



United Sidecar Association

Newsletter No. 21

April 1978

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General News

Be patient. The covers are coming and will be worth waiting for - promise.

Membership is now at a Century and a membership list will be distributed shortly to all members of record.

April Meeting

The weatherman cooperated with us in providing good weather prior to and after the meeting on April 8, although some who came late had some heavy rain to contend with. In addition to our regulars, Hal and Lee Kendall, Tim Colburn, Terry Strassenburg, Larry Lydon, Paula Schiedler, we were delighted to see Richard Zinsmeister, Joe and Alice Haynes, Jerry Harper, Darryl Dover, David Hambrick and Marc Pauls, the co-author of the "Sidecar News." Don Berg and Joe Evans were welcome visitors from Indiana.

Paula has the T-shirts well in hand and they should be ready four to six weeks from now. Be prepared to get your check books out. Small sizes will be available.

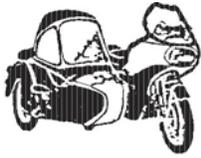
Convertible Tops and Windshields

Joe Ginger wants to hear from anyone who has put a top on a "Veloorex."

Joe Veleta wants to hear from anyone who has put a top on an "Easy Rider" (or the "Spirit of America").

More and more, our riders are getting out and riding in all kinds of weather. Watsonian has one of the best convertible tops around. Perhaps someone has some ideas for other sidecars.

Joe Veleta would also like to hear from anyone who built their own perspex windshields - type of perspex, thickness, how to form. Anyone have any ideas or any contacts?



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Motorcycle Education

Ms. Gertrude E. Box of the Columbia Teacher's College in New York is working on a Doctorial Dissertation "Teacher Preparation Programs in Motorcycle Education in Colleges and Universities of the United States." She contacted us for information on Sidecar History that could be used in her program. Of course, we sent her some material from our files and put her in touch with Frank Zuch, Roger Hull, Ed Youngblood and Gary Winn. Her reply will be of interest to all sidecar enthusiasts.

February 28, 1978

"Many, many thanks to you for your help. I never expected such a large amount of materials, as I knew so little about sidecars. I vaguely remember the sidecars of the twenties, but vividly recall those of the thirties. Unfortunately, I have never been fortunate enough to ride in one, but am looking forward to the treat. The eternal optimist! Your statement on page two of your letter causes me concern. Do you feel sidecars are actually going the way of the rumble seat and the American convertible? (I just bought two Volkswagen convertibles as I could no longer re-place my Pontiac convertible with 125,000 miles on it with an American made.)

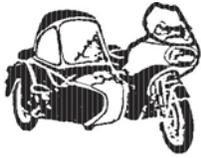
"I enjoyed learning about the double sidecar. Reminds me of a catamaran, learned some new words, including what a "pillion" is. I am amazed at the price of these attachments. More publicity might be the thing. I have loved motorcycles for more than fifty years, and had to wait almost that long to ride one. I had to wait for the death of my father, and then divorce my husband of a quarter of a century, and father of my eight children before I ever got on a motorcycle. Now that's love and determination for you! It was worth it, but too bad I lost those four decades.

"I still am flabbergasted by the LOW price of the sidecar. Knowing about sidecars and motorcycles, liking them, longing for one, still did not make me aware of the relatively small price for one. With the enclosed sidecar, even babies and fragile old ladies can travel in safety, and people like myself who hate wet supplies, can satisfy that requirement too.

"Thanks again, and you may be sure you have another apostle who will spread the good news far and wide, literally through my travels, and acquaintances, and through the Doctorial Dissertation I am now writing. Will keep in touch."

March 7, 1978

"In reply to your letter of March 2, thanks again. I have corresponded with Gary Winn and Ed Youngblood, but not concerning sidecars. I hope the market will increase, not only because of the many women still not ready to ride off into the wild green (white) yonder on their own steeds, but for the many who can't quite bring themselves to pack their papooses onto their backs in all kinds of weather, even though they themselves ride.



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Motorcycle Education, Continued

"Another market I had not thought of was presented to me, entirely unsolicited, by a motorcycle rider instructor last week. He said that he would ride a motorcycle as long as he was able to balance the behemoth, and then he would get a sidecar, but he would never give up riding. That opened a new world to me. I have trouble keeping my weight up to 100 lbs., not very powerful, at 56 and not getting more agile as the decades pass, and, not knowing of the availability and economy of sidecars, I has spent many hours in needless worry concerning the time when I no longer could handle a two-wheeler safely. Not only that, my great-grandchildren are now arriving, and the only way I can travel safely with them in any type motorcycle is with a sidecar.

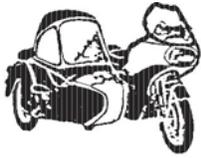
"I will contact you again for help if needed, or just for the good times. Thanks again."
Ms. Gertrude E. Box

Fourth 3rd Wheel Mid America Sidecar Rally - Menomonie, WS

The U.S.A., as a club, has officially been invited to attend and participate in the Fourth 3rd Wheel Mid America Sidecar Rally. In the past, each rally has been more successful than the one preceding it and let's make this Rally no exception. The official dates are July 27-28-29-30, 1978.

All interested members should contact Jim Moylan, Rally Co-Chairman, The 3rd Wheel, 5541 Knox Avenue, North Minneapolis, Minnesota 55430 - \$15.00 pre-registration, \$20.00 after July 1st. Dennis Sanders reports that all of Menomonie is waiting for all sidecarists with open arms.

One of our group should bring back some photos and notes on the event for the "American Sidecarist." Volunteers?



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Tollway Update

We wish to thank all of you who have written to your Representatives and Senators on HB 2631 which was introduced by Representative Kelly and for all who have contacted the Illinois Tollways.

Just keep in mind that the Tollways are not an autonomous institution but were created by the People of Illinois and that includes YOU. The Act was approved on August 7, 1967. The People of Illinois defined its powers and duties in Chapter 121, Paragraph 100, Section 10 of the Illinois Revised Statutes.

Contained in Subsection (c) is a most critical sentence.

"The resolutions, rules and regulations prescribing and fixing the rates of such toll shall be uniform and impartial as to each class of users of said toll high-ways." This is contained in the original Act that created the Tollways.

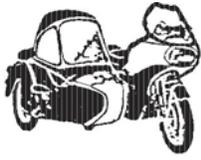
When they charge 30 cents for a motorcycle trike and 45 cents for a motorcycle with sidecar or 30 cents for a motorcycle with sidecar if the sidecar wheel is in line with the rear wheel, that is "neither uniform nor impartial." It appears they are already in breach of the Act. It is not up to us to sneak through the automatic gates - nor is it any concern to us that their method of fixing tolls is to hit a little wire on a footplate.

All Representative Kelly did was to add the following, "In fixing tolls, the Authority shall make no distinction between motorcycles having sidecars attached and motorcycles without sidecars." He has spelled it out in words of one syllable what was already contained and implied in the Act.

In a conversation with their legal counsel, it was discovered that he was not aware of the original "uniform and impartial" clause, nor was he aware how the automatic gate operated, nor was he aware we were not allowed to use them. He was quite taken aback when I pointed these things out to him. Above all, remember. we are not trying to get a reduction in tolls - only to be treated in a "uniform and impartial" manner as is our right.

The bill has been introduced and read. It is read by title only and assigned to a standing committee for study and recommendation. It must be read on three separate days. The committee may hold public hearings. The committee has three options.

- a) It can table the bill which can defeat it if the committee does not consider the bill within 45 days after it has been assigned or if it does not consider it before adjournment.
- b) It can recommend "do not pass" and it is again defeated.
- c) It can recommend "do pass" either as recommended or with committee amendments.



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Tollway Update, Continued

It is sent back to the floor for a second reading. Debate and voting is allowed only on any amendments recommended by the committee. This is the time to suggest amendments to alter, strike, correct, expand, or amplify the bill.

Then a third reading where members of the House debate merits of the bill and vote (89 votes for passage). Again, this is a time to ask your legislators to support the bill.

Then three readings in the Senate (30 votes for passage) and a second chance to vote your support. If the Senate amends the House version, it goes back to the House before it goes to the Governor. Then it is up to the Governor for approval.

TECHNICAL TIPS

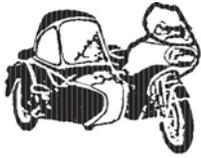
A Cure for Harsh Riding in the Sidecar

Every feature on a sidecar is a delicate matter of compromise and sidecar suspension is no exception. The sidecar passenger must be isolated from the road surface by some form of suspension. A soft spring between the wheel and the frame may appear to be the answer and it is as long as all you want to do is go straight ahead. Just don't try to turn - in either direction.

As you turn to the right toward the sidecar, centrifugal force created by the turn, tries to push the sidecar to the left. This force, acting through the center of mass, tries to lift the sidecar up and over. If the spring is too soft, the first thing to happen is that the spring begins to unwind causing the bike to lean outward. Besides being somewhat frightening, the front wheel begins to fight and grab and turning effort is more difficult. Centrifugal force is counteracted on a solo by leaning the bike into the turn.

Likewise, when turning to the left, away from the sidecar, this same force now tries to rotate the cycle over the sidecar. The spring, if very weak, compresses and causes the cycle to lean to the right. Turning effort is also increased. With no suspension (rigid frame and sidecar wheel) the outfit will corner flat up to the limit when the wheel will suddenly begin to lift. But a rigid frame also means a very harsh ride. Thus, for optimum manoeuvrability, the sidecar suspension should be fairly firm but not that firm that it will not absorb harsh road noise. The spring should be damped (shock absorber) to prevent bounce.

But now we are back to the same problem. The firmer the suspension, the harsher the ride. Nor is letting air out of the sidecar tire the answer as this will cause drag and rapid tire wear.



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TECHNICAL TIPS

A Cure for Harsh Riding in the Sidecar, Continued

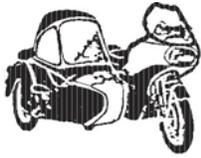
Having sorted out the suspension for optimum handling, we get down to creature comforts of the passenger (do not read further if all you use your hack for is to carry bricks around). The sidecar body is suspended from the sidecar frame to allow the body to float independently from the frame in a controlled fashion. Rubber mounts are one way to do this but they can only absorb a small amount of shock loads and permit only minimal movement. The technique described below to float the sidecar body can be applied to almost any type of sidecar construction except mono body/frame units.

Some Stieb sidecars, for example, allow the rear of the sidecar to float in heavy duty rubber bands. This is a little better. Others have used semi-elliptical springs across the rear - or coil springs - or by suspending the chair between large parallel semi-elliptical springs - or some combination thereof. But, most after market modifications are difficult. The Watsonian, for example, has no body to frame suspension. And that is what we have.

The Chicago and surrounding Suburban streets are notorious for pot holes, raised cracks and so forth, which gave Lee splitting migraine headaches whenever she rode shotgun. Not being totally immune to her cries of distress, I decided to turn my natural engineering talents to the problem that has baffled Watsonian for over three decades. The problem was simple. I needed a controlled dampened spring rate. After the bolts securing the body to the underslung frame cross member were removed, the body was free to move by about a half inch at the rear. The downward motion is restricted by the cross member while the upward motion is restricted by the tubular stress member bolted between the main parallel frame members. This tubular member passed through circular holes cut into the side of the body and a large circular rubber grommet fitted between the body hole and the tube, prevents water from entering the sidecar body. However, this critical inch is all that matters between a rock hard ride and a smooth sports car ride!

Removal of the tubular member and grommets and a few seconds work with an electric reciprocating saw turned the circular hole into a narrow vertical slot. The lower edge of the hole is taken down to the level of the upper surface of the body flooring. The body can now rotate several inches at the rear. A large flexible plastic seal surrounding the tubular member and fitted between the body wall and the vertical liner on each side now retains water integrity.

Two coil springs, 2-1/2 inch OD by 4 inches long having a spring rate of 35 pounds per inch, were installed on a metal sandwich frame. The springs are secured by press fitting a circular wooden block, 3/4 inch thick into the ends of each spring. The wooden blocks are then held at each end of a metal plate 2-1/2 inches wide by 18 inches long.



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TECHNICAL TIPS

A Cure for Harsh Riding in the Sidecar, Continued

The upper metal plate is underslung and secured to body floor by two bolts through the floor and a reinforcing wooden strip, 2-1/2 inches wide, 1 inch high and 15 inches long on top of the sidecar floor. The springs now hang from the body floor just to the rear of the flat horizontal cross member. (Smaller 3 inch springs could have been fitted between the cross member and the body but the springs must not be preloaded or they will be too stiff.) The lower spring plate is secured by a 1/8 inch metal strip, 36 inches long by 1 inch wide bent in a flat 'U' shape. The upper ends of the 'U' are secured to the horizontal frame members by 'U' bolts. So now we have the body able to float against a light spring compression.

Next we had to provide a light dampening action. The Girling gas filled engine shock absorber, 7 inches extended length, 1 inch diameter and a 2-1/2 inch stroke, Part Number 64054600 fits the bill perfectly. The lower end of the shock is secured to the horizontal frame member by 'U' bolts and a heavy metal extension. The upper end is secured by a post through the body. Triangular load spreading plates about 6 inches wide by 6 inches high on each side of the body wall, transmit the dampening loads uniformly to the body. Now we have a very controlled dampened body float.

Does it work?

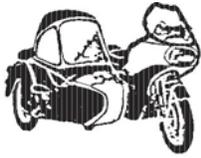
Definitely - no more migraine headaches and no excuse from the little lady for not riding in the sidecar. The sidecar now rides almost like a car and the jarring road shock forces are totally eliminated as are the migraine headaches.

My sincere thanks to Lee for serving as the guinea pig through these experiments and to Al Johnson who supplied the necessary hardware to my specifications.

These basic concepts can be employed with any sidecar body using an external tubular frame and a pivot suspension up front. For a body bolted solidly to an underslung frame, the front mounts can be replaced with a simple shock absorbing pivot mount and a similar mounting for the rear springs as described above. In this case, the dampeners can be run on the inside of the sidecar body extending through a hole in the body floor.

If you cannot find a light engine shock absorber, the steering dampener found on some Japanese bikes will be a good substitute; even a hydraulic door closing dampener can be used.

Another suggestion - fit a well sprung baby buggy Harley-Davidson sidecar, of course, to a Harley-Davidson tug.



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NOTES from Ed Johnson

Rev. Russ Ritchie, a friend and veteran (Harley, BMW, Ducati, etc.) rider of many years took his wife on a 7,000 mile tour on his H-D outfit. As we chatted he asked if there was sufficient interest in the area to warrant a motorcycle club dedicated to sidecaring. Then Terry Strassenburg arrived on the scene, complete with another H-D outfit, wife Becky, son Kyle and another tale of their 7,000 mile tour.

Out of the blue came a call from Hal Kendall shopping for M/C insurance. He did not buy any insurance but instead contributed a knowledge of sidecars second to none, and the desire to get a club started and the drive to get it on. Thus, the Club was born.

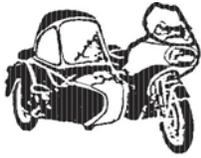
My first thought was to form a National Organization and Hal would have done this if the need existed at the time (he put together the Laverda Owners Club, now International in 14 countries and the Association of Jensen Owners, now recognized throughout the United States, Canada and England, with the able assistance and support from Lee).

As he researched the national scene he found a sidecar club in Florida, another in Washington, yet another in Los Angeles and of course, the 3rd Wheel, the latter having members in nearly every State.

The last thing the U.S. needs is two competing national sidecar clubs. Better to support the existing national club and to concentrate on local needs. A loose federation of all the clubs now exists in a manner similar to the Federation of Sidecar Clubs in England. (Hal was a member of the English Federation for many years.) This concept of our Club not going or attempting to go National was hard for me to accept at first but as time went on, it began to make more sense. "Better to be a big fish in a small pond than a small fish in a big pond - eh?" (HAK).

What can be more unusual and exciting than a motorcycle with a sidecar on it? And, what gains the most attention in any group of motorcycles than a motorcycle/sidehack?

And now for Al Johnson, our President and friend (but not related) for many years. Al and I were two of the original corporate founders of the Pullman Hacker M/C, Inc.; an A.M.A. affiliated club, founded in December 1968. This Club achieved fame as the hardest riding active club in the area for many years. But time and marriages took its toll and membership slowly dwindled. At its last official meeting, Al and myself, with John Woestman and Bob Kenny, voted to affiliate with the U.S.A. The Pullman Hacker M/C Club changed its name to the United Sidecar Association, Inc. and their existing bank funds were entrusted to the newly formed Club. Al became President of the U.S.A., Inc., the position he held previously with the Pullman Hackers.



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NOTES from Ed Johnson, Continued

Now where would we be if it were not for the hardest working guy in the Club, the Secretary, Hal Kendall (I held this job in the Pullman Hackers, throughout its life). This man, with the help and support of Lee, has kept the Club together with threats, promises and sage advice. The Newsletter is an event I look forward to each month. I know I speak for every member that this is an event all look forward to. But, the Newsletter is put together solely by Hal and Lee. He asked me for a contribution so for better or worse, here it is. Let's hear it for Hal and Lee!!!

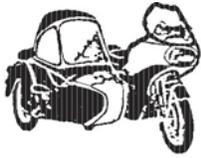
In case you thought I omitted another major contributor and probably the greatest, most enthusiastic member, Terry Strassenburg; he is a great guy and an excellent rider.

And don't forget Paula who has done far more than most for the Club - and Penny. And cheers for Jim Rubens, another extremely dedicated member. Perhaps one day he will let us in on his secret as to why he always has to leave early. And the other dedicated members, too numerous to count.

The 3rd Wheel and Out-of-State Members

In the last issue of the "American Sidecarist" we reported that the 3rd Wheel was not too interested in members from outside Minnesota. We are very happy to report that this is not the case and that our information was in error. The 3rd Wheel and the United Sidecar Association have had informal discussions regarding a National Association to promote sidecaring while allowing each club to maintain its separate identity. This is in the talking stage only. However, the Committee wants to hear from YOU.

DO YOU WANT A NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF NOT?



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CLUB EVENTS

United Sidecar Association - Meeting and Runs

April 16 - U.S.A.-Kankakee Run - 9:00 AM - Plantation - Monee
Combined with Laverda Owners Club AGM - 1:00 PM

May 13 - Regular Monthly Meeting - Planatation - Monee

May 21 - Poker Run - U.S.A. members and guests only.

* * * * *

MACMC

Spring Tour - Sunday, June 4, 1978

A Sprint Tour is planned for members of the MACMC. The ride will begin in the Fox Lake vicinity, go north into Wisconsin via Silver Lake, Lake Geneva and the Kettle Moraine area.

Starting time - about 10:00 AM and average speed about 45 mph.

Antiques or Classics are PREFERRED.

Suggestions are welcome - SIDEHACKERS - THIS IS WHERE YOU OUGHT TO SHINE!

Contact Stan Pernic at: (312) 546-7467

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St. Paul National Rally - June 16, 17, 18, 1978

Contact National Rally Promoters, P. O. Box 20404, Bloomington, Minnesota 55402 or
Phone (612) 739-7565 or (612) 224-7089.

Road Tour, Swap Meet, Religious Services, Camping, etc., etc.

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