

Remembrances

Dave Bucher looks back at some little gems of experience from his 45 years of riding and writing.



A Shore Thing

The Jersey Shore has always been an important part of my life—from childhood trips there with parents, though teenage adventures, to times with my own family and now, in our dotage, visits by my wife and I to more mature communities along its extensive coastline. As such, I thought it only fitting in October 1994 to do a ride up the New Jersey Shore, from Cape May, at its southern tip, to the Atlantic Highlands, across from New York City.

A stop at the iconic Chatterbox in Ocean City was de rigueur. This soda fountain and hamburger joint with its checkerboard tile floors, jukebox and stucco walls was a scene right out of any number of rebellious-youth, rock 'n roll movies. It was our meeting place, the place to see and be seen, and the hall of perpetual hope for all of us over-sexed teens. And on my '94 trip, I found it hadn't changed all that

much, either in form or purpose, since those halcyon days of the '60s and '70s.

One of my favorite memories of the Chatterbox, however, doesn't involve its interior, but its roof. I rolled into Ocean City one day without accommodations and

found myself in the old Lincoln Hotel. Now long gone, this was a classic, wooden, Victorian firetrap of a property, that had been around since the beginning of the twentieth century. By the '60s it had fallen on hard times, thus the cheap rooms for kids like me. I remember looking out from my fourth or fifth floor window when I checked in. It provided a stunning view of the roof of the adjacent, two-story Chatterbox. It was a half-acre of dreary, black tar paper.

Not sure what I did that night, but I sure didn't stay in my room. I probably should have. For when I awoke the next morning and looked out that window, I nearly fell over. There was no black tar paper to be seen...not a square inch. Just a sea of beer cans. Completely covering the Chatterbox roof. The irony, of course, is that Ocean City always was, and still is, a dry town.

I guess I missed one hell of a multi-room party in the Lincoln. And probably a much better chance at getting lucky.

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