

GWFBT&SM

The Great Western Fan Belt Toss and Swap Meeting was held again this year in Palm Springs, California at the end of October. Mike Lake, Bill Maynard, John Young, Ron Bloom and Sam Pernu made the trek across the desert to attend this great traditional event.



From left to right: Mike Lake, Ron Bloom, John Young, Allen Elvick and Bill Maynard.

Wine tasting and Lunch in Sonoita/Patagonia

On Sunday, November 6, several members of TCA joined the Classic Chevy Club of Tucson in a trip down state route 83 to Sonoita for wine tasting and then across state route 82 to Patagonia for lunch at the Velvet Elvis Pizza Company. The Corvair owners included Mike Lake and his mom Jan, Frank and Gloria Trejo, Ron Bloom, Bill Maynard and Frank Pella. We can only assume that everyone made it home without being charged with DUIs.





TCA 2016 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 Chair.

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

Dec 17, Sat

TCA Christmas Party. Rusty's Grill, 2075 W Grant Road. 6-9pm. There will be a silent auction and a white elephant gift exchange. Bring a gift to trade. \$20 maximum limit.

Jan 25, Wed

Regular Monthly Meeting. Parking Lot Bull Session at 6:30pm. Meeting starts at 7:00pm. Pizza Hut, 2943 N

Jan 28, Sat

Classic Car Show. Tubac Golf Resort. 10am to 3pm. Registration deadline: January 20. \$25 entry fee. Go to www.carnuts.org for registration form and more info.

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Bill: You mean we have to push it back home *again*?

Ron: Yup.....

Bill: Give me your phone. I'll call Red Rocket Recovery.

November Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the monthly meeting held November 16, 2016 at Pizza Hut, 2943 N Campbell, Tucson, Arizona.

The meeting was called to order with Bill Maynard, Ron Dawson (formerly the Ron with the white wagon), John Young, Allen Elvick, Mike Lake, Jan Lake, Sam Pernu, Ron Bloom, Bob and Carol Traylor, Dean Hawley (formerly Calucci), Dave Lynch, Gloria, Julio, Javier and Frank Trejo in attendance

Minutes of the October meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report: The month of October started with \$2,804.88 in the account and ended with \$2,737.88. The Club purchased a headlight aiming tool.

Sam Pernu gave a report on the GWFBT. Another great event!

Mike Lake reported:

- GWFBT was great! Awesome buys, good car show.
- Tucson Auto museum open house was good. Many awesome cars, good facility.
- Cops and Rodders Show attended by Ron and Mike with 700 cars including two Corvairs.
- Wine tasting and Velvet Elvis pizza in Patagonia with the Classic Chevy Club was a good time.
- Pomona swap meet in Phoenix coming up on the Saturday after Thanksgiving.
- Christmas Party will be on 17th of December at Rusty's on Grant and Silverbell. 6-9pm. \$20 or less white elephant gift. Bring an item to donate for silent auction.
- In December, the estranged Van Pershing returns.
- January 1st: Door Slammers New Years cruise meeting at McDonald's Sunrise/Swan.
- Bob Anderson's garage tour will be on January 14 at 10am. Address to come.
- 28 January: Tubac show.
- Nominating committee will be Ron, Mike and anyone else??
- DUES are coming DUE! Single \$15, Family \$18.

Break at 7:19 for the Belt Toss won by Javier Trejo.

Tech Items:

- Headlight aiming tool bought by the club at the Toss. Instructions coming.
- Dave Lynch's e-brake cable broke. He has new one in hand.
- Ron Bloom is thrilled with 140 carburetor linkage from Roger Parent.
- Frank thrilled with 3:55 posi-traction Powerglide differential being rebuilt by Paul Kehler.
- Mike trying to get the idle adjusted on his white 'Vair to be able to move it about.

Meeting adjourned at 7:43pm.

Submitted by Frank Trajo

Message from the Editor

Another year is nearly gone and the Tucson Corvair Association is still alive and well. This last year and a half has been an unusual time for your editor and webmaster. Vicki and I have been serving mission for our church in the Eastern Cape of the Republic of South Africa and having the time of our life.

Although very busy with our service, I've been able to keep the website and the newsletter going. It's been an interesting task being 10,000 miles away and trying to keep up with things that are happening in Tucson. Lucky for me we have a good internet connection and we brought our Vonage box with us so we are able to plug it in and use our Tucson telephone as though we were there. Even so, everything hasn't been as good as it could have been and I appreciate your kind patience. We'll be back home in Tucson some during the first week of tDecember and hopefully everything can get back to some degree of normalcy.

I'd like to give a special thanks to Mike Lake for being my eyes and ears while I've been gone. He has kept me abreast of all the activities and between he, Ron Bloom and Frank Trejo has kept me supplied with enough photos to keep things interesting.

Once again, I invite any and all to submit anything you find interesting for potential publication in the *Corvairsation* and/or corvairs.org. Your help is always welcome!

Wishing you all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year,

Van Pershing



Another Mystery Solved!



Corvair Rampside - It seemed like a good idea at the time

By JP Cavanaugh, curbsideclass.com, August 17, 2011

There have been very, very few vehicles produced in post WWII America that can be accurately described as unique. Not “sort of” unique, but unique in the true sense of the word: that there is absolutely nothing else like it. The Corvair Rampside is one of those vehicles. And not necessarily in a good way. This little truck reminds me of a question that most of us have been asked at one time or another: “Just what, exactly, were you thinking?”

It is well known that the Volkswagen was a significant influence on Chevrolet’s engineering team during the creation of the Corvair. Once the Corvair’s design team got its bread and butter sedan out the door for 1960, it shifted its attention to commercial variations. Volkswagen’s Type 2 van and pickup truck had been logical offshoots from its passenger car program. The Type 2 van (and to a lesser extent, the pickup) had been well received in Europe and were beginning to make inroads in the US. Also, Chevrolet’s product planners certainly knew that there was a similar small truck line under development at arch-rival Ford. With so much attention being given to commercial vehicles smaller than Chevrolet’s C-10 pickup and panel delivery, the world’s largest automaker was not about to ignore this market.

Chevrolet’s new little trucks would hit the market as the 1961 Corvair 95 series. First, why 95? The number represented the wheelbase of the trucks, shortened from the 108 inch wheelbase of the of the passenger car. The vehicles were of unit construction, but utilized a rear subframe for additional support of the engine and cargo area. Mechanically, the 95s were mostly standard Corvair, right down to the rear swing axles. However, the front suspensions were largely carried over from the full sized passenger car in 1961-62 (and then from the C-10 in 1963-64). A slightly beefed up version of the Corvair sedan’s 80 horsepower engine was mated to either a Powerglide or the buyer’s choice of a 3 or 4 speed manual.

The Corvair 95 line initially consisted of two vans and two pickups. The commercial van version was the cleverly named Corvan. Chevrolet also introduced the Corvan’s passenger-carrying offshoot, the Greenbrier. Like the vans, the Corvair 95 pickups also came in two flavors – The Loadside and the Rampside. Of the two, the Loadside is the really rare one (fewer than 3000 were built between 1961 and 62) which was basically a standard Corvair pickup. The



Rampside is the one remembered for its single unique quality – the hinged panel on the passenger side that lowered to become a ramp into the vehicle’s ultra-low cargo bed.

We all know that the pickup truck has but a single reason to exist: The large open compartment in the back for carrying lots of stuff. So how do you give your customer a usable pickup when your starting point includes a rear engine? VW’s answer was to make a high flat bed with drop down side panels all the way around. Lockable storage compartments filled in the unused area under the flat bed. Chevrolet took the opposite approach. In order to maximize capacity in the bed, the Corvair 95s traded-away the flat floor. The result was a pickup bed with maximum depth in the middle of the vehicle, and a raised portion at the rear of the truck so as to accommodate the engine compartment.

One look at the inside of the bed of one of these and you can see why the Loadside (confusingly named because you could NOT load it from the side) disappeared so quickly. With no access to the bed but through the teeny tailgate, it was singularly lacking in practical appeal. The Rampside was an ingenious workaround of the Loadside’s achilles heel and the problematic shape of the load floor of these pickups. With a bed wall that converted to a ramp, the vehicle got badly needed access to the lowest part of the bed as well as a built-in ramp not found on anything else in the industry. Although the payload was comparable to that of a conventional C-10,

the inconveniently shaped bed floor cost the 95s a lot of utility points. That Chevrolet offered a plywood platform to make a flat but shallow bed did not really overcome this weakness.

In hindsight, it is easy to see that this truck had failure stamped on its forehead at birth. What happened here? While I have never really been under the Corvair’s spell, I can understand that the car was a bold swing for the fences as a modern compact sedan. But just whose idea was it to make it into a truck? Was the 95 sort of an afterthought? “Uh-oh, great car but I just got a memo that we have to make a truck out of the thing too.” Or was it the hubris of a company that was convinced that the American public would lap up whatever it put into Chevrolet’s showrooms? Either way, it was a painful lesson for GM that what may have made sense for VW in immediate postwar Europe was not necessarily relevant to 1960s America.

Of course, the eventual champion in the compact truck market turned out to be Ford. The 1961 Econoline series met the Corvair 95 model for model. With its conventional front engine configuration, the Econoline had the advantage of an unencumbered load floor in both its van and its pickup. The result was that the Econoline’s sales swamped those of the little Chevy. In 1963, for example, Ford sold over 11,000 Econoline pickups to Chevrolet’s 2,046 Rampside. This was in spite of the Chevrolet’s 2 foot advantage in cargo floor length and a slightly higher payload rating. The Rampside would be discontinued after selling only 851 units in 1964. (Fun fact of the day: Chrysler managed to sell more Imperial convertibles in 1964 than Chevy sold Corvair pickups.) The 1964 El Camino, with over 30,000 sold, removed any doubt about the lack of viability of its air cooled older brother.

The entire Corvair 95 series would be replaced quickly, with the 1964-65 phase-in of a new, more conventional van design based upon the Chevy II. The discontinued Rampside (the sole remaining Corvair pickup) was not missed. Ford, too, would abandon the odd looking Econoline pickup after its initial version. (Chrysler was, of course, late to the party with its 1964 A-100 pickup, another forward control model which failed to survive to a second generation). What is really interesting

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It seemed like a good idea at the time. *Continued from page 4*

here is that Detroit completely missed the most obvious (and only really successful) formula for a small pickup truck: Take a conventional big pickup and shrink it. Toyota and Datsun would make a lot of money from this oversight.

I am not sure what the legacy of this vehicle is, if indeed it has any at all. Although it must have seemed like a



good idea at the time, it may have been the biggest sales flop of GM's postwar history. In fairness, none of this era's forward control pickups really set the world on fire, the VW included. In 1963, for example, the Falcon Ranchero would outsell the Econoline and Corvair pickups combined by nearly 40%. But the Corvair 95 pickup was failure taken to a whole new level. Still, it is vehicles like this one that provide some spice in a bland world. A sunny day and a trip to the home center with the Rampside – what a fun and unusual sight, either in Indianapolis or anywhere else. It always was. The Corvair 95 pickups turned out to be two vehicles in one: Perhaps the least useful truck ever and maybe the coolest Corvair of them all. It is indisputably a Curbside Classic.



Cool Trailer and it's for sale

This is a beautiful trailer and this little showcase isn't intended to be a big ad for its sale, but to show off its beauty and workmanship. If you end up making a purchase, so be it.

It currently belongs to Vic Howard, a TCA and Vegas Vairs member who lives in Fort Mohave, Arizona. It is made from an early model and its ready to be towed anywhere. The taillights and headlights are completely functional. Both the luggage compartment and engine lids work like "factory" and the interior is carpeted to closely match the maroon exterior.

The trailer currently for sale and details can be seen at www.corvairs.org/tca_for_sale.htm.





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Corvair Society of America Chapter 857

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

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

MEETING PLACE:

Pizza Hut, 2943 N Campbell, 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.

Read this newsletter on line at www.corvairs.org



Tucson Corvair Association
4842 W Paseo de las Colinas
Tucson, AZ 85745

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Tucson Corvair Association

Christmas Party

Saturday, Dec 17th

Rusty's Family Restaurant & Sports Bar
2075 W. Grant Road, Tucson, AZ 85745

6 to 9 pm

Silent Auction

White Elephant Max \$20

Come Celebrate the Holidays in Corvair Style