

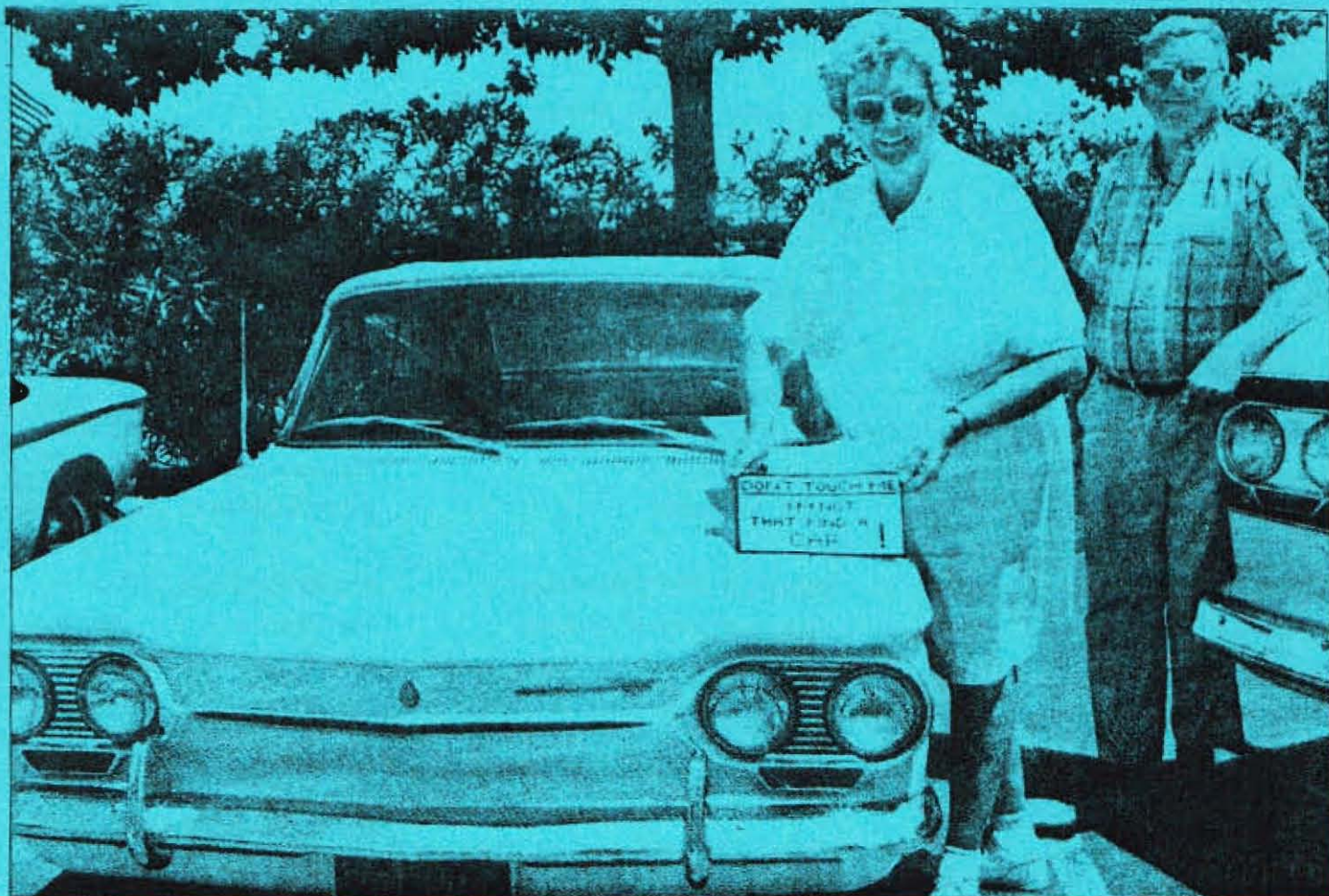
# Corvairisation

TUCSON CORVAIR ASSOCIATION

TUCSON, ARIZONA

Volume 16 Number 5

August 1990



## Coup ( and Sedan and Convertible ) de Grace

Barbara and  
Perley Haynes  
with their  
treasured  
Corvairs:  
a '63 Monza  
convertible  
(hers) and a  
'65 Greenbriar  
van (his).

# TUCSON CORVAIR ASSOCIATION

**CORVAIRSATION** is a monthly publication of the **TUCSON CORVAIR ASSOCIATION**, which is dedicated to the preservation of the Corvaire model of the Chevrolet Motor Division. The Tucson Corvaire Association is a chartered member of the **CORVAIR SOCIETY OF AMERICA (COSA)**.

**MONTHLY MEETINGS** are held on the fourth Wednesday of each month except December. One technical/social event is planned for every month except July and August.

**MEMBERSHIP DUES** are \$10 per year and are payable to the **TUCSON CORVAIR ASSOCIATION** through the Membership Chairman.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS:** Send any change of address or phone number to the Membership Chairman. Don not send changes to the Editor.

**COSA MEMBERSHIP DUES** are \$25 per year and include a subscription to the *COSA Communique*, a monthly publication. See a TCA Officer for a membership application.

**CLASSIFIED ADS** are **FREE** to a TCA Members and \$1.00 per line to all others. The deadline for materials submitted for publication is the 10th of the month for that month's issue. Mail or deliver all materials to the Corvaire Editor. Articles are welcome for publication.

**BUSINESS MAILING ADDRESS:** P.O. Box 50401, Tucson, Arizona 85703.

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Fellow Corvair Fans (or is it Fanatics?),

I hope all are enjoying their summer vacations. I still have not heard from anyone about their suggestions for mid-month activities. I (we, Board Members) have been thinking about more fun rallies or possibly serious rallies. The last board meeting was held on 11 July 1990 as published in the Corvairsation. The only reason the board meeting was held on that date was because the normal meeting date was on the Fourth of July and I didn't think that anyone would show up. Soooo, Jerry Lewis and I had a very long chat while we waited for the other members of the Board to show up. At 2030 hours I decided that nobody was going to show up. Honestly, I did take a shower before the meeting. I also brushed my teeth. Did I say something to upset everyone?

I did not hear from anyone who wanted to volunteer to be judges at the National Convention. I still have the forms to be filled out to be sent in.

AND WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Respectfully,



Ron Allen

### 1990 National CORSA Convention

Those who went appeared to have a great time in Ontario at the Convention. Cecil and Ester Alex were there in Ester's "new" car. The Howards were there but didn't drive a Corvair! Van Pershing helped judge the concours while his kids went to Disneyland. Gordon and Larry worked the whole time getting that beautiful Spyder convertible ready for the show and probably didn't have time to have "fun". (The car did very well - 2nd place. Congradulations, Gordon!) Frank and Mark McKenna spent their whole time in the parking lot of the swap meet selling their fine wares to any sucker Corvair fan who walked buy. All in all, Tucson was farely well represented.

The autocross was great but not very well attended. I didn't attent the banquat but we'll get a full report at the meeting. The venders were out in force and their were some good prices to be had.

It was a great convention. I'm going to Palm Springs in November though. The swap meet is better! Editor.

*More next month!*

The regular monthly meeting of the Tucson Corvair Association was called to order by President RON ALLEN on Thursday, July 26, 1990 at the Picadilly Cafeteria.

The minutes of the previous monthly meeting were accepted as published in the CORVAIRSATION.

The treasurer's report was also accepted.

There were 46 present at the meeting, and the count of Corvairs was 20.

Two persons joined the club:

DON DAVIS  
HERBERT RILEY

Old Business: The President stated that the Board meeting, scheduled for last month, was poorly attended and cancelled to be replaced by a meeting next week.

The President asked for a show of hands of those who planned to attend the National Corvair Convention August 2-5, 1990. There were 7 who indicated an intention to attend.

DON ROBINSON was the winner of the license number drawing.

The Raffle winners of the evening were: BOB EGGERS, ALLEN ELVICK, JERRY LEWIS, ED SANFORD and RON ALLEN.

STEVE ESTABROOK reported that the evening's receipts for the raffle were \$51.00.

DON ROBINSON reported a total of 32# of cans for our recycling drive.

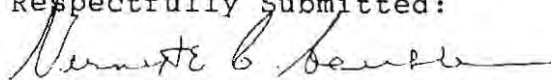
ED SANFORD continued his spirited discussion based on his article in last month's CORVAIRSATION.

ESTHER and CECIL ALEX gave an interesting account of their lengthy trip in their Corvair last month.

DAVE BAKER reported that his wife, BEVERLY, was doing fine after hip surgery.

Volunteers to supply next month's raffle prizes are: DON CHASTAIN, BOB EGGERS, MILT EVANS, GORDON CAUBLE and DON ROBINSON.

Respectfully Submitted:



Verne Cauble

# Nader's nadir

## *Corvair, though long maligned, rates at zenith with fans*

By MEG SULLIVAN  
Daily News Staff Writer

You couldn't help wondering what he would have thought.

There they were, nearly 25 years later, praising the Chevrolet Corvair's stylishness, durability, practicality and, above all, road-worthiness.

Had Ralph Nader misfired when he proclaimed the sporty economy car "a one-car accident" in 1965?

Or was General Motors' multi-million-dollar gamble to create a car like no other such a colossal failure that corporate America and how we perceive it was changed forever?

Most people no longer think of the debate surrounding the car that launched the American consumer-protection movement.

But it still obsesses the 800 or so Corvair fans who gathered this week at an Ontario hotel to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the death trap that would not die.

They snapped up "I ♥ My Corvair" bumperstickers, cooed over mint machines and generally sniped at the man who is anathema to owners of the boxy icon of the 1960s.

"We're all against Nader," said Lucille Gillespie, a 65-year-old Corvair owner from Granada Hills, summing up sentiments at the Corvair Society of America (CORSA) national convention.

"Who's Ralph Nader?" Robert Testa retorted in perhaps the frostiest snub.

As a former supervisor at the Van Nuys GM plant, where the compact cars were assembled between 1964 and 1966, Testa is familiar with the consumer advocate but chooses to ignore him and his warnings.

Testa said he bought a '62 Corvair coupe in 1963 and never looked back. Over the years, the 63-year-old Sepulveda resident has purchased nine Corvairs, including two that he and his wife, Olga, were preparing to enter in one of the convention's car shows.

"It's the best little car going," Testa insisted.

Barbara Haynes couldn't agree more. A 64-year-old retired police dispatcher who lives with her husband, Perley, in Woodland Hills, she still drives the same 1963 Corvair convertible that she bought 28 years ago.

"They're good, reliable, fun cars," she said. "They're very misjudged."

So strongly do the Hayneses feel about Corvairs that they've owned six of them, three of which were passed on to grandchildren. Now they're shopping for a seventh to give to a 16-year-old granddaughter on her next birthday.

"We have a deal," Perley Haynes, 67, explained. "We give our grandchildren Corvairs when they turn 17, but they have to have good character and good grades."

But Nader, who said he turned down an invitation to address the group, hasn't budged an inch.

Reached at his Center for the Study of Responsive Law in Washington, D.C., the 56-year-old watchdog said he still considers the car's early models to be dangerous, despite a government study that found otherwise.

"It's probably one of the prettiest cars ever built, but it's also one of the most lethal," he said.

In fact, the Corvair isn't just one car but several. The introductory 1960 line only included a

basic four-door sedan and a sporty two-door coupe that departed with rigid conventions in the American car industry with a rear engine cooled by air instead of water.

The changes improved the compact car's traction and handling while increasing leg room by taking the transmission from under the front floor, said Larry Claypool, a Chicago Corvair mechanic and self-described "Corvair encyclopedia."

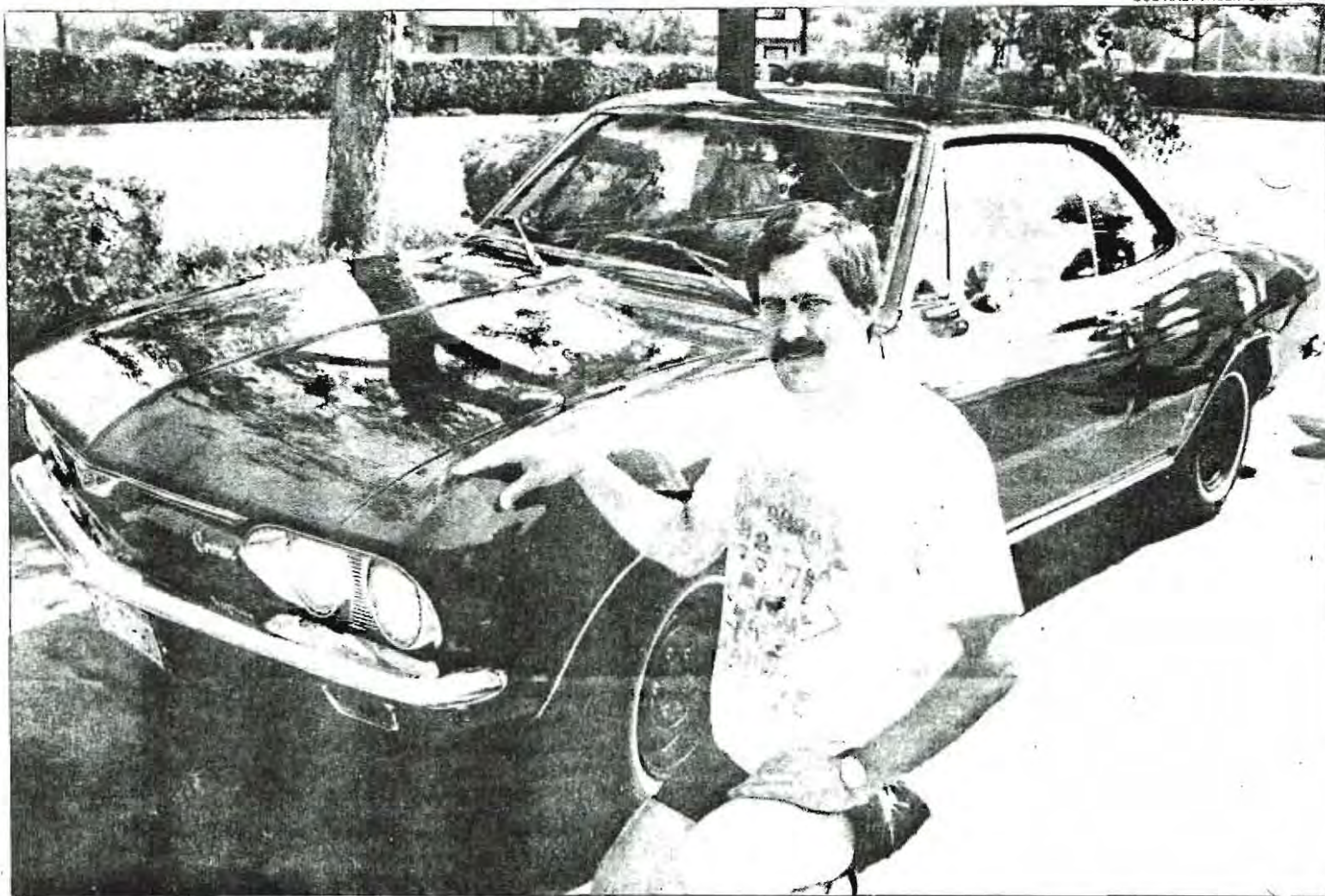
The Corvair insignia eventually graced a station wagon, two styles of van, the souped-up Monza coupe and sedan and a turbocharged model first called Spyder and later Corsa, known as the "poor man's Porsche." There even was a precursor to today's mini-trucks, Rampside, whose bed, in a stroke of genius, opened from the side.

"You pull up the truck to the side of a curb, drop the side down, then load and unload," explained Ruth Wilson, a Reseda Corvair owner. "I think it's the best that's ever been made in a pickup."

Over the years, Corvair zeal has taken even more creative forms. The basic Corvair engine has made its way into dune buggies, homemade aircrafts and, in perhaps the oddest-looking twist, motorhomes called Ultravans. Their owners call them "whales on wheels" and claim they get three times the gas mileage of newer motorhomes.

Such is the diversity that members of CORSA, a group of 6,100 Corvair owners nationwide, apparently never tire of celebrating.

During the four-day conven-



Larry Shapiro is a Corvair conventioneer, accompanied by his 1966 Corvair. Hundreds of Corvair fans have gathered in Ontario.

tion that ends today with races against the clock, they weathered long lectures on preventing oil leaks, rebuilding four-speed transmissions and improving the engine cooling system of their beloved compact cars.

They visited stands selling greasy old Corvair parts, more parts that have been remanufactured in recent years to keep pace with growing demand, and the most precious find — vintage parts that have never been used.

They picked over vintage car manuals, framed ads from magazines touting the car and even 35mm filmstrips developed for Corvair salesmen.

"There's this thing called Corvairitis," said Dave Palmer, 32, of Ventura. "Once you get it, it's terminal."

Somehow, however, nobody had seen fit to dust off a copy of "Unsafe at Any Speed," Nader's scathing indictment of Detroit that began with a chapter on the Corvair.

Striking a chord in awaking anti-establishment attitudes, Nader, then an unknown lawyer of 31, portrayed GM executives as shameless mercenaries who knowingly passed off dangerous goods on an unsuspecting public.

He cited a special rear axle designed to accommodate the Corvair's rear engine that also made the car's tires tilt into the pavement during sharp turns, increasing the potential for the car to roll.

Hence, his pronouncement that the Corvair prior to 1964, when the problem was corrected, was a "one-car accident" waiting to happen.

Such doom and gloom would have fallen on deaf ears, Corvair defenders believe, had Chevrolet brass not hired a private detective to trail Nader and had that turn of events not become the subject of a Senate subcommittee investigation.

"The attendant... publicity vaulted the tome into the public's eye," wrote Mike Knepper, in a history of the car called "Corvair Affair" (Motorbooks International; \$12.95). "Never again would anything Ralph Nader said go unheard."

By that time, 106 angry Corvair owners had sued GM for Corvair defects, and no end appeared in sight.

A 1972 study by the U.S. Department of Transportation eventually exonerated GM, concluding "the handling and stability performance of the 1960-1963 Corvair does not result in an abnormal potential for loss of control or rollover, and it is at least as good as the performance of some contemporary vehicles both foreign and domestic."

GM racked up a long list of successful adjudications and settled 48 suits out of court, but the damage had been done.

FRANK & MARK McKENNA

BOB HALVORSEN/DAILY NEWS



The last new Corvair was built in 1969, so spare parts are in demand.

Besides, other car manufacturers were already cleaning up at the pump primed by the Corvair. In 1964, Ford introduced its answer to Corvair's Monza and Corsa — the Mustang. Rather than throw good money after bad, Chevrolet turned its attention to a newly developed Mustang killer, the Camaro.

The last Corvair, an Olympic Gold Monza, rolled off the assembly in Willow Run, Mich., on May 16, 1969, and promptly disappeared, Knepper wrote.

Now Corvair owners may have the last laugh. While the car's resale value languished during the '70s, it began to pick up in the late '80s. Riding the surge in popularity of '60s muscle cars, vintage Corvairs are now back in demand among car collectors.

Certain sporty models are appreciating at the rate of about 20 percent a year, said Claypool, who writes a regular column in *Corsa Communique*, the Corvair Society of America's monthly magazine.

At a time when vintage Mustangs, Impalas and Chevelles sell in the \$15,000 to \$20,000 range, a similar Corvair can still be had for \$5,000, he said.

"The Corvair is a very affordable collectible compared to

other cars from the '60s," Claypool said.

If \$5,000 still sounds like a lot of money to pay for a car that Nader lobbied hard, if unsuccessfully, to have recalled, consider its historical value.

The Corvair affair led to the Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Acts, signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson in September 1967.

"You might say that the Corvair changed our automaking process to such a degree there will never be another Corvair," noted the influential automotive writer Pat Bedard in the 25th anniversary issue of *Car and Driver* magazine in 1980. "I don't think any other car in the last 25 years has been so significant."



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**FOR SALE: SEVEN CORVAIRS!** 3 - '65 4-door/automatics, all running, need interior and paint; 1 - '63 2-door/automatic; 1 - '65 convertible/automatic, needs paint, top and interior, runs. All for \$7,000 or will sell individually. Many good parts for '63 including motor. Stored in Huachuca City. Call Pete Dillman 745-3725 in Tucson or 456-1171 in Huachuca City. 7/90

**FOR SALE: '64 GREENBRIER**, automatic, not running, \$500; '61 RAMPIDE, runs, \$1000. Call Robert Segl, Casa Grande, 1-836-6390.

6/90

**FOR SALE: '60 700, 4-DOOR**, straight body, all original parts, some parts rechromed, needs interior and paint. \$650 OBO. Don Schmitt 745-5581. 6/90

**FOR SALE: '65 500 2-DOOR**, 110/4-speed, daily driver, minor dents, asking \$1500. negotiable. Call Mark at 622-3482. 6/90

**FOR SALE: '61 LAKEWOOD**, automatic, reconditioned, \$1250. Call Del Light. 883-6794. 3/90

**FOR SALE: '65 CORVAIR COUPE**, 110 engine, 2nd owner, 50K original miles, needs small amount of body work. Engine needs minor rebuilding. Interior needs replaced. New brakes. Asking best offer. Must sell. T.K. Estes, wk:795-8242, hm:885-1339. 3/90

**FOR SALE: '64 MONZA**, 2 door, automatic. Not running - complete. Call Del Light, 883-6794. 3/90

**FOR SALE: '65 MONZA**, 2 door, 4-speed. Rough but running. \$450. Dell Light 883-6794. 3/90

**FOR SALE: Complete 140HP engine**, \$400. '64 95HP engine, \$300. Call Gordon Cauble (602) 299-1122 2/90

**FOR SALE: '61 LAKEWOOD**, 110/automatic. Good condition all around. \$1050. Van Pershing. 743-9185. 2/90

**FOR SALE: '64 MONZA** convertible, complete with new Clark's set covers. Needs complete restoration. Call Larry Dandridge at 750-1515. 2/90

**FOR SALE: '65 MONZA**, 2 door, 110/4-speed, map pockets, clock, 80% restored white interior, needs clutch and some wiring. Many extra parts. All new rear panel molding & fuzzies, spare 110 motor (not running), custom steel wheels, (stock wheels and hub caps available). Call Doug Dyke 883-2239. 2/90

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**PARTING: '66 Corvair**, 2d, no motor. SELLING '63 van motor, 47K miles. Misc Corvair parts. Call Ted Christianson 887-9449 1/90

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# TREASURE'S REPORT

Balance July 1, 1990 .....\$1157.59

## Income:

Dues.....\$ 60.00  
Raffle tickets.....\$ 51.00  
Merchandise.....\$ 19.00  
Aluminum cans.....\$ 31.24  
Advertising.....\$ 30.00  
Name tags.....\$ 8.50

Total Income..... \$199.74

## Expenses:

Raffle prizes.....\$ 23.50  
Supplies.....\$ 76.78  
Name tags .....\$ 8.56

Total Expenses.....\$108.84

Balance August 1, 1990 .....\$1428.49

Vic Howard



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SEPTEMBER

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Randy Nelson  
Don Robinson  
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Allen Elvick  
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TUCSON CORVAIR ASSOCIATION REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

FOURTH WEDNESDAY of each month

(except December)

Piccadilly Cafeteria, 6767 E. Broadway, Tucson

6:30 pm: Parking Lot Bull Session

7:00 pm: Dinner (Optional)

7:40 pm: Meeting Starts

COMING EVENTS

November 2-4, 1990: Great Western Fan Belt Toss & Swap Meet.  
Angel Field, Palm Spring, California

(more details later)

Wednesday, Aug 22: Regular Monthly TCA Meeting

Wednesday, Aug 29: TCA Board Meeting 7:30 at JB's, Swan & Speedway

Tucson Corvair Association  
P.O. Box 50401  
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