

Summer 1999
Issue No. 3

Still...Keeping Track

Penton Owners Group Newsletter



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STILLKEEPING TRACK Newsletter of the PENTON OWNERS GROUP

The Penton Owners Group is a not for profit corporation chartered in the State of Ohio and an AMA chartered club. Our Federal tax I.D. number is 34-1860635.

The Penton Owners Group was formed to preserve and share the memories and the equipment of a very special time in motorcycle history. The first Penton motorcycle was manufactured in 1967 and the last in 1977. This was a time when the enthusiasm, ambition and creativity of the original Penton group helped shape a new industry and a new generation of dirt bike enthusiasts. Sport and competition motorcycles played a significant role in this motorcycle history. Our aim is to make the Penton Owners Group a source of information about the history of the Penton motorcycle, the Penton Company and it's many dealers, riders and extended family.

The mission of the Penton Owners Group is to enjoy and share all the memories from the past and the events of the future, as Penton motorcycle enthusiasts.

Still on Track is published quarterly by the Penton Owners Group. Membership in the POG is \$20 per year and includes a subscription to the newsletter which is not available separately. Manuscripts, photos, drawings, etc. are welcome but no payment is made for material submitted, used, or retained. Please keep duplicates of your submissions, as we cannot be responsible for loss or damage. Submission of material will be considered as assignment of all rights therein. Change of address: Give old and new address and notify us as least 6 weeks in advance. Send address changes to: The PENTON OWNERS GROUP - P.O. Box 756 - Amherst, Ohio 44001 All information furnished herein is provided by and for the members of the Penton Owners Group.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Alan Buehner

Summer is here and things are happening and coming up fast with the Penton Owners Group. At the April meeting, a motion was passed to mail out the minutes of the board meeting to all members to keep them informed of what is going on. The minutes will be mailed out every other month and will include the minutes of 2 meetings. And speaking of meetings, all members are always welcome to attend. They are held on the first Monday of every month at 7pm at KTM USA in Amherst, Ohio.

In April I had the wonderful opportunity to drive to the AMA Vintage Days event at Sears Point in California

with John Penton. It was an experience of a lifetime and I have a report on it in the Vintage Days West article in this newsletter.

At our May meeting, we were honored with the appearance of Ed Youngblood, the recently retired president of the AMA, who gave a presentation. Ed is writing an article for a motorcycle magazine on the story of John Penton. In doing so, he knew that you cannot tell it all in just an article, so he presented the board with an outline for writing a book. The board passed a motion to work with Ed to write the book and supply him with information. Another motion was passed to form a committee to answer questions of who will print it, what will it cost, how many to print, etc. The board members are

excited about this project and more information will be shared in the next newsletter and in the minutes of the May and upcoming meetings.

Our Penton display was set up at the AMA Vintage Days event at Mid-Ohio from July 9th thru the 11th and the Penton Only exhibition ride was held on Sunday during the MX races. More information and photos will be in the next newsletter.

Plans are in the works for October when we will have our first ever Penton Reunion. This will be a one day event where we hope to gather up all the old Penton employees, dealers, and riders. All members are invited and will have a unique opportunity to meet the people who made it all happen. Mark your calendars for Saturday October 9th and

set up your route sheets for Amherst, Ohio.

After we finish up with the July Vintage Days event, I will be working on setting up our display for the year 2000 at both Vintage Days events where Penton will be part of the vintage marquee. John will also be the grand Marshall for both events. For this event we will be looking for bikes to display and many of the big name riders of Penton motorcycles. If all goes as planned, we will have a lot of heads turning in the motorcycling industry. You will find out more about this in our next newsletter.

Jack Penton was inducted into the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame Museum on Friday July 9th at the new AMA headquarters and Museum in Pickerington, Ohio.

JOHN PENTON RECEIVES AWARD - JAN. 23, 1999

By Alan Buehner

A recognition dinner was held for John Penton on Saturday January 23, 1999 by the Penton Owners Group in Amherst, Ohio. It was to honor John and provide the AMA an opportunity to present him with a medal recognizing him for his recent induction into the Motorcycle Hall of Fame Museum.

A half day of activities was planned and carried out. An open house was held at the new KTM headquarters in Amherst, Ohio in the afternoon. Old photographs were arranged on tables in the meeting room for all visitors to browse through. Tom Penton flew in from Oregon and was available to meet along with John and Jack Penton, Dane Leimbach, Matt Weisman, and Paul Danik. Jack gave a guided tour of the KTM warehouse, and the Penton homestead. Someone later commented that it was worth the long drive just to have the tour of the KTM warehouse.

At 5:30 pm everyone started gathering at Veranda Restaurant in downtown Amherst for cocktails and fellowship. A buffet dinner was served to about 100 people with plenty for everyone

to eat. After everyone was seated with their dessert, Jack Penton took the floor and started the program with introductions of the Penton Family who were in attendance (which numbered about 50), special guests and the POG board members. Ed Youngblood, the president of the AMA presented John with a special medal recognizing him as an inductee in the Motorcycle Hall of Fame, and the Mayor of Amherst presented him with a proclamation that recognized all of John's achievements.

John's sister, Pat Leimbach, who is a published author and columnist for the local paper, read a paper that she wrote about John years ago that gave a behind the scenes view of the Penton life.

Jack persuaded a few of the family members and ex-employees to come up and share a story with everyone with one of their "Penton" experiences. They all had everyone laughing over some hard to believe true stories.

Many door prizes were handed out and like all fun activities it ended before we knew it at around 11 o'clock. But, for those who were there, and those who just could not make it, the entire dinner part of the event was video taped and part of it was aired on the local cable TV channel. We have a copy of the entire film and are looking into having it reproduced to sell to the membership.

A big thank you goes to Jack Penton and his wife Gigi who organized and set up the event, and to Rod Bush, President of KTM, USA for allowing us the meet and tour his facility.

JOHN PENTON STORY

Ed Youngblood, past President of the AMA and a POG member has written an article on John Penton. It was published in the August/September issue of Racer X Illustrated magazine. If you cannot find a copy at your local bike shops, give Racer X a call at 304-284-0080. It is a well written and very informative article.



WHAT YEAR IS IT? - PART 1

by Alan Buehner

One of questions that I am asked and one that I also ask is "do you know what year it is?" when talking about someone's Penton motorcycle. It can get very tricky and technical to determine the year of any of these bikes especially for the steel tank bikes. In order to determine the year, you have to determine what is on the bike and what is not on it.

The first thing I ask is "what kind of gas tank does it have, steel or fibreglas?" If it is steel, then it is a model made between 1968 thru 1971. If it is a fibreglas tank, then it is a model made between 1972 thru 1977. The steel tank bikes are further narrowed down by seat size, long or short. The 1968's and 69's came with short seats, the others with long seats. To further narrow down the year takes a sharp eye. Since the frames were prone to breaking, gussets were added in the last year by the factory to reinforce different parts of the frame.

1972 was milestone year for the Penton motorcycle. This was the year that the chromemolly frame was introduced. The 1972 thru 1977 bikes will be covered in part 2 in the next issue of this newsletter.

The following is a listing by year of what to look for:

1968 - (Starting frame no. V001) - non-high breather frame with cast aluminum mid frame air box - short seat - 35mm Cerianni front forks (30" from top to bottom) with long rubber accordion boots - 4 bolt rear sprocket carrier (part of hub assy.) - long steel chain guard (20" across the top) - curved style center stands - Sachs motor with cast iron cylinder with butch cut heads. Come with Magura ISDT style controls.

1969 - (frame no. V1360) - same as 1968 except - short aluminum or steel chain guard (11" across the top) - high breather frame - skid plate welded on bottom of frame - round air box.

1970 - (frame no. V2117) - same as 1970 except - most came with longer seat (20" long) - 35mm Cerianni front forks came with short rubber boots - straight style center stand - a 7" frame extension was added on the bottom left side of frame to hold a down style exhaust pipe - gas tanks

have holes for tank bags - Sachs motors came with radial aluminum heads.

1971 - (frame no. V4578) - identical to 1970 except for triangular shaped gussets on rear motor mounts to back of frame tubes.

NOTE: Frame numbers shown are for reference only. Your bike could have a lower number for any year from 1969 thru 1971.

Identifying CMF framed bikes from 1972 and on will be continued in Part 2 in the next newsletter.

POG IS NOW ON THE WEB

The Penton Owners Group now has a web site. One of our members, Barry Ely of Ohio, has volunteered to set up his site for the club. You can access it at: bely@one.net or by accessing our link through AHRMA's web sites under suppliers and organizations.

We have listed on the site; information about POG, an application form, current news releases, and photos of restored bikes and past events. This site will be fine tuned and expanded each month as information becomes available. One of the features will be an on-line swap meet.

If you would like to have any of your photos or information listed send it to: The Penton Owners Group - Website, P.O. Box 756, Amherst, Ohio 44001 or E mail Barry at: bely@one.net.

PENTON DISPLAY AT VINTAGE DAYS - WEST

By Alan Buehner

April 14th thru the 20th was a period of time that will always be memorable for me. This was the trip of a lifetime and one that as a Penton enthusiast was unimaginable 25 years ago yet an honor and privilege most could only dream about. This was the trip from Amherst, Ohio to Sears Point, California with John Penton to set up the Penton display and meet some of the west coast members. It was a long drive that enabled two people to share stories about their lives and come to better know each other.

The trip was planned out in advance and John and I agreed on a departure time from his house at around 8 pm on Wednesday evening. Because of John's many excursions delivering Hi-Point trailers around the country, he assured me that it would take less than 2 days of driving to get to California with two drivers. I left work early on Wednesday, headed home to eat dinner, gathered up the last of the things I needed for the trip and anxiously headed over to John's house. When I arrived just before 7 pm, I noticed his van outside and I transferred my things into it. I expected John to be in the house doing his final packing, instead, I found him outside over in a section of his property laying face down in a ditch wrestling with a section of plastic drain tile. His project for that day was working on a small parking lot where he had spread out some gravel and he had used his back hoe to dig a drainage ditch and was now trying to tie into some drain tile that existed in the field. It was obvious to me that we were not going to be leaving until he finished so, I gave him a hand.

After we finished, I drove his van to gas it up while he got cleaned up and gathered up his things for the trip. When I got back to his house it was getting dark, and I spent the time waiting for John by talking to his wife Donna. When John found the last of his things, he grabbed a thermos of coffee and we hit the road with John driving. Departure time was about 10 pm.

As we headed to the Ohio Turnpike for our excursion on interstate 80, John laid out the driving rules that included keeping the speed within nine miles above the limit, and that as soon as you feel tired and start to fight staying awake was the time to switch drivers or take a half hour nap. We made good time following his rules but ran into an obstacle on Thursday when we reach Wyoming. The Cheyenne pass was closed down by the police because of snow. We had to turn around and make a detour south to Denver and head west through the mountains over to Utah and then head north to Salt Lake City.

This part of the trip was very scenic. We arrived in the Denver area around 7 pm. It was still light out and the views going through the mountains were spectacular. The drive on the other hand was exciting with John at the wheel,

especially in one section where some fool in a small red car thought he could pass John Penton on the right. John may be 74 years old but he still has that competitive urge and he proved that he is always up to a challenge. I never knew that you could drive a van through any of those turns more than 20 miles above what they show on those yellow signs with the big arrows. We made excellent time.

We reached Salt Lake City at sunup on Friday, found I-80 and headed west with clear skies all the way to Reno. We pulled off at Reno to fill the tank up with gas while it was still inexpensive. At \$1.58 per gallon for regular, it was a lot more than the \$1.10 we were used to paying in Ohio, but we knew from what we heard on the news that it would be higher in California.

John again took the wheel and with his enduro riding experience showed me how to maintain an average speed through the mountains past Lake Tahoe. It was beautiful scenery that was obscured by more of those yellow signs. This kept distracting my attention on the scenery and I just prayed that God would keep more slower drivers in front of us through all the curves.

We reached Sears Point at around 5:30 pm and stopped in to pick up our passes and find out where our spot to set up would be for the next morning. We found our motel, cleaned up, ate dinner, and rested our bodies for the next Day.

After enjoying one of John's favorite meals for breakfast, a bowl of hot oatmeal, we headed over to Sears Point and set up the famous mid-west "Penton display". In it were: the framed ISDT medals of Paul Danik, Jack Penton, and Dane Leimbach; team photos; photos of individual riders; a Sachs motor poster; framed brochures and decals; and Norm Miller's "number one" (the first Penton off the production line - serial no. V001).

Gavin Housh and Jerry Erickson showed up and each brought along a Penton 125 to display outside the booth and Bruce Krell loaned us his Penton 175. KTM loaned us two of their E-Z ups and in the front of these we suspended two Penton banners. It was an attractive and professional looking display that had many people stopping by during both days of the event.

A big thank you goes out to Dave Duarte of California. Dave was John's west coast warehouse manager until it

1999 AMA Vintage Days at Sears Point California

Jerry Erickson of California with John Penton. They are standing behind Jerry's "special" 1973 Penton 125 with a down pipe and Mikuni carb.



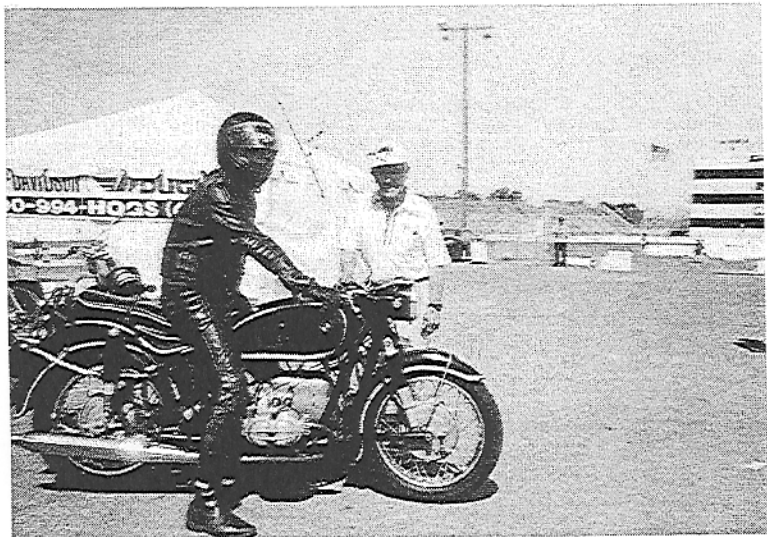
Gavin Housh of California with John Penton. They are standing behind Gavin's 1973 Penton 125 which he uses to race in AHRMA's MX events.



Bruce Krell of California and John Penton. They are standing behind Bruce's 1973 Penton 175 enduro. Bruce is the original owner of this bike.



The rider of this 1958 BMW is unknown. When John saw this fellow riding this bike he became very excited and posed for this photo. The reason for his excitement was this was the same model and year of BMW that John made his solo cross country record breaking run from New York city to Los Angeles in 1959.



was turned over to KTM in 1975. He spent all day Saturday helping man the booth, which allowed me time to get out and check out some of the other displays and the swap meet area. It was a pleasure to meet Dave and listen to his stories.

Some of the people who stopped by and who I finally met for the first time were: Alan Wheeler of Cal, Bill Conner of Oregon, Fred Cameron of Cal, Steve Luisotti of Cal, and Grant Gould of Cal. It was fun being there and I especially enjoyed seeing the surprised look people had when they discovered that John Penton was there.

Another visitor was Ron Carbaugh, who flew in from Texas to see John and check out the event. A special thank you goes out to Ron for his sincere and kind compliments that he pays me every time we meet. It's what makes putting these type of events together worthwhile.

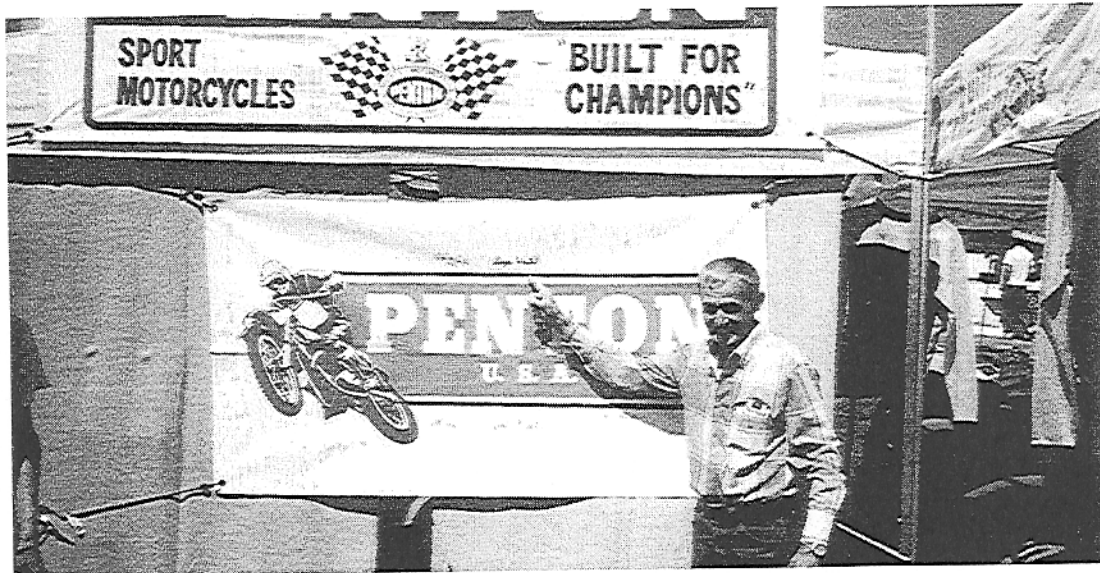
On Sunday afternoon we weren't sure what time we would start packing up and head home. Mother nature decided that for us, as a heavy wind started blowing at around 3 o'clock, and tried to

send our display back to Ohio for us. Many thanks to Jerry Erickson and his sons for helping us pack everything away. Before heading out, someone stopped by on an old BMW that caught John's attention. It was the same year and model that John made his record breaking cross country ride on in 1958! He was so excited over seeing this bike that I took a photograph of him standing next to it.

We left Sears Point at around 5 pm and headed back to Ohio. The return trip was uneventful. The passes were all open and you couldn't have asked for nicer weather. During one of our conversations, John made a comment that everyone thinks that he became a wealthy man because of his motorcycle business. I kind of surprised him when I told him that I knew that he lost out in the end of it. Being in the retail business I know that my profit from years of being in that type of business is all tied up in the inventory that is setting on the shelf. John's money was all tied up in his inventory and although he never told me how much he got paid when the inventory was liquidated, I knew that he took a beating

because it was sold for pennies on the dollar and I had talked to some people who worked at the warehouse and there were many items that were thrown away.

We arrived in Amherst, Ohio at 11 am Tuesday safe and sound. It was a wonderful trip that was rewarding for the two of us. I learned from John what it takes to be a world class rider and that I could never compete at that level. I am teaching John that even though his motorcycle never made him financially wealthy, the real wealth and success lies in the number of quality people that have become his friends over the years. I am amazed at all of the who's who in the motorcycling industry that John knows and who at one time or another had worked for John. It is a touching experience to see the faces of these people light up when they get to see John again after many years. I am looking forward to setting up next year's display at Sears Point where we will be part of the vintage marquee display and John will be the Grand Marshal



Leroy Winters pointing to his autograph on the Penton banner at Mid-Ohio during the AMA Vintage Days event in 1998.

Leroy Winters

by Al Born

Most of you have by now heard or read about the passing of Leroy Winters in late February of this year. I would like to share some of my opinions about Leroy.

Leroy was truly one of the most dedicated off-road riders that I have ever

known. It was no "big deal" for Leroy to drive from his home in Fort Smith, Arkansas, to any location in the US to ride in enduro or trials. He was a man who was capable of getting the most out of whatever equipment was available to ride. For instance, several years ago, he won the grueling two-day Jack Pine

Enduro on a 165cc Harley, which was almost unimaginable at the time, but he did it.

Leroy was very innovative and was always coming up with tricks to make his motorcycle a notch above the rest. I competed with him during the mid-to late

1960s and, believe me, he rode one of the most trick Honda 90s in the country.

I had the pleasure of riding with Leroy on the Penton team at the Berkshire Two-Day Trials in 1968 and 1969 and our team won the Manufacturers Team Award both years. Leroy had a lot of input into the development of the Penton motorcycles and was a Six-Day rider a few times with the Penton teams, having been a very good friend of John Penton.

Leroy was a man who loved life and was a very serious competitor but could still "cut up" and have a lot of fun. Leroy has co-hosted the annual Six-Day Reunion for the last few years near Fort Smith, and according to his son Bart, his family is planning to hold the reunion again this fall, October 2nd and 3rd.

Leroy was a member of the Penton Owners Group. I personally feel that every member of this group as well as any

off-roader that knew him will miss his smile and will be glad that they had the opportunity to know him and to compete with him. I know I will.

Editor's note: Next time you see a steel tank Penton with an ISDT decal on the top of the gas tank, read the names listed on it. One of the names listed is Leroy Winters.

ADDITION TO LAST NEWSLETTER

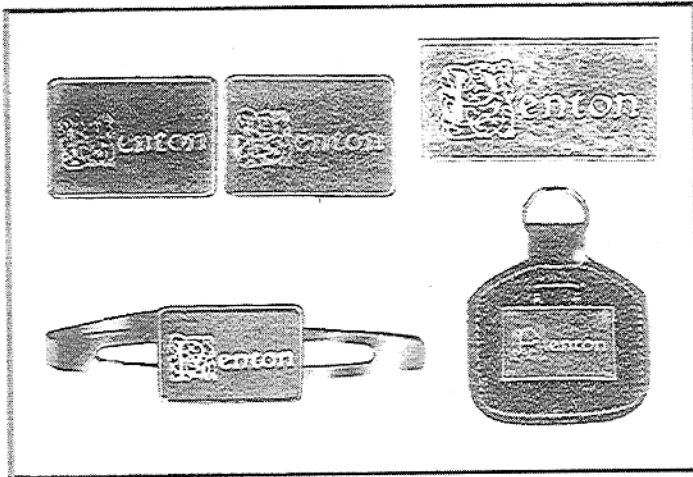
On the last page of the photo section of the last newsletter, there was photo of a CZ 250 and a heading of "In memory of Bob Augustine". In order to clarify why this photo was printed I am writing this addition which should have been printed with the photo.

Bob was not only a member of the Penton Owners Group, but was a very dear friend of Paul Danik. Bob was responsible for introducing Paul to dirt bikes when Paul was a teenager. Bob took him under his wings and showed him what he needed to learn about motorcycles.

I had the opportunity to meet Bob at one of the Ohio Valley BSA Owners Club rallies of which I became a member in 1995. Bob was the President of this fine well run organization. He died of a massive heart attack during his first moto last year at Mid-Ohio during the AMA Vintage Days, doing what he enjoyed best. The last time I saw him was on the Friday evening before, at the Vintage Dirt Track races at Ashland fairgrounds. He was his usual self, smiling, laughing, and enjoying all that motorcycling life had to offer. His sudden death was a shock to all of us that knew him and put a gray cloud over an event that had us all pumped up until we heard the news.

Alan Buchner

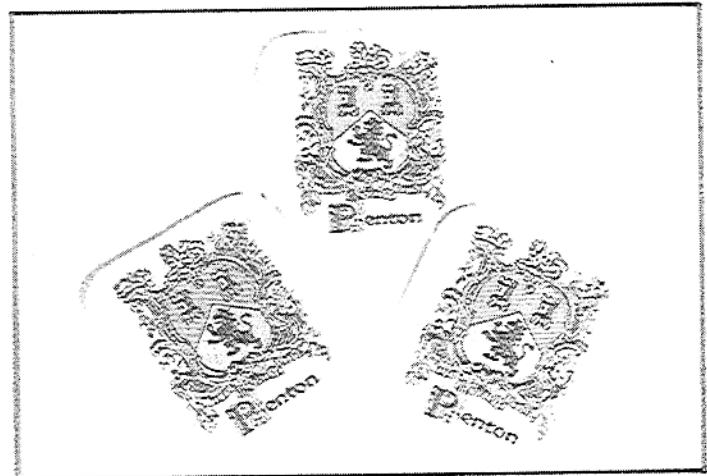
PENTON BANNERS, JEWELRY, APPAREL, DECALS ETC.



PENTON JEWELRY

Beautifully crafted jewelry in fine metal and enamel. Bright green background with gold metal base. Great for the Penton enthusiast.

LAPEL PIN No. 145 KEY FOB No. 142
 CUFF LINKS ... No. 143 TIE CLIP No. 140



PENTON JACKET EMBLEMS

Attractive cloth emblems for jackets or blazers. Can be ironed on or sewed on. White background with green and black embroidering.

No. 122



Photo of the world famous Penton Display set up at Sears Point, California for the AMA Vintage Days West event held on April 17 & 18, 1999.



PENTON OWNERS GROUP
P.O. Box 756
Amherst, OHIO 44001

PENTON REUNION PICNIC - Saturday October 9th
To be held at Amherst Meadowlarks Clubhouse - Amherst, Ohio
mark your calendar for this event - details will be in next newsletter