BCM

Bus Conversion Magazine

March 2017



Not your Father's Buick

Bernard's 1961 Flxible Starliner Bus

Goodbye Dina, Goodbye My Dreams

PUBLISHER´S NOTE



GARY HATT

INDIO AND QUARTZSITE RALLIES REPORT

We just returned from three weeks on the road attending the Indio and Quartzsite rallies. These were great rallies with over 100 bus conversions between the two rallies within close proximity and probably a couple hundred more in the surrounding area. There were probably close to 150,000 RVs in the surrounding area, either in campgrounds in Quartzsite or dry camping out on BLM land in the desert, some equipped with hookups and some without. Some folks attended both rallies because they are only two hours and one week apart.

Between the two shows we handed out over 1000 magazines to current, previous and potential subscribers and signed up several new subscribers, renewed some current subscribers and met a couple of new bus product vendors who are interested in advertising in our magazine. Be watching for some new ads for great bus conversion products in the upcoming months.

In the evenings we visited with the great folks at the Western GM Coach Invitational Rally and the Eagle International Bus Rally located in The Market Place, formally Rice Ranch, on the north side of Kuehn Street catty-corner from the Big Tent.

After they left, I went over and spent time with my vendor friends including Roger Lehet at Unforgettable Fire who sells some of the highest quality American Made wood stoves and Gregg and Vivian Wilson at RV LED Lites who sells a very bright 12V motion activated RV entrance door light that is a big seller at all RV events.

We also met a couple of folks selling beautiful bus conversions at the rally who are interested in listing their bus in our Classified Ads. We run all Classified Ads in our print magazine for three months then for three additional months in our Digital Online Edition as well and for a full 12 months on our website. Check out buses that are currently for sale at http://www.busconversions.com/bcmclassifieds/index.php.

Another advantage of attending shows like this is that we always meet folks with very unusual or very beautiful bus conversions that are interested in submitting an article to run in our magazine. Hats off to all folks who take the time to do this to support our magazine. Without people contributing articles, there would be no ***Bus Conversion Magazine***.

To see aerial footage of the Quartzsite area, click on this link and see if you can count all of the RVs you see. After seeing this, if you haven't experienced his event in the past, you should add it on your Bucket List for next year. https://youtube/yGyNcwcas84

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On The Cover



Bernard's 1961 FIxible Starliner Bus by Noemi Johnston

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Please send us your stories of your bus conversions (long or short) and please document them with digital photos. We would love to consider your articles for the magazine. In addition, we are seeking submissions for the "Landmark BCM" photo feature. Please send them to Gary@BusConversions.com.

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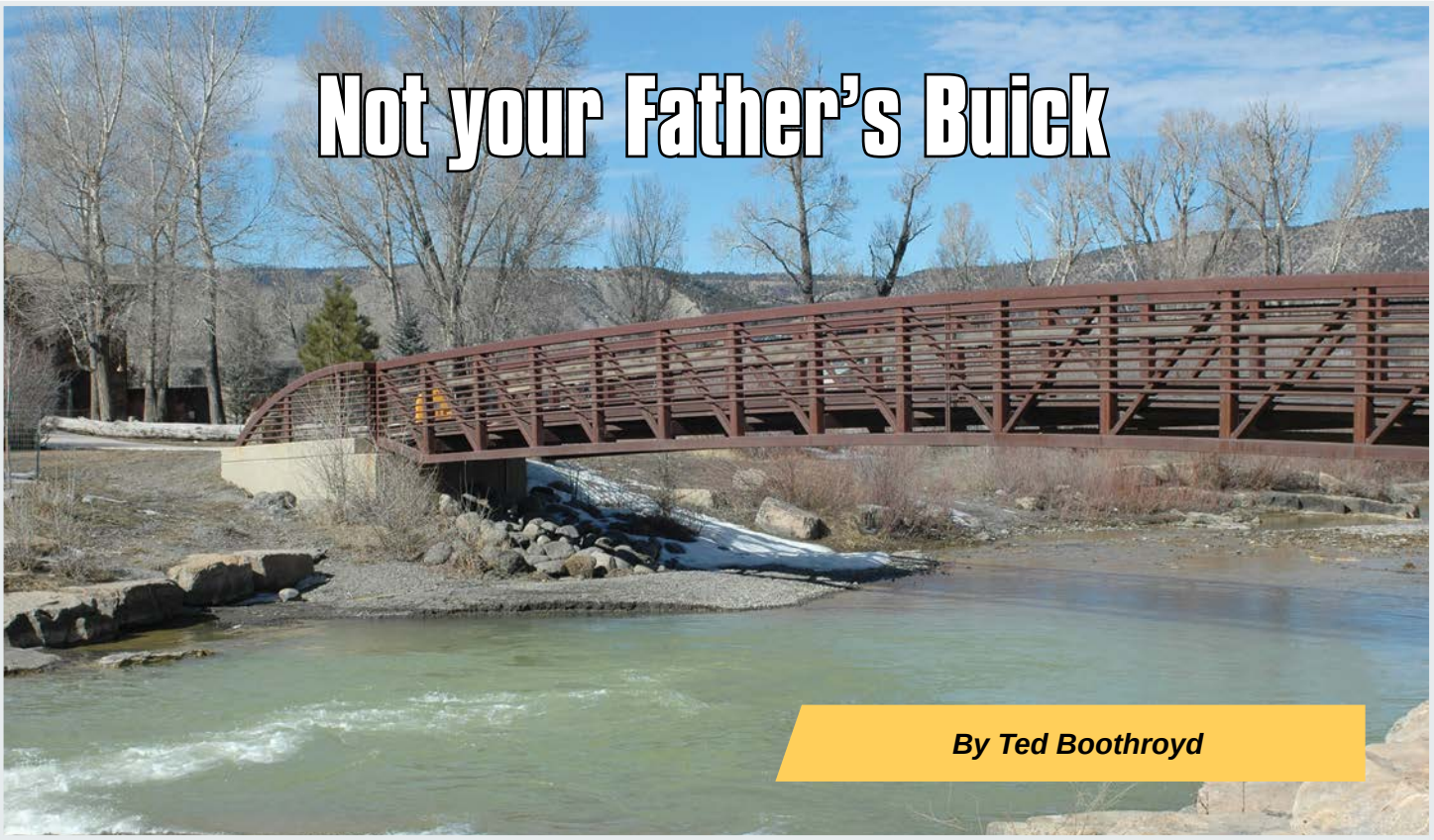

By Ted Boothroyd

A walking bridge serves as the entrance to the town of Ridgway,CO. It spans the beautiful Uncompahgre River and leads to shops, parks, and the True Grit Cafe.

As a writer of transportation related stories, I prefer to write about safety, before, during, and after a trip or series of trips. But safety is a hard sell in publications related to ones hobbies, or favorite recreational activities. Trust me; I have seen the yawns in classrooms, and drivers who can feign attention, whilst also sleeping. In this issue, we take a diversion from the mundane and offer a little trip to the "Wild West". We hope you can add it to the plan for your next vacation.

In my affiliation with ***Bus Conversion Magazine*** over the past few years, I have noticed that "bus people" are often "transportation people". Personally, I love vintage cars, trucks, and airplanes. I wish I could count the number of car shows, air shows, and bus rodeos I have attended. Although a lower priority for me, I also like trains and trolleys and events that include any of these vehicles.

After mustering away from the realm of paychecks and stress, my wife Ramona and I have enjoyed seeing and touring our new state, the Centennial state, the State of Colorado. We recently took a most delightful trek to the small town of Ridgway, Colorado; not knowing exactly why we decided to drive there, other than having lunch at the True Grit Café, more on the True Grit later.

We tend to always be on alert for anything unusual,



All the proof you need that this is indeed not your father's Buick.

weird, or downright adventurous. On the trek to find the True Grit Cafe, we happened upon an odd train museum called the Ridgway Railroad Museum. Now the museum has many rail cars and oddities on display, but the oddest piece of transportation I have ever seen stood out like a sore thumb. This quirky specimen in polite company would be known as a Buick, but definitely not your father's Buick. Allow me to introduce you to "The Galloping Goose". As it happens, this Buick is not a car, not a truck or a train, by definition. It was used like a train engine, but built from a 1931 Buick four-door automobile. It was part of a fleet of new style mail trains owned by the Rio Grande Southern Railroad (RGS).



This is the sign to look for, when you see it, you have arrived in Ridgway.







Used for cattle and sheep, this car is on display at the Ridgway Railroad Museum.



Galloping Goose #1 stands at attention in Ridgway, CO.

The Galloping Goose version of mail trains for Colorado evolved as a result of the need for inexpensive mail delivery after the Great Depression. Bigger steam engines and failing profits, proved to be unsustainable, so RGS revised the system to ward off a possible bankruptcy. New engines, called "motors" instead of engines, were built on a smaller gauge track system and were based on an automobile chassis. They were much lighter than conventional train engines and certainly less expensive. There were only seven motors, built one after another in the early 1930's. They were more economically efficient and were known to pay for themselves and turn a profit after only three weeks of service.

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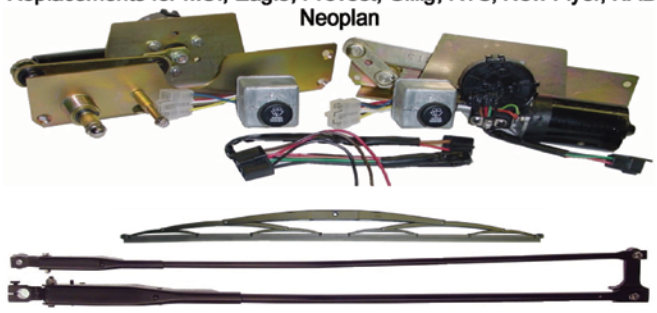

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As the fleet grew larger, other "Geese" were out-fitted with heavier duty parts from companies such as Pierce-Arrow, Wayne Bus, and war surplus GMC gas engines. All Geese were eventually used for the transportation of mail, light cargo, and/or passengers. In later years they were used in tourist operations.

The strange looking Gallopers were originally painted in a black and dark green paint scheme. Over time, paint was changed to a silver color with varying graphics and heraldry.

The motors were particularly challenged through years of hard Colorado winters, but endured for 20 years. In 1951, RGS lost its contract to deliver mail and freight, subsequently closing down the Galloping Goose operation.



Goose #1 stands before the beautiful San Juan Mountains.

The motor you see here is a replica of Goose number 1, of the seven built. Number 1 was scrapped after a few years of service and used for parts to build numbers 2 and 6. All seven Galloping Geese were built in the roundhouse in Ridgway, Colorado. All seven still exist and are on display in other locations. All have been restored with the exception of number 1 which was rebuilt as a replica and dedicated to the Ridgway Railroad Museum in 2012. It now stands proudly near the intersection of Hwy 550 & State Hwy 62 at the Museum.

It is always a joy to take a trip out to Ridgway, CO; but it is a bonus that the Ridgway Railroad Museum can be your first stop before lunch at the True Grit Cafe, just three blocks away.

The seven Galloping Geese are currently located around the West as follows:

Number 1, has been rebuilt and on display in Ridgway, CO. Number 2, 6, & 7 are housed at the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden, CO. Number 3, is now part of the Knott's Berry Farm theme park in Buena Park, California No.4, resides in Telluride, CO and is used as a tourist attraction No. 5 is owned by the City of Dolores, CO and is used for multiple train related events. It is not known exactly why





the name Galloping Goose was chosen, however conventional wisdom suggests that it was so named because all 7 were out-fitted with a horn that honks, as opposed to a steam whistle or air horn used on more raucous trains.

About Ridgway, CO:

1. Ridgeway, CO. Population 713 is a small “Home Rule” town located on the Uncompahgre River, in southwest Colorado.

2. Ridgway, CO was the home of the late actor Dennis Weaver (Gun smoke, McCloud, and the movie “Duel”. He died in Ridgway in 2006. There is a local park named after him.

3. The True Grit Cafe is a wonderful old west saloon, with a dusty old boardwalk and a historic firehouse just a few doors down. The cafe is named after John Wayne movies filmed in the region. The True Grit features a pictorial museum of John Wayne and Dennis Weaver, including some interesting memorabilia. Oh, and if you like to eat, do yourself the favor of lunch or dinner there.

4. Ridgway, CO is also the unlikely home of the Grammy awards trophies. The gold plated Gramophone awards are made in Ridgeway at Billings Artworks. John Billings has made every Grammy trophy for the last 40 years. It takes nearly a year to make all the gramophones which are given each year.

5. Ridgway State Park is a scenic RV resort which is conveniently built around the banks of the Ridgeway Reservoir, excellent for some serious beaching, swimming, boating or catching wiggly fish. Buses up to 40’ are welcome, but book it in advance during the summer tourist season.

In a pinch, there are other RV facilities from which to choose. A visit to Ridgeway is a guaranteed scenic escapade; with the San Juan Mountain range only a furlong or twenty away, the City of Ouray, known as “Little Switzerland” just nine miles down the road, and of course the City of Telluride, about 40 scenic miles from Ridgway. Telluride is rich in history, music, and of course, it is a world renowned skiing destination.



This car appears to be an old caboose adorned with curtains and chimney. It is actually a converted box car called an “Outfit Car”.

Its main purpose was to serve as a mobile home for a water service supervisor and his family.

Not to meddle in your vacation plans, but try a trip beginning in Grand Junction, CO. While in Grand Junction you will want to visit The Colorado National Monument, historic downtown and perhaps a trip through Palisade, CO for some fine wine tasting. From Grand Junction, follow highway 50 south to the town of Delta, a great stop for coffee, or lunch and for just a bit of walking the town. Delta is known in the area for its plethora of murals painted on the walls of quaint old buildings. Head onward south through the burg of Olathe, CO. During the summer you must not miss getting a few ears of Olathe Sweet



Corn. This corn is famous throughout Colorado for its delicious natural sweet taste. It is actually available from corn kiosks over the entire trip on highway 50.

A few more miles south is the town of Montrose; a modern town that is nice to visit and stay the night if you wish. RV resorts are plentiful, as is golf, fishing, and antiquing. All the major stores are in Montrose as well, if you need to stock up. Once you pass the antique mall outside of Montrose continuing south, you will first pass the entrance to Ridgway State Park. Cruise down to the town of Ridgeway, to see the Railroad museum, Ridgway central, and the True Grit Cafe.

Once you have had enough of this beautiful piece of Colorado, you must choose from an array of beautiful roads and towns to visit as you wane your way back home; Ouray, Silverton, Durango - or my personal favorite; Telluride, then highway 145 down the Dolores River corridor to Cortez (the most beautiful drive I have ever taken in this state, my opinion only), and on into Monument Valley.

Oh, the decisions you must make when traveling in Colorado; but no matter what, don't forget your camera.

Ted Boothroyd



Ted Boothroyd is a retired firefighter Captain. He was also a bus driver on the Golden Gate Bridge. He writes for several automotive publications and he is the author of the Gentleman´s Game of Pink Ball Golf.

When he´s not restoring cars or building houses, he takes the time to teach new bus owners how to drive their bus and familiarize them with all accompanying safety guidelines. These include not just driving, but air brake tests, checklists, hand signals and road courtesy — all delivered in a clear and straightforward manner that builds confidence through experience.



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BBB ACCREDITED BUSINESS

Bernard's 1961 FIxible Starliner Bus



By Noemi Johnston

What could be more fascinating than a rainy Saturday morning in Los Angeles, visiting a hidden location, where any car enthusiast dream comes true by finding itself surrounded with hundreds of luxurious and exotic vehicles built by trend setting car and motorcycle manufacturers?

I am talking about Jay Leno's "Big Dog Garage", where Gary Hatt, Publisher of ***Bus Conversion Magazine*** and I spent a good part of the day meeting up with Bernard Juchli, Big Dog Garage's General Manager and also the owner, of a stunning converted 1961 FIxible Starliner. Bernard's Flixible is a one of a kind masterpiece of mechanical ingenuity and the product of 20 years of converting transformations, all done by Bernard himself with the collaboration of his wife Rosalie.



The bus is parked at Jay Leno's Garage, where the latest stages of its conversion took place. Only 260 FIxible buses of this kind were manufactured in 1961, as a way of introducing a "new look" to the brand and to compete with the GM Coach transportation vehicles of that time.

Bernard is not only an exceptional mechanic. He is also a professional F-1 Sidecar Road Racing driver. He and his wife Rosalie needed a mobile home to transport them and his racecar trailer to various tracks across the country. Bernard wanted to customize their transportation to accommodate their traveling needs, so they decided to look for a bus to convert.

They found a 1961 FIxible in Tucson, AZ. At that time the bus was rusting and in various deteriorating conditions. After finding a shop in the Nashville Tennessee area that had an extensive inventory of FIxible original parts needed for restoration, Bernard and Rosalie's mind was made up to purchase this coach. Then they embarked on a 20 year bus conversion journey.

Bernard and Rosalie didn't want to alter the histor-

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ic beauty of this bus, so they decided to keep the outside appearance intact. The originality and passenger bus looks were enhanced by replacing any damaged areas with the parts they were fortunate to acquire from the Nashville shop.





The bus still has the original Torsolastic suspension built by the Flxible Corporation. This Flxible bus is diesel powered. A new super-charged 6V92 turbo diesel engine was specially ordered from the Detroit Diesel Corporation. Its 552 cubic inch engine generates 400+ horsepower, with plenty of oomph to haul Bernard's racecar trailer through the most inclined hills on the road.

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The engine which is located in the rear end of the bus generates a great amount of heat, reason why Bernard installed an air filter inside the baggage compartment. This powerful Detroit Diesel Corporation manufactured engine sucks 1100 cubic feet of air per minute which keeps the engine cool while the bus is running.





How to slow down such a powerful engine? Bernard installed truck retarders and jake brakes in his bus, so if he needs to slow down once while driving, he uses the retarders. If he has to slow down multiple times he prefers to use jake brakes. Two level jake brakes are located in the right and left side of his engine, giving Bernard the option to use one, the other or both. If he uses the left side jake brake, the engine goes into 4th gear, avoiding using the retarder several times. Retarders can only be used for short periods of time because its prolonged use will overheat the transmission.

Bernard's bus does not have power steering, which is Bernard's preference. He said the feeling of driving this bus is better without power steering, but requires a bit more planning when driving at slower speeds. Bernard's and Rosalie's 1961 Flxible it is

used mainly to attend car races and motorcycle races. Quite frequently, a trailer is hooked to it with Bernard's racing car in it.

As a highly skilled mechanic, Bernard wisely utilized all base luggage compartments in the bus. He re-structured, repositioned and replaced many of the Flxible's original parts with new ones, to improve the overall performance of the bus.





There is also a 40 AMP charger from Vanner that charges the batteries when the bus is parked. Bernard installed a hydrogen generator in his bus, as one of his experimental automotive mechanical ventures. Hydrogen works as a supplemental catalyst to improve engine combustion. He tested the hydrogen generator on one of his trips, where he noticed a 10% improvement in his bus mileage. Bernard has the great capability of building motorized systems from scratch to improve performance in any of his vehicles. So installing the hydrogen generator has been a cost effective addition to his bus.

Bernard proceeded to show us another luggage compartment where he installed two Optima batteries as starting batteries. There is also a generator and a 50 AMP shore power cord with an automatic transfer switch.

This 33' Flxible bus is equipped with 100 gallons of fresh water and a 60 gallon stainless steel grey water tank in the front of the bus. Another tank with 40 gallons of black water is in the back of the bus. These tanks have a valve that interconnects them, allowing Bernard to switch over tanks from one to the other and to drain grey water into the black water tank.

The bus has a fresh water supply for up to five days provision, but Bernard said that if he had to do it all over again he would've installed two tanks with 50 gallons of water instead of 60/40 gallons ones. A Webasto water heater was also installed and a carbon filter for drinking water with individual valves for all water faucets inside.





The water heating system works with a coolant loop that heats water when the engine is running. The original large heater is located in the front center of the dashboard, and a smaller second heater was installed in the rear area, inside a small cabinet in between two beds.

A powerful motor like the one this 1961 Flxible has requires a very efficient fueling system. The bus originally had a 90 gallon tank with one fuel filler on the right side only. That collapsed over the years, so Bernard decided to build a new fuel tank and place the fillers on each side of the bus. He said it is the best thing he ever did, he can now fill from either side. This makes fueling more convenient and practical at gas stations without having to worry about which side of fuel pump to park. The tank is made by welding pieces of stainless steel sheet together which a friend gave to him. This 11" high tank was custom made to fit into luggage compartment under the bus and it costed him absolutely nothing.









Since the fuel tank is 8 feet wide, Bernard's also equipped the fuel tank with an electric pump on the right hand side, attached to a check valve to make sure the tank is fueling the system. His plan is to add another pump and check valve to the other side, to ensure the fuel is picked up at all times. This is to avoid issues when the bus is not completely leveled which can translate in running out of fuel with a ¼ tank of fuel remaining. He implemented this same type of component in one of his racing cars and it works wonderfully.

Bernard's 1961 Flxible Bus, is fully loaded with all the comforts of a regular RV, including two basement air conditioning units from Cruisair with heating capabilities. One for each side of the bus. With the help of a large inverter, one of these units will run perfectly without the need of a generator while on the road. Bernard built an unconventional stacked air conditioner box for the dash air where the fan is in the bottom, evaporators and outlets are on top. Because this bus has many electrical features, it is equipped with an 8000 W diesel Power Tech generator.

To maximize electric power usage, the bus has two inverters; the smaller one is a 1500 watts true sign wave inverter, to be used for television, computers and other small electric appliances. The other one is 3600 watts inverter, used for everything else needed in the bus. Three 125 watt flexible Solar

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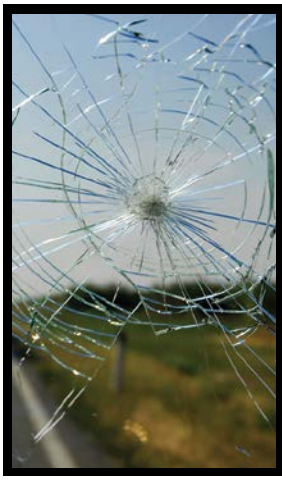
panels were also installed on the bus to maximize energy resources.

The original bus had an air conditioning unit and a condenser located in the back compartment along with a Wisconsin V4 Engine and a V4 Compressor. The original coach's air conditioning unit weighs about a thousand pounds. All that has been discarded, and now all that space has been utilized to store baggage and miscellaneous traveling supplies.







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Talking about traveling, Bernard and his wife Rosalie like to travel in a comfortable, simple and practical way. And their bus interior accommodates all their needs, providing them with the amenities they prefer when traveling across the country or attending local sidecar races.

The interior of this bus was designed with a simplistic, elegant and practical set up, without overlooking any traveling needs. None of the windows were covered or changed. Bernard decided to preserve the original windows in this bus, with the idea of keeping its original look and historic value, as well as a way of maintaining a great source of natural light and brightness throughout the entire bus.

Bernard was not worried about creating a different looking bus; he just wanted to preserve its integrity and originality. The primary focus in restoring his bus was to make it comfortable enough for him and his family when attending races. Decorating this special piece of transportation history and incorporating all sitting and furnishing pieces was a labor of love accomplished by Bernard and his wife, literally from top to bottom and front to back. Starting with two hydraulic truck chairs with front suspension and equipped with massaging features, a foldable table was added, the seats and a larger table behind the driver's seat was built, along with two comfortable booth chairs with plenty of storage underneath them.

One of the most amazing and distinctive décor statements in this bus is the ceiling itself. In the front, Bernard covered the ceiling with beautifully pressed Tin Tiles. The brushed metal reflects and distributes the natural light coming inside the bus from all front windows, giving the bus interior a sense of brightness.







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1961 FLXIBLE STARLINER BUS

MARCH 2017

All pieces in Bernard's 1961 Flxible bus were carefully planned and placed in strategic areas of the bus to provide comfort to him and his family in a very practical way. One of my favorite pieces is the "all purpose" table, installed behind the driver's seat. The table's top is covered with copper, to give it an industrial look; this piece also plays a functional role in reflecting natural light throughout the bus. There is also a smaller table located by the kitchen side, both copper tables have a teak frame, making it easy to clean and maintain.

The kitchen has an electric glass top three burner cook top, an espresso coffee machine, a microwave, a refrigerator with a freezer in the bottom and a very well stocked wine rack.

The heaviness of the custom rear Detroit Diesel made the front of the bus light which contributed to bouncing. To help compensate and better balance the weight, heavy marble kitchen counter tops, heavier chairs, and tables were used.

An intensive amount of labor and time was required to build the bathroom, so much so, that Bernard jokingly commented that it almost cost him his life because the fumes from the polyester gel coat was very intense. The bedroom in the rear area has two beds with plenty of storage underneath to store everything needed for a comfortable trip.





Comfort, practicality and speed; are three of the top most important factors taken into consideration when Bernard Juchli and his wife Rosalie worked on converting their 1961 Flxible, and Bernard has all the skills to make it happen.

Bernard's mechanical engineering skills started developing naturally during his early childhood,

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while growing up in a garage and frequently helping with the family's mechanical shop business. Eventually transitioning to his previous career as an aircraft engineer.

Repairing airplanes was his first professional trade. Once the automotive industry expanded into a more remunerative career option for him, where he could explore, experiment and implement all his knowledge and experience, he opened his own Jaguar specialty mechanic shop in Northern California, which he kept for 20 years. During that time Jay Leno visited his shop requesting his help to repair a Jaguar he thought was unrepairable. Leno, impressed by Bernard's great work, extended him an offer to relocate with his family to Los Angeles. Jay offered him a job as a General Manager in charge of Leno's private mechanic shop, known as the Big Dog Garage.

Bernard started working with Jay Leno back in 2000. He advised Leno to purchase the proper equipment for him to start the restoration process in one of Jay's latest automotive acquisitions at that time. And he also suggested Leno to continue doing the same with all the other vehicles without the need of sending them to external repair venues. Today Bernard has a team of six experienced mechanics

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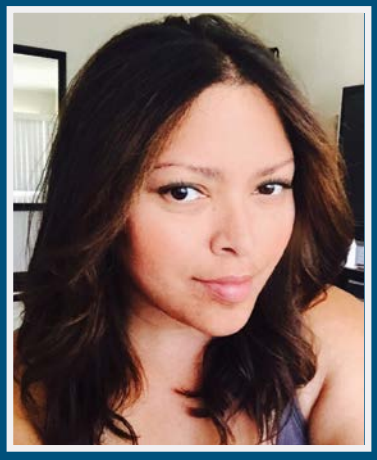
Bernard and his wife Rosalie with their two dogs.



Bernard Juchli beside his 1961 FIxible Starliner.

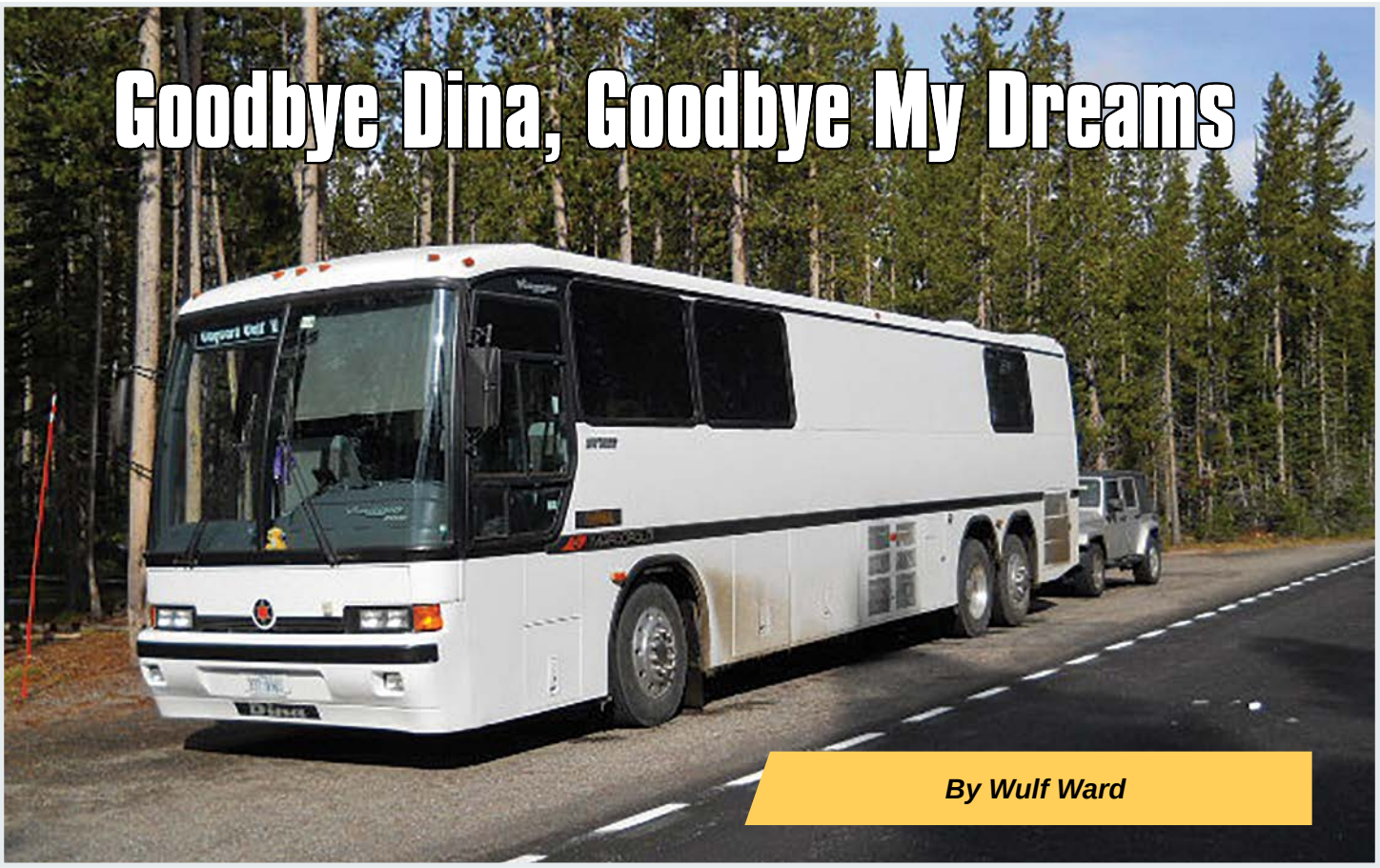
Noemi Johnston



Noemi Johnston is a Southern California girl who enjoys living by the beautiful Orange County coast. She is a former Retail Training Manager with a long time interest in expanding her professional horizons in the editorial field. One of her future plans include taking a cross country trip with her husband. After contributing with ***Bus Conversion Magazine***, Noemi is convinced that no road trip is better than a road trip in a converted bus.



Goodbye Dina, Goodbye My Dreams



By Wulf Ward

Over the years I built four buses, actually it may have been five total, if I include the 35' BLITZ RTS Limo conversion. There was always another bus that I thought will be the last one, the perfect bus to build.

It was the ride of the Eagle that sold me on that bus; also nobody will mistake the Eagle for a motorhome. Unlike my second bus the RTS, most people thought it was a stretched GMC motorhome. In a way it was just that. It was based mainly on the lines of the GMC Motorhome. The RTS started its life about the same year GMC Motorhomes were not being built any more.

When the GMC/RTS came out in 1977 it was years ahead in looks compared to any bus that was being built at that time. In 1983 Ford came out with the T-Bird that had the same streamline looks, not to mention the 1955 Citroen DS (Goddess in French), considered by many, the first real new car ever built. Maybe the RTS is best to be compared with the DS, because the 1955 Citroen DS was 30 years ahead of its time. The RTS was as futuristic as the Mono Rail at Disney World and because of that Disney was one of the first users of the RTS and so were Hertz and Avis. They were so popular and well built, making them an excellent bus to be remanufactured by BLITZ and TMC many times, and as of now, no city bus has come out with a better look than the RTS.

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The GMC became too expensive for a relatively small motorhome while other brands became much larger and sold for a lot less money. Maybe the RTS had the same problem; it became too expensive to build.

I had a GMC motorhome and it has its drawbacks. For example, there is zero storage space under it and the vacuum brakes stop working if the engine dies. Some of those issues were solved with adding large storage pods on top of the roof and installing a vacuum pump to the braking system.



The RTS has similar short comings when it comes to storage and brakes. The 730 Allison could use another gear, but with the right rear end it was never a problem for me. Maybe a little more power from the 6V92 would be nice. I had around 350 HP in mine with 90 injectors, a larger turbo and a 100% bypass blower. It performed about the same as my Eagle with the same 6V92 setup and an extra gear in the 740 Allison. One of my main concerns was the wedge-brakes on the RTS. They are applied by air and if air is lost the brakes are lost too. The small spring brake on the rear end can barely hold the bus on a steep incline.

Also there was the ride I really missed from the Eagle. Owners of RTS bus conversions call it the sports car of buses and I must agree. But the IFS has small donut style airbags and do not incorporate an air-beam like older GMC buses do, making the RTS ride hard. Maybe if I never drove the Eagle I would have not noticed it as much.



But it was the beauty of the RTS that overcame all those shortcomings; it was a lot like a beautiful woman who is a bad cook, it is easier to change the restaurant than to change the woman. I built the RTS alongside the Eagle, but the Eagle was finished first. I had sold my Feetwood Limited and I needed the Eagle to take a vacation while my wife was still on summer break from her teaching job. I took a month off from work and got the Eagle drivable within just four weeks. I still worked on it for many years, because there is always something to change or add to it, including rebuilding the 6V92, adding a one piece front door and a Webasto boiler.

I use both the Eagle and the RTS together for a few years and I did keep the RTS a long time after I sold the Eagle. I always wished the Eagle would have the good looks of the RTS and the RTS rode like the Eagle.

When I was offered three Neoplan Spaceliners for $10k, it was a deal I could not refuse. I sold one of the buses for seven times as much as I had paid for all three. One was too far gone and it was a parts

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bus only. One was in great shape, but needed an engine and transmission, because both were gone, along with some other pieces. That was the bus I converted. For what I spent on the rebuilt 8V92 and a 740 Alison without a core, I could have bought a 60 series and a B5OO, like I have in my Eagle.

The 4-cycle 60 series is light years ahead of the anemic 2-cycle engines. But that was a long time before I drove my Dina. Also I knew a lot more about the 8V92 and unless it was blown to pieces, it would always get me back home. It was easy to fix on the road, but if the 60 series stopped working I could only look at it. Nevertheless, the engine in my Dina gave me zero problems. The few problems I had were self-inflicted.

I got the Spaceliner for nothing, but it ended up costing the most to convert. I think we bus-nuts like our buses large and the Spaceliner was just that. Now there was a bus that had the great looks of the RTS and was a “real” bus like the Eagle. I put a lot of work and money in that Spaceliner. Did a lot of structural modifications and made a lot of cosmetic changes too, to make it look like a newer bus. It turned out beautiful, but it ended up being all wrong for me and for what I wanted out of my bus. Things like the driver’s area that I thought was great at first, but did not work out well in use. To get upstairs the driver had to climb over the center divider console or get to the rear area and upstairs. It was easier for the copilot, but the driver was like in a cage. At least, for an old fat, out of shape driver like me.

In the Eagle or the RTS all you have to do is get out of the driver’s seat and walk back. In the Spaceliner you have to get out of the driver’s door, walk around the bus to the side door and go up the stairs to get to the living areas. Not much fun in the cold, snow or rain, especially if you are driving in your underwear and bare feet, like I have done many times. I never really drove the Spaceliner to write much about it.





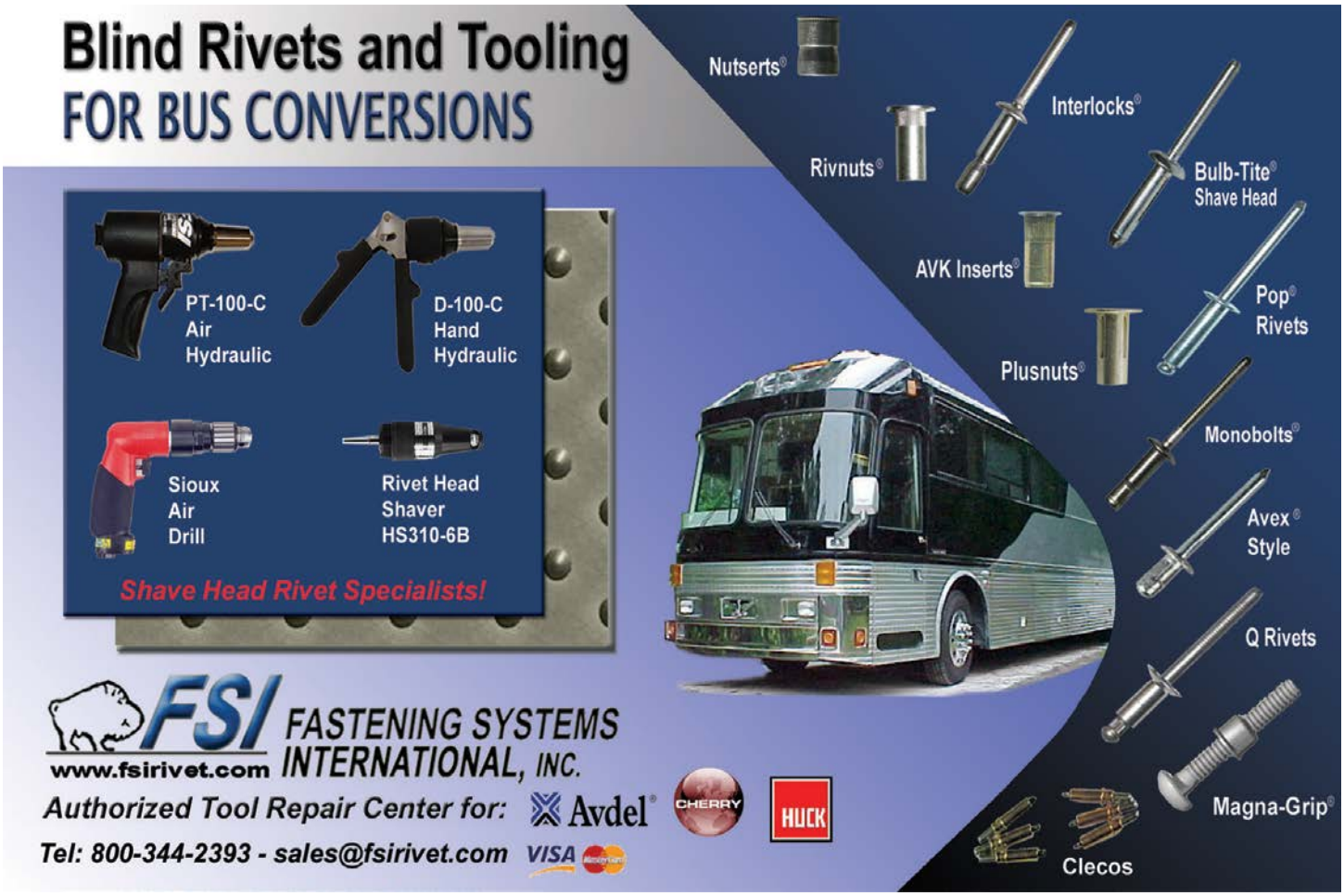
The 8V92 had plenty of power and it rode and handled very well. I ended up selling it as a brand new conversion for about half of what I had in it... Maybe it was not just those seating arrangement that made me sell the Spaceliner, but the fantastic deal I got on my Dina; after my friend Bill Lowman, R.I.P. (Writer of "How to Convert Buses into Motorhomes") came to visit me in a converted Dina, that he was using as a demo bus for Hausman Bus Sales; I was in love with that bus.



But its selling price of about $500k for that Dina conversion was out of reach for me at that time.

If there is the right bus for a fickle Bus Nut it would be the Dina. Everything is just right. It has the same DNA as the Eagle and therefor the same fantastic ride. At 43' long and 102" wide it is just the right size; with zero rust and it is a truly modern bus. Also the integration of the bullet proof 11.1 series 60 and the B500 Alison is just the perfect combination.







I got 10 MPG, if I kept it at the speed limit at about 1600 RPM at 65 MPH. It has only 25 HP more than the 6V92 but it only needs 1200 RPM to make usable power, for the same power the 6V92 needs1800 RPM. Those are just the major things. Little things included the giant double slide driver's window, the recessed lighting, the modern interior and all those nice things that are part of newer buses.

Now I finally have the bus that would be a keeper and if it was not, I will be too old to build another

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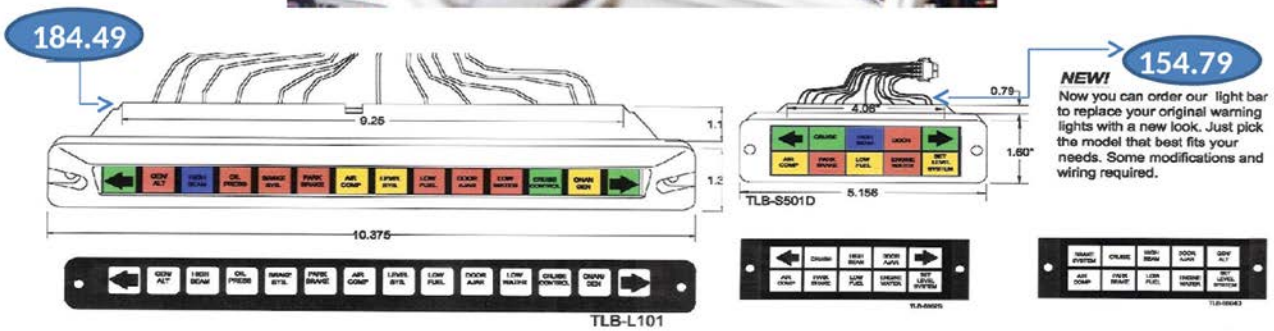

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one. This would be my dream bus to retire in. But there is no retiring in my near future and my priorities have changed. The Dina has not gone anywhere in two years and is parked in my garage taking up room that I could use for all my other toys.

It will break my heart to sell this bus. Not only because of selling my last bus, but selling my dream and basically stop being a Bus Nut, that I was for 25 years. It was a large part of my life and a part of many dreams. Regardless, it hurts me seeing the Dina sitting there and not being used. Therefore I have decided to sell it and move onto other hobbies.



This bus which is for sale can be seen in our Classified Ads and on our website at ***goo.gl/8UsDSE***

Wulf Ward



The Wayward Wulf is a frequent contributor to ***Bus Conversion Magazine***. Wulf can be contacted at:

Wulf@MenAtWorkCS.com or
visit his Website at
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Rally News

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CLASSIFIEDS

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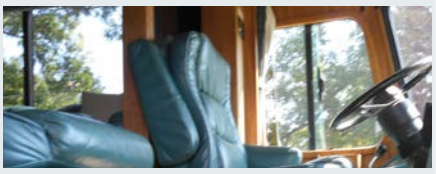
1982 MODEL 10 EAGLE BUS CONVERSION WITH SLIDE OUT









425 CAT (mechanical), Allison 740 AT, 22KW Onan generator 1200 hours, over $500,000 was spent on this high end conversion. The roof has been raised 7" and the sides widened to 8-1/2'. People who are familiar with Eagle bus conversions say that this is one of (if not the best) conversion they have ever seen. The man who did this conversion had very deep pockets. This coach has been driven less than 52,000 miles since being converted. Following is a partial list of equipment and accessories: v zvvvvHP CAT mechanical, Allison 740 Auto Transmission, Onan 22KW Generator, 14' X 36' Slide Out, Corian Counter Tops throughout, Corian Dash, Color Back up Camera, Bose Stereo, Leather Sofa with Queen Bed, Washer/Dryer, Slide out Pantry, Amana Side by Side Refrigerator-Freezer, Sharp Convection Microwave, Creda Convention/Convection Oven, Gaggenau Stove Top, Trash Compactor, 2-Central A/C, Dash A/C, Leather Pilot/Copilot Seats, Central Vacuum, Awnings, Select Comfort Mattress in Master, Beautiful Woodwork throughout, Recent Paint on roof, This Eagle is not perfect but it is very nice. It is a pleasure to drive and you will be proud to own it. Would take a Bus conversion of lesser value on trade.

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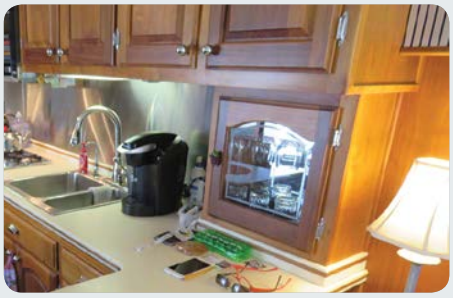

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March 2017

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BERNARD'S 1961 FLXIBLE







BERNARD'S 1961 FLXIBLE







BERNARD'S 1961 FLXIBLE



BERNARD'S 1961 FLXIBLE



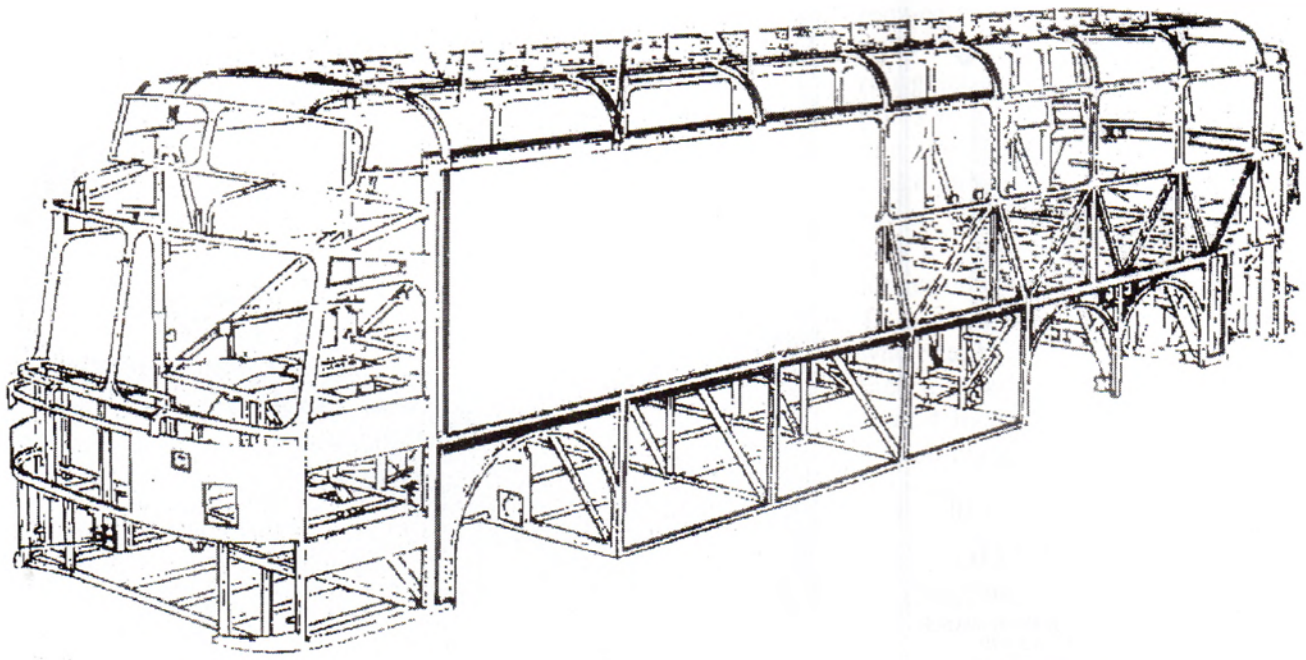
How to Increase Your Floor Space, the Hard Way

by Dave Galey

The latest rage in converting a bus is to create a pop-out. That is, a section of the body that slides out to add more living space. This will expand your living space by placing the sofa in the pop-out section along with the dinette, and may add up to 45 square feet. Another term for this section is a "slide-out."

One of the big questions before undertaking such a project is, can it be done structurally without undue reinforcement, and how do you reinforce the structure? Imagine a box beam with a window cut out of one side. This is the situation. Obviously, if you cut a hole out of the side of a box beam, (the body of our bus), you need to provide additional structure around the hole to transfer the stresses. These stresses are shear, bending and torsion.

Before we get into a lot of technical talk, I wish to state that Gene Plunk, of Medford Oregon, completed a Model 07 Eagle that not only has a 15 foot slide-out, but



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was also stretched to 45 feet, so he increased his total living space by nearly one- third. Furthermore, his bus is gorgeous. His living room is like walking into a mansion... so spacious and luxurious. On the way back to our coach Roberta said, "Don't ever' ask me to Look at any mole conversions.sions. This is the greatest," as she was picking up rocks to throw at our bus. I understand that Gary Bennett of B & B conversions has successfully completed a pop-out conversion last summer in Las Vegas. One of the reasons I am investigating this design is that my old buddy, Jack Headley, of electrical smoke/failure fame (see ***BUS CONVERSIONS*, May 1993**), has just acquired a model 10 Eagle and plans to build it as a pop-out. Back in the days when I was gainfully employed as an airplane designer, as opposed to being ungainfully employed as a writer, body design was my specialty. So, Jack asked me to stress it out, run some numbers, and make some recommendations.

Now, at this point I have to do some editorializing. When solving an engineering problem, I can attest without fear of contradiction, that there are a myriad of ways a problem can be solved. If this wasn't true there would only be one automobile maker and one airplane manufacturer, one washer maker, one toaster Maker, etc. One of my axioms is: "There are a gazillion ways to solve an engineering problem, and of these many ways, there Might be less than 100,000 solutions equally as good, and probably less than 10,000 that are the best (my apology to many German engineers, who believe there is only one answer to each problem)." Therefore, the ideas that I am putting forth are only proposals, and I acknowledge there are many ideas that may be better and much more imaginative. How's that for a disclaimer? By the way, Bob Belter, another retired airplane designer, whose articles you may have read in ***BUS CONVERSIONS***, has examined my numbers, and approach, and may have some better ideas. I'll ask him to write an addendum to this article.

> "There are a gazillion ways to solve an engineering problem."

My first brush with the numbers was to analyze the truss section running the length of the body from the door line to the window sill. This structure is the primary bending member, supporting the upper body and dumping the load into the lower bulkheads, reacted by the torsion bars and ultimately the axles. John Carter in a letter in the November 1993 issue of ***BUS CONVERSIONS***, asked the question, "Why not use the lower longerons of the baggage compartment as tension members, thereby stiffening the body?" This can certainly be done, however the Eagle was designed as a vehicle that would stand alone without a baggage compartment, ie. that section simply goes along for the ride. The bending stiffness is not currently dependent on the structure in the baggage section. It is obvious, however that the lateral trusses in the baggage compartment contribute to the torsional stiffness.

The bus frame as a whole is what is known as a statically indeterminate structure. We do, however, have ways of determining the indeterminate. What we must do is approximate the size of various structural members, and from that point, we can determine the stress and strain of the frame. The stresses, of course, are the internal unit loading of the materials. The strains are the movement of the frame due to the stresses. It is important to decide what constitutes a failure condition. Now, if the baggage compartment sags to the ground, this can definitely be considered a failure. If a member buckles or cracks, this too, can be considered a failure. What about some not so obvious failures, like a shear tear-out of a rivet due to a little excessive movement? What about a permanent set in a bending member? I used the criteria of torsional deflection in excess of the original body as a target point. In additional, I attempted to design a stiff frame around the opening that, again, would have no more deflection in bending than the original body.

DETOUR

These were noble goals, but not very practical. The first set of numbers I ran showed that I could propose a beam along the bottom of the opening and a plate along the top and end that would fall

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well under the yield stress of steel, but the deflection due to bending would equal about ten times that of the original frame. And, to solve for that deflection, the bus may have to have several mole axles and a lot mole fuel capacity just to move. The assumptions below were my starting point.

Assumptions:

1. The bus is a model l0 Eagle.
2. Opening size: 60" x 144.
3. Body to be as Stiff as original body, (this may not be practical).
4. Truss between floor and window sill is the only structural stiffness to be replaced. The window header reaction is ignored.
5. The vehicle weight is assumed to be 40,000 Lbs..
6. The steering axle weight is assumed to be 12,000 lbs., distributed as 3,000 Lbs. per bulkhead per torsion bar, for analysis purposes.
7. The moment reaction of the principal truss is determined by the maximum column load capable by the web compression member.
8. It would be desirable to limit the depth of the reinforcing structure to the depth of the tunnel, so as to be able to utilize the left hand baggage compartment.
9. Frame analysis as suggested by Roark, "Formulas for Stress and Strain",
10. Excessive deflection can be constrained by the use of taper pin latching aligners from the slide-out to the body frame.

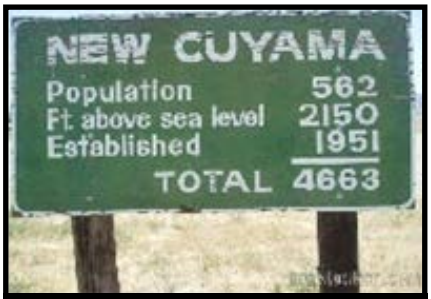
After messing around for a few hours my handy-dandy structural analysis computer programs, I have concluded that it would be wise to nest a series of 6" x 6" x 3/8" angles along the left side door section up to the beginning of the wheel well, thus creating an eight by eight inch box beam. This beam will fall well within the elastic limit of hot rolled steel, somewhere around 25,000 psi. From the rear bulkhead of the steering axle wheel well forward, this beam may be reduced to a box beam with a total depth of six inches, thus remaining above the fender opening. This box beam should extend aft to pick up the reaction of at least one bay of the side body truss. On the header section, I recommend the use of at least a 4" x 4" x 1/4" angle flanged out nesting on top of the existing header and stitch-welded. This section should be used as the forward vertical frame of the opening. This design will allow a little over one-half inch deflection. This would probably be acceptable when parked, since the slide-out section may be designed with tolerance to permit this much movement by the use of seals. And, when the vehicle is in motion, tapered latching pins will eliminate deflection and permit the side wall of the slide to act as a structural stiffener. This recommended design appears to add less than 1,000 pounds to the structural weight of the bus. If a person were willing to accept less height to the left hand side baggage compartment doors, much less deflection would occur and the added weight would be reduced proportionally. As all example, if a 12 inch channel were used in lieu of the box beam, we could probably reduce the weight by forty percent and reduce the deflection to less than 1/2 inch.

As I mentioned above, there are many ways to solve this problem. Perhaps the simplest way would be to create a truss section along the left hand baggage compartment side, thus eliminating all access to that side except through triangular shaped doors. This approach would surely be the



Dave Galey gives his seminar at The Bus Conversion Convention, 1995.

lightest design. So, to use an old buzz word of the sixties, one must make many "trade-off studies" to decide what will suit them. "Just remember, any structure problem can be solved, but can you live with the solution?"



Seen on the Road

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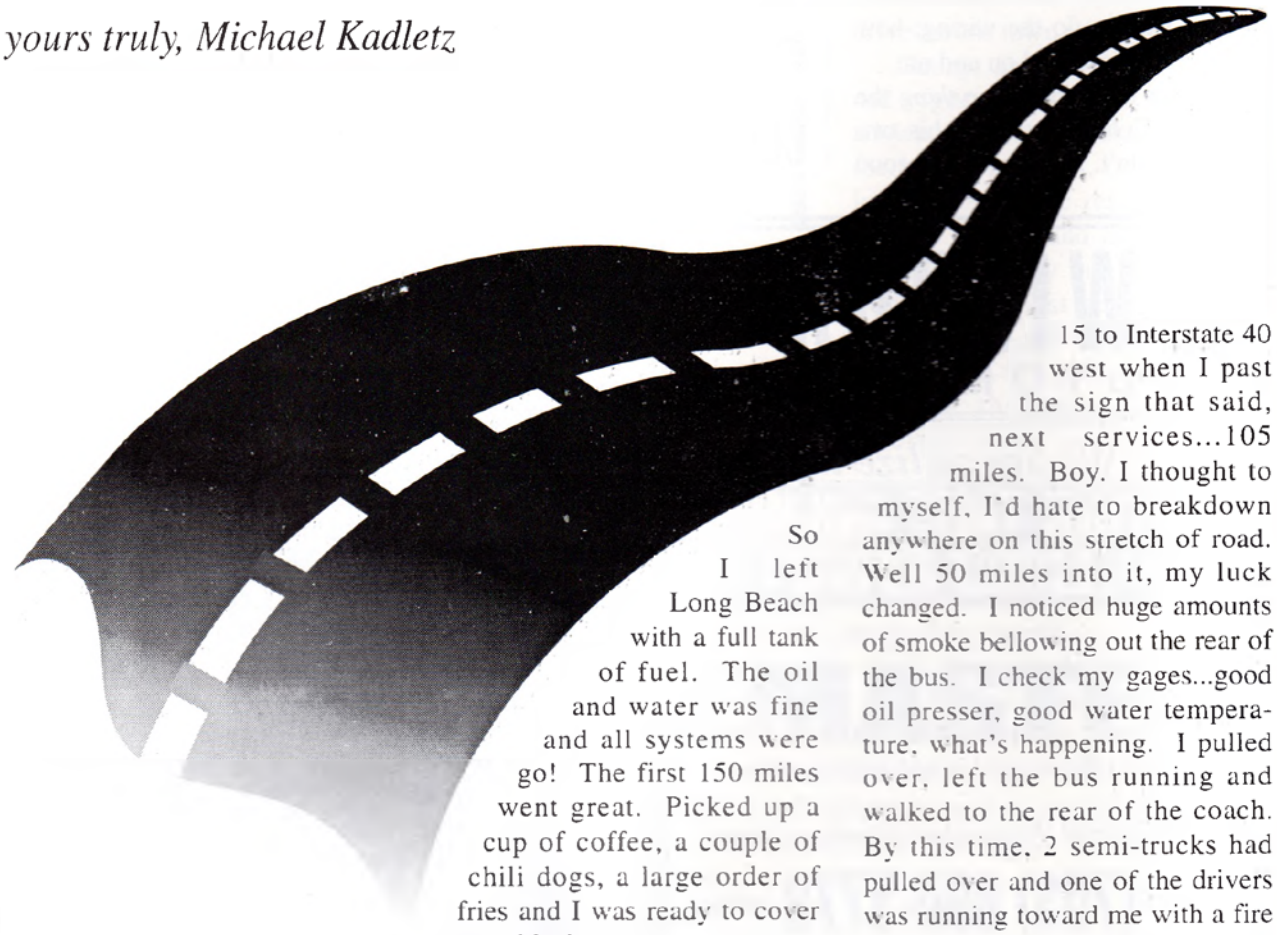
THE LAUGLIN ROAD FIX

By yours truly, Michael Kadletz



So I left Long Beach with a full tank of fuel. The oil and water was fine and all systems were go! The first 150 miles went great. Picked up a cup of coffee, a couple of chili dogs, a large order of fries and I was ready to cover some blacktop.

I had just made the turn off in Barstow, California from Interstate 15 to Interstate 40 west when I past the sign that said, next services...105 miles. Boy. I thought to myself, I'd hate to breakdown anywhere on this stretch of road. Well 50 miles into it, my luck changed. I noticed huge amounts of smoke bellowing out the rear of the bus. I check my gages...good oil presser, good water temperature, what's happening. I pulled over, left the bus running and walked to the rear of the coach. By this time, 2 semi-trucks had pulled over and one of the drivers was running toward me with a fire extinguishes pointed and ready to spray. I open up the tail gate, and all that could be seen was huge

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I noticed huge amounts of smoke bellowing out the rear of the bus. I check my gages...good oil presser, good water temperature, what's happening.

amounts of smoke! I then ran forward and shut off the engine and returned to the rear of the coach. Still it was bellowing out with smoke. Not from the exhaust, but from the entire engine area, yet there was no fire. After what seemed like 15 minutes, but was probably 5 minutes, the smoke started thinning out and I could again see my 8V71 Detroit Diesel. It was cleaner than normal which in itself was a shock. Then I started looking, and soon spotted my problem. Someone had installed a 3/8" copper fuel line with a flare fitting running from my fuel pump to the fuel filters. It had cracked in a big way at the flare fitting coming out of the fuel pump. Fuel was being sprayed all over my engine compartment at 40 PSI from the fuel pump and being aided by the air movement of the fan blade. Fuel was everywhere. Dripping from my tailgate, running on the ground and of course, all over my exhaust system which was creating the smoke. The only nice thing to see was how clean the fuel made my engine appear.

DETOUR

Well, there I sat. 50 miles from nowhere, outside of a phone cell area, no copper tube and no flaring tool. What to do! Well, lets think about this. And while I'm thinking I looked over the bus to see what I might be able to borrow to make something work. 15 minutes later I had it. The propane line coming off the 3 way refrigerator has 3/8 inch copper tube with a flared end. I checked to make sure my propane was off and then removed the line from the refer and broke off the tube about 6 inches down from the flair. In order to get the fitting off the fuel pump, I had to remove the water hose from the water pump to the radiator. Thus, I lost half the water in the system, but I was able to replace the old cracked copper line with the one I borrowed off the refrigerator. I used my needle nose pliers to break off the old fuel line and then used the same pliers to make the holes somewhat round again. Now, I needed to connect the new 6" copper line together to the longer one leading to the fuel filters. To accomplish this, I went to my water tanks and found my breather tube to be 1/2 ID clear plastic hose. I cut 4 inches off the top, borrowed 4 hose clamps from other hoses off the water system and slid the hose and clamps over the 2 copper tubes and tighten down the clamps. Because the hose was 1/2" ID, their was a lot of lose tube to be dealt with. I tighten it as tight as I could

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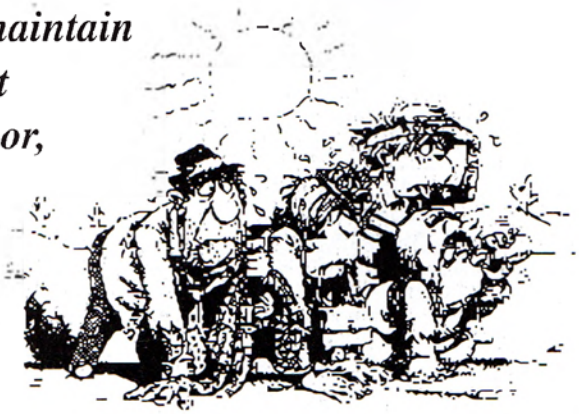

and placed 2 clamps on each end of the hose. It worked! Although it still leaked a little bit from the large tube going down to the smaller copper tube size, it held enough to get me to Laughlin where I made the proper repair.

Oh yes, about the water I lost from the radiator. The coach I was in had an outside shower plumbed from the fresh water tanks to the back of the bus where the recessed shower hose and fixture were installed. I simple placed the shower head into the radiator fill and turned on the shower, in minutes, the radiator was full again I was on my way.

Looking back to what caused the problem to begin with is 2 fold. First, the fuel line should have been out of a more flexible hose. But the problem was created mainly by my shifting of the transmission. The shifter was hanging up between 2 and 3rd gear. When I manually shifted into 3, the engine would jump hard and kick the bus into 3rd gear. This jumping of the engine I believe, is what cracked the line.

Anyway, I got to Lauglin and had a great time.

Have you had to make a emergency makeshift repair on the road? If so, why not share it with our readers, it may one day save them from what seems like a busmare. Send it to Bus Conversion Magazine, 9852 Katella Ave., Suite 361 Anaheim, CA 92804

When You Just Don't Know The Answer

Name six animals which live specifically in the Arctic.

Two polar bears
~~Three~~ four seals

Where was the American Declaration of Independence signed?

At the bottom.

Steve is driving his car. He is travelling at 60 feet/second and the speed limit is 40 mph. Is Steve speeding?

He could find out by checking his speedometer.

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March 2 - 6, 2017 At Casa Grande, Arizona

This is a very scenic area with lots of exploring and sight seeing available. It is close to Tucson, Phoenix, and several recreation areas. The weather can be sunny and dry…..and during the FMCA Convention, who knows!

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Caravan will depart Monday, March 6, 2017 for Chandler FMCA Rally.

Directions: To Pre-Rally at Pinal Fairgrounds & Event Center 512 South Eleven Mile Corner Road, Casa Grande, AZ. 85194. I-10 East bound from Phoenix, Exit 194, Go east on HWY 287 to Eleven Mile Corner Road. Turn Right to Grounds. I-10 West bound from Tucson, Exit 211. Go North on HWY 87. Turn Left on HWY 287 West.. Continue to Eleven Mile Corner Road.. Turn Left go South to Grounds.

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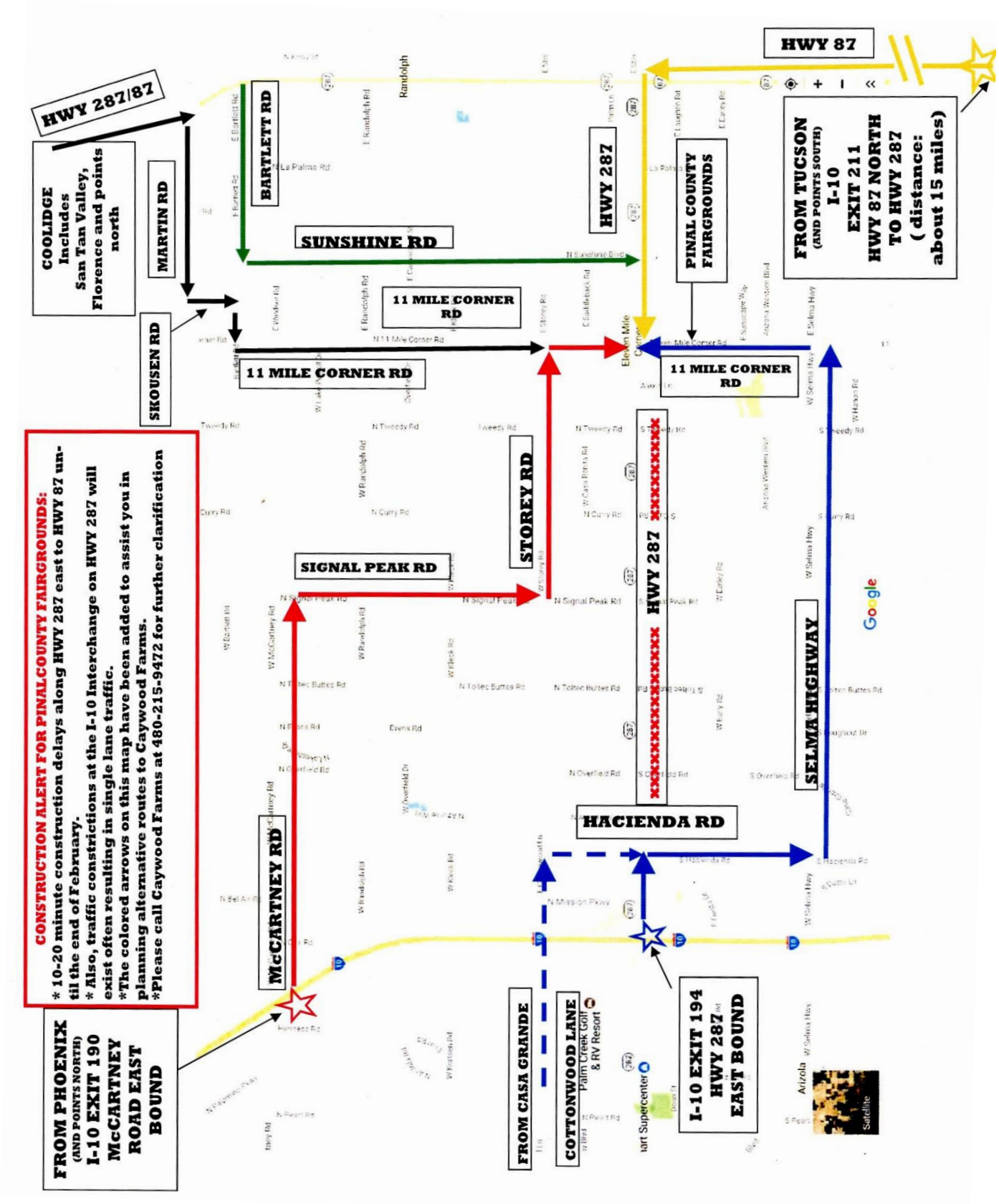
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They Just Don't Make Them Like They Used To

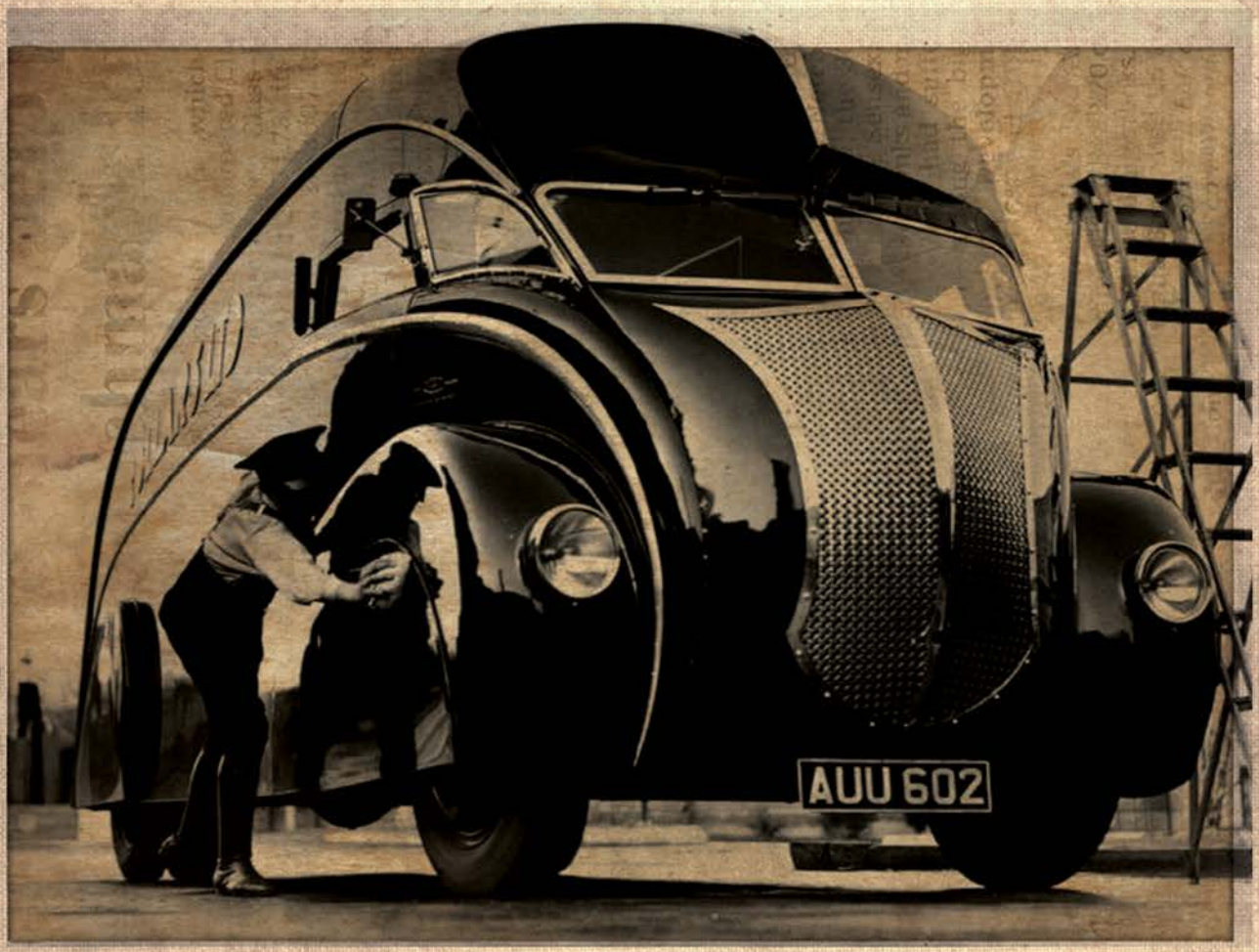

Photo Courtesy John Swartley

1966 04 EAGLES OWNED BY THE NZH, A DUTCH BUS COMPANY.







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May 1-5	IHO	Branson, MO
May 5-10	419 Pusher	Goshen, IN
June 19-24	ACA	Oklahoma
July 5-9	MI Pre Rally	Celina, OH
July 12-15	FMCA	Indianapolis, IN
August		Paron, AR
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Registration Form

Converted Bus Rally

March 11-14, 2017
(Over the Hump to)
Pahrump, NV

Last Name(s)_____ Pilot_____ Co-Pilot_____

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*Make & Year of Bus*_____ *Length*_____ ft. *Does your bus have slides*_____

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Total Enclosed $_____

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Included in Rally Fee

- Dinner...Saturday Night Arrival Date...March 11, 2017
- Dinner...Sunday Evening... March 12, 2017
- Ice Cream Social... Monday March 13, 2017
- B.B.Q. At the Pool on Monday Night March 13, 2017
- Breakfast Tuesday Morning... March 14, 2017
- *Coffee and Donuts Every Day*

Bus Conversion International – Schedule of Events

The Pahrump Rally will take place at The Wine Ridge R.V. Resort, in Pahrump, NV. Check out their website for more informatio: wineridgervresort.com

The rally is open to any and all converted buses. We don't care what you drive, or what phase of build you are in. If you are in the building stages, this is where you need to be. For more info, e-mail me at bcitony@aol.com, or better yet, call me at (307) 250-6966.

Here is our TENTATIVE schedule. As you read the schedule, please remember that you can participate in all activities or none of the activities. It is your choice.

SATURDAY MARCH 11, 2017
12-4 p.m. Check in
5-6 p.m. Cocktails Meet & Greet at Lower Pool
6:00 p.m. Welcome Announcement
6:15 p.m. Ladies of the Coach Shuffle
6:30 Catered Dinner
7:30 p.m.-10:00 p.m. Fireside Gathering

SUNDAY MARCH 12, 2017
7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Coffee & Donuts
9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Ladies Gathering
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. RED Open House
1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Team Scooter Challenge
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. BLUE Open House
6:00 p.m. -7:30 p.m. Mexican Night Dinner
8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. Fireside Gathering...featuring
Irish Coffee/Bar and Nordle Puffins

MONDAY MARCH 13, 2017
7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Coffee & Donuts
10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m GREEN Open House
12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Bean Bag Baseball
2:00 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. Ice Cream Social
3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. YELLOW Open House
6:00 p.m. Pool Side B.B.Q at Lower Pool
8:00 p.m. - 10:00 Fireside Gathering

TUESDAY MARCH 14, 2017
8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. Breakfast at Lower Pool
2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Team Wheel Chair Races
6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Pot Luck Dinner
8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. Fireside Gathering

WEDNESDAY MARCH 15, 2017
7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Coffee and Donuts
Check out by 11:00 a.m.

Any questions call (307) 250-6966 or email us at bcitony@aol.com

SOUTHEAST BUS NUTS

SEBusNuts.org

Winter Rally—Ocala Sun RV Resort
February 16-19, 2017



Located just west of I-75, exit #341, in south Ocala.

This rally is a great bargain. **The fee of $185. is inclusive of camping, several meals, and several tourist attractions.** The fee is subsidized by the chapter treasury This is a very nice RV resort that makes special arrangements for rallies. We will all be grouped together and have exclusive use of the recently remodeled clubhouse.

Rally schedule:

Thursday, the 16th

Dutch treat dinner at StumpKnockers on the River, on the banks of the Withlacoochee River in nearby Dunnellon.

Friday

Breakfast at the resort.
Glass bottom boat tour of fabulous Silver Springs Park.
Dinner in clubhouse catered by Mojos Faijita Bar.
After dinner entertainment: Bingo with prizes and gift cards.

Saturday

Pancake and sausage breakfast at the resort.
Free tour of Don Garlits Drag Race Museum.
-or-
Ladies' Dutch treat lunch at posh Ivy House, followed by free painting class at Painting with a Twist.
Dinner in the clubhouse is catered by Sonny's Barbeque, featuring BBQ chicken and all the fixin's.
Entertainment following dinner: The Old Hippies, on a national tour. This duet will really take you down memory lane!

Sunday

Continental breakfast and fond adieus



The Don Garlits museum is a must for all motor-heads and bus nuts!



Ocala is famous for its thoroughbred breeding and horse farms.



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To register, go to our chapter website www.sebusnuts.org and click on the rally button. Choose to pay either with a credit card or PayPal. Done! If you would prefer to send a check, make it out for **only $185**. payable to SE Bus Nuts, and mail to Treasurer, 5337 N Socrum Loop Road, Box 203, Lakeland, Florida 33809.

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1986 NEOPLAN 40 FT. LONG, 102 WIDE, CONVERTED 1995







Slide-out 13' by 36'', 6V92 Detroit silver, 25,000 mile on out-of-frame rebuild Allison 4-speed auto transmission, Outside is re-skinned, dark green paint, some paint damage, 2,500 on Michelin tires, always covered, Gray tint double pane insulated windows, Kubota 3,500 watt diesel generator, Water Cooled, Remote Start, (8) 130 watt solar panels mounted on top, Blue Sky controller, Trace inverter true wave sine, run any electronics. 125 amp battery charger, (6) house batteries (needs new ones)

150 gallon fresh water, 60 black, 60 gray, (3) 7-1/2 gallon propane tanks removable on slide out, Inside ceiling and walls insulated with spray foam, Ceiling and walls covered with Ultra leather, Flexsteel leather Easy Chair, Italian leather couch, 4 burner Gaggenau stove top, Marine wall oven, Norcold 4-door gas-electric refrigerator, microwave, washer-dryer combo, apartment sized Miele dishwasher, Pennsylvania red oak cabinets, magnet cabinet locks, Propane heat, Posturepedic queen mattress, Computer desk, 32" in flat screen TV

This coach was converted for long term living in RV park or Boondocking. The 8 solar panel array produces lots of electricity, and that will keep Mom happy, LOL.

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PRODUCT ANNOUNCEMENT

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Need some expert air bag leveling advice

Post by: Scott & Heather

We have been experimenting with manual air bag control on our C3. Right now we are dialed in around 70 psi for the driver's side and 80 psi for the curbside drive axle bag pressures. Here's where it's getting weird:

I am still leaning ever so slightly to the curbside. To actually get the coach to level out, I have to run about 40 psi in the driver's side drive axle bags and almost 80 psi in the curbside bags. This makes the coach rock too much because 40 psi just isn't enough. But this is what actually seems to make it not lean. Ok, ready for the extra layer of weirdness?

If I go into the tag axle regulator controls and raise the pressure on the tag bags from 40 psi (where they were originally set) to 60 psi, I am then able to level the coach with about 70 psi in both sets of drive axle bags. It's almost like the tag pressure helps level it out. Now, I'm confused because inside the tag regulator box there are two regulators and two pressure gauges. I can't tell what they do. One is set to 0 psi and the other to 60 now. Is one the pressure you want the bags to be when inflated and the other the pressure you want when they trailing axle switch is in the "unloaded" position? The bags for the tags don't appear to be separately controlled but I could be wrong. I am really heavy curbside because of my 150 gal fresh tank, 40 gal water heater tank, fridge, washer and dryer and kitchen cabinets all on that side. The opposite side has the bathrooms, stove, tile shower with concrete pan and my black tank. Certainly might explain the lean but I'm trying to level this thing out with at least somewhat similar pressures. If I could just add a bit of pressure to the tag on the heavy side it would help to support some of the weight without raising the level of the tag on the light side. But is this even possible? Anyone know how the tags are plumbed?

Post by: Jon

What is wrong with using leveling valves which are always working to keep the coach level?

Post by: gumpy

Of course you realize that as you use your fresh water, it ends up in the black tank on the opposite side of the bus? Aw, the beauty of dynamic automatic leveling devices. On the MC9, the tag pressure is set at 35 psi. The amount of pressure in the tag bags regulates the percentage of weight the tag axle carries. The higher the pressure, the more weight on the tag, and hence, the less weight on the drives and steer. I encourage you to not deviate from the manufacturers specifications on tag pressure for your model bus.

Post by: Oonrahnjay

Plan to fit in a few minutes on the scales next time you're at a well-equipped truck stop for fuel. Ask them if they can weigh axle to axle and side to side. It will tell you a lot. And I agree with Gumpy, the tag pressure has effects all along the bus (the higher the tag, the higher the load is on the front end, for instance) -- don't mess with it too much unless you're absolutely sure what you're doing is necessary and safe. If you have already weighed your bus, please post the individual corner weights here to help us understand what's happening with your "coach".

Post by: luvrbus

I am going to forego the air bag leveling system and go with the HWH hydraulic 4 point system and be done with it. There is not enough leveling range with air bags to really do any good.

Post by: blue goose

First question, do you have lifting springs on the tag to lift them when the air is off? Why did you take the leveling valves off the coach? My C-3 has a MCI installed leaving system and still has the leaving valves. If you need I have the info from MCI as to how it works.

Post by: B_K

I know I know I'm an old school reject but..... IF IT WERE ME.... I'd go back to the factory leveling valves but go one step farther by putting one on each side of the front instead of just the





one in the center. Once set for correct height they should keep the bus level as it travels up and down the highway as well as maintaining a good ride.

If you wanted you could put solenoid valves on there and leave your added system for use when parked, but honestly I'd think the factory system would do OK there too. Just my opinion which when combined with $3 will buy you a cup of coffee at the nearest Flying J or Pilot!

Post by: RJ

Question: Did you remove the OEM stock leveling valves?

Regardless, you need to get out DaBook and open it to the suspension section. In there you will find the dimensions for the stock clearance between the rubber bump stops on the chassis and the axle.

Armed with that information, get your bus over a pit so you can adjust the ride height to factory specs - FORGET your air pressure settings until you've set your ride height correctly. Once you've got everything set to specs, THEN make note of the individual air pressure readings.

Without setting the ride height to specs, it's simply the blind leading the blind...

Post by: B_K

RJ from my understanding yes he removed the stock levelers and just went with his own designed individual gauge per bag w/valve system.

Not saying there is anything wrong with going the route he did, just that I believe the engineers that designed the bus did a good job in the first place and the only thing I don't like about it is the single leveling valve on the steer axle of the MCI (of that vintage). Now had it been a Setra w/independent front suspension he would not have wanted to change it in the first place!

Post by: Scott & Heather

Correct, I have bypassed the leveling valves. The ride height was set and the leveling valves were brand new but the coach rocked side to side so bad it was making us all sick and was downright dangerous. My 9 never ever did this. Once I went manual and added air, she drives rock solid. My only issue is the slight lean which I'm trying to sort out. I do need to get over a pit and measure bump stop clearances. Jack if you do have a diagram on the air suspension system I would love to take a gander at it to see if the tag pressure is controlled separately for each side or in tandem.

Post by: Jon

What leveling valves are you using? There are instant acting which add or dump air almost as fast as the arm moves which would give you that ride characteristic, or the delayed action that are not going to react for a few seconds which provide less rocking. Also, has the coach got sway bars? They make a huge difference in side to side swaying, and most of all bad shocks are going to allow the mushy feel. Take them off and compress and pull them. They should move but very slowly and with resistance. If they move freely they are worn out.

Post by: luvrbus

You need to buy the leveling valves from MCI. So much of the time PO install leveling valves from trucks or trailers. MCI use their own design and cost 2x the amount of leveling valves you find on the internet. Don't use a universal leveling valve on your MCI.

Post by: Scott & Heather

The leveling valves move freely when disconnected. And instantaneously. They are brand spanking shiny new. I didn't buy them but PO did. I doubt they are MCI valves but I could be wrong.

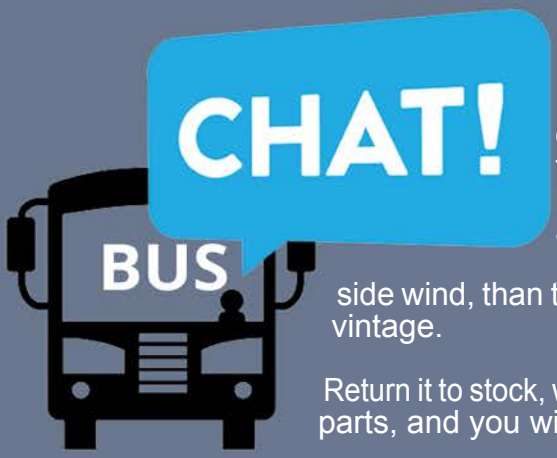
Post by: buswarrior

Proper suspension ride height is critical for drive shaft angles and front steering suspension geometry. Set ride height by a measuring tape, and beware the effect of crushed axle bump stops if you use that measurement.

You MUST have proper BUS leveling valves.

MCI's corner comfortably, from the





driver's seat of the pants, at higher speeds, and flatter, bumpy road, side wind, than the rest of that vintage.

Return it to stock, with the correct parts, and you will be happy!

Post by: blue_goose

Send me your email address for me to send the drawing of air system. The tags both run the same pressure. Some of my friends have raised the pressure in the tags and say it gives a better ride. My C-3 with the factory setup does fine, no problem. My air leveling system can be set for auto or manual. When on manual it just bypasses the leveling valves.

Post by: RichardEntrekin

I don't know one specific thing about your setup, so I'll put my fireproof unders on for the flaming. On my coach, which I know is way different than yours, it takes around 60 psi to raise the coach of off dead flat. Do you know what that value is for your rig? The point is this, the higher the air pressure in any air bag, the stiffer the spring rate. I have no doubt that if you are running 40 lbs in one side that it is mushy on that side and likely to sway.

The second thing is that you commented on lack of understanding of the tag pressure regulators. I would spend some time tracing that system, because if the assumption you made that the right and left tag were NOT independent is incorrect, then different tag pressures on each side could explain why you are seeing the side to side differences. Again, I don't know beans about your setup. But my tags are independent, and even though they appear to be connected to a common frame rail tank, that tank has a divider welded in the middle.

I could be all wrong, but this is easy to try. What happens if you set both tag regulators to the same pressure? Does that make a difference in the side to side pressures required to level the coach?

My apologies for offering advice on a system I have never seen, BUT the basic laws of physics still apply. The weight that an airbag supports is a straightforward calculation. Divide the diameter of the airbag by 2, square that number, multiply by pi (3.14), multiply by the psi. For example an airbag of 6 inches in diameter running 50 psi will support 1413 pound. 6/2 = 3, 3 X 3 X 3.14 = 28.26, 28.26 X 50 = 1413. The point is this, if you are truly running 80 psi on one side and 40 on the other, then the coach would have to be twice as heavy on the 80 psi side. We know that's not reality, so something else is going on.

Post by: Jon

If XX PSI brings the coach to the road or driving height it typically means the air bags are extended to about where they are going to have 3 or 4 inches of travel up and down. If you increase the pressure the bus will sit higher and the amount of travel up and down is going to change to where there is more travel down than up. Conversely if you do not bring the coach to the driving height by introducing less pressure than required the bags will provide a mushier ride and will bottom more easily and there will be more up travel available. Ride height valves are the only way to assure the correct height and provide the ride and handling the designers wanted. There is no way a driver can sense if the bus is too high or too low from the driver's seat, and either position, high or low has an impact on handling and drivability.

Post by: daddysgirl

The Warrior is right as is Jon. IMO, those height valves are important. The bags are important. I have a spare set of both, just in case. And from personal experience when I was a child (behind a friend's bus that wrecked as a result) if you play too much with the bags, it strains the bolts and the rubber. You do NOT want one of them to fail going down the road. Thanks for the conversions Richard!

Post by: Jeff Willard

I'm not a Prevost or MCI guy and know nothing about them but, the one question that should be answered is, do you think you're smarter than the guys that designed this system in the first place? If the answer is no, then fix it as it was designed. If you're trying to "fix" another problem, then design and build another system and leave what's there, as it was engineered.

I could probably hang this comment on the majority of threads on ALL of these boards. When I got started working on the Scenic's I quickly discovered that I spent far more time fixing and



undoing other peoples "fixes" than actually repairing worn out parts and system.

Post by: TomC

I still have the stock, automatic leveling valves. I also have my own designed manual leveling system using the 3 points. I like not having to worry about leveling while driving, but be able to level the bus in less than a minute. Also, I have had a leveling valve go out (actually the connecting rod came loose) while driving. Simply threw the switch to manual, leveled it out and continued driving. Best of both worlds.

Post by: Scott & Heather

I am totally game for going back to the leveling valves. They are still there. But the brackets the rod connects to are bent and look custom. One of them is actually rubbing the shock absorber. That has to be rectified before I reconnect the leveling valves because they just aren't working right.

Post by: Rick 74 MC-8

Since you have to rebuild or replace that bracket anyway, why not make the bracket so that you can move it from a remote location. Bob from Indiana did it. You still have leveling when parked just put it in a home position for traveling and ride height is automatically adjusted. Sean also did it with linear actuators, very slick.

Post by: Lin

Rick, we did that using push/pull cables. Similar to what Bob did, as I remember. I am not sure how Scott is adjusting the air in the bags, but if it is a remote system, like on the dash, it would seem that he would be able to integrate that with the automatic ride height controls as others have done.

Air bag leveling is better than nothing but is limited to about a 6 inch differential from back wheels to front, that's a only about 1 inch per five foot of incline for a 40 foot bus. I am happy that I have it, but I would be really happy if the tooth fairy installed a real leveling system for me.

Post by: RichardEntrekin

If I have read this thread correctly, the initial reason you abandoned the height control valves was the side to side sway and mushy handling. Then, if you level the coach with your manual system by high inflation on the curb side and low inflation on the driver's side, it behaves in a similar fashion. Then if you run higher pressures in the tags, you don't have to bias the side to side pressure with your manual system to get the coach to ride level.

I really think you need to dig into the pneumatic system for the tags. It could be you have unequal pressures from side to side on the tags, and regardless if you level the coach manually or allow HCV's to do it you have the mushy handling.

Post by: Dave5Cs

I agree with Richard. We have independent bag adjustment and don't have those problems at all. But we also don't have tag axle. So would seem that it may be your tag axle has a problem. If you want both systems to work you could use the solenoids like Tom C did also.

Post by: Scott & Heather

Thanks Richard and Dave. This is exactly what I'm trying to diagnose. The issue isn't with ride height or even the leveling valves. I am essentially doing the same thing as the leveling valves but manually. And for those that think the leveling valves adjust for when you go around a turn etc, that's somewhat bunk. The 1/4" lines cannot allow enough air into the bags to adjust that quickly. Sorry, my 9 with factory leveling valves never adjusted very much around corners or turns. It just leaned. Plus, if your valves indeed did have the ability to adjust that quickly, you'd have an unleveled bus once the turn was completed and you were driving straight down the road. Manual control of the bags is actually pretty awesome. I have no desire to go back to leveling valves. I just need to sort out tag pressures because that appears to be part of the issue. And frankly I get weary of hearing people say "if the MCI engineers designed it that way, then you'd better leave it that way unless you think you're smarter than the engineers" because frankly, yeah I have actually done away with a ton of stuff on both my buses that the "engineers" designed because it didn't fit my needs. My air door has the air shock removed because I wanted a normal door action with mere hinges. I moved my temp gauge





because the engineers decided it was a good idea to put that down so low you can't hardly see it on the dash. I have electronic wipers because the engineers thought in 1992 that air wipers would be superior to electronic wipers that all the school buses and millions of cars and semi trucks had. I moved my air brake knob and transmission touchpad to the left side arm rest area because the engineers designed it to be on a pillar on the right side even thought I kept smacking that short differ with my calf getting in and out of the seat. I could go on and on. I like my manual leveling, and I have set the ride height per specs, but I think I have a tag that is helping the driver's side more than the passenger side and causing the slight lean so I'll need to sort that out.

Post by: gg04

What it your front set at? Different bus but my RR is 54, LR is 50, RF is 42, LF is 46 for factory ride height. I'll drop it two inches for interstate highways. Has worked for 17 years.

Post by: Dave5Cs

Some adjust for the road crown of about 5 degrees that they use for road run off but we don't. 80 in the front and 75 in the back and good to go.

Post by: sledhead

On the MCI rear is 42 lbs, front is 70 lbs and I too adjust for the crown in the road or a strong side winds when needed and love the fact that I can control it right at the driver seat when driving.

Post by: Scott & Heather

Dave, your C3 had 42 lbs in rear on both sides and it didn't rock side to side? Wow. Dave5c, what are you driving again? An MCI?

GG04, I don't have the front manual set yet so I have no idea.

Post by: sledhead

I've had no problems in over 10 years. Before I removed my original valves I measured the height at the 1st bumper strip and to get the coach at the same level this is the air pressure I need when driving. But as luvrbus would say jello bags do bounce (and now he has some on his coach.)

Post by: Dave5Cs

Scott, laughing at your question what do I drive. Yes, an MCI MC 5C Saudi coach.

We also have only had to use our riser block a few times. If you measure the distance of travel from full down to full up on a standard coach it is almost 4 inches at the axles. But if you consider the overhangs front to back which is another 6 to 8 feet depending on your coach and you drop the tail or rear axle bags as low as they will go mine almost puts the bottom of the bumper on the ground and the front bags all the way up 4 inches at the front axle plus the overhangs. You measure it from the ground it will be between 7 to 12 inches. So that is quite a bit of adjustment and side to side is enough to level it out.

Post by: brmax

Hmm, low riding.

Post by: RichardEntrekin

Scott, did you ever figure out why the drastic difference in side to side air bag pressure required to level your coach?

Post by: Jim Eh.

Scott, have you ever checked the ride height with all the bags deflated? That would be my starting point. If I remember correctly the whole reason for the tag axle was for stability reasons. If you increase the air pressure on the tag axle it transfers MORE weight onto the steer axle (drive axle acts like a fulcrum). On my coach there is a traction switch that decreases the tag axle air pressure (by about 30% if memory serves me correctly) for times that you are stuck. It in effect transfers more weight onto the drive axle for increased traction. Regardless of the tag axle air pressure there is no effect on side to side balance.

It may be a little bit of work but if you have easy access to your pressure gauges try swapping them side to side and see if your pressures read differently. There are only two things that make the vehicle lean - pneumatic difference or mechan-





ical difference (incorrectly matched bags, suspension mounting point differences, grossly overloaded to one side, twist in the body, etc.)

Post by: Lin

I won't be able to hold my hand steady enough.

Post by: Scott & Heather

I have not yet sorted this out. With all bags deflated completely the coach sits level if on a level surface. To keep the coach level during driving, this is what I have to have the settings at:

Drivers bags: 75psi

Curbside bags: 70psi

Tag bags: 58 psi

If I drop the tag bags to 40psi, the curbside drops out of level. It's weird. I am loaded heavy on that side with washer, dryer, kitchen cabinets, 40 gallon water heater, and 150 gallon fresh tank. Other side has full tile shower with mortar shower pan, stove, both bathrooms, black tank, and that's about it. So the only thing I can think of is that I'm heavy curbside. I need to scale just that side of the coach to confirm this.

Post by: daddysgirl

This might be irrelevant, but is it possible (in addition to being heavy on one side) that the 8" roof raise and tire size could contribute to this problem?

Just a thought.

Post by: gg04

You will not have control until you can control the front bags. You're fighting the factory controls. You adjust they resist.

Post by: Scott & Heather

Roof raise won't cause it to lean. Tire size is the same all around and it did this when I had 22.5's on the coach before I switched over to 24.5's. I raised the roof 9" on my MCI 9 bus and never had this issue. I really think I'm overweight on that side.

Post by: Dave5Cs

Scott which oil do you use?!

Post by: Oonrahnjay

Yeah, 15W-40 will make it lean like that.

Post by: eagle19952

as will Delvac :)

Post by: Jim Eh.

He must be "leaning" towards synthetic.

Post by: Scott & Heather

I actually run shell 50 wt :) way too heavy apparently.

Post by: Oonrahnjay

Oh, yeah, way too heavy on one side, besides that, it'll give you athlete's foot and that itches! You GOT to have just the right oil!

Post by: B_K

Scott have you got a CO-OP or any other type of "grain elevator" or Ag operation near you? If so most of them have a scale right in front of the office that is level and during slow periods will often let you use their scale for a small fee where you can drive just one side of the coach on the scale one axle at a time and then turn around and do the same from the other direction for the other side. That will get you the actual weights from each axle side to side and all.

OR you could get a hold of Bill Gerrie and find out when the next time he's headed south to the US and see if he'll bring his scales w/him! ;)

Post by: Scott & Heather

You know, I'm actually trying to get pulled over by a commercial enforcement office so he can weigh me, just kidding. That would be suicide. I'm going to see what I can do about getting side to side scaled when I get back to Texas in a couple of weeks. I've got to sort this out so that I know what I'm dealing with.



Post by:

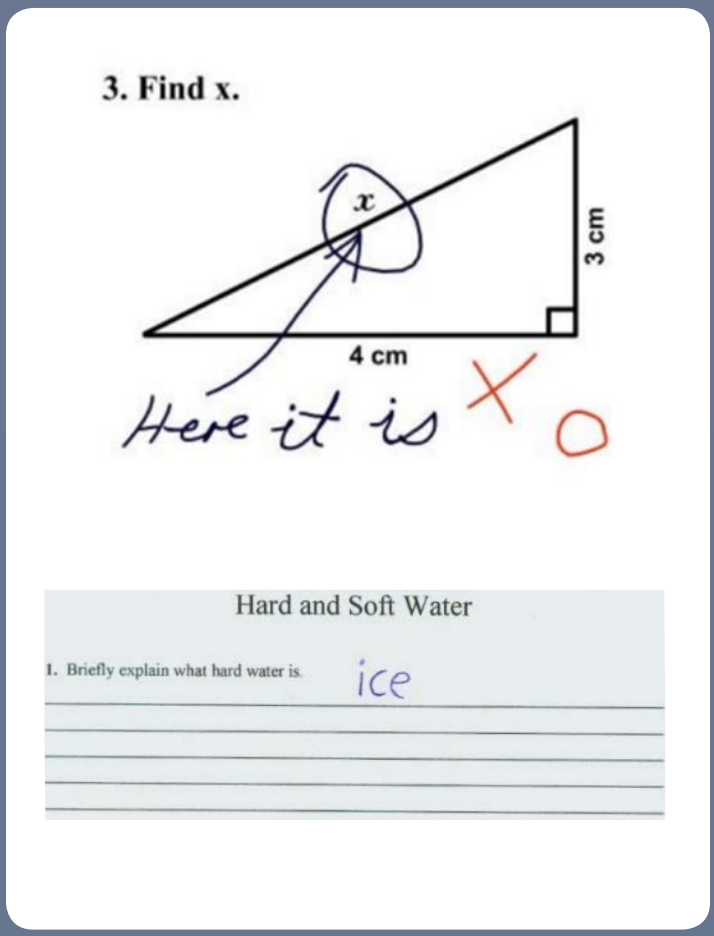


B_K

Well if you had more time between Chattanooga and your recording sessions in IL I'd say swing by here and we'd get it weighed and figured out. But best I remember that is the 16th/17th and I leave for NY on the 17th. But there are PLENTY of Ag places in TX that should have scales that will help you out for a small fee.

Post by: Scott & Heather

Lol. You know my schedule better than I do :) I'll get this done in Texas for sure. In other news I'm thrilled that I finally had my hubs converted to synthetic grease! My life is so much happier!



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See you on the forum!

