

OLD BUS REVIEW

MARCH/APRIL 2008, #106

The Journal of Modern Busing



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Old Bus Review #106

This is issue #106 of *Old Bus Review*, published by NEATO (Northeast Association of Transporter Owners, Inc.) Publication dates are during the second weeks of January, March, May, July, September, and November (or thereabouts).

Northeast Association of Transporter Owners, Inc. (NEATO) was established to help members maintain, restore, buy, or sell pre-1968 Volkswagen Transporters (Microbuses, Kombis, Campers, Single- and Double-Cab Pickups, etc.) Membership is open to all owners and admirers of these vehicles and ownership of a pre-1968 VW Transporter is **not** a prerequisite to join. Membership in NEATO (which includes a subscription for 6 issues of *Old Bus Review* and a copy of the *Transporter Tourist and Traveler Directory*) is \$28 per year. Overseas dues are \$38 per year. Please make checks payable to NEATO. Joining can also be done through our website via PayPal: www.neatoclub.org. Membership dues and changes of address should be sent to:

NEATO/Membership Coordinator
c/o George Bossarte
353 Broadway
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Phone: (617) 876-0390

Email: gbeng@world.std.com

Back issues of *Old Bus Review* are available at \$5.00 per copy. (Some will need to be photocopies). Send requests to above Membership Coordinator address.

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Observe proper safety precautions when working around a vehicle, especially an older vehicle. Pay strict attention to a manufacturer's directions, wear safety goggles, gloves, respirators and proper clothing. With proper care, the old car hobby can be accident-free and fun

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This Old Bus Review

Dear Members—

Welcome to *OBR*, #106. *Our Mission: To Inform, To Entertain, To Be On Time.*

That said, we'd like to announce that *Old Bus Review* is in search of an editor (or an assistant editor, or an apprentice editor, or a once-in-a-while editor). If you have had any experience working with newsletters, or if you've ever **thought** you'd be interested in doing a newsletter, we want to hear from you! You'll be working with a very supportive and helpful crew, and you'll have input from many members near and far.

Need to try it before you buy it? If you only want to do a few pages, or an occasional page, that would be fine! If your chapter would like to have a one-time, or a regular feature, that would be great! We're looking for editorial input on any level, and we'd like to hear from anyone interested: we'll hold your hand through the "getting started" period, if you need that. *Contact us—we will show you the way!*

We had fewer than 10 volunteers for this year's Council: nine to be exact—a full quorum! So, according to the club by-laws, balloting is not required and all will serve on the Council (see page 6 for more details). *"Welcome aboard" to all the NEATO Council volunteers!*

Here are some things we're working on for future *OBRs*: If you have contributions to these topics—or others—please send them in!

- **Mousegray: The New Black.** *A photo essay of the elusive Mousegray Buses from 1961-1964. If you have one of these critters, we want to hear from you!*
- **The Useful Mods Issue.** *Plenty of stuff you can do to make your Bus run smoother, look sexier, and maybe even freak out your fellow Bus owners!*
- **Nice Roads for a Splitty.** *Descriptions of memorable stretches of road or highway you've travelled.*
- **Amazing Bus People I Have Known.** *Stories of people you have known, living or dead, that are worthy of telling.*
- **Passin' It On.** *Stories of the elders of our Bus-Lovin' Obsession passing on the enthusiasm to the younger generation.*

Hope you enjoy this issue: a labor of love from the members to the members.

Buses to You!

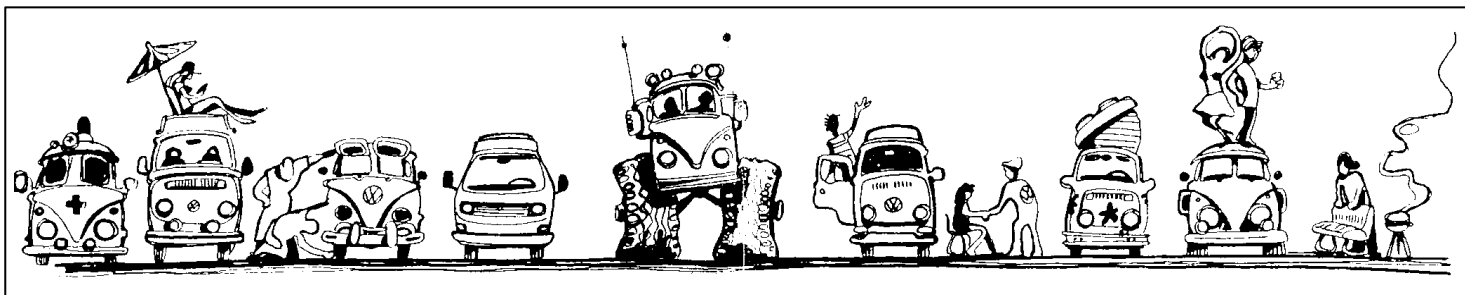
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TRANSPORTER TOURIST & TRAVELER DIRECTORY

2008/2009 Edition

The TTT Directory is your guidebook to members who offer on-the-road help to other members, or who also welcome phone calls, or even visits from fellow members—a great addition to your toolbox as you traverse the world! We already have on file TTT forms from new and renewing members sent in since last year’s directory was published. If you have any changes of contact information to make, you must fill out another form. **Deadline is April 31, 2008.**

Since 1990, NEATO has shared the Directory with members of LiMBO—the Late Model Bus Organization. This edition will be mailed out to members with the next (May/June #107) *Old Bus Review*.

The TTT Directory is a significant benefit of NEATO membership, and its publication is a major club expense. If you as an individual, or own a VW-related business and would like to contribute a gift toward off-setting printing costs of the Directory, it will be most welcome—and your name will be recognized in the Directory as a “Hero of the Type 2 Community.”

If you have a VW-related business and would like to advertise in the Directory, please contact our Mystery Editor and he’ll quote you rates for ad space.

We’d dearly love to stories from members who have used the TTT Directory and found it a benefit—let us hear from you!

The Swap Area Returns!

For Sale: 1966 21-window. Needs to be restored. \$5600. (707) 459-3141. Willits, Calif.

For Sale: I have multiple shelves of split-screen Bus parts I’ve collected over the past 14 years. I am always happy to help others get old Buses back on the road with information and original parts. If you have a question, need help, or are looking for a particular part, feel free to contact Peter at (210) 559-1214 (CST) or pcalbar@satx.rr.com

Wanted: Would like to buy a pre-1968 VW Bus. Larry, (715) 834-0543. Eau Claire, WI. hamre@wwt.net.

Wanted: I am looking for original parts to complete my 1954 Deluxe project including but not limited to engine vent trim, radio b/o plate, 16" wheel trim rings, middle seat kick panel, bulkhead grab bar, clock, aluminum dash pod trim, rear Frese reflectors, spare tire strap, gas pedal, front floor and cargo floor mats, and front Sigla and rear Sekurit glass. If you can help with any of these parts, and/or have BD deluxe parts that I may have forgotten, please contact Peter at (210)559-1214 (CST) or pcalbar@satx.rr.com

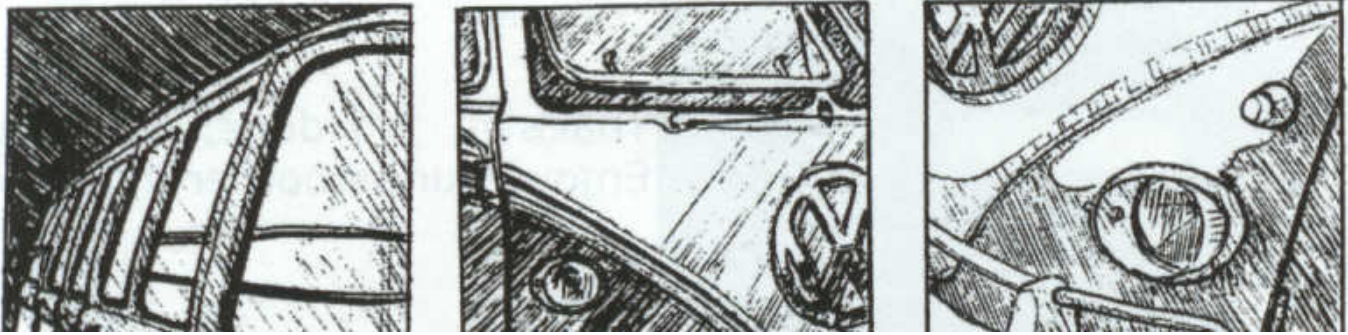


BUG COLLECTIONS

Cars - Parts - Memorabilia

Sammie Smith
936-569-7821

1801 York Drive
Nacogdoches, TX 75965



Letters from Members

From **Judy Neville**, December 5, 2007:

I just read the freebie [2007 *Old Bus Review Complimentary Issue*]. Good. I can't believe NEATO is just 21 yrs old. I bought my first bus ('67 Deluxe) in 1980. I remember wondering if I really wanted to buy such an old car. I first joined SOTO, but it was all West Coast. So I joined NEATO. I must have been one of the early ones. And now my buses are REALLY old. Old enough that, last year, the tax man declared them classics and upped my bill \$40!!

Judy

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Editor's reply: *Yes, Judy, how time flies! Let's have a show of hands of those of us not growing older? None? I thought so. On the other hand, I think that an old VW Bus is a kind of Time Machine—that by owning, touching, driving, or even just being near one, a person is "Transported" to an earlier time, a younger age—an air-cooled Fountain of Youth!*

###

From **Chris Pollard**, January 8, 2008:

Love the pic on the cover of the *Review* (January/February '08). Looks like the guy in the middle pickup is having an exciting time!

We don't really get snow here in the UK any more—global warming, y'know. Pity, I really miss it. The van, as you know, can be quite handfoul in the snow—the traction is good, but the steering and brakes stop working! I took my van to the north of England at New Year in a climbing trip back in the

'70s. The trip along the side of the lake was quite thought provoking, and I ended up sleeping in it in a snowdrift for 3 days. Surprisingly cozy. Used it as a base camp until the road was passable again, but had to dig myself back in every night. Good fun.

I found my original bill of sale for the VW recently: 11th November 1976, which by my reckoning means I have now owned it for 31 years. I bought it just after I graduated from University, and paid a princely sum of £100 pounds for it, which even then wasn't a lot. Mind you, they weren't cool then! I don't suppose this is a record, but, by the same token, there can't be many owners who can match this, especially as it has been running and on the road the whole time. No breaks, continuous use.

Background to the van: It is a '67 right-hand drive (of course!) 1500, probably one of the last built. It is a rare original 12V, and was imported into the UK unregistered, where it was converted by Devon Caravans—so it has always been a motor caravan. First registration was in the UK.

It was bought new by a chap in London, a senior scientist at GEC (not the same company as GE, but the same sort of business). He ran it until the early '70s, clocking up around 70k miles, before his family outgrew it, and it was pushed into a shed for a few years. I bought it in '76; it was very dirty, but still running, after a bit of persuasion. The dirt and the shed had protected it well, and there was very little corrosion. In fact, the only thing needed to get it road legal was a new battery, some new bulbs and a few brake lines—otherwise, it was perfectly OK. It has been on the road ever since, and has never

been restored as such—just running improvements and maintenance as the years have gone on.

All the best,

Chris
Ipswich, Suffolk, UK

Editor's reply: Great to hear the story behind your "van," Chris! 31 years ownership is up there as some sort of record. Maybe we'll soon see your name in the Guinness Book of World Records? We should certainly celebrate this over a pint at your local pub. Cheers!

###

From Gerry Cunningham & Kathleen Brenden:

Aloha from Maui, Hawaii.

We are the "Bus Wau on Maui" article of OBR #103, 2006. We were so surprised when Fred stopped by to see our buses last year and would like to invite any other members to come here and share stories when on our island of Maui.

Aloha,
Gerry & Kathleen
Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii
(808) 669-7093
surfingkb@aol.com

Editor's reply: Aloha to you, too, Gerry & Kathleen! Thanks for your warm invitation!

###

From Andy Pechenik, January, 2008:

I haven't renewed my membership for a few years and thought it was time. I'm actually hoping to move from Miami to Charlotte soon where there is a local NEATO group.

Andy
Miami, Florida

Editor's reply: Hi, Andy! Moving to be closer to a NEATO Chapter? Now that's DEDICATION! Welcome back to the fold of the faithful.

###

From Hannu Jaskari:

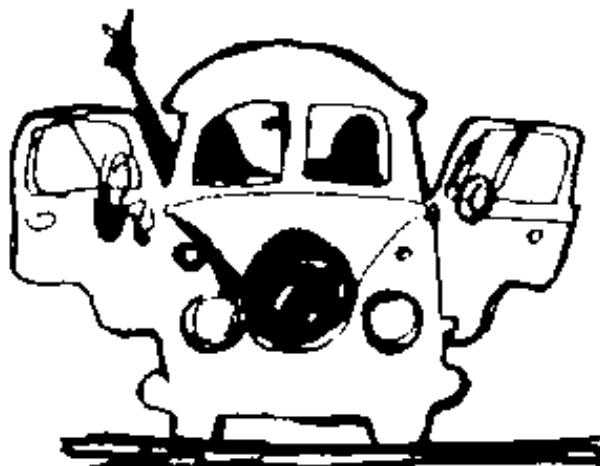
Sad to see how hyped and overpriced split-screen buses have become. I think this due to two things, the easy web media of thesamba.com and eBay, and buyers who will pay anything. There are now dozens of businesses in the UK and mainland Europe that hoard buses from around the world: the US, Australia, Brazil, etc., and sell them high, mainly to Brits. Here in Finland, you can still get a decent bus for a few thousand euros, and a project for hundreds, though prices are climbing. But if a seller gets tired of haggling or wants real money, he will sell it abroad. I've seen many buses go this way.

I let my NEATO membership expire, but I've stuck with the Split Screen Van Club in the UK. We've driven the bus there, and this year we toured Devon & Cornwall for a few weeks. At one point I realized our way took us by a small town where Dave Eccles lives. Didn't have his phone number so we asked around, found his house and rang the doorbell—his face was worth seeing!

I'm happy to have a reliable bus (a '66) that takes me & my wife to places familiar and unknown, to meet friends, old and new. We probably won't part with it until we're too old to drive, and I doubt we will ever NEED another one... Although I've entertained this idea of rejoining NEATO and buying a bus somewhere in the Southwest USA and driving it across America and Canada to celebrate my "big 5-0" in 2009, and then selling it or maybe shipping it home. Besides being a great adventure, this would give us a chance to see the relatives and friends with whom we stayed during our visits 25-30 yrs ago. But then again, maybe not...

All the best,
Hannu
Lappeenranta, Finland
hannu.jaskari@fvwa.fi

Editor's reply: Great to hear from you, Hannu! It's OK to renew your membership—the club council has declared amnesty for all lapsed members! Send us more news from Finland when you can.



Nine Is Fine:

2008 NEATO COUNCIL

Our new Club Council embraces *CHANGE* and *EXPERIENCE*, with the *HOPE* that our collective *EXPERIENCE* will lead to positive *CHANGE*.

According to our club by-laws, if there are fewer than 10 member volunteers for the Council, then an election (with ballots, etc.) is considered unnecessary, and all volunteers are automatically appointed to the council until the next election.

Therefore, allow us to introduce ourselves—the 2008 NEATO Council:

Peter Albarian (Texas): I've been a member of NEATO for around 12 years and on the Council for 6 or 7 years now. I feel honored to be part of a group that does what we can for this great organization and its members. I currently live in Texas and enjoy working with my son on our Buses whenever we can make the opportunity. I hope you'll consider allowing me the honor to serve you for another year.

George Bossarte (Mass.): I am interested in continuing on the NEATO council. I am willing to keep maintaining the membership data base, and I am willing to get the newsletter printed and mailed. I will do what else I can to promote the club. I am looking forward to a great year for NEATO.



Mike Robus, MD (Penn.): I look forward to helping NEATO this year, and beyond! I've owned a variety of Buses over the years, starting in 1984 when I bought a '66

Deluxe. Today I own an all-natural bus "cleansing/detox" service: *KleenBus, Inc.* Here I am, using cleansing waters to purge the rear end of a mouse gray 1964—I think I cleaned out this one pretty good! *Get the KleenBus Treatment: A Colonic for Your Bus!*

Rob Laffoon (Nebraska): I would like to help NEATO with what I can!

Jim Bryant (Illinois):

First bus: 1973, blue '65 Kombi, \$1100.

First NEATO membership: 1992, \$20.

First as NEATO Treasurer: 1998, volunteered.

Continuing on Council as Treasurer in 2008? *Priceless.*



Jim DiGennaro (Mass.):

My first bus was a '66 Westy I bought in 1988 and have had buses ever since. I wrecked the '66 soon after I bought it and then purchased a '79 camper. I've had several Bay window buses and Vanagons. My current daily driver is a '93

Eurovan weekender and I have a '67 Kombi I've converted to a Westfalia using parts from a '66. I've been an active LiMBO member since the Zach Woods days in the late '80s. I'm currently LiMBO's President.

Dave Phillips (Vermont): I joined NEATO sometime around November of 1991. Since that time I have owned many Buses, as well as other old Volkswagens. I currently own a 1959 walk-through Panel that I purchased in Bakersfield, California, and then drove 3000 miles home (Hartford, Vermont). I also presently own a 1991 Westfalia that I drove to California and back last summer. I have often thought about becoming more involved with NEATO and I feel that I now have the time to help make this great club even better! I believe that my long time membership has given me a good idea about what the club is about and where we want it to go. I will work hard to increase membership and continue to spread the word about the greatest vehicle ever made, the Volkswagen Bus!





Mark Pribanic (Florida.):

I am writing to express my interest in serving on the NEATO council during 2008. I've been a split bus owner since 1993 and a long time, although sporadic, NEATO member over the years. Most recently I have taken over

organizing the Bulli Brigade. I live in the Southeast and most of all enjoy driving my buses. I feel NEATO is poised for future growth as technology is integrated to help make payment remittance and

communication methods easier and faster. I am committed to doing my best in helping NEATO grow & prosper.

Bill Webner (Ohio): We have a pretty active group of bus owners here in the Great Lakes area and our local chapter, LEAK OIL, even has our own forum www.leakoil.com. I understand the challenges of keeping NEATO going and growing. About 15 years ago I got my first split-window bus, a 1961 SO23, with factory safaris. I still have this bus and enjoy it in the summer months. If I can be of any help by being on the Council, I am willing—I feel it is an honor.

Not the Sound of Silence

Steve Lee

As familiar as the audible environment of your home, there is the ever present heartbeat of your bus. Every click, whir, clunk, rumble and clank is as familiar as your own heartbeat, and just as welcome. Who hasn't been sailing down the highway pushed along by 85 cubic inches or so of solid German engineering, when suddenly, like a sour note thrust into the mix of Wagner's Valkyrie, there arises a discordant clamor from within? I turn the radio down, cock my ear to one side and analyze the relative cacophony: I recognize those thumps, those are the front shocks I have been putting off replacing indefinitely. That rattle over my right shoulder, that's the cargo door reminding me that I have to put in new weather-stripping before the rainy season. The deep rumble beneath has got to be the transmission reminding me that rebuild time is fast approaching. Not the right sound, none of them. I stop at a traffic light pondering as I automatically return the peace sign given me through the sun roof of a lowered '63 bug piloted by a kid younger than his ride. Can't hear the sound now. As I shift into first and motor away from the signal, I have just about convinced myself that it must have been a noise from some other vehicle in traffic and not my bus at all, when I hear it again. No mistake... it's there and it's coming from my splittie. Ting . . . tink . . . ting . . . ting . . . tink. What the . . .? What other maintenance have I neglected lately? It's too sporadic to be coming from the engine, right? No knocking or tapping or pinging and definitely not the sound of a shredded fan belt slapping the sheet metal in its death throes. Ting . . . tink . . . tink (pause) tink, tink. Hmmm, can't be an errant lug nut whipping around inside a hub cap like a tennis shoe in the clothes dryer, cause I haven't had a wheel off in months. Wait a minute! How about something in the

pan under my feet, something that's fallen off the clutch or accelerator linkage? Can't be. I'm driving on a level piece of highway so why would it bounce around? Tink . . . tink . . . ting . . . tink. Damn, this is driving me crazy! I pull off the road into the parking lot of a Taco Bell and sit there listening. Nothing. What if I start bouncing up and down in the driver seat, turning my head from side to side listening, maybe it's just something loose I can coax into revealing itself. Up, down, up down. I make eye contact with a young woman behind the wheel of an SUV coming out of the Taco Bell drive thru, who grimaces suspiciously before accelerating away. Lord only knows what she thinks I'm doing as I practically bounce my head off the headliner. This isn't getting me anywhere. Back onto the road. Tink . . . ting . . . ting. I try to put it out of my mind but we know how well that works: male brain, unsolved problem. Must find the answer; must get to the truth!

At last I pull into my driveway and somehow stimulate the last tink, tink, ting from whatever road gremlin climbed on board back there somewhere. My girlfriend turns from watering the roses, and walks up to the bus. "Hey, don't shut the engine off." she says, giving me that I-need-a-favor-and-you-might-get-lucky-later look, as she hops into the passenger seat. "I need garlic and tomatoes for the pasta tonight." She turns this way and that, looking around while holding the left half her seat belt before opening the passenger door. "Oh, there it is," she says, recovering the right half of the belt, whose metal clip has been playfully tapping the right front hubcap for the last ten miles. "All set," she says, watching my expression as the light bulb goes on over my head.

Gettin' to Know:

Judy Neville

1) **Age:** *Turned 59 last November—looking forward to retirement next November: less than one year!*

2) **Married, single? Any kids, pets?** *Single with four cats.*

3) **Joined NEATO?** *I joined SOTO in 1980. SOTO was all West Coast related, so when I saw an ad for NEATO, I switched. I must have been a very early member (NEATO membership #382).*

4) **Where are you from?** *I was born and raised in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. I've never lived anywhere else.*

5) **Tell us about your first Bus?** *In 1979, a friend of mine had a '58 23-window that I thought was the cutest thing ever. We called it the "Weeble Wagon" after the Playschool toy. It leaked like a sieve. We'd carry umbrellas when it rained. When she sold it, I had no interest in buying. (Hindsight is 20/20.) But a year later, road construction led me past a '77 Deluxe with a For Sale sign. I went past that VW three times a day for two weeks before I finally called. My boss had a Bug, so*

*he went with me for a test drive. His assessment: "Don't buy it. It's a piece of sh*t." Too late.*

6) **What motivated you to buy your first Bus?** *I wanted it from the first moment I saw it. The seller was nice enough to point out the pluses of this particular vehicle. It had both bumpers. The middle seat was there. All the door and interior panels, including the middle seat piece, were accounted for.*

7) **How many Buses have you owned?** *To date I have bought and sold a '67 Deluxe and a '66 Deluxe. I currently have a '66 Camper and a '67 Single Cab. I have wanted dozens of others, but am limited in my parking.*

8) **Do you wrench on your own Buses or farm out?** *I know nothing about mechanics. Don't want to know. I write checks. Years ago, I tried changing the oil. Not doing that again.*

9) **Stock or Slammed?** *Definitely not "slammed." But not exactly stock either.*



10) **Best road trip done in your Bus?** *It was about late September 1985 when I took a road trip to New England. My stomach was clenched the whole 2000 miles. But I did not have a bit of trouble. Of course, the Deluxe was only eighteen years old at that time.*

11) **Favorite Color Combo of a Bus?** *I love Sealing Wax Red. When I worked in a dental lab, I used a red sealing wax from Germany. Always thought that was where the name came from. Then I saw a SWR bus and realized the color was very different.*

12) **Best breakdown story?** *Is there such a thing? Once, I broke down and went to the nearest business to use a phone. I was directed to the break room. AAA was not happy that I didn't know the street number. I explained that the street was only one block long and I was the only vehicle on the street. Yada yada yada. It was only when I described the vehicle as a red '67 VW bus that two supremely bored guys on break jumped up to look out the window.*

13) **Dream Bus?** *That Sealing Wax Red 23-window with sunroof Deluxe. But I'd take a Double Cab as consolation. Any color.*

14) **Custom paint or OG color?** *Whatever.*

15) **Favorite bus accessory or add on?** *I imported a 1975 Eriba Puck last year. I love it, but it's not all that practical for just me.*

16) **Any other vintage vehicles?** *I've always wanted a '49-'52 MGTD. I've been told I'd want one until I drove one.*

17) **Tell us something you're proud of, non-bus related?** *I've made it through twenty-two years at the US Postal Service. Less than a year to go! It used to be, in nearly forty-five years of driving, I never locked my keys in the car. I blew that last week.*

18) **Any advice to new Bus owners?** *If you love it, buy it.*

19) **Tunes?** *I'm strictly oldie goldie. I don't think I've listened to anything released after 1975.*

20) **What do you do to support your Bus habit?** *I have no kids so my money is mine to fritter away as I please.*

21) **Samba ID name:** *rebapuck.*



Roster of the Rollers

Roll-call of Recent, Renewing & Returning NEATO Members

Geoffrey Aldrich, Peterborough, New Hampshire ('59 Deluxe, '67 Deluxe Sunroof) **

Sammie Smith, Nacogdoches, Texas ('60 Double Cab, '60 Panel, '65 Single Cab, '65 SO-42, '66 SO-42) *

William Jacinto, Mentone, California ('66 Single Cab, '58-'59 Kombi) *

Thomas Pieszchala, Laporte, Indiana ('66 Transporter) *

Christopher Moore, Willits, California, ('61 Westy, '63 Double & '60 Single Cabs, '67 Deluxe) **

James Share, APO—Okinawa, Japan ('67 Westy) **

Robert Miller, Altamont, NY (1956 & 1967 Buses) **

James Walden, Simi Valley, California ('63 Double Cab) **

Richard Tiriris, Prospect Park, Pennsylvania ('65 EZ Camper & '64 Single Cab) **

Tony & Susan Eastman, Westport, Connecticut ('65 Double Cab) **

Brad Warren, Decatur, Illinois ('63 Standard) **

Troy Perdomo, Bush, Louisiana ('65 Panel) **

Arthur Cote, III, Worcester, Massachusetts ('67 Deluxe, '56 Single Cab) **

Steve Lockwood, Port Townsend, Washington ('66 Westy, '67 Kombi) **

Chris Hobbs, Oviedo, Florida ('67 Double Cab) **

Rick Rahmberg, Maplewood, Missouri ('66 Westy) **

Terry Richburg, Crowley, Texas ('56 Panel, '65, '66, '67 Buses, '61 Double Cab, '61 SO-23) *

Richard Palmer, Hickory, North Carolina ('62 Crew Cab) **

Shirley Hall, Ft. Worth, Texas ('64 Single Cab, '65 Westy, '72 Bus) *

* = Recent Member ** = Renewing Member *** = Returning after an absence

Mid-Life Crisis Bus Story

By Michael Kluckner

Part 2: The Search Narrows

A few weeks passed, during which the man busied himself with other things and only occasionally contemplated the equation: bus = adventure = why not? One day, walking in a trendy part of town, he spied a candy-apple red, dropped, chopped, customized, mag-wheeled split-window bus parked on the other side of the street, and felt it reel him in. He *had* to have a look. Is this where old buses go now? To the customizers? It was about as far from Kevin's rolling doghouse as he could imagine. Taped into a side window was a handbill advertising a VW show in a suburb not too far from town, set for a mid-August Sunday. He felt it reeling him in, too, and resolved to go.

From the number of Volkswagens of all descriptions parked for blocks, he could tell he was approaching something unusual. He was amazed at how young the crowd was—the friendly, slightly nerdy quality of “nice” kids in their 20s. Most of the buses were owned or had been restored by 20-somethings. But there was a camperized one (a '57) owned by a chubby, easy-going guy with a wife and few small kids eating bologna sandwiches on kaiser buns and drinking Coke from cans, half of them inside the bus and half wandering around outside.

One young man, maybe staring 30 in the face, had a “radical” delivery bus for sale and had printed brochures of it arrayed on a card table. His wife's old delivery bus, the one she had when he met her, was a distant echo. The owner had cut the retaining wall behind the two front seats down to seat height, and wore the uniform of a modern bus junkie—close-cropped hair that was a bit ragged as if cut by garden shears and tinted blonde or henna-red, an earring, a rather manic smile and intense gaze, a T-shirt with a VW logo, baggy shorts, and large sneakers—and he had a web site.

“Did you do the restoration?” the man asked.

“Yeah, but if I was gonna do it again, I'd go completely stock.” He gestured at its tuck 'n' roll red upholstery, then at an old VW ad on his table which showed a line of identical red and white window vans along a straight suburban street lined with identical red-roofed, white-sided houses.

“Why are you . . . like, I'm curious—why are you devoted to these old buses?”

“Well, they're just totally cool . . . I grew up with them around and, like, there's the boxy shape and everybody turns to look at you as you drive by and . . .”

Another man, probably in his mid-30s and surrounded by a flock of little children, had come up and was listening to our conversation.

“It's cuz it's the most bitchin' vehicle on the planet,” he said emphatically.

“The most *what* vehicle?” An especially loud dune buggy had roared by at the crucial moment in his epistle.

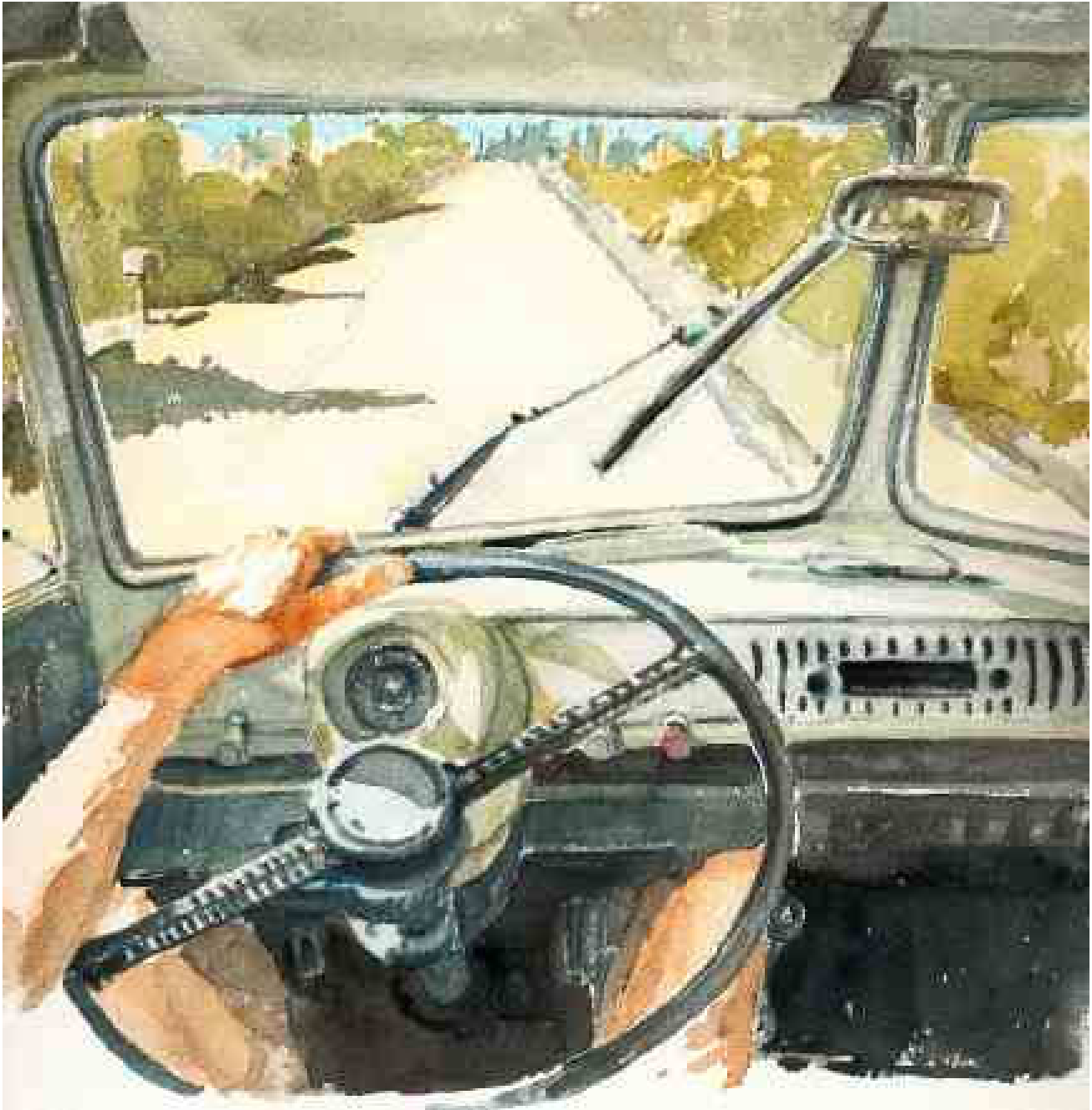
“Bitchin'.”

“Awesome,” the first guy confirmed.

“It's like drivin' a work of art.”

On the tarmac, the world had divided into air-cooled people and water-cooled people surrounding the “new Beetle.” “Like the *deux chevaux*,” the older man suggested to his new friends, referring to the cult-classic Citroen 2CV. They hadn't heard about it, but agreed that a good parallel was between Mac people and PC people; people with PCs were like people with normal cars with their radiators and water-cooled engines. Ordinary. On the beaten path.

Everything about these bus junkies seemed different from those a generation before who moved about in them. They were fascinated both by antiquated bus technology and the latest in high-



speed computer and communication equipment, whereas the earlier generation, or at least some of them, was eager to go back to the land. Later, talking with his wife about them and their multifarious interests, he gave up trying to make the logical connections. “There’s probably a thread there that’s invisible to us,” she said. Like the thread that tied the VW to peace symbols and the antiwar movement, in spite of its Nazi origins, and was invisible to his parents.



Some weeks passed. It was now late-September—cool nights following beautiful Indian summer days. He had put up notices in a couple of VW-friendly garages—“VW Bus Wanted, prefer split window,” and his telephone number—but had heard nothing. He had copied down phone numbers or ripped off the little tabs torn in the bottom of ads pinned to bulletin boards, but all were for modern buses, or for Transporters, so he wasn’t really

interested in them, except trying to find out what they were now worth. Kevin had wanted four large for his beater, which seemed absurd given its condition, yet the owners of the fully restored ones at the show were asking eight. Twenty years ago, the last one he had owned, which admittedly was made of rust bonded together by paint, had cost him \$800 or so. And the crew-cab Transporter his wife and he had bought in the late '70s from Eddie the stoned carpenter? Eighty or a hundred, max. It was a 6-volt but its wiring was so gummy it would only start with jumper cables and a 12-volt battery they dragged around with them.

He had just gotten back from a walk to the store.

“Oh good, there you are,” his wife said. “You got a call from a guy with a bus for sale. He said he got your name off a notice board at a garage . . .”

“Yeah, I put one up at Eric’s Bug Stop.”

“. . . and this is his story—he’s trying to make a flight to Hawaii tomorrow but his wallet got stolen at the airport and he owes \$500 on the ticket.”

“Uh huh,” he said, an edge of suspicion creeping into his voice. “Is it a split-window?”

“He said it’s a ’66.”

“Good.”

“With new tires, a roof rack, and he was going on about how he had just spent \$400 on a new alternator.” She looked at him with the sort of bemused smile a wife has for a husband who’s about to do something stupid, but not dangerous like getting a mistress or taking up skydiving.

“He’s hanging around outside Continental Motors on 4th. He says he tried to sell it to them for \$700, and he claims they would’ve taken it for reselling except they’ve got no room on their lot. He also says he’ll take \$500 for it.”

“Sounds desperate—maybe he’s being pursued by drug dealers.”

“Who knows? Actually,” she remarked, “he sounded credible. But you can always just walk away. He called from a pay phone, and I told him that if I was able to get in touch with you I thought you could get there about 6.”

“By the time I get there, all the insurance agents will be closed—I won’t know whether it’s stolen or

got a lien on it.” All the old auto-savvy, the things he had buried in his mind from 20 years ago, began to come back.

“No mechanic’s going to put a lien on an old bus,” she continued. “And nobody’s going to owe money on it.” She paused. “Anyway, if it looks good it might be worth the risk. Five hundred?” she laughed. “You were contemplating dropping four big ones! His name’s René, by the way. French-Canadian, sounds like.”

Continental’s lot was filled with imports, everything from Mercedes to BMW to modern, sporty VW. The only bus was a camperized Westfalia Vanagon. A couple of mechanics stood talking with a worried-looking customer while a third one, bent over with his head under the hood, read the entrails of a Mercedes.

Just past the lane, parked against the curb, was an old, red-and-white VW Kombi bus. With the camber of the road and the gutter along the curb, it looked like it was leaning against the curb having a rest. Dust was caked up its back and around its sides. On the back, partly obscured by the dust, was a stick-on sunburst, the granddaughter of flower power. On the roof was a homemade wooden rack, empty except for a red plastic gas can strapped on with bungee cords. There was no one in it or standing by it.

He parked nearby and walked back along the sidewalk toward it. Through the passenger-side window he could see a classic traveler’s mess. Rags, scraps of paper towel, empty 7-11 Slurpee cups, partly crushed plastic cola bottles, and butts from an overflowing ashtray covered the floor. The driver’s and passenger’s seats were completely wrecked, the vinyl upholstery worn through in many spots but seemingly held together by the steel springs of the seat, which could be glimpsed through the gaps. A brown, fibrous thatch, probably the padding from the seats, was scattered around like straw on a barn floor. The rubber covering on the brake and clutch pedals was completely worn away. On the dashboard, a large speaker with its grill removed was angled toward the driver and held down by duct tape.

Moving a few steps toward the rear, he tried looking through the side windows but they were tinted purple and partly blocked off by some Indian-print fabric looped over springy plastic-coated wire, just like the curtains on Kevin’s van. Maybe they

attended the same sewing class? In fact, the interior looked just like Kevin's—on the floor, a mess of clothes, boots, tools and parts scattered around a couple of Rubbermaid organizers. On the fold-down bed, a tattered sleeping bag and some rumpled blankets lay in a heap. Another campsite on wheels, he thought.

“You are innerested in de bus?” I heard in rapid-fire, French-accented English.

“Yeah, sure. You're René?”

“Very please to meet you,” he said formally.

With his close-cropped hair and unshaven face he looked not unlike the bus junkies at the show, but shabby and road-worn. Rather sharp-featured, with a ferret-like keenness of gaze, he examined the older man quickly. On his torso he wore only a curious sleeveless vest, patterned in a sort of Value Village brocade like a bizarre waistcoat; its large armholes gave a clear view of his matted armpit hair and the blue veins on his thin, hairy chest. Trying not to be obvious, the older man glanced down his arms but could see no needle tracks or razor scars. He wore a braided wrist band, the kind you learned to make in Hippie 101, to which a watch might have been attached had he needed to know the time. He wore baggy shorts, khaki-colored except where stained with dirt and age, below which extended a pair of knobby knees, bony ankles and sandals.

“Your wife tol' you my story . . . ?” he asked.

“Well, sort of . . . she said your wallet was stolen.”

“I was at de airport, jus' about to get my ticket, an' was putting my tings into anudder bag. I turn my back for jus a minud an' my wallet is gone.”

“And you don't . . .”

“No, no, it was all my monay. An' my ticket is jus' good for tomorrow. If I can get no monay for de balance den I doan go to Hawaii.” His voice trailed off. There was a pause, indecision hanging in the air.

“Look, you want a bus? Dis a good one. I jus' drive here from tree-planting all summer an' living in it.”

The tree-planters were one of the subcultures who used old buses like badges. They lived in their gypsy camps on the edges of clearcuts, worked hard and partied harder through the seasons when there wasn't snow in the high valleys. Then it was Mexico or, it seemed, Hawaii, until the planting season began again.

The older man looked quickly into the engine compartment, noting the remains of a nylon stocking which had once done emergency service as a fan belt. The engine started quickly, but when he tried to engage first gear it ground terribly.

The older man looked quickly into the engine compartment, noting the remains of a nylon stocking which had once done emergency service as a fan belt.

“De clutch is way down on de floor,” René said. “It is just de way it is now.”

As a distraction, René flicked the radio on and turned the volume up. Boom! Crash! went some guitars and drums, drowning out the engine noise. “You see, de radio works!” he exclaimed happily. The older man turned it off so he could listen to this strange beast of burden.

He managed to get it rolling and away from the curb. The thing needed a clutch adjustment really badly—had he actually driven it for all these weeks and months with the clutch like this? Out in the country you wouldn't notice it so much, but in the city it was murder. Some road test—in the madness of the rush hour traffic, it was all but impossible to do anything other than avoid running into other cars. But after a few blocks, it seemed that all the important bits, especially the brakes, worked. Not great, but they worked. Finally he got it back to the spot in front of Continental and parked and pulled on the handbrake. It almost came off in his hand. Another adjustment, at least.

But did he want it? What would he do with it?

He wondered whether himself of 20 years ago, a relatively cagey and astute person used to buying and selling, scrabbling and surviving, would be laughing at the current one. His indecision was all about ego, only very little about the money. "What's five hundred bucks? It's an adventure!" he thought. Suddenly, the decision became really easy. He wouldn't, after all, have any hesitation over spending \$500 on a little weekend vacation, so why should he sweat this?

After that epiphany, he caved in. They drove to a nearby bank which had a cash machine. René quietly packed his gear while he went inside and got the money. When he returned, René had all his essential gear stuffed into a single haversack and was cleaning up the mess in the interior and putting it into one of the Rubbermaid containers. A couple of dirty pots emerged from under the mess and were tossed in, followed by a propane lantern, its base broken and glass cracked. Out of one recess he pulled a bag of cheap spanners and screwdrivers and made a point of saying they could go with the bus, as a bonus, then threw a Chilton's service manual onto it. It looked like René would never get to the bottom of his midden, as the deeper he dug the more he slowed, eventually becoming almost dreamlike as he sifted through the rubble of his recent life. He held up a grubby fork, turned it in his hand to catch the light, then with a slight shrug tossed it into the Rubbermaid. On a pad of foolscap he had written a letter, probably to a love left behind in Montreal. "Chère Sylvie," it began. He tossed it into the Rubbermaid on top of the fork.

"Don't you want this?" the older man asked, fishing it out.

"Non. It is all past."

Next came a ten-pound bag of Basmati rice. "Dis is very good rice," René remarked, looking him directly in the eye for the first time. "You will use dis?" he asked with a cocked eyebrow. Guess he was a vegetarian, too. Figures.

René put his haversack and sleeping bag on a bench on the sidewalk in front of the bank, and asked indifferently whether the contents of the Rubbermaid could be dumped into a garbage can somewhere. They exchanged the money, all in 20s from the bank

machine, and shook hands. As the older man drove away, leaving René with his haversack on a sidewalk bench, he tried to recall whether he had ever been that conclusive in ending one period of his life before moving onto another? René could have put some of the stuff into a cardboard box and mailed it home. Guess he didn't have a home, and just wanted to turn the page on his old life.

The following morning in the clear light of a new day the man walked out of his house to have a look at his new toy. All it lacked was a bumper sticker stating "Katmandu or Bust." On the inside of the buss cargo door was a Bob Marley decal, code for Dope Smoked Here. Painted on the ceiling girder at the back and visible from the bed was a frieze of little sperm-people cavorting around the words love and freedom.

With a couple of wrenches and some God-In-A-Can (a.k.a. WD-40), he crawled under the bus's back end until he could see, on the transmission housing above the rear axle on the left side, the lever that activated the clutch. The old Volksie clutch was such simple technology: with your left foot, you pushed on the pedal, which pulled a cable which pulled the lever which moved the plate away from the flywheel. No hydraulics, no computers, no mysteries. A few turns and the clutch was adjusted.

With a knife, he cut away the remains of the nylon stocking that had served as an emergency fan belt, and wondered whether it was Sylvie's. Had she left René for another, a more handsome man with a better bus? Or had he asked her to come with him to plant trees and live in the bus on the edge of the wilderness and she had said no, I can't leave my job and I have to stay home and look after my mother but you can have one of my stockings as a keepsake? There was a bit of an oil leak along the valve cover gaskets, so he made a mental note to replace them before setting off to do any serious traveling.

A couple of weeks, maybe, and I could try a road trip? he told himself.

Michael Kluckner is a Canadian artist and writer living in Australia. Part 3 (and final chapter) of Mid-Life Crisis Bus Story will appear in the next issue of Old Bus Review.

Original art on page 11 by the author.



The Reference Point

John Lago

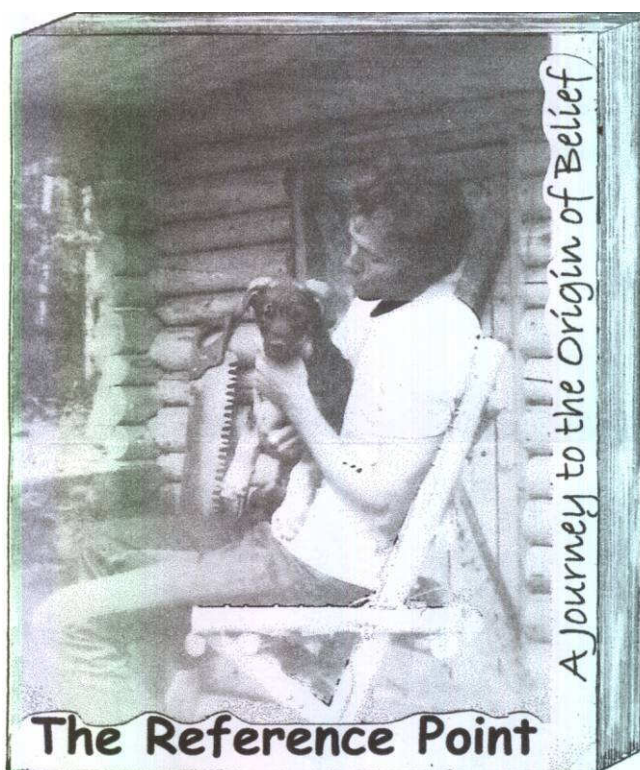
What if everything that made you happy suddenly seemed obsolete? Suppose you're just kicking along, getting a bang out of life in a knocked-back general way, when suddenly something intensely deep and specific puts an addition on life that makes all previous thought and motive fall under the heading of "trivia"? Is this a time to feel isolated or liberated? Awed or abandoned?

The Reference Point begins by telling of an attempted murder gone good. Usually murder, attempted or otherwise, is thought of as a thing gone bad, but with a little help from irony, stress, and mystery, bad intentions slipped into another direction and the participants found themselves in a state that defied earthly description.

Earthly descriptions are famous for falling short of defining what we regard as the spiritual, so rather than struggle to define, maybe we should simply ask, "Is there such a thing as being so close to the edge that you get a glimpse of an awaiting state?"

Regardless, once one is treated to an event of high-impact spirituality, here's where it is understood why beatings, governmental suppression, ridicule, and all other forms of persecution have no power to snuff the idea that "Yes, there is much more than materiality, and to this I need to connect." Like it or not, it's how we're wired. We want a vital connection with a higher state, and with most of us, maybe is not an option. We see that humanity, unlike water, seeks higher than its own level, and we see that people have a need to go there.

The Reference Point tells of people who went there. First they are seen on a wild and primitive tour by boxcar through the Northern Rockies, up the Alaska Highway in a VW Microbus, and down the Yukon River in a canoe. And there they are seen again in a little mountain cabin built next to a big creek flowing into a deep lake. Outwardly, the people in mention are tramps, preachers, dog mushers, innkeepers, nut cases, hitchhikers,



homesteaders, students, prospectors, and (saving the best till last), you. Why, oh you? Mostly because you are likely to see your own self in here, in harmony with the others, pushing back the superficial, cutting through the clutter, so when you step off your last mile you can look back and say, "Not only have I held, but I have also risen."

Finally, since the book is subtitled "A Journey to the Origin of Belief," from front to back it steadily grows into one person's quest to find on purpose the home address of an exalted state of mind once stumbled upon by accident.

The Reference Point, a Journey to the Origin of Belief.

305 pages, by Johnny Bock

\$18.00 per copy, postpaid. Send your name and address, and make checks or M.O. payable to:

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Due out in May '08. Drive alive.



The winners of the third prize in the category “The Oldest” (T1-T3) on the stage.

The 60th Anniversary of the VW Type 2 Was a Great Success (VW Recognizes the Type 2 in a VERY Big Way!)

Text: Heino Vanska
Photos: Heino Vanska, Hillevi Kaariainen,
Macke Rapanen



A welcome present, a nice model of Type 2/T1

The Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles Factory arranged a great event in honor of the 60th anniversary of VW Type 2 on the weekend of the 5th to 7th of October 2007 in Hannover, Germany. In 1946 the Dutch merchant Mr. Ben Pon wanted to begin to import Volkswagens to Holland. During his

visits to the Wolfsburg factory site he saw peculiar vehicles, the so-called “Plattenwagens,” which were built and used by the workers for internal transportation of steel plates from one factory hall to another. On the 23rd of April 1947 he had a brilliant idea which he drew immediately in his notebook. Later this idea of a totally new transportation vehicle led to the famous Volkswagen Type 2. The celebration ceremonies began on Friday, October 5, with





Veterans of the 'Rheinbahn' and 'Deutsche Bundespost'

an official vehicle convoy from the factory through Hannover to the Fair Centre. In the Festival Area were 3000 parking spaces reserved for the visitors who had paid in advance the weekend ticket (EUR 25.00) and came with their VW Buses (T1 - T5). There was no entrance fee for the interested day visitors, but they had to park their own vehicles in separate parking lots (Nord 1a and Nord 1b) outside the Festival Area.

The entrance to the site and thus the whole day program with all events taking place on



A former vehicle of the German Red Cross

the site was free. The price for the weekend ticket included all fees for parking areas, the use of showers and restrooms, a sandwich service on Saturday and Sunday mornings, a welcome present, tickets for the concert on Saturday night, and a coupon for the T-shirt of the International VW Bus Meeting. The parking spaces were successfully divided into the Quiet Area, The Party Area, and day parking. The Quiet Area was for families or persons who wanted to enjoy their peace and quiet a little earlier. The Party Area was for all Clubs who wanted to party along at night some more.

Competitions were for the categories “The Oldest” (T1-T3), “The Most Beautiful” (T1-T5), “The Most Original” (T1-T5), “The Longest Journey” (kilometers according to the vehicle registration certificate), and “Pimp My Bus.” Of the vehicles participating in the competitions, the judges pre-selected about 10 vehicles per category beforehand. On Saturday, October 6, the judges determined three winners per category which were awarded prizes during the afternoon.

On Saturday, one event allowed you to participate in the driver’s safety training by the ADAC and in a test drive. This time my sister and I were only day visitors on Saturday when we were passing through Hannover on my work journey from Marburg (in the Bundestaat Hessen) to the Baltic Sea harbor Lübeck-Travemünde. I was very pleased to see a huge number of fine VW Buses and to meet some ever-young ‘old’ VW friends. During the weekend the total number of all visitors rose very high, over 60, 000 persons, which was a great and enjoyable success for both the organizers and the participants. The

organizers had done very good work, and the event was a very nice and commendable experience.

Recently I received happy news from the organizers. This “60th Anniversary of the VW Type 2” at the International VW Bus Meeting last October is now documented in printed form (A4-plus format in German and English): “60 Years VW Bulli: The Book.” The author Lutz Schilling and photographer Cliff Serna have compiled an endearing 330-page retrospective on the event. The work is now available exclusively via the www.vw-bulli.de website, which has a special link. The book features both studio shots of the most stunning VW Type 2 and their owners as well as a catalogue of photos of almost all the registered participant vehicles and much more interesting information about the event and theme.



This piece of woodworking art was on display

For more details of this 3-day event, click on:
<http://vw-bus-treffen.core4.de/gbr/folgeseite.php>



DARRELL PINCKNEY

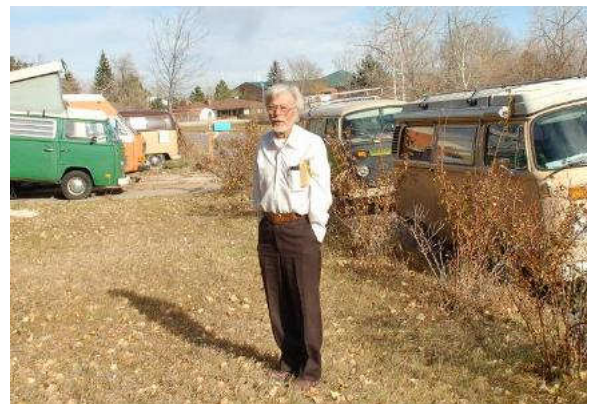
March 16, 1925 – April 23, 2007

Darrell loved camping with friends and family, fishing, hiking, sailing, VW's, gardening and woodworking. He had an encyclopedic knowledge and interest in a wide variety of topics, and people loved talking with him.

Darrell's daughter reminisced that her dad loved his VW's and he loved being in the VW clubs. Darrell was a member of Colorado VW Enthusiasts, Colorado VW Bus Club and NEATO.

Darrell's family was able to be with him when he passed away.

We will miss him dearly.



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THE BACK PAGE



***NEATO Member Jim Share, Serving our Nation with Distinction!
(Okinawa, Japan, 2008)***

"I have been here on the small island of Okinawa, Japan, for the last 2 years. I decided to leave my bus back in the States and boy do I miss it! I finally drew up a tattoo I've been thinking about for years and started to get it done. It's not finished yet but I've sent a pic."