

Whales On Wheels

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Number 3

Your UltraVan on the Cover of WOW

Would you like to see a picture of your UltraVan on the cover of Whales on Wheels? Then send a photo with a short..or long...story. The photo should have some artistic value...or not..showing the UltraVan in a scenic location. Send your photos and story to the Editor and have your UltraVan be a star. Your 15 minutes of fame are now available right here in WOW!!

Prez Sez

Editors Comments: I cannot believe the response I got on the request for articles. You guys are great. I was able to fill this entire issue without writing anything myself. You guys are great writers and I am glad to so you sending in great stories. Keep it up and maybe I can get some rest for my writers cramped hand. I knew you could do it. Give yourselves a big pat on the back.

PS...who sent me the pictures of an UltraVan under a white Tarp? I cant connect them to any text I have. Maybe I lost the text. If you will send some text they will be in the next issue.

To All,

I regret to relay that Earnest J. Newhouse passed away quietly in his sleep yesterday at home. He was 96 years old and had been in poor health for the past year. Earnest was the founder of the Ultra Van Motor Coach Club in 1966. Funeral arrangements were made by Earnest some time ago and are as follows: Thursday August 26th at 1 pm at the Rose Hill Memorial Garden in Whittier. The address is 3888 South Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601. Their phone number is 562 699-0921. Directions to the Rainbow Chapel on the premises are: off the 605 Freeway take the Rose Hill Rd. exit and proceed east on Rose Hill Rd. Continue to So. Workman Mill Road and turn right. Proceed to gate # 17 and turn left and follow the yellow line to the Rainbow Chapel.

I plan to be there. If you have questions you may call Bev Aronson at Earnest's home phone number 562 698-1740. She is Earnest's niece who is handling his affairs at this time. Say a prayer for Earnest and wish him well on his journey to the beyond.

Christy Barden, Boulder, CO.

**DRAG RACING AN ULTRA VAN...
FROM A WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE
By Nancy Pratt #373**

Boys will be boys! It was never so true as at the Mountain Park Dragway in Clay City, Kentucky prior to the National CORSA Convention in Lexington. We went there to camp and enjoy companionship with other Ultra members before the convention and found Walt Davison and Paul Piche & Barbara. Camped nearby at a state park were Bob & Diane Galli, Howard & Marsha Boso, Jim & Roy Davis, and Ken & Penny Wildman. On the CORSA schedule was Corvair drag racing for Monday, June 14th. Sunday evening got fairly busy with owners of Corvair powered vehicles bringing in their souped up cars (and even a racing dune buggy). Of course, Walt, Paul and my husband, Doug, were quite interested in all of the excitement. Walt was especially interested since he had every intention of drag racing his Ultra Van the next day. Now most of you probably already know that Walt has lightened up his Ultra Van to the extent of removing his cabinets, refrigerator, stove, toilet, and even his walls so he wanted to see just how fast his Ultra Lite machine could go. Then along came the guy in charge of the racing and he started doing some arm twisting to have more Ultra Vans compete along with Walt. It didn't take much to convince Paul to sign up. The thing that caught me completely off guard was that Doug actually considered racing OUR Ultra Van...and pay the entry fee to do it no less! At least he had a night to think about it and I figured that he'd get over the idea. But no, he and Paul signed up the next morning.

On Monday Jim Davis drove to the dragway with extra passengers along for the ride. Ken & Penny drove over in their Ultra Van from the state park too. Jim had no intention of drag racing and Ken felt that it would strain his marriage if he even considered it. Smart man! Walt decided and encouraged Paul and Doug to do a test run before removing much of the normal stuff that is in their Ultras (although Doug did remove our bicycles off the back and anything that was loose and would fly through the air). So off the three of them went...a first time ever of Ultra Van drag racing. What a crazy sight it was too, especially watching a car and an Ultra Van race. They were actually testing out their reaction times and speeds before the actual racing began. After the trial runs, the guys came back and took stuff out to lighten their loads. Here I'd spent all that time packing stuff INTO the Ultra for our trip and Doug wanted me to UNPACK it. So out went my seat, tools, books, etc. I drew the line when it came to food but Paul & Barbara took out their food and clothing and just about everything else. Every day we had rain or downpours but we felt very lucky that it didn't rain while everything was exposed to Mother Nature. Walt even decided to change his back tires to the front to see if he could improve his time (but it didn't work out as he had hoped). Doug

decided that he needed to clean his spark plugs to improve his time (which prevented him from getting in a second practice run).

When it came time for the real bracket racing, Walt did quite well at 19.5 seconds at 65.2 mph in the quarter mile. Paul ran 23.6 seconds at 55 mph while much slower Doug had 28.59 seconds at 46.6 mph. Having more practice runs and removing much more “stuff” proved to be an advantage.

So did the guys enjoy themselves? Definitely, yes. And what a sight to behold, watching an Ultra Van race a Corvair car or Rampside! It was definitely a “Kodak Moment”!!



Walt and Paul watching the lights



I think Walt took this one hands down

WESTERN FALL RV CAMPOUT

Nov. 8-11, 2004

This is a "no host" event. Open to all our friends. RV, Camper, Tent or etc. required.
(No facilities near by.)

Location: "The Slabs", Niland, California (Located approx. 25 miles North of Brawley, CA.) Otherwise known as "Slabs City"

This event will precede the Palm Springs Corvair Fan Belt Toss. (Nov,12 14.) After the campout we will all depart on the 12th for the Palm Springs event, which is about 80 miles to the North.

The campsite is located approx. 3 miles east of the center of Niland, off of hiway 111. Watch for the "Ultra Van signs." (Niland is at the Southeast area of the Salton Sea.)

Contacts:

Jim & Marlene Craig, 760 366 9104 or ultravan604@tcsn.net or 7011 Sunny Vista Rd., Joshua Tree, CA. 92252-2736.

RVSP prior to Nov. 1st. A donation fee of \$5. per vehicle is suggested to offset misc . expences on site.

Details:

This will be "dry camping" in the open desert, so arrive with the following ;

1. Full water tank, propane and empty holding tank. Dump station avail. at State Park on way to Palm Springs.
2. Bundle of firewood.
3. Small table and chairs.
4. Food for two "pot lucks"and other things if you wish to maintain your strength during the event. :))

Bring a gift worth \$5 for the "Yankee Swap" for each person in your party.

Extras:

Bathing suit and old tennis shoes, if you would like to enjoy the "infamous" Slightly Warm springs bath. Max. two persons at a time. Hmmm, very cozy.:))

Note; Bar-B-Que hamburgers ,sodas, side dishes and Hot coffee will be furnish by the Craig's on the evening of the 8th.

Check out the following web site for a lot of interesting info about the Slabs. Very good.
<http://www.desertdutch.org/slabcity.htm>

Weather:

Days, very mild- 60 to 72 degrees, night down to 40's.

See ya there; Jim and Marlene

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2005 Vintage Trailer Rally

We are organizing a new Rally in sunny Southern California in January 2005! We can reserve up to 40 sites if we book now! Please visit the rally website for more information and reservations. We set it up in our shopping cart to make the reservations and easy and convenient!

Email Address: welovetrailers@vintagetrailershop.com

www.vintagetrailershop.com

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For sale 1968 corvair ultravan #400 110 hp with 2 spd powerglide transaxle. Many new parts & upgrades. Has a new 2 way fridg & new carpet. All the systems work. Runs & drives & is currently licensed. For more information email me at ultraman400@hotmail.com Aaron

My BIG Doorprize at the CORSA Convention
By Nancy Pratt #373

As part of the registration at the CORSA Convention, we received some tickets that we dropped in a box to be drawn for doorprizes. The next day several of us checked the board and were pleased to see that two Ultra members had won something. Walt Davison won breakfast for two at the Hyatt Hotel and Paul Piche won dinner for two at a local restaurant. There were no Ultra winners the next day but the following day my name was listed on the board showing that I had won a gas grill donated by Lowe's (which is like a Home Depot). However, this was not just your average grill...this was



a HUGE 6' long grill with four burners plus a side burner worth \$500! And no, it did not come as a gift certificate that we could pick up at a local Lowe's when we got home!

We made arrangements to see this grill and Doug was in shock at the size of this thing but I was determined that we would somehow get it home via the Ultra Van. So before we left town, Paul Piche & Barb helped us load it after removing one of the side shelves. Now just what do you think people thought of us as we pulled into rest areas and gas stations? Just your average grill to take out for the weekend, right?!



Well, we did get the grill home and a friend helped Doug unload it onto our deck. The reaction was, "Wow, it's gorgeous but it's huge!" So we came up with a plan. I called our local Lowe's and asked to speak to the manager of gas grills. I told him me complete story about winning it in Kentucky and asked if I could possibly exchange it. The answer was yes, just bring it in. So we loaded it back into the Ultra and took it for another ride. Just to be sure, we asked again at the customer service desk before unloading it and were told that we could do just as the manager had promised. As we unloaded it and put the side shelf back on it, a couple inspected it and other gas grills that were outside on display. Then we took it inside and I received a gift certificate for \$499 PLUS sales tax! I was definitely a happy camper! And guess what, we watched that same couple buy "my" grill, plus a rotisserie and wood chips before we even left the store. We were both smiling customers.

So was it worth giving the BIG grill a ride back home to Pennsylvania? You bet it was!! I'm still day dreaming about a nice shopping spree! However, I think that there will be some disappointed people when they realize that I won't be bringing it to Iowa for a super cookout at the National rally.

Smorgasbord by Walt #366

With that title I have “permission?” to go wherever. So..lets start on the way to the CORSA Nat'l Convention 2004 in Lexington KY. I had a brief stop (brief because I know I'll be back) at the Lane Auto Museum in Nashville TN. Some will know that's where Ultra #101 lives now. Trust me it's in good hands and lives in a very nice “house”. A VERY large house..its an ex bakery..like maybe an acre under roof. Mr. Lanes collection is truly eclectic. How about an older green fluid DS..called by some , the “Goddess”. Several drop dead gorgeous Tatrass..rear engine air cooled V-8s. Mr. Lane was driving an RO-80 on the streets the day I was there. WOW. I'll give you a money back guarantee..you'll love it. After that its to Cookeville TN. Home of Albert Ramsey and #509..the last Corvair Ultra. It too has a nice house. Albert and I took a torque converter to Dacco T/Cs..a VERY large rebuilder. This converter was a known “heater”. On opening I was shown the problem..and was told..”Yeah, in Corvair days we saw this all the time”. The faces of the stator were scored. Come to Iowa to see the real thing. They replaced the part and said the TC was as good as new except for slight wear on ring gear. From Alberts it was north to Cave City KY. Ah yes..Clay City..the location of the drag strip for goofy Corvair/Ultra owners. Well, we had 6 coaches in attendance, and three participants. Myself..Pratts..Piches. John Seaman and Jack Irwin were at the Horse Park CG. Also Jim/Roy Davis, Ken/Penny Wildman,and Bob/Diane Galli were non participating attendees at the drag strip.

I don't think there is a huge interest in draggin' by Ultra types..so the short version is..lighter wins. But Paul and Doug get “ataboys” for getting out there and giving it a shot. I was interested to see how close I could come to the reported times in a 1965 issue of Car Life magazine of a Monza coupe 110/PG/3.55/840 rpm tire. They reported the quarter in 20.9 seconds at 65 mph. I run an “almost” stock 95/PG/3.55/835rpm tire. Our weights were almost the same. In “cruise” condition I turned 20.7 at 62.5 mph. By unloading prox 200 lbs and shifting my 904 rpm tires to the rear I turned 19.5 at 65.2 mph. I'm pretty sure that was best Ultra time of day. #366 is a very light rig. It was not lightened for drag strip purposes, it was lightened so it would perform in everyday driving and particularly in the western high country. It might interest some, I made no engine adjustments of any kind from house to house and got 18.3 mpg on 87 oct fuel. The down side..sure..lunch is never free. The next day several of us, seven I believe, hopped into #389 (Piche)and took a little tourist cruise of the area. Thank you Mr. Piche. (When you see Paul ask him how fast he REALLY went through that tunnel). #389 is much quieter, rides softer, and has way more amenities than my 366. Of course,it steers harder and is, how shall we say, a bit slower up the hills. No surprises there. Paul is rightfully very contented with #389 and I'm quite pleased with #366. The old different strokes deal.

After the drag strip we all went into Lexington to the convention. Basically we all had a good time. You will get a full convention rundown in an up coming issue of the CORSA COMMUNIQUE. You ARE a CORSA member...right? During the convention several of us were at the Horse Park CG. Piches,Pratts,Gallis,Bosos, and myself. Bosos in their BIG RIG...but towing a rampside, hey that's a Corvair. One evening about dinner time Nancy Pratt asked if I minded leftovers. I should be so lucky. She fed me a pasta “thing”. I hope Nancy doesn't mind me sharing her recipe. Buy some Classico brand “Traditional Basil Pesto”. Comes in a 10oz jar..was \$2.00 and I had a little trouble finding it. I have a half dozen on the shelf now. Nancy added some chicken chunks and some mushroom slices. Absolutely SUPER. Thanks again Nancy. While we're on this kitchen thing you should know that the Pratts, lucky dogs, won a VERY large BBQ grill as a door prize. They had to take it apart to get it in the coach. I'm looking forward to having a great BBQ in Iowa...but a little mouse tells me..”Not gonna happen”

FIRES. Do everything possible to never have a fire in/on/around your beloved Ultra. BUT..lets play a little game here..somehow you perceive you have a fuel leak or fire in the engine compartment. No matter your systems..STOP..and get EVERYBODY OUT! Then from the outside view the engine compartment through the air inlet on the curb side. Give it a couple of good squirts of Halon. If fire persists hit it again. If fire continues..CLEAR THE AREA!! Stock Ultra have this propane bottle “thing”..and you can’t be really sure where all the fire is. Coaches are precious..members lives are much more important. Now, do me a little favor please. Take a few minutes every now and then and go over where your extinguishers are (please..you do have more than one I hope)and what your plans are for an emergency. A little prethinking can make a world of difference if your exciting time comes. A little aside thing..I keep hearing how Halon fire ext are 1-illegal 2-no longer available..nonsense..the fire ext company in Childersburg has Halon..Sporty”s Aviation has Halon , and I’m sure its available other places as well. Halon is not cheap. Have you priced a replacement for your coach lately? To my knowledge there is nothing that equals Halon for Ultra purposes. On this fire thing...let me beat a dead dog some more..this has been hit on in the past, but we get new folks, some of our memories are iffy..whatever. And I promise you not all will agree..but I,m doing the writing, so. I have never used a stock mech fuel pump in an Ultra. The best pump made (and there is apparently a WIDE span of quality) will eventually fail. It’s the failure modes 1- gas in oil sump 2-gas in engine bay..right by Mr. Sparky..the alternator, that I don’t like. Also you have a whole bunch of fittings, any one of which can start the trouble train going. And some coaches have “soft” (rubber/plastic) lines in the engine comp. I use nothing but steel lines in the engine comp. My electric pumps are mounted at the tank. Left pump/left pickup..right pump/right pickup. Placing the pump in the differential area is not a bad thing. It leaks to the ground. But I like two pumps ready..so when one dies..(mech or electric..they all die sooner or later) I just flip a switch and keep on rollin’. Another fire thing: A new to Corvairs local chap whom I haven’t met, (I got this from a mutual friend), was starting his freshly overhauled engine while it was out of vehicle. He apparently didn’t have the air cleaner on and he poured some fuel down the carbs..got a backfire..and ended up with 1st, 2nd, 3rd degree burns. Spent a little sheet time in hospital, but after he gets his skin grafts he’s forecast to be OK. Sounds like fun, huh. I would assume that EVERYBODY knows how dam dangerous gasoline can be. Please be careful.

AIR DAMS: Another view/story. Back in the grey area time zone..more than five years ago, I rigged up a quite “deep” dam. Ground clearance about three inches. This was a test. It did just like it was supposed to..it kept the air out from under the coach. And in my opinion it helped straight line tracking. BUT for me, with my PG cooler located just forward of the rear box beam, up in the dry bay area, scoop in right at cooler..scoop out alongside..my PG temps just slowly kept going up. I normally run 115/120..when it got 175 I said..enough. Off it came. The other down side is ,it makes the coach “longer” for parking purposes. I hope that makes sense. A folding two piece dam might be useful..but for me its too much work. If its straight line tracking your after, my suggestion is you reset your front wheel alignment. Most coaches have about one degree positive caster. I have six. My top ball joint is prox one inch behind my lower ball joint. This angle is the caster angle. Caster is the reason you can ride a bike hands off. (well at least some folks can.) I gave Arnold Steenburg a dose of caster. He said it was the best thing he ever did for tracking. #286,Chance Fitzgerald got a dose. He said it was hard to believe that such a small/simple adjustment could have such a dramatic effect. I am a little nervous about front end alignment shops. Its really not beyond a persistent owners capabilities. Set caster first..recheck camber (I suggest zero camber, ie wheels straight up) and set toe in last. This is not a fast hurry up job but the rewards are well worth it. I’ve done a lot of things to help tracking..different size tires front vs rear..weight as far forward as I can get it.. and I run one degree neg camber in the

rear, (I'm not real sure how much that helps..but its there).But the Ultra is plagued with the inherent design problem of having the center of gravity behind the center of pressure, a common problem of rear engine vehicles. By very elaborate modern suspension systems, Porsche being an example, this can be brought under control. Read..VERY expensive..probably not a viable plan for an Ultra. Too bad. With a truly modern suspension we would then have ..the PERFECT travel device.

In closing I want to give my thanks to one of our members. Many, many, people in the Ultra organizations have been helped by this man. I wonder how many of us would do a days drive (each way) just to help someone, so there summer trip wasn't spoiled. Yes I'm referring to Howard Boso. A true gentleman, and not only a wonderful Mr. Goodwrench, but a truly nice guy. I know I speak not only for myself, but for MANY others, when I say..Thank you Howard Boso. I am pleased to count you as my friend. Well it has to end someplace....all the best...till when...walt



Doug, Walt, and Paul in drag....er, at the drag races. Well..... you never know about Paul

The Phoenix

By Jean McMasters as told to Jim Isbell

The Phoenix was a bird that rose from the ashes of a fire. Jeans coach has done almost the same. The accident last year was enough to end the life of most coaches.

A \$23,000 ultra Van? Yes, you heard me right, \$23,000. The insurance company covered \$15,800 and the rest came out of Jeans pocket. But its almost done now. Its on the road and on the way to the National in a few weeks.

Most of you already know that late last year Jean McMasters Ultra was hit from behind by a truck towing a trailer while he waited to make a left turn. The truck locked his brakes for 30 feet before he hit the Ultra and when he did it compressed everything up to the front firewall of the engine compartment.

It could have been worse, but luckily the engine survived the hit so it was salvagable. With 2500 rivets and lots of time and \$8000 it went back together. All the rear fiberglass all had to be repaired. Jean had moved his propane bottle forward years ago, so that was not a problem. He says he has had three accidents in the Ultra and all of them have been rear end hits so moving the propane bottle seemed like a “no brainer.”

Jean has about 300 miles on the vehicle now and thinks it is going to be all right. Now to put this into prespective you have to realise that Jean had over 600,000 miles on the coach before the accident, so thats not bad. I suggested he should try to get another 600,000 and he said, NO way, he was going to quit at 1,000,000 miles. Below are some pictures of the “Before.” There will be some “After” pictures in the next issue with a drive report as to how the repairs felt on the road.

The New Engine Room



Maybe The Logo Tells It All



Group UltraVan



See Honey,
plenty of room for
the car too!

#544 Owned By
Peter Crowl
Of
Littleton, CO

Ok....well....participation
comes after progress.
544 is in the garage! I
had planned to bring it in
soon but moved it up. I
went to the storage lot to
revive it...and indeed it
started right up and
settled into an idle . The
engine really does seem
strong.

Peter

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WHALES ON WHEELS is a quarterly publication of GROUP ULTRA VAN, a
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TO