

A Tribute to the Past

On March 1st, 20 yrs ago, a motorcycle genius left this world to ride the highways of the skies. This gifted man was my father, James Lee Savage. A veteran of Vietnam, his whole life was motorcycles, before and after the "conflict". He was a top graduate of the "Harley" school, a lead mechanic at the old Belmont motorcycles in St. Paul, and had his own makeshift custom shops over the years. Two wheels were in this mans blood. Though memories are scarce, mostly of motorcycle shows/races at places like St. Paul's old civic center, as well as any Midwest swap meet.

Today, as I sit and watch all the t.v. programs such as O.C.C. Choppers, Jesse James @ West Coast Choppers, the great biker build-offs, and the such, I often wonder where my father would fit in. Not to take away anything from the "new generation" bike builders, but there's something different today. Yes, they are artists in their own right, but, at the same time,



they take the "easy" way out. Their shops are custom/state-of-the-art, their funds seem unlimited, they want like \$80,000.00 for their bikes, and almost everything is "pre-fab". I see my father as being one of the original bike builders during the original "chopper craze" of the 60's & early 70's. A man who appreciated every part, who hunted thru every "pile" at every swap meet, then made the specials finds work for his projects. Unlike today's builders who build the frame/sheet-metal, then order the engine, tranny, and the rest - my father built 100% of the bike from scratch....himself! On one T.V. show, I won't mention which, one of the builders was going to teach a kid how to "build" a bike. They started out by clipping the spokes out of a rim! Now, it may not be a major thing, but to an old school, a real biker on a budget, why ruin perfectly good spokes, because you can afford to?!? C'mon, that's disrespect!

To people such as my father, if a part wasn't usable on a working bike, he used it on another "project", or in a metal sculpture. I watch today's builders and I know that we're technologically advanced, but few still go "old school". With the passing of "Indian Larry", we lost one of the real/last "old school" builders who truly had the talent and respect of the "custom roots". Now some may disagree, and all I can say is "to each his/her own". I know that the old-timers will agree that things aren't like they were. Sure, today it's all about comfort and technology, yet there's still a mystique when you see or hear an old rigid pan or shovel or knuckle.....A fleeting memory of a day long ago, when that's what life was.

I still see the excitement, the flicker in my father's eyes when he came across that old basket-case, that forgotten part, that hidden jewel, and knew it was just what he wanted. Back then the search for that part was half the fun.

The "true bikers" funds were limited, you all know the feeling, that's what "swap" meets were made for.

The 2 pictures are from 1972 and 1973 and show 2 of my father's gems, built from scratch and both won awards. Notice the same motor in each, as that's how my father was, a true biker who upgraded each time he could afford it, in true biker fashion! He was once "test driving" the yellow chopper and was pulled over by "the man" on old Hwy 61 in St. Paul. When the officer asked if my father knew how fast he was going, he replied "no" (he has no speedo). The officer told him that he was doing between 95-100 mph! All my old man could do was smile and say, "Hot damn, she's running good!" The officer had a sense of humor and gave him a warning, it was 1972. (Notice the crash helmet necessary for test drives!)

I know that this tribute is long, but I feel that it is long overdue, especially to those last of you "old schooler's". My father left us 20 years ago due to lasting problems from Vietnam amongst other things. To him, Indian Larry, and all of the fallen, I say "Thank you for the legacy...You'll never be forgotten!"

Knees in the wind, rubber to the road, & smiles for miles!!

With love & respect,
Abe Savage



Dear Brother Preacher-Staff & Friends.

I hope this letter finds you and yours well, and getting ready to be in the wind soon. The Best to you From ALL of us!!!! I'm writing to you on behalf of all the Many Brothers through "Bingo" and your Paper has helped over the years, and I'm amazed that Bingo does not get the recognition and help, Such a True and Real Older brother Deserves!! I've been a biker and clubber Most of my life, and Rare do we see, Now especially, such a true devoted brother of what we're All Supposed to All be about!! I can't count in so many ways he's helped so many on the inside of these halls, along with the many ways he's helped so many on the outside. Regardless of weather they belonged to any club, as long as they rode and for the most part were into what they rode. And believed, freedom and brotherhood of the open road. I've Always tried to be a brother to many and am. I help in any way as best I can. But Bingo surpasses and continuously shows what brotherhood is all about. Your help Preacher to all of us Inside is appreciated beyond words! Many bro's in here have been forgotten, with no money, yet through your paper and thoughts along with Bingo, and a few brothers and sisters out there Keep the Dream Alive, to one day be a better person. Brother and Friend and again in the wind Rick 1% MC Menard, IL. Special thanks to Brother Chuck "Chester" Brost.

Well I think everyone involved has gotten the picture. So we should be able to put this issue of Brother Bingo to rest. Don't forget to keep sending in your stories , artwork etc. Thx Preacher

People of the Free Riders Press,

Thanks for helping us keep in touch with the real world. Due to an unwanted move I must put in for an address change to keep me posted on what's up. We also need to start a Downed Biker Pen Pal Club for us Brothers and Sisters who have been reduced to having mail call being the highlight of our day. And if you have room send a big howdy to Scooter and the boys at Fox Lake from the Hillbilly. Ok, your howdy is done. As far as the Pen Pal Club, I got no problem with it. All I need is a letter from whoever wants their name printed sent to me exactly the way it should be, with a big yes for me to print it. I really want to cover both our asses from mistakes on this one. But I'll start with your name.

Bill Drake #99906
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