

# Fanbelt Flyer

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

September 2019



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

Greetings Corvair Enthusiasts and members! September is here and we begin another season for the Cactus Corvair Club. Though we can expect about six more weeks of hot weather, we look forward to bringing our cars out of the garage and from under the covers so we can drive them! We all know just how fun these cars are and soon we will be able to enjoy them again.



Summer has been a busy time in my garage. Some of you know that last Spring there were two significant events in my Corvair journey. First, I acquired a third Corvair – a 1965 Corsa Coupe. This car is a ground-up build intended for my niece Hannah. She has been helping me with the cars and

helping in my garage and learning about Corvairs – she's 13!

So we've made a deal to build a Corsa and work towards her first car when she is old enough to own one. So "Rockette," as she's been named, was torn down to its barest bones and sent off for media-blasting and primer. Hannah jumped right in on the work along with Gary, Miner, Bob K. and others to remove everything from the car....everything! Over the summer, I was fortunate to work with Gary at his shop to rebuild the front and rear suspension and steering for when the car returns. This will make her a rolling chassis ready for the next phase of body work and paint.



The second event was the catastrophic engine loss "Blue" suffered just outside Tucson on April 27. The car, consuming oil on the trek to the All-Chevy Show at Desert Diamond Casino, conked out just north of Tucson forcing her off the road. Much appreciation goes to the 'strength in numbers' caravan travelling with me that rendered help and then continued on to event with my niece. She ended up having a terrific time at the show (and won several raffle prizes to boot!) Meanwhile, the breakdown happened literally in front of a

trailer dealer, so several hours later, Blue was loaded and ready for transport home. Again, thanks to the Tucson Corvair Club for their support and encouragement, Miner and Joe for looking after Hannah, and Marian who brought my pickup truck down and made the best of what otherwise was a less-than-perfect outing. I had been looking at trailers for a while, but my purchasing schedule moved up out of necessity. Since acquiring the trailer, I had several modifications made that allow easier and safer loading and securing a car for transport. The entire system was put to the test successfully very recently.



As we begin the 2019-2020 season, we look forward to several milestones this year. First, we celebrate the introduction of the Corvair sixty years ago and a new cycle of anniversaries for our beloved cars. I am looking forward to continuing my understanding of the Early Model 'vairs and learning about their role in automotive history. Secondly, we look forward to the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual National Corsa Convention in San Diego, CA next summer. It has been five years since the national convention was on the west coast and nearly eighteen years since it's been "in our backyard." Not since the 2002, when the Corsa Convention was hosted by our club in Flagstaff, AZ, has the opportunity been so close for us to have a prominent showing at the national level. I will be reaching out to the San Diego Corvair Club to see what we can do to assist in making the convention a success. Finally, we continue to explore new and interesting ways to enjoy our cars, support the charitable work of our hobby through attending shows, and plan new opportunities for us to take our cars to the public through events, escapes, and drives. In the meantime, stay cool and hang in there a little longer;... the amazing Arizona climates perfect for our cars is just around the corner.

Happy motoring,  
David "Doc" Dean



## A Little Racing History

The Corvair of Doug Thorley is one of the best remembered funny cars of the sixties. It was known both for its performance and its looks. The Corvair replaced the "Chevy II Heavy" 65 Chevy II. The new Pat Foster built piece had tinted Plexiglas windows, a lace paint job, and gold painted Halibrand mags. The car was the poster child of late 60s fads. The Doug's Headers '67 Corvair at one time held the distinction of being the fastest funny Corvair in the quarter-mile, at 192.30 MPH.



Doug Thorley had one of the great weekends of his career at Indy '67. The Doug's Headers Corvair ran 7.69 to win the race over a number of Hemi powered machines. The 7.69 run and Indy win were the high point of Thorley's funny driving career. The notoriety from the win led to Thorley getting a deal with American Motors to build a rear engine funny car, but the AMC machines never reached the success of the Chevy.

## Another Monza....

I was recently in Hawaii and discovered an interesting commemorating drag racer Roland Leong and his career. Roland "The Hawaiian" Leong is one of the legendary figures in racing, whose over 40 year career as a driver, owner and crew chief for funny cars and dragsters made him one of the sport's greats. Eleven different drivers accounted for his 23 national event wins. In 2005, he was inducted into the International Drag Racing Hall of Fame and in 2006, he was Grand Marshal of the 15th Annual Hot Rod Reunion. From 1983-1991, Hawaiian Punch sponsored Leong's Funny Cars, which was one of the longest running sponsorships in drag racing history.

He arrived from Honolulu as a teenager, just 17 or 18, and can't say for certain what year it was, but Roland Leong quickly made his mark on the burgeoning So-Cal drag racing scene. Working alongside and living under the same roof as Dragmaster Chassis co-owner Jim Nelson in Carlsbad, California, Leong quickly learned the trade of welding fast pipe, later moving on to building nitro Hemis under the tutelage of none other than Keith Black himself

In one of the world's shortest nitro driving careers—8.01 seconds at 191 mph—Leong ended up on the railroad tracks at the far end of the Lions Beach strip when he couldn't find the parachute release. The harrowing experience was enough to turn the young Hawaiian, at the insistent urging of Black, strictly into a team owner and tuner. At 20 years old, he never made another high-speed pass down a drag strip. Instead he paired up with another young California phenom, 23-year-old Don Prudhomme and together in 1965 they won the NHRA Winternationals and U.S. Nationals, with Leong repeating the performance the next season, too, with Mike Snively behind the wheel.



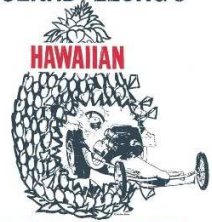
One of the iconic cars of Leong's career was the Hawaiian Power Gloss Monza Funny Car – a 1977 Chevrolet Monza. In 1980, having hired Ron Colson to drive in what was Colson's final year as a professional race-car driver, Leong turned his "King's Hawaiian Bread" Monza Funny Car to victory at the NHRA Winston World Finals in Ontario, California. Besides being Colson's last race, the event was also notable as being the last drag race at

Ontario Motor Speedway. As part of NHRA's 50 years of Funny Car celebration, fans voted on a Top 20 list developed by respected drag racing historians and Funny Car experts. Leong's King's Hawaiian Bread along with such notables as Don Prudhomme's 1982 Pepsi Challenge, the first Funny Car to exceed 250 mph. This car carried "the Snake" to two wins in 1982 and one of the greatest runs in class history, a stunning 5.63 clocking at the U.S. Nationals.



Leong's 1977 Chevrolet Hawaiian Monza lives on today as Temporary Insanity with owner/driver: Krista Massarella of Parsippany, NJ. The chassis is a Steve Plueger 125" wheelbase originally owned by Kenny Berstein with a 478 cubic inch big block Chevrolet engine plugged into a powerglide.

ROLAND LEONG'S



NATIONAL CHAMPION  
1965 & 1966

## Cactus Corvair Club Meeting May 1, 2019 Secretary's Report by Nancy P:

The May, 2019 meeting of the Cactus Corvair Club was held at Earnhardt Chevrolet on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Due to the absence of club president David D., the meeting was officiated by vice-president Dave W. Called to order at 7:00 PM. The minutes from our previous meeting was read and accepted, followed by the treasury report, also read and accepted.



### Old Business

The club donated \$250 to the Corvair Preservation Fund in the memory of Jim J. David D. will be finishing this up when he returns from his trip.

The club had good representation at the Chevy Showdown in Tucson on April 27<sup>th</sup>. Although club president David D.'s car broke down, others in the club had good luck: Joe L. took 1<sup>st</sup> place, Miner F. took 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Dave W. took 3<sup>rd</sup>!

The annual club picnic, held at Tumbleweed Park in Chandler on April 6<sup>th</sup>, was a great success. Well attended by the club and with several Tucson club members driving up to join in the fun, 17 Corvairs in total lined the adjoining street. Everyone agreed the location was great and the club will be securing a spot in the same park for next year's picnic.

### New Business

The club looks forward to more "fun run" type events in the fall when we return from Summer Break. Ideas for destinations include the Air and Space Museum, Biosphere, and some others.

On Saturday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, there is an informal car show at Cobblestone Car Wash in Chandler that some members plan to attend.

The Board of Directors is putting together a show for the fall.

We have a potential new member in Corbin, a young lad who just purchased a '64 convertible and will be restoring it. He and his father attended the meeting to check out the club. We are excited about the prospect of having another young member and hope he returns to join in the fall after the summer break.

After the 50/50 Raffle, the club also raffled off some other useful items.

### Tech Talk

Joe rebuilt an engine. The carbs weren't quite right, but he eventually got it. The linkage was not correctly set up, and he realized he had been running on two carbs instead of four for about four years! 3/4" made all the difference.

John found a tool that measures the temperature of both cylinder heads simultaneously and cost \$146 and will give the information to anyone interested. The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 PM.





Thorobred Chevrolet is Now

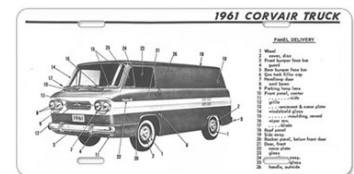
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## Treasurer's Report May 2019 by Joe Lewis

Beginning Balance as of	3/28/2019		\$11,227.77
<b>INCOME</b>			
	50-50	\$	
	NEW MEMBER	\$	
	RENEWALS	\$	
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
ENDING BALANCE	8/31/2019		\$11,227.77
<b>PENDING CHECKS</b>			
Pending Deposits			
BOOK BALANCE	9/1/2019		\$11,227.77



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**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>Dave Wenzlick</b>	<b>Chris Slonecker</b>
Treasurer	<b>Joe Lewis</b>	<b>Gary Sudbeck</b>
Secretary	<b>Nancy Pastore</b>	

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

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

Find us on  
**Facebook**

**Cactus Corvair Club**

**Arizona Corvair  
Gatherings**

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

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/239893616189038/>

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**UPCOMING Club Meetings:**

- September 4            Regular Club Meeting - Earnhardt Chevrolet – 7PM
- January 26             Agri-Country Bluegrass Festival & Car Show – Pinal County Fairgrounds
- October 2               Regular Club Meeting - Earnhardt Chevrolet – 7PM
- October 12             American Legion Post 35 Car Show - Chandler
- November 9            Corvair Cruise-In (Regular Club Meeting) - Pavillions
- March 9                 Caliente Clowns Car Show - Florence



Preserving Chevy's Rear Engine Fun Car

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*We're on the Web!*

*Visit us at:*

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

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***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.*

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



Name  
Street Address  
City, ST ZIP Code