



Jean McMasters was able to park his Ultra Van S/N 330 right on the beachfront at the Plaza Resort Hotel . You can see the Atlantic Ocean behind the fence where Jean is parked.

CORSA NATIONALS DAYTONA BEACH

REPORT by Richard Finch

The year 2000 Corsa Nationals, including our Group Ultra Van , was the most successful event in recent history with a sold-out crowd at the banquet on Saturday night of over 650 people.

The pre-event publicity stated that there would be NO on-site parking for any RV's and that included Ultra Vans. This stipulation caused Gayle and I to take her air conditioned V-6 Chevy convertible rather than take our Ultra Van and not be able to park at the headquarters site, The Plaza Resort Hotel. That very same reasoning probably kept several other Ultra Vans from attending also.

As it turned out, the heat was so oppressive that many swap meet and flea market participants either opted for air conditioned space inside the hotel with other Corvair vendors , or they just did not bring swap meet parts. This fact opened up many spaces in the back parking lot and the three Ultra Vans that did attend (Jean Mc Masters, S/N 330, Walt Davison S/N 366, and new member Charles Jasmer, Jr . S/N 458) were allowed to park in empty swap meet spaces. And it was HOT there this year. Every day was 102 degrees and 95% humidity. If you stayed out in the sun for 30 minutes, you would have sweat running into your eyes and down your back. There were no hook-ups there either.

The entire drive from our house in New Mexico to Florida and back was in daytime temperatures of 102 degrees to a hot 108 degrees in Houston and San Antonio.

A new event was instigated at this year's National, Valve Cover Races. You decorate an old Corvair valve cover, put skate wheels on it and run it down a ramp like we Dads used to do with our sons in Scouting Pinewood Derby races. The crowd at the Nationals loved it and there were several high-tech racers built by former and current aerospace engineers. The valve cover races were held on the patio of the hotel by the swimming pool and right by the beach and the Atlantic Ocean

The annual Group Ultra Van meeting was held at 8:00 pm on Friday night with about 25 people attending. President Bob Galli opened the meeting and then turned it over to Walt Davison who gave a very interesting overview and history of the Ultra Van and it's inventor and developer, Mr. Dave Peterson. It was announced at the meeting that several long-time Ultra Van owners , including Mr. Peterson , had passed away. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm to give the room to Virtual Vairs for their mtg.



Walt Davison was able to park his Ultra Van S/N 366 right beside the beach and near the Plaza Resort and Hotel. you can see the Hotel at the right of the picture.



Tony Fiore is talking to Fred Johnson about the relative merits of the various "Valve Cover Racers" sitting on the table just before the races started. Everyone seemed to enjoy this event and it will probably be held again and again at future CORSA events.



In the vendor's area in the hotel at the Daytona Beach, Florida CORSA National Convention this year, you could buy a rebuilt Corvair engine of your choice. On the floor here are two 110 HP Powerglide engine long-blocks. There were also a couple of complete engines for sale with carburetors, alternators and all the shrouding in place. The workmanship seemed to be excellent.

Vendor's Area

I was not able to get out of the vendors area at the Convention this year, but I did send Gayle on a couple of tours. The first tour was to World Famous Silver Springs and the glass bottom boat cruise. The second tour that Gayle went on was the St. Augustine tour. St. Augustine is the oldest city in America and has some beautiful buildings, many of which were built by Henry Flagler, the railroad tycoon.

The usual vendors were at this show, including Clark's Corvair, Corvair Underground, Silicone Wire Systems, Ray Sedman, and numerous East Coast Corvair OEM and aftermarket suppliers. You could buy nearly anything for your Corvair powered vehicle there.

One new trend in the Corvair collectable hobby is the building of model Corvairs. I wanted to buy a model of a 1962 - 1964 Monza convertible, and I was shocked at the prices that models were going for. The bottom price for a poorly built and partially disassembled 1962 Monza convertible was \$ 55.00 ! The second lowest price was \$ 79.00 for a partly built model. Top price at the convention for an early model **model** in an un-opened box was \$ 275.00 !

Gayle and I had a great time at the convention. The hotel is the same one where the NASCAR Speed Parts show had been held for the past 25 or more years. For all I know, Richard Petty or Bobby Allison may have once slept in the same room as we did there this year !

Book Review

"Home on the Road"

by Christy Barden

Home on the Road is a book written by Roger B. White who is a land transportation historian at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History. He chronicles the passion that Americans have had with being on the open road. Shortly after the invention of the automobile, there were those that would take a truck or a bus and convert it to something to live in. With the Model T Ford and the prosperity of the 1920's, many people went camping, using the car to sleep in, or attaching a tent-like canvas to the car, making the car a part of the tent.

Travel was slow in those days. In the 1930's, travel was greatly reduced with the advent of the depression. Travel by car was more reliable, and people used the new tourist courts that began to spring up all over the country for use by the travelers. (editors note: The Motel Inn in San Luis Obispo, California is said to be America's very first travel court for use by people traveling by automobile. The Motel Inn still exists and was in the process of being restored in 1998 - 1999. You can see it when driving North on Highway 101).

During the 1940's, individual motor homes were being built by ingenious people, such as David G. Peterson, for personal use. Motorhomes, essentially motorized house trailers emerged from the booming vacation market of the 1950's as did manufactured van campers and pickup campers. The striking advantages of self-propelled camping vehicles equaled maneuverability and

all-enclosed comfort, rekindled interest for travel by "house-car".

It was illegal to ride in a house trailer, but post-war families who purchased streamlined house-cars, pickup campers or vans enjoyed the intimate experience of riding together in the easy-to-drive home away from home. By the 1960's, fast, straight interstate highways made long trips smooth and un-impeded. Thousands of Americans fell in love with modern factory built motorhomes. Unlike trailers, motorhomes are not subject to reduced speed limits on highways, and drivers could take advantage of speeds of 70 mph or more. In the early 1960's, hundreds of affluent suburbanites became enchanted with the handsome, efficient Dodge motorhome and several other makes (Ultra-Vans) and they easily transferred their rancher or Cape Cod style living to these portable vacation homes equipped with everything from automatic transmissions to forced air furnaces. In the late 1960's, Winnebago became America's best selling motorhome and the most conspicuous symbol of homes that one could drive. Vacationers in the Space Age had discovered the fun of these space capsules on wheels.

Between 1961 and 1973, output of motorhomes soared from 200 units to 65,000 units per year. Gasoline "shortages" and gasoline price increases in the 1970's curbed the growth of motorhome sales. But the motorhome has remained a staple of recreational travel and one of the most prominent symbols of Americans determination to see their country and use their expanded leisure time to the fullest.

The development of motorhomes and trailers followed separate paths. Mr. White's book examines only the self-

propelled Recreation Vehicle. Two threads link the house car fad of the 1920's, the popularity of the pickup campers of the 1950's and the motorhome mania of the 1960's and beyond. Mr. White delves into detail of some obscure motorhomes as well as great detail of the Browns of Michigan who produced the early famous Dodge Motorhome. In his book he talks about the Ultra-Van on page 155 and gives a short biographical sketch on David G. Peterson on page 210. He also credits Norm Helmkay, Jim Craig, Roy Neal, Jim Hinkley and Christy Barden for their information on Ultra Vans. He also credits Larry Claypool and David Newell for information on the Corvair camping van..

If you wish to order the book, call :
1-800-782-4612 or write to;

The Smithsonian Press
P.O. Box 960
Herndon, VA 20172-0960

The hardcover book costs \$ 24.95 plus \$4.50 shipping. You can call and use your charge card as I did..

Christy Barden

Editors note: For a look at one of the early truck chassis built motor "house cars" described in Christy's book review, look at the Model T Ford in this newsletter.

For the next several issues of "Whales on Wheels" I plan to show a picture of a rare and unusual and old RV that we have come across in our travels. I will not give the particulars in the issue, and I will ask the three questions listed above under the photo. Let's try to see how many of you can answer the three questions and even maybe give some extra facts and particulars.

I would also like to encourage the "WOW" readers to submit photos of rare and interesting RV's that you have seen in your RV travels.



What is it ?
Where is it located ?
What are it's particulars

(The RV in the photo above is a 1924 Model T Ford chassis with a factory built RV "house" built on it. The Model T features a 2-speed planetary transmission with reverse and a 2-speed rear axle, making for 2 reverse speeds and 4 forward gears. The RV is now located at Adam's RV on State Street in Santa Barbara, California. They are asking \$ 2,000. for the unit, un-restored.)

Installing a Satellite Dish in your Ultra- Van

by Bob Galli---S/N 504

A **Satellite** dish in our Ultra just sort of evolved. Several years ago we decided that we would like to have a VCR and a TV along with us on our trips. We were not really very pleased with the 12 volt units on the market at the time. They were all black-and-white units with 9 inch screens. We found a handy 13 inch G.E. unit with it's built-in VCR for a very reasonable price at COSCO. It was a 110 volt unit that only draws 75 watts.

I found a 140 watt inverter in the Damark catalog for only \$ 39.00. Upon hooking it up, it would kick the circuit breaker immediately upon turning the TV set on. It seems that there is a capacitor that has to get charged when the set is first turned on, and this takes more current than the inverter allows. However, if this capacitor gets charged by some other means, the inverter will handle the TV and VCR satisfactorily.

I rigged up a resistance device that would allow the capacitor to charge slowly without tripping the circuit breaker. This was a very handy way to turn on the TV. Whatever it takes to get the job done ! Sometime later, Damark was having a sale on reconditioned inverters and I got a 500 watt unit for \$69.00 .It has been satisfactory. Most trailer parks were getting cable TV hookups available, but if you were not in a trailer park, you would have to rely on local TV rabbit ear reception or watch a movie on the VCR .

We are not movie people, so in spite of the fact that we had about 40 movies in the cabinet, we seldom watched one.

What we really missed while traveling were the ball games, be it baseball, basketball, football or golf. I myself enjoy the lades bowling and billiards.

We have had a large satellite dish at our our home since 1983, and we have not scrimped on paying for the programming when it became necessary. Diane had always had dreams of mounting a dish on our Ultra but size-wise this was impossible. Then came the advent of the small dish. My sister and brother-in-law became full timers in a fifth wheel about 4 years ago, got themselves a small satellite dish to carry with them, and came to visit us and "it was all over!". We had to have one!

My brother-in-law's is mounted on a piece of plywood about 20 inches by 30 inches. He sat it on the ground, pointed it, and had a picture in about 5 minutes ! and better than the one we had in our house. I asked him why not mount it solid on top of or on the back corner of the 5th wheel trailer. He said that it was much easier to set it up this way if you were parking near trees or a building.(editor's note. trees and buildings often block the reception of a signal from the satellite)

It took us a year or so to get our small dish and set it up so we could use it in the house also. I made a flat plywood base to mount the small dish on the carport roof. I have marked the roof so I can go right back to where it was each time we take it on trips. When we get ready to take it with us in the Ultra, I just un-bolt it from the carport roof. It fits very nicely on the bed of the Ultra while we are traveling. Upon arrival at a destination in the evening , it is a simple matter to take out the dish, hook up to our outside cable plug, turn on the TV set, turn on the dish receiver, tell the unit

our location to the nearest zip code and it tells us where to point the dish. With a little fine tuning we get a dandy picture.

Tune in to the Cubs, the Braves or the Rams and the 49er's. Diane can set the VCR to record the crafts shows she likes on HG TV or Oddesdy to watch later, and fast-forward through the commercials. Roughing it, just like at home !

Bob Galli...

editor's note: Bob helped the Craigs set a satellite dish up in S/N 604 . In a future issue of WOW we will get Bob and Diane to tell us about the details about where to get a satellite dish, how much they cost, if there is an additional monthly charge for using it on the road, and other questions. Send your questions to the editor or to Bob and Diane.
r.f.

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This ad shows what various inverters can do. if you have not tried one, you may be missing out on some affordable modern technology that will make life more fun.

Video Review

by Richard Finch

While we were at Jim and Marlene Craig's "ranch" in Joshua Tree, California, just before going to the CORSA Fan Belt Toss in Palm Springs last November, the Galli's showed us all a very funny and educational video about two brothers who were traveling from Mexico to Canada in a Model T Ford truck that

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note; your new editor encourages submissions of book reports and video reports from members.

they had converted to a "Camper". When Gayle and I returned home after the Palm Springs Fan Belt Toss, we called and ordered a copy for ourselves. It is a very good video and a must for anyone who has a vcr and tv in their Ultra Van. We will bring our copy to Amana, Iowa and to Palm Springs. Ask us to borrow it for great entertainment in the evenings. When you call to buy your own copy, ask for video # 3, "Trails of the Mountain West". Here is how to order one:

Don Cooper Videos
% Ruth Cooper
P.O. Box 300107
De Borgia, MT 59830-0107
ph. 1-406-678-4337

Jean McMasters showed a Firestone air-over-hydraulic shock assembly that might work for the front suspension of Ultra Vans. It looks promising but rather expensive at \$ 500. per pair including the pn-board pump. Jean, keep us informed about this improvement.

Travel Destinations

by Richard Finch

About two weeks ago, Gayle and I came home late on a Sunday night and turned on TV to the *Home and Garden* channel. We just caught the last 15 minutes of a really neat program about a place in Bisbee, Arizona that featured a restored 1930's travel trailer park. The owners of the park have not only restored the park but they have also salvaged and restored at least a dozen 1920's to 1950's travel trailers and have parked them in the park.

They have also restored a 1950's diner and hamburger cafe. The operators even dress in 1950's waitress clothes.

The next morning after seeing the TV program, I called the number listed in the

credits and tried to buy the tape of the program. But, H & G TV does not sell tapes of their shows, so they gave me the phone number of the actual RV park in Bisbee, AZ. I called the park and they took my reservation for November 8th and 9th, when we will be returning to Tularosa, NM from Palm Springs and the annual Fan Belt Toss. We will drive our Ultra Van there, take pictures and write an article about the park for a future issue of "Whales on Wheels".

For more information about the restored antique RV park, call: **SHADY DELL RV PARK VINTAGE RV'S BISBEE, ARIZONA** ph. 1-520-432-3567 ref. H&G TV Episode # 605 "Vintage RV'S"

MORE TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

By Richard Finch

Arizona's Kartchner Caverns State Park.

Located between Benson, AZ and Bisbee, AZ, just off US Interstate 10.

Kartchner Caverns is a very new tourist attraction that is located in Southern Arizona.

The caverns were not

even discovered until 1988, and they were on private property when they were discovered. The story is that two young college students were scouting out the area for possible caves for their college class in geology when they discovered the caves..

The caves and State Park were just opened to the public in late 1998. Gayle and I will stop by there on our way to Bisbee in November. There is a public RV park at the Caverns with 65 spaces. For more information, contact:

Kartchner Caverns State Park.

P.O. Box 1849
Benson, AZ 85602
phone 1-602-542-4174

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If you have tried one of these pressure clothes washers, write a short review about your opinion of the unit and send it in to the editor for an informative write-up for other members.

Editor Christy Barden retires!

For about the past 25 years, Christy Barden has been your editor of "Whales on Wheels" but now it is time for Christy to take a break from writing and publishing this newsletter 4 times each and every year. Christy will likely find that he gets more projects done without having to publish a newsletter every 3 months.

Like many other CORSA members, I first met Christy at the 1975 CORSA National Convention at Seattle, Washington. At the Saturday night banquet, we people in the audience were being very bored by the door prize presentations. The presenter was really dragging things out and then unbelievably, he said "could someone take over for me for awhile, I need to go to the bathroom"! Now that we all know Christy, that was all he needed to hear in order to take over the very dull meeting. With a very loud voice, Christy said, "I'll do it!" and with that he ran up to the podium and began THROWING the door prizes to the

winners and doing jokes that had the whole crowd laughing constantly.

The next time I saw Christy, he was in the cab of a tow truck with his Ultra Van S/N 228 on the back, sitting in front of my house in Santa Maria, California. It seems that his powerglide differential had spun while he was downshifting to climb a hill a few miles down the road from my house, on highway 101. He worked on the differential problem in the street in front of my house for 3 days and got it running again by installing a differential that he obtained from Dick Campbell in Van Nuys, CA.

A few months later a tow truck pulled up in front of my house again with Christy in the cab with the driver. This time the vehicle on the tow hook was Christy's 1965 4-door Corvair with again, a slipping Powerglide differential. That time, the '65 4-door sat in my side yard for several months while Christy did his job as an airline pilot. I remember that his business card listed his residences at the time, as Paris, France and Boulder,

CO. (I think). Anyway, Christy traveled a lot in those days.

Another time when Christy showed up in my neighborhood was the day I got my private pilot's license. As I was taxiing in to my parking spot in a rented Cessna 150 airplane, the control tower said "Cessna taxi to parking and Christy says congratulations!" The last I had heard, Christy was in Saudi Arabia flying for the Saudis and low and behold, now he was in the control tower in Santa Maria, California waiting for me to park my rented airplane!! Christy and several others took me out to The Far Western Tavern in Guadalupe, CA to celebrate that night.

Another time, Christy and Dick Campbell saved our skin at a Santa Maria Corsa Mini-Convention by buying the local club's 1960 Corvair 4-door raffle car when the raffle fizzled. Last year, Christy showed up in Santa Barbara and called us to come to our house and visit while he was in town for a dance contest. He was driving his Greenbreir on that visit.

CHRISTY, You have a way of making most Corvair events more fun than they would be without you. rf..

News of members

Bob and Diane Galli celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on July 1, 2000 at their home in Atascadero, CA. Congratulations to two special people and their offspring, including their grandson, Paolo.

Lewis Griggs had to have a heart by-pass surgery in July and then he was taken back to the hospital with a serious staph infection after the surgery. Our sincere wishes for a successful recovery Lewis.

Charles Jasmer, Jr. is a new member of Group Ultra Van and a new owner of S/N 458. Welcome to our group Charles.

Duane Gest is also a new member. Welcome Duane.

Mike Loanes is another new member. Welcome Mike.

Bob Brown, S/N 473, says his really original looking unit featured in "How to Keep Your Corvair Alive", pages 117 & 119, was damaged while enroute to the Corsa Nationals at Daytona Beach, Florida. Bob was not hurt in the accident but he reports that two tires were blown and the windshield popped out of its retainer when a 18-wheeler forced him off the road and over a curb. He reports that side aluminum skin was also damaged. Bob, we hope you get your unit repaired and back on the road again.

Rallies

Sept 20 - 24, 2000, Ultra National Rally, Amana Colonies RV Park, Amana, Iowa Hosts Ron & Martha Zoutendam, 206 N. 7th St., Sheldon, IA 51201. (712) 324-4660

Oct. 21 - Nov 1, 2000, Ultra 101, Restoration Class. Joshua Tree, CA. Work will be done on the restoration of Ultra Van #101. Contact: Jim & Marlene Craig, Desert Rendezvous Ranch, 7011 Sunny Vista Rd., Joshua Tree, CA 92252 (760) 366-9104 or jrcraig1@juno.com

Nov 3 - Nov 5, 2000, G.W.F.B.T. & S.M. Palm Springs, Ca. Great Western Fan Belt Toss & Swap Meet, at Angeles Field in Palm Springs. Ultra Vans are a special attraction for this show. Ultra Van Parking is available on the swap meet grounds. More Information later.

Jan 17 - 20, 2001, Western Winter Rally, Phoenix, AZ. Hope Church, 4842 North 51 Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85031 (623) 846-7785. Hosts: Dan & Betty Reinhardt, 5201 West Camelback Rd, #A255, Phoenix, AZ 85031 (623) 846-6920.

WHALES ON WHEELS is a quarterly publication of GROUP ULTRA VAN, a CORSA chapter. It is dedicated to the preservation and use of the ULTRA VAN. This 22 foot unique motor home was designed by David Peterson and built in Kansas until 1970. About 365 units were built. Dues are \$6.00 annually, please remit to the Secretary-Treasurer. Submit all technical information to the Editor.

PRESIDENT
Bob Galli #504
5000 Cascabel
Atascadero, CA 93422
(805) 466-7237
rdgalli@tcsn.net

VICE-PRESIDENT
Graham Dell #292
4332 157th Ave SE
Bellevue, WA 98006
(206) 641-1570
grahamdell@aol.com

SEC.-TREASURER
Louis Griggs #334
626 Brookfield Ave.
Cumberland, MD 21502
(301) 722-2991

Editor
Richard Finch # 443
1418 Apple Avenue
Tularosa, NM 88352
(505) 585-8037
finchbird@juno.com

DIRECTORS

Eastern
Norm Helmky #356,#486
RR# 1, Carrying Place
ONT KOK 1 LO, Canada
(613) 394-3054
corvair@fan.net

Western
Dan Davis #468
4509 Interlake Ave N.
Seattle, WA 98103
dandavis@w-link.net

E-Mail Guy: Ken Wildman #338, 419 N. Johnson Street, Ada, Ohio 45810
(419) 634-4874 E-mail: k-wildman@onu.edu

Web site: <http://www.onu.edu/user/FS/kwildman/ultraVan.html>

Group Ultra Van

Richard Finch
1418 Apple Ave.
Tularosa,
New Mexico
88352-2006

Pictured here are your new editor, Richard Finch and his wife, Gayle Finch in front of their Ultra Van S/N 443 at the Corsa Fan Belt Toss and Swap Meet at Palm Springs, CA in November 1999. Photo by Dean Olsen



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