



Star Chatter...Celebrating Life on Two Wheels.

Volume 3

December 15, 2008

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From the Heart of Chapter 415

Feed the Children Event

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As you may know approximately 65 members and 50 bikes of Star touring and riding (and 6 members of our Chapter) participated in the recent "Feed the Children" event at the YAMAHA Corporate headquarters in Cypress, CA. Yamaha has worked with Feed the Children for more than 10 years, raising several hundred thousand dollars and feeding tens of thousands of children. Feed the Children is an international and nonprofit relief organization that delivers food, medicine, clothing and other necessities to individuals, children and families who lack those essentials. In addition to the corporate support, the headquarters employees raised funds to purchase 400 boxes of supplies for the local community.



Star Touring members supported this effort by escorting the 400 boxes transported by semi truck to a distribution center (approximately 3 miles with police escort), unloading the trailer, organizing the various supplies and in many instances carrying the goods to recipient's vehicles. The event is well covered by local print media, video crews and still photographers throughout the day. After the distribution, YAMAHA hosts a lunch and various other activities back at the corporate HC.

I have participated in this event for the last 2 years. As for last years 2007 event, when asked, I reported that it was a good thing to do, a nice way to spend some time, and an opportunity to interact with members from other STAR chapters. However this year's 2008 event has become very special to me. While assisting with the unloading and organizing of the boxes I noticed a toy was included in this year's supplies. The toy was a video game that hooked up to a TV rather than a computer. A short time later my attention was directed to a young mother with a small boy in tow. As one of our STAR members was helping her with the boxes the boy was given the toy to carry. Watching this scene I heard the boy exclaim "wow" and saw his face light up with grateful enthusiasm. I quickly concluded that this toy was indeed something special for this family.



Although several weeks have went by, my minds eye is haunted with the vision of that little boys face, and still overcome with deep emotion. Prior to this, my assessment of STAR member participation in the annual Feed the children day was that it was a nice event, an opportunity to help some people, and an opportunity for YAMAHA to get some good publicity—all good things. But if our participation can in anyway help produce the joy in others that I saw in that little boy, you can bet that next years event will certainly be on my calendar. Contributed by Chuck Long.

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President Bill



V.P. Don



L.O.S. Wendy



Sgt. of Arms Dave



Lead Tail Gunner
& Webmaster Tom



Secretary Alice

NOVEMBER CHAPTER RIDE

A celestial ride to Hell's Kitchen



Lead Road Captain
Tim



Vet Chuck

That's the way the wind blows. A common saying that is referring to the fact that sometimes plans change because of something that just can't be controlled. Of course that saying is usually fairly innocuous but sometimes it carries with it a more ominous meaning. On this day, in Southern California (more specifically the Los Angeles, Riverside, and Ventura counties) the old saying carried the ominous meaning. What Chapter 415 had planned for its November Chapter Ride was a ride to the Rock Inn, a favorite rider destination that is nestled between the Santa Clarita and Antelope Valley. Today however, because of dangerous house-eating fires causing multiple freeway closures, the wise decision to choose another destination was made. The new destination chosen was Hell's Kitchen located along the Ortega Highway in Lake Elsinore.

With the new destination chosen and all pre-ride business taken care of, a group of eleven bikes, led by Lead Road Captain Tim and watched over from the rear by Lead Tail Gunner Tom, gave the thumbs up as all bikes were pointed south into a beautiful morning that would turn into great summer day...in November. Also in the group was Sandra, riding with Tim, Art, Julio, Lead Shepherd Bob, Carl, Treasurer Chuck and Penny, Tony and Martha, Dan and Sara, Dave, Doc, and Secretary Alice riding with Tom. After a short drive down the Pacific Coast Highway to the 110 Harbor Freeway all riders proceeded south on the 110 toward San Pedro. Heading toward this Los Angeles harbor town, the towering port cranes are visible. They are amazing metal giants that to locals are just another part of home, but to visitors, are awesome structures that can be seen from miles away. Today they seem to be giant sentries watching over the southland.

Soon the group arrived at the Vincent Thomas Bridge that was completed in 1963 to replace the old ferry boat that connected San Pedro to Terminal Island. Many who drive over this beautiful big bridge are not aware that bridge was a big thing to the thousands of people who lived in the Harbor area and worked on Terminal Island in what was a thriving tuna cannery industry. This industry has long ago moved off to other countries, other lands, perhaps a harbinger of what many industries would be doing in our present day. To the group driving over the bridge, these thoughts of the past were undoubtedly an unlikely consideration. Instead the breathtaking views of Southern California, the Los Angeles Harbor and the Pacific Ocean were enough to fill ones thoughts and imagination with awe at the beauty we live in and around.

Arriving at the southern end of the bridge there is no sight or smell, of the long gone canneries. As the group travels along they see to their left another bridge with a lot of history, the Commadore Schuler F. Heim Bridge that was completed in 1948. This vertical lift bridge has caused many area kids to hope the cars they were riding in would be stopped so that they could stare in awe as the bridge was being raised. Then they would clap with glee as the mast of a ship below would seem to float by and perhaps even a flag may be attached. Then the old bridge would shiver as the raised section would be lowered into place. This bridge replaced the Henry Ford Bridge (also known as the Badger Avenue Bridge and was completed in 1924) and was a treat to kids and a bane to parents who were rushing to a destination. This bridge, like the Vincent Thomas Bridge, has been a favorite to Hollywood moviemakers. (Cont. pg. 4)



Star Chatter

Celebrating Life On Two Wheels

Chatter Cafe

Do fifty-four year old men get their first tattoo? If they do, was it a drunken mistake? Well, Don



Thomas got his first tattoo at the tender age of fifty-four years old. Why did he do that? It was his birthday and he just decided he wanted to. Was it a mistake? Nope, it turned out to be the first of many. That first tattoo was the Chinese Rooster symbol for the year that Don was born. Since then he has had a dragon put on and thirty-six naked women. Well at least there's a common theme.

Don Thomas Jr. gets the nickname Doc by taking the first letter in his first name and the last letter of Jr. and you get Dr. Doc is a good pseudonym. It fits. If you let your imagination run wild, you can picture him being a doctor in the old west, getting off of a buggy and walking up to a farm house to help out an ailing member of the farming family. Or perhaps you could picture him dealing cards on a Mississippi river boat. Or maybe he is the old gunslinger who smiles and tells an enthralled kid a couple of stories from his past, but not all of his stories. But your imagination is not needed to make this Texas born fellow interesting.

Doc cut his teeth in Texas and afterward Dad moved the family to Pismo Beach. Dad built the family home there, and so Doc had the beach as his backyard. After a couple of years the family moved to Porterville, where Dad's family lived. When Doc was in the fifth grade the family moved to Ventura, where the roots stuck and Doc graduated from Ventura High School.

Don's first experience on a bike was in 1968 on a 125 Trailrider. Like many guys who now ride cruisers, Don grew up riding trails in the desert and raced motocross. One of the places he frequented was the (Cont. pg. 5)

MYSTERY RIDER

Motorcycling has a varied and interesting mix of famous people who have enjoyed and do enjoy motorcycling. So this is the first of a series of *Mystery Rider* pieces to high light. The name of this game is to guess with as few clues as possible who the person is. This *Mystery Rider* was very famous and you may not guess who he is, but you will likely remember the name. Alright here are the clues: 1) He lived from 1888 to 1935. 2) He was the illegitimate son of an Anglo-Irish baronet. 3) He was Oxford educated. 4) Before his graduation from Oxford he had visited the Middle East and after graduation had worked on the excavation of the Hittite city of Carchamish where he gained experience with the Middle Eastern people that would later prove invaluable. During this time he learned to speak Arabic. 5) He later served in British intelligence in Cairo 6)



He helped his Arab friends plan and perform military victories against the Turks (Modern Ottoman Empire). 7) He became a colonel and became famous as U.S. journalist Lowell Thomas' "Travelogue" featured him. 8) He retired to Oxford and wrote "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom" (known for its insights in guerilla warfare). 9) He helped with the development of air-sea rescue launches. 10) Awards won – Companion in the Order of the Bath (a modern version of being knighted); Distinguished Service Order (meritorious wartime honor of the United Kingdom) and the French Legion d'Honneur (Highest French order that was established by Napoleon Bonaparte), though in October 1918 he refused to be made a Knight Commander of the British Empire. 11) Rode Brough Superior Motorcycles. 12) In May 1935 he was fatally injured in a motorcycle accident near his home near Moreton in Dorset, England. It was reported that he was thrown from his motorcycle while trying to avoid boys on bicycles. He wore no helmet. 13) Peter O'Toole and later Ralph Fiennes portrayed him in a movie portraying his life and having his name as, or in, the title. Who is he?.. (Cont. on pg. 6)

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Traveling a short mile more, the route took Chapter 415 to yet another large bridge, the Gerald Desmond Bridge that was completed in 1968 and has a four hundred ten foot suspension span over the Cerritos Channel. The ride has had a good start..

Coming off the Gerald Desmond Bridge the riders traveled along Ocean Boulevard in Long Beach. For those raised in the area and with some gray hair on their heads, it is remembered that not so long ago, this was a dangerous place to be once the sun had gone down. The old pike with it's ferris wheel, fun seekers and sailors had deteriorated into empty buildings, few attractions and night time ne'er do wells. But now the drive down Ocean Boulevard surrounds the riders with beautiful modern buildings, wonderful, beautiful, lovingly maintained older edifices, and many trendy restaurants and shops.

Riding south the riders can see, to their right, peeks of the ocean beyond the buildings. It is a nice ride as they pass through early enough to not get embroiled in the stop and go traffic that is common once more people are up and about.

After getting past Long Beach's downtown, a clear view of the vast Pacific Ocean is to their west. The oil derricks just off the coast are small islands that somehow do, and do not, fit in. Perhaps a necessity of society and surely what helps make the ride possible.

Combining with the warmth of the rising sun and the cool of the nearby ocean, the ride has become the get-away-from-it-all excursion that all were hoping for. Traveling down south through the sleepy Seal Beach, the Surfing USA Huntington Beach, Laguna Beach and down to Dana Point, no one is thinking of the work week, unless this ride reminds them that is one of the reasons they put in the hours at work. One troubling sight that some of the riders did see, was what looked like another fire starting up off toward the east.

Once the riders arrived at the 5 Freeway they jumped on it for couple of miles to the Ortega Highway (the 74 Freeway) where they exited the freeway and after a couple of miles, stopped for a gas, a cold drink and a quick snack. Soon they were again on their bikes and had traded the ocean views for mountain and hillside vistas. The city avenues were behind them and a rustic road filled with sweeping turns before them.

By the time they had reached their destination, the name of the place, Hell's Kitchen, seems inappropriate for the rustic beauty that surrounds it. The name does no justice for the peaceful ambience of eating on the patio out back. A little reading about Hell's Kitchen reveals that this place was named after the Hell's Kitchen borough in New York. Tyler Paulson, owner of Hell's Kitchen, named it after the borough in recognition of the gritty borough being a wonderful microcosm of the United States. Also, he is touched by the great loss of life that was suffered by the borough's fireman in the 9/11 tragedy. About the time most of the Chapter 415 riders were about three quarters of the way through their meal, fellow members Rick and Tina caught up to the group. They had been missed the start of the ride due to an unexpected circumstance but had been determined to meet up with the group. So after finishing the meal and some good conversation, the group geared up for the ride home. Rick and Tina had ridden a different route, along the 91 Freeway to get to the restaurant. The spark that the main group of riders had seen on their ride along the Pacific Coast Highway was much more than a spark. It had turned into another horrible house eating fire that was causing, when Rick and Tina drove by, an extreme freeway slowdown. Later this fire would jump the 91

Freeway and cause it to be closed down. So, the group headed back down the Ortega Highway to the 5 Freeway where they headed north. Travelling north the sky was getting darker from the smoke of the fire to the east. For a good stretch of the drive the falling ash became dangerous as it was being breathed in and getting in the riders eyes. Fortunately, all made it back safely via the 405 and 110 Freeways.

At the customary end of the ride meeting at Pacific Motorsports, everyone agreed that, although driving through the ash got a little dangerous, overall the ride was scenic and very enjoyable. This ride was what everyone joined Chapter 415 for... a good ride with some good people. All in all it was a fun and relaxing ride.

More can be read about the Hell's Kitchen at <http://www.hellskitchen-ca.com> and more about the bridges by looking them up in Wikipedia.



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Chatter Cafe

(Cont from pg. 3) famous Indian Dunes. He has many a good memory there, and one of them occurred on a day when no official races were scheduled and the amount of bikes in the park was light. He had noticed that there was a big recreational vehicle in the parking lot, but had not thought too much of it. After

he and his friend had done a little riding, someone approached them and asked them if he could ride with them. They told him yes and the guy raised his helmet, and it was Steve McQueen! So they spent the day riding with Steve McQueen and yes, he was a good rider. At the end of the ride, they came back to the recreational vehicle where two other recognizable guys stepped out, Paul Newman and James Garner. Well, they got to take pictures with the three actors who were all great guys. That day was one of the more memorable days at Indian Dunes.

Over the years, Doc had continually thought about getting a bike to ride in the street. He would go into shops and longingly look over the bikes. Finally he made the move and bought his 2004 Road Star. He quickly realized that although his dirt riding experience was a benefit, street riding was a whole different animal. He took the motorcycle safety course and was cautious as he started just riding around town and worked himself up to the freeways. Four years ago he joined Star Chapter 230, and since then has been a Chapter 230 tailgunner, shepherd and lead shepherd. Don has also tailgunned with Chapter 415 and was one of the Chapter 230 members who came over to help a new Chapter 415 get on its feet. He has enjoined riding with Chapter 230 and Chapter 415. He believes that Star Touring and Riding has been a great benefit in meeting people to ride with, making a whole new circle of friends, and finding a lot of great new places to ride. He is constantly amazed at the places he finds himself with his bike, as he considers how it is unlikely he would have ever gotten in his car and ended up there. Don also enjoys and is impressed with, the disciplined way the rides are ridden in Star Touring and Riding. Asked what he enjoys about being a Tailgunner, he responded that he enjoys watching over the group like a mother hen over her chicks, anticipating and heading off potential problems. With a hint of a smile he also adds that he also enjoys being a tailgunner because he does not have to pass down any signals.



Don has two sons and three grandchildren. He works as a Senior Buyer with the same company for eighteen years.

Bowling has been a part of Don's life since he was fourteen years old. He remembers that when he was sixteen years old, he was overjoyed that he beat his Dad for the first time. Over the years Don's bowling skills improved to the level that he has bowled professionally. He has bowled a three hundred game, but he says his higher achievement was bowling a series over eight hundred. He has been told that fewer people bowl an eight hundred series than people who bowl a three hundred game. Don still bowls one night a week, though his game is not what it was before his hip replacement surgery about a year ago.

Don took up golfing at the age of fifty-one years old. He went after golf in the same manner as he went after bowling. At one time, he played eighty to ninety rounds a year. He lowered his handicap to 17 before his hip surgery, but has played infrequently since then. He says that the movement required in the golf swing does not go well with his surgery recuperation.

Don has served his country in the Air Force...for two weeks. He received a medical discharge from the Air Force because of his asthma. When he left the Air Force they made him sign paperwork relinquishing any veteran benefits. He has been advised that if he were to obtain a lawyer he could probably get his veteran benefits reinstated. Bristling at the thought, he firmly states that he would never do that. When asked why, he responded that a lot of people have served this country and in the process suffered some serious injuries. Doc says he would not want to draw anything away from the help that these soldiers deserve. That speaks volumes about who he is and it also confirms why he likes being a tailgunner, it is because he gets to look out for the other guy.

Whose That?



Can you guess who this is? Give it a shot, think about our members. It might not be as easy as you think! The identity of our mystery member can be found on Page 6.

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MYSTERY RIDER

(Cont. from pg. 3) Our Mystery Rider was born Thomas Edward Lawrence and more popularly known as "Lawrence of Arabia". The Motorcycles of his choice were Brough Superiors. He owned at least five of them and named them them George I through George V and said he had ridden about 100,000 miles in five years. Mr. Lawrence said of his 1922 Brough Superior SS100 that it was "very expensive to buy, but light in upkeep". His bike got 50-65 m.p.g. and he changed the oil every 4-6 thousand miles. Of the bike, he wrote that the Brough "holds the road extraordinarily" and said that at 70 m.p.h. he could "feel the machine gallop". He rode up to 700 miles in a day and described the SS100 as one of "the jolliest things on wheels". You can check out more Brough Superior bikes on <http://www.brough-superior.com/historyac.htm> and a video of Lawrence of Arabia on his motorcycle can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3DQ7oknW5xA>.



Bike of the Month

Call it Maverick



Ahem, other than a recent presidential candidate? A card shark in the old west? A fighter pilot for the U.S. Navy? How about a guy who does things his way while snickering at what is "acceptable"? Perhaps the word maverick can be used to describe this issue's "Bike of the Month" and it's owner Don Thomas. The bike is clean, not too far from stock, but not too close either. It's not real flashy, but the overall effect produces a great looking bike. But isn't that what a maverick would ride. He wants to look sharp, but he does not want something too flashy. Mavericks want to surprise you while still

looking good. Some contradiction of appearance can be an advantage. Some flash, but not too much. Such is Don Thomas's maverick bike. The first thing one may notice is the new two-toned black and white paint job. Nice, really nice. The black and white new paint scheme are accented by the new white wall tires. These are nice, but probably what you first notice are the fox tails hanging from the grips. These seem in contrast to the clean black and white paint job, yet somehow complementing at the same time.



Don has added a custom seat and Hard Krome pipes that some might say are too loud, but Don thinks the bike's growl is just right. Don has added a lot of chrome parts that gleam in the sunlight. Don's mischievous side, and practical side, come together in the addition of a 130 decibel horn. If the loud pipes don't warn a car that Don is near, the horn will make him think a semi truck is about to run him over. But really, the part of the bike that may get the most attention, and is what some give Don grief over, is that one of Disney's seven dwarfs, Doc, rides along with him. It fits though, since Doc is a nickname of Don's.



Though the main reason little Doc should be on his bike, is that it is not what you expect to see on this bike, with this big bearded man riding it. It breaks the rules, it's so maverick. See more pics of the Bike of the Month on the Chapter 415 Website - StarChapter415.com.

Whose That?

BUY AND SELL

Got something to sell., or looking for part or accessory? Members can advertise for free here. Send your submission to: StarChatterEdit.com.

Sassybiker.com - You're not like anyone else. You are one of a kind and would like something that says who you are. Visit SassyBiker.com to check out the custom helmets and other artistic pieces. Why not get away from "off the shelf" and move into "off the hook"? Visit SassyBiker.com.

That's right it was Dan Ramirezfrom cute kid to being mistaken for Bob. Sorry Dan! Thanks to Dan for participating! Remember to send in your pics.

