

The Concourier

The Journal of the Concours Owners Group

Fall - 2007



*Another great gathering of the COG faithful in
the hills of West Virginia, August 7th-11th.*

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Concours Owners Group

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Rob Stevens, 1989-1990

Ron Ramlow, 1991

George Fitch, 1992-1994

Tom Adams III, 1995-1998

Carl Metler, 1999 - 2005

Guy B. Young II, - 2005 - present

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Photography: Steve Smith and Bob Burns

The *CONCOURIER*

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from the editor's desk...



Hot, but oh, so happy was I...

I covered two bases with this most recent COG National Rally. I rode clear across the United States and back—something I wanted to do all my life—and I covered the national rally for *The Concourier*.

Of the first instance, more elsewhere. In the second, I have to say that West Virginia isn't anything like I imagined it to be, which goes to show you how deep an impression all those famous Depression-era photographs make on a person unfamiliar with the modern reality of West Virginia. It was a bit of an eye opener for this West Coaster. Indeed the state is incredibly verdant and pocketed with picturesque little towns in the coves and hollows that make up much of the state. That banjo picking kid in *Deliverance* never did show up. And the Canaan Valley venue for this year's national rally was top notch. Plenty of room, plenty of things to do and of course plenty of riding throughout the countryside.

Mother Nature could have been a little more cooperative in that for several days both before and after the event the entire eastern half of the country seemed to suffer record temperatures coupled to some good (?) old-fashioned east-of-the Rockies humidity. From the looks of things to this writer, it didn't seem to dampen anyone's ardor. Folks were out there rain or shine.

We are really grateful for Kawasaki sending in no fewer than 8 new Concours 14s for us all to try out. The loaded them into a big semi-trailer in Irvine, CA, drove it across the country and set up a demo area at the resort, replete with flags and company personnel to answer questions and hold little meetings explaining all the new hi-tech bells and whistles in this completely new machine. (We should also quickly add our thanks for Bob Sherwood, COG's Industry Liaison for making it all happen.) The effort was a tremendous indication of the support Kawasaki Motors America gives to probably its most rabidly loyal owners group. Most of the Coggers in attendance had a chance to take one for a spin, albeit a strongly regulated one. Though one couldn't take a demo C14 through it's paces ala Deals Gap, one got a clear impression of the power and performance engineered into this new iteration of the Connie. It is, in fact, a hell of a machine.

Jason Kaplitz, Steve Smith & Co. did a great job in putting this rally together, and the club is so much the better for people like them who, with literally boundless enthusiasm, took on the work of making the 2007 national rally happen. We tip our hat to the entire 2007 rally team. Kudos to you all.

Elsewhere here, you may have noticed that this issue is called the Fall issue. There is no Summer issue. We decided we needed to make a little change to get our issues a little more seasonally current. Due to the fact that mailing your magazine bulk rate caused impossible delays in getting a new *Concourier* to you in a timely fashion, and due to the fact that yours truly was on a month-long motorcycle odyssey to the right side of the continent, there was no way we could produce a fourth issue this year. Then, we got word that, henceforth, *The Concourier* was going out 1st class! Wow! Wait times now go from 8 weeks to maybe 4 or 5 days. So we're going to publish a Winter issue which may get to you by the end of the year! That's real progress and puts a seemingly chronic problem to bed.

And of course this, our post-National Rally issue, is in living color. Enjoy it readers. Our paltry coffers allow but one all-color extravanza per year. And this is it!

Also, we're including news from our sister club in Europe, which is called the GTR Club Europe (GCE). We felt that as we get more familiar with each other through the enormously successful "Over the Pond" program, it would be good for all of us to catch each other up on our doings. We're hopeful that that you'll be hearing from our cousins on the other side of "the pond" on a regular basis. (If no one else in Europe likes us these days we can all be certain of the steadfast and mutual friendship of our GTR brethren.)

Ride safe(ly)

Bob

from the executive director...



August has come and gone and if you were not in Canaan Valley, WV for the '07 COG National Rally, you missed a good one. By all accounts, this was the biggest National we've ever had in attendance (some 450 attendees), and in events that took place. Kawasaki saw the writing on the wall and came prepared with a rig full of new C14 Concours, so those who stood in line patiently waiting had a chance to see—and ride—their new offering. I venture to say that most of us who had the opportunity to take a spin were not disappointed. It's one heckuva bike. *(Maybe in a couple of years, I tell myself. I have a wedding to pay for.)*

You'll probably read this elsewhere in this issue, but the successful outcome of this rally didn't come easy. The many volunteers who took on their appointed task did a superb job seeing that the attendees had plenty to see and do. This came about due to the guidance of rallymeister Jason Kaplitz, with the able assistance of NEAD, Steve Smith. Jason is no novice when it comes to putting on a good show, but he outdid himself this time around. If you haven't already, send him/them a note of thanks for the work that they did. They deserve it.

Just in case you haven't noticed, the "stamp" on this issue reads "First Class." This is the result of what many of you have asked for; especially those of you who participated in the survey that was mailed out earlier in the year (the full results of that survey can be found elsewhere in this issue).

In that survey we also mentioned that such a move would involve a modest increase in dues to cover the additional mailing costs associated with sending *The Concourier*, and the Directory to you, first class postage. This will amount to a \$7.00/year increase, effective January 1, 2008. In addition the postage, the added income will help offset the rising costs of printing these two publications. If you pay attention to the Treasurer's Report, you will see that these are *The Concourier* and postage for mailing them, are the most expensive outlays of cash our club has. Assuming that you keep your current address on file with our membership director, and (the almost) guaranteed postage provided by First Class Mail, this will help ensure that you receive your four issues per year, and the Directory in a timely manner. Besides, considering that the last dues increase was back in the early '90s, it was about time.... Especially now that WE can deliver.

There's a lot more going on as well. Rather than retyping all of it, I'm going to use a letter I wrote in response to a couple of critics of all the club-related things that appeared on the COG internet Listserv. Some of it isn't too pretty, but I think you'll see where we believe the club needs to go in order to move forward. To many, the Concours 14 has made a quantum leap in the future of the Concours badge and COG needs to do the same to ensure its place in the years ahead.

"I am sending this to both you guys, because you asked. Quite honestly, I didn't realize xxx's note came through the List, and didn't pay much attention to the return addy. Like I said, they're trying to kill me at work and I can only respond in snippets. Regardless, here we are.

Here goes:

Carl (Metler) asked to me to consider the (ED) position in 2002 at the National Rally out in CO. I was the NEAD and Tech Ed at the time and just couldn't see stretching myself any thinner. There were problems then that I knew needed attending, but I just didn't have the energy at the time to try and tackle them.

Carl asked me again in 2004. By this time I'd turned down another term at the NEAD position and decided, "What the heck?" so I accepted. Prior to my taking over at the end of Carl's term, I knew we were in deep doodoo with the AMA and they were refusing to sanction/insure our events. I'm not going to get into a debate as to whether we need them or not, but we are a chartered club and they offered the (insurance) protection we felt was needed (for the officers and the COG's assets) for our larger events. I started doing a lot of talking with a friend of mine there at the AMA, attended a RMW he was teaching, and also went to a subsequent district awards banquet he was also attending.

This was not my first district meeting, by the way. I arranged for the AMA to teach an extra RMW during Bike Week for COG. I rode down to Daytona the last Saturday to attend a COG dinner we'd invited him to, ate, then turned around and came home. I was basically 'kissing his ass, but it all paid off and we were back in their good graces. It remains a fragile relationship, but it is working, especially if the folks hosting our rallies do exactly what they're supposed to do.

We had a COG Board of Directors meeting at Hill City, SD last year, and that set the ground work for a lot of things that are in the works now. Some of these I cannot talk about because the issues are (still) very touchy, and we're going to

(See "Guy Young," Page 51)

c.o.g. chronicles

by **Bob Dombrowe, COG #1904,**
COG Secretary/Historian

Hello fellow Coggers! In place of this month's History column I am enclosing the final results from the COG Survey. We would like to thank all the COG members who responded providing feedback. This gives the COG board affirmation of the directions to proceed with when responding to members' preferences.

Because of the mailing issue related to the 2007 Directories which included the surveys, the survey cutoff date was extended several times from the original May 15th date. It was first pushed to June 1st, but due to continuing Directory mailing issues, we eventually extended this to the end of July to consider as many member preferences as possible. However, most responses were received early on (almost 74% responded by the end of April), but by extending the deadline we received an additional 8 replies in July.

Before we begin, here are some general statistics about how many members participated and how we received the responses. Some of the returned surveys were not completely filled out or some of the responses included answers such as maybe, sometimes, not applicable, left the space blank and other such creative responses to a YES/NO question.

For ease of reference I have listed each question in **bold face** as they were printed on the survey. An answer or comment follows each question with most showing a breakdown of responses by both number and the equivalent percentage in parenthesis limited to one decimal point. In some cases I've rounded the percentages to equal 100%.

But overall, as you read each question and look at member responses, there are several trends that are apparent, the most significant being that there are mailing issues related to members receiving both *The Concourier* and Directory.

The total number of member responses received by July 31, 2007 was 272. This equates to almost 13% out of all 2,121 COG members (as of June 2007). Responses received by email were 173 (63.6%). Responses received via U.S. Postal service or typically referred to as snail mail was 99 (36.4%).

Again, we want to thank all members who took the time to send in their preferences.

1. COG#:

By supplying your COG number this tells us who responded to the survey. We received the greatest num-

ber of responses, 80 (29.4%) from our newest members with COG numbers ranging from 7,000 and higher. Our second largest group was from members with COG numbers 6,000 to 6,999 which was 63 (23.2%). So over half of our survey responses are from the most recent members. Most of the remaining member number ranges show a fairly equal distribution. COG members with numbers 5,000 to 5,999 numbered 28 (10.3%). COG members with numbers 4,000 to 4,999 numbered 20 (7.3%). COG members with numbers 3,000 to 3,999 numbered 25 (9.2%). COG members with numbers 2,000 to 2,999 is 18 (6.6%). COG members with numbers 1,000 to 1,999 is 19 (6.9%). And our earliest COG members with numbers less than 1,000 was 16 (5.9%) and there were three members who didn't list their COG number.

2. City/State/ZIP?

By supplying your geographical location we were able to determine which Areas and states the responses came from. The largest number of members responding reside in the Northeast Area, 91 (33.4%). Then North Central with 63 (23.2%), Southwest with 35 (12.9%), Southeast with 34 (12.5%), Northwest with 32 (11.8%) and South Central with 17 (6.3%). The top five state respondents are from Califor-

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nia with 18 (6.6%), Virginia with 17 (6.3%), Washington, New York and Illinois each with 14 (5.2%). There were also 21 (7.7%) respondents from Canada and one from Sweden (.4%).

3. Have you received *The Concourier* in 2006? YES/NO
254 (93.4%) members responded Yes, 17 (6.3%) responded No, and one member left it blank. But looking closer at the data, we found some members didn't differentiate between the years 2006 and 2007. Some members said they received a *Concourier* in 2006 but didn't join the club until 2007. This also brings into question 3a. Members who joined in 2006 potentially would not have received all 4 *Concouriers* depending on when they joined COG last year. Some members weren't sure how many *Concouriers* they received. Some members responded with 6 issues received which is very plausible, that would be 4 in 2006 and another 2 in 2007 up until the time they returned the survey. So what can we glean from this data? Even taking these points into consideration, there are almost 5% (I removed the members who joined in 2007) of the members that have not received a *Concourier* at all. Second even after eliminating all the members who may have gotten less than 4 issues for the year (those who joined in 2006 and/or 2007) there were at least 76 (37.6%) members who did not receive all 4 *Concouriers*. The bottom line is there is a delivery issue and the board is working to rectify this.

3a. If yes, how many issues?

See the discussion above. The number of issues received ranged from 0 to 6.

4. Did you receive the Membership Directory in 2006? YES/NO

Many members responded to this question with a comment about the Directory they received had a mailing label addressed to another member. This actually pertains to the 2007 Directory, but whether we reference the 2006 or 2007 Directory, the data shows that even though 173 (63.6%) of members did receive their Directory, 94 (34.6%) members never received their Directory. 5 (1.8%) did not answer the question. As you are aware the COG Board is taking steps to alleviate the primary cause of members not receiving Directories and that is examining the class of mail service that the Directories are sent in. [As of this writing]

5. Would you entertain a modest dues increase to improve mailings? YES/NO

210 members answered yes (77%), 58 member answered no (21%), 4 didn't answer the question (2%). Most members are willing to improve the reliability and regularity of mail-

ing by a modest dues increase.

6. Would you be interested in receiving either, or both electronically (in PDF format)? YES/NO

154 members responded Yes (57%), 118 members responded No (43%). Of the 154 that answered Yes, 111 responded via email and 43 responded via snail mail. Of the 118 that answered No, 62 responded via email and 56 responded via snail mail. Even though more than half the members responded Yes, there are still 43% who like their hard copies. A typically comment was I take the Directory with me when I go riding.

6a. *The Concourier* YES/NO

Of the 154 members that answered Yes to question 6; 122 responded Yes (79%) and 32 responded No (21%) to receiving the *Concourier* in electronic format.

6b. Membership Directory YES/NO

Of the 154 members that answered Yes to question 6; 112 responded Yes (72.7%) and 42 responded No (27.3%) to receiving the Directory in electronic format.

7. Are you satisfied with the content of the COG webpage? YES/NO

241 members responded Yes (88.6%), 19 members responded No (7.0%). If you notice this doesn't add up to 100%. There were 11 (4.0%) who didn't indicate a yes or no and one (.4%) member who doesn't use the Internet.

8. Do you use the COG Forum (www.concours.org/forum)? YES/NO

164 members responded Yes (60.3%), 105 No (38.6%). There were 2 (.7%) members who didn't indicate a yes or no and one (.4%) member who doesn't use the Internet. More members use the Forum than the List Server.

8a. If yes, does it meet your needs? YES/NO

Of the 164 members that answered Yes to Question 8; 153 responded Yes (93.3%) and 4 responded No (2.4%). There were 7 (4.3%) who didn't indicate a yes or no.

9. Do you subscribe to the COG List server (cog@micapeak.com)? YES/NO

78 members responded Yes (28.7%) and 190 members responded No (69.8%), There were 3 members who didn't indicate a yes or no (1.1%) and one (.4%) who doesn't use the Internet

9a. If yes, does it meet your needs? YES/NO

Of the 78 members that answered Yes to Question 9: 63 responded Yes (80.8%) and 10 responded No (12.8%). There were 5 (6.4%) who didn't indicate a yes or no.

(Continued on following page)

from the industry liaison

by Bob Sherwood, COG #2994, COG Industry Liaison



A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since our last issue, and it has been a great canoe ride, although sometimes without a paddle! So let's start back in June when I was very fortunate to be able to attend the press introduction of the Concours14 in Santa Rosa, CA.

This was my first time at such an event and although I don't know how the other manufacturers do it, Kawasaki sure does it first class.

Due to a flight delay, a limo picked me up at the San Francisco airport and whisked me up to Santa Rosa, where I arrived at the tail end of the evening's presentation by Karl Edmondson, a Kawasaki product manager. Much of the information I had already been made aware of due to my earlier indoctrination for the stint at Daytona.

Anyhow, by now you all probably have read all about the technical details of the new C14, so I won't go into that again here. They were not able to accommodate all of the invitees in one session due to the number of motorcycles that they have available to ride, so just as they finish up one group, they start another. I was lucky to be in the first group along with the major media writers such as Mark Hoyer of *Cycle World*, Tim Carrithers of *Motorcyclist*, Mark Tuttle of *Rider*, Kit Palmer of *Cycle News*, Kent Kunitsugu of *Sport Rider*, Dave Searle of *Motorcycle Consumer News*, Arthur Coldwells of *Robb Report MotorCycling*, Lance Oliver of *American Motorcyclist*, Steve Lita of *RoadBike*, and Neale Bayly, who is a freelance writer. Impressive company and I was in awe.

After a very nice dinner visiting with Bruce Stjernstrom, Kawasaki USA Director of Marketing and Karl



"Testing" the C14

Edmondson, I headed for my room to prepare myself for the next two days of riding along the Pacific coast and the Sonoma wine country. The next morning I awoke around 4:30 since I had not adjusted to the three hour time change. Plus, I had much anticipation about the day's ride. I ate an early breakfast and headed outside to find the 12 bikes all lined up and waiting for us in the hotel parking lot. They had us in 4 small groups with an escort rider, a chase rider, and a photographer. After some briefing, we are off!

Exhilaration time! Fantastic! It was thrilling to be a part of this group. We headed south on Hwy 101 for about 16 miles then exited onto the Dry Creek Road and started heading west towards the ocean and Hwy 1. However, the fun began as soon as we started getting away from the population centers. The roads were not that heavily traveled and had nice curves and beautiful scenery.

The bike handled like a sport bike, only with comfortable ergonomics. It's hard to believe when you are riding it that it is a big, heavy bike. It handled the curves much

better than I am capable of and was comfortable. The power was awesome, yet it comes on in such a smooth, linear way that it doesn't scare you. The only complaint I had was that the mirrors seemed to get more of the rear bags than the road. There were some people that felt heat on their legs, but I didn't. The only time I felt heat was when we were in city traffic late in the afternoon and it was in the high 80's. The heat seemed like it was coming up at me from



All dressed up and ready to go!

around the steering head; I never noticed it on my legs but I had jeans and overpants on, so they may have been insulated from it. The photographer would set up at various locations and we would ride back and forth thru the same spot many times to give him an opportunity to get his shot. This also

gave me a chance to get a feel for making U-turns at slow



Heading through some Northern California twisties

speeds. After a wonderful day of riding fantastic roads, panoramic views, and on what I believe to be the world's best sport touring machine, I was ready for Day 2 to begin. However, the Kawasaki public relations folks had a fun evening in store for us as we pretty much took over a neat little pub with lots of different activities, including pool (I was quickly eliminated in the pool tournament by none other than Mark "the Pool Shark" Tuttle.)

The next morning many of the attendees returned home but those of us who stayed on enjoyed another day of great riding. They had a variety of chase bikes, so I even took a turn riding the Ninja 650R and the new KLR. Both very nice bikes. It was a most memorable experience and I was indeed grateful to have been able to participate.



I simply doesn't get better. Heading through the hills on the way to the coast in a spanking new Concours 14.

Well that was June. The next big thing that happened was our National Rally in August in Canaan Valley, WV. Kawasaki stepped up big time for this with demo rides and door prizes galore. Kawasaki was not the only one, though, who donated door prizes. We had wonderful gifts from many other vendors. We are most appreciative of them, also.

It is now the end of September as I am writing this and I just returned from the Kawasaki Dealer's Meeting in Las Vegas (I know it is a tough job, but somebody has to do it!). New motorcycle models that were introduced includes the ZX-10R with traction control via their Torque Management System (black box), an update based on the ZX-14 so Kawasaki can stay head of the competition; a new Ninja 250R; a KLX 250S dual sport; and two copies of their off-road play bike, the KLX 140.

I looked at the accessories list for the C14 and noted that Kawasaki has available a "spoiler" windshield, a tall windshield, a travel trunk, saddlebag liners, saddlebag guards, a gel seat, and a cover. Probably an even bigger discovery was while visiting some of the vendor booths I come across the Muzzy folks, who had a C14 there with a dual exhaust system installed on it plus a rear fender eliminator that was designed for the ZX-14 but which just happens to fit the C14! I'm not sure when the dual exhaust system will be available, but I suspect it will be available by the time you read this. Everything else was available immediately.



"Excuse me, sir. I know you're somebody. Couldn't I have your autograph?." The author in a moment of reflected glory.

While at the dealer meeting, those of us who were present representing clubs got together and kibbitzed about some of our rallies and other details of running our clubs. The gentleman from the American Voyager Association gave me one of their recent magazines to look at and one of the things that immediately came to my attention is that they have advertising in their magazine. Something we have talked about but was discouraged from doing due to an interpretation of an IRS code by one of our officer's CPA. I hope we can take another look at this, as it would help defray the cost of this publication that is our biggest expense in running this organization. It might even help us from having to raise our dues.

Well that wraps it up for now, let's go riding.



2007 Rally a Huge Success

A record turnout for the West Virginia COG confab

By Steve Smith, COG #3184

Each year, directors and members of Concours Owners Group put their heads together to come up with an appropriately awesome location for the club's annual national rally. For 2007, COG's national rally was held at Canaan Valley, WV the week of August 7-12. (in West Virginia, "Canaan" is pronounced "ka-NANE"). The 2007 rally was the most successful get-together in COG's history, according to Jason Kaplitz, one of COG's 2007 National Rally organizers. Participants came from 37 different states with some as far as the west coast, plus attendees from two Canadian provinces, Bermuda, and Europe.

Kaplitz said, "West Virginia offers some of the best motorcycle riding on the east coast. There's little traffic, great roads and amazing scenery, and that's why we chose this area for our event." The club's national rally is geared toward pulling members together, meeting others of similar interests and of course exploring new parts of the country.

More than 450 Kawasaki Concours motorcycle owners from across the country converged on the Canaan Valley Resort and the Potomac Highlands region of West Virginia to share their enthusiasm for the Concours and sport touring on the area roadways. The resort resides within the 6300 acre Canaan Valley State Park, which also includes a 34-site campground that COG used exclusively for the week in addition to the resort's lodge. The COG group, which filled up the resort, had many activities planned. Two Experienced Rider Course sessions were offered in one of the resort parking lots by the West Virginia Motorcycle Safety Program and multiple on-road training mini-sessions were provided by Stayin' Safe motorcycle training. Other activities included a poker run, evening campfires, a paintball tournament, and a huge BBQ banquet.

The riding was outstanding. There were nine self-guided routes to choose from which allowed rally attendees to explore the area. Maps and literature were provided at rally central to allow riders to plan their own rides using the available routes as a base. Some routes were trips to specific area attractions like "Fallingwater," one of architect

Frank Lloyd Wright's most acclaimed works, the Flight 93 Crash Site Memorial, the New River Gorge Bridge, Seneca Rocks, Seneca and Smoke Hole Caverns, and the National Radio Astronomy Observatory at Green Bank. For the train aficionados there were a number of train rides, including the famous Cass Scenic Railroad. Even the "ride to eat" crowd was appeased with interesting and unique area eateries.

The rally also included a number of informational seminars. *The Concourier* technical editor, Rich Riczinger entertained and educated folks at several "tech sessions" he facilitated, including one where a complete carburetor rebuild was performed. There was even a brief "GPS Primer" seminar offered. Some special activities were also planned with non-riding ladies in mind. There was a "Women's Breakfast" one morning and a planned shopping junket to local shops and galleries.

Kawasaki Motors Corp., USA played a huge role supporting the event, sending a team all the way from Southern California to join in the party, providing two in-depth informational sessions about the new Kawasaki Concours 14. This year's rally coincided with the introduction of the all-new 2008 Kawasaki Concours 14, and Riders of Kawasaki (ROK) provided many items that were provided to attendees in their rally informational packets and as door prizes.

This was also the first time that demo rides were offered at a COG rally. There were more than a half dozen new Concours 14's available and many rally attendees were able to sign up for a ride time slot over the three day period. A Kawasaki pavilion was set up in the resort parking lot. The Kawasaki's event staff prepared a very nice ride route which showcased their new flagship motorcycle. The rides went off without a hitch. Sue Slate from ROK stated that COG members "articulated their responses to our new offering intelligently and openly. Their questions showed the strong knowledge base that has been representative of Concours riders since the bike first entered the scene back in the mid-80's. It was a tremendous experience for all of the Kawasaki staff in attendance to be in the company of riders who respect themselves and their machines."

For additional information, rally reports and photos from the 2007 COG National Rally visit: www.concours.org/2007.



"It takes more love to share a saddle than it does to share a bed." - Anon.

What a Swell Party it Was!

Okay, so it was a little muggy; but that didn't seem to keep some 450 Coggers attending the 2007 COG National Rally from doing what they love to do: meet, greet, eat, drink, and ride in some of the most beautiful country east of the Mississippi River.



The Appalachians are truly unique and well worth a trip no matter from where in the world you hail. The Canaan Valley region of West Virginia couldn't be a better representation of the great natural beauty of this ancient range. Coggers were indeed treated to something special in gathering in such surroundings.



We came from far and near; from the West Coast to the East. We represented 37 states, 2 Canadian provinces, Bermuda, and of course our special guest, Patrick De Maqueville, our OTP “traveler” from from France, and who was sporting enough to sample some of Appalachia’s finest “white lightning.” He quietly pronounced that it was definitely not a Bordeaux.



Once again, our thanks to Steve Smith, Jason Kaplitz and the entire Northeastern area national rally team who took up the challenge of putting on a first class party in a great location and something of which they can be very proud. Next year we gather in beautiful Frisco, Colorado. See you there!



2008 National Rally Venue Announced

It's the Rocky Mountains for '08

The '07 National Rally banquet was pretty near over. What seemed like a carload of prizes were handed out; but folks were still all seated, enjoying coffee and table chatter. The answer to an important question which has traditionally been revealed at the national rally—where were we going next year— had yet to be addressed. Rick Hall, AD for the Southwest Region stepped up to the microphone.

“We'd like to invite you all to the Concours Owners Group 2008 National Rally...he paused...IN FRISCO, COLORADO!”

Cheers went up. A few people looked at each other, wondering where the heck Frisco, Colorado is. It was done. Next year the COG moveable feast goes out west. On June 2-8, 2008 Coggers get a genuine Rocky Mountain high—like nearly 2 miles in the air high!

Situated 9,100 feet above sea level, Frisco's history began with the Ute Indians who first traveled the region now

saloons, not to mention "loads of mines." The mining boomed lasted until 1918.



Along with the rest of the country, Frisco was hit by the Depression; by 1930 Frisco's permanent population had dropped to only 18 people. Frisco was one of the few old mining towns to keep going. Many of the smaller, less accessible mining towns were deserted. Frisco persevered and by 1946 the population had increased to 50.

Frisco, with a current population just under 2,800 full-time residents, remained a sleepy town with a sprinkling of summer tourists until the ski industry, which now attracts some 3 million people a year to the area, brought a new boom era to Summit County which continues to the present. There are no fewer than 8 major ski parks within a short drive from Frisco.

The area is loaded with great motorcycling roads, hiking and biking paths through the hills, a great fishing and boating lake, an historic museum and park, crisp mountain air and incredibly starry nights.

Set your calendars for next June. If you're a sea level kind of person, you're in for a real treat, not to mention a day or two of acclimatization. Frisco's where you want to be next year. - *Bob Burns*

(A 2008 National Rally sign-up form can be found elsewhere in this magazine.)



known as Summit County, CO. The first white men to come through this area were known as "mountain men" who trapped in the high mountain lakes for the thick coat of the beaver. The mountain men trapped in this territory from 1810 to around the 1840's.

The 1870's ushered in mining to the area. Founded in 1873 (officially chartered in 1879) by Henry Recen, the Town of Frisco quickly developed thanks in part to the locale's many mines. By 1882 the permanent population reached 250 with two railroads, many businesses, hotels and

OTP “Traveler” Somewhat Surprised

The 2007 GCE Club recipient, runs into the usual “image vs.reality” problem.

He was “surprised in many ways” he said. Surprised at the openness and informality of the Americans he met. And very surprised at the sheer size of the USA.

Patrick DeMaqueville, 41, who lives in Saint Loubès, France, a small town in the world famous Bordeaux wine country, flew from his home country and landed in Denver, where Cogger Rick Hall hosted him at his home in Lyons, CO and from where they kicked off a weeks-long, several thousand mile ride through the the USA.

“What really shocks Europeans like myself who have never come to the states is just the size of this country,” he said. “I never in my life realized the size of the United States. And the diversity of it!” adding a classic Gallic “*Oooff!*”

In addition to Hall, other Coggers were able to help out in seeing to it that “the traveler,” as the OTP recipients are referred to, was well taken care of. Chris Baum, Mike Flynn, Bruce Brown, Jerry Roland, Larry Leranthe, John Hogaberth and others, all assisted in making sure that Patrick’s time was well used in discovering the USA.

“I met a French girl here sometime after I got here and we were comparing impressions of the USA, DeMaqueville said, “and we agreed that we both were deeply impressed with the informality of Americans. Neither of us

expected them to be quite so open.

“I’ve been treated like a king since I got here,” he said when we caught up with him in Canaan Valley. “I can’t thank COG enough for making me so completely comfortable here.



Patrick de Maqueville, the 2007 OTP traveler in Canaan Valley, WV

“Really, the whole experience has been tremendous. I never expected to see all the wildlife that I’ve seen on the road on this trip. Even the roads themselves were incredible, although some states had better roads than others.”

This year’s “traveler” from Europe was a runner up to Marc Kleefstra in 2005 and so GTR Club-Europe chose to send Patrick over this year.

The “Over the Pond” (OTP) program is now firmly—but very informally—a part of COG life. Members of both COG and it’s GTR sister club in Europe, send a deserving member of one or the other club “over the pond” each summer to experience motorcycle travel outside their home turf. In odd numbered years, the Europens send their candidates here. In even numbered years, Coggers send one of their members.

The members of each club make purely voluntary contributions which go to finance the recipient’s travel. Though the OTP program has no official recognition within the COG, itself, it is highly regarded by members of both clubs and has been enormously popular and successful. - rmb

COG Board Announces Dues Bump

In response to a COG membership survey taken in 2007, the Concours Owners Group Board of Directors agreed to take a seven dollar per year increase in dues in order to eliminate what has been a major problem in getting timely delivery of *The Concourier* to its membership. The decision was taken just prior to the the national rally in Canaan Valley, WV.

“This problem of having to wait 6, 8, or even 10 weeks for our members to get their magazines has been an ongoing source of grief for everyone for a very long time,” said COG executive director Guy Young II. “In many instances, members simply didn’t even get their copy of *The Concourier*, he added. “It’s time we fix this problem and the only way to do that is to shift from bulk mailing the magazines to sending them out first class. The added cost is so substantial that we simply couldn’t absorb it without asking members to help in the form of a dues increase. Moreover, the results of the membership survey were so convincing that we felt that asking for the additional money wasn’t going to be as onerous as first thought. Most felt that the increase was well worth the benefit. COG hasn’t increased it’s dues since 19XX.”

Young stated that there is another issue which membership mentioned were very important to them and which will add cost to the club. “Folks are really getting insistent that they be allowed to renew their membership via the internet,” he said. “In an age where more and more business is conducted using the internet to send and receive money, we really need to come into the 21st century and make it as easy as possible for members to renew their membership as well as for prospective members to join COG. As the C14 gets into circulation it’s going to be incumbent for COG to be seen as the club of choice for people who have purchased a Concours 14 and who have switched from other non-Kawasaki makes. The board and I are looking very hard for a way to implement these much needed changes and we hope to get this accomplished sometime in the next several months.”

Getting There Half the Fun, Right?

“Popeye” may have a different slant on it.

by Bruce”Popoeye Reed, COG #1045

My vacation—the good, the bad, the ugly.

The Good

It’s August! It’s AUGUST! It’s AUGUST! Wow! What is so exciting about August? It is my planned vacation month. I have had this one planned on for almost ½ a year. I’ve gone through my list of things I need to take with me at least twice. Am I forgetting anything keeps echoing through my mind. Nope! I even have arranged for the cats to be fed. So there I was, off to visit Palestine, Athens, Paris, Moscow, Warsaw, and London. So what did I forget to pack? Did you mention a passport? Luckily I did not need a passport for these locations since they are all in Texas. These were just towns to pass through on my way out going to Canaan Valley in WV for the Concours Owners Group National Rally.

Once you get out of Texas, does everything turn green and grow thicker? It was really great to see so much greenery and trees. I think only the cities and major highways weren’t green. Even the gas prices were cheaper with premium going for less than 3 bucks which made riding around that much nicer. I still have to remember to both eat and drink correctly when I travel so that I don’t get so weak. I ended up averaging two states per day with Texas and Arkansas out the first day, and Tennessee and Kentucky done by the second. The third morning out had me just breaking into the West Virginia border. After two days of glorious sunshine, what happens? You guessed it, it rains!

Actually, it was kind of refreshing. I ended up misreading my map and directions and missed my turnoff by some 50 miles. I hooked up with Richard, a fellow COG member and we made our way over to the rally site. Thank goodness for guides, with the way I get lost! 1,600 miles for me in three days wasn’t too bad!

Once the campsite was set up, it was off to register up at the lodge which was 1½ miles away. It was good to meet some of the old friends that we had made from previous encounters, match faces to e-mailings, and just meet new people. Is this what they call bonding? You bet! Tuesday and Thursday were the main banquet nights on the schedule, which left the rest of the week open for what else but riding? I rate the Texas hill country and the Big Bend area as havingsome great roads. With the contrast of countryside, West Virginia rates high in my book for roads to travel. I would enjoy returning here to do some more riding. Steve (Tulsa) and Tom (Kemah) let me tag along with them on

several days of riding with each them. Again, it is always good to have a guide or somebody with a map to help find your way back.

The Bad

Well, it really wasn’t bad, but a friend brought his lowered Connie over to the site. He permitted me to sit on it and, with it being lowered 2”, I could touch the deck flat footed. Maybe another Concours will be in my future. Most of the campground had cleared out by Saturday. Tom and I had laid out some good routes and plans on making it back to Texas. We would part ways in Mississippi. About the only place that we planned to hit the slab was getting down to the lower part of WV so we would be able to do Deal’s Gap the following day. Tom never hit it, but I did. A retread got squirted out into my path and I caught it with the right floorboard and the trailer I was towing. The bike ended up in the right lane, the trailer shell was in the middle of two lanes with the frame now in two sections against the inside rail, and I was four feet from the inside guard rail.

What a trip! Here is all my crap spread across the highway with all the traffic stopped and I’m a bloody pulp sitting on the rail smoking a cigarette. Bummer! People were real quick to help administer first aid and help stop the flow of blood from all the wounds. I did not elect to go to the hospital. Tom went on his way after the wrecker showed and I have yet to hear from him since.

The Ugly...the REALLY ugly

The wrecker driver charged me \$200 to take the bike 2.5 miles down the road to his shop where he literally dumps the bike instead of leaving it on the flatbed for an easier transfer. He then offered to charge me only \$800 plus gas to transfer the bike on Tuesday to the nearest Kawasaki dealer, which is 180 miles away. One way to San Antonio with U-Haul was \$1200. Can anybody say “price gouging?” I chose Door No.2 and rented the U-Haul.

I had to ride the bike into the back of the truck thanks to the dummy who took the bike off of the flatbed. Oh yes, injured as I was, I got to load the rest of it by myself, too! (It gets even uglier, so stay tuned.)

The U-Haul broke down and I spent 5½ hours on the side of the road until Officer Smothers stopped. I spent the whole day waiting for the truck to get fixed before I could get on my way again. I finally got back to the San Antonio area on Wednesday and dumped the bike off at the shop for

(See “Popeye,” Page 19)

Chesapeake Riders' Get Together

by Roger Somero, COG 5903

The Eastern Panhandle Ride and Camp in West Virginia (September 14th-16th, 2007) is now in the books.

I was really looking forward to this ride as last year I meet some really great Coggers and had a fantastic time. There wasn't much traffic on the forum and Jim Miller wasn't going to be hosting due to some other business but I wasn't going to let that stop me from heading back to West Virginia! Tom Hofssis (forum handle: *tommyhof*), riding a Connie and I (*roger123*) on a Vee-Strom, made plans to leave Virginia Beach on Friday afternoon, which would put us at the Harper's Ferry KOA around 1800 (Tom needs to stop every so often for his coffee).

Weather reports were inconclusive but we were planning on some rain for at least Friday and maybe Saturday morning. No worries, I know my First Gear getup and Oxtar Matrix boots are completely waterproof. We blasted out of work early and got on the road about 1215. The worst part of these trips for us is actually getting out of Virginia Beach; the only way to leave here is via bridge, tunnel or a combination of both. I was already in somewhat of a bad "traffic mood" as it seems as though around here they issue you a cell phone with your license and it's mandatory that you drive with it planted in your ear at least 75 percent of the time.

We got to the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel and, as you can imagine, the yellow lights started flashing and the warning signs signaled that the left lane was closed ahead. Those of you who are familiar with this area know that they *never* just close one lane of a tunnel. We came to stop and shut off the bikes to wait it out. The good news was that it was only about 75 degrees versus the 95 degrees that we usually get stuck in. It was actually only about 15 minutes before we started moving again.

We slabbed it on I-64 and bailed off the freeway and on to Highway 33 towards Montpelier, VA. It's about 125 miles or so to Montpelier and it's also where we leave the freeway behind, so it's a good place to stop and catch your breath (and get a cup of joe). Weather was looking okay, kind of cloudy but the temps as well as the humidity were way down. Good riding weather. From there we hit Hwy. 522 towards Culpeper, Hwy. 15 towards Warrington, Hwy. 17 towards Marshall and then the *really* good roads: Hwys. 713, 611, 690 and finally 340 into Harpers Ferry. We only had two other "traffic incidents" after the wait at the tunnel. A jack knifed pick-up/goose neck trailer with a small bulldozer on it delayed us for a few minutes and a crazy teen-

ager tried to kill me while text messaging. I was ready for her though so no harm done other than a slightly increased heartbeat! It started to sprinkle about 50 miles out but it was no big deal.

After arriving at the KOA we took a lap around to see if there were any other Coggers there. Andrew Martin (on a Connie) was set up already so we knew that we weren't going to be alone. It was still spitting rain somewhat but we got setup and headed into town for dinner. A papaburger at the A&W was just what the doctor ordered. Then it started to rain a little harder so we headed back and enjoyed some adult beverages in our rain gear next to the fire ring (noticed I said fire ring and *not* fire). I was thinking to myself (I may have actually let it slip out once, as well) that this really kind of sucks, ride 275 miles to sit in the rain and drink beer in the dark.

That evening while lying down reading the latest moto-rag write-up on the C14, using my LED head flashlight, lying on my king sized therma-rest inside my super-deluxe-rated-at-20-below-zero sleeping bag, all while staying perfectly dry in my hi-tech-Eureka tent I got to thinking. I was sleeping—or at least trying to—about 20 feet away from a Civil War battlefield trench. I wondered what those soldiers were going through and how they were dealt with weather back then. I'm sure that whatever tents they had must have leaked like sieves; they probably were lucky to have any sort of blanket (or even shoes for that matter); everything they had was carried on their backs; and by the way they were *shooting* at each other. It was a pretty eerie but neat moment for me. I actually slept pretty darned well that night.

When the birds woke me up Saturday morning, I knew things were going to be okay. Tom and I headed to Cindy Dee's as Andrew wanted to sleep in and he planned to meet us later.

On the road I noticed Tom's headlight was out, so I headed to the restaurant and he was off to Wally World. I was the first one there but a gentleman on a Gold Wing showed up a few minutes later—not a Cogger—but was stopping off for breakfast on the way to get a new tire for his Wing. Tom made it back and just when I thought we were going to be doing the ride by ourselves Russell and Martha Fleming (two up on a C10), Mike Shaw (*aka shawmut*, riding his "Wee Strom") as well as Al (on a Connie) showed up. Okay, now we're cooking here!

We waited till just after 9 AM and no one else showed so we were off. Paul (on a BMW GS) and Mitch (on another "Wee") ended up at the campground and hooked up with Andrew but I guess they got to the restaurant just a little too late to meet up with us (I think Andrew said they got there about 0910). Andrew said they had a nice ride on Saturday, too, so all was not lost for them. I really wanted

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Mitch to be there as then the Wee Stroms would have equaled the number of Connies (three to three). Oh well. Maybe next time.

Tony Bourm actually laid out the route (but couldn't make the ride) and what a route it was! It was one of the most detailed route sheets that I've seen. I can't even attempt to list all the roads here but we were on: 673, 688, 655, 704, 611, 713, 710, 647, 635, 522, 619, 678 and 600 just to name a few! Every road was in perfect condition and had nearly no traffic. We were mostly in VA with occasional jaunts into WV for most of the day.

The weather was absolutely gorgeous. It was pretty chilly in the morning but it warmed up to the high 60's - low 70's towards the afternoon. The route had us on virtually deserted roads through some of the most beautiful horse country you will ever see. The houses and land just had me in awe. Truly unbelievable country. This trip was worth it just to see the fences that these people have erected around their properties. Some of the rock fences went on for miles, I have no idea when or how they were built but it was just amazing to see how perfectly laid out they were and what great condition they were in. I'm sure some of them date back to the Civil War but some looked to be newer construction, very impressive to say the least.

We had a great lunch at the Kac-Ka-Pon restaurant in Wardensville, WV. (Ok, I just put the name into Yahoo and got the skinny on the place, check it out at www.kackaponrestaurant.com.) Please don't take this the wrong way or be offended but I'll guarantee you every worker there has had an AARP card for at least 20 years! The service and food were excellent, Tom had pie for desert and Al had—coleslaw! (Don't ask, you needed to have been there).

We continued on and got back to the KOA around 1600 or so. We had lost Al at a red light shortly before the campground but Russell, Martha and Mike stopped off for a few minutes before heading back to their homes. Russell and Martha were going back to MD and Mike needed to hit PA where his very pregnant wife was, I'm sure, anxiously awaiting his return!

Had a great fire that night and told a bunch of lies till about 0100 (well at least Andrew and I did, Tom hit the sack around 0000). We had filled up on hotdogs, fried baloney, "Smores" and had washed it all down with some adult beverages.

The weather on Sunday was also perfect and we just reversed the route on the GPS and had an excellent ride home. We rode through some really neat Civil War battlefields and even stopped to snap a few pictures. (Actually, I just needed to have some proof that I actually did go on a ride this weekend!) Pictures just don't do these places the justice they deserve. You need to get out and ride through them. There are more pics on my webshots account: [http://](http://community.webshots.com/album/560783491kISzTN)

community.webshots.com/album/560783491kISzTN if you care to see them.

See you on the next ride.



(*"Popeye," continued from page 15*)

an estimate for my insurance, then dumped the rest of the stuff out of the truck at the house and the took a well deserved and needed shower. My neighbor Lisa Moore brought me back to the house after dumping the truck.

My neighbors Lisa, and Wade Toth have ended up being my drivers since I have gotten back. Lisa has taken me back and forth from the hospital and Wade has kept me up with all of my doctor appointments. So far I have gotten six X-rays, antibiotics twice a day, and wound care once a day. Why all the fuss? I fractured my thumb and, with my being a diabetic, it easily got infected. I ended up losing it up to the first joint. Hopefully, it won't go any further than that. With the way it is right now, I still should be able to work a throttle and brake with the right hand. Don't ask me to hitch hike with it, though.

As I expected, the insurance company totaled my bike. The trailer is also totaled along with the helmet and all of the clothes that I was wearing. They don't even deserve to be rags. All three of my prosthetic devices made it through the accident unmarked. And, yes, I was wearing all of them at the time!

So, what are my plans for next year's vacation? Testing cotton balls in a padded cell sounds good to me right now.



HOST AN EVENT!

COG is only as strong as its members are active and involved with other members. Why not host a ride, or a tech session, or something as simple as a get-together for beer and pizza at a local restaurant? The best part of being a Cogger is the fellowship which inevitably results from just "hanging out" with each other. And the only way that can happen is if members participate. Hosting an event of whatever kind is easy and a ton of fun.

Call your local AAD (see the list on the inside back cover of this magazine) and ask him or her how to go about being a host. Remember: Nothing happens until somebody does something.

FREE PRIZES IN EVERY BOX!!!

by Rich Riczinger, COG #5977

Technical Editor

“30 years of technology! Thank you, Kawasaki....*Thank You...*”

I’ve been a pretty lucky fellow. I worked hard (periodically) but all in all have had the time to enjoy a passion I’ve had for over thirty years. I was told when I was a kid living with Mom and Pop that as long as I was under their roof, I would never bring a motorcycle home. Well, when I got out of school and was earning a keep there was nothing stopping me. That’s where it all went to “heck in a hand basket”.

Being a mechanic’s son and holding a job as a mechanical designer, it just seemed right to choose motorcycle mechanics as my “part time” job, and that fueled the fires for me to get to riding. My first bike was a Yammi 360 Enduro: a monster of a bike to play in the woods of northeast Ohio. It made me strong and gave me the roots to start my Kawasaki life. I picked up my KX 450 MX’r and really start living.

I’ve had many bikes, periodically straying from Big K, but always returning. The horsepower monsters that “K” was building had me in their spell and I haven’t looked back since.

It was 1978 and I just finished hopping up a KZ1000 LTD for a friend to drag race, it was really eating me up not being able to afford one of these Z bikes, when he turned to me after taking a spill and offered me a great deal to take it off his hands; before it killed him. Noooooooooo problemo!

I’ve carried this bike for thirty years, still in my stable, and have added new toys along the way.

When Kawasaki brought out the first Ninja, I melted, and had to have one. (*Naw, not in the budget*). Then they created this ugly bike based on the Ninja, with bags, and a huge bunch of plastic—the “Concours.” My thoughts at the time were *Never in a million years, that’s an old man’s*

bike...a bagger.

Well, time went by, and guess what? I became that “old man.” And just what did Kaw have to go and do then? Yep, re-invent the rocket. “*The Transcontinental Super Tourer.*” So the new Concours 14 was in my barn the first week of July, 2007—and in my bloodstream since.

I got to thinking about this bike and all it’s new features. New? Really? Yeah. Lots of things are groundbreaking advances, but more than not, the beast has actually gone full circle, all the way back 30 years, and back again.

Class, today’s assignment: Compare and contrast 30 years of Kawaski technology.



KZ1000 Ltd. (B2):

Kawasaki’s first attempt at a sport bike that doubled as a bike to be ridden 2 up and carry you longer than across town. (actually, the LTD did make a 900cc debut, but for all practical purposes nothing smaller than 1000cc’s even

makes the grade, with its puny little engine.) The bike was a marvel: a 500-plus pound metal beast with a huge air cooled engine, a King ‘n Queen plush seat, pull back bars with spartan controls, sexy paint job, coupled with just the right amount of chrome to set it all off. Oh, and those awesome Jardine 4 into 2 headers that in today’s market will fetch a \$1000 if you can find them. The original “hog” size MT90-16 Goodyear rear tire on most of these bikes went up in a plume of white smoke, gloriously sacrificing itself to make all the “kids” jealously understand that with this bike, you *are* the King of the Street. Burn them up kids, we’ll make more, and as long as there are Harleys there will be a tire for you—maybe not a good tire, but a tire.

Few folks had a grasp of what really made it a breakthrough machine. With all that horsepower to control, drum brakes and spoked wheels were things that belonged on bicycles, not motorcycles, so we now see huge stainless steel dual front and single rear rotors, with equally big (at the time) calipers. They hauled those triple digit speed runs down to legal speed limits in a hurry (again, by the standards of 1978!).

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But still there were quirks. Chain drive technology was fine for bikes maxxing out at 50 h.p., but when you reach the century mark, they don't live long. It was very soon the shaft drive of today became the gospel—and the reason we all are riding Connies instead of Ninjas. That 1 liter engine hid even more surprises. Along with an almost bulletproof design, it had a system of replaceable shims sitting on buckets, that required periodic examination and swapping/replacing to keep the valve train adjusted to optimum specs—very disheartening to the novice mechanic and money making for the dealers. All the competition was still using rocker and tappet style screw adjustable valves. But the big engine showed its technology as seldom if ever did it require fiddling with. With a bulletproof (?) 5-speed transmission, and an easily replaceable cable actuated clutch, quarter mile times at the strip on Friday night were being riddled. Behind that engine sat 4 sweet Mikuni slide carbs, begging for tweaking, and infinitely modifiable. Basic carbs that had no diaphragms, a huge jet that high test gas poured from with zero headaches. We all had to go out and by hazmat disapproved mercury filled carb sticks to meticulously synchronize *four individual carbs, each with it's own adjustment.*

Electronic ignition? Nawww! We have *2 individual sets of points* under that side cover that require dentist like precision to get adjusted to deliver the spark through a pair of monster coils up top. If you couldn't set points, you didn't ride!

Aftermarket cams, carb kits, 4 into 1 headers, big bore pistons and bolt on turbochargers made this engine a mainstay. The cam chain that sits between the middle two jugs had a spring loaded plunger adjuster that pressed against a fiber block, and “every once and a while” could be adjusted by loosening the bolt that held it in place, which allowed the plunger to slam forward taking the slack out of the chain, good to go for another couple hundred miles...

Straight line horsepower was cool, but when the road got twisty, so did this bike. It did the Hula dance around every turn. The minimally designed, triangulated tubular framework flexed furiously, but seldom broke, thank goodness, so it was a reminder to slow down. Dual antiquated Mullholland rear shocks with external springs (with 3 adjustment settings, *soft, softer, and mush*) soaked up a whopping 3 inches of wheel travel in back, and the puny front forks up front tweaked at every expansion joint on the road. The only salvation was the heavy chrome front fender, reducing the flex slightly, and there was no provision for mounting a fork brace of any kind to assist. To put it mildly, even equipped with Dunlop K81's, the best rubber of the era, scraping the rubber covered foot pegs was not a commonplace adventure. Knee dragging, yes—foot pegs, no.

The electrical system was barely enough to run lights

and charge the battery, and pretty much all you could tap was power for a radar detector, which we all had back then.

As noted, the KZ was very spartan with regards to “carry-ability”, but accessories were made available by Big K including various rear rack systems, bags, and complete front fairing/rear hard case assemblies manufactured by Vetter, under Kawasaki contract and bearing Kawasaki badges. (Badges? BADGES? We don' neeed no steeeenking badges... sorry, I just had to do that.). They actually looked as if they were straight out of Star Trek; and *yes, I do* have a set of those bags, thanks to Ebay.

Ahhh! “Sport Touring at It's Finest,” albeit in its infancy.

ZG1000 A1:

Seven years later we see a new kid on the block, the Ninja. Again, we regress back to a puny 900cc engine, but this time liquid cooled! Top to bottom revamped. The KZ is dead. Long live the ZX! Oh how I longed for that bike. But wait! One more year and Kawasaki shows us its big sistah—the Connie.

Well, now that Mattel is out of business making plastic gunstocks because the war is over, they have a new niche: plastic covered motorcycles. Gobs and gobs of plastic, a majestic metallic silver patina. This is one pretty machine. Pretty heavy, pretty big, pretty expensive, and most of all—pretty tough to work on. (Did I say that? Yeah, it's 1986 remember?)

But boy, does it have all the “stuff!” (700 pounds' worth!) Hydraulically operated clutch, comprehensive instrumentation, water cooled 1000cc Ninja engine, shaft drive, big tires, and big—BIG—bags!

The refined Ninja engine now has complete electronic ignition requiring little, if any, thought about to how juice gets to the plugs. Along with this system came a few new parts: an igniter box and a fuse/junction box containing relays which controlled electrical output to circuits before, during, and after hitting the starter button. While a very good design for the time, it will prove to fall into the realm of “troublesome” due to technology running ahead faster than materials will last. Luckily it is built in a manner that allows someone to repair it without the need for a super computer or a laser beam mounted to a shark's head. It will prove to be the second most painful part of this bike's design. A rack of Keihin CV (constant velocity) carbs begins to torture “wrenches” that venture into the fuel system, making us resurrect our carb sticks (we never gave them up) but this time they allow an easier route to synchronization. Sad thing is the much improved performance carb is now a much more labor intensive and a less forgiving unit with regard to its diet, and neglectful treatment. They will prove to be, in my opinion, the single most misunderstood, and most costly

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trouble-causing aspect of this bike's 20-year production run. But then again, we ain't figured out this fuel injection thing yet. Whoa, and will you look at that gargantuan gas tank? Seven and a half gallons worth—with a great water reservoir hanging below the petcock level to ensure water sits there and rusts out the tank—but saves some users from stopping as frequently to fill up. A blessing or a bust? (“Yeah I filled up last month—I think!”)

As we strip away some of the outer covering we start seeing the innards. A massive engine housing, smooth and devoid of fins housing the water-cooled cylinders and head; cam chain relocated to the end of the camshaft now, with an automatic self-adjusting mechanism. 16 valves (Count ‘em sixteen!) with screw adjustable rockers to maintain the valve train clearances. A large capacity (larger than its Ninja brother) radiator with a fan that assists cooling during times the bike isn't moving air. Along with this is all the associated necessities of a water pump, thermostat, cooling manifolds and hoses out the ying yang. We also have a second radiator that cools the engine oil to relieve the thermal load the main radiator sees.

Again we find a 4 into 2 (with a crossover pipe) exhaust but this time with pipes half the size of the old designs, and terminating into huge but quiet cans at the rear. A high output generator capable of powering all sorts of additions that will soon give way to a new term, “farkle”, and shortly force the invention of electrically heated clothing (Wow! What next? Phones—with no wires?).

That familiar bulletproof transmission is back again, but now we have six gears and can achieve 137 mph. Unfortunately it has been coupled to the drive train thru a new and improved clutch system with a mechanism designed to prevent the rear end from rising and the clutch locking up when downshifting—the infancy of the “slipper clutch.” Flat stamped springs designed for this will fail and be retrofitted shortly, but the problem will never go away. Further along the power train we find a fixed position rear tire and rear bevel gear case giving us trouble free service for years as long as periodic attention to lubrication is followed. The single air shock rear suspension link offers such great latitude of adjustment that all sizes and shapes of riders surely find a sweet spot, but as air is our spring, there is the constant need for monitoring. Up front, vastly improved and stronger forks with air assist spring rate (phased out in '94 but improved with mechanical adjustment) coupled with a design that allows the addition of an aftermarket fork brace. All this makes for cutting edge handling, forcing the rider to see if he can actually scrape the foot peg feelers and make sparks.

Robust cast rims sporting equally robust rubber will have us arguing tire choices for 20 years, at least until the tire size chosen for this bike becomes unpopular—and all

major manufacturers drop the tire size from their lineups, one by one.

Brake technology has now excelled and with the drilled rotors and new compounds for brake pads, better braking is achieved using smaller rotors than in the past, and will be enhanced further with the introduction of the floating rotor system and dual piston calipers in '94 (but for a loss in longevity of the front wheel bearing, which will be downsized during the change). Vastly improved lighting system with integral signal and marker lights located along the perimeter of the frontal profile offer better visibility for both day and nighttime safety.

Taking a cue from our German friends, we have been provided utilitarian removable luggage, simple but robustly designed, and thoughtfully spacious. The integral rear rack offered us a perch for more aftermarket trunks and luggage capacity. The luggage and its overall frontal aspect sets the Connie into well known niche in providing the rider somewhat excellent protection from the elements, allowing comfortable long distance travel.

This same fairing profile, while during it's life was good, really wasn't as good as we could have experienced. In reality the fairing design, while protective, is designed to redirect air over somewhat flat surfaces, lending to uncomfortable feelings in turbulent air encountered during storms, or the dirty wakes of large vehicles where the air changes directions from surface to surface.

Twenty years, with the only changes being redesigned wheel castings, a slightly different instrument cluster, improved brakes, locking side glove boxes, and lots of different colors. Oh—and chrome mufflers.

A manufacturer's dream, a marketer's nightmare, a tech editor's lament, and an owner/rider's benefit.

The Concours 14

Trans Continental Super Tourer. Or so it is called.

I believe I am the second COG member to take delivery of this fantastic piece of new machinery. I waited patiently, and then not so patiently, for it's debut. While our industry liaison was out in California riding one, I was sitting in Virginia, green with envy, wondering how I could get my hands on one, and how I would pay for it; also working up a credible story on how to get my wife to believe *I needed one*, with 2 Connies and a Z bike in the SkUnKwErKz already. I dunno, the stars aligned, I must have said the right words in the prayer I muttered, and all good things came to pass. (And changing jobs again didn't hurt) I was signing papers and riding over to “Dad's” (aka Guy Young) to show it to him. The smile on his face was priceless when he said “congratulations”.

So, is this so very cutting edge, or is it full circle, in a new wrapper? Both.

The wrapper is all new, although the color is almost

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familiar. They outward design of this bodywork has taken rounded form for reason, instead of forcing air *apart* to ride through it like the ZG, it actually pushes it *away* in a manner that creates a *bubble* that is not affected by the changes in traffic and wind turbulences. This is a complete departure from the ZG's design.

The electrically operated "undersized" windscreen is a major point of dislike so far by the majority of the owners, and has already been addressed by Kawasaki, with different screens now available; also, the aftermarket has sprung into the chase. Personally, I don't find it uncomfortable at all yet. In the low position during the summer months it has provided lots of relief from heat; and in the up position, during wet weather, it provides a blast of air perfect for keeping my face shield free of rain. I suppose the cold weather will have me re-evaluating this, and possibly seeking better plastic up there.

Although this monster looks big, it's weight is slimmed down to around 600 lbs. and although slightly top heavy, it maneuvers at slow speed like a sport bike. Seating position seems narrower, so much less effort is needed to maneuver it. I must attest to the redesigned steering bearings system of large angular ball bearing units as opposed to the tapered roller bearings of the past. The fuel tank's redesign places a major amount of the fuel lower in the bike and combined with the ergos of the handlebars' improved design, fits me perfectly.

There is a lot of plastic on this machine. It is very apparent that a lot of fitting and re-fitting and modifying went into its design, many individually sculpted pieces forming the final artwork. Again, we will go through a learning curve to unveil this bike's innards on a regular basis, but we have been thru that. It's part of the owner experience. The overall shape of this bike has placed the baggage/luggage—in my mind—as a feature that was not so well thought out as it was made a *design* feature. The shape and size of the bags while large, is oddly shaped. Yes a helmet or many small items fit well, but my laptop does not. Very irritating. I miss the "American Touristers" already for that simple reason. We did successfully pack enough within the bags and Shad 42 liter (added on) trunk for a recent 10-day trip, but compression bags were a necessity, along with a midweek laundry day. The integral luggage rack offers itself up perfectly for trunk mounting—as it should—on a machine designed to be "trans-continental".

Dona, my wife, also had to re-learn a strategic method for mounting this bike without slamming into the bags due to the position of the rear foot pegs; but once aboard she found the comfort of the seat and the position so comfortable she had to worry more about staying awake than keeping comfortable. She could never have lasted 100 miles on the ZG without stopping but she accomplished this feat

frequently on the C14 without a peep.

Mechanically, the 1400 engine is a total re-vamp, the throttle body and fuel injection being the best thing so far. After 4,800 miles without so much as a burp and getting a combined 42 m.p.g. since breaking, I have nothing bad to say about it. As with the old Connie, I will caution folks on proper storage, and the need for good quality fuel to alleviate problems in fuel delivery, but having a pump delivering fuel to the throttle body does tend to keep a system cleaner than having gunk sitting in float bowls (*Arghhhh!*).

VVT—variable valve timing—let me just say it works. This technology provides changes in the intake cam position relative to the task at hand, providing increased torque and improved response thru the 3k to 7k rpm range we see most often in our quest for roll on enjoyment, if you so decide to kick it down a gear or two, it works even better. Lets just say you don't want to be trolling around town at 2000 rpm in sixth gear. Second gear is good to 100 (well almost). It's actuated by a second dedicated oil pump, thru a sophisticated flow valve controlled by the computer—one of three computers on board.

Six gears once again, but I tell you this bike only needs 4. Sixth is truly an overdrive.

This engine has gone back to shims for valve adjustment but they are now located under the buckets, which has sprouted mixed emotions, once again, from the masses. It is my opinion this will prove once again to be a non-issue, even though it takes a bit longer to get parts out of the way, and the cams must be removed to swap them around if need be, I think folks will find the interval of service, combined with the reliability and metallurgic advances will mitigate frequent or costly service intervals. The cam chain tensioner has been moved to the right side of the engine now, but its tried and true, 20-year design remains virtually unchanged, possibly a stronger spring and with a hydraulic "assist," it looks to be a winner still.

The sophisticated computer controls you see on all of your modern motor vehicles are now present in this motorcycle, monitoring intake air temperature, throttle position, speed, gear, fuel delivery, position of sun, moon, and stars, along with your biorhythms, all playing a part in how this engine runs. The good thing is it really isn't old tech anymore, and thanks to Mitsubishi, we have it all under control. The normal user service items *are still* user service items. Oil changes are a breeze: the filter, a spin on type now, is accessed from the front of the bike, and only one drain plug for you now to worry about. Rear end lube is also a breeze. All in all, a lube day will be only a half hour job. Hopefully in the next few months all Kawi dealers will purchase the tools needed to perform service intervals, along with the training on the new systems, to keep owner experience high, and maintenance costs low.

So, from the front to the back, here's the good bad

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and ugly.

Up front the new inverted massive forks are completely adjustable, spring force and rebound, allowing you to easily tailor your feedback to the load being carried. The awesome brakes on this bike will have you rethinking what you actually thought were good brakes, two finger operation from triple digit speeds are the norm. Brake pad life is yet to be determined but I am sure it will be good relative to your riding style. These are back to a dual piston floating system, but now the caliper is radially mounted behind the forks to offer optimum position on the disc rotor. Rotor is floating style again, and with a petal design to promote wet brake efficiency. Oh, and the ABS—well what can I say? It's there but I have yet to have it kick in. Maybe it's just that I never had it before and learned to drive within the realm of reality for the road conditions; but knowing it is there if it is ever called upon is a great relief. Kind of like a seat belt: you never want to have to test if it works. 'Nuff said.

The big radiator up front seems naked, and as of yet Kawasaki has not decided it needs a screen to protect it. Aftermarket products are currently being made available, and most likely Kaw will also be putting them on. The front fender is the same as on the ZX1400 (ZZR), and our friend Murph has already cornered the niche on Fenda Extenda's, HIGHLY recommended for longevity of the radiator.

Tires on both ends as delivered (Bridgestone Battleaxe BT21's) are surprisingly confidence inspiring. We are now in the popular 17-inch rim size, like all the sport bikes today, hopefully the sportbikes won't change size again willy-nilly and force the tire companies to dump us again like with our old faithful Connie. Oh, and the back meat is HUGE, welcome to the 190 rear tire (I'm certain I can squeeze a 200 in there next time!)

Wet or dry, it makes no difference. I am seeing some flat spot ridge in the middle, but with 4,800 miles on them, and almost 2,000 of that 2-up with a full load on an extended trip at light speed on the slab and pushing the chicken strip on the twisters, I think they will last for a total of 8,000 miles. I don't know how or what some of the folks are doing, but I have been hearing of people replacing these at less than 5,000 miles. I will likely replace them with the same model, I guess those folks forgot to run them over to the edges to extend the life....

The tire pressure monitors on this bike are a rare treat, being able to hit a button on the display every day when I begin my commute to see that the tires are at pressure is a relief, and in the event one begins to drop in pressure I will get notification in the display when tire pressure drops below 33 psi, a real comforting feeling if a tire is going south. Regular manual tire inspection is still a necessity, but the technology is good.

The remaining tidbits you see in the sales literature are just frosting on the cake, all the hype about the KIPASS keyfobs, the digital display, fuel monitoring on the fly, etc., are added features you will come to accept and love. It is the future of motorcycling, and I'm really glad to be a part of it.

The generator output issues have been answered, we now have 581 watts of power, so along with all the stuff you want to run—you can pretty much arc weld or power a small city. Battery access is now made convenient thru a removable side panel; and no longer will you be able to stow anything under the seat other than a few spare fuses to feed the three fuseboxes controlling all of the peripherals. That seat, by the way, is one of the most comfortable ones I have ever sat upon. (Sorry, Corbin. This one's a keeper!)

Integrated rear and front marker/signals, and an LED taillight provide excellent visibility, and the dual adjustable front headlamps provide an awesome departure turning night into day. Not much to improve there, but maybe we will see HID in the future? And finally—yes finally—we have a true four-into-one exhaust system, with big tube front pipes and dual catalyst units internal which, while extremely quiet, still has a note of authority to it. I'll pass on it's appearance. I like it. 90% of the onlookers don't seem to but then that's because all they will be seeing is the rear end of this bike for a long time to come. This unit breathes well.

I really want to stress to all new or prospective C14 owners to give active feedback to the dealers, remain diligent in getting problems fixed by Kawasaki, which will force Kawasaki to compile a comprehensive database on this new bike through you all bringing them in at some point for a service, where documentation can be compiled. Without this important step hidden problems will not be documented and owners' experiences will suffer because of a lack of feedback.

So, in my opinion we have come full circle on a lot of the original intent, and parts, while technologically they have been improved, many have returned to simpler design which melds well with the techno-add on's to keep our interest.

So for those of you thinking about it, go ahead, I'll be here backing you up; and if need be; I'll pull my bike apart to figure out an answer to fix something for you, but till then I'll be riding it like I stole it.

That's my story, and I'm sticking to it. Who would've thought I'd be repeating "Sport Touring At It's Finest"—30 years ago!



Connies At The Arctic Ocean

The Scurvy Seven go formation flying in a lawless land

by Peter "Hogboy" Hobday

Prologue

There were seven of them, and they were rough around the edges—to the point where most had no edges left at all. By the grim process of attrition, Homeland Security raids, or pathological Darwinism they were what remained after the lesser ones had fallen to the sides of the road. These were the sour cream at the top of the week-old milk; these were the ones in a thousand who could survive any horrifying tank slapper, any cataclysmic run to the beer store with 5 minutes left before closing time, any crazed blitz along a gravel road at 90 mph. These were the dudes that God had cast slightly wider than life.

For the most part they were middle-aged and battered. Trapped inside each was a wild-eyed, teenaged boy just itching for something to start. And that could be accommodated.

Each of them had the gas properties and each had the spark properties, and none of them were configured to be tempered by the cautionary impulse lobes. They wanted action. They needed action. And if they weren't going to find some, then they were just going to have to whip some up.

They had gathered for the run in the town of Ottawa in Her Majesty's Dominion of Canada. Before them at the saloon were arranged buckets of the brown suds and by early evening the bantering volume had achieved High Din status. The whoppers were being whopped, the tall ones were being stretched, and the builders climbed that anticipatory mountain yet again.

Heroic riding deeds were described in their abundant glory, tragic mechanical mishaps were unfurled with leaky dampness, and the after-ride howlers yet again were being hit with grin-splitting intensity. Bellies bounced, hands

and arms gesticulated in the ritual style and, as one, the listeners leaned as the teller told.

These were the different drummers—the guys who couldn't march; the itchy ones who could not abide speed limits or red lights. And their mechanical steeds, the noble Kawasaki Concours, were hitched up in a line outside that raucous place. Before them on the tables were spread the maps. And upon each map was a bold black line with an arrow that pointed north. Due north. To the Arctic Ocean.

If all went according to plan, they would, in 2 or 3 days' time, gaze out over the salty waters of the Arctic Ocean on Canada's James Bay, but only after surviving a high speed rip along the final 360 mile, lawless and largely abandoned private launch pad. This paved quasi-race course had been laid down to allow access to the series of mammoth hydro-electric plants far in the north of la belle province of Québec and it made them salivate just to think of it .



The "Scurvy Seven" gather in Radisson, PQ for the group portrait before setting out on a dash to James Bay. Left to Right: Colin Longuedoc, the author "Mr. Expert", Suzie "The Princess of Radisson" Rousseau, Steve "KrumGrinder" Krum, Troy "Troidus" Smith, "Tub" Maxson, John "Conando" deVos, and AJ Pierce.

And at the halfway point of this, the infamous James Bay Road, was to be found the sole gas station; and beside the sole gas station was the med-evac helicopter pad. It was possible, if not probable, that this chopper would see some action over the course of the next few days. It was their primary fall-back position whether they liked it or not.

For the most part there were no leaders among the motley, limping collection, for they disliked leading as

much as they disliked being led. They were freaks of genetic entropy and how they ever made it this far through life was a deep question for a different day. For now, keeping them all aimed generally northward and in some semblance of order would be enough to burst the forehead veins of Mother Teresa.

The best that could be hoped for at the outset was that they would all arrive on approximately the same date at the end-town of Radisson in Québec's sub-arctic tundra. But it was understood that some would become distracted and would veer at the least sign of something bizarre, something dangerous or anything extreme. The Cree Indian Nation in Chisasibi had been given warning and presumably would be on the lookout for trouble. The Québec Provincial Police had not.

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Day One: Tuesday September 4, 2007

Start Point = Ottawa, Ontario

GPS = 45.32 (lat.) X 75.66 (long.)

Elevation = 114 meters

The boys had recovered nicely from the previous evening's tour of downtown Ottawa, where they had gaped and gawked and eventually been accosted by 2 beautiful blondes (one of whom had grabbed the "Hog Boy" by way of introduction). The gals were quickly escorted to the nearest bar for lies and banter and Tub broke the ice nicely by loudly ordering some "poon-tang" instead of the traditional French dish of "poo-teen".

This drew an admiring glance from one of the sisters who murmured something in his ear that sounded like "... you can't get that in restaurants up here, Tub." But gentlemen they were and gentlemen they stayed, even as the good Canadian beer eroded discipline and inter-gender resolve. (*Kind reader, it should be noted early that "Poutine," a traditional Québécois dish consisting of about 6 pounds of greasy french fries, coated with a few handfuls of cheese curds and topped off by a bucket of bubbling, fatty gravy, will make several appearances during this story, much to the dismay of any reading coroners or pathologists.*) "Tub" and "KrumGrinder" became particularly afflicted by this evil concoction, usually after the day's ride, and sometimes with hints of liquor on their breath.

Later that evening the bar across the street from the motel got a punishing workout and they all started to get to know each other—a posse of 3 from Ohio, one of whom was carrying his state's flag for reasons unclear at that point); a lone renegade from Kansas who eventually clocked over 4,500 miles round trip; 2 buddies from Southern Ontario who rode possibly twice as far as necessary that day just to get into the twisties instead of the 401 super slab; and this writer, a lone Hog representative of Her Majesty's National Capital Region. Things got loud and a bit crazy, but they turned in somewhat early. Something big was ahead and they were frisky.

The lads were fuelled up and ready to get cracking at an early hour. The first part of the ride would involve traffic, speed limits, lights and other profound irritations but they knew these were to be short-lived. They wended their way through downtown Ottawa and crossed the Macdonald-Cartier bridge over the Ottawa River and into the province of Québec. As they cranked their heads back toward the city they took in the Parliament buildings on the cliff, the Prime Minister's residence (where an intruder had managed to slip past the sleepy RCMP security detail a few years back only to be met by the PM's wife wielding a 30 pound Inuit soapstone carving), and the waterfall that signi-

fied the end of the Rideau River as it plunged into the Ottawa and slipped its way eastward toward Montreal.

Here her waters would join with the mighty St. Lawrence on its endless journey to the Atlantic Ocean where she would continue her evaporative cycle, returning northward 4 days later by way of a series of driving, freezing gales that drove the boys partially mad on the return leg of the run. What goes around comes around. And yes, there might have even been some recycled COG beer in the mix.

While eastern Ontario is generally pretty flat and a bit boring—like the people—the change in topography on the north side of the Ottawa River was striking. Here was the beginning of the massive Canadian Shield which is the world's oldest mountain range, covers over 95% of Québec (580,000 square miles) and contains some of the oldest igneous rocks in the world, dating back to the Precambrian period which had its day about 1 billion years ago (even before Tub was born, some say).

The Shield has been scraped and pounded by glaciers which explains the boulders, gravel and sand that were to be seen along much of our route. The Shield also has a mind-blowing arrangement of over a million lakes, peat bogs, rivers and streams which seem endless when viewed from a plane or a zooming sports-tourer like the brave Connie.

The lads were itchy in the first hour or so as they endured commercial and commuter traffic along highway 105, which snaked along beside the Gatineau River. There also was a bit of construction going on which further impeded things. Eventually we left all that behind and our Connies got to stretch their legs a bit, despite the police presence and a less-than-optimal road surface.

"Any chance we can wind it up a bit? I thought we were going to be able to rip a bit quicker than this," said Colin, the token ST 1100 rider that we allowed to join us in a rather magnanimous gesture, even though we were careful not to joke about his bike when he was within ear-shot.

Your scribe, Mr. Know-It-All, replied in words he would later eat, albeit in a non-litigious way: "Let's hold off a bit, at least until we get used to each other. Things open up quite a bit when we get into La Verendrye Wildlife Refuge and what few cops are up there are generally pretty tolerant. Later today we'll get past Amos and things get real isolated and swervy from there to Matagami. I have no problem suggesting that we can go WFO on that stretch".

Any worries about group rides and coordination of the caravan quickly vanished as the guys slipped into a nicely-spaced, neatly staggered, right/left accordion and wound their way along the winds and bends of Highway 105 North as it paralleled the river. Excellent cliffs, river vistas, classic Québec rural architecture and lots of rolling farmlands were enjoyed by all. As were group pee stops that tested the spiritual foundation of an occasional passing motorist and his wife.

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La Vérendrye is about the size of Connecticut (17,000 square kilometres) and punctuated by horizons full of bush, rivers, rock and lakes, and has zero gas stops along its 100 mile length. Every 20 kilometers (12.4 miles) were to be found “SOS” stations where anyone in distress or being pursued by a ravenous gang of bears could dial 911 and get some help—as long as they spoke fluent French. The signs looked pretty cool though in their brilliant red and white and served nicely to help the cloistered Yanks get used to the Canadian metric system. (Remember that these boys were getting hit by the alien triad of a new currency, a new language, and a new measurement system (“*Still just looks like a can of beer to me*”).

La Vérendrye’s landscape is typical of the Shield and has massive growths of coniferous tress like the ever-abundant black spruce and jack pine. There are reportedly over 40 types of critters there as well, including moose, white-tailed deer, bear, wolf (“*Hey Steve, how big was the one you saw?*”) and beaver. There are also oodles of pickerel (wall-eye for you heathen Yanks), pike, trout, small mouths bass and whole navies of sturgeon for those that like to drink beer in a boat and whiz over the side.

The ride through the refuge was tons of fun and some of the fast boys, particularly Colin and Conando, began to stretch it out a bit. Others paired off and Tub and AJ began to establish their reputation as the “clean-up crew” running tail-end so as to be on the lookout for any smoking Connie remains, skid marks through a guard rail ahead, or smug-looking moose. The fast guys also served an essential martyrdom function in their magnetic roles as “radar bait” but we weren’t telling them this early in the trip...

After a big gas-up on the other side of the park the boys got to practice their French with the gas kids, one of whom was obviously gaga over the bikes and made throttle-twisting motions and sounds as he helped us fuel up. The French-Canadian people count in the most eccentric way and trying to keep up in a foreign language with someone asking for “*vingt, quatre-vingt-dix-huit*” (literally “twenty, four-twenty-ten-eight” or \$20.98) can be trying. Then a quick run over to the local greasy spoon where we learned the difference between “*un hamburger*” and “*un hamburger spéciale*” (the former is a patty on a bun and the latter has stuff on it). Some brave soul took another stab at a cauldron of poutine (“Man, that stuff could stop the Delta Force in its tracks). Some say Poutine represents the 4 major food groups but science probably could not be sure without a series of full autopsies.

For the duration of the expedition any discussion about any technical topic under the sun would invariably prompt Troidus to pronounce upon the matter. For example, a typical poutine banter would elicit something like “I’m pretty sure that mono-unsaturated fats and polyunsaturated

fats do not raise LDL cholesterol; although some studies I have read suggest they lower LDL cholesterol slightly when eaten as part of a low-saturated and trans-fat diet.” The dumb guys would stare and then slowly shake their heads in wonder.

Beyond *Grande Remous* (“Big Mixture”, after the rapids) we transitioned out of the Canadian Shield and into another glacial peculiarity known as the “Clay Belt” which is a totally unexpected, great swath of fertile land that stretches across northern Ontario and north-western Québec. This strange but rich landscape allows livestock farming and the great rolling wheat fields we passed. It also hides some extremely valuable deposits of gold, nickel and uranium which have made the fame of northern cities like Sudbury, Timmins and Rouyan-Noranda.

We zipped over to *Val d’Or* (“Valley of Gold”) for a quick run past a massive open-face gold mine and along a well-paved series of traffic roundabouts (“Blimey, you say old chap!”). The boys were flipping the Connies about like they were KLR650s and even the ST1100 was able to keep up:).

In the early afternoon the gang made it up to the start of the 150 mile Amos-Matagami stretch where the “experienced expert” had loudly pronounced that it was quite safe to “let ‘er rip the whole way”, as there were “no cops, for sure”. Without further urging we stretched out, with even the clean-up squad running 100+ mph for long stretches. The rest did the grab-ass at light speed and got great thrills out of hitting the roller coasters that seemed to compress suspensions a bit in the hollows and make the trees on each side of the road blur, just like in the movies.

Later that night, during the post-caribou burger drinking session (“Anybody like Irish whiskey?”) it was learned from “Lucien,” Matagami’s only GL 1800 rider, that we should, under absolutely no circumstances, go much above the speed limit on the Amos-Matagami stretch as there were cops “all over the place”, and they were “without mercy.” Hmmm.

An hour and a bit later they rolled into Matagami tired but very exhilarated. This was the start of the infamous James Bay Road where, next day, the real fun would begin in earnest. But first they needed to do the hotel, gas and security check-in business.

It was just outside the Hydro-Québec security station that The KrumGrinder tried to kill Troidus. No one could have predicted that the ride up had pushed him so close to the snapping point but later, during the soothing hops process, it became retroactively self-evident. The fact that he also came close to simultaneously offing a “hitchhiker from Paris” (more on him later) and a passing pickup driver shows how cheap life is to some. Here’s the shocking scene.

The boys had just finished that day’s patently stupid and criminally insane blitz, topped up at the gas station be-

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side the motel (with a forever nameless Connie boy toppling over in front of witnesses—Steve), and had somehow registered in an unknown language at the motel and now we needed to get things squared away with the Hydro-Québec security station Boss Lady.

This was the same ornery gal that might have remembered me from the foam dripping out of my pant legs 2 years ago when she last interrogated me (Yes, I used shampoo to ease my chapped crotch earlier that fateful day). Her approval would be needed for the next day's highly anticipated "Fear Of Death" run.

Several of the more eager lads had found—to their concern—that they needed photo identification to get loaded into the "Potential Corpse" database at the security station. This listing would tell the Search & Rescue Canine Units how many bloated and frozen carcasses they should be seeking when they did the spring fling, should less than 100% of the visitors not make it out again.

Showing off just a little (as is their wont), the need-to-get-my-passport-pronto guys took off from the checkpoint like double AA fuelers with a great howl from the straining Connies. No one thought anything when Krum Man fiddled with his spare gas canister, looking guiltily all about as he loosened the bungees, possibly glaring with bloodshot eyes at Troidus.

Scant moments later, and juxtaposed with the mystery hitchhiker, the mystery pickup, and the oblivious Troidus, the gas canister was fired like a cannonball rearward from KrumGrinder's bike where it smashed on the ground, was hit by the truck and spun like a pinwheel into the direct path of a bike belonging to one of the Kansas boys. The hitchhiker, whom we later discovered was a journalist from Paris, was terrified by these mad, homicidal bikers and scrambled wildly across the Bell River bridge and away from the impending carnage.

Disappointingly, there were no explosions or even open flames, Troidus scrambled clear with cat-like reflexes, and the canister was recovered, intact and none the worse for wear from the bizarre encounter. Tub ponied up a spare bungee net and the gang moved through the border processing and back to the motel. They were thirsty. And the day's tales needed to be told.

At some blurred point in the night, the erstwhile Lucien showed up and regaled the Connie men with tales of French-Canadian Goldwingdom. The guy was hilarious and seemed to attract various riff-raff over to join in the revelry. At one point the mystery hitchhiker made a cameo appearance where he was roughly questioned by the boys until he fled. Like other weird characters, we would meet him again later in the trip.

Day Two:

Wednesday September 5, 2007
Start Point = Matagami, Québec
GPS = 49.73 (lat) X 77.71 (long)
Elevation = 281 meters

Up early yet again for the warm-up. Coffee shook its way down shivering throats, as it was cold. It would remain that way each morning of the run with temperatures being in the low 40s at best. But the boys were ready and were layered up. A quick huddle and a brief consultation with the "expert" whose stock and credibility had taken a big hit the night before when the gang reflected on doing WAY over the limit for a few hours in an area that was discovered to be cop turf.

Oh well, today was going to be different for sure. The infamous James Bay Road—"Route Isolée," said the big French road-sign. No cops, no speed limit, and no gas station until Mile 230.

Even knowing that they needed to exhibit throttle frugality for most of this stretch they couldn't hold back, and some cranked it right out of the box. However, prudence and a really banged up roadway, replete with many frost heaves brought them to their senses. They did well, all things considered, and held a steady 80-90 mph pace for much of the way. The scenery was mesmerizing and was basically bush, rocks and water with a couple of 20-30 minute rides through huge, old forest-fire burn patches that looked otherworldly. This continued for hours and hours with nary a human or a house to be seen.

The gang pulled off a couple of amazing stops alongside the raging rivers that are the source of all Québec's hydro wealth (\$11 billion gross last year just through the northern systems alone). The stop at the Rupert River dropped everyone's jaws as the rapids were easily several hundred yards wide and raged right to the horizon. This river will be dammed next year which has pissed off some of the Cree (despite their agreement and acceptance of oodles of money) but will add to the province's revenues in perpetuity.

It was at the Rupert River stop that the one pathetic-looking rider (who shall remain nameless but who looked the like writer, oddly enough) discovered that his fairing headstay was completely shattered, almost as though he'd been riding like a crazed idiot over a paved motocross track and at top speed for hours and hours. Coils of zip-ties and thin-gauge wire were tried but were quickly destroyed. Then the KrumGrinder and Conando got out the nylon rope and cinched 'er down real good. The other 4 guys struggled for mechanical position - all the tools were out. A sub-arctic wrench session was on!!!!

"That should do until we get to Radisson. I'd keep the speed down if I were you". This advice was actually being offered to a moron who had absolutely zero self-discipline, had taken the art of willful obliviousness to new highs

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for several decades, and who wouldn't have dreamed in a million years about riding slow while sitting on perhaps the planet's most prime real estate for worry-free speeding.

Hours later, eyes were glued to the twin trip meters (given Connie's pathetic attempt at a gas gauge) and speeds slowed as the tanks began to get lighter. Eventually the gas stop appeared on the horizon with several of the Itchy Boys already waiting at the intersection with their mounts facing northward toward Radisson.

"You guys gas up already?" This, from the stupid-looking guy who was beginning to look less and less like he actually knew anything about this whole sordid mess.

"Naw, we just weren't sure that this was really the place." replied one of the Itchies. (Colin, John, and Troy, at that stage).

"Yeah, I guess it is pretty bad looking isn't it? Well anyways, this is the place. Let's go!"

The gas bar actually looked like a Soviet gulag and has the biggest, rustiest gas holding tank on the planet, looking like it had been stolen from the Red Army, circa WW II. A big, giant gas guy was there (What a life!) and we all obeyed the bold instructions that forbade anybody but the BGGG from operating the pump. Mr. Expert pointed out the empty med-evac pad and pronounced upon the likelihood that it was out gathering the body parts of the last biker that attempted the James Bay Road without the proper



The main fairing stay assembly on the author's Connie is secured with a combination of zip ties, wire and nylon rope.

martial arts spirit and attitude. Credibility further eroded when it then whumped into view and dropped off a guy with an electric guitar and what looked like a case of beer.

The remaining stretch to Radisson was only 130 miles and the road had improved. As a result, speed—umm—increased and mileage suffered to the point where it whimpered and then completely capitulated. It is remark-

able how fast you can go through 7 gallons of gasoline when you really put your mind to it. It was also remarkable at how quickly you can grow accustomed to sustained hyper-speeds, one of which manifestations is the belief that you can probably step off your bike and walk when slowing through towns or sighting members of the law enforcement community.

The blitz was resumed with a vengeance, the boys crossed several massive forest fire clearings that probably were the closest thing to the Martian landscape this side of Kandahar, and they eventually stopped at the Radisson airport to watch an ancient Hawker-Siddley 748 belonging to Air CreeBec (I kid you not) blast off into the wind with its nitrous-type boost system. As predicted by someone, they ran into the pilot a few days later outside the bar in Radisson.

Well, they sure laid out the red carpet for us at the *Auberge* (hotel) Radisson. The proprietress, Suzie Rousseau ("*They call me the Princess of Radisson*"), met us upon arrival and quickly chided us for leaving our bikes in the parking lot.

"Please bring them up onto the sidewalk in front of the reception area. Can you park them like cowboys please? We love such good publicity". Heads shake at this. Yes, this is different for sure.

Inside, the dusty beaten idiots were greeted by the gorgeous Lebanese assistant, Rachel, who had personalized portfolios for us all with maps, instructions and meal passes enclosed. Generally, we got a room, 3 squares, and a free VIP tour of the hydro installation for about \$110 a night which is a real steal in the far north. Suzie was especially excited about offering us a "Nordic Dinner" on the last night, featuring a caribou fillet mignon—and booze.

The evening was spent recounting some of the crazier racing incidents of the day, quoffing good Canadian beer, and grabbing some more caribou burgers. The bikes were then tucked in and the boys collapsed into some pretty decent hotel rooms. It had been a long day and, unaccountably, no-one had been killed.

Day Three:

Thursday September 6, 2007

Radisson, Québec

GPS = 53.37 (lat) X 77.42 (long)

Elevation = 195 meters (and later that day – sea level)

The boys had a free day in Radisson but had big plans too. First at bat was the VIP tour of the Bourassa Hydro complex and that would prove to be a hot one with the technical boys ("How many kilowatt hours did you say?"). Afterward we would grab some lunch and mount the steeds for a quick run over to the Cree village of Chisasibi and a symbolic wheel-dip in the Arctic Ocean ("Hey, it is salty!"). It was never suspected that the 100 mile dash to the Arctic and back would be the hairiest and most insane of the trip, if you count the guys who didn't get lost. But I run ahead of my-

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self...

We were welcomed to the multimedia, high-tech Hydro Québec auditorium by Eric Hamel a Québécois version of Nikola Tesla who, we found out later, was a fully trained hydro-electrical engineer and definitely knew about which he spoke. The fact that he was fun and very fluent in English was a bonus. At the gathering point (about 30 yards from our hotel rooms), we ran into John L. Sullivan (yep, same guy) and his nameless buddy. Conando and I had both been up the JBR in previous, separate solo runs and had found to our amusement that we just might bump into each other up in Radisson. Serendipity I think it's called.

We had learned quite a bit of tolerance by allowing Colin's ST 1100 to keep up with us so far, and turned these new skills to work for Conando and his buddy who were up on BMWs (Cursed be their name!). Later that day we saw them off as we grabbed some emergency Poutine at the Boreal Bar, remarking on the tremendous amount of gear they had packed in. Man, and they say the DC3 was a work-horse!

Grab a hardhat and hop into our own little minibus as Eric continued the tour out past Radisson and toward the underground complex at the Cheyenne Mountains. The hydro installation was blown deep into the pre-Cambrian granite.

Given 9/11 and all that, we picked up a security guard/escort who eyed us warily the whole way. Not sure why, as I myself had rarely seen such a clean cut and well turned out group of polite individuals in all my born days.

Hope I don't get too much of this wrong, but the scale and throbbing power inside the 1/3 of a mile long cavern just blew us all away. There were 6 massive generating units each of which weighed over 900 tons and they put out over 450,000 horsepower each which, incidentally, is just a tad more than the Windsor Green Connie (Canadian model only) and roughly equivalent to three Boeing 747s.

Later, the boys got a change to scramble down a spooky stairway and peer inside one of the turbine units to see it spin (60 revs per second). Troidus once again put his brain in gear and started to compute rotor weight, rpm, and voltage step-up values and came up in his head with a power output estimate that was pretty close to the real thing (333 megawatts). By this time people were starting to look at Troidus whenever he opened his mouth.

At one point Eric mentioned that the moving parts used very thin oil bearings to keep all these granite-shaking, metal monsters from frictioning themselves into a great heap of smoking slag, and this caused seven heads to snap up in unison.

"What kind of oil do you use?" Eric didn't know off the top of his head, although he did comment on how all

the oil was recycled in-house. The seven kept staring though and Eric slowly realized that the type of oil used was of critical importance to these guys, Lord knows why. He promised to look into it. Eric obviously had no idea that the two most important topics for discussion among worldwide bikers are lubricants and tires.

The tour finale was a winding drive along the gravel road network that led to the massive La Grande (LG2) dam. This sucker is like a third of a mile wide at the base, contains more than 23 million cubic meters of fill (slightly more than all the poutine gulped down during the trip), and is almost 3 kilometres across (1.8 miles).

It has created a lake that is used for boating, water-skiing and fishing. We learned that once a year the "trash gates" are hoisted so that the accumulated debris can be removed, thereby allowing only unsullied water to flood through the turbines.

"What kind of stuff do you find in those gates?" went one of the questioners.

"Well, we get materials like trees and things," replied Eric politely.

"No bodies, or motorcycles, or crates of gold?" posed the Creative Boy hopefully.

"Not really," evidently dashing the images of all.

Later that afternoon the boys prepared for the run over to Chisasibi and fuelled up in eager anticipation. Although contact had been made with the Cree band council beforehand ("Sure, drop over anytime and say 'Hi'") I knew in my heart that the odds of anybody being found were slim to nil. These are folks that generally are not clock-watchers and move instead to many of the natural rhythms of the en-



The Arctic Ocean

vironment—when the geese are coming through, or the caribou have started to migrate and The Artist Formerly Known As Prince has a new MTV video, etc.

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We zipped out from Radisson and into a stiff westerly headwind that banged us around for a half hour or so until we got over to Chisasibi. The closer we got to the bay, the more stunted and desolate the landscape and eventually things faded away to rock, lichen and stunted conifers. We slid about on the last 8 mile gravel road and then, lo and behold, the Arctic Ocean lay before us!

I must admit I wasn't expecting such a neat sight, especially since the sun was dappling the whitecaps with its reflections and the shore was covered with Cree freighter canoes. Nobody was around, which suited us just fine and the gang began to line up for photos with their bikes dipping front wheels into the ocean.

Conando pulled off a real coup by pulling a case of beer from his Givi and handing them around. Hoots and hollers and high-fives as it began to dawn on us that our mission was mostly completed and that nothing outrageously horrifying had happened. Not even one speeding ticket!!

Back to Chisasibi where no Cree officials were to be found, but by then the let-down was not huge. Lots of gabbing with passing kids and a quick chat with the Chisasibi cops in their very cool 4X4 when it was noted that John the V had not made it back with us.

"I bet he went down in the gravel. He's probably dead," murmured some thoughtful soul.

There was nothing for it but that this writer, the Local Expert, travel back to discover Conando's remains and maybe grab whatever farkles were detachable from his downed Connie. It must be pointed out here that I am not big at all on riding 660 pound sports-touring bikes on loose gravel but the single beer I had offered its usual encouraging-word-thingy and off I flew.

Riding a road bike in gravel is much like riding a dirt bike in sand, and I had many a decade of that stuff under my belt. So I loosened up and let Connie wander where she wanted, reminding myself that centrifugal force would bail us out no matter what happened. Yeah, right.

Conando was found a few miles later, unscathed. As we got back onto the road I pulled out ahead and decided to give it a bit of a goose, showing off the superior performance of the Windsor Green model. I got going at a good clip and turned to look back over my throttle shoulder only to find—no John. I sat up in alarm only to get completely blitzed by this nut-case going past on the clutch side at a speed that was shocking to witness. Obviously the gauntlet was thrown down and I wicked it up to keep his dust trail in sight.

Actually it was a lot of fun and we got up to over 90 mph at which speed our Connies were doing a very impressive wander-about routine. But we were relaxed and

reenergized from our dip into the salt water and all too soon we hit pavement.

Back to join the gang in Chisasibi only to have our hopes dashed at the possibility of contacting the chief or band council. Most people gave us vague directions for the location of the band office and we finally realized it wasn't going to work. Oh well, maybe next year.

Back on the highway; this time with a strong wind at our backs. It was at this point that The KrumGrinder snapped again and dramatically hunched down over his bike and absolutely took off. I jumped to keep up, as did John the V and the three of us spent the next half-hour or so taking our Connie's to their—okay, our—limits.

We pinned it on the straights and touched speeds towards 120 mph several times. (Remember we had bags and shields on and the stupidest of us had a fairing secured with the nylon rope farkle). The sweepers along this highway were pretty quick and had few bumps so away we went using all of Keith Code's racing tricks—fixate on the correct line, enter at about 90 mph and roll on the throttle until the exit, feather touch on the bars with the inner palm counter-steering, and lean it more than seems sane.

The first series of corners were a bit spooky at this speed but then my Connie had The Big K pulling us from ahead and Conando's Vision Plus beams pushing our mirrors from behind. Soon we got into a real groove and it just kept on in an almost timeless manner with every pixel of The Line serving to focus the brain.

At one nameless corner the highway snakes and frost heaves had conspired to completely destroy any line through



"AJ" takes a break after somewhere on the tundra.

the bend, which I discovered in complete alarm after watching Steve blow it completely and drift into the oncoming lane. We laid on the Double Pucker Power to ward off any oncoming pickups filled to the brim with Cree people and managed to squeak through (with a big I.O.U. left behind).

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It seemed to go on for an eternity but suddenly I saw a stop sign ahead (actually it said “*arrêt*” in French and had some cool hieroglyphics in Cree) and we knew the fun was over. As I stopped I thought to myself, Man, those 2 guys must be absolutely nuts. I wonder if they always ride like that!”. Not really, as we all celebrated at the stop, exchanging high-fives and hoots and then shouting that it was time to get back to the saloon for a cold one. We waited a while for the tardy ones to catch up and then formation flew back into Radisson passed the now-familiar Martian Invader installations that served as the transmission base for all the boost going over the lines and down to the USA eastern seaboard, Quebec and southern Ontario.

That night we had a super “Nordic” dinner after bantering quite a bit with Nancy, our waitress. After farting around with French words for “well done” or “medium” she threw up her arms and said, “You want blood or no blood?”

We got the message. Later, some of us wandered down to the “*Pub Seize*” (French for 16), which acknowledges the 16 turbines that make all the power along the La Grande River system. Here we ran into our buddy Eric with new his buddy, who just happened to be the mayor of Radisson. Later a nut-case Cree guy wandered over spinning us a yarn about how he invented the X Box, or some such stretcher.

Back to somebody’s room for ice cold beer from the local store and head over to the Boreal Bar to hang with the locals (Is anybody detecting a theme here?). Tub was especially interested in the draft tap set-up as he had one in his basement bar (Don’t we all?) and Troidus got blasted with a \$50 bill for 3 pitchers of beer by our waitress, who was yet another “Nancy.” Veering back to the hotel we ran into the Parisian hitchhiker-journalist guy who had started to develop a facial tick whenever he saw us. I could only imagine what mention he might make of us in his news story (“*Taber-Nac, deez crazeee guys were everrrrywhere!!!!*”).

AJ snores. But I don’t. I’m sure.

Day Four:

Friday September 7, 2007

Start Point = Radisson, Québec

GPS = 53.37 (lat) X 77.42 (long)

Elevation = 195 meters

The return run down the JBR from Radisson to Matagami was very cool (in more ways than one) and the gang stretched it out immediately. Troidus blasted off from the outset but was eventually reeled in, in what would prove to be the last really fast blast on the trip. It was found out later that day that his shock compression was #1 and he

had about 25 psi (I think) which probably explains why his bike was see-sawing so noticeably in the really fast sweepers. I was sure he was gonna die but I was disappointed yet again.

The ride back down to the sole gas station was chilly but clear and the boys made very good time indeed. At the top-up we ran into the Cree BGGG again, who was on a mission to somewhere that probably was inexplicable, like the guy.

“You white men still on my land?” Without cracking a smile.

“Yes,” I replied, “but we’re leaving today and you can have it back. By the way, when exactly is moose season? I told these guys they’d see all those moose heads that you folks usually tie to the tops of your trucks after you chainsaw them off?” (No word of a lie)

“Moose season is any season for us man”. A bit of back and forth and I pointed out the double moose whistles I had installed on Connie’s front fender.

“Those things work?”

“They must, I haven’t hit any moose so far”. He stares at me.

That evening the boys pulled up their chairs outside their motel rooms and started a bantering beer session. Famous people of Matagami came and went, including a very lovely, chain-smoking, beer-toting nurse who was heading out from Chisasibi for some R&R at the rear. Somebody remarked that it looked like we were probably going to continue to ride through bad weather the next day and she replied “There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad equipment”. There’s a gal after our own hearts

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Why I Ride

*I topped a hill
and the road stretched out before me
as the land fell away
blue azure hills in the distance
light blue sky with cotton ball clouds
and for a moment
I knew what it felt like to fly.*

- Jeff Hudspeth - COG #3770

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Day Five:
Saturday September 8, 2007
Start Point = Matagami, Québec
GPS = 49.73 (lat) X 77.71 (long)
Elevation = 281 meters

The final run together down from Matagami prompted mixed feelings in us all. By this point in the trip we had bonded quite a bit, had grown to know each other’s peculiarities and preferences, and were now capable of watching the blurring scenery not as alien and dangerous, as we had on the way up, but as something familiar, fun, and part of our collective experiences.

Together we had probably burned more 100 gallons of fuel just on the James Bay loop itself (“I swear, the gas gauge was moving faster than my tach!”) and had probably sizzled through far more than that in adrenaline. We had thrilled ourselves to the point of terror on several, extended occasions, marveled at Mother Nature, been chilled and almost downed by the final day’s freezing, machine-gun gales and huddled together under picnic shelters when things got a bit too much for our old bones.

AJ pulled off the best geographic mechanical when his clutch pivot bolt went into orbit about 10 minutes from the Kawasaki shop in Amos, Québec. The tech fixed him up pronto in the best of “franglais” (half French, half English). After that we gobbled down some “cafe” in the local McDonald’s where all the products had French names (“*un quartier livre avec fromage et frites s’il vous plait!*”) but that stuff was old hat to us now.

On the other side of Amos we split into 2 groups with handshakes all round - the Ohio posse heading west into yet another storm system where they passed through Timmins and down to the border at Sault Sainte Marie, while the Canucks re-traced their route back through La Verendrye and to Ottawa. Troidus, in yet another renegade run, decided that a solo blast up the north route through Cochrane, Kapuskasing and back through Duluth was the proper ticket and proceeded thusly, despite a minor brush with Ontario Provincial Police along the way. Old habits die hard.

Epilogue

Well, we accomplished our mission which was “seven go up, seven come back”, despite coming close on more than one occasion.

Best move was accomplished by John The V who smuggled the beer down to our moment at the Arctic Ocean. Remember that this was the same loonie that passed me at 150 kph (90 mph) on the gravel road out.

Greatest moment of irony happened on the home stretch in Michigan when the steady hands in the Clean-Up Crew got nailed for doing around 90 mph but whined their way out of anything major. Lots of hoots on Open Forum

after this came out (“...only 90? Were you guys even in top gear?”).

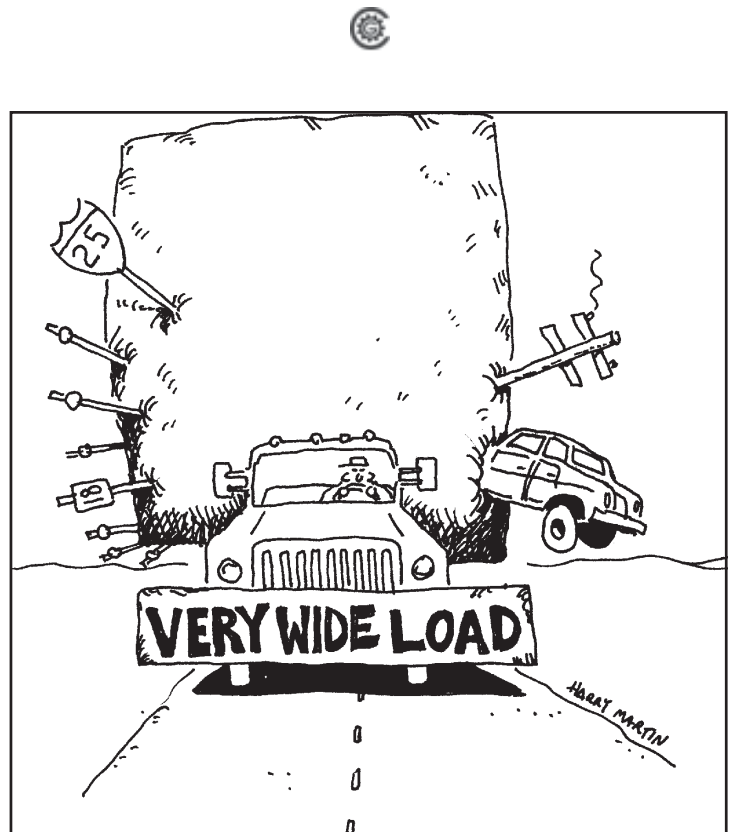
Longest ride goes to Troidus who totaled about 4,500 miles from Lawrence, Kansas. If there ever was need for COG to send somebody on the Jeopardy show we probably couldn’t do better than Troy, who seems to be a walking encyclopedia of every topic known to humankind.

Quickest wrench session guy was The KrumRider who seemed to have his entire tool kit out within seconds of any mechanical mishap and fought off a line-up of everybody else (except your truly, the helpless IKEA Boy) for wrenching rights. Everyone was impressed by John the V’s foresight in bringing along a torque wrench (a torque wrench?).

Best non-Connie was Colin’s ST 1100, probably because it was the only non-Connie we gave permission to join the group. Seriously, that was a clean rig and Colin rode it very well.

I managed to pull off the worst mechanical record on the trip, going through 2 bulbs, losing all electrical power at the most north point of the trip (“Hey Steve, gimme a hand here will yah?”), and the aforementioned fairing stay (This, 3 weeks after fracturing the side of the fairing frame up on a pre-run). I found out later that the other side had busted too, so she was hanging pretty loose there at times. Don’t want to dwell too much on the 120 mph blasts for some reason...

Anyway, it seems there’s lots of clamouring to make this a yearly pilgrimage. Anybody out there interested?



Worth the Wait?

by Brian Jordan, COG #480

Sam Koehler, a 74 years young Canadian Cogger owned two Connies and racked up an impressive 250,000 miles on them over a period of several years. He was a regular attendee at the Toronto International bike show and for 8 years had been harassing the Kawasaki delegation about when they were going to come out with a “new” Concours. It got to

and show the world its all-new Concours 14 in the spring, Koehler was the first one in line with his earnest money at the local Kawasaki dealer. When his bike did arrive in early June - even before the first US-bound bike was shipped to the States, Sam was the “first one on his block” to lay claim to a Concours 14.

And sure enough, of the two or three C14’s in the parking lot of the Canaan Valley Resort, among was Sam Koehler’s gleaming new bike, ridden down from Ontario. If Sam had a single word for getting his C14 it probably would be “Finally!”



Brian Jordan, Sam Koehler’s buddy and riding partner, points to an inventory sticker on the shipping box, inside of which is the answer

be such a regular occurrence that when Sam headed to the Kawasaki booth at the show each year, his friends would scatter, not wanting to be drawn into a contentious argument from Sam that it was time - time for a new Concours.

So when Kawasaki actually did pull the sheet away



Sam and his new ride in early June, '07

WANTED: CONTRIBUTORS

The Concourier is in need of contributors. Got a riding experience you were particularly impressed with or an opinion on anything motorcycle related which you want to share with your fellow Coppers? Or maybe you’ve actually figured out how to fit a square peg into a round hole on your Connie and think the rest of us would appreciate knowing how it’s done! Whatever the case may be, *The Concourier* is the magazine for Coppers around the globe to share their ideas and discoveries with each other. *The Concourier* is published by and for Coppers and sent to members in good standing both in North America and in Europe. In trying to keep its content original and relative to all things Concours, we depend on membership for contributions of the magazine.

So, if you think you can write (And even if you don’t think you can, that’s why we have editors!), share your thoughts with us all. Got pictures? Send them along. Because of printing requirements, we can only accept hi-resolution digital photos or prints. See page 3 for more information on how to submit your contribution.

“Tour De Twist” (TdT) 2007 – in SLOVAKIA

[Ed. Note: This is the first of what we hope will be regular contributions from members of the GTR Club Europe, also known as the GCE.]

By Dr. Walter Kirchweger (Austria)

On June 17th-20th a small group of riders met in Wolfsthal, Austria, a little village 2 km (1.2 miles) from the border with Slovakia on Thursday, June 17th. Initially it didn't look too good. One of the participants, Bernd Neumann from Germany, had crashed the week before the TdT. Unfortunately, his bike was completely destroyed. Nevertheless, although his broken ribs were constantly aching, he demonstrated that he is a very tough rider. Bernd showed up riding his wife's bike (and even though it was raining most of the time!).

In Wolfsthal, Hans Dresler (the OTP “traveler” in 2003), who organized this event, had found a place to stay the first night for all the participants. He booked us into a truly beautiful country house named “Villa Pannonica,” which in former days was a property of the Habsburg aristocracy and which was bought some years ago by a Vienna lawyer and his wife. They remodeled the house as a guest inn

bronze figures spread throughout the pedestrian zone in the heart of the city.



City center scene in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, which was once half of Czechoslovakia. Shortly after the end of the cold war, Czechoslovaks voted to split the country. The other half became the Czech Republic.

Crossing the “Little Carpathian Mountains” via Trnava and Trencin, we headed forward to the north-



Starting out for Slovakia

and included a little restaurant where we had dinner and some beer in the evening.

The next morning we started out for Slovakia, first visiting the capitol of Bratislava, which still has kept the character and style of an important city as it was one hundred years ago when it was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. The central part of the city is famous for its 300 year-old buildings and



Riding through the high Tetra of Slovakia.

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east of the country to enter the mountain region of the "High Tatra." For the first few miles we passed through wide urban areas and some ugly industrial complexes; but later on we enjoyed wonderfully curvy roads that lead through green hills covered with forests.

Suddenly the group stopped. One rider was missing: Renate Reinke from Germany had missed a turn (!) but she was lucky enough to find herself riding on a bridge which crossed a river and which was running parallel to the road we were riding on. So after a few minutes Renate came along—rider and bike okay. We continued, passing through little villages where time seemed to stand still. The houses still have the same design they had 100 years ago—wooden upper parts and decorative white paintings on the logs.

In the late afternoon we came upon an armoured tank standing beside the road. In front of the vehicle was a sign announcing that anyone can have a ride in the armoured tank for a small fee. We learned that a farmer had bought the vehicle from the Slovakian army, when it was decommissioned for scrap-metal. Now he makes money by driving tourists through those parts of his property which aren't good enough to farm corn, wheat, or even grass, as it is a wet and rather steep ground, hardly suitable for agriculture.

In the evening we arrived at the hotel in the town Habovka, not far away from the Polish border. The hotel was built just a year ago, offering four-star comfort, with sauna and a wellness area, bowl-



A Slovakian village

out of the former Czechoslovakia, finds it's way in Europe and has become a true international country.

Next day we were riding through the "High Tatra," going along through the woods in the Tatra mountains, some of them nearly 3,000 meters (9,842 ft.) high. There were large areas of the land completely deforested from a storm and subsequent fire had broken, then burnt, all the trees four years ago.

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We regret to report that Bill Risser, COG #5655 and rider of a 2000 Concours, was killed on Sunday night as he returned home from the COG National Rally in Canaan Valley, WV. He had been riding toward West Chester, PA where he and his wife, Carol, were living. He had been riding with Grant and Dee Beauchamp, Stan and Lena Stagg and some others and had turned off on his way to his house, about 15 miles away.

Bill was riding solo, travelling east on Route 30 near the Lancaster - Chester county border in southeastern Pennsylvania. At that point the highway is a three lane road and a young woman in a Mercedes driving westbound on Rte. 30 drifted across the median and began going west in the eastbound lane. Bill swerved to avoid but was struck head on and pronounced dead at the scene.

Bill was one of the finest guys you could know, generous and gregarious and his loss is keenly felt by his friends, Church community and people all over. Services were held on Saturday, August 18 in Parkesburg, PA. COG has lost a good friend and great guy.



Dinner and beer at the Villa Pannonica in Wolfsthal

ing, table soccer, billiards, etc. They built the hotel mainly for the *nouveau riche* society in the western Slovakia, who come to that region for its skiing. We found the hotel to be typical Middle Europe standard. The employees there speak English and some of them German, as well. This was a very good example of the way how Slovakia, which was formed

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Coming home. The high Tatra Mountains in the background.

Down on the plain we had a good view to the Tatra mountains.

Further on we went through bigger towns, such as Rusemberok, Martin and Poprad, heading southeast toward the Hungarian border. This is the poorer section of the country. Many gypsies are living there, most of them without work (up to 80% of the population is unemployed), and suffer a high rate of alcoholism among the male population. We were riding through villages without any infrastructure at all: no stores, no shops, no inns; only more or less shabby houses.

Between the villages there were small hills covered with woods, twisty roads with an acceptable macadam surface; good ground for riding a bike. For lunch we stopped in a bigger village, finding a new pizzeria (It had opened the day before!) which offered tasty food, and where the price was only a third of what we are used to paying in our home countries.

Then we made our way home, using the most direct way, arriving back in Wolfsthal in the evening, where we had an excellent "good-bye-dinner" in a restaurant. We finished the evening talking and joking with some beers.

The next day after breakfast the participants departed for home, taking different ways, some running together, others riding alone. But there is one thing all of them know for sure: We will come back again some day

(See "GCE," Page 49)

"Never argue with an 18-wheeler!" - Anon.

Northwest Regional Meet Comes with a Big Beat

by Bob Burns

It will be enormously difficult to top the 2007 edition of the COG Northwest area's regional rally, held July 13th and 14th in Enterprise, Oregon. Aside from the location be-



Just about 50 happy Northwest Coggers gather for a group photo at the Pondersoa Motel in Enterprise, OR during the '07 NW regional rally.

ing one of the most glorious parts of not just the Northwest but the entire country, Enterprise, a small community of a couple of thousand Oregonians, sustained by ranching and farming and increasingly, tourism, turned itself inside out for 50 Coggers that rolled into town. In fact, the city fathers



Noel Mallory jumps for joy ay having won a Joe Rockets perforated leather riding jacket. Way to go Noel!

sealed off a block of Main St. so the bikers could party hardy eating barbecue, drinking copious quantities of beer and rock-

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ing out with a band which Bob Pappalardo who, along with Cogger Alex Charleton, put the soiree together, describes as being “kickass!” Marlon Brando at his best, would have been proud.

The area around Enterprise provides some spectacularly historic, scenic and highly technical riding. Northeastern Oregon is where the Oregon Trail entered the state from Idaho. It’s also where the Nez Perce people hunted game and whose descendents still call home. It where the two great rivers of the Northwest, the Snake and the Columbia come together on their trip to the Pacific Ocean. In short, there’s plenty to see and do and plenty more to ride, whether or not you’re a history buff, a shutterbug or, as we found out, like cold beer and rock ‘n roll!

From Enterprise there were some great rides north and south. If you wanted to head north you would head up Hwy 3 through the Grand Ronde canyon to Lewiston, ID. If you choose south, you go through Joseph, OR (named after Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce people) wind up on Forest Rd. 39 overlooking the Hell’s Canyon National Recreation, where the Snake River—well—snakes through the Wallowa Mountains area and you drop down into Baker City. In either case, the riding is chuck full of twisties and not much traffic.

As good as the riding was, the gang had a roaring good time at the Saturday night BBQ in the middle of town, as noted above, and it seemed everyone had a great time. “Enterprise will certainly not be hearing the last of Northwest Coggers,” grinned Pappalardo. “We had a hell of a good time.”

Metlers’ “Encore”

As if the regional meet wasn’t enough to satisfy a weekend of top notch riding in the Oregon outback, (former COG executive director and present



The middle fork of the John Day River winds through some great canyon country and some great sweepers follow the river in this section.

m e m b e r s h i p honcho) Carl and Ronda Metler, picking up the ball from “Idaho Bob” Rainey, hosted the annual “Ride the Ribbon” event on the Labor Day weekend. Centered in the wild country in and

around the small town of John Day, where the Metlers makes their home, about 30 Coggers enjoyed a weekend of riding in the Blue Mountains region of the state, taking in some vistas which, to this writer, are truly spectacular. I couldn’t stop remarking to anyone within earshot how incredible the views were. Even though the air was thick with smoke from

lightening caused forest fires in the area, reducing visibility somewhat, it was a camera nut’s dream come true.

The area is a magnet for motorcycle riders, with several clubs hold rallies in John Day. The town is happy to have them, for the most part, as they generally bring significant amounts of tourist dollars with them.



Carl Metler leans into a sweeper

The riding was great: a nice mix of highspeed straightaways totally devoid of traffic, broad sweepers, and technically challenging twisties.

Best of all, the riding weather was just perfect. Carl and Ronda had reserved the entire Grant county fairgrounds as a campground for several riders who liked roughing it; several more riders chose motels. Sunday night we had an entire Mexican restaurant to ourselves

(Are you getting the idea that John Day is a really small place?) So everyone tanked up on margaritas and enchiladas and generally had a roaring good time. Too good, in fact!



Coggers rendezvous at Austin House, deep in Oregon’s Blue Mountains

Ronda Metler was scheduled to lead the ride through the actual ribbon on Sunday. Whether or not it was due to a little too much partying the night before or because it was just getting late in the long weekend and people started thinking about the rides home is conjectural, but it



Dinner and drinks at El Cocinero in John Day. Perfect way to cap off a great day.

didn’t happen. The “Ribbon” is a small section of U.S. 395 which runs from John Day south toward Burns, Oregon (I always liked that town, for some reason!) and which runs through mountainous, highly twisty countryside.

After the incredibly good Saturday ride it wasn’t much of a loss.

All in all it was a great month between the two big events for the Northwest Coggers.



The Southwest Region of COG is pleased to welcome you to Frisco, Colorado for the 2008 COG National Rally from June 2-6, 2008. Located 60 miles west of Denver on I-70, Frisco is central to some of the finest motorcycling roads in Colorado.... both street and dual-sport.

What to expect.

- Colorado averages over 300 days of sunshine annually. This doesn't mean you won't get rained on, but the odds are against it.
- Frisco is at 9100' Planned motorcycle routes (street and dual-sport) will vary from 5400' to over 12,000'.
- Daytime temps in early June (Frisco) will be in the 60-70's. Daytime temps (Denver) will be in the 80-90's. Evenings may get to 35.
- Expect to see some snow on the shaded side of the mountains above 8,000'

Personal preparation for high altitude.

- Expect to be short of breath for a few days, it will be most difficult to run a four minute mile.
- Use sunscreen! The mountain sun can be brutal.
- Drink plenty of water. The dry air and altitude in Colorado dehydrates you faster than normal. It'll sneak up on you.
- A few people suffer from altitude sickness for a few days after arriving at elevation, especially those that do not take a few days to acclimate to elevation (arriving by plane for instance). Drinking plenty of water helps, as does a small aspirin once a day. Diamox is also effective.

Things to do.

- Go ride! Dirt and street bike routes planned.
- Shop! Silverthorn Factory Outlet mall in Silverthorn. Perhaps the shops along main street in Breckenridge are worthy of a visit.
- Take in a National Park. Rocky Mountain National, and Black Canyon of the Gunnison are very close by. (Bring your Parks Pass!)
- Ride the historic Georgetown Silver-Plume loop railroad. Take in the optional mine tour at the end.
- Tour an historic gold mine. The Argo mine in Idaho Springs is popular. There are mine tours in Breckenridge too.
- Go for a hike, plenty of options here, all close to rally central.
- Mountain biking. Bike rentals are available at both rally host hotels.
- Fly fishing. The Blue River is a few miles away. The Frying Pan and Crystal rivers are a short ride.

Rally Central will be at two hotels. The Holiday Inn Frisco (primary), and the Best Western Dillon Lake Lodge (secondary). Easily accessible from the Interstate, both of them offer a host of features to make your vacation enjoyable.

An entire wing has been reserved at the Holiday Inn starting at \$69.00 per night plus tax. Reserve online, the direct URL is on the concours.org website, or call the hotel direct at (800) 782-7669, or (970) 668-5000. Mention "COG Motorcycle Rally" when making reservations.

The Best Western, directly across the street, has rooms starting at \$67.99 plus tax until January 1. Then the rooms increase in price slightly. Call the hotel direct at (800) 727-0607, or (970) 668-5094 and mention "COG Motorcycle Rally" for our group rates.

Camping is available at several NFS campgrounds in the area. The closest is Heaton Bay campground on Dillon Dam road, a scant one mile from Rally HQ. Reserve online at reserveusa.com. or recreation.gov, or call 1-877-444-8777. The campsites have water, but no showers. The Silverthorn Recreation center has those, and more.

...gleanings from the AMA

AMA calls conclusions of new IIHS report misleading.

The AMA has expressed serious reservations about the conclusions reached in a report of motorcycle fatalities released by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety this week.

The IIHS report purports to show that sport-styled motorcycles are considerably more dangerous than other types of bikes. But an AMA analysis of the report notes that the methodology used in the research makes it difficult to determine whether that's a valid conclusion.

"The synopsis released by the IIHS claims that it has data showing a much higher fatality rate among so-called 'supersport' motorcycles," noted Ed Moreland, AMA Vice President for Government Relations. "But that is by no means clear, based on this report."

The IIHS report is not a new study. Instead, it's an analysis of existing data from the national Fatal Accident Reporting System. The methodology consists of a comparison of fatalities for different styles of motorcycles based on a rate per 10,000 registrations. But that approach ignores a number of key factors, like the number of miles the bike was ridden, the traffic environment in which it was used, along with the age and experience of the rider, among others.

"Those factors are so significant that they could easily change the results the IIHS has reported," said Moreland. "For instance, the IIHS has made no attempt to determine whether bikes in its 'supersport' category are ridden more miles than bikes in the 'cruiser/standard' category. Nor has it attempted to determine whether they are used more often in urban areas that represent a more dangerous environment than the rural interstates where touring bikes are likely to be used."

When it comes to age and riding experience, the IIHS does indicate that motorcycles in its "supersport" category are ridden by the youngest riders, averaging 27 years of age. In fact, its rankings of the average ages of riders killed on various styles of bikes coincides closely with the fatality rate it reports on that style of motorcycle.

"In other words," said Moreland, "it's entirely possible this report actually demonstrates that younger, less-experienced riders are more prone to crash than older riders, regardless of the type of bike they're riding. And that's true for all types of motor vehicles--cars, trucks or motorcycles."

Making any interpretation of the IIHS report even more difficult is the classification system the group used in dividing motorcycles. It includes some unfamiliar categories, like "unclad sport" motorcycles, and leaves out well-established categories, like the sport-touring class.

In an attempt to sort through this confusion, the AMA requested a copy of the classification system the IIHS used in its analysis and found several significant anomalies. For

instance, although the IIHS report focuses on speed and acceleration as the factors that make its "supersport" category so dangerous, the two most powerful motorcycles you can buy in the United States, Kawasaki's ZX-14 and Suzuki's Hayabusa (above left), are placed in the Sport category, which is rated considerably less dangerous. And they share that category with Honda's ST1300 (below right) and Yamaha's FJR1300, two bikes that define the sport-touring class.

No matter what name you put on it, the Hayabusa and the ST1300 are simply not in the same class of motorcycles," Moreland said. "And if you're claiming to rank fatality rates by category of motorcycle, it's hard to get meaningful results when you lump those very different machines together and declare them to be in the same class."

The timing of the IIHS report is also unusual. Just this week, the National Transportation Safety Board specifically asked the Federal Highway Administration to work with states to develop uniform data-collection procedures that will result in better information about the number of miles traveled by motorcycles, one of the most important factors in evaluating crash statistics. As a result, this could be one of the final reports to use registration data exclusively, which is less accurate in reflecting actual motorcycle use.

This new IIHS report is remarkably similar to a study the group financed 20 years ago that also purported to show higher fatality rates among sportbikes. At that time, the IIHS used its study as the springboard for a well-orchestrated campaign that included ready-made news footage it fed to TV news operations across the country. That campaign culminated in the introduction of a bill in the U.S. Senate to impose a horsepower limit on all motorcycles sold in the United States.

The current IIHS research has plenty of echoes of that era in the late 1980s. In fact, the final sentence of the IIHS "Status Report" on the subject, published September 11, says, "Short of banning supersport and sport motorcycles from public roadways, capping the speed of these street-legal racing machines at the factory might be one way to reduce their risk."

In response to that previous attempt by the IIHS to ban sportbikes, the AMA conducted an analysis of the study and raised questions that the Association submitted to Harry Hurt, lead researcher on the most comprehensive study of motorcycle crashes ever conducted. Hurt reviewed the research and declared it "fatally flawed" for exactly the kind of methodology problems seen in the new IIHS report. The Association then coordinated a campaign among motorcyclists across the country that eventually led the senator to withdraw his proposed legislation.

Ironically, the new IIHS report comes out just as the AMA and the motorcycling community have been successful in getting federal funding for the first comprehensive motorcycle safety study since the Hurt Report all those years ago. And thanks to funding from the industry, through the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, along with the AMA and individual riders, that study will begin this fall.

"We look forward to getting the results of actual, in-the-field research that won't just compare fatalities to some

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hypothetical class of motorcycle, but will pin down the actual factors involved in motorcycle crashes," Moreland said. "That will be much more useful in helping save lives on the highway."

33 Secrets for Smart Touring

There's nothing like the feeling of loading up and heading out on a big motorcycle trip. And there's nothing like the security of knowing you're prepared for life on the road. It can take years to develop that knowledge through trial and error. But we've got a shortcut. We've asked AMA staff members to share with you the experience they've accumulated over decades on the road. What you'll find here isn't a comprehensive collection of touring knowledge. Instead, here are 33 insider tips—useful suggestions that have made our tours more organized and more fun. We guarantee you'll learn something.

- 1) Eat at weird times. Everyone and their dog eats around 8 a.m., noon and 6 p.m. To get in and out of restaurants in a hurry, don't be hungry then.
- 2) A short metal cable with loops on both ends (like those made to keep people from stealing bicycle seats) is perfect for securing a jacket and helmet to your bike's helmet lock.
- 3) Carry a spare key. Zip-tie or duct tape it somewhere hidden on your bike, or better yet, give it to a traveling companion.
- 4) Portable weather radios are now in the \$20 range, and the first time one saves you from running right into a massive storm, you'll wonder why you ever traveled without one. Check accessory companies like Aerostich, or Radio Shack.
- 5) On high-mileage days, you'll feel a lot better if you carry eyedrops and use them every time you stop for gas.
- 6) If you're nearing the end of your riding day, and want to set yourself up for a quick getaway in the morning, consider riding to the far side of the next city you reach before you stop for the night, eliminating urban traffic the next day.
- 7) Take a tip from off-road riders and carry a backpack hydration system so you can drink while you ride. A must for arid weather.
- 8) Going on a long, complex trip? Keep yourself organized with the envelope system. Before you leave, prepare one envelope for each day on the road. Mark the dates and locations on the outside, then stuff things like hotel reservation info and lists of things to see inside. Instead of juggling your entire stack of literature to find the piece you need, you can just open up that day's envelope.
- 9) A simple map case attached to your bike's tank (we've used a Rev-Pak version that has been available through www.whitehorsepress.com for years) can keep you on course without the bulk of a tankbag.
- 10) Keep your stuff dry in saddlebags by using trash compactor bags as waterproof barriers. They're thicker and more durable than standard garbage bags.
- 11) Use earplugs to help reduce wind noise. You can get them from most mail-order shops or dealers, or in bulk from safety-equipment supply houses.
- 12) Don't forget that pack-and-ship places are just about everywhere these days. They're perfect when you spot that antique umbrella stand you're dying to buy hundreds of miles from home.
- 13) Don't forget a small towel or rag for wiping dew off seats, wind-

shields and mirrors, and even for doing a quick whole-bike cleanup. Those synthetic chamois cloths work particularly well.

- 14) Pack extra bungees and zip-ties. 'Nuff said.
- 15) Go ahead, buy that GPS you've always wanted. They're perfect not only for finding yourself, but also for allowing you the freedom to get lost in the first place.
- 16) You've heard it a million times, but we'll say it again: look over your bike carefully every morning on the road. Checking the simple stuff—air pressure, oil level, loose or missing fasteners—can save you from big trouble.
- 17) Sign up for AMA MoTow. For \$25 a year, you get peace of mind, knowing that if you do break down, a motorcycle-savvy towing crew is only a phone call away. To sign up, call the AMA at: (614) 856-1900.
- 18) Stash a little cash somewhere hidden on the bike or on you, so you can make something happen when all else fails.
- 19) Before you take off from the hotel or campground in the morning, double check every strap on tankbags or soft saddlebags, and every latch on hard luggage.
- 20) Especially if you're riding alone, wear a dog-tag with your name and contact info. You can get them lots of places, including your local army surplus store.
- 21) Take a look back at where you were parked every time you leave someplace. You'd be amazed at what you find.
- 22) A cellphone can be a lifesaver in an emergency. You can dial 911 for help anywhere you find cell service, but you'll need to tell a dispatcher where you are. Keep track of route numbers, interstate exits, towns you've passed, mileposts—anything that can save emergency officials time in getting to you.
- 23) Good motorcycle gear really is worth it. Waterproof, breathable linings in boots and jackets will transform the way you think about bad weather. A number of companies offer materials that work well, but always test your gear on a rainy day at home before facing a storm on the road.
- 24) Do routine maintenance at home with your bike's toolkit, so you're sure you have what you need along the side of the road.
- 25) On a long tour, plan for at least one day every week of doing nothing. Time is the ultimate luxury, and can mean the difference between a vacation and an endurance run.
- 26) Be realistic with your daily mileage. In really scenic areas, 150 miles may make a very full day. Don't assume you can achieve freeway mileage on good back roads.
- 27) Guidebooks can be invaluable, but these days, a search of the Internet can add spice to your trip by revealing special-interest locations most books fail to include. One of the sites we've used is www.roadsideamerica.com. World's largest concrete bison, anyone?
- 28) It is possible to use a kit to make emergency repairs on tubeless or tube-type tires alongside the road. But before you count on this as your safety net, practice using the kit on an old tire in your garage.
- 29) A packable motorcycle cover not only keeps your bike clean and dry overnight, it also discourages thieves. And don't forget a stout lock of some kind for the bike itself.
- 30) If you can afford it and are short of time, you could always ship your bike somewhere cool and ride it back. Coast to coast, uncrated motorcycle shipping was in the \$600 to \$700 range for AMA members at presstime—much less than your cost to ride it that far. Call the Federal Companies at (800) 747-4100, ext. 217 or 218, for details.

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31) If you call a hotel—even if you're two blocks away—you can often get a better rate than if you just walk in. And if you have access to a computer, there are some spectacular Internet-only deals available these days. Either way, do yourself a favor and have a reservation by 4 p.m. You never know when a convention will take over your destination city. Remember that AMA members get a discount at Red Roof Inns (call (800) RED-ROOF and use AMA code CP503343).

32) A nap can do wonders on a long day.

33) If you're traveling east or west, schedule your breakfast or dinner times near sunrise or sunset so you don't have to stare into the sun when it's low on the horizon.

9 ways to keep your bike from becoming a motorcycle-theft statistic:
Lock it or lose it

"I felt a sickly, sinking feeling in my stomach...It was just like a nightmare. I stared for about two minutes at the incredibly empty spot where I had parked the bike the night before..."

No matter how you look at it, walking out to discover that your motorcycle has been stolen is guaranteed to make you sick. Unfortunately, it's a feeling a number of AMA members have experienced firsthand.

A few months ago, we asked you to send us your stories of motorcycle theft. We knew you'd come through, not only with tales of misfortune, but also with sound advice for others. And you did, proving once again that you can't go wrong with the accumulated wisdom of 270,000 experienced riders.

We've distilled scores of responses down to the following nine key ways to keep your bike from disappearing:

1. Lock It - Keeping Your Bike 101, first day of class, lesson one: Lock it, or you just might lose it. A determined, professional thief may get your motorcycle no matter what you do, but plenty of motorcycles are stolen by opportunistic miscreants. Your fork lock is just a start. Adding a disc lock is better. But why stop there? Use a strong, motorcycle U-lock and a chain to attach your bike to a solid object, or another motorcycle. Looping the chain through the frame is better than draping it through the wheel, which can be removed. Make the chain as tight as possible to offer less access for bolt-cutters, and don't let it drape on the ground, where it can be chiseled. Put the locks in hard-to-reach spots—if it's more work for you to put the lock on, it's more work for a thief to get it off. Maybe he'll move on to an easier target. On some bikes, you can lock down the centerstand, so the motorcycle cannot be dropped off the stand and rolled or ridden away. A lever lock on the clutch adds another layer of hassle for the thief, especially if you leave the bike in gear, unbolt the shift lever and take it with you. And remember that the same chain you use to secure your bike can also secure your gear. Run the chain through your helmet and jacket sleeve so you won't have to carry them around all day.

2. Cover It - No, a motorcycle cover won't stop a determined thief. But it might mean your bike attracts less of the wrong kind of attention. So after you've locked it, cover it. A plain cover is best. After all, the purpose is not to advertise your loyalty to a particularly valuable brand of motorcycle, but to avoid letting thieves know what you've got. A cover with metal grommets can be locked in place to help keep prying eyes away, and to prevent the cover itself from being stolen.

3. Consider an Alarm - An alarm in conjunction with a lock can be a difficult combination for a thief, especially if the alarm is hidden. Cutting chains and removing locks is likely to set off the alarm, which could stop a theft attempt before it succeeds. But what if your bike is parked where you can't hear the alarm? What if you live where nobody pays attention to screaming vehicles any more because they're always blaring false alarms? Simple. Get an alarm with a pager that notifies you when someone tampers with your bike. Some riders find that an alarm attached to a cover can be really effective. Lift the cover, and the noise starts.

4. Don't Be a Show-Off - Some people are so proud of their bikes that they park them in the front yard for everyone to admire. That just makes it easier for thieves to case your ride. Always park your bike inside a garage if possible. Keep the door closed and consider covering the windows. If you must park outside, use a cover. It's simple: The more your bike is out of sight, the more it's out of a thief's mind.

5. Reinforce Your Garage - Use your lock and/or alarm in your garage, just the same as elsewhere. But don't stop there. Beef up your garage security as well. Don't confuse a garage-door opener with a lock. A simple lock on the frame inside the door will keep it from opening unless the thief seriously mangles it. And by then, he might have created enough noise to wake you up. Installing a U-bolt in the garage floor gives you an easy way to lock your bike. Want more protection? Consider a baby monitor. Put the monitor in your garage and the receiver in your bedroom, and you're less likely to sleep through a theft attempt. If you're really serious, you can extend your home security system to include the garage. Some people even mount a closed-circuit video camera so they can check on their bikes from inside the house. Lastly, use other vehicles as additional obstacles. Make the thief hoist your motorcycle over the car if he wants it that bad.

6. Disable Your Bike - Locking your bike to something stops a thief from lifting it into a truck and hauling it away, but you can also temporarily disable the motorcycle to keep someone from riding it away. This can be as simple as removing the main fuse and dropping it into your pocket after you park. Some owners install hidden cut-out switches that disable the ignition. Just tap a secret switch onto the existing kill switch circuit. Got fuel injection? A switch that cuts power to the fuel pump will keep the engine from firing. The key is to hide these anti-theft measures so that the thief runs out of patience and abandons the bike before finding them.

7. Choose Parking Spots Carefully - In a parking lot, don't park next to a panel truck, van or other vehicle that can conceal thieves at work. For the same reason, try to choose a spot where thieves cannot intentionally use their stolen-bike transporter to block the view of your motorcycle. On the road, ask the motel operator if you can park by the front door, within sight of an all-night desk clerk. When you can, pick a ground-floor room with a parking spot right outside the door. We've heard of motel guests making a homemade alarm of sorts by perching a glass ash tray out of sight on top of the rear wheel. It'll clatter to the asphalt if someone tampers with the motorcycle.

8. Be Wary of Test Rides - Some thieves pose as buyers of used bikes. AMA member Bob Krus was selling his off-road motorcycle a few years ago, and a potential buyer showed up after dark, on foot, claiming a friend had dropped him off at the corner. The buyer took off on a test ride. When he didn't come back, Krus chased him down. Krus got the bike back, but he only caught the guy because the "buyer" got lost on unfamiliar streets. "Buyer beware" has always been good advice, but sellers should be careful, too. Instead of a test ride, some sellers get payment first and offer a money-back guarantee if the buyer brings the motorcycle back in the same condition within an hour. It's a no-risk test ride for both sides. If you let someone test-ride your bike, at least ask for identification. Take down the person's drivers license number and the license plate number of the vehicle in which the person arrived, and gather any other information possible.

9. Mark Your Territory - If all else fails, and your bike is stolen, at least don't make the thief's job easier. Professionals nab bikes so they can break them down into parts, obliterate the VIN numbers and resell them here or overseas. If the thieves get caught, you stand a better chance of getting your bike or parts back if you've marked them so police can identify them. Consider marking your drivers license number or other identification in hidden locations on key parts, such as the engine and frame. In addition, make sure you can quickly put your hands on all the pertinent information about your bike, especially the VIN and license plate numbers. The more time that passes before police have this information, the less chance you have of recovering your motorcycle. Don't leave documents, such as the registration, on the motorcycle, but have it handy. It also helps if you have



NORTHEAST REGION

Steven Smith- AD



As many know by now, Pat Sprague plans to step down as the mid-Atlantic AAD at the end of this year. The Northeast staff has been actively searching for AAD candidates to pass the baton to. After an exhaustive search we have finally decided on the best candidates. I am please to announce that Kurt & Sue Nordstrom, COG 6049/6049A, have volunteered to take over for Pat for 2008, and hopefully beyond. The Nordstroms are excited to take on this role and will begin the transition now while shadowing Pat and getting his expert tutelage. They will officially take over the helm as co-AADs for Viginia/West Virginia in January. Please offer whatever support you can to Kurt & Sue. I'm sure they will be looking toward the area members to pitch in by hosting rides and other events. Adding to the Northeast Staff further... Ken Quesenberry, COG 3361, will be teaming up with AAD Bob Chappell as co-AADs for the DelMarVa/Philly suburbs/southern NJ region. Ken has been looking forward to when he had time to get more involved and have the opportunity to try making this region more active. Please join me in congratulating these folks on joining the ranks of the NE Staff.

We've had a great spring and summer here in the COG northeast area. The big NE Area event this year was the 2007 COG National Rally in Canaan Valley, WV. This rally was the culmination of a few years and many, many hours worth of work by the rally organizers and committee. Check out the rally summary submitted to the Concourier, as well as all the photos that are linked to from the rally web site. Thanks to many folks who volunteered some of their vacation time to help out. Many thanks to the 453 folks that took part in the rally. Hopefully everone enjoyed themselves.

The National was not the only Northeast Area event. Here is a recap of some of our other wonderful activities that took place...

Western NY AAD J.R. Healy reported, "*The spring got off to a good start in Western New York with a lunch meet and greet on April 14 at the Buffalo Tap Room in Tonawanda, NY. Everyone at the meet and greet had a great time, and Tom Welch volunteered to set up a ride to the Lake Ontario Shoreline. We set the date for the Spring Lake Ride for May 19 and had a terrific turn out. Fourteen bikes from the US and Canada turned out for a beautiful day to ride. We stopped at Niagara Falls Goat Island then followed the Niagara River to the Lake Ontario shoreline. Lunch was had at the Lighthouse Restaurant in Olcott Beach, after which we continued to Lakeside State Park and home.*"

Kevin Martin, AAD for northern New England recalled "*We had what I'd consider an old fashion New England spring with plenty of wet weather and mild tempera-*

tures in late April and most of May, which offered some great riding weather with temps in the 60's and 70's. We didn't waste any of that good weather by kicking off our Northern New England event schedule with a Tech Session hosted by Pat Mulloy and Greg Habel at Pat's home in Monson, MA on April 21. Pat has a great set up for a tech session with an oversized 2-car garage and all of the toys including lift tables, M/C jacks, tire removal and balancing equipment, etc. At last count we had about 20 people attend the event, some who serviced their bikes, and others who just dropped by to say hi and take advantage of the great weather and go for a ride. This was Greg and Pat's first attempt at hosting a Tech Session, and it was a smashing success."

In mid-May Jon Coler organized an Experienced RiderCourse for COG members & friends. The well attended course was held in Waterbury, CT with folks coming from Connecticut, New York, and Massachusetts. Even the instructors (John Purdy & myself) were COG members. The weather was perfect for the course. It was delightfully sunny day and not too warm. We all felt badly for Mike Flynn, whose Triumph Sprint decided to plague him with a persistent charging system problem.

The Northeast Regional Spring Fling Rally was held the weekend of May 31-June 1 and was flawlessly hosted by Kevin Martin. While I have not attended as many consecutive COG rallies as member Chris Lawrence (this spring fling makes 25), I have not missed a Spring Fling since 2000. I could not spend the entire weekend romping around the wonderful Vermont roads, but I did manage to sneak away with my wife for an overnight trip and was there for the most excellent buffet dinner. Attendance was close to 100 people despite the ominous weather reports.

In June Russell & Martha hosted the 10th annual North/South weekend at their home in Maryland. This is always a very well attended weekend long event with folks setting up camp in Russ's yard or seeking refuge at nearby motels. Folks come from all over the NE area to attend, but there is always a very large contingency of members from the most northern part of the NE Area (Canada, eh!) As usual, Russ was out in the driveway cooking up a scrumptious breakfast both mornings for the attendees.

Mid July brought Pat Sprague's "Urinal Ride." Originally the ride was supposed to take in several places with interesting urinals in the VA and WV area, but due to time constraints, the ride was shortened. Their first stop, the Homestead Resort in Hot Springs, VA. The urinals at the Homestead were Five Star, as is the resort itself. Pat said, "After a full day of riding we crossed the Ohio there and rode the 15 miles north to Fly to catch the Sistersville Ferry, and got there at 5:52pm, just in time to see the last ferry of the day about 100 yards from shore and heading for WV. An easy ride to the New Martinsville bridge put us back in WV and we were soon at the Wells Inn at Sistersville. The Wells Inn is/was a classier, older hotel built during the oil and gas heyday of Sistersville. It's a bit sad to see the fine old hotel drifting irrevocably into ruin. But, as Jason said, it was clean, the water hot, and the staff friendly. Oh yeah, the large old urinals at the

(Continued on following page)

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Wells Inn were in good working order.”

As we head into the fall season I look forward to some wonderful northeast area rides while. Autumn riding in the northeast can be wonderful... Cool temperatures and crisp morning air are a great way to start off a ride. Add in the spectacularly beautiful fall foliage and it makes for a great time. There are a number of fall events planned around the area. In October Terry Faherty and Scott Sorger are once again hosting a regional Fall Rally in Lake George, NY. This has been a favorite fall destination in the past.

A few of the other notable Northeast Area events were the “COG in Coal Country” ride hosted by Pat Sprague, the “BellyBuster Covered Bridge Ride” hosted by Ken Quesenberry, the “Rhinebeck Aerodrome Weekend” hosted by Kevin Martin and the “Sport Touring Ride” hosted by Russell Fleming.

Amid all the joy this summer, there was some sadness as we lost two COG friends... Pat Sprague reported “COG member Herman Tessman of Arlington, VA died on 12 July 2007 from laryngeal cancer and pneumonia. He was the husband of Sharon Tessman and father of Greta Tessman. Herman had developed cancer in the summer of 2006 and underwent several series of chemotherapy and radiation therapy in the following months. He was recuperating and optimistic, and even bought a new FJR 1300, but the cancer returned. Herman was COG member number 5302 and a very active member, attending many COG events local and distant; he also hosted a morning get together for 3 or 4 years for those attending the Cycle World motorcycle show in Washington, DC. He enjoyed modifying and maintaining his red Concours “Scarlet Uhurha” almost as much as riding it. He also enjoyed learning from other riders and always rode safely and responsibly. Herman was an excellent rider and friend. He will be missed by me and many others in COG.”

Bill Dean informed us that “Bill Risser, (COG#5655) and NE Area member and rider of a 2000 Connie, was killed on Sunday night (Aug 12) as he returned home from the COG national in West Virginia.

We will miss both these fine gentlemen.

SOUTHEAST REGION

Larry Buck - AD

Where has this year gone? It seems like I had no sooner held last year's Last Blast Before #4 and it's time to plan #5. Where does the time go?

I had a chance to attend the COG National Rally in Canaan, WV in September. Wow! It was the best one in awhile, nearly 480 people were there. I rode the new C-14 – awesome. I was the lucky dog who won the grand prize of a Garmin Zumo 550. It sure looks and works great on my Connie.

Vic Salisbury (ex NGA-AAD and COG Industry Liason) has returned to Florida, and retired from his military duties. Now residing in the Tampa area, Vic is itching to get



back into the swing of things COG. After totaling his '99 in California, he trucked it back to Florida to remove some precious parts. Bob Sherwood (COG Industry Liason) just happened to want to sell his '97 so he could get a new Kawasaki Versa. The two of them worked out a deal both were happy with. Welcome home, Vic.

Al Norcross (North FL-AAD) is soon to be leaving on his ride of a lifetime; Florida to Terra del Fuego, then on to Prudoe Bay, Alaska. Al has resigned his position as AAD due to his upcoming absence from the area. I can't say enough about Al's efforts for our Group. He has made a big contribution to us and I will miss his warm “friendship signs” that always greet our getting together. Thank you Al, and please stay in touch.

Returning to the subject of Vic Salisbury. I am pleased to announce that Vic will assume Al's AAD duties. Many of you know of Vic's enthusiasm and dedication to COG when he was an AAD in North Georgia. The Florida riders in his area, and we in the Southeast, are fortunate to have him. Welcome, Vic!

Jack McVickers, AL-AAD and his lovely wife Gwynn, have relocated to western Tennessee. I'm putting the arm on him to be our AAD in that area. All you TN members need to coax him a little (glmcvickers@yahoo.com). Ping him via email, you won't regret it.

Steve Jenkins, Western NC-AAD is re-starting the Fall Foliage Ride. Those of you who did this ride in the past know how beautiful the colors are in western NC. Check the SE website for details or email Steve @ swj54@charter.net

Paul Heydemann, S-FLAAD, will lead us to Daytona Beach, FL 10/19-20 for our annual Biketoberfest activities. The Polito's will host another of their famous Chilifests on Friday evening. This is an RSVP event. Please make your reservations ASAP – details @ www.concours.org/se On Saturday we will have our Biketoberfest Breakfast at Biscuits Gravy & More.....mmm, Biscuits & Gravy.

Paul Heydemann, S-FLAAD, will host a ride and get together at the Barber Museum in AL, November 2-4. If you want to see one of the best motorcycle collections extant, don't miss this ride and a great motorcycle facility. Check the SE website for all the info.

Mike Schmitt and his wife Roseanne are hosting a Tech day and BBQ at their home in Orange City, FL on October 6th. Tech starts at 9:00 AM, BBQ at noon. Thank you Mike and Roseanne for your hospitality and support of COG. All the details on our website” www.concours.org/se

Don't forget the Last Blast Before....#5, on December 29th. We meet at the Blackwater Inn in Astor, FL for our last get together in '07. We've had as many as 40+ riders come to this yearend event. It's not just for the food (great!) it's for the people. All riders and all makes welcome, bring a friend or two. See 'ya there.

And last, but not least, Jack Ferguson, N-GA AAD, has already started his plans for the annual Run With the Wolf Rally in April '08. We will again return to the High Valley Resort in Suches, GA. Stay tuned to the site in coming months for more details.

Ride safe.....and well.

(Continued on following page)

(“Regions” from previous page)

From our So. Georgia AAD: RTE at Hawkinsville :After a bit of a layoff we decided it's time to start back the RTE's again. July 21st turned out to be the best and really only time for me before the National Rally in August. I wanted to pick a spot that was centrally located in Georgia. Well, Hawkinsville is about as middle of the state as you can get. I had heard from a good friend here in Valdosta that there was a good place to eat there called "The Horseshoe Restaurant" A week prior to the RTE I took a "scout" ride up there and checked out the place. It was perfect, with plenty of space inside and lots of parking space outside.

The morning of the RTE was overcast and a chance of rain down here in south GA. I was bringing a group with me and we headed up U.S. 129 and the overcast sky made for perfect riding conditions. I was kind of concerned over how many would show, but as Jerry Holland told me, "Just pick a place and time and go ahead with it." I was pleasantly surprised to see 15-20 bikes already there when we rolled into the parking lot. Jerry (Cognosticator) and Bob Sherwood had brought some folks from the Savannah area including a guy and his daughter on a beautiful '98 Connie from South Carolina. Ray Olszewski and a friend drove all the way from North Carolina just for this RTE. Wow! Jennifer Simmons rode down from the North Carolina mountains that morning just to get there in time. Thanks Jenn!

I think we all had a good time and the spaghetti buffet inside was awesome as was the service. After a good meal and good times we all saddled up and headed out. I ran into a bit of rain on the trip south but it actually felt good as it had gotten pretty warm and the Connie does provide great protection. Thanks to all who attended and I hope to put together another one soon. There has been a lot going on lately with the National Rally, WRRR, and the upcoming Tech Session October 6th down in Orange City Florida. Check it out on the COG site and the Southeast COG site. Also don't forget the chili dinner and biscuits and gravy breakfast during Biketoberfest. See ya down the road! - Reid Yeargan, So GA. AAD

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Larry Leranthy- AD



Here it is, almost the end of September already. Where did the time go!?!?!

The events for the year are winding down. Sept 21 - 23rd was the Spider Ride. This was Ethe third time I've attended this event. One time the weather was beautiful, the other it rained just about the whole time.

This year's weather was perfect. Warm days and cool night. Great roads !Jeff Pruitt had been hosting the event for quite a few years. This year Tony Koenen and Jack Gindra ran the event. I heard they have a few pork steaks left over !!

The 13th Annual HFRO (Hunt for Red October) will be October 13 - 14th. This is another ride where the weather can go either way. Last year we woke up Sunday morning with a couple of inches of snow on the bikes!! I hope we

don't have a repeat of that this year!!

Jerry Layman, the Nebraska, South Dakota, and North Dakota AAD, is stepping down after eight years. Jerry has done a terrific job as AAD.

Jerry and Chris Baum were THE GUYS for the '07 COG Rally in Hill City, South Dakota. I met Jerry at the first COG Rally I attended (the 2000 Rolling Rally in Mountain Home, Arkansas). That purple riding suit really made an impression!! I'm sorry I never made it to his Black Hills ride, especially after seeing the area while at the '07 Rally. Thanks, Jerry, for all your time and effort!!

Cyle Rush has volunteered to take over for Jerry. Cyle (pronounced like Kyle) has been a COG member for seven years. Thanks, Cyle, for taking over this important position!!

Mark your calendar now for the first week in June next year!! The 2008 COG National Rally will be held in Frisco, Colorado. Don't forget to bring your woollies and snow tires. There could still be snow in those mountain passes!!

Help is needed in Kansas, Iowa, and Western Michigan. If you're interested, e-mail or call. Thanks!!

Ride Safe and watch out for the other guy!!

NORTHWEST REGION

Bob Pappalardo - AD



What a fantastic summer riding season this was. From a well attended and a newer and better location with Mike Curtiss's Idaho Bun Cooler to the now famous ride hosted by Dan Paulsen, the Volcano run around Mount Saint Helens. "Ride the Ribbon in John Day, OR hosted by our very own Carl and Ronda Metler. Steve Mustoe's Coastal Ramble and his Aufderheide Ride in the Cascades. Dave Morrow's 50/50 and Victor Ince's Tour BC! I think everyone has a great time this year contributing to all the rides! Once again the membership of NWCOCG has risen to these occasions and my many thanks to all who hosted and participated in these events.

This year's regional event was certainly no exception to this as we had 63 Coggers and a few non-Coggers in attendance in Enterprise Oregon. The town put out the red carpet for us with a brewery tour, gondola rides, incredible roads and of course a great Saturday night banquet complete with one "kickass" band! I can tell you right now that we will be back in Enterprise again for another regional in the upcoming years! This year's regional of course could not have been put together without the generous help and support from fellow NW Coggers Alex Charlton, Ben Baker and Jim Hill. Thanks again, everyone!

We will also be posting a wrench session in the Puget Sound area very soon so keep an eye on the events schedule in the Concours Forum on line. We'll also have our annual get-together at the Northwest Motorcycle show held this year on Friday, November 30 through Sunday, December 2, 2007. We will once again meet Saturday, December 1st, 12 noon at FX McCrory's for lunch. This is a first come,

first served deal and the restaurant gets extremely busy, so make sure you are there on time!

Here's Carl Metler's take on the RtR:

Well, another riding season's over, and, as usual, we ended it with the Ride The Ribbon on Labor Day weekend.

Of course, we'll still ride some before we take the batteries out to store for the winter, but it just seems traditional to see our friends and ride the old favorite roads we've ridden for so many years. Those of you who haven't sampled the roads we have here in Eastern Oregon are really missing the best of the best! Curves, woods, and no traffic!

This ride was started years ago by COG's own Bob Rainey, when he found some one-lane asphalt roads through the Malheur National Forest, and thus the "Ribbon" was born as he constructed several loops that connect those narrow hard-surfaced roads through the wilds.

Riders come from hundreds of miles away to enjoy the country we have, and, since we had volunteered to take over the RTR, we wanted something a little different, and thus we created this year's diversion, the "5 card draw poker run." We also moved the ride HQ to John Day, Oregon, from Mt Vernon, in anticipation of greater attendance and as John Day has more facilities. The HQ motel was to be the Dreamers Lodge, as they have specialized in catering to mortocyclists traveling through the valley. Camping was available at the county fairgrounds a couple blocks away and next to the John Day River in the shade complete with "almost warm" showers! The Saturday dinner was held at El Cocinero Mexican restaurant, which the owner closed for us to allow unrestricted use.

I've always found the standard "poker run" to be sort of BLAH, so I wanted something different, but similar, something worth riding for, but something the rider has more control over, so we "wrote our own rules"! \$5 to ante and draw five cards. Then ride to each of the next 4 stops and, if you want to, \$1 to trade as many of your cards as you want for new ones, to better your hand. Then the pay-out was 40% for the best hand, 30% for second place, 20% for third, and 10% for worst hand.

This event was easily administered, as I carried the jug with the draw cards, and rode to each of the stops, where the riders met me and drew as many as they wished. Each rider was given a set of instructions and a map with directions to the stops.

The ride was a great success and we awarded \$32 to Bob Burns for his full house, and \$8 to Pat Murray for his worst hand, which he consistently tried to make worse but it kept getting better!

We look forward to next's year's Ribbon and promise to come up with something different again, to make the ride interesting!

Thanks to everyone for your participation and wonderful support. COG is truly about the people and not the machine.

SOUTHWEST REGION

Rick Hall - AD



I tossed another log in the fireplace and it saddened me to think the riding season is winding down. It is for me anyway, not so for riders at a lower elevation, and those that live in AZ, CA, NV, UT, most anywhere than at 7400'.

Gary Davis (SW AAD, San Diego) dropped me an email a few weeks ago about a monthly ride he was hosting to Mt. Laguna. I did the math and thought I could tie it in with Ken Dick's (SW AAD, Sacramento) monthly dinner meeting in Sacramento. I mean it's just a road trip! Alas, it didn't pan out, but it got me to thinking on what a vast and varied area the SW region of COG is.

While I'm thinking about putting Sam up on blocks for the winter, others are thinking about a ride up Mt. Lemmon in AZ, perhaps an evening ride to Tortilla Flats to take in the sunset. Those in California are thinking about Mt. Hamilton, a ride down Cerro Noroeste Rd, or a day ride on 128 to Geyserville and the back road to Stewarts Point (a wrong turn onto Annapolis road is an ever so pleasant detour too). The SW has such a diversity of rides and climates, we can literally ride comfortably (someplace) all year long.

I think the SW area has more square (s)miles than any other area in COG. I do know it's shorter from Miami to NYC, than it is from Las Cruces to San Jose though. With such a large area, you may feel under represented, I am always looking for assistants to make the SW better. If you have a few spare hours a month, consider becoming an AAD. All that's really required is to enjoy riding, and this can be a monthly ride up to the local diner for a burger and fries. It really is pretty simple, and such an important position. I might be the guy in the corner office (with no windows and wood heat), but it's the AAD's that make stuff happen.

Of course this needs to be announced to the COG members in our area, a newsletter editor is also needed. This person would format a few words about upcoming events and meetings, and prepare it for mailing as a single page or postcard format. It doesn't have to be four color and twenty pages. Drop me a line if you'd consider helping, all of us in the SW region will appreciate your effort.

The big news in this report is our SW region will be hosting the 2008 National Rally in Frisco, CO this coming June 2-6. With rides planned for both street **and** dual-sport riders, this rally is sure to be remembered for years to come.

I've heard comments that if you're thinking on bringing a dual-sport bike (and why not?), and don't because you think some of the high altitude passes may be closed (a few may be), you'll be sorely disappointed. Every road will be open for street bikes this time of year, but snow may remain on a few of the dirt roads above 12,000'. In the for what it's worth department, many moons ago (1979) I tried to cross Cumberland Pass (Pitkin to Tincup) on July 7th on my new-to-me KZ-1000 LTD. Ten feet from the pass I was blocked by

(“Guy Young,” from Page 4)

have to take a “walking through a minefield” approach in dealing with them. But we will.

“I’m saying ‘we,’ but I mean the board.

“Out there in SD, I basically put myself in the middle of attendees and asked what their major complaints were. The biggest ones were not receiving the Directory, or The Concourier. There were some additional comments and requests, and those will come to light a little further down.

“Based on the feedback we received during that “town hall meeting,” it was eventually decided that the 2007 Directory would be mailed out First Class. There were some complaints from the old school about that too, but we went ahead and did it anyway. One of the deciding factors for that was getting out a survey we wanted ALL members to receive. The success rate for the Directory getting to the members had been dismal. In fact, there were several states where no one received it. None! Other than bitching, or writing letters to the USPS, what can you do? You put on a “stamp,” drop it in the box, then it is out of your hands. With bulk, you never know if it got there, or not, until you hear the people grouching because they never got it.

“This attempt was not without a screwup either. The mailer managed to switch names with addresses, so you never knew whose Directory you were getting.... not that it mattered; you got one. Approx. 80% got to a COG address, some were returned by the USPS, like they were supposed to (due to the wrong name on the label), and the others (we assume) they simply trashed.

“Frustrating.

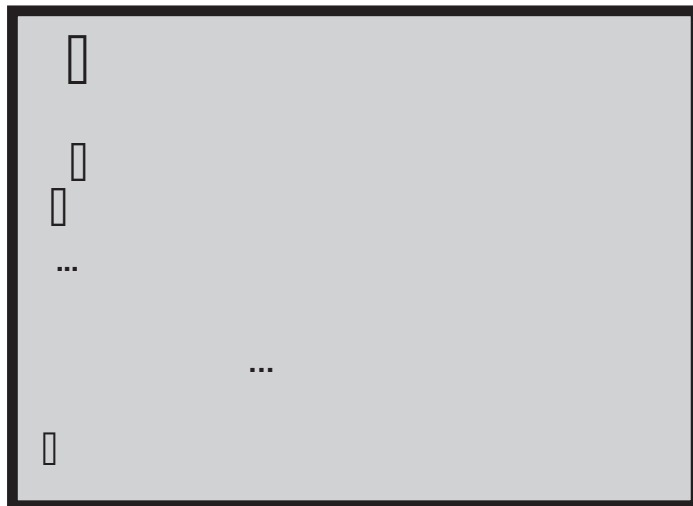
“Based on the results of that survey, it was voted on at Board meeting in Canaan that the Concourier (and subsequent Directories) would go out First Class, but not without cost. It was also decided that a \$7.00/ year increase in the dues would occur, but would become effective after January 1, 2008. This was one of the questions asked in that survey and the majority of the results that came back said that they approved.

“Some of these \$\$ would also be used to offset the higher printing costs we’re seeing today. The last dues increase was back in the ‘90s, so we felt it was justified.

“It was also decided during this meeting that a committee would be formed to look at the feasibility of our going on-line with registration, the paying of dues, merchandise purchases—basically the whole gamut. This is the survey you are hearing about now. [This was a survey that was sent out to all members we had e-mail addresses for-GBY]

“Going online was discussed in earnest a few years ago, and some things were going on behind the scenes that only a few knew about. We were several days away from making a major change but an unfortunate event happened that, had we moved forward, it would have probably torn COG apart.

“We pulled the plug and decided to wait until a more



appropriate time. That time may be now, however, and what sounds like a simple thing to accomplish suddenly comes with all sorts of liabilities that need to be considered and addressed. And yes, we do have a lawyer looking at some of those things.

“The old school is bitching about this too, and we may lose some people. I hate to see anyone go, but at this point, that may be a good thing.

“We have listened and we are trying to move ahead. It may wind up that I’m not the individual to fully accomplish that, but that will ultimately be decided by others. Even with all the criticism, I can still rest easy knowing I made the step and gave it my best shot.”

The full impact of what’s transpiring may appear in this, or the next issue of *The Concourier*. Rest assured, the Concours Owners Group plans to be around for a very long time, and we’re doing our best to see that this happens.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please feel free to ask and I’ll answer the best I can, based on what’s going on now.

Ride safe,

Guy

“If you can’t get it going with bungee cords and electrician’s tape—it’s serious.” - Anon.

OVER THE POND VI

How to Get a GCEer to the

by Hans-Ove Görtz, COG #3465 / GCE#001

First of all, tremendous thanks to all the folks who supported OTP VI on both sides of the pond! In the autumn of 2006 when the “Over the Pond” team—this writer, from Sweden, together with Ted Adcock and Spencer Farrow from the USA—decided to plan for a sixth OTP. This time a GCEer would cross “over the pond” to the USA.

The team, working together, laid out the basic plan (which would be very similar to last year’s plan) and then we “went for it.”

Ted and Spencer pushed me again into running the thing. Ted was my backup “slave labor” and he helped a lot with translating and getting the word out to COG members that we were going to try to keep OTP going. Spencer got the hardest job in volunteering (maybe by being persuaded is more accurate!) to collect all contributions and paying the bills. During late spring Harry Martin came aboard as a slave labor specialist addition to the team!

Since this was a spontaneous thing (it was outside of ordinary club activities and not an actual COG function) we set up some rules. I won’t go much into the OTP rules since they are still available for you to see, but here are a few points. We asked for eligible nominees from the GCEdom and that were willing to travel “Over the Pond.” We then set up a poll among all GCE and COG-list members so they could nominate, support, and vote for the winner. We asked for nominees. We asked for suggestions. We asked for help. We begged for pledges!!

The list of nominees grew and all were contacted to confirm their qualifications. The support, votes, ideas, suggestions and, lo and behold, the pledges and cash started coming in!

Now it was time to pick the “traveler.” (We knew from our list of nominees, that it was going to be a hard choice) and when we counted the votes, we had a winner! At one time the OTP team became very worried. How would we collect enough dough to support the traveler? Pledges continued to come in and after awhile we relaxed. We could raise enough money after all.

Patrick de Maqueville from France was selected as the traveler. Now “all” we had to do was to arrange a few simple things like; funding, tickets, bike, lodging, scheduling, and a few other little items. A special thanks to Harry and Coty from The Netherland for loaning their Concours to Patrick. Rick Hall, a devoted OTP supporter worked hours readying the bike before the event.

I think it’s appropriate to once again give a big thanks to all that contributed and helped make “Over the Pond VI” such a great success.

Needless to say, to make a trip “Over the Pond” is something many people dream of. Unfortunately, most find it too expensive, and far too difficult to arrange. Eventually most are forced to drop the idea.

Luckily, some get a little help as they plan the trip. My best memory of “Over the Pond” will always be that you proved that people working together (and making a small donation) can achieve great things! You showed us your enthusiasm through your willingness to pledge your money and time, and by offering us a helping hand, and in many, many, other ways..

I feel that Ted, Spencer, Harry and I would not have been able to take this idea and make it into such a great personal experiences for us all without your help.

It is because of your support that “Over the Pond VI” was a success. A VERY special thanks to Rick Hall in Colorado for his outstanding support with travel arrangements, coordination of all B&B, and also as the travel companion for the whole trip.

We received contributions for the trip from more than 50 pledgers – cash in the range from USD 10 up to USD 150 totalling USD +1700, bike, gas fill ups and B&B. “WOW”

We’re not thru yet! At the end of “Over the Pond VI” we agreed that we’d like to try this next year too. We want to send a lucky Cogger to the GCE-rally of 2008 in Switzerland.

So, here’s the question: Will you help us do “Over the Pond” again?



(“Regions” from Page 47)

a snow drift that hadn’t melted yet.

We selected this date for several reasons. First is it will be a pretty nice drive across the desert of Nevada, Utah, and Arizona, and much cooler if you’re coming from the east coast. Second is it’s just barely off season for the tourists. We should have the entire state to ourselves with no Winnebagos clogging the go-fast lane. Third, we got a smoking hot deal on motel rooms. See the Rally announcement elsewhere in this issue, and a sidebar (if Bob allows me the space) with a little fluff and two really cool pictures about what to expect.

Chad Pippin, the 2008 Rallmaster, from Aurora, CO is assembling a crew to assist in the festivities. A few key positions have been filled, it goes without saying that more help is needed. Man the registration table for a few hours, judge a bike show, plan and host a movie night, help stuff the goodie bags, the list can be long. If you can spare a few hours before or during the rally, do let him know. His address is in the members handbook, his email is 2008rallymaster@concours.org



Keep Left Except When Passing. It's a Disease!

by Bob Papalardo, COG #5539

There is an epidemic running rampant across America. Don't anyone panic yet as there isn't an immediate need to call the CDC or Homeland Security, so just put down your phone, push the keyboard away and at least for now, relax. This is, however, to be taken very seriously as the epidemic is an insidiously chronic disease, afflicting thousands of commuting Americans each and every day. I am referring to "Left LanersDisease."

There is no doubt you've all witnessed LLD on the highways and byways of our great nation. Whether in the city or the country, LLD affects the car, truck or SUV driver in a profound way, rendering them unable to move out of the left lane regardless of the road or traffic conditions. Light traffic or heavy bumper-to-bumper commutes—it doesn't matter as the afflicted are almost frozen in place and they will always be there, in the way in the left lane. And the number of cases is on the rise.

The clinical term for LLD is "Linke-gasse krankheit," which is German for "Left Lane Disease." Is there a cure? Currently, we just don't know. But in order to find a cure we need to study the root cause of LLD first, then develop a course of action to mitigate its affects. This will not be an easy task as LLD has taken hold across the entire country and has even been witnessed recently in Canada and overseas. Making the task even more difficult is the fact that LLD is neither gender, age, nor even vehicle specific. Although reports have confirmed LLD is most prevalent in four wheel drive sport utility vehicles there are credible eyewitness reports of LLD in compacts and even sub-compact classes of automobiles. Although the two latter classes should be considered dangerous, they are much more approachable and less dangerous than the leviathan SUVs and trucks on the road. It has been reported and is generally accepted that LLD started in California in the early 1970's sometime during the first Arab oil embargo when the lack of gasoline supplies caused long lines of stalled or out-of-gas vehicles in the right hand lane forcing a scared and bewildered public to drive almost exclusively in the left lanes of interstates and highways. Although there is little to no documentation of these reports there is enough "hearsay" or "anecdotal" evidence to warrant some credibility to its origins.

Strangely enough, without any epidemiologically known reason, LLD seems to be inherited or passed down with increasing severity from generation to generation.

As clinically defined by the A.S.S. (The American Society of Sociologists), LLD is: "The inability to yield the left lane to prevailing traffic patterns or to anyone attempting to use the left lane for legitimate driving purposes". Also: "The lack of ability to understand, comprehend or acknowledge DOT signage stating any of the following directions":

(1)Left Lane for passing only; (2) Keep right expect when passing;

(3) Stay in right lane except when passing; (4)Yield lane to faster moving vehicles; (5)Get the hell out of the way you "effing idiot!"

LLD affected driver's exhibit an inability or refusal to acknowledge other vehicles on the road that wish to use the left lane. In mild cases they are under a broad misconception that they are sovereigns of the left lane and anyone engaging in an attempt to use the left lane for legitimate purposes should be punished. In severe cases the LLD-affected have exhibited a series of nasty and dangerous traits when directly accused of having the disease, usually manifesting themselves when confronted on the open road. The LLD driver will not yield their lane, they can not. Even if you attempt to pass using the right hand lane they have been known to viciously box you out of their lane by speeding up, effectively closing ranks with a submissive and/or slower moving right hander, occupying the moving space and lane with a convoy-like mentality.

If you travel too closely or flash your high beams signaling them of your intention to pass be ready to react to their immediate slamming of their brakes and turning on their directionals signals but not actually turning or yielding the lane as long as you are within an immediate proximity of their vehicle. The severely LLD-affected may curse you violently, much as that of a victim of Tourettes Syndrome and will throw their hands at you in a raging fit, in a vain attempt to cause direct bodily harm to any who "invade their space". If weather conditions allow, LLD drivers have been observed lowering their window, usually after putting down their cell phones, and in a rage face you, directly shouting obscenities out the window while blindly barreling down the road unaware and uncaring of direction or surroundings. One of the most disturbing tendencies of the LLD drivers is to slow down and speed up without apparent reason. They will never yield and they will, if confronted aggressively, behave like a dangerously wounded animal. It is highly recommended you not challenge the LLD affected person while they are in a moving vehicle as a significantly life altering and potentially disastrous event is imminent. *Under no circumstances do we ever recommend challenging a suspected LLD driver while on the road.*

If we are to ever able to use the left lane we must stand firm against this plague. But what can be done? Independent studies indicate that if a LLD driver can be helped, it is best to have a close friend or relative talk calmly about the issues and help them understand and recognize their affliction. If you know someone, a friend, neighbor or co-worker who you suspect has LLD, take the time to talk to them in private in a non-confrontational, non-judgmental manner about your concerns. Never ever talk to a suspected LLD driver while they are driving! Don't accuse them or having LLD but rather try putting them in a position to understand the situation and how they feel when they too are victimized by another LLD driver. Personal intervention can be effective, but only in an environment safe from accusation and full of support.

If there is any hope for the LLD driver, and for you to ever use the left lane for its intended purpose, we must unite against this condition. If you know someone with LLD and would like to guide them to a better way please call MOVEOVRNOW, or 668-368-7669 for professional advice and assistance. It is up to you to guide the LLD driver to a better way and become a better citizen of the road.

Thank you, please ride safely and now will you please GET THE HELL OUT OF MY WAY?



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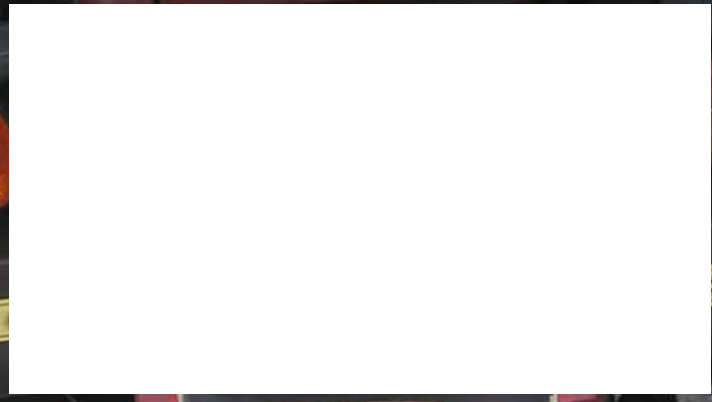
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