marcy T. will supersede Lynn Marrs as recording secretary.

Don Robinson continues as merchandise chairman. Van Pershing is the Webmaster and assistant editor of the *Corvaireation*. Chris Cunningham is the editor of the *Corvaireation*.

Congratulations to all! They are looking forward to a prosperous and adventurous motoring year in 2007. Contact information for Board members is located on page 2 of every issue of the *Corvaireation*.

MUSTANG - BARRACUDA - CORVAIRE

Making the inevitable comparison ...

by David E. Davis, Jr.

Car and Driver, October 1964

After testing the Corvaire, the Mustang fastback, and the Barracuda, we would be craven cowards indeed if we didn't try to draw some comparative conclusions. The reader who entertains any thoughts of buying one of the three is bound to want us to make a choice. So we'll try - with as little equivocation as possible - to give you our opinion, based upon our personal reactions to the three products involved.

The basic Mustang, without any performance equipment, is a kind of bargain Thunderbird. It has no particular vices, but it has no great charm either except that, like the Thunderbird, it has original and unique styling with enormous appeal to the general public. With the addition of heavy-duty suspension and a hotter engine, it becomes very fast and very exciting to drive. Unfortunately, part of this excitement stems from Ford's antique Hotchkiss-drive rear suspension (abandoned on the big Ford line this year), which allows the back end to slide at a furious rate. Our test car could best be described as a lightweight, extremely responsive Super-Stock, for it more nearly resembles a potential drag winner than a true GT car.

The standard Barracuda is a very disappointing car, in that it really isn't as nice to drive as the other cars in the Valiant line from which it is derived. It also suffers from a styling treatment that lacks the distinction of the new Corvairs and Mustangs. However, it fairly blooms with the addition of better suspension and a more powerful engine. It is not as powerful as the Mustang, nor as sophisticated a handling package as the Corvaire, but it strikes a nearly perfect compromise between the two. In its most sporting form - like our test car - it is a delight to the enthusiast-driver. It goes fast enough, and it handles the way a man who's had some time in European GT cars would like it to handle. We were very impressed by the Barracuda, as we tested it.

The Corvaire, in its most basic form, is a far better car than either of the competitors (also in standard trim) we're discussing here. The regular Corvaire handles beautifully and needs no heavy-duty suspension. The car's only flaw is the limited potential of its air-cooled, six-cylinder engine - in its most powerful form it is no faster than the "cooking" versions of the Mustang's 289 V-8 or the Valiant's 273 V-8. In its favor, it has a styling treatment that is one full cycle ahead of its competition, and this will surely offset its moderate performance.

Now that we've discussed the cars in both their most basic and most exotic forms, how about the ones that lie in that middle ground - the ones that most people will buy?

Considered in that light, their performance begins to equalize. The most popular versions of the three will probably be within fractions of seconds of one another in most normal accelerating situations, and their comfortable cruising ranges are nearly identical. It is here, when we evaluate the three from the typical moderately-enthusiastic driver's point-of-view, that the Corvaire

MUSTANG - BARRACUDA - CORVAIR

continued from page 6

wins.

And it is here too, that we have to go on record and say that the Corvair is - in our opinion - the most important new car of the entire crop of '65 models, and the most beautiful car to appear in this country since before World War II. When the first Corvair Monza appeared, it caught the fancy of hot-rodders and sports car enthusiasts alike. Big, successful businesses were built to supply the demands of the quarter mile crowd - Eelco, Ieco, Bill Thomas - on one hand, and the sports car people - John Fitch, EMPI - on the other. Nobody seemed to mind that it would never go very fast, no matter how much speed equipment they loaded on it: they just plain loved the car. This new Corvair will kick off a second phase for that accessory business.

The Mustang and the Barracuda are both supposed to be something very fresh and very special - unique new concepts - and they aren't. The Corvair is. And what's more, the Corvair isn't a one-of-a-kind sporty-cum-personal car, it's a whole line of cars including a four-door sedan! When the pictures of the '65 Corvair arrived in our offices, the man who opened the envelope

actually let out a great shout of delight and amazement on first seeing the car, and in thirty seconds the whole staff was charging around, each wanting to be the first to show somebody else, each wanting the vicarious kick of hearing that characteristic war-whoop from the first-time viewer.

Our ardor had cooled a little by the time we got to drive the cars - then we went nuts all over again. The new rear suspension, the new softer spring rates in front, the bigger brakes, the addition of some more horsepower, all these factors had us driving around like idiots - zooming around the handling loop dragging with each other, standing on the brakes - until we had to reluctantly turn the car over to some other impatient journalist. We were actually annoyed about having to drive the new Sting Ray and the new Impala SS with a great, storming 409 to propel it.

We said we'd give you a comparative opinion, and there it is. We liked both the Mustang and the Barracuda - for different reasons - and they're very good cars. They have speed and handling and they're the right size - excepting the Corvairs, they're the best of their kind.

The '65 Corvair is an outstanding car. It doesn't go fast enough, but we love it.

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. AZ

WANTED: LM left & right rear panel trim pieces. Call John Frugoli: 312-3574. AZ

WANTED: LM Windshield Call Bill: 520-205-1777 AZ.

FOR SALE: '64-'69 Stock crankshaft gear, brand new - never installed, Clark's # C786x, Clark's price - \$89.65. My price - \$75.00. Contact Dave Lynch at lynchmob@theriver.com or 325-0750.



FOR SALE: 1961 Corvair Monza, two door, 4speed, solid body, no broken windows, 98% complete, ready to restore. Car is

located in Tucson, Az. \$500 for info call Rudy at 822-3079 or 661-4442.

trokitaville@gainusa.com (picture on left)

FOR SALE: 1964 Monza sedan -needs work. Also 1961 Monza coupe - needs work. Cary Hubbard: 505-350-0483. NM

FOR SALE: 1968 Monza convertible, 110hp, 4-speed. New front seat

upholstery, new carpet, 2-yr. old top. SHEET metal in floor has been replaced. Needs paint, has rust.

Asking \$3000. John Arnold: 505-281-5542. NM

FOR SALE: 1962 Wagon 700 \$1500 - OBO. Terry Price: 505-872-0100. NM

FOR SALE: 1967 Monza 2-dr coupe, 110hp, auto. Great interior, gd condition. \$2500. Terry Price: 505-872-0100. NM

FOR SALE: 1961 Monza coupe, '66 110hp engine, powerglide. New interior, needs paint, minor body work. Make offer. Hurley Wilvert, 505-281-1732, hurbrenwil@peoplepc.com. NM

FOR SALE: 1968 Monza coupe, 110hp rebuilt engine w/4 carbs, powerglide, new paint, gd interior. Make offer. Hurley Wilvert, 505-281-1732, hurbrenwil@peoplepc.com. NM

WANTED: Late NOS front panel. Jerry Goffe: 505-345-3100, 505-346-4220. NM

FOR SALE: '65 Monza convertible, white, red interior, needs top, needs restoration, runs. AT has problem, power top works. \$800. CHRIS McCarthy 804-262-3299 cem1133@comcast.net. VA

FOR SALE '65 Turbo convertible. Gd inspection, new tires. Runs well. Engine rebuilt a few years ago. Saginaw 4-spd. Body solid but has dent on left fender and bumper. Paint faded, needs top, interior fair. \$4000. Stanley Ullman: 804-833-4696. VA



Monthly Newsletter March 2007 Vol. 31 No. 10
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: Micha's North, 1220 East Prince Road, (formerly Mt View Restr.) Parking Lot Bull Session: 6pm. Optional dinner at 6:20, meeting starts at 7pm.

Upcoming Events:

March 25, Sunday

Arizona Renaissance Festival Meet at Metro Grill at 9am, Oracle and Magee roads. Depart before 9:30am.



Tucson Corvair Association
1026 South 7th Avenue
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March 2007

Volume 31, Number 10



First Class Mail