

The Eagle Times

Colorado FreeWheelers

April, 2007

NEXT MEETING
Thursday, April 19, 2007
Fay Myers Motorcycle World
7:00 pm

www.cofreewheelers.org/

In Memoriam of Walt Hankinson

By Peter G. Chronis

Although many of his motorcycling pals called him "Fossil," Walter E. Hankinson, 85, who died March 21 at his Littleton home, was hardly a museum piece and had kept riding until becoming ill only a few weeks before his death.

Walt's memorial service March 25 at the Bullock Colonial Chapel was a sorrowful affair, with some tough-looking bikers choking back tears as they

shared reminiscences of the "Fossil." Both sides of old East Hampden Avenue were lined with parked motorcycles, testimony to how well-loved and well-thought-of Walt Hankinson was.

Pastor Paul "Boots" Reimer gave Walt a fitting send-off, celebrating his life rather than mourning his death and reassuring us that our good friend was in place where there's always good riding.

A slide show of photographic images recounted the rich, full life of this wonderful man. All this, of course, served to remind us how lucky we all had been to know him and how much he'd touched all of our lives.

Walt, a Motorcycle Safety Foundation-certified instructor, taught hundreds upon hundreds of Coloradans how to ride motorcycles first as an ABATE instructor



at Arapahoe Community College and in later years with the Rider's Edge program at Rocky Mountain Harley-Davidson.

Although in his 80s, he thought nothing of riding several hundred miles in one day, and as recently as August had accompanied Rider's Edge chief Bob Norton on a ride to Kansas City and also rode to Chimney Rock on a dinner run with members of the Freewheelers Motorcycle Club, his wife, Gina, recalled.

Indeed, the Fossil could keep up a grueling pace that would soon tire far younger riders.

Long-time friend and motorcyclist Pat McCombs recalled how he and a pal met Walt in the mid-1970s people-watching in front of the state Capitol. "(W)e were both in our 30s at the time, and after

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Bake/Craft Sale!

It's that time of year again. Time for our annual Bake Sale fundraiser. One of the major reasons this club is dues free, the bake sale needs your support.

Date:

Thursday, April 19, 2004

Place:

FreeWheelers Meeting
Fay Myers M/C World
9700 E. Arapahoe Road

Time:

About 7:30

after a short club meeting

Put your baking skills to work and make that special treat that you're famous for. Then bring it to the April meeting to support your club. Many fine crafts have also been featured at the sale.

Also bring your friends, neighbors, family, kids, money, checkbook and appetite. But, leave your diet at home.

It is sure to be a fun evening.

Meeting Minutes

March 15, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Bob Norton in the absence of President Jon Lofstedt. There were no visitors.

Thumper has checked on the status of Mike Finneran and "Boots" Reimer. They are both ok, just busy and can't attend meetings. They both appreciated the welfare check.

Sunny gave a report on the death of Brendon Hudson, grandson of Tom and Anne Hudson. The family is having a difficult time dealing with the tragedy. Sunny will send a card from the club with our support. A \$100 donation from the club was made in Brendon's name to the National Wildlife Federation.

Bob Norton, also acting as Safety Officer, said he recently rode at the back of the group, something he doesn't often do. He said we were looking pretty bad. Bob then gave his pitch about the things we may have learned in rider training courses. If you have never taken a course like an Advanced Rider Course, Bob encourages you to do so.

Ride booklets were passed out, and Frank went through most of the rides.

Frank brought everyone up to date on the Fay Myers open house to be held on April 14th. The club will have a booth set up to recruit new members. All are encouraged to come out at some point during the day to help out. Floyd and Brian gave a report on the season-long trivia contest. They have come up with a system of awarding club mileage to trivia locations based on a mapped distances from Denver. The system would allow mileage to be given to members getting the locations even if they are alone. The contest entails getting a picture of a certain item or place with your bike in the picture.

Alan Hansher won the 50/50 for \$18.50. Don McKee won the Mental Meltdown Award for getting two speeding tickets in eight days... both on his bike.

Submitted by Secretary, Bill Gillespie

Photos from Norm's Wild Goose Chase



New member Michelle.



Lunch at the Pumphouse in Longmont



Our Head Goose Chaser

Thanks

As I was sitting at Walt "Pop's" Hankinson's Memorial Service on Saturday March 24th 2007, looking over a room of two hundred people, some things really came into focus. The majority of the folks in attendance were or are still long time riding friends in the motorcycling community. They had come to pay their respects to another "Fallen Biker". It was kind of a "Who's Who" of the motorcycling community.

What really struck me was when the service started. Colorado Freewheelers Chaplain Paul "Boot's" Reimer was conducting the service for the Hankinson family. Paul a long time Freewheeler, ran one of the nicer Memorial Services, I had the honor to attended over the years.

Sometimes I think we take some of our Freewheeler members for granted. They have been around for so long, that we just assume the things they do or are involved in will just get taken care of. We hand out pat's on the back to a lot of our members for great job on that, or nice ride etc.

But here we have our long time riding friend Paul "Boots" Reimer, who has watched out for the spiritual needs of the Colorado Freewheelers for twenty plus years. He has never let us down, when we have asked of his help. He has sat with many of us for hours at a time when we have been ill. He has spent long hours away from his own tasks to assist some of our members

who were down and out, and near rock bottom.

So, from this member's view-point, to you, Paul "Boots" Reimer, a big THANK YOU for all you have done for the Colorado



Freewheelers over the years, and continue to do. As they say "We are Blessed to have you".

Thumper



In Memoriam of Walt, *continued*

checking this guy out thought he was more than likely pushing 60," McCombs recalled recently in the Eagle Times. "It didn't take us long to realize that he was the real deal and not some 'wanna-be' biker."

And, indeed, he was the real deal. Walt, who joined the U.S. Army in 1940 and retired in 1967 as a command sergeant major, helped teach fellow soldiers how to ride motorcycles as the Army switched from horses to the two-wheelers, his daughter, Carol Figarra, of Michigan, said.

"He started riding when he was 6 years old," Gina said. "He rode Indians, he rode Harleys, and he raced Indians, Harleys and Hendersons _ all on dirt tracks."

Hankinson, who had ridden with a now defunct East Coast club that often "took" over Atlantic City, N.J., in the 1940s, was a charter member of the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the Harley Owners Group and had served as director and club historian. He was also a founding stalwart of the annual Children's Hospital Toy Run, only missing a few of the events in which thousands of motorcyclists take Christmas toys and other gifts to the kids at the hospital.

Often _ especially when the weather turned bitter cold _ Walt would bring Thermoses of coffee and hot chocolate to help fellow bikers warm up as they waited for the procession of motorcycles to take off for the hospital.

Walt was a gregarious man who put strangers quickly at ease. "He was an easy guy to like," McCombs recalled.

Walt's unflappable demeanor and reassuring manner was honed during his Army career which saw him in combat with the Army Engineers in North Africa and Europe. Later, he boarded a transport ship and was at sea nearly four months en route to an invasion of Japan that was canceled when the Pacific war ended, Gina, his wife of 30 years, recalled. Walt also served in the Korean and Vietnam wars.

His Army service took Walt to varied duty stations, including Washington, D.C.; Panama (where he set up the jungle warfare training school); Japan, Ethiopia, and as an ROTC instructor at Lehigh and Drexel universities. Son Roy, who lives in Virginia and spent 22 years in the Navy, took the jungle survival course that his dad created.

"He was pretty strict," said daughter Carol, "but he toned it down when he realized we weren't the troops." Walt was also an expert marksman (with a wall full

of trophies to prove it) and a rifle and pistol instructor who taught all his children how to shoot.

After retiring from the Army, Walt ran a family business and also worked as a commercial/charter tour and school bus driver for many years.

"My father loved to drive," said son Walter Jr. of New Jersey. "He had one (Army) assignment in Philadelphia but he lived in North Jersey and had to drive two hours one way." It wasn't unusual for the elder Walt to rack up 100,000 miles on a military car in short order.

One time on an ice-covered back road between Hagerstown, Md., and Washington, D.C., Walt's car did a 360 spin, Walter Jr. recalled. "You gotta learn how to do that," his father told him. Walter Jr., Roy and their younger brother, John, of Hawaii, all ride motorcycles, although, curiously, their dad didn't teach them.

He was school bus driver for the Cherry Creek Schools for a time in addition to being a commercial charter bus driver. He participated in the National Bus Rodeo.

In 2006, he received the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's Instructor of the Year Award.

He also taught a lot of motorcycle cops (there's a requirement that they take the Motorcycle Safety Foundation course before they can become motorcycle officers).

In addition to the Freewheelers, Walt also was a member of the VFW, the Elks, and The Retired Enlisted Association, in addition to being a life member of the Harley Owners' Group (national and local) and a life member of the American Motorcyclist Association.

I first met Walt several years ago during one of the toy runs. He was a very easy guy to get to know and like. He made people feel at ease _ like they'd known him all their lives. He had a very gentle way of chastising riders for safety infractions and subtly letting them know the right way to do things. In every respect, Walt was the "good sergeant" for all the troops. He looked out for them, and he helped in every way he could. He was the epitome of the old-time bikers I met when I first started riding 45 years ago _ most of them were World War II vets like Walt and only too glad to be of help to younger riders just getting into the sport. And, come to think of it, most of them are gone now, too.

Born Feb. 23, 1922, in Plainfield, N.J., Hankinson was a descendant English immigrants who arrived in 1683 and married into a family of Pilgrim settlers who came to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the 1630s. Hankinson didn't

move to Colorado until 1972 but was no stranger to the state, having worked on an uncle's ranch in the Colorado Springs area as a youngster.

In addition to Gina, Walt, Jr. Roy, Carol and daughter Susan, Walt also is survived by a brother, James C. of North Carolina, eleven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Editor's Note: Have a great ride Fossil. We'll ride together again someday.

Walter Edward Hankinson

I certainly did not get to know Walt as well as many other folks might have, and I deeply regret that. But, whenever I had the opportunity to sit near him at a breakfast or a lunch while we were traveling out and about I always relished that opportunity. I was very clear as you sat next to him that he was definitely and man of many travels, experiences and wisdom. There was always a lesson to be learned while "breaking bread" with this man of many years of seniority.

I could not help but think of how proud I would be after I leave this earthly world if people thought of me with such fondness and admiration as was vividly apparent at the recent memorial service attended by myself and my wife Linda. In that there is a message and/or lesson to be learned by each of us. I know that I need to live each day, NOW, with an objective in mind. Try to be the kind of person that will leave a mark on other people's lives such as our good friend Walter.

There are many people, men and women, that never get to experience the longevity with relatively good health that Walter did up until two or three months prior to his death. He had some 85 very good years to spend and share in his loving family, friendships and acquaintances. Therefore it behooves each of us to treasure each day and not necessarily live it as though it were to be our last, (some of us might do some really wild and crazy things if we knew it were our last) but to at least consider that there is a yet to be determined number of days left out in front.

I know that he will be greatly missed by many. The way that I find comfort in this instance, as I reflect back on the passing of my own father many years ago, is to have the faith and belief that he has gone to a place beyond, where there is peace and no pain or suffering.

Live, love and laugh with one another.

Floyd Thorne

First 'Summer' Open CFW Ride

by Don McKee

Golden Gate Canyon, Estes Park, Glen Haven, Big Thompson Dam Site, Loveland (lunch), Carter Lake, Boulder, home. Unbelievable! Awesome weather—pushin' 80 degrees toward the end.

The winter weather is beginning to really break, and the biker-kids are ready. We were astounded to see just how many bikers had the same idea on this fine day.

The Neighbourhood Grill set up three tables in a long row, and we added another. The typical feast was enjoyed by all. Becky Gillespie [Stud Muffin], Frank Heinzel [Freewheelin' Franklin] and Floyd Thorne joined us for breakfast.

The twelve riders ambled out to the parking lot to tell war stories, tell jokes about those not there, and get ready to ride. Frank went off to assist a lady-rider club, Becky went to be with her parents at church, and Floyd—maybe to join the RMVTA ride.

Ten Riders, PLUS two guardian angels (no, not those two—Don & Walt)

Ten (plus two) savvy riders set off in a westerly direction on Littleton Blvd.

The route, selected by Ride-Leader Brian Boberick and Co-Leader Jon Lofstedt, took the excited riders north on Santa Fe Avenue to U.S. 285, west to C-470, north to Morrison, north behind the hogback to U.S. 6, around Golden, and west up Golden Gate Canyon.

Soon the dregs of a loooong winter were left on the CO-46 pavement in Golden Gate Canyon as the leaders set a blistering pace—draggin' a peg or two in that process. Of course, all traffic laws were strictly obeyed—usually.

Fluid Motion Up Through Golden Gate Canyon. Brian, Jon, Gene and Don were like little kids—with an occasional "whoopee" to be heard on CB channel-15. Of course, Brian dutifully called out the numerous leftover remnants of winter—pockets of road-gravel here, a stray rock or two there, and one strange 'blip' on his fail-safe radar-detector—a false alarm.

The four 'hot-dogs' pulled-over into the Golden Gate State Park vehicle area until the rest of the group joined us—in just a few minutes. The state rest room got some business as the guys chewed and grunted and spat and kicked the proverbial tires. Peter was having such a good time that he whizzed by, headed for points-west—the Wing Commander hot on his 'heels.' Soon, they returned.

We marveled as biker after biker passed on their way to warm-weather nirvana. The sport-bikers in particular were certainly feeling their oats.

We hit the saddle once again, heading toward the snow-capped peaks—which

seemed to be so close one could reach out and touch them. We crept by the local sheriff's hoosegow, and turned north on the famous Lariat Trail Scenic Hi-Way (CO-119 in that area), along the Peak-to-Peak Highway.

Dodging the many substantial potholes and zooming around the folks who were out for a SLOW Sunday drive, we passed Braeher Ranch Reservoir and we chatted (lead by Pat McCombs) about the good old days—when the top-musicians came from far and wide to record their licks in Nederland.

We passed by "General's Way" and negotiated the two sharp switch-backs as the occasional pothole leaped in front of us.

It was still somewhat early, so the watering holes in Rollinsville were nearly empty, so to speak. We neither saw nor heard a train as we passed over the main east-west rail line for the old Denver and Rio Grand, and now the behemoths of the freight and passenger rail corporations. The Rollins Tunnel under the Continental Divide was out of sight, seven miles to the west.

We passed the delightful lake that sits astride the Boulder County line, and noticed the Dahl Campground is still closed for the "off-season."

We zoomed by the Coal Creek Canyon Road (CO-72) and Magnolia Drive as we descended into "Ned" for a pit-stop at the local Quick-Stop.

Refreshed and drained, we jumped back on the Peak-to-Peak (now CO-72) and zigzagged our way up the road past Cold Spring Drive, Sugarloaf Drive, Switzerland Trail, Gold Hill Road, and Indiana Gulch Road (Left-Hand Canyon Drive) where it tip-toes through the gravel roads in Ward, CO.

Soon we glided by the idyllic Peaceful Valley and the small town of Raymond, CO as we reached CO-07, the continuation of the Peak-to-Peak Highway toward Estes Park, CO. As we climbed and skirted Ferncliff and Allenspark, we were greeted by stunning views of Long's Peak in her winter garb.

Riding northward along the easterly boundary of the gigantic Rocky Mountain National Park, passing through Meeker Park, we were certainly humbled by the sights and views. Passing the Aspen Lodge and Lily lake, we had the RMNP on both sides—credible rock formations.

We passed the Saint Malo Retreat Center, where Pope John Paul stayed while in Denver in the 1990s. We also passed the wonderful Salvation Army Retreat Center before descending past the Mary's Lake Road and into Estes Park.

We pulled off South Saint Vrain Avenue to do the male-bonding thing in the parking lot for the Visitor Center, at the west end of the

Lake Estes Golf Course. A man was fly-casting for trout in the Big Thompson River.

Brian and Jon then set off northward on McGregor Avenue (CO-43) through Devil's Gulch to ride through Glen Haven—and more-better twisties. At one point we crested a knoll and curved abruptly to the right, resisting the "airborne-temptation." Hwy-43 actually swings eastward and a tiny bit southeast as we continued trending downward toward Loveland, CO as we rejoined US-34 (Big Thompson Canyon Road) in Drake, CO.

Continuing east we stopped for more refreshment and a potty-break at the little dam; best store by a dam-site. Once again we



chatted and did our thing, as hundreds (really) of motorcycles zoomed by.

Because the clock was moving faster than we anticipated, we ditched the side-trip to Masonville and skee-daddled for the Perkins Restaurant just east of Wilson Avenue in Eisenhower Blvd. in West Loveland. We enjoyed a great chat with a long-time biker who came to Colorado from California, forty years ago.

Refreshed and filled, we doubled back to the Carter Lake Road (Larimer County Route 29) and headed south, then west through the mini-hogback on LC-18-E, passing an incredible statue of a Brave man (medicine man) on horseback, with an eagle held in one hand. Or, is that what it is? What do you think?

We then turned south on LC-31, past the large county recreation staff and equipment facility, and up the long grade to Carter Lake. Once again, we passed many motorcycles, with more than a few parked at the hangout just north of Carter Lake.

The Lake is filling nicely—perhaps 30 feet below the top of the dams. There were many

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First Summer Ride, *continued*

boats on the lake, though almost no breeze for the sailboats—good day for sun-tanning; the temperatures were in the low 70s.

We rode atop two of the dams as we meandered south along the east side of Carter Lake, waving to one of the many law-enforcement rangers in his official pickup truck.

We then proceeded east on Larimer County Road 8-E, having circumnavigated the Sedona Hills enclave. We turned south (again on LCR-23) for a few hundred feet, then continued on Boulder County Road 23, west on BC-06, and again south on BC-R-23-E to Woodland Road, where we turned west to go around the huge house with the many Ham-radio antennas, south east of Rabbit Mountain.

We continued through the traffic control light at the Ute Highway (CO-66), riding SLOWLY on 75th Street through the burg of Hygiene, past the Vance Brand Longmont Airport and Nelson Road, curving right and left to pass the Lagerman Reservoir and Dodd Lake to joint with the so-called “Longmont-Diagonal Highway” (CO-119) as it scoots past the Boulder Municipal Airport to South Boulder Road, where we go east to CO-93, then south toward Golden and our homes.

What a day! At one of our pit-stops (yes, there were more than a few), Thumper was heard to say; “We had a great ride. Perfect weather. Wall-to-wall motorcycles every place we went today. It seems that everyone is trying to recover from cabin fever. Let’s hear it for two-wheeled medicine.”

After the ride, Frank Heinzl logged the ‘official’ 241 miles for each of these member-riders; Brian Boberick [BB, Lead], Cliff Eudy [Pipe Bender], Jon Lofstedt [Nomad, Co-Lead], Pete Chronis [Bedrock], Bill Gillespie [Wing Commander], Pat McCombs [Thumper], Don McKee [Orange Bear], Gene Porter, Norman Roeder [Monkey Wrench], and Rex Young [Road Rider]. We were honored by the spiritual presence of Don Council and Walt “Fossil” Hankinson on this glorious ride.

Wobble! What Wobble?

Honda should be very pleased, that they are making a lot of other folks rich. Little did they know the the under engineered front suspension of the GL 1800 would be so popular. For the moment, and \$1400.00 lighter in my pocket book my “Wobble” has been corrected. For some GL 1800 riders, it has become the “Never Ending” story.

If you are a GL 1800 owner, at the advice of a Honda Master Technician, you might want to check out the feature article of the month in the March 2007 Motorcycle Consumer News. It is call “GL 1800 Gold Wing Suspension Make over. Traxxion Dynamics to the Rescue”. It is a four page read that will really open your eyes, to what a number of us have been bitching to Honda about, since the 1800’s came on the market.

I looked at the web site this morning, for the complete Consumer News. At the present time, they have the February news letter up, but will be posting the March issue shortly. That web site is www.mcnews.com

We figured out down at RPM MotorSports, that if you did everything is this article, you would be looking at a cost of around \$2500.00. Traxxion Dynamics web site is www.traxxiondynamics.com

Would be of interest to me, and I am sure other members feed back on this. Although I love my GL 1800, it would be nice to see Honda and their field representatives, admit they have a problem. Seems like every time I change something on the front suspension, they look into what it is that I have done.

Thumper

Sixth Annual Biker & Bike Blessing

Sunday, May 06, 2007
North Metro Church
12505 Colorado Blvd.
Thornton, CO

Join the Pastor in the church parking lot - blessing begins at 10:15 am. You are welcome to attend the regular gatherings at either 9 am or 10:30 am.

All are welcome
Bring your friends
Wear your leathers

If you have any questions call Ron Hall at 303 452-6251 or rph4750@msn.com.

On the Web Site

Frank has posted back issues of the Eagle times, (back to June 2003) on the club web site. Just click the link in the latest news. He has also added to the ride calendar so check it out.

Classifieds

For Sale... 94 BMW K1100 LTA—49 K 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 just 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

For Sale... Power Mac computer: Silver Tower Model, Power PC. 2.0 GHz dual processor, 1.5 MB Ram, 200 GB Hard drive. Hardly used, Some extra software with it. \$1000.00. E-mail Willy at: willytay@qwest.net

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