



TRCR

Three Rivers Competition Riders



"Western Pennsylvania's Premier Off-Road Club"

online at www.trcr.org



Member PA Off-Highway
Vehicle Association

FEBRUARY 2006 NEWSLETTER

EVENT CALENDAR

Visit www.district5ama.org and www.mojoraceteam.com for updated 2006
Harescramble, MX, GNCC & AWRCS race schedules

MARCH

6 Monthly Meeting, 8pm at Cross Roads Cycle, Rt. 8, Gibsonia

APRIL

3 Monthly Meeting, 8pm at West Hills Honda

7/8/9 Annual Spring Ride at Hatfield McCoy Trails

MAY

1 Monthly Meeting, 8pm at Bentley's Cycle, Rt. 22, Murrysville

ATTENTION: MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR 2006 ARE NOW DUE.

Please pay at next meeting or use the enclosed form to pay by mail

Only members in good standing receive a club newsletter via email or snail mail

THREE RIVERS COMPETITION RIDERS

President: *Steve Stiller* Vice President: *Michael Perry* Treasurer: *Nicholas Milan*

Secretary: *Jeff Pflugh* Legislative Affairs/USFS Liaison: *Mike Babusci*

GREETINGS FROM THE BACK OF THE PACK

First order of business – the club voted last year to try to save on postage and limit the number of newsletters sent out in regular snail mail. Everyone was on board to get the newsletter through email as an attachment. Well, here we are in early 2006 and we have darn few email addresses. This newsletter is going out to only paid up members in good standing. If you are reading this off our website, which is perfectly fine, but are not a member, you can't take advantage of club events until your dues for the year are paid. And, as for those email addresses, get them sent in through the website or give them to me at a meeting! Oh, and if you've scribbled it illegibly on your membership renewal form, chances are, you won't be getting it because I'm not too good at 'ciphering hieroglyphics.

The February meeting was held at Northgate Cycle. Thanks again to Joe and Steve for the site and pizza. We went over the results of the Holiday Party held in January. The event "went in the red" a little less than most years but everyone agreed the party was fun, food was good and prizes were great. Celine Nista had a good idea for next year and this is something everyone can help out with. Instead of a band or DJ, we thought we'd play music and set it to a media presentation of digital slide and video that we can project onto the wall via laptop. So, start collecting all your pictures for submission. I've begun saving little video clips of rides too. We can download them all in December and have a great time reminiscing over our favorite rides from 2006. CVS Pharmacies sells little disposable digital video recorders that record 20 minutes of video, which is quite a lot to shoot on a ride. When finished, you take it back and they put it onto a DVD. We can then download those and convert them into little mpegs to show at next years party. What's nice is the disposable cameras are pretty bulletproof and beat taking your personal \$300 video equipment out on the trail. The video quality is surprisingly good too. So, take pics and videos, put them on CDs and DVDs and hang onto them for the party.

Another note about the party, we were remiss in not mentioning that many of the door prizes from the party were collected by Bob Huerbin and Donnie Paulsen who went around to shops like Cross Roads and Davis Cycle to get donations. Thanks guys.

Steve gave us a little more information about his property up in Bruin. He'll be selling "keys" to the gate beginning at the next meeting where some ride dates and work details will be announced as well. You'd do well to come out to Cross Roads to stay on top of this unique riding opportunity.

We talked briefly about the upcoming **Hatfield McCoy** ride April 7/8/9 which is sneaking up on us pretty quickly. I can tell you that I can not make the April 2nd meeting at West Hills Honda as I'll be working in Texas. So, if you want one of the rooms at the Super 8 in Logan, you need to let me know soon or give me an email at jpflugh@peircelaw.com We've got a batch of rooms blocked off but they usually go quick. Also, for members who have never ridden these trails, I can't on earth wonder why not. You'll not find a better system of legal trails in the east, maybe the whole country, as far as diversity. Don't think that this is a little loop around a mountain. It's more trails than you can ride in 3 days and some of them are pretty challenging. And, even the ones that aren't are so much fun because of the elevation changes and scenery. It's always a good trip. Go to the next meeting and sign on.

The club took up the issue of making monthly meetings a little more fun. It was decided that at each meeting, we'd be raffling off a substantial prize that night to those in attendance. We may get the hosting shop to donate the item or get it at a discount which would dictate the price of the raffle tickets themselves. But plan on coming with the opportunity to take a chance on something worthwhile like an o-ring chain or some riding gear or other accessories.

Anyone with submissions for the newsletter can email them to the club website or me at jpflugh@peircelaw.com or, talk to one of the officers at our next meeting – Monday, March 6 at Cross Roads Cycle, Rt. 8 in Gibsonia, at 8pm. In the meantime, we'll see you in the woods.

Different Strokes for Different Folks

Editor's note-I began working on, and titled, this article months before the release of an article with a similar title in the April '06 "Dirt Rider"

It's Sunday morning and you've arrived at your favorite trail riding area with your buddies to do a little woods riding. Bikes are unloaded and gear is put on. Riders begin the ritual of psyching each other out with forecasts of trail conditions that await them – "Talked to Rob last night and he rode this loop last

week, said the uphill at Crisis Creek is so steep and rutted out we'll need a ski lift to get up it". Others begin laying the "excuse foundation" – "Wow, my knee is killing me since that get off last week at the Broken Spoke hare scramble". Such is the ritual of our typical Sunday morning and this one is no different. What happens next, however, has changed over the years. Ten years ago, at this point, legs would be thrown over machines and engines kicked to life. Blue smoke of a warming dirt bike engine would fill the air along with a ferocious "braaap-braap-braaap" sound. But this is 2006, and not many kickstarters are kicked. Instead, start buttons are pushed and a mellow "thump-thump-thump" sound fills the air – and without the smoke.

How did we get here? Some riders want to know why these lawn mowers are in the woods and on the track. And others that have crossed over to ride 4-strokes are enjoying all this technology and earth-moving torque as they look forward to the two-smokes going away forever. So, which is better? A cylinder that fires every 2 strokes, or 4? The intensity of this debate in some circles would lead you to believe we are at war here. Geez. Can't we just all get along and ride whether our engine smokes or thumps? Well, fact is, there are several different layers of dynamics to the issue. And it doesn't matter whether we're talking bikes or quads (although by now, fact is, there aren't many 2-stroke quads left). The fundamental issue has to do with the general performance characteristics of each engine and the positive and negative attributes each brings to the table, whether you ride in the woods or race motocross. Beyond that, though, are issues that have more to do with politics and rules that affect 2-strokes negatively, and 4-strokes positively, in research and development at the factories.

We used to wait with anticipation at the end of each year, looking for the newest development on the next years bikes. We saw them progress from the big, heavy, awkward, unreliable, loud, poor handling and poorly suspended machines of the 60s and 70s to what they are today. The virtual equivalent of an Indy Car on two wheels from a power-to-weight ratio and technological perspective. Have 2-strokes "topped out" technologically? Hardly. Remember, the rear wheel is still driven by that archaic chain thing. Still, for those of us old enough to have grown up riding Yamaha DTs and other 2-stroke enduro bikes, the typical 2-stroke off-road motorcycle came to a near state of perfection by the 90s. With light weight frames, power-valve equipped engines, advanced suspension components and technology, slim ergonomics and unbelievable reliability. Life on the trail has been good.

Carving a 220 pound 2-stroke powered two-wheeled-Indy-Car through the woods these days has become so effortless that it's like cheating. These bikes turn where you point them, wheelie over obstacles with a quick snap of the throttle and light touch of the clutch, climb the steepest of hills and jump over obstacles at will. And, they do it all without beating your body up. Kinda makes you wonder how we did it on old iron. Ah, but riders were tougher back then. Just ask the abby normal crew.

So, with everything so right in the dirt bike world, why are these 4-strokes being developed, anyway? Whose idea was this? Why, as some riders suggest, would we trade in our Indy Cars for riding lawnmowers? Well, for one thing, it's not like the 4-strokes ever went away. They were always out there, they just weren't being developed into race bikes because the demand wasn't there and 2-strokes did the job. But remember that Honda and others were making all sorts of sizes and configurations of 4-strokes for years. They were thought of as trail bikes but no one would ever race one, right? How could a big, top-heavy thumper compete against the light and fast Japanese and European enduro machinery in woods racing? Well, put Scott Summers on one for starters. But that wasn't the reason technology dollars were shifted from 2-strokes to 4-strokes.

The demise of the 2-stroke began as their proclivity to pollute became more and more apparent. I know this is hard for many of us to accept – that our dirt bikes make the kind of air pollution that could possibly compare to diesel trucks or industrial sources. But, it all adds up and, like it or not, no source of hydrocarbon emissions is immune to regulation. Power plants spend millions on controlling it, the auto industry too. And, manufacturers of everything from boats to mowers to dirt bikes had to fall in line. But the good news is that it forced the manufacturers to revive what seemed like a stagnant R&D agenda. And by the late 90s, we started to see 4-stroke motocrossers – and they're not that heavy, and they're pretty reliable and, most of all, they're eye-watering fast and throw roost like a super mod tractor leaving the line. And a guy named Doug Henry wins the outdoor MX championship on one in 1997. Which brings us to 2006 when every major producer has 4-stroke MXers and woods bikes in all sizes from minis to over 600cc, many with electric start. And every bike on the starting line of the Supercross and Supercross Lites

Series is a 4-stroke.

Yet, there are still those who refuse to even try one. I, personally, bounced back and forth between 2 and 4 strokes over the past 5 years wondering which one was the best all around mount. It's a hard decision. But, 4-strokes are a blast to ride. They've become unbelievably slim and ergonomically comfy and they make superb usable power over the entire RPM range, instead of a narrow window, which means less overall wheel spin and more controllable power to the ground. They make massive torque too, which also translates into more usable tractable power. They usually only weigh 10-15 pounds more than the comparable 2-stroke (well, the newer ones do, anyway). Electric start is a cool thing that's difficult to give up once you have it. No gas to mix. The exhaust pipe is difficult to smash. They really shine in the rocks where they just kinda lumber along instead of twitching from rock to rock. They also excel on slippery terrain and slimy roots where they hook up much better because of the way they make power. They're generally quiet (although there will always be idiots making them louder than they need to be). You can ride them at a wider range of speeds – from first gear tight woods to 70-90 mph open fire roads. And, two personal observations that may not hold true for everyone: They just don't seem to "beat you up" during long rides the way 2-strokes do, and, I seem to crash a lot less on one because the engine manners keep me out of trouble.

Now, don't get me wrong, they ain't perfect. The engines are great but require more frequent service and if you fail to check for things like valve tolerances or change your oil real frequently, you run the risk of very expensive rebuilds if you suffer catastrophic failure. And that leads to the kind of top end service many of us are not qualified to do. They are still heavier than 2-strokes and 10-20 lbs. is a lot of weight to throw around, especially in tight woods. And the weight is higher in the frame than a 2-stroke due to the valve-train. And, that weight translates into slower turning and pushing into turns. Add the engine braking effect, and it takes some getting used to. Some models are also prone to overheating easily in tight woods.

So, you could just stay on your 2-stroke because it's light and flickable and quicker through the tight woods and turns on a dime, shooting from corner to corner. It makes sweet snappy power that comes on now, enabling you to wheelie over logs and jump stuff effortlessly. It's easy to start, especially after a crash. The engine is easier and cheaper to service, and it needs it less frequently. It's less likely to overheat. It's easier to "get out of trouble" if you bury it in tough sections. And, overall, it's probably less expensive to own.

Of course, your 2-stroke requires mixing your gas (a pain on long rides with gas stops). It can be prone to plug fouling. The pipe is vulnerable in crashes. It's noisy and smokes. It twitches in the rocks like a pogo stick and refuses to stop spinning in greasy mud and tops out pretty early on fast sections.

So, what to ride? Last year, I joined the growing ranks of members who have one of each – a KTM 520EXC 4-stroke, which I primarily ride in the summer season, and a KTM 200MXC which I primarily ride in tight woods rides and in the winter months with studded tires. It has been quite an eye opener in comparing the two motorcycles. The real irony has been that some of the things the big bike is supposed to do well in the summer on more open trails like Marienville and Hatfield McCoy, it also seems to do well in the situations where I would ride the 2-stroke. Of course, the opposite is also true, but to a lesser degree. Having the luxury of going back and forth between a 4-stroke and 2-stroke really hasn't been a luxury at all because sometimes, when you're on one bike, in a tricky situation, you always find yourself thinking "I wish I'd have brought the other bike today, I would have gotten through that section easier and faster". I've learned the same from talking to others who have both bikes. The prevailing opinion seems to be that we'd ride a 4-stroke all the time, if only it were lighter. Geez, we're demanding! The average 4-stroke weighs around 250 lbs. Remember when our 250 2-strokes weighed that much?

Is there a winner here? Probably not. But, who said it's a contest? Sometimes, in life, too many choices can be a bad thing. How spoiled we've become! Fifteen to 25 years ago we struggled along on vintage iron on Sundays the way our parents drove their 1951 Chevy with no air conditioning or auto tranny. But we had fun anyway! And, that's the point here.

Sure, there are no 2-strokes left on the starting line of a Supercross race, but so what? Will they be around that much longer? Who knows, but I say, get over it. Some things you just can't control. If the demise of the 2-stroke leads to light, powerful and high tech 4-strokes, I say, go with the flow. In the meantime, ride what works for you, whether it smokes or thumps. As for me, I'm still, subconsciously, at

least, searching for dirt bike nirvana. Maybe it's a mid size 4-stroke – one that's a little lighter for tossing around in the woods but still makes almost-open-class power. I wonder if my 520 engine can be squeezed into my 200 frame? Hmmmm.

CLASSIFIED - (ad will run for 3 months only, unless renewed)

Moutain Lodge/camp, Clearfield, Rockton Mountain. Between S.B. Elliot and Parker Dam State Parks. 1/6 ownership, now through April 15th. \$6000. 412-916-8090. Nicholas Milan

MOTORCYCLE REPAIR – Expert dual sport conversions and general motorcycle and ATV repairs. KTM's are my specialty! Don Adams, 724-744-2377

Wanted – fuel tank to fit 95-97 Yamaha WR 250. Stock or aftermarket. Brian, 724-443-5369

Free to Good Home Truxedo bed cover, like new, fits Dodge Dakota w/ 6 foot bed. Jeff 724-295-2583

2001 KTM 250EXC Revloc clutch, WER stabilizer, new rear tire. \$2,000 OBO. Dale, 724-337-8628

2005 Suzuki DR650S dual sport, 155 miles. Supertrapp exhaust, fender bag, jet kit, warranty, Kevin, 724-586-5577

1995 Honda XR280 Brand new Al Baker's XR's Only 280 Kit w/ 3 rides on it. Includes XR's Only exhaust system, graphics and seat cover. Other goodies too. One nice running/sounding/looking mid-size thumper that is ready to ride, needs nothing. \$1,800 OBO. Jeff, 724-295-2583

TRCR's DISCOUNT DEALERS Please be sure to visit these dealers and accessory shops. By showing your TRCR membership card you receive a discount. Most dealers give 10%.

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BOB THOMAS HONDA 12671 Rt. 30, No. Huntingdon, 724-863-0237

BOB TRACEY'S World of Cycles 604 Narrows Run Rd Moon Twp, 412-269-9999

BOHN CYCLE 2015 Saw Mill Run Blvd Pittsburgh 412-882-4330

CROSS ROADS MOTORSPORTS, 5375 William Flynn Hwy, Gibsonia, PA 724-444-6555

DARLINGTON CYCLE Rt. 51 at Rt. 168, Darlington PA 724-847-4011

DAVIS CYCLE, Kaw-Suz-SeaDoo, 701 New Castle Road, Butler, PA, 724-287-3052

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DUTCHMAN RACING, 412-781-5551 or www.dutchmanracing.com

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SCHULZ CYCLE & ATV, 234 Millers Run Rd., Bridgeville, Parts & access. 15% off, ATK, Husqvarna, Gas Gas, Kasea parts/service 412-257-3188

STORMIN NORMAN'S RACING, Billet clutch baskets \$125-\$135, Basket wear inserts \$90 kit, includes machining (select models) call Norm at 724-722-3630

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TEN GRAPHIX, Signs & Vehicle Markings, Thomas E. Nebel, 1800 Sheridan St., No. Braddock, 412-824-8889, www.tengraphix.com

VEHICLE MAINTENANCE CENTER, 68 Camp Horne Rd., Emsworth, 412-761-1666. Auto and cycle inspection



2006 TRCR MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION - DUES RENEWAL FORM

PRINT NEATLY!!!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email address: _____

Date of Birth: _____ AMA No.: _____

NEW MEMBER _____ RENEWAL _____ ADDRESS CHANGE _____

New members only – membership is \$3.00 per month for each month remaining in year

Single Membership _____ \$34.00 annual (Anyone age 18 or over)

Family Membership _____ \$35.00 annual (A family includes parents w/ children under 18)

RELEASE

In signing this membership application, I acknowledge that off-road riding is a hazardous activity with inherent risks of injury and that I voluntarily assume those risks. I understand that TRCR, its officers, directors, trail leaders and members welcome my participation as a club member, but are not responsible for my safety or liable for any injury that might result from my participation in any club activity. Furthermore, I will rely upon my own judgment and ability while participating in TRCR events and assume all risks of injury or damage arising out of such participation. I will not sue or make any claim whatsoever against TRCR, its officers or the organizers of its events as a result of such participation. I agree to follow sensible trail riding principles and ride carefully to ensure my own safety as well as the safety of those with whom I share the trail. As a parent or guardian of a member under the age of 18, I agree to indemnify and hold harmless the above mentioned parties from any claim or injury or damages which said minor may sustain. I hereby consent to and permit emergency medical treatment if I am injured. Above all, I hereby acknowledge that TRCR is an off-road vehicle club which is dedicated to the furtherance and preservation of the sport. I therefore agree to follow general rules of good conduct and sensible behavior at all club functions and wherever TRCR appears in public in any way.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Make check payable to TRCR and bring to next meeting OR mail to
Michael Perry, TRCR VP
667 Baur Drive
Wexford, PA 15090