

Corvairs invade Tucson Classic Car Show



The annual show was held on October 19, 2021 with several beautiful Corvairs on display that caused many show attendees to drool. Frank Pella, Pat Croan, Tim Lindhorn, Doug Scott and Mike Lake all brought their cars. John Young came home with a 3rd place prize.



For more pictures from the show go to www.corvairs.org and click on the Activities page.



TCA 2022 Events at a Glance

The **Corvairsation** is a quarterly 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 \$25 per year for individuals. 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 Chair or email changes to tucsoncorvairs@yahoo.com

CORSA membership dues are \$45 per year (\$90 for 26 months) and include a subscription to the CORSA Communiqué, a monthly publication. Rates are \$37 per year and \$74 for 26 months for a "virtual" membership. CORSA memberships is not required for membership in the Tucson Corvair Association, but is highly recommended. See any TCA officer for more information.

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3rd Tues of each month

Monthly Meetings: Check website for current location. http://corvairs.org/monthly_meetings.htm

Sat, Jan 29

27th Annual Sahuarita Classic Car Show (formerly Tubac), Quail Creek Veterans Memorial Park

Sat, Feb 19

Cruise, BBQ & Blues Car Show, Oro Valley Market Place
12155 N Oracle, Oro Valley

Sun, Feb 27

TCA/CCC Joint Activity, Pinal County Fair Grounds, 512 11 Mile Corner, Casa Grande,

Sat, Mar 26

2022 Chevy Showdown, 9a-3p, Desert Diamond Casino, 1100 W Pima Mine Rd, Sahuarita, AZ.

It is with a very heavy heart that I must announce the passing of Greg Davis on September 8, 2021. Greg was 65 years old.

For those of you who never met Greg, you truly missed out. Greg was a gentle giant of a man who was always willing to use his Corvair knowledge to help those in our local Corvair community. He was the go to guy when you needed Corvair engine machine work done right. He was an extremely talented machinist who took great pride in doing things right. The word "shortcut" was not part of his vocabulary.

Over the last four years, Greg and I grew to become really good friends as we planned and executed improvements for my Corvair engine.

Mike Lake

Greg Davis passes



A visit to Greg's shop in March 2018. From left to right: Mike Lake, Greg Davis, Frank Pella, Van Pershing and Ron Bloom.

Bonnie Henry: They're upfront fans of car designed with rear engine

Bonnie Henry Arizona Daily Star
Apr 12, 2010

"I found this one on Craigslist," he says, proudly pointing to a 1964 bright-yellow one. Some have been driving them since high school. Some don't own one at all. But all have one thing in common: They're just nuts about Corvairs. You know, those somewhat-boxy-yet-sporty little cars that came out in the 1960s? The ones with the engine in back?

"Every time I drive one, I either hear, 'I used to have one,' or 'What is it?'" says Barry Cunningham, 52, a charter member of the Tucson Corvair Association.

Either way, it gets the looks. "I was at three straight stoplights talking to people about mine," says Bill Maynard, 71, the proud owner of a 1961 baby-blue station wagon that he's spent \$4,000 restoring. "It was completely rusted."

So was his first Corvair, a '63 convertible that he "rescued" in 1980 from a friend's yard in Prescott. "Everybody has one in their backyard," says Maynard. Or front yard.

"This one sat in my neighbor's yard. Since 1990 I've been watching it," says Ron Bloom, 69, who finally snagged the 1962 Corvair Greenbrier sports van last May. "I went over and asked my neighbor if he was ready to sell after 20 years. He was just turning 80. He sold it to me for \$250. I had to push it over to my yard."

The last Corvair van was built in 1965. Bloom's van is white with orange trim. It sports facing back seats and holds nine people.

"I'm the second owner," says Bloom, pulling out the original title.



And yes, he got it running. "Ron and I have driven our cars to Palm Springs," says club President Ken Farr, 72, who bought his first Corvair in 1960 right off the showroom floor. Price tag: \$1,800.

Since then, he's owned more than a dozen of 'em over the years. convertible with a saddle-brown interior. "I call it Tweetie," says Farr, adding that it was his wife, Heidi, who dubbed the car.

He completely redid the interior and dash, re-chromed the front bumper and put in a CD player. "I drive it quite often. So does my wife," says Farr.

"This is the cheapest antique car you can restore," says Van Pershing, 65, who drove his first Corvair while he was still in high school. "I had that one for three or four years. Then I bought one in 1970 after I got back from Vietnam. I've had one ever since. All my children drove them, too."

Currently, he owns a 1966 Yenke

Stinger, which is a replica of the modified Corvair Corsa model. "Don Yenke wanted to race Corvairs, but they weren't competitive. They said he had to have 100 in production. So he made 100."

Pershing's replica is a two-door, white with blue trim, with a gray and blue interior and 140 horses under the hood (or where the trunk lid would be in a conventional car). "There are still a few idiots around who think they can race with this car," he says.

Owning a Corvair is no prerequisite for joining this club.

Lynn Marrs, immediate past president of the club, doesn't own a Corvair but finds them fascinating.

"You can put the engines in an airplane or a dune buggy," she says.

As for why she doesn't own one herself: "I can't fix them myself. And I live on a dirt road

atop the Tortolitas."

The club, which has about 35 members today, began in 1975 with five guys, including Gordon Cauble and Frank McKenna, who were talking about the possibility of a club while in the parking lot of an auto-parts store.

"The first meeting was held in Frank McKenna's living room," says Cunningham, who along with his younger brother, Chris, were still teenagers at that meeting.

"My father bought me a Corvair in high school, a 1964 two-door. I had to become a Corvair mechanic to keep it running," says Barry Cunningham, who wound up buying the garage where most of the owners

took their cars for work.

Today he's showing off a 1966 four-speed Corvair with bucket seats - one of five Corvairs he currently owns. "I've driven this car coast to coast," he says.

Many know the Corvair only through the 1965 book "Unsafe at Any Speed," which made Ralph Nader a household name.

But many may not know that only the first chapter of that polemic on auto safety dealt with the Corvair, charging that its rear suspension made it prone to roll over.

Although the suspension design already had been modified in the 1964 model, the damage was done. Corvair sales in 1966 plummeted

by more than 50 percent. The last one rolled off the assembly line in May of 1969, ending a 10-year run that began in October of '59.

Members of the Tucson club - one of more than 50 around the country - still stand by the Corvair's safety, pointing to later government tests that rebutted Nader's charges.

Some also point to another reason for the Corvair's eventual demise: "In 1964, they came out with the Mustang," says Pershing. "It had bucket seats and was cheaper and faster."

New Banner for TCA

Due to the hard work and diligence of Pat Croan and the generous donation of several TCA members, the Club now has a new beautiful banner. I made its debut at the 2021 Tucson Classic Car Show at the Gregory School in October.

Mike Lake built a stand for the banner that will hold it in place by parking a Corvair on the large tab the holds the banner pole.

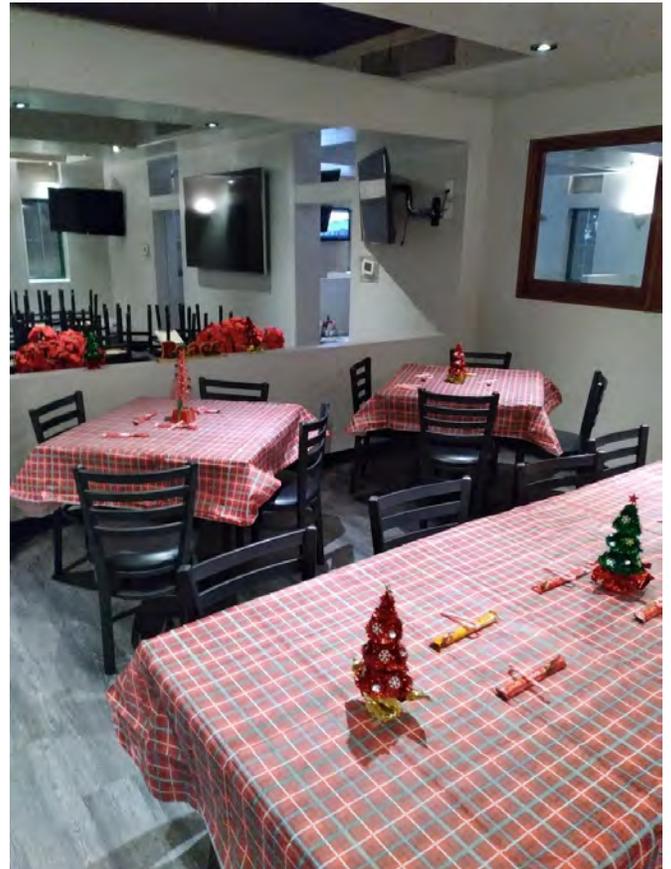
It will be used for years to come at car shows and other events.



2021 TCA Christmas Party

For those who attended, we had a very good time. The room was secluded and free from all bar noise and odors. Anita, the owner of Rusty's went all out for us. She brought in rib eye steaks and salmon medallions that are not on the menu for our occasion along with the full menu. The meals also included red velvet cheese cake. All for under \$20. Rusty's even went so far as to decorate the room and tables for us. The night went well and we had great conversation. In my opinion, this room was the perfect location for our party.

A big thank you goes out to Anita and her staff at Rusty's



Jim Mills passes

Longtime TCA member Jim Mills passed away on December 9, 2021 after a long battle with health issues. Jim hosted many tech clinics at his shop at home and was the go-to guy for Corvair parts.



More from the Tucson Classic Car Show



A few pictures from the Great Western Fan Belt Toss & Swap Meet

October 21-23, 2021, Palm Springs, California

On October 20, Mike Lake, Tony Warren, Brad Bacon, Bill Maynard and Eileen left Tucson at 4:30am for an hour and a half cruise to the westside of Phoenix to meet up with the Cactus Corvair Club. They rolled out to Palm Springs without incident: three Corvairs on trailers and three regular cars in the group. Once in Palm Springs, we unloaded our cars, and set up the swap meet space. Frank Pella and Ron Bloom drove their cars to the show but Ron had an issue along the way and limped his Purple Rain into the Show. On Saturday morning, Ron pulled the Purple Rain into the swap meet spot and with Franks help, proceeded to repair the carnage. Their attempts failed to bring the Purple Rain.

The swap meet area had more vendors than usual and 60 Corvairs were in attendance but the number of swap meet shoppers was down drastically. This affected sales and only sold \$270 worth of the donated items. Mike has the left-over parts and pieces and will make a list so that the donors can either reclaim their parts or they can be offered to Club members for sale or try to sell them to other Corvair associates around the country.

On Friday night and Saturday night the TCA members joined forces with the Cactus Corvair Club for dinner. Johnny Costa's was the Friday night choice and, once again, they did not disappoint. They went to a Mexican restaurant on Pat's recommendation Saturday night and the food was great.



What happens in Palm Springs.....

On Sunday morning we loaded up the rides and Dave Wenzlick was kind enough to put Ron's Purple Rain on his trailer to tow it back to Phoenix. A special thanks to Dave: he saved the day. The following day Ron, Jan and I went to Phoenix and picked it up.

All in all, I do believe we had a great time!



A few more pictures from the Great Western Fan Belt Toss & Swap Meet

