

Book Report

By Kenn Hartmann

"But every son would have his motorcycle, And daughters ride away on casual pillions." - T. S. Eliot

Ok. I get it; FRP needs a biker romance novel, why not? It's had everything else. My whole room is filled with biker paraphernalia, and my library has over a hundred biker books by authors as diverse as Buzz Kantner and Glen Heggstad to

Sonny Barger and Tony Thompson (no relation to Hunter). Some of my favorites are George Frizzell, Kevin Bean're and Donald Charles Davis who wrote "The Aging Rebel - Dispatches From The Motorcycle Outlaw Frontier." I have (with the help of my brother Charlie) written two biker books and sold tens of thousands of copies. When it comes to biker literature, I don't fuck around. T. S. Eliot may have called it a pillion; today it's called a bitch pad.

I write like I ride; I don't have a preconceived notion. Sorry to Ann freaking Rand, I got to write about what I know, not make up some fantasy bullshit. Oh well, what are you going to do? I ride my motorcycle everyday or should I say, I ride at least ONE of my motorcycles everyday, sometimes two. Plus I ride at least five to ten, maybe fifteen or twenty other bikes everyday too. Different makes, different models. It doesn't matter; it's all about riding my sickle. By the way, I've got Arlo Guthrie's book, "Alice's Restaurant" in which he laments, "I don't want a tickle or a pickle, I just want to ride my motorsickle." I read that book aloud to kids ditching class by the railroad tracks behind Fenton high school. I was 16. And one of the ditchers. Maybe that's why I call it a sickle. And maybe I need a shot of George Dickle.

So I'm listening to the FM, Johnny B. He was born in northern Wisconsin and occasionally breaks into his "ya hey der" rap, the amiable vernacular of some north woods fisherman. And this dude calls in, saying he was out riding his bike, apologizing that it's only a 750 Honda, but who cares? Anyway, the dude goes out riding with his buddies to Willow Springs, and I can't remember if he said Archer and Lagrange, or 95th and Kean, but I knew exactly where he was going. And it wasn't to Buffalo Woods or the Lutheran Cemetery. But I'll bet he didn't do a shot of Malort when he got there. And I'll be bet he doesn't know Larry Burrows.

So I've been writing for FRP for a decade and when I pass out this precious rag to the hoi polloi, which for common folk who don't read literature, means exactly that. I guess I could have said the huddled masses or better yet, like George Bernard Shaw, "the undeserving poor." He said something like, I'm not undeserving, I'm more deserving. I eat more. I drink more. Anyway, I always autograph each copy and I ask for a book report. Surprisingly, or maybe not, occasionally people comply.

Here's one such reply from a sweet retired schoolteacher:

"Book Report on The Droogies by Kenn Hartmann" by Janet Brown.

Having read the recent article by Ken Hartmann in the Free Riders Press I thought I could predict the subject matter. Given the vehicle (pun totally intended) in which the article is presented I expected to read about the experience one has when riding their 'sickle.' The feel of the wind on your face and blowing through your hair (glad to see he still has some). Boy was I surprised.

However, I did find the article to be refreshing and funny. Mr. Hartmann displays a humor that is often not appreciated except by those who also are able to reflect on their past experiences, pratfalls and all, and present them in the manner most becoming, with a smile.

The references to various films that he has viewed whose main characters he has tried to emulate in his style of dress is really quite impressive. I cannot envision many individuals, mostly men but even some women, who would willingly admit to having these movie characters impact their outer personae.

His detailed description of the incident in Grant Park is vivid and entertaining. One can see the entire sequence of events and savor every aspect of its great comic value, ala Dick Van Dyke and the ottoman.

As a side note, I too remember the manual typewriter though mine was a Royal (which is also my father's and brother's first name). Have to keep things relative.

Thus spoke Janet Brown, retired schoolteacher.

So there you have it loyal FRP fans. The story that Janet Brown refers to was written on the morning of the Spring Equinox. It was snowing. By noon my story was done, the snow stopped and I was out riding. Another day in the life. Hope all is well in your world, cause my world rocks. It smells of burning rubber, grease and gasoline. So if I write about Nietzsche or T.S. Eliot, oh well, what the hell, life is swell.

-Kenn Hartmann

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May is Motorcycle Awareness Month

As dedicated motorcyclists' rights advocate I could write volumes about the negative media attention that we have been receiving lately, I will defer those comments to a future column. As the snow melts and we roll our scoots out the press always finds a way to put a negative spin on motorcycling when they could do us all a favor by putting the word out about awareness. Even though Wisconsin had the third least fatalities per registered riders in the U.S. for the last several years, we could significantly reduce that number by raising awareness in our state. Over 1/3 of our total motorcycle fatalities were caused by right of way violations.

ABATE of WI proudly supports Governor Scott Walkers decision to designate May as Motorcycle Awareness Month. In his proclamation, the Governor states, "The safety hazards created by automobile operators, who have not been educated to watch for motorcyclists on the streets and highways of Wisconsin, are of prime concern to motorcyclists" National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) statistics conclude that over two thirds of automobile/bike crashes are the fault of the automobile drivers' not yielding right of way to motorcyclists'. Every year the number of motorcycles on the road increases with over 320,000 registered motorcycles in Wisconsin. With proper education and awareness, right of way violations will be reduced, thus making Wisconsin roads safer for all.

ABATE of WI has compiled a list of tips for both motorists and motorcyclists to increase safety on Wisconsin roadways.

For motorcycle riders:

Ride so you are seen. You and your motorcycle are easily hidden in traffic, in motorists' blind spots or against a bright sky. Use lane positioning to be seen. Signal your intentions. Signal before changing lanes. Avoid weaving between lanes. Flash your brake light when you are slowing down before stopping.

Sharpen your riding skills. Know your abilities and ride within your limits. Earn and maintain your motorcycle license. An Experienced Rider Course (ERC) can upgrade your skills and increase your riding enjoyment.

Be courteous and respectful. Being courteous, non-aggressive and cooperative can go along way in reducing crashes.

For motorists:

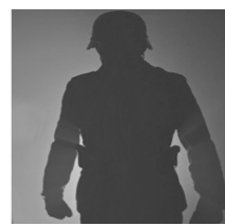
Learn to expect motorcycles in traffic. Watch out at intersections and when making left turns. Motorcycles are everywhere, look twice and save a life. Respect the motorcyclist. Motorcycles are vehicles with the same privileges as any vehicle on the roadway. Give the motorcyclist a full lane of travel.

Allow plenty of space. Traffic, wind, weather, and road conditions affect the motorcyclist differently. Leave more following distance, allowing room for the motorcyclist to maneuver and enough time for you to react.

Be courteous and respectful. Being courteous, non-aggressive and cooperative can go a long way in reducing crashes.

Please join me on our first annual Awareness/ Memorial Ride to the State Capitol on May 10th. We will be staging at the CC Riders clubhouse in Madison starting at 12:30pm with an escorted ride to the Capitol starting at 2:30pm. Groups will be leaving from various locations all over the State to join us on the Capitol steps to show the general public that we are unified in our goal of promoting safety and awareness on our roadways and we will be also memorializing those that have fallen due to right of way violation accidents. For more information visit our website at www.abatewis.org. or look us up on facebook.

Ride Safe, Ride Free...



AN OVERREACHING FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ENTITY IS CALLING BIKERS A DISEASE OF THE ROADWAYS. THEY ARE WORKING TO TAKE AWAY OUR FREEDOMS OF THE ROAD AS MOTORCYCLISTS.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?

Are you just going to hand over your motorcycle keys when they come knocking?

WE NEED YOUR HELP — JOIN US AND FIGHT FOR YOUR FREEDOM TO RIDE!



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