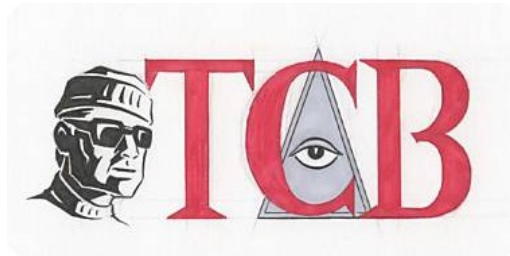


# Bronson's Garage



## Portfolio



**The Bronson Gazette**

All news articles can be view in their entirety at  
[http://www.jimbronson.com/news/TCB\\_Gazette\\_Archive.htm](http://www.jimbronson.com/news/TCB_Gazette_Archive.htm)

# Welcome to the Long Lonesome Highway



[JimBronson.com](http://JimBronson.com) started its evolution in late 2007, living and working in Japan, Mike accidentally hit the wrong button on his television and flipped to a Japanese television channel, the TV series *Then Came Bronson* was on and Jim was talking Japanese. He suddenly was swept back to 1969 when he was 18 and saw the show, bought a bike and tried to live out the Bronson mystique that summer. Also in 2007 he was learning how to build websites and launched a page for TCB, and met Greg and Billy, now charter members of Bronson's Garage. From

that time forward Peter, Bill, Tom, Don, Rich, Jim and David have been inducted into the Garage, and we have become friends with Jerry who painted the original bikes and Birney Jarvis, the man whom Bronson's life and adventures were based. We have celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup>, 41<sup>st</sup>, 42<sup>nd</sup> and 43<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of TCB, with reunions of Bronson's Garage members at various episode filming locations. Our You Tube channel (TCB1970) is as populated with nostalgia as JB.com. Come back in time and recapture your youth and enjoy the TV show that *inspired us to ride*. Until then you hang in there and we'll see ya on the long lonesome highway!



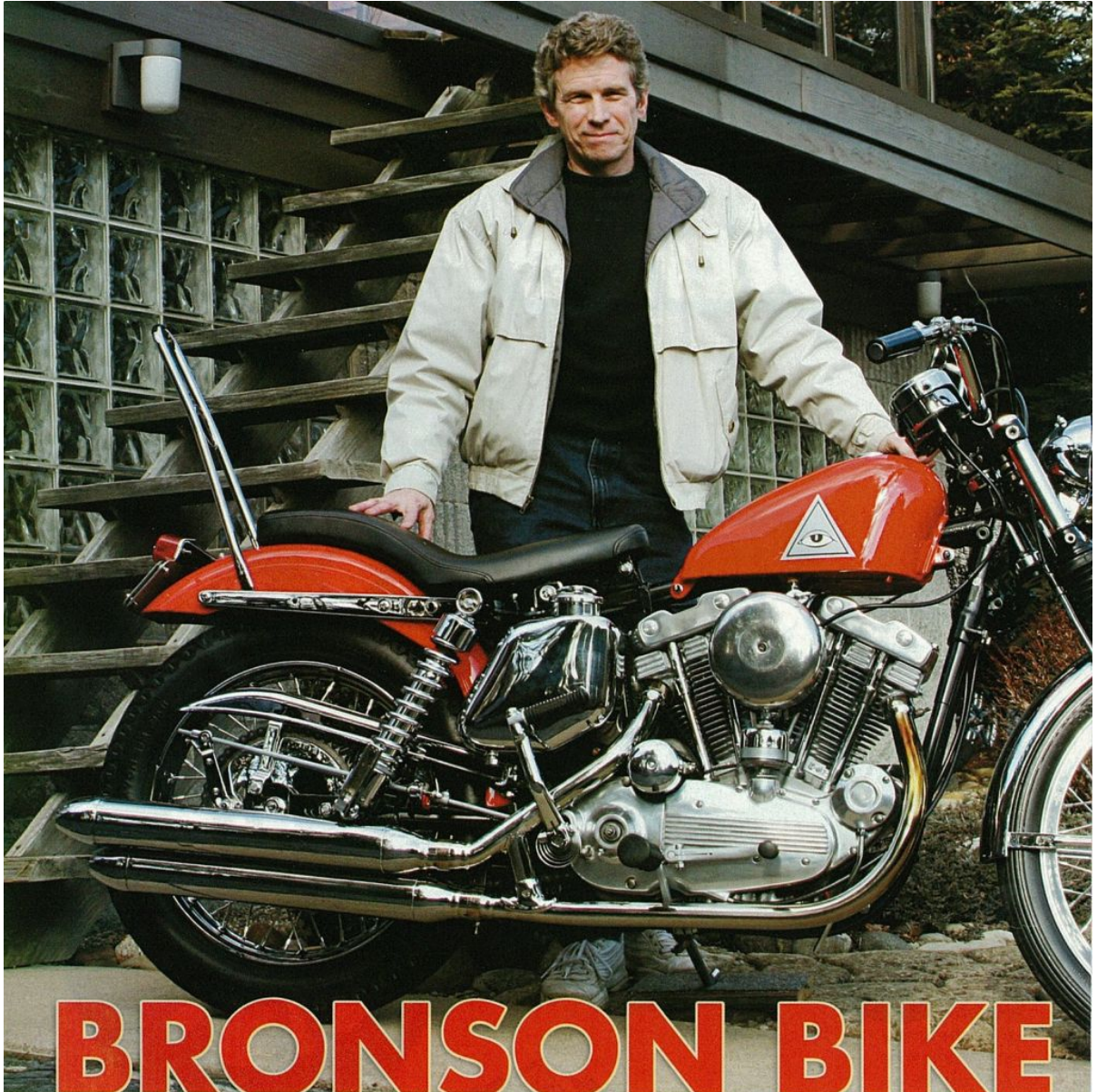
Mike and his 1970 Replica Sportster in 2010 at the Bixby Creek Bridge, famous for the opening scene of each TCB episode.

# The Ultimate Bronson Machine

Greg from Pittsburgh and his 1969 Replica Sportster.



Greg was featured in Iron Works Magazine in April 2008



## BRONSON BIKE

### *Then came the tribute bike*

story by Jerry Smith  
photos courtesy Greg Patnik  
and by Vincent Stemp

In its infancy television was a tool of enormous potential. Broadcast pioneers saw it as a way to educate people, to improve their lives, and, if possible along the way, to entertain them. Today, only about one out of those three goals is what we get from the tube. But now

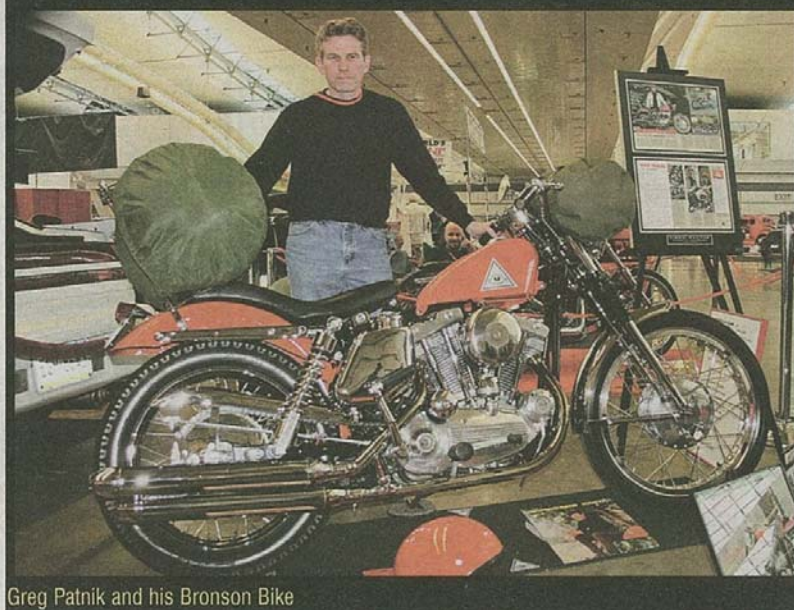
and then television really changes a life, like it did for Greg Patnik who, at age 13, sat down in front of the glowing screen one evening and saw a show that affected him like no other before or since. That television show was *Then Came Bronson* (see sidebar).

"I was 13 when it was on, and I loved it," reflects Greg today. "It was the catalyst for me liking motorcycles, and I became a big fan of Michael Parks." The show was only on the air for a single season, but 10 years later, a local station replayed the series. "I was older then, and I

### GREG PATNIK'S BRONSON BIKE

## Takin' a trip?

This replica does Bronson justice



Greg Patnik and his Bronson Bike

by Ernie Copper

PITTSBURGH, FEB. 22—I haven't seen an episode of *Then Came Bronson* since our family television had separate knobs for UHF and VHF. But that prime time NBC program was a shooting star for motorcyclists on Wednesday nights in the 1969-'70 television season. It featured Michael Parks as Jim Bronson, and a 1969 Harley Sportster as his sidekick. The story line went something like this: After his friend committed suicide, Bronson got the Sportster from his widow, gave up his job as a newspaper reporter, lashed a duffel bag and a sleeping bag fore and aft on the Sporty and took off to find himself. He ended up working odd jobs from town to town, meeting chicks and making friends nearly everywhere he went. Honesty, peace and goodwill normally prevailed.

The chances are if you're between the ages of 45 and 55 you fondly remember this show and on some level it influenced your life. Some more than others. Enter 51-year-old FedEx courier Greg Patnik, a *Then Came Bronson*

fan. After being hit from behind while riding his Venture Royal, he had some second thoughts about riding again, but Patnik took the time to sharpen his focus on the dream of having his own Bronson Bike.

In 2004 Patnik saw a '69 XLH on eBay and much of the Bronson cloning work appeared to be done. The bids did not meet the seller's reserve, so Patnik contacted the seller, Tom Hansen from Little Rock, Arkansas, to see if they could work out a deal. Eventually they did, and Greg was on his way to owning a fine replica of Bronson's bike.

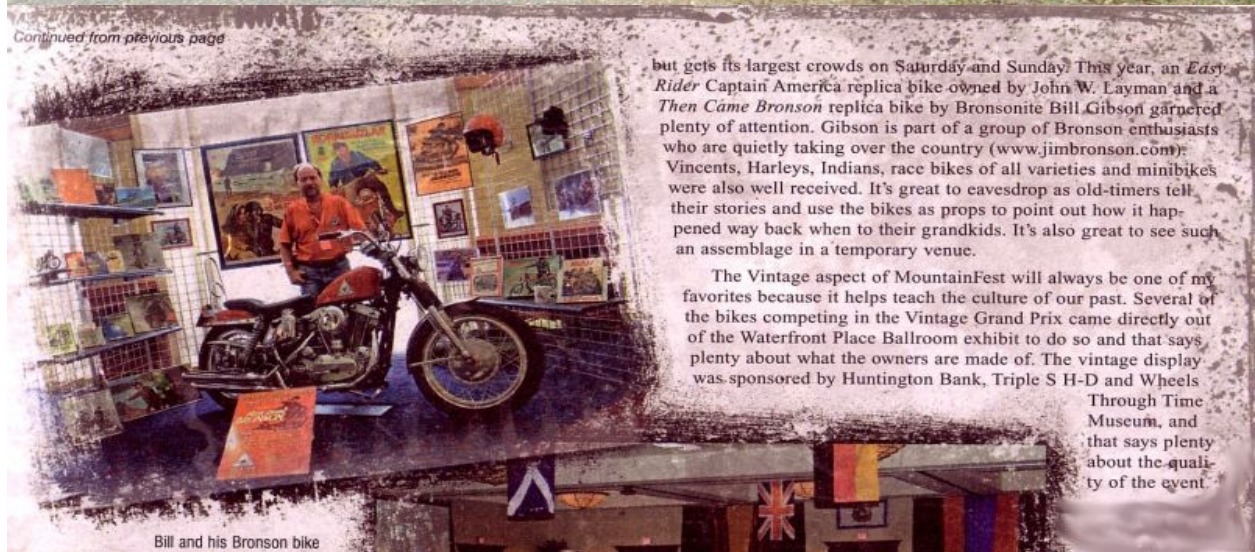
While Tom had done much of the work to make the bike look like a Bronson bike, the Sporty clung tightly to many of the idiosyncrasies of a 30-something-year-old Sportster. For example, on a ride in August of '05 the key fell out of the ignition, on three other occasions a header pipe separated from the cylinder, and last but not least, a muffler fell off. This, combined with a dead battery and a smoking cylinder, convinced Greg that a restoration was in order or it would indeed be a Long Lonesome Highway.

That's when he met Bernie and Keith Kovalsky, who were instrumental in helping Greg with a total restoration. Some of the details you'll notice are: The correct chromed headlight and bobbed chrome front fender, chrome chain guard, correct air cleaner, addition of a kicker kit, correct 21" polished Akront front rim, a custom seat and a peanut tank

See "Bronson Bike," page 83, column 1

# BILLY'S BRONSON BIKE

Billy and his 1970 Replica Sportster from Maryland - owner of the Bronson Works



2009 Mountain Fest Vintage Bike Show in Morgantown, West Virginia



Timonium, Maryland 2010

Michelle Smith from Speed Channel in 2010

# *Peter's Bronson Bike*

Peter with his 1969 Replica Sportster in New England



Peter, a die hard Sportster rider has three perfect vintage 883's and was feature in IronWorks in the January 2011 issue.



ent sources and eras to play nice in a rubber mounted package and, in the end, have it look as if it could be a factory built production machine. Although Peter has restored a number of machines, this was his first frame-up custom and he relied heavily on Ganno Motors and JSP Cycles. Only being 10 minutes from Ganno's shop insured that Peter was a regular visitor bringing coffee, donuts, good cheer, and the latest parts to arrive from JSP.

The Ganno spec rubber mount frame, reminiscent of a classically sexy 4-speed swingarm frame, is the first clue that this is no out of the box bike. Using a 1987-era EVO engine that was gone through from top to bottom and rebuilt by the Ganno team insured Peter's machine would last long, perform well, and be reli-

able. The Pan rocker covers, a bit of bling that Peter fell for, were custom made by Motorway, in Manchester, NH—and are lined with felt to keep the valve train racket down.

Relying on as many H-D take-off and NCS parts not only kept cost in line and made parts hunting simpler, but incorporating these classic and useful parts aided in the machine looking like it might have rolled out of Milwaukee's doors. There is no sloppy mismatching of parts here, everything flows.

The H-D trans case stuffed with an Ultima 6-speed cassette keeps the bike changing hard while not running out of steam. Modern suspension and braking bits insure the bike stays fun and safe to ride. The bike is road worthy and more

comfortable than most, meeting its original target admirably. As a result of the success seen here, Ganno Motors is offering this machine in various stages, from roller to finished machine.

So how does this package work where it is most important?

Peter relates:

*"On the road, the bike has great balance, it's smooth, runs cool, shifts quietly, and is very comfortable. It's old, new, and everything I love about Harleys, all rolled into one machine."*

After seeing this machine in person, meeting Peter in the New Hampshire mountains on that early morning, and hearing his story, you can see how the DMV properly titled the bike as a 2010 H-D FXR. It's only right. **IW**



## Bill's Bronson Bike

Bill's 1975 Tribute Sportster bike is currently on display at the National Motorcycle Museum in Anamosa Iowa, the museum hosted the 43<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary Reunion of Bronson's Garage in 2012.



Bill was the invited guest of Michael Lictner at Sturgis 2009.



# Tom's Bronson Bike

Tom's 1969 Replica Sportster Bike



Tom at the 2009 Mountain Fest Vintage Bike Show in Morgantown, West Virginia

# Bronson memorabilia

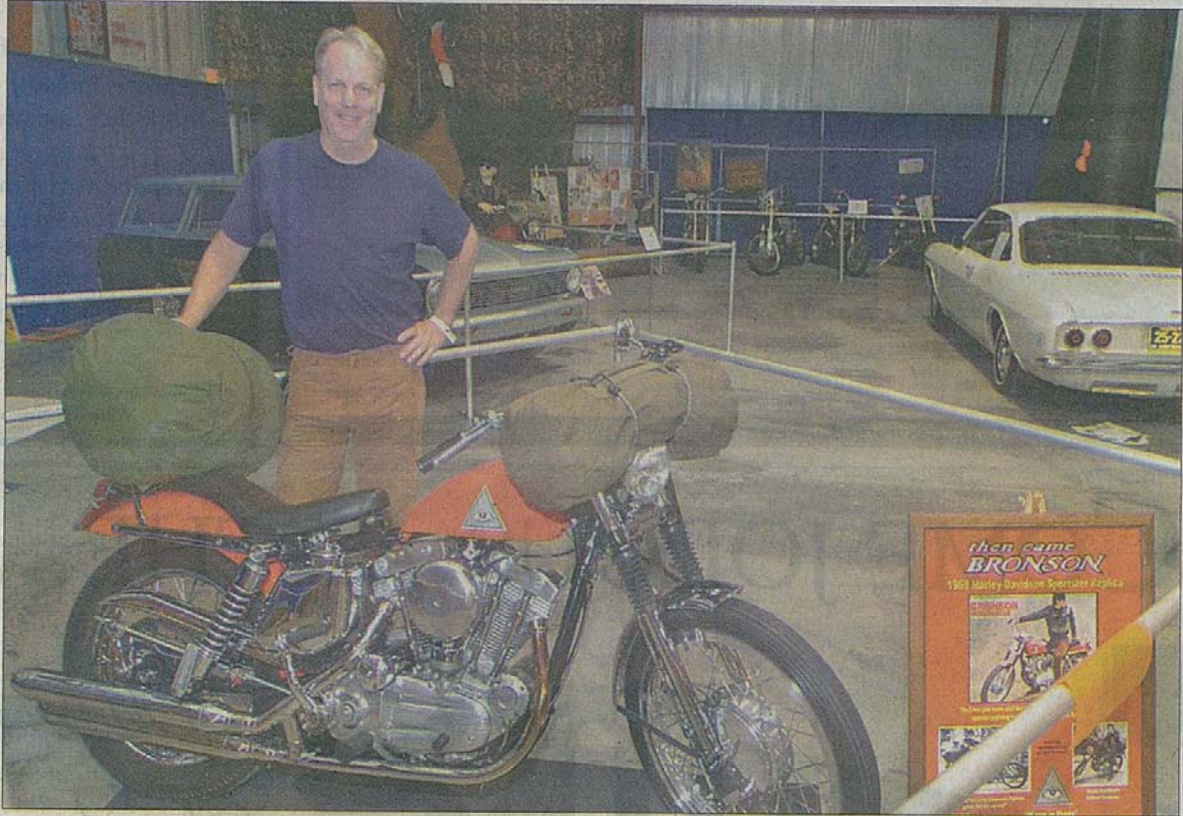


PHOTO BY DANNY SNYDER

Tom Hansen of Little Rock, Ark., is shown with a 1969 Harley-Davidson Sportster that he bought and rebuilt to match the one ridden by Jim Bronson, the lead character in the 1969 TV show, "Then Came Bronson." The MountainFest Motorcycle Rally in Morgantown was celebrating the show's 40th anniversary, including with several replica motorcycles and the screening of the show's pilot movie, at the Vintage Motorcycle Display.

## Past comes alive at MountainFest Motorcycle Rally

BY MARY WADE BURNSIDE  
TIMES WEST VIRGINIAN

MORGANTOWN — Forty years ago, 13-year-old Tom Hansen was at his parents' house, channel surfing the old-fashioned way — manually — through the four channels offered on television at the time.

"I was two and a half feet away from the TV, and it was a little after 9," said

Hansen, a motorcycle aficionado who lives in Little Rock, Ark. "I changed the TV to NBC, and I saw a guy riding a motorcycle and I got hooked. The rest is history."

The show Hansen saw was "Then Came Bronson," and the "history" part started the teen's love affair with motorcycles that 40 years later landed him at the 2009 MountainFest Motorcycle Rally at Mylan Park in Morgantown.

He was there baby-sitting two 1969 Harley-Davidson Sportster motorcycles he had "built" — essentially, changed into replicas of the one ridden by the short-lived TV show's hero, Jim Bronson, a disillusioned newspaper reporter who set out on America's highways to make the world a better place.

SEE **MOUNTAINFEST**, PAGE 6A



Don's 1969 Replica Sportster Bike



Don's bike is currently on display at the RV Museum in Amarillo, Texas 2012



Don's bike was featured in Motorcycle Classics Magazine in September 2010.

# THEN CAME BRONSON

Motorcycle meets  
the Old West ... **AGAIN!**

Story by David Howe  
Photos by Daniel Peirce

If you're of a certain age, you'll never forget *Then Came Bronson*, a short-lived TV show chronicling the adventures of Jim Bronson, a disillusioned but likeable young newspaper reporter out on a voyage of personal discovery.

Propelling Bronson from one episode to the next was his Harley-Davidson Sportster, transporting him through a kaleidoscope of fascinating characters and situations that both challenged and strengthened his gentle spirit.

Taken at face value, the travails of a social dropout played by a largely unknown actor riding around on a not-especially-good motorcycle doing improbable things doesn't seem like much of a storyline.

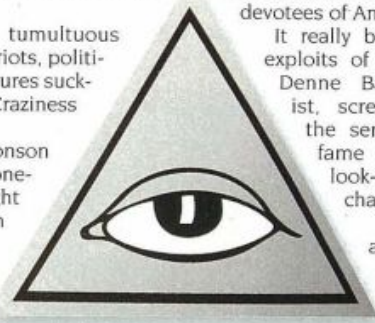
But American society was undergoing tumultuous change, fueled by angst of a raging war, race riots, political assassinations, hippies and corporate cultures sucking the life out of ourselves or our parents. Crazy was all around. The time was ripe for a hero.

Had the show aired a few years earlier, Bronson might have lived in the Old West. But this lonesome cowboy rode a motorcycle that caught the eye and spirit of a generation raised on Westerns but more interested in bikes. That was part of the appeal, although *Then Came Bronson* was not really about motorcycles, or even riding them. Rather it was about freedom, adventure, the call of the Long, Lonesome Highway and being true to one's self.

The story behind *Then Came Bronson* (TCB) is as interesting as it is unlikely. The pilot aired in March of 1969, and was released



Don "Donson" Collins' 1974 Sportster faithfully recreates the bike used on the show, right down to the groovy "All Seeing Eye" on the tank.



in Europe as a feature film. The series ran for only the 1969-1970 television season and was then cancelled. Since then, it has become a cult-classic among motorcycle enthusiasts and devotees of American television.

It really began many years earlier with the true-life exploits of Birney Jarvis. Jarvis' good friend, the late Denne Bart Petitclerc, noted American journalist, screenwriter and television producer, wrote the series pilot. Robert H. Justman of *Star Trek* fame was executive producer and James Dean look-alike actor Michael Parks played the title character.

Jarvis was retained as adviser for the pilot, and the legendary Bud Ekins provided the motorcycle stunts and technical accuracy. The list of guest stars included well-known actors and motorcycle racers and enthusiasts. The soundtrack included vocals by

Parks, including *Long Lonesome Highway*, which along with Parks' signature "Hang in There" tagline has become symbolic of the series.

# Love for Motorcycle Drives Man to Make California Trip

by JOSH BURTON



People have different inspirations for changes they make in their life and Don Collins is no different.

The Canyon resident recently returned from Big Sur, Calif., about 140 miles south of San Francisco on the Pacific Coast.

The 53-year-old lived out his fantasy when he traveled out there to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the movie "Then Came Bronson."

The movie inspired Don to ride a motorcycle, and he hasn't looked back since.

He spent time restoring James Bronson's bike, a 1968 XLH 900cc Harley-Davidson Sportster.

It was odd for Don because Bronson was a "good guy," which is why Don wanted follow in Bronson's footsteps.

"Bronson was the antithesis of the biker," Don said. "He was a good guy. Every 15-year-old wanted to be Bronson. It's a typical young man's dream."

The movie, and short-lived television series that followed, chronicles newspaper reporter Jim Bronson, from San Francisco after a friend commits suicide.

Jim buys his friend's motorcycle and – after his editor shoots down an idea for a story about motorcyclists – Jim decides to take to the open road.

Don was in seventh grade at the time, and he chose to follow through with that dream. Don's father wasn't too happy about the idea, Don said. "Motorcycles was an outlet for me, something I was involved with," Don said. "I had to work after school to pay for my hobby."

"VOICE OF RANDALL COUNTY SINCE 1896"

# The Canyon News

Sunday, June 13, 2010 • Canyon, Texas 79015 • 75 cents

## Meeting the real Bronson

Canyon man meets man who inspired television character

By BRAD RABURN  
Canyon News staff



Don Collins, back, is creating a motorcycle like that in the 1969 television "Then Came Bronson" for Birney Jarvis, the inspiration for the character.

It is a long voyage from the coasts of California to the streets of Canyon, and it is a longer journey from the debut of 1969 television-movie "Then Came Bronson" to the present-day.

For Canyon native Don Collins, the wait resulted in a dream come true.

Collins is one of many fans that latched onto television character Jim Bronson as a realistic hero to idolize. Today, these individuals aptly call themselves "Bronsonites" and join together to retrace their hero's motorcycle rides.

"Until a year ago my buddies and I knew about Bronson, but thought that he was a fictional character," Collins said. "But it is pretty neat how it has come full circle."

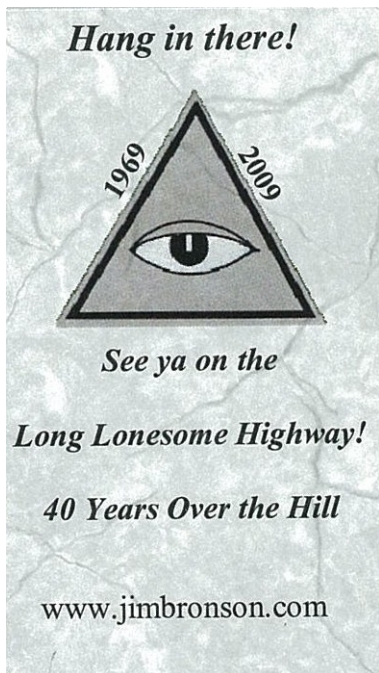
Through the group's interaction, the Bronsonites discovered that the fictional Jim Bronson was actually based on the real life of Birney Jarvis.

Jarvis worked off-and-on as a police reporter for the San Francisco Chronicle and shares that he quit four times and was hired back five times throughout the years.

Photo by BRAD RABURN (See BRONSON, Page 3)

# Dr. David's Bronson Bike

David's Replica is a 1970 Sportster.





For more information on Bronson Garage and Then Came Bronson Replica Bikes, shows, exhibits or personal appearances contact:

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