

Solex



Spring is in the Air

By Jeff Matthews, VeloCruz president

Greetings Solex enthusiasts. Spring is in the air (at least in this part of the country)! And, with spring, my desire to get back out on the streets with my Solexes is rising. I added to my collection over the winter—a nice 2200 and one of the rare PliSolex (folding models). I have a few things to do to get them street-ready, but it will be fun to see what personality these Solexes have. Isn't it true that no two Solex bikes are quite the same? They all seem to have a unique ride, a unique engine purr, and that's exactly what make them so fun.

I commend all of you that embarked on a Solex restoration project this year. I saw a lot of good activity on the Solex Club site (<http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/solexownersofamerica>). There were questions about powder coating, complete engine overhauls, etc. It's always exciting to hear about another bike that comes out of someone's shed to see the street again. It's also been fun to see the value of old bikes increase on sites like eBay. Before production of the new bike ceased in 2005, a nice, used bike would get around \$200. I've seen them go on eBay for 3 to 5 times that amount. A used Solex is not a bad investment choice given the state of the economy and the price of gasoline.

Well, I hope that you enjoy this issue of the newsletter. We have included some exciting articles about Solex events around the world, and the eSolex, which made a cameo appearance in the U.S. earlier this year for one of our good customers.



Blaine's eSolex

First eSolex in the USA

By staff

Blaine, one of our longtime customers has worked with a close business contact in Europe to take delivery of the first eSolex in North America. He was kind enough to not only show pictures of his treasure, but also to tell us a little bit about how this bike compares to the traditional Solex that most of us know and love.

Blaine took receipt of this bike a few months ago and has spent time getting it assembled and finding an adaptor for the charg-

ing plug. Here's what he has to report:

"The performance data given by the owners manual is as follows:

- Two speeds: low power 1 to 25km/h; 55 km range. High power 1 to 40km/h. 40 km range.
- Motor 400 watt/36 volts.
- Battery is a lithium Ion 36V x 15 AH. 700 recharge capacity. recharge time 4 hours (70%) 8 hours 100%



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charge.

- Bike weight without battery 40 kg. Battery weight 5 kg.
- Disc brakes front and rear.
- The speedometer reads both speed and battery charge.
- The battery is held in frame below the handlebars. The battery has a strap on it and is removed from the bike for charging. The battery automatically connects when lowered into its holder in the frame.
- Based on visual observation the eSolex is heavier all around than the gas model. It has a heavy duty frame, tires and suspension system. The fit and finish is very good (better than some of the later gas models of the Solex).
- The ride is smooth without any lurching or hesitating. It does not like hills of any type and pedaling takes a real effort because of the weight.

The eSolex seems ideal to me for the person who wants zero mechanical chores having to do with engine maintenance, etc.” Blaine in California

It is still unknown when these bikes will be made available in North America, but the feedback in Europe seems generally positive. Stay tuned for more information as we have it.



Trotilex Meets its Match

By staff

Many of you have probably heard about the Trotilex, which was produced by Impex in partnership with a company EDEM cao. Their goal for this product was to introduce Solex to a younger generation of scooter owners. There were a limited number of these made and I suspect that at some point they will be listed among the collectible Solex products.

Charles de Vogel, one of the most talented Solex mechanics in the United States, decided to produce something similar to this product. This isn't the first experiment that Charles has undertaken. Charles has the motto that any product can be improved if you introduce Solex parts to the equation. Well, in this case, what he produced took on the name of "Pli-Scoot-olex", which is a combination of the PliSolex (the folding Solex) and a scooter.

Here's what Charles had to tell us about the project:

"The story is pretty short and sweet. I saw the scooter online (I bought it from Amazon.com—\$70), and said to myself, "Self, that thing NEEDS an engine." So I took a 3800 fork re-engineered it to fit, and several days of measuring, cutting, welding, and painting, I had a Pli-Scoot-olex.

I gave it a more comfortable seat, and put on a real macho piece of aluminum diamond plate for the foot-plate and voilà! I still need to sandblast the edge of the rims where the brake pads contact, as the chrome plating on the rims is very smooth, and I'm not yet satisfied with the braking action. After all, the thing does 20+ mph, and it's always nice to be able to stop.

The engine is a 1970s 3800 with a 5000 decompression system. The muffler is a Briggs and Stratton lawn mower muffler, and as such, is a bit louder than the average Solex, but quieter than a mower. Someday, when I really have NOTHING else to do, I may add a lighting system to it.



Bastille Day Rendezvous 2006

By Brian Colter

The Solex gods were shining down on us for the seventh annual Bastille Day, Rendezvous. Unfortunately, so was the New York summer sun, causing the temperature to hit the century mark. When combined with the humidity, it caused the “real-feel” temperature to reach 115 degrees F (46 C). Not exactly what drivers and riders of older vehicles want to hear, but Citroen and VeloSolex people always seem to make the best of

things and have a good time, and that’s just what we did.

Twenty-five Citroens and eleven Solexes showed up on Sunday, July 16th, 2006 to once again celebrate France’s independence day. Concerning the Citroens, there were fourteen 2 CVs, one SM, one GS 1220, two CX 25s, one truckette and six DS including one station wagon. As

for the VeloSolexes, there was a 1962 S 3300, two 1967 S 3800s, a 1974 S 3800, an Impex S 3800, a 1973 Pli-Solex, a 1974 4600 V1, two 1975 4600 V2s, a 1977 4600 V3 and my 1978 4600 V3. Six of the bikes belonged to Howie Seligmann from VeloSolex-America who generously loaned them out to friends, an intern, and some visiting students from France.

I met fellow Solexists Marc and Jean-Baptiste early Sunday morning at the Continental Army Plaza at the foot of the Williamsburg Bridge in Brooklyn. Marc’s freshly painted Atoll Blue 4600 V2 looked great and ran as well as it looked thanks to a recent motor rebuild by yours truly. JB’s weathered S 3800 had a nice “dans son jus” look to it and performed satisfactorily with just some minor overheating problems here and there. After crossing the bridge, we headed uptown, encountering a lot of traffic, closed streets and detours. We stopped for a break in Central Park to cool-down ourselves and our Solexes in the shade. JB rode with us to the start point, Grant’s Tomb, on the Upper West Side, but could only stay awhile before having to go to work. Howie pulled up with his Van-o-Solexes, and Manny, who attended last year’s event, returned again this year, this time with his son-in-law. Howie assigned his Solexes to those in need and also gave out free “VeloSolex-America” helmets to those using his bikes and to anybody else that wanted one. Marc nearly had need of one when he crashed just before the start of the run, returning from a store with a bag of drinks in one hand and losing control going over some very rough road. He did a good job protecting his motor and the drinks, but paid for it with a big bruise on his arm and a bent pedal crank. Mike, on Howie’s 4600 V1, was glad he took one of the helmets as he took a spill near the end of the run and narrowly missed getting squished by a taxi. Mike



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A Soul-x Sister

By Shawne Anderson

John Bowring once said, “A happy family is but an earlier heaven.” However, in our happy family, heaven is glimpsed with each solex ride. The family is gathered, the gas is mixed, the engines are revved, and we’re off on our heavenly ride. It’s hard to understand another family’s joy, until you throw in a Solex. The Solex is a staple in a relationship, the common ground we all can relate too. If you have felt the joy of the ride, the glimpse of heaven, then you are already one step closer to understanding. For me, the Solex really has been that connecting link between me and my family.

I am Shawne Anderson. I was born and raised in Mesa, AZ, and thus, displaced from my maternal extended family. They had the birthday parties, the graduations, the reunions, and even the Solex Rallies without me. I saw the pictures and watched the videos, but always felt left behind. It wasn’t until I was fourteen that I was finally allowed my own Solex. The excitement that stemmed from that large shipment lasted far beyond momentary pleasure. It gave me a connection to my Solex-riding family. I rode that Solex to piano lessons, church activities, and of course, my social



undertakings. But, I could always call and share my latest Solex ride. I had something in common with my extended family.



Then, there was my Aunt JaNae. She had always had a Solex and knew how to create the riding memories. JaNae seemed to take the greatest liking to her soul. Seeing as we are 12 years apart, it’s hard to imagine any possibility of a close-knit relationship. However, JaNae would take me on her Solex when I was a little girl. Climbing on the back of her seat, she would provide the rare opportunity to feel the wind blow through our hair, the interesting looks we got from everyone watching from the sidelines and the residual fuel smell that stayed with us for the rest of the day. When we were Solexing together, the 12 years between us were not an issue. We were truly bonding.

Although the years have passed and we both have grown, the Solex still holds us together. JaNae will often call to report the latest Solex news, and thus, open up a whole new world of conversation.

The Solex is a thread that weaves our family together. But more importantly, it binds our love together. From the Solex rides, to life’s lessons, the family ties are created. I love my Solex and I love my family. But, more than that, I love what the Solex does FOR our family.

A Second Chance at a Solex

By Claus Puehler

My grandpa had a 3800 with which he would sometimes pick me up from kindergarten in the mid 1970s. I would ride on the baggage porter, without a helmet. I remember when being a child I was wondering what this brazen button on the toolbox was for—since at this age I didn’t have the power to open that toolbox it remained a mystery to me for the next years. In 1990 (I was 19 then) I bought an orange Solex 5000 from a friend’s friend and drove it for two years till it refused to start one day—and made a big mistake: I sold it.

In 1998 I bought a fast 5000 just to be able to do some short distance trips during summer. In 2005 it wasn’t as powerful as in the first years and so I started to get in touch with the inner life of Solex engines. To obtain first hand information right from the country of origin, I reactivated my French, to be able to read all the information given in Bernique’s forum (Forum Cyclomoteurs à Galet <== highly recommended website).

Since driving my car has become annoying and boring to me, due to strange traffic participants and strange traffic rules, I’m using my 1970 (my year of birth) 3800 super luxe to get the biscuits in the morning, do the shopping, visit friends and customers, and last but not least, driving to one of my favourite lakes (we’ve got plenty of them in our area) or to the river Rhine.

The 1953 330 V0 has become a mile eater, too—and hopefully it’ll bring me from southern Germany to 27, Boulevard Barbès, Paris in August 2007—to the house of the first owner of my bike.

<http://bernique.free.fr/vsx25/index1.html>

A Solex Fatality

By Charles de Vogel and B at Vuagniaux

My best friend of over 40 year's duration is B at Vuagniaux. He's Swiss, from Geneva, Switzerland, where I also grew up. We went to school and had a lot of other adventures together in the '60s. Before he and I met he was going to a different school than I was and he rode a Solex to get there. He and a few of his pals did a bad thing to the Solex. Here, translated by me but in his own words, is that story.

The story of my Solex goes back quite some time, it must have been in 1962 and I was going to «Coll ge de la Gradelle», an outlying school that we called the «Stalag» due to the resemblance of the buildings to those, sadly famous, of the aryan mustachioed one! Several of us had mopeds, of course there were «Pony's» with 2-speed Sachs engines, «VeloVap's», and Solexes. The Sachs (engines) were incredibly strong, but had one main shortcoming; They «bit» 35 Kml/h and not one more. They were nearly impossible to modify without changing the gears and all the rest. The Vaps were a bit faster than the Solexes, which, when the engine was raised a bit must have gone 37 to 39 Km/h.*

*One day, weary of this slowness worthy of a Burgundian snail, one of my Solexist buddies said, «I spoke with my mechanic, and it seems that by adding a good-size thimbleful of ether to the Solexine** the moped will spit fire and reach unheard-of speeds***. So off we went to the Pr  du Couvent road which led to the school and which is quite straight. We tossed the ether into the juice to which the Solex was accustomed, and opened the throttle. It made our hair stand up! We felt we had at least a 250cc. Up on the front wheel, things lasted about 42 or 43 seconds before the piston gave up the ghost, seized, froze the drive roller, and seriously ripped open the front tire.*****

It goes without saying that such an experience is a one-time event in the life of a Solex and that it is fatal (R.I.P.), and that got me a Sachs for my next birthday from my parents who never learned how that poor 2200 recei-

ved its last rites. Amen. This is an experiment that should NOT be attempted.

* (a high school in Geneva, Switzerland)

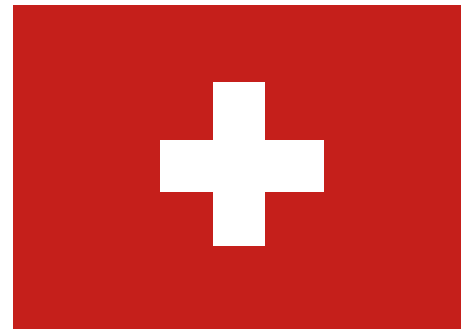
** (special ad hoc Solex fuel of the day)

*** (Famous last words...)

**** (I seem to remember that before THE END, they hit something like 85 Km/h. CdV.)

This story leaves us with a few Zen points to ponder:

- 1) It's bad karma to feed your Solex stuff that wasn't intended for it - it will break.
- 2) An old truism: If it ain't broke, don't fix it.
- 3) If the Solex gods had wanted Solexes



to fly, they would have been built with wings.

- 4) Life is a journey; if you must travel at full throttle, do it on a Solex.  (All rights reserved on this preceding sentence).

The original version of B at Vuagniaux's Solex story:

La version originale :

L'histoire de mon Solex remonte   un bout de temps d j ,  a devait  tre en 1962 et je me rendais au Coll ge de la Gradelle,  cole pavillonnaire que nous appelions le « Stalag », en raison de la ressemblance de ces b timents avec ceux, tristement c l bres, du moustachu arien ! Nous  tions plusieurs   avoir des boguets, il y avait bien entendu les Pony,   moteur Sachs deux vitesses, les V loVap et les Solex. Les Sachs  taient incroyablement robustes, mais avaient un principal d faut, il « tapaient » du 35 km/h. et pas un de plus, ils  taient presque impossibles   maquiller sans changer les pignons et tout le toutim, les Vap  taient un peu plus rapides que les Solex, qui, quand on levait un peu le moteur, devaient arriver   37 ou 39 km/h.

Un jour, las de cette lenteur digne d'un escargot bien bourguignon, un de mes copains solexiste   dit : « j'ai discut  avec mon m cano, et il para t qu'en mettant un bon d    coudre d'ether dans la Solexine, le boguet crache le feu et atteint des vitesses rarement  gal es ». Nous voil  donc partis sur le chemin du Pr  du Couvent, qui m ne   l' cole et qui est bien rectiligne et l , on balance la soupe dans le jus auquel le Solex  tait habitu  et plein gaz,  a a effectivement un peu d coiff , on pensait avoir au moins une 250 cc. Sur la roue avant,  a a dur  42 ou 43 secondes avant que le piston rende l' me, sorte de ses gonds et que le galet bloqu , n'entame s rieusement le pneu avant.

Inutile de dire que cette exp rience est unique dans la vie d'un Solex, mais qu'elle lui est fatale (R.I.P.) et  a m'a valu un Sachs pour mon prochain anniversaire, de la part de mes parents   qui je n'avais jamais dit comment ce pauvre 2200 avait re u sa derni re onction. Amen. Dis bien   ton public que cette exp rience ne doit en aucun cas  tre tent e. B.V.

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also did a great job protecting the Solex, but came away with a twisted ankle, a bloody arm and a swollen lip. The only other casualty was the Pli-Solex which suffered a flat front tire just after the start of the run. Despite the mishaps, a good



time was had by all. It's a lot of fun cruising through Manhattan with a Solex gang.

First stop on the run was the French-American Bastille Day Street Fair on Fifth Avenue and 60th Street, where we lined up the vehicles for display. The whole street was blocked off and filled with food and drink stands, games, a band and a crowd of people enjoying the festivities. After sampling some French food and drinks at the fair, we headed for the next rendezvous spot, Washington Square Park, in downtown Manhattan. At the park, there is an arch that resembles the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. We again lined up



the vehicles for display and relaxed in the shade for a short time. When it came time to leave the park, Manny's S 3300, which his son-in-law had been riding, would not start. Not getting any spark, I replaced his dirty spark plug and worn spark plug wire. Still nothing. Remembering a trick I learned on a French Solex forum, I flicked the arm of the points to knock away any possible speck of dirt that might be keeping the points from totally closing. Success! Manny's son-in-law was very happy that he wouldn't have to pedal the rest of the day.

The last stop, like last year, was The Un, Deux, Trois Café in Midtown, where we all enjoyed some delicious French food and drinks... and the AIR-CONDITIONING!

It was great seeing familiar faces and vehicles, and some new ones as well. Many thanks to the event organizers and sponsors, and to all of the club members for another fun and memorable Rendezvous.

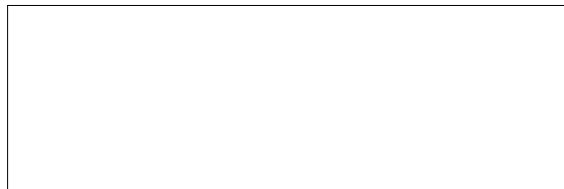


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