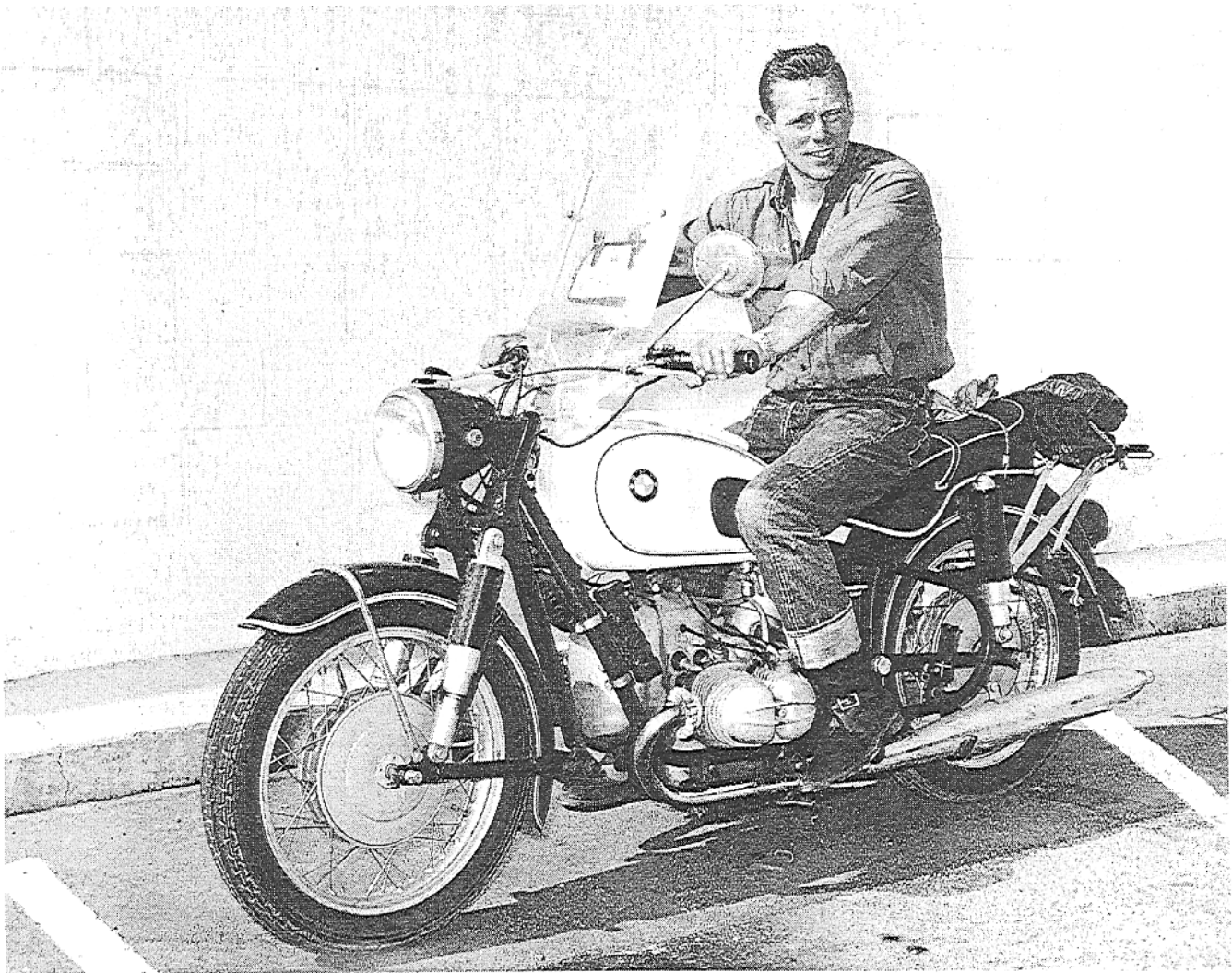


Winter 1999

Issue No. 5

# *Still...Keeping Track*

Penton Owners Group Newsletter \* \$5.00



John Penton aboard his BMW motorcycle that he used to make his transcontinental record run in 1959.  
See the enclosed article "John Penton and the BMW Connection for the story behind this photo.

- Inside:
- Penton Feature Marque Display - Sears Point, CA - page 3
  - POG mailbox - page 4
  - John Penton and the BMW Connection article - page 6
  - Penton reunion picnic article - page 8
  - Tech Tips - Sachs shift selector secrets article - page 10
  - Member profile - page 11
  - ISDT Reunion article - page 12
  - Minutes of Sept. 27, Nov. 1, & Dec. 6, 1999 meetings - pages 16, 17, & 18



## **STILL...KEEPING TRACK Newsletter of the PENTON OWNERS GROUP**

The Penton Owners Group is a not for profit corporation chartered in the State of Ohio and an AMA chartered club. Our Federal tax I.D. number is 34-1860635.

The Penton Owners Group was formed to preserve and share the memories and the equipment of a very special time in motorcycle history. The first Penton motorcycle was manufactured in 1967 and the last in 1977. This was a time when the enthusiasm, ambition and creativity of the original Penton group helped shape a new industry and a new generation of dirt bike enthusiasts. Sport and competition motorcycles played a significant role in this motorcycle history. Our aim is to make the Penton Owners Group a source of information about the history of the Penton motorcycle, the Penton Company and it's many dealers, riders and extended family.

The mission of the Penton Owners Group is to enjoy and share all the memories from the past and the events of the future, as Penton motorcycle enthusiasts.

---

Still ...Keeping Track is published quarterly by the Penton Owners Group. Annual membership dues is \$20 per year for US residents (\$25 for foreign membership) and includes a subscription to the newsletter which is not available separately. Manuscripts, photos, drawings, etc. are welcome but no payment is made for material submitted, used, or retained. Please keep duplicates of your submissions, as we cannot be responsible for loss or damage. Submission of material will be considered as assignment of all rights therein. Check our web site at: [bely@one.net](mailto:bely@one.net)  
Change of address: Give old and new address and notify us as least 6 weeks in advance.  
Send address changes to: The PENTON OWNERS GROUP - P.O. Box 756 - Amherst, Ohio 44001  
All information furnished herein is provided by and for the members of the Penton Owners Group.

---

### **PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

By Alan Buehner

This has been a busy time for the club. The monthly meetings have long agendas that have been dealing with the book that Ed Youngblood has just written, the newsletters, the upcoming Vintage Days events, and the Penton web page. They are all intermingled together in that what happens or does not happen with one, affects the others.

Steps are being taken to improve the communication to our members and other Penton enthusiasts. We know

that the present Web site is hard to access, especially for the first time. Jack Penton is working with Barry Ely to obtain a new name for the site, link it for easier access, and set it up for unlimited "hits". Once this is done, the book will be advertised for sale on the new site for a larger exposure.

Ed Youngblood has stepped forward in helping to promote the book and also advertise Penton as feature marque at the Vintage Days Events by writing articles to be printed by some of the motorcycle magazines. This has helped to take a load off of my back and free up some of my time to work

on the newsletter and organize the Vintage Days displays.

Barbara & Matt Weisman, Doug Wilford, Jack Penton and I have been meeting as a committee to work on the Vintage Days events that are coming up real fast. We are still trying to finalize ideas at this time, but are working to insure that the display will be second to none and that it will tell a story about John and his motorcycle.

For the Vintage Days Events we will need help from our membership. This will be the biggest event ever for Pentons. One that you will not only not want to miss but also be a part of.

Please plan on attending the events and also volunteer some of your time to man the display and share your knowledge of the Penton with any visitors. More information on the upcoming Sears Point event is in an article of this issue.

Paul Danik made the trip out to the ISDT Reunion and wrote an article about it. After reading it and seeing the photos that he took, it made me wish that I had been there.

When John Penton started his motorcycle business he was blessed with having many talented people work for him. The Penton Owners Group has been blessed with the help of many of these same people. For this I am ever thankful, for even though this is a small club that is still growing, it is too large for one person to run by themselves and still consider it fun.

I hope that you enjoy this issue of the newsletter and I am looking forward to seeing all of you at one of the Vintage Days Events.

### **PENTON FEATURE MARQUE DISPLAY for Sears Point, CA** by Alan Buehner

On April 28 thru the 30th, Penton will be the feature marque at Sears Point Raceway, in Sonoma, California, for the AMA Vintage Days event. A committee consisting of Jack Penton, Barbara and Matt Weisman, Doug Wilford and I are still in the process of planning out this event. At the December board meeting, Barb submitted sample sketches for the interior arrangement for the Mid-Ohio tent. The board members selected one of the drawings for the committee to work on and from this the Sears Point display will be drawn up.

The displays are being arranged to not just display some bikes, photos, and medals, but to tell a story about what the Penton motorcycle did in the development of the dirt bikes

The AMA is providing us two 20'x20' tents that will be placed next

to each other. Inside we will have areas set aside for: a John Penton display, ISDT medal display, Hi-Point products display, and a POG sales table.

The number of bikes needed for the inside display will not be important in that all we will need will be a representation of a steel tanker, the CMF bikes, and the GS or MC models. An area outside the tent will be used to display any Pentons that our members wish to display.

Since the book on John will be in print before Sears Point, we will be selling these in the tent and Ed Youngblood and John Penton will be on hand at various times to autograph them.

I have contacted Carl Cranke who will be at the event. Other people who will be there are: Tom Penton, Paul Danik & Dave Duarte. We are hoping more people will show up as the date gets closer.

We are working on trying to have a cook-out on Saturday after the event to get together and tell some stories about John - maybe event do a roast on John. As of this date we do not have any details available. More information will be in the next newsletter.

The cost for getting inside Sears Point for this event is as follows:

Friday - \$5 per person

Saturday - \$15 per person

Sunday - \$15 per person

There is a weekend package price of \$25 per person. I recommend buying the weekend package and AMA members should keep an eye out for any deals that may be promoted in an upcoming magazine article.

Our set up time for the display will be on Friday morning. We do not have a time as of this date but I am guessing that it will be at 9:00.

Set-up will be a mad house in that wall display panels will have to be installed first with the bikes to be displayed going in last. Outside display bikes can be brought over at any time

... continued on page 19

### **PENTON Only Exhibition Ride at Sears Point**

by Alan Buehner

With the running of the Pentons being so well received in July at Mid-Ohio, it was decided to run them at Sears Point in April as part of the celebration with Penton as feature marque. I contacted the good folks at AHRMA (Jeff Smith, and the new Executive Director, Jack Turner) and they again have graciously agreed to let us ride at both Sears Point and Mid-Ohio.

The Sears Point ride will be on Sunday April 30 during the MX races under the same rules that were set up for the Mid-Ohio running:

- 1) all riders must be an AMA member and show proof of membership (AHRMA membership not required)
- 2) all riders must sign the AMA liability release form
- 3) there will be no entry fee for riding this event
- 4) riders can sign up on the day of the event
- 5) any year of Penton (1968 thru 1977) may be ridden
- 6) this event will be run after the 1st set of motos has been run
- 7) the start will be staggered ( one rider at a time) with 4 laps around the track
- 8) there will be no scoring, points, or trophies awarded

As the Pentons Perpetuated Club in Florida says in their moto "ride-em .....don't hide-em", it's time to finally bring those bikes out of the garage. This will be a fun event and we hope that all of the Penton Owners going to Sears Point will bring their Pentons out to ride. Note: If you wish to ride any of the MX races, you must be an AHRMA member and you must pre-enter before the event by mailing in the proper paper work. At the event, you must register before the races to pick up your info and verify that everything is all right.

## THE P.O.G. MAILBOX

9/14/99 Mike O'Reilly - Canada

I've been trying to get around to this since May of this year, and I now have a couple of spare bucks. I was going to join at Mid-Ohio but didn't know how much money I'd have by the end of the weekend (our Canadian dollar doesn't go too far at all in the U.S. these days). A donation to the Todd Henning medical fund was also a priority at that time. Anyway, here is the "20" that was left over.

Thanks for all of your efforts at Mid-Ohio, last year and this year. Your hard work in putting it all together really showed, and I imagine will have provided a good dress rehearsal for the big event next year.

9/16/99 Kevin S. Mitchell - Michigan

All right, finally a Penton Club! I've seen a link for this club on the AMA's site, but it does not work. I finally found another link by searching and got to your web site, very nice layout and design.

I have been following Penton Motorcycles since 1971 when I was thirteen years old. I read all the motorcycle magazines I could get a hold of although I did not start riding until 1974 on a Yamaha. When I graduated from high school in 1976 and got a full time job, I went out and bought a new 1976 Penton MC-5 250. It was the trickiest bike on earth and I thought that nothing would ever be better.

I still have this bike as after two years of racing and riding almost every day, I wore it out in 1977. It is a bad basket case, but if I find another MC-5 for the right price I can rebuild one good bike. I also had owned a 1973 175 Jackpiner that had seen a lot of battles. I bought it from my brother as a basket case and sold it for \$7500 in 1978. I really wished that I had kept it! Now I have four early 1970's 125 Sachs engine Six Days that I can build one good bike from. Also a 1974 Mint 400 that is real bad and a 1980 KTM 420 that runs.

After John Penton sold the distributorship back to KTM in 1978, I switched to Husqvarna's. I have raced Husky's for many years. Did not race in the last nine years. Now my son is seven and he is riding motocross on a PW-50. I started riding the Michigan District 14 Vintage Motocross series in the evolution class on a 1980 Husky 390 this year and am currently third in points.

I am a member of Craig Comontofski's Husqvarna Motorcycle Club also and have many Husky project bikes and parts. I hope to get going on some of my Penton projects soon. I would love to go to the AMA Vintage Days in Ohio and the ISDT Reunion in Arkansas. Maybe in the next year or two I can make it.

I will mention this club to several of my friends. One is Bill Catron who won the overall at Jackpine in 1978 on a

KTM. Bill told me he has several of the KTM Dirt Track chassis without engines.

Anyway, enough bench racing, I have bikes to work on! I have enclosed by membership form and \$20 for a one year membership.

*Kevin sent in a membership application form that he pulled down off our Penton web site. Kevin, this coming event at Mid-Ohio in July will be our big event of the century and will be the one not to miss. If you need an excuse slip for your boss to get out of work for that weekend, let me know and I will write you one. Thank you for your support. - Al Buehner*

8/28/99 Rich Williams - California

Please send me information on joining the P.O.G. I lived and raced Pentons in the early 1970's with Jim Hale and Eddie Cole. After reading the great article in RacerX by Ed Youngblood, I just knew I had to have another Penton. Even though they had six gears and seven neutrals. Do you have a web site?

*A membership application and our web site address were mailed out to Rich. Pay attention to our Tech Tips article in this newsletter and you will always know that your bike will have six gears and only one neutral.*

9/29/99 Phillip Peterson - Illinois

*Phil is a Pipe Fitter from Chicago and filled in the following information about his Penton experience on his POG Member Information Form.*

When I started growing out of my "72" Honda mini trail in late 1973-74 I started buying "real" motorcycle magazines instead of minicycle magazines. One of the first magazines I bought was the October 1973 issue of "Dirt Bike". In that issue was an interview with John Penton. Although I didn't understand what he was actually saying (I was 13 at the time), I knew I liked his style. When I finally understood what John was saying 10 years and 5 Japanese bikes later, Penton was KTM.

I bought my brand new 1985 KTM 500 MX (and have bought nothing but KTMs since) not only because it was a superb bike, but because it had John Penton's history all over it, even if it didn't have his name on the gas tank or seat.

KTM would not be enjoying the success it has in the US today had it not been for John Penton. I am sure KTM understands that. I only hope they recognize it.

10/6/99 Tom Herman - Kansas

I read the article about John. It told how many Pentons were made in 10 years. I was wondering if records were kept on: How many were made each year and every size. It would be interesting to know which are the rarest models. I have collected the factory Penton brochures and have 1974, 75, 76, & 77. I lost the 1973 brochures. I've never

seen any for the steel tank models. If at all possible it would be neat for P.O.G. to reproduce the brochures for all ten years and have them for sale. Parts manuals too.

*So far as we know, there are no records on how many Pentons were sold for each year and model. The rarest models would be the steel tank bikes and the Wassel trials bikes. These are the ones that everyone is grabbing up. There are no plans to reproduce the brochures at this time. They were scarce even back in the 70s and whatever is done will be done in such a way to protect the value of the few originals still in existence.*

## LATEST NEWS

Barry Ely of Ohio, our POG webmaster, was briefly out of action when his computer crashed. Although Barry was not seriously injured (definitely safer to be on a crashing computer than a crashing bike), he was inconvenienced and out of action on the Penton Web Page until he was able to secure another new computer. Barry reports that the old computer was able to be saved and is being put to good use by his wife. Cards and letters can be sent to Barry via his web site: [Bely@one.net](mailto:Bely@one.net).

Al Born of Ohio, longtime friend of John, is reunited with his first Penton (serial no. V003). In fact, Al was the first person in the world to buy a Penton from John in 1968. Al was a very competitive rider on his Penton 125 and was good enough to qualify to ride the ISDT events which never happened. Al sold his bike years ago and just this year located it, brought it back "home" and is in the process of restoring it. It may not be ready in time for Sears Point, but it will be on display at Mid-Ohio.

Kirt Flashback of Massachusetts has just purchased a Penton/KR 250cc short tracker (serial no. 31). He reports that it is working condition (very fast) but was stored outdoors under a tarp for a few years and the bottom of the frame is rusted up. He is eagerly tearing it down and will have the frame powder coated. Maybe we can have him bring it to Mid-Ohio

10/19/99 Brad Kennard - Iowa

Understanding the history of the Penton Motorcycle and John Penton is great. But a little info on people still riding them and racing them would be nice. Keep up the tech tips.

*We agree with you and welcome any information that anyone has about their current riding/racing experience from back then and now. If you have a story or two that would be of interest to the other members, mail it in and we will be happy to share it.*

in July and have a Penton short tracker exhibition ride at the AHRMA Friday evening dirt track races?

Robin Hartfiel, the Editor in Chief of "Dealernews" magazine, is the proud owner of a Penton steel tank Berkshire. Every year he somehow manages to slip in a photo or short article with Penton motorcycles. This year was no different. In the November 1999 "Vintage Directory" issue, there were three old photos with Pentons and a current photo of a showroom display at Town & Country Yamaha/Kawasaki in Murray, Kentucky. There is also a short article titled "Penton Envy?" in which the Penton Owners Group received some very positive write up.

Thanks for the publicity Robin!

Speaking of publicity, the November 1999 issue of "Dirt Bike" magazine ran an article inducting the 1972 Penton 125 and 175 in their fifth annual Dirt Bike Hall of Fame. It is a great article and the timing is perfect in that it coincides with our efforts to publicize the Penton name awareness before the Sears Point event in April.

Thank you "Dirt Bike" for the recognition we have known all along.

"Vintage Views" ran a nice article on the ISDT Reunion in their November 1999 issue. A nice photo of Paul Danik's 1972 Penton starts off the article which talks about some of the "great ones" and lists the results of this year's finishers.

A big "thank you" goes out to Matt Benson, who is the person that puts AHRMA's "Vintage Views" together each month. He has helped us out by printing short articles of upcoming events in the past and has come through again by printing a short announcement of John Penton's transcontinental record set 40 years ago, in the December 1999 issue.

Back in April of 1970, an article written by Ted Penton titled "Brother John" was published by motorCYCLIST magazine. The current editor, Mitch Boehm was contacted to obtain permission to reprint that article in our newsletter. Mitch gave his blessing for us to do so. He is a dirt bike fan, having grown up in northeast Ohio, was involved in MX racing in 1974-75 and is very familiar with the Penton name. Look for this very interesting article of Ted Penton's perspective of his brother John in our next newsletter.

The AMA has a new museum director, his name is Mark McDurski. We have been talking with him and hope to have a steel tank Penton on display in the museum before the end of the year. We are also planning on setting up a PENTON display in the museum with many of the items to be shown in the Mid-Ohio display in July after the Vintage Days Event is over.



## John Penton and the BMW Connection

by Ed Youngblood

John Penton is one of the most dynamic, innovative, and influential men in the world of modern motorcycling. His ideas and his determination to build a better off-road motorcycle helped revolutionize the American motorcycle industry. It is fitting that his life and accomplishments will be celebrated by the American Motorcyclist Association at AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days 2000, at which John Penton will be honored as the Grand Marshal and his famous Penton Motorcycle will be designated the official commemorative marque.

There is no doubt that John Penton has achieved great notoriety in the world of off-road motorcycling, and that his name will forever be associated with the light-weight, two-stroke, high-performance off-road motorcycles he developed and marketed between 1968 and 1977 in affiliation with the Austrian firm KTM. However, Penton's first taste of fame came through his exploits aboard a BMW motorcycle, and, in fact, the development of his famous Penton brand can to a large extent be credited to his early relationship with a little 250cc BMW single that he used to win championship enduros.

Although John Penton loves and has been involved in every aspect of motorcycling, his main interest has been in off-road endurance competition. He has won almost every event on the AMA national championship enduro circuit, and in 1969 he won the AMA Grand National Enduro Championship. His long and illustrious off-road riding career began in 1948 when, at the age of 24, he entered the legendary Jack Pine Enduro. His desire to win the Jack Pine set him on a life-long quest to design and build a better off-road motorcycle. Eventually he would win the Jack Pine four times, but never

aboard the motorcycle bearing his name.

During the era when John Penton began riding, there was no such thing as a purpose-built off-road motorcycle. People took their big road bikes - Harleys, Indians, and various British marques - and modified them to slog through the dirt, water, and muck typical to enduro competition. None of these bikes were much up to the task. They were too heavy, often had unreliable electrical systems, and were prone to take on water in places that would result in catastrophic engine failure. In fact, in the 1940s and 1950s many enthusiasts became motorcycle dealers so they could get their motorcycles and parts at wholesale cost in support of their own competitive hobbies. Such was the case of the enduro-riding Penton brothers - Ike, Ted, John, and Bill - who established a BSA dealership in their home town of Amherst, Ohio in 1950. In 1952 they took on BMW and later the German NSU.

In 1958, John Penton's young wife Katherine died of multiple sclerosis. To sort out his feelings and deal with his tragic loss, John boarded a BMW R-60 and hit the road. He traveled throughout America, as far south into Mexico as Mexico City, then westward to the Baja Peninsula, and eventually north toward California. At night he would simply lay the bike over on a cylinder, spread a canvas over it as a makeshift tent, and sleep on the ground. Finally, when he decided it was time to return to the responsibilities of his family and the motorcycle dealership in Amherst, he mounted up and rode non-stop from California to Ohio.

Impressed with his feat of endurance, John's brother Ted suggested he try to break the coast-to-coast record held at that time by Michigan Harley dealer Earl Robinson. John was always a sucker for a challenge, and the following summer he outfitted a new R-69-S with a large fuel tank and set off the

east coast, where he spent a day resting as the guest of BMW distributor Alfred Bondy. He launched his transcontinental record attempt on June 8th, stopping only to take on fuel and eat candy bars, and he arrived in California 52 hours, 11 minutes, and one second later, having covered 3,051 miles at an average speed of just over 58 miles per hour. He complained that the run had been flawed by a 45 minute stop in Albuquerque when he had to take a break to overcome a bout of double vision brought on by extreme fatigue. His record stood for a decade. While it may not sound remarkable to modern Iron-Butters, we must remember that in 1959, the interstate highway system was incomplete and less friendly than it is today.

This was precisely the kind of accomplishment that fit nicely into BMW's marketing strategy. The company was working hard to build a world-wide reputation for quality and reliability, and Penton's coast-to-coast record was exactly what the company needed to sell these concepts. Both American BMW distributors - Butler & Smith in the east and the Flanders Corporation in the west - as well as the home factory in Munich got behind the story in a big way. The Munich public relations team distributed the news worldwide through Reuters, and the American distributors featured John and his R-69-S in full page advertisements. *BMW Journal* made the name John Penton a household word among BMW dealers throughout the world. Five years later, when John began to compete in the International Six Days Trial in Europe, people from as far away as Czechoslovakia came to shake his hand and tell him how they had read about his record run in their local newspapers. John Penton had become one of the most famous motorcyclists in the world as a result of his record run aboard a BMW.

In the mean time John Penton had continued his career as a

championship enduro rider, switching in 1959 from a BSA to NSU. The NSU, with its big fenders and cushy suspension, seemed an unlikely choice for an off-road competition machine, but John was attracted to it by the design and high quality of its engine. It's electrical system was more reliable than that of British bikes, and its machining, fit, and finish were excellent. In 1960 Penton won four national championship enduros aboard the little 175cc NSU and in every case he rode the motorcycle to and from the event, in some cases as far away as Georgia and Florida. As a result he became the only American in history to be awarded the "NSU Victorious Award" by the factory, which declared him the most important NSU ride in America. But NSU was on its way out of the motorcycle business, and by the fall of 1961, John Penton found it necessary to look for an alternative.

Still attracted by German quality and reliability, in the fall of 1961 he switched to what may well be the most unlikely and unorthodox off-road competition motorcycle in history, a 250cc BMW R-27. He lightened the flywheel to facilitate better acceleration and quicker shifting, and replaced the heavy Earls forks with the more conventional front suspension from a British Ariel. Otherwise, it was a dead stock R-27, and promptly went out and won the Corduroy Enduro and the Canadian National Championship title.

In 1962 he put together a string of victories at AMA national championships, so impressing Butler & Smith and the BMW factory that they proposed to sponsor him to ride his little single at the International Six Days Trial in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany that autumn.

John was one of only three Americans entered in the event. The others were Bud Ekins, aboard a Triumph; and George Streck, Jr., riding a Greeves. But Penton, aboard his 250cc BMW, was the star of the event. *BMW Journal* wrote about his enormous popularity among the fans. Incidentally, one of the fans on hand was Steve McQueen, who was in Germany filming "The Great Escape." In fact, Bud Ekins was the stunt rider who conducted McQueen's spectacular motorcycle jumping scene, and was on temporary leave from the movie set for the purpose of competing in the ISDT.

John Penton continued to campaign his 250cc BMW in national endurance competition until 1966, and he competed aboard the bike at the ISDT three more times; in East Germany, Great Britain, and Sweden. In America it became almost a trademark motorcycle. When you saw a little BMW coming down the trail, you knew immediately it was John Penton.

John Penton had been formulating his ideas about a better off-road motorcycle for years, but it was his exposure to competition at the ISDT in Europe that helped bring those ideas to fruition. Through the contacts and friendships he mad at the ISDT, he eventually developed the relationship with the small Austrian firm KTM that manufactured the Penton motorcycle according to his specification. Within a year of its arrival in the market place, the Penton motorcycle established a worldwide reputation as a superior product and design, and before Penton's distributorship was sold to KTM in 1977, over 70,000 Pentons would introduce countless enthusiasts to motocross and off-road riding. But

absent John Penton's early exploits aboard his BMWs, history would not have unfolded in this way. Long into their motorcycling careers both John and his brother Ted continued to favor BMWs as their road bikes of choice, and in the 1970s Ted and his friend Bell Clever set a transcontinental record aboard a BMW sidecar rig.

More about John Penton's BMW connection is described in "John Penton and the Off-Road Motorcycle Revolution", a new book by Ed Youngblood scheduled to be published by Whitehorse Press in April, 2000. It will be available from the Penton Owners Group or you can meet John Penton personally at the AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days where he and the author will be autographing copies of the book. These events will take place at Sears Point Raceway at Sonoma, California April 29 & 30, 2000; and at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course at Lexington, Ohio July 7 thru 9, 2000.

*Ed Youngblood is a POG member who has been working with the club after writing the book on John. He wrote this article for the BMW Owners club to publish in their newsletter. He is also working on other articles and news releases to have published, to bring an awareness to the motorcycling community the contribution that John Penton has made, and to advertise that PENTON will be the feature marque at next years Vintage Days events.*

*This article is a sampling of the details and historical background that Ed wrote about John Penton in his new book.*

*Look for an upcoming article in AHRMA's "Vintage Views" and the AMA's "American Motorcyclists".*

### **ORDER YOUR COPY OF "JOHN PENTON and the Off-Road Motorcycle Revolution".**

An order form is enclosed with this newsletter. Books are priced at \$19.95 each and will be autographed by John Penton and Ed Youngblood. Proceeds from the sale of these books by the Penton Owners Group goes to the club and will help to finance the goals and objectives of the club.

These books will make great gifts for your family and friends.

## THE PENTON REUNION PICNIC

by Al Born

October 9, 1999 dawned as a warm, foggy, misty morning and by 8:30 a.m., the Meadowlarks clubhouse and grounds had become a bee-hive of activity, as members of the Penton Owners Group were preparing for their first annual reunion/picnic. The day remained warm and the showers held off until early evening.

There were tow easy-ups to cover a fine display of pictures and medals that were won by Penton riders. Also two more easy-ups were used to cover most of the motorcycles displayed. There was a total of twelve Pentons, two N.S.U.'s, and two Huskys displayed. Ollie Martin showed a 152cc and a 175cc Penton which were both in excellent condition. The 152cc Penton won the certificate for "Best Early Penton". Al Born also showed Penton numbers V-003 and V-026 which were both still in the very same condition that they were in when they left competition. The V-003 motorcycle won the certificate for "Best Early Penton." Alan Buehner showed a beautiful Penton short tracker and the Jim Borer family showed a very nice older 125cc Six-Day as well as the two N.S.U.s.

Inside the clubhouse there were four tables filled with picture albums and scrap books that went back even to the pre-Penton motorcycle days. Also,

thanks to Matt Weisman, there was an all day showing of videos of several of the Six-Day events that were ran during the "Penton Hay Days", as well as some 60's vintage Jack Pine runs.

Kip Kern of Van Buren, Indiana who is the chief restorer of Penton motorcycles was in attendance and offered a few Penton items for sale. Next year the P.O.G. wants to make the Penton reunion/picnic bigger and better and we will be putting more emphasis on a swap meet area for Penton items.

Jim Borer served a "Chef for the day" and prepared hot-dogs and hamburgers for all to enjoy. "Thanks Jim". There were also two large cookers of chili available throughout the afternoon and evening. There was approximately 65 people attending throughout the day. There were people in attendance from Minnesota, Maryland, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Ohio.

Former A.M.A. president, Ed Youngblood, was in attendance. Ed has written a book titled "John Penton and the Off-road Motorcycle Revolution", which will be printed and ready for sale on approximately April 1st 2000. Please call P.O.G. executive board members now to place book orders. The books will be priced at \$19.99 plus tax and shipping if necessary. Many of these were presold at the picnic.

In the early evening hours, everyone

gathered in the clubhouse where Jack Penton credited Alan Buehner and Paul Danik for being so instrumental in organizing the Penton Owners Group. President Alan Buehner and Vice President Jack Penton gave everyone the opportunity to stand and tell who they were, where they were from, to tell something about their connection with the Penton motorcycle, the Penton businesses or with the Penton family.

Approximately a dozen door prizes were given out. Everyone who attended received an eight page commemorative agenda for the day which contained several pictures also. The agendas were prepared by P.O.G. members Barbara and Matt Weisman.

After the door prizes were given out, John Penton gave a brief talk about how proud he was of the P.O.G. and of all of his extended family members. He also reminded the P.O.G. members of what a tremendous task lies ahead to prepare for the Penton Motorcycle to be the featured marquee at Vintage Days east and west for the year 2000. John will also be serving as the "Grand Marshall" for both of these events.

I think that all who attended will agree that it was a very full and enjoyable day. The P.O.G. wants to "Thank" all who helped organize this event, the Amherst Meadowlarks for the use of their grounds and all who attended. We want to make next year's reunion/picnic bigger and better.

Al Born standing between his Steel Tank Pentons, no. 3 and no. 26. Al was John Penton's first cash paying customer when he bought no. V003 in 1968.

*photo by Paul Danik*





**Photos of the Penton Reunion  
Picnic - October 1999**

An outside view of the Amherst Meadowlarks clubhouse. The Penton display was set up under the KTM e-z ups in the center, the bikes were displayed on the right.



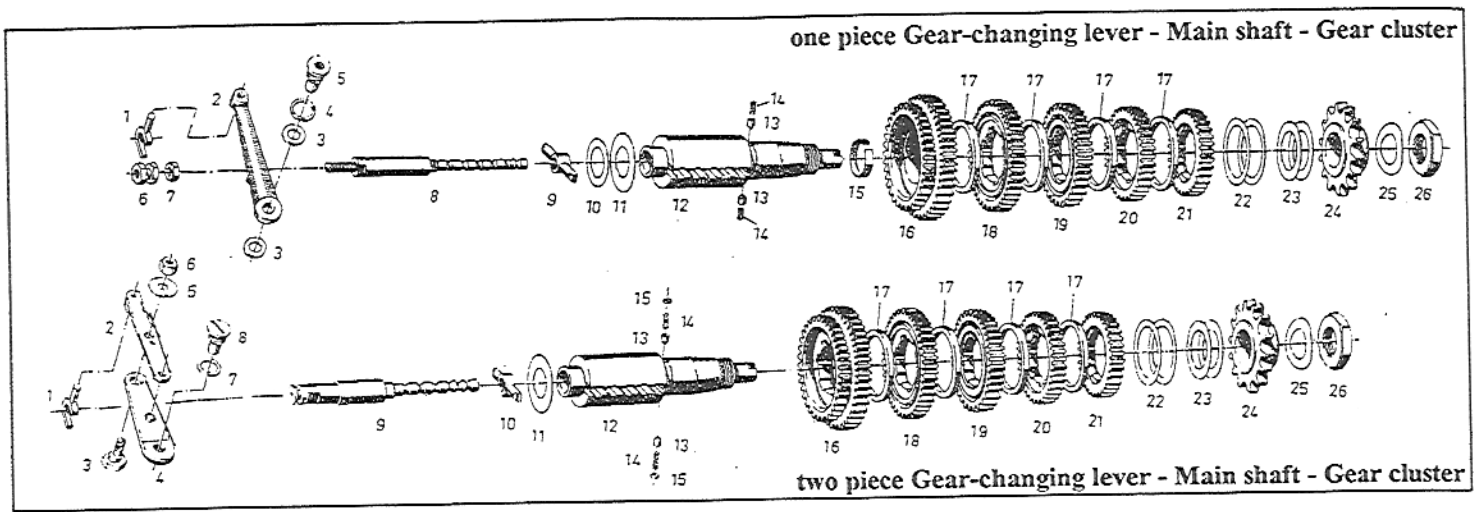
This photo shows some of the variety of bikes that were on display. There were a couple of NSU's, steel tank Pentons, a Penton/Wassel trial bike, 175s, a 250 KR short tracker (#93), and a 250 MX (#63). Conditions of the bikes ran from original (one step away from the scrap heap) to restored but, every one of them got a good looking over .



Jack Penton (left) and Matt Weisman (right) taking care of business at they awarded plaques to the "best bike", "most original", "John's best pick", etc. before the end of the event.



*photos by Paul Danik*



## Tech Tips

### Simple Sachs Shift Selector Secrets

by Kip Kern

Al Buehner asked me to submit an article on the adjustment of Sachs 5 + 6 speed transmissions. What I wish to do is not quote "word for word" steps involved from shop manuals, but give some very important areas, I feel, to pay attention to when performing this task. By no means am I a professional, good common sense and a little reading can produce great results!

**Step 1.** Have a Sachs engine manual handy be it a Penton shop manual, Sachs repair instruction No. 336.8 E/4, or a Clymer service handbook M427. Follow the printed steps and you will be fine.

**Step 2.** Very good "things" to know!

A. There are two types of gear selectors, a one piece, and a two piece. Adjustment procedures are different. Read carefully about the type of selector you will be adjusting.

B. I don't believe in the gear lock device; therefore, I don't use them, sorry!

C. Very Important! Before you can properly adjust any Sachs transmission, you must ensure the following:

1. The main shaft (fig. 12) is shimmed properly between case halves.
2. The shift key (fig. 9) is in excellent condition.
3. The selector rod (fig. 8 & 9) is not worn.
4. The selector rod detent cups and springs (fig. 13 & 14) are in excellent condition.
5. The transmission gears are spaced properly and are not worn on the inside.
6. The two springs on the shift boss are OK and that each flex properly.
7. The shift boss is shimmed properly from the inside of the clutch case.

8. The space between the shift boss and the clutch cover is shimmed properly, prior to placement of the clutch assembly.

9. Properly shim the shift arm pivot point in the case.

10. Use an unworn shift fork (fig. 1).

D. Don't worry about the stop bushing, eccentric cams, whatever, until transmission adjustment is complete.

E. Statically adjust the shift arms per instructions, rotate main shaft and run the transmission through the paces. If it shifts OK from 1-5 or 6, you have it! If not, adjust the arm to meet direction needed, i.e., 1 piece arm = rotate selector arm fork nut (fig. 6) in or out to achieve adjustment. 2 piece arm = turn eccentric screw on arm (fig. 3) to achieve adjustment. In either case you must be able to rotate the main shaft and run the shifting through all of the gears. Once done, shift to lowest gear, hold down on the shifter and adjust the cam stop and tighten. Next, shift to highest gear, hold up on the shift lever and adjust the cam stop and tighten. Now, after all is adjusted and checked tight, statically run the transmission through all of the gears again and ensure that it shifts OK from top to bottom. With luck, you won't have to readjust and you will be finished!

F. Handy tools to have to adjust transmissions:

1. - For 1 Piece arm = Depth Micrometer for .910-.915 measurement
2. - For 2 Piece arm = "thin" 13 and 10mm wrenches

As you can see from the above comments and your reading of the shop manuals, this is an easy task but always remember it is imperative that this engine and transmission be shimmed properly to function correctly!

As always, feel free to call (1-765-934-4821) and I will be happy to help with questions. Good luck!

## MEMBER PROFILE

Vernon Lee Miller (better known as Skip) of Grand Prairie, Texas.

Skip sent us a whole bunch of information about him and his bikes so he gets to be this month's "typical member".

His occupations range from; Structural Steel Detailer; Home Improvement; siding mechanic; auto mechanic; and photographer.

He has been involved in a variety of hobbies and sports that include: Drag racing, Water Skiing, Snow Skiing, Camping, Photography, Computer operation, and Sign & Screen printing.

He is skilled at PC & pagemaker, Wedding photographer (sounds easy, but just try it), KTM

assembly, Motocross, and Vintage Motocross. He is the current treasurer of the Texas Vintage Racing Club, an AMA and AHRMA member. He not only has a garage full of nice looking Pentons, he also races them at his clubs events and was the 1994 TVR Amateur champion riding a 1975 Penton 250. He competes in the GPI, GPII, and Vintage Intermediate classes He came up to Mid-Ohio in July and rode the AHRMA MX races with Bobby Lucas. He showed everyone in the pit area how Texans beat the heat between moto's. He pulled out a pressure sprayer with a hose (you know, like the type that the exterminators use to spray for roaches and bugs) and used it to spray a fine mist of water over his

head, other parts of his body and anyone standing too close.

He renewed his membership with the Penton Owners Group and wrote back on the reply: "Great newsletter, very informative for bikes and personal identities past and present. I want more 75-77 info -the 75 model frame with a cantilever 7" suspension was not shown in fall 1999 article. How about a Penton National in Texas or Nationwide!! Will the club be able to operate on \$20 dues? I hope to go to Sears Point in April. Create a cross reference for parts of bikes owned by the POG members. A possibility for the Web Page. Finally we have the POG!!! Thanks for all the hard work so far, call if I can do anything and thanks for all the press at Mid Ohio."



Skip Miller from Texas warming up his Penton 250 on Sunday morning at Mid-Ohio (July 1999) prior to the start of the AHRMA MX races.

*photo by Anthony Buehner*

**Mark your calendars for April 28, 29, 30 and July 7, 8, 9 for the AMA Vintage Days Events.**

Penton will be the feature marque for both events and John Penton will be the Grand Marshall.

These will be the big events of the year for the Penton Owners Group and the ones that you will not want to miss.

Tell your friends and plan to be there. If you have to work, give us a call and we'll write you an excuse.

## The Third Annual ISDT

### Reunion

by Paul Danik

The Third Annual ISDT Reunion Ride was held in Ozark, Arkansas on October 1-3. This year's event was renamed the Leroy Winters Memorial Ride. Leroy Winters and Dick Mann were the co-creators of this event. Leroy passed away on February 20th 1999 and Dick Mann was on the mend at home recovering from some health problems. Therefore, Leroy's children showed what they were made of and stepped right up and put on a fine event.

I have wanted to attend this event since it's inception, but have always had a reason that made me put it off. This year was no different until Brett Watson and I attended one of the POG monthly meetings and the event came up in discussion. Dane Leimbach, Jack Penton, Ed Youngblood and Mr. Penton were planning to attend and were leaving Thursday evening and would be back on Monday. By the time Brett and I arrived back to Mars, PA after the meeting, we had ourselves talked into making the trip.

We started right in on the prep work on our bikes. It was just like old times. Almost every night we would compare notes and look over each other's projects. Brett was going to ride a Penton MC5 that he had picked up off of an old guy in the neighborhood, "me". I was getting a CMF Berkshire ready for the event and had a great amount of help from my son Chad. Chad has heard war stories from us old guys about prepping a Penton for an event. This was a real first hand experience for him. We had a great time working together, and I didn't even get upset when he drilled a hole in my finger while we mounted the tool bag!

The race to "the race" is always a very interesting part of any event. It hadn't rained in so long that I was actually thinking about getting out my BSA and seeing if it would start. But, the night that we had to load all of our gear and bikes into the open bed of my pickup and leave for Arkansas, it decided to rain. Our excitement wasn't going to be dampened by a little rain and soon we were off. We looked like Team Hefty Bag as we zipped along the interstate with the black plastic garbage bags, that were protecting our gear, flapping in the wind at about 70 or so.

We were near Columbus, Ohio early Thursday morning and made a quick stop at the AMA's new headquarters. Brett and I were amazed when we saw the campus like grounds and buildings. After a quick tour of the museum, we were on our way. We would need to return again when we had more time.

We stayed the evening in Branson, Missouri and arrived at the reunion headquarters, Byrd's Campground, on Friday.

Friday was spent talking with old friends and making new ones. I was impressed with how laid back and casual everyone was. This truly is a reunion and not a race. It was great to see Dave Mungenast (he rode one of those new Steel Tank Pentons in the 1968 ISDT in Italy), Larry Maiers (former sales manager for Mr. Penton in the late 70's), Mr. Penton, and many others just relaxing and talking over old times. Ron Carbaugh (POG member from Texas) and Don "The Captain" Schultz, made the trip from Texas together. Ron had his CMF Berkshire Penton with him and was going to ride. He claimed that he hadn't ridden in about five years, but you wouldn't have known that by the ride he put in. The Captain had some pictures with him from his days of working

with Eddison Dye and the Husky team. He now works with Richard Sanders in Houston and is a master at restoration work. The bikes were parked under a large tent for the evening and everyone enjoyed a cookout prior to retiring for the evening.

#### Saturday - the first day

Saturday morning, guys in riding gear were at the diner and some good-natured kidding was going on. Someone mentioned that their riding gear had shrunk!

At the campground, Jake Fischer (a 1972 & 73 ISDT rider) and his son Jeff arrived. Jake is one of the toughest riders of all time in my book, and his son Jeff is following in his footsteps.

My starting time comes up and I am lined up with Dwight Rudder (a rider in the 1994 ISDT). We started off on the first day's ride, approximately 32 miles. The trail is dusty and has more than its share of nasty surprises. The rocks were sharp and numerous, and the fallen trees were like spears lurking in the dust with their branches pointing up in the air.

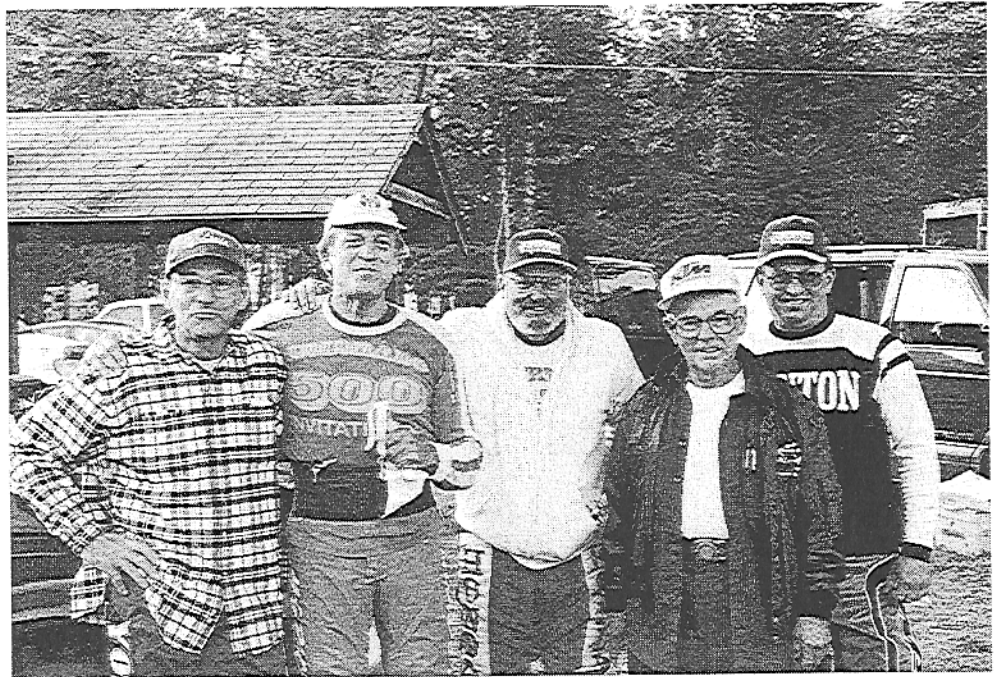
At the first and only checkpoint for day one, we had a few minutes to check things over and get the dust wiped off.

Ron Carbaugh and I were waiting our turn to start the special test when one of the on-lookers stated that he couldn't remember the last time that he saw two Penton Berkshires together. The special test was tight. Sure this is just for fun, but a special test still gets you moving. The trail section of day one ends at the campground. We did a timed lap of the grass-track and an acceleration-brake test.

The acceleration-brake test is just a short burst from a standing start, then a U-turn around a barrel, and a race to the finish line, except you have to stop within a marked

**ISDT Reunion Ride  
Ozark, Arkansas  
October 1999**

*standing from left to right:*  
 Jake Fischer (PA) 1972/73  
 ISDT compeditor  
 Dave Mungenast (Missouri )  
 1967/68/69/70/71/72/73/74/75  
 ISDT compeditor  
 Ron Carbaugh (Texas) first time  
 reunion rider  
 John Penton (Ohio)  
 1962/65/67/68/69/70 ISDT  
 compeditor  
 Paul Danik (PA) 1972/73 ISDT  
 compeditor



*standing left to right:*  
 Doug Wilford (Ohio)  
 1970/73/74/75 ISDT compeditor  
 Team manager in 1972  
 "Captain" Don Schultz (Texas)  
 Brett Watson (Pa) first time  
 reunion rider  
 Ron Carbaugh (Texas)  
 John Borer (Ohio) 2 time  
 reunion rider  
 photo taken in parking lot of the  
 Wiederkehr Winery



*from left to right:*  
 John Penton (sitting)  
 Ed Youngblood (Ohio) Past  
 President of the AMA  
 Dane Leimbach (sitting with  
 some discomfort)  
 Dave Mungenast (standing)  
 Jack Penton (standing)  
 Larry Meiers (sitting) M/c race  
 track announcer & TV  
 sportscaster



*photos by Paul Danik*

area. Brett lined up and took off for all of 30 feet. He fouled a plug and in the true ISDT tradition, he pushed his bike through the test!

Day one was now history and the bikes were back under the tent.

Saturday evening was spent at the annual banquet at the Wiederkehr Winery, which was one of the highlights of the event for me. After a great meal, Larry Maiers introduced all of the ISDT riders in attendance. Each was asked to tell a story about their ISDT experience. I could just sit all night and listen to Mr. Penton, Jack Penton, Dane Leimbach, Doug Wilford, Dave Mungenast, and others tell of their memories.

Mr. Tommy McDermott was presented the Bud Ekins Pioneer Award. Tommy was the first American to win an ISDT Gold medal. The event was in 1949 in Wales, England, and Tommy rode a BSA. If you ever get a chance to talk to Tommy you will get to hear some great tales from a fine gentleman!

Leroy Winters was posthumously awarded the Al Eames Award for having organized, with the help of Dick Mann, the ISDT Reunion Ride. Leroy's children accepted the award and each spoke of their father and some of the memories they had of growing up with him.

The Leroy Winters Memorial Award was presented to Dick Mann. John Sawazhki accepted the award for Dick.

The evening was over way too soon, but the memories will last a lifetime.

### Sunday - The second day

Day two started off about the same as day one. A little too similar for Dave Mungenast and his Rokon. In case you never have seen a Rokon, they start just like an old lawnmower, with a pull rope! And just like an old lawnmower, sometimes they just won't start. Dave demonstrated to the spectators how one can build up their upper body strength and tone their arm muscle without having to buy one of those store bought exercise machines. Unlike the other bikes, you can't push start a Rokon. They are belt driven like a snowmobile, but if you do get it moving, they stop really great, for they have disc brakes.

The first section of the special test was tight and dusty and then it opened up. There were no checkpoints on the second day and the course was a little shorter. The rocks and "spears" were still in place. Dane Leimbach took a bad tumble and broke his collarbone and cracked some ribs. Being the trooper that he is, he just got taped up, took a little painkiller, and waited till he returned home to Amherst, Ohio to see the Doc.

The trail portion of day two ended at the campground. The final special test was a five-lap race round the grass track. I had a great time in this event and followed Dwight Rudder around for the entire five laps. It was a pleasure to meet and ride with Dwight.

You don't have to ride this event to enjoy it. Numerous excellent riders were on hand and

did not ride for various reasons, but their presence sure added to the event. Penton was well represented at the event both in machines and people.

As for the official results, everyone had a great time, and I am sure that Leroy Winters was proud of his family.

*Paul Danic is the Chief Legislative Officer for the Penton Owners Group and is a two time ISDT rider. He won a Gold medal in the US in 1973 and a Bronze medal in Italy in 1974.*

*Paul is also known as the man from Mars. He lives in Mars, Pa.*

*He scored a gold in the ISDT Past Masters class at the reunion ride. He also rode as a team member at the reunion with Brett Watson and Johnny Carter and they came in third place under the team name of "Men from Mars".*



### HAS YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRED?

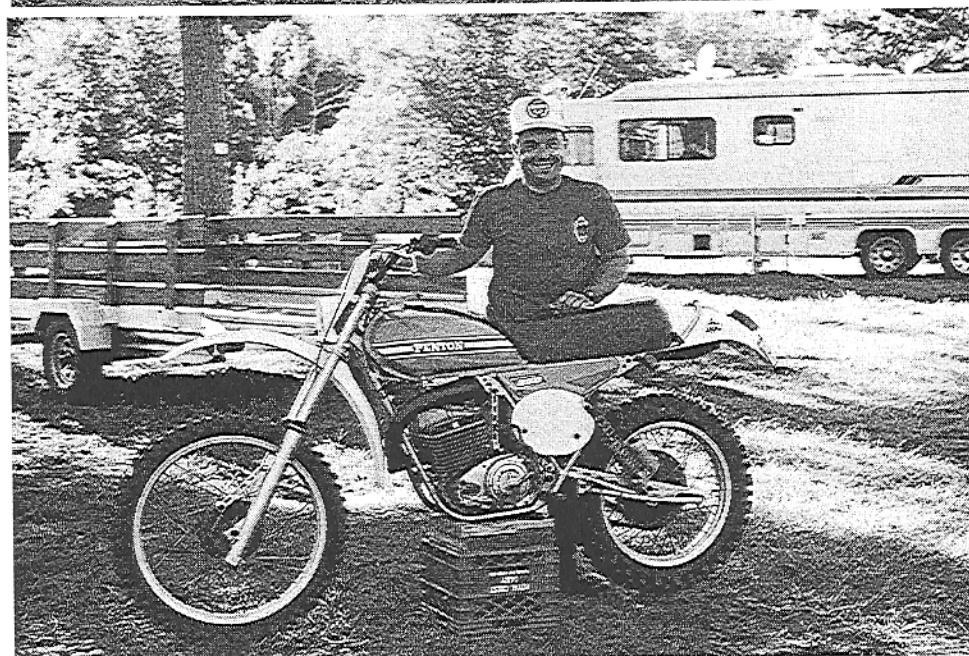
Check the date on the mailing label below your address. This is the date of your last renewal or when you joined. If the date is more than a year old, your membership has or will expire and this will be your last newsletter. Please fill out the green renewal form enclosed with this newsletter and renew your membership today.

ISDT Reunion Ride  
Ozark, Arkansas  
October 1999

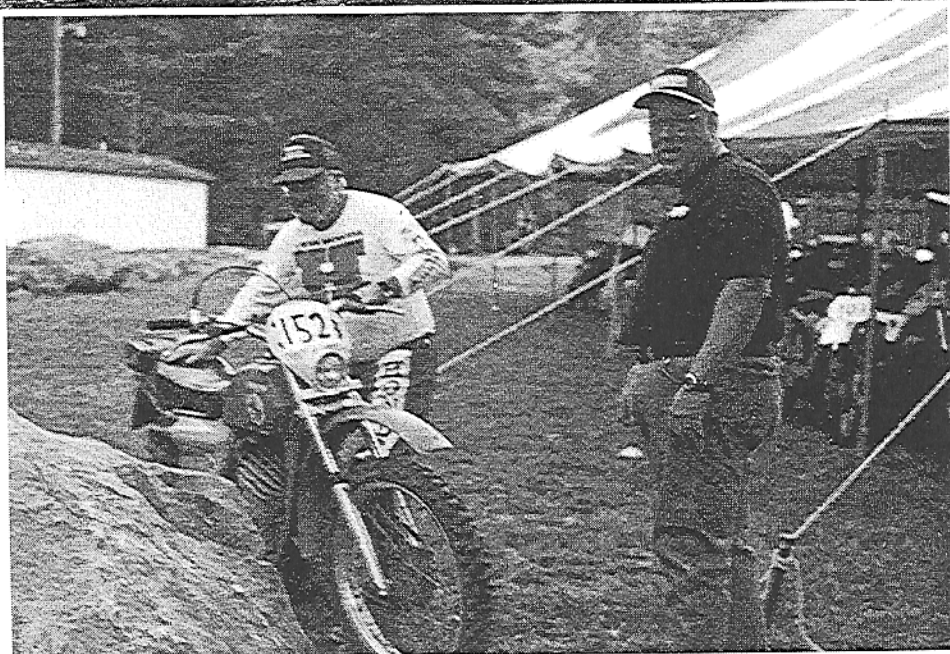
Paul Danic (the man from Mars)  
Pa, posing with his Penton  
Berkshire in the campground.



Brett Watson (another Martian)  
from Pa, showing off his "secret  
weapon" - a Penton 250 GS6.  
"Nice bike Brett." This photo  
was taken at Byrd's  
Campground, the starting area  
and headquarters for the Six  
Days Reunion.



Ron Carbaugh (Tx) resting his  
bike up against a convenient  
side stand while "Captain" Don  
Schultz (Tx) smiles for the  
camera. This photo was taken  
next to the tent where all of the  
bikes were kept before and after  
each day's ride.



*photos by Paul Danic*

... continued from page 3  
 and space will be on a first come first serve basis. As the event gets closer and we get some idea of what kind of bikes are coming, we may section off the outside display into groups such as: steel tank bikes, CMF bikes, 125's, 175's, 250's, etc. Let me know what you think about this idea.

As shown in the display lay out, we will only have six bikes inside the tent. We are in need of the following motorcycles:

- 1972 or 73 - 125
- 1973 - 250
- Penton Trials

Any bike being displayed inside must be in excellent condition and be as

close to original as possible. We are asking that all inside bikes on display be left on display during the entire event until tear down on Sunday afternoon.

I have requested that the tents be provided with sides to them all the way around, so that they can be closed up at night to secure the items inside.

The inside of the tent will have grass carpeting under the bikes and the bikes will be roped off to keep visitors from touching and fooling around with any of the bikes on display. The display will be set up in such a way that it will tell a short story about John Penton and his involvement in the development of his motorcycle and the

dirt bike industry as it is written in the book by Ed Youngblood.

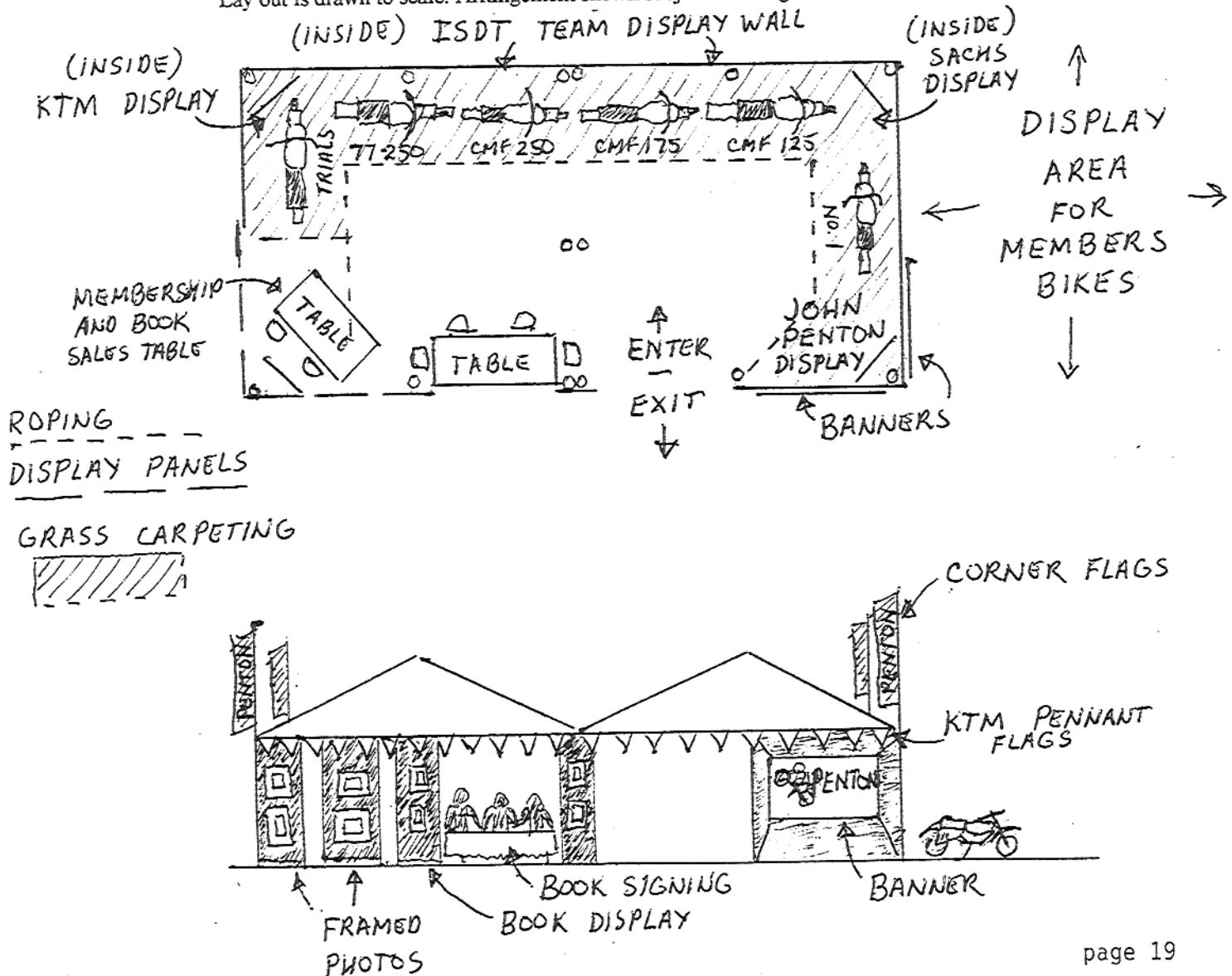
We are in need of volunteers to help man the booth during the event. Please let us know what day(s) and what time (morning or afternoon) that you can spend time in the display. Duties will range from greeting visitors, explaining the Penton involvement with dirt bikes, answering questions, selling memberships and books.

Call Alan Buehner at (216) 651-6559 for more information and to volunteer your help.

## Sears Point - 2000 Display Lay Out

Overall tent size 20'x 40'

Lay out is drawn to scale. Arrangement shown subject to change before the event.





# WANTED

— Dead or Alive —

## PENTON MOTORCYCLES

- ☞ To display at Sears Point for the AMA Vintage Days Event
- ☞ To run in the Penton Only Exhibition Ride
- ☞ Volunteers to help man the display

## \$\$ REWARD

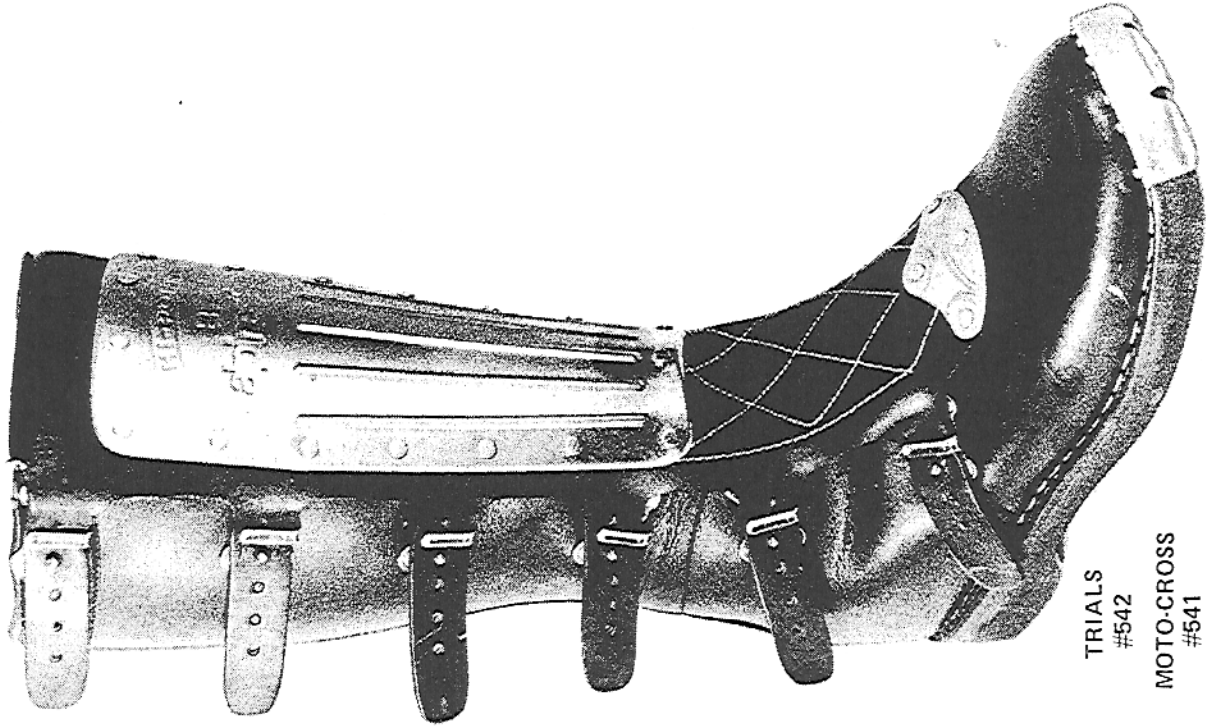
Recognition, a chance to show off your pride & joy, have everyone gawking & drooling over "your bike", share your knowledge and enthusiasm, and have fun riding your Penton with the Penton boys.

Round-up will be from April 28-30, 2000  
see inside page 3 articles for more information



PENTON OWNERS GROUP  
P.O. Box 756  
Amherst, Ohio 44001

HI-POINT HAS THE  
FEATURES YOU DEMAND  
BUILT RIGHT IN!!!!



TRIALS  
#542  
MOTO-CROSS  
#541