

## From the President's Garage - By David Dean

"A Corvair? Isn't that the car the Ralph Nader killed?" Perhaps the most frequent statement made whenever our Corvairs are out and about. From car shows (with supposedly knowledgeable car enthusiasts) or the public admiring our GM classics, this often-quoted mis-information opens many of the conversations that enable us to explain and educate the public about our cars. So, what really happened? The first highly publicized Ford Mustang arrived in mid-1964 and took the country by storm. Built along the lines of the economical Ford Falcon, with a sporty body and more options, the Mustang caused Corvair sales to drop by more than half in 1966. Most Americans could more easily relate to the Mustang, with its conventional front-end loaded, six-cylinder, liquid cooled engine. Moreover, the longer hood offered room for bigger, stronger V8 engines ushering in a decade of muscle car wars between the big three Detroit automakers.

Even though the redesigned late model was a drastic step forward towards the styling cues of the later Chevelle, Camaro, and other GM coupes of the late 60s, the Corvair powerpack was neither a huge success as an economical alternative to the Volkswagen, or as an American sports car. Left between niche markets, GM sealed the Corvair's fate in April, 1965, with an internal memo that prohibited further significant development work on the car. It wanted a conventional coupe to take on the success of Ford's successful pony car. Code-named Panther, GM designers set about bringing the new Chevy Camaro to market in 1967.

And what of Nader's role in the Corvair's demise? In 1965, Ralph Nader published *Unsafe at Any Speed*, a criticism of the U.S. auto industry's safety record. Only the first chapter was about the Corvair, but that was all that the reviewers and critics read. Nader's complaint was about the 1960-63 rear suspension design that was already discontinued, but the damage to Corvair's reputation was done. GM's mishandling of its response to Nader only made things worse. The Camaro was supposed to end Corvair production. The Corsa was discontinued in 1967, but the Corvair soldiered on through 1969 as the 500 and higher-line Monza coupe and convertible. GM wanted to sell the car long enough to amortize its tooling. It also kept the Corvair around a few more years simply because of its pride. Ralph Nader didn't kill the Corvair. GM unwilling to give in to pressure, kept the Corvair in production letting the Corvair fade quietly into automotive history. It is interesting to note that both the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) in 1972, and more recent testing conducted by insurance companies not only refuted Nader's claims; but exonerated the Corvair and GM of these charges showing Nader's data was flawed.



February was a busy, and perhaps most successful month for our club in the time I've been president. We attended five events, every weekend an activity, where our cars met former Corvair owners, interested armchair engineers, and families of all ages who gained new insights into our cars, automotive... nay, American history... because of a book that changed the automotive industry, and made cars safer for everyone. February 27, as one of our most active months comes to a close, Ralph Nader celebrates his 84<sup>th</sup> birthday. We wish him well, and thank him... for actually saving the Corvair.

Happy motoring,  
David "Doc" Dean

---



## Caliente Clowns Car Show, Florence AZ, February 17, 2018

Once again, your Cactus Corvair Club attended the Caliente Clowns Car Show in Florence Arizona. When the Caliente Clowns began in the early 1990s, they entertained at the over-55 RV park from which they took their name and at a local nursing home. They also greeted spectators at Florence's annual Junior Parade parade. It wasn't too long before groups that serve children in need discovered them and invited them to participate. Today, they're involved in numerous children's charities. The clowns bring clothing, stuffed animals and other items to the Pinal County Family Advocacy Center in San Tan Valley, the Arizona Department of Child Safety, the local crisis pregnancy center and events hosted by Bikers Against Child Abuse, among others. This year's show again prominently featured Corvairs as part of the Car Show, Silent Auction, and BBQ luncheon. We brought three early models (two convertibles, and one sedan); five late models (three convertibles, and two coups) and the half car on full display. The event was also the debut of Bob K's new-to-him '65 Corsa, recently purchased from a former club member.



**EARNHARDT**  
"NO BULL" SINCE 1951



Thorobred Chevrolet is Now

**EARNHARDT CHEVROLET**

Sales: (602) 626-9500

Service: (602) 635-9157





## Other February Club Outings

Here are some of our club member's cars out at the many February Events,



Congratulations to club members Chuck R and Dick R. for taking home some hardware from the Sweetheart All Chevy Show held at the Scottsdale Pavilions, February 18. Way to go!

## Corvair Preservation Foundation Announces Museum Opening - Decatur, IL



Save the Date. The New Corvair Museum curated by the Corvair Preservation Foundation will hold its grand opening with a swap meet, car show, food and fun! The new Corvair Museum located at 3635 US Route 36 East, Decatur, Illinois has 9,000 square feet of space to display Corvairs in their collection and exhibits that include, mechanical displays, literature and artwork.

The Corvair Preservation Foundation came up with these "25 Things You Didn't Know About Corvairs" -- or which you will enjoy anyway even if you did. Here are some highlights from their list:

1. The secret of the Corvair was leaked 18 months early, on April 11, 1958, when United Auto Workers official Dave Mann told the press that General Motors would build a small car at the Willow Run plant in Ypsilanti, Mich.
2. Motor Trend magazine's Car of the Year for 1960, Corvair had GM's first all-independent suspension. To use an existing manual transmission, the engine rotation had to be reversed so as not to have one low forward gear and four reverse.
3. Unibody construction with welded front fenders, a first for GM, meant that Fisher Body employees aligned the whole car.
4. Some 8,000 Corvairs were stockpiled at the GM's Milford, Mich., Proving Grounds in preparation for the October 1959 launch; 250 were "swimmers" (caught in a flood) but cleaned up, reupholstered and sold.
5. Oct. 2 was the official launch day and considered national Drive Your Corvair To Work Day annually.
6. Initial Corvair models were 500 and 700 four-door sedans. The most basic 500 is known as the Caveman for its simplicity. Coupes followed in January 1960, then the Monza coupe with 4-speed on the floor in the spring.
7. Surviving early Corvairs are Nos. 375 and 428, both sporting original front fenders, which lasted only 500 cars into the production run.
8. Chevrolet dealers were dismayed by the initial price, which could climb to \$2,500 with Powerglide, heater and radio, only \$200 less than a full-size Biscayne.
9. Gas mileage could be as high at 26 m.p.g. highway, until the VW-style gasoline-powered heater was fired up at a loss of 6 to 8 m.p.g.
10. A boatload of 1960 Corvairs was sent to Cuba before the revolution. At last count, three survive; two reportedly running with front-mounted Russian motors.
11. Dick Doane Chevrolet in East Dundee and Chicago Tribune writers made two attempts to drive to Rio de Janeiro in three Corvairs, with a support truck and fuel truck. They got as far as Colombia in 1961, where one car remains in the jungle, according to a British Army photograph from 1972.
12. In 1961, the Corvan panel van, Greenbrier passenger van and Lakewood station wagon and Rampside pickup were introduced. Air conditioning was optional.





13. GM built several front-wheel-drive prototypes in 1961, based on Alfa Romeo 1900 and Renault Caravelle platforms; a four-wheel-drive Corvan was tested.

14. One of the rarest Corvairs is the 1962 Loadside pickup. Only 369 were made, with a well in the center of the floor that could not be swept out.

15. The Corvair was an enormously popular base for show cars: the 1961 Sebring Spyder and Pininfarina Speciale, 1962 Super Spyder and Bertone Testudo, 1963 Monza GT and SS, 1966 Fitch Phoenix, 1967 Astro 1 survive.



16. A radical 1965 redesign with Fisher Z body saw the rear suspension resemble Corvette's to address safety issues (see "Unsafe at Any Speed"). And the heater and A/C were improved. But without the pop of the V-8 Ford Mustang, sales dwindled and opened the door to the Panther (Camaro).

17. Don Yenko extracted up to 240 h.p. from Yenko Stinger Corvairs, which were competitive Sports Car Club of America racers. He built 100 in one month in 1965, with a total of 185 from 1965-67.

18. In 1968, XP-892 was shown as a full-size model for the 3rd-generation Corvair, planned for 1970, but scrapped. However, the 1974 Holden Monaro HJ coupe borrowed some styling cues.

19. Corvair was down to two coupes and a convertible for 1968-69. A/C was discontinued because of the engine load added by an emissions air pump.

20. Modular Corvair engines were built to bolt together in 4-, 8- and 10-cylinder configurations. One, a 10-cylinder front-wheel-drive configuration, was used in the development of the Olds Toronado.

21. The rarest Corvair is the amphibious Corphibian Loadside pickup. One was built. The GM plant in Oshawa, Ontario, built 100 amphibious Corvair Dynatrack articulated vehicles for the U.S. and Canadian Armies. The Australian Army ordered 500 but didn't have the money upfront.

22. Apollo astronauts trained on a Corvair-based lunar rover in New Mexico.

23. The last Corvair was VIN:105379W106000, an Olympic Gold 1969 coupe with black interior. It's reported to have been destroyed, but ...



24. In the 1970s, Viton finally made a rubber seal that resisted the heat around Corvair pushrods and cured the oil leaks that had plagued the cars since they were new.

25. By 1971, the National Highway Safety Transportation Board declared the Corvair no less safe than anything else on the road in the early 1960s. Take that, Ralph Nader (the consumer crusader who made his name in 1965 with "Unsafe at Any Speed," the book that targeted Corvair).

---

## 34<sup>th</sup> Tri-State Corvair Meet

Not going to make the trek to the National Convention? Join us in beautiful Crested Butte Colorado nestled in a picturesque box canyon in the heart of the Colorado Rocky Mountains for the 34<sup>th</sup> Tri-State presented by Rocky Mountain CORSA. Registration and welcome gathering at host hotel Friday afternoon and evening. Saturday's car show will be held along historic Elk Avenue in the town of Crested Butte. Our goal is to have downtown Crested Butte awash on Corvairs so make your plans to bring out your favorite ride and join us and the Pikes Peak Corvair Club's cut-a-way Corvair!



The chair lifts will be running for hiking and biking (single ride lift ticket are part of the room package). Gunnison, the scenic Black canyon and Blue Mesa reservoir are a short drive from the hotel. The special \$99 event rate is available up to 3 days before and after the event weekend so bring the family and make it a vacation to remember.

### Hotel Info:

The Grand Lodge at Crested Butte Resort sits at the base of the world famous Crested Butte Ski resort. Shops, pubs and other family activities around the hotel are in abundance, and the town of Crested Butte is a short drive or shuttle away for more shopping and eating along historic Elk Ave.

Two room options are available at the special rate. The King Suite has a king-sized bed and a queen pull out in the sitting area, and the Emmons Suite which has a king bed and a king-sized Murphy bed in the sitting area. All rooms are equipped with a kitchenette, flat panel HDTV's. Each room will also come with a single ride lift ticket for each registered guest per day.

There will also be parking set aside for our Corvairs and tow rigs.

Call 888-443-6715 for reservations. Use the code phrase "**Rocky Mountain CORSA Tri-State Rally**" to get the special rate. Reservation agents are available to guide you with bookings of other activities.

Book online at <http://www.skicb.com/mygroup> use booking code: 10249. (standard room choice is the King Suite. Emmons Suite is also available at the \$99 rate)

**When:** June 8-10, 2018

**Where:** Grand Lodge at Crested Butte  
500 Gothic Rd, Mt Crested Butte, CO 81225

Commemorative T-Shirts are available for pre-order on the RMC website at:

<http://www.rockymountaincorsa.org/2018-tristate-t-shirt-order/>

Hope to see you there! But just so we know you're coming, please register at:

<http://www.rockymountaincorsa.org/2018-tristate-registration/>

Rick Beets

Event Chair, Rocky Mountain CORSA

Tri-state@triple-5.net

## **Cactus Corvair Club Meeting February 7, 2018 Secretary's Report by Dave W:**

The meeting was called to order at 7 PM by President David Dean. David apologized for the lateness of the February newsletter.

David read the Secretary's Report and then Gary S. motioned for approval, Bill R. seconded and the minutes were accepted as published.

Joe L. was out of state so David Dean reported the Opening balance for last month was \$1680 and the closing balance was \$1740. There were no expenses in the last 30 days, only membership renewals. Gary S. motioned for approval, Bill R. seconded and the Treasurer's Report was accepted as read.

David Dean reported on the Air-cooled AZ meet being a bust on Jan 14<sup>th</sup> due to all of the roads that were closed due to the Rock-and-Roll marathon in that vicinity. Attendees instead rerouted to the Hoosier Café in Chandler and since all club board members and officers were in attendance, a board meeting was held while eating breakfast. Topics included that we currently have three Lifetime Members including Charlie Dye, Ande Lange and John Seaman. Also discussed were simple ways to help build the club treasury by hosting a 50/50 at all gatherings, selling T-shirts, club license plates, club logo stickers and such. David's wife Marian has agreed to make a Corvair quilt that will be sold with proceeds going to the club. Also discussed at the board meeting was the event schedule as detailed in the newsletter and on the website.

David mentioned that website traffic was logging about 100 visitors per week with most people viewing 2-3 pages while on the site. Ideas to keep the site actively visited were to host some unique technical or historical information on the site that others might link back to often.

A membership application was received from Anthony Laube and his son Alex. They have visited our events several times this year and just got a 62 Monza they are working on. Their membership was unanimously approved.

David Dean mentioned that John H. could not be at the meeting but he is coordinating an embroidered shirt purchase from Embroidme in Phoenix. Please contact John at the next meeting if you wish to join the group purchase.

Several samples of a possible new club sticker were passed around at the meeting. David W. has volunteered to print them as required for sale to club members as a fund raiser. The advantage is that they can be printed 4-6 at a time as needed instead of us being required to order hundreds from other sources. Dave will present final results soon.

The club received a request to help sell some early model Corvair items that a previous club member is clearing out. For sale were some assorted trim parts, horn rings, and emblems. The seller is also giving away some old Corsa Communique magazines. Please contact David Dean for further info or watch for an ad in the next newsletter.

David reminded everyone to check the newsletter and website for upcoming events. The Caliente Clowns Car Show is Feb 17<sup>th</sup> in Florence and everyone was encouraged to meet at the Gold Canyon Basha's to drive together the last 30 minutes of the trip. Meeting time there is 7-7:15. Maps and last minute details are on the website.

Other events coming up (all show details can be found on the club website);

Sweetheart All-Chevy Show at the Scottsdale Pavilions on Feb 18<sup>th</sup>

Cruisin' through the Decades at Desert Ridge High School Feb 24<sup>th</sup>

Ostrich Festival Car Show March 3<sup>rd</sup>

Melrose on 7<sup>th</sup> Street Fair and Car Show March 3<sup>rd</sup>

Catch-a-Wave in Tempe on March 17<sup>th</sup>  
 Cruisin' to the Lakes on March 17<sup>th</sup>  
 Good Guys at Westworld on March 16-18  
 All American Car Show in Goodyear March 18<sup>th</sup>

We had a visitor to the meeting, Roger, who may join the club soon. He's had a 65 Corsa for over 24 years and used to work at the GM proving Grounds in Mesa. His Corsa currently has a 110 engine but he has the original 140 that he plans to rebuild while he also freshens up the interior with some new upholstery.

David Dean related repair some issues he's been going through with his two late models. He was attempting to do a valve adjustment on the convertible but a very leaky fuel pump changed those plans. Chris S. helped him find a pump locally so that is schedule for an install soon. David installed a new Roger Parent throttle linkage system on his coupe while he also installed the secondary carbs that were not on the used engine he bought some time ago. An intermittent wire connection was causing a no-start problem but that was solved. Now the flexplate to torque converter bolts seems to have backed out causing some really loud noises from the engine. That's on David's repair schedule too.

Nancy and Braden P. suggested a place to meet for a possible Fun Run to Tortilla Flats this spring. The What's Crakin' Cafe in Mesa holds a breakfast cruise-in car show on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month through May. It could be a great meeting place for Corvair owners before a scenic cruise to Tortilla Flat. The drive from there to Tortilla Flat is under 1 hour. This will be added to the club schedule for April 21<sup>st</sup>.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1957740444493104/>

The 50/50 was won by David Dean.

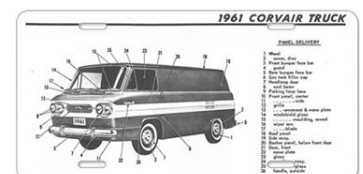
The meeting adjourned at 7:45 with some members heading to Culver's for some treats.

Submitted by Dave Wenzlick

## Upcoming Events

Mar 3rd	Classic Car Show Chandler Ostrich Festival
Mar 7th	Regular club meeting night at Earnhardt Chevrolet 7 PM
Mar 17th	Catch-a-Wave Car Show in Tempe
Mar 17th	Cruiz'n to the Lakes in Goodyear
Mar 17th	9 <sup>th</sup> Annual GoodGuys, Spring Nationals
Mar 18th	9th Annual All American Car Show at Sands Chevrolet
Mar 24th	Impala Bob's 10 <sup>th</sup> Annual Falcon Field Car Show
April 7th	Annual Club Picnic Day at Eldorado Park
April 21st	Corvair Fun Run to Tortilla Flat starting at What's Crackin' Café in Mesa
April 28th	Chevy Showdown in Tucson
June 8-10	34th Annual Tri-State Corvair Meet Crested Butte CO.
Oct 26-28	Great Western Fan Belt Toss and Swap Meet Palm Springs CA.

For details and forms, check [cactuscorvairclub.com/upcoming-events.html](http://cactuscorvairclub.com/upcoming-events.html)





## Treasurer's Report February 2018 by Joe Lewis

Beginning Balance as of	1/31/2018	\$1740.05
<b>INCOME</b>		
	50-50	20.00
	RENEWALS	45.00
	NEW MEMBER	30.00
	DONATION	
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
ENDING BALANCE	2/28/2018	\$1835.05
<b>PENDING CHECKS</b>		
Pending Deposits		
BOOK BALANCE	2/28/2018	\$1835.05

**Clark's**  
Corvair Parts®

Site of the World's Largest  
**Corvair Parts Supplier**  
Since 1973



### ARIZONA CORVAIR CORRAL

1043 W. Roundup St  
Apache Junction, AZ 85120  
New, Used, and NOS  
Parts and Repairs  
480-242-1211

**Gary Sudbeck**

**Corvair**  
**Repairs and Rebuilds**  
**(480)827-2065**



## About Us:

While a salesman at Rudolph Chevrolet in Phoenix Arizona, Lou Grubb decided there were possibilities in an inexpensive, economy car produced by the Chevrolet Division, the Corvair. He sent letters to recent Corvair buyers and devotees alike inviting them to a social dedicated to appreciation of the car. With a promising response, discussion turned to organizing a new sports car club. With hasty planning, the first event was an economy run put together by a group of rookie enthusiasts who later became the first members of Cactus Corvair Club after its Constitution was signed in October 2, 1963. We are the oldest, continually active, Corvair club in the world!

As part of the Phoenix Chapter of CORSA (Corvair Society of America) we hosted our first regional mini-convention in April of 1976. People from all over the country came, with an estimated 90 cars and 150 people attendees. The event included autocross, a concours show, driving tour of the Valley of the Sun, and a "Fiesta banquet.

The Cactus Corvair Club hosts an annual All-Corvair show in early October, participates in classic car shows throughout the year (usually benefitting local charities), and supports classic car events, museums, and organizations dedicated to the preservation and public education of our automotive history. We are a community of car enthusiasts; all our events are family oriented and we are excited to meet you.

Club Officers		Board Members:
President	<b>David Dean</b> <a href="mailto:dr.dean@cox.net">dr.dean@cox.net</a>	<b>Miner Fleming</b>
Vice President	<b>John Hamel</b>	<b>Chris Slonecker</b>
Treasurer	<b>Joe Lewis</b>	<b>Gary Sudbeck</b>
Secretary	<b>Dave Wenzlick</b>	

Webmaster Dave W. [dave@rcaz.com](mailto:dave@rcaz.com)

Librarian Miner Fleming

Membership Dues:

Cactus Corvair Club  
c/o Treasurer Joe Lewis  
5811 W Park Ave  
Chandler, AZ 85226

Meeting room generously provided by:

Earnhardt Chevrolet  
2121 N. Arizona Ave.  
Chandler, AZ 85225



CORSA Chapter  
#850

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=arizona%20corvair%20gatherings>

**UPCOMING Club Meetings:**

February 7	Regular Club Meeting - Earnhardt Chevrolet – 7PM
March 7	Regular Club Meeting - Earnhardt Chevrolet – 7PM
April 4	Regular Club Meeting - Earnhardt Chevrolet – 7PM
May 2	Regular Club Meeting - Earnhardt Chevrolet – 7PM
June-August	No Regular Club Meetings -



Preserving Chevy's Rear Engine Fun Car

---

*We're on the Web!*

*Visit us at:*

[www.cactuscorvairclub.com](http://www.cactuscorvairclub.com)

---

---

***Monthly Meetings***

*Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month  
(except for June, July and August)*

*Location is at [Earnhardt Chevrolet 2121 N. Arizona Ave -  
Chandler AZ 85225](#)*

*Meetings start at 7PM. Driving a Corvair is encouraged  
but not required.*

---

---

**Cactus Corvair Club**  
**5811 W. Park Ave**  
**Chandler, AZ 85226**



Name

Street Address

City, ST ZIP Code

---