

# Corvairation

TUCSON CORVAIR ASSOCIATION TUCSON, ARIZONA

Volume 19 Number 8

November 1993



HAPPY  
THANKSGIVING





## TUCSON CORVAIR ASSOCIATION

EST. 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 America (COSA).

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

**MEMBERSHIP DUES:** Initial dues are \$ 15.00 (includes name tag), renewable for \$ 12.00 per year and payable to the TUCSON CORVAIR ASSOCIATION through the Membership Chairperson.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS:** Report any change of address or phone number to the Membership Chairperson. Do not report such changes to the Editor.

**COSA MEMBERSHIP DUES** are \$25 per year and include a subscription to the COSA Communique, a monthly publication. COSA membership is not required for membership in TCA but is highly recommended. See any TCA officer for 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 10th for that month's issue. Mail or deliver all materials to the Editor.

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9 Corvairs

44 Members

The regular monthly meeting of the Tucson Corvair Association was called to order at 7:30 p.m., by President Bill Leslie, at Picadilly Cafeteria on Wednesday, October 27, 1993.

Visitors were Michael & Angela Parks, Chris Cunningham and Randy Griffith.

The minutes from the September meeting were approved as published in the October Corvairsation.

President Bill Leslie gave a report on his trip to the Midwest.

Corvairsation Editor Lynn Bloom thanked Vernon & Ruth Griffith, and Esther Alex for their help with the October Corvairsation. Late submissions for the Corvairsation caused the delay in mailing.

Van Pershing reported on the Casa Car Show. Eleven Corvairs were present. An excellent pot luck lunch was provided by Lynn Bloom and Ruth Griffith. The rain drizzled off and on during the day, but a good time was had by all.

Treasurer Al Crispin reported a treasury balance of \$1,016.27.

The license plate drawing was won by Larry Dandridge.

Raffle prize winners were Lynn Bloom, Vernon Griffith, Jim Wright, and Fred Zimmerman.

Volunteers for November raffle prizes were Ron Bloom, Cecil Alex, Jim Wright, Russ Lockhart, Allen Elvick and Alan Gray.

The food drive was a success. Alan Gray won the personal cassette player, and Allen Elvick won the Corvair clock.

President Bill Leslie reported he has come across a cache of original new/old stock Corvair parts. Thermisters, 44FF spark plugs, shocks, and much more is available. Contact him if you are interested.

Barry Cunningham discussed the seven various muffler hangars available.

The nominating committee for next years officers will be selected at the next board meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

*Marcy Tucker*  
Marcy Tucker  
Recording Secretary



# REPORT ON PALM SPRINGS TRIP FOR GREAT WESTERN FAN BELT TOSS & SWAPMEET

At 6 AM we left on our journey. Stopped at the Iron Skillet for breakfast, and when I checked the engine compartment I noticed oil coming out of the crank pulley seal. More on that later. Stopped in Brawley for gas, and made over 30 MPG, but nore oil was in evidence. Got to the GWFBT&SM in the late afternoon and it was cold. Saturday weather was beautiful and there were lots of parts for sale. Many Bargains--- and Bargains I did buy. Ron Bloom bought a few also. Jim & Laurel Wilson were there and we bought some of their hats. At the Awards Banquet only the Blooms & Alexes represented TCA. The food and the program were good as always. Sunday morning we rose early to get a good start for Tucson, and it was raining-I mean it was R A I N I N G !! All of us got wet before we started. It rained all the way to Marana --- then the rain quit.

Now about oil leaks.... I tried some Duro Lube that was touted on TV, and that could have caused the oil leaking problem. It was leaking at both ends of the crankshaft. After I got home I read a letter from Fluoramics, Inc., which company makes the slickest oil in the world. Their letter stated that teflon PTFE additives are destructive to engine seals and exhaust catalysts. Last year I had seal leaks and had the engine out twice, and now I am sure that the PTFE additives may have been to blame, as I have in past years assembled many Corvair engines that never leaked. Previously I read somewhere that PTFE additives were causing oil leaks.

In this report I haven't mentioned anything about the awards banquet, but will explain at the next meeting. One car got an award - it had Volkswagon seats and not stock wheels. In the same show there were Corvairs that were stock and flew that never got an award of ANY kind.

Hope to see most of you at our next TCA meeting in November .... and LOTS of you at our CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES!!

*Cecil Alex*  
Your Vice President

## Treasurer's Report

Balance Oct. 16, 1993.....\$ 1045.27

### Income

Raffle .....	\$ 40.00
Dues .....	\$ 48.00
Merchandise sales & cans.....	\$ 53.43
Advertisers.....	\$
Misc. Parts.....	\$ 160.65
Flower Donations.....	\$
Name tags.....	\$
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 302.08</b>

### Expenses

Postage .....	\$ 29.00
Jackets & embroidery.....	\$
Mid-Month (Ice, Soda, Etc.)..	\$
Flowers/card/misc.....	\$ 61.80
Name Tags.....	\$
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 90.80</b>

Balance Oct. 7, 1993.....\$ 1256.55

Al Crispin

YES, WE WILL BE ATTENDING THE CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES  
ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1993 AT THE O.K. CORRAL.  
WE WILL BRING CANNED GOODS FOR THE FOOD BANK.  
THERE WILL BE OF US.

(Please send or give this to Esther Alex  
NO LATER THAN DEC, 16, 775 W. Roger Rd.,  
Tucson, 85705, or 293-4156)

((We turned in 120 lbs of food for Thanksgiving!!))



# POOR MAN'S PORSCHE

*Corvair Monza and Corsa were sporty enough,  
but they couldn't pony up in the sales race.*

By Joe McBride

Chevrolet took a big gamble on innovation in 1960 when it introduced the Corvair as an economy car with an air-cooled, rear-mounted engine.

Despite its unusual drivetrain layout—or perhaps partly because of it—the Corvair fared badly in the high-volume

sales war against the very conventional Ford Falcon. Older people seemed to want economy cars that were straightforward rather than unique, while young drivers were looking for a bit more piz-



CLASSIC CAR RESTORERS

This pretty 1964 convertible sporting aftermarket wheels is owned by Jack Batchelor of Stanley, Kansas.



zazz than the original Corvair had to offer.

So, positioning its new Chevy II and Chevelle to suit conservative buyers, the automaker sought to increase the Corvair's appeal by giving it a sporty image and introducing genuine high performance models aimed at a more specialized segment of the market.

Chevrolet realized that the Corvair had all the elements needed for an excellent sports car: light weight, all-independent suspension and the unusual air-cooled engine out back to push it along. Not coincidentally, in the preceding decade Porsche had transformed Volkswagen economy-car components into a potent rear-engine

basic flat-six engine. Compressing the intake charge was an obvious way to make Corvairs faster without spending a lot of money developing a new powerplant, and different types of blowers were tried before Chevrolet finalized its production design.

Chevy had used Paxton's aftermarket centrifugal blower on its Corvair Sebring Spyder show car of 1961, and the same unit enabled Andy Granatelli to reach 142 mph at the Bonneville Salt Flats in a Corvair. When the advantages and disadvantages of a belt-driven supercharger were weighed against the newly-available exhaust-driven turbocharger, a turbo came out the winner.

As most enthusiasts know, tur-

bocharging works something like a windmill in principle. Engine exhaust gases spin a turbine wheel, which in turn drives a compressor turbine on the intake side. This squeezes the fuel and air into a denser mixture that generates more power when it burns. As exhaust flow and temperature increase, the turbines spin faster to create more positive pressure, or boost, in the intake manifold.

As most enthusiasts know, tur-



**Spyder** instrument panel trumpeted the car's sports car pretensions with a complete set of gauges set in brushed aluminum. Even back seat passengers could see the clock.



**F**alse grille designs were changed each year, making them the simplest clue to the vintage of pre-'65 Corvairs.

**C**hevy believed that American consumers couldn't relate to the sporty meaning of Spyder, so the model designation was dropped in 1965.

sports car with a strong performance image and appeal to younger buyers.

In mid-1961 Chevrolet launched the Corvair Monza, a coupe dressed up with sporty trim that included front bucket seats, and it was an immediate success. But despite having two more cylinders than Porsches would have until 1965, it was obvious that even the most powerful, 102-bhp Corvair engine couldn't deliver sports car performance without some help.

## ALONG CAME THE SPYDER

The Monza Spyder was created in mid-1962 to tap into this new market with a more muscular version of the

bocharging works something like a windmill in principle. Engine exhaust gases spin a turbine wheel, which in turn drives a compressor turbine on the intake side. This squeezes the fuel and air into a denser mixture that generates more power when it burns. As exhaust flow and temperature increase, the turbines spin faster to create more positive pressure, or boost, in the intake manifold.

The Corvair's turbocharger was made by Thompson Valve Division of Thompson-Ramo-Wooldridge (now TRW), Inc. It weighed only about 13 pounds and was mounted slightly off-center near the front of the engine

sporting three concentric venturis. The carb was dressed up with chrome bolt heads and linkages set against a glossy, black-finished body.

To withstand the increased stresses from turbocharging, many internal components of the Spyder engines were beefed up with high-strength materials. They included a chrome steel crankshaft, heavy duty connecting rods and piston rings and high temperature, super alloy exhaust valve heads. Spyderys also were equipped with an eight-plate oil cooler instead of the three-plate unit used on standard Corvairs.

The turbocharged '62-'63 Monza





## CORVAIR

continued

Spyder engine produced 150 bhp at 4400 rpm—more than one bhp per cubic inch, and a huge improvement from the standard 80-bhp engine. Torque was similarly improved to 210

pounds-feet at 3200-3400 rpm. This

turbocharged engine was the most exotic Chevy powerplant at the time, and was extremely advanced by early 1960s standards

### SUBTLE STYLING CUES

The turbocharged engine option and a convertible body style were both introduced in February 1962, but Spyder availability was limited because volume production didn't begin until April. Only 6894 were built that year, including 2574 convertibles. Complete with heavy-duty suspension, the Spyder package was listed as RPO 690, priced reasonably at \$317.45 above the standard Monza. In the first year, orders far exceeded manufacturing capacity, demonstrating much buyer enthusiasm for the car.

Although the external differences were so subtle that a casual observer might not notice, an enthusiast could identify a Spyder at a glance. Only a 2.5-inch chrome tailpipe jutting through the rear pan, a chrome script "Spyder" on the rocker panels and a small, die-cast "turbo-charged" emblem on the rear deck set it apart on the outside. When the rear bonnet was raised to reveal the engine, however, the chrome plating on the heat shield, crossover pipe, oil lines, fuel lines and dipstick handle made an impressive display.

The Spyder was further set apart by its interior. The basic Corvair instrument cluster was replaced by a brushed aluminum face with a complete set of more serious gauges: 6000-rpm tachometer, 120-mph speedometer and smaller gauges for manifold pressure, engine temperature and fuel level. Brushed aluminum also was used for the central radio panel and the glove box door.

Despite a considerable drop in Corvair production for 1963, Spyder output was up as the factory raced to

Peak output for the late 1964 Spyder engine was boosted to 180 bhp, a precursor to the Corsa engine.

Owner Karl Cozad of Kansas City, Missouri, outfitted his '65 Corsa with new seats and Cragar wheels suited to full enjoyment of the car's performance potential.

ibles. The new car received a hotter cam and a standard PCV valve, while the throttle-return check valve was removed.

Midway through the model year, the Spyder's engine compartment finish was changed from body color to gloss black. Other cosmetic and equipment touches were shared with other Corvairs: a transistorized radio, self-adjusting drum brakes, new front and rear exterior trim, restyled hubcaps and upholstery, improved door locks and exhaust valve rotators to cut down on valve wear.

The 1964 model year brought further development. Displacement of all Corvair engines was increased from 145 to 164 cubic inches by lengthening stroke from 2.60 to 2.94 inches. In turbocharged form, torque was increased by more than 10 percent, to 232 pounds-feet at 3200 rpm. Horsepower remained at 150 bhp, but peak power was achieved at 400 fewer rpm.

Other internal changes included a return to the 1962 camshaft profile, stellite-faced exhaust valves, stiffer valve springs, a lightweight magnesium alloy cooling fan in place of the heavier stamped steel fan, a 12-plate



### FIXING HANDLING QUIRKS

Suspension changes in 1964 decreased the car's notorious oversteer and sensitivity to cross winds by adding an anti-roll bar at the front and a transverse leaf spring spanning the independent swing-axle rear suspension. The transverse spring was designed to counteract the tendency of swing axles to change camber when cornering hard.

Both the three- and four-speed transmissions were revised with closer ratios and heavier synchros, with the four-speed unit specified in most Spyders. Wheel covers were now unique, bearing the image of a gold spider in their centers, and the air cleaner was chrome plated.

One of the most interesting 1964 options was a set of Kelsey-Hayes real wire wheels, supplied with special adapters and a rubber hammer for their knock-off hubs. These wheels are hard to get today, because only 400 or 500



## CORVAIR

continued

The wire wheels probably would have been more common had Kelsey-Hayes marketed them, but the company sold its entire production to Chevrolet. Today these wheels fetch many times their original price of \$400.

In 1964 the Spyder was listed as a separate model instead of a sub-series in the Monza line. Prices remained stable with the base figure never higher than \$2800 but, despite the substantial improvements that year, Spyder production fell to 11,241 coupes and 4761 convertibles. The stronger engine, revised rear suspension and relative rarity of the '64 models makes them among the most collectible of the first-generation Corvairs.

It was to be the last year of the Monza model and of Corvair's unique and original high-beltline design, which featured a dummy front grill—the easiest clue to a Monza's vintage. The '62 models had twin, horizontal black bars with chrome surrounds and horizontal wind splits, separated by a triangular center emblem; '63s had a single, full-width black bar sandwiched between chrome strips; and '64s retained the single bar but added an inverted-triangle emblem in the center.

### CHANGING CORSA

At the height of the car's initial success in 1962, Chevrolet's design staff under Bill Mitchell put everything they had into the second-generation Corvair that would debut in 1965. Today, many see the result as one of the most timeless and beautiful cars in GM history. Unfortunately, it was not a very profitable car for GM and ultimately it could not compete with Ford's new Mustang after the ponycar craze began.

For those who appreciate it, 1965-69 Corvair is a very desirable automobile, particularly the turbocharged models produced through 1967. They are arguably the best cars in the Corvair's decade of production.

The Corsa nameplate succeeded the Monza Spyder at the top of the redesigned Corvair line in 1965. ("The name Spyder somehow never caught on with the American public," explained then-GM Vice President Semon E. "Bunky" Knudsen). The

Corsa was available as either a hardtop selling for \$2500 or a convertible for \$200 more. The blown engine, now developing 180 hhp, was optional in the Corsa. The standard Corsa powerplant was a special four-carburetor, non-turbo unit rated at 140 bhp.

The Corsa package included complete instrumentation and deluxe interior. Two-year production was 20,291 coupes and 8353 convertibles for 1965, with 7206 of the total equipped with turbochargers. The following year, Corsa production was 7330 coupes and 3142 convertibles, including a total of 1951 turbos.

Although Corvairs remained in production until 1969, the Corsa was dropped after the 1966 model year to make room in the lineup for Chevy's new Camaro ponycar and to hold down production costs while the dies were run out.

In turbocharged form, the 1965-66 Corsas were quicker than the Spyderys. The final generation engine delivered 180 bhp at 4000 rpm and a thumping 265 pounds-feet of torque at 3200 rpm. Typical 0-60 mph acceleration was 9.5 seconds, and the car could hit 115 mph. Gas mileage was still over 20 mpg at normal highway speeds.

Getting 180 bhp out of the 164 cubic-inch engine was not too difficult, because the Corvair engine had been relatively unstressed. To do it, Chevy introduced new cylinder heads with larger valves and ports. The head and cam design duplicated those of the Monza Spyder, but the carburetor and the turbocharger's impeller and turbine blades were all slightly enlarged for increased air flow and boost pressure.

From 1962 through 1966, some 80,000 Monza Spyderys and Corsas were produced, and many of those cars stayed in the same hands for lengthy periods because they never lost their appeal.

Although many believe it was Ralph Nader's book "Unsafe at Any Speed" that caused the demise of the Corvair,

the decision actually had been made well before publication of Nader's book to drop the Corvair after tooling costs for the revised 1965 line had been amortized. The Corvair was doomed by declining sales after Ford's Mustang defined the ponycar market, and by Chevrolet's decision to engineer a specific Mustang-fighter in the form of the Camaro.

### CORVAIRS TODAY

Corvair Monza Spyderys and both the blown and unblown Corsas are now recognized as the fine automobiles they were. Despite Chevrolet's lackluster support and the many ill-bred rumors surrounding the Corvair, these models have demonstrated that they were ahead of their time.

Today, collector prices for these cars remain stable and reasonably low. And apart from rebuilding the blower, turbo

Vairs aren't expensive or difficult to restore or maintain.

To get increased performance from their turbo cars, some Corvair owners take a few measures that were not included when the cars rolled off the line. The most common modification is water injection,

which can boost horsepower and reduce knock from modern low-octane fuel. Some people wrap the exhaust system with high-temperature insulation to increase exhaust gas temperature and thus boost—but at the expense of decreased life for the crossover pipes.

The Corvair is a fun car to drive through S-curves thanks to its all-independent suspension, nimble steering and small size, but when you pilot a turbo model, the experience becomes downright exciting.

Sitting low in the Corvair's bucket seats (which are actually closer to split-bench seats in terms of side support), a driver finds all of the gauges in plain view, and the large steering wheel, gearshift and pedals all within easy reach.

At low engine speeds the turbo is quite smooth, producing adequate power

### CORVAIR CLUBS

The Corvair Society of America (CORSA) has about 6000 members in 130 local clubs, including groups in France and Switzerland. National dues are \$27 per year and new members receive a packet of information that includes a list of parts suppliers and service specialists.

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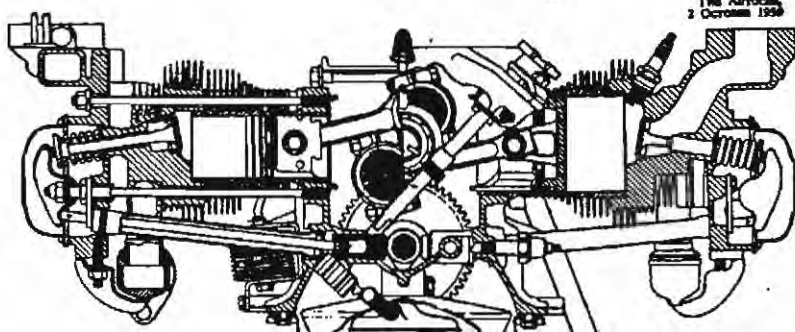
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The Artisan,  
2 October 1999



## CORVAIR

continued

for getting around town. To feel the benefit of turbocharger boost, you need to get the revs up and keep them up, especially from a standstill. When the turbo is wound up and delivering a dense

intake charge, dumping the clutch produces a more spirited launch and offers an exhilarating ride.

If you're cruising at 55 and apply a serious amount of pedal, the reaction from the car is by no means instantane-

ous. But after some hesitation, the turbo Corvair accelerates so smoothly that, before you know it, you're passing 90 mph. (This practice can be highly enjoyable when a Fast Freddy in an IROC Z pulls up alongside the unassuming vintage car. He may think about you next time he makes out a check for his

car payment.) After this quick burst of

adrenaline it's time to shut her down, unless your state has a higher speed limit than others.

Besides being exercised by their drivers on the road, Corvairs can still be

found competing on the autocross circuit. These races against the clock through a course of cones lend themselves to the car's superb handling and responsive powerplant. Though not as common as normally-aspirated Corvairs on the autocross course, turbo Spyders and Corsas make an impressive showing

when they come out.

The heel-and-toe method is a popular way to keep those critical engine revs up, putting gobs of power at your disposal rather than losing vital seconds spooling up the turbine. Keep that engine running, and the cones will blur past. It is not at all uncommon for a turbo Corvair to beat out Corvettes, Camaros, Porsches and Mustangs, much to the dismay of their owners.

### BUYING A CORVAIR

Finding good examples of turbo Corvairs can be challenging. First of all, the cars are relatively rare, especially late-model examples. Secondly, owners often have had their cars for years and have no intention of selling them. If you can talk them out of their prized possessions, the cars are often extremely well maintained and require a minimum of restoration. Some owners think their cars are blue-chip collector's items that should command an excessive amount of money.

On the other hand, you may come across a turbo Corvair tucked away in a side yard, only to find that the yard is growing through the floorboards. Or the turbo may be seized up, although this is not an insurmountable problem if you get a rebuild kit and are reasonably good with a wrench.

Solid, restorable examples of Spyders and Corsas can be purchased between \$1000 and \$2500, but your total investment by the time you get the car restored may exceed what the car is worth. Corvair enthusiasts don't restore their cars to make money. They buy and restore these milestones because they love the cars.

Maybe in a few years the auto enthusiast hobby will appreciate Corvairs for the great cars they were, and prices will go up. Meanwhile, there is no better deal going for an attractive, exciting, good-handling and peppy sports car. No wonder many Corvair owners have more than one in their dri-





# Vairs 'n Spares

FOR SALE: 62 two dr. 110 HP, PG, Red, New fuel pump, Reg, Battery, New brakes, New tires, Everything in good shape! \$ 2000.00  
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FOR SALE: CORVAIR PARTS. Large outdoor yard full of great Corvair parts. Call Barry Cunningham for information at (602)747-9028.

CORVAIR PARTS: Large selection of early and late. Reasonable prices. Larry Dandridge, (602)571-9680.

FOR SALE: 66 500 Coupe 110 4 sp. 3:55. Near new wsw tires. Straight chromed front and rear bumpers, air exh. grill. Twin glass packs, Call Ron Allen, (602)883-8458

FOR SALE: 64 Monza 2 dr. parting out, Call Del Light, (602)883-6794 or 883-5902

FOR SALE: 6 ea. N.O.S. eng. cyl. and Piston units complete. GM p/n 3847843 (for 64 Corvair) \$400.00 Call Don Chastain (602)886-1076

FOR SALE: 64 Monza Coupe W/factory A/C. White, Blue interior, Trophy winner, low mileage, Az. car. \$ 1500.00 or OBO.  
Call Al Crispin (602)722-9445

PARTS FOR SALE: Early rear axle bearings, Wanted, FC hub caps. Call Ron Bloom (602) 747-4842

GREENBRIER-1961 FOR SALE; VIN 955, P/G, 64-110 eng. Best offer, Yellow W/Brown stripe, has Alt. Call Mike Zachery, (602) 232-7892

FOR SALE: 63 Spyder convertible, non-Spyder engine, runs good, needs restoring. Have Spyder engine parts to go. \$1500. OBO. Phone Keven, 791-7478 or Larry Dandridge 571-9680.

FOR SALE; 64 Greenbrier, 95 h.p. 4-speed, posi-traction, sunroof, almost new tires, rally wheels, excellent running condition. Needs paint and front seat repair. \$950, OBO. Larry Dandridge 571-9680.

\*\*\*\*\*NOTE--- Ads in VAIRS & SPARES are free to TCA members. Non-members can place a four line ad for \$2.50. Send ads directly to Corvairsation editor\*\*\*\*\*



TUCSON CORVAIR ASSOCIATION REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS  
FOURTH WEDNESDAY of each month (except December)

Piccadilly Cafeteria, 6767 E. Broadway, Tucson

6:00 pm: Parking Lot Bull Session

6:30 pm: Dinner (optional)

7:30 pm: Meeting starts

COMING EVENTS

PLEASE CONTACT A  
BOARD MEMBER WITH  
ANY SUGGESTIONS!!

DEC 22  
January 1994  
February

CHRISTMAS Festivities - OK Corral  
??? Tune Up Time ???  
???? Must make a mid-month plan !  
Feb. Meeting Night Election of Officers

Regular Monthly Meeting: Wednesday, Nov. 24, 1993

TCA Executive Board Meeting: Dec. 1, 1993 JB's Swan & Speedway, 7:30pm

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