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Corvairisation

Letting the Good Times Roll Since 1975

March 2008 **Volume 32, Number 10**

From the Prez...

TCA's newest pilot talks about TCA's past, present, and future, and coming of age in the 21st century. by Bill L.



The Club's logo pictured here and the newsletter header above were designed by former member and airbrush artist John DiLauro in 1975.

Many things have changed within The Tucson Corvair Association since my first term as Club president, which was over ten years ago. At that time we were meeting at the Piccadilly Cafeteria and our group was somewhat larger than it is today. I distinctly remember being nearly the youngest member other than Marcy, my wife. Our meetings were filled with the "founding fathers" of our organization, names like McKenna, Cauble, and Sanford. We were also blessed to have Misters Alex, Dandridge, and Rosenberg, who among others provided a wealth of hands-on experience in the techni-

cal aspects of our Corvairs. Our "tech session" portion of each meeting always brought fresh insight to the problems and repair of our machines.

One of those sessions that comes to mind is one in which Larry Dandridge explained the solution to a problem that happened to his Lakewood while he was moving from Ohio to Tucson. It was not a problem unique to Corvairs but it was a problem unique to distributor ignited autos, and a problem that I had never heard of nor encountered in my years of mechanical repair. Larry's engine suddenly ceased

running while he was on the Interstate. (When was the LAST time you encountered a Lakewood on ANY freeway?)

After pulling to the shoulder, Larry started unloading possessions from the engine cover area to the side of the road, opened the lid and started looking for the obvious problem. He had plenty of gas in the tank and the battery easily turned the engine over so he started tracking down an ignition problem looking first for a disconnected coil to distributor wire. They were found to be intact and energized, he then removed the distributor cap and checked for closed or broken points. They were fine. He then assumed it was the capacitor, the next logical point of failure. Having a new one handy, he grabbed a screwdriver and proceeded to unscrew the suspected part from the points plate. That is when he discovered the real source of his ignition failure, which had nothing to do with the capacitor. When he twisted the screwdriver, the base of the distributor came apart from the lower shaft area. The distributor had literally been cut in HALF!

How could such a thing occur?

continued on next page



The Helmsmen:
L.to R. – Bill L. takes charge in March 2008, with outgoing Prez Dave Lynch as the new Vice President, Ryan Green as Recording Secretary, Don Robinson continuing as Merchandise Chairman, and Barry Cunningham returning as the Treasurer. Photo taken at Cachanilla Mexican Restaurant, formerly Shari's Drive In on 1st Avenue.

Well, it seems that one of the counterweight retaining springs under the points plate had rusted to pieces, which in turn allowed the counterweight to swing freely in the base. That counterweight had been rubbing against the inside of the distributor's lower "cup area" where it meets the shaft. As the shaft turned thousands of times per minute at freeway speed, the steel counterweight had, in effect, become a whirring saw blade on the aluminum distributor base, cutting it cleanly into two pieces: top and bottom!

Larry of course had all his tools and spare parts along for the move to Tucson. A replacement unit was unearthed from the depths of the possessions; installed and Larry was back on the road in less time than it took for me to write the story.

I bring this to light not just as a remembrance of Larry's fine diagnostic and repair skills but to point out that the most unexpected things can happen, to our cars, in our club functions, and in our lives. The point being that observation, diagnosis, flexibility, and resolve are not just mechanical traits, they are life tools which serve us well IF we logically and methodically follow them when encountering problems.

After 30 plus years of existence, our Club has passed its formative and adolescent years and reached middle age. Middle age in humans usually affords a person the wisdom to see beyond the self and start to consider the value other people bring to the equation, or club, as in this case. As a club we have encountered several miss-steps in the past, missed entries for the Tucson Classics Car Show, lost records, and meeting place establishment closures are a few that come to mind with ease

For us to continue in the fashion that has been established by those before us, we need to work as hard as they did to overcome the bumps in the road that present themselves with or without warning. Larry always took the initiative and solved the problems he encountered. He didn't wait by the side of the freeway for someone else to diagnose or solve his problems nor did he hesitate to do for others, that which they were unable to do for themselves. These traits were not unique to Larry alone; how many of us back in those years never once placed a call to CLARK'S for parts, relying instead on the initiative and gracious services and expertise provided by General Cauble, whose garage was full of new and used parts waiting to be DELIVERED to anyone with a Corvair in need...?

We are an association of Corvair owners who are dedicated to our cars, but we also need that same dedication to our fellow members, each of whom bring special talents and expertise to the table each month. I for one would like to see each of us extend ourselves a bit more towards making "the Corvair experience" richer and fuller on an individual

basis. Take the initiative when you see a problem or conflict arising. Communities do not survive nor do they grow when individuals are only focused on themselves. Put forth the effort to make a contribution. Follow thru on your commitment and not only will you profit from the effort, the Club and it individuals who comprise it will do so as well.

Set a precedent for yourself; maintain it and others will follow in an attempt to maintain the status quo of the organization. Our little organization would be a bird of a different color today had not those who preceded us put forth the individual efforts they did back in their days with the Club. Reflect on those efforts and immortalize them whenever the opportunity presents itself and we will preserve our tradition, our Club, and most of all, our integrity.

Over the last 20 years there have been some large boots of legacy left to fill by those who passed before us. I think we are up to the challenge and can equal or surpass those standards as we move through our fourth decade of association and appreciation of the cars and people we have come to know and understand during that time.

This is one of the main reasons I committed myself to the presidency of the Club. I don't want to see us become just another once-a-month social supper club with little vigor or vision for the future.

I really look forward to this coming year of service as president once again, and I hope I can motivate in each of you a new-found desire to reactivate yourself with deeper dedication to your fellow members and your unique automobiles.

After all is said and done we only have ourselves and our friends to depend on. When you extend efforts to the Club and its members without reservation, you will find it returned in greater volume than you had come to expect!

It is OUR CLUB and only WE can make it last, and do so with greater reward for each of us in the end!

Mo' Later

Your proud 2008 President

Bill



Check Your Battery Voltage

by Steve Goodman, Rocky Mountain Corsa

Some of our Corvairs tend to sit for a while, which is rough on batteries. Using a digital voltmeter, you can easily check the condition of your battery and also the charging system.

Let's start with the battery. It may surprise you to know that a 12-volt battery is not a healthy working piece if it shows only 11 volts. Look at the table below and see how quickly a battery goes from a full charge and 100% working condition to 'discharged' and unable to turn your starter.

VOLT READING	% of battery charge
12.70 volts	100%
12.58 volts	90%
12.40 volts	75%
12.20 volts	50%
12.08 volts	35%
12.00 volts	25%
11.94 volts	10%
11.90 volts	discharged

Sometimes a battery showing in the low 12 volt range will have the energy to run lights, honk the horn, and play the radio, but not enough energy to make the starter work. The starter requires maximum voltage and amperage because the load placed upon the starter that is required to turn the engine over is very high - it's the single biggest challenge your battery faces.

Recognizing the load the starter places on the electrical system, it only makes sense to have every connection clean and tight. The place to start of course is the battery terminal clamps. Past that, the ground connections to the frame and engine and the connections at the solenoid are all things to check.

Now a quick check for your alternator: With the engine off, read the voltage of your battery. Start the engine and check the voltage again. Typically, voltage running will be around 13.3 volts, while the static reading will be in the 12+ range. That indicates the charging system is working. Incidentally, if you don't have a voltmeter handy and still want to check your alternator, just hold a small screwdriver blade or similar to the armature shaft bearing on the end frame opposite the pulley. If the blade is magnetized and drawn to the bearing case, then the alternator is at least putting out something!

— March 2008 *The Denver News*

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John Young poses next to his 1966 Monza Coupe at Micha's del Norte. Photo courtesy of Bill L.

Editorial Ramblings

Eric Schakel, Editor — *The Denvair News*

Corvairing Through An Uncertain Economy

If you're like me, you have a Corvair because you actually wanted a Corvair. And as collector cars go, this is a pretty good time to own a Corvair.

I say this because chances are good you didn't draw a big home equity loan and head down to Barrett-Jackson or Mecum to buy your Corvair. It's also likely you're not paying on a big collector car loan while waiting for the next big auction, where you hope to "flip" your car and score a big profit.

To the chagrin of many true auto enthusiasts, collector cars have morphed into significant financial instruments. Unfortunately, that means financial speculators are now car collectors, but not because they like the cars. No, many collector car purchases are made today because market trends and appreciation analysis suggest there is money to be made. Big money. To the speculator, the car is simply a high-dollar investment vehicle to be turned.

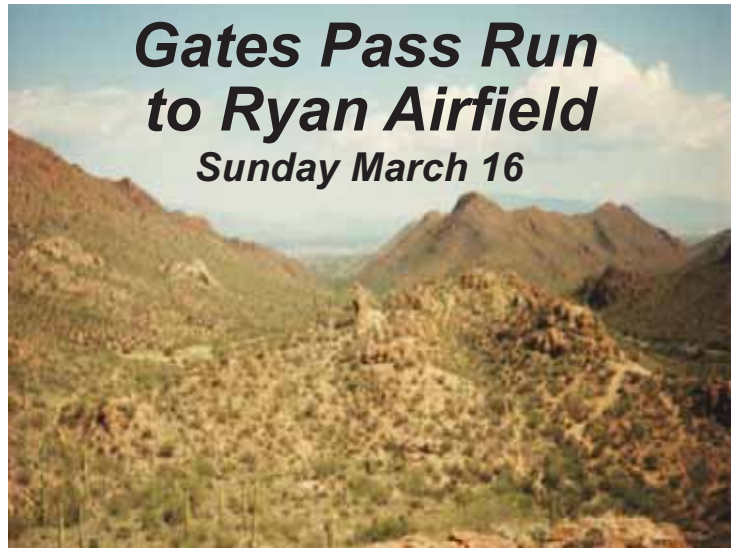
I met just such a person two years ago at the 40th Yenka Reunion - he was marketing a 1969 1-88 Sebring-winning (in class) race Corvette, and had brought it out in a multi-deck hauler to "gather eyeballs". He mentioned that he'd paid \$900,000 for the car, and felt that he'd be able to turn it for nearly \$1.3 million. I asked if he was going to run show laps at Nelson ledges with the Stingers. He looked at me, frowned, and said, "Why would I take a risk like that?" Then he walked away. It wasn't a car to him, it was a stock certificate.

Personally, I think that's sad, because a lot of people who would like to drive and enjoy the cars are priced out of the market. Corvairs, though, have remained reasonably priced, and have the added enticement of being fairly economical to operate. They are economy cars, after all!

Storm clouds are building for the collector car business. A Barrett-Jackson marketing executive was recently sacked after admitting to Hemmings Motor News that he expected collector car prices to decline in 2008. The days of multi-million dollar Hemi Cudas may be numbered.

So pity the poor soul in Las Vegas who took out a home equity loan to buy his Tri-Power GTO in 2006. Since that time, his home value has declined by 19% and his car may be heading downward on a similar curve. Many Americans are in that same uncomfortable drivers' seat.

Our Corvairs, on the other hand, did not ride the speculation curve into the stratosphere. Sure, we all hoped, dreamed, and watched the occasional big dollar sale, but in general Corvairs are still the most affordable collector cars on the market. Our vendors, too, like Clarks and Underground, are focused on Corvairs because Chevilles, GTOs, Corvettes and Camaros don't share parts. As the rest of the aftermarket tightens up, Corvairs will ride on through with few ripples.



Join the Tucson Corvair Association this Sunday (March 16th) as we hit the road for a short tour of the scenic Tucson Mountains. Enjoy the panoramic drive through Gates Pass and explore the spectacular saguaro forests in Tucson Mountain Park on our way to lunch at Todd's Cafe at Ryan Airfield on Sunday March 16th. **Meet at 10am in the parking lot of El Rio Golf Course, 1400 W. Speedway.**

Ryan Airfield is a general aviation reliever airport located 12 miles west of Tucson International Airport at the intersection of Ajo Way and Valencia Road. The field was created in the 1940s as a training camp for the Army Air Corps.

After the war, the state of Arizona approached the Tucson Airport Authority, who also manages Tucson International, about operating the airfield. The Authority and the state entered into a long-term lease agreement and over the years Ryan Airfield has become a busy and popular airfield.

Todd's Restaurant offers breakfast (all day) and lunch. Overlooking the aircraft parking apron and runway at Ryan Airfield, Todd's features typical deli favorites enhanced by local cactus and desert products and caters to private pilots, area residents, bicyclists, motorists, and visitors headed to Kitt Peak and Rocky Point.

Don't miss this great opportunity to get out and drive your Corvair - before the snow melts!

**Club Sumbits Resolution to CORSA
Honoring Herb Berkman**

**RESOLUTION
OF THE
SAN DIEGO CORVAIR CLUB**

FEBRUARY 2008

WHEREAS, Herb Berkman was a member and officer in the Los Angeles Corvaire Club and

WHEREAS, Herb Berkman was instrumental in the reorganization of the Los Angeles Corvaire Club into what is now Corsa West of Los Angeles, Vintage Corsa, and South Coast Corsa and

WHEREAS, Herb Berkman was an officer in Corsa West of Los Angeles, and

WHEREAS, Herb Berkman served the Corvaire Society of America in a number of capacities, including President, and

WHEREAS, Herb Berkman was an active competitor in the Southern California Council of Sports Cars (SCCSCC), serving in a number of capacities in that organization, and

WHEREAS, Herb Berkman was an active competitor in the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA), serving in a number of capacities in that organization, and

WHEREAS, Herb Berkman won the first Edward M. Cole award for best all around performance at the National Convention in San Diego in 1978 in his 1965 Corsa (CORSA X) and

WHEREAS, Herb Berkman won the Cole award a second time in Flagstaff in 2002 in that very same car, and

WHEREAS, Herb Berkman exemplifies the qualities of enthusiasm and service that have helped make the Corvaire Society of America the Organization it is today,

**NOW, THEREFORE, the SAN DIEGO CORVAIRE CLUB, CORSA Chapter 921,
does hereby RESOLVE THAT CORSA designate**

**THE AUTOCROSS HELD ANNUALLY IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE
CORSA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION BE ENTITLED, IN PERPETUITY,
THE
HERB BERKMAN MEMORIAL AUTOCROSS.**

Adopted _____

SS _____

*The above document was sent out in the monthly newsletter of the San Diego Corvaire Club, VAIRMAIL, March 2008. It speaks for itself and shows that Herb is still in our hearts. There wasn't a club or organization that Herb was a member of where he did not become its chief executive. Speaking of big shoes to fill, they don't get any bigger than Herbs. **RIGHT:** Herb with CORSA X at the Casa Car Show, Tucson 2006.*



My New Job

1. My first job was working in an orange juice factory, but I got canned. I couldn't concentrate.
2. Then I worked in the woods as a lumberjack, but I just couldn't hack it, so they gave me the axe.
3. After that, I tried to be a tailor, but I just wasn't suited for it, mainly because it was a sew-sew job and everyone needed me.
4. Next, I tried working in a muffler shop, but that was too exhausting.
5. Then I tried to be a chef, figured it would add a little spice to my life, but I just didn't have the thyme.
6. Next, I attempted to be a deli worker, but any way I sliced it, I couldn't cut the mustard.
7. My best job was a musician, but eventually I found I wasn't noteworthy.
8. I studied a long time to become a doctor, but I didn't have any patience.
9. Next, was a job in a shoe factory. I tried but I just didn't fit in.
10. I became a professional fisherman, but discovered that I couldn't live on my net income.
11. I managed to get a good job working for a pool maintenance company, but the work was just too draining.
12. So then I got a job in a workout center, but they said I wasn't fit for the job.
13. After many years of trying to find steady work, I finally got a job as a historian, until I realized there was no future in it.
14. My last job was working in Starbucks, but I had to quit because it was always the same old grind.
15. So, I tried retirement and found that I'm perfect for the job!

—from *The Brass Nuts*, March 2008
Mary Gunderson

A Cautionary Corvair Tale

Remembering that old Boy Scout motto -Be prepared!
by John Dailey — from *On the Air, Newsletter of the Arkansas Corvair Club, February 2008*

Since I am somewhat new to the Arkansas Corvair Club, I thought that I would relate what happened when I went to pick up my 1965 Corvair Monza, south of Kansas City, Kansas. I found the car on the *Corvair Project* Website. Part of my criteria for buying was that it must be drivable and that the drive back to Fort Smith must be a reasonable distance. This car met both of those requirements.

It wasn't even 300 miles away--a nice drive.

Since I am retired from Delta Air Lines, I get to fly for free, space available. So (and I know this will sound weird), my wife, Mary, and I flew to Atlanta and then caught a flight to Kansas City. I put together a toolbox and checked that as my luggage. We got to Kansas City and caught a prearranged shuttle to Louisburg, Kansas to check out the car.

We arrived at the address I was given for the car and I and started to check the car's condition. It had a few rust bubbles and some nicks, small dings and scratches, but, for the most part, it looked pretty good. The interior was great. Supposedly, the car only had 52,000 miles on it.

We took it out for a drive and after getting used to a non-synchromesh, 3-speed again, it drove very well. The engine was strong. I had checked the tires and the fan belt and all looked decent.

Well, we went through all the paperwork and payment stuff and the car was mine. We took off and all was going well until we reached Joplin, Missouri. At this point, the car started shaking. At first I thought it was the road surface, but then it got pretty severe.

I had just started to back off from about 65-70 mph, when the left rear tire blew. I was already easing it to the shoulder but we started to go down the embankment, forwards and sideways. Part way down, the rear end snapped around and we completed our side trip, backwards. Then, we went into some shrubbery and stopped. We both just sat there, my hands, white knuckled, on the wheel while the dust and bits of foliage settled around us.

We got out and some people had stopped and wanted to know if we were all right. Surprisingly, we were. I think the fact that we went in backwards helped keep us from being injured. Instead of slamming into the wheel or dash, we were slammed into the seatbacks. The scary part was that we missed a concrete culvert by only about three feet.

Anyway, the Highway Patrol came by to see how we were and called a tow truck. I had no idea if there was any damage to the left rear because it was buried in the shrubs. The tow truck winched the car out and I noted that there was just some more scratches on the quarter panel. Also, the wheel-well chrome was trashed, as well as the wheel itself.

We put the spare on and limped into Joplin. The Wal-Mart auto department was closed by the time we got there, so we had to spend the night at a hotel. The next morning we went back to Wal-Mart for some new tires. After the one blew, I had no trust in the rest of them. This was on a Sunday so Wal-Mart was the only tire store available. That's why I ended up with four Douglas tires, 185/70 x 13-inch.

After that detail was taken care of, the trip was going pretty well until about 25 miles from home when the fan belt went south and, stupid me, I didn't have a spare. I called Triple-A and got towed home from that point.

The moral of my story is that you should always be prepared. The tires looked good, but you never know. I'm sure the guy I bought the car from had no idea they were bad. He only took short trips in it, a couple days a week, and probably not very fast.



Ed— As a side issue here, I did a search on Douglas tires on the Internet and found very little information. Most of what I did find was of a negative nature. What was glaring was there is no Website for Douglas Tires.

Douglas Tires may be manufactured by Kelly Springfield for Wal-Mart only. Kelly-Springfield is a division of Goodyear Tire Company. An Internet blogger had this to say about the tires:

“So, the long and short of it is a private label brand Goodyear tire (90% sure) which will be very low quality in comparison to the name brand Goodyear. You can compare it to, Wal-Mart brand fruit loops and the Kellogg version of the real thing (looks and tastes close, but not quiet as good).”

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 (CORSAs) 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 \$38 per year (\$76 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.

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TCA 2008 Events at a Glance

MARCH

5 WED *TCA Board Mtg.* Magpies Gourmet Pizza
4th Ave & 5th St.,— 6:30pm.

16 SUN *Gates Pass Run to Ryan Airfield*
Palm Sunday Meet at El Rio Golf Course parking lot, 1400 W. Speedway, at 10am. Caravan to Todd's Cafe at Ryan Airfield (Ajo and Valencia Rds.) for lunch.

26 WED *TCA General Membership Meeting*
El Cachanilla, 2530 N. 1st Ave, Tucson, AZ
(1½ blocks north of Grant) Parking Lot
Bull Session: 6pm. Optional dinner at 6:20pm,
meeting starts at 7pm.

APRIL

2 WED *TCA Board Mtg.* Bangkok Cafe, 2511 E.
Speedway. 6:30pm.

23 WED *TCA General Membership Meeting*
El Cachanilla, 2530 N. 1st Ave, Tucson, AZ
(1½ blocks north of Grant) Parking Lot
Bull Session: 6pm. Optional dinner at 6:20pm,
meeting starts at 7pm.

CAR SHOWS

MAR-NOV SATURDAY *Little Anthony's Car Show Dates:* - 7010 E. Bdwy.
Day Shows: 10am-2pm: 3/22.
Night Shows: 7pm-10pm: 4/12; 4/26; 5/10; 5/24;
6/14; 6/28; 7/12; 7/26; 8/9; 8/23; 9/27; 10/11; 10/25;
11/8.

MAR 15 *11th Annual Benefit Car Show - Sierra Vista, AZ*
Benefitting the Boys and Girls Club of Sierra Vista. All cars and trucks of all years welcome.

APR 10-12 *17th National Bakersfield Swap Meet*

APR 12 *17th Annual Copper Classic Car Show,*
Bisbee, AZ. INF: 520-432-5421.

APR 25-27 *Beline Cruise Inn,* Payson, AZ. INF:
928-468-6300

JUNE 23-27 *CORSA International Convention in Ventura CA*
Hosted by CORSA West of Los Angeles.



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Corvair Society of America Chapter 857



NEW



MARCH
16 SUN
Palm Sunday

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS are held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. November meeting is on the third Wednesday. The December meeting is our annual Holiday party.

MEETING PLACE FOR MARCH 2008: El Cachanilla, 2530 N. 1st Ave, Tucson, AZ (1½ blocks north of Grant Road). A parking lot bull-session starts at 6pm. Optional dinner starts at 6:20pm. Meeting starts at 7pm. Guests are welcome.

Gates Pass Run to Ryan Airfield

Meet at El Rio Golf Course parking lot, 1400 W. Speedway, at 10am. Caravan to Todd's Cafe at Ryan Airfield (Ajo and Valencia Rds.) for lunch. Details inside.



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