



# Chief Blackhawk

## Things I Think and Why I Think Them

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What makes this thing called The Antique Motorcycle Club of America (AMCA) work? Did the four gentlemen who got this project underway back in 1954 have some sense of what they were putting into motion, or did times change in such a way that it simply became the right thing for our time?

I have the idea that the question isn't best answered with an either/or response. I believe they tapped an unmet need for folks who had an interest in preserving and enjoying bikes the way they used to be. The thing they tapped was almost unique to motorcyclists. That thing, being the independent individualist who, in spite of their iconoclastic nature, is truly open to other iconoclasts of a like bent, the bent being old motorcycles that requires intense engagement to fully appreciate them.

I was six in 1954 and have no understanding of how gentlemen of their era thought. However, from my vantage fifty-seven years on I think it is safe to make some conjectures. I think it inconceivable the founders could have envisioned 100 thousand dollar motorcycles, the auction business that thrives on the antique world, e-bay and the Internet, the capabilities of the home hobbyist or the ability to indulge in antique motorcycles afforded by the rise of the middle class: and the commercialization of the whole shebang.

At the time the AMCA came into existence motorized transportation still required the motorist be engaged. Vehicles of all ilk quit with wondrous regularity. Failure to be attuned to the mechanical conveyance was a surefire formula to being poorer and stranded. Granted the level of engagement paled in comparison to what was required fifty-seven years prior, in 1897, but engaged never-the-less. Fifty-seven years on since the founding of the AMCA the level of engagement required to be a motorcyclist is good credit, bad credit or no credit at all, the desire to ride, and enough engagement to survive the experience. So why is the AMCA as relevant today, if not more so, as it was on those fateful days in 1954 when the founders launched her?

In today's world communications in the form of newsgroups, blogs, email, websites, e-bay and Craigslist make it possible to pursue our particular perversion in private, so why are the AMCA and the local chapters successful?

I think it is due to the focus required to ride, restore and appreciate these old motorcycles and the intersection with our personality trait that causes us to value such focus in others. Were this discussion to be about "modern" motorcycles we would be talking about motorcycles as commodities, requiring little engagement beyond the desire to own and ride. The farther back in time we go the more engagement is required to enjoy the full measure of the experience. Put another way, the gulf between motorcycles today and the motorcycles of our predecessors is immense; the AMCA provides us the framework to bridge that gulf through the activities of the member chapters and their activities.

Do I think this is, or should be, the end of the subject? Not at all! I believe everything is in place to undermine everything we have all worked for. But, that is a discussion for a future date.

Charles E. Finney



#### Write up from Cycle News

Erwin "Smitty" Smith, the Hall of Fame tuner who built racing machines for some of the top AMA Grand national riders in the 1950s and '60s and was a key figure in the vintage motorcycle movement of the 1980s, passed away Sunday, March 6, 2011, at Heartland Health Care Center in Moline, Illinois.

Smith was born in Benton, Wisconsin in 1917. He bought his first motorcycle in 1927, a 1908 Flying Merkel for \$5. When he was 12, he and his family moved to the Quad Cities.

"In those days, it wasn't unusual for boys to have motorcycles," Smith said in a 2006 interview with Larry Lawrence for the Motorcycle Hall of Fame. "It was a rural farming area and I even bought my first car, a Model T Ford, when I was 10 years old."

As a young man Smitty earned quite a reputation around the Quad Cities for being an excellent engine builder. He did a little racing himself, but was better known for building winning racing engines for

many of the top area riders.

"I was happy just building the engines," Smith said. "A dealer in Cedar Rapids, who was a friend of mine, by the name of George Clifford, talked me into opening my own dealership."

While still in his early 20s, Smith opened an Indian motorcycle dealership in Rock Island, Ill., in 1940. He took a three-year hiatus from his dealership to serve his country in World War II from 1942 to 1945 in an armored division of the U.S. Army.

Upon his military discharge, he went through dealer training at the Indian headquarters in Springfield, Mass., and then reopened his dealership for business on Jan. 1, 1946, with just a single Indian motorcycle and a parts inventory worth \$34.

Throughout the 1950s and '60s, Smith built some of the fastest BSAs, and later Triumphs, in the Midwest. Over the years, famous motorcycle racers such as Ed Kretz, Sr., Bill Tuman, Joe Bissman, Mickey Green, Dave Camlin, Don Camlin, and his own brother, Lyle Smith, rode race bikes built or sponsored by Smitty.

Smith was one of the early restorers of antique motorcycles. Over the years, he showed his bikes at shows and races and that helped generate a great deal of interest in vintage motorcycle activities in his part of the country. He was especially known for restoring Indian Chiefs.

Smith became a president of the Blackhawk Chapter of Antique Motorcycle Club (AMC). For five years, he served on the Board of Directors of the National Antique Motorcycle meets in Davenport, Iowa.

When inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1995, Smith was still riding his 1941 Indian 741 Scout at vintage meets.

Survivors include his children and their spouses, Carol Morris, Rock Island, Larry and Karen Smith, Broomfield, Colo., Clark and Mary Smith, Mesa, Ariz.; five grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; and 10 great-great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents; and a brother, Lyle Smith.

Graveside services were at National Cemetery, Arsenal Island. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Shriners Hospital for Children or Honor Flight of the Quad Cities.

**Photos from the  
Second Meet of the  
Year!**

**Sunshine Chapter  
in Eustis, FL**

The weather could not have been better for the meet this year. My daughter and I drove to Florida and it was so nice to see the colors change from the drab browns in Iowa to the lush greens and the beautiful Florida sunshine. I dropped my daughter in Orlando and headed to Mt. Dora to my hotel and just as I pulled into the parking lot it started pouring. It didn't last long though. I guess the meet was pretty much ready to close for the evening. I met up with Pam, Steve, Barb, Tim and Dave at the little festival that was going on in downtown Eustis. The rest of the weekend held beautiful weather for us. It was the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for the Sunshine Chapter. A good time was had by all at the banquet. Dennis Craig was made an honorary member at the banquet.  
Brenda Teel-Lash



**THE NATIONAL MOTORCYCLE MUSEUM**

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THE NATIONAL MOTORCYCLE MUSEUM IS A NON-PROFIT 501 (C)(3) ORGANIZATION



## In Our Backyard

That Was Then, This is Now Keels and Wheels May 13-14- Muscatine, Iowa For more information contact Dave Mortiz at [MoritzDavid@stanleygroup.com](mailto:MoritzDavid@stanleygroup.com) or call 563 260 1970

## April Birthday and Anniversaries

Happy Birthday Wishes to the following members with birthdays in March:

Karen Anselmi	Tim Roberts	Steve Tenut
Jone Booth	Tracy Rowland	
Donald Cleek	Rick Smith	
Brian Fitzgerald	Roger Smith	
Barb Neece	Ryan Sumner	
Kent Scott	Tony Swain	

Happy Anniversary Wishes to the following couple:

## February 8, 2011 Meeting Minutes

February birthdays were Mike Anselmi, and Judy Thiakos. New member was John Rowland, Dave and Tracy Rowlands' son. Norma Thiakos, Pete and Judy's daughter was also in attendance. Twenty-six members and guests were at the meeting.

The meeting was called to order by President Charlie Finney. Minutes of the last meeting were read and accepted.

The treasurer's report was given by Treasurer Hollie Swain.

Charlie Finney and David Lash met with Bob Fox of the Fairgrounds on January 10, 2011. The Fairgrounds will need a copy of our insurance coverage.

Ted Zeiner passed away. He had been head of our security for several years.

Mark Engelmann, the lawyer, is the corporate registering agent. Hollie Swain has sent in our corporate report.

Discussion was heard on having a post office box dedicated to Club business. Del and Wanda Schumacher want to disconnect from the day to day club activities. Brenda Lash has a post office box for vendor registration, and has been receiving mail at that address.

As Del and Wanda are out of town, Pam Gross will check with Christina Caldwell regarding the amount of mail received at the post office box, and whether it needs to be picked up and addressed by the club.

A motion was made by Jerry Cedillo for a centrally located post office box to be rented. Motion was seconded by Pete Thiakos. The motion was passed by a majority of members present. After further discussion, the motion was rescinded by Jerry Cedillo. There will be a three month trial of having the mail sent to Charlie Finney's address. The mail box issue will be revisited in June or July, to see if further action needs to be taken.

Old business, Jack Gross has had contact with the pin person, and will have art work at the brunch.

New business, Bill Provance reported that the Starved Rock Harley-Davidson dealership will have their open house on March 19<sup>th</sup>, and would appreciate any members who would like to bring over an old bike. Bob Mounce is a mechanic at the dealership. There will be a bike display, food and music.

There was an update on the Road Run by Tim Schumacher. There will not be a fee for the chase vehicle and trailer to cross on the Cassville ferry. Discussion heard on the time for the closing night banquet.

Wanda has given the Club printer to David and Brenda Lash. David worked on the printer and it is now working well. Discussion on a new printer has been tabled until this printer stops working.

An e-mail was received from Bill Weeder, who represents a group of riders who have "Bronson" replica bikes. As the theme bike is Sportsters, they would like to be involved with the meet.

David Lash will be in contact with this group.

New business, Tony Swain, we need to pick a theme bike for 2012, bring ideas to the brunch.

Smitty is in the hospital with pneumonia.

Hollie Swain; the books need to be audited tonight. Charlie Finney, Dave Booth, and Jack Gross will help with this task.

A majority of members called for adjournment,

Respectfully submitted, Pam Gross, Secretary

## Events Near and Far

### Chief Blackhawk Business Meetings

May 3- meeting at the  
Welcome Inn in Milan  
Meeting starts at 7PM come earlier to eat.

June 7- meeting at the  
Welcome Inn in Milan  
Meeting starts at 7PM come earlier to eat.

### Up coming Events:

May 7, 2011 Bi-State Motorcycle Awareness  
Ride. 1:00pm - 4:00pm [www.awarenessride.com](http://www.awarenessride.com)

Gates open 11AM, ride leaves 1PM from Davenport West High  
School...ends at RI County Fairgrounds 4200 Archer Drive East  
Moline.

We have been asked to assist with the bike sign in. We are  
meeting for breakfast at Riefe's at 9AM and then heading to West  
High School by 10 or so to start setting up. We will be assisting  
Women on Wheels. Brenda and David have been doing this for  
many years, not a hard job just busy.

May 21, 2011 Bill's Annual Ride Meet at the  
Purple Onion in Annawan at 9:00 AM for  
Breakfast.

June 3, 4 & 5, 2011  
The National Motorcycle Museum Vintage  
Rally. See flyer page 4

### Special Events of Chief Blackhawk

**April 30, 4:00 PM**

Meet at David and Brenda's to put vendor packets  
together. 3904 Hwy 22 Montpelier, IA  
563-381-4015.

**April 16**

Garage open house hours 9am till 11:30am. Coffee,  
juice, doughnuts, bench racing etc. Following open house  
is your chance to go find lunch if desired, then ride up to  
the Prairie Arts Center in Princeton Illinois for their ride in  
Bike display from 1pm till 4pm. Bikes(even yours is you so  
choose) will be displayed outside in front of the Arts  
center. Free will donation taken when/if going thru the  
indoor motorcycle art display. This is the last weekend for  
their motorcycle art display.

Directions to open garage: address is 2304 South Main  
Street, Princeton Illinois.

Garage is located 4 miles straight south of Interstate 80 at  
exit #56. Or

Garage is 2 miles south of US Route 6. Garage is on your  
right as you head south from the above listed roads.  
Additional (car, truck, or van) Parking is available directly  
across the street at the Church. Please do not block their  
driveway.

Still need more info, call 815-875-1245. See you  
then..... Jack & Karen Gross

### Annual Chief Blackhawk Picnic

When: July 10, 2011

Where: Moto Dome, 25126 Ridge Road, Colona, IL 61241

Time: Began gathering: 9:00 AM Lunch: 11:30 AM

RSVP: Check for \$10 per person by 1 July to:

Chief Blackhawk Chapter,

C/O Hollie Swain

611 Wisconsin Ave.,

Davenport, IA 52804

(Your check will be returned to you at the picnic)



**Wanted:**

Ideas for other activities or rides we can do outside of just having a business meeting. Bring any ideas with you to the meeting or email to Brenda. Anyone interested in having a garage party at your house, please let us know and we will get it on the schedule.

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**Newsletter Editor**

This is your newsletter and our means of communicating with members who cannot attend a local meeting. If anyone has anything that they would like to include in the newsletter please sent it to me via email at bteellash @gmail, com or you can mail it to PO Box 514, Buffalo, Iowa 52728,

or just give me a call at 563-381-4015. *I do request that if you want to include something to please have it to me by the 10<sup>th</sup> so that it will appear in the following month's newsletter.*

*Thanks Brenda Lash*

We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.chiefblackhawk.org](http://www.chiefblackhawk.org)

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**CHIEF BLACKHAWK**

PO Box 514

Buffalo, IA 52728

