The Confederate Chapter Newsletter

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2012 - Spring / Summer Issue

A Publication of the Confederate Chapter of

The Antique Motorcycle Club of America

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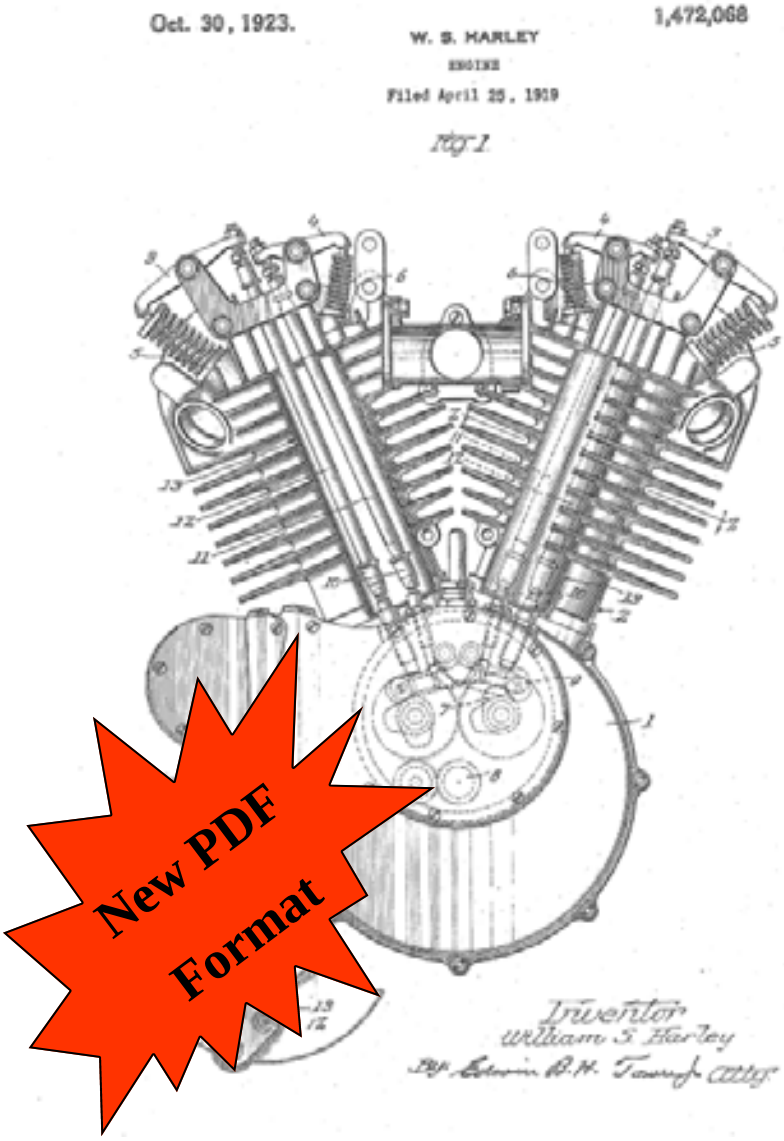


New PDF Format

The Colonel Speaks

Colonel Bob

Middle of July, Great weather, and two fantastic club rides to our credit.

The Scooter Ride was another great success as the spring opener to our riding season schedule. Again the Breakfast was a smashing success, the day was very pleasant, and the catered lunch at DDR's shop was the perfect way to close the ride. Thanks to all those who helped and participated in making it all work. All and all very interesting and lots of fun.

Next was the Cooper's River Run more affectionately known as the "Cooperfest". Coop will have more on that later in the newsletter. I was not able to make it this year but I have it on good authority that a great time was had by all. I hope to be there next year. I really missed Coop's infamous Carolina Slow Boil. We Can't thank Coop and Pam enough for the Great food and the fine hospitality.

Next big event is the Barber Festival. If anyone has any ideas for making it new and exciting please let me know. We will be doing more planning for this event in the upcoming meetings.

Then the Fall Scooter Ride will be close at hand. Anyone wanting to help plan and offer some ideas for shop stops please contact the Colonel, Big Daddy Ed Dacus or Coop to share your thought.

Anyone wanting to plan a ride please do so and let me know when and where so we will all be there.

Anyone wanting to set the meeting place please do so and let me know a week in advance so I won't set it.

Remember to check the website for all the latest news and photos of the current past events and upcoming rides. Thanks to David Lloyd for all his hard work on the site and the newsletter.

One other thing of official order. I have been working with the national's CPA on an issue with the non-profit status of our chapter. It seems there was some confusion with the charter and subsequently the chapters with the understanding of how to remain tax free as a non-profit club. We have met all the standards and meet all the codes of the IRS and as such are NOT at risk. I will remain on guard and work closely with Pam our Treasurer to make sure we will be in compliance.

That's all I have for now.

Till next time, Ride safe

Colonel Bob

Bob Kenney

Letter from the Editor—David

Confederate Chapter Antique Motorcycle Club,

Wow! Here we are and it's already early July 2012 – Our Antique Motorcycle season is in full swing. Although, riding in 100 degree temperatures will quickly limit your rides to sneaking out for an early breakfast ride or an evening cruise after the sun drops below the trees. Common sense tells me to stay inside and drink lemonade. As I sit here in my Air conditioned room, I am preparing to ride on an upcoming weekend motorcycle trip where the forecast is looking like 105 degree temperatures. And the great thing about this weekend trip is, we are riding our motorcycles and leaving around noon time!! Right in the heat of the day. I will be keeping an eye on everyone in the group when we are sitting at the red lights, in case someone starts to melt.

In my last Newsletter, I resigned as the Confederate Chapter Editor. Well, since that time, I have agreed to stay on-board at least 1 more year. Our agreement was to do only 2 newsletters in 2012. A Spring/Summer issue and a Fall/Winter issue. The plan was to lighten the load of 4 issues, but add content to the other 2 publications. I have solicited several people to help me share information of some of our past 2012 events and we will also hear information about the upcoming 2012 events still to happen. I really hope everyone enjoys this issue's profile Memphis motorcycle celebrity. Charlie Saurenman was a very interesting man. Some will know of him because of Auto mechanics, others will remember his motorcycle, jet boat & stock car racing days, and sadly enough, some will have never heard of him. Just wait until you get the opportunity to read about this man and his contribution to the Memphis Racing scene. A man who was full of Compassion, determination, a will to win, on the track and off.

There still seems to be some questions concerning the chapter's dues. We voted and agreed to start January 2012 as the new fiscal year. Pam was tracking over 100 member's anniversary dates for renewal. That was just crazy! The best way to ease that load was to have all renewals 1 time yearly. We did have several members renewal paid in October 2011. That seems like a bummer to pay up again in January 2012. There were only a few of those, and we can assure you the extra money will be used to promote club events or be donated to our yearly charity. Pam doesn't get to pocket the overage, even though she would deserve it because of the fantastic book-keeping job she does!

On a sad note, we have had to add another name to the "Tribute Page" of those who have ridden before us. Gilbert Cagle passed away earlier this year. He was one of the old Timers back when the membership was much smaller. He had become disconnected from our regular club activities, but he was still rebuilding and working on his Indian Chief. Many will miss Gilbert.

Thanks to Rusty McFarland, Les Cooper, Roxanne Spencer, and Lee A Griffin for your contributions to this edition of our Confederate Chapter Newsletter. And also thanks to everyone else who has supplied photos and articles in the past to share with the members of our club.

We are just about ready to start focusing our main attention on preparations for the 2012 Barber Vintage Motorcycle Festival. Some of us have already been planning some of the early details and events. I already have 7 "Race of the Century" riders on the schedule with several more waiting to confirm very soon. This year, we will see some very cool machines. Jack Wells from Florida has waited several years for his 1912 Abbington King Dick to be eligible to enter the 100 year race. He was one of the 1st to call me this year. I could hear the excitement in his voice as we discussed the details and procedures to get his bike entered in this year's race of 1912 model machines and older.

Hope you enjoy this Issue

David

2012—3rd Annual Scooter Ride

What would make a guy get up at 5:00AM, drive three and a half hours, ride around at a snail's pace for half a day and then drive back home, all the while re-living the day's events, and basking in the afterglow? The Third Annual Scooter Run, organized by the Confederate Chapter of the AMCA, that's what! As a vintage and current motorcycle nut, there are a few events each year that are on my 'must do' list. There is the North Carolina run I do with friends from Nashville and Memphis, the Mid-Ohio vintage event in July, and the big vintage ho-down at Barber Motorsports Park just outside Birmingham in October. And for the last three years, the scooter run has been on that list.

Rusty McFarland

The third running of this annual event took place on a beautiful Memphis Saturday in May, and can only be described as spectacular. Hosted by Ed Dacus at his home about 25 miles east of Memphis, this year's event had something for everyone. Ed's mom, who lives right next door, graciously opened her beautiful home to all 90 participants and treated us to a grand home-style breakfast. After that, we all milled around outside to admire the wide variety of machines, old and not so old that were lined up in the large parking area between the two homes. Naturally, there were plenty of scooters of all types to check out, ranging from old Harley Toppers, Cushman's, Allstates, Whizzers, a couple mint 50's Mustang Stallions, and Italian Vespas, to newer Italian and Oriental scoots.

But even though this is a scooter run, it's not limited to just scooters. There were almost as many motorcycles there. A herd of old BMWs, including an R27 single, an R50 twin and later slash/5 models, lots of early Japanese street and trail bikes, a Puch café-racer-ped, a couple old Ducati's, and some old British iron. (Ed keeps plenty of oil-dry on hand). There were also a few current bikes… some big, most little. Some were even legal.

After breakfast, the "Head 'em up!" call was heard and we headed for the first of four race/restoration shops. After an hour or so at each shop, we would saddle up, as if the scent of some silent, instinctive call to ride had been detected in the air and we all rode, mostly single file to the next location along serene tree lined back roads and idyllic country scenes. Actually, "serene" is about as fast as some of the old bikes can go. Some didn't even get up to *that* speed. Ed's scooter quit on him at the end of his driveway just as we were taking off, so he just wandered up the driveway and plucked another piece from his collection. Nice…

Our first stop was at Dewayne Stewart's shop, where he builds street rods and does fabrication work. It looked like Dewayne was in the middle of about five projects at once and there were plenty of cool old race cars, and rods & customs out back, including an historic old racer driven by dirt track legend, Hooker Hood back in the day. And that Caddy 331 powered rod project still has me hot and bothered. Then we puttered out to John Reddick's place, which is like an old museum that houses a little bit of everything from a Clark Gable era Packard Super 8 Roadster, to a couple E-Type Jags, and plenty of moto-related goodies. Coincidentally, in my bad old days, I mis-spent quite a lot of time at John's place. He has demanded a disclaimer stating that was before he lived there. From there, we cruised out to John Callies' home with his showplace shop out back. John's resume would require a feature length article in itself. Suffice it to say his shop is impressive and immaculate. You have to see it to believe it. A fully equipped machine/fabrication shop that houses his current project, a world-class 40 Chevy coupe that he and local fabricating wizard, Eddie Wilbanks have been toiling away on for the last couple years. Actually, Willbanks works there a couple hours per day, as that's about all the attention span he can manage. Finally, there was Dane Dacus' sprawling race shop, home to his late model dirt track operation. Dane's shop is another beautiful facility that any gear head or scoot-o-phile would lust after.

After returning to our starting point at the Dacus estate and loading up for the drive back to Middle Tennessee, Lin Neal, the real deal (dill?) was already burning up my phone and making plans for next year's run. As we talked, I recalled how there are many universal experiences that we motorcyclists (scootists?) share… knees in the breeze, freedom, overcooking it into blind corners… that kind of stuff. But one of the coolest things you will ever experience on two wheels is following along at the tail end of this bunch and gazing upon the wobbling, weaving, smoking line of ninety old bikes and scooters idling along at break neck speeds up to 30 miles per hour in front of you. It's absolutely surreal. And very peaceful. Who knew you could have so much fun going so slow ?

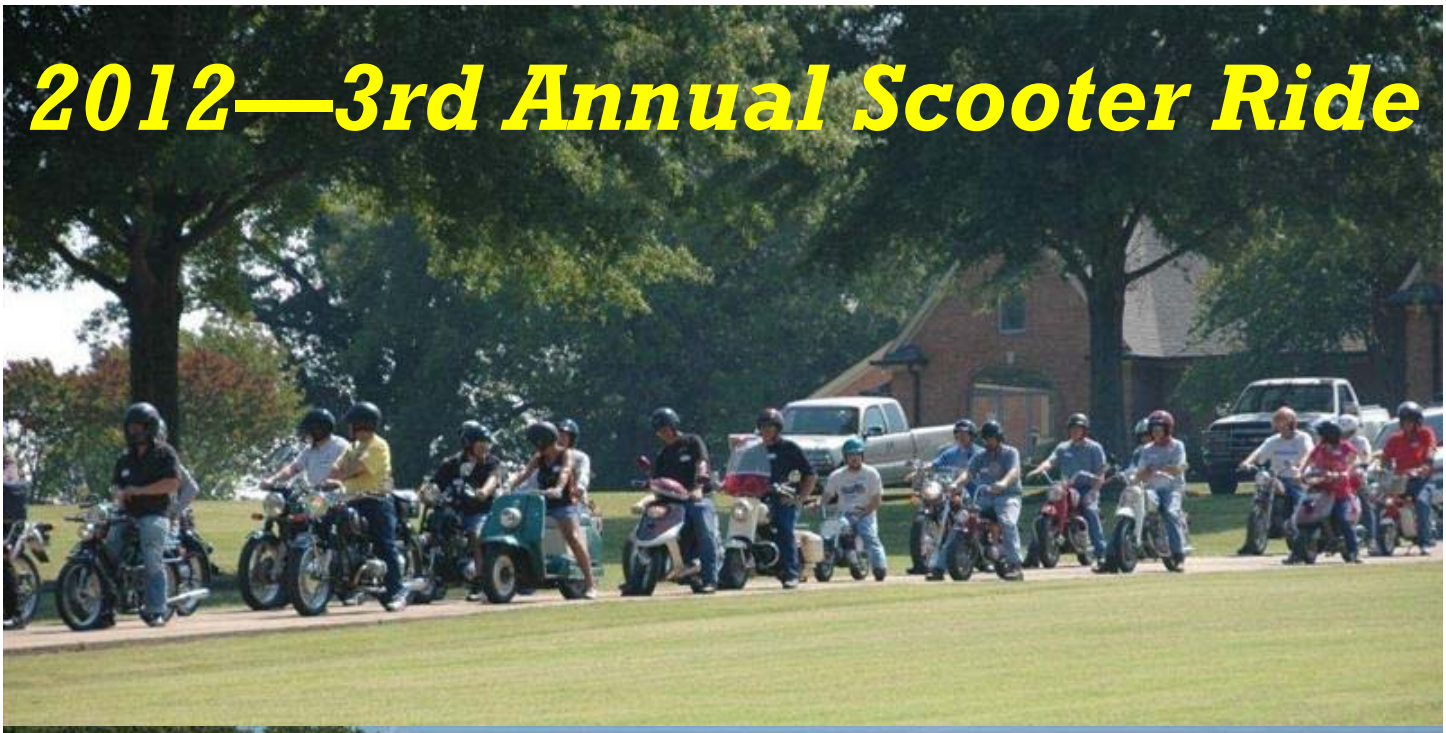
There are many other things that stand out for me too. The camaraderie, the smiling faces, re-uniting with old friends, and the new friends I made on this year's run. Ninety people coming together to enjoy each other's company, eat, ride, and reminisce. It just doesn't get any better than that.

So this year's scooter run is history. Many thanks to the guys (and wives) who let us invade their shops this year. And a huge debt of gratitude goes out to the guys and gals of the AMCA, Confederate Chapter for putting on such a memorable event. See you next year!

Rusty McFarland

Henrietta, Tennessee

2012—3rd Annual Scooter Ride



Les "Coop" Cooper

Cooper Fest or Feast—2012

2012 turned out to be the absolute best ever for the Cooper fest in Norfork Ark. Pam and I went up the weekend of May 26th (Memorial Day weekend) to do final preparations to our place for our annual Gassville in the park weekend of 6/2/2012. We had decided with great reservation not to do the park this year. That being said I informed the club that there would be no antique bikes this year but bring your late models so we could all ride the beautiful roads in the foot hills of the Ozark Mts.

With the word of the late models only & spouses riding as well, the response was over whelming. With that being said Pam & I worked leisurely during the first of the week before the first guest started arriving getting everything just so, so to show off our new digs. We have been working for over a year converting from a 30 plus year old travel trailer which had been flooded out twice to a studio efficiency living quarters. With all but the minor final touches we pulled it off. Finally enough air conditioned room for most everyone to enjoy and relax getting out of what had always cursed us from the extreme heat. Well luck would have it Mother nature blessed us as well when people started showing up with lows of high 50's to highs in the lower 80's with beautiful sun shine.

Some people (Wally Wages) tried coming up really early on Tuesday morning so he could drop his trailer with scooters, then hook up with his good friend Randy Oliver to go Trout fishin. Randy is a guide on both the Norfork River as well as the White river. Well have you ever been so excited about killing two birds with one stone in one vacation trip? Wally had gone into the office early Tuesday morning to get his crew set up for the rest of the week and left straight from the office heading up to Gods country. Even though being early in the week, Wally couldn't wait any longer. Have you ever passed a Mobile Home being transported on the hwy and one of the tires on said Mobile Home explode? If you haven't had the pleasure of experiencing that, then just ask Wally. Talk about being in the right place at the wrong time. Wally states he herd and saw the tire blow up sending both tire & rim into his trailer with his beloved Heritage Softail & CRF230 Honda securely strapped inside. Wally said someone traveling behind him seeing the whole event unfold told him his trailer came at least six foot off the ground when the tire & rim struck the trailer. Never the less Wally's trailer was doomed to be totaled, but both the scooters inside were as if nothing had ever happened. Well with Wally's whit & charm, He found himself heading in the wrong direction following a rollback wrecker hauling his trailer with cargo all the way back to Lakeland TN. What a way to get a mini vacation started!

Once back at the starting point and trying to make a conscience decision on what to do for the rest of his week. He gets a surprise, hearing a racket from inside his newly totaled trailer. Stepping out of the trailer seeing two good friends and club members bringing another trailer to his rescue and helping him get back on track for the rest of the week. No excuses..... So a Day late but none for the ware. Wally finally shows up at our place with bikes in tow and unscaved. He then met his friend Randy and the fishing and everything that goes along with fishing began. Well all I can say is, two old buds fishin always get their fishin stories straight.

Wally had caught three or more 18 inch or better German brown Trout, Fed as if he were a KING and comradely to match. Well it's seems that Mr. Wages was having soooo much FUN slaughtering those big ole trout that he was feeling a tad bit guilty not spending more with the other biker friends that had come up, as well as Pam and Myself. So I had to sit him down and explain the way things go when you come our way either in God's country or at our home in Memphis. We make our home your home. You come and go as you please with no attachments. Pam & I have found that is the best way for everyone involved. No expectations from either side, so no let downs and everyone is happy.

So with that everyone that was present had at least two and a half days of riding which included a trip to Blanchard Springs Caverns and a great lunch at Jacks Resort by the White river. Then the Daniel's Clan coming from as far as Chattanooga TN showing up early Friday afternoon (sorry for having to wait on us from what was previously mentioned). Dennis Daniel being a veteran of this event knew where to go and what to do, so I don't believe it was much of a problem waiting on us to arrive back from our first full day of total leisure.

Saturday and everyone on sight, Shack and his gang (Lew & Carroll), we left out to Calico Rock for a great breakfast. Cris Muirhead had ridden his bike up from Searcy Ark that morning and hooked up with us on the way to breakfast. What a great surprise. After a great meal we headed out for fuel. Most everyone wearing at least long sleeved shirts and or jackets with sunglasses on, Man what a day it was turning out to be. Total count was 13 motorcycles and the rider is on. We made a loop from Calico rock around the Norfork Dam to Push Mountain on to 56 then to Mt View for a couple hours of sightseeing and lunch of course.

The leisurely ride back up highway 5 to our place began but with a hitch.

A few of our riders felt they needed to top off their fuel tanks in Mt View before heading back. Everyone who knows Brian Nance, would you have ever guessed he was a thief? Well FYI yes indeed. After watching a very young extremely out of shape young man running Brian down for riding off and not paying (credit card at the pump!) for $4.65 worth of gas was truly amazing. I thought we were going to have call for an ambulance for the station attendant instead of the sheriff for Brian (the thief). Well Brian being Brian arguing with the young extremely out of shape Attendant for over 5 minutes over $4.65 we were all saved by George Anaston who ran in and double paying for the gas that our new thief was trying to ride out on. (Thanks George & Brian get over it! We love you anyway!!!!!!!!!!!!!!)

Returning back to our place with no other mishaps, we started the usual preparations for the main feast. Only this year there was a twist. We now have larger more comfortable accommodations not only for Pam & myself but for everyone else and thanks to everyone assisting us along the way. Along with the (recipe) Pam was preparing for those who chose to partake & George for assisting me with the slow boil it was much more enjoyable for everyone.

Thanks to everyone from the club who made the trip, friends and neighbors of the river we had 20 + people for our feast. If it weren't for truly great fortunes & even better friends life in this world would be extremely dull at best.

Yours Truly

Jr, Colonel Coop

Lake Hill Motors
50th Year Anniversary Vintage Bike Show

Roxanne Spencer

To Corinth we goooooo….it would have been a great morning to sleep in but then we would have missed all the fun at Lake Hill Motors in Corinth Mississippi for their 50th Year Anniversary Vintage Bike Show. We had a good turn out from our Chapter, about 25 bikes with around 40 bikes all together on display for the afternoon. The show started around 9am and went until about 3pm. Dwayne McLemore, owner of Lake Hill Motors and host of the event did an outstanding job taking care of the Confederate Chapter. There were tents set up outside for our bikes, they handed out t-shirts to all who registered and provided food and drinks. There were a few venders set-up and a couple different people selling parts, memorabilia and just good 'ole junk. The judging took place around 2pm so the guys had plenty of time to sit around, tell some stories along with a few lies and embellishments (guys like to do that you know). Dwayne was the "Judge of the Day" and handed out the wins of the day. Our day ended with several of our guys in the Chapter winning trophy's to add to their collections.

The showroom/museum at Lake Hills Motor's is one you should visit, the showroom is about 18,000 square feet with about 6,000 of that devoted to their museum and accessories. The museum has wide range of bikes on display Harley's, Indian's, Honda's (you can check it out online) and some that just had cute names- Hiawatha Doodle Bug, Scott Flying Squirrel! The showroom has a variety Cruisers, Touring and Sport bikes and Scooters for sale- I liked the little Yamaha Zuma for me, but Shane and Big Daddy had other ideas- you should have seen the salesman expression when they ***both*** got on one and about did a wheelie – they make such a cute couple- I'm a 'lil concerned!! They carry a full line of ATVs, waverunners, generators, trailers and of course our favorite --motorcycles. They also carry of full line of accessories for all mentioned. There is a great assortment of helmets- Big Daddy paid some little kid a *whole* dollar to try helmets on him for the grandkids and finally after about an hour found one for himself (be sure to ask him how it fits!!). Be sure you check out Lake Hill Motors, it's a great dealership and it's not that far to drive or visit them online at www.lakehillmotors.com

As always- it was a good time shared with friends and fun had by all.

Hugs,

Rox

PS- "Real Deal" you were right- Shane passed it on to me, I'm such a lucky girl!!

Let's remember one of our very own, GO Buck Carson #3 riding in the

2012 Cannonball Motorcycle Run—Sept 7—23, 2012

Progress photos of Craig Vechorik's

1932 R3 series 1

AMCA Nationals

Omaha Chapter,

February 24-25, Fremont, NE

Sunshine Chapter,

March 9-11, New Smyrna Beach, FL

European Chapter,

April 20-22, Geldrop, Netherlands

Perkiomen Chapter,

April 27-29, Oley, PA

Southern National,

May 18-20, Denton, NC

Rhinebeck National,

June 8-9, Rhinebeck, NY

Viking Chapter,

June 15-17, St. Paul, MN

Fort Sutter Chapter,

June 15-16, Dixon, CA

Wauseon National,

July 20-22, Wauseon, OH

Yankee Chapter,

July 27-29, Hebron, CT

Chesapeake Chapter,

October 5-6, Jefferson, PA

2012 National Road Runs

Los Angeles Chapter, May 6-8

Northern Rockies Chapter, July 19-21

Black Hills Chapter, September 4-6

Catawba Valley/Blue Ridge, October 1-3

Confederate Chapter Events

Lake Hill Motors 50th Anniversary—May 11, 2012

Scooter Ride—May 19, 2012

Cooper Fest—June 2-3, 2012

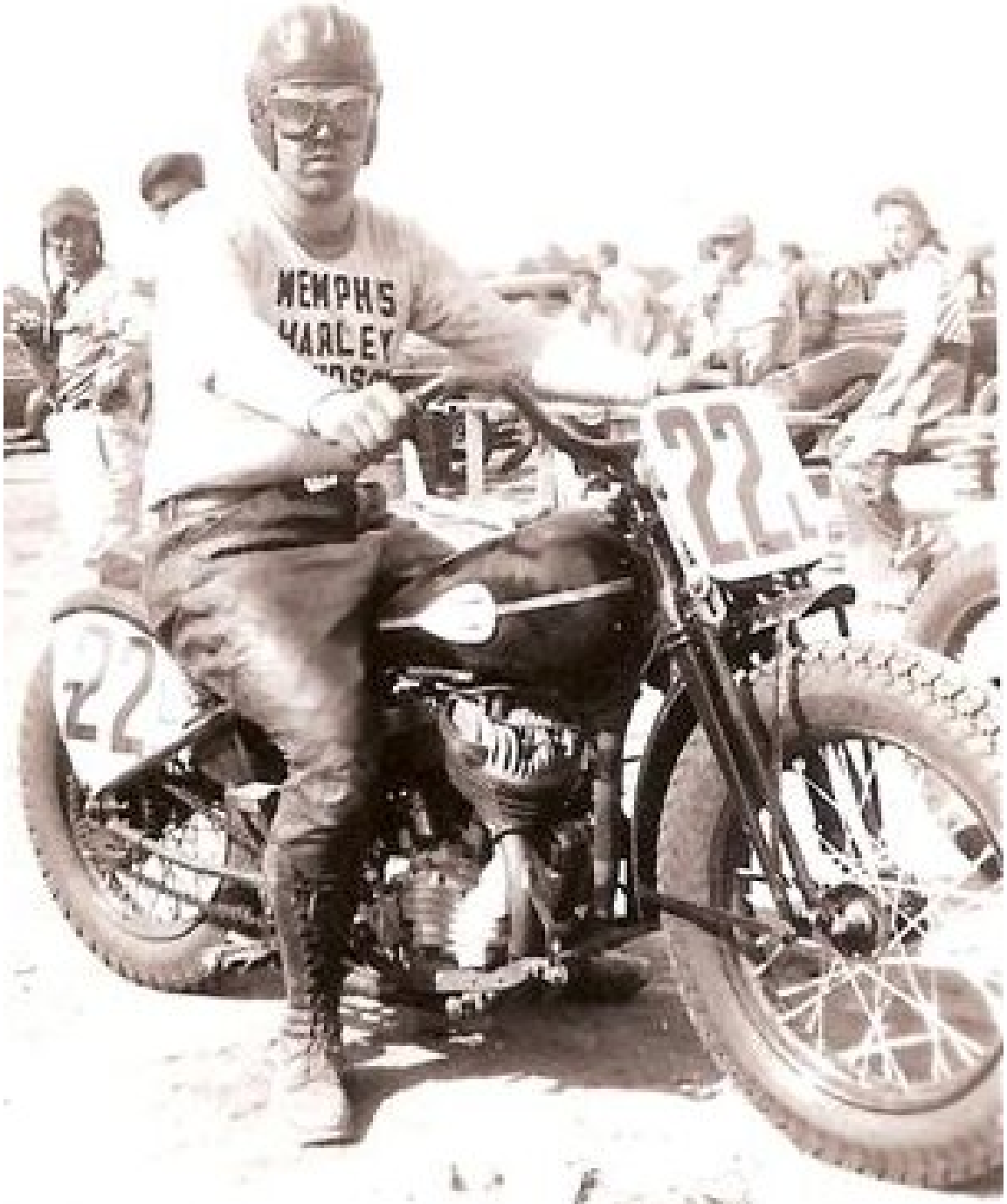
Bob Ward Memorial Ride—June 16, 2012

Ride to Work Day—June 18, 2012

Davenport Swap Meet—Labor Day Weekend 2012

Cannonball Run 2012—September 7-23, 2012

Barber Vintage Festival—October 12—14, 2012



Blast from the Past

Charles W Saurenman

Charles W Saurenman—Born March 26, 1924—Died December 14, 2002

Charlie Saurenman, local Memphis boy ran around with some fellows by the name of Jimmy Sanders, Hooker Hood, George Dickey & Robert Johnson. In the mid 40's, these guys were messing around with Harley Davidson motorcycles and began racing at many of the local tracks. Soon, they became known as "Broad Sliding Specialist". Newspaper reporters followed them around from track to track. "Hot Shot" Charlie Saurenman, as he became known, was always listed in the Top Money slots many times. Other names always listed in the field around Charlie were, his buddies, #44 Sliding "Slim" Cooper of Memphis, Hooker Hood of Memphis, George Dickey of Memphis, and Robert Johnson. These same fellows later raced for Memphis Harley Davidson.

Harley Davidson and Indian Motorcycles always continued to battle on the local scene. Douglas Pope from Springfield Tn. also well known as one of the "Red Hot Boys" rode a souped-up white Indian Motorcycle. He claimed it was the fastest thing on 2 wheels. Glen and Bill Milam, 2 brothers from Little Rock Ar also rode Indians. Their names were also list many times in the top finishers.

Wally Polk from Memphis, Gene Rose from Jackson TN, Wallace Butler of Jackson Ms, CB Mayo, also known as "Tennessee Slim" and Lem Branch #125 from Memphis TN were names always listed in the field of riders around the motorcycle racing days of Charlie Saurenman.

Charlie's racing number was #77 in August of 1947, but later became well known as #22L after 1947. His AMA Competition Racing card listed him as an Expert on Dirt Track, Novice Hill Climb and Amateur TT Race - That card was issued in 1948 and his home address was listed a 235 Poplar Ave, Memphis, Tn. I thought nothing about that address until I started digging deeper into Charlie's life and tracking his early history of motorcycles, Stock cars and racing boats. 235 Poplar Avenue is also the address of the Harley Davidson Dealership when Mr. Barfield owed the franchise. I found out that Charlie did go to work for Mr. Barfield at the Harley Dealership when he 1st arrived in Memphis in 1942. Arnold Grant says Charlie told him that when he arrived in Memphis, he had 2 sets of work clothes, $8, and a broken motorcycle engine. It was a Harley Davidson Knucklehead motorcycle, so finding 235 Poplar Ave seems likely a good place to start.

For the first 10 nights in Memphis, Charlie slept behind a sign board at the rear of a Gulf Service Station, and washed himself and his clothes in the station restroom. With his 1st paycheck, he rented a sleeping room.

Arnold Grant Worked for Charlie a very long time. Some say he had the longest length of employment around Charlie. Arnold was known to be around the shop from daylight till dark. Arnold says there were tons of people who were influenced and intertwined under Charlie’s guidance. Charlie had the ability to teach young men mechanical skills. Ed Dacus said that Charlie could explain the most complex mechanical issues to anyone. If you didn't really fully understand mechanics, he could easily explain in a simple understanding way, but if you wanted to go deeper, Charlie had the amazing talent to explain and even show you how parts functioned and how pieces fit and interact together. So many of the people I spoke with while gathering story content expressed the very same attributes about Charlie, His compassion for people, his mechanical God gifted talent, his generosity, and his awesomeness as man, Husband & father. He knew from an early age that God had plans for his life. I actually listen to a audio testimony from Charlie that the family shared with me. Arnold said it best and summed Charlie’s abilities up in one sentence. Charlie had un-believable people skills, he could work magic with mechanical things and he was an amazing talented driver. All these God given gifts made Charlie the man he was.

Many people told me Charlie never threw anything away. He could make anything from anything. So he always collected and stored anything that he could use later to make something else from that material. He could fabricate parts, make modifications to parts. Several stories stood out over all the memories I heard of Charlie. Many knew this same story, but Arnold shared great details concerning this famous story.

Charlie had built a Harley WR racing special engine that had many "Charlie Saurenman" modifications done to the inside of it. The engine was complete and ready to race, but not install on the bike yet. Charlie let a friend (?) use his engine to race in Springfield IL. Charlie explained to his friend, that he could use his motor, take it to Springfield and race it, but under NO circumstances, would he allow anyone to get a look inside that motor. His friend agreed and took the engine, installed it on his bike and went to Springfield IL. (Which we know today as the Springfield Mile)

Charlie's friend won the feature race that night. The story goes that Harley Davidson Motor Company was there at Springfield and they offered the winner of the race a complete upper top end racing setup as a winning prize.

Somehow those parts were installed on Charlie's engine. When the engine returned home to Charlie, his modifications were gone. Charlie was furious! In those days, if a local boy out-ran the factory, questions would be asked. Arnold heard Charlie tell this same story for many years, and he said the story never changed and that the hair on Charlie's neck would stand up and his face would get red every time the issue was brought up.

Another story happen when Charlie showed up at Daytona Motorcycle Races one year and his bike had some sort of rubber mounted handlebars. Charlie had rigged up a way to put rubber around the handlebar mounts in order to absorb the vibration while he was racing. The Harley Davidson factory guys saw this and thought the bars were too loose. Obviously there had to be something good about rubber mounted handlebars. By the next year Harley had rubber mounted handlebars.

Lin Neal and I are roughly the same age and had different Charlie Saurenman memories. Lin remembers riding bicycles to the barbeque shop across the street from Charlie's automotive shop. They would get a coke and sit on the curb and watch the activity of mechanical work going on at Charlie's. They also loved to see all of the Jet boats in the parking lot. As a young boy, Lin remembers saying, "One day I want a Jet Boat just like that one"! Later in life, Lin had a Jet boat and actually had Tommy Saurenman do some work on it for him.

My personal Charlie Saurenman memory was watching my Mom and Dad use him for their vehicle needs. My mom was very picky about her cars and who worked on them; I remember that only Charlie Saurenman could touch her cars. This was probably a good thing for my Dad because he really didn't care much to work on cars and do maintenance. I saw and remember Charlie talking to my Mom and Dad about the needs and repairs for their personal cars. But I clearly remember one other visual reminder about Charlie. One day I was riding with my Dad (well before I was driving) Dad had some sort of mechanical problem, I can't remember exactly, but we drove the car over to Charlie's shop. Charlie came out to the car and was talking with Dad. I will never forget, he asked Dad to start the motor. Charlie placed his hand on the hood and then on the fender, like he was feeling the car. Then he began to tell my Dad some mechanical talk I didn't understand about what the car needed. I think Dad had to leave the car with him a few hours. Upon return, the car was ready and ran great!!! As a 10 or 11 year old boy, one must remember, when seeing a large man like Charlie come out and lay his hand on a car and diagnose correctly the needed repairs, that memory stuck with me. I heard Dad share that same experience and excitement to his friends about how Charlie just put his hand on the hood and knew the problem.

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TEN
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Charlie's daughter, Kay Carson allowed me to scan many great personal photos and articles. She also wrote a few notes about a few memories about her Dad's motorcycle racing days. (Kay Wrote)

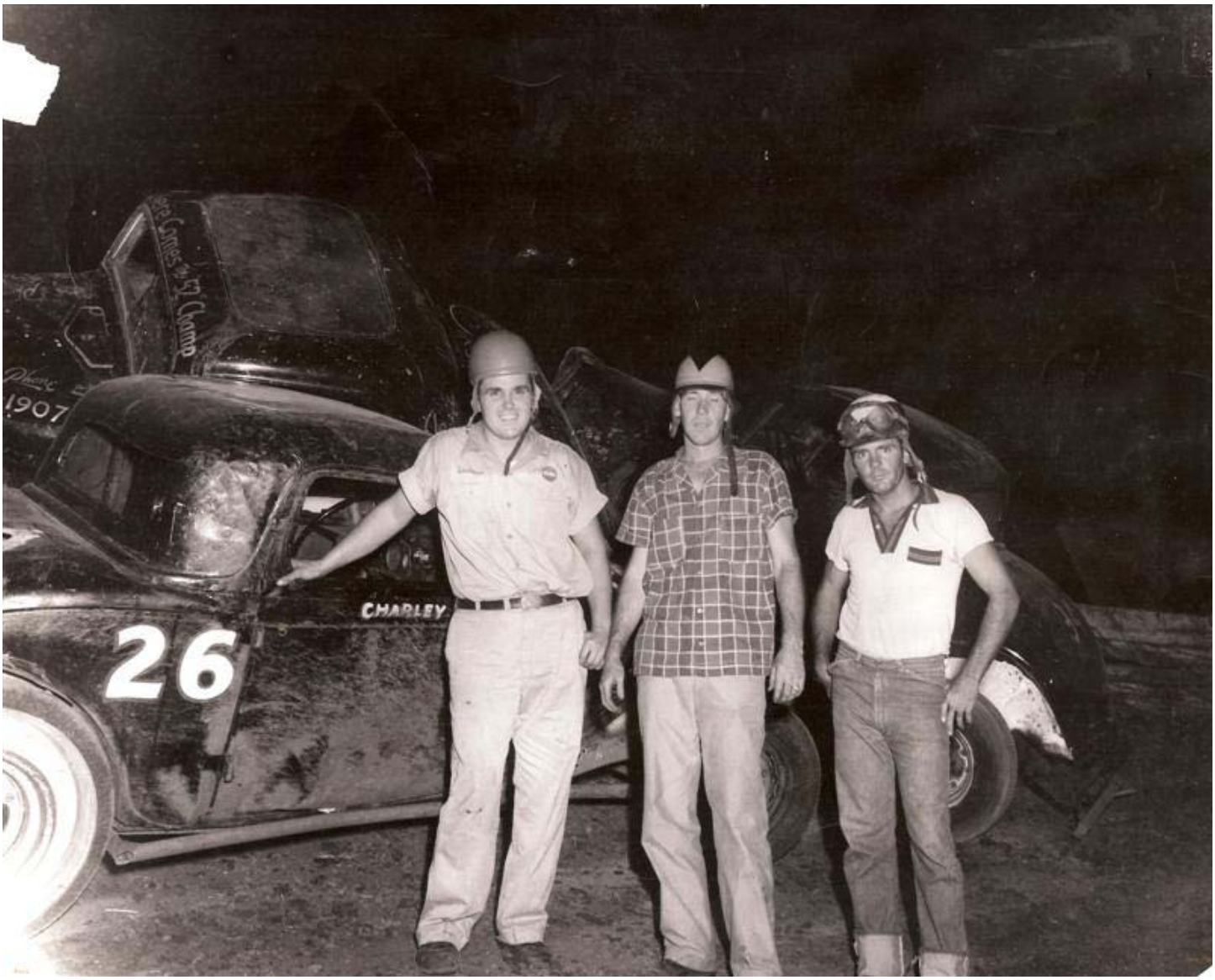
I think I gave you a copy of the photo about which I am telling you. He is sitting in the car, door open, with his riding leather pants dropped to his ankles. He is sitting there in his boxer underwear and everyone standing around him is laughing. He had some kind of mishap while racing and poked a hole in his ankle. Mom said that when he took his boot off, he poured out blood!!! Obviously it wasn't too much of an injury because they are laughing!

One other thing I remember him telling was the night he was running hard and fast down Brooks Road in Whitehaven. He lost control and slid along the highway about a block. When he did stop rolling he said the only thing left of his shirt was the collar and the cuffs! My Tough guy.

One more thing I remember them telling me was about driving to a motorcycle race pulling the motorcycle on the trailer shortly after they had married. When mom and dad married they exchanged rings.....(as long as I can remember he NEVER wore a ring). Mom said dad had a "habit" of riding with his hand out the window and running the ring up and down on his finger. There came a day when the ring slipped off and was gone. Mom always figured it was an accident by design! Ha!

Ed Dacus & George Loomis grew up around the corner from Charlie's Automobile Garage. Ed tells a great testimony of the days when Harley Davidson racers would drive down from Milwaukee in a van headed to Daytona Beach for the races. The van would stop in Memphis and pick up Charlie Saurenman and his motorcycle. They would all sit on milk crates inside the van and continue down Florida and race on the beach. Remember now, in those days there weren't Factory plush Motor homes and teams.

Stock car racing at Riverside Speedway in West Memphis Ar. began in 1949. Those early years were cars with 6 cylinder engines. Charlie was nearing the end of his motorcycle racing somewhere around that time and he began to put his focus on stock cars. He used the same skills on the stock car era as he did with motorcycle racing. Charlie was always modifying parts and tweaking components to get extra horsepower. It has been said that when Riverside changed the rules for V8 engines, Charlie was one of the 1st racers to show up with a Flat Head Ford. He dominated the field. Soon, his motorcycle racing buddies were racing with him on the stock car dirt track. George Dickey, Hooker Hood and Charlie shown here after a small pile up.



This is one of my favorite pictures of Charlie – 3 cars wrapped up together in turn 3 at Riverside Speedway – Charlie, Hooker and George posing for a picture – A picture says a 1000 words!!! Hooker and George not looking too happy, but Charlie Saurenman with the biggest smile on his face!! That photograph speaks Volumes!!!

As a stock car racer, Charlie set track records at Riverside Speedway in West Memphis, Arkansas, which remained unbroken for 20 years. Perhaps some still stand. Charlie later changed his number to 26. Twenty Six seem to have been special. He was born on March 26, Accepted Christ on April 26, married on June 26, 1st house on Nov 26, moved away on Dec 26 and returned two years later on Jan 26, and got his business licenses on the 26th. Number 26 proved to be a good one for this man with an adventurous Spirit.

Here is a small article I found on the Internet someone posted on a forum - Author Unknown

I read in the obituary column the other day of the death of Charlie Saurenman. The article said that Charlie was 78 years old, an auto mechanic and racer of motorcycles, stock cars and boats. I suppose the obit was OK, but to me, the obituary didn't seem to do justice to the man.

I didn't know Charlie in his younger years when he raced; I knew him in the early 70's when he was making his living (a pretty good one) in a two bay garage in his back yard. I was working as a clerk on the railroad in Memphis and worked for Charlie part time to help make ends meet.

Charges for his services were very reasonable, usually about half of the amount quoted in the flat rate book, but he was very fast and efficient, and it didn't take him long to diagnose a problem. He had a rhythm using wrenches with the repeating backward and forward motion he would appear to be using a ratchet. While most mechanics would be deciding on the correct tool to remove a difficult to get at bolt, Charlie would already have it out and be starting on the next one. He could flip a boxed end wrench into the air to swap ends to use the open end, and not break his rhythm. I remember one occasion where Charlie and I pulled an engine for rebuilding. The customer pulled the car into the bay at 8:00 AM, and we started work. In a very short while, the engine was removed, tore down, the block and crank were sitting in the back of the pickup to take to the machine shop, and Charlie had started reworking one of the heads -the block was still warm.

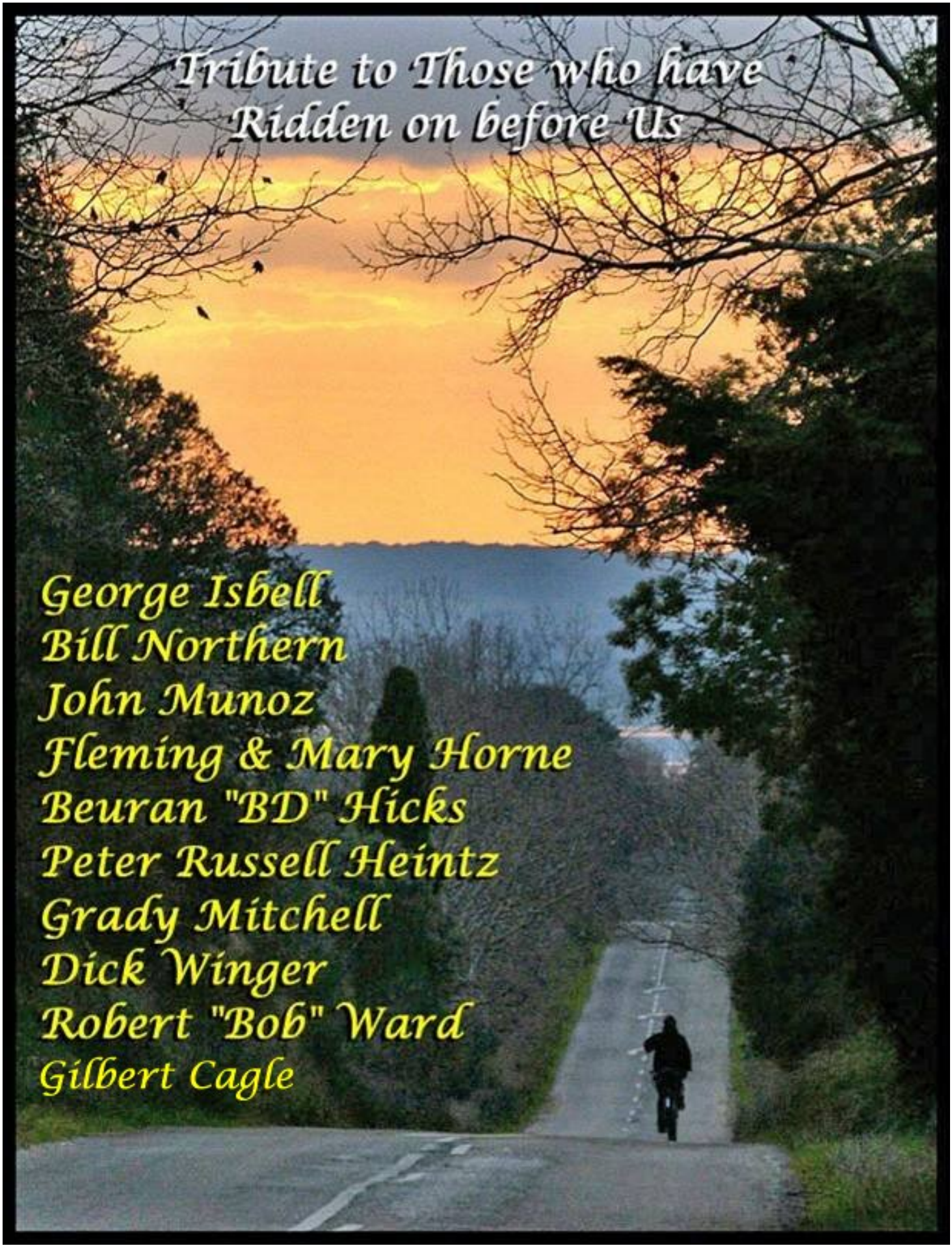
Wednesday was carburetor day. I would pull the carbs on the two cars in the bays, and on the cars outside the door, usually totaling four or five, and would bring them over to the workbench where Charlie would tear them down. Charlie would break all the carbs down and soak them in solvent in a five gallon bucket, all in the same bucket at the same time, where they would soak until after lunch. We would spend the rest of the morning installing points, plugs, and condensers. After lunch, Charlie would rinse the parts and reassemble the carbs, and I would reinstall them on the cars. He then would adjust the mixture, idle, choke, dwell, and timing of each car. By 5:00 PM, all the cars would be ready.

I remember an occasion where a lady, a widow who attended the same church Charlie did, have towed in a 67 Fairlane 289. Her teen age son had taken the car out and had run over something that had cut the sheet metal oil pan and had lost the oil. He kept driving the car and threw a rod. Her finances were very limited and she had come to Charlie for help. He called a friend, Cowboy Rogers who owned a junk yard down in Desoto County, Miss., and explained the circumstances. A while later, Mrs. Saurenman shows up in Charlie's truck with a 289 engine in the back from the junk yard. Charlie worked after hours all week overhauling the engine without spending any money.

He never threw anything away that was any good. When he bought an overhaul gasket set, the sets cover several years and will have more than one gasket for the same application; consequently a lot of gaskets are never used. He would keep a good but used timing gear set, or set of bearings. Anything good he would keep. Charlie used a used set of bearings and plastigauged each bearing in about four positions. They all showed about .002" clearance. He used a .001" shim which he placed on the backside of the bearings, cutting a slit for the oil to pass through. I had never seen this done before, nor since.

I helped him install the engine that Saturday, and by noon it was up and running. Smooth as silk. A friend told me the following week that he saw her driving it to church the next day. He said she was sitting straight and proud and had that Fairlane shined up like it had just come out of a showroom. I got a lump in my throat.

Although I worked for Charlie just a short time, he was an influence in my life. It was he that got me started on old Fords. Every time I raise a hood to do a job in some form or fashion I find myself copying Charlie. A real mechanic.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Bill Northern
John Munoz
Fleming & Mary Horne
Beuran "BD" Hicks
Peter Russell Heintz
Grady Mitchell
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