

Letter from the Editor

A Lot Going On...



It's been a crazy weather year and we're only two months in! One day is beautiful and warm enough to ride... the next day is cold and rainy. Hopefully, by the time you're reading this, the weather will have settled in for some great Spring-time riding... it's time – I'm ready – let's go!

We've been running our Bike Night every month since November 2008. It's been in three different locations. We simply outgrew the first location. The second location just couldn't offer the service level we required. But our current venue is just right! January and February have been our best Bike Nights yet – with more than 250 bikes and almost 400 people – wow! Our new home, Texas Rock Tavern is working out nicely. They are very concerned with service and are thankful to the Thunder Roads Texas family and friends who show up month-after-month and are quickly becoming loyal fans of the venue itself. We've been blessed to have Outlaw Dave and "Babe Wrangler" Bryan Miller, along with the support of their Outlaw Nation and the 9*5*0 Radio Mojo. Additionally, we sincerely thank our sponsor, Eagle Cycles on Jones Road (Houston) who came on in November 2009 and have helped us add another dimension to the event. We are constantly asked if we'll host a bike night down South, out West, out East... well... everywhere. Unfortunately, it's only me and Bob running the show. While we'd love to accommodate, until we can figure out how to clone ourselves for find others to help us carry the torch, the Northwest Houston bike night is all we can handle. Take a ride, come visit us – we party like bikers, rain or shine!

On a sad note... the economy. Final tallies in Harley-world – 28 dealers in the US, gone; four of those in Texas. Suzuki just announced they are not planning to import most of their 2010 street bike models into the US, in an attempt to help the dealers rebound. And who knows the untold number of small shops, metric dealers, and other motorcycle related business that had to close their livelihood... their "baby's" last year. But when it's tough, that's when you fight back! Most businesses obliterate their marketing budget... not the way to go. Studies have shown businesses that advertise during tough economic times come out of the situation with BIGGER MARKET SHARE than those who don't. If you pull your business out of the spotlight and take a back seat... when the train starts moving again... you're still in the back seat. Meanwhile, those who kept their brand in front of consumers will bypass you, straight to the front of the train – and to the bank. This is a GREAT time to advertise! Deals are all over the place. Take advantage of media (like Thunder Roads Texas) offering special deals designed to get businesses advertising. Sign that longer term contract with much better terms than what will be offered with the economy comes out of the sludge. Don't take the back seat! Take advantage of the situation – move to the front! And don't forget, we offer website and Web-zine advertising opportunities for those who like to reach their customer electronically.

You may have noticed an absence in our pages. "Shovelhead" Bill has asked for some time off (like we work him so hard ☺!) from his Out-N-About column. We're not sure if he's trying to recover from 2009... but he promises to be back soon. In the meantime, we have added so many correspondents from across the entire state, we're able to fill his boots – but we do miss him and look forward to welcoming him back.

I'm going to show my reality TV habit here... but I can't help mentioning that I'm watching American Idol and rooting for Casey James from Fort Worth. There are six contestants from Texas out of the 24 who made the final round. Why Casey? You have to have a reason to root for someone. He's good, but specifically, he survived a motorcycle accident that should have ended his musical career. He was told he'd never play guitar again. That didn't stop him – he plays just fine! Call me a "softy". So GOOOO CASEY!

This year, we are sponsoring a lot of great events around the state. In March, join us in San Antonio for the South Texas Motorcycle Show & Stunt Competition (March 19-21). We'll be roaming around, taking pics... who knows what will end up in the pages of Thunder Roads Texas? We'll also be partying with Damon Dave as he hosts his famous party before the party (March 13 at Route 36 Bar & Dance Hall in Rosenberg) for the new Carts, Bikers & Babes Rally (in Somerville, April 9-11).

And I can't ignore the huge – and immediate – success of our Points Across Texas™ reader rides program! We're out of the free booklets, but are talking orders for those who wish to purchase one. They're only \$5 and can be purchased online at <http://thunderroadstexas.com>. Of course, you can download the destination list online as well – FREE. Since we had patch earners within the first three weeks of the year (Wow! They beat us to ordering the patches!), we're working on some additions to the program which will be introduced soon... so keep an eye out. To get these updates as they happen, we highly recommend subscribing to our FREE Web-zine – a weekly email that provides unique content not available in print (except at the beginning of each month) and gives you the latest update of motorcycle events across the state, two weeks at a time.

Here's hoping you've had a good start to your 2010, that you have a GREAT next few months... and that you join us on the road, wherever we are.

Ride Safe & Ride with THUNDER!

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Kiss Me, I'm Irish!!
(I really am... stop laughing!!)

