

# Corvairisation

Tucson Corvair Association  
Volume 26, Number 4

Tucson, Arizona  
April 2000

## LATE MODEL STATION WAGON



In this Issue: **Sizing Tires and Wheels**  
**2000 Club Roster**

Tucson Corvair Association  
25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
1975-2000

Tucson Corvair Association  
Established 1975

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 American (CORSAs), Chapter 857.

Monthly Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of each month, except December. One technical/social event is planned for each month except August.

Membership Dues are \$15 per year for singles and \$18 per year for families. Initial dues are \$15 for singles and \$22 for families (includes name tags). Make checks payable to Tucson Corvair Association.

Change of Address: Report any change of address or phone number to the Membership Chairperson. Do not report such changes to the Corvairsation Editor.

CORSA Membership Dues are \$27 per year and include a subscription to the CORSA Communique, a monthly publication. CORSA membership is not required for membership in the TCA, but is highly recommended. See any TCA officer for more information.

Classified Ads are free to members and \$2.50 per 4-line ad to all others.

Deadline for all materials submitted for publication in the Corvairsation is the 10<sup>th</sup> for that month's issue. Mail or deliver all materials to the Corvairsation Editor.

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The Prez Sez.....

Greetings and happy Easter. It's that time of year just before the hot weather to get those Corvairs out of the garage for some exercise. Our upcoming events will be perfect for driving your Corvair. Once again it's Picacho Peak picnic time with Cactus Corvair on the 29<sup>th</sup>. It's important that we have a good showing of Corvairs and members to achieve a grand spectacle of attendance! Please don't be bashful with your Corvair; get it out and show it off!

We also have a tune-up clinic coming up on May 6 at Robinson's house, which will be a great opportunity to get the bugs and/or cobwebs out of your Corvair. You all should take advantage of your fellow club members' expertise to get those cars in shape! This will also enable you to attend our June picnic in Rose Canyon on Mt. Lemmon. Looking forward to seeing you all at our midmonth events...

Happy Corvairing...

Barry Cunningham

from the editor.....

Picacho Picnic... April 29...what to bring? 1. A dish to pass.

2. A raffle prize.

3. Your camera, of course!

TCA will supplement the raffle prizes too; it's a great raffle!

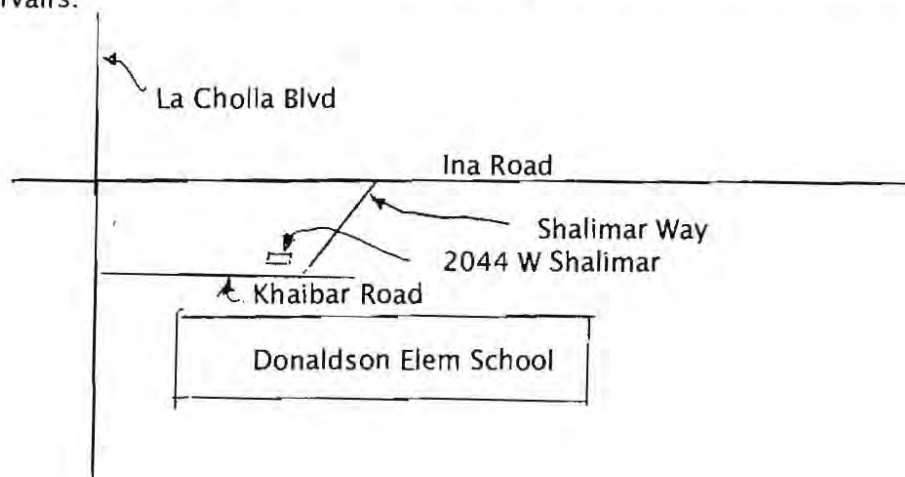
TCA will provide the main course ( burgers & dogs ) and sodas, plates and utensils.

It's a great time with the Cactus Corvair people so don't miss it! If you like to caravan to Picacho, meet at 9:30 at McDonalds on Ina Road west of Thornydale.

We still have a few raffle tickets for the car which will be raffled at the National Convention in Daytona Beach this year. Get yours at this month's meeting!

Great news!! TCA has a new vice president! Tim Green is in that chair. Thanks!

Tech and tune up at Robinson's on May 6 starting at 10am and lasting until ? Bring a friend. There is lots of shade and chairs. There will be snacks and sodas and we will have some parts on hand. If you know what you need, bring it. No doubt we'll have a big gabfest, too! See map below and look for lots of Corvairs.



# Sizing Wheels and Tires

*One of the things that many people do to make their Corvairs faster or more unique is to install different wheels and tires, a task that can be very frustrating if you just try to put on whatever seems to fit. This article originally appeared as a four month series in the Hot Air Mail and is an attempt to help Corvair enthusiasts properly fit non stock wheels and tires, whether new or used. Thanks to the members of the Northern Virginia Corvair Club for their input in writing this article.*

## Autocross Use

For Street Prepared autocross use, I highly suggest you acquire a set of "R" tires if you're planning on running more than one or two events per year. The reasons are:

1 - Regular autocrossing (say 10 events) will completely wear out your street tires. It is cheaper to run real tires than to "save money" by trying to get away with a single set of tires. Sometimes you can get closeouts of the previous year's tires, or buy a set used if you're on a tight budget.

2 - R-compound tires have so much more adhesion than even high performance "normal" tires that tuning the chassis and learning to drive on anything else is, to a degree, a waste of time. The car rolls more, the bushings deflect differently, and the tires break away differently.

## Wheels.

Let's start with a description of the various dimensions that are used to measure a wheel:

**Diameter** - Vertical dimension of the wheel, measured where the tire's bead seats. All Corvair cars came with 13" wheels as stock.

**Width** - The distance between the inner lips of the rim, where the tire beads seat. Both early and late Corvairs used 5 1/2" wide wheels, but I have heard that 60's wheels were only 5" wide.

**Lug Pattern** - This is the number of lugs used to hold the wheel on, and the diameter of a circle drawn through the center of the lug holes in the wheel. Earlys use 4 lugs on a 4 1/2" circle (4 x 4 1/2"), lates are 5 lugs on a 4 3/4" circle (5 x 4 3/4"). A list of possible donors is near the bottom of this page, if you're looking for info on swapping wheels for another type of car, I also have a fairly complete list of wheel lug patterns.

**Backspacing** - The distance from the inside of the rim to the point where the wheel contacts the brake drum. All 5 1/2" wide wheels have a backspacing of 3 7/8".

**Center Hole Diameter** - The hole in the center of the wheel that the hub fits through. All are 2 7/8".

## How big?

Since the standard lug pattern for RWD Chevys from the 50's to the present is 5 x 4 3/4", lots of different wheels will fit on a late model. The pattern for earlys is uncommon among U.S. makers, but is common on Mazdas, Nissans, and Toyotas. 14" or even 15" diameter wheels will fit on all Corvairs, but the width on earlys can't exceed about 6" because of two points of interference. On the front, the end of the steering arm comes close to the sidewall, and on the rear, the upper shock mounting point is close to the sidewall. Fitting quick steering arms may help the clearance problem up front, while some careful trimming may increase clearance in the rear.

Lates can handle up to 7" wide wheels in the front, with up to 8" (!) wide in the rear with the correct backspacing. Even wider will fit in certain sizes, but you will need to alter the backspacing to move the wheel out somewhat (less backspace), and perhaps roll the inside edge of the fenders. You should also check the protruding threads on the rear suspension's toe control links for clearance. It is legal in E/SP to fit any wheel/tire combo along with any fender mods to make big tires fit.

When fitting new wheels the rim should remain centered in and out relative to the hub as close to stock as possible (yes, tires sticking way out from the fenders are a bad thing), which can be determined by measuring the backspacing. This dimension is probably the most important, for the following reasons: if the tire is not centered the wheel bearings will wear prematurely because they are not loaded evenly, the tires may hit the inside or outside of the fender or other components, and the car may tend to dart around when you hit a bump.

That said, a late model Corvair has a bit more clearance on the outside of the tire than the inside, so slightly less than optimal backspace is usually best for maximum width wheels. When sizing a wider wheel, add half of the additional width to the stock backspacing to arrive at the backspacing for the new wheel. If you want to stuff really huge wheels and tires under your 'Vair, it's best to jack the car up, remove the springs so that the suspension can be moved throughout its range, then bolt on a set of stock wheels and tires and measure the actual clearance available. The center hole diameter is fairly common to many cars, but should be checked because this helps



support the wheel on the hub, and of course if the hole is too small, the wheel won't go on the car. If the hole is too large, it's not especially critical, it does not appear to compromise the strength (in other words, yes, the lugs are strong enough to hold the car up).

## You want the tires to do what?

Now let's look at the tires that go on the wheels. I use and recommend only radial tires, so that's what this information covers. If you want to use bias-ply tires, you're on your own, because I know nothing about them. The size radial closest to stock is 175/R13, but unless you have a factory stock show car, you may wish to use a larger size. Most major tire manufacturers make several different types of tires, so to decide which of these types and in what size it helps to realistically decide how much money you want to spend and what kind of use you'll put them to. Answering the following questions usually helps:

- How well do you want the car to ride?
- How much do you drive your Corvair?
- Is stock appearance important?
- Is all-weather ability important?
- Do you drive quickly?
- Do you want more cornering grip?

These dimensions will affect your decision in various ways, so keep the following in mind:

**Width** - a wider tire will generate somewhat more grip but is more likely to hydroplane, and may hit various parts of the car if the wheel size is not optimum. Also, if you want tires wider than 205mm, you must get wider wheels.

**Profile** - a lower profile tire has more grip, but the ride will be rougher.

**Speed rating** - generally unnecessary on U.S. roads, but this is an indication of a high quality tire.

**Wheel diameter** - if it isn't 13", you will need non stock wheels.

## Examples.

To wrap up, here are a few examples of wheel and tire combinations:

1 - Our first example is a late convertible Corsa that is basically stock and rarely driven in bad weather. The driver is willing to trade a little ride quality for more grip, but wants to keep stock wheels. A good quality summer radial, size P205/70 R13, will offer a noticeable increase in grip with only a slight loss of ride quality, and will cost \$75 - \$100 per tire.

2 - Here we have an early coupe that is used for daily transportation. The owner has decided to give the car a different look by putting on 14" x 6" aluminum wheels from a '70 - '78 Datsun Z, and wants an increase in grip while keeping an all-weather capability. One of the all-weather high performance tires will fit the requirements, in size P185/70 HR14. A P195/70 HR14 may fit, but will be snug enough on a stock car that it would be best to mount one and check the clearance before buying a whole set. Cost for both wheels and tires will be around \$1000 total.

3 - The last example are tires for my own car, a Street Prepared late model coupe. I have two sets of tires for the car, a set of real street tires, and a set of DOT legal autocross tires.

**Street.** My street setup are P205/60 VR14 tires on 14" x 6" Chevy steel wheels on the front, and P245/60 VR14 tires on 14" x 7" Chevy steel wheels rear. Backspace is pretty close, 3 5/8" (ideal would be 4 3/8") front, 4" (optimum 4 7/8") rear. With these, any road imperfections are noticeable, but the ride isn't harsh, and the increase in grip is quite large. This front tire size gave me an accurate speedometer too. Really good high performance tires start at about \$125 apiece and go up from there.

**Autocross.** The autocross setup is a set of 15" x 6 1/2" SenDel mags with 5 1/4" backspacing, with 225/50-15 BFG Comp T/A R-1 road race tires. These fit very nicely, with no interference. In fact, they are backspaced a bit too much, the ideal would be about 4 5/8".

Another commonly used wheel is the 15x7 from the '82-'92 Camaro & Firebirds with a 225/50-15 tire on a late model. These are a very tight fit due to the backspacing being too small, and thus may require rolling the fender lips. Also beware that the donor cars used a metric lug nut which cannot be used on a Corvair. The optional 16x8 inch Camaro IROC wheel can also be made to fit. Bruce Schug wrote this note about fitting the wheels and correct lugnuts.

## Tire pressure.

Finally, you can improve the responsiveness and handling by raising the tire pressure up to about 25 front, 35 psi rear for street use. Autocross use is a bit trickier, as the construction of the tire has an effect on the amount of pressure in the tire. In short, there are two types of "Street" tire:

The first is what most people mean when they say street tire, that is a tire designed to give a reasonable service life (~40k miles), good all weather performance, and perhaps a sporting amount of grip. The BF Goodrich Comp T/A HR4, Goodyear Eagle Aqualread, etc. fall into this category. These tires have a relatively soft sidewall, which gives them a nice ride, but they unfortunately allow the tire, under hard cornering, to try to roll under the rim, meaning you're now cornering on the sidewall instead of the tread. Bad plan.

The proper solution is to get a set of competition tires (see below) which don't do this. But if you're just trying out the sport, there is a band aid fix - more air. The additional pressure will stiffen the sidewall, which will help the handling, up to the point where the contact patch is so much smaller that the tire slips anyway. Generally, 5 to 10 psi works well, \*but\* you may need to increase the front and rear tires different amounts to make the car well-balanced.

Here's a procedure, from a post by Mike Lukacs to the autocross list (Team.Net):

The classic method of determining correct tire pressures for autox is as follows:

- A) raise your tire pressures to ~10 lbs above mfg recommended #s to start.
- B) mark the outside tread/sidewall corners of each tire with 3 or 4 patches of white shoe polish (sneaker polish) spaced around the tire.
- C) after your first run, check the shoe polish patches to see if you are using the whole tread width, but not rolling over onto the sidewall too much.
- D) if the shoe polish is getting rubbed off of the sidewall area, raise that tire's pressure by 1 or two pounds. If the shoe polish is NOT getting rubbed off of the outer tread area, lower that tire's pressure by a pound or two.
- E) repeat steps B, C, D, until you are happy.

Caveat: this method is only approximate, a tire pyrometer to measure the evenness of temperature across the tread is better.

Note: Don't forget to go back to your normal street pressures before you leave the event! [BB]

The second group are "R" tires, that is tires which meet the letter of the DOT regulations for street tires, but are really meant for competition use. Goodyear's Eagle VR-S, Yokohama A008-RSII, and BFG's Comp T/A R-1 are examples of this breed. These tires have the sidewall stiffened, to avoid the tire rolling over on its shoulder during hard use, so using the 25/35 tire pressure is still a good baseline.

## Interchange tricks.

Since many folks want to know what to shop for at swap meets, junk yards, etc., here is some info which might be helpful.

Earlies have 4 lugs on a 4 1/2" bolt circle. Other cars with that 4 on 4 1/2 pattern are:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| •Acura Legend '86 to '89                 | •Mazda 626, RX7 '83 to '87             |
| •Chevy Nova, Chevy II '60 to '64         | •MGA, MGB, MGC                         |
| •Chevy Sprint '85 to '87                 | •Olds - F-85 '61-'63                   |
| •Buick Special, Olds F-85 '61 to '63     | •Plymouth Arrow, Sapporo '79 to '88    |
| •Datsun/Nissan, most models to '89       | •Saab 900 to '87                       |
| •Dodge Colt '79 to '88                   | •Toyota, most except PU and MR2 to '89 |
| •Ford Falcon, Mustang (6 cyl) '60 to '73 | •Triumph TR3 through TR6               |
| •Ford Granada, Maverick '81 to '83       |  |

This info from a wheel swapping chart of mid 1989.

Thanks to Martin Scarr for this data. One thing to bear in mind is that the FWD cars listed here will have a lot of backspacing, so measure before you buy.

Late models use 5 lugs on a 5 3/4" circle, other cars include:

- Buick - Regal, Century, Special (most mid-size) '64-'80's
- Chevy van
- Chevrolet - all (exc as noted elsewhere) '49-'89
- Corvette all •Oldsmobile - 442, Cutlass, F-85, Toronado (most mid-size) '60's-'80's
- Pontiac - GTO, LeMans, Firebird, Grand Prix (mid size) '64-'80's

Note: Although the wheels used on some BMW's are almost the same size, they are actually a 5 lug on 120mm bolt circle, which is 4.72 inches.

*This info from a list compiled by Dave Williams and Bill Drake of the Hotrod list.*

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\*\* Honorary member

\*\*\* Paid to 1-1-2002



## APRIL 2000 TREASURER'S REPORT

BEGINNING CASH ON HAND.....\$2103.63

INCOME: (ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE)

Ads.....	15.00
Raffle Tickets .....	10.00
Merchandise.....	00.00
Can Money.....	00.00
	<u>25.00</u>

DUES:

Al & Gail Crispin.....	18.00
Bill Maynard.....	15.00
Hansen.....	15.00
<b>TOTAL DUES:</b>	<b>48.00</b>

**TOTAL INCOME (ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE).....\$73.00**

EXPENSES: (ACCOUNTS PAYABLE)

Stamps .....	23.10
National raffle tickets.....	75.00
Name Tag.....	4.20
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES: (ACCOUNTS PAYABLE).....</b>	<b>102.30</b>

**ENDING BALANCE: (CASH ON HAND).....\$2074.33**

Respectfully Submitted,

Allen Elvick

## **Minutes of Membership Meeting - 03/22/00**

**Incoming President Barry Cunningham**, in his inaugural performance, called the regular meeting of TCA in to order at Denny's Restaurant at 7:29:05PM. He **did not** lead the club members in YET another reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to TCA. There were no guests, but we welcomed new member **Dave Carranza**, owner of a '62 Monza 2dr, which was his father's car and has been in the family since it was new. Minutes of the last meeting were approved as published, even though we had to guess at part of what was on the second page.

**Treasurer (Allen Elvick)** - Starting balance = \$1874.28, Income = \$325.94, Outgo = \$96.59. Ending balance = \$21.03.68. Much income from parts sales and some from dues.

**Membership (Beverly Baker)** - **Beverly** was absent, but all members' dues are in! Congratulations to all! All dues cycles have now been shifted to January. A new roster will be distributed shortly. We will start encouraging CORSA membership for all TCA members.

**Library (Dave Baker)** - No report. **Dave** absent.

**Merchandise (Don Robinson)** - We have 50 raffle tickets available for the CORSA Convention raffle car! It's a '64 4dr, maroon, 110/auto with A/C. Please contact **Don** if you want to buy some or if you want to try to sell a few. Hats for sale @ \$12-\$13. Coffee cups for sale for \$5. One sweatshirt available. Nothing else reported.

**Corvairsation (Don Robinson)** - Nothing new, deadline for material is still the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. For sale ads listed in the Corvairsation are now also listed on the website. Please advise the editor when you sell your items.

### **Activities (Barry Cunningham)**

**NOTE:** *The info shown here is not the official calendar. It is only what the Secretary wrote down because someone said it. Check the official TCA calendar before heading off in the wrong direction at the wrong time on the wrong day.*

### **PAST**

**March 19 - Corvair Cruise and Brunch** at the Cracker Barrel Restaurant. Eleven people showed up. One couple (The Don Robinson's) actually drove a Corvair! It was fun and filling!

### **COMING UP**

**April 29 - Annual Picacho Peak Picnic** with **Cactus Corvair Club** from Phoenix. **Allen** will bring the food. Members need to each bring a potluck dish. Call **Allen** if you aren't sure what to bring. Folding chairs recommended! Final details at the next meeting on 4/26.

**May 6 - Yet Another Tuneup Clinic**, Don Robinson's house, 10:00 AM.

**June 10 - Mount Lemmon tour:** possible Corvair (hah!) caravan.

**July/August** - No activity planned unless we find someone with a pool.

**September** - TBD

**October ?? - Annual Casa de los Ninos Car Show** - New location: Kino Sports Center.

### **Old Business -**

**Tim Green** volunteered (!) to fill the vacant office of Vice-President. **Thanks Tim!!!!**

**New Business** - Announcement from the E-board that we will sell website classified ads to non-members according to the following schedule: Text only = \$5.00, Text plus picture = \$10.00. Contact the webmaster, **Paul Dunn**. Paul will take pictures for you.

**Program/Tech Talk** - General discussion about various Corvair problems.

**Raffle:** Winners - **Allen E:** Micro Fabric Cleaning Cloths, **Tim G.:** Screwdriver Set, **Paul D.:** Halogen low-beam Headlights.

**Next month's prize donors:** **Allen D., Barry C., Herb B., Dave C.**

**JOE:** No joke (Hey! Whatever happened to all the jokes?!).

Meeting adjourned sometime around 8:49:30 PM, more or less.

Respectfully submitted, **Herb Berkman**, Secretary

## *Vairs & Spares*

For Sale: 1962 4-Door Monza, Automatic, Factory air conditioning, 85K original miles. \$3250. Call Dick (520) 299-4723.

For Sale: 1969 Chevy 3/4 ton, 390 AT, Pwr Disc Brakes. PS, AC, Cruise, Stereo, **SOLD** Shell Carpet, Air suspension, Custom Seat, Dual Spots, 3 tanks, Dual Batteries and more. Fully equipped to tow. Lets talk ! Herb (520) 751-9500 eve, or (520) 663-9122 day.

For Sale: Corvair parts- Large outdoor yard full of Corvairs and Parts, Call Barry Cunningham at (520) 747-9028

**From one Corvair lover to another...**

### **Corvairs**

**By**

### **Creative Stitches**

**2710 Cancun Court**

**Grand Junction, Co. 81506**

**(970) 245-4722**

**Member of Corsa and Tucson Corvair Association**

### **LOCAL CORVAIR PARTS**

from

### **TUCSON CORVAIR ASSOCIATION**

TCA has a large stock of new and used parts for all models of Corvairs.

Support the Club and save a little money!



Contact Al Crispin

**722-9445**

Ads are free to TCA members. \$ 2.50 for up to four lines for non-members

6:00 pm: Parking Lot Bull Session  
6:30 pm: Dinner (optional)  
7:30 pm: Meeting starts

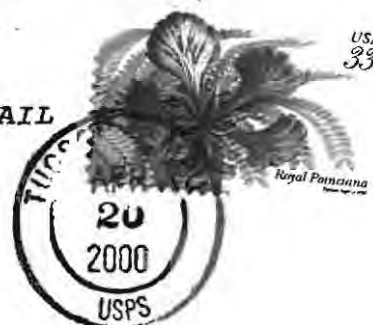
PLEASE CONTACT A  
BOARD MEMBER WITH  
ANY SUGGESTIONS

- Apr 29 Picacho picnic  
May 6 Tune-up & Tech Session @ Robinsons'  
June 10 Picnic @ Rose Canyon (Mt. Lemon)  
July no mid-month activity  
Aug no mid-month activity

Regular Monthly Meeting, Wednesday Apr.26,2000  
TCA Executive Board Meeting: Wednesday, May.10, 2000  
DENNY'S RESTAURANT 6484 E.BROADWAY

A Tucson Corvair Association  
A 2044 W Shalimar Way  
A Tucson, Arizona 85704

FIRST CLASS MAIL



Van and Vickie Pershing  
4842 W. Paseo de los Colinas  
Tucson AZ 85745

[illegible]