



VintageVoice

The Vintage Volkswagen Club of America Newsletter • Established 1976



INSIDE:

- 2 The Little Car That Could
- 3 Director's Forum
- 7 Collecting Postcards
- 10 Headlight Dipping Relay Reconditioning
- 13 Volkswagen Library
- 14 Historian's Corner
- 17 No ... It's not a Volkswagen
- 19 VWs On Parade
- 20 My Tribute to the VW Type 18-A
- 23 Trust Me Honey ... You'll Like This Car show!
- 26 Charitable Donations ...
- 27 Oktoberfest and Classic Car Show

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The Little Car That Could

By Al Geisweidt, alnflo@aol.com

I just took The Little Car That Could on a 2300+ mile trip from Anaheim Hills, California to Colorado Springs, Colorado over the Christmas week. What makes this car worthy of some recognition to all of your VW readers is that this car is 40 years old. It is a 1972 Karmann Ghia VW Convertible painted Porsche red with a little over 83,000 miles on the speedometer when we started out on this trip.

In driving to Colorado Springs, Colorado - this little car had to touch roads in five states to get there. CA, Nev. AZ. Utah & CO. It went into the Continental Divide in the Rocky Mountains passing major ski towns like Aspen & Vail Colorado. Due to adverse road conditions, this little car that could, took the southern routes back to California and in doing so -had to touch another state making it now 6 states it passed through - New Mexico.

What also adds some flavor to this story is that I will be 77 years old this coming March and my wife who joined me on this trip is 73. We have also owned this car for 32 years. Snow & ice and this Little Car That Could just kept chugging along. This little VW got a lot of recognition from passing motorists as well as truckers on the road. At gas stops, people would congregate around and admire this little car.

At an overnight hotel stop in Utah, a young lady would like to buy it and I don't know if that will ever come about but she took my email address and told me that she will make contact with me after we ring in the new year. At one gas stop - an Asian man even asked me if he could take a picture of this car. This little car that could went all these miles using only one quart of oil. Hopefully you will find some merit in my story to give recognition to this Vintage Little VW car that took on whatever the road had to throw at it in a 2300 + mile trip.

Taking this Ghia all the way to Colorado was our third option of getting there plus something that I didn't want to do but wife pressure sure gets us men turned



around at times. My wife was on the Internet twice a day- everyday for two + weeks prior to us leaving trying to get a decent air fare. The airlines kept floating different prices until there wasn't a seat to be had and the prices where out of sight even if you could.

Option number two was to take our Cadillac which has all of the comfort, whistles & bells that you would want for traveling.

I took the Cadillac into the shop prior to this trip (12-13-12) to have the tires rotated & the oil changed. I also asked them to check out the front brakes because I was hearing brake shoe noise?? plus, I wanted them to check out a slight water leak that I had been noticing small puddles of water under the car in my garage now & then.

The puddles were very small and I was told that because this leak was so small, wherever it was leaking at, it must of been spraying onto the hot manifold and vaporizing???

I was also told that this small leak could turn into a major one at any time and because of its location would be very costly to have fixed plus, the shop didn't have time to do it before Christmas.

I also had this shop check out - the check-out engine light which was on.

Well, they told me that the code that came up for this light meant that it possibly could be the torque converter in my transmission and they couldn't verify it this time but if the light comes on again, bring it right back so that could code check it again to see if the same reading came up.

With this horror story with the Cadillac, It would be crazy to even attempt to drive it beyond a very small distance from home.

Last option now was the VW Ghia which "I had not driven at all for slightly over several months". It was in a upholstery shop from 5/21/12 to 12-13-12. (Long story why it was in there that long).

All indicators where now pointing to taken the Ghia to Colorado.

On 12/18/12 -- I took the Ghia in to have new tires put on it replacing the ones that had been on the car (for 20 + years). This car was seldom driven and would just sit in our garage for months after months.

I bought a couple quarts of oil and a remote jumper battery box with a tire air compressor, loaded up the car and early on the morning of December 22nd. this little care was heading out to Colorado.

The night before this trip, I was back at the upholstery shop where the owner had a replacement flasher & turn signal relay which he felt the old one burned out while they were replacing the upper & lower dash covers.

When I went to his shop the night before to have him install it (it took a couple of days for the owner to order it and have it delivered) it was the wrong one? or at least it looked wrong - about 1/2 the size of the one that we needed.

Well anyway, Once I got to Colorado Springs, I went out and bought & replaced this relay.

I also tried to get a replacement window washer bottle hose assembly from the tire to the bottle with no luck and had to resort to using a hand held squirt bottle with deicer fluid in it so that if my windshield would get messed up while driving, I could reach out the window and give it a few squirts. (At the store picking up the flasher unit, I also bought and installed new wiper blades).



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Director's FORUM

by howard query

Burtonwood@vwca.com

4:00 pm. December 22nd. Usually by now we've had at least a foot or two of snowfall. To date, there's been none. Today's weather forecast indicates we'll get hit hard later this evening with snow accumulations ranging from 8 to 12 inches in total. Temperatures are to drop rapidly as the day edges on with wind speeds surpassing 35-40 miles per hour. We're told to settle and stay at home as the first blizzard of the season approaches.

6:00 pm. The snowfall has begun. It began very slowly but is now dumping snow on us with flakes that look the size of quarters. It's falling upon the ground very quickly now, building depth with every passing minute.

9:00 pm. As I look out our rear window, I can see the branches of the trees at the back of our lot bow under the increasing weight of the fallen snow. Everything looks so fresh, so white and clean ... so beautiful. By now, I would estimate we've received at least 5 inches of freshly fallen snow, with more to come. As I stood there gazing through our frosted window, I thought back to the days when my '57 Volkswagen was my only means of transportation. Back then I never gave it much thought as to how cold it was outside or how deep the snow was. Driving to school or getting to work under such conditions was really never an issue. Although my '57 had none of the current luxuries of our SUV, it was dependable and it always

got me to where I needed to be. I for don't think for a moment that I had ever considered a different form of transportation.

10:30 pm. The downfall seems to have increased at a greater pace. As I listen closely, I can hear the roar of the wind and blowing of snow outside our window. I sat back for a minute and then I slipped on some winter boots and coat ... soon heading for the garage. Although my '58 Beetle had been sitting now for several weeks, it started without a problem. I let it warm up for a few minutes and then slowly backed it out of the garage. You could hear the tires squeak as they crushed their way through the snow. You could hear the monotone whir of the windshield wiper motor as it wiped away the melting snow from my windshield. Other than the howling of the winter winds, I couldn't help but notice how unusually quiet it was outside as I drove down our street.

11:00 pm. The streets I've traveled haven't seen much traffic since earlier in the day. As I'm driving around the town I am greeted with enthusiastic waves from folks who are out so late in the evening shoveling their walks. One man waved me over as if he had something to say. Pulling up to the curve, I rolled down the window to hear him chuckle and say, "you sure don't see these things on the streets anymore." He nodded his head at me offered a wishful Merry Christmas as I got back on my way.

12:00 pm. My wife had called, only to make sure my old '58 was still running and I had not gotten stuck somewhere. Ah yes, she of little faith has no idea how enjoyable it can be driving along in a Beetle during a snow storm.

For some reason, the drive that evening had engulfed me in a certain tranquility I have not felt for years. Memories were rekindled of the days I drove to school and to work in conditions worse than this and without concern that I was cold or that I might get stuck in the snow. I remember the days when I would have to make sure I had two window scrapers with me during such treks. One scrapper was to be used for the outside of the windshield and one to be used to remove frost from the inside of the windshield.

And I chuckle as I think back when I'd offer someone a ride into town because they had gotten stuck in the snow. It always amused me when they would tell me how wonderful their car was and how thankful they were that I had come along in my "little" Volkswagen and offered them a lift. I also remember the times when the snow was so deep, you could hear it scrapping the bottoms of the floor pans as I plowed my way down the streets.

Driving my '58 during our first major snowfall brought back many memories. I know of several VW enthusiasts who would scorn at such an attempt, however ... I firmly subscribe to the idea that our cars should be driven to be enjoyed. Now, had the road crews been out earlier that evening and had laid down several tons of road salt .. I can assure you my Beetle would still be at home under cover awaiting a drive on another day.

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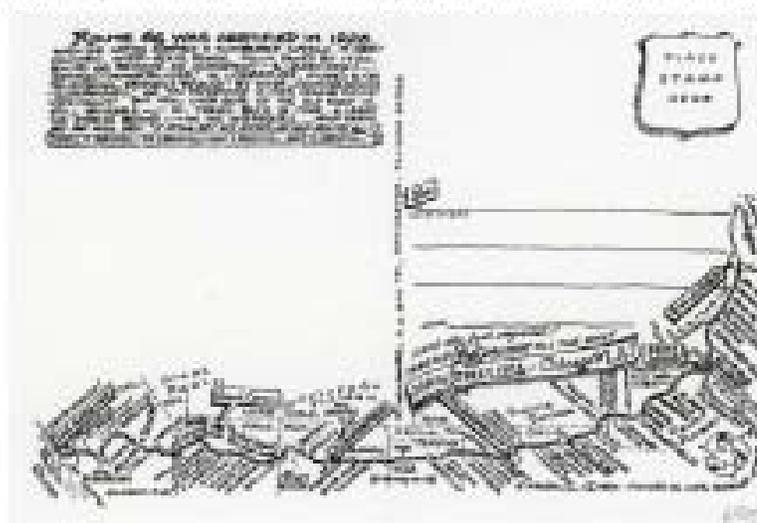
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his life forever. "I suddenly realized I could do my drawing for money and never have to work again," he explains, smiling. "I had to live on the cheap, of course, in ways that other people wouldn't or couldn't do. I also had the option of returning home when money ran low or times got tough."

Waldmire eventually did bird's-eye-view posters of 34 cities, many of them college towns. His unique marketing scheme allowed him to prosper in two distinct ways. First, he sold the merchant a space on the poster; then he was able to sell the posters in the merchant's place of business, a never-ending circle of profits.



Then he had another idea, one almost as wonderful and amazing as the first idea. Robert Waldmire realized he could draw anywhere, even in the warm Southwest in winter. Two goals were thus realized: no work, warm all year.

So a pattern began to emerge. In the fall he would head south, down his arch highway, US Route 66, drawing as he traveled.

He drew the icons on 66, motels (like the Wigwam Motel in Riohato, Calif.), restaurants (Steve's Cafe in Chenoa, Ill.), gas stations (Soulsoy's Shell Station, Mt. Olive, Ill.), weird places (the Edsel graveyard in Shamrock, Texas), whole towns (Needles, Calif.), even stretches of the "Mother Road" still in

existence (in Hydro, Okla.; Halltown, Mo.; Dwight, Ill.).

He started drawing wildlife and inserting the images into his postcards and posters—snakes, mammals, but mostly birds, many of them endangered or close to being so. The inclusion of the natural world into his art allowed it to be more attractive, relieving the rigidity of building, bridge and road.

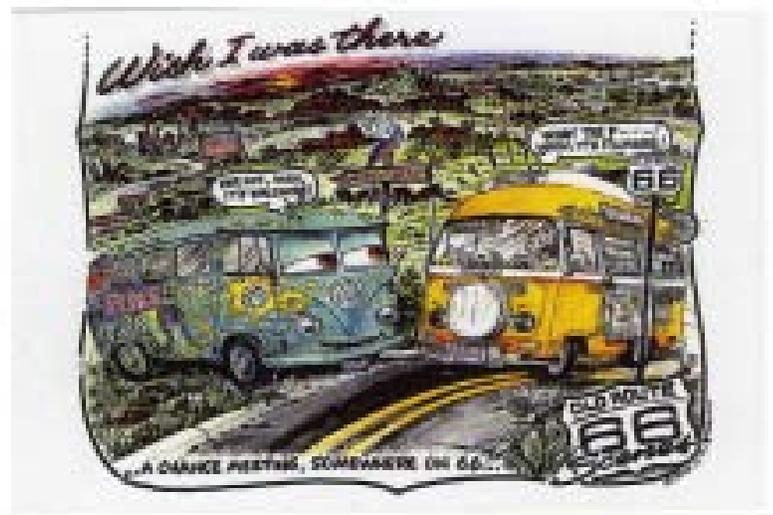
Waldmire was making friends along the way, too. Those who were involved in the Route 66 resurrection phenomenon, the merchants who ran the small tourist shops all the way from Chicago to Santa Monica, the restaurant and motel owners who were keeping the dream alive, the gas station junkies still pumping gas and cleaning windows—these were the people he interacted with in a meaningful way and they provided information and ideas he later used in his art. Out of this group, many became good friends and provided support and encouragement as the years passed by.

By the time winter arrived, Waldmire was in Arizona, or New Mexico, or California, warm and comfy and pondering future projects.

By 1985, really getting immersed in his love for Route 66 and seeing the need for a vehicle he could live out of, market out of and travel in, Waldmire purchased a 1972 Volkswagen van.

"Twenty years ago I was at the Portal Cafe, reading the Auto Trader magazine. I saw an ad for that '72 Volkswagen and I called the guy from the phone in the parking lot. I ended up buying it sight unseen," Waldmire says. The van is still running some 20 years later, and continues to be his main place of residence on the road.

Waldmire continued to expand his body of art over the years. He completed four large (19-by-25-inch) state posters of California, Illinois, New Mexico and Arizona. These intricate posters were filled with hundreds of drawings of scenic overlooks, the usual Route 66 material, sketches of the wildlife, the plant life. There were historical attractions, short philosophical comments, quotes from great literature and wise men, pleas for peace, non-violence and sound ecological practices. And there were moments of wry humor too, often at Waldmire's own expense.



Elements of rebellion against the establishment also began to creep into his city posters and postcards. Here, from the Arizona poster, 1983: "It is estimated that Lake Mead and Lake Powell evaporate more water per year than the multi-billion dollar central Arizona project will provide annually!"

Anti-nuclear sentiments slipped into his New Mexico poster (1984): "The state has a cradle to grave affair with nuclear technology—the atom bomb was 'born' here, nuclear wastes are buried here."

Then Waldmire really began to roll and reached his highest pitch of anger against hunters and trappers in his controversial Silver City poster of 1985. On the slaughter of animals: "The campaign to 'control' the coyote is more like a war of extermination," and "The mountain lion, through loss of habitat and intensive prosecution, has retreated to the most remote and rugged regions of New Mexico. With the aid of a dog pack that 'trees' the cat until the hunters arrive, it is an easy kill." On trapping Waldmire wrote, "The Steel Jaw-Leghold Trap [is the] Scourge of the Earth."

Because the force of Waldmire's rage was in such small print, many didn't catch the drift until one of his merchant sponsors (a hunting outfitter) took the time to take a close look. The result was a general revolt of his sponsors and a potential lawsuit. A subsequent appeal by Waldmire to the state attorney general for a ruling came out in his favor and a lawsuit was never pursued in court.

"Pretty soon I realized I was fighting for everything that was endangered, whether it was flora, fauna, or a highway," he says. "I was committed to saving anything under siege by man."

Over a warm blueberry cobbler at the Portal Cafe (Waldmire is a dedicated vegetarian), he brings us up to speed on his future plans, the status of his unique homes in Illinois and Arizona, and what he was currently deep into (other than blueberry cobbler).

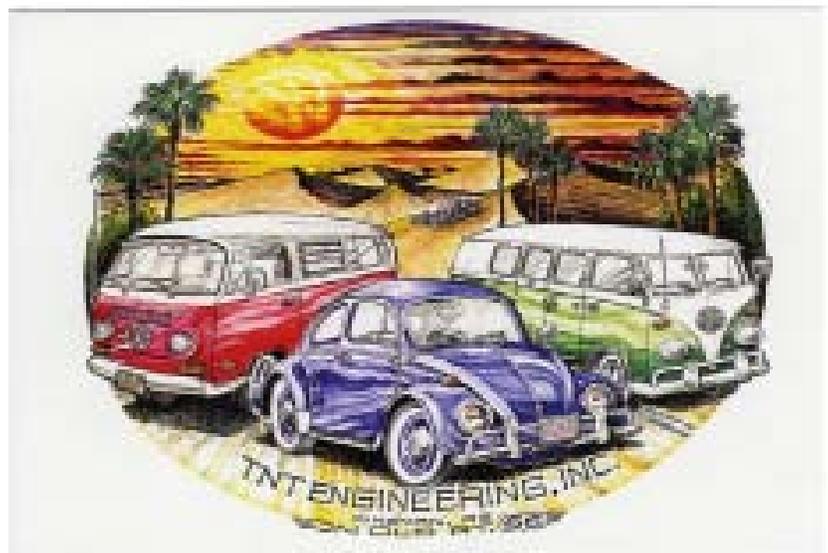
While living in Arizona, Waldmire is completely "off the grid," as they say. He cooks his meals with a solar oven, collects rainwater when it falls, and is dabbling in solar panels in order to be able to draw at night. His singlewide sits on 40 acres of rocky land in the shadow of the Chiricahua Mountains and provides him with free building materials for his many projects (namely, rocks). Piles of rocks are everywhere, designated to provide walls, dams, channels and foundations for his grand design.

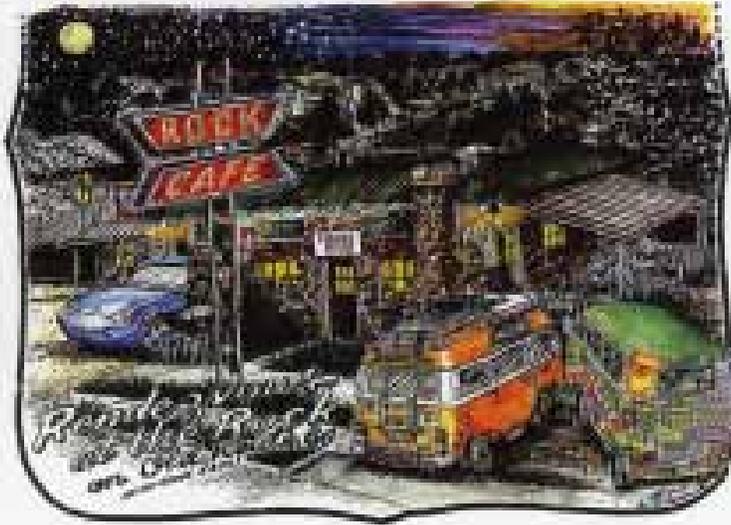
Waldmire calls his 40 acres a "nature sanctuary." His eyes grow bright with pleasure when discussing plans to harbor and protect wildlife and plants on his land. Already many species of birds crowd his feeders, and he fondly recalls a recent visit by a herd of javelina. The visit of a group of illegal aliens a few nights later didn't elicit quite the same friendly response.

While living in Illinois during the few months the sun shines there, he lives in a 1966 Chevy school bus equipped with a second deck, hand-constructed by Waldmire himself. Again, the accouterments include solar panels and that trusty solar oven. Everything currently in Illinois, including the school bus and a stylish Mustang fastback, is scheduled to eventually be moved to Arizona, his future permanent residence.

Some might question the sanity of an artist who shuns the usual trappings of modern life, a man who primarily communicates with the past, someone who lives out of a Volkswagen van for much of the year. But if you had a chance to spend a few hours in the Robert Waldmire universe, it would become quickly apparent that his world is much more sane than ours, yours and mine.

The honors Waldmire has garnered over the years are substantial, but none equals the thrill of being presented the 2004 John Steinbeck Award. The winners are selected from nominations made to the National Historic Route 66 Federation and the John Steinbeck Foundation. A committee chooses the recipient based on his or her work to preserve, restore and promote the legendary highway. Waldmire accepted the award June 11 of last year during the John Steinbeck Award Banquet, held at the Adam's Mark Hotel in Tulsa.





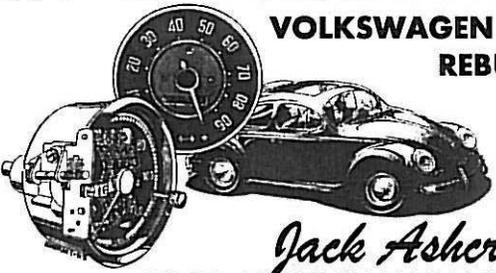
There's more to the story of this remarkable man and his art and tenacity in defense of historical sites and endangered species in these United States. He looking for him along the Mother Road."

Bob Waldmire died Wednesday, December 19, 2009 at his family's home in Rochester, Illinois. He finally lost his decade long battle with abdominal cancer. He was surrounded by his friends and family and knew the end the coming and wanted it to be a celebration of life. He wanted a feast. He apparently envisioned friends and family coming together on that day to celebrate and reminisce.

His 1972 Volkswagen bus and home on the road was the inspiration for the character "Fillmore" from the animated motion picture "Cars."

Bob Waldmire was 64 and died the way he lived — on his own terms.

P.S. I wanted to share the postcards he produced that both depict life along Route 66 and his love for Volkswagens, I hope you enjoyed it and learned a little something about this wonderful man.



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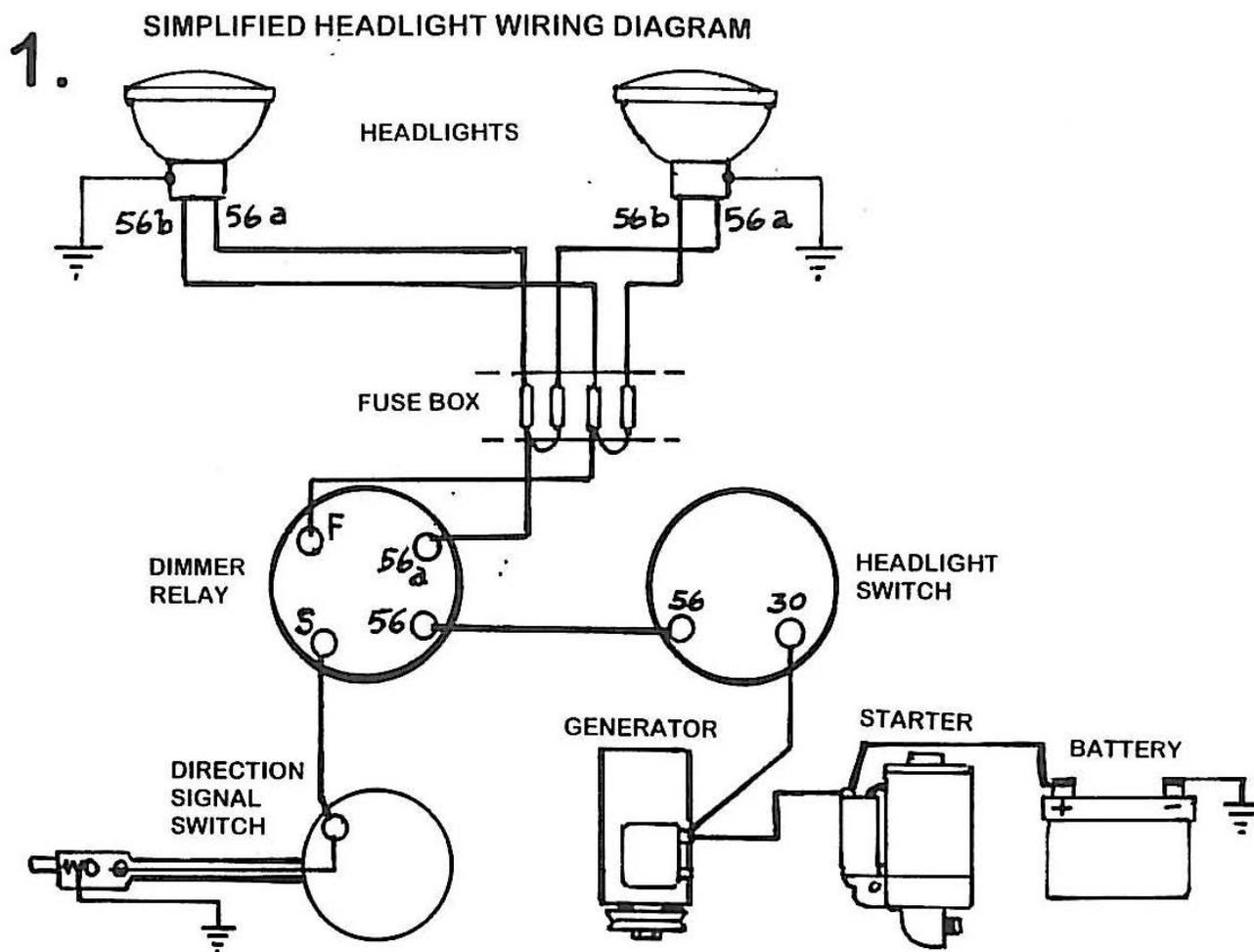
By Jack Ashcraft, jacksonashcraft@gmail.com

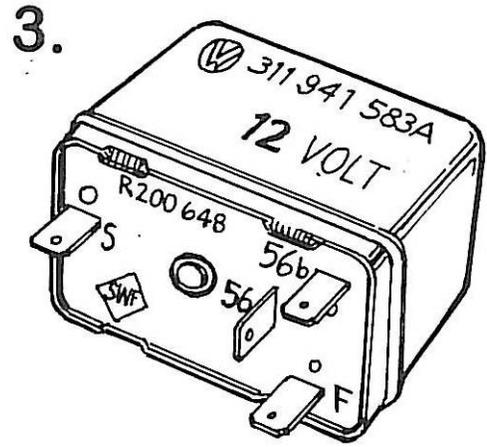
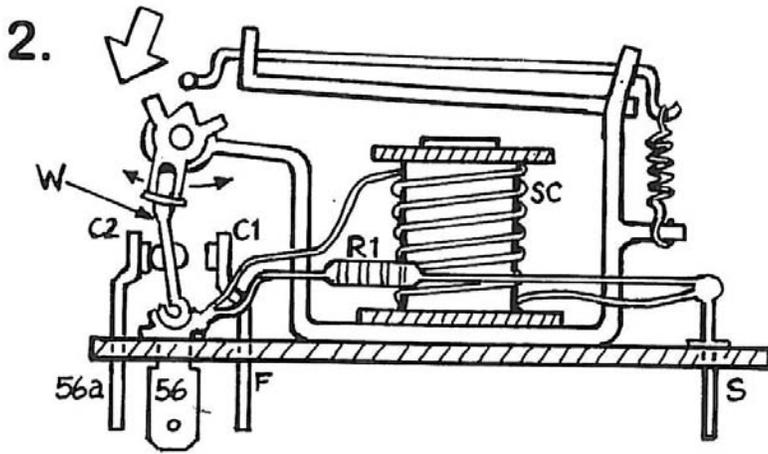
A 1966 Beetle owner, having read my direction signal switch article in V V [Sept/Oct 12], contacted me and said his signals worked fine, but his headlights wouldn't dip. I told him that most likely the problem was the headlight dimmer RELAY. Drawing 1 is the simplified circuit:

12 volts from the battery is always present at terminal 30 on the headlight SWITCH. When that switch is turned ON, current flows thru the switch, out terminal 56 and in terminal 56 of the dimmer relay. Refer to drawing 2, a schematic diagram of the dimmer relay.

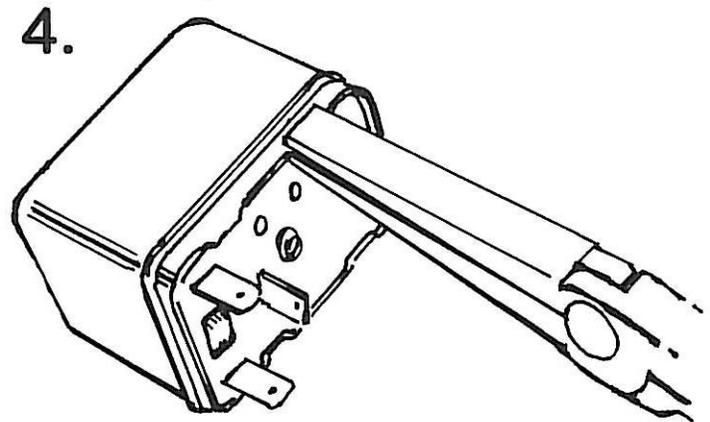
Current passes thru the contacts C2 of the wobble plate W, and in this case out terminal 56a, thru two fuses in the fuse box, to terminals 56a of each headlight, thru the bulbs to ground. Both high beams are illuminated.

To change to low beams, the direction signal switch lever is squeezed [in most applications] which supplies a path to GROUND [see the relay diagram] at terminal S. Current can then pass from terminal 56 thru the solenoid coil SC to terminal S, back to the direction signal switch, and to ground. The solenoid coil produces a strong magnetic field that pulls down the top plate of the relay. The rod just above the top plate physically presses on the "W" shaped upper portion of the wobble plate assembly, causing it to flip the contact portion from C2 to C1. Now current passes from terminal 56, thru contacts C1, out terminal F to two other fuses in the fuse box, then to terminals 56b of each headlight. This action turns OFF the high beams and turns ON the low beams.

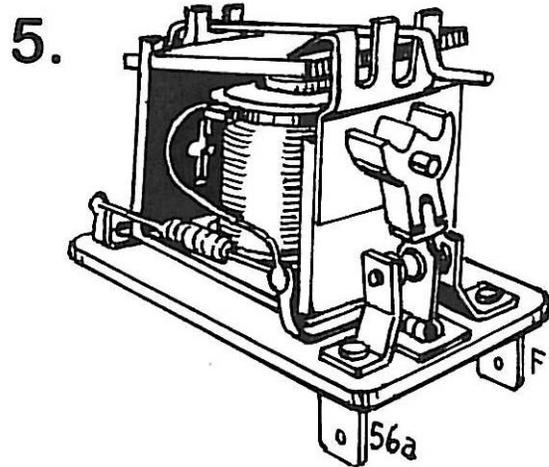




When the squeeze on the direction signal lever is released, ground is no longer felt at terminal S of the relay. The magnetic field of the solenoid coil SC collapses and the spring pulls the top plate back UP. If all is well with the relay, this is how it works. Obviously, if the relay does not work, all is NOT well with it. It is possible to take the relay apart and in many cases, repair it.



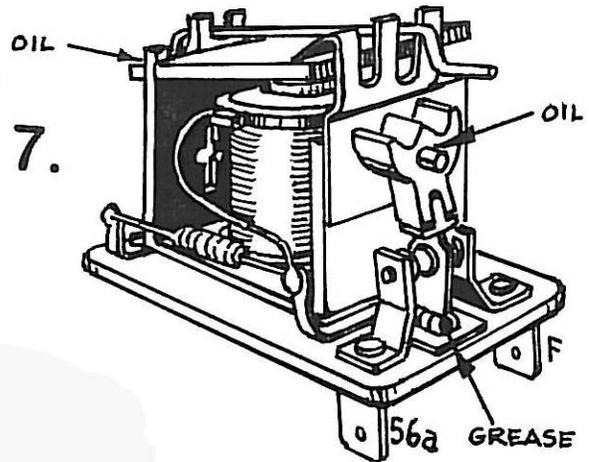
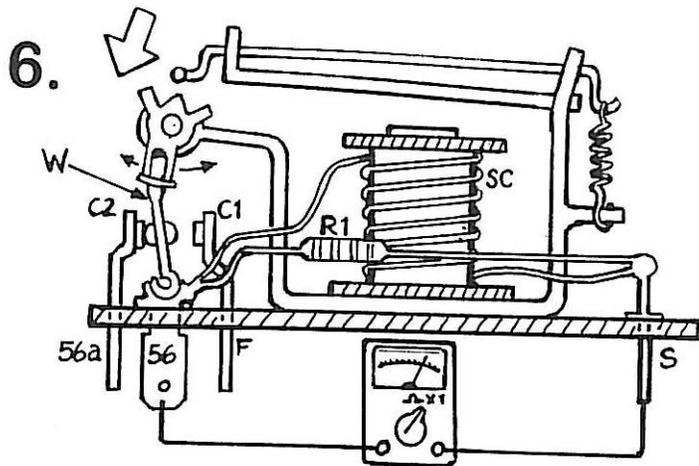
Drawing 3 shows the relay. Depending upon who built it, there are either 4 or 6 crimped areas holding the relay internal assembly into the aluminum case. I use a duckbill pliers [see drawing 4] to carefully uncrimp the case. Lift the relay assembly out of the aluminum case. Time for the first test. Drawing 5 shows the internal relay assembly. Drawing 6 shows the test setup using a multimeter.



Set the multimeter on the ohms x 1 scale, connect the meter leads to terminal 56 and terminal S. You should read 8 to 9 ohms. If so, the solenoid coil is good. If you read a much higher reading, like 2200 ohms [2.2 K ohms--using a higher ohms scale], the solenoid coil is OPEN and you are reading the resistance of the resistor R1. Unless you can find and repair the open wire to the solenoid coil, the relay is junk. If you read 8 to 9 ohms the solenoid coil is good and you can proceed [see drawing 7].

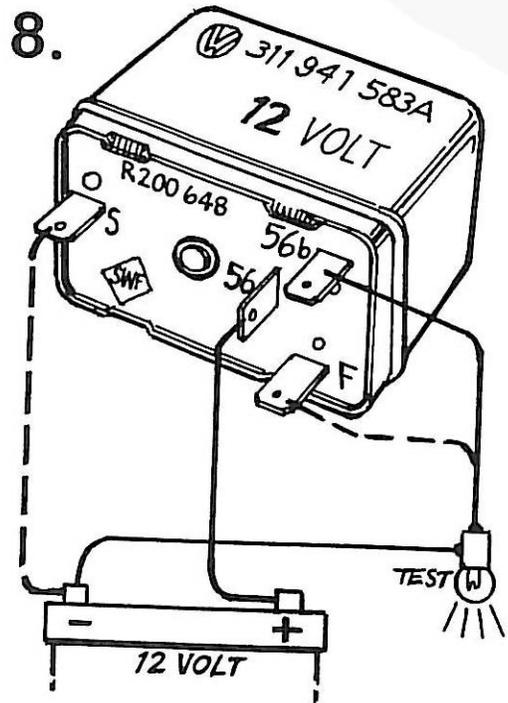
Using some 300 grit emery paper, clean both contacts of contact set C1 and C2. Put a thin coat of dielectric grease on the pivot part of the wobble plate [at the bottom]. Use a drop of clock oil on each end of the pivot shaft for the top, plastic "W" piece of the

wobble plate. Add a drop of clock oil at each moving joint of the top plate as well as a drop of oil on the spring where it hooks over the tab on the top plate. Lack of lubrication is one of the main reasons these relays stop working. Like old men, they get stiff and cranky. Remember, they ARE 40+ years old!



Now it is time for the final test [see drawing 8]. Set the relay assembly on its side on a rubber pad. Connect a test light lead to terminal 56b. Connect the other test light lead to the battery ground [-] terminal. Use a clip lead and connect terminal 56 to the battery positive [+] terminal. If the wobble plate is in the position shown in drawing 6, the test lamp will light. Now move the test light lead from terminal 56b to relay terminal F. Momentarily connect a clip lead from the battery negative [-] terminal to relay terminal S. The relay will close its top plate and the top rod will switch the wobble plate. The test lamp will light. Congratulations, you just repaired a relay that you can no longer buy new.

Reinstall the relay into the case. Use a duck bill pliers to carefully recrimp the case. Just use a bit of patience and you can make the re crimp areas look almost like new.



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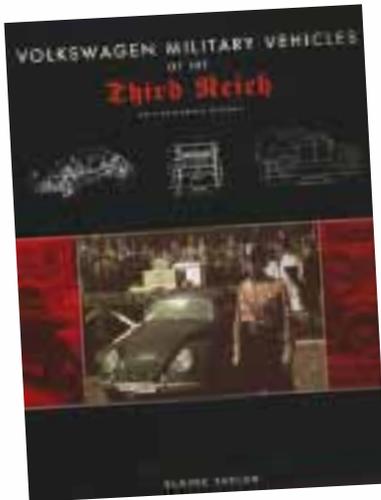
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The Volkswagen Library



Volkswagen Military Vehicles of the Third Reich:
An illustrated history

By Blain Taylor. Published in 2004 by Da Capo Press. A member of the Perseus Book Group. www.dacapopress.com. ISBN 0-306-81313-0. Large format hardcover with 187 pages and over three hundred historical black and white pictures.

As far as books dealing with the Volkswagen history go, this is a fairly new one, published in 2004. For a few years we had an avalanche of books dealing with all aspects of the Volkswagen history. Blain Taylor, the author of this book has written over the years a number of books about the Third Reich and its military vehicles.

Purchasing a Volkswagen in the sixties he never gave much thought about the car until one day as he explains, he saw a picture of a Volkswagen from 1938 and all of a sudden realized how far back the Volkswagen history goes. This inspired him to do some research into the subject. Being a military man he concentrated on military Volkswagens. His many years of research are represented here. Some material presented is based on research done by the US military on German military vehicles at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. Apparently there is a lot material about the Kübelwagen and Schwimmwagen at US Army Ordnance Museum at the above mentioned proving grounds. A number of pictures taken during the testing of the Kübelwagen at Aberdeen are published in this book.

Most writers just recycle the same information without having done much original research. Let me say right here at the beginning, what makes this book unique are the number of historical pictures reproduced and the many technical drawings by the Porsche office of most of the military vehicles developed by Porsche based on the Volkswagen. Porsche lists 23 variations of military Volkswagens. Besides the Porsche list of most of the major variations, there were also many changes constantly introduced during the production of these cars that usually do not receive any special mention.

This book, like they all do, starts with the obligatory telling of how Porsche and Hitler's ideas were merged to come up with a car for the people and it even includes the full text of Hitler's speech given at the laying of the foundation stone on Ascension Thursday, May 26, 1938. It too quotes a number of other statements made by Hitler regarding his ideas of motorizing Germany and cites his not well known ideas about standardizing the vehicle industry; which gives us a good insight into his thinking. It also shows some interesting looking drawings that supposedly were made by Hitler, showing his idea of how the Volkswagen should look like. These drawings have been published before and there are questions regarding their authenticity. One of the drawing looks suspiciously like a 1934 Mercedes H 130 model. Other high quality technical drawings contained in this book show a lot of details of the many different versions of Volkswagen based military vehicles, which have not been shown anywhere else.

Besides the car itself the author describes very accurately how WW2 progressed and explains the shifting transportation needs of the German Army. The many bizarre attempts to create synthetic fuel and rubber, like for instance from dandelions, are also covered. There have been books published before dealing specifically with German military Volkswagens. This is a more comprehensive one with good articles and with the variety of pictures of cars and drawings.

Looking at this book and others, again one realizes that there was and is a lot of confusion about the many Porsche developed cars and the poor record keeping by Porsche. There were just too many variations of the basic military Volkswagens contemplated and actually built.



The Italians In Wolfsburg

We have mentioned in the 'Voice' the British and the Americans and how they contributed in different ways to Volkswagen existence. Italians played also a part, not a very big one, but nevertheless they did and here is their story.

Only two months after the May 26th 1938 laying of the foundation stone for the Volkswagen factory, Hitler pulled 3 000 construction workers from the VW factory construction site to build defensive fortification at the western border of Germany, called the "West Wall" by the Germans and the "Siegfried Line" by the British and Americans. This all in preparations for WW2 for which 500 000 workers were needed. Fortunately, Hitler's buddy, Benito Mussolini, the dictator (Duce) of Italy, had a high unemployment situation and was able to spare a few thousand workers. The original VW factory was almost entirely built by these first Italians at Wolfsburg.

Of the original construction workers, over one thousand remained during the war were they were treated well as friends of the Reich. A special large 5,000 people capacity wooden building was built just to entertain these construction workers with movies and concerts etc. The building was called the Tullio Cianetti Halle, named after the Fascist Italian Minister of Labor. This man had created a unified union in Italy which became the model for what Hitler did with the German unions' once he got into power. It even had an organization attached to keep the workers happy which became the blueprint for the German KDF, the Strengths' Trough Joy, organization.

The treatment of these early Italian workers in Wolfsburg changed drastically after the Italian government switched sites during the Second World War. They became prisoners of war and were joined by about 200 Italian military officer POWs. They all were forced to work on building Kübelwagens and other military equipment. The Italian officers were previously fighting side by side with the Germans in Greece and on the eastern front, at Wolfsburg they were treated badly, as lower class humans, just like most other forced laborers from many different nations.

There is no information how these first Italian workers were repatriated at the end of the war, the just kind of faded away and apparently went home. It did not take long for Wolfsburg to



need Italians again. 16 years later to be precise.

The Economic Miracle in Germany during the early sixties, created an acute shortage of labor. One reason was that there was the giant rebuilding effort taking place to rebuild a much destroyed country. The fact that the war had wiped out millions of men in their prime productive years did not help the situation either. On top of that the undervalued German currency created an ever increasing demand for German products world wide. As an aside: That last situation is today the cause for the great success of Chinese exports. Another factor regarding Volkswagen was that the infamous wall went up and the border between West Germany and East Germany was closed deprived the VW factory of a lot of workers that used to commute up to that time from the east to nearby Wolfsburg to work. The most logical place to get badly needed workers for Germany was to get them from the impoverished south of Italy. With the help of the German government, and in agreement with the Italian government, tens of thousands of Italians made their way north across the Alps to find work in German industry and construction.

By 1961, at Volkswagen, 70 000 employees were building 4 300 cars a day, not enough to satisfy the demand for Volkswagens everywhere. So Volkswagen made a request to get its fair share of these Italian "Guest Workers". On January 17th 1962, a first special train arrived in cold Wolfsburg with 84 Italians to start working for Volkswagen. Nordhoff had a number of prefabricated multi-unit, two story wooden buildings built to house this first group. Every two weeks two more buildings went up for the many Italians that joined the first group. This housing section was locally called the "Italian Village". By March 1, a total of 1,000 Italians had arrived in Wolfsburg and by the end of 1962 there were over 4 200.

These Italian guest workers were almost all men in their middle twenties. Three men were placed per room. Each multi unit house had a kitchen with 18 heating plates where the workers

could prepare their pasta for those who could not stomach the German food available at the factory cantina. Two buildings had rooms for social interactions where Italian movies were shown. Concerts and theater were also available at the aforementioned special hall, as were soccer fields and bocce fields for lawn bowling. At vacation and Christmas time special trains offered the Italian workers the opportunity to go back home.

Despite of all efforts to make their live livable some of the workers coming from the sunny south of Italy got homesick real quick. They could not adjust to the somewhat dreary weather and general environment of northern Germany. Many experienced a real culture shock. Since all were young and single and without families or girls and not able to speak German, it was difficult for them to adjust. The somewhat dry and earnest mentality of the northern Germans was foreign to these southern Italians. As a result some begged to get out of their contracts to go back home after only a few days. Usually another 60% did not return to work after going home for holidays.

After initial positive reports by the Italian Press, praising the fabulous opportunities these Guest Workers had, social activists and agitators started to infiltrate the guest workers and started to create mayhem. In Italy at the time the communist and left wing parties were very strong and had a lot of influence. Despite the fact that the guest workers received the same wages and benefit as the German employees, these activists were able to convince many that they were being exploited. This situation was reinforced by radio propaganda from communist East Germany which was only a few miles away from the VW factory. Communist radio stations from Czechoslovakia broadcasted in Italian especially to the workers in Germany to create problems. It was the time of the cold war. In November of 1962 the Italian workers went on strike in protest and shut down the assembly lines. The Italians complained about discrimination by their German co-workers and of being unhappy in general.

It could not have been the money that caused the unhappiness of these workers because after each payday long lines formed at special provided bank counters to send their money back home. It was estimated that one Million Marks went south every month. These were good old German marks.

Despite all the problems caused by a few, many others adjusted well and eventually brought their families from Italy to enjoy the luxuries that the good salaries at VW allowed them. Other men found local ladies and established families in Wolfsburg. These groups contributed greatly and many of them got promoted to higher positions. Once the labor shortage in German improved others decided to go back home with a great deal of saved money to live happily in the warm southern climate.

While Italian workers in the sixties were building Volkswagens,

Italian designers had been working since about 1951 on ideas for replacing the Beetle. Pininfarina had a Beetle replacement ready as early as 1952. Ghia had a sporty coupe ready in 1953 which went into production in 1955 as the Karmann-Ghia. Bertone designed the Type 4 and Giorgio Giugiaro of Italdesign designed the Golf and Scirocco, and in 2010 Volkswagen bought 90% of Giugiaro's Company, Italdesign, located in Turin, Italy.



Der Volkswagen Holzvergaser, The Wood Burner

Towards the end of the Second World War, Germany was running out of fossil fuels. The last source of petroleum had been Rumania. US bombers flying from Italia wiped out this last supply of petrol to Germany. As the situation in Germany became really desperate many harebrained ideas were kicked around by weird scientists including a suggestion to make fuel from dandelions was tried. Another one was the making of fuel from coal that actually worked well but was too inefficient and to slow to make any impact this late in the game. Germany has a lot of forests and therefore a lot of wood, which was used as a last resort to fuel military vehicles. According to some reports about half a million military vehicles were converted to use wood generated gas. A number I question, I doubt very much that by late 1944 there were even that many German vehicles still in operation by the military or otherwise.

As a very young boy in 1944/45 I remember seeing piles of wood chips stored in strategic places all over and I remember seeing poor soldiers trying to get these wood burning cars and trucks fired up in the morning. It always took along time to get enough wood to start burning, actually smoldering, to produce enough carbon monoxide gas to get going. During the whole starting up process the wood needed to be constantly stoked in its tank with a long iron rod. To check whether there was enough gas to get going, a little flap at the side of the tank was opened and the out flowing gas with a burning match checked whether there was enough gas to burn.



remember that many of these wood powered vehicles on any slight incline had to go up in reverse because the reverse gear was geared lower as the first gear and allowed the vehicle to make it up the hill. It was easy for us young boys to walk as fast as these vehicles could move.

The Porsche Company which was very much involved with work for the military also got involved with converting regular Volkswagen Beetles under project number 230, as well as other military Volkswagen vehicles, like the Kübelwagen, project # 283, with wood gas generators. According to Chris Barber, the author of the excellent book "Birth of the Beetle", the work on a number of versions of wood burners was the

While I do not know how much power these wood powered cars generated, I am sure it could not have been much. I do

last projects Porsche was involved with before they took off for Austria to wait out the end of the war.

According to a book authorized by Volkswagen "The Volkswagen Factory and its Workers during the Third Reich" Porsche at his last meeting with Hitler, September 4th 1944 promised Hitler's chauffeur to supply him with a wood gas powered Volkswagen. This probably was Hitler's convertible that is displayed at the Volkswagen Museum. According to some reports that convertible had at one time been converted to burn wood.

It appears that none of the wood burning Volkswagens ever saw much use except for one used by Porsche's secretary, who took it to Austria at the end of the war. Most of the pictures showing wood powered Volkswagens were taken after the war.

Most writers call these particular cars wood burners; however the correct translation of the German name is "Wood Gasifier".

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No ... It's not a Volkswagen But Fun Nonetheless

By Dan Hotka dhotka@earthlink.net

This is a 1957 Isetta Coupe. I've wanted one of these for a while. The frame has been cleaned and painted. Most of the parts are rebuilt or new...the rebuilt parts look new! The car is COMPLETELY disassembled. It is like a big jigsaw puzzle with no picture! I have 3 books...including a popular restoration guide that should prove helpful for the re-assembly. The parts are in 6 or 7 tubs in my garage. The body is going in for a paint job very soon...this isn't quite its factory colors...there is NO rust! It really is in pretty good shape.

These cars weigh in at about 700 pounds. It has a 1 cylinder 300 cc motor that develops 18 horse power and gets some 60 miles to the gallon. It holds 3 gallons of gas. It has 4 wheels...the rear wheels are close together. The whole front of the car is a door. These cars were first made in Italy early in the 1950's then BMW took over the project and produced them from 1955 thru about 1962. My neighborhood: it is currently under Teen's car port ... the body is going for a paint job in early January and will not return until it is time to reunite it with its chassis.

Director's Note: Your Isetta looks to be a great find. I'm sure we'll all be anxious to see the completed project. Back in '66, I had returned to England and had the opportunity to drive an Isetta around the Northern area of Manchester, Liverpool and Warrington for a couple of days. These cars are a lot of fun to drive and a hoot when folks spot you on the street. Keep me posted, I can't wait for a test drive.

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VWs on Parade

VWCA member Dan Hotka organized a fall parade of VW enthusiasts for a slot in the annual Beaverdale Fall Festival Parade, held in Des Moines Iowa. This festive event is held annually on the 3rd weekend in September. This year's parade took place on Friday and Saturday, Sept 14th and 15th. The event hosts a variety of vendors, bands, and a carnival/amusement area for the youth ... complete with games and rides. The parade takes place just down the street from where Dan lives.



Dan is shown chauffeuring members of the Beaverdale Neighborhood Association Beautification Committee in his 1960 bug. Dan had both of his VW's in the event as well as the owners of the local ice cream store: Snookies Malt Shoppe ... also located in the Beaverdale area.



Dan restored this 1963 Karmann Ghia for a season of free ice cream! Snookie and Jim are riding in the Karmann Ghia, followed by Don Steoger in his 2003 Mexibug. Dan Jespersen joined us with his NICE Westfalia Camper bus, which was used as a

distribution point for candy that was tossed out to the crowds lining the street.



Following behind Dan Jespersen bus, was Dan Hotka's 1971 Marina Blue Beetle Cabrio; driven by Dan's daughter Emily. Kathy Miley followed close behind in her red 1974 Bug ... and the dot on our string is Cherrisse Linder riding her Vespa!

We were the feature group of the parade ... in the front ... following right behind the Grand Marshall.



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My Tribute to the VW Type 18-A

Chapter One

By Bob Shail, Hastings, England.

History of the VW Type 18-A models

There were three firms involved in building the type 18-A four-door Beetle Cabriolet model – ‘Hebmüller’, ‘Austro-Tatra’, and ‘Franz Papler’ of Cologne. Only Hebmüller and the Austrian firm Austro-Tatra had VW factory approval to manufacture these special Polizei vehicles.

In 1949 Hebmüller produced an open side canvas models, which including at least three special four steel door models. In early 1950 Austro-Tatra began production of their two and four steel door versions, while later in the same year Karosserie Papler of Cologne began the manufacture of their four steel door models.

Hebmüller

Founded in 1889, the company specialized in building horse-drawn carriages, and after Joseph’s death in 1919 his four sons began to modify car bodies, opening a subsidiary operation in Wulfrath, Wuppertal. Among their customers were such names as Hanomag, Ford, D.K.W., Hansa-Lloyd, and Opel, these companies being regular clients for several years to come.

In May 1948 the 25,000th post war Volkswagen Beetle rolled off the assembly line at Wolfsburg. During this period the Hebmüller firm was approached by Volkswagen to build a cheap open sided Beetle for use solely by the German Polizei. Hebmüller soon built a prototype version based on a cut-down 1947 Beetle. [Photo # 1/2] It still retained the saloon windscreen surround, which



Photo 1 & 2: The first experimental type 18-A Hebmüller was based on a 1947 saloon. Note the saloon front windscreen which made the car look odd, also the high sided body sills. It’s unlikely the heater channel rails were fitted at this stage!

looked somewhat heavy on a convertible model. The biggest problem, in common with every convertible conversion on a regular saloon, was chassis flex. At first this was tackled with the

addition of deep box-section strengtheners welded around the heater channels and sills. Although this cured the problem to a degree, it was not fully solved until under-sill strengthening rails were added to the production models. The rails meant that the strengthening sections across the door openings could be reduced in height, thus facilitating entry and exit. The other principal modification made to the production models was the use of a Karmann-style squared-off windscreen surround, which greatly improved both appearance and visibility. The metal folding roof frame I had its pivot point inside the car, unlike the production models with their exposed folding mechanism.

In production

[Photo # 3] In service, the main drawback with the Hebmüller police car was the fact that it was not a true all-weather vehicle. A majority of the Type 18-A models, were equipped only with canvas 'door's, and ropes, to prevent the rain from getting in – or the occupants from falling out. There was also a pair of rather inadequate removable wind-wings either side of the windscreen. Aside from that, there was no other known weather protection.

Hebmüller ceased production of the type 18-A in December 1949 with a total production of 482 vehicles.

A New Hebmüller Discovery

Back in the 1980's when I was editor and publisher of the 'IVVM' [International Vintage Volkswagen Magazine] I corresponded with many vintage VW and Porsche enthusiast world-wide. Those were the days long before the home computers. One such friend lived outside 'Rietberg' in Germany. He was a big fan of the 356 Porsche. On one occasion he happened to mention that his father was a police officer and was about to retire. I naturally asked if he ever driven a Beetle during his time with the police. His answer was - Yes. I later asked if he has any photos of the Beetle's he used, sadly he had no photos that included a vehicle, so I left it. A few months later the subject came up again, I asked in passing, what type of Beetle did he drive, during the 1950's - 60's was it a saloon or cabriolet? The answer was; 'it was a very basic model that had open sides' – now that really got my attention!



Photo 3: One of the first production models based on a 1948 model! Note the removable wind-wings and the exposed roof folding mechanism, which was standard on all their 18-A production cars.



Photo 4: One of only a hand full of four steel door models that were built by Hebmüller! Note this example had full weather protection.

The following day I sent him a couple of photos of a Hebmüller type 18-A, and asked if this was the type of vehicle he used. The answer arrived 10 days later and was a resounding –Yes!

I soon gained a lot of information about his time with this Beetle and this is what I can remember he said. First the open vehicle was not especially popular with the officers especially in inclement weather. They only had one or maybe two examples where he was stationed. I asked what it was like for him when the weather was poor. Answer; it was not much of a problem, as the car had protective covering! I asked him to elaborate.



Photo 5: It would appear these are American police officers standing next to a late model 1949 Hebmüller.

This photo was taken in 'Auerbach', Saxony where they were probably visiting Europe on some sort of overseas exercise.

He said the car had full side-screens that gave them some sort of protection from the wind and rain. I sent him another photo, this time of a surviving four-door 'Papler' model for him to compare! He later told me the car was similar in appearance, but his of course had no steel doors. The door top side-screens looked similar but he can't remember that they were held in fixed frames. I took it from that, he meant they were a loose canvas covering, probably fitted with heavy plastic windows that could be rolled up. For me this was very interesting information, as I asked a couple other knowledgeable VW friends about this set-up and they never heard of such a fitment on any of the canvas door models.



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Photo 5A: A close up of what I am certain is evidence that several late model canvas door Hebmüller's did indeed have some sort of extra side-screen covering.

Featured here, [Photo # 4] Hebmüller did in fact produce a very small number of four steel door models and at least two are known to have survived. As you can see, like most four steel door Beetles they were fitted with detachable door side-screens. This Hebmüller has side screens but it's not known if this was an original Hebmüller fitment?

[Photo # 5 & 5-A]. I recently took a closer look at all my period Type 18-A photographs and to my surprise I found this canvas door model has had with the wind wings removed, and it had some sort of top screen-curtain arrangement fitted. You can see from my highlighted closed up photograph there appears to be two side screens, one fitted each side in a folded manner up against both front windscreen posts. A second folded screen can just be seen hanging down at the rear roof frame.

I would suggest that this is indeed positive proof that some sort of extra protective covering was fitted to the late model Hebmüller's. Sadly I will probably never find out if this was a Hebmüller extra, or something the German police commissioned to have made!

Next month will take a look at the Austrian four-door Austro-Tatra.

Photos: Bob Shaill collection.

Trust Me Honey ... You'll Like This Car show!

By Bill Pierson kabprsn@yahoo.com
Photos Courtesy of Chip Beck and John Black

Most readers of this venerable publication are undoubtedly aware of the problem: How do we convince friends and family members that they might actually enjoy attending the cars shows of which we are so fond? Auto enthusiasts and car clubs have been struggling with this dilemma for over a century, so it is no mean feat when a group of people are able to put together a package of events practically guaranteed to include something of interest for nearly everyone we might wish to invite to our car show.

The German Car Club of Kansas was fortunate enough to stumble into a pretty decent solution to this conundrum following our fourth annual Sonnenblumen Autofest in September of 2011. We had already partnered with a local AMBUCS service club, which needed a fund raising event. They offered to remedy what had been a major headache for our club in years prior - coming up with food and drink for entrants and spectators at our 2011 show. That worked out pretty well for both groups, but we decided to move the show to a more central location for 2012, in hopes of attracting a bigger audience for both clubs.

Another benefit of the changed locale was that we might now be able to join forces (instead of “competing”) with the Smoky Hill Museum, who put on a downtown street fair and parade the same Saturday as our show. As discussions progressed, we hooked up with people who were planning a marathon honoring a local PE teacher. They wanted to move to the downtown park we had reserved for our show, so we agreed to begin and end the marathon there. We hoped this might entice family members of the runners to spend time at the car show and AMBUCS Oktoberfest tents and meet their marathoners there after the races.

It seems other Salina groups got wind of our





impending combined events. We were soon joined by representatives of a local steel company who were planning their annual technology expo. They thought it could help all of us if they held their Steel Day on the same weekend. Not only that, but they offered to provide free busing for spectators between the three event locations.



This expanded consortium of organizations worked with the local Chamber of Commerce to design and coordinate an advertising campaign for what was now being promoted as a community-wide set of events, to be known as Salina AutumnFest. This soon expanded further to include a United Way/PKM Steel sponsored concert by local bands in the park, timed to follow our car show awards ceremony. Then a group putting on a world finals professional rodeo championship at the event center in the park that same weekend asked to join with Salina AutumnFest. Adding still more to this mix were a local production of Les Miserables, a gun show and an Al Green concert.



So there you have it: No spouse, kid or friend who was “dragged” to Sonnenblumen Autofest 2012 could possibly have had reason to complain of lack of something else to do besides “look at dumb old VWs”.

The result of all this planning and promotion was the largest number of entrants yet for Sonnenblumen Autofest, and by far the most spectators ever to check out our rides and displays! In addition to our traditional offering of free overnight camping in the park, kids’ foot races in boxes they had decorated to look like buses, live German band music, and our own St. Pauli girls posing for photos and handing out awards, there were several memorable highlights worthy of mention:

More than two-thirds of the 100+ vehicles entered were Volkswagens.

With three awards in each of sixteen classes ranging from Audi to VW, plus the “Best of” winners, there was a ratio of one award given for every two entrants.

The prize for long distance went to an Arkansas couple who drove nearly 500 miles to attend the show in Salina. They also tied for first in their class.

A dozen or so entrants, including a ’60 panel Bus with one of our club banners fastened to each side, chose to





The German Car Club of Kansas holds an occasional silent auction or raffle to raise money which we contribute to a scholarship fund for students in the auto restoration department at nearby McPherson College. (As readers may know, this is the nation's only four year degree in this discipline.) A few years ago, we raffled a 1990 Audi, which had been generously donated for the cause by a GCCK member. The young couple who won the Audi have been working to restore it, and returned to the show with it this year. They seemed genuinely moved when we announced they had won their class.



Our club endeavors to engender an atmosphere conducive to fun for the entire family, hoping to share our love of Volkswagens and other fine German machinery with as many people as possible of all ages and backgrounds. Perhaps indicative of some success in this effort was the especially gratifying moment when we met the family of an eleven-year-old girl who came to our show for the first time this year with the pink '67 Beetle she talked her father into buying. They displayed it proudly, not far from our newest member's 2012 Porsche Carrera.

Our AMBUCS partners are already planning improvements in the food and drink department and GCCK members have made their suggestions for changes for next year's show (details of which may eventually be found at www.gckk.com), so be sure to make an effort to attend Das Sonnenblumen Autofest 2013!

help spread the word of our show by participating in the nearby parade.

Jamie Miller of Lawrence won the Pre-67 type II class with his stunning Mango Single Cab.

Abilene's Greg Rose promises to retire from competition after once again prevailing in the Best Campsite category.

The '67 Bug of John McDowall from Junction City took home Best of Show honors.

Perhaps the most unusual entry in the show was the 1957 Autounion DKW Munga (as in Mehrzweck Universal Gelandewagen mit Allradantrieb), shared by Alan Miller of Lawrence.

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By Albert Finocchiaro, f
innie9mdl261@yahoo.com
Photography by Rick Barletta

The “Volkswagen Club of Central New York” is and has been an active participant for over 12 years in the largest mixed car show on the East Coast. (The Syracuse Nationals).

The Show has in attendance over 7,800 vehicles from all over the United States & Canada. Over 45 VWCNY members volunteer their efforts to help make this show successful. In turn we are rewarded A Check to donate to a Charity of our Choice. This Year the Club awarded a check for \$ 1,670.00 to UPSTATE Golisano Children’s Hospital. During the Month of December The CNY Club is donating their time to help rebuild over a thousand used bicycles for a Xmas Giveaway in the Central New York Area.

Albert M Finocchiaro. VVWC of America. Central & Northern New York Chapter Rep

Director’s Comment: Albert, I am awe struck. Many of our Chapter Clubs each year do some pretty amazing things for the communities they live within. This is a tremendous example of giving above and beyond self. I have pulled a couple paragraphs from the letter you had sent me and thought I would share it with our membership.

Dear Mr. Finocchiaro:
Thank you for helping sick and injured children treated here at Upstate Golisano Children’s Hospital (a Children’s Miracle Network hospital). Your support saves lives, ensures we are able to purchase the best medical equipment, recruit the best specialists, enables our internationally-networked researchers to provide the most current drugs and treatments available, keeps families together, provides families



with financial assistance, and helps kids still be kids even when sick.

On behalf of all of us at Upstate, thank you again for helping us to continue to provide world class care right here in our community with your generous donation of \$1,670.00.

For the children,
Antoinette Gary
Director



Oktoberfest and Classic Car Show at Dorschel Volkswagen with the Finger Lakes Region VW Club

By Joyce Crispino, joycec@rochester.rr.com

On Wednesday evening October 24th, The Finger Lakes Region Volkswagen Club was invited to attend the Dorschel Volkswagen annual Oktoberfest celebration held at the dealership in Henrietta. Dorschel Auto Group is one of the largest car dealers in the Rochester New York area, selling many makes of cars.

The Volkswagen division hosts an annual Oktoberfest inviting past and new customers. With over a dozen cars participating, we had preferred parking inside the service area. Our cars were much appreciated and looked great under those bright shop lights! Up in the showroom we enjoyed complimentary sausage and beer tastings and music by a traditional German band.

Many club members took part in test driving new Volkswagen model. It was a great time and we were treated like royalty. If you missed out this year, consider attending next year's event as we have already been invited back.

Owner of the Dorschel Auto Group, Rick Dorschel stops by to visit and personally thank us for attending the Oktoberfest event on October 24. Rick is standing next to member Chris Hayes' Baja Beetle.





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