

Something Different!

This is the first time in six years that I really miss running a snowmobile. Mainly because of the abundance of snow, but also because of all the sleds I am seeing on the trails. The headlights dodging in and out of sight from behind trees, while dips on the trail temporarily swallow up riders and machines, all the while t wait for spring to arrive. Man I miss riding my bike this time of year. Doctors call it "The Winter Blues", I call it untapped fun waiting to be absorbed during the shorter winter days. The nice thing about living in the upper Midwest is we have a ton of things to do in the Winter months. Snowmobiling, skiing, sledding just to name a few.

Think about it. In the summer we have outdoor activities like hiking, riding and swimming. From Charity events & runs on your scoot like MDA runs out of the dealerships to community events like the Special Olympics and the Wisconsin Summer Badger Games. Not to forget music venues like Summerfest, State Fair, Country USA, Rock Fest in Wisconsin, Moon Dance Jam in MN, and Sturgis on the Mississippi in IA along with bike parties galore and much, much more.

You may be asking yourself, "And this has what to do with anything?" To tell you the truth, this whole line of thought started by a picture I seen of an old snow mobile. And I got to thinking that there has got to be a distinct similarity to this picture and riding my bike. Finally it hit me. Most of us that ride in the summer, enjoy the fresh air and freedom, also living life in the cold-er month's only in a different way. On two skis and a track that acts as a rear tire.

It is interesting to see the people that indulge in sledding, and how there machines match them, just like the scoots they ride. Single and a little on the wild side are the sleek and extremely fast sleds, while the slower paced family style riders (on the baggers, soft tails etc) are on the trail sleds with the backrests for a passenger, some extra comforts like heated grips, suits and helmets. You see three or four sleds on a trailer headed north (or in the case of the 2008 season anywhere, as of Jan 2nd) and you know there is a good chance the whole family is involved on the trails for the weekend.

I remember as a kid the sleds we ran in the winter were the old Vikings. They were heavy and not as quick as some of the others, but they went through anything and were perfect for my family. We ran with a snowmobile club out of New Berlin, WI on the weekends just like we do on the summer runs. Bar to bar, house to house was our schedule. The time spent with family and friends is not replaceable. The memories gathered are with me forever.

As stated earlier, what got me got to thinking about this is a picture of an AMF snowmobile. Did you know Harley made a snowmobile? How about other motorcycle manufacturers that make sleds now or have made snowmobiles in the past.

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Harley Davidson- snowmobiles from 1971-1975 under AMF years. Motorcycles 1903-present.

Polaris-1955 -present making snowmobiles & 1990's - present with bikes.

Kawasaki- from 1977-1982 for sleds & 1960- present for bikes

Yamaha- 1955- present for bikes and 1968 - present for sleds.

I know there are a few more I am forgetting but that's what the internet is for, research.

I suppose what I am saying is that when the snow flies and we don't want to run the bike with our boots dragging on the ground for stability. There are other options to do rather than sitting at home watching reruns of Orange County Choppers.

Pictures taken from www.vintagesnowmobiles.50megs.com



'68 Larsen Eagle made by Polaris



'77 Kawasaki Sno-Jet Astro 340



Preacher's sled while growing up in Wisconsin Winter's '74 Viking



'73 Harley Davidson

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