

January 2012

Apex

Looking Through The Curve

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



Kansas

2012 Rally Update

By Lee Thompson, *President*

On Saturday December 3rd our first Rally meeting was held with about seventeen members attending. A great start to another successful event!

I know you join me in thanking our 2012 Rally Leadership below. As we proceed into the new year, there will be opportunities to serve in the many areas noted. I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting. Thanks to Paul Elwyn for recording our meeting notes.

Lee



Essential Tasks

1. Campground contract, 1 year recommended as opposed to 5-year contract as in past, \$250 per year
2. AMA Charter, event sanction, insurance, MOA & RA Charters, advertising
3. Patches
4. Awards
5. Door Prizes
6. Food Vendor
7. Registration forms
8. Porta Potties
9. Soliciting Rally volunteers

Leadership

- **John Rice** agreed to serve as Rally Chairman for 2012
- **Raymond Montgomery and Mitch Butler** offered to oversee door prizes for 2012.
- **Roy Rowlett** agreed to serve as Treasurer and to handle registrations, advertising. Current Rally Fund balance, \$900.
- **Steve Little** volunteered to serve as Rally On-Site Coordinator responsible for arranging a rally work schedule and recruiting volunteers to take care of tasks necessary during the run of the rally, including site setup and teardown, registration, coffee, etc., trash cleanup, and other tasks during the rally. Steve will be looking for volunteers in advance and will welcome volunteers during the rally.
- **Jeff Crabb** offered to set up a forwarding email account for the rally.
- **Ray Brooks** offered to coordinate Awards.

The Rally Team will meet on the first Saturday of every month following breakfast at Frisch's,

meeting to convene at approximately 8 am.

Information regarding rally planning will be conveyed via email and Apex. Anyone wishing to attend a rally team meeting is welcome. Volunteers are invited to assist with essential tasks already identified or with ideas/tasks not already discussed.

**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.

Counting blessings, watching the weather



Two years ago we were greeted with a light snow on a Saturday in December, as captured in the photo above which I placed on the January 2010 cover of *Apex*.

At the risk of jinxing us I say we have been blessed this winter thus far with mild weather and merely an occasional flurry of snow, not that snow in itself prevents us from riding, as the above photo of David Griffiths' bike illustrates.

But along with the snow we generally also face salty roads and a season that teases us with a mild afternoon followed by cruel cold that discourages all but the most determined riders

from saddling up.

So any day that offers a little sunshine and temperatures above freezing is a treat, and we should do all that we can to take advantage of the opportunity.

I optimistically say on this December 31st writing following four hours of pleasant riding in friendly sunshine that we likely have about 10 weeks of grim weather ahead of us, but maybe not. I can recall some exceptionally pleasant riding weather in January and February of years past, although I also can recall some brutal March and dreary April weather. But let's be optimistic and say we have 10 weeks to endure.

Thankfully, Saturday break-

fast gatherings at Frisch's continue regardless of the weather, and we generally can count on one person riding, maybe two, when the weather is very bad.

But breakfast with 15 to 20 like-minded souls is uplifting as we share mutual interests and look forward to friendlier weather.

The older I get the more I appreciate the everyday blessings of being able to climb out of bed without assistance, being able to putter in the garage and contemplate the next acquisition, that perfect motorcycle project. Notice that I say "contemplate," a purchase.

Sometimes I wish I were 40 years younger, but for the most part I simply am happy to be as old as I am and still vertical during the day and able to more or less physically do what I want to do. I remember many no longer able to do so.

As we confront winter 2012, let's count our blessings, and, who knows, maybe next weekend will deliver another winter day with mid-50's temperatures and dry pavement as we experienced on December 31st.

Let's take whatever we are offered and look down the road toward that next long ride.

—Paul

Saturday at Frisch's



Saturday at Frisch's





To Pike's Peak or...Battery Row Part 3

By John Rice



Yes, most of Kansas looks just like this.

When last we saw our anti-quoted adventurers, they had left the mountains behind and were communing with the farmers and a dog at a small town restaurant.

Headed into the morning sun, leaving Colorado behind and shedding altitude like a starlet's clothes, gaining heat like a politicians campaign funds, we crossed the state line into Kansas at Saunders on Route 160.

Accounts such as this often talk about "The two-lane road stretched out in front of us in what appeared to be an endless ribbon through an unchanging landscape" but there's a good reason for that...it does.

On both sides as far as vision would allow were endless fields of low sage and sparse grass and not much else. A constant wind came up from the south, which in our part of the world, here in Kentucky, predicts an oncoming storm. Here though, it's just The Wind and apparently it never ceases. One can obtain a considerable lean angle here without a curve in sight. The only break in the landscape is the occasional monster irrigation rig, looking like something from a science fiction movie, advancing on the unsuspecting occupants of a farmhouse. We stopped to inspect one enormous spindly rig parked near the shoulder and later learned that some of these contraptions can be a half mile long describing a three mile circle in a field. The temperature shown on

the GS thermometer quickly climbed into the 90's with the sun still morning-low in the empty blue sky. The drought seems to have gripped most of the Midwest and people told us they have not seen temperatures or dry weather like this in their long memories.

As we rode past endless dry fields, the corn that should have been as high as an elephant's eye was more on the visual level of a Labrador retriever. We did notice strips of green grass for about three or four feet on either side of the pavement. I can only assume that this comes from water running off the highway on the rare occasions when it does rain.

We passed a pasture where all of the cows but one were out in the middle of the field eating what sparse vegetation was available. One black cow had wandered over to the fence and craned her neck through the

wire eating the green grass along the side of the road. Like BMW riders, a perfect example of leaving the herd for better advantage.

The bikes needed fuel again near Ulysses (aptly named for travelers in the midst of what seemed an endless journey on open seas). At the station, the friendly proprietor, who seemed to be channeling the actor Broderick Crawford, advised that 160 was not the way to go since it made so many north/south right angle jogs to go around farm sections that it would add another two hours to our trip. Since by this time the temperature had climbed over 100, we elected to take his suggestion and deviate up to Route 400 even though it took us through Dodge City and Wichita. We later realized that for him in an air conditioned pickup, traffic delays were not much as a problem. We burned

To Pike's Peak or...Battery Row Part 3

By John Rice



Picture Marshall Dillon out here in the street.

(literally) across Kansas, at 80 mph except when often stopped at apparently random road construction sites where the flag person, baking in the sun in shorts and a t-shirt, stared with sympathy at us in our riding gear.

Dodge City sprung up out of the prairie rather suddenly. I'd come through here in '84 as well, and this hadn't changed much. As then, I pondered the old Western movies where the Sheriff chased the bad guys up into the mountains and wondered just where the city fathers had found to store those hills, since they clearly weren't here now. From what I could see, the Marshall could've just sat on his horse and watched the miscreants recede into the distance with not much to block his view. We found lunch, a forgettable affair in a non-descript faux Italian restaurant on the main drag (where's Miss Kitty and the Long Branch when you need them?) and perused through the fence, the replicated Main Street store-

fronts.

Wichita arrived about 4 PM. I recall going through the heart of town more than a quarter century ago, with little traffic, but that was not to be this time. The highway now is elevated above the surface streets, five lanes wide and on this occasion, nearly at a standstill. We crept along, now at 107 degrees, engines complaining of the heat, for miles past second story windows until finally we hit the gas station that marked the end of the urban sprawl. A fill up for the bikes and ourselves, and then as if the city had been only an illusion we were back out in open country again. Now the landscape was changing a bit, some low hills appearing here and there off to the sides, but the oppressive temperature remained constant.

By early evening we were wilted. There are few small towns in this part of Eastern Kansas and none of them have any place to stay or eat. On our left came and went the village of Neodesha, where my father

lived from shortly after his birth in 1905 until the family moved back to Kentucky when he was 12. His father was a Magoffin county farm boy with a wanderlust that seems to have passed through to my generation. My grandfather, Halleck Rice, took his bride west in search of adventure and work, establishing a sod home near LaHarp, Kansas (one digs out a square hole in the earth and uses the blocks of sod removed to build walls around the cavity to make the house) where my father was born. They moved to Neodesha, the "big" town nearby, to find work to support the new family, and if Halleck hadn't become ill and needed to come home to the Kentucky hills, I might have started this journey from here. The town has, I'm sure, changed a lot in the ensuing century, but one thing it didn't add was lodging and restaurants, so we pressed on, finally arriving into Missouri outside of Joplin as it was getting dark.

We rode slowly through a tornado-ravaged portion of Joplin in the fading light. News reports had often said "the town

looked like a war zone." Jay, who has seen war zones up close, said this one looked pretty bad. We humans have learned a lot about causing destruction, since picking up that first club a few millennia ago, but when it comes to really wreaking havoc, nature is still the champ.

Our usual pattern is to find a "mom'n pop" motel and a local restaurant, but this long after dark we were only too willing to go for a Day's Inn with an Olive Garden across the street. Food and shelter trumped authenticity and atmosphere.

The next morning Jay's bike wouldn't start again, the battery completely dead. We pushed down the parking lot of the motel (we're pretty good at this by now) and got underway to find breakfast somewhere in western Missouri with the proviso that we could only stop places that had long downhills in front of them. After our Kansas experience, hills and curves were high on our priority list so down route 37 we went without any really good idea of where it might take us. There were trees, cool valleys

To Pike's Peak or...Battery Row Part 3

By John Rice



Bulwinkle's lodge, after the split-up with Rocky, when the show business thing didn't work out.

and sunlit hilltops and a road that disappeared to the right or left not too far in front of us, so that was good enough. Near the town of Monett a restaurant came into view with a covered porch and a raised parking lot next door (though the lot was for the Sheriff's office, we discovered) which met all our immediate needs. Over wonderful pancakes, we pondered the map and determined that a course through the Mark Twain National Forest with a dip down into Arkansas seemed promising. Route 86 was all

ours this clear, cool morning,

We stopped for a pie break about 10:00 at Hog Heaven (a barbeque restaurant, not a Harley shop) somewhere in the middle of the Missouri Ozarks but Jay's battery had not miraculously healed itself. The voltmeter we had purchased along with one of the several batteries showed the charging system apparently working just as it was supposed to, leading to impressive mental gymnastics as we tried valiantly to shoehorn the facts in front of us into some kind of plausible

theory to explain them. We had a bike that was working properly when we left Kentucky.

The alternator died in Missouri, leading to a dead battery. We purchased another battery, two, actually, and got the bike to Kansas City where the rotor was replaced and off we went with everything apparently working properly for two days. Then that battery died without warning and we replaced it, thinking that it just couldn't handle the stress we'd placed upon it. Everything worked properly for another two days,

until the new one died, in just the same manner, working one minute, not working the next.

We noticed what appeared to be a mist of corrosion along the back of the bike and assumed that the charging system was now overcharging, so along with the battery, we replaced the voltage regulator and voila! it worked again, flawlessly, for two day, and now it's dead again and the charging system seems to be working properly.

Over marvelous cream pies we debated the various possibilities, up to and including

To Pike's Peak or...Battery Row Part 3

By John Rice

alien possession, without good result. As is the mantra on all bike trips, the only thing to do was Press On Regardless.

We crossed the state line and found ourselves on Arkansas Route 14 which turned out to be one of the best riding roads of the trip with long sweeping curves going up and down the Ozark hills. I can't call them mountains anymore compared to Colorado. Fourteen finally came to an end, but the Ozarks didn't. We continued on hilly curvy roads, more so than we had seen in parts of Colorado

actually, until that evening when we found ourselves near Popular Bluff. Again we thought this town would have a variety of smaller motels but again we were wrong. We finally found lodging at Bullwinkle's Rustic Lodge about 7 miles out of town.

It met our requirements of having an outside entrance, relatively cheap and a restaurant nearby. We quickly dismantled Jay's bike again, hoping the problem would somehow leap out of a box to reveal itself, but of course, it didn't.

As dark approached we buttoned up the Mystic again and went to the restaurant which was in the parking lot of the motel. This was, not surprisingly, Bullwinkle's Bar & Grill, a relatively new looking place on the outside, but when we walked in we stepped back 20 years. The music was all from the 80's and very, very loud. Although it wasn't terribly crowded, it seemed that every adult in the place except us was smoking at least one cigarette. There were only two food items on the menu, barbecue & pizza.

I had the former and Jay had the latter. We managed to get our meals and beer to go but by the time we left after only a short stay both of us reeked like old ashtrays.

The next morning we pushed Jay's bike again and rode to Dexter, Missouri where we located the only auto parts store open on Sunday with yet another battery. (for those of you keeping score at home, that's four.) As before, this worked its miracle and all was normal. From Dexter to the Kentucky border we opted for



Old man looking intently at something that isn't the problem.

To Pike's Peak or...Battery Row Part 3

By John Rice

the four lane, but found that the bridge across the river was closed forcing a circuitous detour to get into our home state. As we approached the only working bridge we came up behind a rider on a BMW sidecar rig. He pulled over to check his map and we pulled over to check out his bike. He was a fellow about our age who said he was due to compete in a shooting match in Wickliffe, Kentucky in about one hour and was trying to find a way into the state. He carried his competition rifles and equipment in the sidecar.

From Wickliffe the roads up to Paducah were the same ones taken on the Lap of Kentucky the year before on the Yamaha 250. As then, Paducah doesn't seem to have an early-Sunday-morning restaurant selection, so we kept on going, stomachs growling, up Route 60 until by about 2:00 PM we found Marion, Kentucky and the Marion Café. The main restaurant portion was jammed with after-church diners and there was lively conversation going on all around us. On the other side of the building was a perfectly restored store front soda fountain from the 1800's. The proprietor told us that the local groups sometimes reserve the room for meetings.

Leaving Marion far too well fed, we continued on back roads north, not quite ready to go home yet. Jay had on an earlier trip found the Judge Joseph Holt Mansion restoration project near Owensboro.. Judge Holt was the Judge Advocate General under President Lincoln and is the man who prosecuted the conspirators involved in the assassination. A plaque at the restoration site told us that he had come to Kentucky to practice law but



The Marion Café

left while still a young man and moved to Mississippi. He must have found something lucrative to do there, because by the age of 35 he had retired and come back to Northern Kentucky to

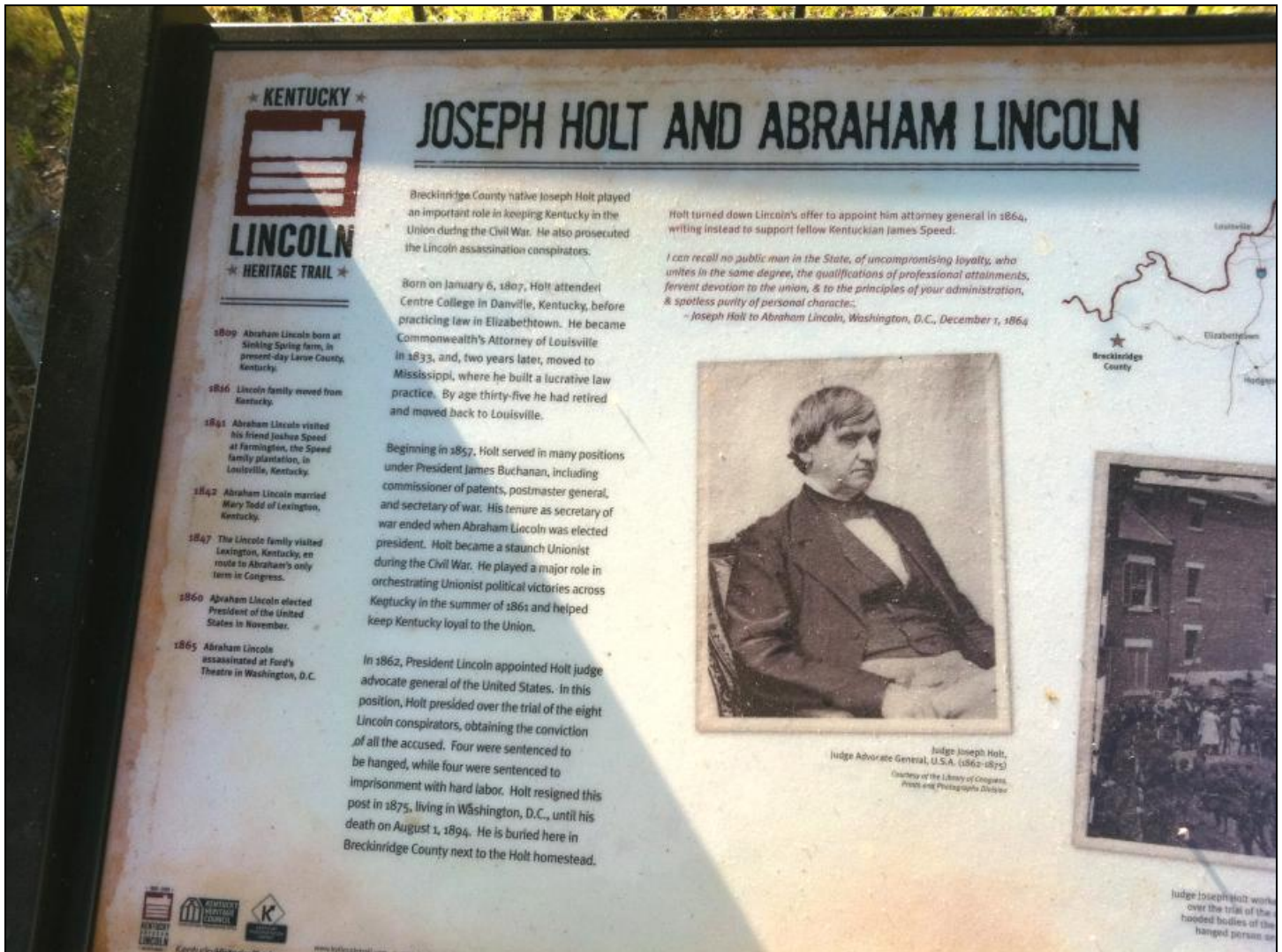
build his mansion. He remained a prominent figure however and it was later that Lincoln tapped him to be the Judge Advocate General for the US. The mansion looks like it has a lot of

restoration to go.

Back home the next day, I was putting things away when Jay called from Elizabethtown. He had taken our last battery to the local franchise of the auto

To Pike's Peak or...Battery Row Part 3

By John Rice



parts store for an exchange and when he put it on the counter, the parts guy immediately spotted the problem that had eluded us and every other person that had been involved for the last 10 days. There was a tiny hole in the back of the battery case, no bigger than the head of a ball point pen that had let the vital acid leak out.

When he said that, my mind flashed back to the side of a road in Kansas and our first change-out. The Mystic, like many airheads, had a battery box that had been modified to accept the ever-so-slightly

longer lawn tractor batteries that are available (as we had proven) nearly anywhere. That modification requires only shaving off the little lip at the back of the box. The battery is then held in place by the rubber straps of the stock mounting and, if desired, some other form of strap placed around the box. In this case, the auxiliary strap had been a large cable tie. We'd pushed that tie down to get the battery out and in our haste to get it done on the side of the road, hadn't pulled it back up. I could see it in my mind's eye. On most of the

airheads, like my own PD, the battery can slide back only a fraction of an inch before it hits the rear fender, so the consequences of it being a bit loose in the rubber straps isn't critical....but not the Mystic. It's rear fender ends above the box and there is only a thin flexible material shroud there to keep spray off the battery. This errant box of volts had slid back, put pressure on the shroud and allowed the rear tire to wear through the material until it made the tiny orifice in the bottom, invisible unless one turned the battery over. It took about

two days' worth of mileage to complete the hole, letting the acid out and killing the battery.

It was simple friction, a mechanical problem having nothing to do with the charging system or even alien possession. I did rather enjoy that latter prospect however.

—John

**We're here to help
make 2012 your best
riding year yet!**

RETAIL



Happy New Year!



RALLIES

RIDES



The KICKSTAND

Your Motorcycle Parts & Accessories Destination

500 East Main Street - Burgin, KY 40310

Phone: 859.748.KICK

www.TheKickstandLLC.com

Hours: Tuesday – Friday 10 – 6 / Saturday 9 – 3
Closed Sunday & Monday

BMW Motorrad
USA

Authorized
Dealer



BMW MOTORCYCLES OF LOUISVILLE

BMWLOUISVILLE.COM



In light of the Sherman Minton Bridge being closed indefinitely, we are offering
FREE SHIPPING
when you call in a parts or apparel order!
Avoid "Shermageddon" and CALL TODAY!

**CALL TODAY FOR MOST CURRENT
BMW MOTORCYCLE INCENTIVES**

FREE PICKUP AND DELIVERY AVAILABLE*

MILITARY DISCOUNTS HONORED*

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

**1700 ARTHUR STREET
LOUISVILLE, KY 40208**

502.634.1340

*Contact us for more details.

