

Living the Dream at Any Age

In the world of Bikers, I may be considered a late bloomer, at least in some respects. Like many others I grew up watching movies and television shows that depicted bikers as tough guys, freedom lovers, a brotherhood. They were not always the hero and quite often were shown as criminals. But there was something appealing about them.

At various times growing up I would feel the urge to get a bike and experience the freedom and power for myself. It

would come and go, often pushed aside by practicalities like money and basic needs. But the dream lingered. As I grew older I got married, started a family and settled into my job and responsibilities like many people do. Again, money and obligations were at the forefront, but the dream was still there. One day I would ride.

Then as is all too common in today's world, my marriage ended in divorce, I became a single father of two and struggled to get back on my feet. But with my new independence and my children getting older, the dream broke through. What started as just a curious search of motorcycles on the internet became a frantic obsession. "I can do this!" I shouted inside my head so as not to look insane.

I began to the plan of making my dream a reality. I signed up for the Illinois Motorcycle Safety Course at the age of 43. In one weekend I went from never having ridden a bike to being able to get my "M" class license. I was ready to ride. All that was missing was the bike.

The first bike I bought from a private owner was a bust. It was not worth fixing. Lesson learned. My money was gone and so was my first riding season. But I kept searching. Finally, in the lull of the off season, there it was. I found a bike that I could afford and this time from a dealership. It wasn't the greatest bike, but it worked and that was good enough for me.

So at the age of 44, I started my first season as a rider on my 1985 Kawasaki EN 454 LTD. She was old and showed some age, but she ran well and got me in the wind. Some say "It's a mid-life crisis". But I know better. It's really t a dream come true. Sure I don't have the biggest, fanciest bike. It doesn't roar like a Harley and it gets a little whiny when I push 60 mph. I just like to say "I ride what I can afford." It doesn't matter how old you are, it's never too late to live your dreams.

Ron Felt



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