

August 5, 2000

Dear Tami:

Sorry we couldn't talk when you called the other day. Please call any time.

Thought it would be easier to just write my recollections, etc. A little about my career before motocross first.

As I'm sure you know, I have been a professional actress since I was about 20. Started under contract to Paramount Studios where they changed my name to Laura Elliot. Appeared in 28 films during my 5 years there. Everything from small roles to leads. Best remembered film is Alfred Hitchcock's "Strangers on a Train" on loan-out to Warner Bros. I played a real witch with a capital "B".

Left Paramount and took my own name back, Kasey Rogers. Have played the lead in over 400 TV shows. All the top shows of the 60's. "Lucy Show", "Perry Mason", "Maverick", "Hawaii 5-0", "Wanted Dead or Alive", on and on.

Best remembered from the TV show, "Bewitched", as the boss' wife, Louise Tate. Before that did 252 episodes of the blockbuster "Peyton Place". Played Julie Anderson, bad-girl Betty's mother.

1971 my son, Mike Lewis, wanted a minicycle. "You want a WHAT?" Got him one and started taking him to Indian Dunes on Friday evenings. He won his first race. Then, started taking him on Sunday's as well. I was getting the bug. Bought my first bike, a street bike, Honda 500-4. Those silly guys at the shop where I bought it, let me ride it home. I couldn't turn it around in a cul-de-sac. Made it, though, and for Christmas got my first 125cc racing bike.

In 1972, "Bewitched" stopped shooting which set me free to seriously begin riding and racing without having to worry about injury and holding up production.

I started writing the Powder Puff column for Modern Cycle Magazine and doing feature stories on the Minicycle Nationals and other race events. I remember when I first started, asking the editor how I got pictures for my column. He said "Buy a Brownie". So...with my trusty Nikon, I became a photo-journalist.

1974 started writing the Motorcycling Column for the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner.

1974 I established PURR, Powderpuffs Unlimited, Riders and Racers, put on the first ever Powder Puff Nationals, July 6 & 7, at Indian Dunes Motorcycle Park just north of where Six Flags is today, an hour out of Los Angeles, Ca.

Ron Henricksen, promoter of the minicycle races, was our first Race Director.

Because of writing the Powder Puff column, we drew women racers from all across the country. Around 300 entries.

Classes included Beginners, Novice, Intermediate, Expert, Granny (35 and over) and the Pit Tootsie race where all the guys who had been wrenching bikes and cheering their lady on could blow off steam.

The competition was extremely difficult. Gran Prix on Saturday, both 125cc. and 250cc. Motocross on Sunday, both 125cc. and 250cc. The winner had to compete in all 4 events. Best over-all took the title of Grand National Champion.

Nancy Payne of Burbank, was the first women's Grand National Champion and received National Champion, Gary ~~Jones~~ (?), practice bike from Gary and...I think it was it Honda. All of the racers received oil and other goodies. There was a purse in each event but I don't remember how much.

1975 PURR again presented the Women's Nationals, July 4 & 5, this time at Carlsbad Raceway, a very difficult track. I had secured Yamaha as the primary sponsor and the event was called the Yamaha Women's National Motorcycle Championship. Also, sponsoring the event was the popular restaurant chain, Sambo's. We had a beautiful souvenir program, full color cover of Lori Payne racing and lots of advertisers.

Again, it was a gruelling 2-day event, 300 entries.

By this time, the top women racers had good individual sponsorship. Everything from local shops on up. Race got off to a difficult start. I had given Yamaha permission to supply the racing numbers for the girls to wear on their chest. Trouble was, when they arrived, the were very large (probably made for men) and covered not only their entire chest in front but the entire back of their jerseys as well, effectively covering up all of their sponsors logos, etc. Racer, sponsors, everyone was objecting vociferously.

I remember standing on the podium slightly behind our Race Director, Butch Lee, trying to figure out what to do to make it fair for everyone. Yamaha had been very good sponsoring our race and deserved to have their name on the numbers, however, the individual sponsors had been wonderful to the individual girls and deserved to receive their visual ID's on their racers. What to do?

Finally, I whispered to Butch "Tell the girls to cut the backs off." This suggestion was met with instant approval. The girls cut the backs out so their sponsors' logos were visible and they received their credit and Yamaha still had their name on the fronts. And, the race was on.

The Grand National Champion was Teri Kezar from Las Vegas, Nevada and Jim Weinert, defending 1974 AMA National Open Class Motocross Champion and Yamaha's #1 man, was our main Pit Tootsie. He presented the prizes, purse, etc. Assisting Weinert



in these difficult chores, was 6'7" Jeff "Cycle News" Peck, one of Cycle News' local editors.

We now had prizes from over 30 contributing sponsors. Everything from leathers (and they were real leather back then), helmets, gloves, jerseys, chest protectors, shocks, oil, spark plugs, exhaust systems, subscriptions, impact driver, even an original painting.

I think Yamaha gave the Grand National Champion a spanking new bike, but I would have to verify that.

And, we had terrific press coverage, as usual. (My husband's public relations company, The Lewis Co. Ltd. handled the press, TV, news releases, etc. wonderfully.) Hit all the wire services with pictures of the girls racing and also in the pits. And, we were always on the evening TV news.

Another coup in '75...Mike Goodwin had started the Superbowl of Motocross at the Los Angeles Coliseum I think it was only the year before. This was the beginning of the SuperCross series we know today.

I met with Goodwin and persuaded him to allow 10 of our top women racers to compete in an Invitational 6-lap Trophy Dash at the Coliseum before the 80,000 screaming fans.

The girls looked so good in practice that the promoters decided they would not allow the women to race up the steep peristyle and fly back down the steep downhill. The fans might think the men racers weren't so hot after all. If the women could do it, how hard could it be? So, they blocked off the peristyle. But, the women still looked great!

1976. We were back at Indian Dunes, same 2-day format and Ron Henricksen as Race Director.

By this time, the women racers rebelled against the Powder Puff title claiming they were serious athletes and demanded to be addressed as such. And, rightly so! So... PURR disappeared and the International Women's Motorcycle Association was born. (I later learned there was also an organization called the Women's International Motorcycle Association, a street club, but we were never in touch with each other.)

This year, little Sue Fish came into her own and dominated the event winning the title for herself. She loved racing with a passion. Sue had raced minicycles with my son and distinguished herself there as well. But, now she was a teen-ager and she sharpened her skills racing with the men Experts.

Sue was only 5'3" and tells the story of when she applied for her drivers license and motorcycle license. The driving instructor denied her motorcycle license because, sitting on her street bike, both feet could not touch the ground at the same time.

"But...but," she stammered, "I'm the women's Grand National Champion!"

"Sorry", he said, "book says both feet have to touch the ground at the same time."

After some difficulty, I think she persuaded them to grant her the motorcycle license.

1977. Race held at Racing World about 1 1/2 hours south of Los Angeles. Ron Henricksen again.

Can't think of anything terribly outstanding about this race except that Sue Fish again dominated the scene. Grand National Champion 2 times in a row.

On a personal note, while I raced all during these years, I did not race the Nationals. I was just plain too busy with the race itself.

The last race I ran was a Dirt Diggers Gran Prix at Racing World. There was a special class entitled "Race of the Pioneers". About 30 men and me. "Feets" Minert, the fellow who invented the 'feets up' broad slide was on the line, and Mike Goodwin and a bunch of guys who were excellent racers and had contributed much to the history of motocross and Gran Prix racing through the years.

I was racing a 250cc for the first time. At one point I was sort of all alone on the back of a mountain and saw a couple of white ribbons tied to the bushes off to my right. Thought they were marking the trail so I headed for them. Reached them and discovered it was the path back to the pits. Turned around to see the Dirt Digger riding sweep just sitting on his bike with his hands on his hips, staring at me like "Dummy". So, chagrined, I rode back to him and up the chalky mountain he pointed to.

Even with that, I'm proud to say I finished 9th overall and at the Trophy dinner received a special cup with a brass plaque inscribed to "Wrong Way Rogers".

What a way to finish my racing.

Before the next year ended, My son phased out of racing. With no one to wrench my bike or go with me, I, too, phased out.

To this day I love motorcycles, I love racing. I wouldn't have missed racing the decade of the '70's for anything.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Roger". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a flourish at the end.

Dear Tami....

My! Didn't I run on!

Forgot to mention that, as I told you previously, am working with the Petersen Automotive Museum to present an exhibit of women in racing (bikes, cars, planes, etc.). I'm sure the work you are doing now will be of great benefit to them. Looks like that will be about 2 years off, if all goes well.

Also, I purposely did *not* mention anything about the TV show I'm working on. And, I would appreciate your not mentioning it. Just keep it confidentially between us. Much too easy for others to steal ideas.

Please say hello to Denise for me. I have a couple of shots of her during those racing years. Would love to see her again. Perhaps we can all meet and do some serious bench racing.

I think the enclosed photos are pretty self-explanatory. Use whatever you like. Do not have a shot of me on a bike that I can get to. All in storage.

Haven't had a chance to check your website yet, but, rest assured, I will.

Let me know if there is anything else you need and keep up the good work.

Kasey

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be the name 'Kasey', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Had a thought.

You might check "The Bewitched and Elizabeth Montgomery" website (AOL). It's run by Wendy and Joe Orgren. Very nice people.

Tell them what you are doing and I'm sure they'll put something in their website that will bring "Bewitched" fans to check out your website. Feel free to tell them I suggested you contact them.

Also, there is another large "Bewitched" website (in fact, a few) but I don't know the exact name.

Best...

K