



# Autoist

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  **EV**

## ROAD-TRIPPING

*Kick back and enjoy the wait*



# Autoist

Since 1955

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## ABOUT THE AUTOIST

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# Driver's Seat

BY CLIFF LEPPKE ✉leppke.cliff@gmail.com

## A lifestyle shift: Clutches to crutches

**H**ave you driven a 1980s sport coupe donning a wheelchair logo dangling like fuzzy dice from its rear-view mirror? I have. Let me tell you something. I'd never thought I'd need crutches or walkers to get around. Things changed. It's possible several decades of Scirocco driving might be to blame. So too could be the moment last summer when a 1993 VW Corrado brake rotor fell on my left foot — smack dab on the big-toe joint. The doc says the rotor wasn't to blame, but I hadn't noticed major foot pain until that bad experience.

Instead, the problem was due to wear and tear in his opinion — possibly due to lots of clutch pedal pushing. In contrast, the right foot doesn't show the same troubles.

Thus, my latest adventure in VW motoring starts with my left foot. You see, my podiatrist removed a bone spur from it. The fancy medical words are toe-joint degradation with metacarpal joint trouble, leading to a rigid big toe and massive pain when wearing snug fitting driving/cycling shoes. This talon's medical imaging sported these big letters: VW. As in XR Foot 2 VW Left.

I think "VW" is medical speak for view, but this new VW in my life got me thinking about the other VW or VWs in my life — namely my Sciroccos. These vehicles employ a 1.8-liter engine mated to a close-ratio five-speed manual transmission with a sportier clutch featuring increased spring stiffness. If you

don't drive with the proper footwear, the resulting clutch pedal effort is tough on your toes; it pinches them. And possibly, says my podiatrist, over time (36 years of stabbing that pedal) it's rough on your lower digits. I've gone through several clutch cables because their nylon cable guides kink due to the stress.



The 16-valve Scirocco, FYI, has a clutch-pedal assist spring which lightens effort — and a different clutch cable. The folks in Wolfsburg likely knew their King-Kong effort pedal was a deal breaker.

So, on March 2, 2023, my surgeon performed his magic. In turn, he told me afterward, not before — no walking on that foot, no driving with

it either. The foot, by the way, throbbed intensively after the meds wore off. Its size increased, threatening to summon the USA's defense system — it looked like a Chinese spy balloon.

This guy might be a good surgeon, but he's not a great communicator. Despite the fact I told him my car has a manual transmission, he didn't warn me of the recovery restrictions such as you must prop up the foot to reduce post-surgery swelling. Great!

So, a week after the procedure, I motored to my follow-up appointment driving my bronze star of lousy cars, my wintertime 1984 Scirocco motivated by a close-ratio five-speed manual transmission, with my right foot commanding its movement like a one-legged organist.

►TURN TO PAGE 29

# Small Talk

VW + AUDI AT A GLANCE

## NEW & IMPROVED

**ID.7 TAKES A BOW:** The Passat-like ID.7, based on the ID.Aero concept, lost its colorful camouflage veneer when the new EV was officially introduced in April, resembling a cross between a crossover and a sedan. The fastback



model represents one of the 25 new EV models VW says it will introduce in the U.S. by 2030. Jeffrey Lear, product manager for EVs in the U.S., said the car would offer a full panoramic sunroof and a 14-speaker Harman Kardon infotainment system as well as adaptive damping that reads the road ahead for a smoother ride and be targeted to an older, more upscale demographic. It'll arrive in North America next year.

## EV NEWS



**ID.2all:** Retro gauge cluster skins inspired by vintage Beetle and Mk.1 Golf models were part of the reveal of VW's ID.2all, a compact EV concept targeted for Europe with a budget €25,000 price tag (\$27,600) and 280-mile range.

**ID.BUZZ:** VW has confirmed that 2023 will be the summer of love for the ID.Buzz in the U.S., and

the model will be the brand's extended wheelbase version, not the smaller five-seater version in Europe. At press time, VW.com wasn't yet accepting orders but offered customers a chance to receive updates.

**NEW POWERTRAIN:** VW unveiled its new 210 kW MEB (modular electric drive) powertrain, the brand's next-generation gear that is expected to improve the performance and range of ID models.

**BATTERY COSTS TARGETED:** VW will target the cost of battery cells by investing in mines, meeting half of its own demand and selling to third-party customers, a company spokesman told Reuters. VW

wants its battery unit PowerCo to become a global battery supplier.

## AWARDS

**ID.BUZZ:** In a competition among the latest cars from Europe, the U.S., China, Japan and Korea, VW's ID.Buzz is the won the Best Car of the Year contest announced in the U.K. in March. The Toyota GR86 won the silver medal and the Nissan Ariya took the bronze.

## COMPANY NEWS

**BEV GROWTH:** VW reported delivering 141,000 battery electric vehicles worldwide by the end of the first quarter this year, an increase of 42% year-over-year.

**BRAND EXPANSION?:** Cupra, a VW Group sub-brand, has been market testing the possible entry into the U.S. market, SEAT Cupra CEO Wayne Griffiths said.

## RECALLS

**ATLAS MODELS:** More than 143,000 Atlas models from 2018 to 2021 and Atlas Cross Sport models from 2020 are potentially impacted by a recall in which passenger occupant detection systems "deactivate the front passenger air bag even when the seat is occupied," according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

# Retro Autoist

FROM THE VWCA ARCHIVES

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## 10 YEARS AGO

**MAY/JUNE 2013:** Volkswagen says it will offer iPhone users a convenient way to use their device in a new Beetle, specifically the iBeetle, the first model line from VW in which the iPhone will become an integrated component. The hookup will be offered as an app or as a standard feature of the new iBeetle and iBeetle Convertible. Both models will be launched in early 2014.



**MAY/JUNE 2013:** Coinciding with Earth Day, the Jetta Hybrid has been named by Kelley Blue Book's KBB.com as one of its 10 Best Green Cars of 2013. The gas-electric model (which was built from 2013 to 2016) was praised for its combined 45 mpg and sub-\$26,000 price tag.

## 20 YEARS AGO

**MAY/JUNE 2003:** Richard Van Treuren, whose first car, a 1975 VW Rabbit, helped launch a long association with the VWCA, celebrated his 25th anniversary as an AUTOIST correspondent with a cover story. "So I welcome you, gentle reader, to our next 25 years," he wrote. "May we both live and prosper well into the twenties." Technically, his first full year was 1978 after a debut column was published in Nov/Dec 1977. So five more years to go, Rich. Enjoy new Taos (see Page 22).

## 30 YEARS AGO

**MAY/JUNE 1993:** The entry level VW Fox, built in Brazil, is history after this year, *Car and Driver* reports. The Fox will be replaced by a stripped-down Golf, which will hold down the entry-level fort until a new car arrives in 1995.

**MAY/JUNE 1993:** *Automobile Magazine* has selected the VW Corrado SLC as one of its best buys among performance cars, saying, "it's a winner in all respects."

**MAY/JUNE 1993:** At the Geneva Auto Show, VWoA President Bill Young said the company still wasn't sure whether the Golf would be sold in the United States with the new VR6 engine, *AutoWeek* reports. (*Postscript: It was.*)

## 40 YEARS AGO

**MAY/JUNE 1983:** Letter to the Editor: "I am writing to ask where you obtained all the derogatory information to give you the nerve to run down the Beetle as you did in your Jan/Feb column. For your information (and I believe you need it), the Beetle and Bus types with air-cooled engines are real VWs. The Rabbits are an aborted afterthought built to compete with Jap junk dealers."

## 50 YEARS AGO

**MAY 1973:** Rumors are circulating on both sides of the Atlantic that Volkswagen plans to establish manufacturing facilities in the U.S. In some business circles the word is being spread that VW is in talks with American Motors Corp. regarding the lease or purchase of some of AMC's unused production facilities. (*Postscript: VW moved into a former Chrysler plant in Pennsylvania in 1978 and built cars there until 1987.*)

## 60 YEARS AGO

**JUNE 1963:** Elden Brown, 56, accidentally drove his car into 30 feet of water in Lake Ouachita in Arkansas and then swam back to shore — towing the car behind him. Brown's Volkswagen did not sink immediately, so he jumped in the water and started to tow it to shore, his wife Ann, 54, sitting in the front seat. The car finally sank in about 3 feet of water. Mrs. Brown scrambled out unharmed.



# HOW AN ID.4 TACKLED A 765-MILE TREK

It's no secret that one of the major stumbling blocks to the mass adoption of electric vehicles in the USA is one of the most quintessentially American experiences of car ownership: The Great American Road Trip!

I can wax poetically all day about how modern EVs have enough range and how there are sufficient chargers available to road-trip in an EV, but I thought I'd go one better and share the same trip I've made in both a gas-powered car and an EV, my Volkswagen ID.4.

The trip: a 765-mile voyage from Denver to Las Vegas. Let's look at how long it's "supposed" to take,

and how long it really took me in both a gas car and an EV.

Google Maps tells us this trip should take about 11 hours. Google, of course, assumes a long continuous drive with no stopping, so I take that as a theoretical ideal rather than a target.

Spoiler alert: there isn't going to be any shock ending or "A-ha!" moment where I announce "amazingly, it was actually faster in the EV!" Of course it wasn't. Charging an EV, even at the fastest chargers, takes longer than filling a gas tank. The questions I hope you're asking at this point are "how much longer did it take?" and "could I put up with that extra time on

By Todd Allcock ✉ [tallcock@aol.com](mailto:tallcock@aol.com)

a few road trips a year?” The answers to those questions might help convince you that you’re ready to look at an EV like the ID.4 the next time you’re in the market for a car.

First, let’s look at my last gas-powered drive to Las Vegas, back in March 2019. We hit the road in a rented Hyundai Santa Fe, a car with a 29 highway MPG rating (we got more like 25) and 19-gallon gas tank. This gave us nearly a 500-mile range and would allow us to drive the 765 miles to Vegas with only one fueling stop.

While we often talk about range being one of the greatest advantages gas cars have over EVs, any parent can tell you that a car full of kids isn’t likely to drive from full to empty without a few extra stops along the way, so we stopped more often than the car needed to for bathroom breaks and snacks. Four stops in all, including an hour at Beaver Taco in Beaver, Utah (highly recommended!) for dinner. Lunch was a 12-minute drive-thru/eat on-the-road meal from Carl’s Jr., the only fast-food chain at the time that offered plant-based burgers for my vegetarian kids.

Total travel time, 12 hours and 33 minutes: 11 hours and 5 minutes of drive time (nice prediction, Google!) and 1 hour and 27 minutes stopped, including a whopping 11 minutes at a gas station to refuel. Since buying an EV, I’ve never made that trip as quickly again.

British comedian, actor, podcaster and EV evangelist Robert Llewellyn often jokes that the range of his EV only has to exceed the range of his bladder. At my age, stopping every two hours or so is pretty much a necessity, so if the charging stops aren’t much longer than the time it takes to use the bathroom and grab a coffee or soda, there will be few downsides to traveling by EV vs. a gas car. Sadly, EVs aren’t quite there yet, but they’re getting closer. Most charging stops are still around 30 minutes to the recommended 80%

► **PREVIOUS PAGE:** The Electrify America station at Green River Coffee in Green River, Utah. Last chance for electrons and window washing for 108 miles.

level, not the 5-10 minutes of a gas-filling stop, and with range of about half of a comparable gas-



No trip from Denver to Vegas is complete without a stop at Beaver Taco in Beaver, Utah.

powered car, you need to stop more often.

In August 2022, the kids and I decided to crash another of my wife’s conferences in Vegas. We set off a little before 10 a.m. and drove 2½ hours to Greenwood Springs, Colorado, to grab a charge at the Target store, use the restrooms and send the kids off to shop for whatever teenaged girls shop for. Thirty minutes later, we were back on the road heading toward the kids’ favorite pizza place for a late lunch/early dinner in Grand Junction — Pablo’s Pizza (also highly recommended!).

A cardinal rule in EV road-tripping requires that you should never stop to eat anywhere you can’t also take the opportunity to charge. Arriving in Grand Junction, we didn’t break the rule, but we did bend it a little. Pablo’s isn’t near a fast charger, but it’s »

## ID.4

near a public library in Grand Junction that operates an old 25 kw DC charger that would take about two to three hours to fully charge the car.

We only needed enough of a charge to make it to our next stop, Green River, Utah, so I opted to support the library and pay \$8 for a charge while we ate at Pablo's, rather than eat and then immediately stop again at a faster station and sit around for another 20 minutes or so right after stopping for lunch. The library did the trick, giving us more than enough of a charge to drive the 90 minutes to Green River and charge again.

Green River was a mandatory stop to charge up before crossing the 108-mile charging desert of Interstate 70 between Green River and Salina, Utah, a no-man's land with no services; no gas stations, no restaurants, no retail stores and certainly no EV chargers!

The only hiccup of the trip was bad timing — we didn't make it to Beaver Taco for a late dinner before it closed at 9 p.m., arriving about 15 minutes too late, and decided we'd hit it on the way out of Vegas on the trip home. So, dinner was leftover Pablo's pizza, and we drove toward Vegas without any fur-



Why fly to Vegas when you can view vistas like this?



A stop at the Electrify America station at a Richfield, Utah, Walmart store.

ther issues.

As expected, the total trip time was longer than the gas-powered trip in the Hyundai. We kept the speed on the trip between 75 and 80 mph, vs. the 80-85 mph we drove the Hyundai. The total driving time was 11 hours and 43 minutes, and we spent 3 hours and 38 minutes stopped on the trip, (including the hour and a quarter at Pablo's for lunch) for a total trip time of 15 hours and 21 minutes: 22.5% (or nearly three hours) longer than the length of our gas drive three years before.

Since that trip, we've also done a Denver-to-Salt Lake round trip, and a Denver to Omaha, Nebraska, round trip,

and the electric time “penalty” vs. driving a gas car seems to stubbornly stay between 20 and 25% with the ID.4, so I'd suggest that's a good approximation to use if you're trying to quickly estimate how long your usual road trip times might increase were you to make the transition to electric in a Volkswagen ID.4.

Alternatively, you might consult any number of EV route planning apps or websites to estimate road trip time in an ID.4. You can see my overview of some of these on Page 24. **VWCA**





## DIAGNOSTICS

was regulatory (emissions compliance) and other was a marketing necessity: a competitive warranty/maintenance plan. I asked VWoA's experts to share the largely untold story of this first foray into computerized car cures. The answer was no answer, as those who developed and used this system have either retired or expired. Due to this roadblock, I consulted VW's annual reports and sale literature, *Consumer Reports* and Petersen's third-edition *Volkswagen Book*. *CR* reported in June 1966 "rumblings" from its subscribers indicated VW's legendary service developed a "leak below the waterline" with long waits and high prices. VW dealers, argued *CR*, are "selling more vehicles than ever before (while) their service facilities appear sorely taxed."

VW's 1968 Annual Report said its worldwide sales and service organization expanded to about 8,800 dealers and service centers. Plus, a "remarkable technological development occurred" with the introduction of the VW's diagnostic service system, allowing fast and accurate vehicle operating checks.

The next year, it claimed VW Diagnosis, a service-center system, was available to customers in all export countries. Thus, VW dealers were "equipped with the latest technical equipment for prompt and excellent customer service." This was important because VW's U.S. dealer throughput was high and getting higher. *Consumer Reports'* April 1970 Auto Issue suggests VW developed a life preserver. It said VW's 1970 warranty is worth mentioning: buyers are promised free diagnostic checks every 6,000 miles for the first 24,000 miles. Dealers, it added, were "told to install special diagnostic equipment."

VW Diagnosis-branded dealer service was efficient and cost effective. It supposedly caught problems earlier than traditional methods, assuring VW drivers low-cost dependable transportation. This accurate service system threw a monkey wrench into the ever-growing numbers of independent import repair shops.

Existing and future emissions standards mattered,



The late 1960s saw VW's expansion of its worldwide service organization.

too. VW's 1973 Emission Control System Warranty booklet explained how to keep this warranty valid. Dealer service was key. The five-years or 50,000 miles coverage required: oil changes at 3,000-mile intervals, valve adjustments, adjusting dwell angle and spark timing every 6,000 miles, replacing fuel filter at 12,000 miles while inspecting or replacing the distributor cap, rotor, breaker points and spark plugs.

And we should not forget the mid-1960s warranty wars. Chrysler expanded its powertrain warranty to five years/50,000 miles. VW's 1966 warranty was six months or 6,000 miles. Perhaps the most aggressively advertised beefy warranty was American Motors' "fix anything" 1972 Buyer Protection Plan. It covered, for 12,000 miles or 12 months, nearly everything on the vehicle, even wear items including wiper blades.

### VW's shifty diagnosis branding

VW branded dealer service in several, seemingly, baffling ways. VW's 1970 Karmann Ghia brochure said its new Diagnosis System (shown in an inset with a "sensitive" oscilloscope) now in dealer diagnostic departments, was a man-machine interface designed to make owning the glamorous Ghia less

exciting — a drama-free vehicle service, which a 1972 Squareback brochure called VW Diagnosis or Medi-car — that's Medicare without the "e." By 1973, VW's Computer Diagnosis System provided four free diagnoses with each new vehicle. Plus, VW offered a two-year/24,000-mile warranty.

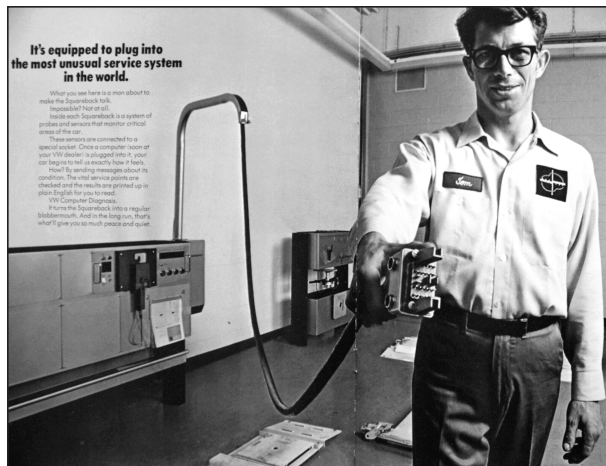
For 1974, VW introduced the Volkswagen Owner's Security Blanket with Computer Analysis. Diagnosis morphed into the psychologically pleasing Analysis. This bumper-to-bumper coverage was 12 months or 20,000 miles. The 1975 Rabbit owner's manual says the Blanket covered wear items such as brakes and spark plugs. Engines and transmissions, moreover, were warrantied for 24 months or 24,000 miles. Computer Diagnosis/Medi-car became Express Care Service. VW promised a 30-minute wait or less at its service centers. Security Blanket ads eventually dropped the words "with Computer Analysis." Regardless, the 1975 Beetle brochure encouraged owners to "bring your VW to our computer."

## The diagnostic test procedure

OK, you say, VW's service/warranty marketing jargon was confusing. How did VW's integrated test gear work? It began by your dealer leasing the computer console and providing tech training. Additionally, VW's setup required needed additional test tools, which talked to the computer. One was an exhaust gas analyzer.

Now, you headed to your VW dealer where the service adviser wrote a service ticket. Then, your car went to the VW-Diagnosis stall. The tech adjusted tire pressures and attached a wheel alignment mirror to the front hubs. After bouncing your front bumper a few times, he turned on the alignment projectors, which eventually illuminated the measuring plates.

After this step, the tech attached the console's umbilical cord to the test car's test socket. VW vehicles had a spark sensor (it triggered the timing light).



A Type 3 computer diagnosis plug.

## When it comes to helping your car live longer, there is nothing like it. VW Medi-Car.

Officially, we call it the Volkswagen Diagnosis Service.

It's our very own exclusive service checkup. And it helps us make sure that the car you buy from us will live a long, healthy life.

Let us explain. Using special diagnostic equipment, our trained VW diagnosticians can now find the kinds of little troubles that normally wouldn't have been noticed until they become big troubles.

Like what? Well, suppose the resistance in one of your spark plug connectors is too high.

If you knew about it, it would cost you only a few cents to replace.

But if you didn't, it could go on to foul up the spark plug, damage the piston and other connecting parts, and lead to an expensive repair bill.

The best mechanic in town could miss a problem like that. Our diagnostic equipment doesn't. The point is now you don't have to worry about those things.

You get 4 of these checkups free when you buy a new Beetle. Plus, one free maintenance.

You also get something else that will ease your mind.

The Volkswagen 24/24 Warranty\*.

Which means if you follow our VW maintenance schedule, and if a problem due to defective material or workmanship at the factory is spotted during the first 24 months or 24,000 miles whichever comes first, the repair won't cost you a penny.

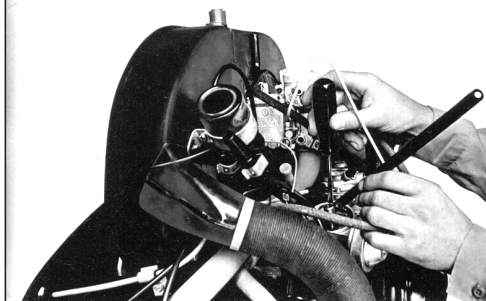
That's because during that time, whatever our diagnostic equipment or mechanics find that is covered by our warranty gets fixed free.

And that means parts are free and labor is free.

We're the only car maker who gives you a 24/24 Warranty and 4 free checkups to back it up.

We figure the least we can do for a person who buys an economy car, is to make sure it doesn't wind up costing him a fortune in repairs.

\*see specifications page.



confirmed the oil level. For each visual check, as well as the dynamometer readings, data were transmitted to the computer by manually pressing hand-control buttons.

The computer came into direct use for step 18, as it ran a battery voltage check, reporting its findings on the "measurement" display. Lights indicated >>

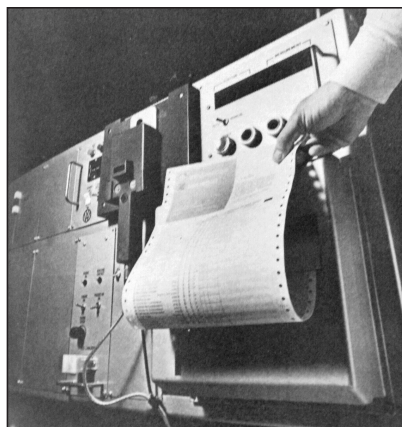
# DIAGNOSTICS

whether the test was positive or negative. During the 74-step sequence, the computer checked battery voltage, voltage under load, stoplight function, battery electrolyte level (sensor at battery), turn signal operation and rear window defogger. It also checked oil temperature, starting current, each cylinder's compression, dwell angle, charging voltage/current and front wheel alignment.

It's likely the computer confirmed cylinder compression indirectly by looking at electrical properties. For instance, as the starter turns the engine, you'd expect changes in current reflecting each cylinder's compression. VW's computer looked at battery/starter wiring sensing points. Thus, the computer with data card could calculate compression

— much like today's onboard diagnostics find engine misfires via crankshaft sensor signals.

Should one suspect a misleading computer code, the umbilical cord could be inserted in the



Seventy-four steps later, you had a report.

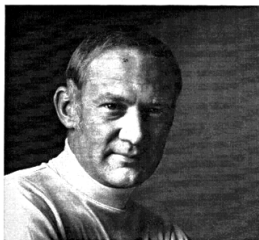
console so the computer to test itself. If your VW didn't have the diagnostic socket, a diagnostician used adapter cables and then ran Computer Diagnosis.

After the 74 steps were completed, the computer printed the results on paper. It showed code numbers. If an item had a minus sign, the tech determined what was wrong and wrote the correction required in the space provided.

From 1972 through 1977, all VW schematics I've seen show test sockets for Computer Diagnosis. I spot-checked the 1978 Rabbit — that model had no test socket. VW's 1978 Annual Report says it launched a new VAG Service System. This necessitated the development of a new generation of easy-to-operate test devices suitable for "all workshop bays." It shows a Siemens VAG 2000 unit with what looks like a floppy disc drive. It's portable, perhaps signaling the fixed-location VW computer console with other gear had outlived its short era.

Regardless, during the early 1970s, VW appeared to have gone much further than any other carmaker to provide better car service. Unlike today's cars with onboard diagnostic ports, VW's Computer Diagnosis, or Analysis, used an outboard computer attached to the vehicle's test socket. And like TV's Bob Newhart in his 1970s sitcom role as a psychologist, your car could tell you how it felt. **VWCA**

**"After our first Moon landing, I resolved I would never publicly endorse any product or service unless I sincerely believed in it."**



Apollo 11 Astronaut, Buzz Aldrin, discusses the Computerized Self-Analysis system in every 1972 Volkswagen.

"Everything after a Moonwalk is a letdown. You just can't top it. So instead, you adjust. You adjust to a world that's a far cry from perfection."

Or at least the kind of perfection that took Buzz Aldrin to the Moon and then brought him back within a quarter mile of an aircraft carrier carrying the President of the United States.

Then it's over and there he is. With a Doctor of Science degree from MIT and a walk on the Moon under his belt, in a world, that at times, seems absolutely chaotic.

Then, something comes along that makes a great deal of sense to him. And he becomes enthused:

"In analogy with the manned space flight programs, past, present and future, which pioneered computer check-out systems, the present VW system compares with the early Mercury flights of Shepard, Grissom and Glenn."

Volkswagen's Computerized Self-Analysis system: If you own a 1972 VW, it means getting the most advanced automotive check-up there is.

"The car, truly, is wired along the same principles as a space craft." (Nothing like asking the man who manned one.)

In its simplest terms, it's a network of check points and sensors throughout the car; each sensor reporting the condition of various key points in the car to one central socket.

The socket, when plugged into a computer, which will be at

VW dealers starting later this year, will actually report the condition of your car directly to you.

Altogether, 60 vital service points will be checked. The results will then be printed out on a sheet of paper, in plain English, for you to read.

"Keeping that print-out sheet after each check-up is like checking in with Mission Control when you're 200,000 miles out in space. It gives you a nice, secure feeling."

It also gets you home quicker.

For instance, to check cylinder compression the conventional way today, a mechanic has got to do the following: remove each spark plug, insert a gauge, crank the engine, take a reading, make a decision and then put each spark plug back. At top speed, the procedure takes 10 minutes and 40 seconds for four cylinders.

With the new VW system, it takes 60 seconds.

So there you have it.

Instead of a mechanic telling you what's wrong with your car, now your car and your dealer's computer can tell you.

It took Volkswagen 7 years and enough money to develop and market an entirely new automobile to come out with Computerized Self-Analysis.

Why such a concentrated effort on service rather than, let's say, a new, longer, lower Beetle?

Basically for the same reason Colonel Buzz Aldrin decided to publicly support it.

The reason is known as progress.

Postscript: Earlier this year, Volkswagen felt it had something advanced enough to show, not only to a man who walked on the Moon, but also a man who was intimately familiar with the subject of computerized check-out and testing.

After a series of meetings and after seeing the system in operation and after learning of the plans to bring in the computers starting later this year, Colonel Aldrin's response, very simply, was: "I'm impressed."



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Apollo astronaut Buzz Aldrin liked VW's moon-shot service strategy.

## WOLFSBURG EDITION SCIROCCO



# STILL DRIVING LIKE IT'S 1983

For the 1983 model year, VW revamped its thinking about its American lineup. For the most part, VW let the domestically manufactured Rabbit/Golf become flaccid and aesthetically akin to the mini-Oldsmobile 98, with its plastic-chrome trim and mouse-fur velour fabrics. For further insult, VW used color-coordinated interior bits, such as red window crank knobs and powder-blue steering wheels. VW also placed more emphasis on fuel sipping diesels, which spoke to relevant Malaise Era concerns, while ignoring the sporting Teutonic traits that made a new generation of VWs so amazing. Remember the AUTOIST's Oil Burner column?

Meanwhile, in the fatherland, VW hopped up the

Golf with its groundbreaking GTI treatment, which also shared its fast bits with the speedy, for-the-time Scirocco. Then in the fall of 1982, VW did the unexpected. It ditched the neutered sport-themed Rabbit S and introduced a swift and agile American-made GTI. It had proper sport seats and an emission-compliant, yet beefy 1.8-liter 90-hp engine. The close-ratio five-speed manual transmission let drivers stir the mill. Suddenly, VW's econobox became the *sui generis* hot hatch, albeit still saddled with U.S.-source flimsy interior/exterior hardware.

Then, mid-model year, VW revved up the Scirocco with an exciting Wolfsburg Edition makeover — the GTI's sporting chassis/engine/tranny treatment. »

By Cliff Leppke ✉ [leppke.cliff@gmail.com](mailto:leppke.cliff@gmail.com)

## SCIROCCO

This car's standard 13-inch tires, however, couldn't beat the GTI's low-profile 14-inch tire/wheel combo — unless you scored the special-edition production milestone California model with its racy body cladding. Now, the U.S.-spec coupe emphasized spritely performance instead of high EPA-estimated miles per gallon. Make no mistake, the fastest production VW yet (for the USA), the 1983 Wolfsburg Edition Scirocco, was still economical to operate; it wasn't a gas hog.

VW was hot stuff. The original GTI's thrilling demeanor still attracts enthusiasts, but the nifty Scirocco seems largely forgotten, unless it's the later 16-valve version with more oomph, a louder exhaust and even quicker reflexes due to revised springs, dampers and steering ratio. I'm still driving like it's 1983. I'm fine with that; the now-vintage Scirocco is a cooperative road-taming tool. The engine is smooth, responds promptly to the throttle and this subcompact car tracks well. Yet, I'm finding more people these days have questions about motoring my museum.

Here's some of them:

### ► Is hypermiling, I mean, racking up 350,000 miles on your VW, a hobby?

Strange question. Sure, I consider VW's small world a hobby. But driving one for 35 years (bought it in 1988 in Mesa, Arizona, when the odometer registered a paltry 51,000 miles), and some 300,000 miles isn't a quixotic quest to join an automotive "frequent flier" club. But it's a time capsule from the era when MTV on cable TV ran music videos with plots from a phone book. Remember

phone books? Remember MTV?

This Scirocco grew with and on me. When a car behaves this faith-

fully, reliably and smoothly, you trust it, care for it and drive it. It has the kind of vibe you get when watching Barry Levinson's "Diner." There's a sincerity to his film you don't find in the more widely accepted "American Graffiti." Plus, the enduring diner in "Diner" has characters who drive cars. Sure, there's a foolish moment with a Triumph, but the movie's characters interact so darn honestly that the cars and the actors seem perfectly melded.

While I consider the Scirocco an enjoyable pastime, it's not exactly a leisure-time activity. I wrench on it to go places mentally and physically. Hemmingway wrote great novels about his hobbies, and my Mars Red Scirocco is my great long, short story. Unlike Californian Albert Klein and his

1963 "super" Beetle that he drove for about 34 years and 1.6 million miles, going through seven engines and three transmissions, I haven't traveled as far or through so much machinery — still running the same engine and transmission as delivered in 1983. Neither has been rebuilt.

I've met a person who had a 2003 Honda Civic. He considered motoring past 300,000 miles a hobby. He devised excursions simply to pile on the miles. Then, he asked for updates on my car's mileage because he was hellbent on beating it. He did — sort of. His car fell victim to an old Honda engine trouble rather early in life, the car's oval cylinders, sucking a quart of oil every 900 miles. In his race to best my mileage, his car's engine went south in an Exxon Valdez untentious mess. He wouldn't fix the "icky" piston oil-control rings (didn't know there were four of them) but paid for a paintless hood repair — just months before the car's demise. And he motored without a rear floor due to rust — just put a scrap of wood over the hole. The potential for carbon monoxide poisoning, less crash protection and air pollution were just fine



► **PREVIOUS PAGE:** Cliff Leppke's 1983 Mars Red Scirocco is posed on the checkered-flag grid at Road America raceway in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin.

to him — all he wanted was those 300,000-plus miles.

That isn't my kind of hobby. The odometer's numbers aren't the reason I keep my Scirocco rolling. Instead, it's the car's Teutonic attitude. It's fun to drive.

► **What's your secret sauce?** My list of long-life tips is too long and too vacuous to make sense. Yet, I've learned youthfulness means avoiding sunlight — I bought a lot of car covers. I've received a lot of comments from co-workers who saw the car "condom" as a mere affectation, but now?

I bought a 16-gallon drum of Rusty Jones rust-proofing treatment. Then, I borrowed a pneumatic sprayer for it. I applied it to the Scirocco nearly anywhere from front to back and underneath. The waxy stuff collects dirt and makes the engine bay look dingy. But the bonus is the brake and fuel lines are still original, as is the gas tank. Many engine brackets sport their original paint — even the suspension's spring paint-color codes are intact.

Sure, *Consumer Reports* claims cars don't need rust-proofing. But I'd say any vehicle driven in road salt needs protection. Yes, new cars have improved corrosion protection, but in southeastern Wisconsin, nearly anything about 10 years old is missing rocker panels, rear quarters and more.

This Scirocco has VW's first big rust reduction program built in. Look carefully and you'll see VW used plastic or vinyl at key contact points — to prevent paint scratches. The unibody's cavities are wax coated. And Karmann sprayed yellow-rust proofing on a few underbody points. The tin worm still gets by — the reinforcement for the rear axle mount is one example. The fuel pump bracket got socked too.

I've installed additional sound deadening and a taller fifth gear for peaceful highway trips. Higher quality loudspeakers make the stock AM/FM/stereo cassette player sound better. I reduced the Scirocco's willowy nature by attaching "stress" bars: two at the car's front and one in the rear.

► **Aren't old cars oil-guzzlers?** I'm going to surprise you by sharing a slippery truth. The motor oil was,

until recently, Pennzoil 10w30 — changed at 4,000-mile intervals. The oil filter is Fram — I can hear all of those Dub Heads spinning. Many have written claiming the Fram filter is an inferior piece of junk. This filter is supposedly awful because its filter medium doesn't have enough pleats and its valving is crummy. Regardless, this engine has motored for decades without an overhaul.

I've switched to Mobil's synthetic 15w50 largely due to this lubricant's zinc additive.

The tranny has synthetic gear lube, however. Brake fluid is silicone too. Coolant is VW-approved G11 — the blue stuff.

► **Best underrated feature?** Five-mph bumpers. I know people hate this car's protruding dark plastic covers over stamped and welded metal braces with lots of plastic gap fillers. In addition, VW employed shock-absorbing bumper brackets. They proved their worth at an intersection where an Olds smashed into the car's rear — the body didn't crumple, but the right rear bumper bracket twisted. Then, there was a Ford Tempo that smacked into the Scirocco's rear — at a movie theater's parking lot. The driver thought my brake lights turned off and assumed I was moving forward — unaware stick-shift drivers can idle in neutral with their parking brakes set. Again, the bumper protected the body. But the biggest insult was the police officer who initially sided with the Tempo driver, who claimed I was at fault because my brake lights weren't on. Ugh.

Then there was an incident where I kissed a Honda Accord. I looked both ways, left and right, at an intersection before driving through it, but didn't notice the Accord's driver slammed on his brakes and stopped in a traffic lane a few car lengths ahead; he missed his turn. I was at fault; the situation was sour.

VW's bumper design works, but the plastic covers snap on with easy-to-break prongs. And their sides attach with metal fasteners, introducing more weak spots.

Fuel injection with oxygen sensor: good engine drivability under nearly all conditions. But VW/Bosch didn't build an altitude compensator into the fuel pressure regulator, so you have to manually >>

## SCIROCCO

adjust the idle speed for mountainous driving. VW later upgraded this model with an idle stabilizer and automatic barometric fuel adjustment.

► **Are VW's reliable? I've heard that they're a headache.** First, this car gets high marks for low maintenance costs. You'll find simple hand tools permit you to change oil, install spark plugs or replace the distributor rotor. VW's air conditioner install, however, means complicated water pump access, but VW provided better than average access to vital items in a transverse engine subcompact.

In my experience, the VW model is relatively reli-

able — its mechanical and electrical parts go the distance. When you compare it with, say, an early Ford Escort with its interference engine, short-life timing belt and non-freewheeling water pump pulley — the Scirocco's non-interference engine with external water pump isn't prone to expensive engine disasters. Plus, I've found the head gasket holds up well.

The Scirocco, however, has lots of feeble parts or ones requiring regular maintenance. The engine mounts for example, often are toast after five years. You can replace them yourself, but I've found most people don't fix their VWs well, either putting up

► **TURN TO PAGE 32**

## A big club for a fantastic little automobile

In the January 1959 edition of the VW AUTOIST, then-VWCA President Al Outcalt wrote:

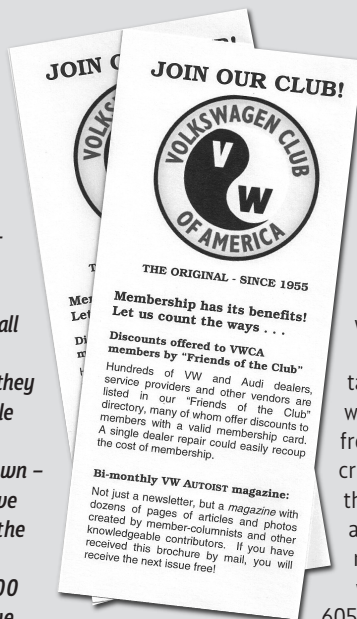
*"Four years ago next month, seven men sat down around a table in the living room of a modest home in Leonia, N.J. They came from all walks of life: a college student, a stone mason, an engineer, an automobile mechanic, a lawyer, an aircraft dispatcher and a magazine editor.*

*"All seven had one thing in common: they all owned Volkswagens. They decided to start a club of VW owners, to share the enthusiasm they all had — and still have — for this fantastic little automobile.*

*"That was four years ago. Our club has grown — sometimes rapidly, sometimes slowly. We have had problems, differences, and disputes. But the club has survived and continues to grow.*

*"There are, in the U.S. today, about 200,000 Volkswagens. Let's assume that eventually we can persuade only 10% of these to join the club. That means 20,000 members, which would make us the biggest marque club in the U.S.*

*"This won't be possible, however, without help from every member. We now have two pieces of recruiting literature. ..."*



The article goes on to describe the 1950s-era recruiting materials that would seem to be rather amateurish by today's standards. Our current Recruiting Brochure is much more professional-looking, printed on quality stock, with color photos and descriptions of member benefits and even includes a convenient Membership Application form. And it has a QR code inside that enthusiasts can scan that will lead directly to our website, VWClub.org.

Your membership renewal notice contained some copies of this brochure along with a note describing how you can earn a free renewal for each 10 new members recruited. Just add your membership number to the "Sponsor" blank on the application form and we'll credit you for each new member received. If you need more brochures, just write to us at P. O. Box 154, North Aurora, IL 60542, or email VWClub@aol.com.

Currently, VW owners in the U.S. number in the millions, so if we can "persuade 10% of these to join the club . . ." Well, you do the math.

Let's share the enthusiasm we all have "for this fantastic little automobile!"



# POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Yes, there are still some key positions open waiting for volunteers to help with the various functions needed to make our club operations run smoothly. If you've been hesitating, consider one of these:

**CLUB STORE MANAGER:** Responsible for maintaining Club Store merchandise, receiving and fulfilling orders, and providing the treasurer of an accounting of goods sold at the end of our fiscal year (March 31).

**AUTOIST BUSINESS MANAGER:** Provides a mailing list file (compiled by the membership secretary) to the printer upon request, and sends foreign and recruiting copies to the appropriate members.

**SAFETY DIRECTOR:** Maintains the club's safety program, promoting safe practices for club events — both static and driving — and managing the Woodbury Dunn Safety Award competition, which is currently inactive. This is an important aspect of our club that should be rekindled.

**ADVERTISING MANAGER:** Handles both classified and display type advertising for the AUTOIST and on the website.

**ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR:** Monitors and encourages car shows, cruises, rallies and other such events and offers advice when necessary to novice event chairpersons regarding scoring, classifications, entry forms, etc.



**RECRUITING DIRECTOR:** Promotes the acquisition of new members through advertising, handouts or personal contact. This appointee maintains the club's recruiting literature and assures that it is distributed wherever it is needed.

**T.I.N. DIRECTOR:** The Tourist Information Network is intended to be a nationwide group of VWCA members who have offered to provide fellow members with information about their area. Such information might include area attractions, suggested lodging, road construction delays or reliable repair facilities. Because there is no current TIN Director, this program has no host members, so this must be re-established as one of our member benefits.

**LOCAL CLUB REPORTER:** As you have noticed, we are in need of a Local Volks columnist for the AUTOIST. Information about local club activities is provided by the local clubs themselves or gleaned from their newsletters or websites.

Well, how about it? Did you see something that piqued your interest? You can obtain a more complete description of these and other positions by mail or email by contacting vwclub@aol.com.

And don't forget – the current term of the VWCA president expires in September of 2024. It's not too early to be thinking about that!

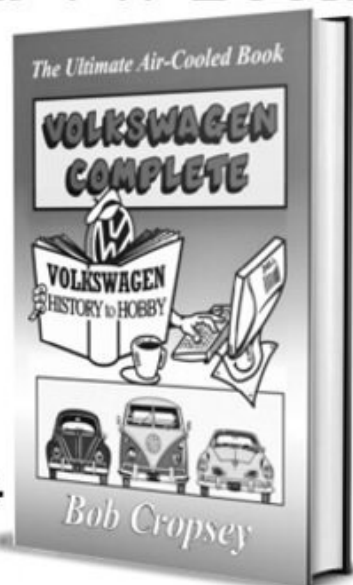
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# 2023

## FRIENDS OF OUR CLUB

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

### VOLKSWAGEN DEALERS

#### TEXAS

ARLINGTON: RANDY HILEY VOLKSWAGEN OF ARLINGTON, 1400 TECH CENTRE HWY., 817-575-6100

GARLAND: RUSTY WALLIS VOLKSWAGEN, 12635 LBJ FREEWAY, 214-349-5559

HOUSTON: ARCHER VOLKSWAGEN, 10400 SOUTHWEST FREEWAY, 713-272-1700

SAN ANTONIO: NORTH PARK VOLKSWAGEN, 21315 W. INTERSTATE 10, 210-581-1000, P-15 A-15 L-15

#### UTAH

SALT LAKE CITY: STRONG VOLKSWAGEN, 1070 S. MAIN ST., 801-596-2200, P-10 A-15 L-10 AC

#### VIRGINIA

ALEXANDRIA: ALEXANDRIA VOLKSWAGEN, 107 W. GLEBE RD., 703-684-8888, alexandriavw.com, P-15 A-15 L-10

RICHMOND: WEST BROAD VOLKSWAGEN, 9001 W. BROAD ST., 804-270-9000

STAUNTON: VALLEY VW, 314 LEE-JACKSON HWY., 540-213-6800

#### WASHINGTON

KIRKLAND: VOLKSWAGEN OF KIRKLAND, 12612 NE 124TH ST., 415-898-2500, P-10 A-10 L-10

PORT ANGELES: WILDER VOLKSWAGEN, 53 JETTA WAY, 360-452-9268, wilderauto.com

SEATTLE: UNIVERSITY VOLKSWAGEN, 4724 ROOSEVELT WAY NE, 206-634-3322

#### WISCONSIN

EAU CLAIRE: VOLKSWAGEN-AUDI OF EAU CLAIRE, 5201 FAIRVIEW DR., 715-830-1111, P-10 A-10 L-10 AC

MADISON: ZIMBRICK VOLKSWAGEN OF MADISON, 1430 N. STOUGHTON ROAD, 608-241-5201, P-10

MIDDLETON: ZIMBRICK VOLKSWAGEN, 7505 CENTURY AVE., 608-836-7777

#### WYOMING

CASPER: FREMONT VOLKSWAGEN, 6001 E. 2ND ST., 303-233-4300, P-10 A-10 L-10

### AUDI DEALERS

#### ARIZONA

TUCSON: AUDI OF TUCSON, 4690 E. 22ND STREET NO. 3, 520-748-1000

#### CALIFORNIA

BURLINGAME: AUDI BURLINGAME, 1010 CADILLAC WAY, 650-348-0111

#### LOUISIANA

BOSSIER CITY: MOFFITT VOLKSWAGEN, 1960 OLD MINDEN RD., 318-746-2175

#### MICHIGAN

KALAMAZOO: MAPLE HILL VOLKSWAGEN, 5622 W. MAIN ST., 269-342-6600

MUSKEGON: AUDI MUSKEGON, 1860 E. STERNBERG RD, 888-724-3942

#### OHIO

COLUMBUS: BYERS IMPORTS, 401 N. HAMILTON RD., 614-864-5180, P-10 A-10 L-10

#### PENNSYLVANIA

LANCASTER: AUTOHAUS LANCASTER, INC., 1373 MANHEIM PIKE, 717-299-2801

#### WASHINGTON

SEATTLE: UNIVERSITY VOLKSWAGEN, 4724 ROOSEVELT WAY NE, 206-634-3322

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EAU CLAIRE: VOLKSWAGEN-AUDI OF EAU CLAIRE, 5201 FAIRVIEW DR., 715-830-1111, P-10 A-10 L-10 AC

### OTHER DEALERS

#### ARIZONA

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

#### CALIFORNIA

LONG BEACH: SO CAL IMPORTS, 6831 N. PARAMOUNT BLVD., 562-633-4979

SANTA BARBARA: TOP SHOP AUTOMOTIVE, 177 S. PATTERSON

AVE., 805-964-6554, topshopsb.com, P-20 A-20

#### CONNECTICUT

OLD SAYBROOK: CARDONE AND DAUGHTER AUTOMOTIVE, 4 CUSTOM DRIVE, 860-664-0727, cardoneanddaughter.com, AC, SERVICE & REPAIR SHOP

#### ILLINOIS

DOWNERS GROVE: SPAROMOBILE, 503 OGDEN AVE., 630-963-8410, FOREIGN CAR PARTS

EFFINGHAM: MID AMERICA MOTORWORKS, 17082 N. US HIGHWAY 45, 866-867-0540, mamotorworks.com, P-10 A-10 AC, AUTOMOTIVE AFTERMARKET

EVERGREEN PARK: BEETLE CRAFT SPORT TUNING, 9535 S. PULASKI RD., 708-422-7548, P-10 A-10 L-10 AC, AIR-COOLED VW SPECIALISTS

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

#### INDIANA

FORT WAYNE: WERNER'S GARAGE, 7804 FRITZ ROAD, 260-489-9783, AC, ALL EUROPEAN CARS

#### KENTUCKY

LOUISVILLE: IMPORTDOKTOR, 1387 LEXINGTON RD., 502-584-3511, importdoktor.com, INDEPENDENT REPAIR SHOP

#### MICHIGAN

WATERFORD TOWNSHIP: MUNK'S MOTORS, 3080 W. HURON ST., 248-681-8081, munks.com, AC, INDEPENDENT REPAIR SHOP

#### NEW YORK

MASSAPEQUA: G T PRECISION IMPORTS, INC., 190A MARGARETTA AVE., 516-799-1100, gtprecision.com, P-10 L-10 AC, REPAIR & RESTORATION

WATERLOO: SELECT EUROCARS, INC., 0685 WATERLOO-GENEVA RD., 315-789-2200, P-10 A-10 L-10 AC, INDEPENDENT VW & AUDI SPECIALISTS

#### RHODE ISLAND

SOUTH KINGSTOWN: M & T MANUFACTURING, 30 HOPKINS LANE, 401-789-0472, VW PARTS



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# Local Volks

## Activities of VWCA affiliates

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### Wisconsin club loses longtime member

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](mailto:Volkstom@sbcglobal.net), or the club office at [VWClub@aol.com](mailto:VWClub@aol.com).

Here's what some of the locals are up to of late: **BADGER BEETLES AUTOFUN CLUB, MILWAUKEE:** As plans are under way for the club's annual Memorial Day Campout, word was received of the passing of long-time (founding?) member Hazel Kuklinski. Hazel had an influence on the Milwaukee chapter for decades. Our condolences to husband Al, as well as Lyle and Laura Kuklinski.

**NORTHEAST ILLINOIS VW ASSN., LISLE:** An early spring dinner meeting at White Fence Farm, a famous Route 66 landmark, kept the NIVA group connected during the colder months. A cruise in to a popular Dog-N-Suds drive-in and a campout were planned for June. A rallye scheduled for May was postponed due to the lack of suitable maps (who uses paper maps anymore?!). Keep in touch with [nivaclub.org](http://nivaclub.org) or face-

[book.com/nivaclub](http://book.com/nivaclub).

**STATELINE VOLKS FOLKS, ROCKFORD, ILL.:** The Stateline members will be meeting up with NIVA for the June campout, while some will be heading to Effingham, Illinois, the MidAmerica Motorworks Funfest. Visit [statelinevolksfolks.com](http://statelinevolksfolks.com) or watch the "Events" posts at [VWClub.org](http://VWClub.org) for the latest details.

**CENTRAL FLORIDA VW CLUB, ORLANDO:** Central Florida members are understandably excited about a new VW electric pickup possibly reaching our shores. There was considerable coverage and commentary on the subject in the "V-Dubber" newsletter. To read the latest details, visit [centralfloridavwclub.org](http://centralfloridavwclub.org) and click on "Newsletter."

Check our website, [VWClub.org](http://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](http://facebook.com/vwclubofamerica).

And if your local chapter is planning an event, contact us at [VWClub.org](http://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](mailto:VWClub@aol.com) or directly to the AUTOIST editor at [VWAUTOIST@icloud.com](mailto:VWAUTOIST@icloud.com). **VWCA**



## VWClub.org

Add value to your VWCA membership by registering at [VWClub.org](http://VWClub.org) to take advantage of discounts on exclusive Club Store merchandise and to renew your membership, using either PayPal or your credit card.

# The Frontdriver

BY RICHARD G. VANTREUREN ✉rvant1951@gmail.com

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## Hello, Miss T

Of all facets of VW ownership, my least favorite part is the process of acquiring a new one. Following September's Hurricane Ian and our Eos being totaled for flooding, however, we were unwillingly collided with the new car market — at the worst possible time. You want to shop for a car when you really don't need one immediately, ideally during a supply glut, and if possible, when few other people want the same thing.

Fantasy? I was spoiled by my experience with Mr. T, our Touareg2, back in '08. With the price of gas going north of \$3 a gallon, customers were less interested in an 18 mpg tush hog drinking premium gas and weighing in at 4,400 pounds.

I took a test drive in the only white one left in central Florida and got a quote from Aristocrat VW, long-time sponsor of our local club shows. The price reflected the trade-in of my '99 Passat wagon whose air bags had fired after an unlucky encounter with a plump sow. The salesman followed up the next week, telling me of the VW loyalty bonus I could claim. I asked for a trailer hitch to be added to Mr. T ... no! That's \$1,500!

Then the following week's call — OK, they'd throw in the hitch. By then gas had reached \$3.50 with no end in view, so I asked to trade in TWO VWs, since we already had the Eos and would no longer need our 2000 Passat sedan. Impossible! Only one bonus

per transaction!

The following week he said OK, trade in two at a time, with bonus. Gas passed \$3.75. I asked for zero percent financing. No! Can't be done, with all the incentives you're getting! Gas passed \$3.90. They called again; OK, zero percent. Gas hit \$4.00. VW announced it would shave

\$6,000 off any remaining '08 V8s as the V6 and hybrid '09s were on their way. We drove our sedan and wagon over and made the deal. I wept leaving our prized Passats out of their garage and "in the cold." Happily, with our trades and incentives, we'd acquired a new V8 Touareg for 36 equal payments of \$1,000 each over three years. (A nearly identical V-10 diesel Touareg marked



Debbie VanTreuren poses with the couple's new Taos.

"sold" at \$70,000 was delivered without visible incentives.)

Thrust back from that antediluvian paradise into reality, we arrived at Daytona's Gunter VW-Volvo. Eos had been totaled, and we could not drive our insurance check, fair as it was on a 120,000-mile car. Mr. T was showing signs of serious problems after sitting in about 20 inches of water, and we needed a car, period.

Bad timing on our part. Like others, VW has been dealing with industry-wide supply chain shortages, and the uncertain economy offered little reason to work production overtime anyway. Ian forced a whole lot of other people into the car market in a fortnight. Supply and demand ... the record-setting prices of

used cars had already been making news, and there were few to choose from even before Ian. People were buying their leased cars. (I don't even recall seeing any used VWs anywhere at decision time.)

Of course, other brands were bragging of longtime or even lifetime warranties, zero percent financing, free servicing and large selection from stock. Most offered the disaster county a \$1,000 purchase bonus for flood relief. We test drove Gunter's last 2022 Taos, decided it was a good, solid, comfortable car and handled well. Asking for a brochure, there were none (possibly because it was model year end). Likewise there was no discussion of color choice, trim or options. Taos is supposedly the least expensive car VW offers, and this one was the lowest trim model. It did not have a window sticker so we could get an idea of the price. Guess if you have to ask, you can't afford it. We were offered a \$750 hurricane relief incentive on the test drive unit, take it or leave it.

We took it.

## Next, the convoluted dealer dance

Shuffled into the closer's room, the convoluted process of sealing the deal seemed to move too fast to follow. Aren't you supposed to negotiate the itemized price list — the plus dealer prep, for example? No, we did not want this extra or that add-on for more thousands, thank you. Understanding the commitment for five years of payments sounded more like being read one's rights. Our local credit union did offer a rate slightly better than VW's, and we drove off heads spinning.

Did we get a square deal? Could we have done better? was the nagging thought. Somehow we'd surrendered what we thought was a big check, but now we are going to have to cough up \$500 and month for the next five years. One way of looking at it would say we saved a lot of agony not having to pour money into trying to repair a flooded car.

Thanks to what must have been teams of really careful legal writers, we have a document that details everything. The actual price of the Taos was \$35,943.13, including tax. Seems to take a lot more of our dollars to make sure VW stays in business, remembering this is supposedly the entry level car, in

the lowest trim, in the VW line. We want the dealer to stay in business as well, so clearly the \$1,384 they added wouldn't keep the lights on for long. Of course, money, like everything else, also has its price. Because we had to borrow almost 27 grand, the Taos' true total is spelled out in bold print: \$41,731.40.

## Thankfully ... knobs

So what did we get? So far, mostly satisfaction and a learning experience. Taos, dubbed "Miss T" by its proud owner, is a competent handler with adequate acceleration and good stopping power. Cargo area is spacious, the interior quiet with no squeaks or rattles. Clearly the trend to de-content reflects supply chain realities, not just competitive pressures. Surprised to see a hood prop rod in place of a lift strut, but one less thing to go wrong.

Was an engine cover ever planned? we wonder. We don't see the widely panned capacitive environmental controls; our entry level model has knobs, thanks. Passenger seat, in lieu of motors, has a three-lever pumper arrangement — again, less to go wrong. Disappointed to read that the brand is so low in the satisfaction ratings, with Taos near the bottom of that; we have little to complain about.

When the stop-start required by law killed the engine at the first stop sign, we were astonished, a flashback to the old '70s Rabbit days when engines would quit at the worst times. At first, pushing the defeat option became part of our preflight checklist. In time we came to live with it, lighting it up only when faced with pulling out in heavy multi-lane traffic. We had asked the salesman to turn off any otherwise hidden driver-assist features until we had time to become acclimated. (Not sure, but it appears these also must be unselected in each ignition cycle.)

It's kind of fun learning its ropes, one day at a time. The instruction manual reflects our society's reluctance to train and retain technical writers. Least helpful is the "on models that have this, do this" when we haven't figured out if we have that feature. I could have sworn we had two gauges showing on the original screen, but following some menu selections, there is but one. Once fiddling with the radio it

► TURN TO PAGE 33

# ID. Insight

BY TODD ALLCOCK ✉ tallcock@aol.com

## Tools can make for smooth trip planning

Summer road trip season is upon us, and something both EV skeptics and many first-time EV owners share, is a belief that EVs either lack the capability to tackle long road trips, or that the charging infrastructure isn't developed enough to support such trips.

In a country with more than 120,000 gas stations but only about 5,000 EV fast-charging stations, road-tripping in an EV in the USA isn't as effortless as in a gas-powered car, but with a little planning, and a few online tools, it can get pretty close.

An EV road trip doesn't require the same level of planning as the Apollo moon landings, but it often needs more thought than the vague "maybe we'll stop for lunch and fill up in Albuquerque..." type that we're used to making for gas-powered trips.

The built-in navigation systems in newer EVs like the 2022 and 2023 ID.4 do a very good job of calculating charge stops when you tell it to navigate to somewhere out of the car's current range. The ID.4 will navigate to where you'll need to stop and charge, tell you the estimated battery level when you arrive at the charger, the approximate time you'll need to charge and to what level you'll need to charge to get your destination (or to the next charger if multiple stops are required.)

In fact, the navigation system in the ID.4 does well enough that it's really the only tool you need, except for two situations — first, it can only plan a route from your current location, making planning for future trips that start elsewhere difficult; and second, it only

works in the car, of course, so planning trips from the comfort of your couch is impossible. Thankfully, there are excellent tools for these situations.

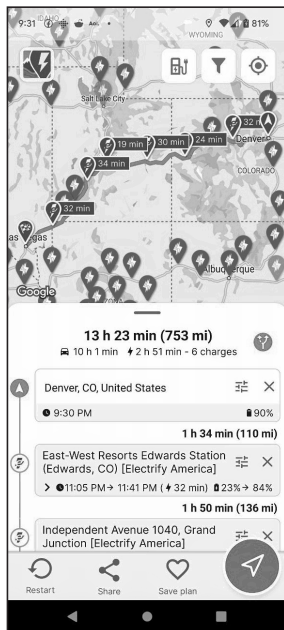
For road trips in a gas-powered car, we all just fire up Google Maps, Waze, Apple Maps, or maybe even Mapquest (if, like me, you're over 50!) because we just need to know the best route, secure in the knowledge that whatever route we take, when we need gas along the way, we can just pull off at the next exit and hit one of the several stations available. But in an EV, we need to know where the chargers are, because the next charger might not be at the next exit — it might be 30 miles down the road.

While navigation apps from Google, Apple and Waze can now tell us where chargers are, they can't tell us if we'll be able to get to one with whatever charge is currently left in our battery.

For this, we can use route planning websites or phone apps made specifically for EVs. These calculate your route based on where chargers are located, taking into account the model of your car, speed limits, altitude changes and temperature along the route to more accurately estimate range and power consumption.

## A Better Route Planner

The most popular and most complete EV route planner is A Better Route Planner, or ABRP. It's heralded for its accuracy and large database of EVs and chargers. It's also extremely customizable; you can tell it the lowest battery percentage you are comfortable arriving at chargers or your destination



A trip from Denver to Las Vegas planned in ABRP.

with, how much extra weight in passengers and luggage you'll be carrying, how much over the speed limit you typically drive and your maximum speed, all of which the app uses to adjust the range estimate. You can even tell it to favor, exclusively use, or avoid individual chargers or entire charging networks, (helpful to us ID.4 owners that get free charging at Electrify America stations for three years included with the purchase of a new VW EV).

For some cars, including the ID.4, ABRP can even read live battery and power consumption data directly from the car via select OBD-II Bluetooth readers plugged into the car to increase the app's accuracy.

But all of this customization comes at a cost; ABRP has a fairly steep learning curve, making it more difficult to use than a typical route planner like Google Maps, or even some competing EV planners.

ABRP is available as both a website as well as an app for Android and iOS. It's free to use but offers a monthly subscription for premium features, like Android Auto/CarPlay screen mirroring (to see the app on the car's touchscreen display), automatic weather (takes local temperature and headwinds into account for greater accuracy) and the ability to store multiple cars in your account (if you own multiple EVs, as I do.)

While ABRP is my favorite EV route planner for its customization and accuracy, my runner-up is an app called Chargeway, which prioritizes ease of use over customization.

## Chargeway

Instead of a menu full of various settings like ABRP, Chargeway "hardwires" in certain assumptions to make the app less confusing. So, with Chargeway, you just select your model of car, the temperature, the maximum speed you intend to drive and slide a graphic of a battery to your starting charge level.



**A same trip from Denver to Las Vegas planned with Chargeway.**

Then you enter your origin and destination and it plans your route and charge stops.

With Chargeway's ease of use, however, come some fixed settings you might or might not like. Chargeway presumes you're willing to arrive at chargers and your destination with 15 percent battery remaining. While this might seem scary to those new to EV road tripping, seasoned pros will often run down to 10 percent or even 5 percent before charging, because EVs charge faster when the battery is lower. Stopping more often and charging from 10-60 percent can make for a faster overall trip than stopping less often and charging from 20-80 percent.

What I don't like about this presumption, however, is it also assumes you're willing to arrive at your destination at only 15 percent. That's fine

if your destination is a hotel with overnight charging and you arrive when you're done for the day, but if I'm arriving at my destination mid-day I like to have a few volts left in the tank to be able to do some exploring. The last thing I want to do when I arrive is make my first stop yet another charger! ("Hey, kids! I know you can't wait to get to Disneyland, but first we need to stop at Walmart to charge up so we can make it back to the hotel after!")

Also, Chargeway doesn't allow you to favor particular chargers or networks, so while ABRP can calculate a route exclusively using Electrify America chargers that will cost me nothing to use, Chargeway will just use whichever fast charger is closest to the point you will hit 15 percent battery left.

But even with those minor shortcomings, I find myself using it often when I just want a quick, easy "yes/no" answer trying to decide whether an EV road trip to (or through) an area with little charging infrastructure is possible, or if I should consider renting a gas car for that trip, instead.

Chargeway is a free phone app for Android and »

# PLANNERS

iOS but has no website version for computers. While it offers an app free to consumers, its business model is to sell EV-related educational equipment to car dealers.

## Plugshare

Though the last website and app I'll discuss is not really a route planner per se, PlugShare is the one EV app I would have on my phone if I could only have one. PlugShare is to EV chargers what Yelp is to restaurants; it's a map of virtually every EV charger in existence, collating data from a variety of sources: government databases, the charging networks themselves and crowdshared data from PlugShare users.

If you see a charger that's not in PlugShare, you can submit it in the app or on the website along with all the information you can give (cost, speed, number of connectors, a picture, etc.) and PlugShare will add it to the map. PlugShare users can review chargers, leave user tips (e.g. "if the charger doesn't work when you plug in, lift up on the handle until you hear it click...") and perhaps most importantly, they can also "check in" at chargers when charging, so other users know the charger is currently in use and working. When I plan a route through an area with few EV charging options, I'm far more comforted seeing that someone else reported that they successfully charged there this morning or yesterday rather than seeing the last check-in was six months ago!

To use PlugShare you simply tell it what EV you have (so it can filter the chargers on the map to just those compatible with your car) and then you can search any location for chargers you can use. You can also filter by a variety of other criteria as well: only show free chargers, chargers over a certain speed, chargers with higher user ratings, chargers at hotels, chargers of a particular network, etc.

While PlugShare isn't a primarily a route planner, many longtime EV owners use it as one. It does offer



Route planning on the PlugShare website.

routing as Google Maps does and also displays all the chargers available along the route on the map. But it makes no attempt to accurately estimate how far you can go before needing a charge, or selecting which charger is the best/fastest/cheapest along the route for you. The closest it comes (on the website, but not on the app) is to throw up a circle around the starting location with a radius equal to the car's approximate range. You then manually select a charger in the circle, and then the circle jumps around that charger so you can select the next, and so on until your destination is inside the circle. Then you can save that route to your PlugShare account to also see it in the phone app.

But for those seasoned EV veterans more comfortable with "seat of your pants" road-tripping, PlugShare is all they need to find a charger when they notice their battery is starting to get low.

The PlugShare app and website are free to use. It is provided by the parent company of the EVGo charging network and provided as a service to the EV-owning community.

Some day, websites and apps like these won't be needed to road trip in EVs any more than apps are needed to road-trip in gas-powered cars, but that day is probably still a few years away. In the meantime, hit these apps and websites for a little planning, and happy electric road tripping! **VWCA**



# VolksWoman

BY LOIS GRACE ✉ vlkswmn@sbcglobal.net

## Tow truck trifecta

With the past couple years we've all had, I suppose it was just a matter of time. Covid swept through the world. Lots of people getting sick, too many people dying, and the hysteria mounting by the minute. I thought my cars would at least all stay healthy through this year, as they'd nearly all been to the shop recently for one thing or another. But I was wrong. The tow truck came for my 1990 Golf GTI last week. After my 1958 convertible Beetle and 1959 Single Cab pickup both made the trip on the flatbed in this past year, it was going to be just one of those things: make it an even three and have something go phlooeey on my daily driver. My GTI got Covid.

The car was due for a smog check, so in December I took it in for the test. During the check, the tech must have knocked something loose because after he was done he couldn't get the car started again. Finally, I heard it fire up and he gave it back to me, telling me not to turn it off! Seriously? Of course, he said he "didn't do anything" to cause this, so I took the car home and forgot about it ... till this past week when I drove it on a short errand and it was barely running.

It chugged and missed and smoked like crazy, stinking up a storm. After doing a quick look-see to make sure things were still connected (about all I know how to do on this car), I called my friendly VW fix-it guy and made an appointment.

With Rob following me, we set out on the 35-mile trip and lurched about halfway there before I finally gave up. The car was running so poorly I didn't trust it on the freeway and it would have added an hour to the trip by taking city streets. So, I pulled over and called AAA.

Turned out it was a broken ground wire. Who knew one little wire could cause all that trouble? I am hoping that now, since things seem to come in threes, my hijinks with tow trucks are done for a while. Not making any bets, however.

## Gus earns a lofty new status

It has been a year or so since I wrote about my stinky, balky 1990 GTI. He has officially reached Old Fart Car status, also known as "Hobby Car" status. He is still my newest car, and I count on him to be reliable. But I also need to remember he's 33 years old, so this stuff is bound to happen. He doesn't have to be a jerk about it though.

The latest is that he's been stinky, smoky and hesitant when I drive him. This is how he acts when the MAF sensor is acting up. So I bought another one. My fix-it guy says it's not that. The

car just recently spent nearly 10 days in his shop, so he could diagnose it. The end of that episode came when the guy called me and said "I need to take a break from your car."

My car was driving him nuts too. He did find a few things going on in there and repaired them, but he >>



Grumpy Gus gets a lift.

is not at all sure that will fix the issue. One of them is the switches on the side of the throttle body – they are severely worn, and will not last long. The other is the main engine wiring harness – it has a spot where it is not making a good contact (meaning a break in the wires somewhere) and he can't find that spot.

OH, JOY. Both these items sound like they will be inside the Ark of the Covenant when that is finally found. Or maybe Bigfoot has them tucked away in his lair. Either way, not only are parts like this extremely hard to find, no one is reproducing them.

A week after the car came home, I found a set of the switches, on eBay. Located in the UK, I paid a good price for them, so it made it worthwhile to pay the ridiculous postage to get them here. Best of all? They are NOS, in the original box! One problem now solved. The wiring harness will prove to be a big help too, I'm sure, if I can just find one that will work better than the one that is in the car now.

If you know of any sources for a main engine wiring harness/loom, I should know about, send me an email! My 1990 Golf GTI is an 8-valve 2.0, with Digifant fuel injection. Gus and I both thank you.

## New truck

After our 2008 Dodge Ram logged 14 years and more than 200,000 miles, Rob decided it was time for a new truck. After all, we take our trailer on road trips and love to camp, so we need something we can count on to get us there and back. Even though Mack has not given us any indication that he was heading for a fall, his age works against him and those many miles under his tires tell the tale.

So Rob chose his truck order and we waited for it to be built. Three months later, Rob's new Dodge Ram came home. We have spent every moment since trying to figure out how it works. There is no key but just a fob of what would look like a key. You don't step on the e-brake to engage it; you pull a small lever upward. There is no gear shift, just a knob you turn. There's a – GASP – TV screen in the middle of the dash to tell you if you're in the right lane or if there is something behind you when you're backing

up. The side mirrors fold in automatically when you park. Strangely of all, it's got a BACK SEAT. Every decent truck person knows real pickups don't have back seats. But there is this: a full-size back seat with its own doors and windows and armrests. What's next? A lane departure warning system? An automatic parking system? Oh, wait, it's got those, too. As if forward-facing eyeballs and a connected brain stem weren't good enough.

As all my faithful readers must know by now, I come from the (very) old school of automotive design. Trucks don't have back seats. Cars have keys that open the doors or start the engine. Windows roll down with a crank handle. It was quite a treat when I realized my "new" 1990 Golf GTI had power steering. Wow! And now we have a truck that can park itself. SIGH. I dread it when my computer says "Click here to update system." I don't want to update anything! I don't LIKE updates! Everything is working fine, just leave it alone! I don't want a vehicle that can subject me to that kind of stress too!

This Dodge Ram is Rob's fourth new Dodge, and all of them have been nearly perfect. I say nearly because, for all the successive upgrades and systems that came on each one, parts still wore out and that was about the only thing we ended up having to do on any of the previous three trucks we had. A water pump here, a radiator there, but nothing you could really count as a problem. We logged more than 200,000 miles on almost all of those trucks, most of those miles pulling a trailer. I have high hopes for this one too.

I am considering naming him Einstein. It's obviously smarter than both Rob and me.

It is now a full year later, and we have not discovered all the wonders on this truck. Recently discovered treats include an electric rear cab window that you control from the front, and heated and cooled rear seats. One more might be the triple bell chime that sounds occasionally, a very loud DING DING DING. We still don't know what that's about. Oh, and he did not get named Einstein. In true truck fashion he is called Larry. **VWCA**

# DRIVER'S SEAT

## ► FROM PAGE 3

I played a bad note: One time I hit the brake pedal when trying to reach the clutch, which in turn caused a stall — all at a busy intersection. Snagging the slow pedal is way too easy. The Scirocco's pedal cluster routes the clutch and brake pedals via their offset arms to their pivot points. Thus, your now diagonal right foot touches the clutch pedal's arm because it's not designed for cross-foot operation, which in turn makes it all too easy to squish the slow pedal, too.



less space between your knees and the steering wheel than in an early Rabbit. In contrast, the front seat travel is more than adequate.

After my unhappy motoring moment, I removed the right foot's shoe so I could feel the pedals or the gaps between them — much better — and removed the under-dashboard stowage tray to improve pedal access. The left side of this tray snaps in place. You can remove it while driving. Weather, however, didn't cooperate as two winter storms and then rain meant footgear was required. The left foot shod in a post-surgery



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



Knee room in the Scirocco is tight.

boot was out of commission, as if in a Velcro-wrapped Styrofoam prison.

The Scirocco isn't a powerhouse. But its 90-hp engine routes enough torque at idle to launch it without stalling it. Second gear starts are possible. All it takes is a steady foot, and a sense for the clutch's friction spot. One winter hiccup — it's awfully difficult to rock the car free in deep snow with just one foot. It takes too long to move from the clutch to the go pedal.

I noticed a few quirks — in my head. My right foot (or left brain), for example, hadn't learned the subtle dance called not dumping the clutch. I tended to let go of the left pedal too quickly. Jerky, the kind you cannot eat. The next item was not revving the engine too high before deciding to shift upward — especially in lower gears because when you remove your foot from the go pedal and head toward the clutch, engine braking suddenly slows your roll — almost whiplash-like in its intensity. If you don't rev too high in first gear, remove your foot from the long pedal and then migrate toward the left one, the process is smoother, but pokey at best — you're a turtle in a sea of motoring barracudas.

The next part has at least two parts. One, the close-ratio transmission works fine if you go from one, to three and then fifth gear — skipping the even-digit gears. Two, the familiar rhythm I've used for decades is undone by things such as shifting into neutral before applying the binders — you'll stall >>

## DRIVER'S SEAT

if you don't. Funny how you've forgotten just how wonderful it is to decouple the engine and transmission with your left foot's ministrations. I decided to talk aloud to myself explaining how I'm driving: gear number, say, clutch, brake and throttle.

A professional driver taught me how to tame asphalt at Gingerman Raceway by telling him through my headset's microphone what turn I'm in, where I'm going to look, what gear I'm going to use, when and how long I'll brake and how I'll track out. There's something about forcing your brain to put this stuff into words that really cements motoring magic into your memory. In the end, you up your game with a renewed focus on vehicle dynamics and driver interaction.

My surgeon let me remove my post-surgery boot meant to restrict my ability to flex toes and in turn wreck the sutures after three weeks of wobbly movement. I managed to get by for three weeks with that moon-shoe contraption — certainly not the best encumbrance for operating snowblowers and other gear needed in wintry Wisconsin.

About a month after my foot surgery, I'm using my left foot again. It's still angry. And I'm still walking at a snail's pace. The doc says in a few more months I should have less pain and more mobility — such as the ability to wiggle my toes. We'll see.

With all this talk about one-foot, one-pedal EV driving, I thought sharing a few words about mastering the internal combustion engine and manual transmission with just your right foot needed a leg up. Elon Musk, how about Full Self Driving Mode for five-speed manual VWs?

### Milwaukee auto show

On March 1, the day before my foot surgery, I trekked to Milwaukee's auto show with automotive writer George Straton. He's a fellow Midwest Automotive Media Association member. I had to show him how to use his press credentials to enter that show — awkward because this relatively minor show doesn't have a designated media room. He thought MKE's event was amazing because he saw several vehicles not shown in Chicago. For example, Tesla was

there — not part of the main floor, but in another vendor's exhibit. VW didn't send its brand specialists or any part of the booth I saw at the Chicago show. A local VW dealer supplied about four VWs for its postage stamp-size space.

Perhaps the most obvious thing about this and other auto shows these days is you won't find press kits or brochures and carmaker booths. I scored a tote bag, though. I went through the paces at Ford, which enrolled me in its paid test-drive program. I received the debit card shortly after visiting Heiser Ford near Milwaukee. This dealer provided the codes needed to get the money. Then, I drove a four-cylinder Mustang with a 10-speed automatic and artificial engine sound enhancement. In its standard drive mode, it upshifted too soon.

### EV tax credit removed temporarily

VW got bad news that turned into good news in April. New rules announced by the U.S. Department of Treasury meant that its American-made ID.4 would no longer qualify for the full \$7,500 EV tax credit due to the Inflation Reduction Act's battery production/materials sourcing requirements.

But a few days later, after receiving documentation from a supplier, VW said that all 2023 ID.4 models that are placed in service this year will be eligible for the full \$7,500.

### Door handle glitch

Some facing long waits for a new Tennessee-built ID.4 got more bad news: VW issued a stop-sale because moisture in the door handles might cause them to fly open while the car is driven at low speed. A stop-sale meant VW didn't have a remedy. It was waiting for U-Shin Ltd., the supplier of the ID.4's touch-controlled door latches, to rectify the problem. About 18,000 vehicles are affected. First reports of the door problem arrived in January.

The remedy apparently came on April 18, when the National Highway Safety Administration issued a report that describes the fix: Dealers will inspect the handles and replace them if necessary in addition to

performing a software update.

The NHTSA memo said the remedy components can be distinguished from the recalled parts and are not subject to water ingress.

At this writing, there was no word on when VW would lift the stop-sale order.

## Golf 8 may be the last of its kind

VW's German brand boss Thomas Schaefer says the current eighth-generation Golf gets a major update next year. This might be the last significant change to VW's venerable water-cooled, front-drive internal combustion engine hatchback. Schaefer says current trends, if they continue, mean the Golf will evolve into a full-electric model, one based on VW's 2028 planned new EV platform. He assures us the electrified Golf will have Golf genes — not a face-lifted ID.3, say.

VW also says it's developing a more efficient electric motor and other bits for its EVs.

## Atlas Peak Edition teases in New York

VW's 2024 Atlas Peak Edition was its New York auto show teaser. It's much like the former Atlas Basecamp concept shown a few years ago. It features rugged body cladding and off-road type wheels.

## Scouting the Scout

VW, or make that Scout Motors, announced it's building the \$2 billion Scout EV plant near Columbia, South Carolina. Meanwhile, Audi says it's studying whether it should build an EV plant in the States.



Atlas Peak Edition

## Security features expanded

VW's Car-Net Safe & Secure service is now free for five years on most 2020-23 models. The Passat isn't compatible. VWoA did this after a Chicago-area driver's Atlas with a child onboard was carjacked. VW's Car-Net rep refused to let the police use Car-Net's vehicle location service unless they paid for the Car-Net subscription. The police located the purloined vehicle and child without VW's telematics. VW's rep apologized for the poorly handled plea for help.

## Top sellers

Tesla's discounted Model 3 is the second-best selling car in the USA at 63,000 units for Q1 2021. And its Model Y outsold Toyota's RAV4 to snatch No. 4 on the best-selling light truck chart.

At VWoA, the entire group's sales increased 21.4%. Audi reported moving 52,763 units (up 48.6%). VW sold 67,853 vehicles, an increase of 4.4%. Notice the estimated Tesla Model 3 sales — a sedan mind you — nearly outsold all of the various VW models VW offers in the USA. **VWCA**

## VWCA annual membership meeting

**WHERE:** WindMill Grille & Pizzeria, 90 North Island Ave., Batavia, Illinois (suburban Chicago)

**WHEN:** Noon, Saturday, June 3, 2023

This is the opportunity for all VWCA members to present areas of concern to the national officers. We'll have pizza and a possible visit to a nearby museum. For more information, email [vwclub@aol.com](mailto:vwclub@aol.com).



## SCIROCCO

### ► FROM PAGE 16

with excessive death rattles and then trading their cars in because they're uncomfortably noisy.

Somewhere I'm supposed to say what's second, but I've forgotten the order.

Back to Parts: There are several items that weren't well made. Sometimes VW offered improved replacements but didn't broadcast the changes. Do your research.

Even then, I've found VW's American parts delivery scheme sometimes blew it. A good example is crankshaft/camshaft seals. American dealers sold new seals with the correct size molded on them, but the seals themselves had oversized IDs. The new part, therefore, leaked worse than the old ones.

The official-through-1984 service manual doesn't discuss several key items found on the 1.8-liter Scirocco. You should check the 1985 and newer manual; it covers lots of useful info, including the close-ratio transmission's spring-loaded drive flanges — they'll blast off like missiles if you remove their clips when servicing the flange seals.

Then there's the rear-wheel bearing seals. For a period, VW sold Type 3 front-rotor bearing seals as the replacements. The problem was the original seals were flush with the brake drum's edge — they didn't touch the rear stub axle mounts. The Type 3 seals, which have a thick lip over the drum — rubbed on the Scirocco's axle bolts, causing a mess. Eventually, VW redesigned the part with a thinner lip.

I can just imagine how frustrated VW owners and their service techs were. The tech would install the new part, and in the end, not fix the car's problem.

Then there are happy items such as the fuel injector O-rings or clutch pushrod seals or drive flange inner seals — all made of Viton, an improvement. And some clutch cables were modified so a metal tube or housing guided the cable through the firewall at the point where the original plastic nylon tube compressed.

► **Have you reupholstered your seats?** Shockingly, no! I use a leather cleaner protector on them, cover them, and carefully place my butt in the center of the seat when entering. I exit by first hoisting my body upward by placing my hand on the door sill. The leather-wrapped steering wheel is original, as is the leather shift knob. I'd say this car fared well because I covered it.

► **Electrical problems?** Yes! But I managed to drive well into the 300,000-mile territory before the fuel pump relay failed or the air-conditioner relay quit. The high-beam switch finally melted at 350,000 miles. The ignition system is still cooking, and none of the electrical gremlins stranded me. The original fuel pump started roaring at 275,000 miles. That noise led me to replace it before it stopped running.

► **How's the body and interior hardware?** I'm still on the original door



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# Classified Ads

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**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).

**FOR SALE:** Vehicles, parts, accessories, literature, toys. Over 50 years. John's Car Corner, Westminster, VT 05158. (802) 722-3180. johnscorner@gmail.com

**BACK AUTOIST ISSUES:** Did you know that a limited number of copies of past AUTOIST issues are available from our Club Store? Get an extra copy of the one that featured your car in an article or just to complete your collection. Copies are \$5 each including shipping and handling. Inquire about issues more than 20 years old. Order from Volkswagen Club of America, P.O. Box 154, North Aurora, IL 60542-0154 or check for the most recent issues in our online Club Store at VWClub.org.

## FRONTDRIVER

### ► FROM PAGE 23

spoke to me, asking if I wanted the satellite radio. I answered no, FM, to which it replied FM was already on. It is going to be interesting finding out all the hidden features, sort of like discovering a new power for your existing telescope.

Buying a new car sure has come a long way since Ol' Blue, my 1975 Rabbit, and I had joined company after my handing over a check for \$4,000.18. Driving away from San Diego Motor Imports without knowing what the flashing "CAT" light meant, there was no learning curve on the radio ... because none was installed. Would I trade Taos for a brand new Rabbit? No way. This is a Rabbit on steroids! **VWCA**

handles. And the weak door checks are still checking.

► **Biggest disappointment?** Break-ins! Someone bent the right door and then broke the right door's window while trying to steal the radio in 1989. In St. Louis, in 1996, someone busted three windows and grabbed my radar detector out of the glovebox. And they took my driving gloves!

And I'd say VW's sculptured futuristic-for-1983 wedgy dashboard is inexcusably fragile. I respect the integrated interior design with contoured door cards fitting neatly into the dashboard's profile.

Probably my biggest regret was not buying more spare parts. VW produced this car in Europe until the early 1990s. Thus, many items were relatively easy to get. Yet, the 1983 Wolfsburg Edition has several unique pieces from a three-way coolant hose you don't see on its parts diagram and short production run of mufflers for this model. VW should have used more stainless steel on say the exhaust downpipe and muffler. Its lifetime warranty on the muffler, say, died years ago.

► **Would you do it again?** Silly question.

► **Is your Scirocco an old car?** I've been hearing "that's an old car" a lot these days. A receptionist at my doctor's office exclaimed "look at the old car." I wonder what she thinks about the driver. It's like I'm some kind of social leper because I'm not driving like it's 1999. Then there's a tire manufacturer rep who described my car's tire size as "rare, it's unique." For me, this car is the new kind of VW — you know the much-ballyhooed shift from air-cool rear engines of VW's past to the modern water-cooled fresh-thinking small wonders. If I want old, I've got the 1972 VW Squareback, which was my daily driver before the Scirocco. It has about 250,000 miles on it. **VWCA**

► **DON'T MOVE!** Without telling us. Unlike first-class mail, the AUTOIST will not be forwarded to your new address by the post office. Please help us out — send changes to VWCA, P.O. Box 154, North Aurora, IL 60542, or by email to VWClub@aol.com.



# Club Store

Don't wait any longer to freshen up your summer wardrobe with one of our Club logo T-Shirts!



Select the classic **Bug** in gold and black on an ecru shirt or the red and black **Bus** on a gray shirt. Available in child sizes 6-8 and 10-12, and adult sizes S, M, L, XL and XXL. **Specify size and Bug or Bus when ordering.**  
 Regular price: \$18 (XXL \$20);  
**Club Member Price: \$16 (XXL \$18)**



For water-cooled enthusiasts, pick the blue and black **Rabbit** on a cottontail white shirt. Available only in L, XL and XXL, they're going fast! Regular Price: \$12; **Club Member Price, \$10**



Check out these and other unique designs of VWCA logo Tees along with other Club wearables and exclusive car accessories on our web site:

**www.vwclub.org**

Send completed Order Form with a check or money order to the Volkswagen Club of America to:

VWCA Club Store  
 P. O. Box 154  
 North Aurora IL 60542.



Subtotal Amount	Shippin' & Handlin'
Up to \$5.00	\$2.00
\$5.01—\$20.00	\$5.00
\$20.01—\$35.00	\$8.00
\$35.01—\$50.00	\$11.00
\$50.01 and up	\$15.00

## Order Form

Qty	Item Description	Size/Color	Price
Subtotal			
Shippin' & Handlin' (see table above)			
<b>PRICES EFFECTIVE 11-1-2016</b>			
Total			

VWCA #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_



# Parting Shot

Pop (up) goes a Jetta



At the SUN 'n FUN airshow in Lakeland, Florida, held from March 28 to April 2, our Richard VanTreuren got a look at this heavily modified Jetta performed by one of the many volunteer workers in the campground who is the owner of a specialty welding shop. The later generation VW had been cut into a pickup with rails that allowed for the mounting of a pop-up camper.

## Don't miss an issue

► Moving is hectic, but so is missing an issue of the AUTOIST. Bulk mailing of the publication doesn't allow for forwarding, so it's important to let us know your new address promptly. Send a snail mail to the VWCA, P.O. Box 154, North Aurora, IL 60506. Or an email to [VWClub@aol.com](mailto:VWClub@aol.com).



VW Autoist  
P.O. Box 154  
North Aurora IL 60542



EXPLOREVWCLUB.ORG

# VW Toon-ups

BY TOM JANISZEWSKI ✉ [volkstom@sbcglobal.net](mailto:volkstom@sbcglobal.net)

