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Autoist

PUBLICATION OF THE VOLKSWAGEN CLUB OF AMERICA



DIESEL
Memories

**JACK PAVIE HAS FOND RECOLLECTIONS
OF VW'S GROUNDBREAKING FRONTDRIVERS**

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Autoist

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■ **COVER:** Jack Pavie of suburban Philadelphia had to wait several months to get this 1975 Rabbit diesel, one of three models he enjoyed in the '70s and '80s.

Driver's Seat

■ BY CLIFF LEPPKE

An iconic VW for every purpose

You might say VW's Golf is a "whole" in one—it's like an automotive Victorinox Craftsman Swiss Army knife, an every purpose, all-people car line. Whether it's *Motor Trend's* Car of the Year, Car and Driver's 10 Best Cars, Automobile's All-Stars, or WardsAuto's 10 Best Engines, VW's compact hatch wins accolades like Bubba Watson does PGA tournaments.

One salient observation: the Golf family tree is designed for nearly every purse and purpose, including youthful enthusiasts, mature movers, hedonists,

women on the run, fun seekers, oil burners and volts folks. The Golf's sophisticated mien transcends its price and market segment. Two more versions will further extend the lineup: the hot-rod R and the diesel-driver's favorite—the SportWagen.

More buzz: the Golf is a North American Car of the Year finalist. I nominated VW's jewel-like hatchback for the Family Vehicle of the Year's short list. Thus, the Golf might win more trophies. With the Golf's ample cargo hold, there's room to drive home those publicity-generating decorations.

Now you're wondering: Why did Cliff choose VW's

■ TURN TO PAGE 27



■ CLIFF LEPPKE | CLIFF.LEPPKE@FOX6NOW.COM

Small Talk

■ VW • AUDI , QUICKLY

NEW & IMPROVED



■ **BMW FIGHTER?:** *Auto Bild* in Germany is reporting that VW is considering a beefed-up Passat to go head-to-head with BMW's 5 Series. The new model (concept pictured above) would feature a completely new and premium design, fitting between the existing Passat and Phaeton.

■ **NEW 10-SPEED:** VW is working on a 10-speed DSG gearbox for the next-generation Golf, to be rolled out in 2017. VW says the gearbox translates into higher torque and lower CO2 emissions.

MONEY MATTERS

■ **AUCTION RECORD:** A 1955 Microbus sold for \$235,000 by a German auction company, the highest price ever paid at auction for VW's iconic model. The Sealing-Wax Red and black bus had only 6,400 miles on its odometer. The nine-seat Samba Microbus Deluxe, which included cloth sunroof, was the most luxurious version of the Microbus sold at the time.



■ **GLOBAL SALES UP:** The Volkswagen Group delivered over 9 million vehicles worldwide from

January to November last year for the first time ever, a 4.6 percent increase over the 2013 period. VW also shattered sales records in the UK, surpassing the 200,000-unit mark.

AWARDS

■ **CAR OF THE YEAR:** *Motor Trend* bestowed the 2015 Car of the Year award on the Golf family—Golf 1.8T, Golf TDI, Golf GTI and e-Golf models. The other finalists were Audi A3, BMW 2 Series, Ford Mustang, Honda Fit, Hyundai Genesis, Kia Sedona, Lexus RC, Maserati Ghibli and Mercedes-Benz C-Class.

■ **GOLF GTI:** The 2015 Golf GTI has won *Autoweek's* annual "Best of the Best"/Car award. The all-new GTI was evaluated against every new or significantly updated model, before competing against three other finalists — the Alfa Romeo 4C, Mercedes-Benz C-Class and Ford Mustang — for the overall honor.

RECALLS

■ **JETTA, BEETLE:** VW is recalling a total of 442,000 Jetta and Beetle models from 2011-2013 after discovering the rear trailing arm may fracture. VW identified an undiagnosed component deformation, which acts as a stressor to the safety issue. A sudden fracture in the trailing arm could cause a loss of vehicle control.

SAFETY FIRST

■ **5 STARS FOR PASSAT:** The independent European consumer protection organization Euro NCAP has awarded the new Passat the maximum rating of 5 stars, meaning the eighth generation model is considered to be one of the safest cars in the world.

Retro Autoist

■ FROM THE ARCHIVES

10 YEARS AGO

■ **JAN/FEB 2005:** *Off Road* magazine has chosen VW's Touareg as the 2004 4x4 of the year. Nearly 40 percent of participating readers chose the VW, 20 percentage points more than the Porsche Cayenne and Volvo XC90. The Touareg racked up two dozen international prizes since its introduction a couple of years ago.

■ **JAN/FEB 2005:** The Touareg has been awarded five Euro NCAP stars, putting the SUV at the top of its segment in terms of safety.

■ **JAN/FEB 2005:** Primedia has announced it will stop publishing *VW Trends* after 28 years. Dwindling advertising revenue was cited as the reason for *Trends'* demise after 268 issues.

20 YEARS AGO

■ **JAN/FEB 1995:** VW announced that its one-world, one-car policy will be scrapped in favor of a plan to design separate models for markets in Europe, North America, South America and Asia. The major shift prompted VW chairman Ferdinand Piech to acknowledge that the company "wasn't listening to the customer," particularly in the United States.

■ **JAN/FEB 1995:** It's only Volkswagen, but they like it. The Rolling Stones plan to use VWs to putter around in on their 1995 European tour. VW says it will introduce at least one Rolling Stones special-edition car in the coming year. Preferably painted black.



30 YEARS AGO

■ **JAN/FEB 1985:**

Though Americans have had access to Golf models since 1975, they've missed out on VW's hot-hatch GTI. But that changes later this year, when VW sends the car our way, based on its European counterpart.



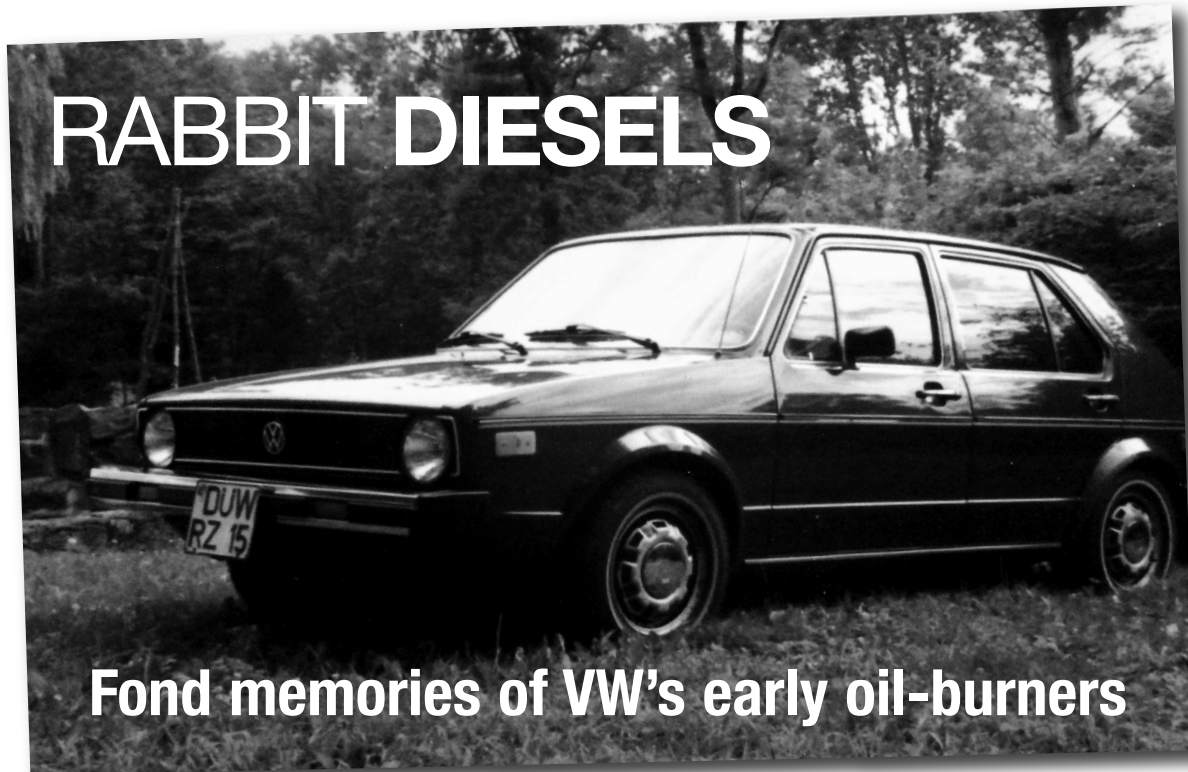
■ **JAN/FEB 1985:** Technology has eliminated at least two of the drawbacks of the diesel engine, smoke and odor. A device called a trap oxidizer is being used by Mercedes-Benz in its 1985 models, cutting by two-thirds the smoke and odor of the turbocharged diesels it sells in 11 Western states. VW has been experimenting with oxidizers—but in combination with fuel additives.

40 YEARS AGO

■ **JANUARY 1975:** The VW Beetle passed another milestone in its 30-year history on Oct. 4, when the 18 millionth Bug rolled off the assembly line at Emden, Germany. The event gives the Beetle an even firmer hold on its world champion status. No other carmaker has built as many.

50 YEARS AGO

■ **JANUARY 1965:** According to German sources, technicians in Wolfsburg are working against the clock to complete a new type of heating system for the 1500 model VW. The manifold pipes of cylinders No. 2 and 4 will be equipped with heat exchanger ribs and incorporated into the present heating system, which utilized mainly the manifold pipes from cylinders No. 1 and 3. Poor heating has been the main complaint the factory receives from owners.



BY JACK PAVIE

Fun with MPG” in the September/October issue of *AUTOIST* reminded me of the 1970s, when VW introduced the Rabbit. When the 1.5-liter diesel engine was made available as an option, it was pretty popular. Diesel fuel was less expensive than gasoline back then.

Late in 1975, my wife and I ordered a Rabbit 4-door diesel with a sunroof option from our local dealer. With all those orders for diesels, VW didn't get it to us until late spring 1976. I worked for a computer company as a repairman. The rear hatch and compartment made the Rabbit (pictured above) handy for storing and accessing parts. I drove at least 100 miles every day around the suburbs of Philadelphia.

During warm weather, I remember taking my shoes off so I could drive in my socks. I could feel the gas pedal better that way. I would sometimes drive behind tractor-trailers, at a safe distance, in their slipstream. When possible, I would do 45 mph, nice and steady. I was able to get it into the upper 40- and low 50-mpg range by doing any of that.

The glow plugs were used every time I started. In winter, I used a block heater that I would plug into an outlet for an hour or so to help it start. The heaters would burn out once in a while so I kept a spare and still have one in my basement!

I was careful to add some Siloo diesel additive to every tankful of fuel, give it a few minutes to warm up, change the oil on time, etc., so I don't

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remember having many issues with the car. One time, my company sent me to Atlanta for a few weeks during the winter. I was getting off the I-285 city loop one afternoon rush hour, and when I pressed on the brake pedal, it went to the floor. I was able to stop using the hand brake and nursed the Rabbit to a nearby repair shop OK.

The shop guys assumed the master cylinder was defective and replaced it. While refilling the reservoir, they became concerned that they had already added over 2 gallons of brake fluid, but it all just kept disappearing! To their surprise, they found a pool of fluid back behind the driver's seat. VW ran one of the brake lines inside under the rug, and apparently it had corroded and burst. The line was replaced, but I had to drive back to Pennsylvania with all the windows open because of the strong odor. The heater had to be set on full for me to keep even slightly warm. Remember, it was winter.

I eventually sold the car to a neighbor when it had around 250,000 miles on it. My neighbor drove it almost 30,000 more miles until the rear axle pulled loose due to rust.

My second Rabbit was a '79 diesel that I bought used from an elderly couple to replace the '76. It, too, was a four-door, and I installed a glass moonroof, an enlarged oil pan, chrome window vents and a neat Hella grille with driving lights. Again, I was careful to get great mileage on it. The only issue I remember was when I was driving home during a very heavy



The author's 1979 Rabbit diesel, parked near his 1979 Ford F250. His car mechanics allowed him to work on his vehicles on their property.

snowstorm. It was dark, the snow was up almost to the bottom of the car, when the V-belt let go with a bang. With no hope of getting a ride, I kept pressing on with several miles yet to go. The result was a warped head from overheating, and it was damaged enough that it had to be replaced. I got almost as many miles out of the '79 as the '76 but ended up scrapping it due to a lot of rust.

To replace the '79, I found a gently used 1980 Rabbit diesel Pickup with low miles. It had a nice truck cap on the back, and I was able to keep my stuff dry in the bed. In my job, I did plenty of driving on the interstates. Occasionally, the truck would suddenly accelerate and blow black clouds of smoke from the exhaust. The only way to stop it was to shift into neutral, turn the key off as quickly as possible, and coast over to the shoulder.

VW had a free breather kit fix for that problem, but the dealer told me it didn't apply to my 1980 model. Seriously? How could that be? I believed they should have given the parts to me so I refused to cough up the \$70 VW wanted. I learned that if I kept my speed a little below or a little above 59 mph, the engine behaved. I don't ►

RABBIT



ABOVE: 1980 Rabbit diesel Pickup. RIGHT: A 1961 Single Cab Bus the author acquired in trade for a newer model gas-powered Rabbit

know why, but 59 mph was the magic number to avoid.

That was the only problem I can remember having with the truck. But one day, a lost driver, coming the opposite way, saw the street he had been looking for, and made a left turn right in front of me. My little Rabbit truck wrapped itself around the front corner of that car and died. I was able to walk away but suffered some rather painful seat belt trauma.

My company issued a big Ford Econoline to me after that incident, so it spelled the end of my Rabbit experiences. Well, almost.

A customer I got to know pretty well owned a newer model Rabbit with a gas engine that had seized up. He was eager to get rid of it, and he just gave it to me. I towed it home and was later able to trade it to a repair shop that needed Rabbit parts for a '61 Single Cab Bus. The bus is minus an engine, suffers from some rusting, but



everything else is there. I built a shed to store the Bus and a '67 Bug inside, with dreams of doing restorations some day when I've retired.

I have never been able to get anywhere near those MPG's since my early diesel Rabbits. I drive a Ford Escape these days, and as much as I try, the best I can do is around 24 mpg with it.

Regardless of what I drive, I always make sure my headlights are ON at all times since that accident. I hope my experience will encourage you to do the same. **VWCA**

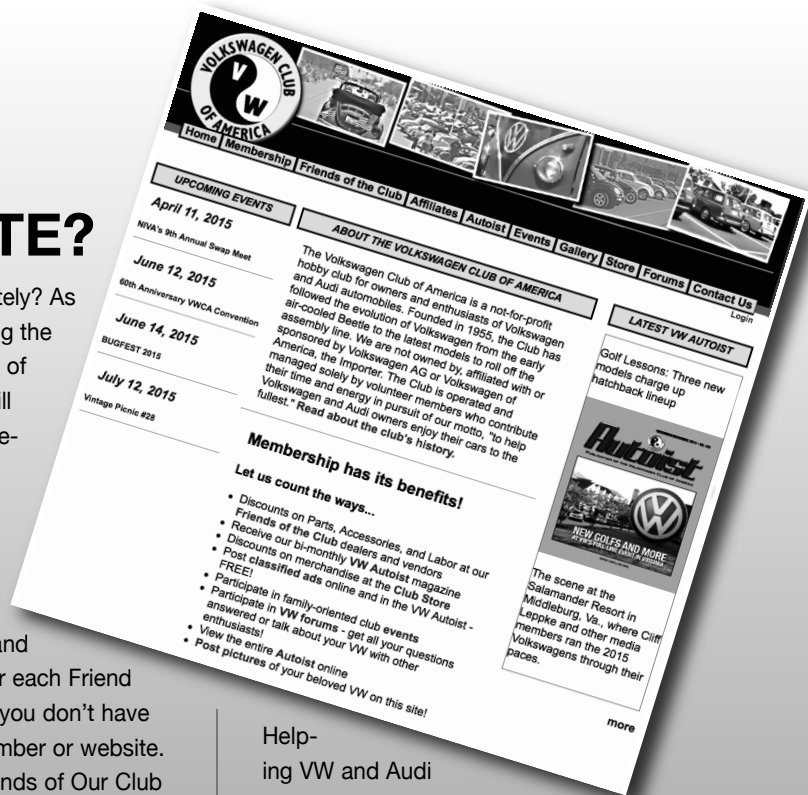
WHAT'S UP WITH OUR NEW WEBSITE?

Have you checked our website lately? As the year was ending, we were putting the finishing touches on a total overhaul of **VWClub.org**. When you visit, you will see a lot of what you are used to seeing, and we hope it will be more pleasing to the eye and easier to navigate. But wait, there's more!

The **Friends of Our Club** directory has its own tab, making it easier to find for both new visitors and veteran users. All the information for each Friend now appears on a single screen so you don't have to dig deeper to find that phone number or website. Did you know you can view the Friends of Our Club directory on our website using your smartphone? Just a tip for travelers who need to quickly locate a dealer while on the road!

We've restored the **Photo Galleries** for everyone to see what's going on at the many club events we attend. We hope it will inspire you to come out and participate with us and to send us photos of your events for posting on our site. We'll soon add a "Club Rides" gallery for photos of our members' favorite VWs and a Paint Your 'Wagen gallery where your custom-decorated VWCA T-shirt (available in the Club Store) can be proudly displayed.

We'll also have a new **Forum** section where you can look for help in solving a nagging VW-related problem or perhaps assist your fellow members with theirs. And isn't that what this club is all about?



Helping VW and Audi owners enjoy their cars to the fullest!

With this revised site, **you will need to re-register** online to see the members-only sections. Whether you have had a VWCA online account in the past or not, or even if you don't have email, you can still register. Simply click "Register" in the log-in screen and enter your first and last name in the form **exactly** as it appears on your membership card or AUTOIST mailing label. You can set a new user name and password that will give you ALL the benefits of VWCA membership. Now, THAT'S a full service Volkswagen Club!

Log on, look around, and tell us what you like (or don't like) about our new site (use the "Contact Us" tab). We're eager to hear what you have to say!

GETTING
THE BEST
EFFICIENCY
FROM YOUR
DIESEL'S

GLOW PLUGS

IN WINTER
CONDITIONS

By **FRED ORTLIP**



The Polar Vortex that descended upon the central and eastern United States last winter brought record low temperatures and with it a little disappointment on learning how best to start a Golf TDI in such conditions.

On Monday, Jan. 6, the low reached minus 8 degrees F in St. Louis and had “warmed” to minus 4 when I ventured out into conditions that can turn diesel fuel to gel. I passed on consulting my 351-page manual for starting cues, instead recalling a clever video in which VW engineers created a minus-25 degree environment so a fellow named Ted could attempt to fend off hypothermia and start the Golf TDI in a test garage.

When prompted, Ted is shown turning the key, then seemingly pausing as the camera cuts away to the outside of the car so a colleague can deliver a quip. We return to Ted, who is shown cranking the TDI quickly to life. (See the video, called “Ice Cube,” at bit.ly/1D9weLP)

Ah-ha! So Ted was actually waiting for the glow plugs to



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heat the combustion chamber!

Before we get ahead of ourselves, let's shed some heat and light on what these glow plugs do. In a gasoline engine, the spark plugs provide the ignition. In a diesel, the glow plugs take center stage. This heating coil in a metal tube protrudes through a hole in the cylinder head into the combustion chamber. When the glow plug is electrically energized, its heated portion reaches a surface temperature of more than 1,800 degrees F.

Injected fuel mixes with compressed air, evaporates and ignites almost simultaneously because the intake air heats up during compression, and diesel fuel has a relatively low ignition temperature.

So who knew VW's modern clean diesels had actual glow plugs?! That dirty little secret evokes less-than-warm memories of early generation VW diesels, in which you turned on the ignition and sometimes waited ... and waited ... and waited in cold weather for the glow plug light to extinguish so you could start the engine. Even then it might be lights-out in severe cold.

Not so with VW's modern common rail fuel injection engines, which make more efficient use of the glow plugs.

Not realizing Ted was eyeing the dash for good reason in the "Ice Cube" video, I simply turned the key over and let the TDI do its thing. It cranked slowly for about 4 seconds before coming to life, wasting fuel and adding extra wear on the battery.

My brother owns a 2009 Jetta TDI that's approaching 130,000 miles — his first VW and first diesel. He's probably like a lot of new owners who just didn't know the proper way to start a TDI in severe cold until we discussed it.

He mentioned similar long-cranking experiences in cold weather. "I know starting is really hard on the battery, and I have been through one so far," he said. "Most of the diesel trucks I've seen have a plug you can heat the engine block. I don't know if that is even an option on these cars."

After reaching my destination, I went looking for what surely was a better way to start this modern diesel. Sure enough, it's like starting the

clattering old ones. Turn the ignition on and wait for the glow plug icon — resembling a broken-off bed spring on the left half of the RPM gauge in this 2012 model — to switch off. Then crank.

Later that day last January, with the temperature right at zero, our TDI turned over almost as quickly as on a lovely spring day after following the proper starting protocol. The glow-plug activation wait was about three seconds.

VW spokesman Mark Gillies confirmed the TDI starting procedure. He told our Cliff Leppke: "Taking the fraction of a second to a few seconds to allow the glow plug light to turn out allows the system to work fully as designed and could lead to smoother starts and smoother initial idling, but I don't think it has anything to do with battery life or with fuel economy," he said. "The best thing to do for a TDI after initial ignition to assist with fuel economy, during the warm-up period, is to drive away slowly, not sit there idling waiting for the car to warm up."

Gillies added that the starting procedure for the electric push-starting TDI is automated, thus a check of the glow plug indicator isn't necessary.

So, surely, VW spells this out in our Golf manual. We went looking and looking. We found an image of the glow plug indicator, but VW refers to it as "diesel engine preheating before startup."

Oh.

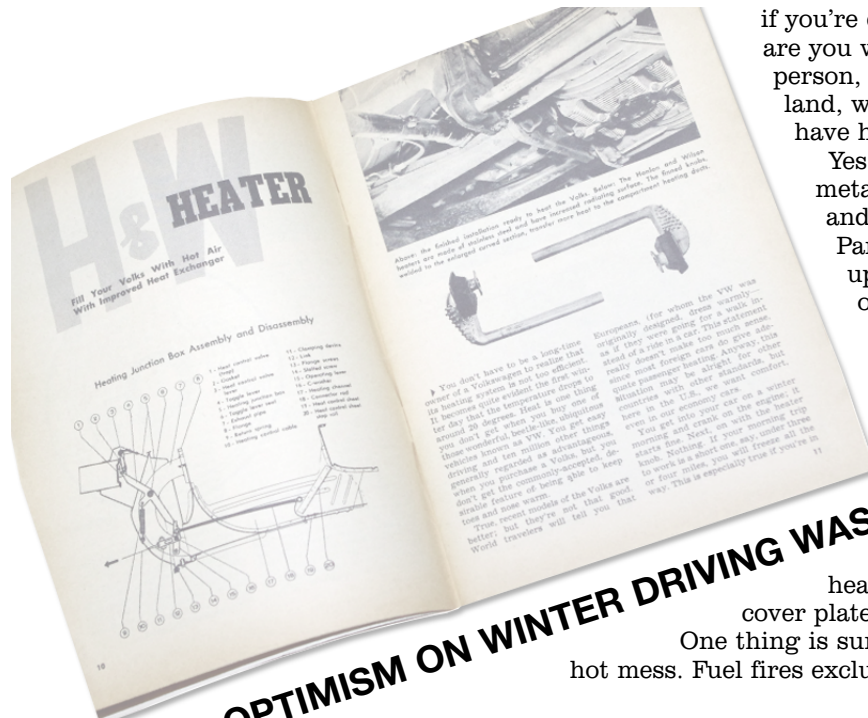
Under "Starting the engine," the manual advises, "Turn the key to position (shown in Figure 2) — do not depress the accelerator pedal." Nothing about cold-starting a diesel.

Does "Starting assistance systems" offers some insight? Nope. This refers to the Hill Hold feature.

In our browsing, the manual has barely any references to diesel operation.

So, maybe this was unintended, but it seems that VW wanted in more ways than one a total break from its dirty diesel past.

And if you read it here first, take heed. Even in the heat of summer, glow plugs like about a second to ready themselves. That's an extra second to get fired up about the impending drive. **VWCA**



if you're driving a 2015 Golf, chances are you will still find some misguided person, who'd get lost playing Candyland, who will inquire: Does that VW have heat?

Yes, Virginia, to mix my metaphors, there is a Santa Claus and a VW heater, too. Like Peter Pan, Beetle heaters never grew up. They remained underdeveloped despite the fact that VW's elves overhauled the system to warm Popsicle toes.

Nonetheless, Beetle owners complained loudly about VW's ineffective heaters.

A survey of Foreign Car Guide

reveals a smorgasbord of heater fixes, some as simple as cover plates and deflectors.

One thing is sure: You cannot call the Bug a hot mess. Fuel fires excluded.

VW'S '60s OPTIMISM ON WINTER DRIVING WAS JUST

HOT AIR

BY CLIFF LEPPKE

Back in 1964, the 1200cc Bug owner's manual proclaimed: "When it snows and freezes, your car has two features which you will appreciate ... air cooling and heating!"

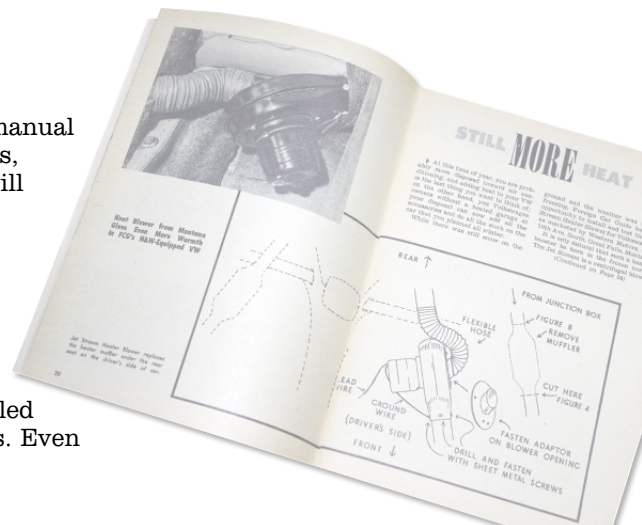
I'm not making this up!

The next part defies reality. It hyperbolically states: "the aircooled engine will always start readily and supply warm air for the interior."

Holy Sophia Coppola, something got lost in translation.

Whether you're an old timer or new to air-cooled VWs, you know the lore: VWs don't have heaters. Even

■ CLIFF LEPPKE | CLIFF.LEPPKE@FOX6NOW.COM



Regardless, a rundown on how an air-cooled VW's heater functions might light your candle.

On a water-cooled car, engine coolant is routed through a small radiator (heater core). Then, an electric fan to blows air through that device. This warms the interior.

On VW's Beetle, air is routed from the engine-cooling fan (it's rpm-sensitive) either over the cylinders or through an exhaust manifold heater box into the interior. Ductwork runs from the vehicle's rear toward the cabin's front. Opportunities for heat loss abound! This car would never get an Energy Star rating.

For our purposes, I'll focus on the most common air-cooled VW Bug climate control: fresh air heating, which arrived in 1963. Instead of routing air exiting the finned cylinders/heads to heat the vehicle, these cars have finned exhaust manifolds or heat exchangers (forward exhaust outlets only on Bugs). The manifolds are wrapped with metal housings that guide air from the engine fan toward the car's cabin.

Positive-pressure fresh-air heating reduces the chance of carbon monoxide poisoning, as air is forced into it. Leaks, therefore, let the air out.

Interior heat outlets are numerous. Two reside below the rear seat; they supply the hottest air. Each has a flap. When these are closed, all heated air is directed toward the front compartment via ductwork inside the car's rocker panels. Two front-floor heater grilles warm your feet. Sliding covers close the floor vents, letting you direct air to the windshield's defroster outlets. By the late 1960s, VW shifted the front compartment outlets and flaps.

With all these flaps and covers, a driver needs to be as flexible as gymnast Gabrielle Douglas.

Passengers must refrain from placing their belongings atop floor outlets. In addition, until 1965, you spun a knob to open or close flaps downstream at the heat exchangers. This adjusted air volume not the temperature. The latter remained "fixed." The heater box's temp and how much heat was lost as this air moved through the ductwork's maze determined what emerged inside the car. Fastbacks and Squarebacks differ. These senior vehicles have two extra heat exchangers and upstream thermostatically controlled warm/cold air mixers. Mixers regulate heater temperature.

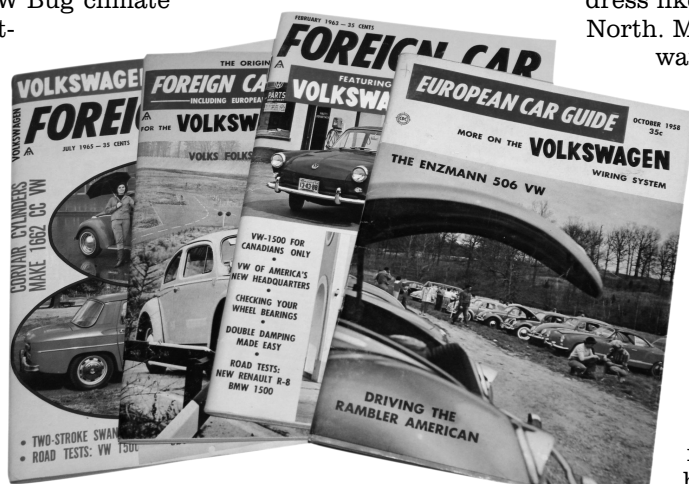
When everything works, you won't have to dress like Nanook of the North. Most people, however, want every BTU they can

get. Tips: First, it's difficult to move heated air into the car; the cab is nearly airtight. Open a vent wing or crack open a window. By 1971, VW introduced flow-through ventilation, which has an extractor effect. Opening windows isn't required, but it still helps. Second, heater output is dependent on

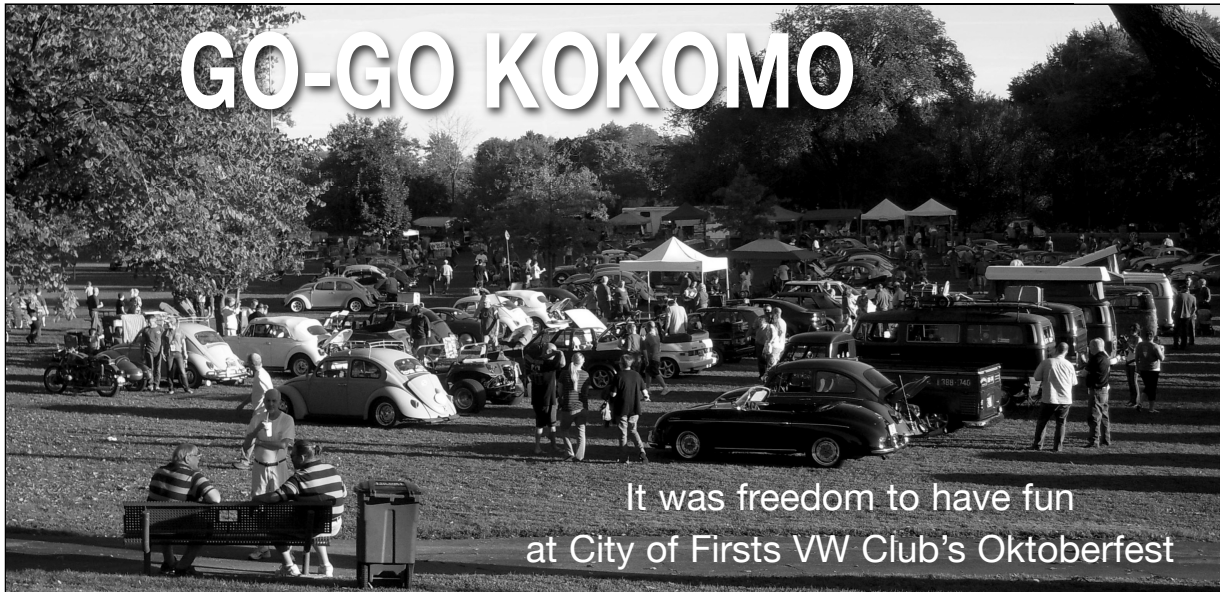
engine speed. If you idle, there isn't enough air-flow to toast your toes or defog the windows. Plus, VW's heat boxes don't warm quickly. Always make sure your engine's thermostat (between cylinders one and two) is up to par.

But wait, there's more. Another affectation that VW cured in 1965: the engine fan housing's output. Before '65, a thermostatically controlled ring blocked air going into the engine's fan housing. Until the engine warms, there's little heater air-flow! For 1965, VW put thermostatically control flaps (VWs are flap happy) underneath the fan housing permitting fan-forced air to blow into the interior regardless of engine temperature.

■TURN TO PAGE 31



GO-GO KOKOMO



It was freedom to have fun
at City of Firsts VW Club's Oktoberfest

By SHELL TOMLIN

The City of Firsts Volkswagen Club of Kokomo, Ind., named for its home town that boasts being the first to accomplish many noteworthy feats, has scored another first: a free Oktoberfest. You'll remember we marveled at the 2013 Oktoberfest with all its unique activities, such as the Piston Toss, Nut Chase and Spark Plug Change competitions. In 2014, organizers added the Valve Cover Derby, using engine valve covers as vehicles. Innovation continues in the City of Firsts!

The main event was the huge car show and



A throwback gas station is part of the scene at Summer Place, a 1950s-era town.

small-block Chevy engine! It was a sight to see and another "first" for us.

The park's Performing Arts Pavilion was the

swap meet, which has quickly grown to fill Foster Park in downtown Kokomo. Nearly 200 show cars and swappers poured into the area starting at noon on Friday, Sept. 26. Row upon row of Bugs, Buses, Ghias, Dune Buggies and a large number of some very fancy water-cooled VWs filled the park, with even more arriving at the end of the "normal" workday. A "water-cooled" Classic Beetle was even powered by a

■ SHELL TOMLIN | VWCLUB@AOL.COM



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Summer Place Diner; a small-block Chevy-powered Beetle; Waupecong gas station; and valve-cover racers.

The cruise's end point this year was A Summer Place, a working 1950s-era town featuring a gas station, diner and theater, showing "The Bus Movie" running continuously. Due to the diner's limited seating, half watched the movie while waiting our turn to enjoy a burger and fries. After ample time for photographs and taking in all the sights, a raffle was held featuring some very cool donated prizes. Proceeds went to A Home For Every Child foundation, formed by A Summer Place developers Jim and Tricia Richardson.

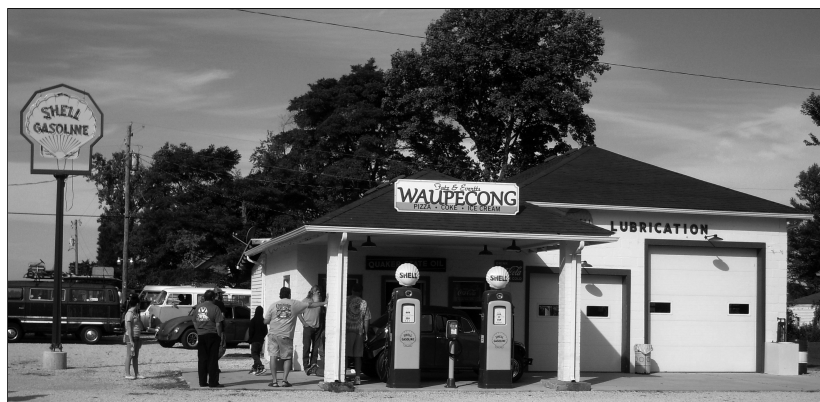


venue for Zoso, the "Ultimate Led Zeppelin Experience." And that it was, providing all our favorite tunes far into the night. The seating around the pavilion was filled, possibly including some non-VW folks who just came to enjoy the concert and dance to the music. And did we mention it was free?

On Saturday morning, we met in a parking area across from the park for the start of our cruise. Forty-six cars wound through the rural roads north and east of Kokomo as we enjoyed the changing autumn colors. A stop midway at the Waupecong Gas Station allowed us to relive the highlight of the 2013 cruise, but we still couldn't fill up at the gas pumps, set at their 1960s price of 35.9 cents per gallon.



scenes City of Firsts VW Club members who made this spectacular weekend possible. Can't wait for next fall's Oktoberfest! **VWCA**



VWCA CONVENTION

JUNE 12-14, 2015 • ST. CHARLES, ILL.

By TOM JANISZEWSKI

Ask any member of a local Volkswagen club, and they'll likely tell you that their club is more of a dining club thinly disguised as a car club. Food is typically at the center of most local VW events. It'll be no different at the Volkswagen Club of America's 2015 Convention June 12-14 in the far western Chicago suburb of St. Charles, Ill. The Northeast Illinois Volkswagen Association is already hard at work planning an exciting convention you won't want to miss. Yes, there will be LOTS of fun, car-related events happening at the convention, but it could very well be the Saturday night taste of Chicago dinner that will be most memorable.

Rather than eating in a hotel banquet room, the dinner will be at Portillo's – a casu-



al, privately owned chain in the Chicago area serving award-winning Chicago-style hot dogs, Italian beef sandwiches, burgers and more. The food is so good that Portillo's is often the first stop from the airport when transplanted locals come back to visit.

Dick Portillo started the whole thing in a trailer in a grocery store parking lot.

Their proprietary hot dogs are made with a special recipe, and everything else on the menu

was created as if each were going to Portillo's signature item. NIVA is extremely excited to replace the more standard banquet-style dinner with a visit to Portillo's. Sadly, the menu is extensive, so it will be impossible for NIVA to include everything Portillo's offers, but whether you try the Chicago-style hot dog, Italian beef or mosta-

■ TOM JANISZEWSKI | VOLKSTOM@SBCGLOBAL.NET

ciolli, you're gonna love it. Odds are, you're gonna want to stop there again on your way home because there is no way to plan a banquet menu consisting of every delicious item they make.

Aside from Portillo's, NIVA is planning a whole weekend of VW-related fun. Convention headquarters is at Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles. It was selected not only for its accommodations and value, but because the resort has prior experience hosting auto-enthusiast events. Whenever there's downtime, we'll have our own section of parking for what'll feel like a show-n-shine. Pheasant Run is a complete resort. To learn more about the facility, visit pheasantrun.com.

Exciting events are being planned for Friday evening and Saturday, but they aren't yet finalized, so watch for more details in your next *Autoist*. The convention grand finale will be NIVA's Bugfest VW show at Fox Valley Volkswagen, located conveniently down the street from Pheasant Run. Bugfest always has what we enjoy most about a VW show — lots of fellow VW fans, plenty of cars to see and a swap meet where you may just find that part you've been looking for (or trying to sell).

The 2015 convention is already shaping up to be one you will not want to miss, so make plans to head to St. Charles, and get ready to make your hotel reservations soon. Accommodation rate is \$89 per night plus tax and \$9.95 resort fee. Reservations can be made now. Each individual guest must make his own reservation by calling (630) 584-6300 by May 29 and identify themselves as members of the Northeast Illinois Volkswagen Association Group. All reservations must be guaranteed and accompanied by a first night room deposit or guaranteed with a major credit card.

Convention registration fee is a reasonable \$40 per person, which includes the Saturday banquet and a fun-filled Volkswagen weekend. Registrations must include an email address so that we can send you confirmation.

Make your reservation soon, and watch for more details on the activities in the next *AUTOIST*. Hope to see you in St. Charles! **VWCA**

2015 Convention Registration Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

VWCA No. _____ Local Club _____

Email Address _____

Names of others in your party

_____ registrations @ \$40 each = \$ _____

Please make checks payable to the Northeast Illinois Volkswagen Association.

Complete the above form and mail it along with your check to:

VWCA Convention

c/o NIVA

446 Summersweet Lane

Bartlett, IL 60103

Hotel reservations must be made directly with the hotel:

Pheasant Run Resort: (630) 584-6300

Registration deadline is May 29, 2015.

Got something to sell? Try the *AUTOIST* classifieds. The price is right for members — they're free! And ads appear more promptly on the club website, vwclub.org.

2015 FRIENDS OF OUR CLUB

Dealers and businesses listed here are friends, and we hope you will patronize them whenever possible. They are soliciting your business and will do all they can to satisfy you.

Several companies offer discounts to VWCA members showing valid membership cards. Discounts are shown next to the dealer's phone number. **P-15, A-10, L-5** means a 15 percent discount on parts, a 10 percent discount on accessories and a 5 percent discount on labor. **AC** means dealers service air-cooled VWs.

Because service and parts advisers may not be familiar with the discount offered, it might be helpful to show a copy of the AUTOIST when requesting the discount.

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

TENNESSEE

FRANKLIN: HALLMARK VW AT COOL SPRINGS, 620 BAKERS BRIDGE ROAD, 615-236-3200, P-10 A-15 L-10
MURFREESBORO: SOUTHEAST SIGNATURE MOTOR, 2203 NW BROAD ST., 615-898-0700

TEXAS

HOUSTON: ARCHER VW, 10400 SOUTHWEST FREEWAY, 713-272-1700
HOUSTON: DEMONTROND VW, 14101 N. FREEWAY (I-45), 281-872-7200
HOUSTON: MOMENTUM VW/AUDI, 2405 RICHMOND AVE., 713-596-3300
HOUSTON: MOMENTUM VW JERSEY VILLAGE, 19550 NORTHWEST FREEWAY, 281-925-5000, P-10 A-20 L-10

UTAH

LAYTON: CUTRUBUS MOTORS VW, 1230 N. MAIN, 801-544-5878, www.cutrubusmotors.com
OREM: KEN GARFF MOTORS, 195 E. UNIVERSITY PKWY., 801-374-1751

VIRGINIA

ALEXANDRIA: ALEXANDRIA VW, 107 W. GLEBE ROAD, 703-684-8888,

www.alexandriavw.com,

CHESAPEAKE: SOUTHERN VW-GREENBRIER, 1248 S. MILITARY HWY., 757-424-4689, P-10 A-10 L-10

NEWPORT NEWS: CASEY IMPORTS, 12943 JEFFERSON AVE., 757-988-1200

RICHMOND: WEST BROAD VW, 9001 W. BROAD ST., 804-270-9000, P-10 A-20 L-10

ROANOKE: FIRST TEAM VW, 6520 PETERS CREEK ROAD, 540-366-4830

SPRINGFIELD: SHEEHY VW, 6601 BACKLICK ROAD, 703-451-2380

WOODBIDGE: KAREN RADLEY VW, 14700 JEFFERSON DAVIS HWY., 866-756-9770, P-15 A-15 L-10

WASHINGTON

AUBURN: AUBURN VW, 3109 AUBURN WAY NORTH, 888-528-5280, P-10 A-10 L-10 AC

BELLEVUE: CHAPLIN'S BELLEVUE VW, 15000 SE EASTGATE WAY, 425-641-2002

BELLINGHAM: ROGER JOBS VW, 2200 IOWA ST., 360-734-5230

EDMONDS: CAMPBELL-NELSON VW, 24329 HWY. 99, 425-778-1131, www.campbellnelson.com, P-10 A-10 L-10 AC NOT TO BE USED WITH ANY OTHER DISCOUNTS

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L-15

SEATTLE: UNIVERSITY VW, 4724 ROOSEVELT WAY NE, 206-634-3322, P-10 A-10 L-10

WEST VIRGINIA

HUNTINGTON: MOSES VW, 5210 US RT. 60 E., 304-736-5226, A-15

PARKERSBURG: LARRY SIMMONS, 1710 14TH ST., 304-485-5451

SOUTH CHARLESTON: JOE HOLLAND VW, 210 MAC CORKLE AVE. SW, 304-744-1561

WHEELING: WHEELING VW, US ROUTE 40 E, 304-242-7313

WISCONSIN

EAU CLAIRE: KEN VANCE VW-AUDI, 5201 FAIRVIEW DR., 715-830-1111

LACROSSE: BOB BURG VW, 700 MONITOR ST., 608-782-8808, P-15 A-15 L-15

MADISON: ZIMBRICK VW OF MADISON, 1430 N. STOUGHTON ROAD, 608-241-5201, A-10

MILWAUKEE: CONCOURS, 1400 W. SILVER SPRING DR., 414-290-1400, P-10 A-10 L-10

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WEST COVINA: AUDI WEST COVINA, 2016 E. GARVEY AVE. SOUTH, 626-384-3400, P-10 A-10 L-10
WOODLAND HILLS: AUDI AUTO GALLERY, 21301 VENTURA BLVD., 818-884-4411

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FLORIDA

SARASOTA: SUNCOAST VOLKSWAGEN, 5005 S. TAMiami TRAIL, 941-923-1700, www.sunsetautogroup.com, P-10 AC

INDIANA

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LAFAYETTE: MIKE RAISOR IMPORTS, 2912 E. MAIN ST., 765-448-4582
MERRILLVILLE: TEAM VW, 3990 E. LINCOLN HWY., 888-805-3689, P-10 A-10 L-10 AC

IOWA

DAVENPORT: VW OF QUAD CITIES, 3700 HARRISON ST., 563-386-1511, P-15 A-20 L-15 AC

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MUSKEGON: MY AUTO IMPORT CENTER, 1860 E. STERNBERG ROAD,

231-799-2886

TRAVERSE CITY: TRAVERSE MOTORS VW, 1301 S. GARFIELD AVE., 231-946-5540

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LATHAM: LANGAN AUDI EAST, 723 NEW LOUDON ROAD, 518-783-5003, P-15 A-15 L-15

NORTH DAKOTA

FARGO: VALLEY IMPORTS, 402 40TH ST. SW, 701-277-1777

PENNSYLVANIA

KINGSTON: WYOMING VALLEY MOTORS, 126 NARROWS ROAD RT. 11, 570-288-7411, P-10 A-10 L-10

LANCASTER: AUTOHAUS LANCASTER, 1373 MANHEIM PIKE, 717-299-2801, P-10 A-10 L-10

VIRGINIA

RICHMOND: WEST BROAD VW, 9001 W. BROAD ST., 804-270-9000, P-10 A-20 L-10

WASHINGTON

SEATTLE: UNIVERSITY VW, 4724 ROOSEVELT WAY NE, 206-634-3322, P-10 A-10 L-10

CANADA

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OTHERS

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KINGMAN: TNT AUTO CENTER, 535 E. ANDY DEVINE AVE., 928-753-1477, P-10 A-10 L-10 AC, PARTS & SERVICE

PRESCOTT: PRESCOTT IMPORT CAR SERVICE (SERVICE ONLY), 710 RUTH ST., 928-778-9305, IMPORT SPECIALIST

CALIFORNIA

ESCONDIDO: KOTTER'S VW SERVICE, 242 N VINWOOD ST., 760-489-6857, www.kottersvw.com, P-10, VW SERVICE SPECIALIST

SANTA BARBARA: TOP SHOP AUTOMOTIVE, 177 S. PATTERSON AVE., 805-

964-6554, www.topshopautos.com, L-10 AC, VW AUTO REPAIR

VENTURA: AIRHEAD PARTS, 1604 MORSE AVE., 866-664-3724, P-10 AC, INDUSTRY PARTS DEALER

VENTURA: KARMANN GHIA PARTS, 1604 MORSE AVE., 866-664-3724, P-10 AC, INDUSTRY PARTS DEALER

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WESTBROOK: CARDONE AND DAUGHTER AUTOMOTIVE, 177 BOSTON POST ROAD, 860-664-0727, www.cardoneanddaughter.com, AC, REPAIR SHOP

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EVERGREEN PARK: BEETLE CRAFT SPORT TUNING, 9535 S. PULASKI ROAD, 708-422-7548, P-10 A-10 L-10 AC, AIR- & WATER-COOLED REPAIR & RESTORATION

OAK LAWN: G&H IMPORT AUTO PARTS, 9734 S. CICERO AVE., 708-422-9272, IMPORT PARTS STORE

INDIANA

FORT WAYNE: WERNER'S GARAGE, 7804 FRITZ ROAD, 260-489-9783, IMPORT REPAIR SPECIALIST

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MINNETONKA: DUNE BUGGY SUPPLY, 2345 HOPKINS CROSS ROAD, 952-938-8877, AC, DUNE BUGGIES

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RHODE ISLAND

SOUTH KINGSTOWN: M & T MANUFACTURING, 30 HOPKINS LANE, 401-789-7720, P-5 A-5 AC, VW PARTS

WISCONSIN

GLENDALE: MOFOCO ENTERPRISES, 4170 N. LYDEL AVE., 800-558-8955, P-10 A-10 L-10 AC, AIR-COOLED PARTS

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The Frontdriver

■ BY RICHARD G. VAN TREUREN

Alternative realities

The science fiction TV series “Fringe” was just another program I ignored for years — until someone mentioned airships were involved. Both Debbie and I became big fans, one day driving from Virginia Beach to Florida in a 12-hour rush trip to be home at 9 p.m. for the next episode.

Early in the third season, the main character is trapped in a near-duplicate universe where things are the same ... only different. A double-decker car goes by, the Statue of Liberty is copper colored (not corroded) and — in a scene that brought me right out of my chair — the twin towers were still standing. However, nothing drove home her isolation like the moment the actress looked up in response to a rumbling engine sound. A somewhat modernized Zeppelin passed slowly overhead on its way to a mooring atop the Empire State Building. She did a marvelous job emoting an expression that showed her character knew she wasn't in her Kansas anymore.

So why shouldn't there be a multi-level VW bus in our universe? My friend, artist Cortney Skinner, thought so and created one (upper right).

It's always fun to travel outside the U.S. and see what VWs are being sold and used there, and readers of this column have seen the wild, weird and wonderful vehicles we've been so lucky to photograph. A recent visit to the Caymans found a few VWs, including this rather ordinary-looking GTI (right).

Ordinary, that is, until one realizes the former British colony is a righthand drive country. This fellow has to make do, one supposes. I used to study otherwise near-identical RHD models to



look for parts that might be switch-hitters. For some reason, the RHD Golf 1 had a unique



■ RICHARD G. VANTREUREN | RGVANT@JUNO.COM

under-seat rack that held the owner's manual perfectly flat. (The early Rabbit's glove box did not — it was wider than the box bottom!) My first car, the 1975 Rabbit "Ol' Blue," was retrofitted with that feature. That part from "the other side" — as "Fringe" called it — was an example of how an alternate reality could be useful.

Elsewhere on Grand Cayman one can visit a place many of us assume we're going to wind up, someday, in that alternate reality called the after-life. The good news: they have ice, and you can get gasoline to drive back.

Surely this parking lot must be nearby!

That stiff fee wouldn't be a very pleasant reality, for sure. But not to worry. We'd made it back

from Hell and went on to Jamaica. At the exchange rate during our visit, parking in that lot not from Hell was less than two bucks.

I am actually spending a lot of time these days



on one concept of an alternative reality. Like "Fringe," as you might guess, it involves airships. The novel "ZRS" (meaning Zeppelin, Rigid, Scout) by Australian author Rowan Partridge offers what the world of 1942 would have been like had three accidents had not happened.

In this universe, the British airship R-101 had simply left a half-hour later, meaning it refueled in Egypt on its way to India, rather than grounding in the storm then passing through France. The USS Akron would have received the full weather map, not half, on the night of April 3, 1933, and easily sailed around the storm that was sinking surface ships.

And, of course, on the night of May 6, 1937, the German Hindenburg crew refused the American request for a "high" landing. Making an ordinary on-the-wheel touchdown, no high voltage could develop.

By 1942, therefore, British passengers could have flown anywhere in the Empire with only three stops; Zeppelins would have flown San Francisco to Manila nonstop; and the U.S. Navy would have completed the ZRCV, a nine-airplane carrier airship, and

moved it to Pearl Harbor. If I can ever get the hang of website software, I will be directing you to zrsthemovie.com to check on our airplane-building progress and find out how you can help make the movie.

Speaking of leaving reality, we have already selected the person we want to play one of the main characters, "Jillian Miles." She's Australian singer Kylie Minogue. Did we choose her because her character is Australian? In reality, she advertises for Volkswagen! What do you think, can she fly on an airship? VWCA



• Kylie Minogue talks up the Golf Cabrio.

bit.ly/1wpUkAU

Casual Collector

■ BY STEVE MIERZ

Summer was a bummer

When I last wrote a Casual Collector installment it was July of 2014—and as this is being written, it's now a couple of days before Thanksgiving—as usual, time really does fly! Both of our kids now attend the University of Connecticut, and as UConn gives the entire week of Thanksgiving off as a normal matter of course, it's been fun catching up with both kids again the past few days. My wife and I are still working full-time jobs—retirement's still a ways off, it appears (especially with two kids in college!)

Not to sound like a complainer, but I had a less-than-fun latter half of the summer due to a couple of factors that kept me away from doing much of anything with old cars. Factor 1 was the ordeal of getting the hardwood floors in our house refinished. The plan was to have the house done one-half at a time, moving everyone and everything into the other half for however long it took for sanding and recoating, and then the reversal for the second half. To say it was a pain in the neck is an understatement. Speaking for myself, living like that for approximately 2 months was not my idea of fun—everything in a state of suspended animation—can't get organized, can't get anything done. Glad it's over.

Factor 2 is only now starting to wind down. This was the resurgent effort to clean up my folks' old homestead to get it ready to sell, after an unfortunate experience with an unreliable tenant who had been living there for a while, and who, it seemed, kind of lost his ability to live like a human being. Yes, we had some messes to

clean up, and it was an effort that became necessary right as the flooring situation was tapering down. So, yes, there was a lot more time lost from the old car hobby on through the fall of 2014.

The good news, however, is that we are almost done, and hopefully we can get the house sold in the near future, so that me, my family, and my sister and her family can all get on our with our normal lives once again.

■ RECONNECTING WITH TOM FROM OHIO:

Funny how connections are made, and every so often they may lead to other unexpected ones. My wife, Diane, has been having a lot of fun the past couple of years doing a low-budget, low-key and patient restoration project on her '63 Karmann Ghia—all the while keeping the car driveable, though, so that it's not just purely time in the garage.

Like most old-VW people, she pays a lot of attention to the well-known old-VW hobby website, TheSamba.com, often scanning the for sale ads for used original VW parts that she may need for her own car. One of the people she has bought some parts from through Samba ads, it turns out, is from Ohio, and, what do you know, one of his local neighbors turns out to be a “long lost” old VW friend of ours from “The Old Days” (for our purposes here, that means the mid-1980s, which is when Diane and I first started to get seriously involved in the old-VW hobby).

That mutual friend is Mr. Tom Holmes, and I guess when he heard that “Diane Mierz from Connecticut” had bought some Ghia parts from his fellow local enthusiast buddy, Tom set about getting in contact with us.

■ STEVE MIERZ | P.O. BOX 3353 | STONY CREEK, CT 06405 | COMMONGEAR@AOL.COM



Tom Holmes' early 1970s Karmann Ghia shown at a Holbert's VW Octoberfest in 1985.

Long story short, it was a real thrill being able to talk with Tom on the phone again recently, after, I am guessing, not having talked with him since we last saw him at one of the old "legendary" Vintage VW meets at the old Holbert's VW in Warrington, Pa.

Tom also took the time to gather up some photos of some of his past and present old VWs and sent them to me, and perhaps next time I might share one or two and a brief description.

What I did do this morning, however, was to look through some of my old photo albums and found a couple from one of the old Holbert's event, where we met Tom, and viewed his super-nice light mustard-yellow early '70s Karmann Ghia that he drove out to the event.

The date markings on the backs of the photos read "October 1985." I don't know how many "Holbert's Octoberfest" vintage meets were held, but I am guessing perhaps not more than two or three). The specific photo I've chosen to go along with this Casual Collector installment is one of those '85 photos, and you can see Tom's beautiful Ghia (looking very sporty with "Marathon" wheels and whitewall tires), parked back-to-back

with event organizer (and another mutual friend) Joe Alackness' former 1950 Karmann Convertible.

Tom, by the way, did not include photos of this Ghia among the shots that he sent me recently. He also did enclose, however, a few shots of some of the Subarus that he's owned over the years, and so there's another area in which we have some mutual background, because I owned a couple Subys back in the '80s, and currently drive an '01 Forester as my daily car. I guess flat-four enthusiasm runs deep!

■ HERE'S LOOKING TO A GREAT 2015!:

Given as how I'm writing this in late November, you are probably be reading this some time in the early part of the New Year, so I'll also wish you a Happy & Healthy 2015! I have a few various old VW projects I'd like to get done over the winter—but also hope to get an old car out for some occasional driving on clear days as well—as I try to do every winter here in rust belt southern Connecticut. An occasional drive in an air-cooled VW is positively good for the soul! **VWCA**

Local Volks Scene

■ BY JACK LYMAN

Fun for fall

The **Badger Beetles Auto Fun Club** in Milwaukee gathered on a beautiful Sunday for a polo game, highlighted by entertainment, a dinner and socializing. The annual campout was held the Labor Day weekend with a golf outing and relaxing around the camp fire. A Christmas party was also on the schedule.

Central Florida VW Club, Orlando centralfloridavwclub.org After a break of a year or two, Fields VW has agreed to sponsor the club's March 22 Show N Shine at Blake Park in Lake Helen, Fla. Fliers were handed out at the Pasco Bug Jam in November. Holiday meeting and dinner were held this year but with no cookie exchange.

Northeast Illinois Volkswagen Association, Chicago nivaclub.org NIVA gets busy at the holiday time with a chili fest in November and Holiday Banquet along with election of officers for 2015. Members also give to the local food bank around the holiday season as well as attending a parade or two.

Stateline Volks Folks, Rockford, Ill.: state-linevolksfolks.com A planning meeting was held in November followed by a Festivus party in December.

Volkswagens over Georgia, Smyrna, Ga.: The two Goldsteins visited the Sunshine State and with the Van Treurens, Lyman' and Frank Caruso while there.

■ **CLUB CONTESTS:** I would like to remind the clubs to enter the VWCA club contests. Information needs to be compiled for the contest period running April 1 and ending March 31 each year.

Does your club have a safety program? Want to start one? Contact the safety director. See inside front cover.

The club is always looking for ideas on improving the contests, so if you have ideas and suggestions or if you wish to get copies of the form email a request to vwclub@aol.com.

■ **VWCA CAR SHOW CONTESTS:** Local clubs put on car shows throughout the year and attendees compete for awards. Did you know that even if you did not finish first in your class in the VWCA portion of the contest that you could finish first? If the cars finishing above you were not VWCA members, they are removed and you can move up in the standings. Make sure the contest you attend is participating, and remind the show sponsors to send the results to me. Complete rules are available by contacting Jack Lyman at vw.sprite@verizon.net. **VWCA**

Members: Got a beef, a story, a point of view, a problem, a solution? Let us know at vwclub.org.



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■ JACK LYMAN | 611 STONE DRIVE | BRANDON, FL 33510 | vw.sprite@verizon.net

DRIVER'S SEAT ■ FROM PAGE 3

Golf as his conversation starter? There's the parallel: your club strives to be like the everyman/woman Golf, an organization for the entire VW scene. Yes, we're wholesome mostly, but we're also the folks who welcome VW enthusiasts who are new to the Dub scene to those who got their VW fix before the Beatles broke up.

Dedicated club members keep this organization running. While I cannot hand out golden calipers and etched-acrylic tchochkes, I can express my appreciation in words. Thank You.

■ **YEAR-END WRAP:** For nearly a decade, my year-end contribution featured an in-depth VW test drive. Unfortunately, an incident sidelined the 2015 Passat TDI (turbo diesel) that was headed toward my driveway. I would have told you a story about VW's completely new diesel engine, perfectly timed for the recent gas-price slump. Bummer.

Instead, I'll draw your attention to the developing news: VVoA's Mark Gillies tells the AUTOIST that its Auburn Hills quality team implemented an Audi-style process that identifies issues earlier.



Cliff Leppke, a regular AUTOIST contributor since 1993, has upgraded his wheels since getting his first car in the early '60s. Reach him via email at cliff.leppke@fox6now.com.

The result: the 2014 Passat TSI (1.8-liter turbocharged, gas four-cylinder mill) is a reliability standout. It took first place in Consumer Reports' midsize sedan ranking. That's right. The most reliable 2014 family-sized sedan in our land is a VW, built in Tennessee.

For your edification I planned to compare that Passat TDI with other models. The sad truth:

the Passat is out of sync, behind market trends.

■ **OTHER SEDANS:** Hyundai's newly minted Sonata Limited illustrates what the Passat is missing. The Korean brand's engineers told the Autoist that they benchmarked the Sonata against VW's midsize sedan. In turn, like the fictional Eliza Doolittle, the Sonata has been to charm school. It now rides more quietly, feels more substantial and apes much of what made the previous generation Passat a treasure. Teutonic optional gadgets like an electronic parking brake with auto hold or grained soft-touch interior trim could come from the Audi parts bin. Hard plastics are often coated. In contrast, the Americanized Passat seems dowdy.

All isn't beer and Skittles, though. The electric power steering is everyday OK. Get curve-carving serious and the Sonata's aimer feels like you're extruding stuff through a Play Doh Fun Factory. VW's Passat is much better. The 2.4-liter engine, teamed to a six-speed automatic (your only choice) is sudsy, but not particularly perky. I netted 24 mpg overall during cold weather, a disappointment. VW's turbocharged engine has more grunt, drinks less fuel.

Where the Hyundai wows is its driver assistance package: lane departure warning, forward collision alert, backup camera with park sense, adaptive cruise control with start/stop, rear cross-traffic alert, blind-spot detection and self-acting headlight high beams. And for those who'd like the 1951 Nash Rambler convertible's sardine can-like top with full-door framing, there's a mammoth panoramic sunroof with light-blocking retractable interior cover.

Hyundai's gear proved useful if confusing. Sometimes the info/nav screen wouldn't let you see the backup camera until the onboard computer booted, you accepted the lawyer notice and viewed the last entered destination. And even then, it nagged you for permission to download your phone's contact list.

Yet, the forward collision alert (it beeps, it cannot brake) and blind-spot detection were ►

DRIVER'S SEAT

bobsledding team approved, noticing vehicles alongside frosty windows and sounding the SOS when motorists suddenly swerved in front of the snow-trekking Sonata. And the lane-keeping beeper directed my eyes toward the road, when fiddling with the heated steering wheel's switchgear or info screen led me astray. Cruise control that senses vehicles ahead will stop the car should it detect an obstruction.

And parents, it's also a Twitter mobile. The car will announce to your friends that you've arrived. It also spits out the last destination after you start the car, which could reveal a hideaway. And there's a "geo fence" that lets you monitor where the car goes when you're not in it.

In sum, Hyundai offers lots of formerly top-end luxury car features for about \$32,000, including faux-wood dash inserts. Not cheap.

Spend that much on a Passat, you'll get a car that performs well, but lacks gadgets.

Yet, the Passat offers a comfy back seat, decent driving behavior and the joy of shifting it yourself, with either a five-speed manual with its base turbo four or a six-speed manual with the TDI.

Then, there's the Mazda6. It's the driver's pick; its fuel-efficient power train and sporty suspension tuning satisfy. I spent more time in the Mazda3 compact with its driver's gear that included a head up display, high-mounted infotainment screen, Audi-like rotator knob and switches on the center console. By placing items like navigation prompts and speedometer as if it were a '50s Astra-Dial Ford, it's easy on your eyes. True, it's cab-back curvy eye candy, but it's also just plain less taxing on you peepers, when up-down ocular work isn't required. And the center knob with key-like switchgear would have tickled Marian McPartland.

The Mazda's zippy nature is offset by constant

road noise. And rear passengers are tightly confined. Some interior items aren't neatly fitted. The navigation system has city finding or not finding quirks. For further fuel efficiency, my tester had I-Eloop, a regenerative braking system that charges a capacitor. This supplies electrical energy reducing the alternator's load. I observed 28 mph overall, the car costs slightly more than \$30,000.

■ **BETLE BASHING:** If you read the automotive trade publications, you'll discover that the New Beetle is a one-hit wonder. Like the Chrysler PT Cruiser, it's on the list of hot cars that flickered brightly then went dim. There were plenty of

early NB adopters, but once they got their fix, others didn't follow. My informal survey revealed

that some embraced this car while others found they wanted to replace it with practical

car, one without VW's hardware/electrical and trim woes.

Less than a decade after the New Beetle arrived, enthusiasm for this specialty retro revival waned. Likewise, the Chrysler PT Cruiser's moment of fame is now a forgotten. Mini is sorting out how it will continue its "let's motor" mission. Minis are now larger and the lineup has peculiar variations. Give BMW (its parent company) credit for going where VW should have: the larger wagon-like Clubman and the compact crossover Countryman. Microbus, Baja Bug anyone?

The car that's currently a hot hit, a phenomenon that keeps catching on is Kia's Soul. Like the original Scion xB, this boxy car and those hamsters outsell VW's dome. Now in its second generation, it's a bit taller than the Golf. In Europe,



VW's Golf Plus offers a similar high roofline.

Souls don't need all-wheel-drive to get buyers into the left front seat. It sort of reminds you of the day when the original Beetle was in the pink — just kept on going like the Energizer bunny. Now a Kia best-seller, it's rolling proof that Americans will buy hatchbacks.

My 2.0-liter tester was practical, yet whimsical. The three-mode steering/tranny calibration felt too tipsy in comfort about right in sport. It gets short winded on the expressway. Suburban jaunts were a snap. Audi-like dashboard speakers look upscale.

A dated beam-axle rear suspension should provide useful below-the-floor stowage (check VW first generation Golf/Rabbit) it doesn't. My Exclaim tester with the Whole Shebang got 28 mpg overall and lists for a tad more than \$26,000.

■ EXTENDED RUST, ENGINE WARRANTIES:

VW's fourth-generation Golf and Jetta (1999-2005) are/were covered by a 12-year rust perforation warranty. VW might replace rusted front fenders and fix rocker panels on these cars. The manner in which the lower back of the fender is attached to the body leads to rust.

For direct-injection TFSI mills (turbocharged, belt-driven overhead-cam fours) used in many mid-2000 VWs and Audis, VW has extended the engine's fuel pump lifter (driven by the intake camshaft) and the intake camshaft warranty. It's now 120,000 miles or 10 years. When the lifter wears, it can break the intake camshaft.

One 2008 Audi A4 driver whose car recently busted a camshaft, found VW/Audi would not extend the warranty coverage beyond the 120k limit, reimburse owners for work done by independent shops. I've asked one VWoA manager to explain whether there's warranty wiggle room. I'd say VW/Audi should recall these engines or make goodwill reimbursements.

I recommend replacing the fuel-pump lifter on Audis or VWs powered by this engine. That's cheaper than the \$4,000 our unfortunate A4 owner paid. A new lifter design with a roller bearing is supposed to be much more durable.

Meanwhile, the chain-driven overhead cam TFSI (Audi) engine or TSI (VW) has a similar

extended warranty. It covers extensive engine damage caused a failed timing chain tensioner.

Consumer Reports published a December 2014 Reliability Guide. This nifty publication lists secret warranties, safety recalls and more for most makes and models 2004-2013. Timelines for popular vehicles help readers identify major concerns.

■ **VW SALES:** It's no secret. During 2014 U.S. new vehicle sales zoomed. VW's, however, went into a tailspin. One reason: a changing marketplace. New-car shoppers are going for crossovers or tall station wagons. VW's dealers aren't competitive. In some vehicle sectors, such as compacts, small crossovers are actually outselling sedans.

The VW Group knows to tailor crossovers for the U.S. Yet, the VW brand is adrift. VW's Tiguan is the right idea, popular in Europe, but observers argue that this luxury-grade machine's price is driving Americans away. Audi, which now sells a similar Q3, thinks it's got a hit. Even its Q7 easily outsells its VW Touareg platform mate. And pyrotechnically, the Q5 is hot. Porsche's Macan a variation of the Q5 is in short supply.

Meanwhile, VW's auto deliveries are off. It has ambitious U.S. sales goals, but its Passat and Beetle continue posting year-to-year declines.

One bright spot: the Jetta. Still looking a lot like its 2011 six-gen redo, it's posted two months of year-to-year sales increases. VW's Mark Gillies tells the *AUTOIST* that the Jetta's improved crash protection and attractively priced driver's assistance packages have caught on. Showroom traffic is also up due to the new Golf's publicity buzz. During November, VW delivered 15,633 Jettas (up 26 percent from 2013) landing the sedan on the 10 best-selling cars list ahead of Ford's Focus, Hyundai's Elantra and Nissan's Sentra.

At Audi, the brand passed Cadillac in U.S. sales (162,773 through November). That's right. America's standard of excellence, which until the 1990s was the best-selling luxury brand in the States, now takes the back seat to Audi. That's amazing.

Meanwhile, VWAG might deliver 10 million VWs, Skodas, Seats, Audis and Bentleys during 2014. That's a big boost. Few expected VW to surpass GM and nip the heels of Toyota, when its ambitious 10-million-a-year sales goal was ►

DRIVER'S SEAT

announced several years ago.

■ **BENCHED FOR THE SUPER BOWL:** Waiting for another VW Super Bowl ad that's a winner? You won't see it in 2015. VW announced it's not going to advertise during the event, a sign that it's relationship with its ad agency might be tense.

During the 2015 American auto show season, you'll spot Audi's new wide-face grille and VW's five-seat CrossBlue concept. The latter, if it's like one seen at a China show, is an attractive design direction. Meanwhile, there's further evidence that VW will build an all-wheel-drive Subaru-like Golf Alltrack wagon. It's about time.

VW's German headquarters has a new face: BMW's former development chief Herbert Diess. Industry watchers say Ulrich Hackenberg, who currently heads the VW brand and the VW Group will focus on the latter's management, while Diess will concentrate on the VW brand. Many consider VW's management situation problematic; it isn't clear who will replace retirement-age Hackenberg. Diess' appointment has received kudos. Previous recruits Bernd Pichetsrieder and Wolfgang Bernhard did not pan out.

■ **TENNESSEE LABOR UPDATE:** VW's Tennessee plant now allows recognition of employee groups. VW agreed to include labor groups in monthly management meetings—a practice similar to its work councils at VW's European plants. Access to management is based on the percentage of employees a group represents. Currently, the United Autoworkers Local 42 says most plant employees have joined the union.

The UAW's strategy: demonstrate that even though it didn't win an election, it can sign enough members of the total workforce to sit at VW's management table. If that goes well, the union might gain the representation rights at VW and perhaps Mercedes' plant in Tuscaloosa, Ala., where it's implementing the same strategy.

■ **REAL ID'S:** Renewing your driver's license

may require more than an eye test. That's because of the 2005 law called the Real ID Act. It's intended to ensure that jurisdictions issue driver's licenses that meet federal standards designed to thwart terrorists. Currently, 19 states issue Real IDs. One is Wisconsin.

If you don't have a Real ID by 2016, you might be restricted from federally regulated airline flights. Ouch! A passport or other federal IDs, however, still qualify.

Obtaining your Real ID, when you renew your license, saves money. States often charge an extra fee to process this ID if you don't get it during a license renewal.

To get a Real ID, you'll need documents such as a state-issued birth certificate. In my case, the local department of motor vehicles' staff politely informed me how to get the docs. Plus, they gave me an additional 60 days to complete the process without paying a late fee. For some, you'll have to contact the state where you were born request and paying for a birth certificate. Ironically, most states ask for your driver's license in order to process your request.

I know the drill. My parents gave me a birth certificate they got from the hospital where I was delivered. That document isn't acceptable. Thank folks! Another document that's handy: the W2 that you filed with the IRS.

Whether the Real ID Act will stop terrorists, protect freedom and not become a bureaucratic nightmare, is open to debate. If you live in a state that is Real ID compliant, you'll need more than good vision to renew your license and get a federally approved ID.

■ **DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS:** In my Audi A3 review (Nov/Dec AUTOIST), I meant to say that its sunroof, as does the new Golf's, evokes a 1954 Ford Crestline Skyliner or Mercury Sun Valley. Those Ford products sported acrylic roof panels. VW/Audi's wide sliding glass-roof panel moves upward over the car's top. When closed, it's a new take on the fabulous '50s Ford. **vwca**

HEAT ■ FROM PAGE 13

With these complexities, a fortune was made in supplying heater improvements. Cold-weather accessories ranged from windshield defroster tubes, electric fans, to the big fix: a trunk-mounted gas-fired furnace. Of these, electric fans were the most popular. While some could be mounted in the engine bay, most were placed under the rear seat requiring modifications such as cutting and removing ductwork mufflers.

New for 1965, the introduction of heater control stalks: one on either side of the parking brake lever. The right one adjusted airflow, whereas the left one opened or closed the rear-seat outlets. By 1973, however, the left lever opened or closed the defroster ducts, as federal rules required a belted driver to be able to reach heater/defroster controls.

Cryptic describes heater labeling.

Hoses, clamps and ducts must be connected and in good condition. After that, what goes wrong is often rust damage. The heat exchanger's outer skin corrodes, letting the air out. Another rust spot is the heater boxes flap section near the device's outlet. These flaps might stick. From here, insulation covered hoses route air into the interior.

All too often, the air-cooled VW's heater channels, inside the rocker panels, perforate, making it impossible to route air toward the front compartment. At the base of the A pillar, the area surrounding the heater outlet can go. Another suspect area is the paper tube that connects the floor outlet to the defroster outlet.

Often mistaken for a defroster: VW's whimpy late '60s fresh air inlet, fan forced on some later models. This system supplies fresh air from the vehicle's cowl. It's not integrated into the heater/defroster setup.

Repairing your Bug's heater requires sleuth-like investigation. For example, does the heater box's flap work? There are two, with control cables. Has rust damaged the heater channels? Is fan-forced air entering the system? A common restoration mistake: incorrectly connecting (or eliminating) heater channels that should be inside rocker pan-

els. Another is omission: not installing heater-cable guide tubes, when replacing floors.


■ **UPGRADES:** From a collector's standpoint, a vintage accessory makes sense. These are period appropriate, a great conversation starter; wintry tales of scraping the frost off the inside of the VW's windshield abound.

Mid America Motorworks sells a heater/defroster improvement system. It features two under-rear-seat mounted inline fans. On many VWs, you must cut metal ductwork. These fans will up heater airflow. One technique that's elegant is removing the hose between the engine's fan housing and muffler/heat exchanger. Install a booster fan there.

MAM's setup apes another old-time trick. Instead of pulling fresh air from outside of the car, you can recycle the interior's air. This is accomplished by blocking off the doghouse heater outlets. Then, one cuts holes through the rear compartment. Hoses are attached such that air is pulled from the car's interior behind the backseat, through the heat exchangers and into the vehicle. While this should up heater temperature, it might not defog very well.

My take: air-cooled VWs with their factory-correct quiet heat are collector-car adequate. If you must operate your collector car in cold weather, try a booster fan. It increases heater output at low engine speeds.

VW Security Blanket anyone? **VWCA**


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FOR SALE: 1979 Super Bee-

tle Convertible, fuel-injected. Mini overhaul to engine last year: R/R push rod tubes, injectors, points, plugs, rotor, cap, etc. Rusted areas on body sandblasted and



treated. Fender beading and right rear floor pan replaced. Entire repaint with original VW diamond silver color. New vinyl top with pad and headliner installed in 2013. Car has always been garage-kept and stored winters. Asking \$9,500 OBO. Car is located in South Carolina. Contact Ron Schmits at schmitsron@msn.com.

FOR SALE: Rebuild air-cooled VW 36 hp, 40 hp, 1600 single port, 1600 dual port, custom 1835, 1915, Porsche 911 2.0, 2.2, 2.4, 2.7, 3.0, 3.2 and custom 3108, 3.5, 3.6 liter engines by Wolfsburg and Zuffenhausen trained builder. Call Volker Bruckmann, (760) 765-2149 (CA).

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FOR SALE: New and used Volkswagen and Audi parts. John's Car Corner, Box 85, Westminster, VT 05158, (802) 722-3180 or e-mail johnscarcorner@yahoo.com.

FOR SALE: VW press kits: \$5 each, plus shipping. Entire VW line: 1998, 1999, 2000. New Beetle Convertible Intro (October 2002). Phaeton Intro (2004). Audi A6 (2005). Contact Rich at rgvant@juno.com.

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Parting Shot

■ A LOAD OF WINTER WARMTH



John Hamill of John's Car Corner in New Hampshire demonstrates the value of a good VW pickup, a European version of a 1980 Single Cab Pickup. He says these vehicles came with a Beetle-style air-cooled, carbureted engine (with spin-on oil filter and early '80s style Type II muffler). Transaxle is similar to those found in 1980 through 1983½ Vanagons. "Probably one of the handiest vehicles I have ever owned," John says, adding that this model can carry a half cord of firewood (more than a ton even when seasoned and dry) without any complaints.

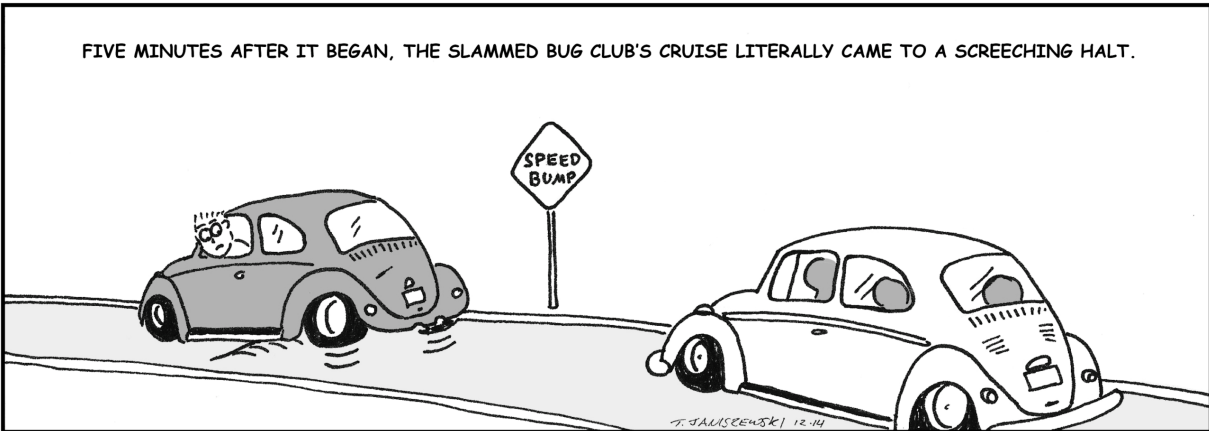
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VW Toon-ups

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