



SOUTHERN OHIO INSANITY

Land of Crazies

Story by D. L. McKiernan

Enduroists are crazy. Really and truly insane. Just look at the madness they inflict on their bodies and bikes. They get up at ungodly hours, travel miles and miles, and pay someone lotsa bucks just to ride like hell for four or five endless, gutwrenching, fatiguing hours through bottomless bogs, up unscalable cliffs, across raging rivers, through impenetrable thorns, and up, down, over, around, and through other equally-evil, bike-breaking barriers. Then they stand around for even more interminable hours in the rain, snow, sleet, mud, heat, and/or dust waiting to see how they fared in their struggle for a tin cup, medallion, plaque, or some other flashy, spangled, gaudy, shiny, silver-gold - red - white - and - blue - inlaid - walnutplastic-high-zoot trophy with the Harley street bike on the top. After the awards ceremony they hobble, limp, lurch, and drag off, groaningly favoring



"Torpedo off the starboard bow, Sir."

some sore, twisted, wrenched, split, smashed, or bashed body part, preparing for that endless journey home, and all the time proclaiming, "Jeez! Wasn't that fun!"

Masochists.

Fact is, most enduroists can't get enough of their self-inflicted delight. Their concept of nirvana is to have their karma embedded in a higher plane of existence delineated by an endless route sheet that'll get 'em down the infinite cross-country trail through countless check-points on time 'cause they gassit. I know it's true, 'cause you see I'm one of that masochistic mob. I ride enduros. And if you ride and love enduros too then let me tell you about Utopia . . . southern Ohio, that is . . . home of the never-ending enduro.

Actually, I exaggerate but slightly when I claim a never-ending Ohio enduro, for even here enduros end. But lemme tell you what I'm trying to say: The 1976 southern Ohio enduro season opened in the rain on February 22 and closed in the snow on November 21, and in that interval Ohio AMA District 11 ran *twenty-nine* sanctioned enduros . . . that's right, I said 29 enduros in



"When all those about you are losing their heads . . ."

one district in one season . . . an all-time AMA record. That district had enduros coming out of all orifices, two-day enduros and week-end double-headers and regular one-day affairs and a National, and it all added up to 29 runs. Altogether there were 11 clubs involved; one club staged five, count 'em five, enduros; another club put on four; others three, two, or one. They/we are insane down here . . . mad, rabid, crazy endurophiles.

With all of this opportunity and activity, it is no wonder that this Ohio hotbed is the home stomping grounds of such outstanding enduro/ISDT riders as the Penton clan, the Leimbachs, Fogle, Bush, LaVoie, and a whole host of others too numerous to list. Even King Richard and his Tonto, Popiel, were Ohio based before their recent move to Tennessee. It's true that all of these notables now spend their time at National and International events, but every now and again they return to home base to ride in a local run . . . where they sometimes lose to one of the onrushing horde of very good, District 11 hotshoes.

This southern Ohio proving ground



"Just sin-n-n-ging in the rain."



Aqua-glide.



Sudden traction.



Where's all this help when WE need it?

PHOTOS BY RICHARD CHRISTENSEN



"Ah, he's no fun."



"Lifeguard, lifeguard!"



Rigor Mortis Man returns from the swamp.



"Heh, heh. Just wait till the LATE numbers come through here."

is perfect for training and graduating top-notch talent. The terrain incorporates practically everything but desert into the enduros: steep hills, swamps, fire roads, creeks and rivers, mud, water, logs, rocks, brush, trees, strip mines—you name it—it's available. Furthermore, Ohio has something nearly unique to their enduros: hard-sided, slick, deep, narrow, clay/mud ruts running in packs lengthwise down the trail. When you get in one of these babies you feel like you're trapped in a giant slot-car track. Get a bit out of shape and you are gonna go down, 'cause they're too narrow to steer in and too slick and steep to get out of. You can actually be in the process of helplessly crashing for about a hundred yards before you even hit the ground . . . gads, it's like seeing the giant shithammer coming at you for an hour-and-a-half and not being able to do anything about it. Ultimately, you learn that there are two ways of riding the ruts: very slowly while paddling and footing it, or very fast, stabbing now and then. Anything in between and you crash. But clay ruts, power lines, woods trails, whatever, it's all fun . . . that is, if you're a typical crazed enduroist.

What's new, you say? Enduroists aren't insane? HAH!! Just look at the accompanying photos. I rest my case. ●