

Liz Majors Memorial Page

Member comment on ITW article by Jeff Burns, May 2010

From: Terry Schuyler Sent: Saturday, May 01, 2010 2:16 PM
To: Cathy Catrell
Subject: Re: 2010 May BMWCC In The Wind Newsletter Cathy,

I want to offer my compliments on the story by Jeff Burns, Starting Over. I thought it was well written and captured the essence of the whole episode we have been following for some time. I have only been in the club for more than a year, and live in Fort Collins. Most of the rides and events are down south so I do not get to frequent many. I never knew or had met Liz as her tragedy occurred close to the time of my joining. But I have been following the emails and stories and am very impressed with and thankful to all those club members who were active in their support.

Having ridden now for 37 years and having had 16 motorcycles without an accident, I often take time to consciously recognize that possibility with gratitude, imagining vicariously the exact situation that happened to Liz and Greg. The stories, articles, emails and efforts of those who championed this have done us all a service in bringing to light the many sides of this whole tragedy- and dusting off those cob webs of complacency that can prevent us from being alert and safe while on the road.

Its a credit to this organization for this pursuit. I am forwarding this issue on to my two brothers who both ride. We meet in Albuquerque next month for a 4 day tour through Northern NM. I am hoping this article sticks with them as it will with me as we embark on our little adventure.

cheers to Starting Over!!

Article on the sentencing of the person who killed Liz Majors

Sentence in Colorado M/C Fatality

Long time BMW Motorcycle Club of Colorado member Liz Majors was run down and killed while riding her BMW the evening of April 23, 2009. Fifty one weeks later her killer was sentenced to 6 years in the Colorado prison system for her crime, the maximum sentence for the crime to which the defendant had plead guilty. "A Weld District Court Judge... sentenced an Aurora woman to six years in prison for causing the death of an Arvada woman while driving drunk last year. Judge Marcelo Kopcow ordered Valerie Rudnik-Vagher, 50, be immediately taken to prison after a two-hour sentencing hearing today before a packed courtroom of family and friends of Elizabeth Majors, 51, who died a little more than an hour after Rudnik-Vagher, while driving drunk, plowed into her motorcycle last April on Interstate 25." Her attorney had argued for six months in jail, given it was her first drinking and driving charge, but Kopcow said anything less than a prison sentence in the case would depreciate the seriousness of the crime. "Ms. Vagher's family will have had the benefit of being there for her when she is in prison and after she gets out of prison," Kopcow said, adding that he though drinking and driving was a selfish act. "Ms. Rudnik-Vagher, what is aggravating as a citizen, as a judge, and a member of this community, is I don't know what it takes to put people on notice how dangerous drinking and driving is. There's been a campaign against since I was born." Rudnik-Vagher pleaded guilty in recent months to vehicular homicide while driving reckless, which brought the sentencing range down to a maximum of six years in prison vs. a potential of four to 12 years in prison. She also pleaded guilty driving while ability

impaired.

Rudnik-Vagher told Colorado State Patrol troopers she had her Toyota Corolla on cruise control set at 67 mph, and she ran into the motorcycle Majors was driving. She then struck another motorcycle being driven by Gregory Cocks, and then a Cadillac Deville, driven by Forrest Kelley. No one else was injured in the crash. Colorado Troopers performed roadside sobriety tests on Rudnk-Vagher and noted she failed on several of the tests. Troopers also found a box of wine beneath her seat at the scene. She later tried to explain her alcohol content by stating that after the crash, she had taken an Advil with some wine she had in the car. Troopers took three samples of her blood, which later came back indicating her blood alcohol level was at .076 an hour after the crash, dropping to 047 three hours later. Investigators determined that at the time of the cash at about 10 p.m., she would have had a blood-alcohol level at .114. In Colorado, drivers are presumed to be under the influence at .08. After she serves her sentence, Rudnik-Vagher will have to serve three years of mandatory parole.

Gray Buckley
Trustee
BMW Motorcycle Club of Colorado

Memories below first by Greg Cocks, second by Roxanne Gartrell, both of whom were privileged to have spent time with Liz in her last hours.

Greg explains in his letter what the club intends to do in remembrance of Liz Majors.

As Greg explains Liz was an integral part of the club and what she sowed, she now shall reap in terms of recognition by this organization.

Others in suit will be recognized according to their contributions, those are the undeniable rules of life.

Jeff Galligan President BMW Motorcycle Club Of Colorado

I came to Colorado around a year and a half ago, joined the BMWCC soon after - and immediately felt "at home." Once I got to know people, they invited me to not just ride with them - but celebrate Thanksgiving and New Years with them, come around for dinner (including Liz), share part of themselves with me, many things...

We lost Liz to a drunk driver as she was riding the bike she loved on a beautiful evening, and from that flowed an outpouring of support and love from all - not just for me because I was with Liz that night when she was killed - but for each other. I am certain that if, God forbid!, we loose another that outpouring and support will be just as deep & supportive - as it has been in the past I understand, before my time.

It has been awhile since I was in Sunday School, but one thing I do remember from that is (paraphrased) that "You reap what you sow..." Liz was one of those core members of the club that gave the club strength, just by being who she was, quick to laugh, slow to take offence - but also by taking Ladies rides & other things to get some females amongst us old male curmudgeons, being a bright spirit at Paonia which got people out of their seats to dance... and so very much more - she contributed, we respect that, miss that dreadfully - we can only hope to be a little like her... The club, through the board members, would like to recognize this contribution, and as such have a few things planned so that her spirit & example in some way stays with us. We have three major things in mind (i) the State has a program to fund road signs in people's memories, you may have seen them, and we are working with Liz's family to get a sign up at the accident scene, (ii) turning Liz's annual ride for Ladies Dual Sport into a road ride for charity, staffed by volunteers (as you may know, Liz's daughter Annie has cerebral palsy), and (iii) when we want to hang out with Liz at Paonia, planting a tree, with a bench - for all of us to take the moment to remember her fondly.

My words can not even approach the articulateness of another member, Roxanne Gartrell Eddins, past president of the club, co-owner with her husband Steve of 'Beemers & More', and a motorcycle rider & prompter extraordinary herself; her words are below... Thank you, GREG C.

THE GIFT

I was given a gift which I have been wanting to share with you. It came to me in slow fashion over time and with much emphasis on April 23rd of 2009. It is only now that I have been able to gather myself enough to

pass it along to you. My gift was to know a wonderful person and call her friend. Sweet Liz. My gift, which I wish to share with you, and which is extra special now, is the gift of sharing some of her last moments on this earth. Most of you know that I am part of Beemers & more, the motorcycle shop. I am also part of a wonderful family of BMW riders, the BMWCC. Liz rode her beautiful motorcycle, with companions, to Beemers & more on Thursday, April 23rd to our shop. She spent the last couple of hours of her too short life mingling with us and others on our Bike Nite on that Thursday night.

The gift is the time we shared with her. My gift for you is to know her time, her last hours, were special and caring, and filled with fun things doing what she loved. Liz's smile was flashing that night. She met new riders and shared stories and plans. We were planning dirt rides in Northern Colorado, roads she had not yet seen, to ride her F650 on with us in exploration. We were planning the ladies rides for the BMWCC, and committing to participate in the ride I plan and the Dual Sport ride she was planning to lead again this year.

Liz, always the motorcycle enthusiast, sat on a few new motorcycles, fantasizing about more adventures. The smile ever present. Her last photo, taken in our shop, is true to form - trying the seating position on a new bike. Always thinking about the ride - as most of us who knew her do as well.

The gift is the knowledge that she had, what is for a rider, a wonderful evening of companionship, riding with Greg, visiting with us, meeting others, and touching motorcycles.

If I could I would share the gift in person with her present. Our gift, though, is in knowing Liz - forever. Knowing the beautiful person, the rider, the friend - with happy moments as her last.

By: Roxanne Gartrell Eddins

For the four Bike Nite Thursdays following Liz's death, Bike Nites at Beemers & more Motorcycle Works were dedicated to Liz Majors. Proceeds collected for food donations and supplemented by Beemers & more were passed along in Liz's name to the United Cerebral Palsy Colorado with a donation in the amount of \$350.00 on June 3, 2009. If you would like to leave your personal memorial message on our Club's Form, Please click [HERE](#) to go to the Liz Majors Memorial Thread. For photos of Liz Majors, see them [here](#).