

December 2010

Apex

Looking Through The Curve

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

Marrea Matthews exploring back roads

**Merry Christmas to all
and to all a good ride!**



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Everything about life runs on borrowed time, including all things mechanical.

The new car or motorcycle remains "like new" for as long as it takes to move the machine

**On
borrowed
time, our
machines,
at least,
can be
rebuilt
indefinitely**

**'Remained
vertical
due to the
exceptional
skills
of my co-pilot'**

—Lee Thompson



off the production line. Then stuff begins to happen.

You know stuff.

Take, for example, the front Lester wheel from Lee Thompson's 1978 R100. This period lovely was a popular upgrade from the "snowflake" cast aluminum wheel by BMW that suggested the appearance of a classic "wire spoke" wheel and actually provided none of the

benefits of an aluminum wheel: less unsprung weight, tubeless capability, and easy maintenance.

So, owners replaced snowflakes with Lesters, a true, tubeless wheel that also was easier to clean. Some say it is a more attractive wheel, but that's a subjective call.

Lee found a great example of the R100, has done quite a bit

distance riding.

Then, the Lester encountered a pothole in Mercer County.

Lee sent a note along with the photo of the bent wheel:

"Remained vertical due to the exceptional skills of my co-pilot."

Take a second look at this wheel. That's quite a bend, but Lee managed to wrestle the bike to a safe stop. At this writing, he is not sure if the wheel can be saved.

So, here we are, mulling over another incident that makes us shake our collective head and say, "Could have been much worse."

Lee experienced a similar wheel-bender on his R1150R. Boone Sutherland bent a wheel on his R1150RS in Mexico. We likely have other members of the bent wheel club among us.

After all, nothing moves through life without taking its share of blows.

We'll keep up with Lee as he addresses the bent Lester, and maybe we will learn of a good repair source to add to our list.

Although on borrowed time, our machines, at least, can be rebuilt indefinitely.

—Paul

to make it even more roadworthy, and has been enjoying the bike for both long and short-

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Lexington, Kentucky MOA #146 RA #4-49**

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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.**

Anvils Away!



Falling Leaf rally attendees watch as Gay Wilkinson shoots an 85-pound anvil 100 feet into the air.

Text and Photos By Marrea Matthews

More than just leaves fell at the 2010 BMW Falling Leaf Rally in Potosi, MO.

The Anvil Shootist, Gay Wilkinson, blasted an 85-pound anvil about 100 feet in the air. When the anvil landed, it had to be dug out of the ground. I wish I had the words to describe the boom.

Gay explained he learned the technique for “blasting” from an 89-year-old friend, Tom Sawyer Nichols in 1994. Just two months after passing on this love, Tom died.

Gay continues to blast anvils just about any time he’s asked—school functions, weddings, competition. In fact, Mr. Wilkinson has twice won the “World Anvil Championship” held each spring in Laurel, Mississippi.

The care taken in preparing a solid and level base, determines how close the anvil returns to the spot from which it was shot. For the rally blast, he used five

two-inch thick steel disks under the base anvil. In the base of each anvil, a cavity has been hollowed. One-half pound of black powder is poured into each cavity.

A fuse is run through a small hole. More as a precaution, than fear of ending up like Wile E. Coyote in the Roadrunner, Gay hopped in his pickup and drove to a safe distance. From there he enjoys watching the appreciation by the crowd.

Even though the anvils are forged, not cast, Gay has found they can break on impact with another anvil or a frozen gravel road.

In fact, the 85-pound anvil used for the rally has been broken before when it returned and struck the base. In competition, points are deducted for each foot the anvil lands away from the base. Part of the technique is setting things up to get close, but not too close.

Someone described the whole affair with, “It’s kind of like the joy of sex, but sex shouldn’t be done in a crowd!”



Above: The anvil returned just a few feet from where it was launched.



Right: Gay Wilkinson prepares the anvil. The base anvil sits on five thick disks and one-half pound of black powder is added.

Anvils Away!

“Acme” peanut butter is spread around the edge of the top anvil. To the peanut butter a sheet of notebook paper is tacked. This hold the powder in place when the anvil is flipped upright.



Gay Wilkinson answers the last questions before the crowd is dispersed.

In the Beginning...

Part 3 See the October and November issues of Apex for Parts 1 & 2.



**John
Rice**



**Ducati Diana,
pre-conflagration**

After high school, I spent the summer working in a Pepsi Cola warehouse, sorting bottles on a conveyer belt, and sometimes making deliveries because I was the only teenager on the line that had a driver's license. (Most of the others had some "legal difficulty" or just hadn't yet acquired the requisite academic skills to navigate the written test.)

The warehouse sat on the edge of US 23, the main road out of Ashland heading north, with the tall loading doors opened facing the highway. As we stood there, picking the bottles off the moving line, we often could hear the sound of a bike coming. With my back to the doors I would tell my fellow workers what the bike

would be as it came into their view. I was seldom wrong, because back then different brands of bikes were unique in their engine configurations, with distinct sounds, there were relatively few in Ashland, and I knew most of them.

Sometimes I could even tell them what color the bike would be and what the rider would be wearing. Now, many decades later, I often can't tell what a bike is when I'm looking at it, since all of the remaining manufacturers copy each other so well that many are indistinguishable.

I went to the community college in Ashland for my first two years, finding a job to support myself and pay for my schooling. This meant that often I had night classes, so I could work during the day. In

those innocent days, in such a small town, the few of us who rode motorcycles parked them on the lawn in front of the college building and left our excess books and jackets and helmets on the seat.

Theft just wasn't a consideration (perhaps because of those who would steal in a small town, textbooks weren't high on the list of desirables.)

A friend had a Ducati Diana, a race-replica bike I lusted after, but his maintenance of the machine was somewhat less than perfect. It had an oily film around the open bell-mouth carb, sans air filter, and wasn't always easy to start. One cold night as we left class, he put his books on the ground and began the ritual of tickling the carb and swinging the short-throw lever to bring the single to life, as I did the same on mine. I looked over at him just as a tongue of flame shot out of the bell-mouth, setting fire to the oily residue. Bruce kept kicking away, oblivious to the fire developing under his leg. I yelled at him, but he was absorbed in his task, until the heat coming through his jeans finally got his attention. He leaped off the bike and began jumping around, screaming (in hindsight, he probably thought, with good reason, that his leg was burning as well as his bike).

I ran into the school building and grabbed a fire extinguisher off the wall. I pointed it at the burning machine and pulled the trigger, only to get a dribble of white liquid falling on the ground right in front of my shoes. Note to self: check fire extinguishers frequently. I ran

In the Beginning...

Part 3 By John Rice

back in and pulled the fire alarm for the building, which brought quick results, if probably overkill.

By then however the poor Diana, object of my desire, was but a shell with melted bits of seat and tires dripping on the ground. I helped him push it through town the next day, back to his home, where he began the slow process of bringing it back to life. It eventually Phoenixed as a blue metalflake café racer....but still oily and hard to start.

In the summer of 1968, the financial vagaries of being a teenager in college left me a bit short of tuition for the next semester when I would be transferring to the main campus of UK in Lexington. I sold my Ducati Scrambler in late July. I still recall watching the new owner ride away from my home, knowing that I'd just made a motorcycling mistake, even if it was a necessary one. From then until October I didn't have a bike, and it was like I was missing some major organ required for life, as if someone had just removed one of my lungs.

I haunted motorcycle shops in Lexington until mid-October, when I found at The Cycle Center on Maxwell Street a basket case...literally... Montesa Scorpion. I'd heard of the Spanish marque, but never seen one in the flesh...or in this case, the laundry basket. Someone had brought it into the shop this way after dismantling it to repair some now long-forgotten ailment and had abandoned it. It was in two baskets, actually, with the frame and some other bits on the side.

I bought it, much to the amusement of the shop owner,

who helped me load the thing in the trunk of my decrepit Ford Fairlane for the short trip back to my second-floor apartment.

I put it together, learning as I went, painting the tank British Racing Green with a spray can out on the metal deck above the parking lot. Getting it down the flight of stairs when it was completed presented only a minor impediment.

I was back on two wheels before the end of October and that three-month gap is the only time since the age of 14 that I've been without at least one motorcycle. I rode that bike as my primary transportation through the rest of my college days there in Lexington, including a trip to Radcliffe, near Elizabethtown, to visit with a friend whose family had a farm there.

The Montesa was street legal, in the barest sense of the term in a very permissive time, but was wearing knobby

tires and required for its diet a steady supply of two stroke oil mixed with each tank of gas. For luggage, I had some clothes and basic toiletries rolled up in a towel and bunjee corded to the seat. The bike had a "cruising speed," if one could call it that, of about 45 mph. The heat characteristics of a two stroke single meant that a constant throttle was not an option. The bike would begin overheating if run that way, developing the classic extended twang of a motor that was just about to show the rider what seizure looks and feels like, necessitating that I ride the entire 75 or 80 miles in a rising

and falling acceleration/ deceleration sine wave. Still, I was on the road and that's all that mattered. Those other things were mere details.

When I arrived at my friend's farm I was given the tour by his WWII veteran father of the barns which include their horses (with captured German cavalry saddle) and their airplanes. The family was, heavily involved in the Civil Air Patrol and kept their small planes in a barn bordering the family airstrip. It was a mowed path in a field....with a definite dip in the middle, meaning that whether taxiing for takeoff or coming in for a landing, one always was coming downhill, facing an uphill right in front of the propeller. I didn't ask for a test flight. I did go for an exploratory ride around Hardin

County, following his small street bike (which I can't recall the make of, only that it was a red two stroke twin). Not far from his house, as we were heading back, we got pulled over by



the local Sheriff's deputy. I couldn't think of what infraction we'd committed, since neither bike was capable of much speed and we weren't capable of much else that would cause attention from the law. It turned out that my friend wasn't wearing protective eyewear, required by the regulations but something I'd never thought about since I have to wear glasses all the time to see past the front fender. The officer lectured my friend severely, punctuating the tirade at the end by saying "I know what I'm talking about"....and then for emphasis tapping with his fingernail on

In the Beginning...

Part 3 By John Rice

his own glass eye. We were properly chastened by that unanswerable argument and rode slowly to the house.

five gears in order, 1 neutral, 2,3,4,5 and then back to 1 to start over. This got pretty exciting if one forgot one's place in the sequence and went from 5th to first at any serious speed.

The bike had a dubious history and soon needed some work. He and I rebuilt the engine in the parking lot, neither

sional forays into the mechanic shop and body shop.

One January morning I was on my way to work on the bike when the streets of Lexington were iced over. I tiptoed carefully down High Street, feet out to catch slips, when I was passed by the proverbial little old lady in a large car. She was hunched over, looking through the top arc of the steering wheel, dressed in woolly cap and serious expression.

As we approached the major intersection with Broadway, the light turned red. I saw the brake lights on the car come on and it began the slow slide of a vehicle without traction,, turning completely around 360 degrees, then again, as it flowed on through the light backwards and finally straightened out on the other side. She never turned the wheel or her head, staring straight forward under the wheel as the landscape whirled around her. I wondered if she realized it had happened.

Our service writer at Lagrew's was named Jack, a young man not far from my own age. His claim to fame was his missing right index finger and his habit of putting the stump up to his nostril so that it appeared that he had the entire digit up his nose. We were easily amused in those days. Jack was a rider of sorts, having a small dirt bike as a toy rather than a passion.

One night he and I figured out that the newly painted floor of the body shop would make a good after-hours short track venue. It had the added benefit of a "ramp" from one level to the next affording a jump into the wider area of floor space on the second level. With only a little ingenuity, all we could muster, we devised a sort of figure 8 kind of track with little danger of collision since it was just the two of us.

It was a raucous evening of great fun, sliding the bikes on



BRIDGESTONE 175+ DUAL TWIN

A graduate student, who had the adjoining apartment in the converted old house where I lived. decided that motorcycling looked like fun, so he went out and bought one. It was a Bridgestone twin, a 175cc if memory serves, with the rotary transmission for which the brand was famous or notorious, depending on one's perspective.

In this arrangement, as I recall it, the gear lever was used in either direction to shift up or down, going through all it's

of us knowing quite how such a thing was to be accomplished, and even resorting to cutting gaskets out of used pizza boxes. With the incredible resilience of two strokes, the poor abused beast ran again.

To earn my daily crust and pay tuition, I was working at Lagrew Motors, a local auto dealer that sold, in an unlikely combination, Mercedes Benz, Jeep, American Motors Rambler and Studebaker (parts only, for the latter, since the brand was now defunct). I labored in the parts department with occa-

In the Beginning...

Part 3 By John Rice

the slick floor, falling down and generally enjoying ourselves until we realized late in the game that our tires had left black streaks all over the new painted surface....the one the manager was so proud of. We spent a long time trying to clean it up, to little avail, and had to admit our sins the next day.

We kept our jobs, barely, and had to complete the clean up. (That body shop, on Old Vine, was later an upscale restaurant and is now "Bar None.") The Cycle Center moved from its Maxwell Street quarters to the building right behind Lagrew's, leaving me the opportunity to visit as I traveled my errands between the parts department and the body shop, used car lot, etc. As I recall it, the shop sold Montesa, Suzuki, BMW, and a variety of other minor makes available back then. Their parts guy had an AMX, the American Motors answer to the Mustang, and we quickly made arrangements for mutual discounts on parts for our respective machines (yes, I cleared it with my parts manager).

He also had a BSA 441 Victor, ("Victim", they were called by their owners) which had the typical hard-starting woes of its breed. This one often sheared the Woodruff key holding the flywheel onto the crankshaft, until finally out of frustration he welded the flywheel in place. Not sure how he intended to ever service what was behind it, but future problems didn't seem to bother him at the time.

Where I rode often was the reservoir property off Richmond Road, which was then considered "out of

town." There were miles of trails worn in the woods all around the water where one could ride, chase rabbits (they always won) and generally blow off the steam of job-work and schoolwork. I sometimes think of those days now when I



pass the gated subdivision of fine homes that now sit where I used to blast along on a Spanish dirt bike.

In my senior year I was returning to campus on the Montesa, on the dreaded Nicholasville Road, when a lady pulled out in front of me from her driveway. The dirt bike's brakes being marginal on dirt and next to useless on pavement, left me only the option of leaving the road and traveling over the curb, up the steep bank and through her yard, behind

her car and back out onto the street. I'm not sure she ever saw me. The incident began my thinking about abandoning the street for a dirt-only motorcycling experience.

Graduation finally came in December of 1970, and I packed up the now thoroughly worn Scorpion to return, somewhat reluctantly, to Ashland.

Times weren't the best then in the spring of 1971 and jobs

quarter liter two stroke single, I thought even then). It was a lime green, not found in nature, with oil injection which freed me finally from the need to mix every tankful at the pump. Suspension, as was typical of Japanese dirt bikes in those days, was marginal and certainly not up to the task of controlling the bike's considerable weight at any speed off road. Draining the "fish oil" (it smelled like it

for psychology majors were hardly thick on the ground. I took work as an electrician's helper working for my brother for a while and even sold bedspreads door to door for a local department store (it's a longer story...don't ask). In April, I got a job with the State as a social worker at the princely recompense of \$504 per month. Barely enough to live on, but enough to permit the purchase of another bike, a new 1971 Suzuki TS 250 Savage (a rather ambitious moniker for a

had come fresh from the tuna can) from the forks and installing Koni shocks (no specialty suspensions back then....Konis were pretty much one size fits all except for the length) got it to an acceptable level.

Today's bikes come with more adjustment in stock form than we had available from the whole aftermarket back then.

My job involved making home visits to various welfare clients in two counties and I soon found that the Suzuki made the rural visits a lot more

In the Beginning...

Part 3 By John rice

I shot down the short straight-away leading to a left hand curve in the loamy track, holding on the gas until the last possible second, carrying more speed than I thought possible, hit the brakes just before disaster... and then two racebikes came around me on either side, still on full throttle, like jet fighters parting formation around a hapless Cessna.

fun and actually easier in some cases. I recall one family that lived in a place called Wolf Pen Holler that could only be reached by road if the creek was sufficiently low to allow passage.

I learned that there was a trail that led from the highway on the other side of the hill down into the holler, just perfect for a dirt bike. I still remember the look on the face of the clan patriarch as the Social Worker came down the trail into his back yard, official blue notebook strapped to the seat of the bilious-colored Suzuki..

Motocross had come to the United States in the late 60's, a different kind of racing from the "Scrambles" that dominated the off road competition scene where I lived. Scrambles was done on a bare dirt track, with a jump and both left & right turns. Motocross was "natural" terrain, over hills and across creeks and done in "motos" of 45 minutes, not the 10 lap 15 minute Scrambles heats.

I had done a little Scrambling at a tiny track in Wurtland Kentucky, with less than stellar success. I recall one Sunday when, with the excess of optimism and utter lack of talent that so often marks my efforts, I went into the dip and shot up in the air on the other side, coming down farther and faster than I had any idea what to do with...the crash was spectacular, with me and the bike finally sliding as a unit into the weeds lining the edge of the course. I pushed the bike back to "pits"...a dirt area near the first

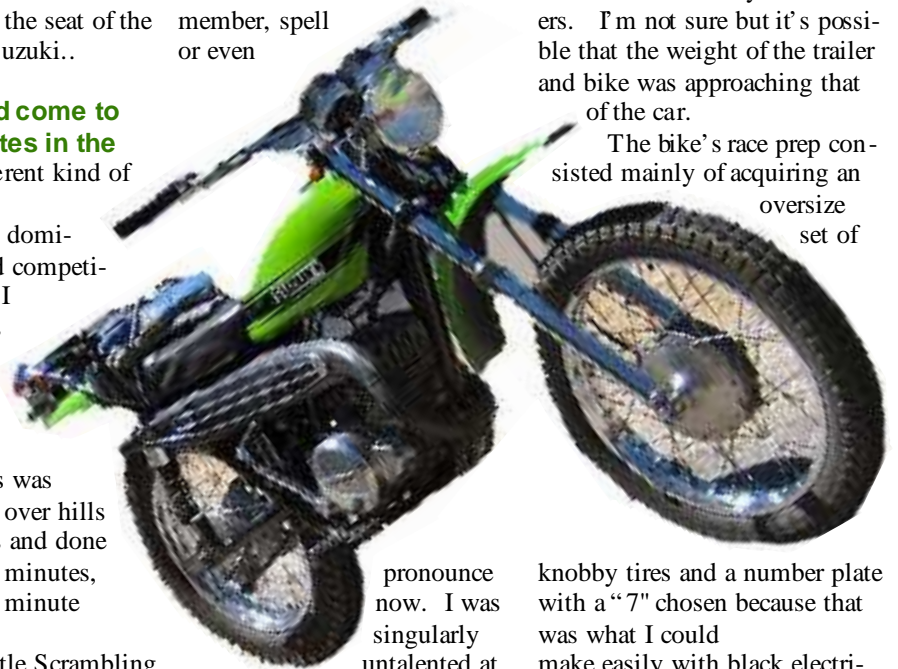
turn, and began the process of hammering the bent bits back into some useable form.

One of the experienced riders, those whom I considered the minor gods of the time, came up behind me and put his hand on my shoulder. "Nice jump son," he said and my spirits soared for just the moment required for him to add, "...but that landing needs work."

Motocross became a the new fad, sweeping scrambles and nearly everything else off the magazine pages. My new heros were names like Joel Robert (a Belgian, so pronounced "Ro-Bear"), Roger DeCoster, Gerrit Wolsink, Heidi Mikkola and others I cannot remember, spell or even

could be stubbed onto such a pipe by even a welder so inexperienced as I. The deck was 3/4" plywood, painted with marine varnish and the "rails" were also plywood bolted down to the deck with angle iron brackets. I'm not much of an engineer, but I can make something sturdy. The sturdiness came at the expense of weight, however, as any of you readers can easily add up from the ingredient list above. I was to pull this device, loaded with the somewhat heavy Suzuki, with my car at the time, a 1970 Volkswagon Karmann Ghia convertible....not exactly a powerhouse of a vehicle even when unburdened by trailers. I'm not sure but it's possible that the weight of the trailer and bike was approaching that of the car.

The bike's race prep consisted mainly of acquiring an oversize set of



pronounce now. I was singularly untalented at

motocross, but that didn't keep me from trying.

There was a small track in Proctorville Ohio, just across the river from Huntington, West Va. where races were held with some frequency. With help from my brother and his welding rig, I made a trailer for my Suzuki so that I could strip it to racing form and haul it to the track. The trailer was welded up from two-inch angle iron, using a steel pipe as an axle and the unique American Motors Rambler hubs that

knobby tires and a number plate with a "7" chosen because that was what I could make easily with black electrical tape.

Driving to the track was an adventure in physics as the little car struggled to deal with its load and the load tried its best to overcome the car that was restricting its forward progress.

We lurched on in this fashion for the 30 miles or so to the track, found our way to the pit area (just grass, marked off with tape) and unloaded. All around were other new acolytes to the faith of Motocross, some as green and unprepared as me,

In the Beginning...

Part 3 By John rice

others with racebikes, real boots and jerseys like those on the heros in the magazines.

The crackle of two stroke exhaust was a constant background with the wonderful smell of burning castor oil in the air. I set off on a practice lap before the track got crowded. I was out there, going up the hill, down through the creek, on an actual motocross track....this was great ! I shot down the short straight-away leading to a left hand curve in the loamy track, holding on the gas until the last possible second, carrying more speed than I thought possible, hit the brakes just before disaster....and then two racebikes came around me on either side, still on full throttle, like jet fighters parting formation around a hapless Cessna. They disappeared into the turn, changed direction like slot cars and were gone. Maybe I was out of my league here.

Still, youth knows little discouragement in putting itself in harms way, so I continued, with all the eagerness one can muster with no clue of what one is doing.

I recall one race in which I, far back in the pack, was competing with another back marker similar to myself, and I decided I could take him at the next jump, just before the sharp left that started up the long hill.

I pinned the throttle as we came to the crest and soared farther and higher than ever before....not just past my rival, but over his head. He made the landing and the left turn. I made a landing off the track on the outside of the turn, crashing down so hard my handlebars rotated in the clamps, my chin

slammed into the bolts on top of the steering head and the world went black for just a moment. When I realized where I was, the bike was still upright and moving, so I tried to pull the bars back up to continue....and that's when I saw the blood. It was all over the lime green tank, as if someone had chosen that particular spot to slaughter a cow. I thought "Where did that come from?" and just as quickly realized that I was the only likely source since I was the only one on the bike.

I pulled over to the side, re-



moved my glove and put my hand up to my chin, finding not the smooth surface I expected but an amorphous warm hole. I left the bike where it sat and began walking up to the start-finish area where the "officials" and the ambulance were stationed. As I walked into the area, people would come up to me, look at my face and immediately cringe....not exactly what I had hoped for as a reaction. The ambulance had just left the track with another unfortunate competitor, so all that

was left was the local constable who had come to offer his services as "security." He was an older fellow, probably in his 40's, with a uniform consisting of a too-snug blue shirt with his name on one pocket and a badge on the other. His vehicle was a 10-year-old Chevy 4-door with a classic old-style "bubble gum" blue light on the top, wire snaking across the surface and in a window to the cigarette lighter plug.

He took one look at me and I could see this was the chance he'd been waiting for. He put me in the back of the Chevy and started down the dirt road to the highway. When we hit pavement, he hit the gas, the blue light switch and got on his radio to the highway patrol. He told them that he was transporting a badly injured person to the hospital in Huntington and needed the bridge across

the river into
town cleared
of traf-
fic.

I
looked over his
shoulder and saw
that the rocking,
weaving
sedan was
going 90 mph
down the two
lane road. I
wondered if I
had survived
the moto-
cross acci-
dent only to
be killed ful-
filling this
man's fantasy. I
put my hand on
the seat between us
and said that I wasn't

hurt all that badly and we didn't need to be going this fast. He growled over his shoulder in his best Clint Eastwood/Broderick Crawford imitation (and I'm not making this up!) "You just shut up and bleed, son, I'll drive."

We got to the huge bridge, normally thronged with traffic, to find Highway patrol cars at each end, lights ablaze, holding open our path.

The Constable shot down the open bridge like the Blues Brothers through Chicago and on into Cabell Huntington hospital where the Emergency Department, having been alerted to the incoming tragedy, was somewhat let down by a skinny young man, holding a hand to his bloody chin, walking in through the doors under his own power.

Twenty or so stitches later, I walked out, with a broken tooth still to be dealt with by a sadistic dentist, but that's another story.

—John Rice



Ian gets better with the little Honda trials bike

Grandson Ian, age 9, on the TL 125. The bike has been lowered to accommodate his current "height challenge" and has acquired a new exhaust system so that my neighbors don't shoot him or me. He already wants to know when he can compete in a trials event.

—John Rice





Jim Brandon and Ben Prewitt take a break in Perryville on the way home from Elizabethtown on a 70-degree mid-November afternoon. We met for breakfast in Bardstown then rode to E-town to visit the Swope auto museum located north of the city on 31W adjacent to the Swope Chrysler dealership. From E-town we loafed along back roads to Campbellsville to enjoy a late lunch at the Happy Days Old Time Soda Fountain & Grille downtown.

—Paul Elwyn

**A November mid-70's sunny-day
tour for vintage cars and good food**

A November mid-70's sunny-day tour: vintage cars



A November mid-70's sunny-day tour: good food



From www.happydaysonline.biz: Happy Days Old Time Soda Fountain & Grille is located at 229 East Main Street in downtown Campbellsville, KY.

"We will attempt to entertain you with our nostalgic collection of 1950's and 1960's memorabilia. You will see the original soda fountain and many collector signs that came out of the corner drugstore soda fountain. Belly up to the fountain bar for a trip down memory lane with a REAL cherry coke, or banana split. Or maybe a "Deluxe Cheeseburger" made from Kentucky raised beef. Or maybe an old fashioned "Hot Brown" with juicy open faced turkey and Penn's Country Ham and cheese gravy dripping off the sides of the plate....Come on down and bring back YOUR memories."



Mon-Wed-Thurs-Fri-Sat
6:30 am-8:00 pm

Sunday
6:30 am-3:00 pm

Tuesday
CLOSED



'Are our motorcycles for other generations?'

A response

By Tom Weber



Tom Weber (left) stands with Paul Kennedy who owns the red 1989 R100RT that Tom has ridden for the past 6,000 miles.

*Saturday, August 28, 2010
9:20 PM EST
Lexington, Kentucky, USA
From: A young 'in, (in BMW years) with a motorcycle license issued back in the late '70's.*

This article is in response to a story that was posted in the May 2010 issue of *BMW MOA ON* by a man who is probably closer in age to myself than I realize regarding "Maybe our motorcycles are not for other generations..."

Embarrassingly enough, I have been so busy this year that I do not regularly read the "ON" like I should, nor do I regularly attend the Saturday

morning (7 am) breakfast with the local BMW club like I should. This morning, rather last night, I made it a point to actually set my alarm on a Saturday for about 6 am. During the week it goes off at 5:30. At 6:30ish I call my buddy Paul Kennedy & wake his rear end up saying "its time to ride on over to the Big Boy on Harrodsburg Road & have breakfast with Roy & the rest of the local chapter that show up every Saturday morning at 7 am". So we did.

There were about 30 of us there; Paul and I were pretty much the only ones that were not regulars.

Obviously, by now you are wondering what does this have to do with the original article. Well, I'll tell ya.

You see the bike that I ride now, is a 1989 R100RT. It has a modest 39,296 miles on the odometer. I have only put about 6,000 or so miles on the bike myself.

Last year about six weeks before the rally in Gray, Tennessee, which is near Johnson City, Paul asked if I would like to go. His mom & dad would be there as usual because they have been BMW Ambassadors for many, many, years, only missing the years when Paul's mom would have another

'Are our motorcycles for other generations?'

A reply By Tom Weber

young' in (three boys, imagine that).

I said sure, but I don't have a bike to ride. That's all it took.

About a week later Paul called me up after work one day and said, "Are you home?"

I said, "Sure, why?"

"Well, I have this bike I need to drop off so you can get used to it so we can ride down to the rally."

Of course I said, "Sure!" (I'm no dummy.)

Well, that bike has been here ever since. We had a great time at the rally and even better time riding there and riding back.

When Paul first dropped off the bike, it looked good, but being the anal sob that I can be, I cleaned her up, and I cleaned her up good. Underneath the oil pan was a caked-on mess. Something had been leaking just a little bit of oil, but not enough to spot the garage floor. I had to gently use a hammer and a screwdriver to clean the muck out from between the fins of the oil pan, it took several hours.

Then I focused on the wheels, then the frame, then the exhaust, then the fairing, then the saddlebags using the highest quality products from Mother's.

It is amazing, once you clean her well, shine her until you see your reflection, it is easy to keep her clean. Nothing to it now, just a little wipe down every now and again.

So to reply to your statement of, "Maybe our motorcycles are not for other generations."

Maybe they should retire along with us when there is no one left to love and care for them. Maybe their specific engine hum should be quiet when their owners who so lovingly cared

for them can no longer listen. How is it that a motorcycle, a machine, can become so lifelike that it, too, is loved? Because....."

After this past week, it makes one stop and wonder; what if I had said no, or had chickened out and had not gone to the rally? Well, I never would have been able to make new friends, I never would have been at breakfast with you 'all at Frisch's this morning and I never would have seen Paul's father at a BMW rally (which may have been his last).

Never say never, but Paul's father's health went downhill quickly shortly after that. He got better for a while, then worse, then better, now worse again.

I owe an awful lot to the Kennedy's from Owensboro. Paul was my best man at my wedding. I still remember Paul's first born, Kay. Now she has her own daughter who is almost a year old.

Three days ago I learned that Paul's son's best friend and fellow Marine was killed in Afghanistan last Sunday morning about 9 am EST, August 22, 2010.

Paul's son did not ship out as planned with Cao, but he was supposed to. If he had, he might be among the several Marines that were killed that day, or maybe he could have saved them. We will never know.

When you stop and think about such things, well it just becomes overwhelming.

So, let's stop asking "what if" and let's just start doing it, make it happen. Live every day



as if it were your last, because for some of us it is.

There are several chapters that I have left out regarding my motorcycle riding history.

Some are good, others are tragic. Another day, I suppose.

Tom Weber

Aka waffleheadweber (whw)

Postscript:

When I originally wrote this, I was in the process of sending it to Paul Elwyn, but my good computer at the apartment died suddenly. It is still lying horizontal with a sheet over it in the living room. When you turn it on a computer-generated female voice says "System Failed, PP Impact." If it's not one thing, it's another. So I am forced to use this old Compaq Presario from the early '90's.

It's amazing how the old outlives the new.

—Tom



Thanksgiving, it comes in all shapes and sizes.

I guess.

I know I was moved.

I

was brilling and the Wed ness day before the Thankful day .
All the gobblers slulked low behind the billabong, wishing to avoid the feast.
I'd stepped into the gloam and freezial to check on the progress of Sisyphus
And his endless mail delivery .

Old Glory had snagled herself on her standard
In her windful excitement, as is her want
I reached to desnare her as a young droog snuffled past.
I took him to be a catcher in our Natural Pabst Time
Since his cap was backward.

He'd stopped, standing in the freezial to watch.
As I soothmed her bars, defrageled her stars.
And he gave a waveal, almostly a
Salute!

So I sprung straight up
And snapped him, with the baggy trousers
A proper salute
As he snuffled down the strassa.

Id rereturned to my task when I hear
"Sir"
I was not sure, but again
"Sir"
This time loud and boldner

He was standing at parade rest in the freezial
Cap behind his back
And as I looked at the young droog
He snapped to attention

Gave me a crisp salute
Held it till I returned it
Made a sharp turn up the strassa
And snuffled on.

Take Care
Ride Well

Geoph Jones