

Inside:

- The Prez Sez.....page 1
- Palm Springs.....page 2
- Hard luck story.....page 4
- Vixen, travel with....page 5
- Bisbee, AZ.....page 6
- Classifieds.....page 9

Your Ultra Van on the Cover of WOW

Would you like to see your Ultra Van on the cover of Whales on Wheels? Then send in a photo, with a short story. The photo should have some artistic value featuring the Ultra Van in a good location. Send your photos and stories to the Editor and have your Ultra Van be a star!

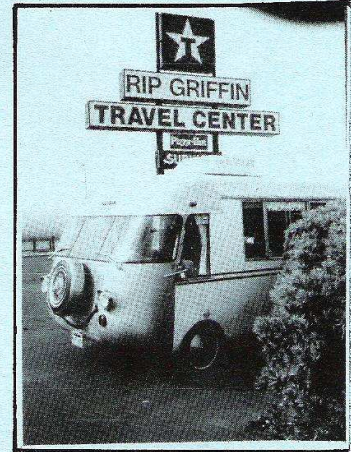
from the editor:

Happy New Year, Healthy New Year, and may your Ultra Vans all run like new for 2001 !

And now maybe we can stop hearing about when the new millenium REALLY started. I have heard it explained two different ways. You can decide for yourself (again). Here they are:

1. Popular Science Magazine says that the Millineum is like an apple eating contest. You give out the prize AFTER the 2,000th apple has been eaten, not as the contestant bites into the 2,000th one.
2. Calendar makers say that it is like someone having a birthday. You wait until he is 2,000 years old before you have his birthday party, not when he starts his 2,000th year. The world's calendar makers decided that they would start counting at the birth of Christ, which was 2,000 years ago, give or take about 3 years. No one seems to know for sure exactly when Christ was born.

The calendars for recorded time report in BC, before Christ, in AD, anno Domni, which means "In the year of our Lord". But no one living today can say for sure when that event occurred. So, you can decide if AD means "after delicious (apples)", or anno Domni. But maybe the "real millineum" does not start for another 2 or 3 years ! So, maybe it is not solved yet.....rf.



1969 Ultra Van s/n 443 at a truck stop about 30 miles west of Phoenix with about 103 diesel trucks idling nearby !

The Prez Sez, by Group Ultra Van President Mr. Bob Galli , UV S/N 504

As you read this, Christmas will be over and we are in "The New Millineum", and I think that the USA has a new President. Diane and I will be leaving in S/N 504 around the 10th of January for the Rally in Phoenix, AZ. On the way home we will spend a few days in Quartzite, AZ. for the big RV Gathering and Flea Market there at the end of January. What a Circus !

How about our new newsletter editor, Richard Finch ! I think our newsletters will continue in the same award winning fashion as we were used to with Christy. Good job Richard. Of course Richard can use all the news articles he can get from you readers. We are all interested in hearing what is going on with our members.

Don't forget about the Corsa National in Chicago, IL this year. I have already started some dialog with CORSA National Convention Chairmen as to what Ultra Van accommodations we will have at Chicago, St. Charles this year at the Corsa National. We should have all the information about that for the Spring 2001 issue of WOW. We should really plan to get some good exposure for Ultra Vans there as I believe that this is where the future of Ultra Vans lies. Corvair people see Ultra Vans at the National, become more interested in them and eventually buy one of the many that are for sale. Then they join the group and then we all have a good time.

We have several new members in the last couple of years. Those of you that are new to the group, be sure to look us up at the St. Charles National or one of the regional rallies that are listed in the calendar of events on the back of this newsletter.

You know that the WOW Club dues are due. If you have not paid your dues yet, send your \$6.00 for 2001, or make it \$12.00 for 2 years, to Lewis Griggs, Club Treasurer. His mailing address is on the back of this newsletter. That's about it for now, See you down the road. rg.

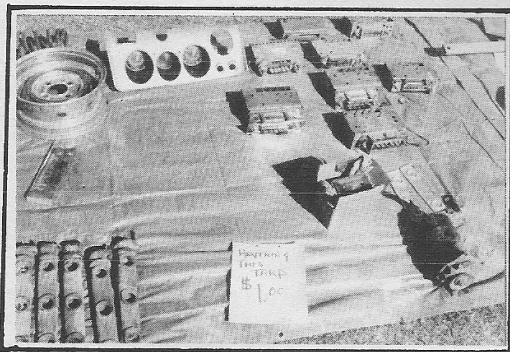


Jim Craig, S/N 604, in the left of this picture in the white hat, has laid out his blue plastic tarp and loaded it with lots and lots of "good old Corvair parts" at the Y2K Palm Springs, CA event. For those of you that have never been able to attend this November event, this picture is typical of what you can see there at the GWFBT & SM. Our own S/N 443 is to the left.

The year 2000 "Great Western Fan Belt Toss & Swap Meet " November 3rd, 4th and 5th at Palm Springs, California

Well, there is not a lot of " fan belt tossing " but there is always a lot of Corvair parts swapping at this annual event that is usually held on the first weekend of November. On Friday morning, a Corvair Club from Southern California marks off the 10' x 10' swap-meet spaces, and then at 12:00 noon sharp, the gates are opened and the vendors swarm in and start setting up their spaces that they have reserved. The US Army could take a tip from those Corvair people who can set up for parts swapping, selling and buying in just a few minutes. A significant number of vendors buy the really good deals from other Corvair sellers and then sell the parts for a higher price later in the week end from their own swap meet space . Sound familiar?

All day Saturday is the big day and includes the People's Choice Car show. Sunday morning is the time to make last-minute parts purchases because at 12:00 noon sharp the whole field of Corvairs clears out.



The sign on this parts tarp reads " any part on this tarp, \$1.00". Your editor bought a good Corvair starter for only \$2.00 early on Friday.



This set up of Corvair parts is operated by Larry's Corvair Parts of Gardena, California. They have been in the Corvair parts business for many years.



Corvair Oregon Underground always has a big display of new-old-stock and reproduction Corvair parts at the Palm Springs annual event. Lon and Linda Wall and their helpers can drive in, set up and be selling parts here in just a very few minutes. And the sign at the left of the picture says " 17 1/2 % off marked parts", a very good deal and you don't have to pay shipping!

This very low key but very organized annual Corvair event always draws a big bunch of the typical Southern California Show Cars and Customs. The car show this year had about 75 of the prettiest Corvairs you will find at any Corvair event. The cars are judged by peoples choice ballots, but you can't get a ballot to vote with unless you are a paying entrant to the swap meet. That keeps the votes more authentic.

The Corvair vehicle that won the People's Choice award was also the one that most people were talking about all week end. Well known Corvair CORSA member Vance Piper brought his freshly restored Greenbreir Van to the show and proved that a Forward Control Corvair can be just as pretty as an Early Model Corvair Spyder Convertible . If you can imagine a Forward Control Corvair back in 1964 that had nicer than factory paint, upholstery and bodywork, that is what Vance Piper's F.C. looked like. And then he had a picnic table set up in back with Melmac (tm) plates on the table.

There was another Greenbrier at the show that was a standout too. The other F.C. had air conditioning in the ceiling with outlets in front, in the middle, and in the rear, all molded in just like in a VW Vanagon. That is because the owner/builder took the a/c unit out of a VW Vanagon. But it looked like the Chevy Factory had installed it in 1964.

The a/c compressor was a small Sanden unit and the condenser was mounted flat under the front floor with an electric suction fan to cool the Freon

The best Corvair car at the event was an early model Monza Convertible . It seems that Corvair owners vote for convertibles as pretty cars even though they may own coupes or 4 door sedans. Coupes and 4 doors are practical and usually less expensive to restore, but a convertible is always more classy looking. This year at the event, almost 1/3 rd of the cars entered in the show were soft tops.

There was only one Corvair Ultra Van at the show this year. Four years ago there were 12 Ultra Vans at the show, including Buick V-6 conversions and Corvette V-8 units. The other Ultra Van at this year's GWFBT & SM was the Craig's Olds V-8 S/N 604. The sponsoring club gave out two trophies at this year's event, so the Craig's got first place and the Finch's got a second place trophy.

There were a number of Ultra Van owners at the show who stopped by to visit with us. Even the father and son who sold us our Ultra Van, Garry and Mike Saylor from Poway, CA, stopped by to see us and their old S/N 443. They were happy to see that we have already driven it through nearly 1/4th of the States according to our "been there" map on the back of our unit.

We found lots of Corvair parts to buy, and we saw lots of people , "old friends" at the show. At the Saturday night banquet, we were recognized for driving our Ultra Van 820 one way miles to the event, the furthestmost distance that any Corvair powered vehicle was driven this year. We were also recognized for a "hard luck award" . More about that on page 4.....**editor.**

Our "Hard Luck Story" by Richard Finch S/N 443

On October 30th, Gayle and I pulled out of our driveway with 30,030 original miles on the odometer of our Ultra Van S/N 443. We had put 12,630 miles on it since we bought it in August 1998. It now has 32,308 miles on it so you already know that this story has a happy ending. But early in the story the ending did not seem very happy.

We were leaving for Palm Springs a few days early so we could stop by the Craig's in Joshua Tree, CA and help work on Ultra Van S/N 101 before we drove on to Palm Springs.

We drove past White Sands National Monument and up the 7% grade San Augustine Pass, the steepest pass between California and Florida, traveling the Southern Route that is. We actually outran a couple of loaded 18 wheelers and a Winnebago going up the pass. #443 was running GOOD! We made it to Benson, AZ the first night and camped in a very clean RV park.

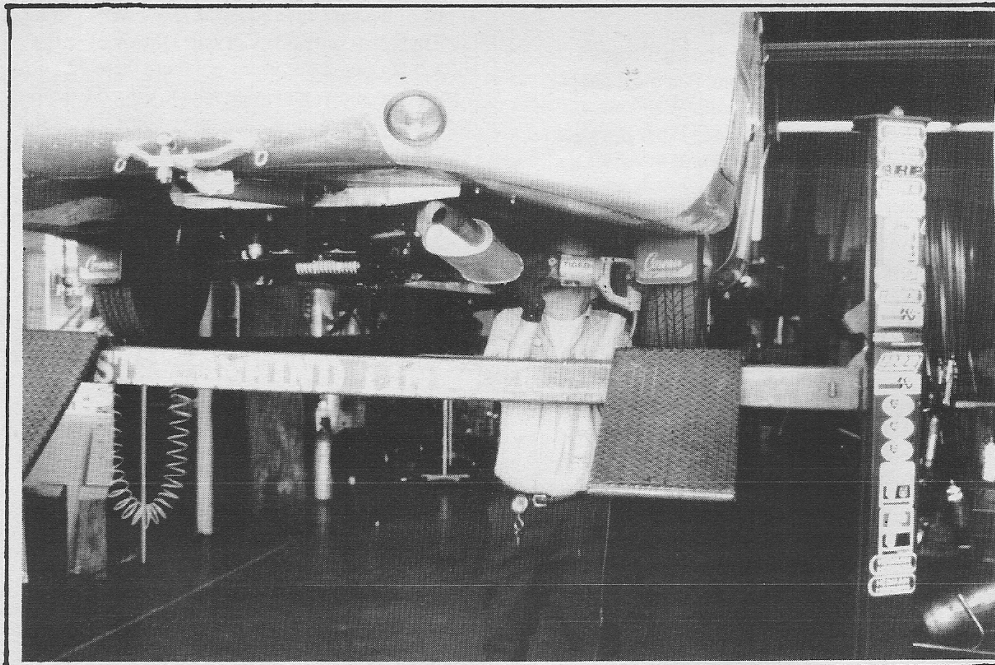
The next morning we gassed up in Benson and drove to Tucson, AZ, actually passing several trucks and motor homes along the way. (It is slightly downhill from 4,000' elevation Benson to 1,500' Tucson). And just past Tucson, our Corvair engine began bucking and spitting. We nursed her in to Casa Grande, AZ and found a NAPA store with a big parking lot but next to a Catholic Church with a bell that rang every 15 minutes.

At the NAPA Store, I bought new toggle switches for our electric fuel pump and I replaced the clear plastic fuel filter. I could see globs of silicone

sealer in the existing filter. Then we headed for Gila Bend, AZ and #443 ran pretty good until we were 6 miles past Gila Bend, then she quit, quit, quit! So Gayle called a tow service and had us towed on a hook back to Gila Bend where a nice RV Park owner let us have #443 towed into his park.

The good thing about the RV Park was that it had a NAPA Store directly across the street and an A & W Root Beer stand next door. So I went to the NAPA store and bought all the clear plastic fuel filters he had in stock and I bought about 20' of synthetic fuel line and several fuel line clamps. Then we ate an A& W and went to bed. The next morning, I started replacing fuel system parts with the belief that lots of silicone sealer was floating around in our gas tank. I did a lot of trouble shooting and realized that my electric fuel pump had quit, probably because it did not like to pump silicone.

We Called the Craig's and apologized for not making it to their S/N 101 restoration "class", and stayed another night in the RV Park. The next morning, I cranked up #443 and drove 5 miles out to the Gila Bend Airport so I could crawl under her and replace the entire aluminum fuel line with the neoprene line. I parked over a ditch at the airport and crawled under the UV and replaced the line, but plumbed it so I could visually see my extra clear plastic fuel filter and replace it before it got completely plugged up with silicone. It worked. We did not have a stall for the next 1,900 miles of our trip. I think that we have pumped all the silicone out of the tank.



Here you can see our S/N 443 up on a drive-on hoist having her muffler replaced. We blew out a muffler when our engine backfired while starting it up after the fuel line had plugged with silicone sealer from the fuel tank. Cliff Vose runs the "Champion Muffler Shop" in Santa Maria, CA and he says this hoist only cost \$2,700. new and it does not have to be bolted to the floor. This would be a great hoist for Ultra Van and car repair and maintenance work at our homes.

**Traveling with a
"VIXEN" (motorhome)**
by Doug & Nancy Pratt,
Ultra Van S/N 373

In the Fall 2000 issue of WOW, Richard Finch wrote about touring the Vixen RV Dealership in Mechanicsville, IA during the National Rally. We thought that it might be interesting to share our perspective since we often travel with our friends, Cliff and Sandy Swick who own a Vixen RV.

When I say "travel", we mean like 4 to 6 weeks of travel together from Pennsylvania to Texas, Arizona and then on to Florida during the Winter months.

First, to answer a question that Richard did not know the answer to. The empty weight of a Vixen RV is about 6,000 pounds. Yes, they are certainly a lot heavier than an Ultra Van, but they don't seem to be bothered by wind when we are really being whipped around. The Vixen RV also cruises easily at 70 miles per hour.

To compensate for this, we usually make Cliff drive behind us. Otherwise, he hits "warp speed" and we are left behind in the dust. We find it very interesting when we are traveling down the road together to see people's reactions. You can see people stare and point in fascination when they see the Ultra Van, only to do a double take when they see the other one-of-a-kind RV right behind it.

It is also interesting to stop at rest stops or grocery store parking lots. Quite often people will walk up with blinders on and only see the Ultra Van and not the Vixen. Then at the next stop, someone will walk up with "blinders on" and only see the Vixen and not the Ultra Van. When that happens, we just sit and wait for "tour time" to be finished.

When it comes to roominess, the Ultra Van wins hands down. In fact, Sandy and I cook most of the meals together in our Ultra Van using the stove top or the oven and we 4 eat together in the Ultra Van. We feel like sardines in the Vixen. Whenever anything needs to be microwaved, it is done in the Vixen. (Even though we plan to install one in our Ultra Van one of these days. It could even be run off our inverter as it is in the Vixen now.)

It would be hard to believe, especially for those who have toured the Vixen RV's, the 4 of us have traveled for several days in the Vixen, and we are still friends at the end of the trip! The Vixen is very comfortable for Sandy because she is short and the counter tops are low. Unless the roof is extended on the side, we must duck our heads, especially in the bathroom. We are both 5' 6" tall.

Sleeping 4 in the Vixen is a real trick. The Swicks just curl up in their comfortable bed and chuckle at us because we are squeezed into the dinette that folds down into a bed for 1 1/2 people. We found that the best position is for us to sleep with our heads at opposite ends to make room for our shoulders. Sandy thinks that it is funny to hear, "hey, cover my feet".

As for repairs, we have both had our share of troubles. Cliff and Doug are both good fixers and help is given to whichever vehicle needs it. This past winter our Ultra behaved very well and it was the Vixen that caused most of the trouble. At least our furnace works now and we were toasty when it snowed overnight in the desert of Big Bend National Park in Texas.

The Vixen's Wabasto diesel heater has never worked properly, and Sandy's teeth were chattering on many mornings. Each RV has it's own good and bad features.

We are very familiar with the Ultra and the Vixen and we definately would not want to trade, even if it meant that we could drive at warp speed and get 28 miles to the gallon.

We had hoped to bring the Vixen along with us on the Rally around the Lake (Ontario) in June, but Cliff and Sandy will be bicycling in Ohio that week.

.....dp & np.....

RV New Product Review

by Gayle Finch

I was privileged to have been asked to be the first contributor of this column (I suppose that being married to the editor had something to do with it)!

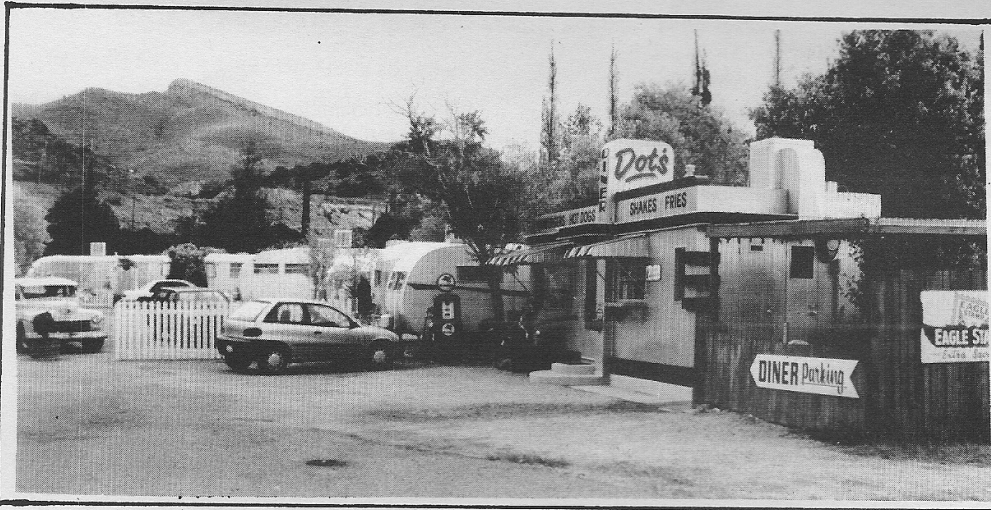
The "Power Wash N' Dry Clean Machine" as advertised in Heartland America Catalog as a "pressure wash n' dry unit" that was both "easy and fun to use". The ad claimed that the product would wash or dry clean up to 5 lbs. of laundry "sparkling Clean" in only 2 minutes.

I followed the product instructions and placed the following laundry in the machine (using a J.C. Penny Catalog to gauge the weight of each item): 1 man's dress shirt, 2 men's tee shirts, 2 pr. men's socks, 1 pr lady's underpants, 1 pr. pantyhose, and 1 washcloth totaled 4# 14 oz. I added the specified amount of water and laundry detergent, The "automatic" washer is operated by hand turning a crank on one side of the unit, thus approximating the tumbling action of a front load washing machine. After turning the crank for the recommended 2 minutes, the water must be drained out by attaching a semi-flexible hose to the side of the machine and gravity draining the dirty water out. To rinse the clothes, one can either refill the washing machine with clean water and repeating the agitation action OR rinsing the clothing by hand. In either case, the clothing must be hand wrung out before being hung up to dry.

The ad alludes to a "sparkling clean" wash when your clothes are washed in this machine...however, the reality is more "tattle tale gray"! A much cleaner wash can be realized when done "by hand", the old fashioned way, or even by kneeling by a stream and beating them on a rock!

As you can probably guess, I was not impressed by the "POWER WASH N' DRY CLEAN MACHINE".

.....Gayle Finch



Dot's Diner sits in front of the antique travel trailers at the Shady Dell Vintage RV Park in Bisbee, Arizona. All of the vintage travel trailers can be rented like rooms in motels. you can also rent a full hook-up space for your Ultra Van or even a modern RV in this RV park.

Shady Dell RV Park, Bisbee, AZ. by Richard Finch

In the Summer 2000 issue of WOW I told you that Gayle and I were planning to stop by and stay at this "antique" RV park after we finished our trip to Palm Springs to the Corvair, CORSA event. We did in fact stop and stay here 2 nights and part of 3 days. We enjoyed it so much that we plan to go back there just because we enjoyed it and want to spend more time there.

Bisbee, AZ is an old mining town that is located almost on the Mexican Border, about a 2 hour drive from Tucson, AZ. The problem with the 2 hour drive is that you pass through Tombstone, AZ which is the location of many historical events. One event that happened in Tombstone was the Gunfight at the OK Corral. Wyatt Earp and other famous historical figures once lived in Tombstone and died there too.

As we left Bisbee on our way back home to Tularosa, NM, we took the Southern rout through Douglas, AZ which is on the Mexican Border and near Agua Prieta, Mexico. The drive took 6 hours including a stop for gas and a one hour rest stop at a Bowlin's Running Indian Trading Post in New Mexico.

Dot's Diner at the Shady Dell RV Park was built in 1957 in Kansas as a modular 10 stool diner. It was found in Long Beach, CA and was hauled to Bisbee and restored. I have never eaten better 1950's era breakfast than we ate there at Dot's. Even the cook and the waitress dressed in 1950's uniforms. The diner is one of a series of modular diners built to be part of a nation wide chain like Denny's and other diners of that time in our history.



This 1942 bus was converted to a motor home back in the 1940's and it can be rented as an overnight room at the Shady Dell RV Park in Bisbee, Arizona. Other vintage trailers are visible in this picture. The RV park was first opened in 1927 and has been fully restored.

How to contact the Shady Dell RV Park:

**Shady Dell
1 Douglas Road
Bisbee, AZ 85603
phone:
1-520-432-3567**

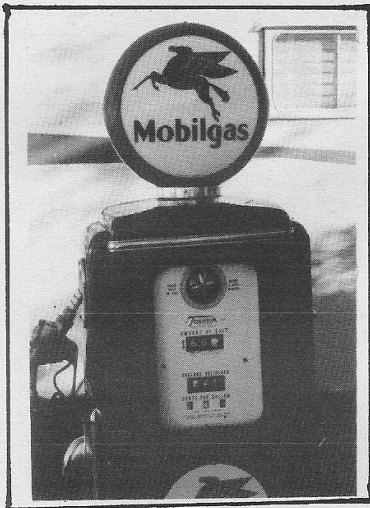
The RV park is 1/2 miles South of downtown Bisbee and 1/2 block off the traffic circle. As you drive past the town, you will drive right past the HUGE open pit copper mine. The traffic circle is right on the edge of the open pit mine.

The story goes that the highway and part of the old town were moved in order to dig the mine pit deeper and wider.

We were in Bisbee during mid-November and it was about 45 degrees there at the time, so I expect that you could plan to take a jacket in the winter and your A/C unit in the summer.

Last WOW what is it....

The RV featured in the Fall 2000 Newsletter is a "Commer" made in England in 1965. These RV's sleep 8 people and have a propane hotplate for heating coffee and for cooking. They were used extensively for the race teams to sleep in at sports car race tracks in Europe and here in the USA in the 1960's.



The price of Mobil Gas at this antique pump at Dot's Diner is 26.9 cents per gallon ! That was a common selling price in the 1960's.

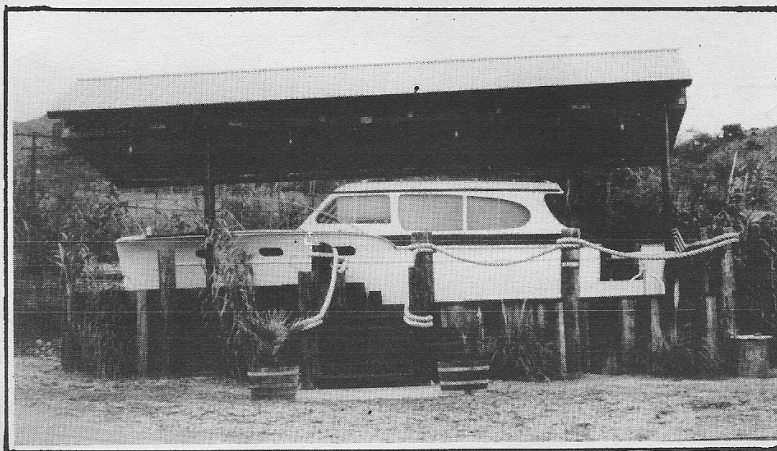
The Shady Dell RV Park is not complete yet. The owners are still finding and restoring old travel memorabilia.



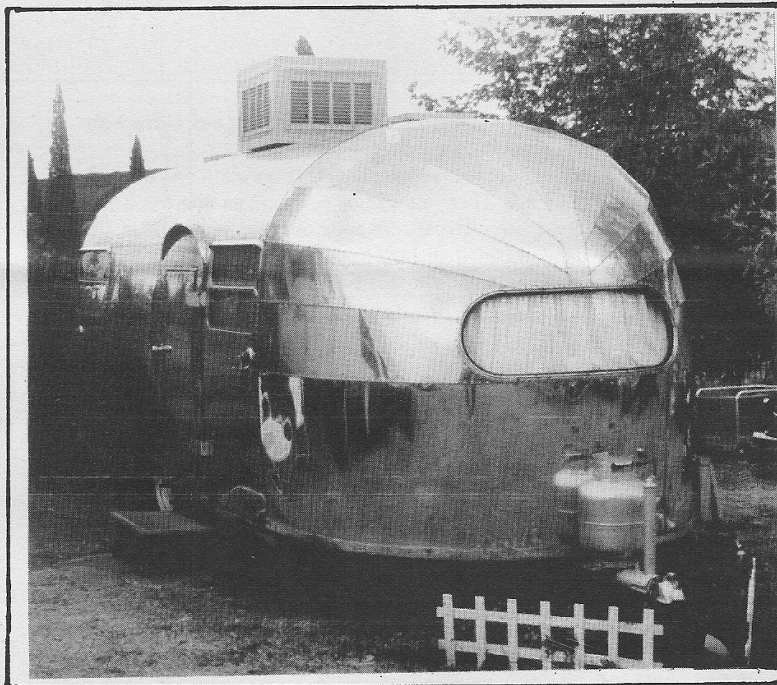
What Is It ? Here is a clue:

It was built in early 1942 and it has dual exhausts. It was built as a highway bus. And you thought that 4 headlights were invented in the late 1950's ! This RV looks a lot like an Ultra Van except a lot longer.

Send in your photos of old and unusual RV's so they can be published in the WOW. Be sure to provide as much information about the old RV as you can find out.

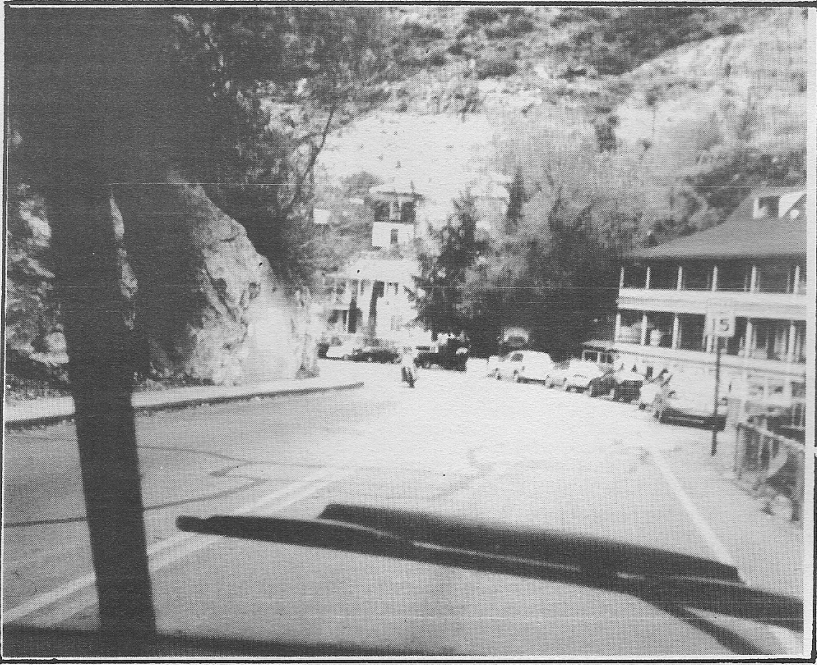


This 1950 Chris Craft Cabin Cruiser can sleep up to 8 people as a boat, but as a converted "motel room", it will sleep 4 people and has a galley and a porta-potty. The owners of the Shady Dell RV park have decided to keep it for themselves and not rent it to the public.



This 1949 Airstream Travel Trailer is 21 feet long and it rents for \$60. per night. The RV park owners paid \$1,000. to have an aircraft mechanic polish it for them.

This travel trailer was pictured in *Bride's Magazine*. A photo album of vintage wedding pictures and a 1950's bride doll add to the vintage interior appointments. The RV park owners told us that they stay booked up from April through October every year. The vintage travel trailers were all full the two nights we stayed in the park in mid-November. Even though we have only rabbit ears for our 13" color TV in our Ultra Van, we were able to watch the Election disaster while we were in Bisbee.



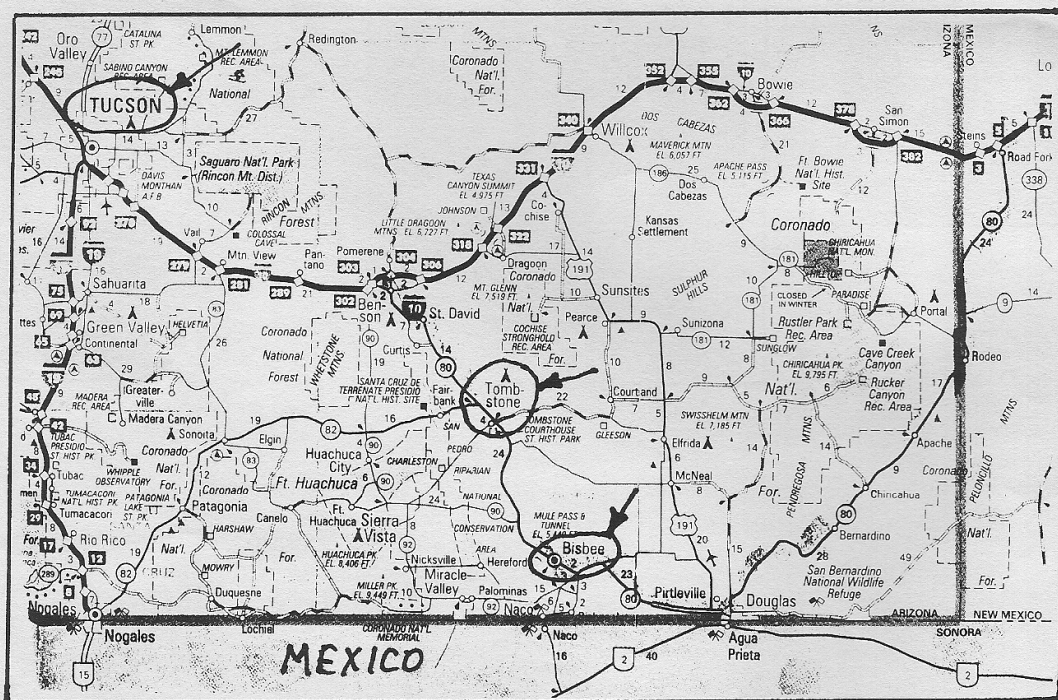
Main Street in Bisbee, Arizona from the windshield of our Ultra Van.

Main Street is quite crooked, but we were able to drive our # 443 through town without any problems. There are several parking lots where you can park an Ultra Van and where you can turn around if you want to. It seemed that we fit in quite well in Bisbee in our 31 year-old RV. At least everybody smiled at us as we drove up and down this very crooked street.

Bisbee reminds me quite a bit of some of the small towns in Switzerland. There are a lot of shops to visit and sidewalk coffee houses to sit in and watch the tourists walk by.

If you want to stay in a 100 year-old hotel or a bed and breakfast, you will find many places in town to suit you. Gayle and I even passed by a shop where they were restoring a bunch of French Citroen cars and delivery vans . There was also a VW Bug restoration shop there on main street. Several of the houses had driveways and car parking buildings with the doorways right on the curb and sidewalks. We even bought a pretty poster with some of Bisbee's Doorways pictured . There is also a great Museum of Mining History in downtown Bisbee.

On your way to Bisbee, you will pass through Tombstone Arizona. The town is now mostly a tourist attraction, but it still has a high school and quite a few old hotels. You could also spend a day and a night in Tombstone and not get bored.



Bisbee is right on the Arizona / Mexico border and about 2 hours drive from Tucson, AZ
Map courtesy of Arizona Chamber of Commerce.

Rallies

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

April 20 - 22, Spring Fling in the South, Hopkins, South Carolina. Hosts, Dennis and Linda Radford, & Jean McMasters. More info later.

April 25 - 29, 2001, Space Odessy 2001, Tularosa, New Mexico. Visit the Space Center Museum, White Sands National Monument, a 140 year-old historical village. Room for 12 to 16 Ultra Vans with elect and water hook-ups and dump station. Hosts, Richard and Gayle Finch, 1-505-585-8035, Tularosa, NM.

June 17 - 24, 2001, 2001 Round Lake Ontario Rally, Lake Ontario, US & Canada. Four day tour around Lake Ontario, join wherever you want, depart wherever. Hosts, Nancy and Doug Pratt, Marion & Norm Helmkey. More info later. (sounds great !)

July 25 - 28, 2001, CORSA International Convention, St. Charles, ILL. Chicago area, Chigaoland Corvair Enthusiasts. Pheasant Run Resort. Reservations, 1-800-999-3319. Info, contact Charlie Biddle, 1-708-344-2679. Call Bob Galli for Ultra Van parking info.

September 10 - 16, 2001, Ultra Week 2001, Minden, Nebraska Pioneer Village, site of the 1985 Ultra Week. Visit an American Heritage Historic Museum and Village. Hosts, Richard and Gayle Finch. Send sase for info package, 1-505-585-8035

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.

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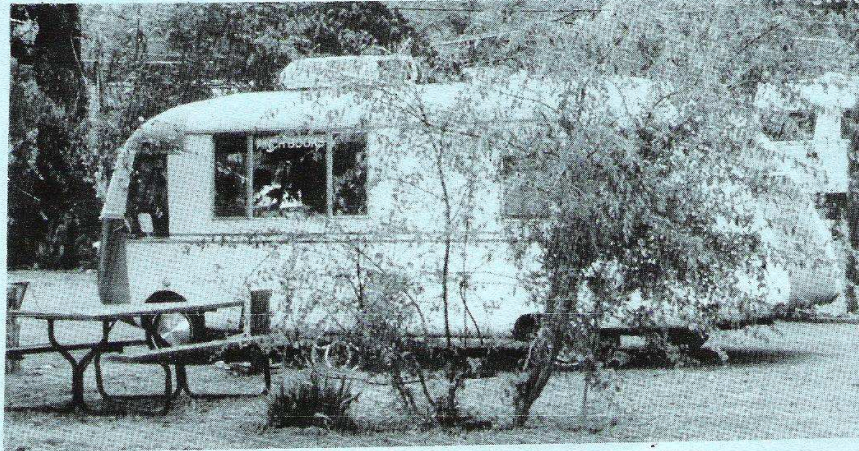
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GROUP ULTRA VAN

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Ultra Van S/N 443 is parked here at the Shady Dell RV park in Bisbee, AZ. For more about the park, see the story on page 6.

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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FL 33844

Winter

2001

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