

April 2010

Apex

Looking Through The Curve

Official newsletter of Bluegrass Beemers, Inc. Lexington, Kentucky
MOA #146 RA #4-49 <http://www.bluegrassbeemers.org>



Kelly Ramsey's fresh 1976 R90/6



BMW MOTORCYCLE OWNERS OF AMERICA

508A Old State Road Ellisville, MO 63021 636-394-7277

November 23, 2009
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Ted Moyer
Phone: 866-865-1055
Email: tedm@bmwmoa.org

BMW MOA Set to Give Away \$1000RR Superpackage in the BMW MOA Superbike Superstakes!

ELLISVILLE, Missouri – The BMW Motorcycle Owners of America (BMW MOA) announced today the grand prize in the BMW MOA Superbike Superstakes will be a BMW \$1000RR "Superpackage" that includes a 2010 BMW \$1000RR Superbike, VIP access for 4 to the 2010 World Superbike race at Miller Motorsports Park, BMW World Superbike race team pit access, an autograph session with the BMW World Superbike race team riders and a full BMW apparel package including boots, gloves, jackets and pants.

In addition to the Superbike Superpackage, 2 first place prize winners will receive a guided motorcycle tour of Europe on either the BMW MOA Andalucía Tour presented by Iberian Moto Tours or the BMW MOA European Rally Tour presented by Edelweiss Bike Travel. The BMW MOA Andalucía Tour spends 7 riding days in Southern Spain, making stops in Acros de la Frontera, Ronda, Granada, Jaen and Sevilla, while the BMW MOA European Rally Tour features 7 riding days in the Alps region of Southern Germany, Switzerland and northern Italy with stops at the BMW Motorrad Days in Garmisch-Partenkirchen and the BMW Museum. Both trips include motorcycle rental, first class lodging accommodations, breakfast and dinner for the winners, as well as a complete BMW apparel package for the trip!

And the BMW MOA isn't stopping there. Over 50 prizes in all will be awarded during the BMW MOA Superbike Superstakes. 2 second place prize winners will be receive training at the Keith Code California Superbike School aboard a BMW \$1000RR and 50 third place winners are set to receive \$100 in motorcycle merchandise.

Chances to win the BMW MOA Superbike Superstakes will be available beginning February 1, 2010. Tickets will be free with any new membership or renewal in the BMW Motorcycle Owners of America or can be purchased separately for \$10 each by current members. BMW MOA membership is available to anyone, but you must be a member to win. Ticket sales will be limited to only 10,000 tickets to better the odds for the winners and you must request the Superstakes ticket with your membership purchase. Tickets and membership packages will be available online or by calling the BMW MOA at 636-394-7277.



**GET YOUR
TICKET
TO RIDE**

**WIN
YOUR VERY
OWN \$1000RR
AND OTHER GREAT PRIZES!**



**CLICK
FOR DETAILS TO
ENTER
AND GET YOUR
TICKET TO RIDE!**



Photo by Paul Elwyn

Members recognized at Awards Banquet

Awards Banquet winners are (from left) Lowell Roark, *Miles Ridden Honorable Mention*, 12,544; Randolph Scott, 18,745 *Miles Ridden*; John Rice, *Breakfast Rider* having ridden a motorcycle to 36 Saturday breakfasts; Pete Galskis, *Breakfast Attendance* with 50 out of 52 breakfasts.

Bluegrass Beemers gathered at Halls on the River on March 13th for the annual Awards Banquet.

The club recognized members in four categories based upon

member reporting and Log entries: Miles Ridden, Miles Ridden Honorable Mention, Breakfast Rider, and Breakfast Attendance.

President Steve Little welcomed the crowd of approxi-

mately 42 members and spouses. Steve then acknowledged Paul Elwyn as Newsletter Editor, David McCord as Historian and Keeper of the Log; and Roy Rowlett, the "backbone" of the club.

President Raymond Montgomery invited nominations from the floor for Vice President. John Rice moved and Paul Elwyn seconded a motion to close nominations and accept the nomination of Lee Thompson as Vice President. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dues of \$12 is payable to Roy Rowlett.

See Pages 4-5 for more coverage of the Awards Banquet.

Lee Thompson (left) and Ray Montgomery will serve as Vice President and President for 2010.

Apex is the official newsletter of Bluegrass Beemers, Inc.
Lexington, Kentucky MOA #146 RA #4-49

Paul Elwyn, *Editor*
paul.elwyn@gmail.com

Deadline for submissions is the last day of the month.

Back issues of *Apex* can be accessed at
<http://www.bluegrassbeemers.org>

**Join us at Frisch's on Harrodsburg Rd.
on any Saturday, 7-9:30 a.m.**



Photo by Paul Elwyn



Photo by Pete Galskis

Jeff and Kim Crabb



Photo by Pete Galskis

**Joyce and Lowell Roark, Jay Smythe, Brenda and John Rice,
Randolph Scott**



Photo by Pete Galskis

**Paul Elwyn, Karla and John Barnes, Raymond and
Lynn Montgomery, Maureen Elwyn**



Photo by Paul Elwyn



Photo by Pete Galskis

Jim Brandon, Gail and Ben Prewitt



Photo by Pete Galskis

**Ron Blackburn, John and Carol Keeling,
and Barbara Sue Blackburn**



Photo by Pete Galskis

Stacey and James Street

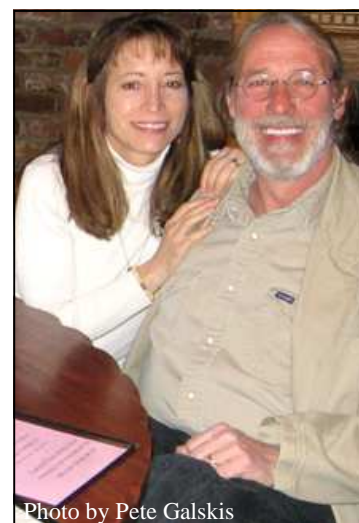


Photo by Pete Galskis

Linore and Geoph Jones

Bluegrass Beemers Awards Banquet



Photo by Paul Elwyn

Charles and Denise Norton



Photo by Pete Galskis

Marrea Matthews, Brian Sawyer and Dee Deakins



Photo by Paul Elwyn

Tom and Terrie Rich



Photo by Pete Galskis

Steve Bishop, David McCord, Dannel Phillips



Photo by Paul Elwyn

Roy Rowlett



Photo by Paul Elwyn

Brenda and Jessie Vaca



Photo by Paul Elwyn

Kelly Ramsey, David Griffiths, Steve Little

Bluegrass Beemers Awards Banquet

Sticking Throttle 🤔

From: Wolfddata@aol.com
Date: Tue, 2 Mar 2010
23:00:39 -0500
Subject: Sticking throttle
To: damccord3@hotmail.com

Dave:

Hope you and yours are doing well. I really hate to seem like some whinny girly-man, but once again I am coming to you for technical advice for my Harley. Perhaps you have been reading about the problems Toyota has been having with throttles that are sticking. What I read said that some people

had experienced uncontrolled "rapid acceleration" Sources have indicated this might be due to a sticking throttle. So here is my query. I wonder if I have an "unstuck throttle" since the Harley has never had rapid acceleration, under any situation. Im wonderen if this might be due to a throttle problem. A week or so ago I had an opportunity to ride a friends Suzuki Hayabusa. It seemed to accelerate MUCH more quickly than the Harley. This seemed odd to us since they are both the SAME COLOR! Go figure!

Through the course of a dreary January afternoon we discovered that while I was able to ride the Harley standing on the tank, whenever he tried this with the Suzi he would fall over. Before long the Haybusa was too bent up to ride. We left it on the side of the road with the keys in it. He said it was ok though, since it was stolen. So have you ever heard of a throttle problem causing a lack of "rapid acceleration"? As an interesting aside to our previous technical discussions, I noticed that after the second

or third fall the Suzi's speedometer stopped working. This was at about the same time he was unable to steer the bike. Coincidence? I think not! I feel this evidence helps support my hypothesis that there is a link between speedometer function and bike handling.

As always,

Take Care,
Love Life



Geoph

Geoph,

Like me, you seem to be suffering from the Stage III Winter Jitters that Paul wrote about in the new newsletter.

I'm a bit befuddled at the vast difference between the acceleration of your H-D and the Hayabusa. This shouldn't be the case as they ARE the same color, and not far off on cc's. Your bike has 1200 and the "Busa has 1300. I'm left with the conclusion that the "unstuck throttle" malady that you spoke of definitely has to be a factor. It just stands to reason that if your H-D was operating properly, you should be able to keep

the Hayabusa in sight. As for riding the bikes while standing on the tank.....you're a better man than I Gunga Din !

I've noticed that when I try riding like this, I have a helluva time holding on as I approach triple digits!! Almost impossible, but then again, I am officially a Senior Citizen now that I turned 55 last November, so maybe age has something to do with it.

The extra two cylinders on the Hayabusa must lead to an imbalanced condition, thus the tipovers while standing on the tank. The more "svelte" Sportster obviously has a better balance to it. And to answer your

question if I have ever heard or experienced "rapid acceleration", the answer is yes, but almost everytime I experience this phenomenon, I either wind up on crutches or repairing the bike. My bikes are not designed for rapid acceleration, (well, maybe the Ducati) so I don't experience it very much.

Sounds like you put the speedometer theory to the test and you found out that the speedo definitely does effect the handling of the motorcycle. Now the next question is, does the tach (analog, of course) also effect the handling and do the combination of the two gauges have a singular effect, or a syn-

ergistic effect ??

Possibly if the two gauges rotate in different directions, they would cancel each other out, but if they rotate in the same direction, they would cause a double effect ?? What do you think ? Would any of our "panel of experts" like to wade in on this one ? After all, it is Stage III Winter Jitters time !



Dave

From: RIceKY@aol.com
To: damccord3@hotmail.com
CC: perice@roadrunner.com
Sent: 3/3/2010 5:00:17 P.M.
Eastern Standard Time
Subj: Re: Sticking throttle

Unintended Acceleration Not Limited To Toyotas

Unintended acceleration problems that put Toyota in headlines have cut across the auto industry, according to complaints consumers have filed

with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. An NPR News Investigation finds that companies such as Volkswagen, Volvo and Honda have had high rates of complaints in some model years.

It seems to me, from reading the above release, that the problem is less mechanical than psychological. Harley's are deliberative, contemplative machines, ones which are perhaps happiest in the laid back

"cruiser mode".

The question is one of Intent. Other bikes, and indeed automobiles, can be guilty of "unintended" acceleration, which the lay person might read as "rapid", but the real distinction is one of the desire for such movement.

The Harley, it seems clear, could do any such thing it wished, at any time, but it just doesn't **intend** to do so.

Less refined machines, like

the Hayabusa or a Toyota, may lose control of their faculties like brash teenagers, and accelerate willy-nilly, but not the HD.



John

Another fresh Airhead hits the road, thanks to Kelly Ramsey



A special R90/6

You never know when something special will show up at a Saturday breakfast at Frisch's.

Kelly Ramsey has brought a

number of Airheads back to life, the latest this 1976 R90/6 with period modifications.

Featuring a full mechanical reconditioning, this R90/6 now

sports R90/S front brakes and fairing with rare Krauser windshield, a police issue large tank with storage, and Epco stainless exhaust, stainless hardware, and

pinstripes by Kirby Stafford.

See the next page for more Saturday surprises!

Impromptu car show at Frisch's



We enjoyed an impromptu member-owned vintage car show on March 6th. Sam Hawkins showed up in his long wheelbase 1976 Rolls Royce Silver Shadow, one of only 2,700 worldwide, and Kelly Ramsey drove his 1973 BMW 3.0 CS, an exquisite design with delicate roof pillars, an upright, roomy cabin, and the bulletproof 3.0 six cylinder engine.



Danny Phillips' 1982 R100CS inhales Ducatis on track days and continues to provide reliable street performance with 128,865 miles on the clock. See Danny's email reply on Page 9 regarding this bike and sporting alternatives.



Welcome Russ McFarland with his 2008 Yamaha FJR. An architect with Clotfelter-Samokar, Russ began riding on a 750 Honda Shadow. A bicyclist friend of Marrea Matthews, Russ looks forward to meeting Bluegrass Beemers who share his enthusiasm for touring.

100,000 + miles with an '82 Airhead 'I've enjoyed...this old bike immensely!'



Editor's note: I asked Danny to confirm the year and miles on his Boxer, and with his permission I'm sharing his reply.

Hey Paul,

1982. 128,865 miles

When I got the bike from Jimmy Street about 17 years ago, I believe it had approx 23,000 on it.

I have enjoyed putting 100K+ on this old bike immensely!

Lynn Sweet purchased a 2007 R 1200 S (after much prodding from u know who) last Saturday. We drove to Charlotte, NC to pick it up on Sat early A.M.

While Lynn was test ridding it, the dealer allowed me to ride the new BMW 1000RR (Real nice super hot rod but WAY to much bike for any mortal on the street. I'll pass).

I also rode a 2009 Triumph Sprint ST, a very nice bike with wonderful motor and sloppy suspension, easily fixed with time and money, just wish it had shaft drive.

The best mid displacement sport motorbike I have ever ridden stock was most definitely the 2010 Triumph 675. Easy to ride, easy to mod-

ify, relatively cheep to modify (Two Brother slip-on \$300.00 and use your own laptop to set it up!) and loads of fun that no inline four can match. All together the finest sport bike for street/track on a mortal's budget. (I have seen a few '06/'07 models for less then 7K).

Paul, I must confess that I expected to be pleased riding the '07 R 1200 S, but I can tell you without a doubt, if I did not have a motorcycle and could only have one street bike, the 12 S would be the ticket.

I rode home to Lexington from Newport, TN and loved it!

The thing is a dream to ride between 80 and 130..... never

scary, very stable, great torque, light weight and just a ton of fun.

Lastly, leave it to BMW's infinite wisdom to stop producing this model only to leverage the buying public to spend 25K (ouch!) on the HP2 Sport (Yes of course I want one!) or purchase a much more touring orientated R model new.

Mate, it was very good seeing everyone at breakfast and the banquet at Hall's.

I hope we all enjoy a great 2010 ridding season.

Ride safe and be lucky, in that order!

— "Woosh"
Daniel Phillips



Experience *and the effects of ignoring it*



By Bob Beard

March 8, 2010

Somewhere along the road of life, wedged somewhat loosely between your first diaper change and your last breath, are those little bits of wisdom gained by first-hand experience.

You know the old saying: "Experience is what you get when you don't get what you wanted."

This is not to say that each person necessarily needs to experience an occurrence to ensure its being firmly filed into the old brainbin, but the lessons learned by experience tend to loom larger and shine more brightly into the jaded cornea of judgment than items

of heresy. Touching your tongue to a hot stove is a lot more of a convincing deterrent (at least for some of us) to further repetitions of this sort than just hearing your grandma say, "That's darn hot, I wouldn't if I were you."

Then of course there are those of us who have a more difficult time relating one experience to another and placing them alongside one another in that toolbox of intentions labeled **DON'T**. For instance, the same nameless youngster who neglected to heed his granny's advice in the above example also managed to gain some branded tiger stripes on his left wrist and forearm some years later by trying to straighten out a clock-spring, holding it stretched out over an open flame, pliers clamped securely at each end, until that spring was glowing with the hue of a ripe of cherry. Upon releasing

one end he gained some new knowledge while remembering the experience gained from past maneuvers.

The old, remembered knowledge, gained by personal trial and effort:

- Hot metal hurts.....a whole lot. (Granma was right, again.)

And the new knowledge:

- Spring steel ain't gonna change shape just cause it is flesh-searing hot. (The science teacher coulda mentioned that one, couldn't he?)

Here are a few glimmers from my repository of things learned by glint of personal misjudgments. I present them merely with the idea that someone out there might actually gain a bit of useful insight from the mis-

takes of others (who shall continue to remain nameless) Use these handy hints as you will and try to remember them and the lesson they carry. Of course, if you *really* want to remember you can always try it yourself.

Without Further Ado (and in no particular order) may I present

THE EXPERIENCES:

- Styrofoam cups are a poor choice for funneling gasoline into a motorcycle gas tank. It is even worse if you own the motorcycle in question.
- Cleaning a fuel petcock by the side of the road is miserable work.
- If two people are riding the same size and brand of motorcycle, and gas up at the same time, when one of them runs out of gas it is hardly worth the effort to send the other fellow riding off for help.
- Down jackets are warm, but do not take to sliding on asphalt very well.
- Down ski pants are warm, but do not take well to hot exhaust pipes.
- Melted nylon, like the kind they use for ski pants, sticks until it is *completely* cool.
- One more tire iron is not enough.
- It is damn near impossible to ride a motorcycle when the operator has a broken col-

Experience *and the effects of ignoring it*

larbone. Not entirely impossible, just damn near. And it should be mentioned here that it is not pleasant even if it is (barely) possible.

- Loaned tools will soon forget where you live.
- Those rain suits they sell at mini-marts make a tremendous amount of noise when they let go at 80 mph.
- A helmet makes for a fairly awful pillow, unless you put your head in it first.
- You should never place your new helmet on your motorcycle seat; it could fall, which causes immediate aging. Always set it on the ground from where it cannot fall.
- You should never set your helmet on the ground in an area where centipedes live.
- Centipede bites hurt like hell, and they keep hurting for hours....and hours... and hours.....
- Rain-soaked leather boots should not be set outside the tent at night when overnight temperatures are below freezing.
- Hard-packed gravel highway shoulders aren't.
- That battery is at least one year (and one start) older than you thought.
- Washing your motorcycle makes it run better, but it does not make it stop better.

- Vice grips make a passable foot-brake lever.
- Disc locks are stronger than fork tubes, and nearly as hard to get off after you find this out for yourself.
- When the guy at the parts counter tells you he is 100% certain that this part is *exactly* the same as the one you ordered (even though it has a different stock number) it isn't.
- Rain proof only works when it is warm, you are not late, and you know where you are going.
- It is a fantastic idea to spend a few moments checking the torque of the brake caliper mounting bolts on your brand-new motorcycle.
- Adjusting a drive chain is a lot cheaper and less time consuming than replacing everything it can reach when it comes loose.
- No, you cannot paint it yourself just as well as that overpriced thief that runs the custom paint shop.
- Overspray is not a happy thing on your wife's car.

And, the lesson that was the impetus for this whole article:

- If two high-school kids outside the Taco Bell ask if you need a hand as you and a friend begin to roll your stranded bike up a ramp and into the back of a truck **YOU**

TELL THEM YES!
You tell them **YES** and **YOU BUY THEM LUNCH.** Just do it. Because buying them lunch and replacing the \$5 dollar piece of burst fuel hose living inside your gas tank (once your precious baby is securely tied in the back of the truck and delivered to your home) is still a ton cheaper than the alternative.





March 6th:

Polar Bear Run at *The KICKSTAND* *Your Motorcycle Parts & Accessories Destination*

One hundred twenty-five riders departed with Raymond Montgomery leading the group on his BMW K1200LT for an 80-mile loop in this year's Polar Bear Run sponsored by The Kickstand in Burgin.

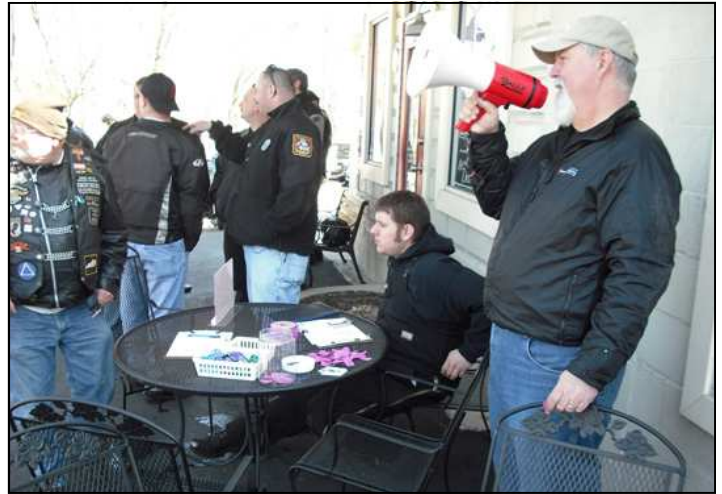
To ensure conditions were safe, Ray previewed the loop early in the morning when the temperature at Bradfordsville was 17 degrees. "We had a good ride with no incidents," said Ray.

Last year's ride with temperatures in the 70's drew over

200 riders. Air temperature this year hovered around 45 degrees when the run began at Noon.

As usual, the Polar Bear Run drew riders on all brands and bikes such as the vintage Indian Chief and a Ridley motorcycle with automatic transmission.

Riders paid \$5.00 for the ride, to be eligible for door prizes, and to eat BBQ at the Village Restaurant across the street from The Kickstand upon return to Burgin.



Kickstand owner Ray Montgomery addresses riders.



March 6th:

Polar Bear Run



Bluegrass Beemers riders had a great time checking out the scene in Burgin. Part of our group pictured here are Russ McFarland, Tom Rich, Stan Horsley, Ray Brooks, and Geoph Jones.



March 6th:

Polar Bear Run





March 6th:

Polar Bear Run



John and Brenda Rice do South Africa

Hatari it isn't

John and Brenda Rice, two American motorcyclists who still can't believe they are in Africa, stand at an overlook above Pretoria on the first day of their 10-day tour. In the background is the stadium where the rugby tournament took place in the movie, *Invictus*.



By John Rice

! ! You go down there and win me a trip," she said as I was leaving.

Brenda had been perusing the BMWMOA brochure for all of the various tour companies that would be present at the National Rally in June, '09.

I was packed up on the '93 PD and ready to head out to meet my nephew Paul for a quick weekend run to Johnson City. After our once-in-a-lifetime trip that previous March to New Zealand, Brenda and I had joked that the only way we'd get another overseas bike trip was to win it. The joke was predicated on the fact that I never win anything. If there were two tickets in a box, mine would stay put. Brenda on the other hand often gets door prizes at events and once even won a four-day trip to the Bahamas by dropping a card in a box at Barney Millers while I

was paying for a VCR.

At the Rally, I did all the usual rally stuff, walking down the rows of vendors, marveling at the gimcracks and gadgets, farkles and sparkles that can be had. I finally made my way to the row where the tour operators had set up shop. I talked briefly to the ones selling tours to New Zealand and Germany and the Italian Alps. At one booth near the end, I had a pleasant conversation with Nicole, the young woman representing SAMA Tours (South African Motorcycle Adventures) in South Africa. She told me that it wasn't like the media portrayed Africa to be, showed me photos of the lovely mountain vistas and the obligatory pictures of the lions and elephants. I dropped a card in the box, as I had done with all the others, picked up a brochure and went on to look at more Bike Stuff, never giving it a second thought.

It was a good rally and a wonderful ride to and from

(including the encounter with the bear on the Little Shepard Trail on the way back) and soon I had to return to the real world of making a living.

About two weeks after the rally, I was at lunch with friends at the little café next to my office. My cell phone rang and when I checked the number on the screen, I didn't recognize the area code. I answered the call and was told by a vaguely familiar female voice with a South African accent saying, "Congratulations, you've won the 10-day Motorcycle/Train tour from SAMA". I thanked her politely and hung up. It took me several minutes for the realization to sink in that the call had been genuine.

I called Brenda to tell her the news. Her squeal at the other end of the phone gave me to believe that perhaps she was interested in going.

The prize included the 10-day tour, use of an R1200GS, all rooms and the train fare across the Karoo Desert and many of

We learned that, for this first five days of the tour, until we returned to Pretoria to embark on the train portion, we would be the only participants on the trip, just Brenda and I with the guide.

John and Brenda Rice do South Africa *Hatari* it isn't

**Riding on the left
side of the road
in a big city was
interesting
enough but here
in Pretoria they
have a particular
hazard, minivans,
used as taxis
whose operators
drive much like
taxi drivers
everywhere would
do if they weren't
constrained by
pesky traffic laws.**

the meals. What it didn't include was the air travel to get there and back or the pillion fee for bringing a passenger.

Those two items came to about the same as the cost of the tour itself. Nonetheless, we were in for the whole shebang. I picked a date in February because 1) it was the nearest date, and 2) I'll do almost anything to get out of Kentucky in February which is, contrary to popular belief, the longest month of the year.

As the date drew near, we prepared by reading tour books (most of which told us how not to get killed while we were there) and in the interest of research, going to see the movie "Invictus" which dealt with Nelson Mandela's efforts to reunite the country after the end of apartheid by, among other things, promoting the primarily white national rugby team.

I watched "The Long Way Down," the chronicle of a trip by three guys on R1200GS's down through Africa....with a full support crew and a six million dollar budget. We would be traveling in a more luxurious style than we had ever done before, we thought, but still a bit short of that level. We'd never done an organized, professional tour before, so we didn't really know what to expect.

It was a long flight, 17 hours, but the last few hours were the best. From the back of the plane, I watched the sun slowly illuminate the African coastline, then the Namibian desert as we flew over the sand dunes. The sand gave way to mountains, then roads and finally villages as we crossed over Botswana and into

South Africa, finally to the urban sprawl of Johannesburg.

We were met at the airport by Jonathan Berman, from SAMA who whisked us away to Pretoria and ensconced us in our B&B for the night. The lovely Marloot House is situated on a hillside with the architecture making it seem more like it had grown there than was

built. Our hosts made us comfortable immediately and after a quick supper, we fell in bed for the first time in about 32 hours.

On February 8th Monday, promptly at 9:00 am, the tour operators came to pick us up at the B & B and take us to their facility (also their house) which is less than 1/2 mile away.

We learned that, for this first five days of the tour, until we returned to Pretoria to embark on the train portion, we would be the only participants on the trip, just Brenda and I with the guide. Not very profitable for the operator, but true to his word, he was going to give us the full experience. I went through the process of getting the paperwork done and the necessary walk around of the blue R1200GS before we could take off on our 1/2 day tour of the city of Pretoria.

Darryl, the owner of the company, and his assistant Tamzin rode an orange GS just ahead of us. Riding on the left side of the road in a big city was interesting enough but here in Pretoria they have a particular hazard, minivans, used as taxis whose operators drive much like taxi drivers everywhere would do if they weren't constrained by pesky traffic laws.

They toot their horns (or hoot as the locals call it) constantly as they drive to alert passersby

that they are available for passengers and if a potential customer is spotted, the minivan goes to that location whether or not there is a car or motorcycle in the way. If it requires making a U-turn across several lanes of traffic, so much the better. The roads here are all under construction, in preparation for the World Cup Soccer Games to be held this summer. Apparently they were supposed to have the highways completed before that event, but, like all highway departments, are a bit behind schedule.

Darryl and Tamzin led us down through a maze of such traffic and then finally up into the hills above Pretoria. We stopped at an overlook which gave a view of the entire bowl in which Pretoria sits, rimmed by the mountain range that forms the opposite side.

This range, according to Tamzin, who is taking a college degree in adventure touring, is the Magaliesberg, one the longest and oldest (about 100 times older than Everest) ranges in Africa. From the top of this overlook we could see the stadium where the rugby tournament was played in the movie Invictus and could clearly see how the jumbo jet swooped down over the stadium to display its fan message during the game.

Darryl told us that in the proper season the Jacaranda trees all bloom purple at once making the entire valley look like a purple haze. (Do you suppose that Jimmy Hendrix had visited here?)

Down from the overlook we went into the bowl and weaved our way through Pretoria downtown traffic to Church Square for lunch at the Café Riche at an outdoor table overlooking the square. (The intern's job at my office is doing research and drafting documents. This is Tamzin's job.)

John and Brenda Rice do South Africa *Hatari* it isn't

Down from the overlook we went into the bowl and weaved our way through Pretoria downtown traffic to Church Square for lunch at Café Riche at an outdoor table overlooking the square.



Tamzin and Brenda get the Voortrekker history lesson from Darryl.

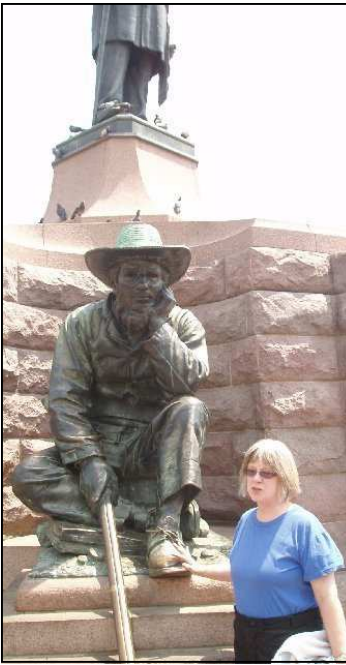
We explored the square, wandering around among the market stalls surrounding the statue and then followed Tamzin into an old theater (now used as a parking garage!) that harkened back to the elegance and opulence of Pretoria's past. All of the street signs here are in English as are the vast majority of the advertising signs one sees on the road or in the shop windows. On the streets you hear mostly English but also a heavy dose of Afrikaans being spoken. There are apparently 11 official languages here but English is sort of the universal default used more or less effectively by everyone. Darryl told us that during Apartheid, which only ended in the late 90's, there were mainly white citizens on the streets of Pretoria, but now the ethnic mix in the crowds more accurately mirrors

the true population, about 90% non-white.

This square marks the spot where the Voortrekkers, South Africa's version of our Western Settlers, first settled when they came in to the area in the 1800's. There was a church built there as their first edifice and then the square was built around it. As it developed, the square was designed by an architect who modeled it after Trafalgar Square in London, England with the statue of Lord Nelson replaced by one of Paul Kruger, a hero of the Boer Wars and the first President of South Africa.

From Church Square we got back on the bikes and went through the city up to the Voortrekker Monument. On our way into the monument, which is arranged like a huge park, we were amazed to see herds of

John and Brenda Rice do South Africa *Hatari* it isn't



Voortrekker ponders why he shaved off the moustache but left the beard.

Zebra and Wildebeest grazing on the grounds. At first it seems unbelievable and then the realization sinks home that despite being in this modern city, we really are in *Africa*.

The Monument is an enormous granite structure, looking actually a lot like the shape of our old iron furnaces but 20 times the size, built on top of a hill in such a way that on December 16th, of each year the anniversary of the Battle of Blood River the sun shines through a small hole in the roof down through the building to a Cenotaph at the bottom which celebrates the unity of



Darryl, who isn't this blurry in real life, narrates the story for Brenda.



More history from Darryl, as we ponder climbing those steps in riding gear.

the Voortrekkers. The Battle of Blood River (so named because the "river ran red with blood" from casualties) was the decisive battle in which the mostly Dutch settlers repelled the natives and established their hold on this part of the territory.

Inside the monument is a plaster relief sculptures which goes around all four walls encapsulating the major events of the long journey to this settlement.

The artwork portrays their version of the hardships and their battles against the natives they encountered. Like our Indian wars, the settlers were armed with rifles and moving into areas already occupied for generations by natives whose weapons were hand-carried spears. It is another example of the adage that the winners get to write the history.

Our next stop on the Urban Tour was the Union Building, South Africa's seat of executive government. Unlike our maximum security at the White House, we were able to park

right in front of the building, (If you've seen the movie "Invictus" we were only a few feet from the place where the Matt Damon character was dropped off by his wife when he was to make his visit to President Mandela.)

The building was built with identical East and West Wings, having an amphitheater in the space between, because the Afrikaans and the British weren't getting along so well and it was decided to give each an equivalent space from which to work out their compromises.

On February 9th we got on the road at about 8:00 headed northeast toward Mpu-langa. It took about 20 minutes to get out of the downtown Pretoria traffic and out onto open road. The highway here was a two lane, long and straight, bordered on both sides by open fields and rolling hills. The pavement was potholed, the result Darryl says of very thin asphalt and lots of traffic. The countryside looked very much

John and Brenda Rice do South Africa *Hatari* it isn't



Tamzin, Brenda and Darryl in front of the Union Buildings. Matt Damon not visible here. Below: Brenda at the Union Buildings wondering why it's me and not Matt Damon taking the picture.



scarves wrapped expertly about their hair. Sometimes it is a family group, but most often women. In other areas, particularly in the morning, there are groups of men, waiting for rides, to work in the cities one can assume.

There were buses pulled over and buses coming in both directions but no matter how many buses we saw there were still people standing and waiting. We often would see what looked like family groups coming through the high grass headed toward the road. Usually a man dressed in what would be completely normal attire nearly anywhere in the States, t-shirt, jeans, ball cap, followed by a woman in long flowing, brightly colored scarves and a robe or caftan type of garment. Following them would be two or three children usually dressed in bright colors as well. There often were men or women pushing wheelbarrows down the side of the road to the nearby river to get water.

Such contrasts in one country. Scenery that just takes your breath and leaves you without words to describe, followed soon by evidence of poverty such that we from the US cannot imagine its extent. As I understand it, during the Apartheid (which literally means "apartness" and is pronounced, ironically enough "apart-hate") blacks and "coloured," essentially anyone who wasn't considered white, were not allowed to own property in, or in most cases, live, within the cities. At various times there were "removals" when black residents were displaced wholesale from areas the government wanted to use for white settlement, with the black homes razed and the property redistributed. The non-whites were relegated to "townships" set aside in less desirable areas, usually with no utilities or

like high desert country in Eastern Oregon or Northern California with maybe a little bit of Florida mixed in. It would be easy to forget just where we are riding except for the fact that we're on the left side of the yellow line.

People standing, waiting, by the side of the road. It is one of my enduring memories of our first few days travel, and it was a continuing sight everywhere in the north we went. Small groups, usually women, standing by plastic bags containing who knows what, sometimes with large packages held casually on top of their heads. The women are often in colorful robes or shawls, with bright

John and Brenda Rice do South Africa *Hatari* it isn't



Brenda and new-found friend at the coffee stop.

**Most of these
shacks are the
size of (but
nowhere near the
sturdiness of) the
average small
garden shed one
would find at
Lowe's, suitable
for holding a lawn-
mower and a few
rakes and shovels
and that's all.
But here there are
families living
in them.**

transportation networks. We passed several, beginning suddenly along the side of a road with nothing before but open fields, then going on for miles, stretching off to the horizon as far as one could see.

Because of the extreme poverty in which this left the displaced people, the "townships" typically are composed of shacks, hundreds of acres of them, only a few feet apart, most made of corrugated tin or whatever material could be scrounged, applied haphazardly to the sides, some of mud brick with the tin just laid on the top, weighted by rocks, to serve as a rudimentary roof. Most of these shacks are the size of (but nowhere near the sturdiness of) the average small garden shed one would find at Lowe's, suitable for holding a lawnmower and a few rakes and shovels and that's all. But here there are families living in them. There is no running water, no electricity. There are out-houses, sometimes nearby, sometimes not, but one can

shudder to think what it must be like to go inside. We understand that the government, now majority ruled, is building new housing with proper amenities, but this is a long process, far from complete.. Many generations of being denied education, profession, property ownership and status will not be erased in a few years.

There was a heavy police presence on the road with small cars identified by police markings traveling both directions seemingly every mile or so. We were waved over for two traffic stops just to check our papers and license. One officer kept insisting he remembered me though I find that highly unlikely since as far as I know, I've never been here before. Darryl handled everything expertly and efficiently, getting us back on our way.

About 10:00 we stopped for coffee at a small shopping center in what seems to be the major town in this part of the territory, Marble Hall. The shopping center is a strip design with different colored awnings for each store, not unlike that in our country.. We went to a "Wimpy" for coffee which appeared to be a pretty standard fast food sort of outlet like you would find in the average American mall. Darryl paid a man, sitting on the grass with a puppy, both apparently waiting for such an opportunity, to watch our bikes while we went inside.

Just outside of Polokwane, Brenda saw a troop of baboons crossing the road ahead of us, but I was in the middle of making a turn and didn't see them. Such critters were going to be a regular feature of the trip, but

we always found it shocking. Deer just stare at motorcycles...baboons look at them as if they're wondering how hard it would be to take it for a ride. We pulled in for gas at a Shell Station that would not have looked out of place on any modern American interstate. A full tank of gas was 145 Rand, about the equivalent of \$19 US dollars.

From here the mountains began in earnest, rising suddenly and impressive from the plains. Roads became one curve after another and the rock formations more dramatic. Everywhere one looks, the evidence of past continental collision is apparent. The rock strata are pushed up high and angular, then eroded away to patterns sculpted by eons of wind and water. In this first part of the Limpopo Province, there are scattered enormous conical hills of reddish-yellow dirt, partially worn away to reveal an interior composed of huge rounded rocks, the size of SUV's or larger, as if someone had stacked the rocks then coated them with dirt for protection....or, think of a Brazil nut cluster with a light colored chocolate coating on the outside, but the size of a 5 story building....God's own box of candy. These hills just rise at random places, from flat plains between the mountains with no apparent mechanism for them being there. I wondered if they could have been glacial moraine, from the tumbled and smooth appearance of the rocks, but this seems unlikely.

Darryl pulled over to show us Zion City, a religious enclave on the right hand side of the road in a natural bowl marked by a large 5-pointed star on the side of a mountain that looked very much like a star of David, though Darryl informed us that this was a Christian sect. He said that every year they have a

John and Brenda Rice do South Africa *Hatari* it isn't

festival where about ½ million people show up. I found it interesting that, just like here, at a religious festival, there must be tight security to prevent the bringing in of contraband, such as alcohol and firearms.

By now we were far up in the mountains on roads with wide sweeping turns and decent pavement. Darrell was setting a sporting pace, not dangerously fast but definitely not "smelling the roses" either. I've never been on an organized tour before, but I had always assumed, that the pace would be slow. I was wrong, but just how wrong, I wasn't to know until the latter half of the experience. The big GS was, of course, completely in its element carrying the two of us as if it didn't even notice we were there. Mountain roads like this are high on the long list of the bike's natural habitat.

The scenery here seemed familiar, yet different enough that it was clear we weren't at home anymore. There are tall trees lining the roads, like our North Carolina mountain pines, but they aren't exactly the same. The smaller understory trees are green and leafy and as we zipped by, I could have assumed it was the Georgia mountains...but it was a bit discordant.. Sort of like those old Twilight Zone shows where the man wakes up in a place he doesn't immediately recognize, where everything seems at first normal, but definitely isn't.. The tall straight trees, not quite pines, with yellow trunks, are, I was told, Eucalyptus. Upon learning that information, "Hotel California" got stuck in my head and it took several days to get it out.



The Pot and Plow with Irish greeting on the door and inside a mixture of things British, Irish, a bit of New Zealand, and African.

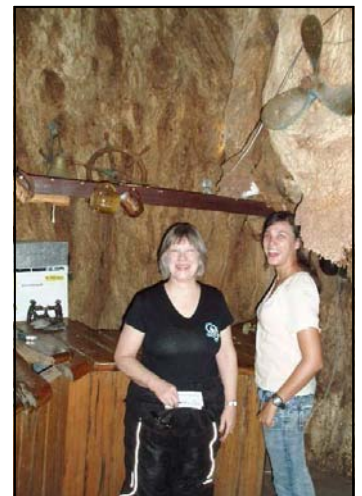
About 1:30 in the afternoon we stopped at a restaurant on the side of the road, "The Pot and Plow". The sign out front advertised pizza.(pronounced "pit-za" here) and other meals

Rather than your typical Dominos, however, here in the middle of the countryside in South Africa there is an Irish greeting on the door and inside, a mixture of things British, Irish, a bit of New Zealand, and African. In parts of the restaurant, we could have been on a street corner in Killarney. We ate outside at a table on the lawn, near a palm tree, which they do have in Ireland, just not usually in the courtyard of a pub..

Just down the road, we dropped our things at the hotel where we will be spending the night, the Magoebaskloof Lodge on top of a mountain and then proceeded on, passing through the village of the Rain

Queen (a whole story of its own), to visit the largest baobab tree in S. Africa. It's also is apparently the oldest known such tree in the world, carbon dated (they don't have growth rings) at 6,000 years old. The tree is probably about 60 feet in circumference and has multiple trunks. Some describe it as looking like the trunk is in the ground and the roots in the air. The outside looks like elephant skin rather than tree bark. The interior of the trunk is split with a cavity large enough for a small pub inside. Human kind was still in a rather primitive state when this tree was a seedling and it was 4,000 years old when Christ was born. Now more than 2,000 years after that event a couple from Winchester, Kentucky is standing at its base marveling at its size and shape. T

he baobab tree is reached by turning off the paved road, go-



Brenda and Tamzin inside the Baobab tree pub.

John and Brenda Rice do South Africa *Hatari* it isn't



**Not your average
Kentucky landscape
Below: Two old dogs in
front of even older tree**



ing down a dirt road and then turning off the dirt road onto essentially a path. There are long stretches of deep sand on this path which under different conditions one might have tried to take a bit quicker but this far from home on a rented bike we followed the lead of our guide and went through at a snails pace feathering the clutch and holding both feet out to catch any slips. Once at the tree, the amazement of seeing it is tempered by the realization that you have to do it all over again to get out.

Nearby were some small baobab saplings. I'm going to come back in another 6,000 years to see what they look like.

Another hour or so of magnificent mountain roads brought us back to the Magoebaskloof Lodge, our place for the night. The valley gets its name from

the Big Lynn Lodge on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Our room, down over the hill from the above photo, had a sign inside warning us to keep the door locked at all times and not to leave the windows open, because wild monkeys were known to raid the rooms for food. I went up to the coffee shop while Brenda took a shower, dutifully locking the door behind me as she instructed. About an hour later, I got a call from her on my cell phone, telling me that she couldn't get out. The room door, once locked, can't be opened from the inside.

That night we met Darrell and Tamzin in the bar at the lodge (which had one bottle of Kentucky bourbon on its shelf. I tried to convert Darryl, unsuccessfully, to its charms), then joined them for supper in the



Brenda and Daryl at Magoebaskloof Lodge

Chief Makgoba of the Tlou people who populated the area until the later 1800's when they were largely displaced by the European settlers. The lodge is a series of buildings spread across the brow of the mountaintop, reminding me a bit of

excellent restaurant. I make it a point to try as many local foods as I can on these trips, so I can't really tell you what it was that I ate, but it was good. For dessert there was a buffet bar of various choices, so I tried one of each, just to be sure. Tamzin

John and Brenda Rice do South Africa

Hatari it isn't

explained to me what they were, but I'm afraid by that time I wasn't taking notes.

The next morning, as was Darryl's schedule, we met for breakfast at 7 and were on the road again by 8 heading to the memorial for John Buchan, a Scottish writer who settled here in the early years and found the country much to his liking.

Standing at the monument, overlooking a lake that could easily have been a highland glacial loch, it's easy to understand why. Our twisting path took us up through a series of tunnels along the edge of a ridge. Darrell pulled in at an overlook just before one tunnel so we could peruse the wares at



South Africa or the Scottish Highlands? Hard to tell.



Local lady, statue of the Chief and strange creature in red coat.



Roadside shopping

a roadside market stall. Like typical tourists, we bought souvenirs of African crafts for the folks back home, but only things small enough to fit in the topbox !.

We made our way then to the Three Rondavels, a rock formation that looks like columns of stone topped with the tradi-

John and Brenda Rice do South Africa *Hatari* it isn't



We stopped at God's Window and hiked up to the overlook above the Window for a look down into the wide valley below. In the distance we could see hills that Darrell told us marked the boundary into Mozambique. There were dirt roads criss-crossing the valley below which Darrell told us were great GS rides, but that's another trip yet to come. On the way down from the overlook, we stopped at God's Window, the viewpoint that gives the park its name. As with any such place, the photos can't begin to convey the vastness of the valley.

That night our lodging was at the Numbi Lodge in Hazyview, located just on the edge of town. There's a small shopping center with a bakery and a fine restaurant, Pioneer's, just outside the compound gate. We were told that even though the town was only about a quarter mile away, it wasn't safe to walk that distance at night, so we'd just stay in the compound area for supper. It was excellent, though again I'm not sure what I ate.

Thursday morning, we met Alfred, our Kruger Park guide at 4:45 AM for our 7 hour "safari" into the largest wildlife preserve in Africa. The park covers an area larger than some US states and is the home of most of the species we typically associate with Africa. In the pre-dawn darkness we climbed into the back of his safari vehicle, a modified pickup truck with seats in the bed, protected by a framework and canopy and the roof over the driver cut out for access. Alfred took us into the Park just as the sun was coming up. Not 100 yards into Kruger, we came upon a



Not sure if Brenda is considering how I'd look mounted this way.

tional round African dwelling houses. They are on the edge of a canyon created by the Blyde River following what must have been a volcanic rift.

The rift is bordered by cliffs on either side, separated by about a half mile gap, about 1,000 feet deep. It is easy to see how animals and culture could have developed differently on each side with no real access to the other. It occurred to me that the beginnings of the split between becoming human and another branch remaining something else was at a place like this, where one proto-human creature, a bit different than the rest but not yet knowing how, looked over the edge and felt the pull to go over there just to see what's on the other side...not for food or a mate, but just because it wanted to know. That one leads to us.

From there we followed Darryl down through the canyon roads to Burke's Luck Potholes, not a monument to bad paving, as we Americans might think, but a park encompassing a wonderful set of rock formations and waterfalls, dedicated to the memory of Tom Burke, a miner in the early gold rush days, who staked a claim nearby and accurately predicted that large gold deposits would be found in the area. They were, just not on his claim, hence the reference to his luck (or lack thereof. The potholes are natural formations, nearly perfect circular holes in the rock, made when smaller rocks get caught in eddy currents and whirl around like grinders over thousands of years, unlike our modern potholes, which we are able to form in pavement in a single winter season.

John and Brenda Rice do South Africa *Hatari* it isn't



**Above: Jumbo at home.
Below: The juvenile
pachyderm who charged
us, now finding other
interests in the brush.**

small herd of elephants grazing in the tall vegetation under the trees bordering the road.

The adults, presumably the parents, continued with their

feeding, not even bothering to look up at us. Junior, though, the adolescent male about 2/3 their size, took great umbrage at our vehicle's presence. He

in. Realizing that his siblings and parents weren't signing on for the event, he suddenly found something very interest-



**Lone hyena, trying to re-
member the punch line.**

ing to explore over in another part of the bush away from our truck.

Not far down the road, we turned off the pavement and headed deeper into the countryside on a dirt track. Soon we encountered a group of hyenas crossing the road, no doubt to find something to laugh about on the other side.

Baboons were a common sight in the park, always trooping across the road, looking around furtively as if they were



flared his ears, raised his trunk and trumpeted a blast I hadn't heard since the old Tarzan movies....somehow it's so much more impressive when the real animal is less than 50 feet away. He "charged" forward a few steps, then like most teenage boys, looked around to see if anyone else was joining

criminals coming from the scene of the crime, checking out who might have seen them.

(It wasn't me, copper, I was in the grass picking fleas when it happened.)

Warthogs were feeding in the tall grass, thin brush-topped tails straight up in the air, much like young toughs on a street

John and Brenda Rice do South Africa

Hatari it isn't



**Stripes are in this year.
The plaid thing didn't
work so well for them.**

corner looking for trouble. With their exaggerated shoulders and chests, narrow hips and fierce expressions, one could almost imagine them with cigarette packs rolled up in their sleeves and a tattoo reading "Mother" on a massive bicep. When they turned to watch us, I could hear one saying, "Hey...what're you looking at?"

Zebras, the traditional horse in striped pajamas, wandered across the road and stood together much like their American cousins are wont to do in the pastures of central Kentucky.

Alfred braked suddenly to a halt then reversed about 50 feet. There on the open plain, a short distance from the track, were three black rhinos sound asleep in a clearing. He told us that there were only about 300 of the great prehistoric beasts left, so seeing three in a group was a rare treat. We watched them for a while, sleeping peacefully unconcerned there in the park. While some of the world's largest and most formidable predators are also there in Kruger, something the size of an Escalade, like the black rhino, doesn't have a lot to be afraid of.

About another half mile down the track, we paused at a bridge over a mostly dry creek bed. There, a pair of white rhinos, accompanied by some impala, grazed quietly. The white rhino (not really the color white, more of a dull gray...the "white" comes from an Anglicization of the Dutch word for "wide", distinguishing them from the sharper, narrower face of the black rhino) is larger than the black and is the one you probably think of when and if the term "rhinoceros" comes to mind.

We continued on, in search of the rest of the "Big Five" (rhino, hippo, lion, cape buffalo and leopard) but the others of them remained in hiding for the day. We did see two species of eagle, one the bardolier black eagle, a stockier cousin of our national symbol without the white head, and another, the martial eagle, a black bird with a feather pattern that makes it appear that he's wearing white suspenders....or maybe he is.

After returning to Numbi Lodge, we saddled up again

and rode to the nearby town of Sabi for lunch. Darrell lead us to the popular motorcyclists restaurant with special bike parking under the deck. Signs there proclaimed spots for "Jap Scrap", "Colonialist British bikes" (though it must be mainly occupied by the modern Triumphs, for I didn't see any oil stains over there), a prominent place in the middle for BMW'S, another for "Italian bikes (no Vespas allowed)" and finally a bit on the end for Harleys....that one was marked thoroughly with dark oil spots. Inside the restaurant was decorated with bike posters and memorabilia, including what appeared to be a complete BMW Boxer Cup racer hung from the ceiling.

Lunch on the deck completed, we rode a short way through the mountains to Pilgrim's Rest, a mining community from the gold mining heyday (remember poor old Tom Burke?) now preserved as a sort of monument/ tourist center. The old buildings have been kept as in the early days but now are used as shops and restaurants and museums. Gold is still mined in the area, but using much more modern techniques than the picks and shovels and horse-drawn carts of yesteryear.

That night we went to a local resort compound for our "cultural experience", a show put on by members of the Shanga tribe that once lived in what is now Kruger Park. The chief came out onto the dirt stage to give us a short, somewhat humorous lecture about the history and culture of the tribe. He included the fact that in African tradition, a man choosing a wife must pay up



John and Brenda Rice do South Africa *Hatari* it isn't



At the South African side of the Swazi border crossing.

front to the family for the privilege. He contrasted this to our western system in which he said there is no initial cost for the bride, but the husband must pay and pay forever thereafter. There was a show of traditional drumming and dance, with an opportunity at the end for members of the audience to participate. In the interests of international peace, I did not dance. Tamzin, always up for new experience, did join in.

After the show there was a buffet dinner of African foods and desserts. I was introduced to, among other delicacies, "Koeksisters," a twisted pastry soaked in honey, sort of a cross between baklava and a cruller, which I later learned was a favorite of Nelson Mandela. It's good to know that one of my heroes had similar tastes in pastry.

In the river that ran through the area where the show was held, there were hippos grazing on the bottom. I saw one raise its head briefly, then duck back down to continue feeding. As we were leaving the compound, we were told to stay to a particular path because the hippos were out on the riverbank. Apparently they are one of the leading killers of humans in Africa, far more dangerous in that respect than the big cats.

On Friday, we headed out at 8 am to visit the Kingdom of Swaziland, one of the few remaining absolute monarchies. The King is an inherited position and the current holder, a young man in his 30's, lives an opulent lifestyle, with multiple wives and a collection of expensive cars, in a palace while the majority of his people live in poverty. Shortly before

we arrived, there had been the traditional ceremony in which dozens of young virgins are rounded up, dressed up and permitted to perform a complex dancing routine for the King. He selects one of the group as his new wife, to add to his others. Not surprisingly, this setup isn't terribly popular with the much less affluent citizens.

The road we took to the kingdom recently had been a dirt track, but now was widened and paved for the most part. We stopped at the top of the mountain to look back down from whence we had come. We could see the dirt roads still remaining, going off into the distance. I could easily tell how isolated this place must have been if that was the main route in.

We reached the border crossing and went inside to present our papers and pay the "road tax". Guards at the border, carrying automatic rifles, inspected our bikes for the proper serial numbers and documents.

Then after a few yards from the SA border, we came to the Swazi border post where we had to show our documents again and have our passports stamped. We passed through a small town, on potholed broken pavement and on the other side of this village, were stopped again at a checkpoint. These soldiers again wanted to check the papers for the bikes, but did not demand our passports.

Darryl had asked me if I would mind a dirt road route, about 20 kilometers or so, to avoid a long stretch of straight pavement and town traffic. He said he watches riders for the first day or so of the tour to see

John and Brenda Rice do South Africa *Hatari* it isn't

went.

The red dirt road went up over a mountain, following the edge of a ridge line most of the way, affording spectacular

spray painted them with reddish-brown dust.

Swaziland seems made entirely of mountains, with the roads carved into the sides or running along the ridges at the top. As we reached the top of one such peak, Darrell pulled over and told us there was an overlook above us, up a dirt track, looking down on a newly made lake. We bumped our way up to the top and parked in a grassy area between rows of stalls, only one of which was occupied by a vendor. We walked to the edge and looked down on the new dam and the lake it contained.

For several days prior, whenever we went to restaurants that gave us mints at the end of the meal, Darryl had told us to "save them for the Swazi kids". On the way out of the overlook, we were met by a group of children who began dancing for us, an enthusiastic if not entirely choreographed performance. We caught on quickly and Brenda began shelling out the collected sweets. As soon as each child had received one, they left us and turned to Darryl, even though Brenda still had a few left. I think they'd been through this before.

Darryl lead us to the Swazi Candle Factory, a small enterprise set in a group of shops off yet another dirt road. This is an effort by locals to use their resources and labor to produce something for export and tourism, controlled by themselves within the country. The slogan is "Lighting Africa".

We watched a woman at a small table, working quickly and expertly to make the brightly colored candles, dipping each one in a bucket of water to set the wax. On display were hundreds of different varieties, shaped like African animals or odd geometric configurations, all in multicolored wax that seemed impossible to deconstruct into their compo-



Your papers....where are your papers !

if he thinks they can make this part. Apparently I passed the test. Brenda was a bit apprehensive, but game (as long as I promised to take it slowly) so, after turning off the ABS and traction control, away we

views of the slopes and valleys below. Not many cars joined us on the road, mostly coming the other way, but the ensuing dust cloud did require a bit of holding the breath. The surface was partly graveled for some of the distance and it was much easier riding when the gravel ended and we could be on just the red dirt. In a few spots, there were rocky areas where the dirt surface had worn down to expose some clumps of rock beneath. Brenda wasn't too happy about these, but I welcomed them as a chance to do a little more technical riding. I was standing up most of the way, meaning Brenda's view of this portion of the trip was mainly of my backside.

At the end of the dirt portion, we filled up at a petrol station in a small town that was having some kind of market day or celebration. There were hawkers selling their wares on the streets, music playing from different directions and a constant din of voices happily yelling across streets in what sounded like a variety of languages.

The bikes looked as if we'd



Brenda admires the view, but wonders when we're going to get back on pavement.



Perusing the menu at the lakeside restaurant above the dam. Below: At the Swazi Candle Factory



nent parts. Traveling by motorcycle does limit the number of large heavy things one can bring back, so we got only a small sample of their wares.

We reached our rooms for the night, at the Mantenga Lodge, high in the hills surrounded by dense forest and the even higher mountains in the near distance.

Overlooking the valley is a tall pinnacle called "Execution Rock", reportedly because this was the spot for dispatching prisoners the local rulers felt

John and Brenda Rice do South Africa *Hatari* it isn't



Our room at the Mantenga Lodge, high in the hills surrounded by dense forest and the even higher mountains in the near distance.

needed a one way trip. Not sure just how recently that was the norm.

At the pool, we ran into a family from Chile (which as they described it, is "the Britain of South America") vacationing for a month or so in South Africa. and a French family who had been in Kruger the same day as us and had been the ones who told Alfred about seeing lions. Dinner that night was on the deck, below Execution Rock, and included an excellent South African wine, some not so excellent, but adequate South African beer and Brenda's entree, something translated on the menu as "Meat on Fire"....and it was exactly that.

The next morning, bright and early as usual, we got back on the bikes and made the short hop to the Swazi Glass factory, another small locally owned business. We watched these men blowing glass into jars and other figures. One worker, seeing us watching him, kept blowing his bubble

larger until it blew out in a spray of molten glass. He smiled, then broke off the remaining bits in a waste can and turned back for another dip in the furnace pool.

We left Swaziland through a different border station, this one more upscale and business-like, in a larger brick building. There were windows to go to with a bored government employee at each one wielding a stamp for this particular paper but not that one...next window please. We've been through enough of these now to know that they have their regional differences, but in essence, they are all the same. Still, it's not a place for individualism. Just do what they ask and move to the next window.

While we were there, two events stood out. A motorcade came through, with flags flying and dark-windowed limousines stopping just long enough to receive salutes from the guards before the gates swung open to let them pass. And then, as we much less important individuals

John and Brenda Rice do South Africa *Hatari* it isn't



Execution Rock, best seen from this distance I imagine. Below: Mantenga Lodge dinner on the deck.



were mounting up, a middle aged woman in wrapped colorful robes walked past us, carrying a full sized car battery balanced on her head. She walked quickly on, as if she bore no burden at all, just going about her business.

Once back in South Africa, we were on the relatively straight path back to Pretoria for our connection the next day

with the train tour in Johannesburg. It was windy up on these mountain ridges and the road for many miles was as much pothole as pavement. It is part of SA's coal mining area and, like its counterpart in Eastern Kentucky, the heavy coal trucks have chewed up the pavement beneath their overloaded wheels. Some holes were big enough to easily swallow a

bike wheel. We weaved in and out of the broken bits at a fairly

Near Pretoria, Darryl pulled us into the Buddhist temple for a look-round. According to the information I processed, the Buddhists were, like all non-whites during Apartheid, relegated to an outlying area for their living space. This particular group spent the next 15 or so years turning their area into this temple and grounds, making it a showplace and monument to determination in the face of adversity.

Darryl brought us to a late lunch, not far from his headquarters, at Roxy's, a motorcycle themed restaurant in a small town near Pretoria.

The power was out in the town at that moment, meaning that they had only the food they could grill out back on the braai



Not Beijing's Great Square, but as close as I'll ever get. This Buddhist temple built over a 15-year period stands as a monument to determination in the face of adversity during the period of Apartheid.

good speed, slaloming mostly within our lane and hitting only few....but they were good ones. Again, one must be impressed with the ability of the GS to handle what's thrown at it.

(barbeque pit), so here in exotic Africa, we had that most American of meals....a cheeseburger.

That night, upon our return to Pretoria, Darryl and his family had us to their house for a tradi-

John and Brenda Rice do South Africa *Hatari* it isn't



Buddhist temple and grounds built over a 15-year period stand as a monument to determination in the face of adversity during the period of Apartheid.

tional barbeque meal.

Poor Jonathan, who had picked us up at the airport, was in the throes of some form of flu, so we all kept a safe distance from him while he walked about, looking like death barely warmed over.

We learned that Nicole, with whom I had started this whole thing, was returning to America soon to explore a new relationship there.

We talked late into the night, fueled by wonderful food and South African wine and wide ranging conversation.

Darryl and his family walked us back to the Marloot House to get a few hours sleep before starting out for the train station and the second half of the tour.

(TO BE CONTINUED)



The power was out in the town at that moment, meaning that they had only the food they could grill out back on the braai (barbeque pit) at Roxy's, so here in exotic Africa, we had that most American of meals....a cheeseburger.





2010 LAP OF KENTUCKY Lapping The State of Kentucky by Motorcycle

- WHEN:** The Lap begins 9 am, Thursday, June 17th, and ends 5 pm, Sunday, June 20th.
- WHERE:** The Lap begins and ends at BMW Motorcycles of Louisville, 116 West Breckinridge St., Louisville, KY 40203 (Downtown Louisville at the corner of 1st and Breckinridge Streets just off I-65)
- HOW:** Circumnavigate the state by first riding east out of Louisville on a designated route consisting mainly of secondary roads. The route is approximately 1400 miles and can be completed comfortably in the time allotted. **THIS IS NOT A RACE.** You will be provided with suggested lodging points along the way.
- HOW MUCH:** Your \$50 entry fee gets you a souvenir t-shirt, and a prize for finishing at the 5 pm Sunday finish/awards ceremony. Proceeds to benefit the Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) at Ft. Knox.
- AWARDS?:** We will present awards to the oldest finishing rider, the youngest finishing rider, the oldest finishing motorcycle and the smallest displacement finishing motorcycle. Since **THIS IS NOT A RACE** there will be no award for the quickest finishing time.
- WHAT ELSE:** This event will be limited to one hundred (100) riders so get your entry in as soon as possible.
- WHY:** Why not?

2010 LAP OF KENTUCKY ENTRY FORM AND RELEASE

Name: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail address: _____

Bike Year and Make: _____ Model _____ Displacement _____

Cellular Phone (if any): _____ Emergency Phone: _____

Passenger Name: _____ Age: _____

I understand that BMW Motorcycles of Louisville (BMWLOU) and the Louisville BMW Riders (LBMWR) cannot and do not assume responsibility for any aspect of my safety in this event and that I participate in this event voluntarily, assuming all risks and after my own assessment of my own abilities, the condition of my motorcycle, the routes involved and any and all other conditions and facilities likely to be encountered during this event. I release and hold harmless BMWLOU, the LBMWR and their respective officers and members for any injury and/or loss to my person or property which may result from my participation in this event. I also certify that I am in compliance with my state's financial responsibility laws regarding the carrying of proper insurance and that I hold an appropriate license for operating a motorcycle.

Rider Signature _____ Date _____

Passenger Signature _____ Date _____

Return completed registration and \$50 (payable to BMW Motorcycles of Louisville) to:

Jeff Cooke, **BMW Motorcycles of Louisville**, 116 West Breckinridge Street, Louisville, KY 40203, (502) 568-6311



MotorcycleCannonball.com

Coast to Coast on Pre-1916 Motorcycles!

Sept. 10 - Sept. 26, 2010