

# Remembrances

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

## Ageless Wonders

**By Dave Bucher**

Not sure when I first started riding to Shamokin—probably in the early '80s. I've often talked about the challenging trip up Route 125 that is a must-do for any motorcyclist worth his or her salt. For me, it's an annual pilgrimage that I don't always want to take, but one that I must.

It's kind of the same with the Coney Island restaurant on that town's main commercial street. In business at the same location for nearly a century, it is still owned by the original family that opened it in 1918. It also has most of its original appointments. So, while the food isn't really all that spectacular, and seems a bit overpriced, the overall impact of the gigantic, steaming pile of onions on the grill in the window, the marble lunch counter and wooden stools, the tin ceiling and 100 years' worth of

"cooking patina" on the walls makes for a very unique dining experience.

According to a recent book on area history and culture, *Coal Dust On My Feet*, by Janet MacGaffey, the Coney Island's are to be found only in the Pennsylvania hard coal regions. With burgers and hot dogs served like they are at the real Coney Island, these places have become fixtures in their towns, and many, like this one in Shamokin, stay open until the wee hours of the weekend mornings serving that other fixture, people who've drunk a bit much.

Unfortunately, my ride this year was delayed until Columbus Day, and, much to my dismay, Shamokin's Coney Island is never open on Mondays. So not only did I miss out on the real reason for my ride, I wasn't able to check on the disturbing news I'd read on the Internet: Lucy was "no



longer there." I swear, every single time I went to the place, over all those years, I was met by the same lady. She was as iconic looking as the place itself. A subsequent phone call to co-owner Billy Bacas allayed my worst fears. Lucy hadn't expired, she'd retired...after 53 years.

But maybe, even more than her lengthy tenure, the most remarkable thing about Lucy was that her appearance never changed. She didn't seem to age. When I asked Billy about that he agreed and, after thinking a moment, suggested, "Maybe it's those onions."