

# Area

## Denver man 'scooting' across the country to help orphans

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

Oberlin Herald

OBERLIN — Scooting down the road at speeds of up to 25 mph — downhill with a tailwind — a Denver man putt-putted into town last week on a motorized scooter.

"It's like a leaf blower on steroids," said Don Morreale as he described the unusual vehicle on which he is riding across the county.

He said the specially made scooter has a 40cc, two-stroke motor and does about 20-22 mph most of the time.

"I use the highest octane gas I can get," Morreale said, adding that he premixes the gas with oil like most people do for their lawn mowers.

The little vehicle gets about 100 miles per gallon, he estimated. Each day he tries to travel about 70 miles, which takes him five to six hours. That's about all his feet can stand, he said.

This is the second leg of the 50-something Denver real estate salesman's transcontinental trip. The first leg took him from Las Cruces,



Don Morreale taking a transcontinental trip on his scooter.

N.M., on Feb. 15 to San Diego on March 1.

On July 25, he left Byers, Colo.,

“

It's like a leaf blower on steroids.”

Don Morreale

scooting across the country

headed east for the second leg.

The first night, he said, he and a friend, who is driving a backup vehicle, camped in Cope, Colo. The second night, they spent at a motel in St. Francis and last week they stayed at the LandMark Inn. They then set off on U.S. 36 again, hoping to spend the night in Kensington.

Last week, Morreale spoke to the Oberlin Rotary Club, explaining why he was undertaking a nearly 2,500 mile journey on a scooter made by the Mosquito Co. of Salt Lake City.

He said that he had become fascinated by stories of people crossing the continent on odd conveyances — everything from unicycles

to a riding lawnmower — and decided he wanted to do so on a scooter. (In fact, there was a guy on a unicycle following him through Colorado.)

His second and biggest reason, he said, is to raise money for orphans in India. He is hoping to raise \$62,500 during the trip. That money will educate a thousand orphans in India for a year, he said.

In 1976, he said, he backpacked through India and was struck by the friendliness of the people, who invited him into their homes and fed him when he was in the middle of the country in the small villages.

Near the end of his trip, he said, he visited the Metropolis Restaurant in Old Delhi near the train sta-

tion. It's one of the few places in India that you can get a steak, he said.

As he left the restaurant, he noticed that all the scraps from diners' plates were thrown in a pile in the alley.

The pile was swarming with children, he said.

He realized that these were orphans — children nobody wanted.

Then and there, he said, he promised he would do something for these feral children, but after he got home the memory faded as he went about his daily life.

However, last year a rock-climbing buddy from India was killed in an accident.

At his funeral, Morreale said, his mother asked that instead of flowers, people give money to SOS Children's Villages, a group which builds homes for orphans around

the world.

It was then, he said, he remembered his promise and knew what he wanted to do.

While he is paying all his expenses, Morreale said, the Foothills Rotary Club of Denver is sponsoring him and he plans to stay with Rotarians on his journey and speak at club meetings.

In Oberlin, he collected \$110 after his talk.

"They were really generous," he said.

Donations can be sent to SOS Children's Villages - U.S.A., attention Anne Derby, 1317 F. Street N.W., Suite 550, Washington, D.C. 20004 or to Don Morreale, 1266 S. Williams St., Denver, Colo., 80210. Make all checks out to SOS Children's Villages - U.S.A. and put Scooter Fund for India in the bottom left-hand corner.

## Chase ends when motorcyclist runs out of gas

NORTON — A Colorado man on a 2004 Yamaha motorcycle led a chase that started in Norton, dodged a roadblock near Sappa Creek, roared through Oberlin and ended just short of Rawlins County — when the biker ran out of gas.

Oberlin Police Chief Wade Lockhart said officers were notified around 11:10 p.m. last Saturday that a state trooper had tried to stop a man on a motorcycle near Norton, but the man outran them and headed west.

Troopers told the Oberlin Police

Department about the man and said he might be heading their way.

Lockhart said Officer Troy Haas and sheriff's reserve Deputy Barry Richards set up a road block about one to two miles east of town on U.S. 36.

The driver, Joel Griffin, 20, of Thornton, Colo., didn't stop, the chief said, but blew right through the roadblock. When he got to town, he turned south and fled down Wilson. Lockhart said he intercepted the bike on Victoria. For a while, he said, it seemed like every street he

entered ended with a dead end, but he managed to get away.

Lockhart said Mr. Griffin shot up Penn Avenue and headed west on U.S. 36 with Richards and Haas on his tail.

The motorcycle ran out of gas just before the Rawlins County line at 11:56 p.m. Officers arrested him for attempting to elude a police officer,

reckless driving and driving with a revoked license.

Lockhart said he wasn't sure how fast Griffin was traveling in town, but when he was outrunning the troopers, he was exceeding 120 mph. Griffin was being held in Norton County, but will be sent to Decatur County when they are finished with him.

## Anhydrous ammonia leak sends firefighters to coop

By KATHRYN GUFINKEL

The Goodland Star-News

Just before midnight earlier last week, the Goodland Fire Department was called out to the Frontier Equity Co-op to investigate a suspected leak of anhydrous ammonia.

Scott Gilmer, assistant fire chief, said he arrived on the scene and suited up in full bunker gear with an air pack to investigate the odor.

Gilmer said he and another firefighter found a slow leak on a valve of one of the tanks, which they quickly sealed. Another eight firefighters were on standby at the scene.

Lance Keys, the coop fertilizer manager, said the valve had cracked open a little bit. He said the tank had just come in from a farmer and was only about 5 percent full when it

began to leak.

Gilmer said anhydrous ammonia gas dissipates on its own, but it can be dangerous if it is near people.

The Coop is away from any houses, he noted, so it was not a public danger.

Sherman County Sheriff Doug Whitson did file a report on the theft of anhydrous ammonia at 6:45 a.m. Tuesday at Dorman Brothers LLC on Road 21. He said Tony Sieck, a Dorman employee, noticed a leak and reported it to the sheriff's office. Whitson said there is no way to tell how much anhydrous was taken and it is almost impossible to identify a suspect.

"Not on these," he said. "We never get a suspect. We just file it in case we get something on it. It's pretty cut and dried."

## St. Francis board hires coach, searches for used activity bus

ST. FRANCIS — School is just weeks away and the St. Francis Board of Education is making last minute decisions.

Prior to the meeting, Ward Cassidy, counselor in the high school, had agreed to coach the high school boys' basketball team. He will be the only coach this year as the team is estimated to be fairly small.

There are two vacancies which will need to be filled including an assistant coach in high school girls' basketball and a co-sponsor of the high school cheerleading squad.

The board accepted the resignation of Vicki Killingsworth who had been the high school daytime cus-

todian. Superintendent Carl Werner said the new breakfast and lunch ticket prices were reviewed first and it was also mentioned that the textbook rental fees would remain the same: kindergarten, \$10; and grades one through 12, \$15.

The 2005 fiscal year budget is projected to remain the same as last year at 34.152 mills.

The budget hearing will be held at the next board meeting on Aug. 12.

The board and administration will be continuing to look for a used coach-type activity bus. It was noted that when, and if, a good used bus is found, the administration will need to take action.

## Thanks to the voters!

Thank you for your support during the primary. I would appreciate your continued support in the November general election.

Jim Cousins, for Thomas County Commissioner #2

Paid for by Jim Cousins

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