

NEXT MEETING
Thursday, March 15, 2007
Fay Myers Motorcycle World
7:00 pm

www.cofreewheelers.org/

76 Years of Riding

Pat McCombs

In the summer of 1975, a good friend of mine, Mike Weathers and yours truly had just gotten rid of our Triumphs, and had decided to give Honda motorcycles a go. We had taken time in April and May to trick them up pretty good, and as the warm weather came along for June we were ready to roll.

We had developed this habit of starting out after 10:00 PM on nice summer nights to cruise all over the city and take in all the Denver night life. For two summers, we met and 'hung' with some very interesting folks in the metro area. We were both people who enjoyed hearing stories from every day folks. Our interest in motorcycling ran deep, and anytime we ran across long time bikers it was always a good three hour coffee shop stop.

In July of 1975, on a warm evening Mike and I would meet a true hardcore biker. At a time when 'cruising' meant a somewhat different thing than it does today, we backed our bikes into the curb by the State Capitol and were just sort of watching the activity, when a lone biker went by. We did the wave thing, and didn't give it much thought after he was gone. We were pretty engrossed at the time watching some guy that was totally smashed trying to hit on a hooker, when our

biker friend pulled in next to us. Mike and I were both in our thirties at the time, and after checking this guy out thought he was more than likely pushing sixty. It didn't take us long to realize, that he was the real deal and not some "wannabe" biker. Only after we had ridden up to Speer & Federal to a 24-hour coffee shop, would we realize the depth of a "True Biker". The stories were many, and I thought this guy of fifty-three had invented the motorcycle. This, my friends would be the first time my path had crossed with Walt Hankinson, a long time Colorado Freewheelers member.

It would be another seven years before our paths were to cross again. My friend Mike had gotten out of motorcycling, our club, the Rocky Mountain Freewheelers had gone belly up. I had just joined another group known as Chapter "C" of the Gold Wing Road Riders Association. It was 1982 and the Chapter "C" folks are looking for some type of project to take on. A number of the Chapter "C" members were friends with members of the Rocky Mountain Harley Owners Group back then. The two groups had bonded to put on a Charity Ride for the blind children of the Anchor Center in Englewood. It was most likely the first time that an

all-Honda group and an all-Harley group had put on an event together across the United States. Something that both groups should be proud of to this day.

When the two groups got together for their first meeting, who would pop up but the fellow I had met seven years before on a warm July night. For many of us it would turn into an instant friendship. That same year, although he was an officer in the Harley Owners Group, Walt would join the club that would eventually become the Colorado Freewheelers. Now, twenty-five years later, Walt has many brothers and sisters in the Colorado Freewheelers, and they have become like family to him.

As many of you know, our long time friend has been fighting a major battle with cancer for the last couple of months. The last month and a half of which has been spent at Littleton Hospital. He fights a good battle, always trying to have a smile on his face, even when you can see the pain is there. His room at the hospital looks like a Harley shop, and many of the cards he gets are related to motorcycling. There are tons of motorcycling pictures to bring back the great memories.

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Meeting Minutes

February 15, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 by President, Jon Lofstedt. Visitors included Damion Payne who found us via the web site. Damion rides a Yamaha FZ6 with a grand total of 168 miles on the clock. Willy Taylor made a rare meeting appearance.

The minutes of the January meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter.

Treasurer Floyd Thorne reported \$81.33 in cash, \$891.54 in checking, for a total of \$972.87. The Christmas Fund is now an empty jar.

Thumper reported that Walt Hankinson is now home from the hospital, and is in good spirits. Calls and cards would be appreciated.

The Ride Committee met on February 3rd to plot out the rides for the year. There are many good times ahead starting with Norm's Wild Goose Chase on April Fools Day. There are still some open dates, so if anyone has a ride in mind, they should contact Frank. Ride booklets should be ready at the March meeting.

Pat gave his normal pep talk about the Rider of the Year program. This will be the 24th year of the award.

Jon and Pat are still working on ideas for 25th anniversary shirts, and should have some recommendations in March. Jon is also getting a quote on two dozen coffee mugs to keep at Your Neighborhood Grille.

Frank reported that the 1000-IN-24 will be August 18th, and that route submissions will be invited until May 1st.

The idea of another large benefit ride for the Anchor Center was discussed. A vote was taken, and it was decided the club will sponsor such a ride in 2008. Pat will approach the Rocky Mountain HOG group to see if they would be interested in co-

sponsoring the ride.

Brian and Floyd reported on the season long Colorado trivia contest. Participants must first figure out the location each item pertains to, then ride to that location and take a picture of the topic in the description along with their motorcycle. Most people felt that some sort of club mileage should be given to riders for their efforts, even if they are alone. Brian and Floyd will work out the points system and club mileage associated with each item, and report again at the March meeting.

The Gateway Canyons Resort will be having a car show on May 19th. Bill will see about motel rooms, etc. to make this an overnight or a three day ride.

There were three nomination for the Mental Meltdown award. Brian was nominated for not bringing the award to the meeting. Pete was nominated for dropping his new/old Harley in the snow packed alley behind his house just 124 feet from the garage. A new turn signal lens, and it was all better. Norm got the award though, for sleeping through, and missing the last meeting. Brian said he would deliver the award to Norm.

During a break to buy 50/50 tickets we enjoyed homemade chocolate chip cookies made by Linda Thorne.

We passed the hat to collect a donation to the World Wildlife Fund in the name of Brendon Hudson, Tom and Anne Hudson's grandson who recently passed away.

One of our visitor, Damion drew our other visitor, Willy's winning ticket. Maybe Willy should come to more meetings.

Submitted by Secretary, Bill Gillespie

76 Years of Riding *from page 1*

On February 24th, 2007, our friend Walt "Fossil" Hankinson celebrated his 85th Birthday at Littleton Hospital. For this biker, it was very special as Walt's family really got me involved in his party. My thanks to all of Walt's family, as it was indeed a VERY SPECIAL day for Walt. It was like a "Who's Who" of motorcycling that afternoon. Walt had touched a lot of people's lives, and they came to celebrate his 85th with him. There would be no way to list all of the folks in attendance, but it would put a big smile on your face, with all of the great memories flying around the room.

On Wednesday, February 28th, I received a call from Gina, Walt's wife, wondering if I could spend the day watching Walt. She had not slept the night before, and had very little sleep the night before that. It was a day the snow was coming down hard, and Walt had a great view of it from his room. The two of us kicked around "Old Riding Stories" for a couple of hours before his eye lids got heavy for a well deserved nap. Walt had mentioned before he dosed off how peaceful and quite the snow looked that day.

As I read my book and watched the snow fall, I remembered all the great times Walt and I have had over the last twenty-five years. It is very rare to have a person like Walt to come into a person's life. I have been one of the lucky one's.

Walt continues to fight, and would not surprise this biker if he puts things off for a long while. I sure hope so, as he is the last of a great breed of motorcyclists.

A little side note to all this is a big heart felt thanks to my brother Bob Norton. Bob truly has a big heart, and is a great care giver to our club member Walt. He has been by Walt's side every day for anything Walt or his family might be in need of.

Let us all have a great riding year, but always remember to keep our biker brothers and sisters close in our hearts.

Thumper

Ride report, (and interesting LEO encounter)

George Barnes

Does anyone ride anymore? Well, I did the other day.

The weather Sunday morning was bright and beautiful. It was warming up nicely; 37 by 11:00. My wife decided to go to Grand Junction for the afternoon and I had my honey-dos done by noon. Gee, what to do? Well, I logged onto the CDOT road condition site and noticed that McClure Pass was only showing ice & snow pack in spots. What the hell, says I!

By the time I reached Carbondale the temperature was knocking on the 40s. There were clouds over Carbondale, but Mount Sopris and the area over McClure was cloudless and blue.

Now, CO 133 is one of THOSE roads. You know the kind; no matter how pissed off you might be at your wife, kids, boss or anything else, 10 minutes on this road and all is well with the world. After passing a bunch of Sunday afternoon sightseers south of town, I picked up the pace.

I used to live in Carbondale and 133 was my therapy road; I'd ride it weekly during the summer. Sunday it was beautiful; there was a lot of snow run-off crossing the asphalt, but, for the most part, it was clean and dry.

I continued to pick up the pace, getting into the rhythm of the road and just generally having a blast. I came up on a pick-up truck doing the speed limit, (55 mph), with a light bar on top. I quickly realized it was a Colorado Division of Wildlife truck and, therefore, no threat, (or so I thought). I waited for a legal place to pass. After all, I didn't want to piss him off. I dropped a gear and gave the LT a little throttle and went by him about 20 over. As I cruised down the road, I noticed he was on my ass and had his silly lights on. "WTF", I says to myself.

So, I pull over onto the wet/gravel strewn shoulder. As I watched him approach in my mirror, I detect a definite attitude. He more marched towards me than walked. He says "I suggest you slow it down a bit". For the life of me, I don't know why, but I

replied "Why?" (my dad was an LAPD cop, I should know better). He took a step back, pumped up his chest and said, "Because you're riding way over the speed limit and I AM a law enforcement officer and I CAN give you a ticket". "OK," I said, "just checking". He asked for my driver's license, which posed a little bit of a problem. My wallet was in the tail truck, only accessible from off the bike, and I was stopped on a soft, off-camber shoulder. I managed to move the bike around enough to get the proper lean angle, then slowly dismounted, all the while expecting the side stand to sink into the mud and the whole thing to collapse.

I then notice the DOW guy was backing up and had his hand on his pistol. "My wallet is in the trunk" I said. He relaxed a little, but was still wary. I slowly opened the trunk and, more slowly, pulled my wallet out, (no need to make a bad thing worse, I figure).

I gave him my license and he walked back to his truck. I saw him talking on the radio as I kicked myself for being a jerk to him. I was just wondering if he was the "You can't speed because it's the law" kind of guy, or if he was a member of the "You shouldn't speed because it's unsafe" crowd. I figured the former at this point.

He came back; much more relaxed, and again "suggested" I slow down. Then he gave me the "it's unsafe to ride that fast" speech. I guess he swings both ways. I apologized and told him this was the first nice day in a while and I guessed I was having too much fun. He agreed and we parted as friends.

As I approached the summit of the pass there were a few patches of snow and ice, just like the website had predicted, but they were easily avoided. The air at the summit had dropped to 33, but it was still sunny and the road was surprisingly free of the gravel they throw down for traction.

I rode on down the south side of the pass, giving my usual salute to where I smacked a cow elk a few years ago. After a quick lunch break in Delta, then another quick break to visit my mom in Grand Junction, it was back up the slab to home.

All in all it was great ride. I covered about 250 miles, saw some great scenery and had a completely new and interesting discussion with a LEO. I even got home in time to watch the second half of the big game.

PS: I rode to work today as well. It was bit chilly, (15 at the lowest point), but still better than the cage.

George Barnes

Two Tools

Sometimes, we just need to remember what the rules of life really are: You only need two tools:

WD-40 and Duct Tape.

If it doesn't move and should — use the WD-40. If it shouldn't move and does — use the duct tape.

Submitted by Don McKee

Classifieds

For Sale: Canon Digital Rebel SLR, 6.0 Mega Pixel, additional battery, 18 to 55mm lens included. \$300.00. Contact Willy: willytay@qwest.net 303-980-6654.

For Sale: 94 BMW K1100 LTA—49K miles, asking \$4000

Top of the line BMW sport-tourer in it's day, four cyl, water cooled, fuel injected, computer controlled, about 100 hp, very usable torque characteristics. ABS (can be locked out), heated grips (high, low heat), electric movable windscreen, removable bags and trunk, custom seat. Uses premium fuel, gets between 45 and 55+ MPG, 5.2 + gal tank. Excellent brakes and suspension systems. Runs great, but could probably use a tuneup, as I only changed oil and filters in last couple of years. It has good tires and a near new battery. Call or email Bob Swanson at 303-699-7058, rjswans59@hotmail.com

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