



THE DISPATCHER

WEST COAST WILLYS QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Hand-Built CJ-2A

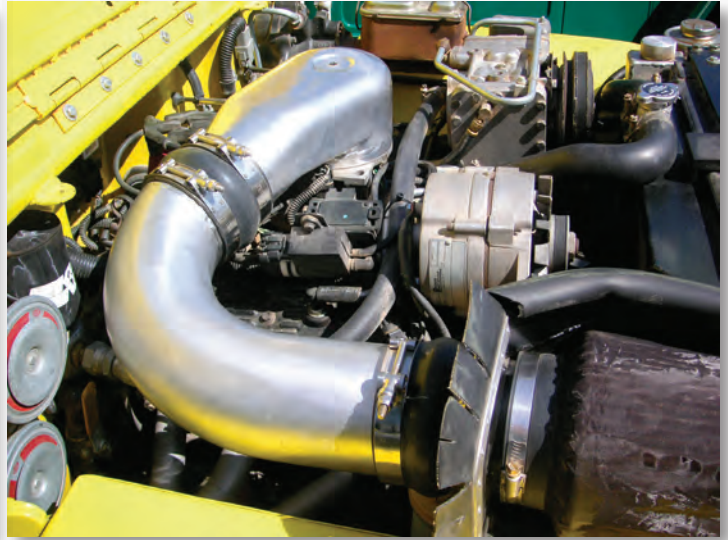
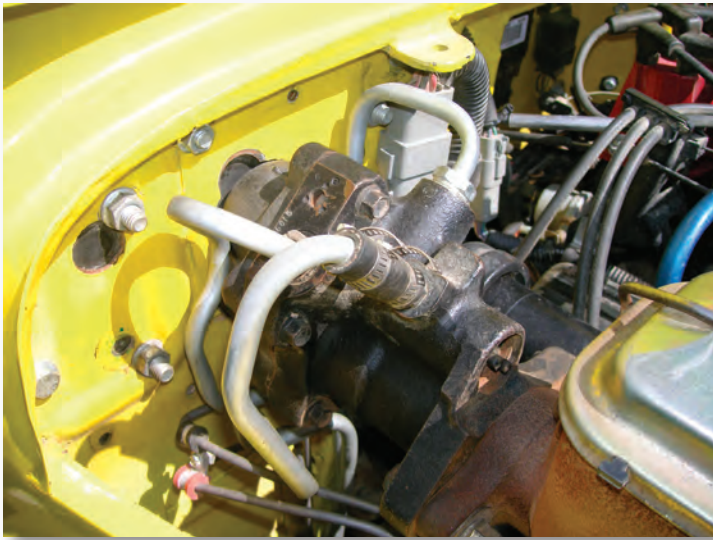
George Wright, WCW #1523, San Bernardino, CA, has a lot of history and thousands of hours in his 1947 CJ2A. His dad bought the stock Jeep in 1957 and in 1966 decided to install a Ford Falcon six in it. The engine replacement was done using adapters George made for his dad while he was serving in the Navy. Unfortunately, soon after the engine replacement, the Jeep was disassembled again so the new engine could be rebuilt. After George's father passed away the disassembled Jeep sat in the garage until the '70s, then moved to George's house where it sat until 1999.

George began working for O&R 4 Wheel Drive and saw the products they were turning out. He bought a 3A frame because it was stronger and started rebuilding the 2A from scratch. The Ford six was used for a while; then, as his four-wheeling got more serious, he decided that it was time to make some modifications. He went to a Buick V6 using a 4.1 crank and then to a 4.3 Chevy V6 motor. The 4.3 motor has a roller cam and was built by Orange Engine, the same shop that rebuilt his father's six. The transmission had been switched to a Turbo 350C when the Buick motor was used. George told us this transmission is unique for several reasons. It was used in the late '70s and early '80s in trucks and some pas-



senger cars; it has a bolt pattern for both Chevy and Buick; and it also has a lock-up torque converter.

It is a good thing that George owns a machine shop because every part that has been added to the 2A is handmade. 44s were installed front and rear with 4:10 gears. In the front he used a narrowed Scout II, and in the rear a ¾-ton Ford truck front end. George made his own full floater conversion and enough additional modifications to fill pages of tech talk. The Jeep is a marvel to look at because everywhere you look there is a clever machined component. The wiper assembly is just one of these interesting builds. George constructed a unique wiper that "actually works well" using a later CJ motor that was re-indexed and a cover (circa 1968 and later) mounted on the inside of the window frame to hide the motor. George's unit has a nice box covering the width of the unit. He told us his design became so popular that he made ten of them through the years for friends.



The Jeep also has the onboard welding unit with control box mounted under the dash on the floorboards and a hydraulic power brake booster from a diesel truck driven by pressure from the power steering pump (the power steering pump was also modified by George). On the front the Jeep has the original Warn rapid recovery winch that is now becoming popular again, and the body and paint work is superb. George said his friend Dan spent months doing all the metal work on the body by hand so there was less than

a cup of bondo. Dave has taken his Jeep on countless trips and does a desert run every year to the Panamint Valley. He says he likes the Dusy Ershim trail a lot because it changes so much each year, as well as the Coyote Lake trail. Both are very challenging and in a most beautiful surrounding.

We caught up with George at Tom's Farms and you can do the same at the Wrightwood Willys & Jeep Day on October 6 and check out his Jeep for yourself.

"History Remixed"

Chatsworth, California company, ICON, has taken on the CJ-3B, creating two reincarnated versions of the Willys classic. Founded by Jonathan Ward, originally a Land Cruiser-restoration specialist who was chosen to envision and build the initial prototypes for the FJ Cruiser, ICON is an automotive specialty house dedicated to building "a limited number of reincarnated classic utility vehicles assembled and finished

by hand" that offer "unparalleled refinement [and feature] a level of custom detail impossible to find in the world of mass production."

Customers can choose from one of ICON's three current vehicle lines, based on the CJ, Bronco, or FJ, or commission ICON to build a vehicle around the body style of their choice. Each vehicle is tailored to the individual customer's specifications based on how it will be used.

ICON also does "Concours quality restorations that hide modern chassis engineering," which they call "Reformers." You can see a beautifully "reformed" yellow Jeepster on their web site.

For more information about ICON, visit their web site at <http://www.icon4x4.com/>

WCW TOUR OF ICON

West Coast Willys has arranged a private tour of the ICON design and assembly facility for March 9, 2013. If you would like to attend, contact WCW at 503-332-8572. This event is open to WCW members only.

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Tech Feature: The Civilian Jeep Hardtop

by Walt Mikolajcik, WCW #1, Fairfield, CA

Soon after the first civilian Jeeps started rolling off the assembly line, Willys Overland and Jeep owners everywhere grappled with the problem of how to enclose these Jeeps in order to keep out the elements.

EARLY TOPS

The early heavy canvas tops had limitations in poor weather and with longevity (not so different from today) so soon the idea of a hard enclosure emerged. In the early years of the 2A you could actually buy a hardtop made by Willys Overland. These half-cab tops are very unique in appearance because a larger front window casing was used and the cab was boxed out past the body of the Jeep with a large panel of fixed metal used below an optional ventilated windshield. The doors were also extended out past the body. These cabs are similar to the DJ postal configuration and actually provide a lot more knee room and interior space.



1949 2A with Willys Overland hardtop owned by Steve Bovee, WCW #614. The back of the cab is open into the bed area. The Jeep originally came with a canvas-covered soft-top frame over the rear section.

AFTERMARKET ENCLOSURES

As the 1950s approached many companies began manufacturing enclosures. Willys chose to stop making hardtops and recommended that customers wanting hardtops order “approved” aftermarket tops. The Koenig Iron Works Company, Houston, Texas, was one of the many companies that made aftermarket products for Willys and Jeep. They made all-steel cabs (hardtops), all-steel body extensions for the CJ, utility cabinets, all-steel grain boxes and other Jeep-specific products, including an aluminum-cased PTO winch sold under the name King Power Winches. We will have a future technical article about the Koenig winch speci-

cally, but one fascinating fact should be mentioned—it had no shear pin to break in case it was overloaded. The winch relied on using $\frac{5}{16}$ " cable, and when you got to 8,000 lbs. the cable was supposed to break to save your winch...now there is an interesting idea!

The Koenig standard cab has sculpted door bottoms and small doors, small side windows and a single rear glass. The Super Cab has a large rectangle door that goes way down on the outside of the body, large side windows and a thin window on each side of the rear lift gate. The Koenig hardtop was considered to be one of the best made enclosures of the time, and they have proved their durability as you can still find them firmly attached to many an old Jeep.

Mike Ahern, WCW #5, purchased a stock 1946 CJ-2A several months ago and decided that he wanted to equip it with some vintage aftermarket accessories that would have been found at the local Willys dealership. Being familiar with the Koenig PTO winch from a past Jeep, Mike decided Koenig was the company for him. He first found a Koenig PTO winch, and then the hunt was on for a Koenig hardtop. We recently accompanied Mike on a long trip to pick up a very nice original Koenig standard 2A hardtop. The only problem with the top was that there was a Jeep attached to it, and he couldn't purchase one without the other! After removing the hardtop the Jeep went on eBay and is now on its way to Australia. The Koenig sales literature photos at the end of this article are also courtesy of Mike, as he was able to locate original sales brochures, including a book full of brochures, with one of his winch purchases.

Mike Ahern's Jeep purchase with Koenig top



You could also buy hardtops through Sears, both in steel and aluminum.

The Sears tops came disassembled with instructions and the owner could have the Sears dealer install it or save money and install it himself. The Sears tops have a drip rail above the door, and the aluminum version has a curved roof. There are lots of Sears tops still out there, owing to the fact that Sears had such a large advertising network. Kaiser-Willys had a close relationship with Sears, selling the Sears All-State automobile with Kaiser running gear, and the '50s

(continued on page 8)

Jim Russell, WCW #677, coordinated another successful WCW gathering at the Pacific Coast Dream Machines show in Half Moon Bay on April 28th. Members enjoyed looking at interesting cars, airplanes, antique motors and of course Willys and Jeeps. A big thanks to Jim for bringing all the barbecue essentials and to James Brink for bringing his camp stove and great side dishes.

Our group this year consisted of 12 vehicles and 23 people. You can never predict how many vehicles of each Willys body style will show up to an event. This year seven Jeepsters took the prize for best represented body style. The three Wagons and two Pickups also represented their body style well!

Tom & Carmen Gunther, WCW #1326, came in their 1949 Jeepster, which they also used in their wedding last year on 11-11-11 to get to and from the wedding ceremony and reception. They also brought a custom 1948 Willys Pickup tailgate that was signed by all of their wedding guests to show the group. Carmen married into a real Willys family as Tom already had four “children”—the '49 Jeepster, a 1948 Pickup, 1959 Wagon, and a Grand Wagoneer.

Philip Monego brought a friend to the show with a 1956 Porsche Speedster that was converted to an electric car (what a great car!). Philip told us he is going to build an electric '48-'50 Jeepster and already has a couple of parts cars to get the project started. He and his friend took classes through



Sonoma State College on building electric vehicles. We hope to keep you updated on Philip's progress in future issues!

To see more great photos of this event, visit the WCW online community site, where we've posted a link to **Dan Bowermaster's (WCW #1499)** photo gallery: <http://west-coastwillys.ning.com/profiles/blogs/2012-event-photos>



2012 Willys America Open House

by Dan Bowermaster, WCW #1499, San Francisco, CA

Thanks to **Jim Russell, WCW #677**, for organizing the caravan up to **Paul Barry's (WCW #2)** annual open house and barbecue at Willys America in Cazadero, California on July 7th. Cazadero is about 80 miles northwest of San Francisco near the Russian River and is beautiful country. I'm already looking forward to next year.

The first of three caravan groups started off in the South Bay and drove up the San Francisco peninsula to meet the next group at the north end of the Golden Gate Bridge, notorious in the summer for its thick fog. Saturday proved no exception. Here's the arrival of the group from the South Bay. If you squint you can see the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz, and San Francisco in the background (just kidding). As a bonus at this stop, a Cobra club from Washington state drove south across the Golden Gate Bridge. The sound of two dozen V8s was heavenly. After adding vehicles at the vista point, our caravan continued north for the next rendezvous in Petaluma, joined by Willys drivers from the North Bay and Sacramento Valley. The temperature jumped 25 degrees, and we set off on the freeway (briefly) before turning off on back roads for Cazadero.

Highway 116 to Cazadero winds through the wine country of Sonoma County. The route becomes increasingly rural and wooded. Rolling hills and vineyards turn into coniferous forests. Eventually you enter groves of smaller redwood trees, the likes of which once covered the entire coast of northern California. In the town of Guerneville, a popular summer resort town on the banks of the Russian River, Highway 116 takes a sharp turn to the west and heads out toward the coast. A few hamlets later, we all pulled over at a rare straight stretch for the shot of the entire caravan.

Rolling into Cazadero, your eyes feast on a variety of Willys and related vehicles. Willys park on the main drag and there is plenty of additional parking down off the strip for the rest of us. It's pretty cool to see all of the different Trucks, Jeepsters, and Wagons.

Willys America seemed to be busy. Inventory, especially of more-or-less complete vehicles, appears to have grown



compared to previous years. Paul's personal collection is impressive. He and his team also do impressive work and were in progress restoring three wagons, a CJ-2A and a CJ-3A at the time of the open house. This year there was even a band, whose music added to the festival-like atmosphere.

For more photos of Willys America, including images of the shop and in-progress restorations, visit the WCW online community site, where we've posted a link to **Dan Bowermaster's (WCW #1499)** photo gallery: <http://west-coastwillys.ning.com/profiles/blogs/2012-event-photos>



Cinco de Mayo at Tom's Farms

The fun of the WCW events is in meeting up with long-time and new members and finding out what vehicles people own and what they've been working on. This year was the 9th annual Tom's Farms event in Corona, CA, hosted by **Art & Teresa Holling, WCW #259**. There was a lot of activity at this year's event, which is always a great time and well attended.

Some highlights included meeting **Bob and Bridget Tomson, WCW #1257**, from Scottsdale, Arizona, who were first-time participants and had included the event as part of a larger Southern California trip they were doing. While not in one of their vehicles at Tom's, they own a host of FCs and even an Aero. **Teri & Keith Munday, WCW #1455**, and **Larry Boyes, WCW #958**,

were there and taking t-shirt orders and passing out flyers for the upcoming Wrightwood Willys & Jeep Day on October 6th. **Casey Dimmitt, WCW #1403**, also brought very cool t-shirts from the 3rd Annual Moab event that took place on May 20th. **Doug Lee, WCW #632**, trailered his 1950 Willys Jeepster to the event and left with the Jeepster and a fantastic 1956 Pickup that he bought from **Bob Gall, WCW #1191**. Doug has wanted a Pickup for five years and finally found the right one when he saw Bill's ad in the WCW classifieds. **Bill Peet, WCW #266**, was also

there with his 1961 4x4 Wagon that, in 1962, he drove on a 13,000-mile trip from the U.S. through Mexico, Central America, and most of South America (the full story appeared in the December 2006 issue of The Dispatcher). The Wagon still looks none the worse for wear but Bill has been redoing some of the worn components.



Even getting to an event can be fun (though not more fun than a 13,000 mile trip in a Willys). Walt Mikolajcik made the 800-mile round trip from Fairfield, CA, to Corona in a rented 2011 Jeep Liberty Limited, a car that surprised him with 24 miles to the gallon, an all-leather interior, 4WD, and was a lot of fun to drive.



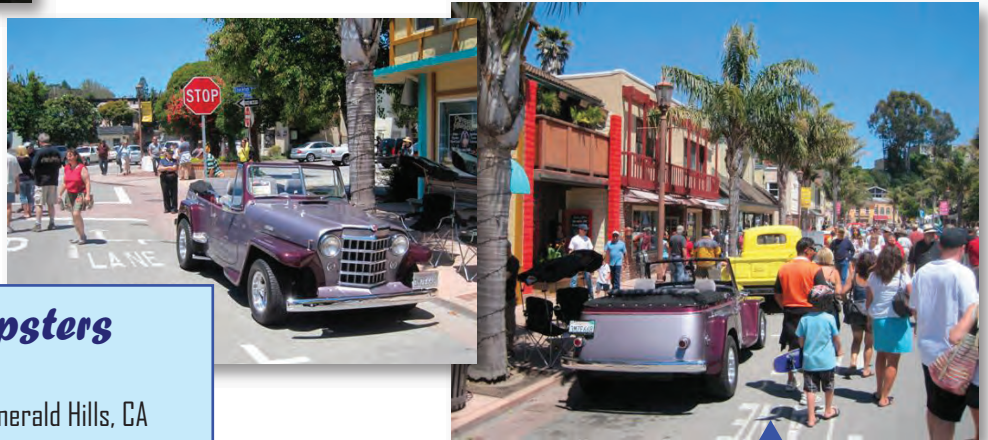


Brazilian Willys Wagon

by Signe Johnson, WCW #1288, Philipsburg, Montana

Last year I traveled to Belo Horizonte in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil to visit my brother and his family there. They drove me around for two weeks to see all the sights in the area. People drive REALLY fast there. In fact, I wouldn't be able to drive. It's pretty scary. I think you have to grow up there to understand the driving style and be able to drive in it.

As we drove here and there, I would glimpse a Willys Wagon as we flew past a side street or a road, but I never really got to stop and check any of them out. I thought something about them looked different, though. My brother said that they were built in Brazil for many years. A few days before I flew home, we were way out in the country looking around, and we stopped for some Brazilian barbecue. I spotted the back of a blue-and-white Wagon parked a short distance away so I went over to get a closer look. I walked around to the front and couldn't believe what I saw. How many WCW members would trade their American hood, grill, and fenders for the look of this Brazilian Rural?



Are Three Jeepsters Enough?

by Philip Monego, WCW #1395, Emerald Hills, CA

Here's an updated picture of my current 1950 Jeepster corral. The first on the left is the F-161 that I restored two years ago; the middle one is a new acquisition, currently powered by a 305 CI GM small block V8; and the right one is a roller candidate for my electric Jeepster conversion project that I'm starting in July.



Capitola Car Show

by Kirk & Bonnie Snodgrass, WCW #70, Burlingame, CA

Bonnie and I attended a fun car show last weekend. Most of the cars met in Santa Cruz then caravanned down to Capitola, parked and enjoyed the day in downtown Capitola. There were approximately 300 cars—a great show; lots of fun and plenty of shops to check out.

tops were sold with the All-State name. The steel tops were most likely made by Koenig. The Koenig Company also built the ribbed roof sliding door and fixed door hardtops on the later CJs that were delivered from the factory with no Koenig tags on them.



Sears half-cab top owned by Sam Jonson, Prairie Village, Kansas. Photo taken at the 1996 Midwest Willys Jeep Reunion in Jefferson City, MO.

Koenig and Sears are not the only companies that made tops for Jeeps. There were lots of independent makers. The Kelly Manufacturing Co. of Charleston, West Virginia, also manufactured tops from 1951 to well into the CJ-7 era. Kelly purchased the D.L Beck Manufacturing Company in Middlepoint, Ohio, which already built tops for the early Jeeps. We have the '70s-era Kelly brochure from the parts department of the former Biava Jeep in Napa showing CJ and Jeepster Commando tops. There were no economy versions of the Kelly tops, but they were well built and had lots of glass. Beck/Kelly did offer an Econo-Cab that was also manufactured under the Kemco name.

The Meyer quality hardtops, called Meyer Jeep Cabs, were available for the 2A and 3B but were mostly marketed for later CJ-5, 6, and 7 models as the Jeep body style evolved and include an easily identifiable, distinctive rib design on the door.

The Meyer hardtop roll-up window design owes a lot to another Willys-Overland "approved" top company, the Carson Machine & Supply Company out of Oklahoma City. The Carson CarCraft Jeep Body half tops were built with aircraft aluminum, and for the early 2 and 3As the window cranked up at a slant in the door making a larger glass opening possible (this same design was used for the Meyer tops). The Carson top was one of the first to offer a flip-up "Postal" door option.

The Jeep Postal DJ-5 enclosures of the '60s owe a lot to the Koenig and Meyer companies. The DJ series hardtops first appeared with the DJ-3A in factory advertisements with hardtop versions for commercial use. The postal versions

were available from 1955–1984 with the recognizable CJ-type body designs.



1969 AMC DJ-5 Postal owned by Scott de Ridder, WCW#777.

Worman's Jee-Cabs and Jeep Sedan Body (hardtops) were other aluminum hardtop options (they also made steel tops). Worman's Packard/Willys dealership was in Toledo, Ohio, and you could order your Jeep top from this dealership. Worman's advertisement stating that the tops were "tested in the Willys plant" made them appear to be factory approved. Many of these tops have a characteristic overhang above the front window, and the sedan model came with a plastic roof. The Worman tops were pictured in Willys advertisements as early as 1949 but were not specifically mentioned by name. The Worman company also built Military Jeep enclosures.

There were many other top companies like Porter & Reed of Willinton, Kansas, and even one top built by a company in Oroville, CA, and there were many attempts by Jeep owners to build their own versions. The challenging part with any of these tops today is finding a good one that is still usable with all the parts and roll-up window components still in working order. Certainly the modern Jeep fiberglass tops have come a long way in comfort, weight, outside visibility, and durability, but they owe their beginnings to the pioneering homespun Jeep hardtop companies.

Richard Venola, WCW #312, looking at a GPW with early truck cab attached (actually not a bad job, and look at how they solved the tank-under-the-seat issue and got larger fuel capacity)!



BULLETIN 353

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Mike Ahern, WCW #5, provided the Koenig ad only. The Meyer ad and the Worman ad images are courtesy of The CJ-3B Page (<http://www.film.queensu.ca/cj3b>).



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