

Where to Ride and Other Odd Thoughts

by Frank Del Monte

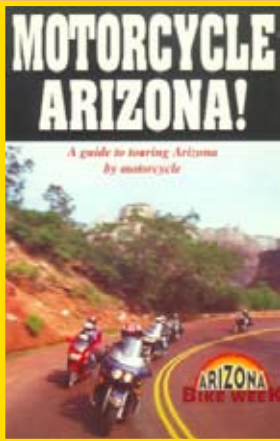
Good Deeds

Story 1: A long, long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away....OK, it was back in Virginia in about 1974. I was returning home on my new Norton Commando, riding east on Route 50 when I saw a radar trap on the far side of the road. In those days radar was big and cumbersome. They had to have one car with the electronics in it hooked to a transmitter tripod on a 50-foot cable out by the side of the road. Five or six other cop cars were lined up on the side road to pursue the speeders after they passed by. Luckily I was going the opposite direction or I would have been cooked.



A few miles farther along I saw a group of 8 or 10 hard-core bikers haulin' butt westbound, heading right for the cops. As luck would have it there was a crossover ahead so I hit three gears down, crossed the road and hauled my own butt after them. I caught them in about a mile, passed them and slowed down while waving frantically for them to slow down. They caught on and we all drifted past that radar nice and sane.

Then I caught another turn around, waved "bye" and made tracks south again. Once past the radar I hammered down and cruised home in my usual highly illegal fashion.



Story 2: In August 1975 I rode the same Commando from Virginia to the Black Hills Rally in Sturgis, SD. I was riding with my good buddy Paul Custer and boy, you should have seen the folks faces at the Custer Museum light up when he signed the visitor's book! Anyway, about halfway there we checked into a campground for the night. When we left the camp office I saw a group of pretty tough

looking bikers across the parking lot who were working on a rough looking chopper. It seemed the bike had snapped a primary chain. They had been able to buy a chain at a farm machinery store and were now trying to cut it to length with a tiny little hand file. I watched for a moment and then asked, "Do you wanna borrow my chain breaker?" Wow, you'd think I'd offered them the Holy Grail! I took out the "Little Beaver" chain breaker I carried in my tool kit, gave it to them, and said, "We're camping down this road at spot 23." I figured I had about a minus 10% chance of seeing that chain breaker again, and frankly, as they were some very scary looking guys I figured that would be OK with me. But, don't cha' know, about 30 minutes later that whole pack came rumbling down that dirt road to our campsite. Handshakes were extended, a cold six-pack was presented as a thank-you, and off they went.

Story 3: Less long ago, here in Arizona, I was riding westbound on our favorite road we love to hate, Rt. 60 when I saw a flatbed truck ahead loaded with 2x4's. They were stacked in a big-tall-square-stack, the full width of the trailer, and were strapped down with heavy ratchet straps up and over them. As I caught up to the truck I saw that the big-tall-square-stack was transforming itself from square to round and the whole stack was sliding around inside the straps. They were coming completely loose and were about to be all over the road! This time I was on a Dresser and I twisted its tail in an effort to get up next to the tractor. It seemed like forever but I did get up next to the driver, honking my horn, screaming, and motioning him to pullover. He took one look behind him and did the quickest pull over I've ever seen. As I watched the whole stack of 2x4's let loose and slide all over that truck, but not one made it to the ground.

Story 4: A year or so after story 3, an acquaintance of mine was riding in New Mexico and he too saw a flatbed with a loose load. This time it was steel pipes. He did the same as I did trying to warn the driver but the load let go while he was passing the trailer and he was killed.

Epilog: Good deeds are good. But sometimes the world throws the dice for you and you find out you really don't have any say in how they land. You just never know.

Ride On! Ride Safe! BE SAFE!

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