

The Eagle Times

Colorado FreeWheelers

February, 2005

NEXT MEETING
Thursday, February 17, 2005
Fay Myers Motorcycle World
7:00 pm

<http://www.msnusers.com/RHNWebPages/cfwhomepage.msnw>

Thumper's Corner

Pat McCombs

Well, spring is right around the corner. Yeah, right! According to that stupid groundhog it's another six weeks of winter. But, since "Phil" is an eastern groundhog, let's hope that does not apply to us here in Colorado. I know a lot of Colorado Freewheelers who would like to do something other than hang out for breakfast on Sunday mornings. A ride, even a little ride after breakfast would be nice.

We had four hearty souls make it on their bikes for breakfast on February 6th. Bob Norton, Bill Gillespie, Alan Hansher & Pete "Bedrock" Chronis all braved the twenty-five degree temps & snow to make it down to the Village Inn. Looked kind of cool to me when they rode off into the snow after breakfast.

So, the question is, can there be any warming news to come forth on a cold winter day? You bet, and plenty of it. As many of you know, a great number of Colorado motorcyclists applied for tickets to the 2005 Three Flags Classic this year. Well folks, the Colorado Freewheelers & RMVTA Motorcycle Clubs struck as they say "The Mother Load" this year. Twenty members from the two clubs got tickets in the draw for this years Three Flags Classic. Congratulations to the following folks who have gotten confirmation of tickets for this years event: Bill Gillespie, Becky

Gillespie, Bob Norton, Sunny Norton, Pat McCombs, Donna McCombs, Jon Lofstedt, Gene Porter, Mike Finneran, Tom Shader, Bruce Vinson, Willy Taylor, Leah Kelley, Stan Stotz, Rex Young, Floyd Thorne, Frank Heinzl, George Barrett, Brett Barrett & Al Harris. *(Note: As of this writing, we are waiting on confirmation from Al. Also, Norm Roder, knowing he wouldn't be able to ride the event applied for a ticket just to have an extra for someone else. Thanks to Norm, Stan Stotz will be riding with the rest of the group in September. We don't call him "Nice Guy" for nothing.)* And by the way, if you're not on the list and think you might want to join in the fun, I just might know of an extra ticket floating around that one could purchase. But you had better act fast!

I am sure the phones were ringing off the hook after the draw at 12:00 noon on January 29th from California. I know in the case of Donna & myself it came on Sunday morning when we were on our 40th wedding anniversary get away weekend to Manitou Springs. Was nice to hear on a cold winter morning, when it had snowed fourteen inches during the night.

I am sure we are all looking forward to the adventure coming at the end of of this summer. For those of you who are making their first Three Flags Classic, WELCOME, and take time to really enjoy "America's Premier Motorcycle Tour."

Thumper

A Friend, A Rider

Frank Heinzl

As you may have heard, Paul Becker, a friend of mine for 30 years and a long time club member is very sick. As of this writing he had been released from the hospital on Tuesday, the 8th, but was readmitted on Friday the 11th because he was loosing blood.

An Ultrasound indicated fluid pressure on his gallbladder, so they installed another drain tube using a fiber-optic scope and probe rather than cut him open again.

When I saw him on Saturday he was in room 312 of the Critical Care Tower at University Hospital, and in a great deal of pain mostly from bed sores.

The doctors are trying to get him to get up and walk around more, but he keeps resisting as he tires so easily. He's lost over 70 pounds since first going into the hospital, and he keeps getting pain meds every 8 minutes.

Rhonda is loosing sleep and is having difficulty coping with the stress of trying to care for him, though she is trying valiantly. When Bob and I gave her the \$616.00 we raised at the last club meeting, she choked up with tears.

They are applying for SSI and Medicaid, as they have no insurance. This will take some time to take effect, for as you know government aid is a slow moving machine. They are looking into a nursing home for him, but it is difficult to find one without the SSI and/or Medicaid in effect. They are also trying to sell their motorcycles. Please see the ad in this newsletter.

Paul wants everyone to know he really appreciates everyone who visits him, sends cards and letters and prays for him. The visits from Rev. Boots have really helped to lift his spirits, when he was at his lowest. His physical condition really cannot improve without our prayers and emotional support. His will to live has been tested over and over these last few months and it is only with Rhonda's and our support that he has been hanging on.

I will continue to offer any and all the help I can to Rhonda and Paul, and keep you all updated as to his condition.

Freewheelin' Franklin'

The Visit to Herb's Place

Herb Schaffer

You have heard from Knight Rider about the Polar Bear Ride, but there was a little detail missing, obviously to protect the embarrassed. During the pit stop at my house we were all standing around telling bike stories when I told them about my "motorcycle simulator". Of course, there was great interest in this novelty, so I brought out the Harley Davidson simulator.

Knight Rider was really interested, but initially refused to try to drive the "machine". So, Freewheelin' Frank rose to



the occasion by taking the handlebars with trepidation. He selected his rider personality Easy Joe and bike, Low Rider. With that done, off he rode straight down the city street and ran into the first obstacle in his path, then the next and the next. He never did get to the first turn and he was disqualified.

You can see by the picture he has full concentration on riding that beast around the kitchen. Everyone heard the repeated crashes and began wondering if



Frank should lead the next ride.

Knight Rider could stand the suspense no longer. He had to demonstrate his prowess as club Safety Officer and MOST Instructor, so Bob chose to be



"Big JD" riding his Dyna Glide. In a flash he was off, flying down the boulevard chanting: "Counter steer, counter steer! What's wrong with this thing! It doesn't turn!" Crash after crash could be heard by those looking on. But I'm sorry to say our club's best also failed the merciless simulator.

I guess the moral of the story is stay on the real thing, ride safe and avoid Herb's Harley Simulator.

From the Chaplain

Colorado FreeWheeler's Resident Chaplain, Paul Reimer - "Boots"

Greetings. The television show "Extreme Makeover" captures my attention from time to time. That's probably due to the fact that my tenure in the industry has served me well for over fifty years. However, I must admit I don't quite understand how you can get over a hundred workman in an area and facilitate quality craftsmanship. But, it works at least on TV! A lot of this has to do with funding, and of course the hype of the star of the show.

Many of us in life are caught up in the same scenario, sometimes wrongly taking credit for the deeds of others working in the background. I was amazed by watching Dr. Phil the other day. The subject was 'obsession.' It is very sad that some folks get hung up or obsessed with themselves or their accomplishments along the way to a point of not being functional and rational. When faced with a problem, they often seek an easy fix, which, too often turns out to even more complicated.

In my counseling, I find many folks who are in denial of the life conditions which they inhabit. Left unchecked, denial will only lead to great pain.

In conclusion, there is an answer many seek to avoid heartache — confrontation to the problem and the willingness to accept divine direction.

In the spiritual sense, *extreme makeover* often is required to bring back the essence of life and true fulfillment.

Should you ever need to contact me, I am available. My phone number is 303-288-4828. You can Email me at cbpr842@aol.com.

Until then, ride safely, and remember you do not have to ride alone.

Chaplain "Boots"

For Sale

1999 Gold Wing-SE with aprox. 50k miles, new alternator, floorboards, highway pegs, highway lights, 6 disc CD changer and receiver hitch. \$10,000 includes a color-matched Escapade cargo trailer. Contact Rhonda Becker, 303-877-0347.

1987 Shadow 700. 16k miles, new alternator, and handlebar mounted windshield. \$2,000. Contact Rhonda Becker, 303-877-0347.

1996 Honda ST1100, ABS2/linked braking system, MR Accessories shelf, Clearview +4" windshield + stock shield, rear luggage rack, MEZ4 tires, 58,000 miles. A well cared for bike, \$6,200. Call Bill Gillespie, 303-781-0032 or 303-758-8804.



Photo by Robnor

Southwest Tour

by Bruce Waters

Tuesday November 16, 2004

An early season snowfall was slowly melting in the bright sun, turning parts of the road to mud as I left home in mid-November for a two week motorcycle trip. OK, I know, I'm crazy to take off on a motorcycle trip in November, but I have a perfectly good reason.

My new status as a semi-retired person seems to have the emphasis on the semi part. I worked all summer building you a new bridge to carry US-40 traffic over the Union Pacific tracks between Kremmling and Hot Sulphur Springs, Colorado, so I got very little motorcycling in this summer. My biker batteries needed a serious recharge. Now that the project is finished and I'm back to the retired part of semi-retired, I've brewed up a little jaunt to do just that.

Now crazy or not, I'm not nuts enough to try to do New England or Banff or some of the other places that are on my 'to ride someday' list in November. Just getting out of Colorado is motorcycle adventure touring enough that time of year! I've had limited travel time in Arizona and not much more in New Mexico, two neighboring states that have certain ahhh... disadvantages when it comes to mid-summer motorcycling. But perhaps not so bad in November, yes?



San Luis Valley Colorado.
Sangre de Cristo mountains in the background.

A brief scan of the Weather Channel confirmed 70's along most of the U.S.-Mexico border several days in a row, so temperature extremes shouldn't be too bad. It looks like I picked the rainy season, though: There were flood watches and big green blobs all over the maps of the desert southwest the whole time I was watching this. Not to mention snow showers at home that would be right on my tail chasing me out if I was the least bit late getting away.

Since I had both my pension and the paycheck from my summer job, I was flush with cash for the first time in my life, and actually paid someone to adjust valves and carburetors and give the bike a thorough check over before I set out. So this is how the other half lives!

I twisted my daughter's arm and got her to watch the dog, then spent an entire day washing clothes and packing. There's only so much stuff you can lash to an old BMW F-650

single and still be able to keep up with traffic, and I pushed the limits. I was pleased to discover that John's carburetor adjustments had cured my surging problems and perhaps even found another horse or two to put in the stable, so I was better off than I'd expected in that regard. Maybe even improved my gas mileage a bit.

Usually when I do some traveling, it's with the idea that I'm relaxed and able to stop and take pictures or see an interesting state park or whatever, although I usually have someplace on the trip where I need to arrive at a particular time. On this trip, that was going to be Thanksgiving Day - a week plus away, when I'd agreed to show up at my sister's place just north of Houston for dinner and to become reacquainted with my family.

But literally at the last minute, as I was looking up some addresses on the computer, I happened across an e-mail I'd written over a year ago to Jesse Luggage, the maker of my hard bags. You see, unlike the rest of you, I'm a dodo-brain, and quite a while back, I'd dropped my bike on its side with the lid of the bag open and tweaked the box. Not unusable, but just enough that it wouldn't shut right, seal out rain, etc. At any rate, Jesse is in Glendale, AZ, a suburb of Phoenix. I was headed that way and I had money.

I phoned. Yep, they could fix it, but they only worked Monday through Thursday. This was Tuesday at noon. If I moseyed around



Arizona until the following Monday, I'd never make my sister's by Thanksgiving unless I stayed on the interstate all the way. Ever ridden on a west Texas interstate? Not my favorite motorcycle road. That meant getting to Phoenix in a day and a half from south central Colorado. And just like that, I was behind and trying to catch up.

My original plan was to spend Tuesday night at a hot springs I like just on the other side of the Sangre de Cristo mountains from my home, Wednesday night in Mesa Verde, and wing it from there depending on what looked interesting. Faced with a considerable distance to ride and a limited amount of time in which to get there, that all went out the window like a Wal-Mart bag.

I wasn't about to get that close to Valley View and not go for a soak, so I still made that

stop. Instead of an overnight though, I opted for a Quick Dip and was on the road in two hours. I'm glad I made the stop though. Another guest, a fellow named Jeff Davis, noticed my Aerostich and we ended up having a great conversation about motorcycling. But needing to hurry, I cut it short and headed south and west.

My goal for the evening was Durango and I was hoping for Cortez. I made it to Pagosa Springs before quitting.

One of the disadvantages of advanced age at least from my perspective, is that my night vision is going away. I just don't see well at night any more, and the single headlight on my BMW, although better than what I've had in the past, doesn't throw enough light to alleviate that problem.

The highway department has really poured some money into Wolf Creek Pass since I was last through here, but that hasn't changed the fact that you're still riding over the Continental Divide at well over 10,000 ft. I made it, but wouldn't have had a prayer if a deer or elk had decided to step out in front of me. Pagosa was enough. I'd do the rest tomorrow.

I found a decent looking little motel just on the far side of Pagosa and turned in for the night.

44,292

44,069

223 miles today

Wednesday, November 17, 2004

Not the most pleasant of nights. Zero soundproofing in this room, the sixth away from the highway. Every truck that went by was either climbing the hill out of town or decelerating down that hill coming into town. Add in a too soft, sway backed mattress, and I've had more restful nights on the road. I did get several hours of decent sleep just before morning.

Cold gray damp weather greeted my bleary eyes when my internal alarm clock went off promptly at 6:30. What the hell, I've got a long day ahead of me. The sooner I get to it, the sooner finished. Grumble, gripe - have to take a darn motorcycle trip when everybody else gets to fight rush hour traffic on the way to work - moan, complain... Not that I'm hard to please or anything.

I packed everything back up and loaded it on the bike, taking the time to lube the chain while the wax was still warm even if the chain wasn't. The bike fired right up, even though overnight temperatures in this town, which sits at an elevation of 7000 ft., were sub-freezing. First thing out though, no speedometer. No odometer, no trip odometer. Perfect! Here I am wandering around in a place where it's 100 miles between gas stations and I'll have no idea how far I've gone on a tank. Unprintable words!

Continued on page 4

I cursed - not for the first time - everybody from the janitor on up who had a hand in designing or building the instruments on this bike. Finding a place to turn off and park, I disembarked and felt the speedo cable from one end to the other. Everything seemed Kosher unless maybe there was a bit of excess play down by the drive on the front axle. John would have had to take that off to do steering head bearings. Could he have made a mistake?

The map showed little towns flanking US-160 all the way to Cortez, so I wasn't in any great danger of running out of gas just yet. I decided to press on and began making plans to contact the BMW dealer in Phoenix and see if I could get this fixed after doing the Jesse bag thing. I plugged back in and got under way.

It stayed cold, and except for a brief bit of sun near the beginning, cloudy with patchy fog almost all the way to Durango. I stopped for breakfast at a place called Christina's on the way out of town toward Cortez. There was nothing else available without going all the way back into Durango. Seeing the 'bar' on their sign, I resigned myself to greasy eggs and manufactured hash browns, but I got a very pleasant surprise. They had a whole menu full of healthy and tasty bits at only slightly upscale prices, excellent music in the background, and friendly unobtrusive service. I left a larger than usual tip.

Soon after I got back on the road, I went on reserve. The station in Hesperus only had regular, so I passed on that. I also passed on buying the Hesperus ski area which is right beside US-160 and is for sale. Maybe a bit out of my price range at the moment.

I was motoring blissfully along when a flash of movement on my instrument panel caught my eye. Whoa! I'm doing 65 mph! I have a speedometer again. And odometer as well as trip. Let's see, should I file this under magic or miracles? A bit of cogitation produced the following: It's noticeably warmer now. Could a speedometer freeze without destroying itself? Only the Shadow knows... and perhaps the Aprilia engineering department, although I wouldn't count on it.

Whatever. Here comes Mancos and a gas station with a recognizable name. Fill up. Reset trip odometer. Go motorcycling. Pass Mesa Verde. Go through a tiny little corner of New Mexico on the way to Arizona. Pass Four Corners. Ride through lands of the Navajo Nation. Pretty country all around regardless of the political boundaries, as if Mother Nature couldn't have cared less. Nice views of Shiprock as well as numerous other volcanic necks, and waaaaay over there, Mt. Humphries and the San Francisco Peaks near Flagstaff. This is a very poor area in terms of money, but rich in views.

One hundred fifty miles more or less later, I'm at Kayenta, famous for its sandstone. Fill up. Reset trip odometer. Go motorcycling. I've often wondered if Tuba City actually has anything to do with the musical instrument, and I'm still wondering since I saw nothing to answer my question as I rode through.

Very interesting suspension bridge over the Little Colorado River at Cameron. Stopped to look and naturally forgot to take a picture.

On into Flagstaff where I burned the rest of the daylight eating supper and gassing the bike. Lubed the chain again, then headed off toward Phoenix.

It wasn't long before I couldn't see beans, so I pulled off at an exit that had a lot of lights. Turned out to be a casino, but it did have a motel associated with it. Went in to see if they had a room. "Sorry, sir, we're all booked up for tonight." Less than ten cars in a parking lot designed for a thousand and they're 'all booked up' on a Wednesday evening. Obviously no place where you could squeeze in a motorcycle. Or a motorcyclist. I thanked them and left. Found a Super 8 a few miles further down the road and here I am. Let's see if the extra ten bucks gets me a better night's sleep than the motel at Pagosa.

44,660

44,292

368 miles

Add in roughly 80 miles for Italian engineering and I did about 450 miles today. Not bad considering I haven't done a multi-day trip in several years and haven't been on the bike all day since June.

Thursday, November 18, 2004

Much better! Slept like a baby until early risers began starting diesel engines around 6:00 or so. Not bad. I wanted to get an early start. Venus and Jupiter were visible in the eastern sky as I loaded the bike. I fired it up and rode out of the parking lot, whereupon a Denny's appeared from behind the building next to the motel. That should work. I chowed down on an omelette, then hit the road for Phoenix. The sun was up by now and there was heavy truck traffic on I-17 in the mountains north of town. I had perused the Phoenix area map last night in the motel, and thought I had figured out where Jesse Luggage was located, but I got off the freeway much farther north than I should have. No problem. A normal city street in Phoenix is about 6 to 8 lanes wide with traffic moving about 50 or so.

Eventually I found Jesse Luggage. They were a friendly little outfit who fixed my tweaked bag and mount and updated my hardware, all the time talking with me about bikes and rides. Even had a Moto Guzzi enthusiast on the staff. Obviously people who care about their work and their customers.

Now that I had taken care of the time-crunch item, I was free to wander and play some. A couple of things on the Phoenix map had caught my eye and the folks at Jesse confirmed that they were both good choices. I decided to start with the Desert Botanical Gardens.

My only real problem navigating around Phoenix so far was getting a handle on the scale of the map. I was assuming a metropolitan area similar in size to Denver. It's more like that of Houston. Phoenix is one vast city. I went cross town using AZ-101 and I-10. Nice big wide 8, 10 and 12 lane things that handle the traffic of a metropolitan area this big with ease.

Once I got close to where I was going, I stopped to get my bearings again. I've so far been unable to find a tank bag that will fit on

this weirdly shaped BMW tank, and I really miss both having a tank bag and having a map visible in front of me.

I did find the Desert Botanical Gardens, and paid the \$9 to get in. It was well worth it. An overwhelming, astounding variety of cacti and other desert plants. Neat, interesting plants well-adapted to life in a dry environment with frequent temperature extremes. Plants from desert environments worldwide. An entertaining and knowledgeable volunteer who explained all of this to the tour group. And all of it right under one of the approaches to Sky Harbor, the major Phoenix airport. I stayed until about 4:30 or so then left. Bad timing.. Rush hour had begun.

Remember those 8, 10, 12 lane freeways I had been so enthusiastic about at 1:00 P.M.? Parking lots! Both directions! I got on AZ-101 southbound and immediately got off at the next exit and went to find a place to hide. I settled on a Japanese fast food place and pondered my maps. I saw nothing much in the way of camping anywhere nearby, so with sunset fast approaching, I decided to do one more night in a motel. Where can I find a cheap motel? Not right at the airport. An old US highway should have a whole string of 'em out where the edge of town was back in the 60's. Filter out the flop houses and crack dens and you can frequently find decent lodging at a reasonable price.

Wanting to stay on the east side of Phoenix, I found US-60 after several miles of stop and go riding on AZ-101. Only got cut off once. But US-60 was another one of those 8 lane things where traffic had loosened just enough that it was 75 mph, bumper to bumper. I took as much of this as I could, never once seeing a sign for a motel and finally got off when the street lights ended. I had finally crossed completely through Phoenix. I turned around and headed back into town and found a lighted gas station/convenience store where I could investigate the map again.

Ah! Here we go! Main Street. Bet that's old US-60. Sure enough, it didn't take long to find the Starlight Motel with a big neon sign showing a woman diving off the word MOTEL into a tiny pool of blue neon water. Major 60's stuff! They even had a 'Best of Phoenix' award for Best Neon Sculpture hanging on the wall of the office. It was, of course, run by the standard Indian/Pakistani innkeepers this kind of place usually has. Forty-two bucks and they were repaving the drive. Almost dropped the bike trying to park it but managed.

Whoa! What's this? A kitchen! In my motel room. Original, I'll bet, sink and gas stove and cabinets; newer fridge and microwave, and bigger than some I've owned and lived in. Ditto for the real bathroom with sink tub and toilet all in one room, unlike modern motels. It'll do. Oh yeah - I'm still right under the approach to Sky Harbor. No noise related problems so far, though.

44,835

44,660

175 miles today, about half that within the Phoenix metro area. Speedometer problems have not returned.

To be continued.....

Three Flags Classic FLASHBACK

by Pat McCombs

Some time I think I have a little bit to much time on my hands, but that's ok because it usually results in some pretty good memories. I was looking over some information on the 2005 Three Flags Classic, and some great memories came flooding back.

For some of the Freewheelers, and some of the RMVTA members that are new to this ride, I thought I would pass on to you our first adventure as Three Flaggers. We had heard of the Three Flags Classic, but had seen

very little information on the event. Nineteen years ago we didn't have the wealth of information at our finger tips like we have today. In July of 1986 that would all change, and a wonderful chapter in the lives of five Colorado Freewheelers would be written. That call came from Bill "Wing Commander" Gillespie, who some how had gotten his hands on not just one, but five tickets to the 1986 Three Flags Classic. The five riders to receive these tickets were Bill Gillespie, Pat McCombs,

John Cribbs, Bob Norton & Rex Young. The club was a buzz over the fact that five of their members were going to ride the Classic. I went back into my files, and pulled out the October 1986 issue of the Colorado Rider the monthly publication of the Colorado Association Motorcyclists. Bill Gillespie had written an article on the adventures of the five Colorado riders who attended the Classic. I hope for the new riders, that you enjoy the article as I did living the adventure....

Three Flags Classic

by Bill Gillespie

The following is a daily diary of five Colorado riders who participated in one of motorcycling's greatest touring events. The 11th Annual Three Flags Classic was sponsored by the Southern California Motorcyclists Association. Three hundred entries were drawn by lottery last spring. The riders depicted in the story were all founding members of the Colorado Association of Motorcyclists: Pat McCombs, Bob Norton, John Cribbs, Rex Young, and Bill Gillespie. The Three Flags Classic ran a route from Tijuana, Mexico to Nanaimo, B.C., Canada over the Labor Day weekend. The event had a time limit of 72 hours and covered a distance of 1,753 miles. We started our trip on September 27, 1986.

Day 1: We met at Bill's house for an approximate 8:00 a.m. departure. First thing we have to do is get to Tijuana, over 1,000 miles away. The goal for the day was Flagstaff, AZ. Other than some heavy rain from Tuba City to Flagstaff, the day and the ride were pleasurable.

Day 2: The morning broke crisp and cool in Flagstaff. Some light drizzle present. Rode out of it soon. The ride through Oak Creek Canyon was terrific. Beautiful route through the Arizona mountains. Stopped in Prescott for breakfast. After breakfast it looked like rain to the southeast, so decided to suit up. Found one of the West's greatest motorcycle roads. A portion of US 89 south of Prescott is divided two-lane, twisty turny's and one way, too. As we dropped out of the mountains, the rain stopped. The lower we got, the hotter it got: Prescott, 62; Merritt Pass, 80; Aguila, 90; Blyth, CA, 104; Indio, 110; Palm Springs, 111. Too Hot. Passed a wind generator farm near Palm Springs - thousands of them. Looked like something out of "Close Encounters." Went west on the Riverside Freeway to Newport freeway. Missed the sunset at Newport Beach. Did see some California girls though.

Day 3: Washed the bikes. Found our first drive-thru grocery. Did some sightseeing on the beaches. Rode on some of the streets used for the Long beach grand Prix. Took the coastal route to Tijuana. 4:00 p.m. sign-in deadline fast approaching. We're in San Diego

traffic now. Bob and Rex stopped to buy Mexican insurance. Pat and Bill crossed the border. Where's John? Pat and Bill are all signed in. They hear Bob and Rex on the CB. They're lost in Tijuana. Where's John? Bill tries to guide the lost companions by radio. They finally made it; 5 minutes to spare. John's here. We're all here. Wow, what a collection of bikes. Some have extra gas tanks. Some of these guys are really serious about this. Check-in went smooth. Got our passports with a Polaroid glued inside. Nice touch. Mexican dancers providing entertainment. At the riders meeting, they said not to do much sightseeing on the way up. Are they kidding? Didn't come all this way not to see anything. Got a warm send-off from the Mayor of Tijuana. Rider's meeting followed by a dynamite parade through town. Too bad nobody told the Tijuana police. It was exciting. Got through the border quickly. Special gate, just for us. Hit I-805 and the race was on. Stopped near Del Mar to catch the sunset over the ocean. Missed it again. Almost city all the way to Ventura. Couldn't live like this. Got off I-5 on 101. Stopped in Carpinteria for the night.

Day 4: Rode over San Marcos Pass. Fog was very heavy in Santa Ynez Valley. Had breakfast in Solvang, nice little Danish town. Did some sightseeing after breakfast. Aren't we on an endurance run? Back on 101 at Buelton. Decided to stay on 101 to Salinas for time. After all, we are on a schedule, aren't we? John radioed for landing instructions as we approached Checkpoint One. Flaps were down and in we went. Only 25 people behind us. Too much sightseeing? Not a chance. Suggested route goes east of San Francisco. Pat has never been to California. Can't have him miss the Golden Gate. Passed by Candlestick Park. Rode downtown for a while. Some kind of hills, Cable cars are working again. Lombard street was too crowded. No time for Fisherman's Wharf. Went across the bridge. Cold and foggy. Will be on 101 now to Cloverdale. West on CA 128. Another road made for motorcycles. Some of the locals know this road well. That must be A.J. Foyt in the Plymouth S.W. Finally reached the coast. Very pretty. Missed the sunset by ten minutes.

That's three days in a row. Made Checkpoint Two in Fort Bragg about 8:30 p.m. Now 35 behind us. We're gaining on them. Met up with a solo rider from Riverside, CA at the checkpoint. Dan is riding with us now. This is his first Three Flags, too. Coast highway slow at night. The roads aren't even this crooked in Colorado. Rode most of 101 into Eureka two abreast with high beams. It was dark and there were deer. Made it in to Eureka about midnight. Long day. We lost Dan somewhere in town. Checked into a motel.

Day 5: Didn't get a very early start. Had a bad case of the tired last night. Where's Dan? Headed out for the Redwoods. Pat, Rex and Bill took a coastal drive on a dirt road for about 10 miles. Bob and John went back to look for John's side cover, blew off about 20 miles ago, Bill was the only one to see it. Stopped by the *Trees of Mystery* to regroup. Dan caught up with us there. Better get a move on. We haven't made very good time today. We want to keep gaining on the rest of the pack. The Oregon coast is breathtaking. Stopped at several over looks to take pictures. Have to hurry. Want to have time to stop at the Sea Lion Caves. Pat and Bob are slow taking pictures. Regrouped in Coos Bay. Made the Sea Lion caves before dark. Also saw the Heceta Head Lighthouse. Almost sunset. Don't want to miss it again. Got some good pictures this time. Stopped in Lincoln City for dinner. Next checkpoint about 30 miles. Plan to stay in Astoria. Wait a minute. Checkpoint Four closes at noon tomorrow. We'll have to leave Astoria by 5:00 a.m. We won't even get there 'til 1:00. Are we going to have to ride all night? Checkpoint Three, Beaver, Oregon. 10:30 Sunday night. Now only 8 people behind us. All that sightseeing finally caught up with us. Good checkpoint. Homemade cookies and hot coffee. Some guy pulled in on a 1300 Kawasaki with a sidecar as we were leaving. Had his wife and two kids in the hack. The suggested route was north, through Astoria and Aberdeen. We went east to Portland and the Interstate. Got on I-5 and took it in 60-80 mile chunks all night. Went past the Kingdome in Seattle at

Continued on back page

Three Flags - continued from page 5

4:30 a.m. Checkpoint Four, Bellingham WA, 5:30 a.m., Monday. Now they say there are 189 behind us. Where were they? We didn't pass anyone. Ten minutes behind us was the same guy on the Kawasaki with his family. He took the regular route. He rode his butt off. Headed out almost immediately. Wanted to finish in the top 100. crossed into Canada at 7:00 a.m. Went directly to the ferry terminal north of Vancouver. Just missed the 8 o'clock crossing. Caught the 9 o'clock ferry. 1 hour and 35 minutes boat time. Eight to 10 other bikes were on this ferry. Most of them are on the Classic. The finish was only a few blocks from the terminal in Nanaimo at the Tally Ho Hotel. Had a virtual drag race from the terminal. We rolled in to cheers and applause. Many people congratulated us on our finish. We finished 78 - 83 out of the 300. There were more than 77 people to greet us. Many locals lined the drive to the finish line. Had our picture taken at the finish. Moved the bikes to the secured parking area. Went to the bar first, then the hospitality room. Got our finisher's packet there. Ah, yes, the famed solid brass belt buckle. We earned these babies. Only finishers get them. entry number is stamped on the back. Quite detailed and three dimensional. Nice buckle. Almost too nice to wear. Also got finisher's patch and

some assorted pins, and a very nice finisher's plaque. Went back to the bar. Now about 1:00 p.m., 28 hours in the saddle. Time to check in. **Day 6:** (That portion not included in day 5): Got up about 5:00 p.m., went down and kicked tires with some of the other riders for a while. After dinner, went to the nightclub. Didn't last long. Hit the rack pretty early. **Day 7:** The parade to end all parades. Nanaimo to Victoria: 75 miles escorted by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Speed to 75 mph at times; 250-275 bikes, two abreast and tight. All intersections were blocked by the Mounties. Stopped just north of Victoria for instructions. Weaved in and out of downtown traffic. Parked in the circle drive in front of the Parliament Building. Locals say nobody ever parks there! 275 motorcycles parked there by direction of the Royal Mounties. Walked around Victoria for a few hours. Saw plenty of sights. Victoria is a very pretty city. Extremely clean. The residents are very hospitable. would like to spend more time there. Time to get back to Nanaimo for the gala banquet tonight. Bill stopped in Lady Smith to buy a belt to put his new buckle on. Returned to the Tally Ho for dinner. Nice affair. Excellent buffet with plenty of everything. After dinner came the awards. Oldest rider, youngest rider (5 months in the aforementioned sidecar). etc.

Colorado well represented with 14 entrants - - fourth largest contingent. One guy from Oregon has been on all 11 Three Flags Classics; he is the only one. The banquet is over. The Classic is over. All in all, a great, and very professionally organized event. Now we gotta get home. Wow, 6, maybe 7 days of sightseeing to do on the way home, only 5 days to do them. Better get after it early."

Well, that was Bill's story in 1986. This year he will be riding his 19th Three Flags Classic, and I will be on 9th. Each one is a wonderful adventure with lots of stories to bring back to Colorado. I hope for you new 3-Flaggers, you will share your stories with your clubs as well. For me, it is still one of the top 5 rides in my forty some years of riding. "86 was a very good year"

Pat "Thumper" McCombs

Editor's Note: *Bill missed the draw for the 1987 Classic, and made another commitment for Labor Day weekend. In August he received a call from the waiting list chairman, who had a ticket for him if he wanted it. He vowed then and there that he would never miss another 3-Flags. So, in 1988 he entered 8 times to make sure he got at least one ticket. The rule limiting the number of entries to one per person, adopted in 1989, was named after him.*

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