

HERITAGE IN A SIDEHACK - WILLY'S GREAT-GRANDSON JOINS THE RIDE HOME

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FRESNO, CALIF.- LEGACY: The word conjures up all sorts of visions. Forgotten things in dusty attics. Memories in black and white pasted to crumbling pages. Pictures of people that nobody can identify, relinquished to the mausoleum of time and decay. Then there is another kind of legacy. Where those who came before have left something so great, so much a part of history, that it becomes an institution, a legend, and a national treasure. So it is with the Harley-Davidson Motor Company.

Now, in its 100th year, the celebration begins with all roads leading back to where it all started: Milwaukee.

My association with the Legacy Ride started when I stopped in at Bobby Z's shop to raid the beer cooler, and found him talking to a clean-cut, well-mannered young man, which is unusual, because most of our friends are neither clean-cut, well-mannered, or young.

"Hey Buckshot, this is Jeff. He's the great-grandson of William Davidson," Bobby said, taking the beer from my hand, and putting it back in the cooler. "He wants to put a ride together to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Harley-Davidson, and raise money for charity."

"Charity begins at home," I reminded Bobby, pulling the beer out of the cooler and twisting off the cap before he could grab it again. We spent the afternoon knocking ideas around like the 8 ball after 12 beers. Honestly, I thought it was way too big an undertaking for a handful of armatures like ourselves, so I just laid back like the old dog who starts the barkin', then lets the young dogs charge the fence. I'm glad to say that my misgivings were short lived, and the team Jeff assembled has been more than up to the task!

Using his own money, Jeff bought a top of the line Harley Ultra Classic Electra Glide with matching sidecar for the ride. This classic scooter will get even better, as Jeff has plans to get other Harley and Davidson family members to sign the sidecar and even some of the legends of motorcycling and movies along the way!

The Legacy Ride will start in Fresno, and then follow the factory designated southwestern route of The Ride Home all the way back to Milwaukee where none other than Willie G. himself will add his mark to the hack in gold. Coincident with the Motor Company's 100th Anniversary celebrations, the bike and sidecar will be auctioned off with the net proceeds going to MDA.

The ride will be along the factory designated southern route, and will dovetail with The Ride Home. H.O.G. chapters will provide help, support, and donations along the way, and Jeff plans to ride in as many events during the celebration as possible, including the big Parade of Heroes. Margo "Harley" Manning, the granddaughter of William Harley, will attend as many events as her schedule will allow, riding with Jeff to make this a true Harley and Davidson family reunion!

The official Legacy Ride website hopes to track the ride's journey with a trip-cam, GPS-driven odometer and map showing exactly their whereabouts at all times. With a little help from the bookkeepers at MDA, they will also be able to show per mile how much they've raised all along the way to Milwaukee. This website is IMPRESSIVE, so give it a look-see right now, at www.legacyride.org!

I was invited (Well, an open door IS technically an invitation, isn't it?) to the official kick-off at Visalia Harley-Davidson, where General Manager Mike Cornell and owner Graham Allan presented Jeff with the gold plated key to the Legacy Ride motorcycle.

I also fell in love with Lexi, the 9-year-old wonder girl who is MDA's ambassador. This little sweetie won my ol' road dog heart big-time!! Lexi and others like her are what MDA's fight is all about, and the Legacy Ride, and YOUR donations and support can go a long way toward finding a cure for this heartbreaking disease.

If you want to be a part of this monumental 100th anniversary celebration and ride, log on to www.legacyride.org. You can also contact Ms. Tammy Peck, Fresno District Mgr., MDA. at 559-225-0200, or Jeff Schragger himself at jeff@legacyride.org.

I know that somewhere, the original founders are smilin' down at what their legacy has become, and what it will be in the future, and here's your chance to be a part of their legacy. Don't let it slip by, 'cause it won't happen again for another hundred years, and if ya keep partyin' the way ya are, you'll probably be too tired to go by then!