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RIDIN' WRENCHIN' AND FLAT TRACK RACIN'

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They say that each Sturgis Rally has its own personality and this year was iron clad proof of that. Although we saw many indications from last year's festivities that things were going back to the basics, it was like we had stepped into a time machine and headed off to a much earlier time in the rally's 69 year history. There were spontaneous flat track races, mini bike tournaments, a crowd of Knuckles and Pans, campers and tents as far as the eye could see, and hell, I'm not sure but I don't think I heard one story from people getting hassled by the man, but then again, we stayed the hell outta' town.

It all started a few months ago when Jay Allen, owner of the famous Broken Spoke County Line, gave us the green light on the Good Ol' Days Raceway. Our man Geno took a flight and set up the foundation of what would become the epicenter of this year's insanity. Just south of the Spoke campground, he laid out a quarter mile circle track with a TT Motocross track on the infield.

When you add in the Limpnickie Lot, who brought a team of mini bikes sponsored by the Spoke, Spectro Oils and Nash, the scene was off the hook. Matt Olsen and

his old man, Carl, brought a team of old iron, from '36 and up; a sweet ass collection of Knuckieheads that spent the week with us. Matt and his dad are infamous for their active role in getting people into old bikes and can frequently be found setting someone free on one of their old bikes. Man, that's dedication.

Big Ben and the cats from Wisconsin, Chicago and Minnesota who run with him, made Ben's big Peterbilt, (yeah the one from the editorial), home for the week as well. With the Wall of Death and frequent visits from Matt and Dale Walkler of Wheels Through Time, this was the place to be, as far as we were concerned.

From the late nights with brothers giving it all on the track, to the killer bands and days filled with the greatest riding life has to offer, this was a monumental year in South Dakota.

And the "way back" machine wasn't only visiting the Spoke either. Over at the Buffalo Chip the Michael Lichter exhibit had reached a level of supernatural. "Rebel Rousers" as it was titled, featured some of the most prominent images, bikes and memorabilia of our culture's history. The strange thing was, with such a diverse crowd making up our community now, many of the items on display closely resembled people walking around the exhibit and bikes that were right outside in the parking lot.

Daytime was spent in search of great adventure, many of us taking off in separate directions, coming back to the group at night to share the tales of great deeds and sights.

The Spoke in town was kicking and threw a hellacious Old School Chopper show for all of us. This joint became our second home and even featured a stage with a young builders' exhibition all week. It was everything that Sturgis has always been to us and I can't remember a time that it was any better. Of course, that's only till next year!

From the official reports, some say that rally attendance was down, some say that it was even, a distributor told me that four locations had increased their sales from previous years, but all that is just the numbers that make it run. Here's the deal, the people that came to Sturgis this year were the dyed in the wool, lifetime enthusiasts that didn't care how many other people would show up, as long as they were there and had a blast doing what they love. And that was 69! **CYCLE SOURCE**

