

VINTAGE IRON RIDERS
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VINTAGE IRON *The Newsletter of the Vintage Iron Riders*

September, 2011

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September 21 -Monthly VIR Meeting at the “Dog House.”

For more non-VIR events, please check out the Springfield Miler’s newsletter at
<http://www.springfieldmilers.com/milerNL0911.pdf>

PRESIDENT’S PRATTLE George Tinkham – President

A Good Day

When I started writing this, my pavilion tent was drying in the garage and my trailer was waiting in the drive for me to tuck it away after a fine day spent at the Havana Car-Tractor-Bike Show. We were blessed with another beautiful day at the Labor Day Weekend Springfield Mile. After all the amazingly hot days in August, I can only say: We needed those two weekends!

This is clearly the best part of the riding and showing season, and every event sponsor seems to know it. We could keep busy every weekend with various events. Rather than rattle off a list of area shows and rides, let me focus on two Vintage Iron Riders events:

- September 17th at Hooters in Bloomington, we are sponsoring a bike show. The proceeds of that show will go into our “Downed Rider” fund. This is worth attending. If you have passenger space available when you go, please offer to take another member.
- October 1st & 2nd is our annual “Ride to Ron’s.” This is two days of leisurely enjoying fine motorcycling roads in the Illinois and Spoon River valley, combined with hearty food, bonfire, and viewing of hundreds of antique motorcycles and parts. You can camp out under the stars, stay in the bunk beds in Ron’s cabin, or enjoy a motel in the Monmouth / Roseville area. We also have entertainment that ends the day with a bit of excitement. All of this costs only \$10, including meals. If you are going, please let me know (and pay) by our meeting on the 21st.

No one can promise what the weather will be at these events, but if you go, you will have a good time. And that, my friends, will make time spent at each event a *good day!*



Activities

Mark Morrison

MOTORCYCLE EVENTS CALENDAR FOR 2011

September 17	Hooter's bike show in Bloomington
October 1-2	Ride to Ron's
October 8	Marine Corps "Toys for Tots" fundraiser bike show at Lowe's
December 21	V.I.R. Christmas Party

Thanks, call me if you have any questions.



Meadowlark and Sage

This article first appeared in *MRF Reports*, the newspaper of Motorcycle Riders' Foundation, a national motorcyclists' rights organization. For more information: www.mrf.org or (202) 546-0983. Graydon Wheeler, the author, lives in Wyoming and is State's Rep for MRF.

Where we left off last month:

Lex took one last look at the motorcycle, then threw a leg over his bicycle and started pedaling for the road. He hadn't reached the edge of the driveway when Dave yelled to him, "Hey, Lex, hold on a minute."

Dave trotted up to him with an envelope in his hand.

"You got that four hundred on you?"

Lex was hoping against hope; maybe Dave will let him put a down-payment on the Honda and let him pay it off later.

"Yeah, I got the cash with me, why?"

"Let me see it."

Lex pulled the money out of his wallet and showed it to Dave. Dave wrote something on a piece of paper and gave it to Lex.

"Here's a bill of sale along with the title. And don't you ever tell anyone I'm being this nice to you."

He took the four hundred from Lex, counted out, then handed fifty of it back to Lex.

"I put three-fifty down as the price on the bill of sale. I figure you'll need the fifty to get it registered and such."

Lex couldn't believe it. He now owned a motorcycle.

Dave was already walking back to his shop, yelling back as he went, "You better have that bike outta here in a week or else I'm going to charge you a storage fee."

How many bikes had Lex owned since then? How many runs? How many miles? More than he could remember. Good weather, bad weather, heat, cold, rain, snow, lightning, and even a tornado once. He continued riding and reminiscing.

A month after buying the Honda, Dave called and invited Lex on a run to a barbecue camp-out for the weekend. Lex arrived at Dave's place where Dave, Eddie, Spook and a few others were readying their rides for the trip. They all looked at Lex's 350, loaded down with his sleeping bag, tent, and huge duffle bag containing anything and everything Lex thought he might need for the weekend. No one said a word about Lex's cargo. Lex soon learned that his biker friends were different from his other friends.

When Lex would make a mistake, other friends would ask, "Why are you doing that? What is that for? You sure that's right?" Biker friends would remain silent and let him learn on his own.

Lex had a great time that weekend, but the next run, he carried maybe half of what he brought the first time, and half the time after that. And now, Lex thought to himself, if it don't fit in the saddlebag, it ain't going.

He crossed a bridge over a small dry creek and thought back to one ride in particular.

A year or two had gone by and Lex, now on a Yamaha 650, arrived at the shop as Dave was locking the door.

"Wanna go for a putt?" Dave asked as he threw a leg over his Harley.

By this time, Lex had learned that when Dave asked if you wanted to go for a putt, you could either be going to the local restaurant to get a burger, or a three day ride that hit six different states, and anything in between. No matter. Lex's answer was always the same. "Sure."

This particular day, Dave led them out of town and seemed to be going nowhere, literally. Instead of heading for the canyon road that many liked to ride because of the curves, or the pine ridge that had lots of great scenery, Dave instead

went toward the grassland, following the sort of road that one would not normally take unless absolutely necessary. After an hour or so, Dave pulled to the side of the road and shut his bike off, motioning Lex to do the same.

Lex wondered what was up. "Problem?" he asked.

Dave merely shook his head. "Nah, I just like to come out here now and then to clear my head. Pretty, ain't it?"

Lex looked at his surroundings. "Yeah, if you say so."

Dave snorted, "I do say so! C'mere, let me show you something."

Dave walked about twenty feet off the road toward a cattle fence and sat down. He patted the ground next to him inviting Lex to take a seat. He waved his arm around and said, "Describe this place, as you see it."

Lex gazed around and said, "Nowhere. Smack dab in the middle of it."

Dave smiled and said, "That's why I like it here. But look around, what do you see?"

Lex took another glance around. "Same shit as before."

Dave bowed his head as he shook it slowly. "Here's what you're missing. Rolling empty spaces relatively untouched by anyone, wildlife in abundance, fresh air, and no noise but the rustle of the wind passing through the sage." A bird warbled nearby. "And the song of the meadowlark. Can't forget them, they're my little buddies. They sing to me when I'm here."

He pointed to a fencepost nearby where the bird sat, singing to the prairie and its visitors.

"Some folks consider the robin to be the first sign that spring is here; not me. For myself, I get a good feeling inside when I hear the first meadowlark. When I hear that, I know that warm riding weather is almost here."

He nodded his head toward the plains in front of them. "Still see nothing?"

Lex looked again. This time he noticed the herd of pronghorn grazing a mile away; he saw the coyote jogging along near a gully off to the west; he became aware of all the birds and insects making their respective noises. He closed his eyes and sniffed the air, enjoying the scent of the sage riding in the breeze, feeling the warm sun on his face.

He didn't know how long he napped, but when he jerked awake, Dave was leaning back against his motorcycle seat, legs crossed at the ankles, with a grin on his face. "I told ya it was peaceful, didn't I?"

As Lex stood, Dave walked over to one of the fenceposts and pulled a small paper sack from his pocket. He poured the contents, which turned out to be birdseed, onto the top of the post. "I like to leave the meadowlark a little something when I visit."

"They eat that?" Lex asked.

"Fuck if I know. Something eats it. One of these days I may look up what they really do eat."

He put the paper sack back in his pocket as he put a leg over his ride, turned the key and started the machine.

"Meadowlark and sage. Why people pay good money for psychiatrists and therapy when all they need is meadowlark and sage I'll never know."

When Lex decided he wanted to go to university, Dave was the only one beside his parents to offer encouragement. Most of his friends asked, "What do you want to do that for? What good will a degree do anyway? You think you can even afford it?"

Dave had a motorcycle on a raised platform and worked on it as he spoke. "What do you intend to have as a major?"

"I don't know," was Lex's reply.

Dave gave a snort, "If they are giving degrees in 'I don't know,' you should earn a PhD."

He paused for a sip of coffee. "Charles Darwin once said, 'A man who dares to waste one hour of time has not discovered the value of life.' If you think college is what you want to do, do it. And don't regret your decision. Too many people waste their time wishing they could change their past. The world has too many woulda, shoulda, coulda."

He picked up a socket wrench and turned his attention to the bike in front of him. "Go to school, and don't look back."

It was Dave's third heart attack that did him in. They were at a weekend camp-out/hog roast and Dave was dancing up a storm with a cute little redhead that was probably less than a third his age. He had a knack for attracting young women like that. They would see him as this harmless old man that was fun to dance with and easy to talk to. Later on they would find out he really wasn't harmless, but by that point they wouldn't care.

The band was playing good-time party music and much of the crowd in attendance either dancing in front of the stage or standing on the edge with drinks in hand. Dave was doing a little shimmy with the redhead when he suddenly went pasty white and grabbed his chest. He knew what was happening from the previous two attacks. All he could do was give the gal a weak smile as he said, "Ah crap!" Then he was gone.

If Dave had any regrets in life, it would probably be that he didn't get the redhead back to his tent before the final attack.

Lex eased up on the throttle as he came over the slight rise in the road. Up ahead the road was an empty stretch of grass and sage and not much else. The air just warm enough to cause ripples in the distance as the road shimmered like water, and with each passing mile he drew closer to the place Dave told him to be. He looked around at the desolation, the type of place Dave loved.

He brought the Victory to a stop, and shut the engine off. There was a slight breeze in the air, carrying the scent of the sage. He looked at the scenery: open grassland, slight rise offering a view of open range for as far as one could see, and

in the near distance, bluffs, with no sign of human habitation save for the fence posts running near the road. Lex closed his eyes and listened. The call of the meadowlark sang to him while he sat. He opened his eyes and walked to the fence.

Reaching into his pocket, he pulled out a small plastic bag containing birdseed, which he then poured on top of the post. He stared at the pile of seed and wondered, "What *do* meadowlarks eat?" After all these years, he still hadn't bothered to find out. And if Dave ever discovered the answer, he never told.

Lex returned to the motorcycle and pushed the starter. Turning back the way he came, he rode for about a mile or so, then did a u-turn and quickly went through all gears as he accelerated until the needle was at the 100 mark. He reached inside his jacket for the leather pouch that waited there, and with a practiced motion held it over his head, the dust and ashes of Dave's cremated remains leaving a trail behind him like a jet's exhaust as he passed the spot he had set out the birdseed.

And when he felt the bag had emptied itself of its contents, he released it into the wind.

And like his mentor, he never looked back.

"Vintage Visdom"

Everyone crashes. Some get back on. Some don't. Some can't. ~Author Unknown

"It is good to have an end to journey towards; but it is the journey that matters in the end." ~Author Unknown

**MINUTES OF MEETING
Vintage Iron Riders
Dog House/Break Time
August, 2011**

(Not submitted in time for this **LATE** newsletter!!)

OCTOBER 2011

						1 RIDE TO RON'S
2 RIDE TO RON'S	3	4	5 OFFICERS MEETING	6	7	8 TOYS FOR TOTS LOWE'S
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 VIR MONTHLY MEETING	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31 HALLOWEEN					