



FOREWORD

It's one thing to build a life. But it's another to experience it. My dad strapped himself to that philosophy and held on for the ride. ⚡ I've been told my dad has always been a creative guy and one who works relentlessly to "get it right." If he came across a problem, he'd tinker with it until he figured it out. Then he'd build it with exceptional craftsmanship. So when people started asking him to build vans to treat patients or go on cross-country vacations, he realized he could use his hands to craft people's dreams into a reality. ⚡ Working together at Waldoch Crafts, I see his dedication in motion every day. His creativity and craftsmanship fuels the business as a staple in the industry. But when the road gets bumpy and the wheels fall off, he never gets off the ride. He tinkers until he figures it out and keeps going. ⚡ This book isn't just about trucks and vans, though that would still be pretty cool. My dad's story takes you off roading on the twists and turns of building a business, a family, and a community of movers and shakers. I hope as you read through these pages, you get a glimpse of my dad's dedication to 50 years of customizing your dream and taking you there.

TOC

6

SECTION 1

Do a Good Job and People Will Always Come Back

12

SECTION 2

West Coast Dreaming and Batting Championships

18

SECTION 3

What to do When the Wheels Fall Off

24

SECTION 4

Shoveling Snow and Getting a Real Job

30

SECTION 5

I Was Just Too Proud to Quit

34

SECTION 6

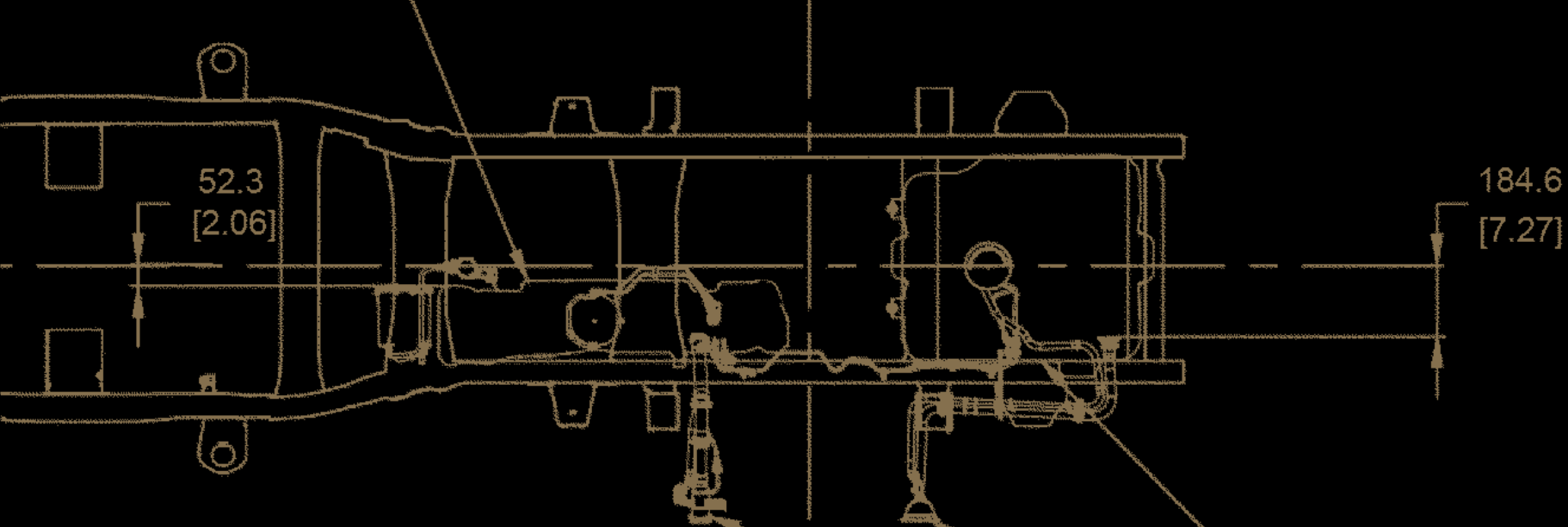
As Long as There are Automobiles, People Will Want to Customize Them

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SECTION 7

Custom Built for a Changing World





40.0 GALLON TANK

Fuel Fills

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L101
WHEELBASE



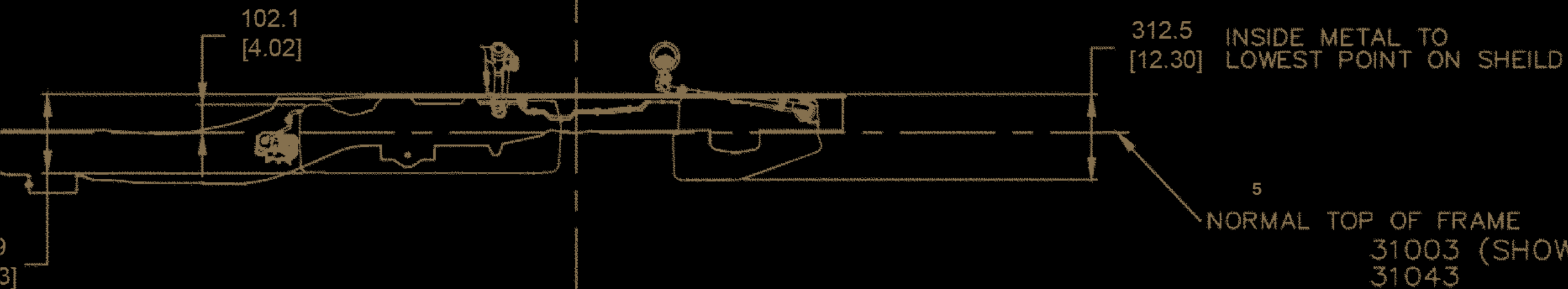
REAR AXLE

Waldoch

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF TAKING YOU THERE

50 YEARS

N2N-63.5 GALLON DUAL TANK
N2M-23.5 GALLON FRT TANK (OPT)
N2L-40.0 GALLON REAR TANK (OPT)





— Section 01

PEOPLE WILL ALWAYS COME BACK

BODY DRAWING

REFER TO 6'9" BOX DRAWING

With a passion for woodworking, and upon being accepted to a Minneapolis vocational school at the age of 18, Don continually honed his woodworking skills. He could often be found after class working in his parent's garage smoothing and shaping wood, turning raw lumber into a cabinet or table. While most of the projects were personal, Don's first "order" would soon come courtesy of an instructor at the school who was instrumental in teaching Don a critical business lesson.

People often would come to the school looking to have items made by the students. Having to only pay for the materials, it was a great value for them, and a great learning opportunity for the students. Having already proven himself as a good fabricator, Don was given an opportunity by Mr. Hans Garnes, an instructor at the school, to build cabinets for a gentleman named Bruce Johnson from Edina, MN. However, unlike most requests, this time Don would be paid for the work and thus would have to create the cabinets at home, after school.

With the opportunity, Mr. Garnes also offered Don something else ... advice that would turn out to be far more valuable than the \$300 he would make every two weeks when six cabinets were completed. According to Don, Hans was incredibly meticulous, and when he asked Don to take on the task of building the cabinets, he did so with the following words of wisdom - "If you do a good job, people will always come back."





"If you do a good job, people will always come back."



Those words rang true every time another set of cabinets were ordered. Soon Don was making more than double of what he was at the sod farm, and it was the first time he realized that creating something with his hands could become something more than just \$300.

The cabinets were good, and clearly Mr. Garnes had confidence in Waldoch's capabilities when he asked him to take on a more challenging project. A project for a doctor

who would be taking a van to South America to treat patients. The ask ... create custom cabinets for the van in just two short weeks.

Don built the cabinets. They fit perfectly. And it was at that moment, the impetus for a new industry was born in a small garage, by a young man, in rural Minnesota.



23.5 GALLON TANK

IN VAN, TRUCK CONVERSION

Waldoch Crafts keeps right on growing

Waldoch Crafts seems to be one of those amazing success stories right out of a best selling novel or hit movie.

Don Waldoch, 25, started out building cabinets for a living. Then, seeing the rise in popularity of vans and other customized vehicles, started the conversion business at 138821 Lake Dr., and now is in its fourth year of business.

"We're probably one of the biggest conversion facilities," Waldoch says about his business which works through dealers in the five state area besides individuals who come in.

Two years ago they moved into their present building with 6500 square feet of production area and have already experienced growing

pains. An addition has been built and they are remodeling the inside for more working space.

Waldoch says the craze for conversion vehicles is not a fad.

"It's a way of life," he said. "People have to have recreational vehicles."

Many people seek to personalize a truck or van to have it become an extension of themselves, Waldoch says. And it's not only ordinary people who come to Waldoch to have a vehicle personalized. Among others, they've converted vehicles for Vikings and Twins and boxer Scott LaDoux.

"We're always working on new creations," he said. The newest one is the Northlander

Cruiser. It's designed as an all purpose van with practical features so it can be used by sportsmen as well as for family outings. They can design conversions for campers, offices or just about anything a customers wants.

For the conversion, they start with a basic stripped van and add paneling, carpet, stereo and other things to add to the appearance and comfort.

One special feature devised at Waldoch's is the "pop top." This involves cutting out the top and raising the roof 22 inches. Realizing that this wouldn't go in most garages without having the top shaved off, they also have a version of the pop top that can be raised and lowered.

They fit a canvas insert between the van's walls and the roof that allows the roof to be raised 22 inches.

Windows of unusual shapes and sizes can be placed in Bronco conversions are

nice family all-terrain vehicles, he said, because they have four bucket seats.

Fourteen employees help put the Waldoch Crafts conversions together. "The guys who work here have self-pride," Waldoch says about the craftsmen who do the conversion work. He says this is what makes the work top quality and distinctive from others.

"They put their own touch in it."



CONVERSION of vans at Waldoch Crafts is done from the inside out with a lot of teamwork and a lot of extra special touches.



THE PLEASURE MACHINES. BY WALDOCH CRAFTS



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[7.2]



ICLE



WE PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

For your comfort, safety and enjoyment

With a tradition for custom planning, we provide the experience and knowledge necessary to convert your vehicle into a safe, secure and comfortable home on wheels. Our experienced craftsmen are available to assist you in every step of the conversion process.

We are only 5 years old and still growing. Our conversion complex is located on Lake Drive in Forest Lake, Minnesota. We have facilities to do custom upholstery, painting, designing, etc. We pride ourselves on a friendly, warm & personal way of doing business.

FOR THE GOOD LIFE ON WHEELS, LOOK TO WALDOCH CRAFTS FOR YOUR CONVERSION. SEE YOUR LOCAL FORD, DODGE, CHEVROLET & GMC DEALER FOR A TRUCK OR VAN.

"THE #1 CONVERSION PEOPLE" - Custom Vans, Trucks, Campers & Motor Homes

Waldoch Crafts, Incorporated

13821 Lake Drive PHONE 464-3215 Forest Lake, Minnesota



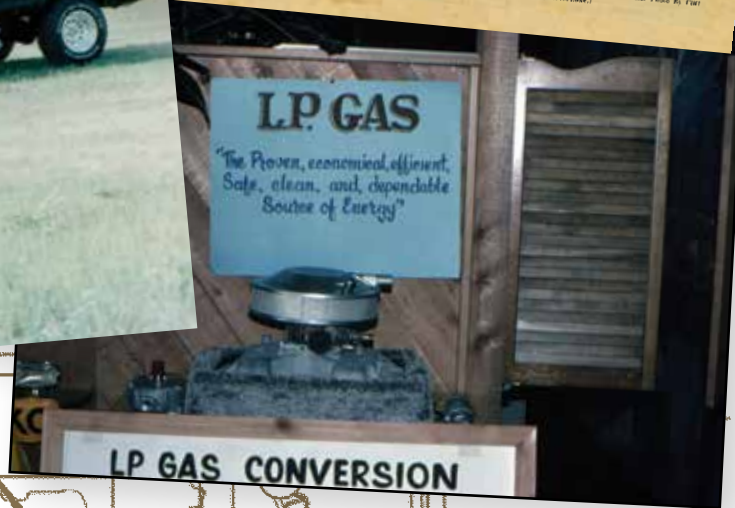
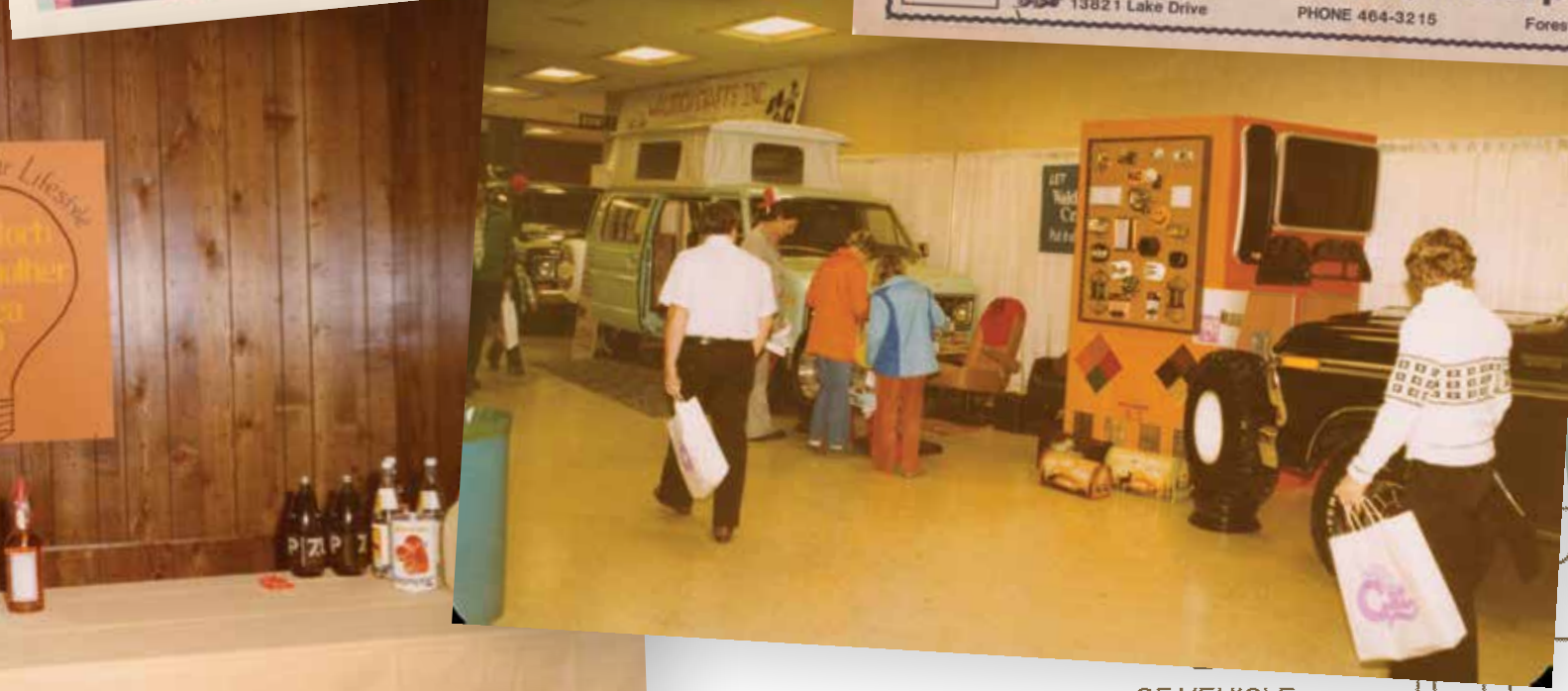
SAILING ON WITH PROGRESS

1978 PROGRESS EDITION

WALDOCH CRAFTS INC

THE CONVERSION PEOPLE

After you talk about conversion, you have to ask about Waldoch Crafts, Inc. (1978) Lake Forest, Minnesota. Waldoch Crafts, Inc. is a custom conversion company that has been in business for over 5 years. They have a reputation for being the best in the business. They have a large inventory of vehicles to choose from, and they have a team of experienced craftsmen who can help you with every step of the conversion process. They have a friendly, warm & personal way of doing business, and they have a commitment to quality. They have a large inventory of vehicles to choose from, and they have a team of experienced craftsmen who can help you with every step of the conversion process. They have a friendly, warm & personal way of doing business, and they have a commitment to quality.



OF VEHICLE

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— Section 02

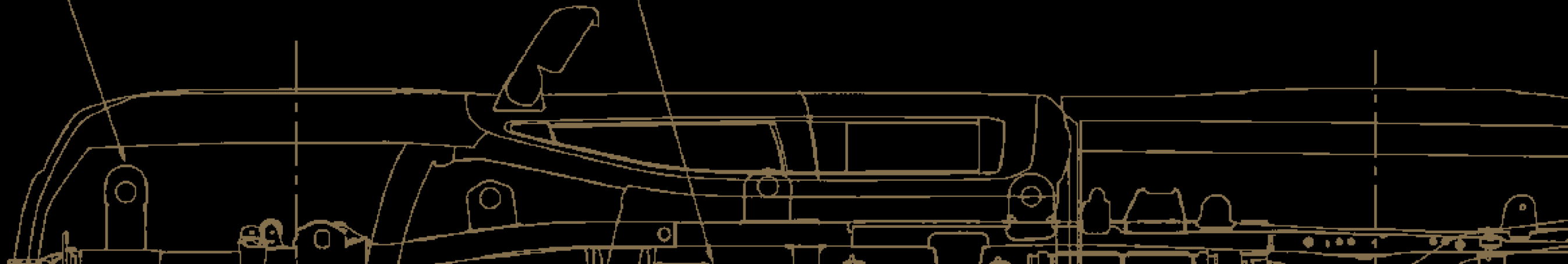
FRONT AXLE

FRONT AXLE

WEST COAST DREAMING & BATTING CHAMPIONSHIPS

REFER TO FRAME DRAWING

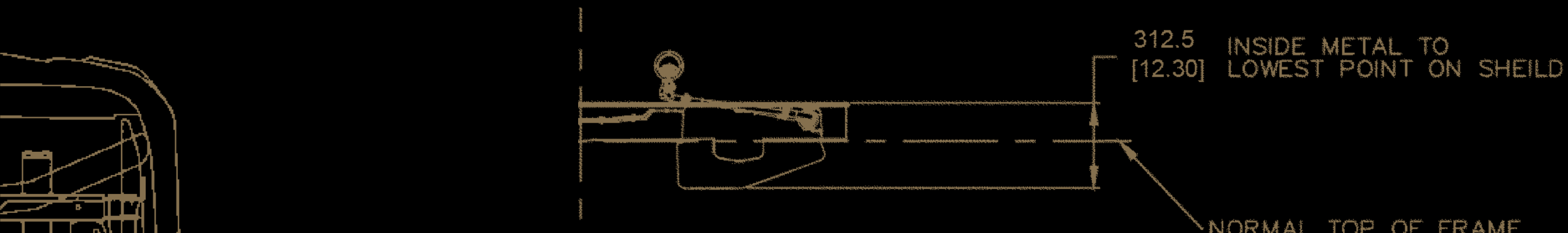
REFER TO EXHAUST DRAWING





NOTE : When installing Upfit Bodies refer to the 'Special Applications' 'Pickup Box Removal' Section, for the zoned Fuel Fill & DEF Fill

In the early 1970s, far from Minnesota, on the coast of California, a new van fad was growing in popularity. While the style didn't have a name, it caught the attention of a good friend of Don who had recently purchased a flat nose Ford van. Don and his friend Tony would pour over the auto magazines of the time and were influenced by the highly customized vans often featured inside. Inspired by this West Coast scene, they converted Tony's van into their own interpretation of a conversion van.



Proud of their creation, Don and Tony visited several area dealers, showing off the van in hopes of attracting more work, while also looking at other vans for ideas for future designs.

Don's hustle and creativity led to a working relationship with two area Dodge dealers. The newfound business also prompted Don to convince his father to "add-on" to the family garage - creating a dedicated workspace for his small, but growing conversion company.

While most of those early vans were built to spec for area dealers, one special request would dramatically change the trajectory of Don's business. A custom van for MLB Hall of Famer and batting champion Rod Carew, who at the time was playing for the Minnesota Twins.

"Rod and his wife would come out to my little shop and check on the progress of the van," Don recalled. "I just remember, they were nicest people. Rod had just signed a contract with the Twins for something like \$100,000, and I was like holy cow! I couldn't believe I was building a van for someone who was making that kind of money."

Carew was a sports hero in Minnesota, and upon completion of the van, a local newspaper did a story on Rod and his newly acquired "Waldoch conversion van". Word of mouth spread, and soon Don was receiving orders from "movers and shakers" throughout the metro area.

It was that van, those relationships, and

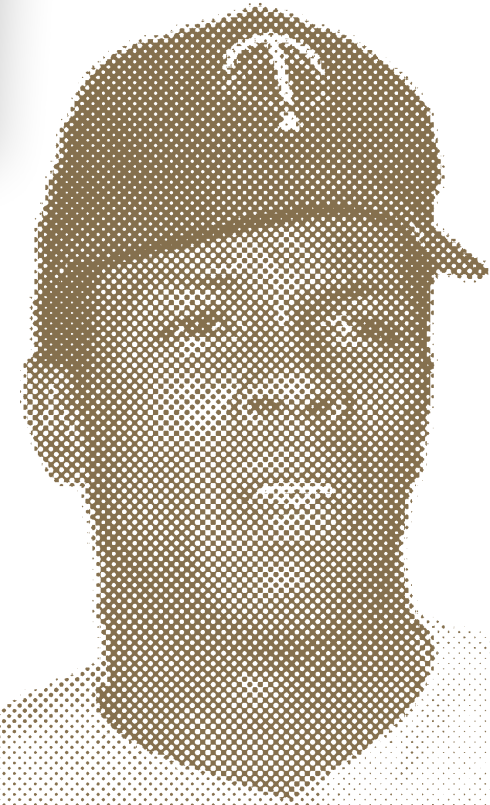




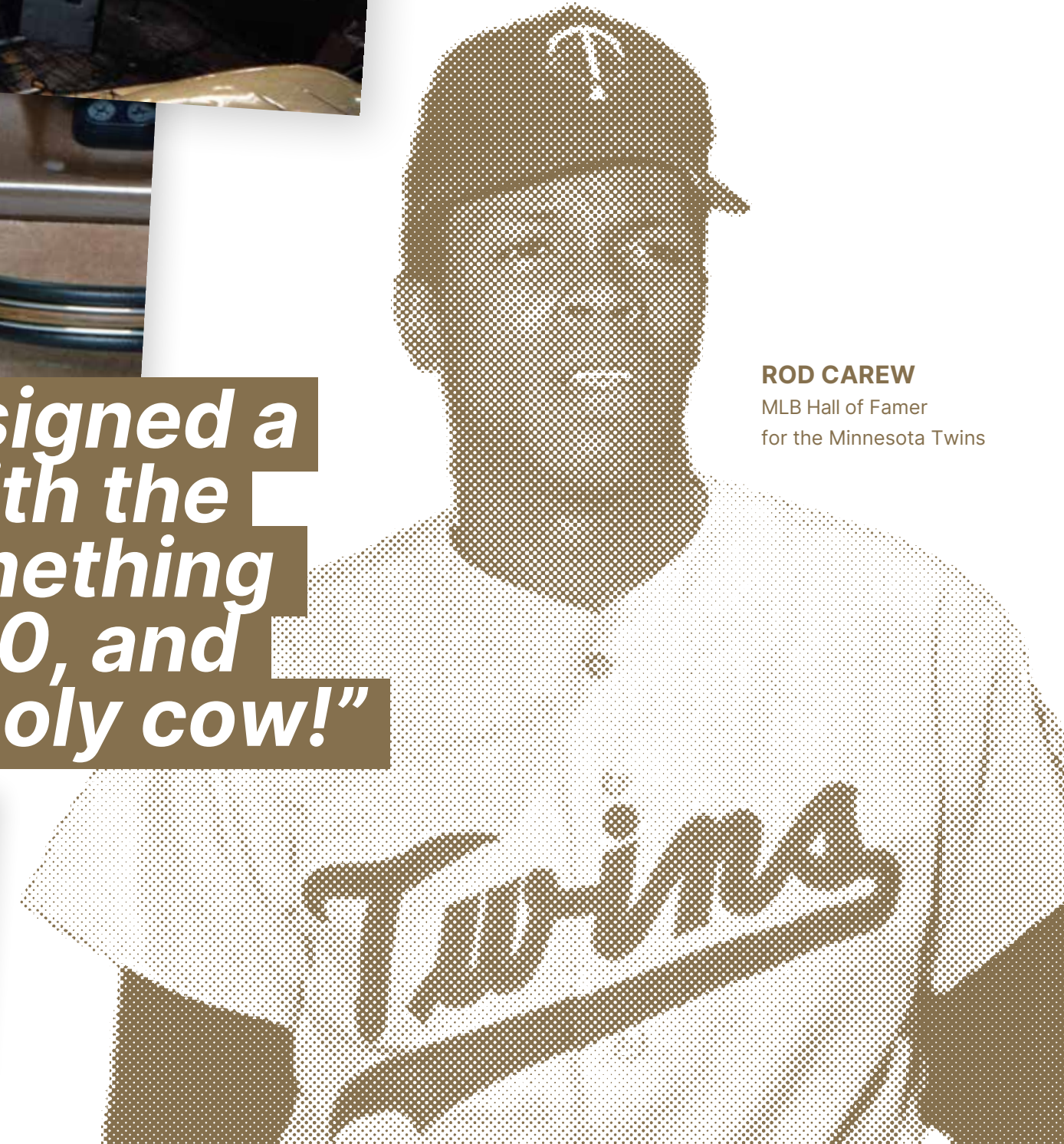
that exposure which ultimately catapulted the business to a new level. A level that would soon have Don building 100 conversion trucks for Midwest Ford dealers (an upfit eventually known as the Northlander package), and also showcasing a Ford conversion to those same dealers leading to a period of rapid growth and more valuable lessons.



“Rod had just signed a contract with the Twins for something like \$100,000, and I was like holy cow!”

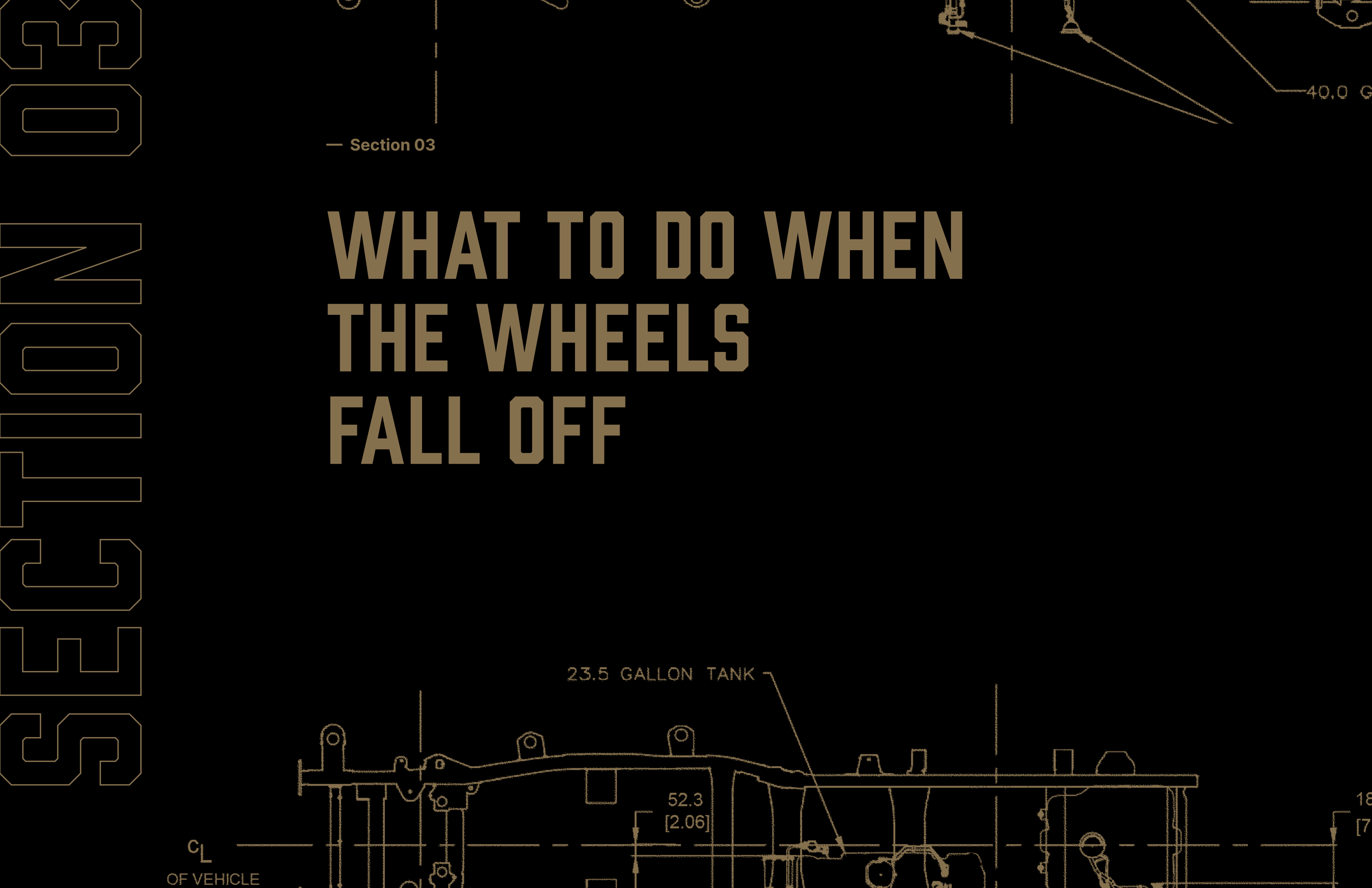


ROD CAREW
MLB Hall of Famer
for the Minnesota Twins



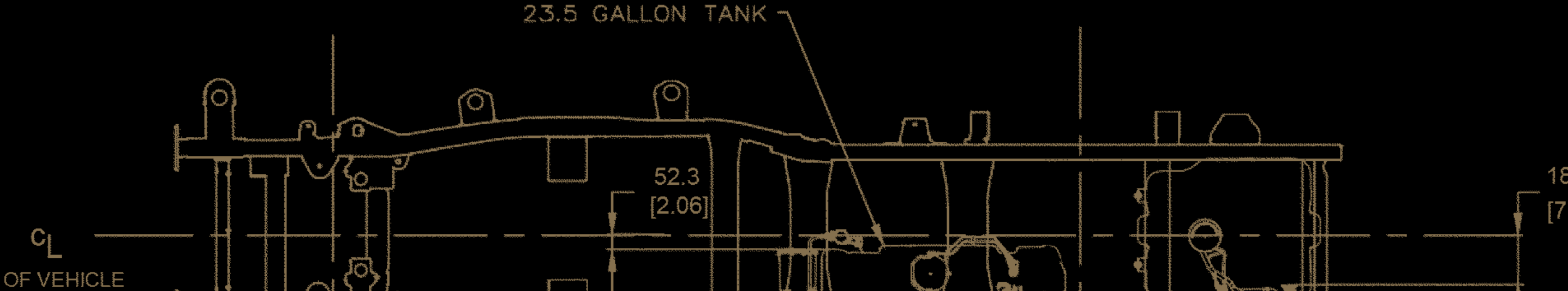


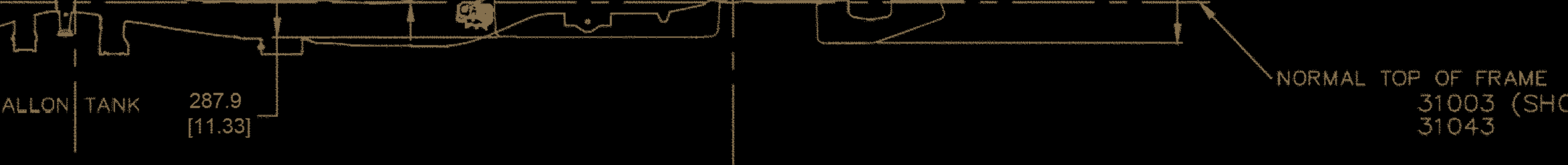




— Section 03

WHAT TO DO WHEN THE WHEELS FALL OFF



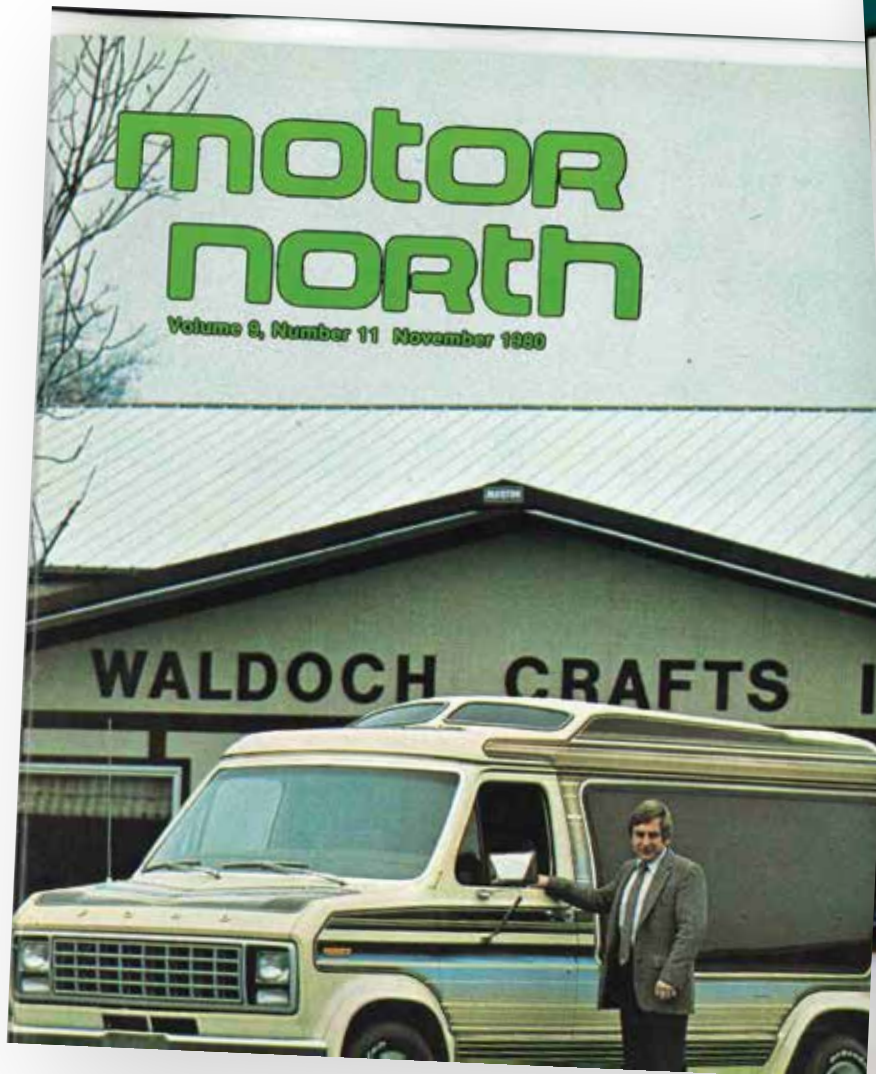


Not long after those Ford conversion trucks were delivered to dealers in what was known at the time as a “drive-away event”, the phone started to ring. There was a problem...wheels were literally falling off the trucks.

According to Don, there was a mix up of wheels and the types of lugs needed to hold them in place. “We ended up replacing all of them...400 wheels. We didn’t know it at the time, but that kind of service was never really experienced before.

We stood behind our product, and the dealers noticed and stuck with us. In fact, there are dealers today we work with that still remember."

That kind of service and quality has remained a pillar of the company ever since. Don has always believed integrity is best exemplified through actions, not words. It's why the company remains adamant that if something goes wrong, you make it right. At Waldoch every part of every vehicle, from the smallest to the biggest, is of the highest quality, installed by the best people, and backed by a level of service that always answers the call...even when the wheels fall completely off.

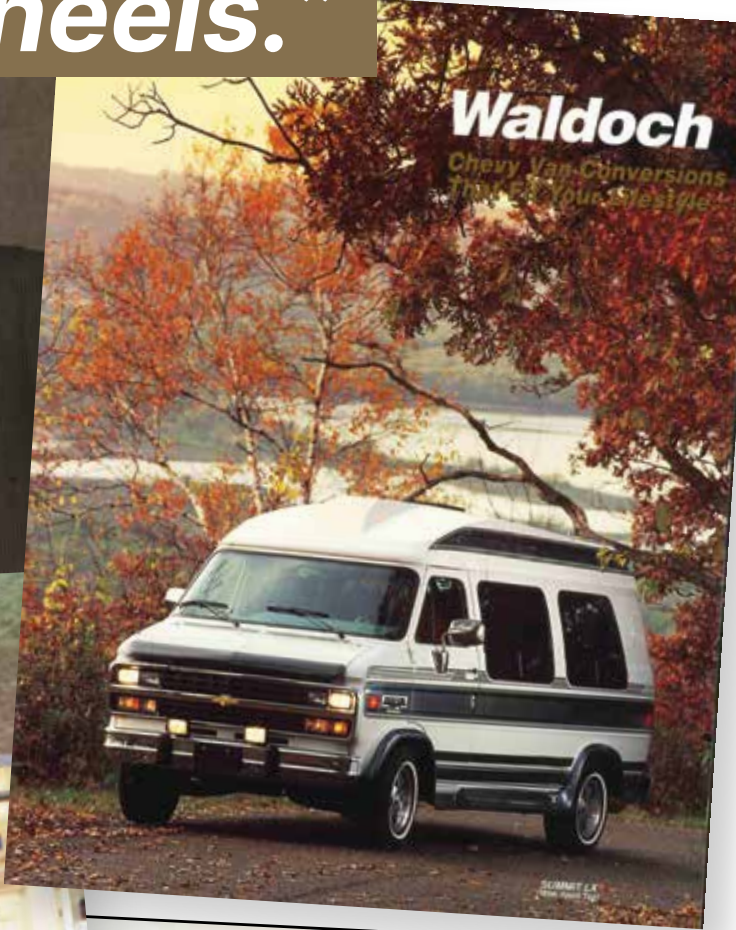




HICLE



"We ended up replacing all of them...400 wheels."

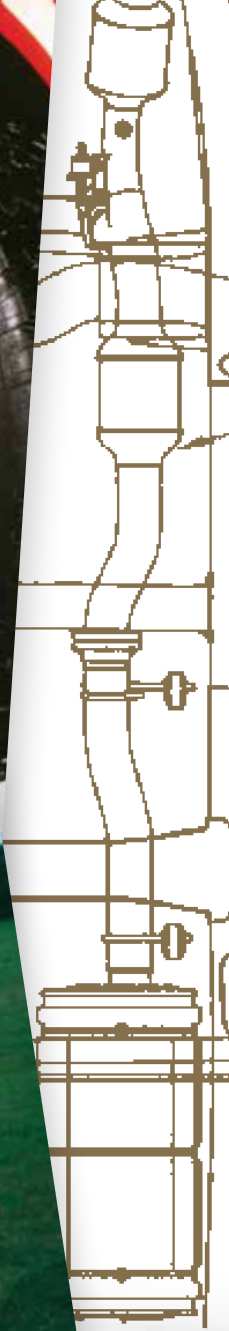
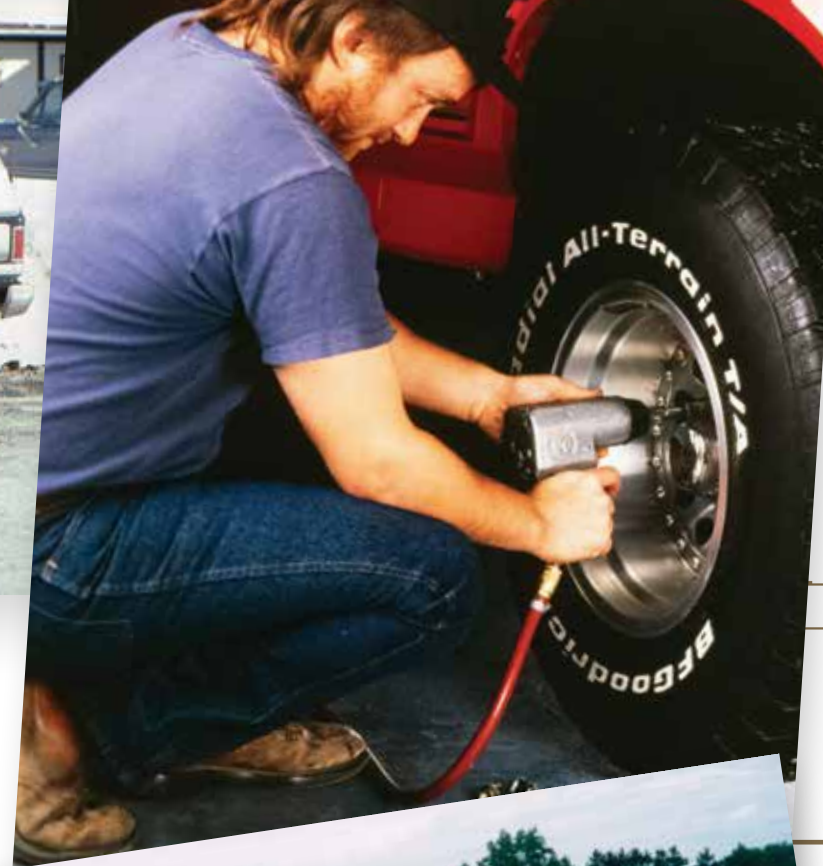


ayton's



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Introducing The Conversion Van That Drives Itself.

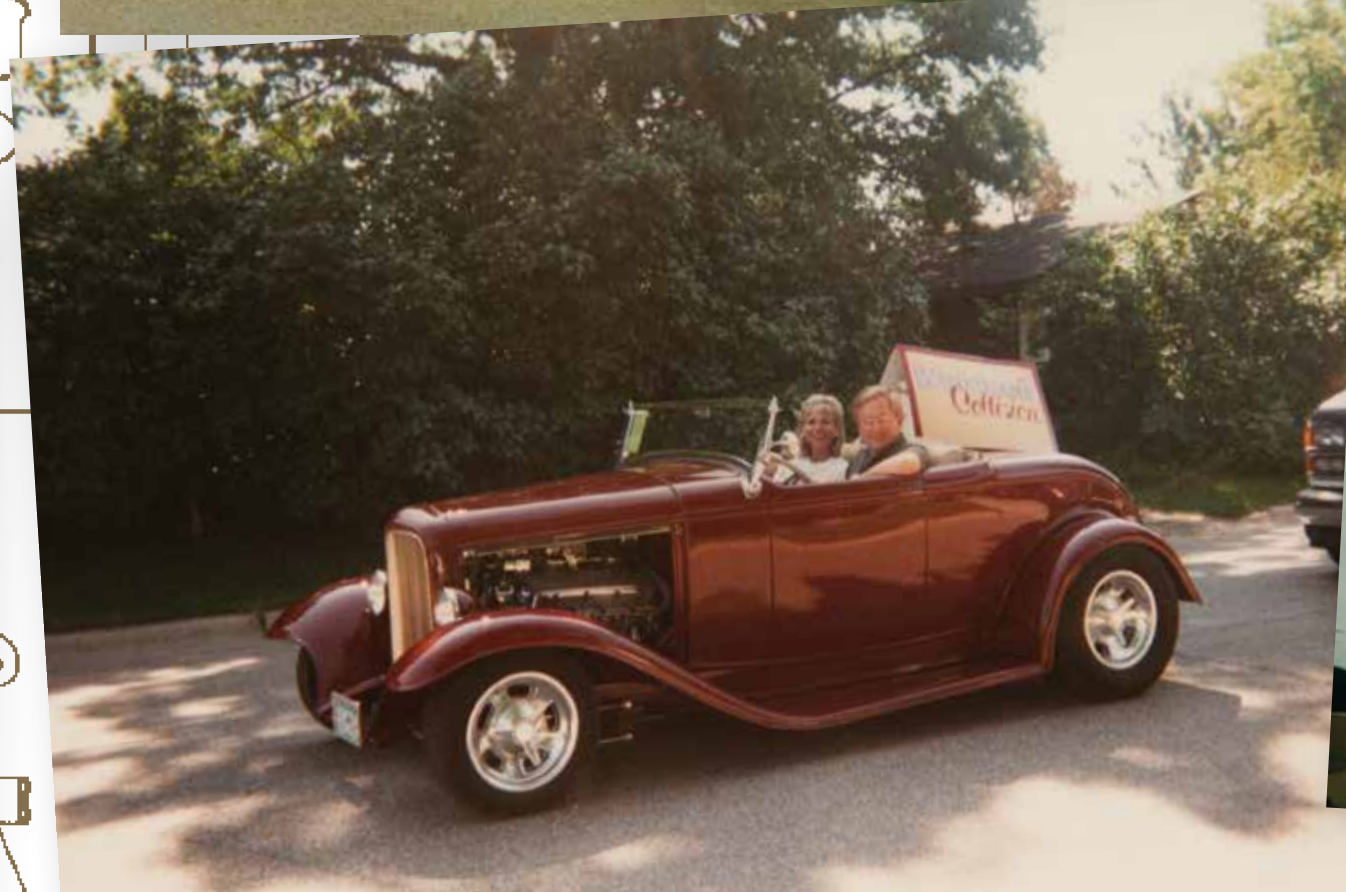
Performance pay-off—in satisfied customers, and profitable dealers—and when it comes to conversion vans and sport trucks, Waldoch Crafts knows how to deliver performance. We've grown steadily over the last 17 years because we understand this industry and we've learned how to help dealers be successful too. That's one reason we're consistently on the industry's "Top 10 Converters."

list, based on total sales volume. Dealers who work with Waldoch know the performance story: quality conversions and extensive sales and service support. Delivering performance has become the Waldoch trademark, and earned us a 94.5% customer satisfaction rating.

High Performance begins with conversions. At Waldoch that means quality materials and brand name suppliers, like Owens Corning insulation, Milkor fabrics, In-sulch wiring, Flexcoat scuffing and Scotchgard protection.

Dealers and customers appreciate Waldoch's innovative design and engineering, clean, eye-catching graphics and top quality workmanship in every detail. But to build a business with van conversions takes more. That's why we work hard to build strong dealer partnerships, to successfully market, sell and service our conversions.





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SHOVELING SNOW AND GETTING A REAL JOB

REFER TO FRAME DRAWING

REFER TO EXHAUST DRAWING





Early on, when Don was building cabinets in his parents garage, or working late in the basement where he kept his very first Unisaw, his mother would ask him when he was going to get a “real job”. Fast-forward to 1978, after the company had acquired enough capital to build a 7,500 sq ft. fabrication and manufacturing facility, Don finally felt confident enough to declare this was his real job.



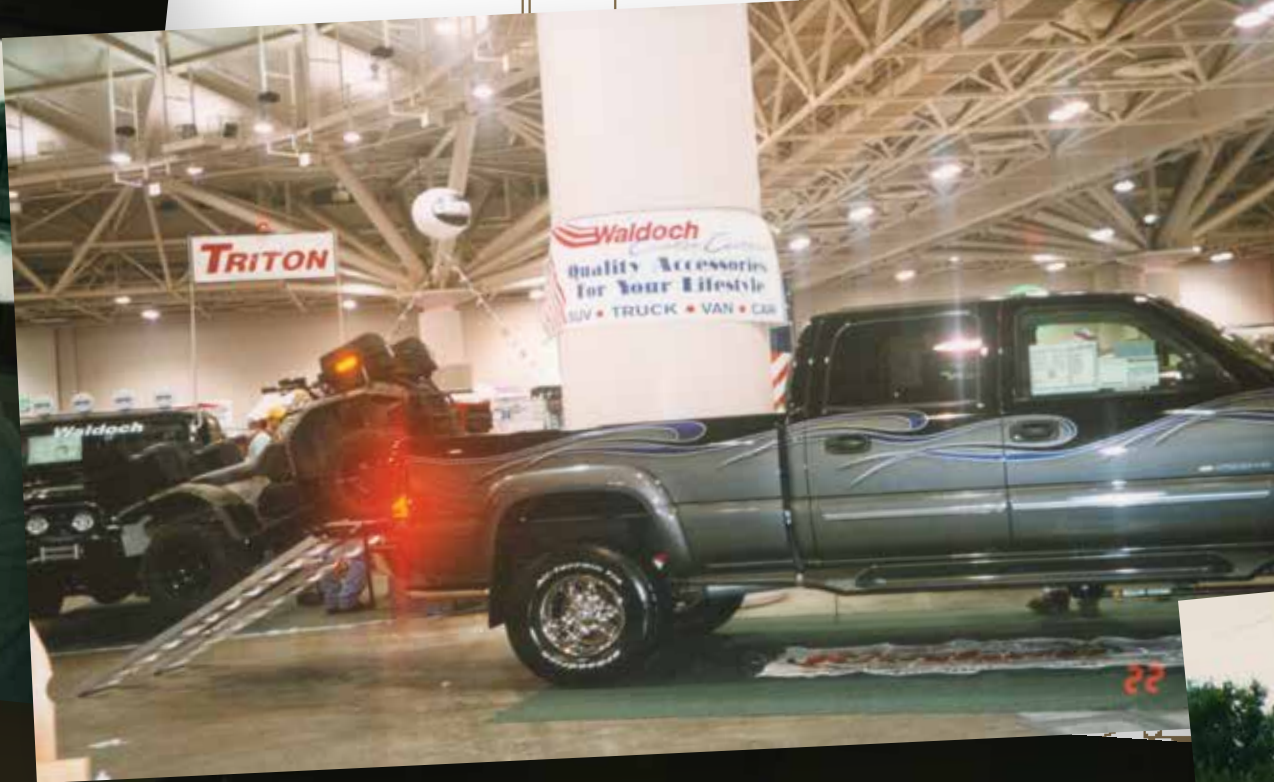
The conversion market for vans and trucks had exploded, and along with help from his brother Larry, Waldoch gained access to the factory “pools”, a fleet of factory vehicles which Waldoch would convert and then deliver directly to dealers.

With the volume of conversion vehicles increasing dramatically, so too did the number of employees. Yet, Waldoch remained true to the lessons learned from those early days.

“I remember looking at other conversion vans, and frankly, they weren’t very good. I knew we could do better. It would bug me to see something not done to perfection...so I’d make sure we corrected it before the vehicle left our facility.”

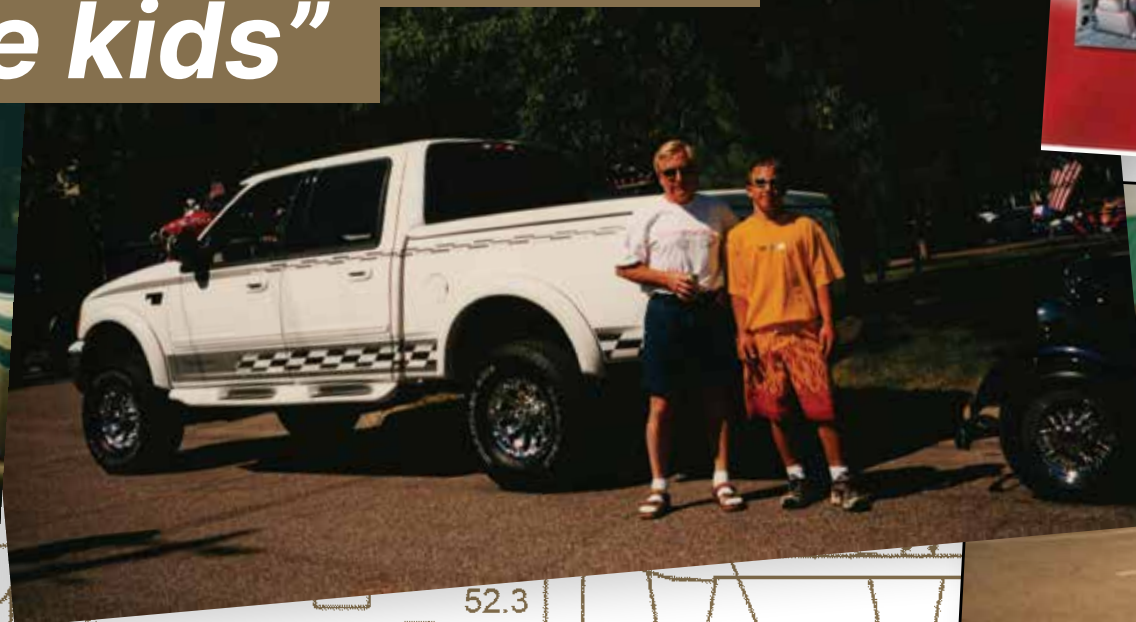
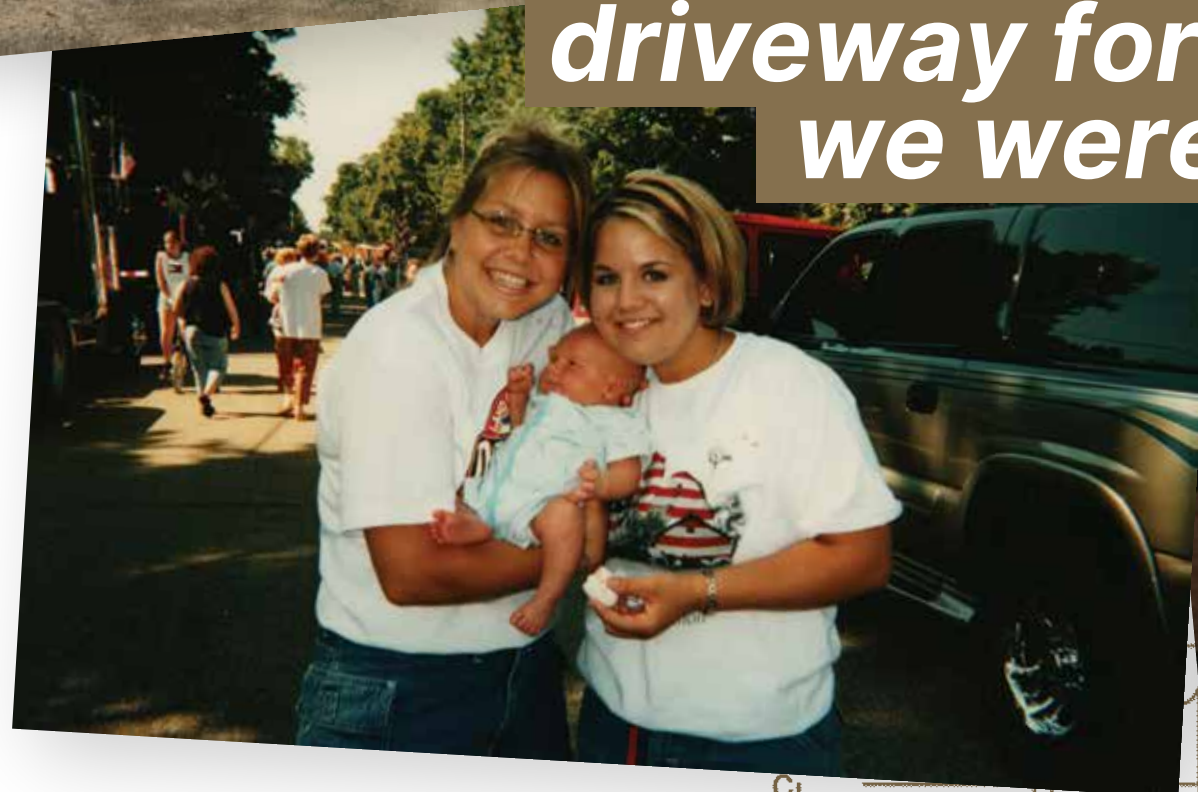
That perfectionist approach and the rewards that come with it were instilled in Don well before he ever built his first cabinet.

“My brother and I used to shovel my grandmother’s driveway for a dollar when we were kids,” Don recalled. “One time after finishing her driveway, she gave me a two-dollar tip, which was a lot of money back then. She said my brother always left a ridge of snow, but when I shoveled...it was perfect. I never told my brother,” Don said with a chuckle, “but that idea of doing things the right way, even when no one is watching, really stuck with me.”





"My brother and I used to shovel my grandmother's driveway for a dollar when we were kids"



Waldoch Crafts

April 7, 2003

Dear GMC Dealer,

2002 was a turn-around year for conversion van sales, and 2003 promises to be even better. The reasons are simple:

- Former buyers who tried SUVs are coming back.
- New buyers are discovering the comfort of a quality conversion van.
- Dealers like the less price-sensitive market.
- Demographics look good for years to come.

Tired of margin-killing competition and look-alike utility vehicles? Today's vans have it all: For comfort, GMC's ride and handling are better than ever. For convenience, there's an **industry-first fourth door**. And for safety, another industry first: **all-wheel drive**. Put them together and you've got the best conversion van platform ever.

The market's better as well, with buyers everywhere you look. They're serious travelers and everyday drivers. Raising baby boomers and growing families are on the move. Folks who are going places and want to do it in comfort and style. Give them what they want: safety, comfort, a better fit, and a competitive price.

You don't have to be a specialist; these four vehicles may be all you need. One look at the luxurious interior is all it takes to get customers thinking about comfort and safety in a whole new way. And with 30 years of experience, Waldoch is the partner you need to make your conversion van business a success. We've got exciting exteriors, even a racing-convert and safety, along with additional storage and better sound control. Our drop-down entertainment centers rival the best home systems, with XM satellite radio, and satellite TV. There's even an optional 22-inch screen.

We know this market, from leisure and family to handicapped-equipped and mobile office vehicles. Our one-on-one training and great customer service will get you off to a solid start, build your confidence, and keep your buyers coming back. We can even help arrange dealer trades for the customer who wants something you don't stock. Conversion sales are up year-round, but the summer travel season is a great time to start.

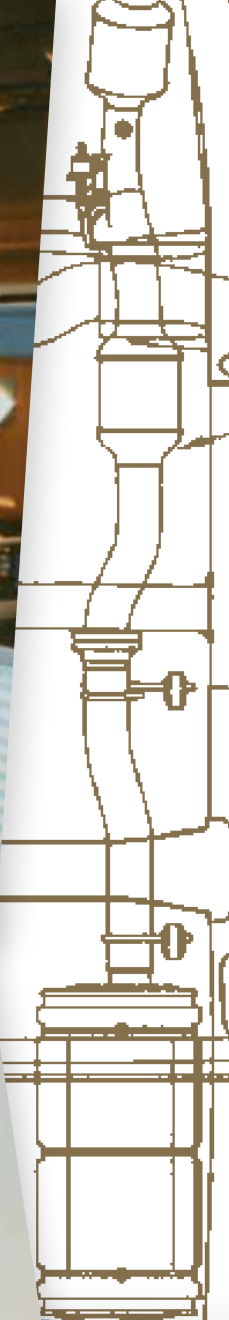
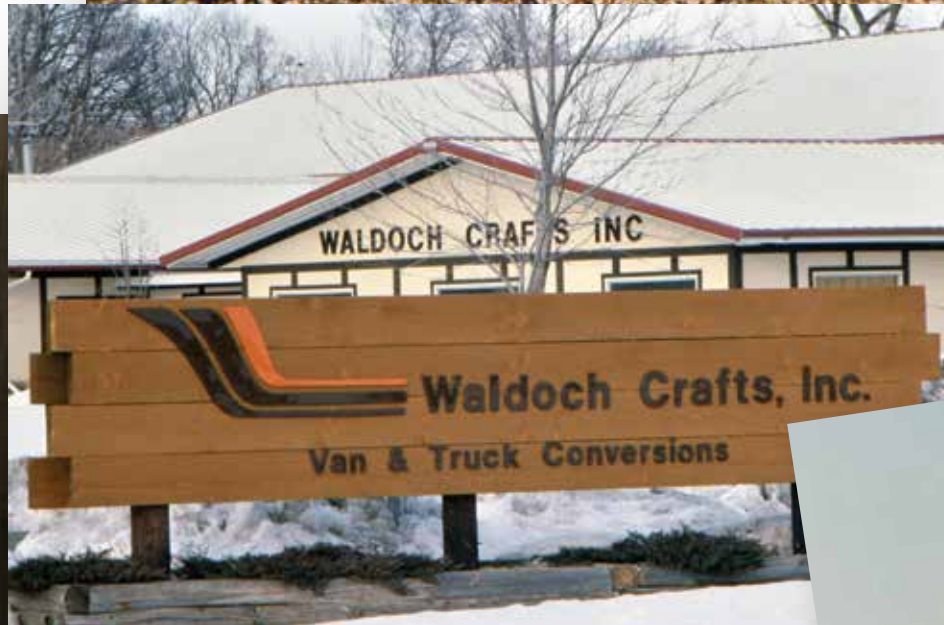
So call me - or Dave or Bob or Gus or Dino or Tom or Sean at 1-800-328-9239.

Who says vans can't fly?

Yours truly,
Don Waldoch
Don Waldoch

13821 Lake Drive • Forest Lake, MN 55025 • 851-884-3215 • 1-800-328-9239 • www.waldoch.com





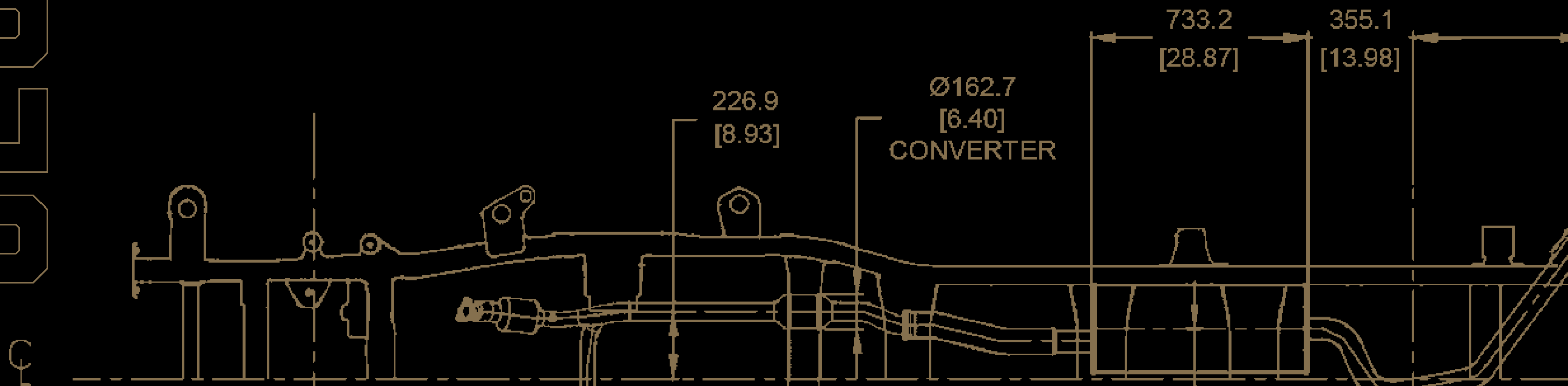


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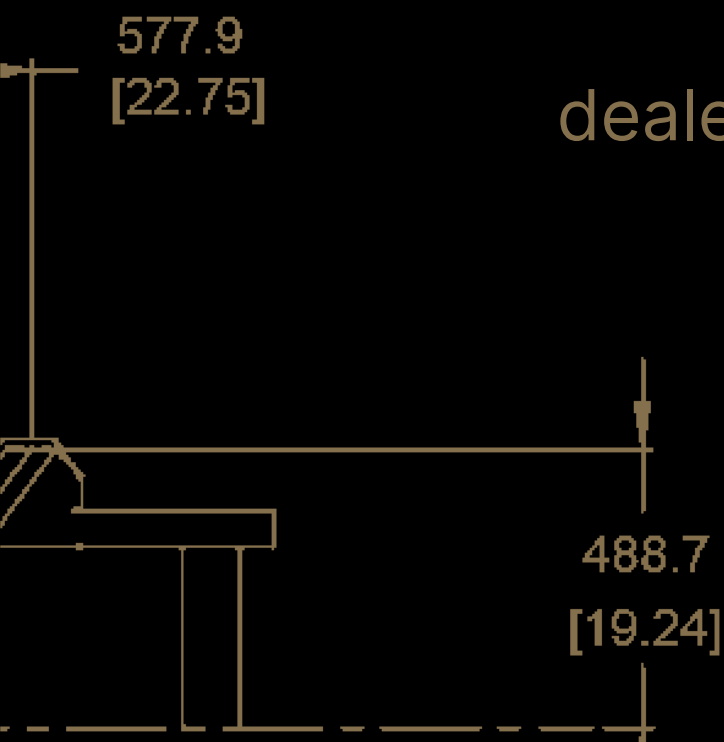
— Section 05

I WAS JUST
TOO PROUD
TO QUIT





By the early 1980s, the conversion van and truck industry exploded in popularity, and so too did Waldoch. The company had gained access to the manufacturer “pools” of vehicles from the “big three” – Dodge, Ford, and Chevrolet and the company earned and maintained the 10 “Best Sales and Quality” position with both Ford and General Motors. In addition, Waldoch was working directly with big volume dealers across the nation.



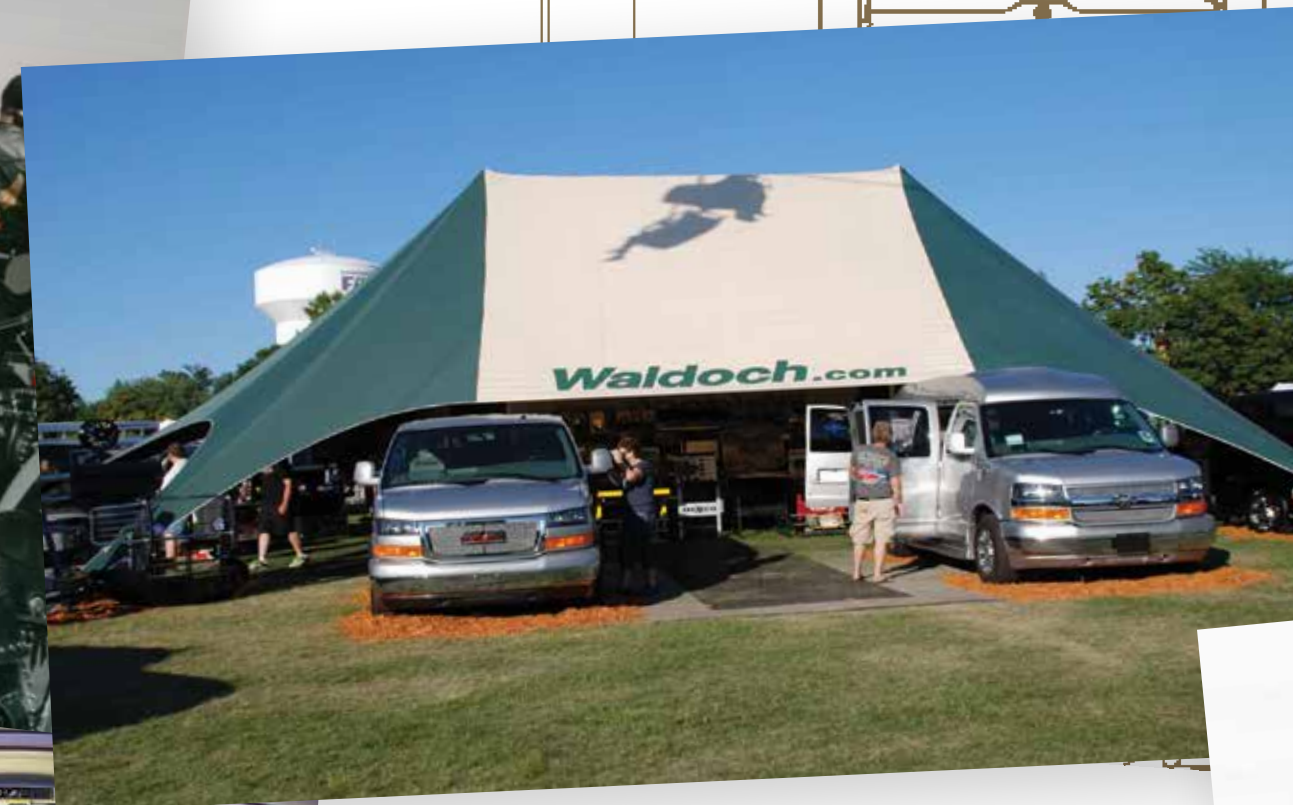
However, they were not alone; with the boom of the conversion industry several other players entered the market all looking to grab a piece of the pie.

Trouble in the late 90's to early 2000's, however, was on the horizon. The market changed, consumer appetite shifted, and the conversion vehicle industry nearly collapsed. Many of Waldoch's competitors left the market.

"We went from a high of 220 employees to 7," remarked Don. "The conversion industry dried up...many of our competitors quit, and many of the suppliers in the market were owed money. We were on the ropes."

As Don puts it, Waldoch was hemorrhaging cash, most of those who remained worked for no paycheck in order to keep the company going. The company attempted to branch out into other markets, even building fish houses, but Don's heart remained in the conversion vehicle market.

"I was too proud to quit. I needed to take care of my family and the employees that remained. In my heart, I just knew it would come back so we never quit doing what we loved to do. We kept building the best conversion vehicles possible."





“We went from a high of 220 employees to 7 - We were on the ropes”

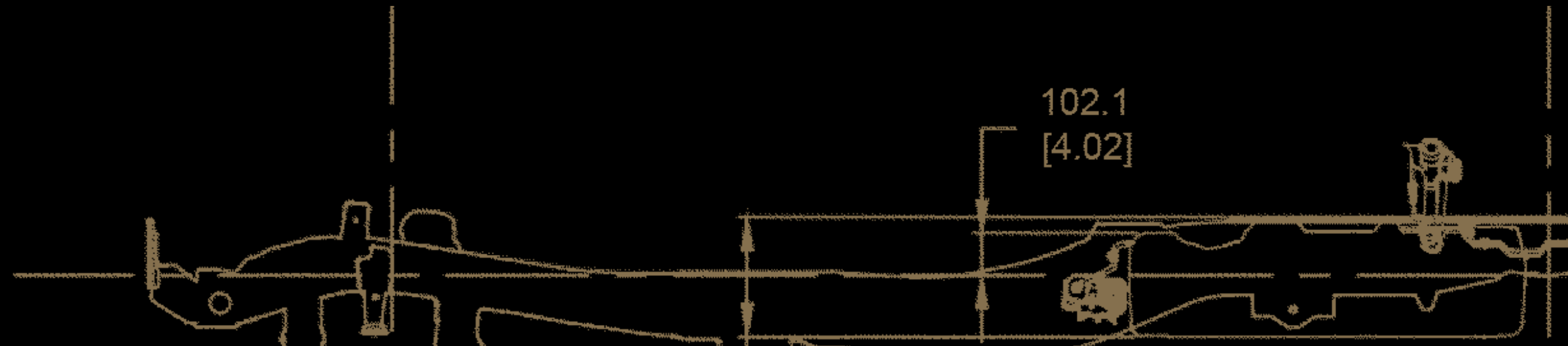


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— Section 06

AS LONG AS THERE
ARE AUTOMOBILES,
PEOPLE WILL WANT
TO CUSTOMIZE THEM





There are three parts to every storm, a beginning, an end, and an opportunity. When the storm clouds of the collapse of the conversion vehicle industry finally cleared, only a handful of brands remained ... amongst them was Waldoch. Don's perseverance helped Waldoch weather the storm, and new opportunities emerged.



"The world changed," said Don. "We had to reestablish ourselves, and we had to educate a new generation of buyers what a conversion vehicle was and what it could do for them."

Fortunately, many things central to the Waldoch company never changed – a mission to lead through innovation; a steadfast commitment to quality; the value of hiring and retaining the highest caliber and most talented employees; and a promise of customer service to always make things right.

Don's vision and enthusiasm to "stick with it" led to Waldoch experiencing growth and success once again. "I just believe that not everyone wants to drive a truck or SUV that looks like their neighbors," Don said. "As long as they keep building cars, we're gonna keep offering ways to customize them."





**"The world changed,
we had to re-establish
ourselves"**

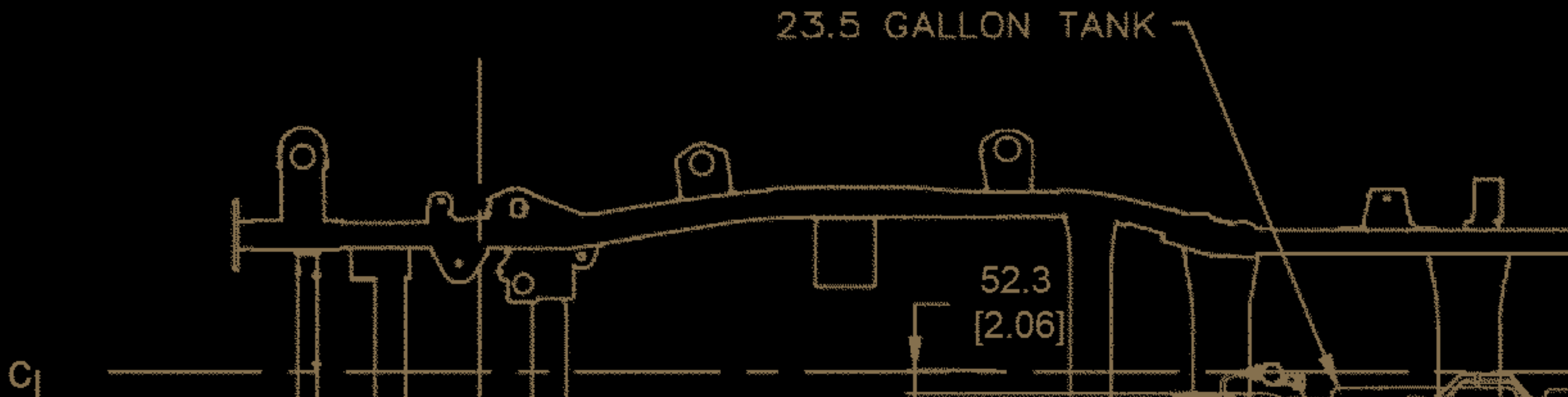


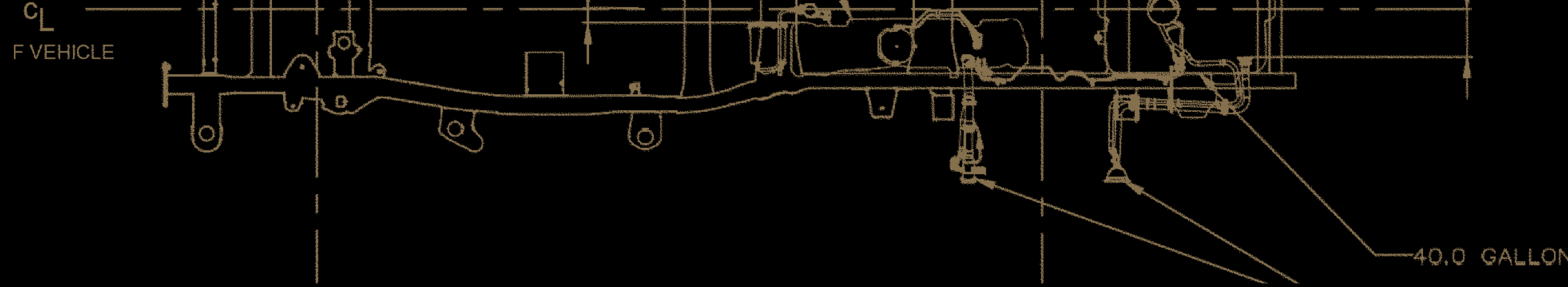




— Section 07

CUSTOM BUILT FOR A CHANGING WORLD





In 2024, Waldoch celebrated 50 years of business and is stronger and better than ever. The brand's legacy, experience, and knowledge give Waldoch a distinct advantage as it looks to expand within the market and explore new ones.



"Nobody has done this as long as we have," said Don. "That 50-years of knowledge is powerful, and I know nobody can build a product better than we can. But you also can't be afraid to try new things."

Confidence has never been in short supply at Waldoch, it's something that can be felt throughout the organization and the Waldoch family, especially within Don's son Billy, who will help guide the company forward for the next 50-years.

"I've poured everything into this company," said Don, "and I'm so proud of what we've accomplished. I'm especially proud of how Billy has put his stamp on things. He's got great ideas and a tremendous vision of where the future of Waldoch is headed. That's the thing, you have to keep moving ... keep moving the company ahead, and that's what we're always going to do."

"I would like to acknowledge all the great people that have and still work for this company in order to get where we are today. Especially my family — Sheila busted her tail while raising 6 kids. All the kids ended up worked for Waldoch at some point through their careers — all contributed immensely — more than they will ever know! They really helped keep me motivated not to quit. Also, my son-in-law Tom has been a tremendous asset!"

To Don, it's always been family.

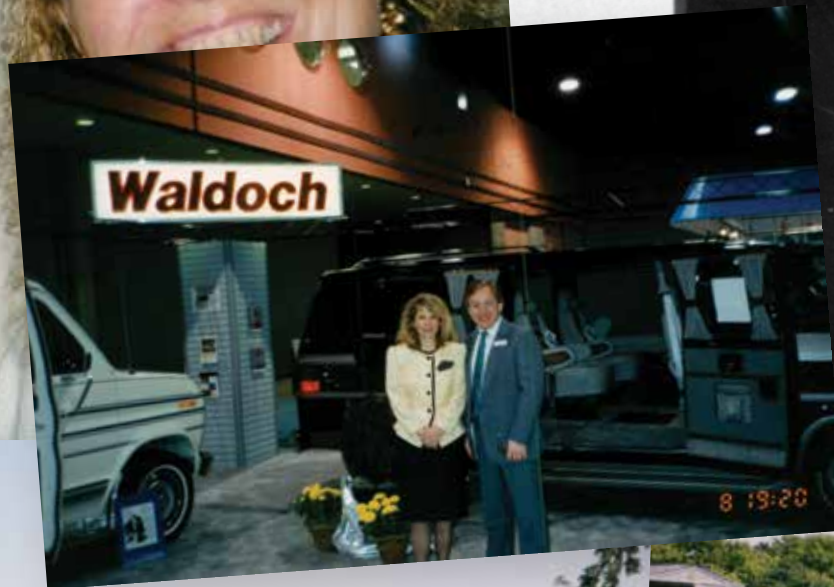
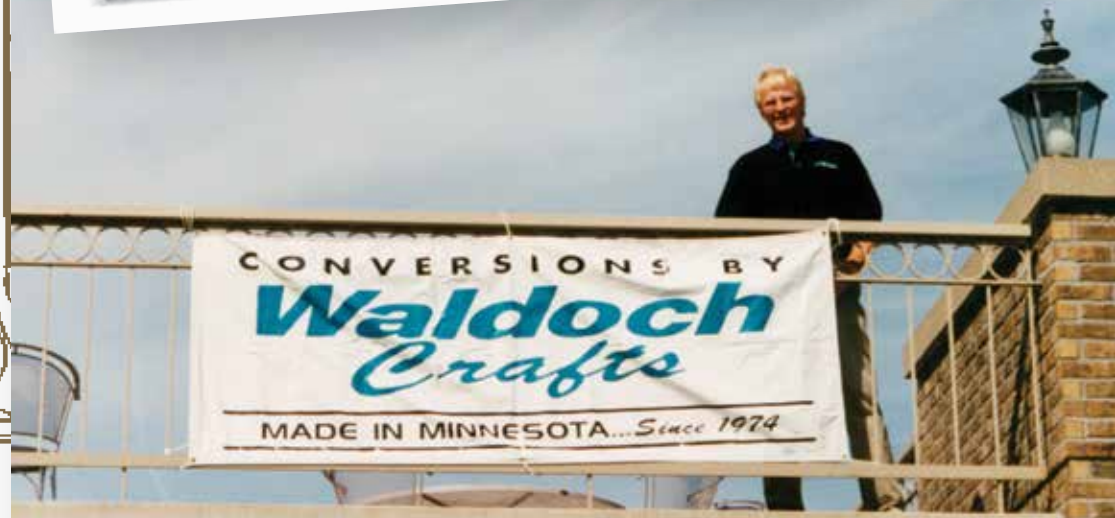




***"Nobody has done
this as long as we have
— nobody."***









The 50th year in business celebration for Donald, did not come easily. He really did not realize what an accomplishment this would be. For him, it was his business, that had good times and bad. He paid more attention to the now, and everyday business needs. It is what he does. 🍷 My experience was one of memories, people and the greatness of what he created. He was a loving son who respected his parents and family. His Mom and Dad put their faith in him back in 1974. His drive, ambition, energy and passion lead to some incredible successes in the van and truck conversion industry. The talent to envision and build a beautiful van and really groovy trucks from an empty chassis is pure, creative genius. Donald truly appreciated the teams of people he worked with. He is hard working, caring, furiously determined, blunt, creative and when necessary, demanding. In my opinion, he did well because of his integrity, consistency, vulnerability, courage and plain old fashioned common sense. 🍷 On a personal note, he did all of that AND was an amazing father to our 6 children. And a fabulous husband. My father asked me with tears in his eyes back in the early 90's, "Sheila, how does Don run such a great business and be a good father too?" It is an accomplishment I admire and so appreciate.

Sheila L. Waldorh

