

Remembrances

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

Mary Lou

My wife of more than 45 years has never been particularly enamored of motorcycling. Nor has she ever been very physically bold. But, throughout much of the 45 years of married life that I've been riding bikes, she's often accompanied me on the pillion. It started just after we were married, when we lived in Japan, putting around that country on a Honda 350. She didn't have much choice. It was our only form of personal transportation. On our stateside return, when I started producing articles for motorcycle publications, she'd also reluctantly go along. Then the big surprise came: She signed up for the MSF Motorcycle Training Course.

Every Tuesday night, for a number of weeks, she'd disappear to some parking lot in a neighboring town and endure what must literally have been "hell on wheels" for her. In the end, she failed. Seems she spent as much time on the ground as on the seat of that little Suzuki. The instructor told



her that she was never going to be able to ride a motorcycle as long as she was so scared of it.

After our son was born, she informed me that our days of getting on the same motorcycle were finished, at least until he was of a majority age. It's a rule we strictly

adhered to. When that long hiatus ended, we resumed riding together, but I always felt she was doing it for me, not for her.

It's dwindled now, down to once or twice a year...mainly to justify her having a helmet and jackets, and to let her say...to let me say...that she still rides.

But it also bothers her when I go for a ride alone. The dread remains. They say that, "There are old bikers and bold bikers; but no old, bold bikers." As I age, I try to keep in mind that I have a responsibility beyond the instant gratification of a cool, clear, sunny day on two wheels. But, at the same time, I'm continually inspired by that very brave thing she did so many years ago. Yeah, sometimes you just gotta' force yourself to go against your nature, take a little risk, live life.

My theory about people who have stayed so long together is that they become one. Two bodies, yes, but their minds and spirits almost totally meshed. Yet, there are parts that remain locked off. And, I'm certain there lies, in her secret place, the reason she was willing to go so outside herself to take that rider course. Maybe, someday, when we're sitting on the porch of an old folks home, rocking and holding hands, she'll tell me. Until then, I just have to be content to wonder why the hell she would have done such a crazy thing...and to love her even more because she did.



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