

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!!

Unfortunately, those words will be tougher for some to hear than others.

First off, my grand-father-in-law aged 92 years young, finally passed away on December 9th of this year.

He had endured a wonderful marriage of over 71 years, had four grand children, and 10 great-grand children, and one motorcycle racing grand-son-in-law.

He was a machinist who had produced ¼ midget racecars that were some of the fastest in the US for their time, and his memory of racing was passed on this past weekend during my four races.

Our family had a memorial for him on Saturday, the day before the big race day, and I planned on performing in his honor one last time in 2005.

Grandpa Ken was one that enjoyed the hands on aspect of racing, building, and fixing the race vehicles, when needed.

I also enjoy the same things that make racing what it is.

As Sunday morning broke, I had fond memories of times I had spent with my adopted grand father, as I hadn't had the pleasure of meeting any of my own family's grand parents, yet my children had the joy of two full sets of great-grand parents.

They are, as am I, truly lucky.

I also held me head low for a brief moment, for a newly met friend and fellow racer who had recently crashed severely on my old race bike.

As some of you know, my family is in a tight spot of recent, moving, and selling our house down in Simi Valley.

As the deal of our house selling went sour after a few weeks in escrow, I was forced to sell one of my race bikes I had acquired for next year's AMA Super Stock assault. Since the bike had been raced, I knew it would take a special buyer to ride the bike out of my new shop, and onto its next racing journey.

As luck would have it, the bike made a late night trip half way to Arizona, where it originally had come from, just hours after I advertised it for sale.

My newly met friend and fellow racer Danny bought the bike with full intentions of beating other racers in his territory of CCS racing.

Knowing the history of the bike he would soon ride and race made his heart sing, as it did mine, when the thoughts of twisting the throttle wide open and holding on with all of his might would occur in the very near future.

The bike was transferred between racers very early one and a half weeks ago Friday morning, with every intention of being broken in with it's new owner at a track day on the following Sunday.

This is the part where something, I still don't have all the facts, went horribly wrong. Danny's Sunday didn't end as well as that early Friday morning would lead anyone to believe it would have.

I want to first say; I wish Danny and his entire family the best wishes this holiday season.

Danny, please accept my sincerest wishes for a speedy, painless, and full recovery from any and all the injuries you sustained from the major get-off you accidentally

received on Sunday.

I have only part of the injuries listed that Danny has had to endure over the past week and a half, a badly multiple place broken femur, a brutally broken ankle, a couple of broken ribs, and other very intense bodily harmed injuries.

Danny, we all want to only hear of great recover story.

Good Luck!!!

Since I had a fairly heavy burden of grief that Sunday morning, I tried to think of positive-ness and the great results from prior outings at the track I had become very familiar with over the past almost three years.

Not only did the thoughts of my now departed grand father in law weigh on my mind, the skies had also shed a few tears in his memory.

The rain wasn't steady or even very hard, but as the track announcer alerted all racers, wet weather conditions were being called out, meaning no one would be allowed to enter the track with slicks.

I had just mounted a brand new set of slicks for my first three races of the day, and only had about 10 laps left on my DOT tires, which would be used in the final race of the day.

I had brought rain tires, just in case, but the rain was not even close to hard enough to warrant the use of such a race tire.

The waiting game began early this Sunday morning.

Since I had a good feeling about what the weather would do this day of memory and reflection on a life of over 33500 days worth, I kept my positive thoughts working for me.

As my first race was being called, Open Super Bike, race number 5, the track was definitely dry enough to run slicks.

I hadn't even run my new bike one lap on the track, although I had bought it from another racer, thanks Jamey, that had ridden it into the 1:27's on Big Willow just months prior.

I knew the bike was capable, but without scrubbing the tires, setting up the suspension, or just the simple act of launching the bike off the line once, I had my reservations about racing the bike at my potential from the drop of the green flag just moments away.

As the green flag waved to start the race, and I twisted the throttle and let out the clutch, the bike made its way from grid position 6 of 15 towards turn one.

I had studied the first four races to see that the dry line on the track was now almost all the way across the entire track.

As we entered the first turn, I waited patiently to see how the bike would react to my fairly smooth inputs of throttle, brake, handlebar push and pull, body positioning and weight transfer, and was very impressed to come out of that first turn accelerating into the top 5 spots.

The race went just as I had expected, I got a decent start, but after the first lap dropped a few spots.

I made my move on a few riders to move back into the natural pecking order of racers, from fastest to slowest, and each lap made a move to improve my lap time from a tentative initial lap time of 1:31 to a fastest last lap time of 1:28.659.

Not the fastest I have gone, but remember I was running a new bike, stock

suspension, on unscrubbed tires, minutes after the rains had stopped. I was extremely happy to put my now just over 600-miled race bike up into 7th place in the Super Bike race.

The second race was Open Modified Production, in which I was gridded 7th of the 18 riders.

My confidence was now much higher, after not only knowing that the bike had more power than my previous bike, but that the track was now dry, and my tires were definitely going to stick like glue.

The start had a freight train of us front 5 riders take to the track in a tentative yet expedient pace.

For the first couple of laps we were running lap times in the mid to low 1:27's. After following the four guys in front of me at a pace I felt was a bit slower than I knew we could travel at, I proceeded to make my move around two of the riders. I made a bold move to pass two riders in one lap and stepped up the pace around the same time as the front two racers also increased their race pace. We all dipped into the 1:26's briefly, but after circumnavigating the track at a pace faster than most of us wanted to in the very abnormal and changing weather conditions, the paced slowed a bit.

Lap 4 had us front three pushing each other to keep the pace up and secure a podium spot for one another.

I made a small physical error in turning and accelerating my bike into and out of turn 6, and thus I had the misfortune of dropping the two spots I had just pushed my number 767 machine into just two laps earlier.

As we encountered lapped traffic from the first wave of our race, 750 Super Bike, our times suffered, as well as my chance to get back around the two riders who had taken full advantage of my error in turn 6.

I cruised to a 5th place finish, upset of the potential podium spot I lost just two laps prior to the finish, and then realized that the group of us 5 were almost 11-1/2 seconds ahead of the nearest rider.

I rolled into my pit and readied myself for the 12-lap Toyota Cup Unlimited Formula 1 race that would occur just 4 races later.

Since I had been pushing the stock suspension bike fairly hard, while riding at a pace where suspension begins to help in keeping the tires from wearing abnormally, I knew I might need to flip my rear tire for this fastest of all race fields.

I took the tire and wheel off and proceeded to have the Dunlop crew flip the tire to give me more of a chance at competing with the fastest riders out at Willow Springs this now late December afternoon.

The Formula 1 race arrived moments after I had replaced the flipped tire, and I made my way to the grid to put my bike in its lucky 13th spot of 16 riders. Mentally I was ready to challenge myself against the other competitors, for a coveted top 10 spot, too bad I didn't physically prepare with enough food for the outing. Time is usually a consideration between races, but without the support of my loving wife and kids, eating was going to be severely missed in their absence. I managed to get a couple of candy bars into my system, but sugar only works for so long, and a 12 lap race is a bit longer and more strenuous than the energy gained from two mini candy bars.

The race began well as I made my way to the top ten immediately. Looking back at my lap times, it is apparent I knew my tires would limit my ability to catch or pass the two riders directly in front of me, as I ran lap times from a 1:27.031 to a 1:27.929 with most of my laps in the low 1:27's. I managed one lap into the 1:26's, but on the next lap, lap 10, I had a big slide coming out of turn 2, and the time difference between the two laps was 1 second. I preserved my top 10 spot and finished in tenth, making sure I had a chance to try and reclaim last month's win in Super Stock, the next and final race of this mood filled Sunday.

Open Super Stock was to be run on some fairly used tires. I knew I had a good chance of riding well, and with a starting position on the front row, my confidence was fairly high. Whenever my bike as no one in front of it, I seem to feel invincible. As I revved the engine before the green flag waved to start the race, I made sure to release the clutch smooth enough to get a good launch off the line. As we entered the first turn, I knew my place and played it safe. Started the race in the fourth place on the grid, and finished the race in 3rd place, just 9 seconds ahead of 4th place. I knew my bike needed help in the suspension department, as I had many times of helplessness during the final 6 lap race, as my bike wanted to hop around corners instead of turn as if it was on rails.

I will getting ready for the arrival of Santa for our three kids, but this year is a bit tougher than most, due to the move, lack of work, and thus lack of income to supply "gifts" to my entire family. I know it is the thought that counts and I plan on making many great thoughts of giving gestures, but when times get better, the materialistic side of our lives will be back to the way we normally expect them to be.

This year has had its ups and downs and we, as a family are extremely happy to be healthy, which makes us richer than even Bill Gates.

I won't give too much away, as my family will read this write up as well, but IOU's will definitely suffice until our monetary situation allows the purchase of previously wanted "gifts" can occur.

As always, even though my family didn't make the trip out to the final competition of this 2005 race season, I need to say a HUGE thank you to them for all of their support.

THANK YOU Jodie, for the littlest of things from making me some sports drinks so I can have something to drink when I come off the track after practice to the biggest of actions, raising our three children as well as you have.

THANK YOU Josephine, Sebastian, and Valentino for making loving you three as easy as it has been, and for loving me back unconditionally, even though times have been tough of late.

THANK YOU Joe and Joann, for just about everything else, from helping us out with a place to stay, to raising our kids when we are out trying to support our now enlarged community family.

THANK YOU Mom and Dad for giving me the tools to live as well as I have over the past almost 37 years, and for everything you have ever done for my family and me.

THANK YOU to all of those that have given to our cause, from the cool replies via e-

mail, to phone calls that expressed genuine support, and the personal attendance of not only racing, but also our family functions.

I want to thank my sponsors as well for another awesome support-filled year of motorcycle racing, and look towards 2006 with wide eyes and an open mind to the endless possibilities of racing at the highest level in the United States of America, with the AMA.

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I also need to acknowledge Chris Thorsen and the entire crew of Thorsen Motorsports who have helped me in the past few months since we have moved up here to Central California. They will be a major force behind me next year and I hope to shine with their help.

I look forwards to another great year in 2006, and want to wish everyone the very best of everything for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!

Finally, Grandpa Ken you will be missed dearly, but absolutely never forgotten!!! We hope you are racing throughout the Heavens, and are continuing to WIN!!!

Thanks for reading and my final statement will be as I stated at the beginning of this write-up:

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!