

**March forth March 4th** by Dan Van Linn

It was a cold blustery day when we set out on our journey. We were bundled in gear we had not been subject to for quite some time. Onward was the map and onward we traveled. With heartiness and gusto we rode pondering the day's to come. Fun was the call and no chill in the air would obstruct us as we forged ahead upright and strong. Our final objective would be Iowa so flat, where others of like minds would gather for freedoms sake. But first the call of the road would drag us much farther south. We headed towards warmer climates and twisty smooth roads, free of pot holes and graveled corners. Our hearts ached with the mere thought of a jacketless ride and warm blasts of air that would sneak around the shield from time to time. Where we would throw down our kick-stand the first night crossed my mind only fleetingly as I pulled the sled into fifth gear and twisted the throttle as if it were the neck of an oppressive politician.

The day was only in its early stages of cresting towards the looming darkness that was sure to reveal itself as the day drew to a close. Dusk would come and with it the chill - much like the chill which overcomes you when you lose sight of a child in a crowded public place. With sadness we knew the first day would be smothered with super slabs and heavy traffic but onward we rode feeling free to ride and free to live knowing full well the days ahead would be filled with glass like byways and nights of drinking allowing the mighty steed a well deserved brake from the grind of twisting roads yet to come.

With night settling in and 300 miles of rubber worn from the tires bringing them even closer to the 32 pounds of air that sustained them. We knew no window, chaps, or neckie could distract us from the first bar on the right as we down throttled into Peoria. The ride has begun, no turning back now.

With the Meeting of the Minds less than a week away we knew pavement needed to be covered as if we were Cheetahs running down an Antelope in the Serengeti. Morning came with the throw of a leg, a turn of a key and a belch of a punched out exhaust. Missouri was next and civil disobedience was on the days agenda. With fines of \$25 a day for not wearing a helmet and an extra \$100 in my pocket the anticipation swelled like a lump in the lower unit after lifting heavier than heavy. For 200 miles we were pilots in combat waiting for the radar lock. But with sorrowed hearts the radar lock never happened. There would be no gum ball style light show this year, not yet anyhow. Again night came and again more Dunlap was missing. I could tell by the collective grins, big enough to wrinkle your eyes it was time to lean the bad boy on one side and get a

beer buzz well aware that when the sun crested next we would be crossing over into Arkansas, the land of virgin roads.

Our next 2 days were as if god was sitting on the front fender. Our tires ran on rubber not used in other states. The roads seemed to be built for the most enthusiastic sport bike rider. From side to side the machine would lean, from air cleaner to horn to air cleaner to horn. Smiles were seen from miles away as we exited one corner only to see a sign instructing us to do it again and again and again.

This voyage was not without reason and purpose. With every feeding of the horse or pause to enjoy a puff of carcinogen we spent a moment spreading the word of the looming fight sure to breathe down the backs of all freedom loving bikers. With every ear that would hear we talked of the lies and deceit and the miss-information spread by non riders. With every lobe that would listen regardless of the accent or drawl the response was always the same, a shake of the head and a "what the fu\$\$ is with them". My take on the pending battle after talking to no less the a hundred riders, Bikers are ready, they will do whatever needs to be done.

On the sixth night, just short of an oil change and 2300 entertaining miles behind us we descended upon Cedar Rapids Iowa where the MOTM's (Meeting of the Minds) an international conference dedicated solely to protecting you, me, and every adult who has ever considered playing on two wheels from unjustified and unnecessary governmental rule making.

This year's mind meld lacked nothing. I stood in awe at the threshold of some of the most revered freedom fighters ever assembled in an almost tribal atmosphere. Free men came from all parts of the globe; Canada, Europe, and even Nebraska. The compound was a buzz with the NTSB Press Release. The NTSB, those who would on the backs of you and I and every free loving biker try and justify their vary existence with an uneducated recommendation about the nation's helmet usage. As god is my witness the NTSB will come to your state on your dime wasting your tax money to lobby your elected officials about what will work best in the motorcycles' safety game. And all this after investigating a mere 6 pack of cycle crashes.

As I walked back to my room on the final eve of the conference, pondering the fight worth fighting that is sure to surface in the coming months. I wondered aloud, what can I do short of taking up arms? How can I stand and be counted? How can I help my riding brothers and sisters?

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