

## UPCOMING RALLIES

**July 19th to 22nd.** "Western Regional Rallie" "South Jetty" on Humboldt Bay, Bareka, California. Hosts: Jim and Marlene Craig (619) 366-9104; Bob and Roberta Franz (415) 757-3557; and Mory and Ester Snyder (415) 757-3092.

CORSA National convention in Ontario California.  
Thursday July 31st thru Saturday Aug 4th. **GROUP  
ULTRA VAN** meeting Wednesday August 1st 2 to 3  
p.m

**September 30th to October 7th.** National UVMCC Rally. The Whitt R.V. Park, P.O. Box 457, Franklin, Texas 77856, on U.S. Route 79; phone (409) 828-5377. Hosts: Pete and Rose Schuler (516) 368-3578; and Marian Grootenhaar (616) 896-8630.

### CLASSIFIED

### FOR SALE

#355 **ULTRA VAN** 1968 model. Professionally rebuilt 140 H.P., good Powerglide transmission. Nice shape inside and out. Good tires. 42,500 original miles. \$5800. *Bob Addis (304) 485-8475*

#414 **ULTRA VAN** 1968, 110 HP Corvair. Includes many parts and manual. Has a small woodstove installed in it Has air conditioning and generator. Will take best offer *Gerald McCoy, 3532 Illinois Trail, Frazier Park Ca (805) 245-3316.*

### TRADE:

Would like to trade my 1964 Corvair convertable for an **ULTRA VAN**. I will add money if necessary. The Corvair is Automatic with Air Conditioning. Candy apple red with brown top and brown interior. The car has won 1st place trophy in class. Warren O. Romberger, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73118.



WHALES ON WHEELS

5537 Pioneer Road

Boulder, Colorado

80301

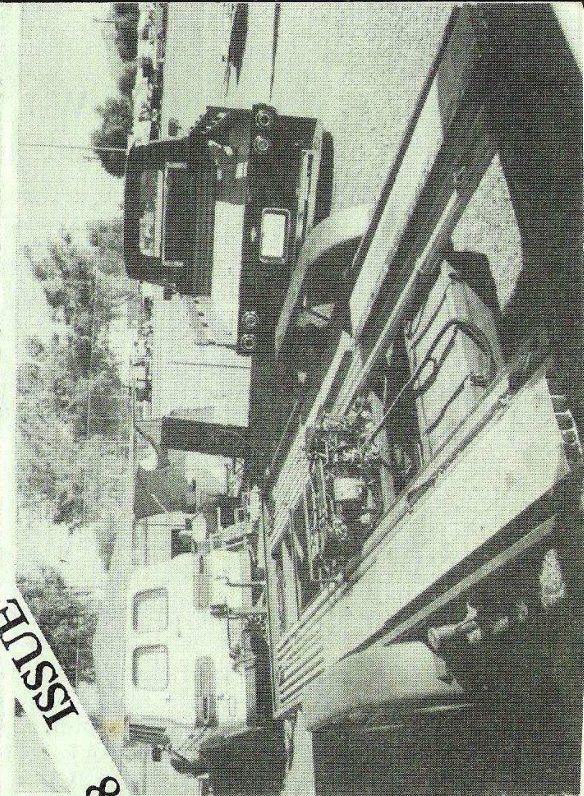
FIRST CLASS

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ULTRA VAN**

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# WHALE ON WHEELS

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GROUP ULTRA VAN, a CORSA Chapter

## PRESIDENT

JEAN McMASTERS #330  
916 Lighthouse Drive  
No. Palm Beach, Fl. 33408  
(407) 626-0388

## VICE PRESIDENT

JIM BENTS #466  
6571 Spring Path Lane  
San Jose, Ca. 95120  
(408) 997-7438

## SECRETARY-TREASURER

LOUIS GRIGGS #334  
626 Brookfield Ave.  
Cumberland, Md. 21502  
(301) 722-2991

## EDITOR

W. CHRISTY BARDEN #228  
5537 Pioneer Road  
Boulder, Co. 80301  
(303) 530-1288

## DIRECTORS

### Eastern

PETE KOEHLER #465  
27446 Beacon Square  
Farmington Hills, Mi. 49018  
(313) 478-0906

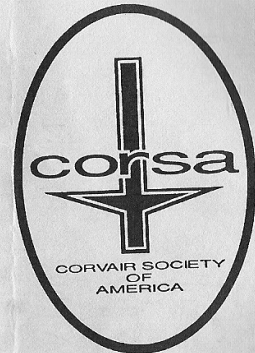
### Western

ART ELLER #364  
3873 Shannon Road  
Los Angeles, Ca. 90027  
(213) 665-3457

GROUP ULTRA VAN is a Chapter of CORVAIR SOCIETY of AMERICA (CORSA) and is dedicated to the preservation and use of **ULTRA Vans**. This 22 foot unique motor home was designed by David Peterson and built in Kansas until 1970. About 360 units were built. Dues are \$4.00 Annually. Submit all technical information to the Editor.

## COVER PHOTO:

Corvaair powered trailer for "helping" with load. Note beve of ULTRA VANS in upper right corner of photo.



CORSA  
15710 Spaulding Ave.  
Markham, Ill 60426  
708/339-6241



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

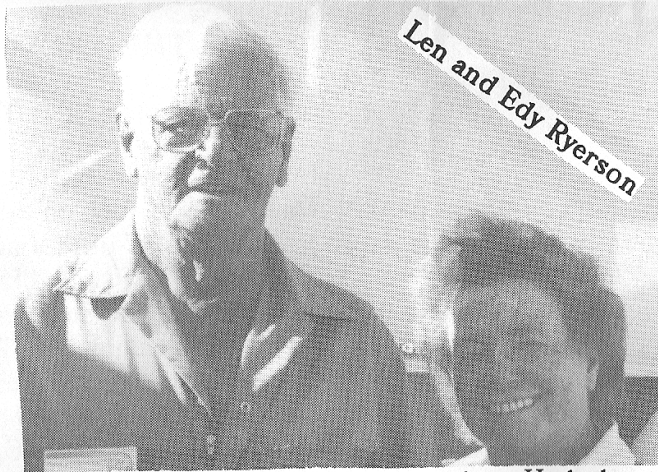
Jean McMasters ULTRA 330

Reflections of the past two months. I took on the job of rebuilding Richards Bodstibner's # 487 of Ft. Lauderdale Florida. It was put on jack stands and I started by redoing the old aluminum bell crank with the new steel one. The old steel plates had corroded thru the aluminium "Z" channels. Bill McKinley of our club helped me repairs the aluminum, then install new plates shoulders and bolts, etc. We also installed a new master brake cylinder. Using the dual actuator type. Also we lowered the engine approximately 3" to accommodate better sealing. I will be sharing more about other repairs; how to lower the engine; rebuilding transmissions; rebuilding differentials; oil coolers, etc., in future issues. Also the month I helped sell two ULTRA VANS , but that's another story.

## Len Ryersons #513

This story starts with a fire that destroyed Len's first Corvaair powered **ULTRA Van**. He and Edy were cruising down the highway, propane was leaking through the regulator and filled the floor of the **ULTRA Van** and finally ignited when it found the pilot light for the refrigerator or furnace. Both got out OK, but the van burned to the floor. From this accident the factory sent out covers for the propane tanks, so any leaking regulator would be vented to the outside.

So Len went to get another Corvaair powered van. They had stopped making them. This was 1970 and Corvaair production had stopped. So he accepted delivery of the first V-8 powered **ULTRA Van**. Well, Len had his



Len and Edy Ryerson

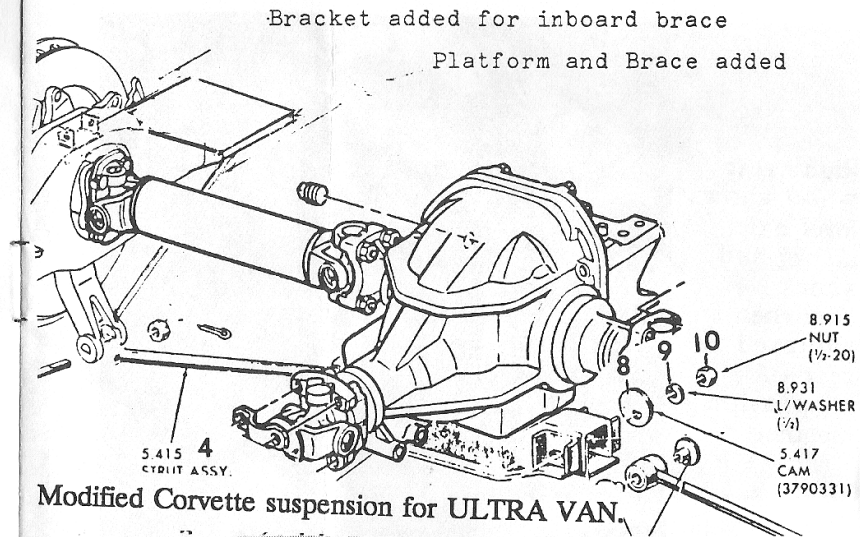
problems. The major one was the suspension. He had put in 9 U-joints and two V-drives. He phoned the factory and told them to come get it and fix it, or keep it. The chief engineer's son Randy Upbegrove came in March of 1970 and got the van and took it back to Hutchinson, Kansas. It had 6000 miles on it at the time. The problem was solved by using 2 steel girders for motor mounts. Len got the van back in May of 1970.

He still wasn't satisfied with the modified Corvette rear suspension, and the front suspension. He changed it. No easy task. If you look under a Volkswagen Vanaggon you will see what Len did. By getting the suspension pivot point as low as possible, side wind loads affect it less. A triangle box was built of steel as a suspension arm (see photos). He used airbags instead of springs.

In the front he mounted air bags on TOP of the top "A" arm suspension member. By doing this the weight of the van rests on the bottom "A" frame instead of Hanging from it (see photos).

Len and Edy have also written and assembled a **ULTRA Van** manual. They spent years of their life getting this together. 8 x 10 and over 1 inch thick for only \$65.00 plus postage. You can contact Len and Edy at 18618 Rayer St., Northridge, Ca. 91324 (818) 349-5058.

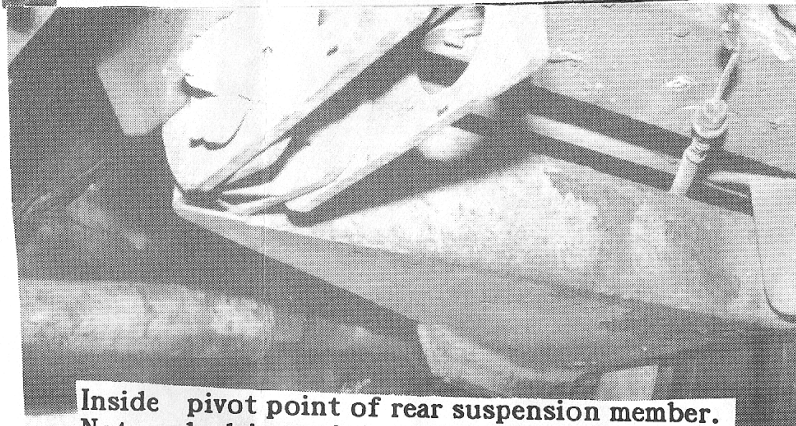
Len gets 12-13 M.P.G. which is a big change from the 6 1/2 M.P.G. he got before all of the modifications.



Modified Corvette suspension for ULTRA VAN.



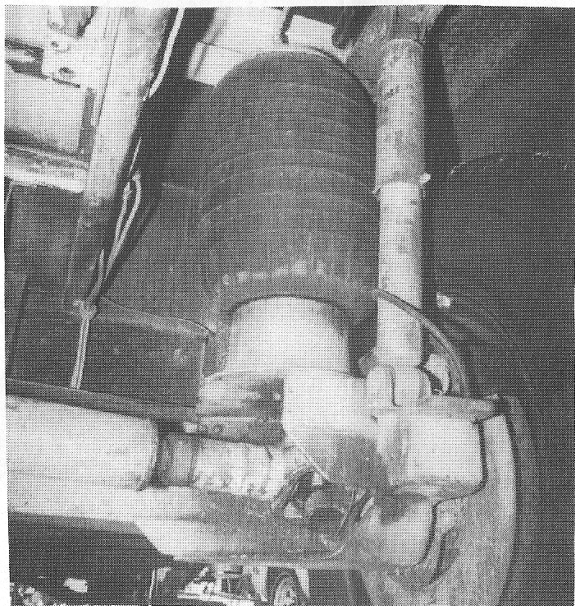
Pivot point of rear suspension member, forward of rear wheel.



Inside pivot point of rear suspension member. Note axle drive to left of rear wheel.



Right rear wheel shows level axle, airbag and shock absorber mounted to rear of suspension member.



Right front suspension "A" arms. Bottom of Airbag can be seen at top of photo. Note bottom left of photo, bolts go all the way through the bottom "A" frame to hold ball joints. Weight of van rests ON lower "A" frame.



Steel girder motor mount as shown in Craig's #549 V-8. Photo is looking aft.

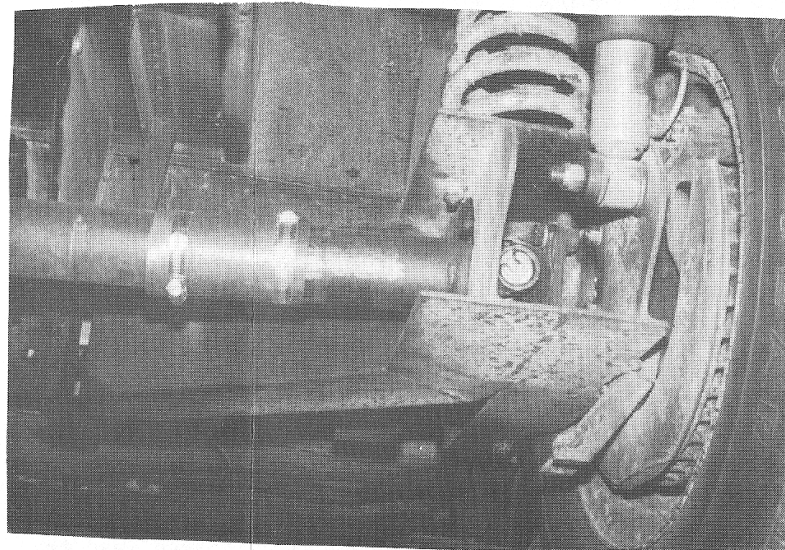


Photo of Jim Craig's #549 V-8 rear suspension modification. Its the same idea as Len's, but not as rigid. Also I couldn't figure how toe-in and camber was set.



### Tech Tip

Front Shock Absorber: V/8 Ultras - During a recent rework on the front of my #549, I noticed on the right front wheel that the spherical rod end of the steering linkage where it attaches to the cross relay rod was bent. It was apparent that the shock was letting the wheel and "A" frame hang down too far. The rod end was in such a tight bind that I had to jack up the wheel assembly to remove the attach bolt of the rod end. The tie rod at the wheel was examined and although it was not loose it did appear that the inner ball of the joint had deformed the outer lip of the rod cap.

According to several previous tech tips the Munroe #3027 shock was reported to be an original style and type which was furnished by Ultra. Perhaps this one worked on the Corvair models, but when they added the big steel collar to retain the wheel assembly spring and shock, I believe it changed the distances for jounce and rebound. Of course, this is not a serious problem with the coach setting on all four wheels and traveling down the road. It is critical when you jack up the front and let the wheels hang by the shock being fully extended.

So what can we do to correct the problem?

First: Perform a complete inspection of your tie rods and rod ends (spherical bearings). Replace parts as necessary.

Second: If your present shock is doing what I described above about my Ultra, purchase and install a set of Munroe #3097 shocks. They are approx. 1½" shorter in body length than Munroe #3027. Also their extended length is 1½" shorter which will keep the rod ends from binding while hanging by the shock. Also you should replace the rubber bumper that fits over the stem of the shocks.

The second critical factor with this original #3027 shock is that the distance from top of body of the shock to the end of the shaft when the Ultra is on the four wheels is approximately 2½" (jounce distance). This is without the above mentioned rubber bumper installed. A good dip or a chuck hole will bottom out the shock which can lead to future failure of the aluminum support casting in the top of the wheel well. Enough said, better check yours.

NOTE: Munroe #5809 (Gas shock) is acceptable replacement also.

Jim Craig #549

### Tech Tip

#### Late Ultra Van Power Brakes - Safety Inspection:

The first thing that comes to mind when you hear someone mention V/8 Ultra power brakes is that the front wheels will lock up if you are on loose dirt, gravel or icy road conditions. That is correct, but it can be remedied. First though lets do a little inspection work.

I have noticed on my own #549 and have heard others say that at times they have had both feet on the brake pedal trying to stop their Ultra Van. There are many things in the system that would contribute to that, but I only want to make you aware of a couple of items.

First - With a flashlight, verify that the power brake pedal linkage is not bottoming out at each of the connection points from the pedal to the power diaphragm. (4 places) The place to look is where an arm fits between two tabs of the next link. The arm can bottom out in the bottom of the link. Depress the pedal fully to view the link points. My #549 was bottoming out at three of the links and where the power diaphragm plunger pin attaches. In that situation my pedal only moved the plunger in the master cylinder 3/4". (1 7/8" is the full plunger movement in my master cylinder) See P/N at end of tip. The power diaphragm has a full stroke of 1 3/8". After rework of my pedal linkage I can now get the 1 3/8" full stroke of the diaphragm.

SECOND, during your inspection verify that the "L" shaped link from the diaphragm plunger does not bottom out on the aluminum support structure. (Notch out the aluminum as necessary) I had to cut approx. a 1/2" deep notch 3/8" wide in my structure.

The ultra manual shows a picture of a dual master cylinder in Section 11, page 11-26, that is not correct for our Ultra applications. It indicates that the primary section is for the front brakes. The GM Corvette's service books and others I have, in all cases use the primary section (that section nearest the power diaphragm) for the rear brakes. (My #549 had the rear brake line installed as per the GM manual.)

Reference - #549 has a dual master cylinder, casting #5468115-1 (on bottom), 1 1/8" bore size and attached to a 10" Delco Morraine vacuum diaphragm. Installation appears



Tech Tip Cont.

to be a factory installation.

Repair kit for my P/N master cylinder is Bendix P/N 22670 .  
NOTE: Be sure not to discard any parts from your master cylinder until you see what is in the kit.

So, there you are, a couple of goodies to check on and refer to your GM Service manual for other items to check on for front wheel lockup and etc.

Jim Craig #549

### TAIL LIGHT LENS By norm helmkay #356/547

A super replacement tail light lens that looks like its was designed for the **ULTRA VAN** is a lens from a 1959 Buick.

At flea markets a genuine 1959 Buick lens is very expensive but luckily there are lots of after market lenses around at reasonable prices, generally from \$7 to \$15 for a pair.

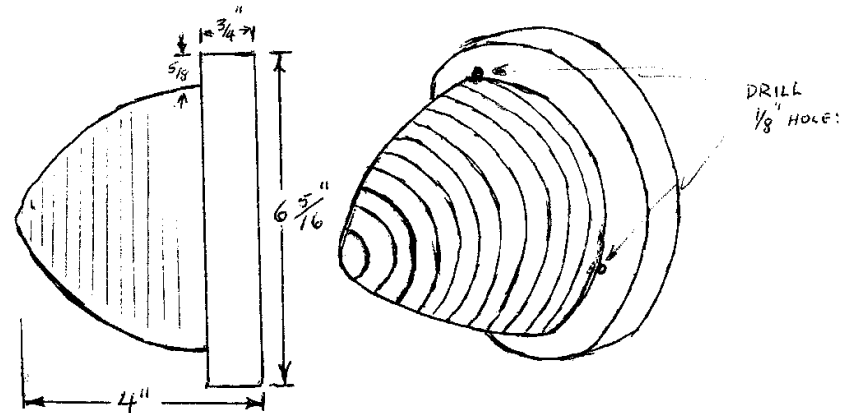
These lenses are 6 and 6/16 inches in diameter which is almost the exact size of the **ULTRA VAN** rear light mount hole.

The after market lenses often have the number 966 at the bottom with no other identifier.

Three small holes must be drilled around the base of the lense at 120 degree intervals to attach the lens to the base with 1 1/2" brass 6-32 round head machine screws. When you drill the holes make sure the drain slot is at the bottom . If you drill holes from the back side, there are six evenly spaced plastic bosses around the inside. Use three of these as guides for drilling.

When changing the lense it is a good time to put a little 5 inch aluminum meat pie plate behind the bulb to act as a reflector which has the effect of increasing the brightness of the tail light.

Just cut a little slot 1" wide by 2" long in the plate to let it drop behind the socket with the bulb in the center of the pie plate.



### A PUSHER FOR YOUR ULTRA VAN

Sometime back we did an article on Jim Woods #396 and his trailer that he was going to use with a Corvair engine in it to help 'push' the **ULTRA VAN** over those steep hills. Well Hanako 'Digger' Hishimoto from the central valley of California has done this.

He built a trailer, weighing about 2000 pounds with a 110 Corvair with powerglide in about 6 months time. His workmanship was excellent. He pulls it with a Greenbriar. Both the trailer and Greenbriar use a 110 H.P. engine. The trailer is powerglide, the Greenbriar is 4 speed. Both are 3.55 differentials and the same size tires. The trailer uses late model Corvair hubs and splined axles. Digger stated that with trailer empty he's had it up to 80 M.P.H. on the Greenbriars speedometer. He uses a 20 gallon gas tank and gets about 18 M.P.G. on the trailer. The trailers with the engine is registered as an automobile. ( wonder if it needs a SMOG certificate).

I ask Digger how he got his nickname. He said in his younger years he had hot engines in his autos and just loved to peel rubber. (just as I thought).

I share this information with you all to maybe inspire some one to do something similar, but on an **ULTRA VAN**. This shows that it can be done. I hope Digger will bring this rig down to the CORSA convention in the LA area so more of you will be able to see it.



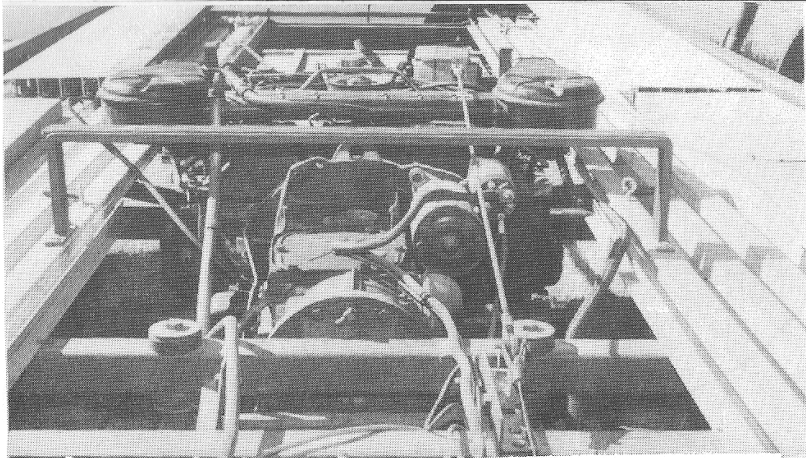
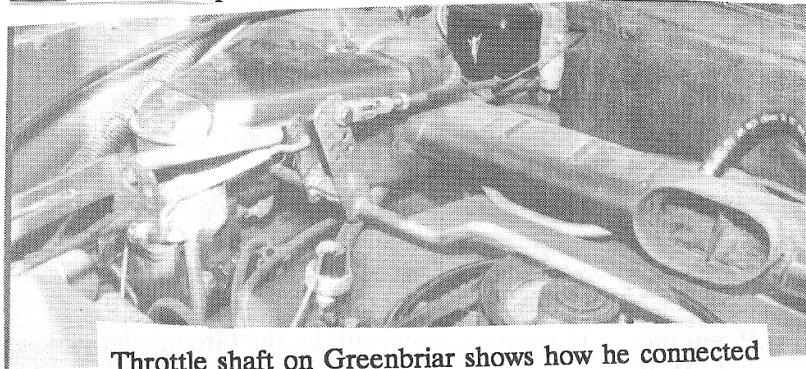
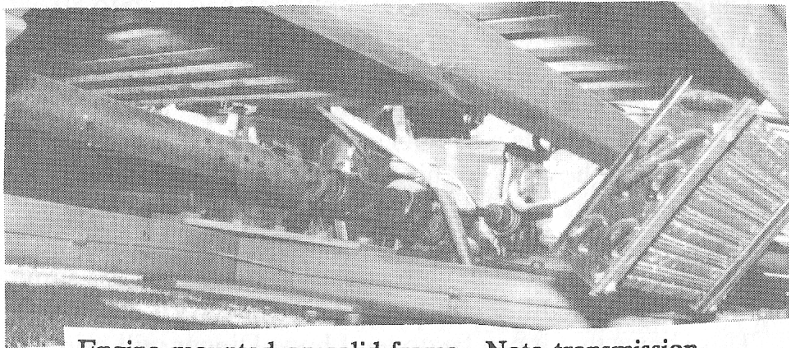


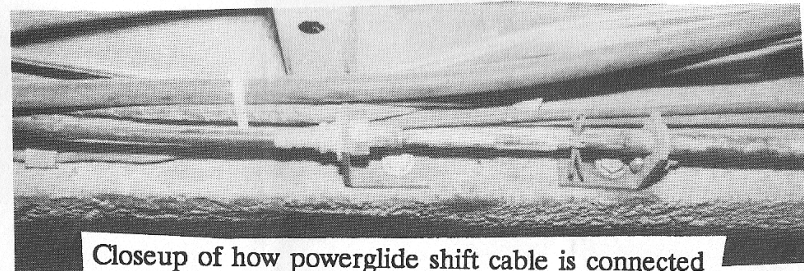
Photo shows forward motor mounts. Easy access to all mechanical parts.



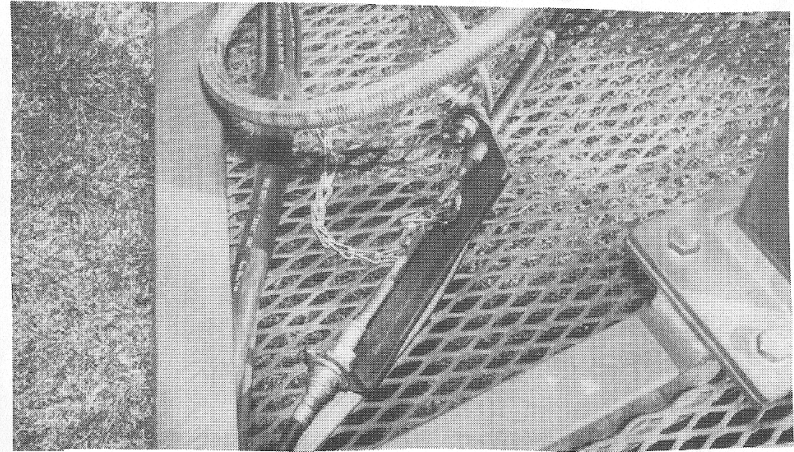
Throttle shaft on Greenbriar shows how he connected the two throttle cables.



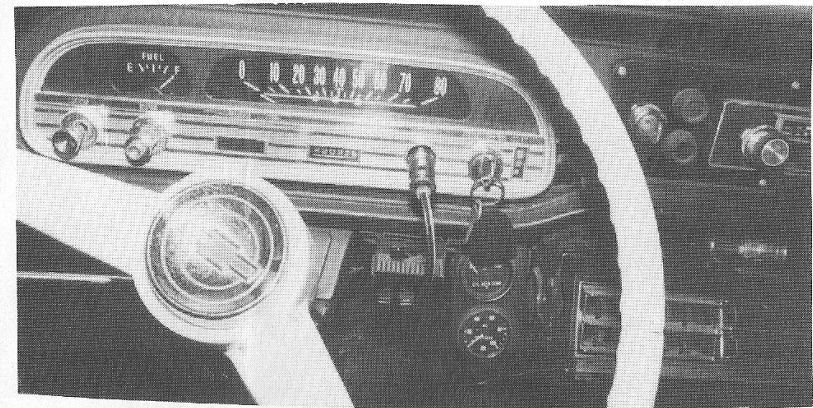
Engine mounted on solid frame. Note transmission cooler.



Closeup of how powerglide shift cable is connected underneath the Greenbriar.



Close up of how powerglide cables are connected.



Greenbriar dash. Powerglide selector for trailer. Just left of radio is key (starter) and two idiot lights for trailer.



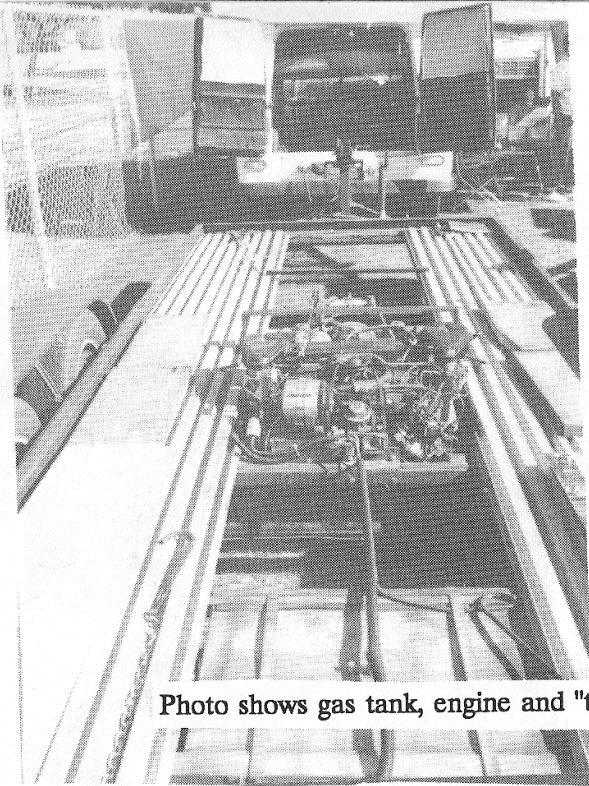
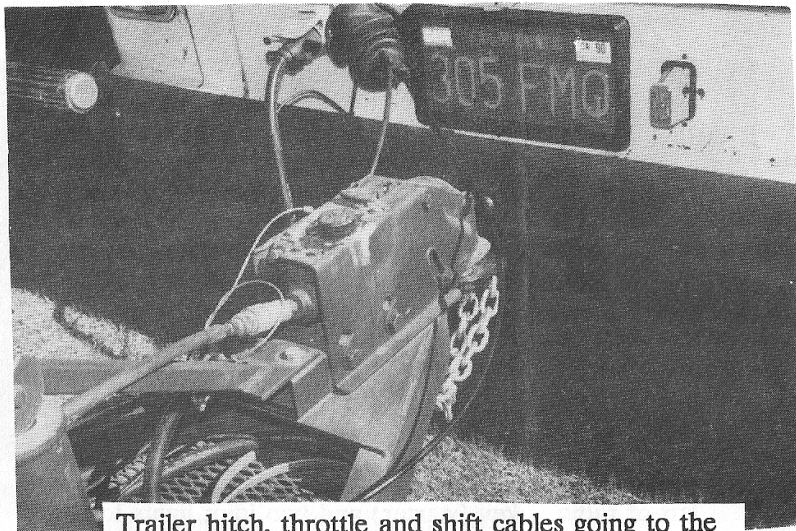


Photo shows gas tank, engine and "tow" vehicle.



Trailer hitch, throttle and shift cables going to the Greenbriar.



Trailer with engine covered.

### MEMBERS WHO HAVE PASSED

Members who have passed away and will be missed.  
Harold Starbird #495, April 1st.; Albert Hoffman #5491,  
May 3rd; Bill Richardes,, May 5th.

Some Ultra owners have coated their van roofs with various brands of insulating materials and most are happy with the results. The following is a new product that will (according to the manufacturer's specs.) exceed all other coatings in providing maximum insulating qualities and waterproofing. It is called: ASTEC #100 Ceramic Insulating Coating (Flexible Coating). It will exceed requirements of R-19, fiberglass material and can be applied by roller. It is available in various colors, coverage is 100 sq. ft. per gallon. Available in five gallon containers at \$50 per. If you have a severe leaking roof, apply their ASTEC WPM#8 (Waterproof Membrane) prior to coating with #100. For your nearest dealer, contact: Jim Craig, 7011 Sunny Vista Road, Joshua Tree, CA 92252. (619) 366-9104.