

From the President

Time Capsule

Looking Back, And Forward To The AMA's Next 85 Years

by Rob Dingman

Writing a column about the 85th anniversary of the American Motorcyclist Association is a bit like trying to decide what to include in a time capsule. When the AMA is celebrating future milestones, others will look back at this edition to get a sense of what was going on during our 85th year.

Looking through our archives, it may surprise some members to know that not every AMA anniversary has been worthy of celebration. Take the 50th anniversary in 1974. At that time, the organization was swamped by a million-dollar operating deficit brought about by a lack of board oversight and antiquated management systems. That sounds a lot like what I discovered shortly after becoming the CEO in April 2007.

In the last two-and-a-half years, we've moved aggressively to reconstitute our senior management team and, under the leadership of Chairman Stan Simpson, refocused the Board of Directors. Working together, we've brought about some very significant changes.

First, we rededicated the Association to its core mission: To promote the

motorcycle lifestyle and protect the future of motorcycling. To do this, the AMA had to undertake a major restructuring. Although it has not been without controversy, this restructuring was necessary to position the organization for growth over the next 85 years.

Second, we strengthened the efficacy of our government relations function and changed the emphasis of the organization's infrastructure to support member advocacy. Advocacy, by the way, is not just about government relations. It is so much more than that. This very magazine, which was redesigned to focus more on the people who make motorcycling fun, cool and meaningful, is an example of advocacy.

Next, we recommitted the AMA to providing more and improved member benefits to better connect with the needs of our current—and future—members. We have added over a dozen new member benefits in just the last year, including free AMA Roadside Assistance for those who sign up for automatic renewal or purchase a three-year membership. We now offer discounts on Garmin navigation systems, SPOT satellite personal tracking devices,

MadMaps, LifeLock identity protection, and much more.

One of the most visible changes has been the redefinition of the Association's role in racing. In 2008, we sold professional racing assets to the Daytona Motorsports Group. This move eliminated the tremendous resource drain that managing professional racing placed on the AMA—including almost daily controversy—and it minimized the self-serving influence of factions on the Board of Directors. Not to be overlooked, we have expanded support for our entire amateur racing program, the lifeblood of a significant portion of our membership.

All of these efforts have repositioned the AMA as the premier advocate for the motorcycle lifestyle, and I am absolutely confident in our organization's ability to face the challenges that lie ahead of us. I am extremely optimistic about the future of motorcycling in this country, and I am especially encouraged about the future of our strong and vibrant AMA.

Rob Dingman is president and CEO of the AMA.

