

**December 2023**



# NETA Observer

The newsletter of the New England Trials Association

It's hard to believe December is already here! The NETA annual banquet is quickly approaching! This year's banquet will be held at the Devens Common Center located at 31 Andrews Pkwy, Devens, MA on February 10th. The hall is beautiful and the buffet dinner is sure to be a delight!

To start the meal off there will be a choice of garden, or caesar salad, and warm assorted rolls.

For dinner there will be traditional baked stuffed

chicken breast, and fresh baked haddock. The sides offered will be; rice pilaf, oven roasted potatoes, and a fresh seasonal vegetable medley. If that doesn't have your taste buds tingling, the dessert will! Dessert will be a warm apple crisp with ice cream!

Dave will be sending out signups some time after Christmas. There will be gluten free and vegetarian dinner options on the sign up sheet, for those who need it. As with previous years we will begin at 1pm with the annual meeting. At 5pm there will be a social hour while guests arrive. Dinner will be served at 6pm and awards will be given at 7:30pm. We expect to conclude the annual banquet around 10pm.

The Devens Common Center is a beautiful function hall. It is conveniently located less than twenty minutes from shopping plazas in Leominster, MA. If you plan to attend the banquet with family, but they'd prefer not to attend the annual meeting, the shopping plazas may be an option for them. This year's banquet is one you won't want to miss so mark your calendars!

As we head into the cold months many people are riding less. Don't let the cold weather stop you from enjoying your trials bike though! There are many great ways to improve your riding skills even in the winter months! Static balance is a great thing to practice and can even be done in the warmth of a heated garage. You don't even have to start your bike!

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When static balancing on my bike I like to start with the wheel turned all the way to one side. For me having my wheel turned to the left is the easiest. The foot that I keep on the ground is on the same side that my wheel is turned while I prepare to shift my weight. In the images you'll see my wheel is turned to the left and my left foot is on the ground. I hold my front brake lever and slowly pull my left leg up onto the peg. As I pull my left leg up I push down with my left hand on the handlebar. Once my foot is on the peg I can adjust how I distribute my body weight. I try to think of myself as a tripod and distribute my weight equally.



If you're just starting out and learning to static balance, digging your front wheel into the ground will help hold your front wheel in place. Holding the front brake will also help balance your bike. As you get better you can try taking one arm off the bars. Taking your right arm off the bars will require you to let go of the brake lever and will really test your balance. Start with short intervals of balancing. If you can keep your balance on the pegs for ten seconds that's a great start! Soon you'll be able to hold your balance for thirty seconds, then sixty seconds. Give it a

try and see how much your balance improves when you ride!

To close out this month's newsletter I've got an article from Mike Komer on things to consider when buying a new bike! I hope you enjoy the article and look forward to more exciting content in the coming months!

Respectfully,  
 Kayla Lovejoy (NETA VP/Scorekeeper)

## Pit Talk

Thanks again NETA for letting me, Mike Komer (Tryals Shop) talk Trials in your Newsletter this month. Since I would talk trials 24/7 I jumped at the chance to share when Kayla said she would welcome more Trials Talk from other sources. Your Newsletter last month was focused on buying a new bike, and I'm happy to tell you a little of what I've found over the years... (and I'll include at the end the biggest bike-buying mistake I see time and time again.)

I'll say first that ALL the bikes are good. The amazing technology that has come about has made all the bikes top notch and nimble. Don't let some of the hype surrounding a particular advertising campaign fool you- they're ALL good- Any top rider could win just as easily on any brand. And on the flip side of that... no bike (no matter how lightweight or trick in some way) will make a difference in how you ride without your own training effort.

The reason to choose one bike over another then-- in my opinion-- is three-fold: Feel, Maintenance, and Displacement

**Feel:** When choosing a bike it is imperative that you try it! Every rider has their own riding style, habits and preferences so that's where the subtle differences (like tight turning etc.) will attract one rider over another to their brand- by the feel of it. When choosing a bike the key is... how does it FEEL to YOU?

Most trials riders will let you try a spin on their bike. Try them ALL and pay attention to how it feels. Ask the person- did you modify your bike from stock in any way? Make sure that's how it will feel when YOU buy one. Ask the person- what do you like most about your bike?

For some riders it's some simple matter of construction or convenience. As mentioned above about Beta, if your right knee is shot (as is mine) then the left kick start on Beta is perfect. If you have large hands (as are mine), the larger air filter box on Beta makes it easier when changing the filter. Along with the feel of the bike, simple things can matter to overall satisfaction.

**Maintenance:** It's important to ask yourself these questions: Will I be working on my bike myself or dealer reliant? How easy is it for me to work on? Do I want a carbureted bike or EFI bike? For me (as an old school mechanic) I don't relish needing a computer to work on my bike. But it would certainly be the norm for new tech-savvy generations of riders coming up.

How is the parts availability for maintaining my bike? How close is my dealer and does he keep the parts I need, that might stop me from riding this weekend, on his shelf at all times? Is my dealer available for tech help over the phone or by email... if I am unable to figure out something myself?

**Displacement:** Lastly, how much bike do I need for my ability and goals?

This is where I've seen the BIGGEST bike-buying mistake over the years: Riders thinking that they need a 300 (and they so much-- do not!).

Riders often don't realize the power that bike really has, and some have innocently told me "Well, I got it because it was on sale and was the same price as a 250..." Ugh! And some unsuspecting riders have the erroneous idea that they need a 300 to "get up a hill", or that the 300 is the "best" so "better get that one" and I can "grow into it". Such a mistake!

I'll go out on a limb and say that unless you have aspirations to be a Pro rider (and the potential to do so) you don't need a 300-ever. And unless you already have repeatedly and routinely opened the throttle ALL the WAY on your 200 or 250... you don't need a 300-ever. In fact, having a 300 can hamper your improvement as a rider if indeed you get one.

A person in Motocross wouldn't get a 450 before they were absolutely ready for it...and the same applies with the 300 for trials. I've seen time and time again that having a 300 has actually hampered the rider's ability to improve. Why? Because the rider is subconsciously afraid to open the throttle. Their body feels the ridiculous power --(even if their mind doesn't acknowledge it). The body knows instinctively from the first throttle feel that- "hey! I'm sitting on a stick of dynamite here!" And you are.

This holds a rider back greatly from improving. Why? Whether the rider knows it consciously or not, the rider is timid about opening the throttle. And with good reason- as the consequences for too much throttle are huge with the 300. In Europe, it is common practice to not even allow a new rider to have anything over a 125 or 200 until their skill set demonstrates they are ready. It is not just "discouraged"-- it's simply not allowed.

Starting at a lower displacement is not only practical from a safety standpoint, but is the absolutely only way to learn proper Trial techniques. A 125 can indeed get up that hill (a 300 is not needed) and to learn the throttle control necessary is invaluable for becoming a good trials rider- and before moving to a larger displacement. You can't learn proper throttle control if you're afraid to open it!

If you want to be a good trials rider, it is necessary in the learning curve to start at a lower displacement. And, in most cases- a 200 or a 250 is as much power as most riders are EVER going to need. And he or she can ride expertly on these models- without being subconsciously scared of their bike. It's no fun to be scared of your bike, and definitely hampers the learning curve.

Thanks again NETA for letting me toss in my two cents. Keep your feet up! Mike