Fanbelt Flyer

The Newsletter of the Oldest Continuous Corvair Club in the World!

Cactus Corvair Club Est.1962 Phoenix Arizona

January 2026 Volume 64 Issue 1

Letter From The Editor – *Braden Pastore*

This month I'd like to talk about one of the best benefits of belonging to the Club—the ability to contact other Club members when you get stuck on a problem.

As most of you know my wife Nancy has owned her '65 Monza, Duane (De Banque-Account), since the early 80s. When I met her she had already made some modifications, one of which was removing the Ralph Kramden bus driver steering wheel and replacing it with a smaller, sportier (and much harder to turn) steering wheel so that she could move the seat forward without cutting off circulation to her legs.

A couple of months back, Duane decided that setting the turn signals off at random times would make Nancy's driving experience a little more exciting. After going through a period of denial followed by one of hoping that the situation would cure itself we decided that we were going to have to do something because, in his current condition Duane was UNSAFE to drive. (See what I did there.)

All signs pointed to something amiss in the turn signal assembly so I started researching removal and replacement of the various components that could have failed. Duane was one of the lucky 4% of Corvairs that came with Telescopic Steering (in my opinion, a pretty ingenious but useless option) in 1965 so I immediately went to the Clark's website o look for parts. I was disappointed to find out that they only had used parts available and it seemed kinda stupid to me to replace a 60 year old broken piece of plastic with another 60 year old piece of plastic. So I was off to the Corvair Forums online.

To my delight if found that the '65 Corvette used the exact same steering column assembly in its Telescopic Steering models and since Corvette owners have much deeper pockets than Corvair owners, brandy-new reproductions of the component parts were available at reasonable prices.

I was able to find a YouTube video of the disassembly and reassembly of a Tele column that gave you juuuust enough information to give you confidence to try to do the job but not enough to successfully complete it. I was able to figure out which part had most likely failed and order it.

Once the part arrived I overcame my fear of failure and started the disassembly process meticulously documenting each step. Of course nothing in Duane's column matched the parts in the video but I figured that Nancy's ex boyfriend who had done the original wheel swap had to be creative when he did the original job.

Everything went pretty well until I got to the turn signal switch itself. It looked nothing like the replacement part and for some reason I couldn't get it out of the column. I was stuck. It was at that point I remembered that I was a member of the Cactus Corvair Club. I posted my dilemma on the Facebook page and members posted possible solutions but none of them worked. Dave W took pity on me and said he'd come over and take a look when he got the chance,

Letter From The Editor – *continued*

Dave surveyed the situation and was able to extract the old switch from the column and we determined that it had indeed failed and since he had had experience with non Telescopic columns that the switch was from one of those. We surmised that the original switch must have been damaged and that the only replacement part available at the time was a conventional switch from a junkyard.

After a little McGuyvering on Dave's part to thread the connectors through the column and a functionality test on the new switch, Duane had turn signals again (I realize that nobody uses turn signals anymore but it's a good idea that when they DO come on the driver is aware of it). Dave was confident at this point that I could finish the repair on my own and surprisingly, I was.

Anyway, the point of this story is that none of us is alone when it comes to keeping our Corvairs on the road. Club members with a little more experience than you can help you get through a rough spot when you hit it. Thanks to Dave and all the members that offered help. Duane is back on the road.

Send us an Article—Win CCC Swag! – *Braden Pastore*

I got a couple of submissions this month. Of course they went directly to Dave W instead of to cactuscorvairclub@gmail.com. But hey, I'm flexible (or is it desperate)

Contributors willl get one of these swell Club logos. Dave W will take care those of you who help me out but you'll have to work out the logistics with him.

Again, If you have a submission, send it to cactuscorvairclub@gmail.com.

Tech Session – *Braden Pastore*

We're doing a Club Tech Session on January 17th at Scott and Jill's in Apache Junction. The shop is located near the the intersection of US 60 and Idaho road. Dave W will give you the exact address when you RSVP.

Among other things we'll be fixing the emergency brake cable on Bob C's 64 Monza so he can finally get rid of his wheel chocks and do a demo of how to set valve lash.

Members are encouraged to use the lift at Scott's shop if necessary and to use our group knowledge to solve any problems we might be having (vehicle wise).

We've contracted with the same caterer that we used at the annual picnic and he'll be providing a menu similar to the one we had there. You can let us know if you'll be bringing any sides or desserts when you RSVP.

The event runs from 10 til 2 with lunch served around noon. We'll also be doing a 50/50 raffle so bring cash (remember cash?)

Full details are available on the Club Calendar

Save The Date – *Braden Pastore*

February 14 is Valentines Day and what could be more romantic than bringing the one you love (and your significant other) to the 12th annual Concours in the Hills. Registraton closes January 16 so sign up if you haven't already. Here's a link.

Last year's festivities

A Corvair Story – *Randy Lewis*

My name is Randy Lewis and I joined the Cactus Corvair Club in October. I was born and grew up in a suburb outside of Detroit (Motown). My dad was a “Car Guy” who always had collectible cars of the 1950s - 1970s. Dad never owned a Corvair however, so my knowledge and memory of them was pretty sparse back then.

My first recollection of a Corvair was in about 1982 when I spotted a Crocus Yellow 1965 coupe with Chevy Rally wheels that captured my attention. At the time I was working for one of Chrysler's advertising agencies in downtown Detroit and an art director at the firm drove the Corvair regularly to work. I specifically remember the beautiful roofline, sleek profile and sporty, 15” Rally wheels with BSW tires. At the time (in my mid-20s) that car looked just about perfect to me, aspiring one day to own one like it rather than the rusty, brown turd, Ford Pinto I was driving to work.

Fast forward to 1994 when I moved from Michigan to Arizona to join a Design and Marketing firm as their Director of Client Service. Again, I was working on automotive business, this time for GMC, VW, Jaguar and Audi brands. Around that same time my mom and dad also decided to move west, purchasing a home in Kingman, AZ. Dad immediately sought out the local cars guys in the community, befriending his neighbor Oscar.

Oscar was a Corvair “Car Guy,” having owned 5-6 over the years. When dad introduced me to him in 1996, he owned a stunning 1966 Monza 140 Convertible in Marina Blue, with wire wheel covers and a power top. One day dad called to tell me Oscar was thinking about selling the Monza, wondering if II';d be interested. Of course I jumped at the chance and soon owned that beautiful car myself. I improved the car in many ways over the years I owned it, getting initiated quickly, pulling the engine to remedy leaking push rod tube seals and a worn clutch.

I thoroughly enjoyed that car and put probably 3,000 miles on it in the four years I owned it. I do remember the dreaded convertible cowl shake (not so fondly) when driving over rough pavement or railroad tracks, due to the lack of a steel roof to stiffen the body.

In 2000, I set out on my own with a couple business partners to start a marketing firm. Unfortunately, the Monza became a casualty of that venture, selling it to raise funds for the new company. I sold the Monza to a California buyer for the sum of $3,500. He was happy as a clam to have found it. I've owned more than 70 cars in my life, many of them vintage collectibles, but the Corvair has always been a favorite.

This past year, post retirement, I began searching in earnest for another Corvair. I'd thinned my herd to the point I had a little extra room. I looked at a 1965 Corsa coupe locally, but decided against it as it was a bit too rough for me, with an incorrect engine and a fair amount of body filler. Craiglist and Facebook Marketplace became a daily visit while seraching for my next Corvair.

In September of this year I finally struck pay dirt, locating a 1966 Corvair Corsa Turbo coupe in Marina Blue, my favorite color. The owner and I talked at length a number of times and many pictures of the car were forwarded.

I discovered the car was located on Orcas Island off the Washington coast. The car had lived nearly its entire life on one of the San Juan islands, making its way to the mainland just a few times for car shows here and there. Reportedly the car was well known in the northwest. I contemplated driving the car home from the Seattle area to Phoenix, but eventually decided on having it shipped instead. I bought the car, sight unseen, based on the pictures sent and the words of the Corvair enthusiast owner. He represented the car as a true rust-free survivor always owned by auto enthusiasts.

A Corvair Story – *continued*

When the car arrived in Arizona it was exactly as described. The car had one repaint in the 80s in its original color but other than that the car is nearly original. It did have a set of non-period correct Camaro alloys on it that I've replaced with earlier Chevy Rally steel wheels with chrome trim rings and center caps. I have plans that include a fresh paint job and I've already begun replacing critical wear components and sprucing the car up a bit.

The car has roughly 35,000 original miles and I was told by the previous owner he never had the car over 50 mph because of speed limits on the island.

I'm looking forward to getting to know club members and benefit from your years of experience. I have always wrenched on all my collectible cars, but my Corvair mechanical skills and knowledge are definitely a little rusty at this point.

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6 Cylinders/6 Questions – *Scott Tom*

[Editor's note: Scott is going to be the host of our next tech session so here's a chance to find out what makes him tick.]

WHY??? (What's wrong with you?)

I wanted something different—something a little weird, something you never see on the road. Then I came across a custom-chopped Greenbrier built by Howard Boso, and that's what started it all.

Dream car (doesn't have to be a Corvair)

My dream car is one I'd build myself—a custom blend of a Greenbrier and a Rampside. I have it already sketched out.

Proudest automotive achievement. (can be a restoration, a McGyver-esque repair, a driving experience, a successful flat tire replacement, etc)

My proudest automotive achievement has been working on the Corvairs over the past six months—I've learned a ton. I've worked on plenty of vehicles throughout my life, but I'm not a mechanic; I've mostly handled minor repairs. This project pushed me further than anything I've done before.

I'm proud of starting the Bink's Coolvair Addiction YouTube channel. Never in my life did I imagine I'd get this deep into Corvairs, as we own 18 and counting, all within the last 3 years.

Where are you from and why are you here. (you can decline if you're currently in the witness protection program)

I'm originally from Franklin, WI. We moved to Arizona because we were tired of the long winters; snow plowing and summers mowing, raking leaves, we were ready for a change. Now that we're here, we absolutely love Arizona.

6 Cylinders/6 Questions – *Continued*

Favorite non automotive activity (keep it clean)

I love browsing and buying at flea markets, car swaps, and antique shops, and I enjoy spending time with my wife and our two dogs

Best sandwich (I stole this one from Stephen Colbert)

Cousins Subs' BLT, extra mayo, plus cheese on Italian bread.

The Waaaaaay Back Page – Braden Pastore

This delightful snippet comes from September of '65. Apparently, the desert was a little cooler back then so you didn't have to be afraid to drive your 'Vair 450 miles just for the fun of it.

Of course I would imagine it was too hot to wear your turtleneck, though so how would anybody know you were a Swinging Playboy?

Rally Goes Saturday

A state championship rally, cosponsored by the Cactus Corvair Club and Copperstate Sports Car Club will kick off from Hayden Plaza Saturday.

Registration for the rally, dubbed the "Playboy Swinging Safari," starts at 7 a.m. Entry is limited to 100 cars.

The rally, 450 miles in length, will end Sunday morning.