



History of Kenosha H.O.G. Chapter

By Dottie Young - Winter 1998

The first organizational meeting was held in Uke's shop in the Spring of 1988. The charter was granted in April. Presiding at that meeting were Bob Skaggs and Terry Hannaman. Members present or who joined that year and are still active include: Terry, Teresa Cucunato, Brian Hejl, Don Kueny, Randy and Gayle Lybrook, Ron Suidikas, Jack and Evelyn Targ, Keith and Nancy Ulicki, Renee Sheehan, Violet O'Dell, Raymond Fonk, Sharon Churchill and the late Bill Churchill. Joining in early 1989 were Don Kuzik, Bethany Wise, and Al and Shirley Herzog.

Several events were held that year including a Pig Roast in Washington Park, MDA Poker Run, many after-meeting rides and a Christmas Party at the Elks Club, where meetings were being held.

By late 1989 there were many more new members, including Ron and Dottie Young. The Poker Run and Pig Roast were held. In October the group rode out to Old World Wisconsin at Eagle, followed by the first Halloween Party at Al and Shirley Herzog's. A toy and food drive was sponsored and the second Christmas Party was held in the ballroom of the Elks Club. The entertainment was Easy Rider-type films.

By 1990 meetings had moved to the Brat Stop. The first week-end ride to Baraboo was organized by Ron Young. Fourteen members rode up and agreed it was a great success. Only nine days later tragedy struck the Chapter when Ron was killed on his beloved Harley, hit by a drunken driver. 1990 was a year of many "firsts", including Uke's Open House. The Chapter bought its first Sportster and raffled it off, with Willie G. and Nancy Davidson riding down to draw the winning ticket. Almost everybody rode to Black River Falls for the first State Rally. Kenosha Chapter, under Al's guidance, did the registration. The first float, assembled in Terry and Melanie's backyard, was entered in the Civic Parade. It was loaded with bikes and riders, young and old. A backyard picnic followed, featuring a turkey roast with Randy Lybrook as chief chef. The first family picnic was held at Alford Park. A large contingent rode out to Sturgis for the 50th Annual Bike Week. Some have been going ever since, but others said they'd had enough and never went back again! There was a big Field Meet, the Halloween Party, and the Christmas Party at The Station. The first 10,000 mile awards were given out. Seven members qualified. Jim Lee had high mileage.

By 1991 a routine had been established. A new event was the visit to St. Monica's Senior Home where all the residents had a chance to ride on the motorcycles or in the sidecars. Each was presented with a Harley bandanna and in later years each got a Certificate of Achievement.

Nearly everyone rode in the “Yellow Ribbon Parade” at Lake Geneva to celebrate the end of Desert Storm. All were given huge yellow ribbons to decorate the bikes – Shirley wore hers in

her hair! The club signed up to participate in the Highway Clean-up Project on Hwy 158 to “polish the biker’s image”. The state rally was at Black River Falls. For the October meeting, Dottie rode in under her own steam, to the delight of the members. The Christmas Party was at The Station. Nine MEN rode 10,000 miles, led by Frank Metallo with 24,849 miles.

In 1992 the first Polar Bear Run was held, establishing a new tradition. Lunch at The Fireside followed. The usual events were held. Most everyone attended the real Harley wedding of Tom and Kelly Ellsbury. The Harleys were lined up facing each other to form an aisle and the engines revved up to provide the “music” for the entrance of the bridal party. What a blast! The state rally was at Wausau and the Christmas Party was again at The Station. Eight MEN rode over 10,000 miles.

The usual events were held in 1993. The chili cook-off was added as was the bowling party. Everyone joined the thousands attending the National Rally and 90th Birthday Bash of Harley-Davidson in Milwaukee. The Halloween party was at the Marina. The state rally was at Wausau and the Christmas Party was at The Station. Nine MEN rode over 10,000 miles, led by Steve Thompson.

The weather was fantastic on New Years Day of 1994 when the Polar Bear Run was held. Every bike in town was out on the streets. Break-out riders were treated to a surprise when Wall proposed to Cherri. (And people think bikers aren’t romantic?) The usual events were held. The State Rally was at Stevens House with a stage improvised from cases of oil. Members modeled the motor clothes and accessories. Champagne flowed and by evening the crowd was rather rowdy. (Any connection?) The Christmas Party was at the Heritage House, very elegant, formerly the Elks Club. Fourteen members qualified for the 10,000 mile award, finally with a breakthrough, as four women qualified. Don Kuzik was the leader.

Due to bad weather and snow, the Polar Bear Run was officially canceled in 1995. By now the Baraboo Memorial Run had grown so large that three groups of riders were organized. A float was entered again in the Civic Parade and took top honors – the Chairman’s Choice Award. Lynne Ulicki put together a Poker Run through Walworth County with riders searching for Zenda and the Blue Overall! Harley owners had a new worry – reformulated fuel. A large bunch rode to Sturgis. The State Rally was at Stevens Point and the Christmas Party was at The Heritage House. Fifteen members rode over 10,000 miles, Clyde Mensching clocking the most. The Chapter lost associate member Ruth Dix to death in December.

1996 found the Chapter holding the usual events. A big group rode to Baraboo in delightful weather. A lovely float was built for the Parade. The float won first prize and the money was donated to a local charity. Born out of bar talk at the Christmas Party, a Women’s Ride to Galena, Illinois was organized by Jane Grahovac and Joyce Johnson. The weather was perfect with beautiful scenic roads, excellent food, and a police escort through town. The State Rally was in Eau Claire. A first was the now famous “Party Room” at headquarters hotel with the honor system prevailing for bathtub beer and soft drinks and also cigars. Dottie won the award for “Oldest Female Rider”, the other ladies not admitting their age! A successful Rustic Road Run was held on a perfect October day and 49 riders earned their patch for doing ten Rustic

Roads. A nice Christmas Party at Marino's in New Munster finished off the year. Eleven members rode over 10,000 miles, Tom Valetti leading the way.

Then came 1997 with the usual events. Last stop for the Break-out Ride was Fontana and the final stop of Sherry and Jane's Charity Poker Run was the Wonder Bar in Twin Lakes. The float featured a gigantic motorcycle with wheels that moved. It won an award for its division. The Galena all-women's ride went off as scheduled, but a tremendous storm hit at Lena. A barn with an open door appeared along the road and all the bikes drove in for shelter during the worst of the thunder and lightning. The State Rally was in Madison with a dangerous parade and some serious accidents involving members. The Rustic Road Run finished off the season. The Christmas Party was at Marino's again. Only six members got the 10,000 mile award, attesting to the cool and wet summer. Leaders were Don Kuzik and Nancy Bates. For the last eight years two members have been consistent mileage winners – Jack Targ and Don Kuzik. In December the Chapter was saddened by the death of a faithful member, Ed Barnett.

Through the year members have shared the joy of watching romances bloom, even being invited to several weddings. They've been pleased by the arrival of new babies and grand-babies, assured of the next generation of riders. The agony of 'Splitsville' has been endured, often cheating the Chapter of friends and leaders.

The Kenosha Chapter had been extremely lucky to have exceptional leadership and members willing to work when called upon. Directors have included Bob Skaggs, Terry Hannaman, Bill Churchill, Bethany Wise, Joe Grahovac, Beau Bosovich and now Richard "Droz" Drozdiwicz. They have been assisted by dedicated officers and Road Captains and especially the editors of Hog Breath. Four historians have been charged with keeping photographic records in a well organized manner. Special thanks to Keith and Nancy and the Chief at Uke's Harley-Davidson and Buell for their sponsorship. Without them the Chapter could not exist.

The New Year holds special excitement with the big 95th Harley-Davidson Birthday Party and a return to Stevens Point for the State Rally. The group has grown to standing room only at meetings – a rare treat for any organization! What great good fortune it is to be able to enjoy a hobby – riding those magnificent machines – and sharing the ride with like-minded brothers and sisters.

Congratulations to the Kenosha Chapter Harley Owners Group as it celebrates its 10th anniversary! What a Chapter! What a history!

Dottie was killed by a drunk driver in 1999.