

July/August 2022 | No. 522



Autoist

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**SHE'S TAKING A
SHINING
TO 'NEW' BEETLE**



Autoist

Since 1955

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ABOUT THE AUTOIST

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Driver's Seat

BY CLIFF LEPPKE ✉leppke.cliff@gmail.com

Scout announcement adds intrigue

Perhaps the biggest news from VW is not a concept vehicle, a marketing campaign or for that matter a VW — the Scout. *Automotive News'* coverage of VW's sudden announcement that it's creating an American division called Scout to design, manufacture and distribute an off-road capable battery-electric SUV and pickup wearing the former International Harvester's brand's model name is dealer focused. Travelall, IH's former Chevy Suburban fighter, isn't on the list. VW can revive the Scout name because it bought the rights to this trademark when VW's Traton truck unit acquired Navistar International Corp. in 2021.

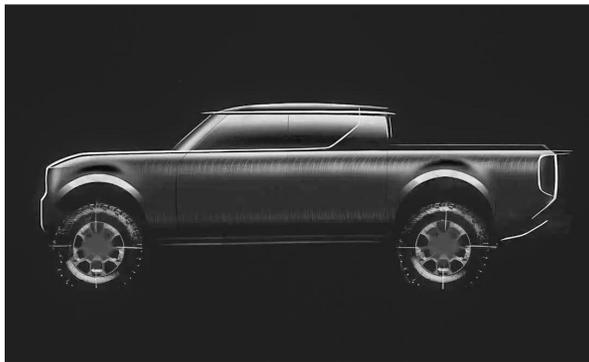
Coverage of the Scout move focused on what VW hasn't said — who will sell it. That's called distribution. Many BEV startups skirt the usual practice of selling through brick-and-mortar stores. VW's press releases don't say which VW's dealers will sell the Scout — sort of a sore spot as VW's U.S. dealers have asked VW for a small truck or off-road-ready SUV. So, the race has begun. VW must quickly invent a new division, give it autonomy, develop a BEV with Jeep-like cred and then sort out how to sell it.

As our Tom Janiszewski observed in his coverage of the 2022 Chicago Auto Show (May/June *AUTOIST*), VWoA hasn't promoted its new GTI and Golf R with gusto. According to VW's Jerohn Anderson, VW chose a soft launch for these sporting VWs rather than traditional advertising. One reason is VW can-

not build, at this moment, enough GTIs for both Europe and North America. Thus, the usual advertising blitz announcing new car models isn't necessary as VW believes those who want a Golf R or GTI are already aware there's a new generation of these hot hatchbacks. Media outlets—print or online—have either gotten their hands on one for road tests or gone to the GTI or Golf R press events.

A new direction on messaging

Finally, Anderson says, expect VW's ad agency to change direction, evoking the playful tone of VW's famous Think Small-era advertising. Currently, most VW TV spots blandly show Tiguan, say as family haulers, and note limited availability and pricing. One Atlas spot shows its pedestrian detection system with braking preventing a crash with a smartphone-obsessed jaywalker.



VW's Scout Pickup (Ute) concept.

Reboots and rebadging

For our purposes, reboots represent a major revision meant to evoke a brand's heritage, whereas rebadging slaps a known nameplate onto an existing or new model shared with another brand. Either marketing strategy can meet relevant consumer/producer tastes or go horribly if not humorously wrong.

VW's revival of the International Scout name and vehicle reveals how automakers have an ecology — they recycle. There's a long history of auto marketing

►TURN TO PAGE 27

Small Talk

VW + AUDI AT A GLANCE

NEW & IMPROVED

SEDAN IN THE WORKS:

VW may have a different vision in mind for its ID.Vizzion concept from 2018. The company released new sketches depicting a four-door model named ID.Aero that will share



chassis components and several styling cues with existing models. No surprise, the car will be all-electric and built on a version of VW's familiar MEB platform. China gets the car in the second half of 2023, while Europe and North America figure to be in play as well.

EV NEWS

HEADED FOR NO. 1?: Bloomberg Intelligence, a research firm, predicts that VW is on track to overtake Tesla's top-ranked production volume by 2024. Bloomberg cites VW's big investment in EV battery technology as a key factor in its prediction.

BATTERY LAB OPENS: VW's new 32,000 square-foot Battery Engineering Lab opened in Chattanooga in June, aimed at streamlining EV production in the U.S. Specialized equipment can simulate a year of average driving (9,321 miles) in one week and it also conducts extreme vibration tests. More sophisticated equipment includes a drive-in climate chamber, thermal shock chamber

and water immersion tanks.

U.S. EXPANSION WEIGHED: VWoA CEO Scott Keogh confirmed European media reports that VW is looking to establish new assembly and battery facilities in the U.S., potentially part of its pledge to commit \$7.1 billion to boost EV growth in North America.

SOLID STATE BATTERIES: California-based QuantumScape, a battery technology company, is aiming to be the first company to hit the market with a solid-state battery for EVs. Company officials predict that as soon as 2024, a VW or Audi equipped with QuantumScape's batteries would go nearly 400 miles on a single charge and then recharge in 15 minutes.

SOFTWARE UPDATE: VW says it has a solution to its slow and cumber-

some infotainment software, updated to generation 3.0, versions of which are found in the new Golf GTI and Golf R, ID.4 and the upcoming ID.Buzz. Many German-produced 2022 ID.4 models are parked in U.S. ports, reported to be awaiting the update.

COMPANY NEWS

BIG DEMAND: With demand for EVs through the roof, VW announced it could no longer deliver any more 2022 models to the United States and Europe, reporting in May that it had a backlog of 300,000 EV orders in Western Europe alone. But good news for U.S. customers arrived in June, when VW said production of the ID.4 at its Chattanooga plant would start in July, months earlier than projected. VWoA CEO Scott Keogh said the company is targeting monthly production of 7,000 units by the end of the year.

AWARDS

ID.4: A panel of more than 90 international journalists representing 24 countries honored the ID.4 as 2021 World Car of the Year.

ATLAS: Cars.com has named the 2021 Atlas family as Car of the Year. The Atlas beat out nominees Ford Expedition and Kia Telluride for the top honor.

Retro Autoist

FROM THE VWCA ARCHIVES

10 YEARS AGO

JULY/AUGUST 2012: VWoA plans to have its new diesel-powered Beetle TDI in showrooms by August. The TDI is the third model in the Beetle lineup and joins the 2.5-liter five-cylinder and 2.0-liter turbocharged gasoline models. The manual will be priced starting at \$23,295 while the automatic will run \$1,100 more.

JULY/AUGUST 2012: Media members and consumers voted the Passat the top rated premium midsize car in the Autobytel and AutoPacific 2012 Vehicle Satisfaction Awards. Other VWs to collect awards were Beetle, which was Top Rated Compact Car; GTI, Top Rated Premium Compact Car; and Tiguan, Top Rated Compact Crossover SUV.

20 YEARS AGO

JULY/AUGUST 2002: The Microbus concept vehicle that debuted at the Detroit Auto Show is becoming a reality.

Volkswagen announced on June 11 that it would produce the vehicle at its Hanover plant. The Microbus was designed at the Volkswagen Design Studio in California.

Look for production in the 2004 model year and a price tag of around \$30,000. *Postscript: That's about \$49,000 in today's dollars, but VW abandoned its production plans. Three more concepts followed — the Bulli in 2011, BUDD-e in 2016 and the I.D. Buzz concept in 2017, which has reached reality as an EV.*



30 YEARS AGO

JULY/AUGUST 1992: News service Reuters reported in March that VW may launch its Chico mini car by the end of 1993 in a move that would make it a frontrunner

in getting electric cars off the drawing board and onto the road, company sources said. Chico is designed as a small car that can be powered either by purely electrical motors or hybrid engines. *Postscript: Cute name, at least.*

JULY/AUGUST 1992: A new engine line displacing between 0.8 and 1.2 liters is said to be on VW's drawing board. The engines may be targeted for the next-generation VW Polo, Seat Ibiza, Skoda Favorit and perhaps the Swatch car and VW Chico. *Postscript: And so it was. VW's city car, the Up, is the latest model with 1-liter power.*



40 YEARS AGO

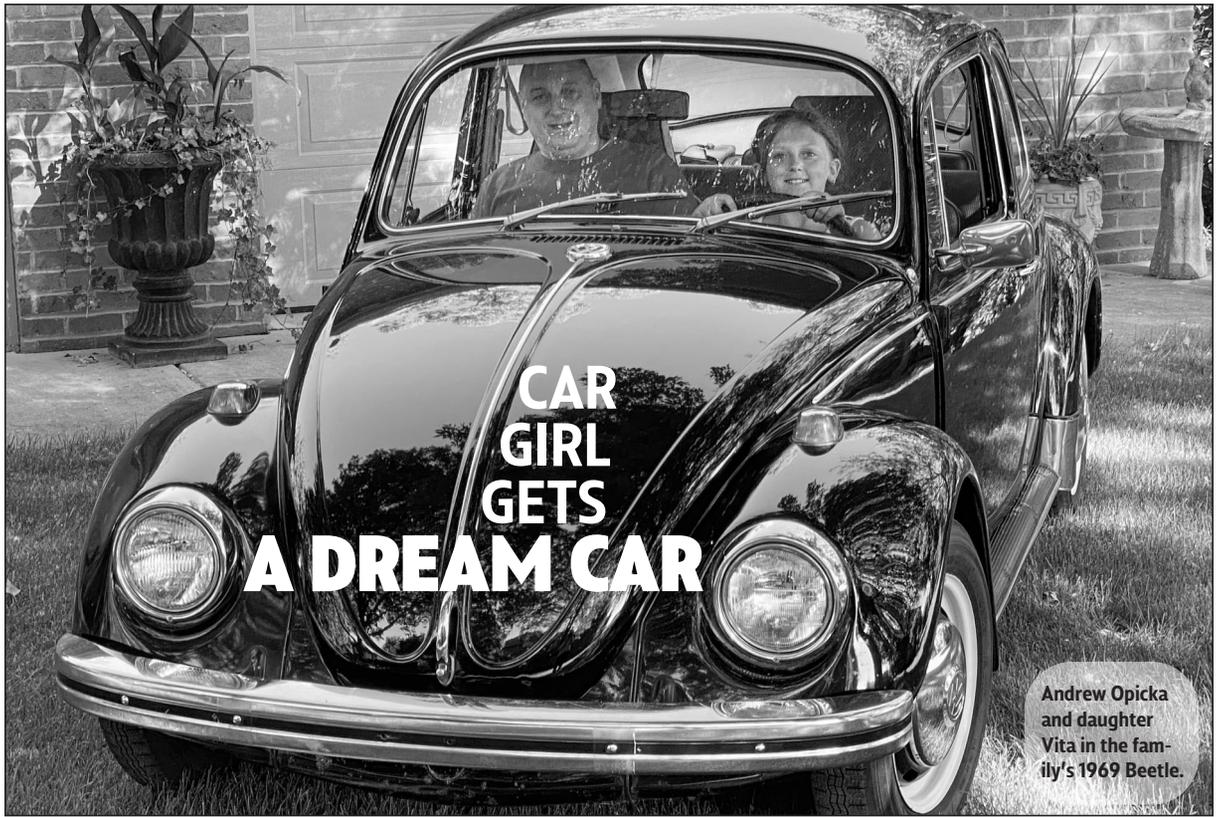
JULY/AUGUST 1982: A VW Rabbit that drinks cooking oil and smells like fried chicken. Well, sort of. This VW has been modified by the Archer Daniels Midland Co. of Decatur, Illinois. The agricultural processing firm has been experimenting with alternative fuels, and this time decided to rig the Rabbit to run on sunflower oil.

50 YEARS AGO

JULY 1972: Worldwide auto production figures for 1971 show that Volkswagen has dropped to fourth from third, replaced by Toyota. Some observers predict that VW will never again regain the No. 3 spot. *Postscript: In recent years, VW and Toyota have both shared the No. 1 production crown.*

60 YEARS AGO

JULY 1962: Short Takes: Volkswagens cross the Atlantic to U.S. dealerships in "floating garages," carrying as many as 1,250 vehicles. ... Four of every seven motor vehicles registered in the United States are equipped with car radios.



Andrew Opicka and daughter Vita in the family's 1969 Beetle.

Andrew Opicka's dream as a child growing up in Wisconsin was to someday own a Volkswagen Beetle. After all, his parents drove VWs — Beetles, Dashers and Golfs. And he got firsthand experience with German cars during summer travels to Europe to visit family members, where a friend of his grandfather owned a large travel company using Mercedes-Benz buses.

So, over the years, he developed a passion for German autos, and he's personally maintained and restored several classic Mercedes-Benz and Porsche models. Since 1998, he's been involved in the Mercedes-Benz Club of

1969 parked in a garage for three decades had 26,000 miles



A VWCA decal applied by the original owner, who was a member.

America, serving in executive posts.

One thing was missing: Finding one of his childhood favorites, a 1971 Super Beetle. He thought he'd discovered one about five years ago but couldn't persuade the owner to sell.

"My mother had a mid-'60s Beetle, and my father had a '71 Super Beetle," Andrew said. "He even got a free radio. And we still have the original sales receipt." He says he's always enjoyed the engineering superiority of the German car brands, mentioning Audi, VW, Mercedes-Benz and Porsche.

Fast-forward to late 2020 and the death of a longtime close friend (and

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VWCA member) who had a collection of low-mileage German and Japanese models. Andrew volunteered to help the family with the sale of the cars (he bought one of them, a Porsche 356, ending a personal 11-year search). A 1969 Beetle, among the cars stored in a basement apartment garage for more than 30 years, was the family's favorite and last to sell.

But Andrew was not aware of the VW until late December 2021, when he went to check out the car with the family. They originally wanted to fix it to drive locally, but the fuel tank was nearly full when stored and the location was not easily accessible. After an initial inspection, the family decided to sell it to Andrew to restore, with a pledge that he wouldn't resell it. To him, it would be a gift to his daughter.

With the storage space lease expiring last New Year's Eve, the all-original Beetle, with 26,000 miles, needed to be moved quickly. Andrew and friends towed the car out of the garage on Dec. 27 — 53 years and seven days after it came off the assembly line in Germany.

"We threaded the needle with the extraction as our cold snowy Wisconsin winters provided a 24-hour hiatus in ice and snow," Andrew said. "The tires all held air and the brakes held for towing out of the basement ramp and onto the trailer."



Vita and Andrew Opicka pose with the 1969 Beetle in the apartment parking garage after its cover had been removed, its towing strap attached for the big move.

In a case of "like father, like daughter," 10-year-old Vita — Andrew and wife Elise's only child — was also thrilled about the Beetle, with original black paint and red seats. Andrew provided a note that the budding auto enthusiast wrote for the *AUTOIST*, reading in part, "Me and my dad put in a lot of work to make it shine. I am so happy that it can start up so good. I dreamed of having a Volkswagen Beetle. The engine looks amazing. My dad is so happy too."

Yes, Vita is Dad's

young wing-woman, showing interest at an early age in the mechanical nature of how things work.

My daughter loves to attend the vintage races at



Announcing
The newest member of your
Volkswagen family



VIN: 119475171
Proud Beetle Parent: Vita Opicka

Name: The Beetle
Model: 1969 Volkswagen Beetle
Color: Black
Purchase Date: December 27, 2021
Production Date: December 1968



BEETLE

Elkhart Lake, which is not too far south of our home,” Andrew said. With Dad’s hands-on guidance, “happily, she’s turning into a gearhead/petrolhead already and dreams of restoring an all-original VW Type 2 Campervan,” he said. “It’s very rewarding to share my knowledge of mechanical repair and restoration with younger people.”

She helped a lot with the brake repair, rebuilding and adjusting, along with a significant amount of cleaning and polishing, he said.



Safety and balance are the keys to Rollerblading, Vita Opicka advises in 2021 in this how-to on her Kids YouTube channel.



The Beetle is loaded onto a trailer, its first outdoor excursion in more than 30 years.

Father and daughter spent the next several weeks rebuilding the brakes, fuel system, carburetor and performing minor electrical work, making the car roadworthy in late February. An updated brake master cylinder was installed, and the original rubber mat was replaced because it was too brittle to be removed for the required brake line replacement.

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On her Kids YouTube channel, Vita Opicka provided commentary on her dad’s 1969 Mercedes 280S in 2020.

In early June, Andrew replaced the muffler after finding it difficult to get the correct NOS version. “The old muffler was not original and was well rusted out — the only troubled area on the car,” he said.

While Vita (pronounced “veeta”) is not helping Dad, she enjoys documenting various automobile marques in school writing projects and on the Kids YouTube Channel, which debuted during the pandemic. Andrew says she enjoys making how-to videos

and reviews, particularly involving automotive events and classic cars.

Her channel, called Vita's World, can be accessed by keying in bit.ly/3HILA7J at YouTube.com. A recent video described how to replace the Beetle's drive belt. Late in the process, she advises: "According to the shims, we should have 15 to 20 millimeters of play." Beetle washing tips are another subject.

At the Beer Brats and Bathtubs event at Road America last year, Vita mingled cheerfully with a gaggle of pristine Porsche 356 models, and she also provides commentary on Dad's 1969 Mercedes-Benz 280S. "Look at how pretty this car is," she intones from the passenger seat, a spot-on assessment.

And if you ever wanted to make an apple out of Play-Doh or learn how to Rollerblade, her channel provides the how-to. Like many YouTubers, she urges viewers to hit that "like" icon, hoping to attain 10,000 of them, which would generate token monthly revenue from YouTube ads. Future gas money, maybe, because though Vita is still too young to drive, she's the rightful owner of the Beetle. An-



Though she's not yet old enough to drive, Vita Opicka is learning how to get comfortable behind the wheel.

drew said: "It was my dream to own my favorite childhood automobile and couldn't be happier to be able to maintain it with her as her first."

Andrew says he wants to honor his late friend and family by teaching Vita about automobile history and engineering excellence. He summed her up proudly: "I am a proud father of a true car girl." **VWCA**

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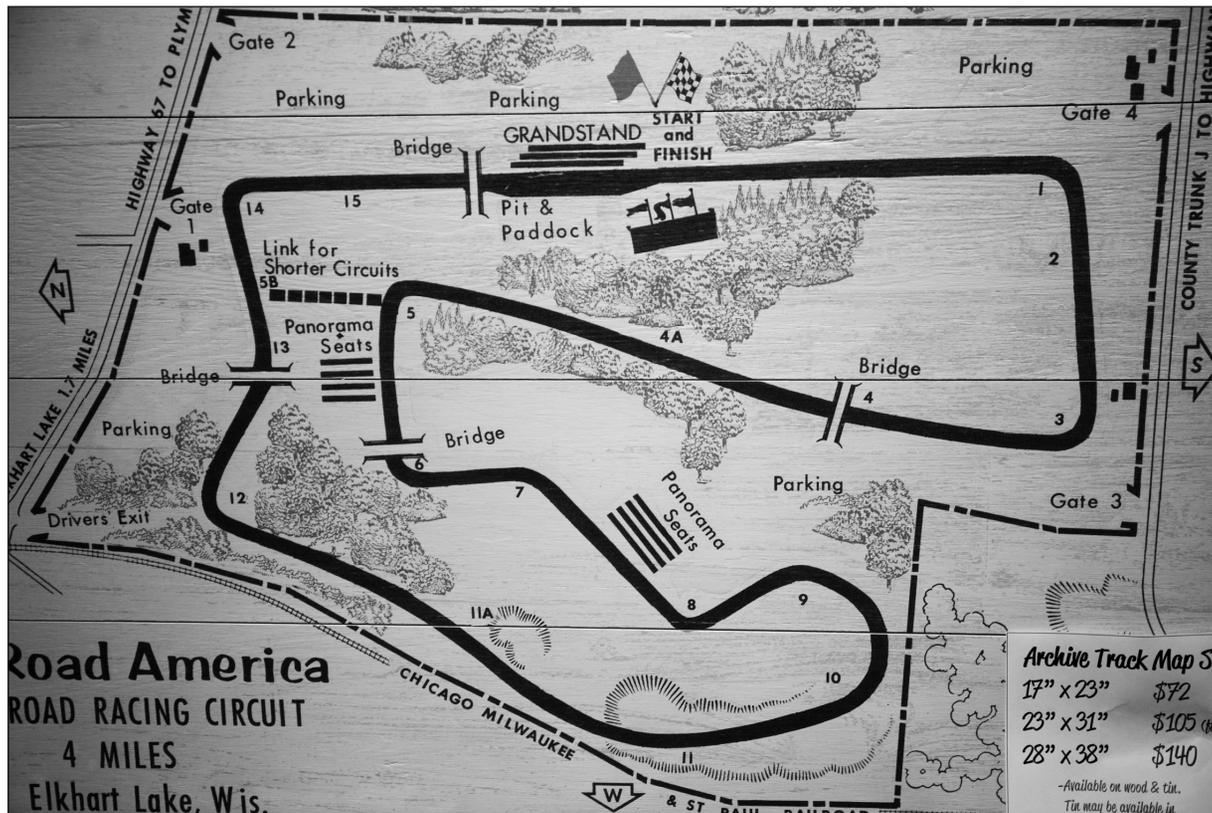
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MIDWEST AUTOMOTIVE MEDIA ASSN. SPRING RALLY



MAMA'S BACK

New rubber meets the curvy corners and challenging asphalt at Road America

This year marked the return of Midwest Automotive Media Association's Spring Rally at Road America near Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin. Automakers and media members convened at RA in late May. I joined other motoring scribes at the fabled racetrack to evaluate vehicles on the track, street or offroad.

This location has a special natural vibe due to glaciers. Ages ago, glacial action caused the formation of what's now a sublime sinewy landscape called the Kettle Moraine. It's

full of twists, hills and drops often punctuated by clear-water lakes. It's easy to see why postwar motorsports enthusiasts pegged this area as a playground for testing the mettle of four-wheeled metal — it's curvy, tree-lined and tricky to navigate.

Whereas early postwar track stars plied Elkhart Lake's roadways, since the mid-1950s, there's America's Park of Speed, as RA bills itself, a four-mile scenic and technical course designed to add a few more thrills to those who carve its corners,

By Cliff Leppke ✉ leppke.cliff@gmail.com

tame its weight-shifting chicanes, caress its carousel and even perform a kink. Honestly, some don't like the latter. But MAMA/RA employ it as a means to moderate our velocity. And MAMA Rally officials place cones on the track as speed-cutting chicanes or guides toward safe cornering.

RA bystanders find trackside hills provide fantastic race-day views. Drivers must learn where to look and how to guide their machines, as this sometimes-unforgiving track (not much runout area) presents several hazards. For example, those who don't brake as hard as necessary, ease off the binders too suddenly, turn at the wrong spot (often late apexes are best) or place their cars correctly for blind corners — I'm talking Turn 6 — flirt with disaster.

Faulty move in a Lexus

For example, after Turn 5, you charge uphill, place and brake on the right under the Corvette Bridge spanning the track, then suddenly you'll encounter Turn 6, a sharp left corner. You'll swap ends if you don't respect the previously mentioned Turn 5. And should you blast through the Kettle Bottoms too fast into dreaded Canada Corner (No. 12) not brake enough and then opt for an early apex, rather than going nose-first off the track, you'll toss your sled into tire-lined fencing. RESPECT! At least one MAMA rally driver who botched this corner and crunched a Lexus shared his mistake — too much speed, fading brakes and a split-second decision to execute the turn too soon that led to an unexpected car-crushing, ego dumping detour.

Should you misbehave — not keep all four tires on the track, RA officials will boot you. You keep those donuts of fun on that track by drawing good lines — entering turns wide at the outside, where you can see through them, nearly nerfing the rubble strip in this runout area and then heading toward the apex



The 2022 Jetta GLI offers a seven-speed dual clutch DSG automatic.

(another rubble strip) and then tracking out to the exit — yet another rumble strip. In sum, you sort of box the corners for best control, using all the track. And although I see the pros on race day straddling those rumble strips, RA doesn't let MAMA do this.

Then there are all sorts of nifty tricks, such as tapping a car's brakes in order to get a vehicle to turn into a chicane. In one such setup, you sort of drive like a pinball in an arcade game, a downhill amusement. I'm talking about a stretch called the Hurry Downs (turns 7 and 8). The pros call this a chicane, although it doesn't look particularly chicane-like on RA's map — good reason to drive it! And this race-track has several hill climbs, one is 4,400 feet. During these ascents you often cannot see there's a turn ahead, so a mental map helps.

MAMA, courtesy of Kia, let me ride my Holdsworth bike on RA, which let me experience those turns, hills and thrills from a different kind of perspective. Loved it, even though I was soaking wet afterward. Then, one track official incorrectly detained me afterward for riding around the track during Kia's "One Lap" — it was foggy so he couldn't see I arrived at the finish line several minutes before the rest of the MAMA clan who couldn't resist this op.

Let's not forget the cars. I'll discuss more of >>

them later. First, VW's Jerohn Anderson brought a 2022 Jetta GLI with seven-speed dual-clutch DSG automatic transmission. It sports a new front fascia, louder looking tailpipes and revamped interior. This 228-hp Jetta doesn't get the GTI or R's supportive seating; instead you get a fancy wrapper on the Jetta sedan's sport-themed thrones.

I snatched the \$33,980 GLI for my first lap, which commenced after the newbies got their orientation-lap. Because I'm considered an intermediate-level driver, event organizers let me skip the follow-the-leader, mother-duck-with-ducklings trip. Driving RA's racetrack required modifications this year, as cold, wet weather turned the "polished" part of the asphalt — the routes most take — into hydroplaning dangers. So, you took your knowledge of where one should drive the car and then altered that line to avoid ponding, a tire-grip-killing danger.

The GLI is track capable but the DSG, despite Sport Mode, is like some napkins — too skimpy for a diner's lap. It upshifts too early and doesn't downshift quickly enough. This blunts performance. I employed the left paddle shifter to get this Dub down a cog or so and keep it there while I worked the corners. With this modification, the Jetta whizzed through its paces well enough — tire grip seemed less than ideal, and the ABS/stability nannies worked harder in the Jetta than any other ride I drove.

Scenic drives

VW's 2022 Tiguan SEL R-Line sports new LED headlamps and several revisions such as a touch-sensing climate control panel for \$37,790. VW's Digital Cockpit instrument video screen is now standard on all Tiguan. Anderson says the Tiguan's pricing is likely higher than the sticker in this machine's glovebox, as VW has passed on additional production costs to Tiguan built later than this one.

The Tiguan, if driven as a family hauler, has light



The Tiguan SEL R-Line gets several updates for 2022.

but accurate steering and seems agreeable in motion. It has selectable drive-modes. Aesthetically, the revised front looks smart — sort of Golf R like lamps with Jetta/Atlas-like grille. This Tiguan appears pleasant inside and the chiseled body looks handsome too. A closer examination reveals supportive seating, extensive use of hard plastics and merely modest engine power. Regardless, this sparkling blue Tiggy easily blended into the livery surrounding Elkhart Lake — as if it were the perfect foil for towing recreational rigs found near boat-house alcoves with trailer parking surrounding the area's glacial lakes.

Facetime

Jerohn Anderson fielded my pop quiz questions. I started with the absent Golf R. VW sent it to another event, so it wasn't available. Many journalists wondered what venue could possibly outrank MAMA's rally. A bias on our part, sure, but a well informed one at that. According to VW's Golf R media info, engine friction-reducing technology has an engine acoustic function: a mellow engine tone. This Golf's fancy differential can instantly send power to, say, an outside wheel for alert, sharp directional changes (called Vehicle Dynamics Manager and torque-vector-

ing differential). VW's UX team in Belmont, California, gets partial credit or demerit for the vehicle's touch-sensing interface, its ever-ready engine has more torque than before doled out over a wide rpm range, and improved forward sightlines are likely due to VW slightly elevating the front seat.

Anderson says the ID.Buzz BEV's European price is higher than the expected but expects the USA's MSRP to be lower. In Germany, the base commercial cargo van costs \$57,220. The Microbus-like five-seat passenger Pro version is \$67,891. There are EV incentives meant to cut those numbers, making VW's BEVs more affordable. And those figures, which to me are anything but affordable, include inboarded fees/taxes we don't pay in the USA. So, Anderson thinks the longer three-row Buzz meant for the USA might, if past practices prevail, have a final tab closer to the ID.4.

Anderson says Max, VWoA's black 1964 Beetle mascot, has several clones. Max is one of the Maxes — multiples required for publicity advertising purposes. And Anderson says Max, as I've seen him, is indeed a 1964 Beetle wearing 1963 model-year items — front signal lamps/fenders and rear lid. VW found it easier to restore cars to the 1963 model-year look, as other "identical" Maxes might be, say, 1962-63 model-year vehicles.

Grin and bear it

Hyundai's Michelle Tinsen directed me toward the 276-hp Elantra N. I found its Grin Mode. Yes, that's a drive setting. Steering wheel buttons let you tweak this feisty steed's steering effort, dampers and exhaust note. While Grin might seem sophomoric and the N seems to amplify various noises to scream performance, it's a serious player, a bona fide sports sedan offering more entertainment than the GLI. I noticed a useful gadget on the instrument screen — graphics for the car's windshield-wiper setting — a nifty feature perfectly suited for a rainy track day.

Surprisingly, it was the AWD 271-hp Subaru WRX, now built on a new Subaru platform but not sharing the Impreza's body, that seemed well calibrated, if a tad lazy in the engine bay. It was less fussy about track conditions than either the GLI or N. Whether

that's because this one required your left foot to manipulate the clutch and right hand for the shifter or just AWD traction, this Subie had mature manners and relatively tame for Subie visuals — no wings from the STI models, say.

I worked my way to the Mazda MX-5 Miata — a good choice for that traditional sports car sensation. It has excellent forward sightlines and playful nature — easier to just kiss the rumble strip's side than most. Toyota's Supra was delightful, too.

Sure, I took the Dodge Challenger for a spin. This ride came with a professional driver offering tips. I received good marks for smoothness, lots of "look-for-ponding" advice, but earned a demerit for not looking far enough ahead after the Canada Corner, climbing Thunder Valley and then heading into Bill Mitchell Bend (turn 13). That zone looked fuzzy gray to me.

The best experience was piloting BMW's \$96,000 M3 Competition xDrive. It felt muscular, with a stout chassis sensation. It pulls its weight and transfers it cleanly. The Bimmer might have an ugly nose, but it was beautiful to drive.

EV elements

RA's paddock had a bevy of BEVs or battery electric vehicles — not for the track. Hyundai's Ioniq 5 (\$55,920), Kia's EV6 (\$57,410) and Genesis' GV60 (price TBD) supplied stiff competition for VW's ID.4 (not available at RA), as did the Subaru Solterra, which was developed by Toyota and is similar to that brand's bZ4X. The Hyundai corporate trio represent this carmaker's first dedicated EV platform. The Ioniq uses Pixel graphics and Parametric styling (geometric body creases) to symbolize its EV nature. Other BEVs included the mammoth Ford F-Series Lightning (has the best built-in coloring book on its gigantic center touchscreen) and the far less imposing but compelling Volvo XC40 Recharge.

While the Lightning was by far the largest EV reveal, I'd say the Hyundai/Kia models, with their VW ID.4 size but with an 800-volt architecture, point toward the future — as do the Audi/Porsche BEVs, also with 800 volts. Those cars attain a 5-80% charge in roughly half the time of VW's advertised 38-min- >>

ute stint for its 400-volt systems.

The International Car of the Year-winning Ioniq (\$55,920) and the related EV6 (\$57,410) have the same instrument display, and I couldn't see key driving data such as road speed — it's not in the center. And I couldn't get the Kia's head up display where I could see it either. I couldn't sort out how to adjust the head up display or instrument display so just drove those machines as is — except for reducing their energy recuperation braking. They vary enough in details that you probably wouldn't think they're related — body styling and even the controls differ: Hyundai has a right stalk with a twist knob clockwise for forward and counterclockwise for reverse. The Kia has a rotary knob on the center console.

While Hyundai's EVs share the same platform, they look different. The Ioniq, for example, expresses the brand's metal-making heritage. Kia's EV6, however, strikes me as more alluring.

According to Experian's January through March 2022 BEV new registrations, Tesla's Model Y leads (52,051), followed by the Tesla Model 3 (47,682), Tesla Model S (9,250), Ford Mustang Mach-E (6,957), Hyundai Ioniq 5 (6,265), Kia EV6 (4,901) Tesla Model X (4,899), Nissan Leaf (4,401), Kia Niro (3,549) and in 10th place VW's ID.4 (2,926). Tesla, therefore leads the pack. Hyundai/Kia with their recently launched BEVs comes in a distant second, showing surprising momentum.

One pedal cars

One thing's certain, drivers must like so-called one-pedal BEV driving, in which you can come to a complete stop without touching the brake. Each one I drove was set to max regen. I don't like this sudden, whiplash-inducing deceleration; it's like downshifting an ICE vehicle or releasing the go pedal on my 1964 Beetle. Most EVs let you tailor regen to suit your taste. I prefer a shift lever or knob with "B" mode setting, as seen in the ID.4, as this is relatively easy to adjust. But most of the Rally's EVs required several



The ID.4 offers drivers the option of using brake regeneration (B mode) or turning it off (D mode) with a twist of a switch (circle). The coming major software update for the platform will provide a true one-pedal driving in B mode where now the car continues to creep at the low end.

steps to locate and adjust energy recuperation.

Ford's Lightning is massive. But dip into the long pedal and it's a sudden energy drink. It goes like snot despite its enormous size and weight. At its rear, a big, and I mean it looks monumental under that body, independent suspension and electric motor route power to the rear wheels. Ford includes a large infotainment screen with an Etch-a-Sketch feature. It has a coloring book-like function where you can use your fingers to "paint" an image of a Lightning. **VWCA**



The Lightning's display screen dominates the dash.

Anniversaries are a big deal for a lot of people and become even more memorable as the first digit hits “5” or higher.

You live long enough, and these commemoratives become a reminder of how life is fleeting.

Like next year, when my wife no doubt will remind me of a special anniversary that starts with 5 (math double-checked).

Though I’m not one to make much of a fuss over such an event, this will be one to celebrate.

But anniversaries can slide for the math challenged: Thirty years ago in the July/Aug AUTOIST, I commemorated the 20th anniversary of my first car, a 1971 Beetle.

A story long forgotten but re-discovered while compiling this issue’s Retro AUTOIST items.

Alert readers will quickly see the problem of noting a 20th anniversary in the 21st year.

Sadly, the piece even opened with the “1972” date (corrected below)!

In the words of Bob Dylan, “Ah, but I was so much older then / I’m younger than that now.”

So cue the drum beat, and let’s take a look back at the 30th anniversary that now marks the awkward 51st commemoration of that exciting (for me) event.

June 21, 1971. Gasoline is less than 30 cents a gallon (adjusted for inflation, a mere \$2.10 in 2022). The country is being torn apart because of an unpopular war in Vietnam.

“Made in Japan is a cliché for “isn’t worth a damn.”

And the Volkswagen Beetle is the top-selling imported car in this country.

I had just finished my sophomore year at Bowling Green State University, where Beetles were everywhere, and I was working as an intern that summer for the Citizen-Journal, then the morning paper in Columbus, Ohio. (That newspaper would go under in 1985.)

And 21 years ago, on June 21, I picked up my first car, a sparkling new, 1971 standard Bug from Volkswagen North in Worthington, Ohio.

For fond memories, it ranks right up there with getting married and having children.

Join me, won’t you, for a trip down memory lane.

• Driving my grandmother, with whom I stayed that summer of ’71, back home for a visit with the folks. She would lurch forward unusually far with every shift despite my efforts to be as smooth as possible. “That windshield is awfully close,” she remarked. You got that right, Grandma.

• My Bug got a Super Vee stripe kit that covered the lower doors and the engine lid. More than once, I was asked: “Is that one of those souped-up VW’s?”

Well, not quite. “Souped-up VW” was like another oxymoron, “jumbo shrimp.”

• The black letters and numbers on a license plate with a yellow background was a perfect vehicle for the icon of the

day, the Smiley Face. Remember?

The plate number, M 17442, had a space between the letter and the numbers, and the black-on-yellow Smiley Face blended in nicely as a cordial hyphen of sorts.

That rusted plate hangs in my garage today, the Smiley Face faded after 20 years of perpetual grins.

• One of my assignments at the newspaper that >>

50¹ST

*An awkward anniversary invites
a trip down memory lane*



By Fred Ortlip ✉ VWAUTOIST@icloud.com

ANNIVERSARY

summer was to accompany a reporter to a traffic accident near downtown, a sobering experience that has always stuck with me.

A woman, who was said to be going alone to church, was driving a late '60s Beetle on a four-lane boulevard when a Cadillac of that period — we're talking a luxury liner on wheels — crossed the center line abruptly and struck the Bug head-on.

When we arrived at the scene, the Bug was in bad shape and blood was splattered everywhere. Like most drivers then, the woman wasn't wearing her seat belt and she never had a chance.

It was a sickening lesson for a 20-year-old on what can happen when things go wrong in a car. The driver of the Cadillac, who wasn't injured, as I recall, had taken her eye off the road momentarily and drifted over the center line.

To this day, I always feel more comfortable driving on the outside lane of a four-lane, undivided thoroughfare.

And I always wear my seat belt.

- One of the more satisfying memories of that summer was driving home from work, window down, on an exit ramp that had a high concrete abutment. The Beetle's distinctive exhaust note would reverberate off that wall, making it sound louder than it really was. What a great sound!

- Those front parking lights, mounted on the top of the fenders, were like mini-headlights for all the light they gave out.

- Rod Stewart singing "Maggie May" through that single radio speaker on the driver's side. Didn't Ferdinand Porsche invent monaural?

- Visiting a friend in Sandusky, Ohio, who worked for the newspaper there. The town got a downpour, and we went out hunting for photo opportunities on a flooded street. We found one with a young girl floating on a rubber raft, and the Bug in the background got its picture in the paper. Front page, I

think.

- A trip to Washington, D.C., in January 1973 for the inauguration of President Nixon, with three members of the campus newspaper. (An in-depth report on this appeared in the Nov/Dec 2020 *AUTOIST*, featuring recollections of the foursome.) Fifteen hours (one way) and four people in a Bug. Only a group of college students would do something like this.

We stopped in Bethesda, Maryland, to check in, then drove to the capital. We were stopped by a police officer waiving a motorcade of black limos through. Sure enough, there was one with the presidential seal on one of the doors. There were Dick and Pat Nixon in the back seat, partying away, we were sure. Well, maybe not; Dick looked a little stiff, no doubt worrying about a break-in at the Democratic headquarters in the Watergate complex.

This was January, and the drive home a couple of days

later, on the Pennsylvania Turnpike, was as precarious as they come. It didn't help that four people were emitting lots of carbon dioxide on the inside of a cold windshield. While Ann Hofbauer was doing her transcendental meditation chants in the front seat, I was reciting a colorful mantra of my own while wielding an ice scraper on the inside of the windshield.

- Another terrifying episode in this Bug: Driving from Toledo to Bowling Green down Interstate 75 in a terrible thunderstorm. The cross wind, (oh, yeah, those cross winds!) was playing big-league havoc with the Bug's handling, and it was all I could do to keep the car going straight.

Maybe you'll find this hard to believe, but the horizontal bar in the middle of the steering wheel was pointing straight up in this storm. I was in effect making a hard right turn for several miles while going semi-straight.

Meanwhile, the rain was going horizontal and the



The Smiley Face sticker has done its best to maintain a time-worn grin for more than 50 years.

wind was blowing water past the rubber in the vent window. Talk about scary. So what if the car floats.

- Then there was the winter I was driving on a snow-covered U.S. 23 in Michigan, passing a semi rather gingerly. For an instant the Bug wobbled on the snow and ice before recovering. Gulp.

But it was nothing in those days to just get in the car and go. Two pals and I took a trip from Ohio to Boston for spring break in '73. It was nothing to make 12-13-14-hour trips. You could fill the tank for less than \$3. (That's \$20 in 2022 dollars.)

- Northeastern Ohio has some beautiful scenery and rolling topography. In the days of the 70 mph speed limit (when written, 55 mph was the limit), you opened it up to maybe 80 going down one hill so you could build momentum for the climb back up. Hill climbing was a painful experience in a Beetle.

- It was downright humbling the first time to drive from Columbus to Charleston, West Virginia, in the summer of '72 to visit my future wife. The poor Bug just didn't like those hills.

We were youthful iconoclasts in those days, and the Beetle was as iconoclastic as any car on the road. So, when we made a trip to meet family members at the Detroit Athletic Club for Easter, the Beetle was not in its element among the two-ton Cadillacs and Lincolns.

And so it was with great and satisfying pleasure to watch the valet parking attendants argue over who was going to drive our orange Beetle down the ramp for delivery to its owner. You could sense the dropping of jaws among some of the staid members waiting for their cars. Or maybe that was how we perceived it. In a final anti-establishment send-off, we blasted off, hoping the Bug would be as loud and obnoxious as possible.

The greatest of all great ironies of this story? My future father-in-law was a Cadillac dealer!

- Denting the rear fender on a filling station curb by turning too quickly. The outraged driver turned roughly the color of the car.

- Trying to teach my future wife how to drive a stick shift in the football parking lot at Bowling Green. She graduated to second gear. Finally, on the odd trip, she would take over on an exit ramp, run

through the gears and get on the highway, then coast onto an exit ramp, depress the clutch and stop, letting me take over. Until one time, when she didn't stop in time and ended up exiting onto a residential street in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

"What do I do?! What do I do?! Oh, my God!" Her white-knuckled hands nearly formed a permanent imprint on the hard plastic steering wheel.

For the first few years of our marriage, one of the hard-fast rules was that one of our cars had to be an automatic. That finally fell by the way side. Today, she's mastered the stick quite nicely and drives one exclusively, albeit over-revving a bit after a stop when pointed uphill. (Her stick shift days ended permanently when we bought a Passat in 1997.)

- Doing "donuts" in the ice arena's parking lot on snowy afternoons. Not good for the front-end's alignment.

- At Bowling Green State, "BGSU" decals in two-inch block letters were popular. I certainly wasn't the first to do it, but the back window of my Bug had the BGSU decal with the S removed and the U spliced between the B and G.

University of BUG. Perfect.

- I have a vague memory of driving an acquaintance's '72 Bug with automatic tranny. How many people can say they've driven an automatic Bug?

- Getting in the Bug one late night in the dead of winter in Bowling Green, where the northwestern Ohio wind makes people painfully aware of the chill factor. It must have been near or below zero that evening. Would the Bug start? It groaned, like a 10-year-old boy on a winter morning when he's only dreaming that his mother just called him for school. But it started after several cranks. And ran just fine, of course. Heat? Never mind.

- In 1974, I got two extra speakers and a new, ill-fitting stereo installed. The radio stuck out about two inches from the dash while it pumped out the tunes through three speakers. What a sight.

After four years with our Bug, we impulsively traded it in for a new Volkswagen called a Rabbit. But we've never looked back in remorse over that move.

The good memories of a time 20 years ago will never go away. **VWCA**

2022 FRIENDS OF OUR CLUB

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

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PRESSING MATTERS

A Studebaker comes to the rescue in replacing a key part in old frontdrivers

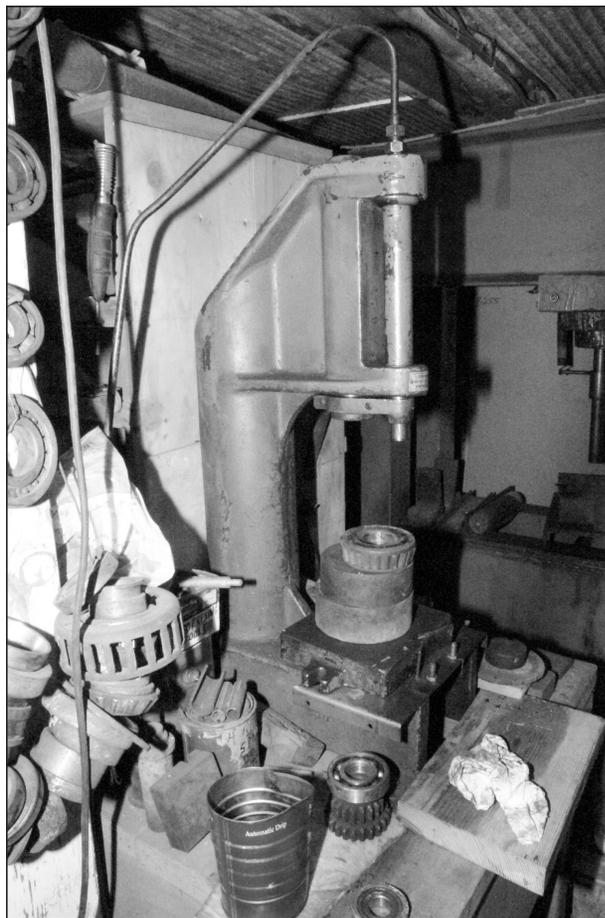
Those who motor in VW's first generation of water-cooled cars either just installed new engine and transmission mounts or need them. There are four. I'm focusing on just one — part No. 533-199-214 for the 16-valve Scirocco and 171-199-214H for eight-valve cars. It's atop the transaxle. It attaches to the transaxle's outer gear case and then to a unibody bracket below the battery tray. There's a metal-cased rubber donut or bushing; it simply doesn't last. When they fail, your VW goes from a smooth-running machine into what I call the death rattle — massive vibration. This is bad for you and your car.

And for added complexity, I'm going to discuss how one does this when there's a 16-valve twin-cam engine in your VW — namely the VW Scirocco 16V.

I've replaced my 1987 Scirocco's mounts two times. The car has 52,000 miles on it, and I've driven it about 5,000 miles over a 15-year span, but this isn't a matter of mileage. Mounts in eight-valve VWs tend to last longer than those in 16-valve models.

Simply put, the 16V's extra engine/tranny weight and underdeveloped factory mounts mean early death. No driving required.

The rubber bonding just sags or tears, letting the



Side view of the Studebaker hydraulic press.

engine tranny drop then hitting the mount's center eyelet that transmits engine vibrations through the car structure.

To replace this mount, you must lower the transaxle. I recommend you get an engine support bar. Place it above the engine, resting on the fender mounting area. Attach chains from it to the engine's two lifting tabs. You can place either a sturdy hydraulic floor jack under the transaxle or a transmission jack. Use one of them to gently lower the transaxle after you've removed the front and rear mounts, shift linkage, fuel distributor boot, front >>

By Cliff Leppke ✉ leppke.cliff@gmail.com

MOUNTS

exhaust hanger and battery cables. There's a ground connection from the negative battery cable atop the transaxle's mount bracket. Remove that wire too. Free the power steering hoses from their guides.

Loosen the right engine mount fastener but don't remove it. On the transmission, remove the bolt that attaches the mount to the car body. Gently lower the transaxle. Adjust engine-bar chain length. Let gravity help you. The reason I advise this upper support is an ounce of prevention. Should your jack slip, the engine/transaxle won't fall.

The transaxle mounting bracket is attached to the transaxle with bolts. On the five-speed version, they route sideways through the mount and fifth gear housing. You must lower the tranny just far enough to slide them out. Then you can remove the bracket.

Now here's where you have options. Watch your language too. Usually, the bonded rubber donut or bushing is called the mount, and it's inserted with a hydraulic press into the mounting bracket. Sometimes, VW repair shops call the bracket the mount. And it would be if VW sold it and the rubber item inserted into it as one assembly. It didn't.

Look at the old mount's bushing. Usually there's an arrow pointing to



'Driving' a Studebaker

The Studebaker hydraulic press that my father owned is a benchtop device with C-shaped form with pedal controls, perfect for fixing a VW's engine mounts, control arm bushings and wheel bearings. I employed it to install a new "bushing," as VW's service literature describes it, in my 16-valve Scirocco's transaxle mounting bracket. You'll find the instructions for replacing engine/transaxle mountings in the Bentley manual's Section 8 (manual transmission), pages 20 and 21. — Cliff Leppke



Both the 16-valve mount (above) and eight-valve mount (below) share the same diameter and width. Their mounting bushing/eyelet offsets, however, differ. The 16-valve has less at its front; more at its back. The eight-valve, in contrast, has no offset.

its top center. Mark that spot on its bracket, as your new mount must align the same way. What will confuse you or someone you hire to do this, is a new mount looks radically different from the old worn mount. The mounting hole on the old one usually migrates upward distorting or ripping the rubber leaving little if any space between it and the bracket's top — hence the vibration. A bad one has a big gap at the bottom. A new mount has the mounting hole toward its bottom with a large gap at its top.

For most people, the easiest way to remove the old mount from the bracket is cutting it. You take a hack saw, route it through a bushing hole and then saw your way through the bushing's metal case but not the bracket. This liberates the pressed-in mount, making it fairly easy to punch it out with a hammer and chisel. You can press it out if you have the proper spacers. I use an old mount (minus its rubber center), which I've cut and then compressed slightly with a hose clamp. So, keep your old mount for this option, especially if you botch installing the new mount. You can use the old mount to remove an errant new one without destroying it.

Employ the Studebaker press. The middle pedal rapidly moves

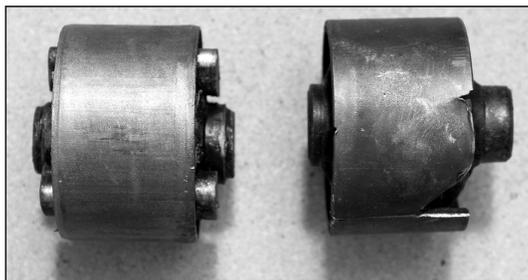
the hydraulic cylinder down — nice for getting things set. Then, you shift to the right pedal and slowly press the mount, with suitable spacer, into a properly supported bracket. The left pedal releases the cylinder. Because this press has foot controls, your hands are free to align your work.

This procedure works for the eight-valve cars I've mentioned but must be revised for the 16-valve Scirocco. That's because VW shoehorned this engine into the car with side mounts designed with an offset. VW moved both the engine and transaxle 5mm forward. Thus, the original mount has a larger gap at its back, thicker rubber buffer there and thinner one in front. These parts are obsolete.

Because this mount has the same diameter and width as the eight-valve car's (part numbers begin with 171). You can achieve that 5mm offset if you insert the eight-valve mount into the backside of the bracket, stopping 5mm short of its front. Brilliant. West Coast Roccas, westcoastroccos.com, offers this tip, but doesn't show how to achieve it. Dave at WCR says the rubber bushing must be 5mm forward, but it's the opposite. You leave about 5mm of the bushing projecting backward. Blame confusing mount lingo for this — some call the bushing and bracket the mount, whereas when you order a new one, the bushing is described as the mount. Furthermore, WCR's diagram depicts the older four-speed transaxle mounting bracket when you're looking for the five-speed transaxle's part diagram.

To achieve the desired offset, I mark a line on the bushing indicating 5mm inward on what will become the backside. I also measure the bracket's overhang with a caliper. When you're done, the mount should stick out the bracket's back.

If you do this properly, the eight-valve car's mount



Note the damage to the right mount, which was cut and chiseled to remove it from the bracket. The offset, the mounting metal piece you see protruding from its back, is 5mm or so more than the left one. The Scirocco's eight-valve mount has equal spacing front to back, while the 16-valve version moves the engine/transmission forward. It's not centered in the car's unibody bracket, though both vehicles share the same unibody. Key advice for installing the 16-valve engine into an 8-valve Mk1 Golf platform vehicle: Change these mounts and a lot more.

will fit the 16-valve car. The original mounts for either the eight-valve or 16-valve engines had buffer pads front and rear. They're the same width on eight-valve cars but thinner in the front and thicker on the back for 16-valve engines. Most new transaxle mounts/bushings feature a revised design supposedly eliminating the need for those fussy buffers. I've found you can still install the front thin one on a 16-valve car and do.

Everything sort of goes back to its original location,

reversing the drop-down process. Use caution when lifting the transaxle mount through its body receiver. If you've let things slip, altering the position of the mount versus the car body, it can wedge itself crookedly, causing much frustration.

Tips: Some shops will tell you to simply install eight-valve mounts in 16-valve cars without altering the spacing. Don't.

Options: Some places, such as West Coast Roccas, sell reinforced mounting bushings intended to prevent them from collapsing. Others sell polyurethane inserts meant to do much the same. I cannot say whether these measures are effective. Once upon a time, VW offered heavy duty mounts intended for motorsports. I found they caused much engine-related vibration through the car structure. So, I use the standard-duty mounts. You make the call.

And if you don't have a Studebaker handy, Harbor Freight's 20-ton H-frame shop press works. You can replace either the engine bushing or transaxle bushing without removing the engine or transaxle from the car, but only do one at a time! **VWCA**

► CORRECTION: The VW showing fender cuts that hinted of a four-door model was a 412, not 411 as described in the May/June AUTOIST.

The Frontdriver

BY RICHARD G. VANTREUREN ✉ rgvant@juno.com

The Passat name (and model) arrives

The Dasher-Quantum was followed by the “B3” evolution, first of the line built off a Volkswagen (as opposed to Audi) platform. Opening the hood showed the sedan was based off a stretched Golf platform, with a transverse front-engine layout. (Well engineered, B3s were later to be offered with the Syncro all-wheel-drive system.) This model was also the first to be marketed as “Passat” in the U.S.

The first Passat in our family was the jet black 1990 sedan purchased by Dad, who shortly left the driving to stepmom Mignon. She encouraged us to take it to the Florida Keys on family vacation, knowing a nice long run was good for a car that mostly made short trips into town, where she volunteered as a Pink Lady at the hospital.

In the waning years of my stepmom’s long life, she had retired to an assisted living facility, and her Passat sat parked most of the time. After she nearly lost it to scam artists praying on the elderly, we purchased the car, thus joining the B3 generation.

We would quickly replace the second battery, whose life was probably shortened from the lack of shade in

the facility parking lot. We enjoyed the 16-valve head’s peppy performance, and did not miss the Quantum in-line 5’s false “overheat” indications. We tolerated rather odd handling and road noise, finally tracing it to the low-mileage car’s left-side tires developing advanced rot.

The Florida sun had struck that side most of the day, while the right only got a little in the afternoons! New rubber all around, and we happily piled on tens of thousands of trouble-free miles on that black sedan, which came to revel in its new-found garage ... until the trouble started.

Eventually, we noticed it was taking longer and longer for the transmission to shift into moving the car; there were incidents of shifting to drive only to rev the engine with no results. We bit the bullet and invested \$4,000 (in the neighborhood of \$8,000 in today’s inflated dollars) to rebuild the gearbox and hoped for no further trouble.

▶ **THIRD OF FOUR PARTS:** Richard VanTreuren continues his historical review Passat ownership — including its early alternate identities Dasher and Quantum.

It was still shifting fine when we coasted to a stop on the way home from our local VW club’s meeting, the engine refusing to restart. Riding home with the tow truck, our local mechanic found the timing belt had broken. Failing well before the recommended change interval, the 16-valve head wound up costing serious dollars, owing to bending some valves when the belt went. (Years before, the timing tensioner pulley had split on Ol’ Blue, our ’75 Rabbit, in the middle of Nowhere, North Carolina, but we were able substitute a junkyard part and just re-install the timing belt.)

B3 Passats were sold here only as



We enjoyed the B3 Passat generation with the black '90 sedan, at right, and later the '93 VR6 Wagon. Having repurposed the original Dome garage, we'd added a carport. Missing the enclosure, we built a structure around the carport roof to create the garage in the photo.

FRONTDRIVER

a four-door sedan or a wagon, but spy photos were hinting VW was developing a six-cylinder mill for its flagship. Sure enough, from 1992, the 2.8-liter VR6 engine making 172 hp was available. As those started coming off lease, we'd decided the last Rabbit Pickup was ripe for a trade-in and found a '93 VR6 wagon at an Orlando dealer.

Should have taken it as an omen when it stranded us on the test drive, the dealer insisting it had just run out of gas. It happened again after we bought the car, with trouble traced to corrosion on the computer connector — and cured.

Unlike the black '90, the VR6 and its drive train were reliable ... only the car's luck was lacking. Commuting to and from the Kennedy Space Center, one drives on the Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge, on which even escaped farm animals are protected species. Somehow that B3 wagon was an animal magnet, as no fewer than three hogs, three deer and countless raccoons, possums and armadillos ended it all by charging out of the dark in deadly collisions with the car.

After so many impacts and rebuilds, the body shop couldn't keep it in line anymore, with front tires wearing unevenly. What could possibly have been different about that '93 Passat that set it apart from all our other VWs driven on the same road for decades? The fact that it was red, maybe? Aren't animals color blind? Do they see better in the dark?

We were still trying to figure that out when we joined the B5 generation.

How many VWs can fit?

The answer to last issue's perplexing photo (because inquiring minds want to know): The garage middle position, its longest, was reserved for the Quantum wagon. To its left the Pickup could be



pulled in with a little room to spare, as the garage



Debbie VanTreuren poses with the deep red '93 wagon. With leather interior, this was the dream car, factory equipped with all the optional equipment from earlier cars. With more than twice the horsepower of the Rabbit Pickup it replaced, travel was enhanced in the lap of powerful luxury and premium sound.



The '93 wagon gets a pose at Cape Canaveral, where the space shuttle crawler-transporter seen above will be used to move NASA's new Space Launch System, the most powerful rocket ever built, from the Vehicle Assembly Building to Launch Pad B. Pad A, in this photo, is now home to Space X.

door was 13 feet wide. What the photo does not show was a second garage door — in a similar dome alcove on the west side, off camera — whose 7-foot width allowed the short convertible to snuggle in. (O! Blue had spent a year in that “maintenance” slot hoping for a rebirth, but alas was killed by the impracticality of pouring more money into what would always be a 1975 Rabbit.) The small east garage door is seen in the upper left of the photo on the previous page of our two B3s. **VWCA**

Local Volks

Activities of VWCA affiliates

Summer in full swing

We've always said that participation in local chapter activities is a huge part of "enjoying your VW to the fullest." It is the purpose of this column, therefore, to highlight these events and activities, give the planners and organizers a little recognition for their efforts and perhaps inspire other chapters to try some of the unique and fun ways we enjoy our VWs.

If there is no local chapter in your area and you'd like to start one, contact our vice president, Tom Janiszewski at Volkstom@sbcglobal.net, or the club office at VWClub@aol.com.

Here's what some of the locals are up to of late:

BADGER BEETLES AUTOFUN CLUB, MILWAUKEE:

The Badger group held their annual Memorial Day Campout with dozens participating in a variety of camper styles. Their now-famous wheeled griddle was in use the entire weekend, with



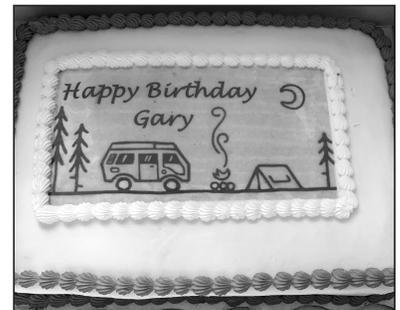
campers taking turns cooking their own meals. On Sunday, the business meeting and election of officers was held around the campfire.

NORTHEAST ILLINOIS VW ASSN., LISLE: NIVA members are getting their pre-pandemic schedule on track with the return of their annual Indoor Swap Meet. The event was quite successful according to the vendors — and the NIVA treasury. After an early June campout, the focus turns to putting the final touches on the annual Bug-Fest Car Show.

STATELINE VOLKS FOLKS, ROCKFORD, ILL.: A variety of Westfalia campers from StateLine, NIVA and mem-



bers-at-large convened at Lowden State Park in Oregon, Illinois, for a perfect weekend of camping. It also turned into a surprise birthday party for VWCA Treasurer Gary Hanson.



Check our website, VWClub.org, for listings of these and future events. You'll always find the latest updates there — and even some events that were announced too late to make the *AUTOIST* publication schedule. Occasionally, photos and videos of these events appear live as they happen on our Facebook page, facebook.com/vwclubofamerica.

And if your local chapter is planning an event, contact us at VWClub.org and we'll post it on our site.

Finally, this column is in need of a member to compile the activities of our local chapters and send them bimonthly to the *AUTOIST* editor. If you're the one, contact VWCA at VWClub@aol.com or directly to the *AUTOIST* editor at VWAUTOIST@icloud.com. **VWCA**

DRIVER'S SEAT

► FROM PAGE 3

via so-called badge engineering where a brand or model name lands on an existing vehicle or a new line often not geared toward the lofty aspirations associated with a revered marque — such as the Cadillac Cimarron — a fancy GM J car sold as the Chevrolet Cavalier. Then there's the 1970s mash-up called the Buick Opel by

Isuzu. It was neither a Buick nor an Opel, although it shared a GM T-body platform sold as the Chevy Chevette. And before we leave the General, remember the Daewoo-built Pontiac LeMans? You wonder what the folks at GM were drinking or thinking.

Rebadging predates World War II. For example, Nash bought and then mothballed, in 1924, the La Fayette automobile, an expensive V-8-powered car built in Indianapolis. Nearly 10 years later, Nash introduced a new lower-priced companion auto to compete with popularly priced makes. It chose Lafayette as the name for this vehicle — reviving the moribund prestige nameplate but placing it on a



Cliff Leppke, a regular AUTOIST contributor since 1993, has upgraded his wheels since getting his first car in the early '60s.



1950 Nash Rambler

budget car. By 1939, Nash dropped this line and later introduced an economy-minded unibody 600.

The marketing proposition that GM forgot with that Korean-made LeMans, according to Nash, was you shouldn't dilute your flagship line by introducing a low-priced car sharing its name. Or perhaps confuse consumers

and dealers by calling nearly all Oldsmobiles Cutlasses — it sort of dilutes the brand's cache.

Sometimes reviving an old moniker is the perfect way to reboot a vehicle idea such as Ford's Bronco SUV and/or enter a new vehicle segment such as Nash's 1950 compact Rambler. Charles Nash, the automotive executive, got his eponymous car brand by

acquiring the firm that had built the Rambler car. So, Nash the company resurrected the Rambler as a compact, an alternative to large cars. At the start, Rambler's focused on glamour with convertibles and hardtops. Later, wagons and sedans were added. In all, the name Rambler outlived the senior Nash, which was discontinued after 1957. AMC ultimately pulled the plug on Rambler as ad-woman Mary Wells likely concluded Rambler's economy-car image ultimately didn't jibe with AMC's desire to appear groovy.

VW acquires Auto Union

VW has its own history or histories of either reboots or rebadging. Perhaps the prime example is Audi. VW acquired Auto Union in the mid-1960s, when AU was known for its front-drive DKW motivated by a three-cylinder, two-stroke engine. Things changed. Auto Union signaled its shift to a four-cylinder, four-stroke engine by resurrecting a moribund pre-war nameplate — one of the four interlocking circles represented in the Auto Union logo: Audi. Ultimately, Audi lasted. And Audi developed at least two models VW adopted for its own purposes — the Audi 80/Fox as VW Passat/Dasher and Audi 50 as the VW Polo.

VW also acquired NSU (1969) and merged it with Audi/Auto Union. Then it pressed the pause button on NSU's rollout of a new front-drive car called the »

DRIVER'S SEAT

K70. After VW's meddling, the NSU K70 became unimaginatively the VW K70, with its NSU-developed engine, body and chassis. The rebadge didn't work from a sales standpoint.

A tad more confusing to VW collectors is the Fox, a name likely acquired when it bought NSU. In the USA, Audi's front-drive 80 wore the Fox badge from 1973 to 1979. This sly car evolved into the Audi 4000 by 1980 and VW Quantum in 1982. VW sold a variation of the Fox theme as the Dasher in the USA — Passat in Germany. Then several years later (1987), when VW opted to import a Brazilian-made car as its low-priced leader. It dubbed this newcomer the Fox.

While the Fox had promise but never an automatic transmission, VW's plans to reclaim its one-time status as the leading vendor of low-priced cars didn't pan out. One problem had nothing to do with the name and everything to do with currency exchange rates. VW couldn't maintain the original bargain price as trade relations with Brazil and the USA were anything but cordial. Plus, those who wanted an automatic or power steering had to look elsewhere.

VW rebooted the Beetle name and concept in the late 1990s, beginning with the Concept One show car. This time the VW struck like lightning — this was more than a reboot of a walnut-shaped car, it represented VW reviving its roots, as this new take on an old car spoke to Americans who thought VW



1976 Audi 80



Early '90s VW Fox

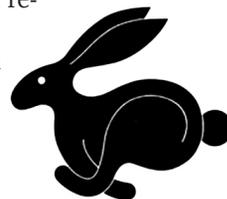


A lofty prediction for the 1975 Dasher family.

was about to pull out of the American market. It worked for a brief period, generating a lot of buzz and plenty of orders. VW ironically went back to its future with the silhouette that made it famous.

Later, VWoA's management, led by brand-marketing ace Kerri Martin, whom I met when she worked for Harley-Davidson, tried to pull off yet another retro revival with the introduction of the fifth-generation Golf. She asked for and got VW to ditch the Golf name and resuscitate its cute Rabbit logo for 2006-07. Yep, the Golf, which replaced the Rabbit in 1985, in what was

then a signal that this American-made VW had returned to the aesthetics and driving dynamics of its German kin, was pushed aside in an effort



to rekindle an imagined love affair with VW's hatchback. This didn't click. The idea, as Martin and her preferred ad agency Crispin Porter + Bogusky put it, was to price the Rabbit two-door low enough to woo buyers. VW cut the MSRP by chopping margins — both VWoA and its dealers didn't make much on selling it.

While the Rabbit redux didn't last, VW later offered a Rabbit-themed GTI special edition — it must have a large inventory of Bunny badges. In sum, the second Rabbit was a flop with a floppy-eared logo — although the car, not particularly thrifty with fuel,

topped many comparison tests — it had Rabbit-like spunk.

Less lovely by far was the VW Routan, a Chrysler minivan wearing different exterior panels — not different enough — and a sport-tuned suspension. VW's ad agency (CPB) recruited Brookes Shield, who in real life had postpartum depression. She, in a mockumentary style ad campaign, urged parents not to have babies to justify buying the latest feat in German badge engineering — the Routan minivan.

The baby maker notion proved as big of a dud as the vehicle itself. VW likely discounted the heck out of it and still couldn't move enough of them to make this venture viable.

Lest you think VW only swaps badges when it's hawking someone else's minivan, there's the tale of VW's SportWagen. Known as the Golf elsewhere, Americans first saw it wearing the gen-four Jetta's nameplate. This was a sensible switch, as the Jetta was, in the States, VW's best-selling model — so why not cater to the crowd? Therefore, the fourth and fifth-gen Golf wagons were Jettas here. By 2010 or so, VW refreshed the fifth-gen model, making the front look sort of like the new sixth-gen Golf — con-



2011 VW Routan

... fusing. For 2015, when VW introduced the seventh-gen Golf, the new SportWagen became part of the Golf family, which would later include an Alltrack version.

This brings us to 2022. VW in Europe has birthed a BEV, paying homage to the Microbus. This marks about a 22-year long tease, as VW has shown us several Bus-like concepts reviving the cab-forward, V-front, two-tone take on VW's venerable box on wheels. This idea seems right. People are pumped. Take the bus!

Now VW is going to rapidly gift us with yet more BEVs — Scouts. This time it's dipping into what

VWoA CEO Scott Keogh calls big-time Americana. So, Scout won't be operated through the VW brand. And Scout isn't part of the \$7.1 million VWAG committed to spend on U.S. on electrification and other efforts. VW is, umm, scouting for a U.S. Scout factory.

We're told we're getting an American-style pickup and SUV divorced of any associations with Things, Buses, Quattro or Iltis (VW's former military vehicle) and supposedly built for and by Americans ready to duke it out with Jeep and Bronco and maybe some used Toyota FJ Cruisers. Watch this one. VW certainly has the resources to pull this off, but its track record with its American-themed 1980s Rabbits and 2012 and beyond Passat leaves me with a >>



2017 Golf SportWagen Alltrack

DRIVER'S SEAT

Missouri attitude — show me. And for the moment, VW has nothing more than sketches and bullet points.

Mazda headache

VW's turbocharged engines perform well in new vehicles but often don't age well. In fact, VW even extended engine warranties due to fuel pump lifters or timing chains that caused serious engine damage.

VW isn't alone when it comes to problematic turbocharged cars. Mazda's 2.5-liter Skyactiv Turbos built through about 2020, are prone to head cracking. I learned about this when one of my readers, who bought one new, discovered a coolant leak. It turns out Mazda issued two technical service bulletins regarding coolant leaks; they're on the NHTSA's website — under coolant leaks — not cylinder head cracks.

What's wrong is the turbocharger/exhaust system stresses the cylinder head, causing it to crack. Mazda doesn't cover the full cost of the engine's repair should you have, say, 67,000 miles on its CX-9. That's 7,000 miles too many. To me, one expects a modern engine to live longer than this. Come on, Mazda, do the right thing — recall the cars.

More emissions cheats

Stellantis pleaded guilty to misleading regulators and consumers about the emission control systems in 101,482 vehicles. Certain FCA diesel vehicles, Ram 1500 trucks and Jeep Grand Cherokees skirted emissions regulations. They produce lower NOx emissions during federal tests and higher-than-permitted levels on the road. It will pay \$300 million, a sum far lower than what VW paid for similar violations. In this sense, Stellantis got a bargain.

Ford, meanwhile, will pay \$19.2 million over false advertising claims for its C-Max hybrids and Super Duty trucks. Ford overstated the fuel economy of its C-Max, a former darling of green-car enthusiasts. C-Max owners discovered its actual mpg was seven fewer than Ford's advertised estimate. And that meant carbon dioxide emissions were higher than

claimed. In turn, Ford reimbursed buyers for this deception. But the legal tangle with states over false advertising claims continued.

Added to this mix was Ford's promotion of its overly optimistic payload capacities for its Super Duty trucks.

\$40K Z car?

Nissan hosted dinner after the first track day of the MAMA event. It used that gig to present its re-designed Z car. The buzz is you can get this 400-hp ode-to-the-original's style for merely \$40,000. Yes, the triple gauge set atop the dashboard returns, too. Whether Nissan and its dealers will let you buy one at that price, I cannot say.

A return to the North Dakota farm

This spring (early May) I drove my 1983 Wolfsburg Edition Scirocco to Carrington, North Dakota, and back. It's a tad more than 1,400 miles round trip from my driveway to what's now my mom's place on a North Dakota farm.

The old Volks proved a relaxed and steady mover, racking up mile after mile with its subdued hum. Shift into fifth gear, put both hands on its large steering wheel and you'll get manual steering feedback few cars replicate these days.

The main reason for this year's trip, other than taking Mom to the Chieftain Motor Lodge/Convention Center for a Mother's Day spread, was fixing the north house's electrical issues, plus a four-way light switch and overhead lamp holder for the south house. The ranch-style flat-roof north house with a bomb shelter had lighting problems. For example, some didn't work because their circuits were never completed; my uncle built this place and then rushed his family into it. They set up housekeeping before finishing the punch list. And then my uncle died in a farm incident. So, you'll notice missing window and door trim, exposed wires (some hot, some not) and "dummy" electrical switches such as the never-connected sewing light.

Other items were frightening to say the least. Wall



The Chieftain was the perfect destination for a Mother's Day spread. A great place to check out a canoe (below) over the salad bar too.

plates were missing, outlet boxes had live wires but no receptacles, sometimes wires dangled from ceilings with bulb sockets hanging from them.

I found a set of modern wall sconces. This solved the living room's bare wire problem — four required, all rediscovered in the garage. Wire nuts, light sockets or wall receptacles and additional wiring fixed most problems. I even got the basement stairs light to illuminate. All good things, but the sump pump wasn't on my to-do list, and it should have been. A massive storm, after I left, pounded the place with more than three inches of rain, which flooded its basement.

Carrington has several sites worth the detour toward this part of North Dakota. The historic Foster County



Courthouse features a dome with curious ocular windows. It's a symmetrical Beaux Arts-style building with many Classical tropes. Those seeking postwar modernism should head to the Bessette GM dealership. It has its early 1960s low-slung roof showroom with Piet Mondrian panels. Exterior brickwork extends from the outside to the back of the showroom.

I cannot tell you how many GM dealerships were constructed with these low-slung salons. One could >>



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easily place them in front of an older garage to update its look. I've seen the residue of them in Milwaukee. Few have the Mondrian panel motif. GM's archivists couldn't tell me anything about this showroom style. My conversations with GM's reps, however, confirmed Cadillac's logo is called the Mondrian.

Look a few blocks south of Bessette and you'll see the Chieftain with its super-size, 24-foot "Big Chief" statue. Developer Jud Tracy built this motor lodge in 1963. It showcased his collection of American Indian artifacts, guarded by Chief with his hand raised as a "how" sign. A neon-lit totem sign and a museum-like lobby with Indian artifacts add exotic flair.

Perhaps the niftiest playful interior feature is the bar/restaurant's drum-inspired seating. Additional items include a canoe above the salad bar and booth seating under bent-tree limbs.

I found what looked like a 1950 Studebaker near Carrington's largely vacated downtown.

In June I returned to the Leppke farm for my father's funeral. This time I drove my 2009 VW Rabbit. I hit a deer just west of Fargo on I-94. This damaged the car's hood, right fender, bumper and right headlamp. Ugh!

I found time to drive my father's 1927 Buick Master Six, though. I gave my nieces and nephews rides in their grandfather's car. And along the way, I became an ace at shifting this antique vehicle's transmission. It doesn't have synchromesh and the gears aren't silent, but once you've got the low-speed engine drill and double-clutch knack, it's remarkably easy to drive. Much like that 2009 Rabbit, it gets around in top gear at absurdly low vehicle speeds. **VWCA**

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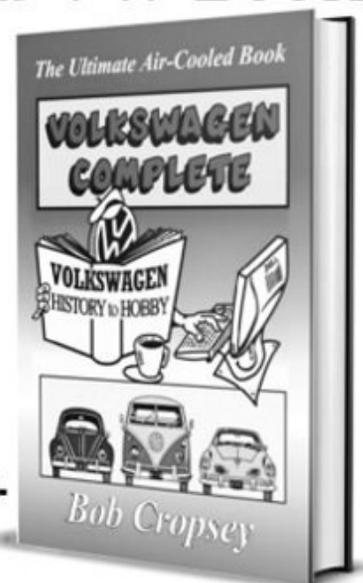
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NEW YORK: Ethan Wurster, Poughkeepsie

OHIO: Brandon Prince, Columbus

PENNSYLVANIA: Mike Lambert, Fairchance; Robert Hecht, Levittown

SOUTH CAROLINA: Ann Cartenuto, Summerville

TENNESSEE: Brandon Brown, Hendersonville

VIRGINIA: Erik Erdal, Winchester

WISCONSIN: Patsy Lee, Ellison Bay

Letters to the editor

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VW Toon-ups

BY TOM JANISZEWSKI ✉ volkstom@sbcglobal.net

