

NEWS FROM THE LAWRENCE JOURNAL-WORLD • 6NEWS LAWRENCE • WORLD ONLINE

LJWORLD.COM
LAWRENCE, KANSAS

Massachusetts
The News Center
645 New Hampshire St.

Current
73° Today: F
thin out the c
the humidity

Real Estate | Apartments | Jobs | Coupons | Restaurant Guide | Movies | Lawrence Guide | Classifieds | Subscribe

- « Home
-  **Check Winning Bids**
- Services
- Classifieds
- Subscribe Online
- Breaking news e-mail
- Wireless editions
- Archives/Back issues
- Submit news
- News
- Local News
- Crime/Fire/Courts
- Obituaries
- Election 2003
- State/Regional
- Business
- KU News
- Haskell News
- School News
- Kansas Legislature
- Today's Photos
- Health
- Births
- Living
- Society
- Nation/World
- Weather
- Corrections
- Sports
- Sports
- Jayhawks
- Haskell
- Free State
- Lawrence High
- Entertainment
- Arts & Entertainment
- Comics
- Movies
- Music Calendar
- Travel
- Web cams

 Discuss Story  Email Story  Printer Friendly  Email Editor

They love their Bugs - and their Volkswagen vans, too

VW enthusiasts have 'Blast' in Lawrence

By [Abby Mills](#), Journal-World staff writer
SUNDAY, MAY 25, 2003

Their reasons for love of the Bug are as varied as the Beetles that have smitten their hearts.

Hundreds of Volkswagen owners and enthusiasts were lured Saturday to Lawrence for the second day of the Mo-Kan Volkswagen Club's 2003 Bug Blitz/Bus Blast at the Douglas County 4-H Fairgrounds. The event drew nearly 130 different Volkswagens and easily three times as many stories explaining their unique drawing power.

Eric Larson, of Overland Park, owned a Beetle as a 20-something growing up in California. When he turned 40, he decided to buy a green 1967 Beetle.

"My midlife crisis was a Beetle, not a Porsche," Larson said. "It just feels like a little bit of home."

Others find their nirvana in the Volkswagen van, which they say symbolizes freedom, adventure and the open road.



Thad Allender/Journal-World Photos

John Seatvet and John Smithhisler, above, smoke cigars in the afternoon shade next to a 1973 "Westy" Volkswagen bus. From Dodge City, Seatvet and Smithhisler on Saturday attended the annual Bug Blitz/Bus Blast, which drew Volkswagen enthusiasts from around the country to the Douglas County

Among them are Lisa Boyd, Topeka, who has traveled across the country in her van, "Alberta."

"I used to fly everywhere; now I'd rather drive," Boyd said. "It's not where you go; it's the adventure of getting there."

For some, the Volkswagen is much more than simple transportation. The bond between owner and machine is a way of life.


"The bus becomes a part of your family," said Tom Henderson, Columbia, Mo. "We buy ours Christmas presents. His name is Truman."

advertisement

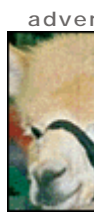
99 Years of Service to Douglas County

- Visit our Web site
- Directory of Professional Services

- Library of Books & Articles


WARREN-McELWAIN MORTUARY
Lawrence 843-1120
Eudora 542-3030

Search



- Lawrence Music
- Eating out
- Today's di
- Blogs
- Calendars
- Download
- Communi
- KUsports.
- Reader R
- Bus Route
- Movie List
- TV Listing
- Datebook
- Communit
- Newcome
- Lawrence
- Find a ne
- Public Sch
- Kansas Lc

Opinion[Columnists](#)[Letters to the Editor](#)[Take a stand](#)[Reader reaction](#)**Miscellaneous**[Order photo reprints](#)[Tour the News Center](#)

4-H Fairgrounds.

"I show pictures of my van, not my kids," Boyd said.

Owners also get together to bond with others who share the Volkswagen infatuation.

"This group is a neat group of people," said Becky Kersten, Lawrence. "There's a lot of families, seniors -- it makes it fun. VW people are just friendly."

Volkswagen owners in Kansas and Missouri formed the Mo-Kan club in 1985. Five members founded the group, which has grown to more than 150 families. They meet once a year for the Bug Blitz/Bus Blast, but they have monthly meetings, and the club also gathers for picnics, Volkswagen swap meets and to carpool to shows around the Midwest.



Randall Parker, from Wichita, adjusts a Volkswagen flag that decorates the front of his 1967 "Splitty Westy" bus. "Splitty" refers to the split-window design, and "Westy" is a nickname for the company that purchased hordes of VW buses and rebuilt them into a vehicle primed for camping.

Independence, Missouri, and the racetrack in Topeka. We love coming here."

Show participants started pitching camp at noon Friday, and they'll break at noon today. Saturday was the big event, with judging starting at 12:30 p.m. and an awards ceremony at 4 p.m. A raffle throughout the day raised more than \$1,000 for Women's Transitional Care Services.



Dana Stein, left, Andrea Hanson, center, and Carrie Stein play volleyball in a clearing in the Volkswagen bus encampment. The Steins, from Oklahoma City, and Hanson, from Fort Collins, Colo., attend the Bug Blitz/Bus Blast on Saturday.

Kersten and her husband, Mike, president of the club, organized this year's show and were responsible for bringing it to Lawrence. Since the first in 1989, the show has been in several cities in both states, mostly around the Kansas City metro area. Kersten said the facilities at the fairgrounds were just what the club required, with ample space for cars and an air-conditioned building. She said she hoped the show would be able to come to the fairgrounds for years to come.

Beverly Rice, Kansas City, Mo., was also happy with the venue.

"I don't think anyone is going to want to go anywhere else," she said. "We've tried

INTERNET ENHANCED

Volkswagen

[Front page](#)

News Center : JOURNAL-WORLD WORLD ONLINE **6 NEWS LAWRENCE**

Copyright © 2003 The Lawrence Journal-World. All rights reserved.

[Contact the Web staff](#)

[Please read our Privacy Policy.](#)

[Contacts](#) / [Advertise with us](#) / [About us](#) / [Feedback](#)