

October 2011

Apex

Looking Through The Curve

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

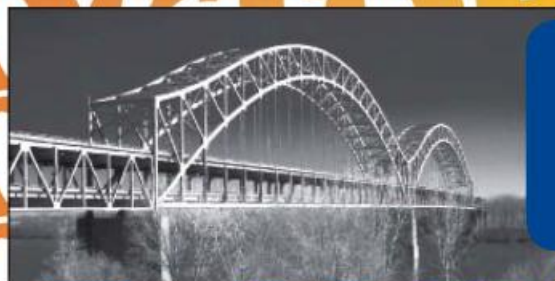


OCTOBERFEST!

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18th Beemers in the Bluegrass Rally a 'Smashing Success,' but future is uncertain



Roy Rowlett
Rally Chairman

This years rally was a **smashing success!** We had just over 100 in attendance. The setup on Thursday was pulled off very nicely and there were plenty of helpers for this. Friday arrived in a very wet manner. There wasn't any real rain to speak of, but the air was damp and wet. This didn't seem to deter any of the stalwart regular attendees to our rally. We had about eight who came on Thursday to camp before the rally even began.

Saturday was beautiful, the sun came out and dried everything out and the day proceeded very nicely.

We had a nice 83-mile loop

for the poker run and several folks took advantage of the beautiful weather.

We were blessed with door prizes from, BMW of Louisville, The Kickstand, Mitch Butler from I75 Yamaha, as well as several member donations. BMW of Louisville and The Kickstand each gave us a very nice riding jacket. We sold raffle tickets for the jackets and our own Phillip Baugh won the BMW jacket.

Our coffers were replenished nicely from all the different proceeds. We started the year with \$839.00 and we put back \$897.00.

Billy the cook, once again

came thru with some great food for the rally, with a country style breakfast and a real nice chicken supper. The burgers and tenderloin sandwiches he sold all weekend were a big hit also.

Our five-year contract with the campground has expired as of this year. They told us we needed to reconfirm by April of 2012, if we wanted to do it again next year.

I am hesitant to commit to another year, mainly because of lack of support from our club members. I know that there would be plenty of help setting up and breaking camp, but the entire weekend, there were only

four folks doing all the running, coffee making, sign-up booth etc.

I stated in last year's rally report that I would be happy to train someone else in the ins and outs of putting the rally together, and I had a whopping ZERO responses or offers.

Hopefully someone will take up the helm and be responsible for continuing our rally.

—Roy Rowlett



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, 7-9:00 a.m.



Rally images

by Bob Walker



More Rally images



Below: John Rice, Ben Prewitt, and Mark Rense catch up.

Bottom left: Jim Davidson of BMW Motorcycle of Louisville talks with Lowell Roark about the new K1600 LT.

Right: Jim Kouns checks in a rally attendee.

Middle Right: Guenther Wuest parks his Aprillia Tuono.





More rally images



More rally images



More rally images





Raymond and Lynn Montgomery of The Kickstand provided rally shopping from their van.

Bottom Left: John and Karla Barnes, Lynn Montgomery and Maureen Elwyn visited at the Kickstand van.



The Kickstand, BMW Motorcycles of Louisville, Mitch Butler of I-75 Yamaha, and members provided door prizes to attendees.



More rally images





Beemers in the Bluegrass Rally photos By Jeff Crabb



Above: Lowell Roark considers the K1600 GTL while Roger Trent observes.

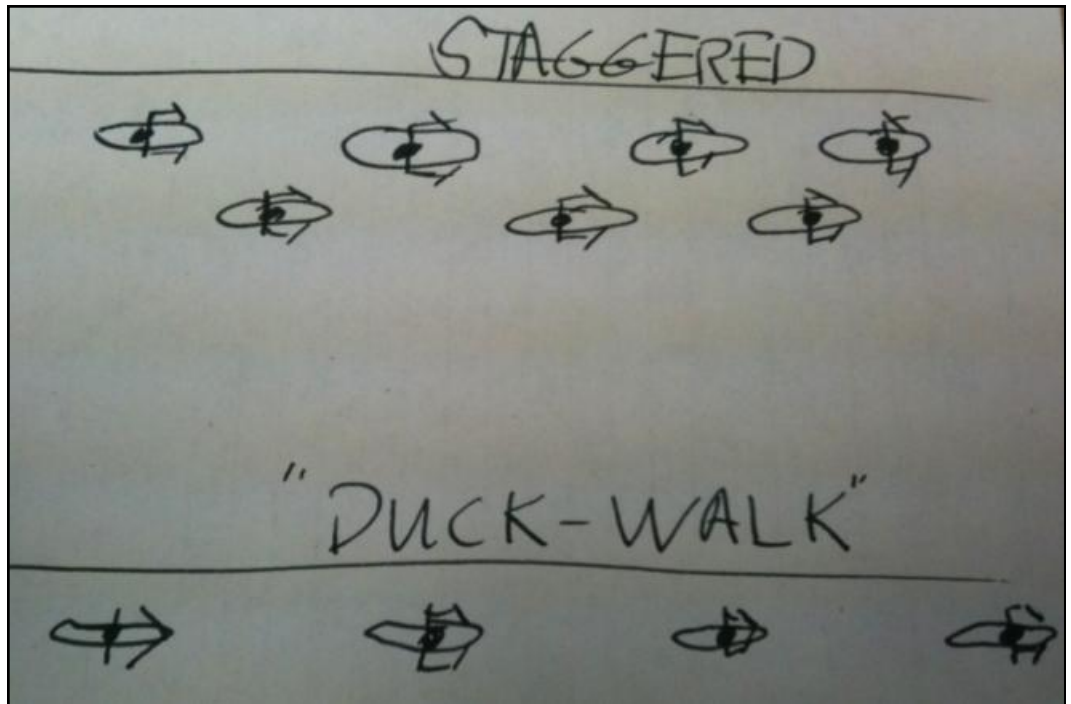
Right: Tom Rich prepares to launch the S1000RR.

Demo rides were provided by BMW Motorcycles of Louisville.





The case for the Duck Walk By Joe Bark



Staggered formation: No one rider fully “owns” a patch of asphalt. The “Duck Walk” allows riders more space to slow if needed and to swerve left or right.

Here's the deal. I don't do a lot of group rides.

I'm convinced that rides grow progressively more dangerous if there are over three riders. But whether there are two riders or twenty, certain life-saving techniques can save your kiester, so to speak.

Lane positioning is one of the major riding skills which must be mastered to get you back home unscratched. I hold no certification in training motorcyclists. I have taken courses all over the east, including three or four offered by Larry Grodsky's "Stayin' Safe" motorcycle training, and two or three of Reg Pridmore's "Class" track courses.

See the diagrams of "ride formations." They are some of the ways we group together on a wider, four lane road, and sometimes even a two lane

road. (Please ignore the horrendous artwork). The question is, though, should there even BE more than one approximately correct formation? If you are like me, I'm a firm believer in the saying, "Ride your own ride!" I think that every moment we should think of our positioning on the road with that in mind.

That said, we must logically determine what is the SAFEST place to be at all times during a ride?

Larry Grodsky, nationally-known safety expert until his demise at the hands of a deer in Texas, always emphasized his "space bubble" concept, that said, "you cannot hit what you are not near."

So he strongly encouraged us not to get near anything! He wanted us to own our patch of road, and asked all of us to respect the other riders' rights by not infringing on his/her space on their chunk of the highway.

But if you look at the drawing of the staggered formation above, you can see that no one rider fully "owns" their patch of asphalt. Sure, the guy nearer the centerline may be somewhat safer because he's not near the edge, but he is just as near a hefty source of death riding near the center line.

And what if the fella ON the right edge detects a threat approaching, and needs to veer to save himself from a collision with that threat? The only place which has any safe distance for him is ahead, and that's not where he wants to be, and will not help if he encounters a threat from the right side of the road. He can't swerve because he does not "own" the patch of road he has a deed to at that moment.

The all-time worst example of this hazardous positioning is one we have all seen, either in real life or in some of the idiotic portrayals of motorcyclists

you see from time to time on television and in the cinema. That is the side-by-side position, where each rider has another rider immediately to the left or right of him. That formation leaves a rider with the least possible space to maneuver if a threat approaches.

Now when a person is doing the "duck walk" there is a significantly larger spacing of bikes, which allows riders more space to slow if needed and to swerve left or right at will. (The only time side-by-side positioning is fairly harmless is at a stop street, when the extended formation of the "duck-walk" might be somewhat onerous.)

Try the "duck walk" technique on your next ride. And I'll try to whip up another riding tale for a future issue of *Apex*.

Comments and rebuttals are welcome.

To Pike's Peak or.... Battery Row

By John Rice



Jay, finishing off the Italian sausage breakfast sandwich and contemplating the repair.

This isn't exactly how we planned it.

For years Jay and I had talked of a westward trip that would include the Colorado Rockies, Pikes Peak and the Utah rock formations. While we took other trips, that one always got displaced, usually by the Army sending him somewhere, like Death Valley, or Iraq, at just the time we set aside. This time, however, Jay had retired and I had a new law partner to mind the store, so the time seemed right.

We left at 0-dark thirty in the morning, heading out into a chilly pre-dawn....and right into a rainstorm. Well, what did we two expect? We burned on down the highway in the water

until just about St. Louis, when suddenly the dash light illuminated on Jay's '95 Mystic and the charging system quit.

About 70 miles later, the voltmeter was down in the 9's and we sputtered to a stop at a wide spot in the road somewhere in Missouri. We removed the battery and I headed out to find a farm supply where a new one could be sourced. Fortunately, those aren't uncommon in rural Missouri, so in a few minutes he was back on the road, but we knew a fix was necessary. He had called the nearest dealer, Engle Motors in Kansas City, about 100 miles away, too close to closing time and out of our new battery range without some work, so we pulled in at the next motel for preparation. I went to another auto parts store, bought a second battery for a spare, a voltmeter and a charger.

We took the just-purchased battery out, put it on a charger, installed the new one and removed the headlight bulb for greater battery life. The next morning, Saturday, we headed out as soon as there was a smidgen of daylight, with Jay following me closely enough to use my headlight as needed. Sans bulb, the new battery lasted all the way to KC and we found the dealership with no trouble.

Engles is an old-line shop, not the new Taj-Mahal style favored by BMW these days. It has been there in the same location for about 50 years, selling BMW and Triumph motorcycles. The shop people were true enthusiasts, engaging Jay and me in a detailed discussion of the finer points of flat track racing until the service department was open and ready for his repair.

They sent us up the street to Teresa's Restaurant, an old-style diner with a menu certain to induce heartburn in the hardest gourmand, though the pleasure is well worth the pain.

By 10:30 Central time, the rotor had been replaced and we were off into the maze of KC streets to find the interstate that would take us out to the prairie, a half day behind and a lot of miles to go.

I'm told that a university professor once compared, using sophisticated equipment and satellite data, the surface deviations in Kansas and on a pancake, proving beyond doubt that Kansas is indeed flatter. After experiencing Interstate 70, I have no data to contradict that conclusion.

Mid afternoon, past Salina, we determined that we couldn't take anymore 4-lane so cut off onto Route 156 which makes a diagonal across the center of the flat state, following part of the old Santa Fe trail. We were making better time than a team of oxen, but the horizon still didn't seem to be getting any closer.

It is quite dry here, with some rolling hills but mostly just one-level-only farm land. Off in every direction as far as one can see, low vegetation mostly looking dead in the summer heat. The color is typically a strawberry blonde burnt dead grass but there are large patches of something that has a vaguely purple cast to it, which I finally decided is the same color as what is left in the bottom of a bowl of blueberry cobbler with ice cream.

All of the creeks in the small towns have names recalling the Indian tribes that once lived here until we newcomers pushed them out. Once in a great while a curve appears in the road, only a slight bend one way or the other, but it is marked in so many arrows that one would think it was a switchback in the Swiss Alps with a thousand-foot dropoff. A missed corner here would result only in embarrassment some damaged corn.

After a quick pie break in Great Bend, we stopped for the night in Garden City, Kansas, a rather euphemistically named agricultural center, redolent not with flowers, but rather with the unmistakable aroma of cattle feedlots, about one hour or short of our goal of making the

To Pike's Peak or...Battery Row

By John Rice

Colorado border.. Perhaps our younger selves could have made another hour or so, but the selves we are now in our 60's found it wiser to stop for the night.

Still on Eastern Time in our heads, we started out Sunday at 6 AM local time into the dark plains. Heading out into the pre-dawn darkness is one of my favorite parts of a motorcycle trip. There was not a star in sight and as I looked out over the pitch black expanse in front of my headlight, I wondered what it must have been like to be out here on horseback two hundred years ago. After about an hour I started to see the sun coming up in the mirror, the sky first just glimmering, then the spreading of the dusky rose and the deep purples as an unseen hand turned up the dimmer switch slowly.

By late morning we'd crossed the Colorado border and, at least in our minds, the topography began to change. We'd been gaining elevation as we headed west, such that the prairie here was higher from sea level than the tallest peak in Kentucky. Now there were rises and small valleys, dips in the road that still had a bit of morning cool air in them. The signs on the places we passed now told of "ranch" rather than "farm" and the animals by the fences were more often horses than cattle.....except for one.

Jay was in the lead and as he passed a ditch by the side of the road, a huge black bull exploded out of the weeds and ran at his disappearing bike. The enormous animal, disappointed, turned his wrath on me and charged as I got on the brakes and tried to figure out where to go. He veered at the last moment and I accelerated past his nose and on down the road still

trying to get my head around it. I suspect he was doing the same.

At Pueblo Colorado (if you're old enough, you remember when TV and radio had endless public service announcements telling you to send a postcard to Box something or other, Pueblo Colorado for information) we again hit the interstate for a few miles to make up time to Pikes Peak.

We got to the entrance with threatening clouds overhead and found a sign there telling us that rain was likely on the mountain, so, they were expecting us.

The young lady who took our entry fee said, "That'll be \$8. You are with the BMW group, aren't you?"

I laughed and said, "Well, we are now !"

Just as we went through the gate, we felt the first splashes of rain.

The road up the mountain curves through pine forest with signs telling us the changes in elevation as we ascended through climate zones. There are only occasional glimpses of the peak until one gets about half way up and the realization dawns that it's still a long way to get there. I thought about the racers who fly up this road, using all the pavement to the edge....where a mistake would leave a long time to contemplate until the crash at the bottom. Some say not to worry about it, the rider would starve to death before hitting the rocks below. I decided to leave that option unused.

At the top, it was fairly dark and windy, until the hail started. Tiny bits, like fine pea gravel, it pelted down for a few minutes leaving us time to ponder the descent on icy marbles. We waited a bit, then headed



The unpaved portion



(about two-thirds of the way up...and a long way

down carefully, taking into account that our brains, marginally functional at best, were not getting much oxygen with which to make cornering decisions.

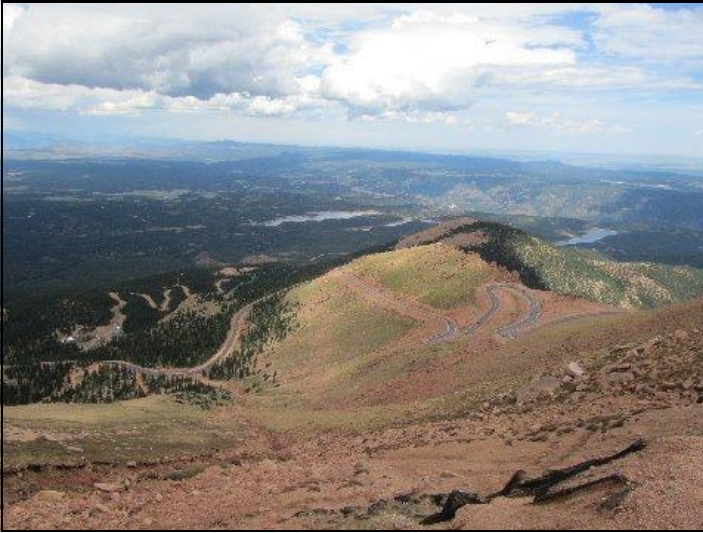
Off the Peak, we had to figure out where to go next. Rt. 24 was a fine curvy road with great scenery on all sides, but it was 4-lane and we were sharing it with a lot of tourists who seemed to be looking at the mountains rather than where they were going.

Rt 77 looked like a fine little twisty road through the mountains. Two or three miles in,

we saw a sign that said "Road Damage next 26 miles." This turned out to be a few potholes at first, then gravel, then miles of bare dirt where pavement was to be replaced. We beat our suspensions and spinal columns into mush for the next 45 minutes, until suddenly, just past the lake, there was pavement ! Jay had taken the lead and was gone like a shot, leaning into the curves like an Isle of Man racer down three seconds on the leaderboard and making up time. When I caught up to him, we were at Jefferson (elevation 9,500 feet,

To Pike's Peak or...Battery Row

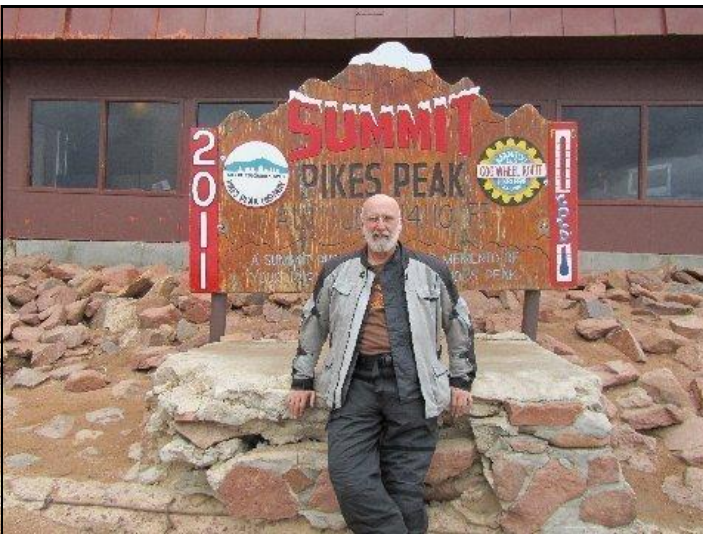
By John Rice



Looking down from the stop, still a long way up yet to go.. Nothing in Kentucky is as high as the bottom of this road.



The weather station at the top. Long commute to work, but a great view from the office window.

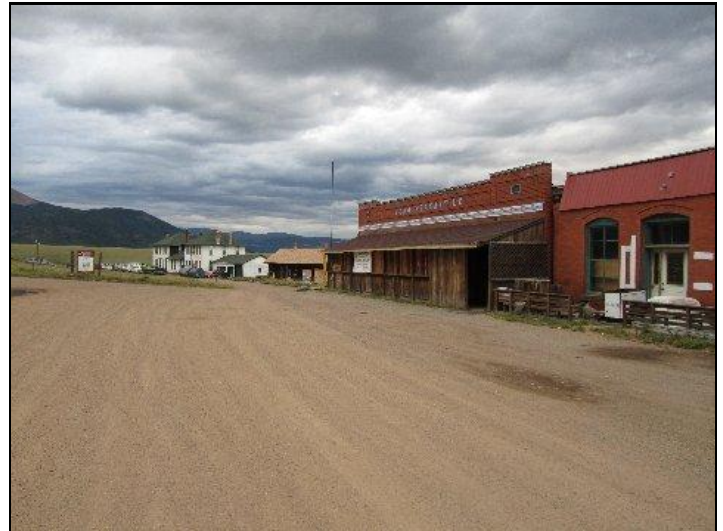


I'm hoping that the goofy look is from oxygen deprivation.

population unknown, but not immediately evident) and made the left to head southwest looking for a place to stay. It was getting late so when I saw a sign indicating food and what appeared to be a small community off to our right, I turned in. It was the town of Como, all of 21 residents (thirty one, if the dogs are included) which just happened to have a B&B in the

old railroad hotel, a perfect place to stop for the night.

In 1859, gold was discovered on nearby Tarryall Creek and by the late 1870's, Italian miners looking for their fortunes had established this town named after their home in the old country. Como soon became a rail hub for the Denver, South Park & Pacific narrow-gauge railroad, whose engi-



Rush hour on Main Street, Como, Colorado

neers established many of the homes in the bustling town that at one point reached a population of 6,000. Only a few houses remain, some in disrepair, others being restored slowly.

The old railroad hotel (one of three lodging establishments in the former town) had fallen into ruin after the last train departed from the depot next door in 1937. Several years ago it was purchased by David, who had come over from Britain after marrying a Colorado resident, and is now operating as a B &

B in the mixed Brit-Old West tradition. The dining room is small but inviting and the adjoining bar well stocked.

Visitors are greeted properly by Lila, the Golden Retriever who has the run of the town.

The food, prepared by a chef, in a white coat, was wonderful (particularly the dessert) and the room prices compared quite favorably to the "modest" (my wife would say "cheap") motels that Jay and I favor.

To Pike's Peak or...Battery Row

By John Rice



Self expression in a restored home/store.



Lila, doing her job.



The bar, which probably served a different selection of libations in the old days.

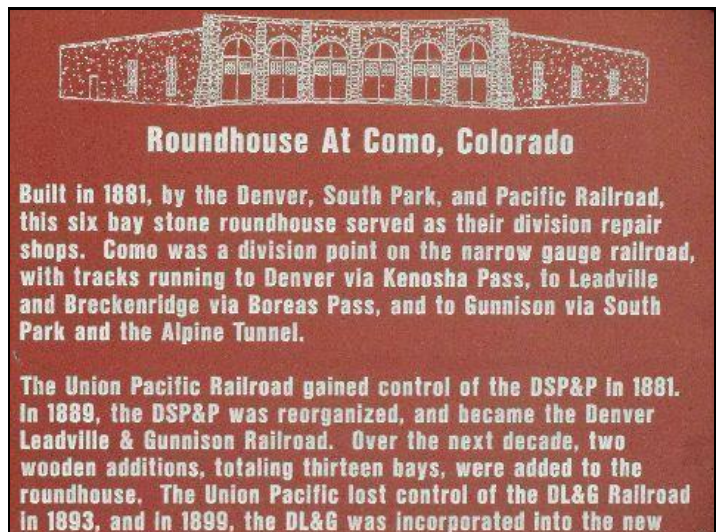
The old roundhouse, where men used giant wooden levers to turn the engines around on a turntable, is being restored by a Colorado heart surgeon with a passion for trains. The lady in charge of the restoration had come up to close the project for the night after fundraiser had been held there and she volunteered to give us the private tour.

At dawn, supervised by Lila,

we loaded up and headed out of Como toward Fairplay on Rt. 285. The GS thermometer was reading in the mid-40's up here above 9,000 feet as the sun broke cover over the peaks. We'd come far better prepared for the heat of Kansas than this level of cold. The road descended rapidly toward Buena Vista with the temperature rising quickly in lockstep with the decrease in altitude.



One of the few surviving narrow gauge manual turntables



The sign at the roundhouse

To Pike's Peak or...Battery Row

By John Rice

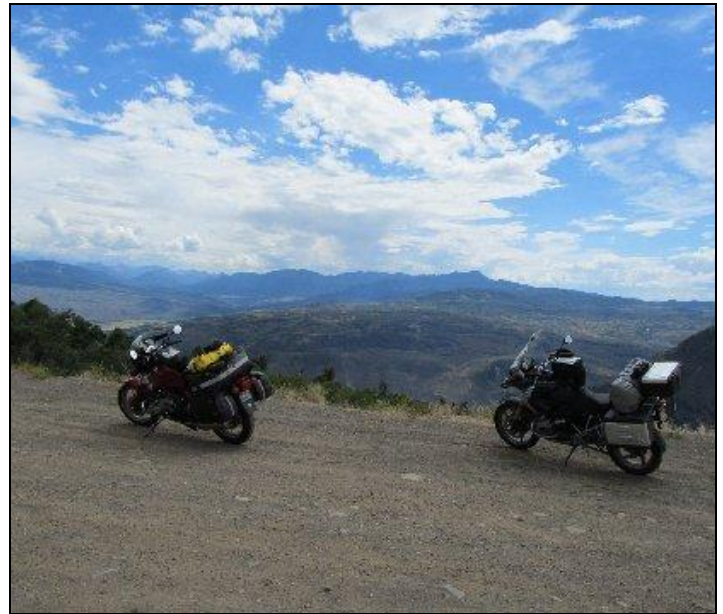


Brief respite on the road down from Fairplay

Our reprieve was short lived however, since after a gas stop in the aptly named Buena Vista, we started back up Rt. 24 toward Independence Pass. This stretch of pavement winds through incredibly picturesque mountains covered with tall pines, until it breaks above the tree line into the stark beauty of the cold rocks and August snow past 12,000 feet.

Going down the other side of the pass, the road struggles its way around innumerable turns

and switchbacks,, many with no shoulder or guardrail to prevent a slight mistake from becoming a long drop. At the bottom of this descent is the town of Aspen, fabled playground of the rich and famous. Being neither, we just passed through. One must note however that the civic improvements made possible by the tax base of homes costing more than the GDP of many small countries are truly amazing. I've not seen outside of Europe such elaborate high-



North Rim of Black Canyon. The Gunnison River is way down there somewhere.

way construction, and the airport which had private planes parked like cars at Fayette Mall on Saturday was very impressive.

Our destination after Aspen was Carbondale, a town we'd read about in a *Rider Magazine* article, where the Village Smithy restaurant is located. The author of that piece had waxed poetic about the breakfast there, and we learned that if anything, he'd been conservative in his comments. But first we had to find it and get inside.. At the parking area we met an elderly gentleman (remember our advanced age in considering that assessment) and his wife who were leaving. The fellow had been a BMW rider in the past and he had an encyclopedic knowledge of the roads in the area, which he shared with us generously. I quickly lost track of where he was sending us and finally his wife gently steered him into the passenger seat of the car and we made our way to breakfast. The breakfast black bean burrito with bread made on the premises was excellent and well worth the trip.!

We stayed briefly in a valley, then began to ascend again into mountain passes with the temperature swinging widely in inverse proportion. Late in the afternoon we reached Paonia, Colorado and pulled into a store for gas and some water. There we met a family and their dog sharing a picnic table and as often happens, they asked us where we were headed. Since we didn't have a definite destination in mind, they were glad to suggest some.

Following their directions, we turned down Route 92, otherwise known as the Rim Road, following the north rim of Black Canyon in Gunnison National Park.

This turned out to be one of the best roads of the trip, even though the surface was sometimes less than ideal, ranging from rough-surfaced pavement to occasional gravel. The road followed closely the sheer drop-off rim of the canyon, making for endless curves with vistas across the canyon drawing far too much attention to keep up any sporting pace. At the end, the pavement hugged the edge of a lake formed by the Gunni-



Always wanted to be here

To Pike's Peak or...Battery Row By John Rice



The view from above Ouray

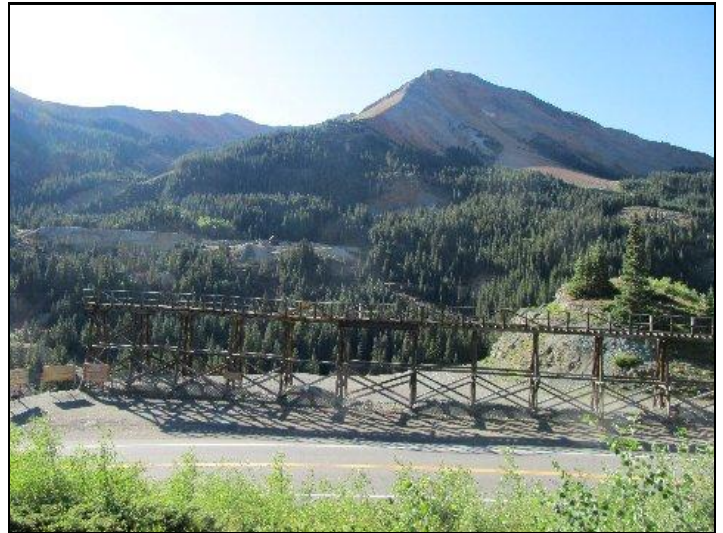
son River that had carved the canyon. We were fed out onto Rt. 50, a major roadway that led us back into Montrose where we found lodging for the night.

At first light, we started out for the Ouray to Silverton highway over the mountains. Breakfast was at Starvin' Arvin's, another serendipitous find where we again overate happily. Carb-loaded, we began the ascent to Ouray, still a bit too early for the sun to have provided any warmth, or any light in the canyon roads. It's a fantastic ride up to Ouray, with one picture-postcard curve after another leading into the little town that was still waking up.

We were there too early for even the coffee shops to be open, so we proceeded on to the top of Red Mountain.

At the top of the pass, about eleven thousand feet, there were the remains of what had been six silver mines and the small towns that grew up around them then disappeared with the petering out of the ore. Here, as in Como, the precious metal was first hauled by animal power until railroads could be constructed, with all the accoutrements of civilization that such things bring. Then almost as quickly as it came, it was gone, leaving only scattered bits of construction as mementos of the people that once lived up here in the clouds.

Descending down into Silverton, the pavement clings somewhat tentatively to the side of the mountain, curving as if the builders had motorcycles in mind, until the iconic little community comes in sight. Main Street looks much like a western movie (pavement being a somewhat later addition) with all the expected buildings of such a set.



Red Mountain Pass. The remnants of an old silver mine

Except for the gas station at one end, of town, not much would be required for John Wayne to stride down the street with his badge reflecting the morning sun.

He wouldn't have stopped in the outdoor supply store, as we did, looking for additional layers for warmth. Real cowboys don't mind the cold, so this store had none to offer.

(To be continued)

Go West Young Bike

(Or, How Paul's Bike Finds a New Home In Hawaii) Part 5



By Bob Beard

Waking up in Kansas, it is still warm (about 85 degrees) and the wind is still blowing, but at least it is warm, and dry. Of the two I am particularly glad of the dry part.

Okay, I want to do an impartial non-empirical never-to-be-recorded in any scientific journal kind of census: Is there ANYONE in the universe who has been in Kansas when the wind is *not* blowing? What is it with this state? At least it is warm.

Up and out of the tent about 5:30 am.I seem to have slept in. Sun is creeping up to spread its arrival on the edge of the world and the dry brush is rustling at my back. The tent, as it has throughout the night, is ruffling softly, like a sail searching for its luff. Already it is as warm as I would want it to be all day, which means it is quite likely to be a scorcher. Last night, after pitching tent, having my dinner of cucumber, orange, string cheese and peanuts I sacked out in my nylon domicile and found myself continually reaching for a new wa-

ter bottle throughout the night. The morning reveals that I have guzzled through three sixteen-ounce containers during the night. I only remember peeing once. Bad ratio in my world. I must have been a bit dehydrated when I sacked out.

Somewhere during the night I had 45 minutes of loudly heralded entertainment as some drunken teens in a pickup raced by on that section of lake closest to where I came in. They stopped to hoot, holler, pull some erratic, dirt-and-gravel spraying donuts in the middle of the dirt road and then, surprise, managed to get a wheel into the drainage ditch. This seems to be where their fun ended and mine began. With the wind blowing directly toward me I could hear all their cursing and blaming of one another as they attempted to get the stranded truck back on to

the road. From the outbursts of hilarity, followed by anger, followed by the tinkle of breaking glass, followed by jocularity, I suspect there may have been some underage drinking involved.

I sat on my sleeping bag at lakeside, fully 100 yards away from all the fun, dressed only in my undies, sipping at bottle #2 of water, enjoying the drama. This in itself proved I was on vacation. Were this same event to happen in front of my house at 2 a.m. it would have been an aggravation worthy of police intervention. Here it is just one more notch on my entertainment stick.

Eventually the stumbling bumbblers managed to get their truck back on terra firma and, having learned to appreciate the gravity of driving recklessly at night on non-lighted dirt roads, fishtail off into the warm and

windy Kansas night leaving me with only cicadas, frogs and rustling grasses as my companions. Good night again.

And.....morning again: Having pretty well packed up and readied myself to hit the road I wander over to lakeside with the intention of filling the lake just a wee bit. Boys will be boys.

You will excuse me if I admit dribbling on my boots a touch, but *right* in front of me a four foot water snake went cruising through the shallows. Man, I must have jumped a foot when I saw him and during the process lost control of my personal python. (Is this too much info?)

Poisonous? I have no idea and no need to find out. I am packed, and I am gone.

One nice thing about Kansas (and it ain't the wind) is that just about any driving endeavor is conducted at interstate speeds



A four-foot water snake greets me at sunrise. Poisonous? I have no idea and no need to find out. I am packed, and I am gone.

Go West Young Bike

(Or, How Paul's Bike Finds a New Home In Hawaii) Part 5 By Bob Beard



A retired steam engine

without the necessity of actually going on an interstate. It is a great place to speed through, so thankfully all roads cooperate by being grid straight. Every turn is 90 degrees, and touring the entire state seems to be merely a matter of remembering whether you last turned left or right.

The first town I come to is Marysville, Ks. where I take time to fill both me and the

bike. While paying for my petrol I notice a headline in the local rag and it loudly proclaims that the previous day was a record setting heat day for much of the state for this day. Salina, Kansas hit 102 degrees. Not bad for a spring day in early May. Well! And I was a part of it all. Oh, the honor.

Leaving the Quickie Mart I am going to take my first left

turn of the day as I ramble ever west and southward, but just a mile along I pull over for a photo shoot. My granddaughter, Lorelei, just adores trains and right there beside the road is a huge and caged retired steam engine. How can I not?

Back on the road and the ever-present wind will not decide on a direction, but it does decide on a tactic, and that tactic is to never, ever be at my back. As I tool along it is ever a strong side wind (either side, it matters not) or a hard headwind. Sometimes I question my choice in small faired bikes, but I always seem to persist. Stubbornness is a questionable virtue.

One other appreciable aspect of traveling hundreds of miles across the state of Kansas is that there are very few dangerous curves to negotiate. (This is me with my optimism hat on) This paucity of directional changes combined with the generally open, uncrowded roadways and byways gives one time to concentrate on the subtler aspects of motorcycling, namely the sights, sounds and smells of out-in-the-air travel. That combination of sensual stimulation is the thing that puts the *m-m-m-m-m* in motorcycling. To me riding in a car vs. riding a motorcycle is comparable to cruising in a glass-bottom boat vs. SCUBA diving.

The sounds are pure momo, but muted. Remember, I am living behind a fairing that rises only to mid chest level. I wear earplugs at all times. I wear a helmet. Within the helmet there is space in the padding to accommodate someone who must be endowed with truly impressive ears. I have filled that unused ear space with pieces of

foam trimmed from an old ground pad to lessen the ambient noise even further. I do not wear an MP3 player. When traveling with the wife there is no communicator. Quiet please, I am on my motorcycle. You with the loud pipes, I am not of your clan.

Kansas aromas are occasionally warm alfalfa and moist earth, but mostly fertilizer and cows. The best time aroma wise is daybreak when the morning sun is warming the dew off the tips of the grasslands. Once things warm up though the scents revert to dust and dung.

The sights are occasionally fields of sunflowers aiming at the morning sun, mist shrouded pasturelands, and copses of wooded streams, but mostly they are flat, plowed-under fields awaiting cultivation, and cattle yards.

But the open expanses invite lots of interstate plus speeds for extended periods and this does serve to shrink the state to manageable proportion. Worried about the local gendarmes? Easily handled unless you are the type A personality that just cannot stand to have someone else ahead of you in line. Out here there is always some guy who wants to own the road and go faster than you are going. The trick is to just let him. If someone wants to go 85 mph, I am willing to tail him at 80 mph. By the time he is out of sight almost invariably another windbreaker is looming up in the rearview.

You may get the idea I am not a Kansas fan. You may be right. But to the north of me there is rain, snow and freezing temps. To the south is rain and flooding. And while straight



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west of me a gigantic low pressure area is building rapidly above the Rockies I am still of the opinion that if I make some straight line haste I can get to Southern Oregon and Northern Cali to see some compadres, so Kansas it is. Not a much straighter line to be found.

Taking a midday break I gas up and pull the bike out of the searing sunshine to check oil, have a cold drink, wet down my jacket, check maps and take my boots off for a few minutes. Inside this combination gas station-store-cafe the several small tables are filled with field hands, farmers, ranchers and truck drivers. These are your modern day western heroes; hard working folk who hold to the land and take their cigarettes unfiltered, their beer light, and their vehicles with four wheels driven.

I had gathered a few looks while disrobing in the parking lot. The looks were originally at my choice of vehicle ("does that say BMW on the side?") but as I began pulling off riding pants and boots the gazes were transferred to me. Bad enough I was doing the one-boot-stuck hop in the parking lot, but as the layers came off other sundry sins were exposed. Under my jacket I had on a synthetic shirt from Patagonia made from some super synthoslinky material that is light as a baby's dreams and promises to keep me both warmer and cooler as I need, if you can believe the manufacturer's claims. I am a believer, but only because it seems to work and is comfy as all get out. It is a bright avocado green, unfortunately, and has the feel of something out of Victoria's Secret. Ah, what price, comfort?

While traveling I always carry my ID, credit cards, spare cash, insurance cards, etc...in a sort of large flat wallet equipped with a lanyard that goes around my torso bandoleer-style. That way I do not have to sit on it, no one can pick it from a pocket, and I never have to set it down anywhere; it is always right there on my hip.

So, as I saunter into this little do-it-all foody and gas emporium I am the main topic of interest; I am the turd in this particular punchbowl, the fly in the ointment, the sand in the sauce. Paying at the counter for gas and a drink I hear someone at the tables behind me say in a voice designed to make sure I hear, "Wears a silk shirt, *and* carries a purse." A few sniggers follow this observation and I restrain the impulse to turn around to see whom they could possibly be talking about. I would not want that person to feel uncomfortable by being singled out in this homey gathering.

Back outside and I am relieved to have avoided confron-

tation and sit my ass on a bit of curbing to plot paths and happily hydrate. After a brief moment a pair of dust covered boots stride softly into my periphery. Uh-oh! I mentally don my most diplomatic demeanor and bland-but-pleasant countenance and look up. Relief abounding! I find I am gazing at an older gent (older than me, even) who is merely curious about my motorcycle. ("does that say BMW on the side?")

He seats himself next to me on the curbing and we share some shade and conversation. We chat amicably about motorcycles and weather and road conditions and rain and my eventual destination which he is astounded to find is Hawaii, by way of California.....and then, out of the clear blue conversation he pauses, takes a deep breath and tells me that his son moved to San Francisco a year ago. To stay. So that he could become a dancer. He is studying the ground as he relates this to me. The way he said "dancer" leaves no doubt about his feelings on this sub-

ject. His voice is a study in uninflected monotone roiling with intent.

It occurs to me he is tossing this bit of info out into what must seem like unsullied and acceptable waters. Obviously he is casting for a sympathetic ear. It is a moment of some gravity and I too study the ground for whatever enlightenment it can share. My momma tried to teach me to hold my stupid tongue if I did not have any idea of what I wanted to say, my dad tried to teach me remain silent and not to be a total ass unless it were absolutely necessary. These two bits of imparted wisdom are living side-by-side in me at that moment. And it is a long moment, for sure.

In this setting, in this lifestyle, I cannot imagine that the son in question has gained the reputation as a stalwart pioneer heading out to find his fortune. And, most assuredly, the townsfolk have cast plenty of quiet innuendo in the air of this man's passing steps. The son's sins falling squarely upon the

fooling at the Fort Wallace museum, KS



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father's shoulders, as it were. The gentleman's tongue-in-cheek unburdening has left me feeling like giving him a hug, but I cannot imagine that would help his continued existence within this particular community. His is a burden of circumstance and location, but he carries it nonetheless. I finally offer that San Francisco is a large and accepting city with plenty of opportunity; it is a good place to try to start a new life. He gave me a sidelong glance and maybe just a hint of a smile, stood, thanked me for my time, wished me well and shook my hand before he ambled off with time worn dignity.

A lot of prisons do not have bars made of metal.

Back on the road the country is becoming more and more rural, if that is possible. It is probably the result of larger and larger corporate farms. Bigger plots of land equal fewer towns and houses. Alfalfa seems to be the main crop for the last few hours, and pronghorn antelope seem to enjoy the fledgling crops. A trio of these bouncy herbivores damn near vies for hood ornament status, but something about their demeanor warned me to cover the brakes and I did not quite have to smoke the front tire to avoid them. I have seen about 4 cars

in the last hour, and no townships at all. This would be a great place to bleed to death. I must remember not to become mortally wounded by one of these jaywalking quadrupeds.

Somewhere along in the afternoon, pretty much out in the middle of nowhere, I find the Fort Wallace Museum. Old west Army lore and trains and wagons and picks and rifles and.....lotsa stuff, all being under the care of a single snoozing docent.

Well.....I pop a \$5 bill into a jar labeled HELP FUND THE FT. WALLACE MUSEUM, and, having eased my conscience, set about ducking under every DO NOT ENTER EXHIBIT sign I can find. This may sound disrespectful and hooligan-like, but would you rather I woke a decent man from his afternoon slumber? Shame on you!

End of day finds me just 10 miles shy of the state of Colorado. Tribune, Ks (birthplace of Horace Greely, He being the author of the memorable quote, "Go west, young man") lies about 20 minutes behind me, and I spied a dirt road running off into some low hills. There is

a stream following that road, and a hard-to-read and faded sign tells me that 5 miles along is some sort of state preserve area. "Overnighting allowed". It may be non English, but it sounds like camp material to me. After only 7 miles I find the "preserve". Preserve is the obviously the local euphemism for designated-and-ignored. The road turns into battered down weeds and occasional ruts. I have stayed near the flowing stream and found a secluded copse of woods surrounding a slight rising meadow that will keep me in some breeze should it remain warm, and out of any running water should it not remain dry.

Dinner is string cheese, nuts, sliced zucchini, and oranges all washed down with some warm water and..... (How did that get in there?).....a wee bit of Johnny Walker.

Night all.

Hoosier Beemer Rally

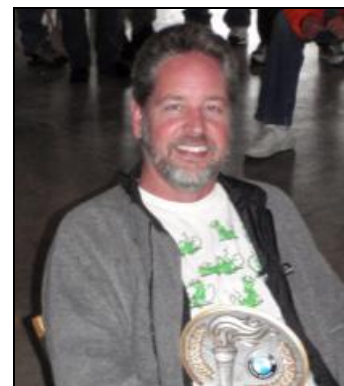
Photography and text By Lynn Montgomery



Even though it rained on and off both Friday and Saturday, 98 people registered for the Hoosier Beemer Rally.

The Bluegrass Beemers were represented by English Dave, Steve Little, Kelly Ramsey, Mark Michael and Ray and Lynn Montgomery.

Kelly took Best of Show in the bike show with his red /6.



Kelly Ramsey took Best of Show with his R90/6.



Right: English Dave, Steve Little, and Kelly Ramsey prepare to hit the road.



ANNUAL MILEAGE CONTEST

Stop into *The KICKSTAND* before October 31st to have your odometer read, then return next October to have it verified again. The three people who have ridden the most miles during that one year period will receive 1st, 2nd & 3rd place trophies from *The KICKSTAND*. Their names will also be engraved on the Annual Mileage Contest Winners plaque on display in the store. The other riders who start and finish the contest will be included in a drawing for a \$50 gift certificate. If you signed up last October, come back to close out the 2011 riding season and re-enter in next year's contest. The winners will be contacted by phone before Thanksgiving.



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