



Jason Torchinsky, *Jalopnic* August 2019

Prior to Ralph Nader's book panning the Corvair, *Unsafe at Any Speed*, Chevrolet already had a plan to help make Corvairs unsafe, by placing them in contexts where they'd be shot at: war. Yes, in 1963, GM came up with a remarkable loosely Corvair-based amphibious military vehicle called the TUFV, for Truck Utility Floatable Independent. The army didn't bite, but I think the world would have been much more exciting if they'd adapted a civilian version of this amazing thing.

One reason why the army didn't decide to move ahead with the TUFV is that it doesn't appear that any formal requests for a new vehicle of this type were made; GM seems to have just built the thing on spec, though the army did test it in 1963.

It was a really clever design: a mid-engine, forward-control truck, with effectively the entire length of the truck being available for people or cargo, minus the space needed behind the driver and front passenger for the air-cooled flat-six Corvair engine.

I imagine for military use, the twin-carb'd engine may have been de-tuned for reliability or to use lower-grade fuels, or some combination of reasons like that. Regardless of power, that engine was driving all four wheels via a two-speed transaxle/transfer case, and both ends had DM Posi limited-slip differentials, all of which should have made the TUFV pretty capable off-road.





# TCA 2019/2020 Events

**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 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.

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

**Website:** [www.corvairs.org](http://www.corvairs.org). Email address: [tucsoncorvairs@yahoo.com](mailto:tucsoncorvairs@yahoo.com)

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- Nov 19 Tues** **Regular Quarterly Business Meeting.** 8:00pm. O’Rielly Chevrolet, 6160 E Broadway, Tucson. Meetings are in the 2nd story conference room above the used car office and will following immediately after the Classic Chevy Club meeting. Enter by the exterior staircase on the west side of the building .
- Nov 9 Sat** **Corvair Cruise In.** 1pm to 4pm. Rock and Roll McDonald’s, 9140 E Talking Stick Way, Scottsdale, Ari-
- Dec 8 Sun** **TCA Christmas Party.** 5-9pm, Pinnacle Peak Steakhouse, 6541 E Tanque Verde, Tucson. Together w/
- Jul 6-11, 2020** **CORSA Convention.** San Diego, California. Crown Plaza Hotel, 2270 Hotel Circle North. Go to CORSA website for more details. [www.corvair.org](http://www.corvair.org).

## 3rd Quarter 2019 Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the quarterly meeting of the Tucson Corvair Association held July 16, 2019 at O’Rielly Chevrolets, 6160 E Broadway, Tucson, Arizona.

A brief meeting was held with members Allen Elvick, Ron Bloom, Tim Lindhorn, Bill Sala, and Dave Lynch present.

Next quarterly meeting will be held on January 21, 2020.



1963 Greenbrier, 110/4, recently completed project belonging to Quaid Comaduran, Van Pershing’s grandson. It all the rage at Marana High School!





# Parts from the Corvair will live on forever!



This '69 Nova was featured on a recent episode of *Hand Built Hot Rods* on the Motor Trend channel. Not much Corvair in the car but the Cosra dash really makes the interior!

With '69 Camaro sheet metal grafted into the sides and an LS4 engine under the hood, you could sit behind the wheel and it would *almost* be like driving your Corsa!



# Give it up for an American Hero

Jason Torchinski—Jalopnik, July 4, 2019



Happy Fourth of July, fellow Americans! And, everyone else, have a beer and a hot dog on me! By me, I mean the United States government, who I'm sure will reimburse you promptly. Today I'd like to celebrate an under-appreciated American hero, that least-American-seeming of American cars: the Chevrolet Corvair. Specifically, I want to remind the world how incredibly influential the design of the Corvair was.

For most people, the Corvair is remembered as the *Unsafe at Any Speed* car, but that's an unfair reduction; the Corvair was a pretty radical car, especially for America, which at the time—remember, the Corvair was developed in the late 1950s—was producing, almost exclusively, front-engine, rear-wheel drive, body-on-frame cars with massive fins and pounds and pounds of chrome.

The Corvair, whose design was headed by the legendary Bill Mitchell, was a masterpiece in crisp, handsome, clean design. For a car developed in the late 1950s, it was remarkably fresh and unadorned, with a light, airy greenhouse, a simple, upright stance, and a distinctive beltline that ran around the entire car.

It was likely the most globally influential single-model American car ever made.

Don't believe me? Maybe you'll believe this full-color chart I made showing some of the most notable (but I don't think all) cars across the world that



were directly influenced by the Corvair design—some of which you could argue were simply the actual Corvair design, just shrunken down a bit.



# Thoughts on the reorganization of TCA

It's almost been a year since the board of directors changed the format of TCA. As you may recall, it was decided to have our monthly meeting in conjunction with the Classic Chevy Club of Tucson with TCA business meetings to be held quarterly. The number of officers required to run the Club was reduced and the *Corvairsation* was changed from a monthly publication to a quarterly one and the dues structure was changed.

All of these changes were made in an effort to keep the Club viable. Our monthly attendance was down to just a few people at each meeting. Participation in Club activities was only two to three per activity, if that.

## PROS:

With our joining with the CCCT for meetings and activities TCA member attendance has actually increased albeit very little and we are able to enjoy well planned activities with new friends who all drive Chevys. This lifts the burden from TCA leadership of not having to plan monthly activities with the prospect of having nobody or only a couple of people show up.

Our presence at CCCT meetings and activities has actually given the Corvair a lot of positive exposure among the Chevrolet community and a little more respect among Chevy owners who maybe heretofore have thought of the Corvair like most of people think of the Vega or the Chevette.

## CONS:

Many of our members and former members have the perceived idea that the Tucson Corvair Association no longer exists. This, of course, couldn't be further from the truth but it does tarnish our credibility as a club somewhat and we're are loosing a little bit of our identity.

We miss out on the opportunity to gather as just Corvair people to discuss our common interests, technical issues and show off the progress of our latest projects.

So, have these changes helped or hindered the TCA thus far? It's probably a matter of opinion for most, but the changes were necessary given the atmosphere under which we were trying to function as a club. The half dozen people who attended the meetings regularly were serving and had been serving as officers for many, many years in some cases. Many of the new people who joined TCA came to a few meetings thinking that there might more to the Club and after a few meeting never returned.

So, have these changes helped or hindered the Tucson Corvair Association? You be the judge.

*Editor*

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## 2019 TCA Membership Roster

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A reminder to all: 2020 dues will be due in the next few months. Please remit all dues payment to Club Treasurer, Allen Elvick. Annual dues are \$5. Thank you.



# Meet the TUF1

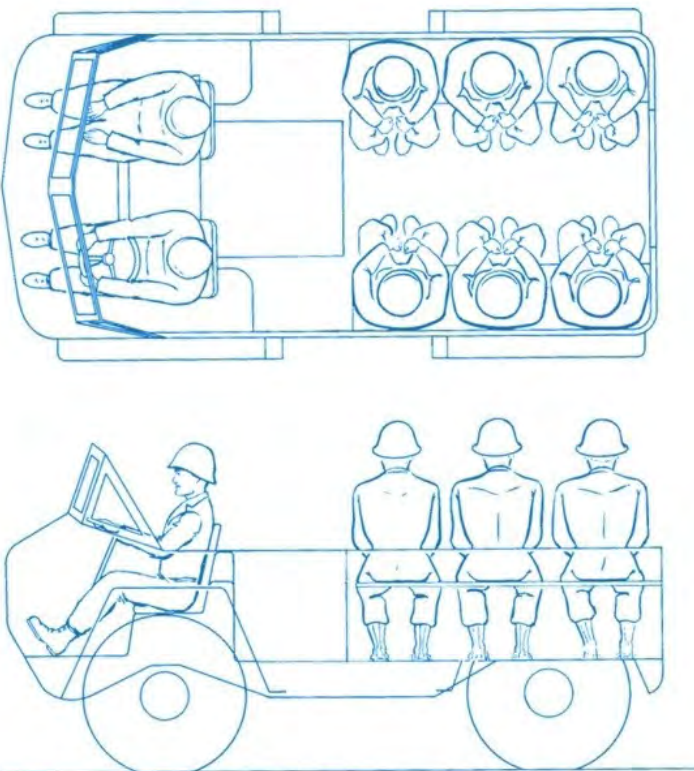
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Suspension was taken right from existing Corvair-based vans and trucks, with the addition of additional driveshafts for the front wheels.

You'd think there'd be some sort of propellers for propulsion in water, but that wasn't the case; the wheels, with their chunky-tread tires were simply used as paddlewheels, and those funny half-skirts over the wheelarches seem to have assisted in making the wheels more effective at pushing water. It appears that the front wheels still steered, acting like rudders in the water. This was much like other amphibious cars like the Amphicar or the wartime Volkswagen Schwimmwagen.

The TUF1 was said to be capable of 60 MPH on land and 2.5 MPH in the water, pretty decent for a truck like this.

While the chassis was aluminum, the body of the TUF1 was made from Royalite, a strong thermoplastic that was a lighter alternative to fiberglass. The flexibility of passenger and cargo layouts was shown clearly in illustrations and diagrams the manual provided by Chevrolet, which showed seating for eight in a relatively compact package. Look at those very stylish helmets:



Without the six rear passengers, there was 23 cubic feet of cargo space, though I imagine you could easily mix-and-match people and cargo as needed.

I'm really taken by this thing. If Chevy had been truly bold, it would have walked away from the Army's lack of interest and turned this thing into a fun Corvair variant, effectively competing in the recreational boating space as well.

If it could have given this thing an easily-foldable top and a few creature comforts, maybe some chrome trim, Chevy could have been the first major American manufacturer to mass-market an amphibious vehicle. GM was absolutely ruling the American car-buying world back then. If any company ever had cash for this kinda thing, it'd be 1960s GM.

Something like this, maybe with an optional hardtop and real side windows, could have competed as a family hauler against the VW Microbus, with the huge added perk that you could drive it into a lake if the urge struck you.

