



THE WAY I SEE IT *by Genevieve Schmitt*

A Sight To See

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MY NOVEMBER COLUMN, WHEN WILL YOU STOP RIDING?, turned out to be quite popular among readers. It asked the question, “When our bodies start failing us, how do we plan on staying in the saddle?” A lot of you were inspired by this

and wrote to me to share your own experience with the aging process as it relates to motorcycling and how a trike is extending your riding life.

The first wave of baby boomers turned 65 last year, and with them making up the largest segment of the population, the time for trikes is now. Several companies are doing what they can to capitalize on the growing interest in three wheels. Lehman Trikes has the good fortune of being located near one of the motorcycling capitals of the US, Sturgis, South Dakota. The Spearfish, South Dakota-based manufacturer of three wheelers held the first ever All Trike Ride during last year’s Sturgis rally in conjunction with its Good Turn Trike presentation, a contest where one deserving person is awarded a brand-new trike. Steven Iler, a retired veteran, was the lucky winner for 2011. He led the ride on his new red, white, and blue Lehman CrossBow, a Victory Vision trike. Ken Hines, president and CEO of Lehman says, “The Good Turn Trike will allow Steven to travel longer without fatigue to his left side, which was injured in Iraq. Steven’s wife, Tammy, will now also be able to ride with him.”

Now you’ve all seen a trike go by here and there. Maybe you’ve seen two or three together. But have you ever seen 80 trikes ride by all at once in parade formation? It’s quite a sight! I know other rallies have had trike rides, but as far as I know, this is a first for the Sturgis rally. Nearly 150 people, passen-

gers included, participated in Lehman’s All Trike Ride, *All Trike* meaning all brands included, and all major manufacturers were represented. There were Lehmans, of course, Roadsmith, Motor Trike, Harley-Davidson Tri Glides, even a Voyager kit, the kind where your motorcycle fits in between two rear wheels, training-wheel style. I interviewed some of the participants asking them why they like three wheels, and the overwhelming response was safety — with many referencing that in the context of getting old. “When you start having knee problems and you want to keep riding, you make concessions, that’s why I ride a trike,” said Chuck Biggs of Indiana. He and his wife, Debbie, are on their second Motor Trike conversion, their latest being a Honda Gold Wing.

Rick O’Leary from Florida and his wife bought a Roadsmith Gold Wing conversion after a scary seven-hour ride in the rain on their motorcycle. “It’s peace of mind,” he said. “You don’t have to worry when you come up to a stop about there being grease on the road, putting your feet down, or turning a corner with gravel on the road.”

For a growing number of people, a trike is the only way to be able to feel the wind in their face. “When you’re riding, you don’t feel like a handi-capped person,” said Larry Tiller from Florida, who was injured in an accident affecting the use of his right leg. “I tell people I may look clumsy on crutches, but I’m poetry on a motorcycle.”

These folks and all the others in the trike ride traveled along a scenic 50-mile ride from the Lehman factory to the Buffalo Chip in Sturgis where they were treated to a complimentary dinner followed by the official Good Turn Trike presentation on the main stage at the Chip, which was part of the Freedom Celebration, an event saluting veterans and active servicemen and women. “I would like to thank all of my fellow veterans for their service and thank Lehman Trikes and Victory Motorcycles for this amazing reward,” Steven Iler said. Steven’s wife, Tammy, also thanked both companies for giving her husband the freedom to continue to ride and support our military.

Being a two-wheeled rider for most of my adult life, I must say that being in the company of that many riders of three-wheelers, there is a different sort of energy in the air. It feels to me like these people are purists, truly enjoying the road and all the experiences that it brings no matter how many wheels are beneath them. Have you even seen a trike rider crank on the throttle coming off of a stop, burning rubber, exhaust pipes screaming? No! He rides for the pure pleasure of being one with the environment as he passes through it within his own comfort zone — that is, aboard three wheels.

If you ride a trike, consider participating in Lehman’s trike ride next year during the Sturgis rally. What an incredible opportunity to mix and mingle with those who “get” three wheels. You motorcyclists: make plans to find out the route and wave as you watch them go by. It’s a sight to see!

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