



November 2011

THE "PREZ SEZ"

NEVER ASSUME RIDE YOUR OWN RIDE

Rich Flay
President,
Contra Costa STAR Chapter #186
www.star186.org
"Carpe Diem"

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Check the website calendar for further information

**** 2011 ****

CHAPTER RIDE /

Chapter Rides: 2nd Saturday / 4th Sunday

Chapter Meetings – red

November 12th Chapter Ride
November 16th Chapter Meeting

AND THE MEMBERS SAID ...

This is your section to share with other Chapter members
Ride Reports, etc.

ICE HOUSE CHAPTER RIDE

Saturday, October 8th, 2011

By Victor Tibbs

The ad line for this ride was: "Come join your friends to ride some beautiful roads and see some wonderful Sierra scenery - in specific a ride on Ice

House Rd – roads that are curvy and smooth as silk – and don't forget about apple pie and ice cream". I have always wanted to ride Ice House Road, and wasn't going to miss this ride.

Leaving Oakley, heading out Hwy 160 and the Delta, it was a beautiful, crisp morning, one just could start envisioning the beautiful ride day that Ken had set up (where does he come up with this stuff??). Heading out Twin Cities, we were all leaving our thoughts behind as the scenery was starting to unfold in front of us, when all of a sudden... **ZAP!!!!!!!** What the heck was **THAT?** A dag gum bee (or something) finds its way into my helmet (umm – maybe ... that's why they make visors and why you shouldn't leave them up??), stinging me on the left temple, and there went my day.

Thanks to (one of) our Chapter's great tail-gunners, Rich pulled immediately off with me (and Barbara) to assist, because I almost passed out. After 20 minutes on the side of the road, we're good to go. Fortunately, the 1st rest stop was just 8 miles up the road, and I had some additional time to apply some after-bite cream (thanks, Sandy) and drink a lot more fluids (sorry to hold up the group). Finally, all was well, and it's time to head towards lunch.

The Red Apple Café, in Pollock Pines, is definitely a place to stop and have some GOOD food. It is a typical restaurant off the highway – you pass it a million times never thinking about what might be inside. This restaurant has some great food AND PIE!!! While we were there (2 hours) longer than we may have anticipated, I might have to think everyone was able to have a great time just sharing stories, getting to know each other, and who can forget that incredible view from the patio? Definitely a place to try the next time you're up by that way.

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Mounting back up on the bikes, we were now in for one of the top treats – rides – of this year. Ice House Road is an exceptional road heading up to the Loon Lake Reservoir, and it's one of the last main roads headed into the mountains in this part of the Sierra Nevada. Ice House Road runs northbound off of Highway 50 along the border of California's Desolation Wilderness, and the ride is 25 miles east of Placerville and just beyond Pollock Pines.

There is a great view of the Crystal Range of mountains at several vistas. This road is one of the smoothest roads I have been on – for quite some time (why can't our local roads be in as good a shape as this road!?) Imagine ... riding a 180 degree hairpin corner at normal speed, relaxed and you're not pushing or having to back off going through the curves. You're cruising through the corner.

Everyone had a great time, and finally finding a twisty road that spoke to our motorcycles – and freedom. Lack of old growth forest from the Cleveland Fire means you can see forever, for miles across this mountainous terrain looking out from the road at every moment. You are in awe – saying over and over again – “*What an incredible view*”. Once you get used to the sight of this ravaged area and realize that much of it has been logged and replanted, you begin to appreciate how unique this wide open feeling is coupled with the elevation, and, what about those GPS units that track elevation? One of our “navigators” were having fun with that (right, Marguerite?). ☺

With regards to the ride, I give it **two thumbs up** – and the inevitable “freaking awesome ride” designation. And just think you've been riding right by this one on your way to Lake Tahoe for ...how long?

As we clear the mountains to return home, chattering on the radio turns to “Hey, forget home, let's go back now and ride it the reverse direction (do I get the hint of a ride for next year ??) We make our last stop for ice cream at Fenton's in Vacaville. What a way to enjoy a great day with good friends and fun roads!!

The ride team is to be congratulated for their hard work and extra time and miles in putting on these rides – don't let one slip by. Despite the bee sting, I wouldn't have missed the ride for anything and

looking forward to a repeat ride. **THANKS** for making it possible.

SOLANO COUNTY BACKROADS Chapter Ride Sunday, October 23rd, 2011 By Alan Costa

This is my take on a recent ride; Sunday, October 23rd through some of the back roads of Solano County. We met around 8:30 Sunday morning at location #1 in Pleasant Hill, behind Denny's. It was a mild day, with the promise of warm weather in the forecast. It was a good turnout for a Sunday ride in late October, with the number of bikes upwards of 20.

It was decided during the meeting; the group would be split in two, for safety reasons. I was just behind Michael Kuttner in the back group who did a stellar job as road captain, 98% of the time. (thanks Michael).

The ride was just as advertised by Jeff and the ride team, during the previous club meeting. A mellow ride through many of Solano County's back roads; some of which I had never been on. It was a good fit for a lazy Sunday morning. The ride captains had their work cut out for them, with many different sections of roads chosen as part of this ride. At one point I got a little nostalgic; as we traveled through groves of walnut orchards, just outside Winters. I thought of my childhood days' playing in some similar walnut orchards in the Concord/Walnut creek area-long since replaced by housing tracts. Guess I'm showing my age!

The ride was a little too tame for my liking, but I think it was a good fit for a couple of new riders to the group who weren't used to group riding. Also, the ride captains did a good job adapting, when an accident blocked the planned route.

The choice of a lunch stop in Winters, was a good decision of the ride team. Lunch was excellent; if a huge gourmet style hamburger fits the bill. It did for me! ☺ I overheard one comment, that the size of these burgers was almost as big as some of the riders heads!! I believe there are some pictures floating around somewhere to prove it!

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After lunch, we lost a couple or riders who left for home, or parts unknown, and several more as we made our way back to Benicia, for the last stop and Ice Cream. I managed to keep my white t-shirt clean up to that point; but during one of the last bites of my cone, I hit the bulls eye right in the middle of my chest with Mocha Almond Fudge!! Oh well; if that's the biggest casualty of the day- I'll take it!

Ride smart, ride safe!



TIRE TRACKS

Tid Bits of Useless (?) Information

Written by "aka David"

Star Vet, Road Star Rider and all-around nice guy

Battle Axe

A comical, but derogatory term used to describe an overbearing harsh woman

Ok, ok ... I know what you are thinking: there's going to be a story here about the lovely and talented Mrs. Aka, but, sadly no. You see, I've received hundreds, if not thousands of cards and letters telling me that I am too hard on, nay, cruel to, the missus. This is simply not the case.

Why just the other day we were standing in line at my favorite restaurant, McDonalds (stay with me now). The line was a little longer than I like, but that's not what made me mad. There was this guy in front of me who couldn't make up his mind what he wanted. I mean really?! Who doesn't know the McD menu? **NO ONE!** So I'm looking around this guys shoulder, trying to see what new tasty item they must have added, and there was none! So what was he doing? He was trying to figure out which combination of dollar menu items made a better deal than the value meals. ARRRGH! He was trying to beat the MBAs that McD employees to figure best pricing for the best meal. He thought he would come up with a mathematical equation superior theirs. Well, news for you buster, it ain't gonna happen! McDonalds kinda "reverse engineers" their menus. That is, they come up with say, item X, not really knowing exactly what this might be. They figure out that they can sell item x

for \$1.25 on a value meal. Then they ask themselves, what can we build for 75 cents? They look at the cost of parts and decide on the new McDandy. So what has this got to do with the missus? I told the guy to hurry up, there were people waiting, and she didn't detonate! Well, she didn't yell at me for more than ten minutes on a 30 minute offense. Would an ol' battle axe be so kind? NO! I say.

So this term, Battle Axe, when and when please. As you may or may not have guessed, this term comes from America during the early years of the women's civil rights movement. The phrase itself was original meant as a rallying or war cry. But this kinda backfired when the movement published a newsletter or journal called *The Battle Axe*. This title was chose to signify their resolve. Instead, the phrase was quickly used as a derogatory term (you gotta love it) for the domineering and hostile nature of the majority involved in the movement and as a reflection of what many, including less aggressive women, thought of its members.

That's my story and I'm stickin' to it!
aka David

P.S. In 2006 a company in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, introduced underwear for dogs (thong type) with a charcoal filter to neutralize the offending odor of dog gas. No more blaming it on the dog!

RULES FOR FIRST-TIME BUYERS

1. **Never buy a motorcycle on a whim.** Maybe you hear the siren call of adventure, but ask yourself, "Is riding really for me?" All too often, the first time a bug lasts a new rider between the eyebrows, the bike gets sold. So ride and then decide.
2. **Don't be seduced by horsepower.** New riders often purchase a bike that is too powerful for them. It's better to buy a smaller-displacement motorcycle to learn the basics – then move up in class.
3. **Find out what insurance will cost.** The faster your bike can go, or the bigger its

engine, the more you will pay for motorcycle insurance. Once you decide on a make and model, check with your insurance agent to see what it will cost to insure the bike before you buy. Some insurance providers: Foremost (AARP), GEICO, Progressive, State Farm.

4. **Take a rider's course.** The Motorcycle Safety Foundation Rider Course (**800-446-9227**; www.msf-usa.org) is the best way to learn to ride, You'll need a motorcycle license before you can take test rides, and an MSF course will help you get your license (and possibly discounts on motorcycle insurance).

TAKING THE USED ROUTE: Thanks to the bad economy, the pre owned-motorcycle market is rife with fantastic deals. Visit a used bike shop – or go online to Cycle Trader, Craigs List, or e-Bay. (*note from the editor: you can also check out our regional newsletter STAR NEWS too ☺*)

*Courtesy of the AARP magazine
September 2011 Edition
Page 56*



By Michael Kuttner



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For any current or new members that want to become a Star Vet, go to the National Web Site www.startouring.org to get the Star Vet Application (DD Form 214 required) as well as the form to get Star Vet Patches. I'll have a hard copy of the Star Vet Application and Patch Form on our rides.

Let's Say Thanks :

This site allows you to pick out a card, select a message or type one of your own, and is then printed out and sent to the military member. You only have to provide minimal info - your first name and city.
<http://www.letssaythanks.com/Home1024.html>

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WHAT A GREAT WAY TO SAY THANK YOU!

When doing your Christmas cards this year, take one card and send it to this address.

<http://www.letssaythanks.com/Home1024.html>

If we pass this on and everyone sends one card, think of how many cards these wonderful, special people, who have sacrificed so much, would get.

When you are making out your Christmas card list this year, please include the following:

A Recovering American Soldier

(Note from the editor: because we're going to be viewing the Traveling Viet Nam Memorial Wall for our November Chapter ride on Saturday, the 12th, even though this information was in our June 2011 edition of the ROTATING WHEEL, I wanted to pass it along again)

Interesting Veterans Statistics off the Vietnam Memorial Wall

"Carved on these walls is the story of America , of a continuing quest to preserve both democracy and decency, and to protect a national treasure that we call the American dream."

~ President George Bush

SOMETHING to think about - Most of the surviving Parents are now Deceased.

There are 58,267 names now listed on that polished black wall, including those added in 2010.

The names are arranged in the order in which they were taken from us by date and within each date the names are alphabetized. It is hard to believe it is 36 years since the last casualties. Beginning at the apex on panel 1E and going out to the end of the East wall, appearing to recede into the earth (numbered 70E - May 25, 1968), then resuming at the end of the West wall, as the wall emerges from the earth (numbered 70W - continuing May 25, 1968) and ending with a date in 1975. Thus the war's beginning and end meet. The war is complete, coming full circle, yet broken by the earth that bounds the angle's open side and contained within the earth itself.

- The first known casualty was Richard B. Fitzgibbon, of North Weymouth, Mass. listed by the U.S. Department of Defense as having been killed on June 8, 1956. His name is listed on the Wall with that of his son, Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Richard B. Fitzgibbon III, who was killed on Sept. 7, 1965.
- There are three sets of fathers and sons on the Wall.
- 39,996 on the Wall were just 22 or younger.
- The largest age group, 8,283 were just 19 years old 33,103 were 18 years old. 12 soldiers on the Wall were 17 years old.
- 5 soldiers on the Wall were 16 years old.
- One soldier, PFC Dan Bullock was 15 years old.
- 997 soldiers were killed on their first day in Vietnam.
- 1,448 soldiers were killed on their last day in Vietnam.
- 31 sets of brothers are on the Wall.

- Thirty one sets of parents lost two of their sons.
- 54 soldiers attended Thomas Edison High School in Philadelphia. I wonder why so many from one school.
- 8 Women are on the Wall, nursing the wounded.
- 244 soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War; 153 of them are on the Wall.
- Beallsville, Ohio with a population of 475 lost 6 of her sons.
- West Virginia had the highest casualty rate per capita in the nation. There are 711 West Virginians on the Wall.
- **The Marines of Morenci** - They led some of the scrappiest high school football and basketball teams that the little Arizona copper town of Morenci (pop. 5,058) had ever known and cheered. They enjoyed roaring beer busts. In quieter moments, they rode horses along the Coronado Trail, stalked deer in the Apache National Forest. And in the patriotic camaraderie typical of Morenci's mining families, the nine graduates of Morenci High enlisted as a group in the Marine Corps. Their service began on Independence Day, 1966. Only 3 returned home.
- **The Buddies of Midvale** - LeRoy Tafoya, Jimmy Martinez, Tom Gonzales were all boyhood friends and lived on three consecutive streets in Midvale, Utah on Fifth, Sixth and Seventh avenues. They lived only a few yards apart. They played ball at the adjacent sandlot ball field. And they all went to Vietnam. In a span of 16 dark days in late 1967, all three would be killed. LeRoy was killed on Wednesday, Nov. 22, the fourth anniversary of John F. Kennedy's assassination. Jimmy died less than 24 hours later on Thanksgiving Day. Tom was shot dead assaulting the enemy on Dec. 7, Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

- The most casualty deaths for a single day was on January 31, 1968 ~ 245 deaths.
- The most casualty deaths for a single month was May 1968 - 2,415 casualties were incurred.

For most Americans who read this they will only see the numbers that the Vietnam War created. To those of us who survived the war, and to the families of those who did not, we see the faces, we feel the pain that these numbers created. We are, until we too pass away, haunted with these numbers, because they were our friends, fathers, husbands, wife's, sons and daughters.

*There are no noble wars,
just noble warriors.*



**WELCOME to the
VETERANS RESOURCE CENTER**
(helpful links to services and organizations in support of veterans)

U.S. Department of Veterans

Affairs <http://www.va.gov>

State of California's Operation Welcome Home

<http://www.veterans.ca.gov>

California Department of Veterans

Affairs <http://www.cdva.ca.gov>

Contra Costa County Veterans Services

Office <http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/depart/veterans/index.html>

The American Legion

<http://www.legion.org>

Wreaths Across America

<http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org>

CalVet Home Loan

Center

<http://calvethomeloans.cdva.ca.gov/>

Helmets to Hardhats (job

opportunities)

<http://helmetstohardhats.org/>

Hiring a Military Veteran

<http://recruitmilitary.com>

Vet Jobs

<http://vetjobs.com/>

Vet Friends

<http://www.vetfriends.com/>

HAPPY BIRTHDAY !!!

[Editor's Note: From the responses that I received]

3rd – Teresa Barbetti
4th – Warren Darmstead
7th – Ken Ayers
9th – Jaime Ray
19th – Dominic Leung
28th - Ed Carreno

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CHAPTER RIDE / EVENTS INFORMATION

Chapter Rides: 2nd Saturday / 4th Sunday

Chapter Meetings – red

**December 10th Chapter
Christmas Party/ and
Election of 2012 Officers**

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2011 STAR Touring – Mid California Chapter Website and President Information:



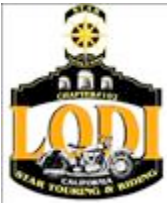
Modesto, CA - Chapter 294

Barry Dias
209-505-1459
[View Chapter Web Site](#)
bmdias64@yahoo.com



Contra Costa Cnty, CA - Chapter 186

Rich Flay
925-354-1412
[View Chapter Web Site](#)
pres.star186@sbcglobal.net



Lodi, CA - Chapter 102

Don Nordstrom
209-327-3298
<http://www.star102.org/>
don.nordstrom@gmail.com



South Stockton, CA - Chapter 192

Gary Shirey III
209-513-3944
[View Chapter Web Site](#)
garychilla@comcast.net



Hayward Fault, CA - Chapter 103

Ed Carreno
925-519-4796
[View Chapter Web Site](#)
prez@star103.org



Santa Clara County, CA - Chapter 209

Tony Machado
408-591-5473
[View Chapter Web Site](#)
scc209pres@aol.com



Monterey Bay, CA - Chapter 161

Kelly Riggs
408-512-3030
[View Chapter Web Site](#)
kelly@painteffects.biz

Mid CA State Ambassadors



Victor Tibbs & Barbara Medeiros
415-706-7421
mcasa@startouring.org

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