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MAY 2019 BMW OWNERS NEWS
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Glenn Stasky, founder of Clearwater Lights, loves his new BMW GSA.



GLENN STASKY

INNOVATION MAN

By Ron Davis #111820



2010. Returning from a business trip in Memphis and headed for home in Sacramento, Glenn Stasky, #144734, is pushing the speed limit on a desolate section of Highway 50 in Colorado. The sun has just set. An approaching car a mile away begins repeatedly flicking its brights. Annoyed and skeptical his motorcycle's lights could be that bothersome, Glenn nonetheless relents and douses his high beam and auxiliaries. Once the car has passed, he toggles his brights, but by the time the bike's HIDs reach full strength, it's too late. He strikes a dead deer in the road and goes airborne. The car's driver had been trying to warn him.

The cycle comes down bucking and bouncing but miraculously stays upright, and Glenn is able to wrench his bike back under control. Shaken, he pulls over to the side of the road, looks up at the stars shining brightly in the thin mountain air and gives thanks to a higher power.

As Glenn cautiously resumed his two day journey home to Sacramento, his mind began buzzing in its characteristic problem-solving mode: How could that near fatal accident have been avoided? What would a better lighting system for motorcycles, one that could actually save rider lives, look like?

A self-professed "science geek," Glenn says he's always been fascinated by what makes things work—and how they could be made to work better. "If left alone, I would take everything apart.

School taught me the regimen to stay on track to reach a solution and also how to put most things back together again. I remember taking my parent's stereo apart to see what was inside...audio became my passion." After making the most of a college scholarship in engineering and then two business degrees, he landed a position with Nakamichi Corporation, then founded his own company in 1990, Clearwater Audio, manufacturing tweeters, woofers and other amplifier parts. His company grew in size to support 30 employees and built a reputation for American-made quality and service.

As Glenn's career in electronics progressed, so did his enthusiasm for motorcycling. He says he got hooked on bikes after a ride on the back of a BMW R60 when he was just four years old. "A friend of my dad's was a movie stuntman, and he offered me a ride. I never forgot that day, neither did my mom!" His first bike was a Rupp Roadster he received one Christmas, but he soon moved up to Suzuki dirt bikes. Glenn said, "I had seen Evel Knievel a few times, and I became hooked on jumping. Evel even jumped a bunch of cars during an event at Madison Square Garden back in the seventies. Right after seeing him there, I tried even bigger jumps. Three months later, I had a major crash when I was 14. Another bike came over a jump, and we hit head-on. My leg was crushed in the middle. I spent two years on crutches while learning

to walk again. That was the most humbling time of my life. It really taught me many lessons. But, there has always been a bike in my garage." He has a stable of bikes now, including a new GSA and an Africa Twin.

That love for motorcycling and his career in audio came together in that ill-fated trip coming home from Memphis. Glenn had shipped his bike, along with a truck full of speakers to his company's biggest client with the idea of taking a long tour home after delivering the order. Unfortunately, his client broke the news that he had found a new supplier in China. A dark cloud hovered over Glenn's head as he headed for home, where he knew he would have to lay off most of his employees.

Once back in Sacramento, Glenn began research and development on an innovative



Ever a problem-solver, Glenn Stasky's newest project is developing a cooling unit for riders that have to deal with excessive temperatures.

system for auxiliary motorcycle lighting that featured instant-on LEDs controlled by a dimmer that worked like a volume control for audio. Probing this challenge led to the founding of a new company, Clearwater Lights. Almost ten years later, Clearwater is an international industry leader, now offering seven different levels of light kits for every major brand of motorcycle.

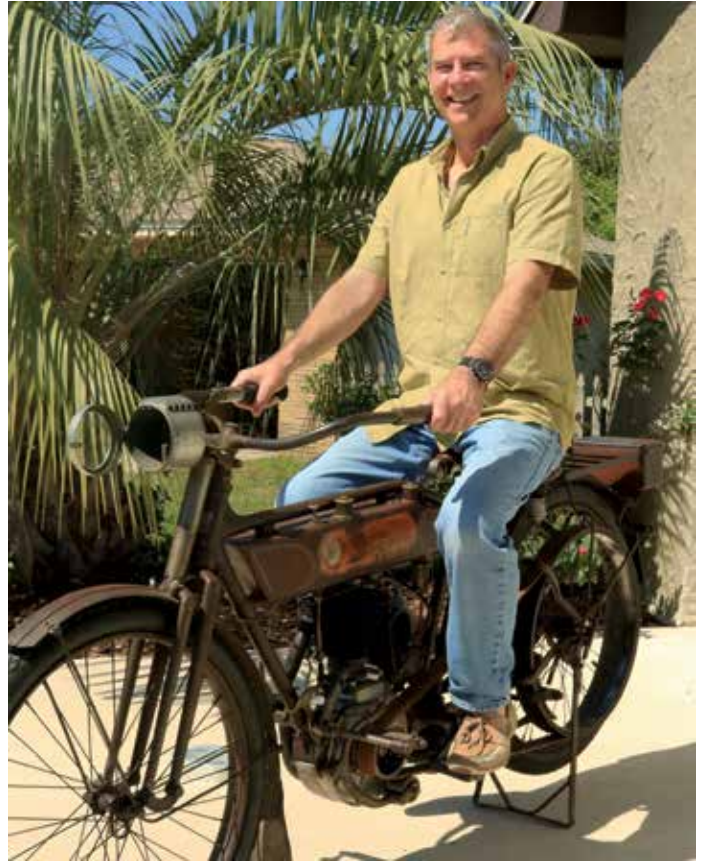
And the incident on the highway in Colorado, was not the last time where adversity led Glenn Stasky to innovation. In addition to being a motorcyclist, Stasky also likes car racing. At one practice session at a local track, he witnessed a crash that sadly took the lives of two of his friends. A faulty track warning system failed to alert drivers to trouble ahead, thus preventing first responders from getting to the burning cars. Within a year, he presented a prototype red flag LED system at Daytona which has since been adopted as the new standard and has been installed at tracks all over the U.S.

Despite Glenn's varied interests and the demanding success of Clearwater Lights, he remains a devoted rider. "Like most riders, I like the feeling of freedom and the connection you get on the open road. Spring rides through the country are some of my favorites. The joy of the different smells that you encounter cannot be experienced in a car. Cagers don't know what they are missing. The only downside of riding would have to be the inattentive drivers and most of all, the texters."

Glenn's preference in bikes also remains with BMW Motorrad. "The solid and planted feel of a BMW is what impresses me the most. A well ridden BMW GS can surprise many a sport bike rider. The level of engineering is evident from the drivetrain all the way down to the high beam switch gear."

Glenn also credits the BMW MOA with fueling his affection for BMWs. "I found a copy of the MOA magazine on my dentist's waiting room table many years ago, and my interest in a BMW was ignited. I found that BMW owners are quite different. (Insert cruel joke here...) I find it funny when I meet a person for the first time and they hear I ride a motorcycle. They usually say, 'Oh, do you have a Harley?' Some people don't even know BMW makes bikes!"

"BMW owners tend to be very good riders... They tend to ride with proper gear, they ride long distances and actually go places. Imagine that. When I ride, it is usually only with one or two other riders. Quite often I ride alone. I like the friendly feel of the MOA group, and I really look forward to seeing our friends from



around the country when we attend the MOA rally. We have some great memories from these events. I will always be a member."

As for the future, Glenn Stasky continues to ride and explore innovations that will make motorcycling safer and more enjoyable for all riders. He recently completed an 8,100 trip over some of the hottest areas of the country to test a prototype for a miniature air conditioning system for motorcycles and race cars. The system features a biometric control system that monitors an operator's vital signs, varying compressor and pump speed as needed. He said, "There is something to be said about 55 degree water pumping around your chest when it is 105 degrees outside."

Snatching innovation from the jaws of vexation is a distinguishing quality of Glenn Stasky's life, but isn't it the challenge for all motorcyclists? How many other lifestyles put its adherents into such a potentially risky, physically and mentally demanding, yet singularly satisfying pursuit? I'm sure the community of riders in general and MOA members specifically are proud to welcome Glenn Stasky as one of their own.