

Out & About

at Ballet Theatre of Scranton's performance of "The Nutcracker" at Marywood University

BLITCH COME-OYS / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Zoey Fagan, left, and Izabela Filipousid, both of Tobyhanna



Stefan Filipouski, left, of Tobyhanna and Christine Dunham of Pocono Pines



From left, Amy Overpeck of Tannersville with Chloe and Brooke Kimmins of Tobyhanna



From left, Natalie Schield, Nicole Susko and Morgan McGuire, all of Moscow

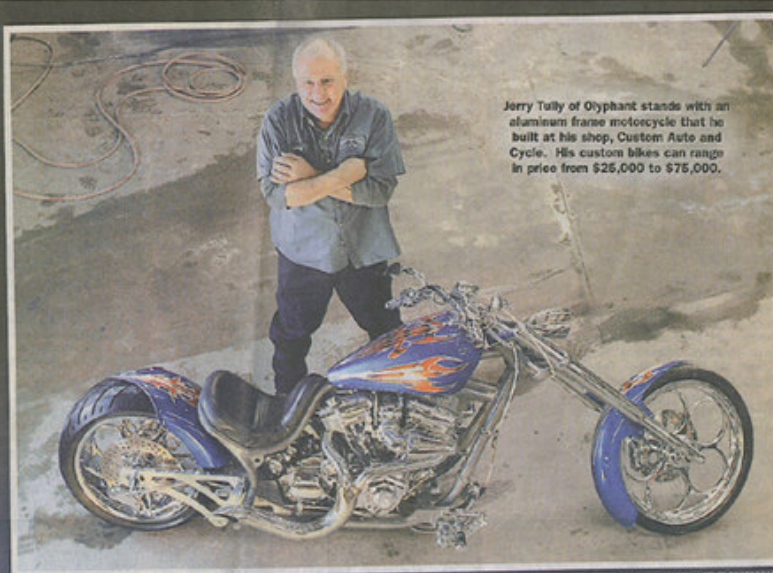


Maria, left, and Mariah Wolff of Moscow



Sara, left, and Connie Wolff of Moscow

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Jerry Tully of Olyphant stands with an aluminum frame motorcycle that he built at his shop, Custom Auto and Cycle. His custom bikes can range in price from \$25,000 to \$75,000.

MICHAEL J. MULLEN / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

WIZARD OF WHEELS

Olyphant's Jerry Tully creates customized motorcycles

BY STACY BROWN
STAFF WRITER

A quick look at Jerry Tully and one could surmise that he was in dress rehearsal for a role in a movie.

His neatly combed silver hair frames a clean-shaven face. He's decked out in a mechanic's greasy blue shirt and oil-stained pants. His tools are close at hand.

But, after a conversation with the mechanic, volunteer firefighter and Olyphant borough councilman, it is easy to see that Mr. Tully's love of classic motorcycles and vintage cars is no act.

Mr. Tully builds custom motorcycles and automobiles at his shop along Burke Bypass. His creations are among the more popular at motorcycle shows across the country.

"A motorcycle is supposed to give a person a sense of freedom. I like it when people pull alongside me and give me the thumbs up," Mr. Tully, 58, said.

Some have even videotaped Mr. Tully as he has traveled the roadways of Northeast Pennsylvania and other areas on one of his colorful motorcycles, he said.

His love of bikes is legendary in NEPA.

Mr. Tully started building motorcycles as a hobby 20 years ago, he said.

No longer just for fun

Ironically it was a bad accident that drove Mr. Tully further into the world of motorcycles. He switched gears from building them as a hobby to designing and constructing them as a profession.

Mr. Tully said he was riding a motorcycle along Scott Road in his native Dickson City in the early 1990s when he was struck by a car, resulting in several fractured bones. "I was so out of it that, when I came to, I thought the guy had sucker punched me because he was standing over me," he said.

The accident made him realize the importance of building safe motorcycles, so the former Marywood University and University of Scranton student, who eventually graduated from Bridgeport (Connecticut) University decided to open his own business, Mr. Tully said.

"I was looking for more self-satisfaction," he said. "I decided to make a change and do my own thing and I went to work at a body shop. After a year at the body shop, I went on my own



MICHAEL J. MULLEN / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Mr. Tully got into the business of building motorcycles following a life-changing collision with a car. Here he sits on the first motorcycle he built. Below is a detail from one of Mr. Tully's favorite creations, a blue, red and yellow bike called "Superman."

and, in 1995, I opened my own shop in Olyphant."

Mr. Tully's motorcycles, which include one named "Nightmare," and another named "Superman," are made from the ground up and are one of a kind, he said. "Nightmare was so named because making it went from a bad dream to a nightmare with all the problems," Mr. Tully said.

Complete with a drawing of the Man of Steel and the trademark "S," "Superman" is blue, red and yellow and has more than 172 horsepower. "It's like riding in a spaceship," Mr. Tully said.

All of the bikes are original, he said. "No matter what show you go to, no one will have the same bike. They are what we call one-offs," Mr. Tully said.

While currently customizing a 1938 Ford at his spacious shop, Mr. Tully gets the most satisfaction from the bikes. He carefully oversees everything from the framework to the engine and the color. "No green allowed. I don't build bikes and paint them green; it's bad luck," Mr. Tully said, explaining that one reason for his distrust of the color green is that a close friend passed away not long after buying a green motorcycle.

The bikes range in value from \$25,000 to as much as \$75,000, he said. Customers, though, are willing to pay the price for the uniqueness, safety features and the fact that Mr. Tully has earned a reputation because of show appearances such as when he represented the state last May in a tri-state motorcycle build-off.

His reputation even caught the

attention of the so-called "King of the Choppers," Jesse James.

"I needed a gas tank and I called a place in New York State and the guy gave me the run around," Mr. Tully said. "I called out West and got Jesse James and got what I needed. Now, I had never met him and not long after, we were at a bike show and I was cleaning the bike and someone came up behind and said 'Nice bike.' I turned around and it was Jesse James and he said, 'You're that screwball from Pennsylvania.'"

The "screwball" is now one of the most sought after custom bike builders and has been featured in several biker magazines. He has served on the Olyphant Borough Council for nine years and also serves as a volunteer firefighter.

Cares for community

Mr. Tully prides himself on being a part of the community.

"We adopt a family every year for Christmas and it gives me the best feeling to help a mother and her children or a couple and their children," Mr. Tully said. "This Christmas, we had a mother and her children and we helped them out and the best thing was that I got a thank-you card, which said, 'P.S., there really is a Santa Claus.'"

Mr. Tully also spends his time helping out in area food drives and participating in Christmas parties for underprivileged children. "Being on the council has been rewarding because it has put me in a position to help people," Mr. Tully said.

Contact the writer: stebwn@imeshamrock.com



**ABOUT
JERRY TULLY**

At home: Lives in Olyphant with his wife, Ann, and son, Jerry III.

At work: Owns and operates Custom Auto and Cycle on the Burke Bypass. Serves as councilman in Olyphant and is a volunteer firefighter. Also featured in several magazines, including Fast Lane Biker, East Coast Biker and American Iron. Mr. Tully started building motorcycles 20 years ago. He attended Marywood University and the University of Scranton and graduated from Bridgeport (Connecticut) University. He has served on Olyphant Borough Council for nine years.

Favorite motorcycle: "Nightmare" and "Superman"

Favorite car: Custom 1938 Ford, which he is currently building.

Quote: "I make three bikes a year and about three cars a year. It's a heavy load and it's how I relieve my stress."