

WHALES ON WHEELS

Volume XI ULTRA VANS Number 7

ULTRA VAN NUMBER 7

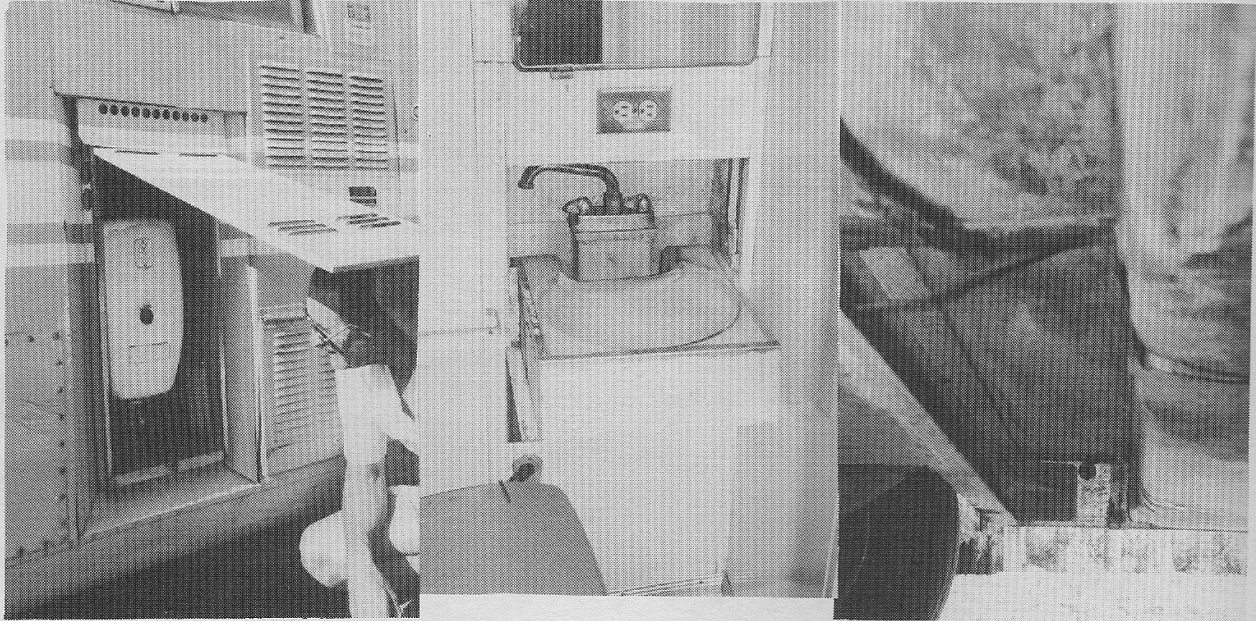
Jim Craig does it again.

by W. Christy Barden

Yes, Jim Craig has acquired yet another Ultra Van. This one is #163, the green one owned by Barr Musser of Salt Lake City. We determined this to be the 7th Ultra Van Built. Jim flew to Salt Lake to pick up the Ultra. It had been towed to a house closer to town. Jim rented a car and motel room and set out to work to get it running for the trip back to Los Angeles area. The Corvair engine needed: 4 new lifters, had 6 bent push rods, #3 rod and piston, 2 used heads, 2 rebuilt carbs, new generator, gaskets, U-joint seals and some slick 50 in the differential. The transmission took a while to get into drive and slipped a bit, but was OK for the trip. Because of uncertain fuel tanks Jim used 2 five gallon jerry cans to get back to Los Angeles. He set them by the engine and stuck the fuel hose



Number 163 before traveling to Jim's House.



Jim inspecting the instant hot water heater.

The bathroom marine type wash basin.

Rear "I" beam and jack point in front of left rear wheel.

in them. A new mechanical fuel pump along with a major tune-up finished the job. He was helped by West Valley Utah CORSA member Rudy Schiendt, who had tools, parts and patience.

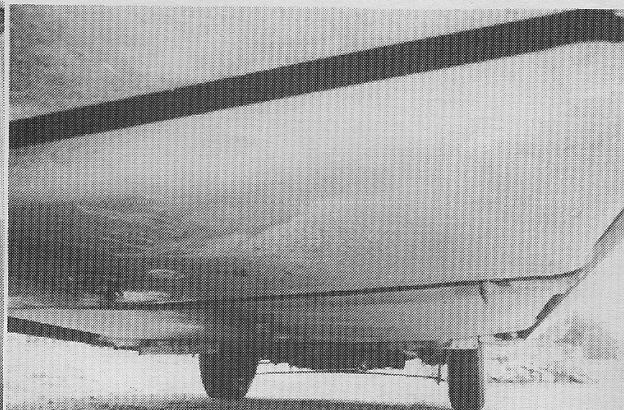
Jim left Salt Lake City at seven in the morning, arriving in Las Vegas at six in the evening to have dinner at a casino. Then that long grade to the California state line. This Ultra doesn't turn as tightly as some of the others. It has the early Corvair suspension that originally used tandem wheels in the

rear. Trucks push it to the side when they pass, but not like his old #202 with 2700 pounds of weight and dual rear wheels.

This what I believe to be the 7th Ultra Van built. The 4th Travelon built by the Prestolite Corp. The body and interior are in good shape. This was the first model built with a box section frame. Two 1/8 inch extruded aluminum pieces were placed on each side at the bottom, curved as they folded under the Van. David Peterson used this idea on the 600 series

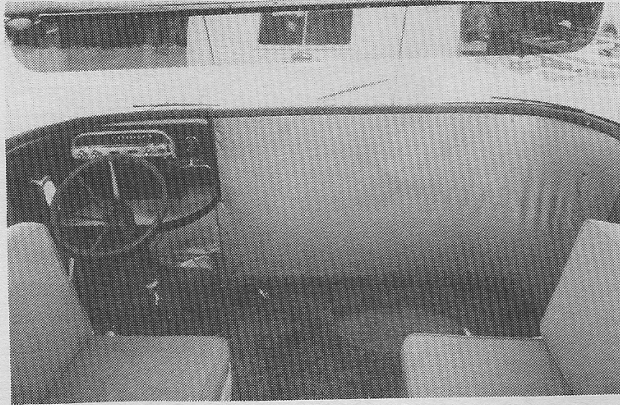


Interior view looking back to bed area.



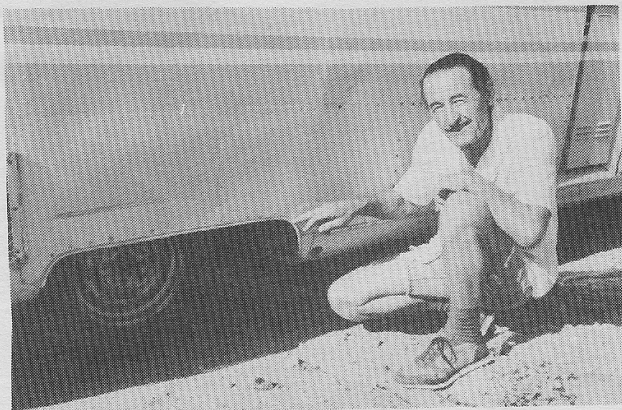
Fiberglass tanks under floorboards.

Ultras, except folded it a few more times and made it thinner. They were connected by an aluminum I beam in front and rear. This was a major difference from the earlier Vans, they used the holding tanks as an integrated part of the undercarriage. This new idea allowed the use of fuel and water tanks to be bolted in from the bottom of the van. This idea was



Sparse forward driving compartment.

also used by Peterson in later vans. Where the I beam and extruded part meet was a casting that held them together and doubled as a jack point, by inserting a bar into the provided hole. This was not used later by David Peterson. The tanks in this unit are fiberglass. The upholstery was done by an aircraft interior company in Hayward California. The original material is still good. They used a heavy duty blue green neoprene material with a nylon backing, very heavy to the touch. The overhead cabinets and bulkheads are all aluminum. The other cabinets are Formica. The bath has a unique marine style fold up wash



Jim pointing out the jack point on the exterior. Note the overhang of the body over the rear wheel.

basin, which gives more room for showering.

Anyone wishing to contact Barr Musser his address is: 155 No. Canyon Road, #83, Salt Lake City, UT 84103. (801) 328-3153.

I ask Jim how he weathered the earth quake since he was so close to the epicenter. He had a few things come down, but the damage was minimal. He had his daughter and grandchildren over at the time. Al Polis was also there in His Ultra Van and he and Cathy felt the Ultra roll, and had gotten up to put on the parking brake.

Jim is also looking for a name plate for his Travelon, the one made by the Prestolite Corp. that says Travelon made in an aluminum casting. He also intimated that #549 may be for sale and he and Marlene will be using #163 in the future.



Travelon plaque rivited on the side of Number 163.

The National UVMCC.

by Jim Craig

San Antonio, Texas was the location for this year's "Ultra Week." It was held at a brand new RV park called Admiralty Park near Sea World during the week of Sept. 23 - 29. The eastern members of the U.V.M.C.C. were hosts for the event, with Norm Helmkey as chairman. Twenty eight Ultra Vans, two associates and a couple of gals in a car from British Columbia, Canada made up the group for this year. Activities consisted of teach sessions for the men, ladies crafts, "A ladies only" tech session was scheduled but they must have held it in secret, so I can't make a report on it. A good idea and we should have more of these sessions. The gals need to know some of the operations of certain items in order to assist the guys. Who knows, they might have to operate the Ultra some day by themselves.

One of the tech sessions was set up to visit each member's Ultra and have the owner tell the group about their units special features, etc. This was a popular item and again



Ultra Vans parked at Admiralty Park in San Antonio.
 should be done more often. A lot of good ideas are available this way. One that a lot of us had a good laugh at was listening to Walt (lighter than air) Davison tell how to take a shower with one gallon of warm water. I filmed the method, but he wouldn't show all of it because he knew I would show the VCR tape at some future rally. Chicken!
 The gals make some beautiful shirts with printed and painted art work on them plus items for Christmas. There was always a group of them in the meeting room working on something. And telling jokes I might add.
 Many members went on the famous "River Walk" in downtown San Antonio and others went to the local bazaar and bakery.

A Yankee Swap, silent auction and a crazy hat contest was held. The contestants had everything from real fruit (like watermelon), floppy hats, witches hats, to a Ultra mechanic's hat, which was the winner (Louis Griggs).

We held a board of directors meeting and the general meeting, with much discussion on the proposed by-laws concerning Technical Directors which was defeated by a majority vote. Also a discussion was held concerning the type of material that should not appear in the club newsletter. The president directed that a by-laws proposal be prepared to be considered next year on what should and should not appear in the club's newsletter.

The evening entertainment after the banquet was a group of ladies that sang many songs for us which lasted about 45 minutes. They sang our Ultra Club song and I believe it was

the loudest I had ever heard it. Really outstanding group. The week really went by so quickly, but everyone got to renew friendships and make new ones and do a lot of visiting.



Ultra Vans parked in Earl McCary's back yard.

The year's Newhouse Achievement Award was presented to Warren Suckow. congratulations Warren.
 Good-bys were said to many friends until next year in Colorado. And within one day we had all departed our separate ways. Some members visited at Earl McCary's place and had an automatic transmission clinic after the rally. Earl was presented with a plaque for services to the club for his assistance in this year's rally. Thanks again Earl for having us there.

We arrived back home on the 19th of October. Had a really good trip, one month long and 4100 miles round trip. Didn't have a single problem with our Ultra. The Synders traveled with us and he had a shock go bad and we installed two new ones at my cousin's place in Levelland, Texas.



Art Eller supervising a "hands on" transmission clinic.



Engine tech session, featuring a disassembly sequence.

**1993 National will be held in
 Colorado, September 15 - 23,
 Rocky Mt. National Park.**

THE FRIST 24 ULTRA VANS

Compiled by, W. Christy Barden, with Jim Craig, and David Peterson October 1992.
(If you have any additona or corrections to this list, please contact the editor)

Mfg. Sequence	Reg. Number	Description	Date Built
1	101 ✓	Prototype, now at Jim Craigs	1961
2	200 ✓	Demo Van, Now owned by Mel Dinensen (Oren E. Haines, White Marsh. Md.)	1962
3	103 ✓	Delivered to Dr. Watson in Walnut Creek. Woodridge Wa.(Auberd & Wanda of Glendale, Ca)	1963
4	104 ✓	Prescolite Van, formerly owned by Murry Fisher in Wash. (Albert Brown Red Bluff, Ca	1963
5	105 ✓	Prescolite Van used as showroom for lights. Reg # is 63-104. Now owned by Craig Lamont. Duel Wheels.	1963
6	203 ✓	24 feet. Owned by Kossow in Ojai (Jerry Light, Running Springs)	1964
7	063 ✓	Prescolite Van, Barr Musser, now Jim Craig. Has Exturded box section and removable tanks	1964
8	065 ✓	Once owned by Pete & Edna Dodge, Temple City, Ca.	
9	020 ✓	John Fitzgerald sold to Roy Neal, N.Y. 22 feet? (Myron & Lorena Hurd Bell Gardens, Ca)	1964
10	107	Prescolite, VIN 64-105. Modified with square front and back, Shown at San Francisco Boat Show. Now in Shelby Mt. Owned by Mr. Farrar.	1964
11	109	24 feet. Leading arm (links) suspension modified later to trailing arm.	1965
12	108	27 feet (24 foot model) special built modified to late Corvair suspension. (Sandels Van)	1965
13	202	22 foot mid door, galley foward. Early Corvair suspension with dual wheels. Jim Craig has owned this one as well. (Wm. & Grace Lane, Pacomia, Ca)	1965
14	203	22 foot, early Corvair suspention in rear. (Huston & n maida Hurt, Redding Ca.)	1965
15	204	22 foot, Modified late model Corvair suspention. (Frank Cheney, Waldort Md.)	
16	205	22 feet. Leading arm (links) suspension. (Modified late Corvair rear suspention turned backwards) Earnest Perlich's van. (Granty Brown, Atlanta Ga. & Richard Warman, Danverse)	1965
17	206	22 feet. Noel Kohler, Bonito, Ca.	1965
18	207	22 feet. (W.J. Ailler, Stockton Ca. and C.J. Olsen, Escondito Ca.)	1965

19	210	22 feet. Ultra Van hull put on a Dodge chassis and engine later on. (Jim Gorini, Oakland Ca.)	1965
20	211	Driven to Hutcheson Ks. as a Hull full of parts. (Authur Ludtke)	1966
21	212	Trailered and finished in Hutcheson (J.S. Spain, San Bruno, Ca. and George Hart.	1966
22	213	Trailered and finished in Hutcheson (Paul C. Newman, Gaudalahra Mexico)	1966
23	214	(Lawrence Bodly, 1218 Tennesse, Lawrence, Ks.)	1966
24	215	1st Van completely built in Hutcheson. Sold to Dr. Marcus Walls Seattle Wa. James Williams sold van after it was rear-ended. (had early Corvair suspension?)	1966

The Trip Home, by Art Eller

On our recent trip to San Antonio National, we had a couple of problems. Their solutions might help you at a later date.

BROKEN RIGHT FRONT COIL SPRING:

Just outside Tucson, I heard a pop from the right front. On checking, I found the rear half of the top coil broken. This left the front half with the two securing tabs intact but the rest of the spring was free at the top and was bent in an arc, the center rubbing hard against the center-mounted shock absorber. My solution: I found a wrought-iron shop with welding equipment. We jacked up the right side of the van until the shock was fully extended, removed the wheel, and had the welder weld the outside edge of the remaining top coil to the next lower coil which was tightly pressed against the top coil. The spring was straight and the shock was centered as it was supposed to be. We lowered the van after installation of the wheel. The van was level and off we went. Welding cost \$15! Total lost time: one



Art showing Millie how to lower the engine using the rods that Walt Davison talked about. She seems to be getting the picture.

hour!

Second problem: BAD BEARING IN THE REAR:

After the convention we headed for Dallas and I began to hear the sound of a bad bearing in the rear. It started right at 50 mph lar sound which was the bearing on the pinion end of the differential. I prayed this wasn't the problem now! I purchased a mechanic's stethoscope and listened to the differential just above the bearing but heard nothing problematic. As my wife drove, I stood in the bathroom and heard the loud rumbling noise coming from what seemed to be directly below. Ah, right rear bearing.

As we drove through Hutchinson, Kansas where our Ultra was born, I started buying the bearings and seals needed for either wheel bearing or differential. I carry no spare hub because my reasoning is that I can take apart my existing hub/s easier than going through the complete hub and brake exchange. I also carried a small supply of rear hub shims!

After completing our visit with relatives in Lincoln and York, Nebraska, we started south-west to keep away from Denver and the prospects of snow in the Rockies. Heading for Dodge City, the sounds from the rear got worse to my ears. All I could think of were the 1600 miles ahead through desert and the possibilities of an expensive tow job. As we entered the tiny little town of Wakeeney, Kansas, I told Millie that this was it! I found a small auto parts shop and asked the young owner if I could park behind his shop and repair a possible rear wheel hub myself! After some long thinking minutes, he said, "Yes." Back we went to find a large freshly-graveled parking area. No smooth concrete anywhere.

In a very short time, I had the right rear hub apart. The bearings were beautiful. Back together and to the left side. Same story, bearings in excellent shape. With a heavy heart, I put it back together and contemplated the obvious: the differential! I had to take the whole engine transaxle down and then separate the transmission-differential-engine.

I ran the rear of the van up onto two concrete blocks to get working space, found a 4x8 sheet of plywood to lay over the gravel and started removing all the shrouding, drive shafts, etc.

Sometime back in one of our Ultravan publications I read an article about lowering the engine assembly with two 3/8" rods. Walt Davison at the San Antonio rally showed us his rod assembly. In York, Nebraska I had bought the rods, nuts, washers and chain, so I was ready.

After fastening the rods to the rear of the engine and differential cover, I got underneath but outside of the engine drop area and had Millie lower the assembly by first turning the top nut at the rear and then at the front. Down she came (Not Millie — the engine). I didn't remove the exhaust system or anything on top of the engine. Except for the carburetors, air cleaner, etc. — the whole engine came out intact. I did drain the transmission fluid.

With the assembly on the ground, I separated the three items and dragged out the differential. I quickly took off the cover and looked in. It looked beautiful but then I took hold of the stub end of the pinion gear shaft and it was loose!! I could push it back and forth, and pull it up and down. I found the trouble! After draining out the gear oil, I took apart the differential and was amazed to see the bearings looked fine. I took the unit over to a nearby garage and had them look at it and they agreed that there was nothing wrong with the bearings, just a loose adjustment. The average person probably wouldn't have heard the noise I heard and would have come on home. On the other hand, that pinion bearing was taking a beating and would have failed, and along with it would have gone my \$400 set of 3.89 differential gears.

It took two and a half days and was an interesting experience. We made some good friends in Wakeeney, Kansas. They now have an interesting story to tell about a California couple who drove into town in this strange looking RV that they said was made there in their state and how this couple proceeded to drop the engine power train out and repair it all by themselves!!!

Letters to the Editor

1 November 1992

Dear Christy,

Thank-you for sending me a sample copy of your superb newsletter "Whales on Wheels".

I am an avid Corvair fan as my first car was a 1964 Corvair Monza convertible bought when I was 23. As I had been born and raised in New York City, I frankly never needed a car until I left there.

I recently found a 1964 Corvair Monza convertible which I've restored and drive frequently. However, I've been into motor homes also and did not know how to combine both interests until I discovered the Ultra Van. Now I'm looking for an Ultra Van with a Corvair engine and will probably sell/trade my 64

convertible to pay for it.

But other than seeing a couple at a Corvair show, and your one newsletter Vol. XI, No. III, I know nothing at all about the Ultra Van. Are some models "better" than others? I am not mechanically oriented so my "restorations" are cleaning-up, painting, finding small pieces and replacing. I don't ever have anything like a floor plan layout of the Ultra Van.

I would appreciate hearing from members who may have duplicate pieces of literature on the Ultra Van that I can borrow or copy to learn from. I would also like to hear from anyone interested in selling their Ultra Van or know of any in the Gulf Coast area of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, or Northern Florida - or even as far south in Florida as Tampa.

I see the subscription is very reasonable \$4.00 per year. Enclosed please find a check for \$12.00 for the other issues for 1992, for next year 1993, and the rest for whatever back issues you may be able to send along with the first issues of 1992.

Again, I would appreciate any sort of photocopy literature, floor plans, anything on the Ultra Van from which I can learn and make a better decision for purchases. For example, does anyone mount an automotive air-conditioner on a Corvair powered Ultra Van, or does the roof mounted, generator driven A/C unit provide all the cool air one needs? Is there a small shower/tub on board or can one be installed? Are there any particular cooling problems on the Corvair unit, or any mechanical problems different than with a Corvair car? Are some year's models better than others? Do I want to stay away from a particular year model? Do they all come with automatic transmissions - as that is what I need.

I know there are a lot of questions here, but believe me I have more. Especially as I'm starting with only one newsletter and nothing else - your vol. XI, no. III. I'm also into vintage airplanes, old model kits, and Corvair engines converted into aircraft engines.

Very much looking forward to a fun relationship with "Whales" on wheels, I remain

Very truly yours,

Louis N. Buffardi, 400 Winward Passage, Slidell, LA, 70458-9242

(Maybe some of our members in that area of the country could help Louis out, Ed.)

From the Editor

After a year on the road I'm back home again. There are many full timers out there. Many have the kids forward the mail, many pull autos with them, some are 1960's drop outs and most enjoy not having a house to take care of. I did find the Ultra easier to clean than a 4 bedroom house.

Most of the time was spent in the West traveling, dancing and working with the computer and on the Ultra Van. It was about even up, between the computer and van. Number 603 provided a large comfortable traveling unit. I had everything I could need. But some of its needs made things trying at times. The Olds 350 engine performed flawlessly, and now has about 130,000 miles on it. The previous owner, Ernest Newhouse,

uses the Auto-Moly, which I'm sure has helped. I get about 13 miles per gallon of gas, which is not bad for a 7,550 pound, 26 foot vehicle. In the last newsletter I talked about the electrical work done, which worked fine. I never had to worry about running down the batteries. I put on new brakes with Velva-touch metallic linings. They no longer make these linings, so they were hard to find. The hotter these get, the better they work. The old brakes started fading when they got hot. It stops much better now. While visiting Dick Nelson # 602 in Los Gatos, California, the right lower ball joint broke, on a hill in an intersection of a residential neighborhood. Couldn't get a tow truck in, so Dick called a mechanic friend in the neighborhood. Using Dick's ball joint, we fixed it in the street. I fired up the generator and used a 110 Volt drop light so we could see. Neighbors were supportive, then offered help in different ways. What could have been a disaster turned out to be a pleasant experience. While traveling on I-5 from San Francisco to Los Angeles a radiator hose broke, it pouring steam into the Ultra Van so I couldn't see at all. It was like an explosive decompression in an airplane at 35,000 feet. I couldn't see out the front windshield as I pulled over to the side of the road. I was able to jury rig some hose I had with me to get to the next town. An experience that does quicken the pulse. A somewhat less exciting, but disconcerting experience happened on the way home from a South Coast Corsa meeting in the South Bay area of Los Angeles. I was making a rather quick stop in traffic when I heard and felt a big bump and thud from the rear and the rear brakes locked up and I skidded to a stop. Number 603 has a solid rear axle and my new brakes worked so well that the driver's side attach point broke and the axle moved back and the wheel well stopped it from traveling any further. The drive shaft pulled out of the transmission, and I was dead in the water. Couldn't go, be towed or pushed out of the way. Help came from David Henry who was also at the meeting. He went home and got jacks, blocks and a come-along. I was in a busy intersection. He was very helpful, by using the come-along we got the left wheel away from the wheel well, removed the drive shaft and was able to push the Ultra out of the intersection. Three tow companies came to see if they could tow it. They couldn't, because of the width and the lack of a solid steel frame. The next morning a 40 foot lo-boy trailer pulled by diesel tractor did the job. The closest place to tow it was Larry's Corvair Shop. For \$110.00, there I went. In his parking lot I jacked up the rear and pulled out the axle. It had broken there before, and had been stressed, and had been cracked again for some time. I had it welded again, but adding gussets to add strength. It was a big help to be able to use Larry Shapiro's parking lot to do the work. I really didn't have any place to go and he was a real friend to allow me to do so. I also re-ringed my 4-door Corvair while I was there.

Then on my way back to Colorado, while in Corona, California the transmission wouldn't shift into high gear. It turned out to be a broken plastic governor gear. But it took a complete transmission rebuild to find that out. The transmission was scored and the bands were worn and seals were brittle, the pump was bad, so it was time for a re-build. A-1 transmission in Corona, California (the Los Angeles area) is the place to go. It's a one person shop and is run by Jollee who did a super job. I

helped pull the transmission and she did a great job of rebuilding it. I recommend her highly. She worked with her father before he died, and her sister runs the office.

Other than dodging snow storms on the way back to Boulder, it all went well. Next on the agenda will be fixing the steering, which is really sloppy.

While at the G.W.F.B.T.&S.M. in Ontario California Mel Dinesen shared with me his experiences on the way back from San Antonio. The metal that holds on the governor on his transmission broke. So his wouldn't shift into high gear also. He tried having it welded, but it didn't work. Long story short, he drove home in low gear. He said the mileage was great and the temperatures never got much over warm.

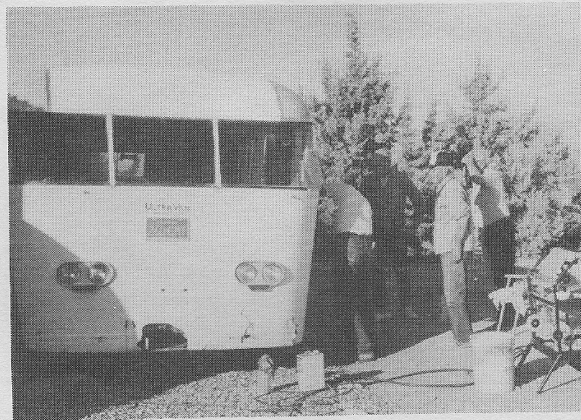
Also Walt Davison burned a piston on the way back from the G.W.F.B.T.&S.M. They figured that there was too much ring gap because it burned right down the side of the piston. But after that, he crashed his Ultra Van into the rear of a slow moving vehicle. No one was hurt, but there was quite a bit of damage to old #366. He managed to do some field repairs, enough to finish the trip home. Maybe he'll share more of that story with us, with photos.

Looking at this issue you may think it's the Jim Craig issue. Well it is. I didn't plan it that way, but that's how it turned out. He is one of the most active members in working, collecting and fixing Ultra Vans. He is the only person I know that has built his entire home and out-buildings around automotive endeavors including the Ultra Vans. He is also into motorcycles, DKW Auto Union automobiles and two cycle Japanese vehicles as well.

High Desert Rally, by Jim Craig

The anticipation began to build at our little oasis known as "Rancho Sunny Vista" here in Joshua Tree, California, as Friday afternoon rolled around.

The cheery sound of an Ultra horn was heard as the first two Ultras drew up in the driveway. Even Sandy, our dog, welcomed each Ultra member as part of the family. And on this note we began our "Fourth Annual High Desert Rally," with the



The painting seminar getting into full swing.

best friends we could ever have.

The atmosphere of our rally is one of rest and relaxation along with plenty of information in the technical and craft sessions. The first day of the rally was spent welcoming the arrivals and visiting with each, drinking coffee and taking in the good desert air.

Each day of the following week, technical and craft sessions began at 10 AM and lasted until lunch time, around 2 PM. One day was planned for a trip to Laughlin, Nevada (a little Las Vegas on the California Border) by bus, but everyone was enjoying themselves so much at the rally it we decided to cancel the trip.

On Wednesday we all went to 29 Palms to visit Bob & Grace Ballew where we had a good technical session by Bob. The ladies enjoyed their crafts, being shown how to paint on small rock slab by Grace. After leaving the Ballews we visited with other of friends, Sid & Pat Remmington who have restored an original adobe house in 29 Palms.

Seems like each day the ladies performed magic in preparing the potluck dinners. They had something different each day, with an occasional repeat. One day we had lunch at the Senior's Center in Yucca Valley. It was nice to visit with all the people and socialize with the other seniors.



Mory and Ed practice driving rivets at the rally.

Technical sessions during the week included an engine disassembly, repairing damaged aluminum skin on the Ultra, paint stripping, metal cleaning and preparation, corrosion prevention, priming and topcoat finishing.

Eight of the ten Ultras that were in the yard left Friday for the Great Western Fan Belt Toss & Swap Meet held in Ontario, California.

On Saturday those remaining in the yard went to the local Swap Meet and bought a few things, then went to J.R.'s for a big breakfast. On the way home we stopped at some garage sale signs and of course we had to check them out. We all brought something home that we couldn't do without. All in all, we had a good day.

Sunday was a day of leisure, with nine more Ultras returning from the G.W.F.B.T.&S.M. That evening we watched slides of Jim and Marline's trips to Baja California by dune buggies. On other nights Jim showed slides of his travels in Japan and China.

During the two weeks of the rally we had members from Canada, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, California and Australia, yes Australia. A new couple Dick Pike and Helen Herbel of Sidney. They bought their Ultra 374 in September 92 from Emil and Evelyn Miller in La Crescenta CA whilst on their way to the UK. Returning from the UK in November 92 they came immediately to Ultra Rally.

The Ultra 374 has had a V8 installation and one owner from new (1968). They intend to tour North America from time to time, indefinitely, coming mainly from Australia, which probably will be their home base.

Friends in La Crescenta knew they were looking for a motor home. A "for sale" sign was seen being put up by Evelyn Miller on her front fence. Dick and Helen phoned them the night they arrived in Los Angeles. They inspected the van the next morning and bought it at first sight. They liked it straight off. Helen and Dick spent five weeks touring England in a VW Bubble Top and on their return to LA were ready to take off in their new Ultra Van that had been well checked over by their engineer friend Barry Gage. They were told about the Joshua Tree Rally and thus headed off.

"We have spent a wonderful week with the Craigs', receiving an abundance of friends, hospitality and making new contacts with people of your country." say Helen and Dick. "We have discovered the beauty of the desert and walked amongst its wildlife."

Dick and Helen had a crash course on the operations of Ultra Van 374 and learned to cook pumpkin pie. They offer thanks to all those people who have kindly offered US friendship to two Aussies.

The weather stayed pretty good until late in the second week when the temperature started falling into the low 30's at night. All in all it was a great time. Everyone bid each other so-long until the January 1993 rally in Las Vegas.

The Painting of an Ultra Van

by Jim Craig

After many sketches, drawings and test lay outs on Len and Edys Ryersons #513, a final design was decided on. A test panel was painted to get an idea how the colors would blend with each other.

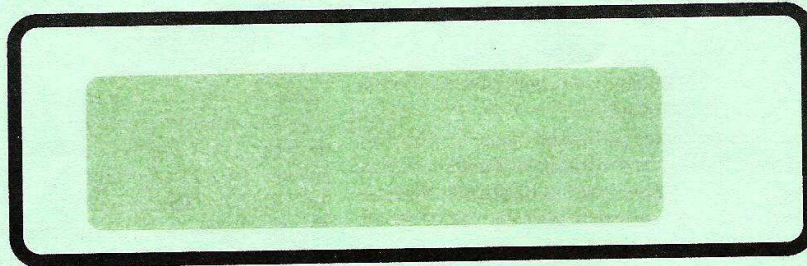
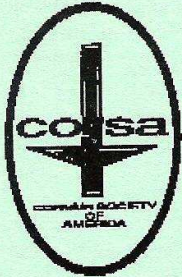
The Ultra had been repainted many years ago and so the remaining paint was very thin in most areas. Len had previously stripped the top and refinished the rear fiberglass panels. It was decided to strip the complete unit of all old paint, perform repairs to cracked rear fiberglass panels, remove backup lights and fill holes, replace all loose and working rivets, and accomplish several modifications prior to repainting.

Stripping the old paint was the most time consuming task. The stripper was "Auto APRA-STRIP" and was advertised to be usable on fiberglass, but in the small writing on the can, it cautioned that problems of lifting could occur on fiberglass gel coats, except for original factory (G.M., etc.) fiberglass. They



GROUP ULTRA VAN

5537 PIONEER ROAD
BOULDER, COLORADO 80301



FIRST CLASS MAIL

were correct. The Ultra gel coat was affected if the stripper was left on too long. Seven gallons of stripper were used.

After stripping the aluminum skins, they were washed with soap and water, then sanded with number 380 & 400 grit wet/dry sandpaper. PPG metal conditioner # DX 533 was used on the aluminum and followed by a Alodine wash with PPG #DX 503. After complete wash and drying they were primed with PPG - DP40 epoxy non-sanding primer (color: Green - Green), 2 coats. Chip guard was sprayed on the front lower panel below the bumper and left and right rocker panel areas from the lower edge up the side approximately eight inches.

The rear fiberglass panels had some cracks in them so they were ground out, leaving only about 1/16" thickness at the bottom of the cracks, and tapered surface area out from them. Fiberglass mat (not cloth) was used to refill these areas. Sanded, contoured, refilled, resanded then all fiberglass panels were primed with PPG # K200/201 primer surfaces with hardener.

All topcoat colors were PPG - DURATHANE Polyurethane enamel with hardener/catalyst.

Base white color was: PPG - DU2058, Dvoer White.

The trim colors were:

PPG - DU 25211, Glamour BeigePol

PPG - DU 25207, GlamourCinnamon Poly

PPG - DU 25205, Glamour Chocolate Poly

The combination of these colors are very pleasing to the eye and the final result is an attractive Ultra that should get a lot of thumbs up and last for many years.

Yes, it was a lot of work but it is a real pleasure to see the

final product and the Ryersons are very happy with their NEW Ultra.



The finished product. and does it look good.

January 25-28, 1993. Las Vegas Rally. Circusland RV Park. 1-800 634-3450 to make your own reservations, or sent \$10.80 (cost per night) deposit to John and Claire Hoffman, 3890 S. Nellis #286, Las Vegas NV 89121 by December 20, 1992

April 1 - 4, 1993. Wickenburg, Arizona. Hosts: Dan Reinhardt, 5201 W. Camelback A255, Phoenix, AZ 85031. (602) 846-2300; Threasa Vandrsteeg, 9716 Loma Blance Drive, Sun City, AZ 85351. (602) 977-43358; Warren & Nobia Suckow, 3129 W. Haywire Ave. Phoenix, AZ. 85051. (602) 841-0911.