

Spring 2000

Issue No. 6

Still...Keeping Track

Penton Owners Group Newsletter * \$5.00



Bei Amerikas schwerster Geländefahrt, der zweitägigen Jack Pine-Zuverlässigkeitsfahrt in Michigan, die über 500 Meilen schwierigsten Geländes verläuft, war eine NSU-Maxi Gesamt-

sieger aller Klassen. Der NSU-Händler John Penton aus Lorain, Ohio, fuhr seine Maxi mit einer solchen Bravour, daß den Zuschauern bisweilen der Atem stockte.

NSU-Bilderdienst 8/1958

John Penton riding his NSU motorcycle during The Jack Pine in 1958.
This photo is from a European publication by NSU in August of 1958.

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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 out our web site at: www.PENTONUSA.ORG
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

I have had the opportunity to read one of the rough drafts of the book "John Penton and the off-road motorcycle revolution" written by Ed Youngblood. Ed did a wonderful job not only telling the background history of John and his family but also tied in the economic and historical events happening at the time to remind the readers of the impact that these forces were having on everyone's lives at the time. My favorite part of the book is

where Ed was able to capture in words John's method of communication when talking with him. Ed's talent for writing shows in this paragraph.

An extra special feature will be found in the appendix in the back of the book. John's sister, Pat Leimbach, permitted Ed to include some outtakes from some of her books that give some of her insights and experiences being around John and his motorcycles. This is the "icing on the cake". Her style of writing will work on your emotions as you read it and

gives a well rounded balance to the book.

The only drawback the book will have is in not telling all of the stories. The reason for not telling it all is because some of them could not be verified and the other is because of a page limit that was put on Ed by the publisher. The plus side of this will be that there will be plenty of stories to tell in this newsletter in the years to come.

The book is an excellent read and one that will be hard to put down until it is finished. It explains not only what

John Penton is, but what he and his motorcycles were all about. This is a must read for not only the off-road riders of the 70's but for the modern off-road riders of today.

A special thank you goes out to Ed Youngblood for not only writing the book, but for all of the articles and press releases he has written. He has also helped the Vintage Days committee by supplying the written information that will explain things on placards and posters in our displays.

He has gone above and beyond the call of duty by volunteering his time and efforts to make our display a success.

The article of Jerry West in this newsletter contains a couple of the stories that Jerry talked about when I interviewed him. Jerry is another example of the quality people that John Penton has met and befriended during his life and that I have been afforded the opportunity to get to know. I hope that you enjoy what he had to share.

Sears Point is fast approaching and I hope that everyone living on the west coast is planning on attending this historic event. To help everyone attending, I have included a time schedule of the events and costs to eliminate any guesswork. We also need volunteers to help man the booth during the event. Please let me know if you can help us out.

1969 Penton Six Day 125 Enduro

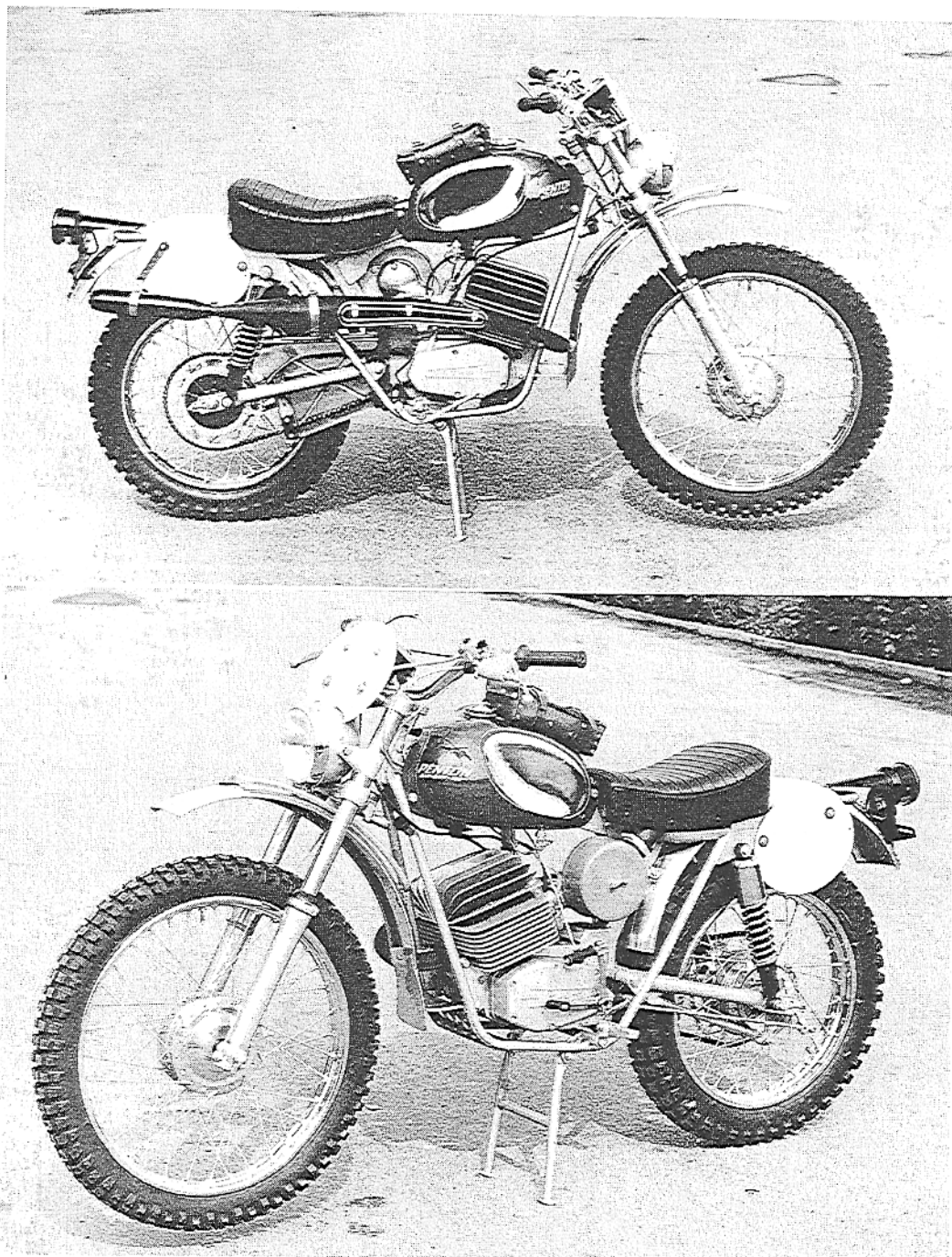
This bike is similar to the 1968 with the following features:

Tank mounted tool bag, round air box, short "ribbed" seat, aluminum cylinder, shorter chain guard, pickle style silencer, loop style foot pegs, non-bullet shaped head light, and rear shocks with exposed spring and chromed cap.

The speedometer is mounted behind the number plate in a box shaped metal holder. The speedo cable is connected to the drive mechanism on the ignition case.

These bikes came with the 5 speed "A" version Sachs motors.

Note the lack of extra gussets on the frame which were added to the 70 and 71 models to strengthen the weak spots.



Latest News

John Penton and Ed Youngblood will be traveling to the Loretta Lynn's G.N.C.C. races on April 15 & 16th. They will be selling and autographing books. Doug Wilford will set up a Penton display booth there with the new "PENTON" banners to attract attention. All Penton owners going to this event are being encouraged to bring their Pentons out to display at the booth. There will be certificates issued to each bike shown and special awards to the top three bikes as judged by John.

Kip Kern has been very, very busy. He is in the process of restoring Al Born's 1968 125 Penton, serial no. V003 in hopes of having it ready to show for Mid-Ohio. He is also trying to work on a bike for Jack Penton and about 3 others for other people which is leaving him no time to work on his bikes. Are we having fun Kip?

We have been in touch with the AMA Museum to put a Penton on display. They have contacted Kip Kern and he has graciously agreed to loan them one of his bikes. He will take it over to them in March after Daytona is over with. If you get a chance to stop at the museum, check it out.

We also are working with the AMA Museum to transfer most of the Mid-Ohio display after Vintage Days and use it as an exhibit for the rest of the year. This will give us exposure to any motorcyclists that missed the Vintage Days events.

For our foreign members who will not be able to attend the Vintage Days events, we will have photos of Sears Point in the next issue of this newsletter. Photos of Mid-Ohio will be in the Fall issue.

Penton Shirts

In our planning for the Penton display at both Vintage Days Events the idea came up to find a way to have the members working in the display stand out from the crowd with some kind of uniform. Doug Wilford worked out a deal with J.C. Penney and purchased a limited quantity of their short sleeve dress shirts. He is embroidering a Penton logo with a small motorcycle above the pocket and will embroider the individual's name on the other side. These are very professional looking and are of high quality. The shirts are being offered to any member who is planning on working one of the Vintage Days displays at Sears Point, California in April or Mid-Ohio in July. The cost is \$27 per shirt. They are available in neck sizes - 15, 15-1/2, 16, & 17. To order one of these shirts send a check payable to:
The Penton Owners Group
P.O. Box 756
Amherst, Oh 44001
Add \$3.50 for shipping by preferred mail and include the spelling of the name you want embroidered and what size shirt.

The best kept secret in vintage motorcycles is no longer a secret. The Penton web site is up and running as a commercial site under the name PENTONusa. With this secured name, it is now linked to all kinds of motorcycle names to make it easy to find. It also sports a bulletin board for all Penton enthusiasts to share information and post items for sale. A big Thank You goes to Barry Ely who helped get us up and running on the web last year by using his personal web site for the Penton Owners Group and for helping transfer items from his site to the new one.

Our membership is growing and is currently numbering about 210. Our members consist of a wide range of professions. We have professionals such as lawyers, dentists,

Orthodontist, real estate agents, and insurance agents. There are many business owners - Car dealers, lumber, Motorcycle dealers, Oil reclamation, & Landscaping.

Keep an eye out for stories and articles about John Penton in the following publications: Vintage Views, American Motorcyclist, Racer X Illustrated, Cycle World, Dirt Bike, Cycle News, BMW Owners Assoc. News, The KTM Underground, Tex-MX News, Ohio Valley BSA Owners, and Deutsches Motorrad Register. Ed Youngblood has written exclusive stories for each of these to bring awareness of Penton being named feature marque, and to advertise the new book.

The February 7th board meeting was a historical event. In attendance were 3 generations of the Borer family. In attendance were James Borer, his sons Jeff and John, and John's daughter Halle who is 9 months old. She slept during the entire meeting which gives you an indication of how exciting our meetings can be.

Jeff Borer is a NSU collector. He owns John Penton's NSU that John raced in the late 50's. This bike will be displayed outside the tent at Sears Point and is the one shown on this month's cover. This bike will also be on display at the Mid-Ohio event.

Upcoming Events

In October will be the 4th annual ISDT Riders Reunion. There was talk last year of moving this event from Arkansas to Missouri. As of this date we do not have a date or exact location. However, this is a good time to mark your calendar for the 1st weekend in October (when the event is generally held) to plan on attending. Last year's event saw more Penton motorcycles than any other brand. We encourage all of our members to try

and attend and bring your bikes to ride or show. More information will be in our next newsletter and will be posted on our web site.

ATTENTION TRIALS RIDERS

The Ohio Valley BSA Owners Club will be holding their 13th annual Vintage Trials - Swapmeet - Auction on May 6th & 7th. This event is held at Cable's Creek Campground on County Road 56 just outside of Toronto, Ohio (north of Stebenville, Ohio along the Ohio river). Their Classic Observed Trials are challenging and fun to ride or just watch. This is a family oriented event. Cost is \$5 per Adult per event day which includes spectating, a European swapmeet, and your camping site. For more information call: Paul Atkinson 740-544-5411 or Bud Kubena 724-945-6018.

In August, the Ohio Valley BSA Owners Club hold their British/European Rally. This is a great event filled with many activities from Friday thru Sunday: Swap meet, evening road rides, a Saturday Dual Sport ride, Vintage Trials, Breakfast road rides, Movies and a Bonfire. Its a weekend of great bikes, good people, and a good time. This event is also held at Cable's Creek

Campground. More information on this event will be in the next newsletter.

Ride with Paul Danik - March 25

Two time ISDT medal winner, Paul Danik has invited all Penton owners to bring their Penton motorcycles out and ride with him on Saturday March 25, 2000 at Cochran, Pa. This is a charity trail ride put on by that city every year that draws thousands of riders. The ride is an easy 30 to 50 miles in length and the whole town goes all out to make it an enjoyable event. The entry fee is \$20 which includes food and beverages along the route. Although the route covers many public roads, they are closed off for this event and license plates are not mandatory. Paul rode this event last year, had a great time, and figured that this would be even better with a bunch of old Pentons riding together. Cochran is almost directly north of Pittsburgh near Mercer, Pa. (NOTE: no 2-up riding is allowed at this event)

All Penton riders are encouraged to meet in the parking lot (look for the Penton banner) at 10am. Be ready to ride as a group at 11am.

For more information call:

Paul Danik (724) 625-9166

TEXAS MX EVENTS

The Texas Vintage Racing Club has a bunch of races on their schedule.

March 12 - Village Creek

March 26 - Rio Bravo

April 2 - Mosier Valley

May 21 - Bentonville, Ark

(Missouri Riders Challenge Race)

June 4 - Swan

These are points paying races and some are a combination vintage and Evolution. If you are interested in playing with these guys, give a call to one of these people for directions and more information:

Britt Lambert (817) 220-6087

Skip Miller (817) 798-5861

Do you have a favorite event that you ride your Penton that you would like to see more Pentons participate in?

Drop us a note to our P.O. box with the time, date, location, and cost of the event and we will publish it in our newsletter, post it on our web site, and try to make it an annual scheduled event for our members to attend.

Photo of KTM factory prototype 175 motorcycle in 1971.

Note: Amal carb, chain adjusters, gas tank & side cover.

This is very close to what the 1972 Penton Jackpiners looked like.



AMA VINTAGE DAYS at SEARS POINT

The Vintage Days event at Sears Point is fast approaching. The following information is being given as an update from the last newsletter regarding this historic event.

The price of admission per person is \$5 Friday, \$15 Saturday, \$15 Sunday or \$25 for the weekend. Camping is available on Sears Point's property at a cost of \$10 for the weekend. If you have an AMA membership card, Don't Leave Home Without It. There is a discount of \$2 off the admission price for the weekend, Saturday, and Sunday rates if you show it.

Friday is the set up day for the Penton Display with AHRMA road racing practice going on throughout the day and a swap meet. In the evening we are planning on attending the AHRMA dirt track race where John Penton will be introduced to the crowd. We are planning on sitting together as a group to watch some good racing. Admission is \$10 at the Solano County Fairgrounds in Vallejo.

Saturday will be a busy day with AHRMA road racing and observed trials, plus the addition of a hare scramble. All Penton owners are encouraged to bring their bikes to display in the coral next to the tent.

Bikes will be judged by John for personal favorite, best of show, etc. Our display will be open with John and Ed Youngblood around most of the day to autograph books. Please pick up your bikes from the coral before 5pm.

After closing, we are planning to have a cook out, to share some stories, and get to know each other a little better. We are still working on the location. More information on this will be provided at the display booth on Friday and Saturday.

Sunday will have us split in two as we man the Penton Display and set up for the Penton Only exhibition ride after the first set of motos has been run. All member are encouraged to ride their Penton motorcycles. Sign up for this will be at the MX track at 9am. You must be an AMA member to ride and any size or year of Penton motorcycle may be ridden. Anyone that is not racing in the AHRMA motocross program is encouraged to display their bikes in the coral next to the tent. The Penton Display will close at 5 pm. Please make sure that you pick up your bikes before this time. We would appreciate any help in dismantling the display.

the following is a time schedule of events:

Friday April 28
7 am Gates Open

8 am Penton Owners assemble display in main tent.

6 pm Penton Owners will meet at Vallejo Speedway to watch AHRMA dirt track races at Solano County Fairgrounds.

7 pm AHRMA dirt track racing begins

Saturday April 29

7 am Gates Open

8 am Penton display open for public viewing. Member bring their

Penton motorcycles in to display in coral next to display tent.

2:20 pm John Penton exhibition lap around race track

5 pm Close of Penton Display

5:30 pm Penton Owners cook out

Sunday April 30

7 am Gates Open

8 am Penton display open for public viewing

9 am Sign up for Penton Only Exhibition Ride at motocross track, AHRMA motocross practice begins

10:30 am AHRMA Motocross racing begins

Noon? Penton Only Exhibition Ride - following first set of motos

2:20 pm John Penton exhibition lap around race track

5 pm Penton Display closes and is dismantled

Directions to Sears Point Raceway 1-800-870-7223

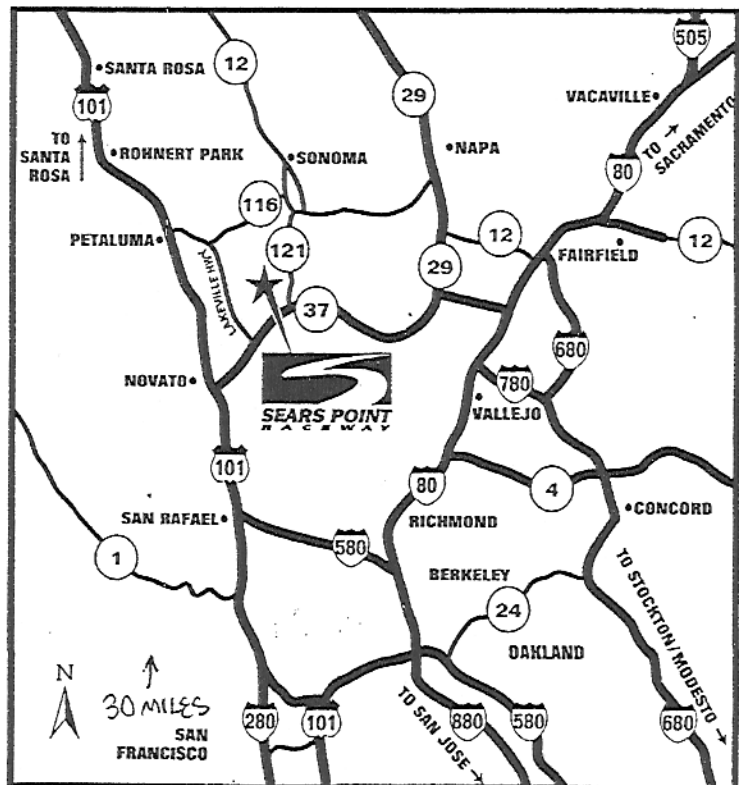
Sears Point Raceway is located along Highway 121 near the intersection of Highway 37.

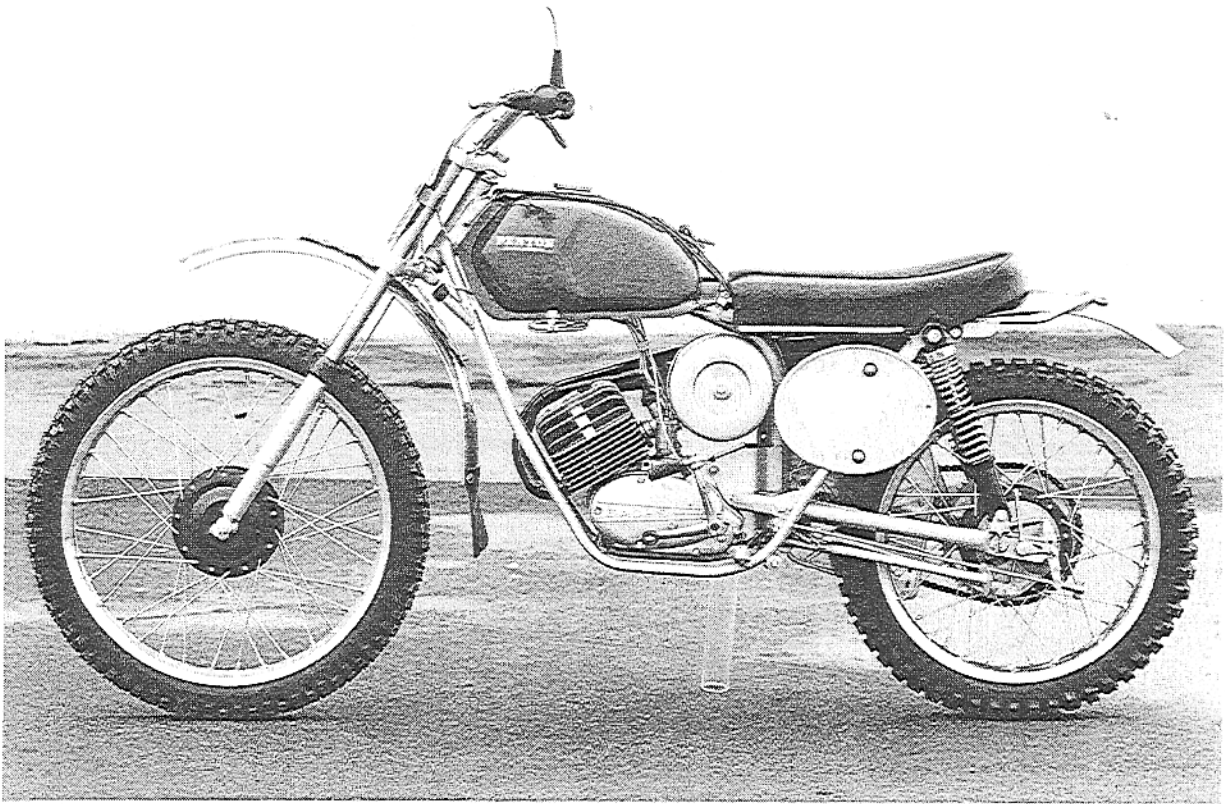
From the North - take Highway 101 south to route 116 to highway 121

From the South - take I-580 to Highway 101 north. Take the Highway 37 exit east to Highway 121.

From the East - take I-80 west to the Highway 12 exit. Follow Hwy 12 to Highway 29 (turn right) to go north to Hwy 121 (turn left). Follow Hwy 121 for 10 miles to stop sign, turn left, and travel about 5 miles to the track.

Follow the signs along Hwy 121 to the parking areas.





KTM prototype of a "Penton Junior Crosser" in a combination CMF and steel tank frame. Items that were borrowed from the steel tankers: Air box, side number plate, and rear axle adjusters. Note the Ceriani front forks, the oval Sachs motor, the short gas tank with leather strap, and the low padded seat.



KTM prototype of a "Penton Junior Crosser" in a familiar CMF frame. Items shown that appear on the 1972 bikes are: The frame, air box cover, air boot, gas tank, seat, fenders, chain guard, exhaust pipe, side stand, and wheel assemblies. Items shown that were never used: front forks, swing arm with steel tanker style chain adjusters, the oval shaped Sachs motor, and the motor brace (which showed up on the KTM motors).

BROTHER JOHN

by Ted Penton

The following article is from the April 1970 issue of motorCYCLIST magazine and is reprinted with permission to do so from the current editor - Mitch Boehm.

The highest tributes paid to men are usually made after their death, but I would like to write this short biography while you can still shake the hand and enjoy the youthful presence of my brother, John Penton. He was born August 19th, 1925, the fifth son in the family of six boys and two girls, to Harold and Nina Penton, on a farm in Lorain County in Northern Ohio.

What makes a great man? The greatest, of course, are those who have gambled with their lives, win or lose, for the betterment of mankind and their country; but, there are other great men who have excelled in performing superhuman feats. This trait was born in man and dates back to the beginning of time. There are countless ways in which men have been outstanding. John's is in physical and mental endurance.

I feel that I know John as no other living soul knows him; even our mother, who keeps very close tabs on her sons, will never know the inner workings of John as I do. I have gone out on the trail and tried unsuccessfully to parallel his greatest feat, his transcontinental motorcycle ride from New York to Los Angeles in 52 hours and 11 minutes. This is a record he held for ten years, until the advent of transcontinental freeways made such attempts easier.

I know what a feat that was! Consider this: Whoever you are - man, woman, or child; young, middle-aged, or old - you have something that you enjoy doing. Embark upon this pastime and don't stop for 52 hours - no sleep, no coffee breaks, no food - just water and candy bars - and carry on. Note how soon it ceases to be pleasure.

Tucked away in a shed of our machine shop was a 1914 Harley-Davidson that our father had ridden as a college student. As youngsters we climbed over this gem and pretended to be great hill climbers and racers. In our magic "world of make believe", we must have ridden hundreds of thousands of miles while we dreamed of the years to come.

The biggest local motorcycle event of the year, during our childhood, was the hill climb promoted by the Two Tired Motorcycle Club of Elyria, Ohio.

We never got to go to the event, but we would stand by the roadside all day long waiting for the wrecks to be hauled past in the evening. It was a futile hope that just one bike might run out of gas or have a flat tire in front of our house, so we might get a chance to see one of those heroes and touch his powerful machine.

Finally, on our oldest brother, Ike's, 14th birthday, Dad consented to let us drag the old bike out into the daylight

and make it run. Little did he dream what that small consent would lead to and the effect it would have on motorcycle history.

In the early years it was Ike and I who spent all of the time we could steal from our daily work to fix and procure motorcycles; but, as soon as John got the strength to operate our machines, he was off and running. He was the smallest of the family, but that made no difference in his ability.

John is part man and part machine; what percentage is machine I have never been able to determine, but it is a very highly tuned machine and is the closest thing to perpetual motion that I have ever known. He is always on the run and usually has a day's work done before the sun comes up. He learned a deep appreciation for machinery at an early age. He learned always the hard way; if he broke it, he fixed it. When he fixed it, he always tried to understand why it broke and would repair and strengthen it so the same thing wouldn't happen again.

His feelings for his machines are akin to his love for his family. Many are the times when I've heard someone tell him that so-and-so fell off his bike and John would inquire without even thinking, "Did he hurt his machine?" Oh, it isn't that he has no feelings for people, but he is so engrossed in his work with motorcycles that his concern is automatic.

All of his life he has been one who never came in second. He always had to win. If he didn't, he would return with renewed strength and practice until he excelled.

As a boy of ten he could dive from 60 feet with the grace of an Olympic champion. He could swim the farthest and the fastest of anyone who ever challenged him, either on top or beneath the water. Many a local football fan remembers him as a plucky little quarterback.

At the age of fifteen he built the fastest hot rod the State of Ohio had ever seen. No one ever passed it or beat it in drag racing.

Ike and I didn't know about it, but he frequently borrowed our bikes to sport his girlfriends when we were busy or away. At night he would push the machine out of hearing distance down the road with the help of these dolls, and off they would go.

After high school John joined the Merchant Marine. He shoveled his way over the route to Murmansk and back for two years, and was one of the lucky ones who made an even number of crossings. When the Navy finally got him, he was the most powerful man I have ever seen. His back was laced with bands of alloy steel; his biceps were so large that he couldn't touch his shoulders with his fingers. He could push a hundred pounds up over his head with one hand as easily as most people push a pencil.

When he finished Navy boot camp, he was a Motor Mac 3rd class. Now, for the first time in his life he had some really fancy precision machinery, and he fell in love with it.

Within three months he made 1st class. His ship was an LSM powered with GM Diesels. He stayed with this ship till the end of the war, when he and the crew took her to Boston, put her away as you would a rifle, and came home.

John tried college, but after a year of studying gave it up for a more exciting life in business with me. We ventured from one business to another and no matter what we tried, we made a go of it. The reason was always the same - John and his never-ending hard work and determination. Why then did we change so much? I really can't say, except that we never entered any business to try to get rich. It was always a new adventure that started us. Like, for example, the ditching business:

We came home from Daytona one winter and found, to our surprise, that the county had started to lay a water main past our house. It was necessary that we dig a ditch to put a water tap in the house. The average man would have looked in the yellow pages and called the ditch digger, but not the Penton boys. No, we had to have our own ditch digger; so we hunted around till we found one for a little of nothing and bingo, we were in the ditching business! Yes, there was Penton Bros. this, and Penton Bros. that, for about six years, John and Ike, and I were in and out of as many ventures.

Somehow it seemed that the turning point for a new venture was always the Jack Pine Run. You didn't need a calendar in our neighborhood to tell when September was approaching for by the first week in August the lights in our shop burned later each night. It was as common as the summer breeze to be awakened in the night by the explosion of a highly tuned engine coming to life and roaring off into the moonlight for a test. How our darling mother survived all these hair-raising years I'll never know; but today, at 79, she lives on the hill in a beautiful home (another of our ventures - we built it for her) and watches over the carrying-on of her offspring. (Six of her 23 grandchildren are already on motorcycles!)

With all this Jack Pine concentration, whatever business we had been in was nearly forgotten. It was motorcycles for breakfast, dinner, supper and all night long. By the time we all arrived in Lansing, we were so beat and run down we couldn't even make the banquet. In our early years there were four of us up there on bikes; Bill and John rode trail while Ike and I were pit crew. But after Bill won the Cow Bell in 1952 he retired from the trail to attend to his fruit farming which was at its busiest in September. After Jack Pine the formula was to seek a new adventure to survive on for the following year.

In 1953 we formed the corporation of Penton Bros., Inc. and settled down to running a machine shop and a motorcycle store. Both of these businesses grew from an old lathe and a couple of mud runners. As the years passed, John's skill in the saddle grew with the motorcycle business.

His fame spread from state to nation to international. It would take ten pages to list all the runs that he has won. He rode the Big Bear once, the International Six Days five times, he won the famous Canadian National Corduroy Enduro so many times that I used to feel embarrassed when they would announce his name. These men worked so hard to lay it out and put it on and John took the big iron home. Wherever endurance men collect and talk any place in the world, it would be a rare occasion that his name wouldn't be mentioned as among the greatest riders of our time.

Oh, his life hasn't been all glory any more than the intimate life of any famous man or woman. He has known sorrow worse than most of us and bad luck much more than his share. Our father died when John was 12. This saddled John with more responsibility than most boys are asked to assume at that age. He nursed his first wife from perfect health to her death with multiple sclerosis over a period of one year. There isn't a more heartbreaking loss any man could possibly endure than to watch the young mother of his three husky sons wither away to death. He nursed her with a tenderness that was almost a prayer and nobody who watched him in that vigil would question the depths of this man's goodness.

Following her death in 1957 he drew on his terrific endurance and pressed on. He worked harder and longer, burying his sorrow in his work. Three years later he married another victim of heartache and sorrow - a young widow who also had three children. John and her husband had been very close friends, so it seemed that fate had meant for these two survivors to merge their families and their futures.

The following year John and Donna were blessed with fifth son and their combined flock numbered seven. Bad luck continued to parallel the good. Their infant son came within a hair's breadth of death with encephalitis in 1962. There were injuries to John and to the children that some years took over half his salaries for hospital and doctors. His medical bills were so high for three years running that the Internal Revenue Service called him on the carpet and said that no man could live on his salary and pay those bills. They were almost right- they should have said, "no man except John Penton".

The year 1966 was true to form in both good luck and bad. In January of that year John organized an American team to ride in the International Six Days. He had the country's top enduro men on his list and it looked as though the USA might finally be recognized as a country in the line-up. Of course these men were going to have to pay their own way to Europe because our great country of America is too busy sending its congressmen and their girlfriends on paid vacations of a global nature to spend a couple thousand dollars competing in world sports. They would rather send our men to be killed in desolate swamps, and shoot rockets to the moon.

Yes, it looked like a great year for John, but in early spring his second youngest boy, Brad, fell at school and suffered a severe skull fracture. Only the skilled hands of a great surgeon and many weeks in the hospital saved his life. This left John thankful, but financially unable to compete; so his team left for Sweden without their leader. One of his daughters also suffered a concussion that spring.

At Jack Pine that year he got the great father's reward of seeing his oldest son start his first Jack Pine Run. He also had the honor of winning the last of the famous Jack Pine Enduros. He received the largest trophy of his career along with the traditional Cow Bell. But, true to form, his luck took another dive at the Cordoroy Run in Canada. He pulled his thumb out of joint and couldn't start the second day. This kept him out of the Sandy Lane Run, along with many other small runs that fall.

In November of 1966 tragedy struck again when John and Donna lost their son Brad very suddenly with Spinal Meningitis. This is the sort of heartbreak one never really overcomes, but his work and his terrific endurance saw him thru.

While he was convalescing with a broken hand from the Little Burr Enduro and nursing a knee injury that required surgery, John recognized the need of riders to have an interchange of news and opinion, so he founded and edited the (Ohio) State Cycle News. This single sheet newspaper speaks for itself as another accomplishment for the motorcycling world and a testimony to the success of John Penton.

The 1967 season went better than average for John, and once again he organized a United States Vase Team to enter the International Six Days in Poland. This trip will go down in history, as it was on this trip that the famous Penton Six Days Motorcycle was born.

As with the other projects of the Penton Brothers, this one happened mostly by accident. One lazy summer day a salesman strolled thru the door of our Honda, BMW, and Husqvarna Agency in Amherst, Ohio. He asked for John and proceeded to try to sell him a new brand of motorcycle. John, being a good listener, patiently absorbed each statement. After the stranger had finished John quietly told the stranger that his product wasn't what the trade needed and thanked him for his time. Now, this gentleman from the East wasn't taking this brush-off easily and he pressed his machine further. He said he would give John a motorcycle if he would just ride it. John accepted the offer. After a few weeks later this "knight of the Open Road" came by to get John's report. I'm sure he never listened to a more discouraging description of poor engineering in his life. He countered with the history-making statement, "If you know so damn much about motorcycle design, why don't you build your own?"

John couldn't seem to shake those words from his head. Of course it was financially impossible. Our enterprise was

burdened to the limit with mortgages. Our machine shop wasn't tooled for this type of production. Even if we had "hand-made" John's machines for years, it was a different deal to mass produce 1,000 machines.

As the summer wore on, John dreamed. He could picture a little indestructible powerhouse composed of the world's finest components, but along with each dream loomed the shadow of money.

Came the fall of 1967 and he went off to Poland to ride for Husqvarna with his team. It was on this trip that he met Erich Trunkenpolz, owner of a small motor-bike factory in Austria. Once again fate brought two people together who needed one another. Mr. Trunkenpolz needed an American product and John needed a factory. After two months of fighting the language barrier and traveling all over Europe, he came back to our office with a design and a request for \$72,000. Now if you think for one minute that it is easy to stand up in front of a stockholders' meeting and convince them that you should be given a check for seventy two big ones to build a dream, I suggest you try it sometime. However, John's reputation for hard work and success sold the idea, and the order was signed.

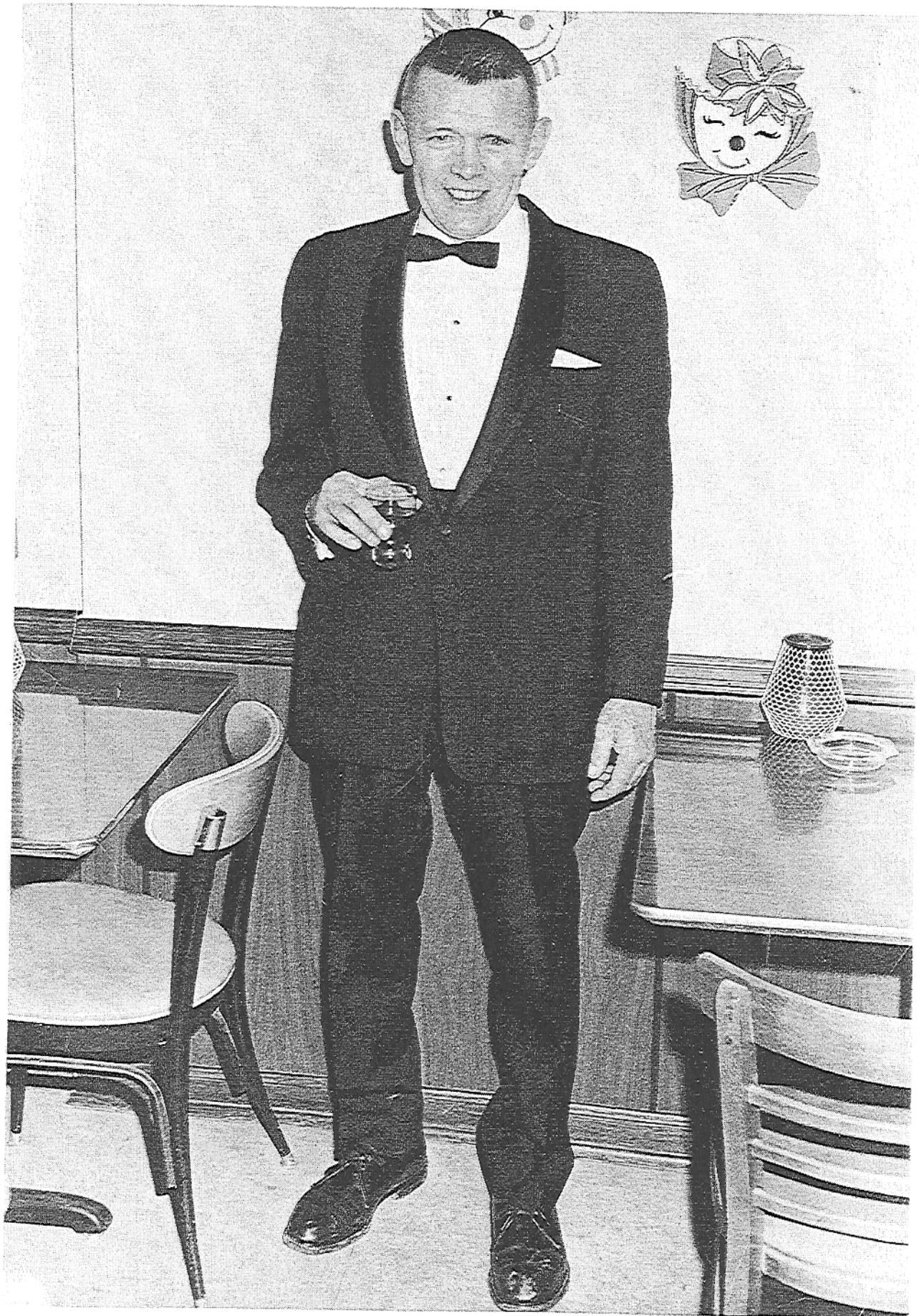
The Penton Six Days model will go down in history as the absolute off-the-road motorcycle. The reason is this: it is built by a man who cares. It is built by a man who has been over that trail many, many times. This man has knelt in the mud beside a battered machine while rain beat on his back, and with his numbed bleeding fingers tried to dry a drenched ignition system with a wet rag. Now, I ask you - who is more qualified to design a motorcycle? This man doesn't design from a drawing board or a book. He designs from the saddle. He draws on his thousands of hours on the roughest trails known to the sport. He has lost many more events because of poor equipment than of poor judgment.

It was his idea and influence that was responsible for one of the most spectacular International Moto-Cross's ever promoted in this country, Mid-States International, at New Philadelphia, Ohio, in 1968.

The handwriting is on the wall for a rider of 44. You can't keep on going and winning forever. This is hard to take, but it doesn't hurt so much when you have four sons so well-tutored.

Watching the first place names in the events each Sunday you see the name Penton there as usual. The first names are different. They may read "Tom, Jeff, or Jack," and someday maybe even "Tim", but you can place a sure bet that what John Penton has started will live on in the pages of motorcycle history long after he has hung up his stopwatch and retired to his trophy hall.

Ted Penton passed away on January 11, 1991. He was the crazy, wild, fun-loving one of the family and is dearly missed and loved by those who knew him.



A rare photo of Ted Penton dressed in a tuxedo (he was not a shirt and tie man).

Tech Tips

Bing Carbs 101

by Bobby Lucas

Penton motorcycles generally have a Bing carburetor mounted from the factory. When properly adjusted and maintained it will give the rider outstanding performance and reliability under all types of conditions!

Under the current vintage competition rules, the Lectron carb and other "flat slide" carburetors are not allowed. Early Jackpiners came with the Amal carb. However, in this article we will be talking only about the Bing carburetors.

The Bings mounted on 125s are 30 or 32mm and have the codes of 2/30/101. The 175s are 30 or 32mm and have the code of 2/30/102. The 250s are 36mm and are coded 2/36/102. The 400s are 38mm and are coded 2/38/102. The later model 125s and 175s had 34 or 36mm carbs and the 250s had 38mm carbs. The codes are stamped on the carb bodies.

The Bings mounted on the KTM powered Penton motorcycles were of two types. Type "one" were on all motorcycles up to 1976. Type "two" were mounted on Pentons in 1977 on through the life of this engine type. You can use a late model type "two" on an early model engine, but you must replace the intake manifold and rotate your air boot to fit. Your pipe will be very easy to remove when you change to the type "two".

Type "one" carbs were mounted in a couple of ways. On some the carb body mounted (clamped) directly to the manifold. The later types had a special insulating insert between the manifold and the carb to prevent wear due to engine vibration. Type "two" carbs were rubber mounted.

Carburetors are a fuel/air metering device which measure the amount of air entering a reciprocating engine and sprays into this air the correct amount of fuel for the desired condition of

engine operation. The metering of the fuel to be mixed with air is the function of all carbs. Pressure is the key along with properly sized and adjusted components. Pressure is created by a good Piston. A worn piston may not provide the carburetor proper pressure to mix enough air and fuel causing a cold running (rich) engine.

Inspect your Bing in the following ways and you can use it a very long time. Check the carburetor mount for wear and any cracks at the clamp area. If your Bing is loose, trying to put six extra turns on the clamp screw & bolt, or using a larger bolt and nut will only cause you to crack your carb body. The manifold needs to be rebuilt (or replaced) to the original dimension or the wear of the two parts compensated by the installation of an insert. If your carb is loose and it has an insert (#37), it (the insert) needs to be replaced.

Check your slide pin located on the inside wall of the carb body. I usually RTV it to prevent any movement of the pin and to prevent any air leakage through the outside part of the pin area. Remember, if air can get in, dirt and water can too.

Check your cable adjusters (#25) on the cap of the carb. Replace any worn parts. Check your tap screws on the cable adjusters for stripped threads or worn flats (from the cable). Replace your rubber o-ring washer (#28) on the cap. Never ride without it.

Check your slide spring (#30) for wear. A worn spring is one that is weak. Don't stretch this spring ever!

Check your choke cable adjusters (#25) and spring (#29). Replace any worn parts.

[caution: never over tighten any of the adjusters on the cap]

Check your spring retainer. I like the plastic retainer (#31) (part #51-31-131-000 / or Bing #26-511 for the 175s and part # 55-31-131-000 / or Bing #26-512 for the 250s). This plastic retainer is very important.

Never leave it out or your throttle cable will slip off the slide and you will not be happy when out riding. Early Bings had a metal flat washer and if you can, replace it with the plastic type.

Next, check your jet needle (#34) and the needle clip (#32) for wear. I highly recommend replacing both. I am a victim of a cut needle which thankfully fell into the needle jet and not into the engine.

The throttle slide (#35) will be a great indicator of the type of performance you will be able to create. If your slide front is worn and pitted badly, you will need to replace it. On type "one" carbs, Bing (Agency) cannot replace the slide. On type "two" carbs, Bing (Agency) has new ones in stock.

A dirty filter, an engine loose in its mounts, and an engine that is vibrating will wear the slide, needle, and needle jet to a point that a rich mixture is all you will get. Remember, keep it clean and tight.

Needle jets (#21) are made of brass and the needle is of steel. The up and down movement and the pressure from your cylinder will cause your needle to wear out your needle jet. You can tell the wear by looking at the small end (top) of the needle jet. An egg shape center means you need to replace the needle jet. Replace it with the same size or buy a smaller one and drill it to the original size.

Vaporizers (#36) (or mixing devices) need to be checked for wear or chips. I've seen some that are gone and the engine really will run rich.

Tickler assemblies should be checked to see if the clip holding the tickler in the body is worn or about to slip off. Replacements are easily had. I've reached down and tickled the carb and let the tickler go only to see it shoot out of the carb. Not a good thing on the starting line!

Float needles (#20) should be replaced if worn. A ring around the top of the needle point will mean you

need to replace it. Use only the same type of needle. If a wire clip is used to attach it to the float, always use it again.

Screens (#12) are provided in Bing carbs for dirt riding use. It is to keep fuel from surging into the engine while riding on rough terrain.

Bowl gaskets (#10) should always be replaced at overhaul time or if they are torn.

By the information provided in the Penton Operation and Maintenance manual and by some of the pointers I have given you in this article, you should have a smooth running , easy

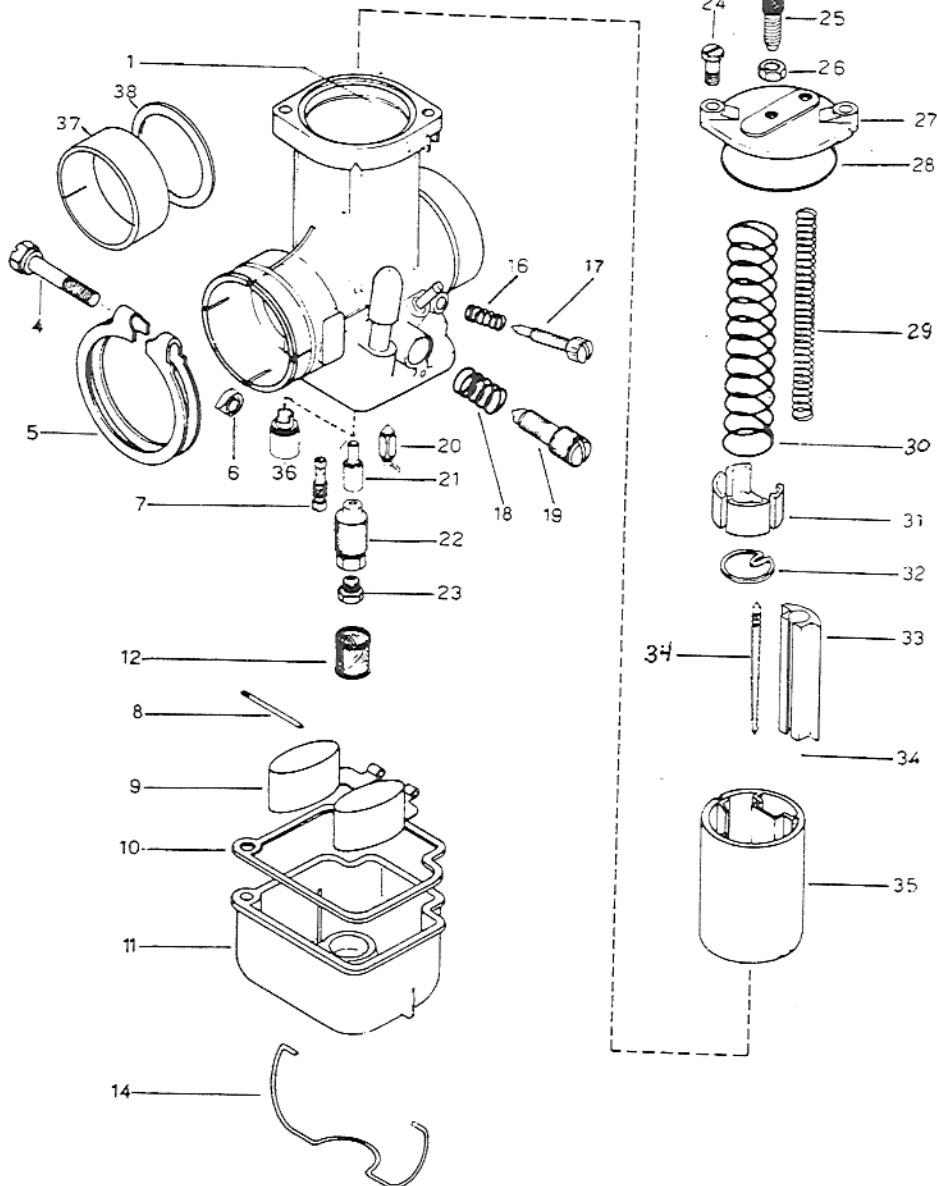
starting, reliable motorcycle. See ya at the starting line.

New Penton Central can rebuild Bing carbs. They charge \$40 for labor plus cost for any parts needed. Bobby can be reached at his home phone number (817) 483-7346.

31
175

Bing Parts Description

- 1 Carburetor body
- 4 Pinch bolt
- 5 Clamp
- 6 Nut
- 7 Pilot Jet
- 8 Spindle
- 9 Float
- 10 Seal
- 11 Float bowl
- 12 Fuel screen
- 14 Float bowl clamp
- 17 Pilot air adjust. screw
- 18 Spring
- 19 Throttle stop adj. screw
- 20 Float needle
- 21 Needle jet
- 22 Jet holder
- 23 Main jet
- 24 Top securing screw
- 25 Cable adj. screw
- 26 Nut
- 27 Cover
- 28 Rubber seal ring
- 29 choke spring
- 30 Throttle spring
- 31 Spring retainer
- 32 Needle Clip
- 33 Air valve
- 34 Jet needle
- 35 Throttle valve
- 36 Vaporizer
- 37 Bushing (insert)
- 38 Washer



MEMBER PROFILE

An Interview with Jerry West

by Alan Buehner

A couple of months ago at one of our monthly meetings, Paul Danik mentioned that I should write an article for this newsletter on Jerry West. Paul stated that Jerry contributed a lot to the sport of motorcycle racing and that this would be a neat way of paying tribute to this not so well known individual.

For those of you who do not know who Jerry West is and what he did, let me tell you. He was not a motorcycle racer, never won a trophy or medal, but his endeavor has been seen by all of us and are the words never written that have recorded the history of champions in the making. He is the person that took the photographs of some of the great ones such as John Penton, Gary Nixon, Leroy Winters, George Roeder, Kenny Roberts, Bart Markel, Roger Reiman, & Dave Mungenast, that have graced the inside pages of many magazines and even a few front covers. It is his photograph of John Penton that is being used on the front cover of the book - "John Penton and the Off-Road Motorcycle Revolution" which was taken at the 1970 six days in Spain.

Jerry was born on July 3, 1924 in Lorain, Ohio and lived most of his life there until his retirement in 1984. Since Jerry and John Penton are almost the same age and lived in the same area it was no coincidence that their two paths would cross. Jerry remembers the first time that he saw John. It was at the local quarries which were

the local hang out to go swimming. He remembers how daring John was with his feats of diving off of the cliffs and staying under the water the longest.

Jerry as a small boy always had a desire to be a photographer. One year when his parents went on a train trip and asked him what he wanted them to bring him back as a present, he asked for a camera and they bought one for him. However, since this was in the years of the Great Depression, they could not afford film, Gerry's career was put on hold.

As Jerry grew up he got to know Ted, Ike, Bill, Pat, & Mary Penton. He would help Ted with his projects and spent time with Ike in the machine shop.

Jerry worked for the Lorain Telephone Company for 36 years before retiring. During this time period he filled positions as an engineering accountant, a manager, head of customer service, and head of the pay phone division. In 1950 he and his wife purchased their first home with a 10 year bank loan that did not leave him enough money to fulfill his dream of taking up photography. He knew that the only way he was ever going to do it was to find some way for it to pay for itself. He went to the library and read books on photography, and purchased a book on where to sell your photographs. One of his first contacts was the publisher Floyd Clymer of Cycle and Hot Rod magazines. None of the magazines had paid staff photographers at the time and all photos were purchased off of free lance photographers such as Jerry. Besides motorcycles, he took photos of cars, horses, scenery,

and harness racing and anything else he could find a market for. This was a strange business to be in. Jerry worked his regular job during the week at the telephone company and took his photos at events on the weekends. Thanks to the President of the telephone company who was also a photographer (Jerry did dark room work for him) Jerry was rewarded with special favors such as extra days off to travel to and from race events. At any one time, Jerry would have 12 or more different contracts to film events (he was Harley Davidson's photographer for 16 years). Jerry never had any formal training, learning instead from his natural instinct and a "good eye".

He got started in photographing motorcycle events at the Amherst Meadowlarks track. From there, Ted and John Penton introduced him to the Jack Pine enduro. Consequently, he expanded his travels to the Little Burr, road racing, dirt track, TT races, and the salt flats.

His big event every year was Daytona. With all of the variety of races going on in one general area of the country he would make more money shooting photos than some of the finishers of the races who were risking their lives. Besides the national events, he also took photos of many of the amateur races during which he got to see many young riders grow and develop into national and international stars. One example was "little Gary Nixon" who he met at a half mile race in Freeport, Illinois.

Al: "Who is your all time favorite rider and why?"

Jerry: "I loved John Penton, but my favorite was Carrol Reswebber

who was very graceful in the way he rode the half mile tracks."

Al: "What is your most favorite motorcycling photo that you took?"

Jerry: "The one that I took of John Penton and Leroy Winters at Jackpine with the two of them sitting side by side figuring out their scores. John won by 1 point."

Al: Did you travel with the Penton family or on your own to any events?"

Jerry: "I rode with them 3 or 4 times to Daytona. I remember the first time that John asked me to ride down with him. Harley was paying for my air fare to Daytona and this was an opportunity for me to keep that money. At 10 am we got into the vehicle. John drove over to the front market and picked up a peck of apples that were very obvious that they were picked up off the ground because they were covered with brown spots. He put them in the truck between the front seats and started driving. He made a stop to buy gas and that was the only stop that he made. As John got hungry, he would just reach down and eat the apples as we drove on and on and on. I found those were the best apples I ever ate."

Al: "What was it like to be involved in recording the Penton era on film?"

Jerry: "Fantastic. The Pentons' always moved on fast forward and documentation was necessary, from the publicity photos of John's cross country run to little Jackie throwing his leg over an exceptional large C-Z wearing a brown knit cap for protection. They brought me to Europe to climb the hills of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. To freeze in Del El Eslorial, Spain. To

appreciate the pasta of Camerino, Italy. To enjoy the charm of Spindleruv Mlyn in Checo and many, many more. I met and stayed in the home of Mr. & Mrs. Erick Trunkenpolz, the "T" in KTM. I can call Arnaldo Farioli my friend. Actually, I met so many neat people throughout the world, and I owe it all to motorcycling, and photography opened the door."

Al: "Were you surprised to hear that a Penton Owners Group was being formed?"

Jerry: "Yes, it never entered my mind."

Al: "What was it like to see the Penton boys and their cousins grow from local riders to international stars?"

Jerry: "Unbelievable. John was the sponsor of a race in New Philadelphia, Ohio. While talking to and shooting photos of Toresten Hallman (who happened to have a broken wing at the time), the two Penton boys were in front of the pack dressed in matching herring-bone twill coveralls out doing one another. You knew back then they had the desire and ability to be very, very good at going fast. Of course these two were not the only two of the Penton clan that had the ability to twist the wick."

Al: "What is your favorite type of motorcycle racing?"

Jerry: "ISDT by far. It's a team sport lasting 6 days over unbelievable terrain, where only the very best can achieve their deserving rewards. One of the funniest things happened in Spain or Italy. The Penton 100cc had a red tank and the 125cc had a green tank. Rough terrain caused tank splitting. The riders were run into a barn, the leaking tank was

changed with whatever color tank was available, and they were sent down the trail. At one of the checks the spectators recognized that one of the bikes was using the wrong color tank, therefore cheating, and they complained to the officials. The officials refused to disqualify him telling the protesters that those Americans don't stand a chance of winning, they bring money to the event, why spoil it?"

The day after I interviewed Jerry, he called me up to tell me about his most memorable moment.

Jerry: "I attended 7 or 8 Six Days events during which I knew Ted Leimbach very well. After Ted passed away, Mr. & Mrs. Paul Leimbach and brothers Dane & Orrin presented a gold medal to me that Ted won in Austria (Ted Leimbach won 3 ISDT gold medals during his short career) and said that 'Ted would appreciate it that I should have it'. I had the medal mounted on the wall in my dining room. A few years ago, since I had no one to pass it on to who could appreciate it, I gave it to Orrin Leimbach to give to his mother to present to his namesake."

It was a pleasure for me to interview Jerry for this article. He is another fine example of the many quality people that John Penton has come in contact with during his life. There was no photo of Jerry to print with this article. Jerry is planning on being at the Mid-Ohio AMA Vintage Days event in July and will be one of the many celebrities on hand for you to meet.



ATTENTION ALL PENTON TRAIL RIDERS

COME RIDE WITH PAUL DANIC ON SATURDAY MARCH 25, 2000 - 10 AM
at the Allegheny Highland Pulling Association 11th Annual Poker Run in Cochran, PA

Meet in the parking lot at 10am (look for Penton banner) -sign up and ride as a group at 11am.

Riders are being advised to carry oil with you. Gas will be sold along route in 1 gallon containers.

For more information read the article on page 5 and check out their web page - www.atvconnection.com

FROM THE WEB

Date: Feb. 13, 2000.

From: Jim Hollander

email: hotgrips@cyberportal.net

The Penton family and organization from the 1970's is certainly the most significant turning point in my life, and I often reflect on it and recall the days of coming out to Ohio with my Saab station wagon, with the disassembled Penton in the back in pieces. I am sure for any of us that were fortunate enough to be involved in the Six-Days, and then fortunate enough to be involved with the Penton family, all feel the same way. There really was an endless sequence of wonderful episodes associated with it all, numerous enough to put in a book someday. (Or maybe it was just in my mind, did it affect others the same way?)

One of the most significant effects the Penton family had on me was learning a whole new way of dedicating or concentrating on the task at hand to reach the goal. While I had the drive, I didn't have the

mentor or models at home in New England, and Jack, Tom, Jeff, Dane, Billy Uhl (we shared the duplex behind John Penton's house when I moved to Ohio), Carl Cranke, and dozens of others (yes I can remember most of them by name though my age group is showing in other areas) all helped me by example. My exposure to the machine shop in Lorain was very important to me, though I couldn't use it competently, it started the seed for me.

Ultimately when I left racing for several years, went back to Engineering school at UMASS, and had a product to solve (a minor problem in cold weather), cold hands, then the Penton organization was there for me still. Dick Burleson did the early confirmation that it worked well with his 1980 Stone Mountain National Enduro win. The subsequent publicity it started in Cycle News, and then the HiPoint Accessories general manager, Larry Maiers (now of Speedvision TV fame), sent me on my way in the business by ordering 2,000 sets of the heated grips. At the time he placed the order I was still living in a university dormitory room, so production literally began

there, and inspection and packaging of products was done by students in the dormitory. School quickly took a back seat, and the university Fire Marshall assigned me another room in the dormitory for my **Hot Grips^R** growing inventory. And I've never stopped growing since then. We now have 16 acres in New Hampshire with a full machine shop with CNC, EDM, TIG, etc., and six injection molding machines all dedicated to making heated grips for several industries (motorcycle, ATV, snowmobile, snowthrower). It really wouldn't have happened were it not for John Penton and his family. Hopefully through this note they will learn of my appreciation.

Jim Hollander rode the ISDT in 1972 and 1973 on a Penton 125. In 1974, 1975, and 1976 he rode the ISDT on a Rokon 340.



Visit the new Penton Web site - www.pentonusa.org

Check out our bulletin board for information, comments, and listings for items to buy or sell.

Need an order form for the John Penton book or an application form for a friend to join? You'll find these forms on our site to print out and mail to our P.O. box.



VINTAGE MOTORCYCLE DAYS

JULY 7-9, 2000

Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, Lexington, Ohio

Penton Motorcycles Marque of the Year display -

Presented by Penton Owners Group

Grand Marshal - John Penton ISDT and enduro champion, cross-country record setter and industry pioneer

Giant AMA/Will Stoner Swapmeet

Tommi Ahvala Extreme Trials demos

Bike Show - all brands - Saturday & Sunday, classes up to model year 1990

Auction - To benefit the Motorcycle Hall of Fame Museum, featuring Jerry Wood, Auctioneer

New Model Demo Rides - By BMW, Harley-Davidson, Honda, Kawasaki, Yamaha

Lap of the Track - For attendees, Saturday and Sunday at lunch break

- **AHRMA road racing vintage and modern classes, Friday practice, racing Saturday and Sunday**
- **Vintage Motocross - Sunday**
- **Vintage Trials - Saturday**
- **Vintage Dirt Track - Friday evening, Ashland County Fairgrounds**

Seminars & Presentations - on various topics including:

- **How to get started in vintage racing**
- **Vintage bike restoration**
- **Tech tips from the staff of American Motorcycle Institute**
- **Penguin Road Racing School Friday**

FOR TICKETS CALL 1-800 MID-OHIO

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
CALL 800 AMA-JOIN**

MID-OHIO SPORTS CAR COURSE



ADMISSION

Weekend Advance (deadline June 30, noon)	NON AMA \$27	AMA/AMCA \$25
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At the Gate

Weekend	\$30	\$27
Friday	\$10	\$7
Saturday	\$20	\$17
Sunday	\$20	\$17

PENTON RIDERS DOMINATE THE COTTON BOLL IN 1975!

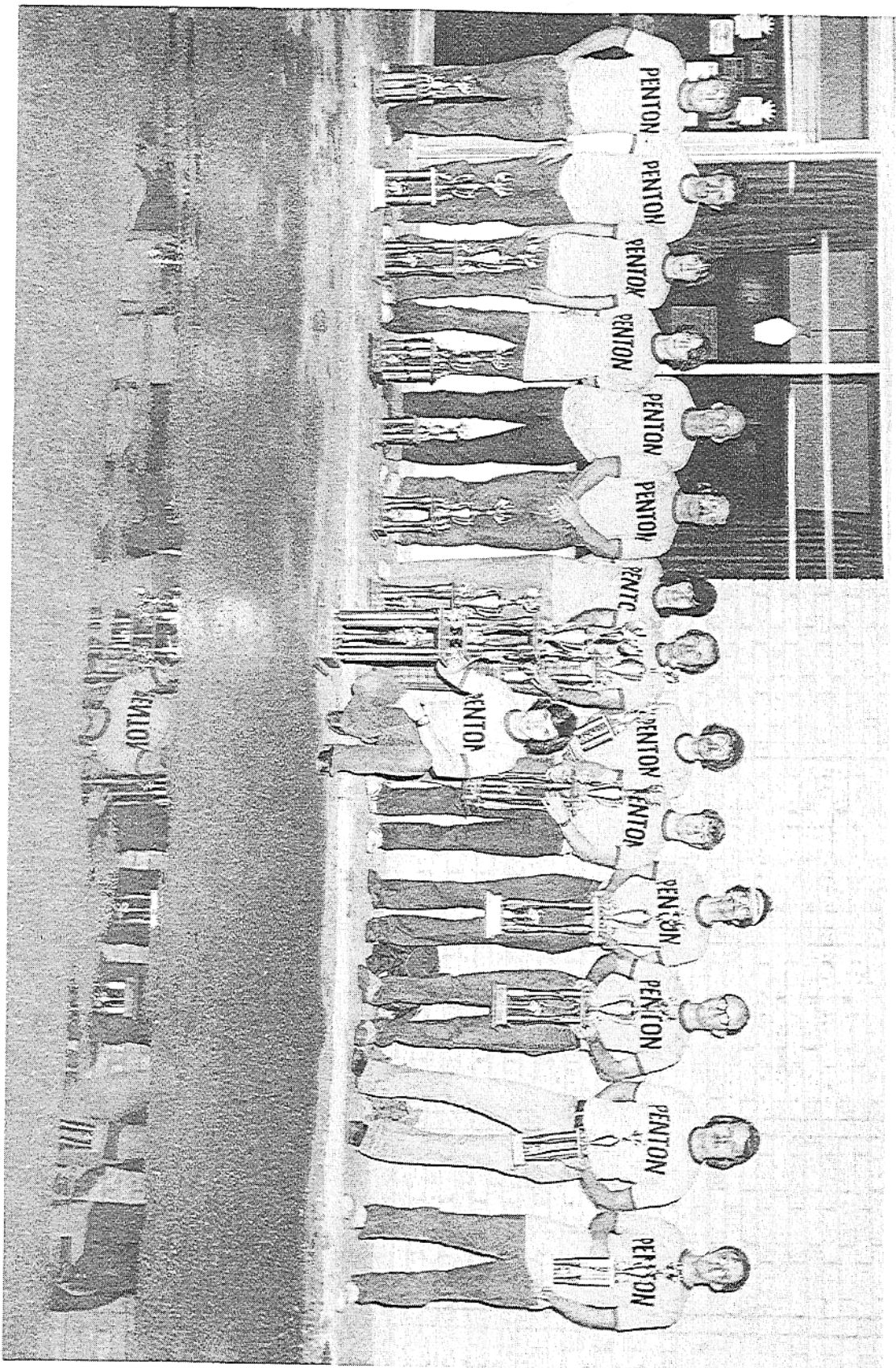


Photo of some of the Penton "wrecking crew" that won trophies in the Cotton Boll enduro, October 1975 in Memphis, Texas. Rider turnout for this 2 day event was over 598 entries. Only 60 riders finished this rough course that consisted of mud and sand. Standing left to right: Mike Davis (5th open B), Don Westfall (2nd Jr. Father-Son), Donnie Westfall (2nd 100 A), John Terry (2nd Sr. Father-Son), Glen Terry (5th 125 A), Gerald Henderson (3rd 200 A), Lynett Poole (1st Powder Puff), Dr. Joel Coker (1st 100 A), Larry Baggett (5th 100 A), Tom Penton (1st 250 A), Eddy Brasher (1st 125 A), Vern Street (2nd 250 A), Henry Bostick (4th 250 A), and Bob Daniels (4th 250 B). Kneeling in center is Jack Penton.

Not shown are the following Penton finishers: Jim Sherrill (4th 100 A), Jim McCartney (1st 100B), Larry Milton (3rd 100 B), Bill Uzzell (2nd 125 A), Bob Pike (1st 125 B), Roy Kaye (3rd 125 B), Eddie Meadows (5th 125 B), Ronald Brady (1st Open B), and Carol Jones (2nd Powder Puff). To say that Penton motorcycles dominated this event is an understatement. It is no surprise who the overall winner of this event was that received the "BIG" trophy shown in the photo.