



SOFTBALL PLAYER PROFILE: GARY HILLABOLT
-by Larry Wolfe

What do the following have in common: A retired postal worker; a member of two Harley Davidson road clubs; a self-confessed “gearhead”; and Clark W. Griswold? Answer: They’re all one-and-the-same Gary Hillabolt!

Gary’s a native of Des Moines, Iowa and a graduate of Lincoln High School where he played baseball for the Railsplitters. Immediately after graduation he was hired by the U.S. Postal Service in what was the beginning of a 37+ year career. Gary’s also an entrepreneur who owns and manages several Des Moines-area rental properties and he founded and operated a commercial snow removal business. He and his lovely bride Pam still spend their summers back in Iowa.

Saying Gary loves to ride his Harley is an obvious understatement. He’s a member of a ten-rider group in Iowa and a 20-member riding group in Arizona that take long road trips on their bikes. Their trips average 4000 miles each over an eight- to ten-day period! Last summer’s ride,

which originated in Des Moines, went all the way down to Key West, then up to Sturgis, South Dakota before returning to his home base. This coming year he plans on a “Hog Ride” through Oregon and Washington.

The “gearhead” designation comes from Gary’s interest in rebuilding and restoring cars and his participation in drag racing. This past November, Gary put his flamed ’69 Camaro into the winners circle in the ADRA Super Pro race at Speedworld Raceway in Whitmann. He ran a 9.279 seconds, 141.9 mph quarter-mile. That’s moving! (See www.metzcon.com/adra/news.htm for full story and photos.)

OK, but where does Clark W. Griswold of the *Christmas Vacation* movie come into the Gary Hillabolt story? Have you ever seen the beautiful Christmas lights on Sunburst Court in Oakwood? Gary and Pam own one of the six elaborately-decorated homes on that street. They have the one that’s lights flash to the Christmas music. All those lights and decorations would make Clark proud!

Of course Gary also has time for senior softball. He previously played baseball and fast-pitch softball into his 50s back in Iowa. His teams played several times in the Fast Pitch National Finals and he was an All-Tournament honoree at the National Finals held in Springfield, Missouri. Gary’s now in his third year of senior slow-pitch softball. It took him awhile to adjust to the slower, high-arching pitches, but he’s now one of our league’s top power hitters. He’s also an accomplished pitcher and solid infielder.

Pam and Gary love socializing with their neighbors. They enjoy golf outings, Monday Night Football get-togethers and other outings and say, “they couldn’t ask for better neighbors.” Pam keeps busy as a realtor and as a member of the Phoenix Suns Golden Grannies Dance Team. Plus they have four children, ten grandkids and two great-grandkids to occupy their time.

So....if you want to ride your Harley or go drag racing on Sunburst Court while looking at the Christmas lights, you now know whom to call!