

A visit to the 390th Memorial Museum

The TCA was able to visit the 390th Memorial Museum at Pima Air and Space museum on August 23, 2014. Museum docent Phil B. was kind enough to arrange for a marvelous morning with the B17 display and the hundreds of artifacts related to the B17's service in Europe during World War II. There were nine TCA members in attendance.



Museum Docent Phil Took good care of the group!!

TCA members: (L to R) Jane Gold, Jan Bennett, Ron Bloom, Frank Pella, Ed Gold, Mike Dalton, Van Pershing and Brad Bacon.



The B17G on display was one of the very last B17s built. It has undergone a complete “frame off” restoration and is well worth a visit to experience it. Several docents were available to answer any questions and give details of the



TUCSON CORVAIR ASSOCIATION
Established 1975

TCA 2024/5 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 by emailing 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 Sat of each month

Monthly Meetings: 9:00am, Old Times Kafe, 1485 W Prince Rd, Tucson, Arizona

Sat, Ail 6, 2024

Sat, r 20, 2024

May 19-24, 2025

CORSA International Convention: Santa Monica., California

Ju2-25, 2024

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CORVAIR CARE

The Garage Squad donates its time and expertise to keep rear-engined Chevys rolling.

ON AN OVERCAST summer morning, a group of six volunteers from the Detroit Area Corvair Club (DACC) gathered in Bill Anstine's expansive home garage in suburban Livonia. The goal: Swap his 1963 Corvair's four-speed manual for a Powerglide automatic.

A transmission conversion is a daunting task. There are many differences between automatic and manual Corvairs—the transmission bell housing, flexplate, and subframe, just to name a few parts. And, uh, you need to remove the old transmission and put the new one back in.

Anstine has used a prosthetic since his leg was amputated below the knee. Luckily, the DACC volunteers, who call themselves the Garage Squad, have many years of experience and tomes of Corvair knowledge at the ready. Longtime club member Pete Koehler has been coordinating the group. "I'm retired and watch too much TV, and one of the shows I was watching was called *Garage Squad*. They'd go to people's houses and fix up their cars. I thought, 'Hey, that's a cool idea.'" Since 2017, the Squad has helped dozens of Detroit-area Corvair owners repair their cars.

The engine in the back of Koehler's pickup looked like it was home to a mouse nest for the past five decades. He had purchased

the heap for cheap, hoping it could either be nursed back to life or salvaged for parts. Attached to the crusty, air-cooled flat-six was the flexplate (a metal disc that connects the engine to an automatic's torque converter) needed to swap the transmission. It was quickly determined that the engine was not worth saving; even with the help of penetrating oil in the cylinders and a big breaker bar, the mill would not turn over.

"If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail."—Abraham Maslow

Because the engine was seized, only one of the bolts attaching the flexplate to the torque converter could be reached through the access port on the transmission bell housing. Annoyingly, the bell housing couldn't be removed until the converter and flexplate were out. Club member Ian Smith gleefully broke the brittle aluminum bell housing, bashing it with a cross pein hammer. Elegant, no. Effective, yes.

As work commenced, so flowed the jokes and war stories from previous Garage Squad events. The club's ethos reflects its values—perfectly correct grease marks and bolt coatings don't matter compared with keeping Corvairs on the road and getting more people interested in Chevy's rear-engined

Here's an article that appeared in the Jul-Aug 2024 issue of the Hagerty Driver Club magazine

This shows us how compassionate Corvair people are! Being of service to other Corvair people is a great way to keep the "sport" alive!



A transmission conversion on a Corvair is a big undertaking, but the Garage Squad volunteers have many years of experience working on these rear-engined Chevs. They made it look easy, completing the job in six hours.

nameplate. In period, the model lineup ranged from convertibles to pickups, and 1.8 million Corvairs were produced during its 10-year run between 1960 and 1969—most coming from the Willow Run Assembly plant in nearby Ypsilanti.

Despite Ralph Nader's infamous take-down of the model, Corvair enthusiasts have a deep and long-running affection for the car. The Detroit Area Corvair Club was established in 1974 by autocross junkies and GM employees, and there are several vendors with piles of parts to help keep these cars running and driving. The largest such outfit, Clark's Corvair Parts in Massachusetts, has been in business for 50 years.

"As the hobby grays, you've got to bring in some fresh people, younger folks that want to participate, and that's what Facebook has done for us," said Koehler. Indeed, with the introduction of the DACC Facebook page (1200 followers) and Garage Squad events,

more local young people have taken an interest. For example, Kassie, Anstine's 18-year-old granddaughter, stopped by in her matte-black 1966 Corvair coupe, named Venom. With the help of the Garage Squad, Kassie has rebuilt Venom's motor and replaced the transmission.

Over on Anstine's Corvair, things were going well. There were no stuck or especially rusty fasteners, and the team's experience removing drivetrains helped. Anstine's son (and club president) Mike, Kerry Borgne, and Bob Wittmann dropped the engine and transmission in about the same amount of time it took to free the flexplate from the crusty donor engine.

Lunch had arrived, putting a pause on work. (The one stipulation of receiving the Garage Squad's help is that you pay for lunch. Donations to the Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Museum as a form of payment are also encouraged.) "In the years we've been doing

this, we've donated well over \$10,000 to the museum," said Koehler. "And that's helping keep the doors open over there in Ypsilanti, especially during Covid."

After lunch, the team bolted the automatic transmission and related parts to the engine. "A good friend of mine had a Corvair, and I've always wanted one," explained Anstine as the DACC crew lifted the whole assembly up and into the car. "I drove it before with the four-speed, and it didn't work out too well for me."

The parts to convert the Powerglide to a floor-shift mechanism rather than the factory dash shift were not on hand, but otherwise the swap from manual to automatic gearbox was finished and Anstine would soon be joining his granddaughter and son for multi-generational Corvair drives, thanks to the generous efforts of the Garage Squad.

Not bad for six hours of work. // **Chris Stark** cstark@hagerty.com

Road Trip Outtake: Corvair Powered Ultralight Motorhome

By Paul Niedermeyer

If you've been around here for a while, you know I've got a big thing for the Ultra Van. It's my ultimate motorhome, combining Corvair underpinnings (front suspension, rear drive train and suspension) with an air-craft type lightweight aluminum body (total dry weight: 3400lbs). but seeing one in the wild is always an occasion that needs to be documented. I saw this green one zipping down the highway on the opposite side before we went hiking, and then here it was parked at Pioneer Town afterwards. Ultra cool and ultra desirable, especially with dual rear wheels, a custom modification I've not seen before on an UV. Just the thing for driving in the desert.



I should have gotten down on the sandy parking lot to shoot a picture of the dual rear wheels, which was possible due to a custom fabricated arrangement. Or a shot of the Corvair engine from below, with its custom headers and exhaust. The owner, who came out of the restaurant just as we were going to leave, told me it has a 140hp four-carb 164 inch version, pushing through the obligatory Powerglide. He said it rolls along nicely at 60-65, and has had it up to 75 or so, thanks to its aerodynamic shape and light body.

The 140 hp was not stock, as most of these were built with the early 140 and 145 cu.in. lo-po (80-85 hp) originally, but not surprisingly, most have been upgraded.

The last batch of the Ultra Vans had a 307 or 327 V8 in place of the Corvair engine, still driving through a PG and then a shaft forward to a marine vee drive, and then back to a Corvette IRS. Those are the hot rod Ultra Vans. Beyond ultra.



The Ford Econoline headlights on this one identify it as one of the first 15 or so built, by UV creator David Peterson and a bunch of California high-school shop students on the side. He built the first one for himself, in 1959, and other folks wanted one too. But after these first 15 or so, he licensed the UV to a Wichita, KS outfit, which put it into production, albeit on a fairly low volume. Its airplane-type monocoque construction was intrinsically expensive, and once Winnebago started cranking out its big cheap boxy motor homes at huge volumes, the UV's future became dim.

Despite the non-original paint, this UV is in very nice original condition, not exactly a common thing anymore. The two front benches swivel to make a dinette, and fold down to make a bed. There are two beds in the aft bedroom too. The spartan driver's compartment is a bit unusual, compared to most RVs. No need for power steering either. And the brakes are the Corvair's manual drums.

Behind the front benches is a good sized room with a galley to the left, and a large sofa on the right, that makes another bed. Later versions often had a dinette instead.

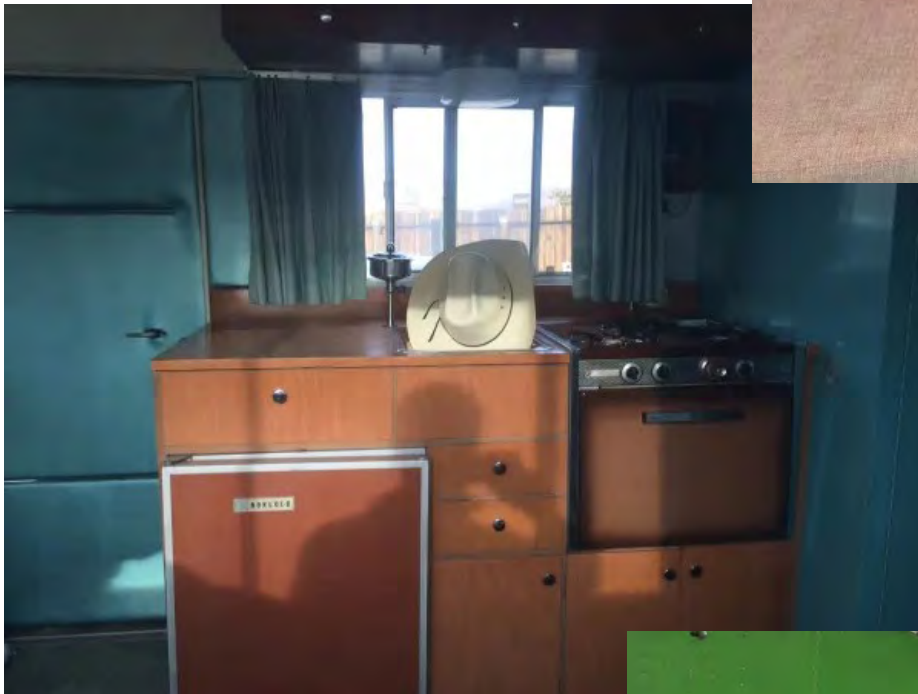
The cabinetry and appliances are original, and there was a fine vintage pattern on the Formica wall behind the sofa. I should have asked

the owner to let me inside. He's had for some 15 years, but doesn't use it much. it does make an annual appearance at Palm Spring's Modernism Week.

I've fantasized way too much about having an UV, but it just isn't in the cards for us. No cab a/c, no heat to speak of, and of course the endless care and feeding of such an unusual vintage machine. I prefer to using my camper, not having it be an endless project. But every time I see one, my mind starts spinning...

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Ultra Van interior



Note the vanity plate!



For the full article got to :[Road Trip Outtake: Ultra Van – Corvair Powered Ultralight Motorhome](#)

STATE OF THE UNION

Volunteer organizations have been around for a long time and every single one suffers the same problem: 10% of the members do 90% of the work. The Tucson Corvair Association is no different. Over the years it has gone from a vibrant active club to a club where few people trying to hold things together as best they can.

Back in 1975 started out with a few guys with a common interest in Corvairs getting together for the purpose of enjoying their hobby. 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 always well over 30 to 40 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 many collector car owners were just not interested in being part of an organized club.

Staffing the organization as it was originally designed has become more difficult every year. Today with only about 15 members and a meeting attendance of only 6 to 8 people, it has become next to impossible to have an organized group. There are 7 or so

offices to be filled every year with almost all them being absolutely essential to the running of the Club.

As the time for this year's elections of new officers rapidly approaches, the current board of directors could not even find two people to serve on the Nomination Committee. Our current president has no desire to serve another term.

With the recent conflict between several members regarding Club administration, several of the Club's most active members have resigned from TCA with no desire to be further associated with Club. A few of the Club's remaining member are on the fence about sticking with TCA leaving only a few who are interested in seeing that the Club remains viable.

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 decide to take a cruise to a nice place for breakfast, and call it good. No bank account, no officers, no newsletter, no non-profit cooperation paperwork to file with the State or the IRS 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. Or should we somehow change things to make TCA a viable entity?

Give it some thought and submit your view to: tucsoncorvairs@yahoo.com