

1st visit to Daytona Bike Week story by Laurence

The last two years my bike has been down, I missed going to bike events, take photos, and writing articles for Free Rider Press.

Well last October I went out east to my brother Peter's wedding in New Hampshire. When he found out I have not been riding for almost two years. He let me use his softtail to go for a ride. Finally the awaited day came when I could go for a ride, it turned out to be in the mid 70s, autumn colors were at its full peak and I had my camera. I couldn't have gotten any better of a day to ride in the mountains of New Hampshire. After my day of riding my brother told me it was time for him to give up riding. Would I be interested in purchasing his bike? Boy did I wish I could buy it right then and there. But, I needed a few months to see if I could put something together, that's if it not sold it first! The next few days I helped him pack up his house and bike so the two of them could start a new life together in Florida. The day after I left to come back to Wisconsin, they moved to Florida.



Off on the side looking for a ride.



In January I was bless and everything came together so I would be able to get the funds to purchase Peter's bike, that's if he hadn't sold it yet. Another blessing came my way, Peter still had his bike, and we came to an agreement for me to purchase it. But, one small problem, I had to go to Florida to pick it up. Ya, I know going to a warmer Florida in the middle of a Wisconsin winter is a tough job, but someone has to do it. If I had to go to Florida to get my bike and trailer it back. Why should I go there in January or February? When I can go in March, when Daytona Bike Week is going on. I have never been to Daytona for bike week. So I made plans to go to Peter's place. Part of my plans was to go to Daytona and to meet up with other members of the Christian Motorcycle Association. I hoped to be doing a few bike blessings and getting to work at a CMA

booth while I was there.

When I left Wisconsin it was -11 below zero and a few days later, I was riding my softtail on my way to Daytona in 84-degree weather. I meet up with about 5 or 6 bikers and their wife's about an hour into my ride, who where also going to Daytona. I found out they where from Canada, down for bike week and asked if I would like to joint them riding there, since I was by myself. I took them up on their offer and it was nice to be riding with a group again. We head south of Daytona about 10 miles to Harley Dealer at Ormond Beach. The group I rode with and others I asked that day, didn't want me to take a photo, so I don't have photos of rider who where at Daytona for this article. That was the first time I have been turned down by someone not wanting his or her photo taken for a press article. I believe they don't know anything about Free Rider Press, so they turned my offer down.

I spent some time walking around the area looking at all the booths and product that where for sale. There where many type of food and drinks offered for sale. I was able to shoot a few photos of custom bikes up for sale and enjoy watch the skills of a law officer riding a bike course. I was then able to find the CMA booth, spent some time working and talking with a few visitors to the booth. Now CMA booths are far from being one of the most popular booths at any bike event. So needless to say things where very slow and after about an hour or so, I found out a couple where out in the parking area doing Bike Blessings. So I headed out there to help since things where slow at the booth. I really enjoy talking to bikers, blessing their bikes and was looking forward to doing this as part of my day at Daytona. Well I was out in the parking area for little over a half hour, I found a little buddy about 3 feet long off on the side of a pond just off where bikes where being parked. It seem like he was waiting for a ride? I never found the couple who where to be doing blessings, when 5 or 6 CMAers from Atlanta area came by. We introduce ourselves to each other and talked about doing bike blessing here. I found out CMA doesn't do bike blessing at this location because there a history of no one wants their bike bless here. So after I was informed there was a church, CMA uses as headquarter to sign in to do volunteer work. I took off to ride my bike to Daytona and see what I could do with CMA.

Along the 10 miles ride down Hyw 1 to get to Daytona, I saw just how commercial this event was for the commu-



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nity. There was young ladies standing out in front of most bars trying to get bikers to come to visit that bar, venders outside in bigger bars in their parking lots with their items for sale, if you wanted your bike washed you had your choice of any age female in their bikini willing to wash it for you. There where even booths outside of churches set up to spread the word of God to bikers.

I spent two hours riding around Daytona looking for the church CMA uses and never found it. How ever I did enjoy riding up and down what I would call the strip. There where bike everywhere, going every direction. It seems most bikers don't care what type or brand of bike you rode. I didn't see or hear anyone giving anyone else a hard time over the type of bike they choose to ride, as I have seen at other bike events. There was a lot of noise from bikes and I could tell the basic age groups of the bikers while at stoplights, just by listening to what was going on. The younger bikers had to rev up the RPMs on their bikes, while waiting at the stop and go light, making all kinds of noise. When there where from 5 to 10 young bikers at a stoplight you couldn't hear anything else but their bikes.

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