

The Queen Manx

In 1967, after Steve McQueen won his favorite lead role as Thomas Crown in the original production of the *United Artists* film *The Thomas Crown Affair*, for which he earned \$750,000, and apparently aware of how well the *Manx* dune buggy performed on the beach, decided he wanted to use a souped-up *Manx* buggy in the beach racing scenes with co-star Faye Dunaway (who bravely remained seated at his side), rather than a *Jeep* as

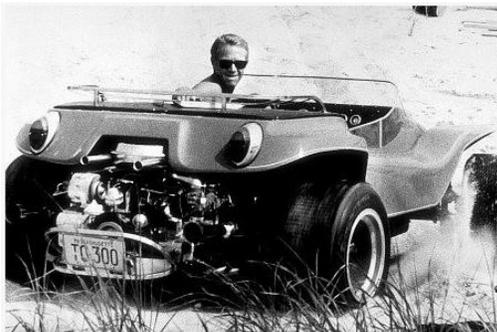
the script called for. The film was released on June 18, 1968 and aside from the Academy Award-winning song "*The Windmills of Your Mind*", it helped further boost the dune buggy industry as all of the driving scenes and stunts were done by McQueen himself in the buggy he had customized, known as the *Queen Manx* (which indeed started out as a *Meyers Manx* kit purchased from *B.F. Meyers & Co.*).



McQueen customized his own version of the *Meyers Manx* dune buggy design that became known as the *Queen Manx*, and contracted with *Con-Ferr Manufacturing* in Burbank, California to modify a *Meyers Manx* body purchased from *B.F. Meyers & Co.*

The conversion was finished in eight weeks and included:

- A 4-barrel 140 HP *Corvair* engine (since the *Porsche* engine he had originally specified was proclaimed to be too expensive)
- Engine adaptor made by Ted Trevor to mate the swing-axle *VW* transaxle (with a flipped ring & pinion) to the *Corvair* engine
- Special extra-wide rear wheels cast by *American Racing* that were produced to accommodate the *Firestone* racing tires from Andy Granatelli's *STP Special* (#40) turbine car (which almost won the 1967 Indy 500)
- Very unique headlamp scoops that accommodated the smaller 5¾" DOT approved 12-volt headlamps
- Marine-style windshield fabrication and rails
- Custom waffle stitched Naugahyde seats and interior trim by Tony Nancy using *Datsun Fairlady* seat frames
- Elongated side panels to eliminate the need for side pods; Bruce Meyers never incorporated this feature, since it prevented the bodies from being stackable
- A *Con-Ferr* nameplate on the hood replacing the *Meyers Manx* badge





TUCSON CORVAIR ASSOCIATION
Established 1975

TCA 2015/6 Events at a Glance

The **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) as Chapter 357.

Membership dues are \$15 per year for individuals and \$18 for families. Initial dues are \$19 for individuals and \$22 for families (includes one name tag). Make checks payable to the Tucson Corvair Association and mail to the TCA Treasurer.

Change of Address: Report any change of address or phone number to the Membership Chairperson.

CORSA membership dues are \$45 per year (\$90 for 26 months) and include a subscription to the CORSA Communiqué, a bi-monthly publication. CORSA memberships is not required for membership in the Tucson Corvair Association, but is highly recommended. See any TCA officer for more information.

Business Mailing Address: 4842 W Paseo de las Colinas, Tucson, Arizona 85745

Website address: www.corvairs.org. Email address: tucsoncorvairs@yahoo.com

Dec 9, Wed **TCA Christmas Party**, Golden Corral, 4380 E 22nd Just east of Columbus) 6pm to 9pm. Bring White Elephant Gift (\$20 Max), Silent Auction (Donations are welcome)

Jan 27, Wed **Regular Monthly Meeting**. Parking Lot Bull Session at 6:30pm. Meeting starts at 7:00pm. Kettle Restaurant, 748 W Starr Pass, I-10 & 22nd.

Jan 30, Sat **22nd Annual Collector Car Show**, Tubac Golf Resort, Tubac, Arizona. January 22 registration deadline. See website for details: www.carnuts.org/

Apr 30, Sat **31st Annual Chevy Showdown**, Casino del Sol Resort, 5653 W Valencia Rd, Tucson, Arizona. 9am to 3pm. Go to www.corvairs.org for details and registration form.

WHEELS AND SPOKES

PRESIDENT

Mike Lake
520-979-0310
mls56@g.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Sam Pernu
520-749-3229
spernu3@gmail.com

**RECORDING SECRETARY/
CORVAIRSATION EDITORS**

Frank & FJ Trejo
480-459-6308
essedave@gmail.com

TREASURER

Allen Elvick
4210 S Preston
Tucson, AZ 85735
520-883-4437
amelvick@pcpeople.com

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Gloria Trejo
480-459-6309
tucsonglo@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

Ron Bloom
Tucson, AZ 857
520-891-7542
bloomaz@msn.com

WEBMASTER

Van Pershing
520-743-9185

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Chris Cunningham
520-240-9035
arizaim@hotmail.com

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENTS

Lynn Marrs
520-297-8969
lareservemanager@yahoo.com

Ron Bloom

LIBBRARIAN
Bill Maynard
3605 N Vine
Tucson, AZ 85719
520-325-8497
billaynard@webtv.com

MECHANDISE CHAIRMAN

Don Robinson
520-297-1356
fourcorvairs@hotmail.com

Wow, did we get lucky, or what?



Denver Post File Photo. Artist's conception of the small Chevrolet based on trade reports. This drawing shows air intake for flat six-cylinder engine behind rear window. Model is expected to have more room than an average imported economy car. December 18, 1958.

Can you imagine? I doubt there would be a Corvair Society of America if the Corvair had shown up in this outfit.

November Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the monthly meeting held November 18, 2015 at Kettle Restaurant, 748 W. Starr Pass Blvd, Tucson, Arizona.

Call to order at 7:04pm. In attendance: Sam Pernu, Don Robinson, Jan Lake, Bill Maynard and his fiancé Eileen, Dave Lynch, Bob and Carol Traylor, and Mike Lake. Small turn out.

Frank Pella, President of the Classic Chevy Club of Tucson, was our guest.

Frank was given the floor first: There is a Pack the Pick-ups Christmas toy drive Little Anthony's Diner on December 5th from 9am to 1pm.

Also Frank gave us the low down on the Chevy Show-down. A new location has been selected to allow more room for the change in entry qualifications. Casino Del Sol Resort will be the new site. The show is now open to all GM vehicles pre—1987. More info to follow.

The last two swap meets here in town were duds.

Speedway Cruise was amazing, lots of vintage tin came out to play.

A trip to Phoenix for the Pomona in Phoenix Swap Meet is planned for the Saturday after Thanksgiving.

Christmas party is a go on Dec 9th. It will be at the Golden Corral on east Speedway.

A trolley tour is in the planning stages for January. No date has been set at this time. Bob Moulton will provide more information.

Dave has discovered a Corvair bone yard in the NW portion of Tucson. I suggested that it was the one located at 4842 W Paseo de las Colinas. Dave said no, that had been cleaned out already. Rats! Someone beat me to Van's Stinger engine cover.

It was mentioned that dues for next year are due soon.

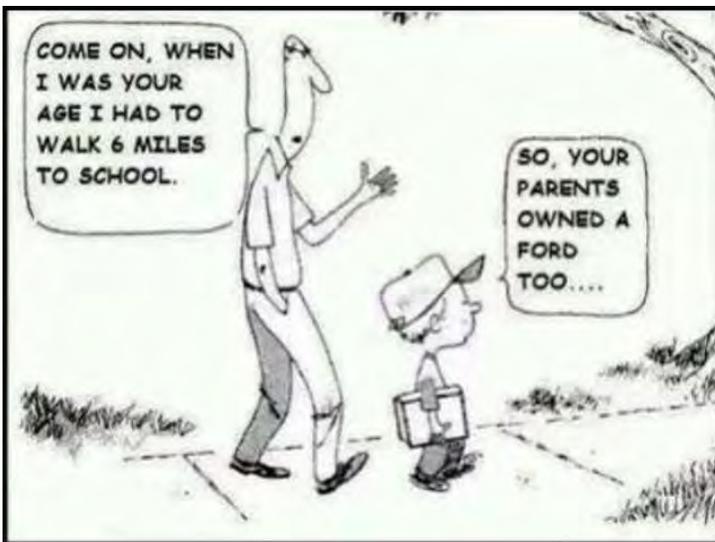
We also discussed the need for new officers for the club.

A new meeting place was suggested: Wings Over Broadway. Sounds yummy to me.

Last month's meeting minutes were approved as well as the treasurer's report.

Don said we still have plenty of shirts for sale: They make great Christmas presents.

Meeting ended at 7:52pm.



President's Message

Elsewhere in this issue you'll find an editorial regarding the current state of the Tucson Corvair Association. Although I do not want to see the club fold up, we do need more participation by other club members to keep it alive.

What keeps the Mustang clubs alive? Basically, they are about the same age: the cars and their owners, as we are in the Corvair clubs. Granted, Mustang has a performance image, unwarranted in my opinion, that helps with the



desire to own such a vehicle. I believe the Corvair suffers from not having that image. Those in the know realize that the Corvair is indeed a performer. I also believe that it's our soul duty to promote it as such by presenting our cars at as many car shows as possible and talking to the younger crowd about the possibilities of owning a Corvair. But to do so, we need participation and right now we do not have it. CORSA is suffering the same fate. We need to reinvent this club, but how and in what direction do we go. These are things that need to be discussed and a plan put in place, but that's hard to do without participation and dedication.

The fate of this club is in our hands. We, and only we, can determine the direction that this club must go to survive. Your input is vital at this time. Please do not hold back your thoughts on this subject. All suggestions, comments whether positive or negative are welcome.

On a more positive note, I would like to wish everyone Happy Holidays.

Please come join us for the TCA Christmas Party. After all this party is for you!

Mike



Is it time for the Tucson Corvair Association to die?

An Editorial Comment

Volunteer organizations have been around for a long time and every single one I have been associated with suffer the same problem: 10% of the members do 90% of the work. The Tucson Corvair Association is no different. I have been a member of TCA since 1981 and have seen it go from a vibrant active club to a few people trying to hold things together as best they can.

It all started out with a few guys with a common interest in Corvairs getting together for the purpose of enjoying their hobby. In 1975 they decided to establish a club with rules and by-laws. They opened a bank account, hooked up with the C.O.R.S.A organization and made it all legal by registering with the State of Arizona. Viola! The Tucson Corvair Association was born.

The Club grew in membership over the years and meeting attendance was well over 30 people. When events were held the majority of the members were there with their cars ready to have a good time. As time passed the membership began to decline. People got older and moved on to other interest or to the Great Beyond, younger candidates were more into muscle cars and rice

burners, and Corvairs became a little scarcer. Staffing the organization as it was originally designed has become more difficult every year. Today with only about 28 members and a meeting attendance of only 8 to 10 people, it has become next to impossible to have an organized group. Let's

look at the numbers from the 2014 roster: There are 24 paid memberships and with spouses, etc. brings the total to 28 (kids excluded). Three of our members live out of town. This leaves about 17 people that might be considered active

members. There are 11 offices to be filled every year with 6 of them being absolutely essential to the running of the Club. With some not being physically able to serve, it does leave many to make things happen.

Our current president has been serving for 3 years. He was a new member that came in enthused to do his part and volunteered thinking he would do his year as president and then move over to give some else an opportunity. When the nominating committee did its search for a new candidate it had no success, so our president agreed to stay on for another year....and then another year. This year I have a feel-

ing he's not going to be real excited about doing it again...nor should he be. I served as newsletter editor for more than 15. It's a fun job but not an easy one mostly because contributions from the other members were few and far between. A couple of times over the years I have needed a break and it has always been nearly impossible to persuade someone to take over. And I could go on. There have been years when we have operated without a vice president and I can remember one year when we operated for most of the year without a president. Needless to say not much went on that year.

So, is it time to change our organization? Maybe we should be just a few friends who get together once a month for dinner and friendly conversation and once in a while we all decide to take a cruise to Todd's for breakfast, and call it good. No bank account, no officers, no newsletter, no non-profit cooperation paperwork to file with the State every year, no headaches trying to persuade people to help with this or that; just a few friends having a nice get-together once in a while. Just a thought. My fear is that is what it's going to turn into unless some of us take a little action.

Van Pershing

Submit your views to
tucsoncorvairs@yahoo.com



Pontiac Tries To Build A BMW Before BMW Built Theirs And Almost Succeeds

Excerpts from an article written by Pual Niedermeyer, December 2010. For complete article goto <http://www.thetruthaboutcars.com>

In the period from 1960 to 1966, GM built three production cars that tried to upend the traditional format: the rear-engined 1960 Corvair, the front-wheel drive 1966 Toronado, and the 1961 Tempest. And although the Corvair and Toronado tend to get the bulk of the attention, the Tempest's format was by far the most enduring one: it was a BMW before BMW built theirs. If only they had stuck with it.

A high performance four cylinder engine with four-venturi carburetion, four-wheel independent suspension; four speed stick shift; perfect 50-50 weight distribution; a light, compact yet fairly roomy body; decent manual steering; and neutral to over-steering handling qualities: sounds just like the specs for the all-new 1962 BMW 1500/1800 or a few others you can think of. But none of them had this: a rear transaxle and a totally revolutionary flexible drive shaft. When GM gave its engineering talent the freedom to innovate, the results were often extraordinary. But in true GM fashion, penny-pinching resulted in the 1961 Tempest arriving flawed, like the Corvair. But unlike the Corvair, the Tempest never got a second chance to sort out its readily fixable blemishes. If so, the result would have been even more remarkable than the 1965 Corvair.

John DeLorean may be more famous for the '59 Wide-Tracks, the GTO, the Pontiac OHC six, and the '69 Grand Prix during his tenure at Pontiac, but in my opinion, the 1961 Tempest is his most ambitious and creative engineering effort. With the 1960 Corvair in the wings, DeLorean's lingering plans to build a truly advanced and practical car finally came to (not quite ripe) fruition.



The Tempest was built from 1961 to 1963 with a transaxle borrowed from the Corvair.



The Powerglide transmission (left) with the torque converter hanging out in space. On the Corvair it would be covered by a bell housing. On cars with a manual transmission, a round plate covers the hole where the bell house would have mounted (right).



In an attempt to save money on tooling costs, a brand-engineering idea was conceived by the corporate gurus that would have made the Pontiac nothing more than a Corvair with a different grill and tail lights. The Pontiac Polaris never made it passed the proto-type stage.



DeLorean was particularly interested in the benefits of independent rear suspension that so many European cars like the VW, Porsche and Mercedes had been using since the thirties. In the mid fifties, his engineering team developed an even more radical evolution of the Mercedes approach for the 1959 full-sized Pontiacs: a rear transaxle to balance weight distribution, and connected to the engine with a flexible shaft drive inside a rigid torque tube. That innovation was his alone, and he received a patent on it. It was a single flexible piece of steel, more akin to a torsion bar or a speedometer driveshaft.

The big 1959 Pontiacs arrived but were utterly conventional. GM wanted to foist the new rear-engine Corvair on Pontiac, in order to spread its high development and production costs. The prototype Pontiac Polaris was classic badge-engineering: a '59 Pontiac-ish front end grafted on an otherwise unaltered Corvair. But the Pontiac brass

Bill Knudsen, Pete Estes and DeLorean weren't buying it, in part because DeLorean was already familiar with the Corvair's tricky handling and nasty habit of spinning or even flipping when it got pushed too far. DeLorean's initial plan was to use the Corvair body, but turn it into a front-engined car while leaving the whole Corvair rear suspension and its transaxle in place, not even turning it around to face the motor. By using a hollow shaft, the Corvair transmission would actually be "driven" from the rear of the car, resulting in the torque converter hanging off the back of the differential, where it would normally have mated up to the Corvair's rear engine. Very creative indeed, and rather bizarre to see the torque converter just sitting there in the open like an appendage.



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Regular Monthly Meetings are held on the Fourth Wednesday of every month with a bull session starting at 6:30pm with the meeting starting at 7:00pm.

The November meeting is generally held on the third Wednesday. The December meeting is our annual Christmas party with the time and place to be announced.

MEETING PLACE:

Kettle Restaurant, 748 W Starr Pass (I-10 and 22nd), Tucson, Arizona.

Board of Director meetings are held at 5:30pm before the regular monthly meeting at the same location in the months of January, April, July, and October. All members are welcome to attend.

This newsletter can also be accessed at www.corvairs.org



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