

# Upshift

MMIC's guide to great motorcycling

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**October/November 2005**

# Editor's lines

The best moments tend to sneak up on you, unexpected.

It happened one night a few weeks ago, while riding a 2006 Harley-Davidson in downtown Kamloops. I turned onto a dark street and accelerated into an empty two-block stretch, and the Harley's stereo sensed the increase in ambient noise and cranked the volume. As the motorcycle beneath me surged in the way of a big, strong V-twin, the exhaust roared and the music welled up just as the melody and tone of the song on the stereo reached an emotional pitch. I was enveloped in a brief nirvana.

It was such an unexpected and powerful feeling that I actually fouled up the stereo system trying to get it back. I hit some mode button and accidentally got it stuck on the weather channel. For the next two days I listened to nothing but weather reports. Rain was predicted. Nirvana was not.

A day before, I had momentarily panicked, riding out of the university grounds with the stereo on full, rockin', throttling up in first gear so the pretty young college students could hear the way the Harley's stereo pumped up the volume. I had a home-made CD in the slot with an Aerosmith tune playing. Stephen Tyler faded out and Karen Carpenter opened up. The Carpenters! On a Harley!

The shame. I immediately turned off the stereo and didn't turn it on again until the next night in downtown Kamloops, with a different



CD in, and all was made better, just for a moment.

Our feature story describes a road between the towns of Chase and Falkland, B.C., that my girlfriend and I had found in an accidental way a couple of weeks earlier. It was just an interesting line on the map, but I had scoured *Destination Highways* for good roads, and this one wasn't mentioned. Not expecting much, we set out to ride this unknown road, some 40 – 50 km from end to end, and it started well enough, winding into pleasant farm country, past a lovely blue lake, into a leafy, deciduous forest. Then it got better, curving and twisting through a beautiful countryside. A long patch of gravel didn't spoil a thing, and when the pavement came back it took us through a plentitude of curves to a place where the panorama of southern British Columbia opened up like a wall hanging, and as we dropped toward the river below, I had another one of those moments.

I hadn't expected the Harley-Davidson to be as delightful as it was, I hadn't expected its stereo to bring me joy and embarrassment. And I hadn't expected to find a great, unmentioned road in the middle of nowhere.

But that's life. You get on, you ride, and you let the music play. And when you least expect it, something good happens.

May good things happen to all of you over the coming freeze. We'll see you back in the spring!

# *One for the street*

## *Harley's Street Glide hits all the right notes*



When the big truck unloaded its cargo at Kamloops Harley-Davidson, there was one bike in particular that caught people's attention: a new model for 2006, the FLHX Street Glide, done up in black cherry, with a shorty windscreen over a 40-watt Harman/Kardon stereo. It was unusual-looking, attractive in a cut-down way, a touring bike with a bad attitude.

After the demo riders were done with the Harleys, I asked for that one; I would keep it for almost a week, hunting for good roads around Kamloops.

The bike is categorized as a touring model, which makes sense given the saddlebags, front floorboards, and fork-mounted fairing, but the abbreviated windscreen lets a full stream of air onto the rider's face, and the absence of lower fairing panels leaves your legs out in the breeze. That's good for warm weather, but a pair of chaps and some long red Stanfields will be useful on cool rides.

It's a looker. The paint is deep, rich with highlights, and flawless, and chrome is lavishly applied. Shooting pictures of the Street Glide was difficult at times because of sunlight exploding off the chrome. With so many motorcycles on the streets these days, it can be hard to stand out, but the Street Glide holds its own.

It's also comfortable. Though my passenger complained that the rear seat was a little too firm, the rider's seat is wide and generous, and its spatial relationship with bars and floorboards worked well for my five-foot, nine-inch stature. Over a three-hour high-speed ride, my arms, neck, shoulders, back, and even my butt remained unstressed and comfortable. That's an accomplishment of design and materials worth noting.



The Falkland Pub has been a fixture in the middle of B.C. for about 70 years, a comforting place to stop on a long ride. I parked the Street Glide there after a couple of hours chugging down a remarkable back road. I was hungry, but not uncomfortable or tired – the Harley had served well, despite the road’s imperfections.

Half an hour east of Kamloops, the Chase-Falkland Road departs from the TransCanada and climbs up a long hill into farmland and forest that, by late September, had turned golden yellow. The pavement twists and turns with the contours of the land and is generally pretty good – except for one section.

I rely on a book called Destination Highways for ride planning. When it tells me a road is good, I know it’s worth a ride. But Destination Highways makes an assumption that road riders want to stay on the road – that is, pavement. So the Chase-Falkland is not mentioned there, and I had discovered it only while reading a pamphlet at the Falkland Pub two weeks earlier. “Let’s try this one,” I had said to Maggie, and what followed was sheer delight, 40 km of twisties through a rippling landscape that could have been painted for a movie backdrop.

But right in the middle of the Chase-Falkland Road, the pavement stops. For 10 km there’s a thin layer of gravel and hard-pack – not challenging to ride on, but not paved. I presume that’s why Destination Highways ignores it.

Coming up toward Chase at the north end, we saw the South Thompson

River and a tableau of farmland stretching into the distance from the height, and I leaned back and said to Maggie, “This is one of the best roads I’ve ever ridden.”

So two weeks later, back on the road, it was a surprise to find the unpaved section dug up and treated to a fresh layer of soft dirt. Grateful that at least it hadn’t rained, I plowed on, knowing it would only be 10 km before I’d hit asphalt again. The ride had been so sweet, the colours and sights and twists and turns of the road so invigorating and pleasing, and the Harley Street Glide had behaved so well, protesting with a scrape of sidestand occasionally in a deep turn, but cruising over the road’s bumps and cattleguards and through its rolling convolutions with such casual aplomb, that I wasn’t going to turn around for anything short of a washout.

Even on dirt, the Harley continued to perform well, going where I pointed it and purring comfortably. We reached pavement again, I accelerated, and soon after that we were eating some very good burgers at the Falkland Pub.

After five days with the Street Glide, I returned it to the demo fleet at Chilliwack. It had performed well, had done everything I asked of it, and had kept me comfortable throughout. It’s also a heck of a good-looking Harley-Davidson.

As for the Chase-Falkland Road, I can understand why it didn’t make the cut for Destination Highways. Maybe that’s good – we don’t want too many riders spoiling its backroad ambience. But if you’re ever in the Kamloops area with a motorcycle, give it a try. And bring your appetite: there’s a good little lunch spot waiting at the other side.



# NEWS

## Ride For Sight: \$1-million plus

The Ride For Sight raised more than \$1.1-million this year for The Foundation Fighting Blindness, which funds research into vision problems.

Ride For Sight is the largest motorcycle charity event in Canada and the biggest charity event anywhere for research into the causes of blindness. This was the Ride's 27<sup>th</sup> year.

As usual, riders in Central Ontario pulled in the lion's share of money, raising more than \$700,000 among 1,000 participants who rode from Whitby to Trenton, where they were met by a huge waiting crowd. The man who chaired that ride, Derek George, was the most success-



ful individual fund-raiser, fetching \$12,000. The Trenton site was the epicenter of Ride For Sight activities, with performances by Trooper and other bands, motorcycle competitions, waterfront camping, and a huge marketplace selling food, clothing, and souvenirs. Central Ontario's Ride is traditionally the biggest and loudest.

But it's certainly not the only one. There were seven Rides this year; some provinces haven't managed to put on a Ride for some time, though riders from Saskatchewan, for example, can go east or west to join Rides in neighbouring provinces.

The most northern Ride is the smallest, with only a dozen or fewer participants each year, but the Inuvik Ride brings in more bucks per bike than any other: they raised \$22,000 this year, and Inuvik resident Cyril Gregory topped the list there with \$2,700. Even more impressive is the actual ride, which covers roads that make motorcycling seem like a blood sport.

Alberta and Manitoba both put on wet but successful rides. Manitoba riders brought in over \$25,000, with Jaye Cameron of Thompson raising \$3,700, while Alberta hosted rides out of Edmonton, Calgary, and Red Deer that rolled into Olds, where Canadian Chaos put on a stunt show as part of a weekend's entertainment. They raised \$108,000, and Milt Christensen of Chestermere produced a high of \$5,400 in donations. The crew there presented a cheque to Dr. Karen Atkinson-Leadbetter for research at the University of Calgary.

The Maritime Ride has grown over the years, and this year 400 participants raised more than \$55,000. A live band, bike games, and other events were staged at the Amherst, Nova Scotia site, and Andy Tuckey of Fredericton, New Brunswick, was the most successful Maritimes fund-raiser with \$3,000.

The Newfoundland & Labrador Ride is one of the biggest events of the year for residents of Gander. More than 1,100 Ride participants raised more than \$187,000, and Len and Selma Martin from Sunnyside were the top fund-raisers with more than \$5,100.

The Northwestern Ontario Ride is relatively small, with just 100 riders, but has one of the most scenic routes, going over the top of Lake Superior. Seventy-one-year-old Walter Stecky, who was recently diag-



nosed with age-related macular degeneration – one of the illnesses that the money helps fund research on – was honorary grand marshal of the parade. The riders brought in over \$37,000 and Mike Tardif of Balmertown was the top fund-raiser with \$1,700.

Deeley Harley-Davidson Canada spon-



sored the big Ride For Sight prize, a 1200R Sportster, which was later won by Robert Lick of Innisfil.

News at the Foundation Fighting Blindness is that the federal government has agreed to triple match a funding grant from the FFB for the Stem Cell Network, raising the grant to \$400,000 and helping to push the frontiers of knowledge in the field of re-growing healthy eye cells.

The MMIC is a supporter of the Ride For Sight every year; other supporters include BMW Motorcycles, Deeley Harley-Davidson Canada, Honda Canada, Open Road Insurance, Victory Motorcycles, Yamaha, Suzuki, Kawasaki, Canadian Biker, Inside Motorcycles, Motorcycle Mojo, Write Stuff Writing Services, and Larter Advertising. And, of course, you – the motorcyclists of Canada.

## Moped laws outdated in Manitoba

In part because current provincial law allows babies to ride on mopeds, a scooter club in Manitoba will petition the government to update regulations for moped use.

The province's Highway Traffic Act is dangerously out of date, says Scootering Manitoba (connect at Uplinks). The law defines a moped as a vehicle with a top speed of 50 km/h, but the club says that's a false limit, and higher speeds are possible, depending on weight, wind, and other factors. The law also requires mopeds to be ridden close to the curb under some conditions, and allows infants to be carried on mopeds.

Scootering Manitoba intends to petition the Manitoba legislature for a number of changes: define the top speed of a moped as 70 km/h, keep the babies off the bikes, and remove the section that requires mopeds to be ridden against the curb or on the shoulder of a road under some conditions. They also want the Act to be changed to allow moped riders to carry passengers (presumably over the age of one), to apply graduated licensing restrictions, and to require safety certification procedures at the sale of mopeds.

Scootering Manitoba has collected about 100 signatures through their website, and will ask Winnipeg-area dealers to help get more. They want 250 signatures, about a quarter of registered scooter owners, and hope to petition the legislature early next year.

# MILES APART: RALLIES EAST AND WEST



## BLUENOSERS AND SOLOMON GUNDY

The Bluenose is not the biggest rally in the Atlantic provinces, but it's one of the oldest, and for some, it's an annual event not to be missed. Since 1970, when 35 touring riders gathered at the Sherwood Forest in the middle of Nova Scotia, the Bluenose has been drawing motorcyclists from across the Maritimes for a summer weekend of fun.

Just over 200 riders showed up for this year's rally, held on the July 1<sup>st</sup> weekend near Kentville, N.S. The Apple Valley Riders, a well-established touring club, hosts the rally, and according to June Huskins, a club member and rally organizer, some of the original attendees are still coming.

That's significant in two ways: it means the rally works – people have fun – but it also means the average age of rally goers is getting up there. The Bluenose is a family rally, so there are kids, but “there don't seem to be as many children at the rallies as there were years ago,” says Huskins, who with her husband has been going to the Bluenose for about 20 years.

There are field events, skits, live entertainment. There's a brunch and ceremony at nearby Acadia University, where people are given awards for long-term attendance. On Saturday nights, when the band takes



## CHILLIWACK: A RALLY WITH A FUTURE?

Chilliwack is a medium-sized city about an hour's ride east from Vancouver, an ideal place, one might think, for a motorcycle rally. In the middle of August, the days were long and the temperatures were warm, and the horse track out back of the hangar-sized buildings at Chilliwack's Heritage Park was a dusty ring of dirt that had to be watered for the tires of the flat-trackers scorching its 5/8<sup>th</sup> mile oval.

In the big main building, there was a vintage show: a trio of gorgeous Harley-Davidson panheads, a Vincent with a mini-fairing and disc brakes, beautifully restored Indians and older Harleys and a forest-green Rudge and lots more. It seemed like there were more bikes than people, in fact, and that may have been the case at times.

According to organizer Todd Copan, the Classic Motorcycle Club of B.C.'s second annual Chilliwack rally was a bit of a bust. From about 1,000 visitors last year, attendance was down to about 600. That's unfortunate, because it turns out that Chilliwack may be an ideal place to hold a rally, after all. Heritage Park is big, the horse track makes a fair flat-track course, and it's all just a short ride from Vancouver.

Blame the Abbotsford Airshow for some of the attendance problems. It took place just down the road at the same time, and is such a big event that many people won't even venture onto the local highways that weekend, says Copan, who didn't know about the airshow when he booked the facilities.





a break, “we do some messing around with the public,” Huskins says. “We get some of them up on stage, and they have a sip of rum and eat some Solomon Gundy and have blueberry pie, and we put blue noses on them.”

Solomon Gundy is a Nova Scotian brand of pickled herring. Bluenosers are Nova Scotians, the description attributed to either the cold noses of Maritime fishermen, or to a potato with a blue protuberance.

The rally is held in Billtown, an area of Kentville in central Nova Scotia, on private land. “We have our own small campground,” says Huskins. “It belongs to one of our members – this is the only time that it’s used.” It’s a “beautiful pine wooded area,” she says.

The Apple Valley Riders are dedicated to their rally, but they welcome non members and other clubs. The BMW Owners of Nova Scotia do a “meet and greet” function on the Friday night, for example. And while most of the motorcycles used by Apple Valley Riders are touring rigs, they welcome any and all kinds.

The club used to organize frequent rides, Huskins says, but that’s not really necessary any more, not with the province’s active motorcycling community: “What we find is that here in Nova Scotia there are enough clubs and enough events, that there’s something going on pretty well every weekend.”

For June Huskins and others who have been going back to their rally for many years, the Bluenose is one of summer’s better weekends.

The rally began as an excuse to go racing, an idea produced by a friend of Copan’s who used to race an old WR Harley in flat-track and a “hand-shift knucklehead” on the road course at Westwood. “He had ape-hangers on the thing,” says Copan. “He’d be behind by about 20 lengths, but everybody’d be cheering him on, just for going out there.”

You’ve got to think a motorcycle event dreamed up by a guy who would road-race a knucklehead Harley with ape-hangers would at least be entertaining – and Copan believes the racers and the visitors did have a good time.

“The racers were happy with it,” he says. A month after the rally, people were phoning, urging him to “keep the rally alive.”

Flat-track racing was the heartbeat of the weekend-long event, but swap-meet stalls and motorcycle displays were added to give people more reasons for attending.

Copan may take next year off, and he says the rally needs a couple of volunteers in Chilliwack who can give it some serious planning time. Whether that happens or not, the Chilliwack Rally – flat-track race, swap meet, vintage show – has potential. Despite this year’s poor at-

tendance, it could be the start of something bigger.



**Todd Copan and the Classic Motorcycle Club of B.C. The Chilliwack Rally was supposed to be “a rally where anybody can go out and race, and have a good time.” Attendance was down in its second year, but the rally was a success in other ways: people had fun.**



# A short way to the finish line

Leave on time, get there first

The launch is what you watch, of course, because that's where the smoke is. Some of the bikes at a drag-racing event will leave the starting gate with a rush of energy that seems almost capable of pulling the air out of your lungs. Nitro methane-burning 800 horsepower Top Fuel motorcycles with 100-inch wheelbases and fat rear tires hook up quickly and accelerate at 3 g's down a quarter-mile long track. Fast? The *air* would kill you if you didn't have a helmet on.

Pardon the slight exaggeration. At the Canadian Motorcycle Drag Racing Association's second-last meet this summer in Ashcroft, B.C., we watched a number of fast motorcycles, like Suzuki Hayabusas and Kawasaki ZX-12Rs, do their thing on the track. And then we watched the pro fuel bikes, and it was like two different kinds of racing.

Unfortunately, at Ashcroft, it wasn't a full quarter-mile drag race. The track was cut in half because of inadequate safety barriers – the trackside barriers just weren't long enough – and so the racers and the fans were treated to a sort of half-pint show, with top speeds closer to 150 mph than the usual 200-plus mph. The times were pretty good, though.

The fans did not turn out in great numbers at Ashcroft, and the CMDRA may not return there. But for some riders, the eighth-mile track might have been a good thing, an easier introduction to the sport. The association began offering drag racing schools at its meets last year (there are about half a dozen races a year, around B.C. and Alberta), and



according to Adele Tompkins, the response has been "awesome," with eight or 10 people turning up for each school. To put it simply, they come in with their street bike, take a morning lesson, and then race in the Street class that afternoon. The school is a way of popularizing drag racing, which doesn't enjoy anything like the media and sponsorship attention that pro road racing gets.





Several of those who took the school at Ashcroft and then lined up for their first taste of real drag racing were women. Tompkins, who is executive director of the B.C. Coalition of Motorcyclists (which runs the office for the CMDRA), says female riders are coming out in greater numbers. So far, motorcycle drag racing has not very many women, but there are some who are exceptional.

It wasn't hard to tell the new riders from the experienced competitors. The first-timers were a little more hesitant in their moves, perhaps a little more eager in their attitudes, and their gear was a lot more street-worthy than race-like. Some of their launches resembled what you see at a city intersection when the light turns green, and their top speeds wouldn't get you a ticket on the 401. But according to Shannon McNeney, executive assistant at the BC-COM, "every single one who has taken the race school has signed up to race in the Street class." They might not launch with the smoke and noise of a pro fuel dragster, but you've got to think the on-bike excitement level is right up there.

Andy Nikiforuk, an Edmonton Harley rider who took the Street School last year, says there's nothing like it. "It was a blast. I had an ear to ear grin on my face the whole time." He says the school made it easy for a first-time racer. "The people, the track officials, the racers, everybody was incredibly supportive."

Racing in the Street class, Nikiforuk turned a best time of 14.35 seconds in the quarter mile at about 95 mph. Whether or not you think that's fast might depend on whether it's your butt on the seat of the motorcycle – but the rush of racing, says Nikiforuk, is potent. "The adrenaline hits you when you do your burn-out, and it stays with you all the way down the run," he says.

At the other end of the scale is Langley, B.C., rider Chris Gartman, who rode to a 6.93 second victory in Top Fuel at the last CMDRA meet of the season in September at Mission Raceway. Gartman

has been racing for years and was last year's Pro Fuel champion. His bike is built to Pro Fuel specs, so to compete and win against a field of Top Fuel dragsters is remarkable. The bike is also unique for being the first (and maybe still the only) competitive rear-engine Harley-style drag bike, Gartman says. It makes about 700 hp and leaves the starting line with frightening efficiency.

Gartman says the feeling of launching his bike is "unreal, amazing." Even 16 years after his first race, he still loves the sport. "From the first time I went down the track I was hooked. It's worse than heroin."

At Gartman's level, racing costs money. It's somewhat self-supporting, with prize money (he won \$2000 at the Mission race, but "the motor sucked that up") and sponsorships from his own company (West Coast Fibreglass) and others, like Canadian Biker and Metal Mart, but Gartman doesn't earn enough money through racing to support himself.

Way down on the cost scale are racers like Andy Nikiforuk, who was 55 years old when he started last summer and really didn't have to shell out much cash to go racing. Adele at BC-COM says the association "took a hard look" last year "at what it would cost for guys to come in off the street and race their bikes," and as a result, they lowered fees. Now, you can take the school and get in a weekend of racing for \$50 (the school, sponsored by the Trev Deeley Foundation and Deeley Harley-Davidson Canada, is free).

The street series, sponsored by Honda Canada, encourages people to race their street bikes, so there isn't a lot of equipment cost, either.

If you're interested, check out the CMDRA's website (go to Uplinks). You don't have to be young, you don't have to own a fast motorcycle, and you don't have to be male. All you need is a bike, some safety gear, and the desire to launch a motorcycle as hard as it will go.

# Just Arrived

## Be there, with a Bell on

Bell Helmets has been in the head-protectin' business ever since the modern head shape evolved back in the '50s. Bell was one of the best, back in the day, but lately, their glory has faded.



Now they're back, and they've got some nice stuff. This tidy little item, which we like to call the 2005 Mag-8, is one fine-looking touring helmet. Actually, it's five fine-looking helmets: Pearl Blue, Pearl White, Titanium, Gloss Black, and Candy Red.



DOT approved for road use, with a flip-up shield under that aero-stylish peak, and removeable padding. Only about \$150 at motorcycle dealers across Canada.



## 2 cool chic

Whether they sit on the back seat or the front, women who ride deserve to be well-dressed, and these jackets from Joe Rocket make it easy. The Rocket's new Trixie (left) and the updated Roxie (below) are both made with thick uncorrected leather, offer additional protection

for spine, shoulders, and elbows, come with an insulated vest liner and feature zipper hip adjusters. Jackets shown are in Hawaii blue, but there are other colours. Go get some! Four hundred and fifty dollars.



## Hey, nice tool belt!

The Motion Pro T6 Tool Pack is so nice you'll want your bike to break down, just so you can get it out and show it off. It's made of tough nylon, has two large compartments, and is intended for trail use, so there's a whistle in the buckle and a built-in compass. We like the detachable work mat and map pouch, and you'll appreciate its snug-down attachment. Just bring your own tools and map-reading, compass-turning, whistle-blowing expertise, and the Motion Pro tool pack will make you invincible! Well, not really – people will still see you. But you know what we mean. Seventy bucks, from Motovan.



# Uplinks

Harley-Davidson Street Glide  
Street Glide review in Motorcycle Cruiser  
Harman/Kardon  
Deeley Harley-Davidson Canada  
Destination Highways B.C.

Ride For Sight  
Scootering Manitoba  
The petition  
Scooter handbook

Chilliwack Rally  
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Canadian Motorcycle Drag Racing Association  
Chris Gartman's website  
Medicine Hat Drag Racing  
Drag Race Canada  
Canadian Dragbike Online  
Saskatchewan International Raceway  
Drag Bike Magazine  
Hall of Famer Russ Collins

Bell Helmets  
Bell Helmet FAQ  
Vintage Bells on eBay  
Joe Rocket: for ladies  
Rocketman  
Motovan

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