



# RUST 'N PIECES

*Newsletter of Antique Motorcycle Club of Manitoba Inc.*

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## PRESIDENT'S NOTES



Well motorheads it's getting close to the end of my President's term (where did 5 years go?). I've had a lot of fun as the head honcho especially the banter with my favourite leprechaun at the meetings. I would also like to thank all the folks on the executive who do so much to make the club the great social outlet it is. By the way if you want to run for an executive position drop me an email or give me a call and I'll talk you into it. We will have elections in November. Kris and I are just back from attending the Jefferson meet in Pennsylvania. Small bike meet but they have a huge clubhouse and their own hill climb where Nationals are held. Then it was off to Hershey for the monster swap meet. 9,000 vendors, 1,000 cars for sale in the car corral and 1,200 cars at the judge meet. Where do good motorcycle parts sometimes show up, well with old cars guys of course. I purchased a near complete Vincent tool roll from a Jag collector. Small world the guy knew David Pritchard (I thought he was going to charge me more). I also bought the missing choke lever for my 1948 Vincent (the last part I needed). By the way, this bike will hopefully be at this year's Rally in Carman. One vendor had 2,190 Indian postcards, (not anymore). Anyway enough of fun and frolic, see you at the meeting. Wrench on, 'me lads and lasses, Cheers, Ross

## 39th Annual Corn Roast turned out Great !



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# EVENTS 2015

- October 27 **AMCM monthly meeting HD of Winnipeg**
- November 24 **ELECTIONS** AMCM monthly meeting HD of Winnipeg
- December 15 **Annual Dinner Meeting at Pony Corral, Grant Ave.**
- January 7-9 **Las Vegas Motorcycle Auctions**
- January 26 **AMCM Monthly Meeting**
- February 24 **Monthly Meeting HD Winnipeg**

**AMCM**  
**ANNUAL DINNER MEETING**  
**TUESDAY DECEMBER 15, 2015**



**Pony Corral Grant and Wilton**  
**Cocktails 5:30pm. Dinner to follow**  
**Friends and Guests Welcome**





Joe Sawtus

It had been a few years since my last trip to Canadian Motorcycle on Main Street, but the moment the door closed behind me, it was apparent things hadn't changed one bit.

Old motorcycle parts still hang from the walls alongside trophies, photographs and posters from races that roared through town decades ago. The path that begins at the front door still winds its way to the back of the shop, and the owner, 74-year-old Joe Sawtus, is still sitting in the exact same spot behind the counter that he has been inhabiting since 1970.

"Right on, guy," he says with a flicker of familiarity in his eyes. "Take a look around and we'll be with you in a minute."

Five hours later I walked back out onto Main Street with a packed notebook and an enlightening story of one man's quest for life, love, and the pursuit of two-wheeled happiness.

Sawtus was born in 1933, during as he puts it, the Great Depression.

Joe's story quickly begins to unfold like a Charles Dickens tale, as it would appear his best of times were also his worst. "We were dirt poor," recalls Sawtus of growing up in a two room house without running water in the Brooklands area of Winnipeg. "But there was always food on the table and we were always laughing and kidding."

Joe got his start with motorcycles way back in 1944 at only 11 years old, riding on his older brother Bill's small British army bike, a Frances-Barnett model. Bill, who was a motorcycle instructor with the Winnipeg Light Infantry Division during the Second World War, was 16 years older than Joe, and treated him as much like a nephew as a kid brother. By age 12 Joe was roaring around on Bill's massive 1942 Harley-Davidson every chance he could get.

In the spring of 1949, still a few months shy of his sixteenth birthday, Joe was itching to get his first real job.

"There was a guy in our neighbourhood a few years older than me who had been fired from his job at Moore's Taxi for riding one of the company's Harley-Davidson motorcycles out to the lake, so I went down there, lied about my age and applied for the job," said Sawtus with a smile. Following a brief demonstration of his riding skills, he was hired on the spot, but there was one condition, he had to show the man his drivers licence the next day. "A friend of mine rode his bike down to the police station in St. Boniface for me and I walked in there as proud as a peacock and told the officer I just got a job at Moore's Taxi and needed a motorcycle licence," said Joe. "He never even asked me how old I was." After he handed over five dollars, the officer took Joe outside, strapped a walkie talkie onto him and told him to ride the bike down Provencher Avenue. Two turns later and the policeman told him to return to the station. He had passed the test, and the rest, as Joe says, is history.

Delivering parts and packages to every corner of the city on a Harley-Davidson was Joe's dream job, and when combined with the expert training he received from his brother Bill, he quickly became an accomplished motorcycle rider and racer.

A small yellowed newspaper clipping in Joe's photo album tells the tale of the first race he ever won, a hill climb event on the outskirts of town in the fall of 1949. At only 16 Joe beat out local legend Tiny Robbins and a pack of other riders, many who were twice his age. In keeping with his parent's wishes, Joe was the first member of his family to graduate from high school, majoring in auto and power crafts at Tec-Voc High in 1951.

Just as Joe's racing career was starting to really take off, he also took an active interest in amateur wrestling, and even trained with the Canadian Olympic team, almost making it to the 1956 Olympics

in Melbourne, Australia. After wrestling he returned to racing, and worked at a number of jobs, ranging from the railway, to driving a truck, working in a print shop, and even a stint as a corrections officer at Stony Mountain Penitentiary.

Joe competed in the Manitoba Motorcycle Clubs annual 50 mile marathon race consecutively from 1950 though to 1964. He won the race three times, and also won numerous other local races.

After quitting his job as a printer in the mid 1960s, Joe started a small motorcycle shop on Pembina Highway. Due to his notoriety as both a wrestler and a racer, Joe's shop was popular, and business was so brisk he quickly expanded to a shop on Spence Street. "Eaton's was selling Road King motorcycles through their catalogue and they needed someone to do their service work," said Joe. "It was a good deal that really gave me a boost in the motorcycle business." By the time Eaton's was done selling motorcycles in 1967, Japanese motorcycles were becoming the rage, and Joe listened to advice from his brother and became a Kawasaki dealer. By 1970, he had sold so many bikes he was able to buy his present location at 981 Main Street. "We stuck with Kawasaki from 1967 through to 1977," said Joe, our best year was 1972 when we sold more than 200 bikes. I remember one weekend we took in \$22,000 and we didn't even have a cash register."

In those days Joe had as many as 12 people working for him, in addition to new Kawasaki sales, the shop also did full service on all makes of motorcycles. The overhead started to take its toll, and Joe stopped selling Kawasaki following the 1976 model year. The shop also stopped doing service in 1980, and since then Joe has focused his attention on the sale of motorcycle parts, accessories, riding apparel and a huge assortment of helmets. Nowadays he often sees third-generation customers in the shop.

Joe, who never married, lost his brother Bill in 1992, he still gets a tear in his eye when he talks about him at length, and acknowledges that if it weren't for the guidance and support his brother gave him, he is certain he would not have had such an amazing life. "Everybody should have a brother like mine," he said with a sigh. "He always looked out for me."

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## HD Winnipeg

### Hot Rods & Harleys

AMCM members did well in the vintage class at HD Winnipeg Show. Parker Filmore out in full uniform showing off the WD model and Scott Best with the beautiful Vincent Black Shadow



### **AMCM Minutes Aug 25 2015 Meeting**

32 bikes present. 6 Guests.

Treasurer Report. Bank Balance \$9437.65 and 112 members in good standing.

Donation to Spina Bifida for wine sale/chain \$260.00

Ross talked about different bike auctions and passed around pamphlet

Upcoming events: Corn Roast Aug 29.

Gimli fishing trip Spina Bifida Sept 5 meet at Tim Hortons Stonewall 11am.

Hot Rods and Harleys Sept 19.

Kudos to Keith Blais for tiddler run.

Kudos to Gerry Spindler for converting old films to DVD.

DVD'S on sale \$10.00.

John Thompson reported on South Beach Casino show 463 bikes registered and 120 other bikes present

Clarence Holigroski reported on Carman rally site. Deposit has been paid on hall but some difficulty with other areas because have to work with three different groups. Rent for the Arena to store bikes \$600 to expensive so looking into other options.

Rust and Pieces presentation by David Pritchard on his 1921 Indian and sidecar. Mystery part was a primer from an early Harley.

### **AMCM Minutes of September 29, 2015**

The meeting was opened by Jerry. There were 46 members present and 26 bikes. There were 5 guests who had a total of 7 bikes between them. Mike Beliveau had the mystery part.

Greg O'Kane reported a bank balance of \$9982.62 at present and 113 members as one signed up that night. The seven copies of the MMC movies that were left were all sold and it was decided that 10 more copies were to be ordered.

The Corn Roast this year saw 43 bikes and about 60 people turn out. It was a beautiful day and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. There was a profit of \$290 that was turned over for Spina Bifida.

The fishing trip had 16 bikes and 20 people that went to Gimli. They raised \$2000.00 for Spina Bifida. Good Job.

John Thompson reported on the South Beach Bike Show. It was a success. Mike McGibney's 1969 BSA and David Pritchard's 1921 Indian with side car both placed first in their categories. The South Beach Bike show for 2016 will be on Aug 21. The Marion Hotel Show and Shine saw David Pritchard's Power Plus and Mike McGibney's BSA each taking trophies.

Greg Kendall reported that the Christmas party will be on Dec 15th at the Pony Corral. Drinks will be at 5.30 with dinner to follow.

Editor: David asked people to pick up the rosters and cross off your name on the master list. It costs \$1.70 to mail them. Newsletter will be out the end of October. Please submit something. Anyone interested in taking over the roster or newsletter please call David Pritchard.

Rally Update report. The 2016 Rally will be held in Carman June 24-26th. There is a hall for the meal and awards ceremony. The Show and Shine will be in King's Park. There apparently is a grassy area we can use and bikes can be stored inside in case of rain. They have offered to help with the advertising.

Mike Beliveau did the Rusted Restoration speech. It was on restoring a Sears Allstate. He said if you are looking for parts check with fellow club members as they may be able to help you.

Marvin Cooper brought some old posters to the meeting for the members to share.

Diane Best brought up a proposal for a facebook page for informal information and casual communications. A discussion followed and a motion was tabled to bring up arguments for and against the facebook page at the next meeting.

Dan Clement shared stories of his trip to Labrador and the visit to the Museum east of Quebec City. He also shared stories of the Digby Warfrat Rally.

Next meeting is Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, 7:30om at HD-Winnipeg! The meeting adjourned to Tim Horton's.

## REPORT ON TIDDLER RUN

Tiddler Run was held on July 5th. We started in Matlock at the Community Centre and enjoyed some pancakes and sausage for breakfast. HOT day, but we were ready to go! We registered for a poker ride that went from Matlock along the cottage roads up to Gimli, where there was a huge show n shine that shut down the two main streets. There were easily 300 cars there...and our group of 8 bikes. We rode up there at about 50kph then up to about 80'ish. First "fun" incident was a spark plug that flew right out of a bike....was cleaned up and put back in and we were off again! Next were some challenges with two bikes – bad Poirier/Robinson team! I guess the excessive heat was a little too much for the Tiger Cub and the Monza was great until the final run home to Lockport where she said "enough", and was happily put in the back of the truck! On the way back to Matlock, we stopped in at a friend's on Winnipeg Beach and enjoyed a relaxing couple of hours and opened some of the Tiddler wine...was a fun time swapping stories and enjoying the breeze off the lake.

This was a really great ride with beautiful scenery along the route and to look around the car show...some of us even enjoyed some amazing pickerel while we were there. For next year, perhaps we could bring some signage for when we are at the Gimli Show n Shine? Special thanks to Keith Blais who organized this year's run - until next year!

- Kim Robinson





### More Corn Roast Pictures



### \* BUY \* SELL \* WANTS \*

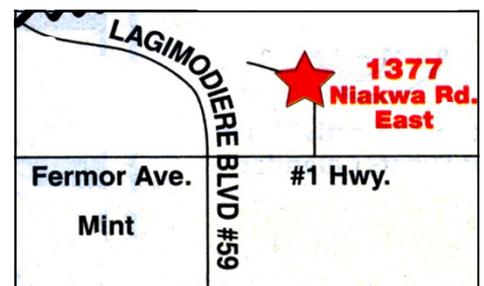
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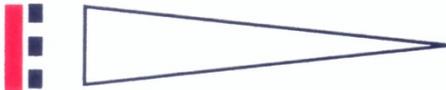
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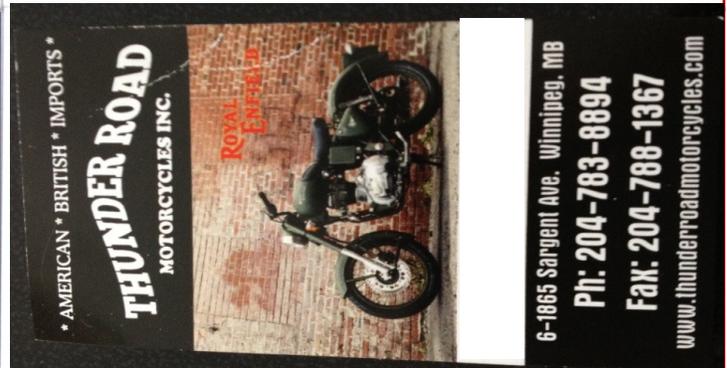
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