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Written by Michael Friesen

Rust Bucket III...The Sandy Creek Edition by Jim Ellis

Yrjo Vesterinen of Finland, Ulf Karlsson of Sweden; Martin Lampkin, Malcolm Rathmell and Mick Andrews of Great Britain; Toni Gorgot of Spain, Charles Coutard of France and Bernie Schrieber of California, plus other Americans, all competed in the 1978 World Round organized by Trials pioneer Jerry Young. Held in Roaring Branch, Pennsylvania, Jerry had previously organized Nationals in 1974 and 1976 utilizing the spectacular series of waterfalls within Cascade Run. We didn't have any of those super riders at our Third Annual Rust Bucket Vintage Trial in Bunn, N.C.....but we did have Jerry, who at 79, made an 800 mile round trip to be part of our event.

That 1978 World Round at Roaring Branch raised \$4000 (which would be about \$20,000 today) for the Multiple Sclerosis Society. Our Rust Bucket raised \$300 for Team USA's Trial des Nations effort, thanks to the \$10 entry fee and various donations.

Our crowd was also much smaller. Jerry's World Round drew three thousand spectators! We had five or six, including Steve Billman who admitted he might be interested in riding Vintage. Eight Honda riders participated including five on Reflexes, ridden by David Webster, Jeff Hensley, Dan Fahey, Jon Quell and myself. Alan Hensley and Joe Palrang controlled their blue TL-125s while Danny Brumley whipped his TL-250 into shape. Bryan Smith, Gary Heyer and Mike Friesen fielded Montesas while a Fantic 240 was under the command of Mr. Berndie Lunsford.

Bultacos were favored by Vesterinen, Lampkin and Schrieber 41 years ago....Scott Porter and Jim Carey are still seeking sponsorship for theirs. By 1975 Jerry's career as a GRM sponsored rider had peaked. At the Rust Bucket his GRM peaked before the start so he borrowed two machines: Gerald Mullins' Sherco as a taxi and Will Salter's Triumph Cub for the action. Honda's major rival, Yamaha, was ably represented by Greg 'smooth move' Hales and Rick 'Ossa veteran' Schill on beautiful TY 250s prepared by Gary Holbert.

The Rust Bucket welcomes Beginners and Novices on modern machines, such as Gerald's Sherco and Leslie Matheson's TRS. Leslie was a major helper, clearing Sections near Sandy Creek and making all the mini Rust Bucket trophies, each of which contained a canned beverage of the recipient's choice. Those riders who arrived Saturday also enjoyed grilled steak or salmon plus fishing or canoeing at her lakeside cabin. Evening entertainment was provided by Jon Quell who adjusted Leslie's TRS suspension... in her living room!

The ten 'B' riders started rather conservatively, one at a time, finding the easiest route through Sections 1-5. But, noticing that the 'A' riders were weaving through their numbered Gates like a slithering glistening slinky inspired many 'B' riders to follow suit in Sections 6-15, attempting most of the 'A' Gates as well.

In addition to multiple riders in the Section, which saves a whole lot of time and creates a circus atmosphere, the Rust Bucket participants rode each Section three times before continuing along a single loop. Because so many challenges were tight turns or switchbacks, we ignored the modern “don’t cross your tracks” rule. Thus no judgment calls over ‘tracks’.

Six of the Sections were completely new including four in the Sandy Creek tributary. Essentially it was self-scoring since simultaneous riders made observing difficult. Which brings me to the one serious glitch of this year’s event: we overlooked creating several score cards in the excitement to get started. As one rider mentioned, in future RB events we should carry our own cards. Hence my apologies for the lack of scores.

Did the time saving measures succeed? Apparently! All the ‘A’ riders finished their 45 ‘rides’ before 2:15, and this included a twenty minute lunch break! We did start at 10:30 rather than the CVOTC’s usual 11:00 start. Which left us more time to study the four foot tall Roaring Branch photo montage, part of a monument Jerry is creating to honor Bernie Schreiber, the Roaring Branch winner and America’s only World Champion! And also to honor the 250 volunteers who made that spectacular World Round possible.

Finally, thank you David Webster, Leslie Matheson, Frank Wolff, Danny Brumley, Rick Schill, Ellis Daw, Chris Buzzelli, Jon Quell, Kevin Bobal and Dan Fahey for help in April at Bunn’s Modern and Vintage events. RB III is now history. Its ribbons and Gates will remain up for practicing.