

Whales on Wheels

Number II

Volume XXII

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Your Ultra Van on the Cover of WOW

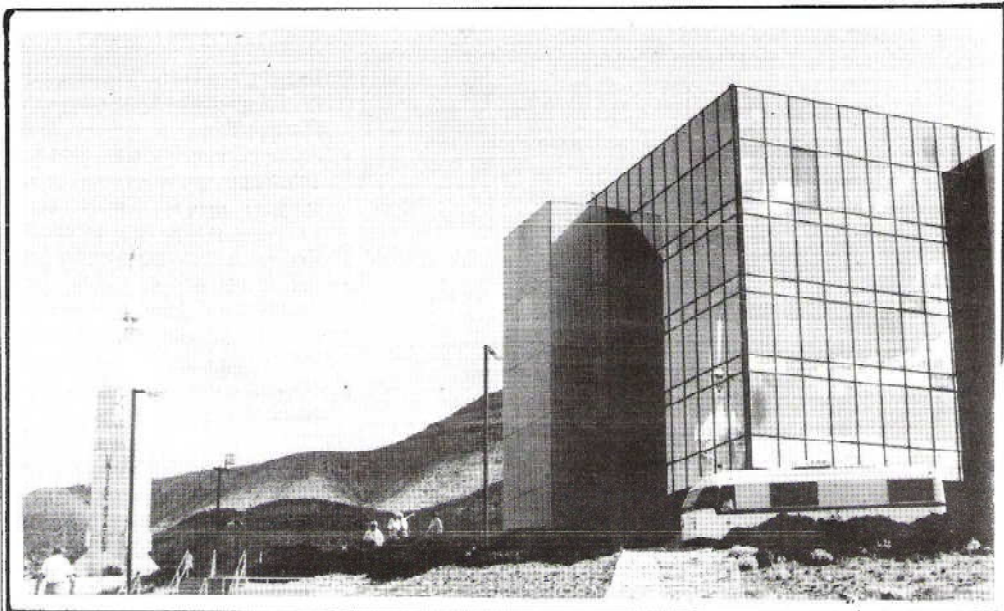
Would you like to see your Ultra Van on the cover of Whales on Wheels? Then send in a photo, with a short story. The photo should have some artistic value featuring the Ultra Van in a good location. Send your photos and stories to the Editor and have your Ultra Van be a star!

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

Hi everybody !.....Just a short note to let you know that Diane and I are about to embark for our Summer trip in S/N 504. We had a good trip to the Finch's Spring Western Rally in Tularosa, New Mexico. We will be leaving shortly for the Summer Rally In Kent, Washington., After that we will have a leisurely trip to St. Charles, Ill. for the CORSA International Convention in late July.

We will have a fair showing of Ultra Vans at the Convention. Try to attend if you can. We will be having the Group Ultra Van Annual meeting on Wednesday evening, July 24th. Even If you don't own an Ultra Van yet, come visit with some of the Gang. We may stay in the Midwest until the Ultra National event in Minden, Nebraska in September. Hoping to see you somewhere along the way.....Bob Galli.....

(Editor's note:.... The organizers of the CORSA National Event at St. Charles / Chicago, tell us that there will be an Ultra Van display area at the show , but that there is no camping allowed at the Hotel as usual. At the CORSA National event at Lake Tahoe in 1999, we were allowed to park and "camp" in the swap meet area , and at Daytona Beach in 2000 , three Ultra Vans were allowed to park overnight in the empty swap meet spaces at the Host hotel, but the hotel management looked the other way while "camping" was done. Larry Claypool tells us that the nearest camping spots to the 2001 Convention will be 22 and 40 miles away! If you plan to take your Ultra Van to the Convention, you may want to choose your own parking spot in a nearby Wal Mart or K-Mart Shopping center. Just don't make plans to "camp" at the Host Hotel. Or you could park at the hotel and just rent a room like the Corvair car people do ! That ought to be OK.)



Jim and Marlene Craigs Ultra Van # 604 sits just below the New Mexico Museum of Space History and you can see some of the Ultra Van people in the picture. More about the Rally on pages 2 thru 7.

RALLY REPORT by Diane Galli, S/N 504 (Western Spring Rally, Tularosa, N. M.)

The Western Spring Rally was hosted by Richard and Gayle Finch, (and very ably I might add).

Bob and I got there on the day it was due to start to find Dave Stoddard, Ultra Van S/N #352 , and Howard and Marsha Bosso, (another brand), already there. Marlene Craig was home in Joshua Tree, CA with bronchitis, but Jim Craig was there in Ultra Van S/ N 604. Forrest and Sally Gist drove from Oregon in their new Dodge Pickup and motelled it as did Nobia Sukow and Theresa Vandersteeg from Phoenix, AZ. Hal and Tote Pickering who live nearby in Tularosa, NM , drove one of their two Ultra Vans, S/N 271 and attended each day.

Notably missing and missed were the Reinharts, Dan and Betty. Betty is recuperating from surgery. Also, Bob Reinhart is recuperating from knee surgery and was unable to attend.

We were all parked in the Finch back yard and had a pot luck every night. And man were they good! I think I gained many pounds and many inches. Gayle and Richard worked like Trojans getting everything ready for the Rally and It showed.

On Friday, we all got together in cars with Jim Craig driving UV S/N 604 and went to the Space Museum in Alamogordo, and it is a must-see for anyone in the vicinity. From there we went to White Sands National Monument. (take sunglasses if you go. The sands are more blinding than snow.) There we had a picnic lunch and drove as far into the monument as we could. Then we stopped at the Visitor's Center and spent money. Well, Sally and I did anyway.

On Saturday we did a driving and WALKING tour of the Village of Tularosa, New Mexico. Antique Shops being high on the list of things to see. Gayle got an invitation to tour one of if not the oldest houses in Tularosa, by the lady who lives there. Lunch that day was at the Sidewalk Cafe in Tularosa. French influence was in the menu. I had a crepe filled with spinach and mushrooms, and onion soup, Mighty tasty ! Definitely European influence.

As Marsha and Howard had to leave early Saturday, We were a smaller group. Gayle and Richard invited some friends to

come join us for evening bar-be-cue. We bar-be-cued steaks and chicken breasts and had whatever side dishes we could muster. It looked like a good spread to me.

Richard showed a video of a new type of fire extinguisher called Halatron, TM, a very good thing to have in case of fire in the motor compartment of our coaches or anywhere else. This is the newer version of the Halon 1211 fire extinguisher.

Sunday saw the last of us leave the Finch's. Thank you, Richard and Gayle. Respectively (respectfully!) ,
by Diane Galli

Coach Report..by Richard Finch

The first Ultra Van Coach to arrive for the Tularosa Rally was Dave Stoddard in his Coach # 352 that is powered by a 350 cubic inch Chevy V-8 engine with a 350 Hydromatic transmission. Dave bought this coach already converted and he spends several months each year parked at a friend's place near Deming, New Mexico. Dave always travels with his cat, a pure-bred Russian Blue that is very pretty.

Dave also spends several months each winter at "The Slabs" near the Salton Sea in California.

The second coach to arrive was an Oldsmobile Tornado powered 1972 year model special edition owned by Howard and Marsha Bosso who live in Apache Junction, Arizona, near Phoenix. Their Ultra Van is for sale because they spend most of their time in their newer RV. While they were here at the Rally, a lady called from Denver, Colorado and asked if she could attend the rally to see and maybe buy an Ultra Van. The lady did drive all the way from Denver and the last I heard, she was planning to stop by Apache Junction to buy the Bosso's Ultra Van that Howard had converted to Buick V-6 power.

The next Ultra Van to arrive was the Galli's Corvair powered S/N # 504. Bob has made a large number of improvements to their unit, including adding a queen sized air mattress in back and he moved the batteries to ahead of the rear axle to improve the weight distribution.

Bob has also modified the differential housing so he can dip-stick check the differential oil level and add oil if necessary from above rather than having to crawl under the van. One very nice addition is an electronic ignition monitor and control unit. Bob and Diane also have roll-out awnings on both sides of their unit.

The next Ultra Van to arrive was Jim Craig in their special built prototype S/N # 604. Christy Barden wrote a report on this fine unit in a WOW issue last year.

One of the improvements that Jim has made to their # 604 is to mount a satellite TV dish on the rear ladder so that it is easy to set up each time they stop for the night. you can see a picture of the satellite dish in this newsletter.

The next Ultra Van to arrive was Hal and Tote Pickering in their S/N # 271. Hal had just returned from a ski trip that took him to many ski areas in New Mexico and Colorado, the last stop being Gunnison, CO. This coach still has the Corvair engine and Powerglide automatic transmission.

The Pickerings also own Ultra Van S/N # 294 which they drove by our house just this past week end. They let me drive it and it seems ready for the road, just like their other one.

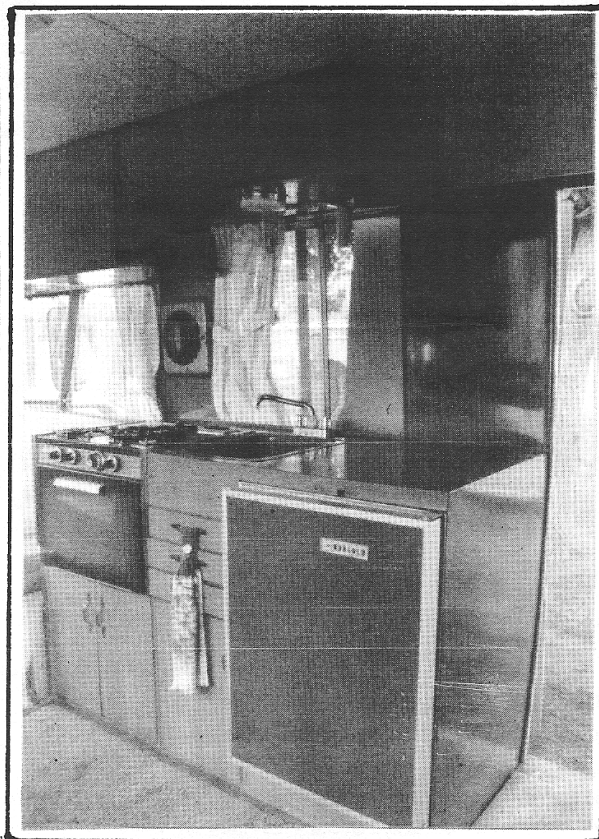
The next Ultra Van OWNER to arrive was Rich Morrison who lives about 12 miles from Tularosa in La Luz, NM. Rich owns # 202 which is a very, very early coach that has the dual rear tires and swing axle. It has a unique entry door that is behind the kitchen and near the middle of the right side of the coach. A picture of this coach is on page- 4 of this newsletter. Rich met us for lunch on Saturday and left his coach at home inside a Butler building because it has not traveled in several months.

One coincidence about # 202 is that Jim and Marlene Craig owned it several years ago . We hope to see Rich Morrison and his # 202 at CORSA events in the future.

And of course another Ultra Van attended the Rally in Tularosa, namely # 443, the Ultra Van that belongs to Gayle Finch, our Siamese cat and is maintained and driven by your editor, Richard Finch. It is 95 h.p. Corvair powered and is still being restored,

but while it is traveling . It's next trip will be to Kent, WA and to Arlington, WA in July of 2001.

Pete Valentine owns another Ultra Van that he has installed a Buick 3800 V-6 engine and transverse transmission in where the Corvair engine once was. Pete's coach has no cabinets, no kitchen, and no toilet in it. It was used as a clothing display office for many years before Pete and his wife bought it. The Valentines live just 12 miles form Tularosa but they were not able to attend the Rally this year. They are both in their 80's, but quite active.



Shown here is the kitchen area of UV S/N 202 which now belongs to Rich Morrison of La Luz, New Mexico. Note that the entry door is behind the refrigerator and the appliances are in reverse from most Ultra Vans. The Jim Craig's once owned this very early unit. photo -J. Craig.



Here is another picture of Ultra Van S/N 202. Note that the entry door is not in the usual location, but it is behind the kitchen. Also, this is one of the early units that has the "early model" Corvair swing arm rear suspension in place of the later type with 4 u-joints. Jim and Marlene Craig once owned this unit, but it is now owned by Rich Morrison of La Luz, New Mexico, which is only 10 miles from Tularosa, NM where 4 other Ultra Vans now reside. photo by Jim Craig

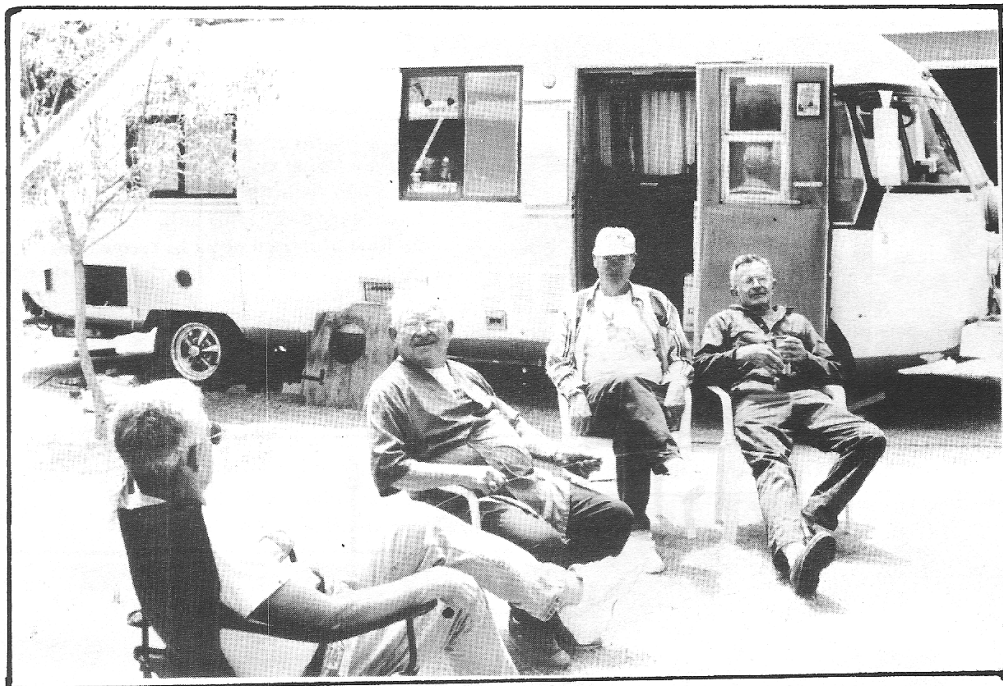


This is Dave Stoddard's Ultra Van S/N 352 that has a 350 Chevy with the 350 turbo trans and a "PARK" position on his gear shift. Dave does not have to rely on the emergency or parking brake like most of us Corvair owners do. This photo is, I believe, at "The Slabs" near the Salton Sea, and in a snow. More about The Slabs below.

The Slabs,.....by the Editor

Sue Grafton, The lady mystery writer who writes novels with titles from the alphabet, wrote a novel that used locations near the Salton Sea, California and the nearby former Marine base now called "The Slabs" because concrete slabs are all that is left of the WW-II Marine Training base. My co-pilot, Gayle had read the book and a couple of years ago when we were leaving the Palm Springs Corvair Fan Belt Toss, she wanted to go down and see the Slabs. So we did.

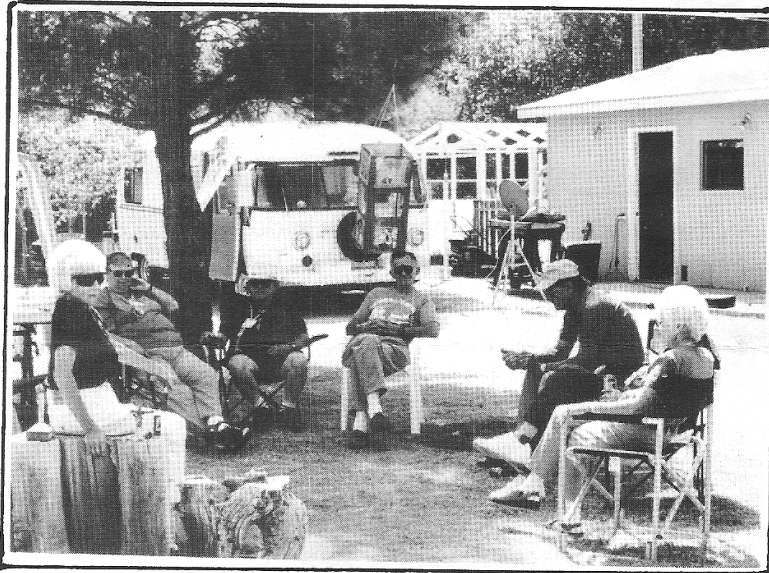
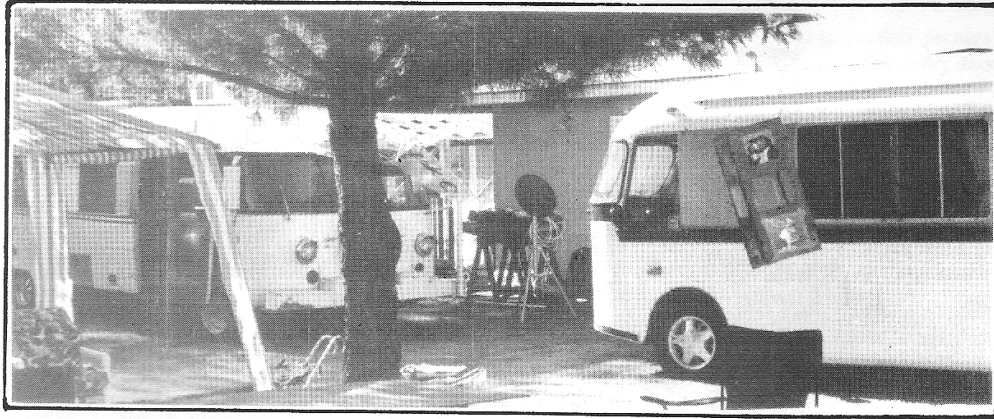
If you are ever driving down Interstate 10 from Palm Springs to Phoenix, AZ. It would be worth your time to stop by The Salton Sea for an overnight or two in the California State Park Campground on the East side of the Sea. From there, it is about an hour drive on up to the "Slabs" at Niland, CA. In the Winter when we have been there, the weather is very mild and pleasant. The motor homes and other kinds of living "vehicles" all parked at the Slabs are a sight to see. There are a lot of old school buses converted to living quarters and even some nice new rigs. Dave Stoddard spends the winter months here at the Slabs, and the parking is usually free, but it is dry too. Try it at least once if you haven't already.Richard.....



The men have a non-tech session beside Dave Stoddard's Ultra Van in the back yard at the New Mexico Rally in April 2001. Left to right are Howard Bosso, Dave Stoddard, Forrest Gist and Bob Galli.



The women have a non-crafts session beside the Galli's ultra Van at the New Mexico Rally. Pictured left to right are Gayle Finch, Sally Gist, Marsha Bosso, Theresa Vandersteeg, Nobia Sukow and Diane Galli.



↑
**Ultra Vans parked beside
 Richard's work shop in
 Tularosa, NM are SN
 # 352 and SN # 604 .**

←
**Pictured here are from left to right are:
 Gayle Finch, Diane Galli, Dave Stoddard,
 Bob Galli, Jim Craig, and Sally Gist.**

↓
**Below are Bob Galli, Hal Pickering behind
 Forrest Gist, back to the camera and Jim
 Craig adjusting his satellite TV dish.**





Jim Craig, Diane Galli, Bob Galli, Sally Gist, Forrest Gist, Dave Stoddard, Howard Bosso, and Marsha Bosso at White Sands Nat. Mon.



Ultra Van S/N 351 parked at the strange entrance to the Slabs near the Salton Sea. photo by D. Stoddard



Pictured here at the left is Dave's Direct TV satellite dish . The way this new interest is going, almost everybody will have satellite TV in their Ultra Van before long. Bob Galli has a new in-line meter that measures the signal strength to make aiming the dish a fast and easy thing to do. I am asking Bob and Jim Craig to make a tech tip presentation at our next UVMCC National rally in Minden, Nebraska in September. The way it looks, I may be able to even save money on my home TV cable bill by changing over to satellite TV and using it both at home and on the road,

2002 Lake Cachuma Rally.....by the editor

Arrangements have already been made for next Memorial Day Weekend, 2002, to join the Tear Drop Trailer Club, The British Motorcycle Club, and the Side Car Motorcycle Club for a great 4 day event at the Lake Cachuma Campgrounds which is between Santa Barbara, CA and Solvang, CA. about 20 miles from the Pacific Ocean. The San Marcos Pass drive to the Campgrounds is in the top ten list of the most beautiful scenery in North America. The event includes breakfast, lunch and dinner cooked for us around a big campfire, and a lot of lazing around and talking to some of the 200 or so attendees about their hobbies. This will be a UVMCC club Rally. More to come about it next issue.....Richard.....

Accommodations at the Galli's by Bob Galli

We live in Atascadero, CA. which is 17 miles East of the coastal towns of Morro Bay and Cambria, CA and about half-way between San Francisco and Los Angeles on Highway 101. We are about 25 miles inland from the world famous Hearst Castle. We have about 1 3/4 acres of land. This was my Grandmother's home, purchased in 1927. All of our family history is here at this place. (editor's note, Bob and Diane also have a wonderful new two story house built right on the banks of a creek. The second story is living quarters and the ground floor is a very well equipped automotive machine shop. The house reminds me of the house/barns in Switzerland where the family lives upstairs and the barn is downstairs.)

Our Ultra Van parking place is a concrete slab that measures 15" x 35", poured specifically for this purpose with 110 volt power and air pressure plumbed nearby for maintaining our Ultra Van. We poured the slab in 1993 and it is out in the open, not sheltered from the elements. This slab is along side a corrugated tin garage that my Grandmother built in 1940 to house her then- new 1940 Chevrolet. The tin building is now filled to the rafters with Corvair parts, with room down the center to allow me to select the part I need if I can find it. On the other side of the tin building, I have various electrical outlets with various voltages and amperages. This is beside a 40" x 70" parking area which is graveled.

Nearby is the windmill and a good water supply. We do not have a sewage system dump, but we have a hot shower and a bathroom over in Grandmother's house.

If you are in the area you are invited to stop in and visit for whatever length of time. If we are not home, you are welcome to park, hook up and fill with water and stay the night. If you are having mechanical problems, you are welcome to come here to get it fixed. I have jacks, tools and parts to handle almost any mechanical problem, no matter how serious. I have tools and equipment to handle automatic transmissions, differentials, engines, cylinder heads, turning brake drums, and etc. If you need to, come in "on the hook" or flatbed, heaven forbid. Call ahead first though. We just had a visit from Dave Stoddard, UV # 352. While Dave was here we replaced both rear axle spindle assemblies on his Ultra Van with rebuilt ones. He should be fixed up for some time now. And we had a very good visit with him.

While you are here, you can watch the herd of deer across the road, and the tree squirrels and the wild turkeys in the afternoons. Stop by and see us.....Bob and Dianne Galli, S/N 504



Pictured to the left is Ultra Van S/N 504 that belongs to Bob and Diane Galli.

Future issues of WOW will include more reports of member's RV's and where they keep them and maintain them. I do not have a report for the next WOW, so if you have a photo and a story, send it to the editor before August 5th so it can be included in the Summer 2001 issue.

Coming up in the next issue will be a story in parts about the Ultra Van I saw at Amana, IA last September, but did not know the owners name. When I do that, people write me and send the story about their UV. The owner is **Paul Piche, UV # 389.**

Your Editor, his wife Gayle and our cat, Baby Cat, are departing Tularosa, NM in our Ultra Van S/N 443 on July 3rd and are heading across New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Oregon and into Washington State to attend the Northwest Summer Ultra Van Rally and Orphan Car Show at Kelton's Museum in Kent, Washington. Graham Dell and Forrest Gist are the co-rally masters for that very interesting event. After that event, we will spend 6 days at the EAA Arlington Air Show. Next, we will trundle down to Grants Pass and Medford, Oregon to visit my youngest Brother, his family and Granddaughter. Then my Brother will follow us on down to Willets, CA in the Redwoods for a 4 day camp-out with the Teardrop Trailer Club. Then we will stop by friends in San Francisco, San Jose, Turlock, Santa Maria, Santa Barbara, Thousand Oaks, Los Angeles, and then head back home, that is if we can find our way after so long a trip.....rf....

Letters to the Editor

There were no letters to the editor this quarter, so this column is blank.

So send your editor some news so this won't happen next time.

The "What is it?" RV in the last issue is a 1942 Flexible, built in Ohio. It has dual exhausts which indicate a V-8 engine, but since it is rear-engine, it is hard to see what kind of engine it has. This is the RV that is listed for sale with the rest of the RV's at the Shady Dell RV park in Bisbee, AZ. I sure would hate to have to buy tires for this giant!!!!

Linda Pugh, who called us and drove all the way down to Tularosa, NM from Denver, CO did in fact buy the Bosso's Ultra Van. Marsha sent us an e-mail telling us that Linda had bought it and was on the road with it and very happy with it. This all happened in May 2001.

I just got an e-mail from Gordon Harvey telling me that he had wrecked his Ultra Van S/N 518. It was a front-ender on the Tampa Freeway last Thanksgiving. But he still has # 527, a V-8 that he will get going. He has been in and out of the hospital 5 times since January. Stroke problems..ed.

News of Members

Jean McMasters has recently had more knee surgery, but he was home recuperating just last week. Send him a greeting card.

Louis Griggs, your Treasurer, was still getting better at last account. Send him a greeting card too!

Marlene Craig had a bad case of bronchitis recently and has had several bouts of bad health including diabetes. We sure do miss Marlene when she is ill. She deserves a greeting card also.

Gordon Harvey had a TIA, or stroke last month. He is home and doing better now, but is feeling the effects. He hopes to be able to attend another Rally soon. Send him a card too.

There are likely others who need cheering up. Let your editor know if you hear of any of our members who have had bad health.

For sale, Corvair parts, too numerous to list, call David at 1-626-584-6957, CALIF area.

Wanted, info about road use A/C generators, coach mounted or trailer mounted. For use in this newsletter. Contact the Editor.

Word has it that the "Shady Dell" RV park in Bisbee, AZ is up for sale, but it is still in business because members Forrest and Sally Gist stopped there and stayed overnight on their way back to Oregon from Tularosa recently. Does anybody want to go into the RV park business?

Classified

Jerome and Nancy Heidiger are looking for a good clean Ultra Van to use to travel to air shows in. Call them at Wicks Aircraft, 1-618-654-5858.

Ultra Van, (unknown year and S/N) for sale. extensive suspension mods, trans, rebuilt 2 years ago, being stripped for paint, with tow bar, runs, asking \$4,000. Located in Boise, ID, Call Bob Pfost, 1-510-444-0666. 3205 Grand Ave. Oakland, CA. 94610 e-mail: jagdoc@earthlink.net

1969 Ultra Van, S/N not given, roof air, 2.8 k.w. elect start Kohler gen. screen door, trailer hitch, TV antennas, 140 hp engine, 4.11 rear axle ratio, posi-trac, distance, miles, fuel computer, power brakes, power steering, front and rear stabilizer bars, etc, etc., no price given, Charles Jasmer, ph. 1-941-355-5069..e-mail corvaircharlie@juno.com

1969 Ultra Van, S/N 434, for sale, standard equipment, formerly owned by Dr. Zoutendam, call Jean McMasters, asking \$4,500. 1-561-626-0388

1967 Ultra Van, S/N 294, roof air, Ralph's generator in closet, mostly original, bumpers, trailer hitch, formerly owned by Hilda Green, Torrance, CA asking ?????, Hal Pickering, Tularosa, NM 1-505-585-2503

1968 Ultra Van for sale. S/N 398 ? Belonged to Jim Foust, \$12,000. firm. Mary Foust, 1-814-352-7435

editor's note: Several more Ultra Vans are for sale at this time, but they were not submitted to WOW for publication. If you have a unit for sale, let us know. There are several people wanting to buy an ultra Van especially because it is so unique....rf...

Corvair Society of America (CORSA)
P.O. Box 607, Lemont, Illinois 60439-0607
(708) 257-6530

Rallies

June 17-24, 2001, the 2001 Round Lake Ontario Rally, Lake Ontario, US and Canada. EIGHT Day tour around Lake Ontario. Join wherever you want, depart wherever you want, Hosts, Nancy & Doug Pratt & Norm HelmKay. Phone 1-570-549-8136.

July 5-9, 2001 Northwest Rally, Kelson's Auto Museum Kent, Washington. Combined with CORSA and Orphan Car Show, Tour of Museum, camp on Museum grounds. \$25. registration, includes 5 nights camping, the car show and tour of museum. Hosts: Forrest Gist, 1-503-538-9584, Graham Dell, 1-206-232-1450. This is a **MUST Rally** for anyone living within 1,500 miles of Kent, WA !!

July 25-28, 2001, CORSA International Convention, St. Charles, IL. Chicago area, Chicagoland, Corvair Enthusiasts. Pheasant Run Resort, Reservations, 1-800-999-3319. For info, contact Charlie Biddle, 1-708-344-2679. Bob and Diane Galli are going to be there, call them.

September 10-16, 2001 Ultra Week 2001, Minden, Neb. Pioneer Village Historical Museum and Village. RV parking on the grounds. Send **LONG SASE** for color brochure and entry form. Gayle and Richard Finch, Hosts. 1-505-585-8035, address on page 10 of WOW.

November 2-4, 2001. Great Western Fan Belt Toss and Swap Meet. The best Corvair event on the West Coast. Reserved Ultra Van Parking (dry). Call Eugene at 1-909-780-7880. Don't miss this great event !!

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 93426
(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 HelmKay #356,#486
RR# 1, Carrying Place
ONT KOK I LO, Canada
(613) 394-3054

Western

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

corvair@fan.net

E-Mail Guy: Ken Wildman #338, 419 N. Johnson Street, Ada, Ohio 43819

(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, Editor
1418 Apple Avenue
Tularosa, NM 88352



This Ultra Van with the sharp looking wheels belongs to Graham Dell of Bellevue, WA. It is S/N 292, and Graham has made very significant engine mods to it, including a new electronic fuel injection system. your editor estimates at least 220 or more horsepower for this unit. The picture was taken at Kelson's Museum. See the "Rallies" section for more info.

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Spring 2001

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CANADA

