

When I first went to the Lake O'the Pines Rallye, it was for one day; then I started arriving Friday night and then Thursday and now that I'm a Club Officer, I like to arrive Tuesday so I get two full relaxed days before the hurly burly of the weekend's activities. However, for a couple of reasons, I couldn't leave until Wed evening at the earliest which would mean setting up in the dark but nevertheless I decided to leave straight after work.



The inestimable Clay Walley loaned me his trailer so I could bring two bikes and I decided to bring the TriColore (actually the 2008 Ducati Monster S4RS Testastretta TriColore but that's a bit of a mouthful, as the actress said to the bishop) and the 1979 Bonneville. So having loaded up the bikes, a tent and a canopy and, second only in importance to the bikes, a cooler stocked with Shiner and Powers – I headed east.

Richard and co had already set up Party Central and the party was already well under way when I arrived at about nine-thirty. Dennis Tackett and Mike Mediterraneo helped me set up the tent so I'd have somewhere to stumble home to, and I joined the festivities. To compensate for the burn ban (caused by the protracted drought) Richard had managed to persuade Tom (the camp owner) to bring his tractor complete with auger and set 20ft posts into the ground. Richard then affixed rope lights to the posts to make a large courtyard bounded by his RV and the posts. Apparently the construction effort involved Tom hoisting Richard into the air using the dozer bucket of his tractor to hang the lights on the posts! (Tom's now having the hydraulics serviced on the tractor next week). At each corner and in the centre, Tiki torches burned merrily in lieu of a camp fire. The whole effect was terrific and you can only wonder where Richard gets his ideas from.....

There then followed an erudite and impassioned discussion on the names of the stars and constellations, that were shining incredibly brightly compared to the city sky in DFW. It all went a bit south when we couldn't agree on the location of Uranus. Then, thanks in part to a gentleman called Mr. Jack, there was a rousing rendition of "Wild Rover" by Richard and yours truly, followed by a massed choir singing "We're climbing up Sunshine Mountain where the Four Winds Blow" – complete with actions and gestures. Alton Gillespie, our artist-in-residence, was particularly adept at the latter, whilst the rest could only stumble along. We'll draw a discreet veil over the remainder of the evening.....



Thursday morning was spent setting up my canopy and getting the bikes off the trailer, followed by helping out by setting up the top of the hill with the big canopy and all the club stuff. Bruce Jones, Mike and the folks had already set up registration and they were very ready – complete with two computers with credit card readers, inventory and point of sale software – we were as technological as we've ever been.

I was then on the receiving end of another one of Richard's mad ideas – not content with approximately 100 tiki torches last year – he'd bought 150 of the damn things and it was apparently my role to pace

out the length of the lakeshore and plant them with aid of a helper and a drill with a 18" auger. Would you believe over 400 metres of lakeshore? Back at Party Central, Michael Ber, Mike Med and Bob Dodd were fuelling up the canisters with tiki torch oil with the aid of a battery powered pump that looked like it should be used for artificially inseminating Clydesdales. Needless to say, the table was awash in torch oil and they looked in permanent danger of self-inflicted immolation.

Later, I saw Richard leading in a fifth-wheel that was as long as a locomotive, followed by another large trailer. Immediately, I knew who it was as I'd seen the fifth wheel at the Lone Star Classic at Cresson, and I knew it would be stuffed with as good a collection of pre-war British bikes as you could possibly hope to see. It was Robert & Holly Hoemke from Abilene and sure enough, they had bought a mouth-watering collection of British iron.

He'd also bought the magician who has worked on so many of the bikes, a Welshman named Ray Dodds who is in the process of moving back from Florida to Blighty. Peering into the trailer was like looking into Aladdin's Cave - Panther, Velocette, Norton, Sunbeam, Ariel, Scott, Levis and a perfect Indian Sport Scout (American of course). The Panther was no less than the very bike that was the display model at the 1939 Earls Court National Motorcycle Show (Earls Court was the premier venue for shows in the UK for decades - I remember going there as a kid).

In the evening, we decided to take a run into Jefferson for a bite to eat at Annie Skinner's, and so Mike Med, Wayne Parfitt and I rode into town. I was riding Richard's Triton, for some reason, and by God, it's fun. Shedloads of torque and a sound to beat down doors - excellent. Berwyn led a happy procession back to LOP - I was pretty knackered when we got back, but I got my second wind and we sat around the tiki torch campfire at Party Central - sipping Powers and exchanging insults.

Friday morning, I breakfasted at Snap-On Central (Randy, Cathy and crew had arrived Thursday midday-ish) and then five of us went for a spin around the lake - Bob, Wayne, Bruce Fishlock were on their Nortons and Mike and me were on the Ducis. The weather was fabulous, and the riding was perfect. After a brief stop for gas, it was back to the campsite and various tasks.



Robert and Ray had wasted no time in unloading some of the bikes and next thing we were treated to the Scott Squirrel being fired up. Talk about technology, this was a two-stroke with the oil metered and injected to the cylinders rather than mixed in the tank. It was apparent that the metering was somewhat on the generous side - ever seen a bike blow perfect smoke rings twelve feet out of the pipes? I got it on video!

There was a steady stream of arrivals as the day passed and quite a few big rigs arriving. We were very pleased to see a good contingent from the BMOA - we'd had a great time at New Ulm earlier this year - and also the 59 Club from Dallas. Later in the afternoon I cleaned up and went to Longview to pick up Monica from the airport and then we met Mike and his family for a very good meal at the Italian Restaurant in the Jefferson Hotel before heading back to the campsite. Party Central was in full swing

and even after we retired for the night, we could hear the Rallye Chairman roaring away – and without the aid of a motorcycle too.



Saturday got busy as we continued setting up the Bike Show, putting up canopies etc etc. The weather was nigh perfect, and the folks were queuing at Bike Show Registration where Ryan and Jerrett were doing tech. The lakeside was soon dotted with motorcycles, and it was soon apparent that this would be a banner year for quality.

There was a running joke that the Pre-Commando class should be renamed the Asprey class as the entrants all belonged to Richard! His ES-2, his 16H and the Big Four looked resplendent; and the Commando class never looked better. I've already mentioned the amazing bikes that Robert brought, but there were plenty of other standouts. Peter Burger's rare Horex Regina 350 sidecar combo and our own Captain Commando's Norton Manx were absolute jewels. There were plenty of attendees to admire the bikes and vote for their favourites. It was soon apparent that a crowd pleaser was the very perfect Harley WLA vintage 1942 campaigned by Kent Chipman AKA Mad Dog. Dressed in period uniform right down to the hand grenade, and brandishing a stogie – he definitely looked the part.

Another personal favourite was a Maserati 125 from 1954 – who knew eh? It was a real beauty and a pleasure to look at....

To further complement the Bike Show, we had a true showstopper, the legendary Gulf Norton streamliner built and campaigned by Denis Manning in the mid-70's and now painstakingly restored by BigD Cycle for the National Motorcycle Museum in Birmingham England. Perched atop the Hill - it looked simply tremendous against the backdrop of the Lake. Too cool for words..... I'll only add that the artwork was done by our very own Alton Gillespie.



So, after a leisurely afternoon, the anticipation built up as the ballot boxes were taken away to be counted by the Snap-On mob, and as we laid out the trophies, folks started to gather at the top of the Hill for the Awards Ceremony.

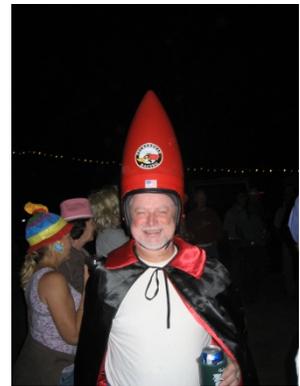
As no doubt you already know, we dedicated this year's Rallye to our very own Ed Mabry who passed earlier this year. Dave Howe, Dennis Tackett and CC all said some words and told some good stories – which were warmly received by the crowd. After a big round of applause for Ed and also Malcolm "Bodger" Dixon of the BMO who also passed away – we got into the Awards interspersed with the very generous door prizes provided by the businesses we all know and need to support. And here is my confession, having painstakingly noted them and thanked them as part of the evening's proceedings, I've lost my damn notes. So, please check out the list at the end of this article and if I've forgotten anyone, please let me know at ntnoa@ntnoa.org

Next came a novel event – Alton Gillespie was commissioned to paint a picture of the Gulf Norton atop the Hill and the painting was auctioned by Richard with the proceeds going to the charity in aid of Fallen Soldiers. They were present and were raffling a very cool period Honda off-road bike. Scott Baker won the auction with a bid of \$1,500 - great stuff.

Then came the moment that everyone was waiting for – the drawing of the winning raffle ticket for the Norton Commando 750 S – a stunning high-pipe model with two bike show awards to its name. Zoe, as in Rallyes past, drew the ticket – belonging to a Harley Willcox who wasn't present. But Richard got onto the phone which was connected to the PA and called him - to say he was nonplussed would be an understatement (partly as he later told me, because he was trying to deal with a flooded toilet and was holding the phone in one hand and a sink plunger in the other)!

Ceremony over, a line quickly formed for the food – very generously laid on by Aggressive Insurance and dished out by Michael Ber's crew. As usual, Saturday night was the liveliest of the weekend but nothing too wild – not at least that I heard about.... Party Central was buzzing as was Snap-On Central and not forgetting the Moto Liberty Party bus! One of the highlights of the evening was a silly hat competition that Audrey organized – great fun!

I managed to stay fairly sensible as I knew I had things to do the next day and so I called it a night not too long after midnight – oh alright 1am. Amazingly I beat Richard – I think that's a first for me.



The next day, we held the mandatory Rider's Meeting at 930am for the Rolling Concours – a good crowd turned up so our fears over putting events on Sunday proved unfounded. Ryan had kindly agreed to act as recovery vehicle and when I saw him I had to feel sorry for him. When last seen by me, he was punishing my bottle of Irish whiskey and it was apparent that it had fought back. He had eyes like axe wounds and all I could hear was a low muttering of "I hate bikes, I hate Lake O'the Pines and I hate whiskey" Just too funny. Anyway, the weather was great – beautifully cool and the nicest ride I had all week. We had three DNF's, but over twenty-five bikes made it round.

Robert Hoemke took first and third with the Panther and Indian, with the second place going to Peter Burger and his immaculate Horex, and his son rode in the sidecar.

Tear down was reasonably painless – thanks to some very hard work by several folks – and we were in



no mood to rush. I think we pulled out about 2pm and Richard and gang pulled out a while later. And so came to an end the 27th LOP Rallye – **I had a great time and I hope you did too.**



The Rallye Chairman and the Club Officers would like to extend their thanks and gratitude to the following people for volunteering:

Super Volunteers – who spent many, many hours before, during and after the Rallye weekend on preparations and support:

Bruce Jones Registration/Inventory/Merchandising

Mike Mediterraneo Point of Sale/Tech Support/Inventory/Facebook/Twitter

Volunteers:

Michael Ber	David Newsome	Ira Rocchi	Norm Blumenberg	Cathy Bauer
Monica Parry	Reid Schulze	Stephen Lonergan	Ryan Ambrose	Jerrett Martin
Dennis Tackett	Clay Walley	Bob Hagemann	Bob Dodd	Wayne Parfitt
George Tuttle	David Bradford	Gary Moore		

The Rallye Chairman and the Club Officers would like to extend their thanks and gratitude to the following businesses for their support and generosity

Aggressive Insurance	BigD Cycle	BMOA	British USA
Eurosport Cycle	Moto Liberty	Moto-Ed	Perry's Cycle
Plano BMW	Rider's Garage	Route 49 Apparel	RPM Cycle
Signs-N-More			

(please – if I missed anyone, email me at ntnoa@ntnoa.org)