

WHAT IS A BIKER?



Many years ago Honda had an ad campaign based on the theme "you meet the nicest people on a Honda". In the early sixties Honda, and some of the other import brands offered motorcycles that were dependable, affordable and loads of fun.

My cousin, Johnnie Ray, became my hero when he got a Honda 305. I rode many miles around Wauchula, Florida perched behind him on that little bike (of course at the time you could not have convinced either of us it was a little bike.)

Many of the motorcycle enthusiasts of today trace their love of motorcycling back to these early Hon-

das, Yamahas, Kawasakis, Vespas and even those little red and gray bikes sold by Sears.

But one thing is still true – you meet the nicest people on a motorcycle – that is how we met Ken and Peggy Lanterman. Motorcycling is a sport that many couples enjoy together, either sharing the same motorcycle or each having their own ride. So Motorcycles: On The Road Again is profiling a couple in this issue.

Ken and Peggy Lanterman are good examples of a couple that thoroughly enjoys riding and taking the adventure together. Here they share their thoughts and ideas with On The Road Again (OTRA).

How long have you been riding?

KEN: Since the 6th grade, but seriously for the past six years.

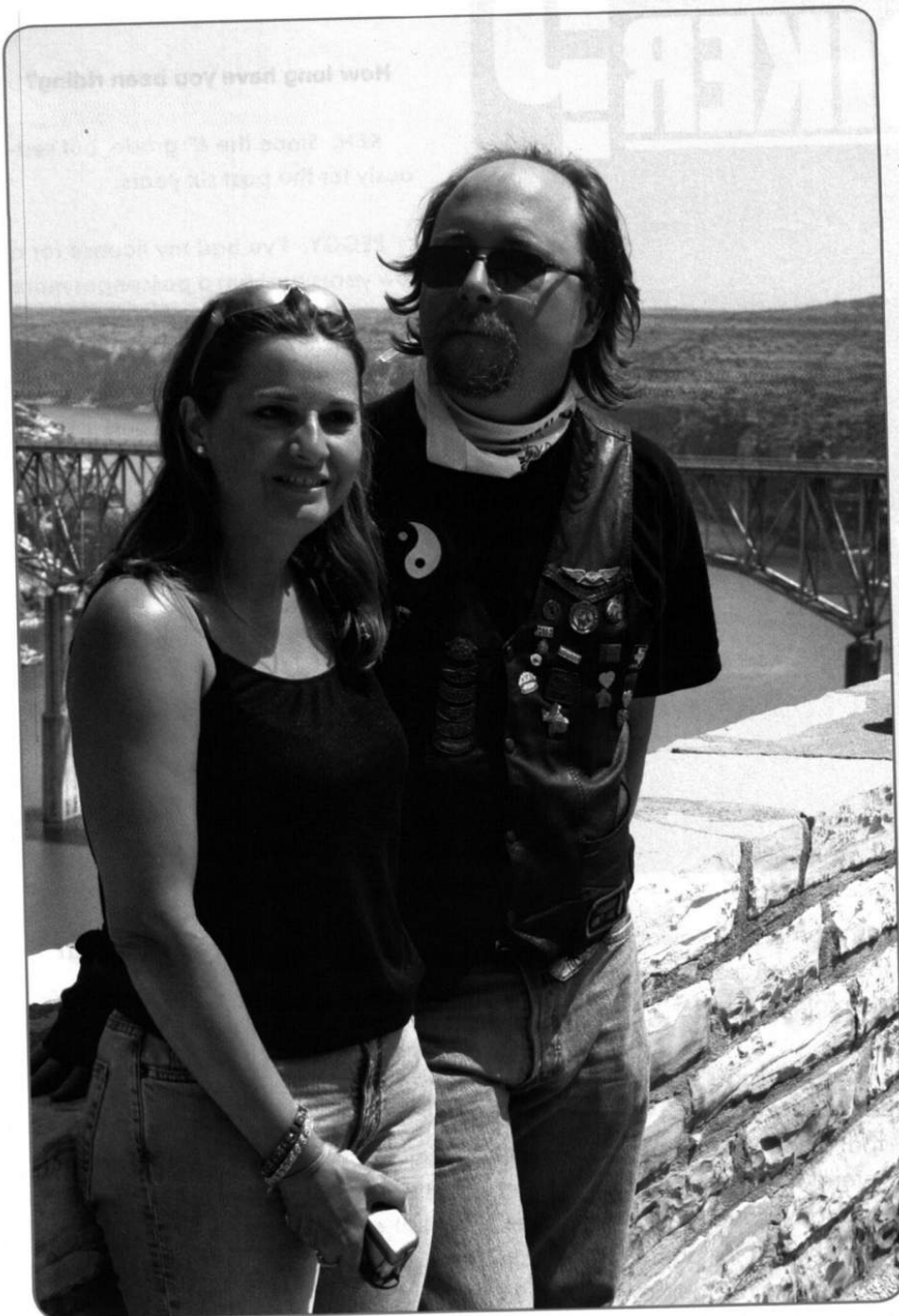
PEGGY: I've had my license for a few years but I am a passenger more than I ride. I do enjoy riding but I also enjoy the scenery. On our first trip a few weekends after we took our safety course Ken and I (as a passenger) went to Austin. We took the scenic route. We took the Buescher Park road. Ken got to practice one of the quick maneuvers that we learned in our class when a park employee backed his trailer into our path. I was impressed with his skills and always have felt safe with him. Right after that incident as we were riding along a beautiful Cardinal flew along side of us for a few minutes. That was one of the most peaceful moments in my life.

What do you get out of riding?

KEN: Relaxation. Meeting new people from all walks of life. The best part of it is way you get focused, but really aren't. It's almost mystical. All your senses are alive and it's intense in a relaxing sort of way. That hardly makes sense, but it's the best way to describe it.

PEGGY: It is very relaxing for me as a passenger, when I ride it's very exhilarating. I just love feeling the wind and enjoying the smells. It may sound silly but some of the best smells are when you pass a freshly cut lawn, or some one grilling or a laundry mat. There is nothing like the smell of clean laundry.

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Peggy, I know you have your own license. What was your first bike?

PEGGY: My first bike was a Honda Shadow VLX 600. It was a little top-heavy for me. I had a problem turning right; I had a tendency to fall over when I didn't give it enough gas.

So on many occasions at the beginning I ended up on my side. I was very okay with this but Ken seemed to be very embarrassed for me. He would be so red with embarrassment it was funny. I would just say "Ken, it's Okay, I don't mind falling". Of course he was the one who would

have to pick me up so I understand his frustration.

In Texas you don't have a problem with people wanting to help. Men would gladly pull up and ask if we needed help and my very kind husband would say "It's Okay. I've got it she does this all the time". We would thank them and wave them on.

Now I have this Diamo 250, it is a less expensive bike so I don't feel bad when I drop it. I would call it a beginner's bike, it's not cool in any way. (Hope, I don't hurt any Diamo dealer's feelings) I practice riding it up and down the street while Ken sits on the back of his pickup reading and watching me. The last time I practiced neighbor hood kids followed me on their 4-wheeler and would pull over and wave encouragingly when I passed. It's a good thing I'm in my late 40's and past trying to look cool, I'm just having fun.

What is the funniest thing that ever happened to you while riding.

KEN: Three of us rode out to Eagle Lake to eat after a day of incredible rain. On the way back we came up on a truck hauling a trailer of junk on a 2-lane road so we couldn't pass. I was leading and, guessing that any minute the guy's junk was going to fall off, so I kept my distance. Sure enough, a wood box and a section of chicken wire fell. I was able to dodge both but one member of our group rolled right over the chicken wire. The wire was stuck under his bike, but it wasn't enough to cause problems. We all stopped, Peggy jumped off the back and took the

wire out from under his bike and was about to toss it in the ditch when the guy said, "No, no, no. Give me that. I'm gonna' go give him a piece of my mind." He put it across his lap and hauled after the junk hauler, the sight of that chicken wire flapping like two wings in the wind was just hysterical. We couldn't hear what he said, but his gestures and head bobbing told us he wasn't giving the guy any slack.

Riding is fun but a good rider never loses sight of the fact that danger lurks everywhere, any accidents or close calls?

PEGGY: We had an accident one evening. We hit a lab that got caught up under the front of Ken's Road King. We soon learned the importance of helmets. Neither of us had a head injury but the two large throbbing bumps I had keeps a helmet on me. I had a short stay at the hospital getting some minor plastic surgery on my left elbow, right knee and right hand. We both had some very bad road rash. It's amazing to try and figure out how you can get road rash on both shoulders when you seem to be skidding on your bootie down the highway. Ken did a great job keeping the bike up as long as he did. His quick response is what saved us from worse injuries.

KEN: The most frightening thing, the one that has stuck with me the most, occurred in downtown Austin during a ROTRally weekend. I nearly ran a red light while looking for our hotel. For some spooky reason just as I entered the intersection, I stopped. Something flashed in the corner of

my right eye and I looked up as a woman in a truck on a cell phone flew right in front of us. Had I been a few feet further into the intersection, we'd have been toast. Needless to say, I don't worry anymore if I get lost. I pay attention at intersections.

What would be your dream trip?

PEGGY: A fly & ride to Colorado would be great. But I would also like to go to Europe and ride the roads in Greece.

KEN: It is always the next trip, to get to go someplace I haven't been before. We try to do 3 or 4 distance trips per year and weekend trips whenever we can manage them.

We met Ken and Peggy when they joined a group we hosted for a

9-day, 3,000-mile ride around Texas. Ken and Peggy were a lot of fun on that trip and we immensely enjoyed their company. During that trip Peggy rode the passenger seat left the driving to Ken; well, maybe she did make a few suggestions from the back seat.

Peggy was always one of the first up in the morning and always ready to go at the scheduled time. She was always cheerful, upbeat, full of energy and excited about the trip.

Peggy and Ken are truly a couple of bikers are that are real biker couple.

Editor's notes: In real life Peggy is a store manager for a Bed, Bath and Linens store. Ken is assistant business editor for the Houston Chronicle.

