

The Story Behind The MOA Rally's "Daily Rally Report"

The annual rally of the BMW Motorcycle Owners of America is the crown jewel of two-wheeled events. The confluence of tradition and technology... The meeting point of distance and time... The threshold of adventure and expertise... The rally embodies the rugged spirit of the road and individual commitment to an icon of Teutonic motorcycling perfection. It provides a magnetic lure for 20 to 25 percent of the MOA's membership, drawing crowds of 10,000 or more to camp in hot, wind-swept fields for as long as five days on site, and however long it takes to get there.

But what of the remaining members, who are unwilling to quit their jobs, terminate marriages, or abandon vacante-eyed adolescent offspring to make a ride of this magnitude? Thanks to the vision of two men, Paul Bachorz and Ian Schmeisser, those forced to stay at home from West Bend were able to live vicariously in the photos and commentary of the Daily Rally Report. First proposed and delivered in 2000, the Daily Rally Report was initially presented as a casual summary of events, punctuated by pictures. This year, the report was back enhanced by technology and an effort to make it as fresh as possible.

"MOA members demanded more pictures," said Schmeisser. "They craved greater detail in the text. They wanted to sense the action and feel the excitement of the event."

"What they really wanted was to experience the rally without having to pay the registration fees," said Bachorz. "And until somebody makes a computer that simulates the aroma of hot engine oil and spilled beer, the Daily Rally Report is the best they can expect."

One picture is a worth a thousand words, and Bachorz took 5 million

words-worth of photographs. He has a unique talent for bending color and light to capture enthusiasm and excitement. His pictures documented the events at Camp Gears, caught the classic lines of thousands of BMW motorcycles, and reflected the smiles of supercharged rally participants.

Ian Schmeisser was commissioned with making the entire mechanism work. His task was to coordinate information between photographer and writer, shoot pictures, align pictures with captions, and post report on an MOA rally forum early each day. Schmeisser approached these objectives by first opening a 55-gallon drum of "Schmooze," and spreading it across the rally surface. It was barely enough because the curse of four challenges was against the team.

Schmeisser engaged writer Jack Riepe to help generate editorial and photo captions. No, Riepe was not the curse. Getting scrubbed from his bike by a left-turning minivan returning from another rally the previous month would be the challenge. Riepe would be covering the rally from home. Challenge Two: For a while, due to work commitments, it looked as if Schmeisser himself would not be able to attend the event. Challenge Three: The software by which the team would share photographs and text proved as cranky as a divorce attorney in hot room full of small settlements. Challenge four: No one realized what it would be like for Paul Bachorz to have to take notes (names and other data) at the same time he was taking hundreds of pictures.

One by one, each challenge was overcome. Schmeisser didn't get any serious sense of misgiving until receiving the first set of photo captions from Riepe. "I read them, and then commented to Paul

I thought the writer was sniffing glue," he said. "I remember asking, 'Who recommended this guy?'"

A member of the Mac-Pac Eating and Wrenching Society, Riepe had been suggested for the job by Ambassador Brian Curry, who found him sleeping alongside an old K75, outside the Betty Ford Clinic.

Schmeisser and Bachorz systematically dealt with all challenges. They even came away with a strategy for next year, incorporating two-man teams to provide better captioning for the pictures and to generate more expansive editorial. Their plans call for more anecdotal contributions from rally participants, solicited through pre-event announcements in the MOA's publication, Web site, and forums. One idea includes having the rally report e-mailed directly each day to members who request it. Schmeisser has plans for some video as well.

How well was this year's report received? Well over 10,000 page downloads were recorded for the Daily Rally Report.

Bachorz reported that a couple of his pictures evoked strong emotions. "The most significant photo I took that week was of Ardys Kellerman and Helen Two-Wheels. Ardys is the spirit of inspiration. But Helen represented pure determination and dedication. Recovering from a serious accident, you could tell she was hurting... But it was never evident by anything she said or in the tone of her voice," said Bachorz.

Schmeisser is already outlining the framework of next year's report. "We're going to hit the ground running in Gillette," he said, and continued "if you would like to volunteer, please contact me via the masthead of this magazine."

- Chester Heaver, Chairperson

Rally Religion

I would like to thank Sue and Brian for all the work they put into the Rally at West Bend. They put thought into getting the facilities that were needed for my committee to provide the devotion time on Friday and Saturday morning along with the Sunday Morning non-denominational service. I would like to thank Mac McDonald for being the Religion Co-Chair for the rally and for being available and willing to be of service in any way that he could. This included finding me a battery charger when I needed it and for doing the morning devotion on Saturday morning. I want to thank Jim “Santa” Klas, Chairperson of the Beer Garden for allowing us to use a small space in the beer garden before opening time on Friday and Saturday morning to do the morning devotion.

I want to thank Thomas (Slider) Lee and Beth (Slipper) Lee for doing the music for the Sunday Service. I want to thank my beautiful wife, Charlotte, for being in the background and helping me in many ways to perform my duties as a Chairperson at the Rally.

*- Jerry Settle, Ambassador,
Chairperson of Religion*

Thank you to the members of the Christian Motorcyclist Association for providing the free bike wash and also for remaining to help clean up the rally grounds on Sunday morning.

- Mac MacDonald, Religion Co-Chair



Andrea Borella talks about stretching for motorcyclists during her seminar.

