

I Miss My Daddy

Billboard campaign continues in memoriam

Story by Loretta Jackson

It would be so cool. It would be cool if Trevor James could trot along behind his son's little blue tricycle. The three-wheeler is careening down the sidewalk in front of Nanni's house in Hammonton, New Jersey. The trike casts a long, wobbly shadow as its pedals are pumped by Trevor's blond-headed son Dylan.

It would be cool if a dad and his son could pause for a moment in the shade—a moment perhaps marked with an exclamation point made by a tall ice cream cone with a chocolate drip coming out of the bottom. Dylan's mom Anne and his grandparents—Janet and John—share with Anne's parents—Bob and Sue—in Dylan's ongoing adventures. It would be so cool if his dad, Trevor, also could hear Dylan's laughter and scoop the boy up into his arms for a belly hug. It would be so cool.

But it ain't gonna happen. Dylan will never get that belly hug—thanks to a driver who says she didn't see his dad—or his dad's motorcycle. Trevor was aboard his Suzuki when the woman pulled out of a local deli and began a left turn—right in front of the 22-year-old motorcyclist. Trevor was a quick thinker. He was able to lay down the Suzuki. In fact, it spun mostly unscathed behind the woman's car. It was Trevor's body—not the bike—that took the full impact against the side of the woman's car. His helmet was no help.

Trevor never regained consciousness. He died a week after the accident that occurred in Winslow Township in August of 2006. He was 22 years old. He never was able to speak any last words to his beloved Anne or their son Dylan, his brother Carson, his parents, other family members or the legion of friends and coworkers who prayed for miracles. A union member in the construction trades who owned his own home, Trevor James lives on in memory—and on a big yellow billboard that is a plea for recognition that motorcyclists are people, not stereotypes.

The billboard is located on Route 73 South in the town of Berlin, NJ. It shows a photo of Trevor and Dylan when the baby was little. Trevor is looking out toward approaching drivers. The baby is in his arms. And it is the baby's words that form the caption saying, "I miss my daddy."

Trevor's mom, Janet James, has fought relentlessly to maintain the billboard campaign, hoped to be incorporated into May's Motorcycle Awareness activities. She was encouraged by a little yellow sign someone left at the accident scene. The Garden State ABATE sponsored sign read, "Look twice, save a life. Motorcycles are everywhere."

Subsequently, Janet's quest to maintain the billboard encouraged support from Kresson Signs of Cherry Hill, NJ, and Walter's Signs of Berlin, NJ. Donations from the public helped, along with support from Garden State ABATE officials Tom Gordon and Steve Friedrich, the

State Board of ABATE and Chapter Six. Gordon's son Adam and Trevor were best friends, so Tom knew the depth of the loss. Congressman Robert Andrews' office got in touch. And Janet recently wrote a letter to Governor Jon Corzine, whose own brush with death in a serious collision showed him only too well how one second can change a life.

Today, the quest continues to raise awareness of motorcyclists. Janet says it's been "the winds of goodness and kindness" that have encouraged her. She said, "'A penny doubled' is my motto, to bring understanding and education to the general motoring public." She is sure that after a time people will remember the image of Trevor and his little son Dylan as they drive the highways of New Jersey and beyond. Now, that would be cool.

A benefit event to help sustain the billboard project has been announced. All are invited to attend the Second Annual Trevor James Benefit planned for Saturday, May 2 at Dazzyo's Bar & Grill, 505 South Route 73 in Cedarbrook, NJ. Riders will meet, greet and depart at 3 p.m. for a memorial ride from Dazzyo's to the billboard site, about two miles away and then return to Dazzyo's for the festivities.

A pause at the billboard site may include a press conference anticipated to feature input from State Senators Sweeney and Madden, Assemblyman Nelson Albano, Congressman Rob Andrews, Mayor SueAnn Metzner of Winslow Township and hopefully Governor Jon Corzine. Folks then will depart for a moment of silence at the crash site, just down the road.

Then, it's a return to Dazzyo's for a benefit there from 4:00pm to 7:00pm that will feature food, music, a 50/50 drawing and a prize auction. All are invited whether on bikes or in other vehicles. Info: Janet James at **609-369-1181** (email: janetjames13@comcast.net) or call Tom Dazzyo at **609-561-5222** (email: tommydaz@comcast.net).

