

The Elvis Greenbrier

Written by David Traver Adolphus

I have in my files a copy of a newspaper clipping from 1981. It shows a lanky, blurry guy identified as Churchill Hill next to a '62 Greenbrier which he's turned into an Elvis shrine. According to the writeup, it was painted with 65 air-brushed Elvis-themed images: movie bills from all 33 of Elvis' movies, album covers, scenes from his life, etc. The inside had an extensive memorabilia display protected by scale Graceland gates and a Rock Ola jukebox. Also along the outside were 120 small reproduction gold records, each one identified with the title of one of Elvis' hits. Push a button in the middle, and the Rock Ola would load up and play the corresponding 45. As Elvisiana goes, this was good stuff.

But aside from this single article in the Sun, I could never find another reference to this gem from the Vanning age.

Surely, if it had survived, it'd have been mentioned at least once during the succeeding 29 years, right? So with no news, I assumed it had been forgotten, scrapped or otherwise lost.

But this was one of those things that just stayed in my mind, I have no idea why. So one day, I spent some time with White Pages for Elizabethton, Tennessee, and ultimately left a message on a machine for one Churchill Winston Hill.

He called me back the next day. Not only was he the guy, but the Greenbrier was still in his garage, in working order. Churchill came up with the idea of a rolling Elvis tribute at the time of The King's death in '77, with the jukebox as the central feature. As he was already a Corvair guy and car customizer, when he saw the '62 van for \$300 in 1978 or so, he had his canvas. Oddly, he wasn't really a

huge Elvis fan; he just thought it would be a popular theme.

He started with a full restoration of the van, with 10 wet sanded coats of lacquer and in magnificent Disco era style, a gold trimmed, blue velvet interior with seats from a Monte Carlo and Cadillac tilt wheel. He spent seven months on the exterior art, then three straight weeks wiring up the jukebox. At the same time, he was accumulating memorabilia for the van, including a copy of every Elvis single ever released.

After taking the northeast Tennessee vanning scene by storm, the Elvair faded into semi-retirement, although Churchill says he still brings it out for local shows from time to time. So if you're ever up near Johnson City and see the rolling black leather jacket, give the U.S. Male button a press for us.



Tucson Corvair Association



Established 1975

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 (COSA) 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 name tags). Make checks payable to the 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.

COSA membership dues are \$38 per year (\$76 for 26 months) and include a subscription to the COSA Communique, a monthly publication. COSA memberships is not required for membership in the Tucson Corvair Association, but is highly recommended. See any TCA officer for more information.

Classified ads are free to members and \$3 per 4-line ad for non-members. Deadline for materials submitted for publication is the 10th of the month.

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TCA 2010 Events at a Glance

Sat, Sep 25

Run to Kitt Peak. A peronalized tour of the telescope facilities by club member Bob Moulton. It's about an hour drive up with a 3-hour tour. Bring a lunch. The club will provide sodas. Meet at the McDonalds' near Ajo & Kinney at 9:30

Wed, Sep 22

Regular Monthly Meeting. Parking Lot Bull Session at 6:30 pm. Meeting starts at 7:00pm. Golden Corral, 6865 N Thornydale Road (just south of Ina).

Sat, Oct 9

Cars In The Park Show, Sierra Vista. Contact Ken Farr or go to the club website for more information.

Sat, Oct 16

4th Annual Classics of Tucson Car Show. 10 AM to 3:30 PM. Let's get those Corvairs ready for another great showing! Visit the TCA website for more information.

Wed, Oct 27

Regular Monthly Meeting. Parking Lot Bull Session at 6:30 pm. Meeting starts at 7:00pm. Golden Corral, 6865 N Thornydale Road (just south of Ina).

Oct 29, 30
& 31

33rd Annual Great Western Fan Belt Toss & Swap Meet. Palm Springs, California. Registration forms, raffle tickets and information available at the club meeting.

NEW MEETING PLACE

The Tucson Corvair Association now meets at the GOLDEN CORRAL located at 6865 N Thornydale Road just south of Ina. It is hoped that the change will offer better meeting facilities as well as an improvement in food quality.

August Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the TCA regular monthly meeting held August 25, 2010 at 6865 N Thornydale Road, Tucson Arizona.

The meeting was called to order at 7:25 PM by Vice President Lynn Marrs. President Farr was not in attendance for medical reasons.

In attendance at the meeting were Jim and Terry Mills, Mike Strong, Don Robinson, Barbara Govostis, Ron Bloom, Bill Leslie, Dave and Patrick Lynch, Steve Lubliner, Lynn Marrs, Ron Kosidowski, Van Pershing and Bob Moulton.

The idea of having club business cards that each member could distribute was presented to the general membership. The group was overwhelmingly in favor of having cards to carry in their cars. Cards will be purchased.

It was requested to all to R.S.V.P. to President Farr for mid-month activities. The club generally provides the drinks or other items for the activities and it is very difficult to plan not know approximately how many will be in attendance. Please take a moment and either call or E-mail Ken when you plan to go on an activity.

Official membership applications are available for use. The applications will be available from club officers or online at the TCA website.

The Kitt Peak activity will be coming up on Saturday, September 25. We will meet at the McDonald's near the corner of Ajo Way and Kinney Road at 9:30 and leave sharply at 10:00 AM. Bring your own lunch. The club will provide sodas. Please R.S.V.P. to Ken. Bob Moulton will be our host providing a personalized tour. He has arranged for a photo op to shoot pictures of our Corvairs in front of one of the telescopes that was built in the 60s.

Bob Moulton provided us with the name and phone number of an auto glass guy who seems to have good prices on glass for our cars. His name is Ken Nail with Platinum Glass at 520-881-9848.

There is a '64 Monza convertible, automatic, for sale. Call Dell Davis at 520-490-2262.

There will be a Push Rod "seminar" at the next meeting presented by Bill Leslie.

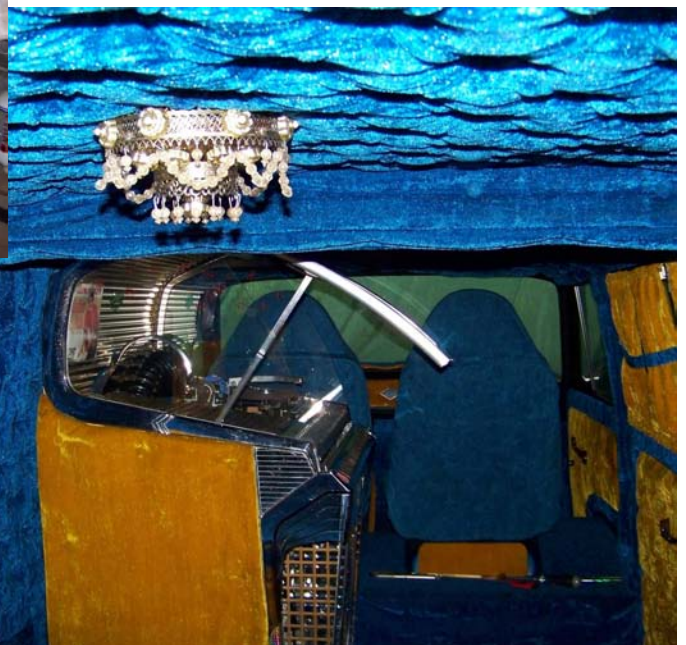
A couple of members mentioned that their dues checks had not been cashed. Van Pershing will contact treasurer Barry Cunningham to resolve the problem.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Submitted by Van Pershing



The Elvis Greenbrier with its many buttons exposed for the pushing. Each one plays an Elvis tune from the jukebox.



Here's a nice shot of the jukebox which plays the 45 rpm records when called upon.

Deserter GT - Something a little different



The Start (1967-68)

Autodynamic's was already an established racing company when in 1967 they got into the dune buggy business with Alex Dearborn and introduced the Series 1 Deserter. The Series 1 dune buggy sold briskly for a while and helped fund the Autodynamic's racing effort, racing always requires more cash. Then in 1968 a gentleman by the name of Brian Dries built a Manx kit on a 1965 VW chassis. Unhappy with looking like everyone else he set about changing it with MGB headlight assemblies and a Renault Dauphine windshield held in place by custom aluminum posts, he called it the Bounty Hunter. The result was an impressive and very unique car with many requests for his body resulting in the founding of Glass Enterprises of Burbank California. The number of Bounty Hunter kits built is unknown to me, but the company folded in 1971.

The Hay Days (1969-1972)

These times are pretty well covered in Alex Dearborn's - *The Deserter*

Book - but no longer available. But to summarize a bit and add some distinction between the Bounty Hunter vs. Deserter GT or even the Marauder GT's, here's a bit to go on. Somewhere around 1969 the Autodynamics Deserter S1 had a face-lift with the Bounty Hunter front end grafted to the familiar Deserter 84-inch wheelbase. The Deserter GT buggy as it was called was not an exact copy of the Bounty Hunter, but a fully licensed and modified version. The resulting GT met the Massachusetts DMV regulations of the time and the race car culture of the folks at Autodynamics. Using the inner tub of the Series 1 Deserter, the nose and lines of the Bounty Hunter but stretching them after the windshield posts in the seat area, to some actually improved on the original looks of the Bounty Hunter. Other modifications or changes from the Bounty Hunter included a larger rear apron that did a pretty good job of covering all of the VW engine and most of the Corvair engine helped keep the Massachusetts DMV and local police happy.

Autodynamic's was a pretty good size operation at the time and in addition to the very successful race car business, they offered many options specific to the GT that really set them apart from the average buggy suppliers. It was easy to personalize your car and build anything from a basic street car, to an off-road or a real track racer using the mid-engine GS chassis kit right out of the Autodynamic's catalog.

My estimated total production quantities of Deserters made by either Autodynamics and/or Dearborn are as follows. Total S1 Manx clone bodies: maybe 300 as VW's, but less than 5 mid-engined GS have ever been located. Total GT bodies: maybe 350, and then maybe 75 bodies were used in mid-engine GS cars. Total GS chassis kits: approximately 100 maximum.

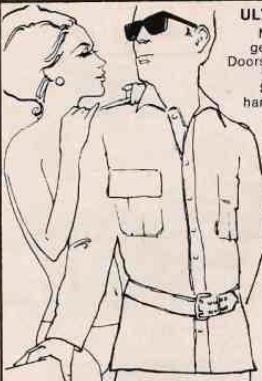
The Lazy Days (1972-1988)

The Dune Buggy fad fell flat enough for a company the size of Autodynamic's to sell off all of the molds to



This particular Deserter GT is 100% Corvair. Most of these cars were built on shortened VW pans but there are no Volkswagen parts on this car. This beauty was a cover story feature in the CORSA Communique in April 2005. It recently sold on ebay for \$6,800.

ULTRA-MOD GULL-WING HARDTOP
 Makes Deserter GT into a genuine sealed touring car. Doors hinge in center of roof for ease of entry and exit. Sliding windows and door handles. Removable, converts GT to a roadster.




DESERTER GT

When is a fiberglass VW not a dune buggy? When it is fully-enclosed all-weather Deserter GT. Developed by Autodynamics Corporation, the country's leading racing car manufacturer, for New England winters and turnpike driving. 84" wheel-base and ultra-low silhouette for stable high-speed handling qualities. It's the first VW-based car worthy of the title GT!

To learn all about it (rear-engined, mid-engined, kit or complete) send \$2.00 for Deserter Portfolio.

PLAY CAR OF THE WESTERN WORLD



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the Deserter GT/GS cars. In the States, the original molds provided small scale production into the mid to late 80's by a man by the name of Gary Card on the GT/GS cars. In Europe, Basle, Germany had a licensed manufacturer and built molds from parts shipped to them. In all, the actual quantities produced by either are totally unknown by me, but believed to be relatively small.

The S1 (Manx clone) molds were just lost or destroyed along the way. I've never seen or heard anything of them. Down in New Jersey, an ex-Autodynamic's employee made full wheelbase (stretched) versions of the S1 Manx body and called it a Jackal. The idea of no cutting and no welding required and a body that you could simply bolt to your chassis was appealing to some. It did not do much for the overall looks of the original lines Bruce Meyers had artfully created in his first design.

I believe this is also the time frame that the Marauder GT came on the scene. To the best of my knowledge, this was a Bounty Hunter clone, with the shorter 80in. wheelbase and a new modification, or yet another attempt to improve the front end with two winglets?

The Dark Days (1988-2002)

From the late 80's until the year 2002, all of the GT/GS molding and construction jigs sat unused and outdoors in the next owners hands, Bill Bramley of Ohio. For a dozen plus years, they sat waiting for the new owner to find the time and energy to put them to use. Well, like many projects and good intentions, it never happened. The real credit to Bill is the fact that they were not destroyed (OK a little weather damaged) but every fiberglass mold piece, the windshield post

molds and all of the GS chassis jigs stayed together :-)) and that is great news!

The Recent Days (2002-?)

Although I and others have made a couple of attempts to restore cars and provide some replacement parts with limited success, the big news is the original US molds and where they are today!

Over the winter of 2002 all of the parts went to Southern California and are currently being restored. Hopefully new parts will be available someday. The newest owner is Dave Barnes. Keep your fingers crossed and hopefully he can bring this car and parts back to life.

Does the story end here? I don't think so, plenty of cars are being restored so there is more good news to follow, I hope!

Bob Elliott, Deserters Owners Group.



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Regular Monthly Meetings are held on the Fourth Wednesday of every month with a bull session starting at 6:30pm with the meeting starting at 7:00pm.

The November meeting is held on the third Wednesday. The December meeting is our annual Christmas party with the time and place to be announced.

NEW MEETING PLACE:

Golden Corral, 6865 N Thornydale Road (Ina and Thornydale), Tucson, Arizona.



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