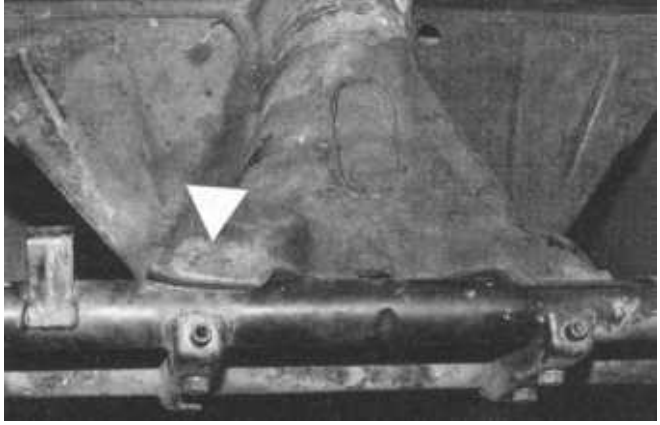

ABOVE LEFT, arrow points to our first problem; a bent front bulkhead. This car was probably crashed hard on the right front, bending the pan. ABOVE RIGHT, after repair, the frame head fit the front torsion tubes squarely.

ABOVE LEFT, our pan was placed on Al Martinez's chassis fixture. Measurements showed the right side was bent back almost 3/8-in. For reference, we used the rear corner body fastener holes as a rear measurement point. ABOVE RIGHT, with the right side of the front beam chained to the fixture, heat was applied to the bulkhead.

ABOVE, with the rear of the pan chained down, the right front was pulled out until the front-to-rear measurement matched. BELOW, with everything unbolted inside and outside, our pan was sandblasted clean.

because your clutch tube is broken in more places than Johnny Carson's been married?

If you've answered "yes" to any one of these questions, or are about to start that ground-up project you've always dreamed about, listen up. The floorpan — like any frame — is the foundation of an automobile. If it is bent, the car is bent. If it is weak, the car's overall value will reflect that condition. Think about the number of critical controls that mount to the floorpan including the clutch, brake and throttle cables, not to mention the entire front and rear suspensions.

It only makes sense that since you've just spent your last dozen paychecks for the body and engine, the next few deposits should go toward restoring the floorpan. But before we get into the actual get-down-and-get-dirty routine, we should mention that under the rear seat of your VW lies the chassis serial number (stamped on the center hump directly in front of the shifter inspection plate). To some it is of the utmost importance that this number jive with the original registration and the body I.D. plate found behind the spare tire. That is, the body must match the pan. To the rest of us it doesn't really matter which body goes on which pan as long as none of the numbers have been tampered with. If this is the case, you're better off finding an alternative pan (although you can have a new I.D. number installed by the police or Department of Motor Vehicles with the correct papers). The reason we bring this up is that for a hardcore restorer, having the correct I.D. number for that year of car is mandatory. So if you plan to restore your vintage VW back to showroom condition, pay particular attention to which year pan you have.

So what year is your pan, you ask? That's easy! By reading the chassis I.D. number on the pan identification plate, you can determine what year it was produced. For example, by reading the complete number and visiting your local VW shop, Bugs For You, for example, that owns an original VW parts book with production numbers, you can find out quickly. If the chassis was produced in 1965 or later, the third digit will tell you. A 115 number will be a '65, a 110 pan will be a '70 and so on. If it is a convertible, the second digit will be a 5; a 1967 convertible would be 157.

Depending on which way you plan to go will determine how you get started. If you plan to use your existing pan, then it's a matter of unbolting the body, lifting it off the pan, and