

## Stuffing Fad - Turkeys, Mini's and Volkswagens by Bob Kocher

On TV and radio a few weeks ago, the question that was being asked was, "Do you know the right way to stuff a turkey?" Happens every year before Thanksgiving. All the information about turkey stuffing brought back some fond memories about cooking for Thanksgiving. Over the years I have stuffed many, many turkeys!

Also in the news recently was a story of 28 British female gymnasts in London who were stuffed into a Mini Copper to set a new Guinness World record for the most people jammed into a BMW Mini.

Stuffing people into different things has been going on for many years. I remember when phone booths were the item to be stuffed into. Then it was trains, followed by VW bugs.

Well, I must admit I was guilty of car stuffing many years ago, but I did not know the rules at the time on how to officially set a World Record for stuffing people into a new 1964 VW van/station wagon. As far as I believe, however, it was a World Record! WOW!

It started in April 1964 when I was working as a parts manager at a VW dealer in Zanesville,



Ohio. One of the dealership's owners, Bob Hills, informed me that it was VW van/station wagon month. He was asking all employees for promotional ideas to help sell as many vans during the month

of April as possible. Well, the next thing that happened was the idea light bulb in my brain switched on, I next shared my idea to Mr. Hills, and to my surprise he said go for it.

The next day I phoned the Stag Club, located on the campus of Muskingum Collage in New Concord, Ohio. For over 100 years the Stag Club has played an important part at Muskingum College. Both John Glenn and his wife Annie attended Muskingum College in New Concord, Ohio, and John Glenn was a member of the Stag Club Fraternity.

I explained to whomever answered the phone when I called that I would like to come to the Stag Club House and stuff a bunch of Stag members into a new VW Bus for a dealership promotion. I informed them that I would be bringing a photographer from the local newspaper so we could run a story about the VW promotion and how many Stag members I could stuff into the new VW. Everyone agreed that this promotion would also be good publicity for the Stag Club

That New Volkswagen van was much like the ones that many followers of the Grateful Dead drove and painted in hippy and psychedelic colors along with peace signs and flowers. They used them to follow Jerry Garcia and his very large group of what they called "Dead Heads."

Before arriving at the Stag Club House, I obtained a set of good scales for weighting all the Stag members. And I had George Barlow come along, who was a salesman at the dealership and also a professional photographer who was a free-lancer of photos for the newspaper. George took many great photos as we stuffed that VW Van.

Before the stuffing started, we had everyone who was going to get into the van get on the scales first. We had a list of their

names and how much each of them weighted in at. And here are the numbers. **We fit 62 Stag Club members into the new 1964 Volkswagen Van, who all together weighted a total of 10,753 pounds.** Yes, I was there and witnessed it happen, but it was the Muskingum College Stag Club that made it happen!

The rest of the stuffing story is history and can be found in the records for April 1964. The Stag Club archives, the Zanesville Times Recorder of the same time period, and the June 1964 VW Dealer publication Weathervane all have the recorded details.

Of course the promo was a big success. The dealer, McHugh - Hills Volkswagen, won the sales recognition that month for their area, and the Stag Club members became part of a very large group who set a world record, even if it was unofficial. It was done with their great contortionist skills and love for fun.

Did I mention it took several tries before? We got all 62 Stag members in the VW Van! We had it loaded once and somebody on the bottom level had a panic attack and we had to unload and start over. The most that I remember about that day was it was a real blast. At times the people stuffing became a little scary as I keep thinking someone was going to get hurt.

I always wondered who ended up buying that new 1964 VW Van. You know after fitting those people in that van, it was a mess and had taken a good beaten. Although that van was still new, for sure it was well used! I remember the VW sunk down into the nice grassy front yard of the Stag Club House about ten inches.

Remember, buckle up, drive smart, and be safe.

