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HOT ROD

EVERYBODY'S AUTOMOTIVE MAGAZINE

**INDY '500' DAY BY
DAY DIARY! NHRA
Spring Nationals**

**RING & PINION GEAR
SETTING MADE EASY!**

**SPECIAL SECTION ON DUNE BUGGIES,
4-WHEEL-DRIVE &
HOME-BUILT
CARS**



Hill climbing is only one of the many competitive activities designed for this new breed of cat. Be it sand, a pure rock slope, or what have you, if it's off the road there are men and machines that are bound to go over it — one way or another.

TERRA FIRMA

by Bob Greene

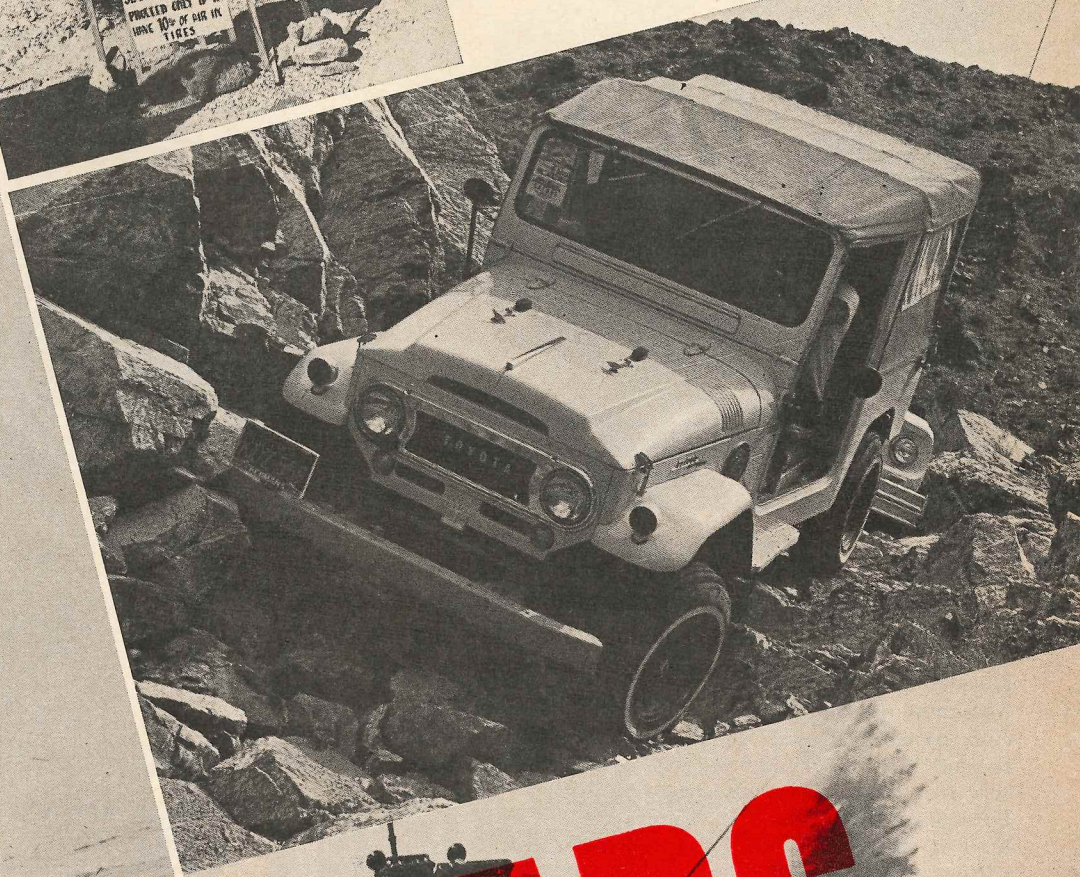
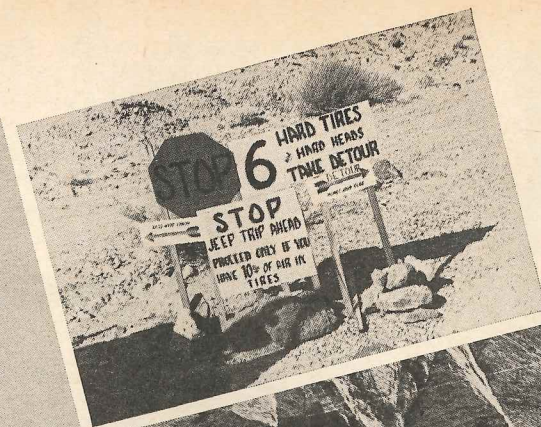
The sudden swing to off-the-road specialty vehicles is really not sudden at all; it has been building for the last ten years in a multitude of camps, each element pursuing and perfecting its own specialty. The rich with their highly articulated and sophisticated backwoods roadsters constructed with the precision of an Indy machine, those of average means with their Jeep-type rigs, and the raw enthusiast with his cut-down Detroit sedan boasting a total investment of usually under a hundred dollars. They were bound to converge someday in an overlap of activities and interests — this is the day. Everything was going for the movement; the urge to shuck city jitters, brought on by an overcrowded metropolis, the advent of the motorcycle trail bike, Detroit getting on the boil with top priority camper programs, plus an obvious surplus of time and money in the hands of Joe Citizen. People were growing weary of the asphalt jungle, its restrictions, its demands, and the pace that kills. First, because they were readily available, came the Jeeps, and it naturally followed that the horsepower be tripled with the substitution of a big-inch V8 in place of the tiny four; then the discovery that a salvaged and denuded Volkswagen, with a rollbar in place of

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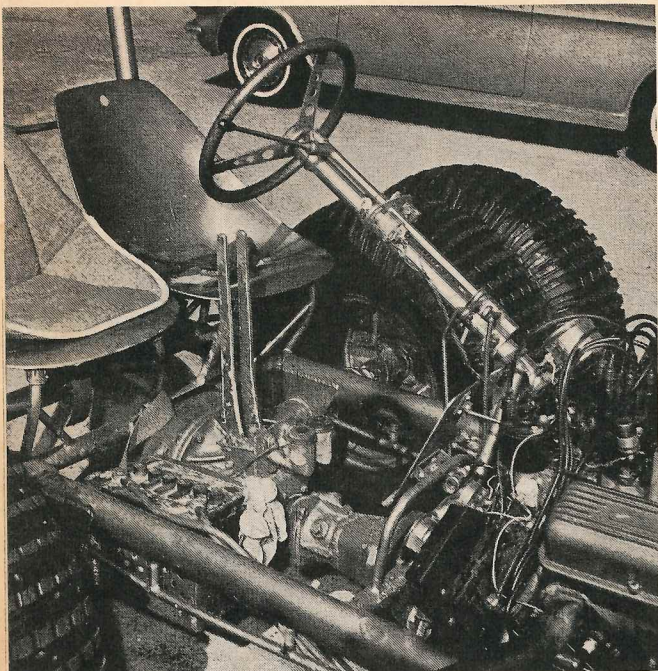


FUNNY CARS

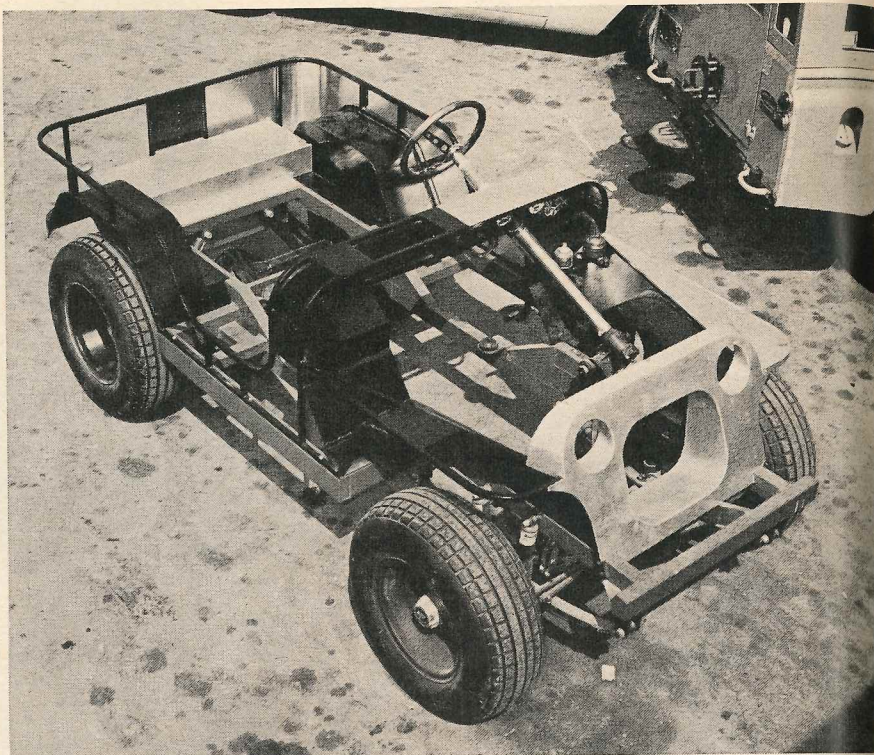
When the highway turns right, they cut left, leaving the city and its easy way centuries behind. You'll discover the mechanical contrivance of a moon vehicle crossed with the mobility of a snake in this wacky assortment of backwoods rods that run off the road



photography: Eric Rickman



LEFT — In addition to normal steering, further maneuverability is gained by individual rear wheel brakes. A slipping wheel is braked, transferring power to biting side. **BELOW** — The Con-Fer Cougar is an extra rugged machine available in any degree of construction from bare 3x2 and 4x2-inch rectangular 1/8-inch wall tube frame, to a completely finished machine with engine and drive train of your choice. Curb weight is 2140 lbs. on an 80-in. 'base.



TERRA FIRMA FUNNY CARS

a body, could scamper over the sand with equal aplomb; and an old '48 Plymouth, bared of its steel shell, shortened through the frame, and fitted with over-size tires, could at least get into the act. But the prospects were too tempting to leave it at that, and manufacturers in various walks of the automotive trade awakened to the fact that a market lay waiting for a new type vehicle, the kit buggy for the do-it-yourselfers with a mechanical bent and a vivid imagination for powerplants and drive systems. The program was in orbit.

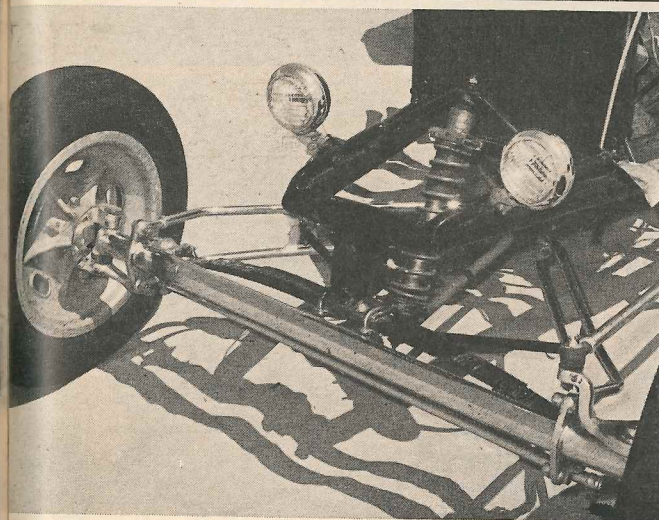
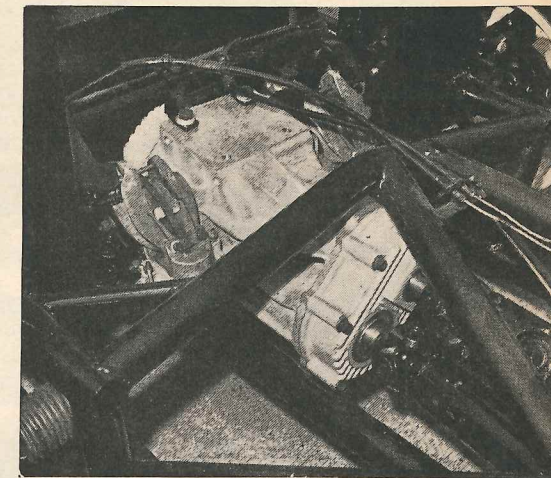
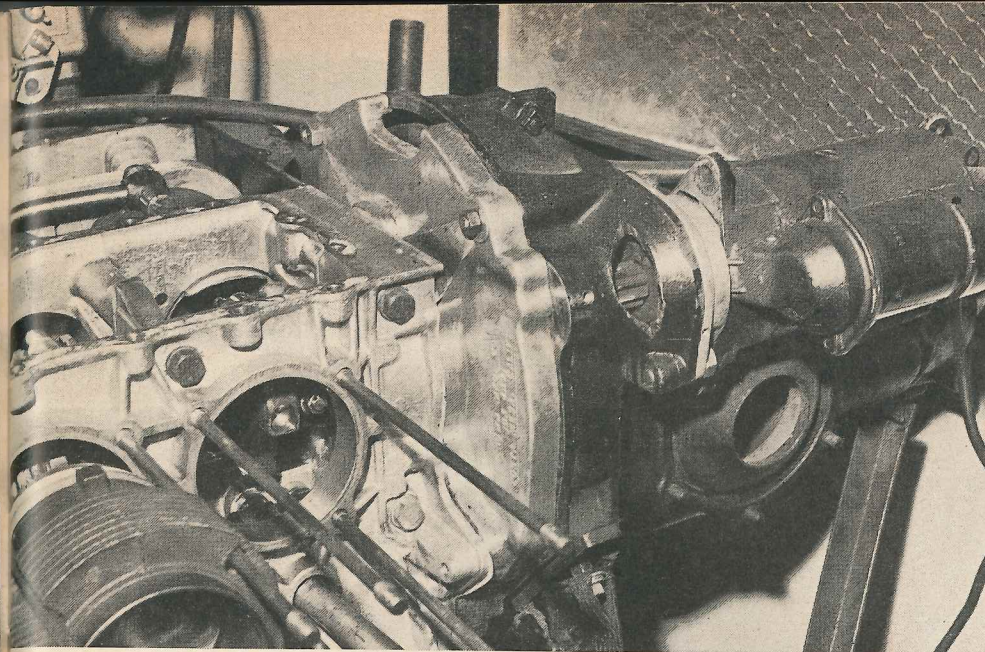
If you are already one of the In Group, identified by their swamp grass burn or cactus needle badge, you either know what you want or you have it, but for the intrigued yet still unindoctrinated bystander there remains the question of which way to go. The precautions can drive straight to the nearest wrecking yard for an appraisal of the smallest and cheapest vintage Detroit car with an operable engine and drivetrain. Long stroke sixes make ideal powerplants in this cheapy setup, and body condition is immaterial since it is not used, except for seats, dash panel and firewall. Section the frame and driveshaft, modify the springs to suit, and fit widebase wheels with jumbo tires — you're in business. The strange-looking contraption you end up with is by no means a thing of beauty but it is good for a lot of laughs, hours of fun in the desert or dunes, and as cheap as they come. And it can be a ticket to membership in a local dune buggy club, or even a means

of revenue, as plied along the dune-covered shores of California and Oregon where enterprising groups emulate WW I pilots with their Jennys by offering to take passengers "up" for a short ride for a small pittance.

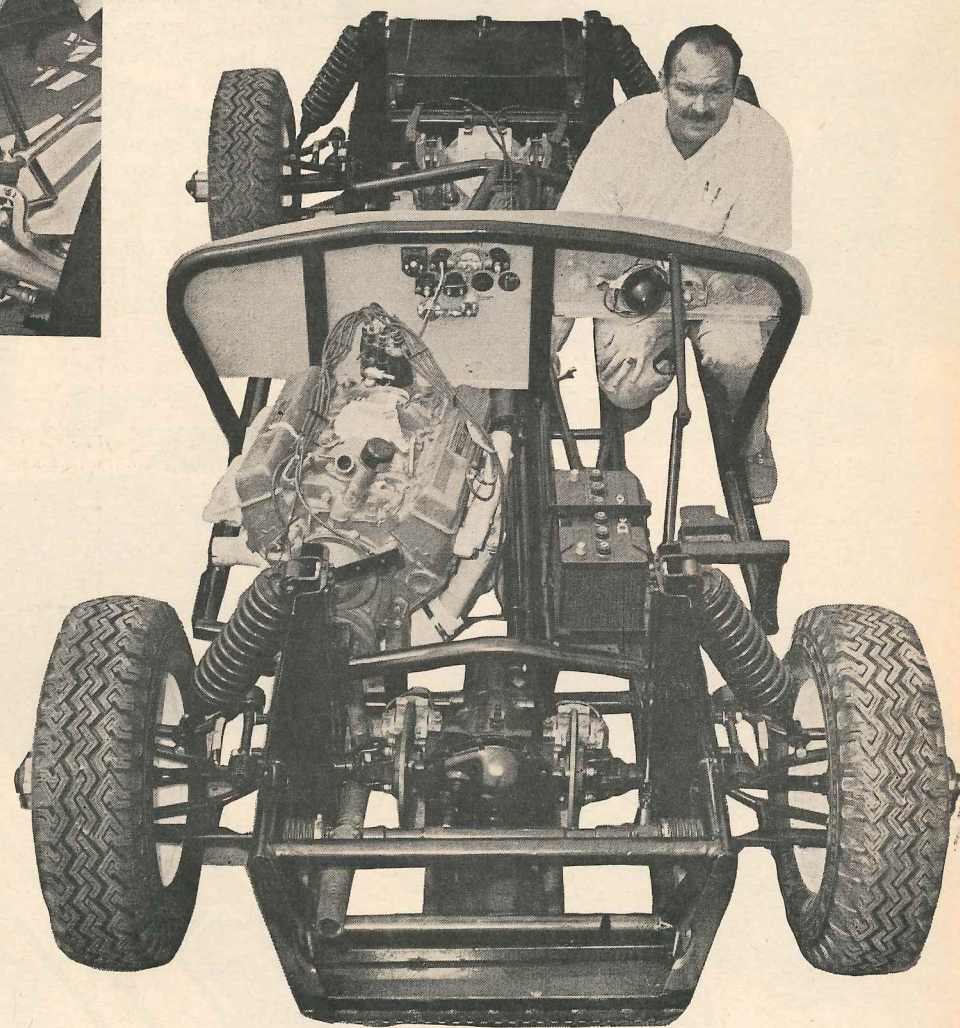
Next up the monetary scale would be a well-used Jeep or a wrecked Volkswagen. With its platform floor and integrated suspension, the VW sans body makes good sense at this level. Find a rolled job and the rest is easy. With the body removed, the VW is unbelievably navigable and jackrabbit fast. Because of its light weight, the stripped Peoples-car can be lifted over or out of an emergency situation and can even be transported to Marlboro Country in the bed of the king-size three-quarter-ton pickup. Thus its speed, and lightness that permits it to be muscled out of a bad scene, make the VW most attractive to the short-haul backwoodsman.

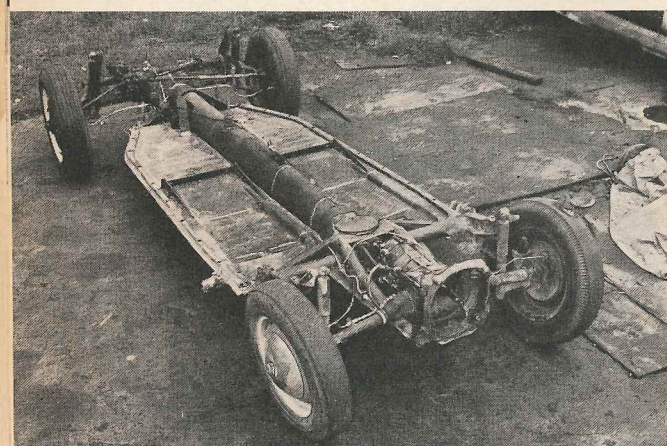
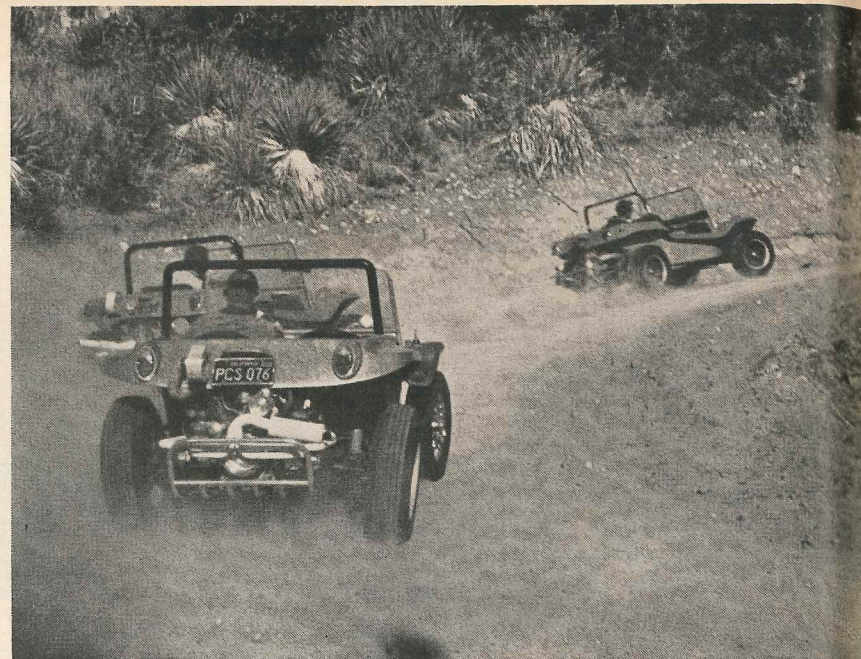
Adding a flair, and partial enclosure, to this most rudimentary of vehicles are the kit bodies now available for the VW chassis. The smartly designed fiberglass shells bolt on in a matter of hours, offer

(Continued on page 37)



TOP — The Crown Mfg. Co. of Costa Mesa, Cal., makes a neat adapter plate to marry a Corvair engine to either VW or Porsche transaxle assemblies. Offset starter adapter utilizes Corvair starter with Crown flywheel and heavy-duty clutch. **ABOVE** — Ingenuity is byword when building dune buggies. **ABOVE RIGHT** — Kientz quick-change rear end with output shaft used in this 4-wheel-drive machine. Note inboard spots. **RIGHT** — Terramaster is being developed by Adolf Schoepe of Anaheim for good roadability plus off-road capability. Harley Kientz, the design engineer, surveys his unique brain child. **LEFT** — When the going is extra slick, or things get real sticky, a winch is the only way out. Surplus aircraft winches can be adapted, plus there are many commercially available. Winch equipped machines are a must for off-road touring.



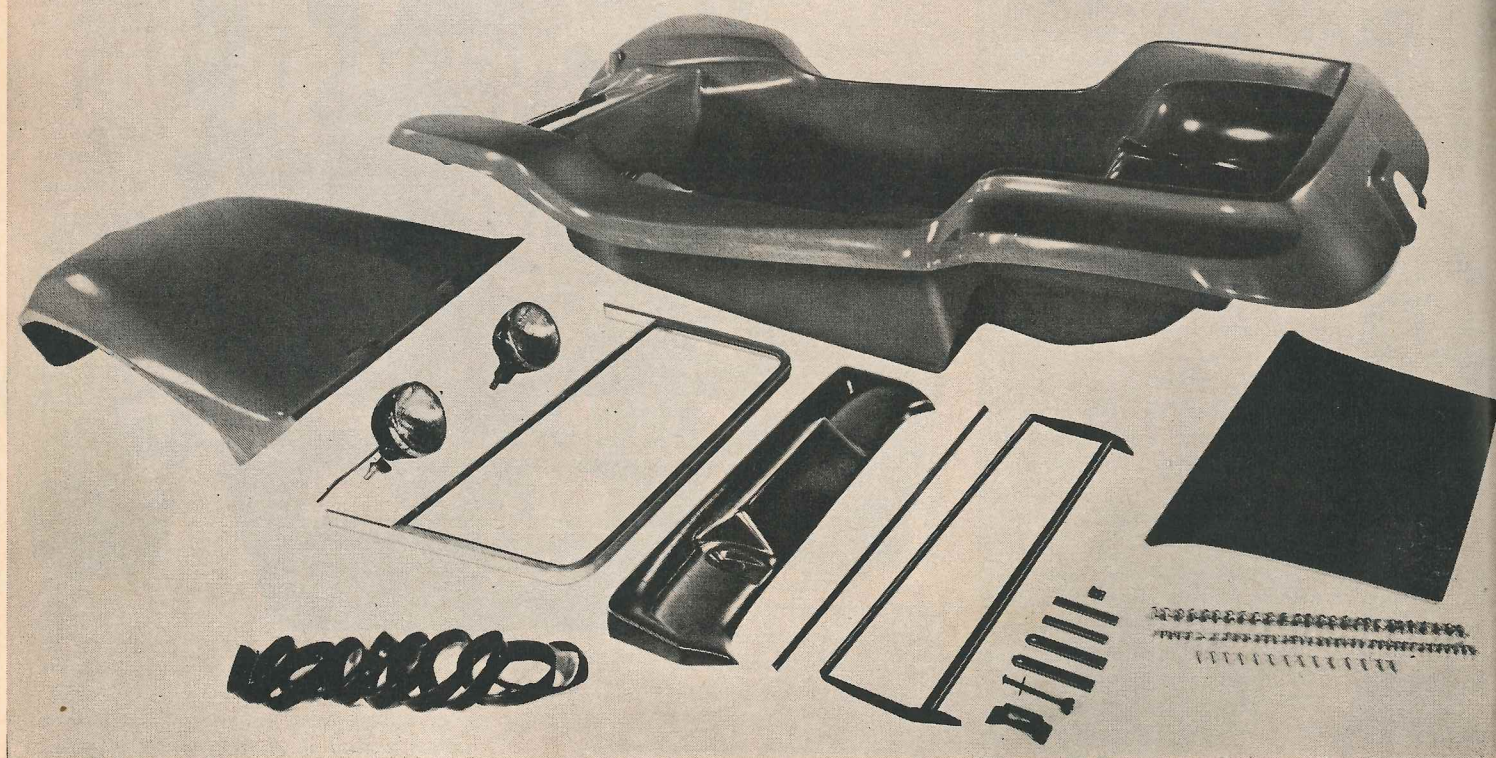


ABOVE—Touring can be fun with the Meyer Manx “go anywhere” machine. The chassis is VW, with either Corvair, VW or Porsche engine.

ABOVE LEFT — Being super light, the Manx can compete favorably with both dune buggies and Jeeps. The car is ultra smooth and maneuverable.

LEFT — The basic ingredients for this machine come from a wrecked VW. Wheelbase is shortened to 80 inches by chopping 14½ inches out of belly pan, then adding engine of your choice.

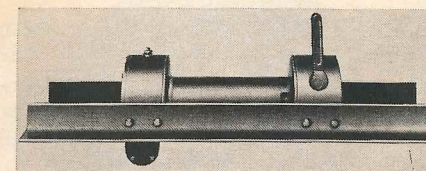
BELOW — The Manx B kit provides the body basics. Salvage seats and other necessities from the VW.



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somewhat more protection and considerably more class at a slight sacrifice in last-ditch maneuverability.

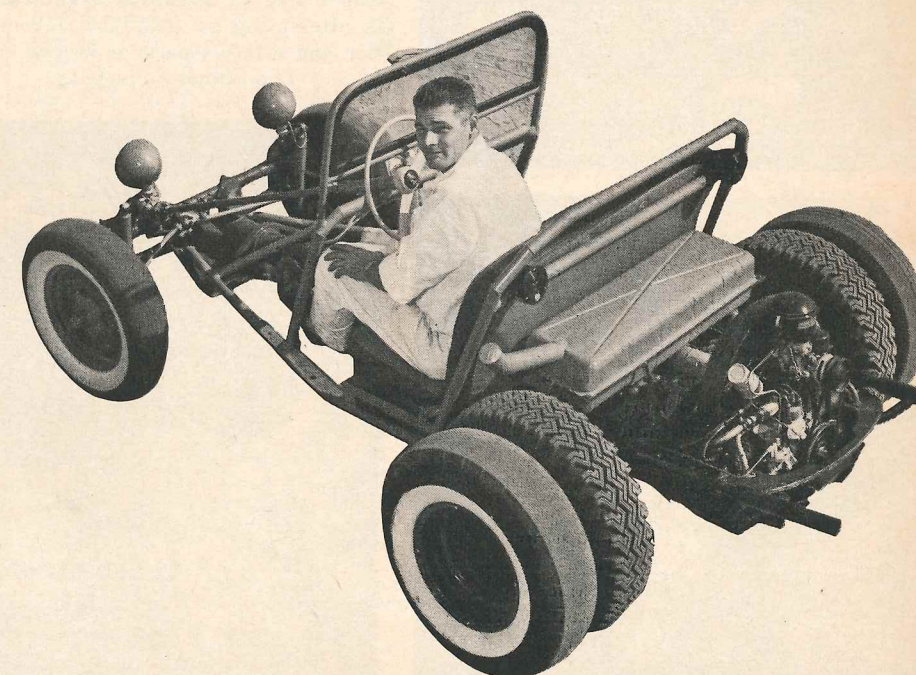
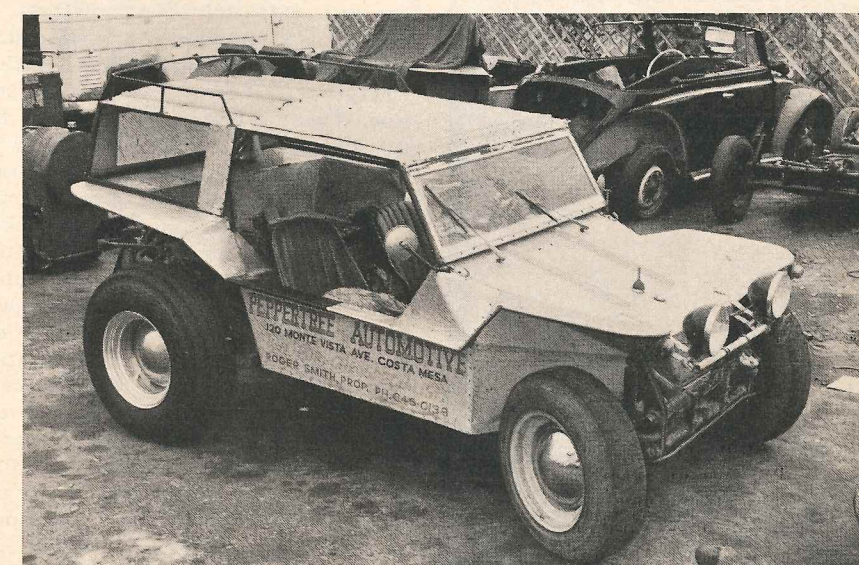
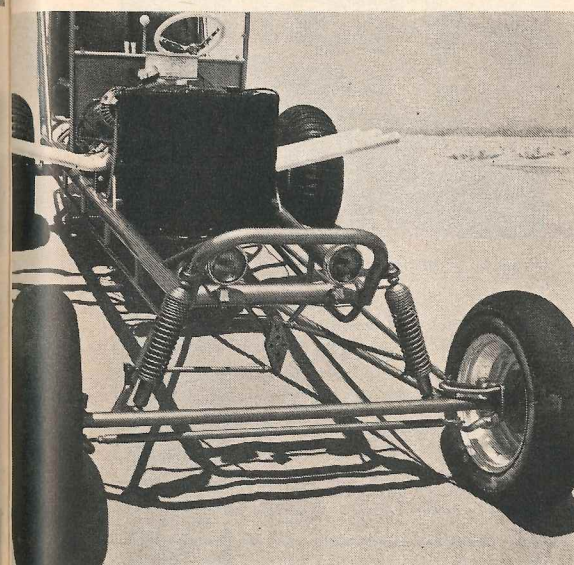
Four-wheel-drive is not mandatory, obviously, depending more on the dictates of financial investment and the type of activity preferred. Horsepower and traction per pound have most to do with it in sandy going, as evidenced by the ability of the two-wheel-drive dune buggies with their helicopter tires, but in the tall rocks, where speeds grind to a crawl, traction at all four wheels starts to pay off. The FWD jobs offer big rewards in payload, too, hauling more passengers and often even a trailer



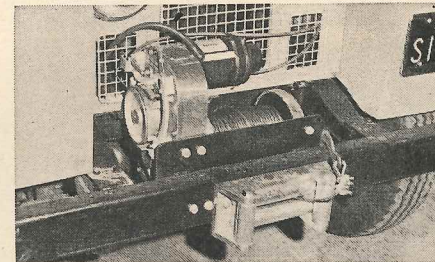
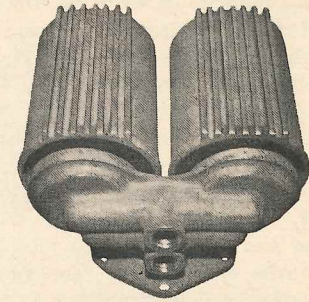
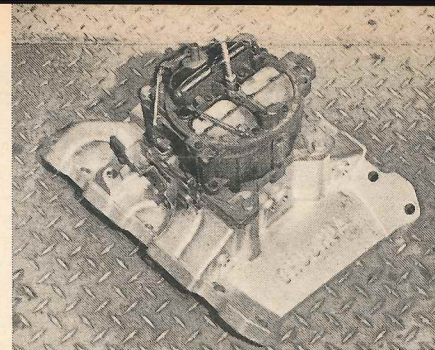
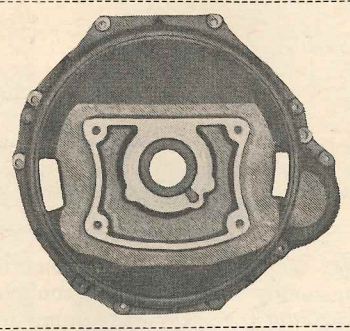
over the worst imaginable terrain. For the family man, then, who contemplates overnight or extended campouts and deep probes into the wilderness, the Jeep-type is the way to go.

With the nearest garage many rough miles behind, special emphasis must be given to spare parts and emergency (Continued on following page)

LEFT — Bumper-mounted Ramsey winch uses power take-off from engine. BELOW LEFT — Good engineering is evident in use of watts linkage in this super neat dune buggy front end set up. BELOW — Utility vehicle built for shop use by Roger Smith — VW versatility. BOTTOM LEFT — For simplicity you can't beat Desre Sholl's buggy, built on 3-inch chrome moly tubes utilizing front and rear sections from '58 Renault Dauphine. Note rollbar and safety flag. BOTTOM RIGHT — Bill Chisholm of North Hollywood has made plans available for those wishing to build this dune bug, another VW-based machine.



FUNNY CARS



ABOVE - VW centers are adapted to various rim widths to provide front and rear wheels for the Manx and dune buggies. Stock rim on right, 7-in. Chrysler center, and special 12-in. rim. ABOVE RIGHT - Trans-Dapt of Compton, Calif., makes a complete line of plate and bell housing adapters for Buick, Cad, Chevy, Chrysler, Ford, Olds, and Pontiac engines to Jeep and Scout 3-speed transmissions '46 to '66.

BOTTOM - Con-Ferr of Burbank, Cal., has adaptor plates for Chevy and Ford to Toyota, Jeep and Scout trans. BELOW - Four-Wheel-Drive Center of Fullerton provides adaptor for over-drive or transfer case to the Borg-Warner T-10-D four-speed transmission.

equipment. Tires, tubes, front spider gears, U-joints, axles, oil, and water are high on the priority list of spares, plus a power winch in case the rig is inadvertently buried or lost over the side. Accessories include a crash-worthy roll-bar and seat belts. Most important, of course, is an intelligently stocked first aid kit, complete with a dime for that emergency call from a remote pay station. There is safety in numbers, for the diversity of spare parts carried by a large group is usually enough to practically rebuild a whole car on the run.

Loners are rare in the wilderness. Smart backwoodsmen travel in groups, or in pairs at least, in case of trouble. This single fact has bearing on the popularity of off-road clubs. Not only is the trip much more fun, but exploration can be more penetrating when there is a backup man, or a whole club, to extract the adventurer whose curiosity gets the better of his judgment. Hundreds of clubs of all categories and sizes dot the country, the more progressive being affiliated with the National Four Wheel Drive Association which, like all spawning organizations, is attempting to standardize competition and safety aspects as well as create

(Continued on page 40)

TOP - F.W.D. Center in Fullerton also has the only 4-barrel carb adaptor we could find for the popular GM-V6 engine. CENTER - It's hard to beat the Trans-Dapt dual-cartridge oil filter if you're going to run in dirt. Unit uses standard filter cartridges. Finned covers optional. BOTTOM - The electrically-powered Belleview winch is available in either 6 or 12 volts with a manual drum brake.

We suggest that Bill Powell might do well to wear a helmet next time. This is typical of action that was seen at the 5th Annual Jeep-O-Rama held near Lakewood, Colorado, the end of July.



HOT ROD MAGAZINE

IF YOU THINK WE GOT A FUNNY NAME, SEND FOR OUR CATALOG . . . IT'LL REALLY TURN YOU ON!

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WE ARE THE WORLD'S LARGEST
AUTO PARTS WAREHOUSE?

IF YOU FIND THAT HARD TO
BELIEVE, WOULD YOU BELIEVE
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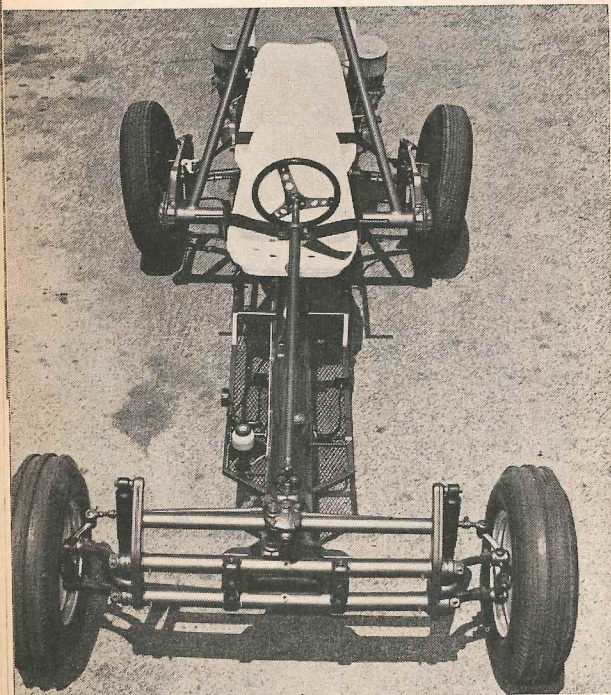
TERRA FIRMA FUNNY CARS

better communications and stronger direction of efforts. Interested clubs or individuals can join the back to nature movement by getting in touch with John Cook, president of NFWDA, at P.O. Box 527, Indio, California.

Sanctioned activities are many and varied, ranging from the biggest competitive turnout at the new semi-annual Jeep Grand Prix near Riverside, California, to the giant Yuma Sand Dunes get-together, an all-fun New Year's Day affair in which upwards of 1500 off-road enthusiasts gather for impromptu gymkhana events, camping, tours, or just spectating. But most of the clubs are going a mile a minute between the big events, filling in with rock collecting sorties or organized tours of old pioneer routes and ghost towns. One such group of motorized nomads, the Chuckwallas, likes to live a little closer to the brink than most, crowding their luck by serv-

ing as follow-up crew for the Pasadena Motorcycle Club's annual 500-mile Greenhorn Endurance Run. The FWD boys, their trailers stocked with "cool aid," boast that, with the exception of slot-like narrow confines, there's no place the two-wheelers can leave them behind, and at least a couple of the bolder handlers generally make their claim stand.

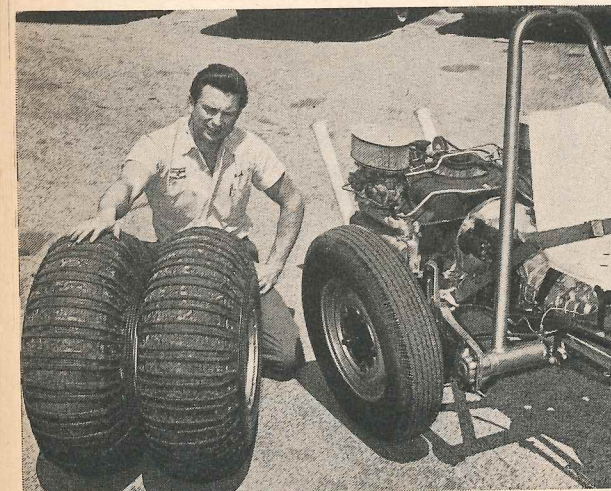
And so the picture takes shape; what appears to be a narrow band of the automotive spectrum at first contact spreads and grows in depth as we look closer. From the level of the weekend warrior bent on a few kicks charging the hills one afternoon to the family group on a week-long caravan, Jeeping, boondocking, sand-duning, whatever you may call it, this bounding, jolting, teeth-chattering thing is spreading like a prairie fire—paradoxically the whole crazy scene makes sense. ■ ■



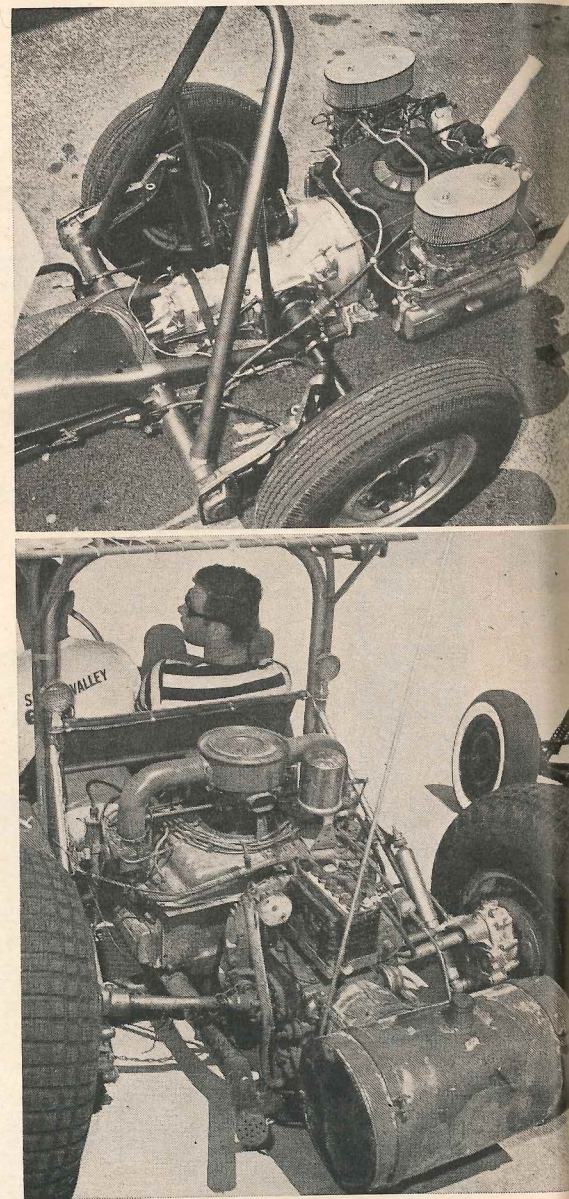
How is this for super sano? VW chassis was cut to basic mono-post. Fuel tank is in frame. A third bar was added to shock horns to locate center-mounted steering.

A '65-140 Corvair is used for power. The second seat is removable for competition. Entire car weighs about 750 pounds. Note well braced roll-bar, park brake split for wheel control.

Ingenious lash-up shows front-mounted Corvair. Rotation's wrong but is corrected at wheels by the VW van gear-reducing hubs. Entire Corvair drive train is retained to half shafts.



Dick Simms, owner and builder, looks over his dual wheel helicopter tires for use in the dunes. Tread was cut away to get cleat effect. Many high floatation tires are made by big companies.



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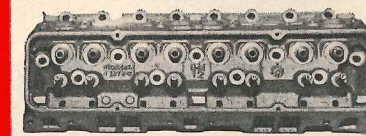
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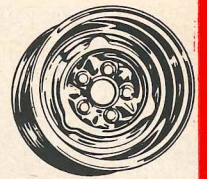
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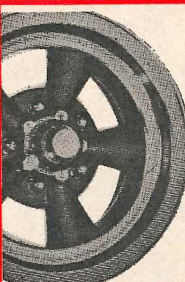
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