

October 2012

# Apex

*Looking Through The Curve*

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



# Rally Recap

By Ray Brooks, *president*



Ray Brooks

**I** am pleased to report that our 19<sup>th</sup> annual rally was a huge success.

Total registered attendance at this year's event was 104. We had many returning folks who personally told me that they look forward to our rally every year and mark their calendars for the next one. We also had quite a few first timers visiting our rally who were very pleased and indicated that would like to return. These types of reactions from our guests are attributable to the planning, organizing and execution provided by our club members.

After 19 years, I believe you've got it down. Your participation and enthusiasm for

this event does not go unnoticed. Thank you.

We took a slightly different approach to this year's rally. Forever we have pretty much relied on Roy to carry the torch. Roy has always been passionate about our rally and has worked so hard for so many years. We owe him a lot.

This year we made a concerted effort to spread responsibilities. Our members were quick to step up to the plate.

John Rice volunteered to be our Rally Chairman this year. In addition to overall planning and coordinating, John secured our rally site, our food vendor Proud Mary Concessions, our portable toilet supplier, and our legal and insurance requirements.

Steve Little served as our on-site representative, coordinator for volunteer services, Sergeant-At-Arms, and awards program emcee.

Ray Montgomery was our man for getting the prizes from various vendors for our drawings.

Roy Rowlett got the embroidered bags that we gave away in the Special Awards categories.

Lowell Roark organized and led the 125 mile Lunch Ride on Saturday.

These are your core group of leaders who made it happen. Behind these folks, there are a lot of others in the trenches who worked tirelessly setting up the site, making coffee, getting supplies, emptying trash, and just doing whatever needed to be done. We are very grateful. We give a special thanks to our volunteers who prepared registration materials, staffed our registration table, collected money, and worked hard in many other areas.

Brenda Rice, P. J. Stewart, Mary Baugh --- thank you so very much.

## Door Prize Donors

I want express our appreciation to those who generously donated prizes for this year's drawings. We had so many nice prizes to give away.

- BMW Louisville (Brett Moxley and Dwayne Mulkey)
- The Kickstand (Ray and Lynn Montgomery)
- I-75 Yamaha (Mitch Butler)
- Bob's BMW
- Phillip and Mary Baugh
- Kelly Ramsey
- Mark Michael
- Bill Denzer (Airheads Club)

To our members who attended, thank you for participating. To our members who were unable to attend, we hope you will come next year and join this very fun event.

Here are links for some Rally pictures.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/66473136@N03/sets/72157631500210232/>

<http://s57.photobucket.com/albums/g209/Arby60/2012Rally/>

—Ray

## Volunteers

At the risk of overlooking someone, we want to recognize the following people who assisted with this year's rally:

Steve Little, Kelly Ramsey, Roy Rowlett, John, Brenda, and Ian Rice, Jay Smythe, P.J. and Joe Stewart, Hubert Burton, Mary and Philip Baugh, Jerry O'Brien, David Griffiths, Ray Brooks, Tom Weber, Ken Perry, Jim Brandon, Tom Rich, Lowell Roark, Jeff Crabb, Roger Trent, Jim Kouns, Paul Elwyn, Ben Prewitt, Ray Montgomery, and Mitch Butler. Dwayne Mulkey of BMW Motorcycles of Louisville was on hand at the rally to share information regarding BMW products and services—

—Editor



## Rally another success thanks to club as a whole, Rally Committee, usual crew of unsung heroes, and Roy at center of crew

**T**he 2012 Rally was, from all appearances, another success.

We had 104 attendees, per last count, and very few complaints. The weather, after a bit of unpleasant wetness and wind Friday evening, was excellent on Saturday.

Though I was nominally the Chairman, I take no credit for the success. That credit belongs to the club as a whole, the Rally committee and particularly



to the usual crew of reliable unsung heroes who do the majority of the hard work getting it set up on Thursday, keeping it running all weekend and tearing it down on Sunday. And of course, to Roy, the center of that crew.

Without them, we'd all have been standing out in an open field.

—John



***Apex* is the official newsletter of Bluegrass Beemers, Inc.  
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, 7-9:00 a.m.**

# Rally 2012: Roy's Day Off



**W**ell, the volunteers did it.

They managed to put on another rally, our 19th, with only minor hitches. I personally thank they did a very admirable job.

The setup on Thursday, 9/6/2012, was well manned and we got it all together without much ado. By about 1:00 o'clock, everything was up and ready.

We left the coffee pots till Friday because the picnic tables hadn't been brought down yet. Joe Stewart and I moved one of the door prize tables to that end and sat up the 30 cup percolator, so the 6 or 7 attendees and ourselves could have coffee on Friday morning.

After the setup on Thursday, I drove my pickup home and picked up my LT so I could do some riding at the rally, a first for me since the inception of the rally.

Turns out I got in a nice short ride Friday evening, and a very nice ride on Saturday right after lunch. P.J. Stewart and I rode back to Lexington to pick up my truck so I would have it for the takedown and haul away on Sunday.

The attendance was amazing considering the weather fore-

cast and the rain and wind we got on Friday night and early Saturday morning. We had a total official attendance of 104, a number about our average for the last several rallies.

The food vendors did a good job, and I didn't hear complaints about them. They set up on Friday just before noon and

sold sandwiches and drinks. I personally thought they left a bit too early that afternoon. Several riders came looking for supper and they had already gone. They said they needed to get back to their kitchen to prepare for breakfast on Saturday. The biscuit, gravy, eggs and sausage breakfast was very

good. They got a bit carried away with the portions at first and ran out of gravy, and then biscuits, before everyone got fed. The supper meal was very good also. I had a pulled pork sandwich with baked beans and potato salad and cake for dessert.

The coffee pots were well manned this year with only one slight hiccup on Saturday night. It seems I forgot to cover the electric distribution box at the hookup and it got water in it and toasted one of the outlets and phases inside. John Rice managed to note the coffee pots being off and quickly moved our power cord to an operational outlet and saved the day.

Thanks to everyone who worked and supported the rally this year. I think it might just have been MY most enjoyable one. I suppose because someone else was bearing the burdens and headaches.

—Roy

## Treasurer's Report

**The rally fund started the year with \$807.64. The current balance is \$1089.94. We made a nice profit this year. —Roy**

### **Our expenses were as follows:**

Rally Sanction Fee \$50.00  
Rally Insurance \$254.00  
Awards \$105.20  
Consumables (coffee etc) \$38.00  
Parts for electric box \$45.00  
Porta Potties \$550.00  
Campground \$250.00  
Food vendor \$1110.00  
**Total \$2402.20**

### **Income was as follows:**

50/50 Drawing \$95.00  
Jacket Raffle \$88.00  
Gate \$2466.00  
Donations \$40.00  
**Total \$2689.00**





# Beemers in the Bluegrass Rally draws over 100 registrants despite soggy start



Ken Perry, Ray Brooks, and Lowell Roark (ride leader) prepare to embark on the Saturday lunch ride.

**D**espite a soggy start on Friday and early Saturday, 104 people registered for this year's Beemers in the Bluegrass Rally.

When Roy Rowlett retired as rally chairman after chairing the annual event for 18 years, club members organized to continue Beemers in the Bluegrass, managing with Roy in an advisory role to move forward with more club members undertaking responsibilities.

John Rice chaired this year's event assisted by Raymond Montgomery and Mitch Butler

handling door prizes, Steve Little soliciting volunteers, and Roy Rowlett serving as treasurer and advisor.

About 15 people assisted with setup and teardown, and members in general looked after trash, coffee making, and registration duties.

On Sunday morning I asked Roy if he felt good about everything, and he responded with a wide grin, very positive review, and a note that he was able to enjoy two rides on his LT over the weekend.

Congratulations, Bluegrass Beemers, for following through with our signature event.

—PE



Joe Stewart and Jeff Crabb were among 15 people who assisted with breaking camp on Sunday morning.



# Beemers in the Bluegrass Rally draws over 100 registrants despite soggy start



Tom Rich departs for the Saturday lunch ride.



Preparing for the Saturday lunch ride was Ken Alley of Ft. Wayne, IN who was thoroughly enjoying his first BMW rally on his first BMW motorcycle, a 2012 R1200RT.





# Beemers in the Bluegrass Rally draws over 100 registrants despite soggy start

Winning the Oldest BMW award was Jim Klauck of Lagrange, KY with his freshly restored 1954 R51/3 sporting a rare 6-gallon Hoeske fuel tank.



Steve Little and Matt Gafney check out the 1954 R51/3, oldest BMW at the rally.



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Retired BMW dealer and MOA Ambassador Joe Katz of Florida checks out this R69S that has travelled 124,000 miles.



Mark Rense poses with his 2012 F800GS showing less than 500 miles since delivery on Wednesday prior to the rally. Mark was sold on the 800GS he rented in Switzerland.



John and Karla Barnes cruised the rally in their Mercedes convertible.

John Rice takes time from rally responsibilities to correct a slipped exhaust sleeve on his 1993 R100GSPD.



Mark Rense (left) talks with Minor Noe, Jeff Crabb, Philip Baugh, and Joe Stewart about his new F800GS.



## Lunch ride to Sunset Grill provides Saturday entertainment

By Lowell Roark



Bluegrass Beemers President Ray Brooks, Tom Rich, and Ken Perry paused for a photo prior to the Lunch Ride.

**D**espite the rain overnight and a wet Saturday morning, the lunch ride left the rally almost on time, just a few minutes late.

The sky was clearing and six of us headed north on US 421 and enjoyed a great ride to Bedford and took US 42 to Carrollton and upriver to Sunset Grill just before Warsaw, Ky.

Sunset Grill is a popular biker spot on the Ohio river. We had a really good lunch outside on the deck with lots of fun and conversation.

After lunch we rode up river 7 miles and stopped at the historic site of the catastrophic steamboat collision in 1866.

The site is at the intersection of US 42 and US 127 and we took US 127 south to Owenton



Lowell saddled up for the Lunch Ride

where we stopped for necessities before continuing on south back to the rally.

The route was 125 miles and the roads were in great shape.

A good time was had by all.

—Lowell

## Bluegrass Beemer to celebrate Grand Riders movie premier

# On the Road Again

By Lowell Roark

**I**saw the article in the July issue of AMA magazine about Mr. Peter Starr and his experience with the Grand Riders of Taiwan.

A group of 80 something (age) men were disenchanted with their place in life and decided to do something about it, ride motorcycles. They prepared themselves and their motorcycles and

went riding around the island of Taiwan. They eventually formed the group known as “the Grand Riders” and now the ride they do is an organized annual event.

Mr. Starr (director of the classic motorcycle movie “Take it to the Limit”) went to Taiwan in October 2011 and rode with them on their annual tour. He promised to bring 10 Americans, age 60 plus, this year to ride with them.

I am very fortunate to be one of the 10 riders to ride with them and to celebrate the world premier of the movie they have made about the Grand Riders.

We will be hosted by the Hondao Foundation, a charitable foundation that helps old people live their dreams, and be provided with 300 cc SYM scooters to tour the island for 8 days.

We will be staying in 4 -5 star hotels and resorts while we are there. I am looking forward to the experience with excitement and I will try to take pictures and write something for the *Apex* about the trip.

If you haven't seen the video clip that started the whole thing go to: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=vksdbsvam6g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vksdbsvam6g)







## More rally images By Mark Rense





# Go west Old Man, Redux Part 3

Words and photos by John Rice



An ignominious perch for a BMW

*We last left our Intrepid Traveler waiting for a tow truck in Flag Ranch Wyoming.*

**A**bout 4:30, the truck arrives.

It's a roll back flatbed, seeming somewhat overkill for just one motorcycle, with driver Abad, a young man who has just driven 368 miles to get here and now must return the same way without a break. I'm glad it's him driving and not me.

We load up the bike and pile my stuff in the cab, which is barely large enough to hold it and us, then head out. I get my tourist's view of the Tetons from the cab of this diesel truck rather than the saddle of my bike, as I'd planned.

We drone on into the night, stopping only for fuel and a quick taco dinner at a roadside place, arriving at the Salt Lake BMW dealership just before midnight. We get the bike ensconced behind the dealer's

garage and Abad, clearly tired and running only on a combination of youthful stamina and energy drinks, drops me off at the nearest motel with a vacancy.

Less than 5 hours after hitting the bed, I'm up and getting ready to leave, catching a cab back to the dealer to be there as they open.

It's a multi-line dealership, with BMW in one building, Triumph in another across the parking lot and in a third, Ve-

spa. The shop, located behind the Triumph portion, is extremely busy, with bikes lined up for service. Oddly enough, the one in line directly ahead of me is another R1200GS from the Louisville dealership, a couple out here on vacation who apparently make this place a regular service stop.

The service manager, Andy, says he'll work me in, telling me his regular customers will always be willing to wait for someone who's broken down on



## Go west Old Man, Redux



**Salt Lake BMW dealership**

the road. I appreciate that! While I'm here, the bike is due for its 24,000 mile service, so I throw that in as well.

Andy tells me that the combination of the service and the battery will run me about \$800. It's not like I've got a whole lot of bargaining room. This juxtaposition of events is, however, making me a lot more inclined to go back to airheads again. This GS is, without question, the best overall motorcycle I've ever owned. Its virtues are legion, with handling, power, brakes, smoothness, all to a degree never imagined in the halcyon days of airhead technology.

But here in the twilight years of my motorcycling, I'm not sure I can justify the cost, both financial and psychological. I'm probably just out of my league. I've decided that owning this GS is like being in a relationship with someone brilliant, physically gifted but deeply flawed.

When it's "on" it is capable of such amazing feats, things that astound me and which I know I'd miss terribly if it wasn't around. I'd always, despite my

best efforts, compare anything that came after to this phenomenal experience. But I have learned not to depend on it, that it's capable of disappointing me deeply and at the worst times, without rhyme or reason and worst of all, completely unpredictably. You're all dressed up to go to the party for a long awaited event and it shows up an hour late and drunk, having lost the tickets.

The airheads are the boring ones, the steady plodders, the ones that no one picks for the prom date, but everyone calls on when the car won't start, the fridge has quit or it's midnight and you need a favor bad. They just keep on keeping on, getting little respect, but deeply loved by the ones who finally have had their flings with the flash and come back to steady. Sure, they do get sick every once in a while or fall down and break their leg, but even then, they'll get up, with a band aid or two, and take you home.

Back on the road again at 3:30, I ponder my former plan against current reality. I had hoped to come out of Yellowstone, cruise through the Tetons

and make my way down to Moab and Arches National Park. But the two days I'd allotted for that had just evaporated with me sitting immobile in one waiting place or another. Even long trips have time constraints, and if I still want to get to the coast and then north, I must start heading northwest and not southeast. I backtrack up the road I've just come down in the truck, but only make it as far as Ogden, Utah (birthplace of the Osmonds !) before it's time to find a room for the night.

There are two busses of Chinese tourists here in this cheap motel, filling the place up. I end up having a conversation of sorts with one, a lady who is trying to figure out the washing machine in the optimistically-named "guest laundry" where I'm cleaning my road clothes. Her English is minimal, but far better than my Chinese, and we manage to communicate. She's never used a washer like this one before and is very hesitant to make a mistake. I learn that she's been in the US before, but has come back with her husband and 12 year old son to expose them to our culture. Like parents everywhere, laments that the 12 year old is far more interested in computer video games than in learning anything about America.

Being familiar with young folks these days, I understand that perfectly. She comes from a province about 6 hours by train from Hong Kong, but tells me it takes longer by car since the speed limits in China are maxed out at 100 KMH or 62, MPH.

Then she asks me why I ride a motorcycle, since a car would be more comfortable and safer. When I tell her that it's because I enjoy it, I see the puzzlement in her eyes. I've only been on one organized tour and while it was convenient to have a guide that knew where to go and what to see, I recall the isolation Brenda and I felt compared to our usual go-where-we want style. We rarely talked with anyone in those countries who wasn't on the tour with us. I wondered if perhaps I was a rare contact with a "real person" for this lady from China.

August 2nd. I get on the road again, headed north still backtracking some of the road I came down in the truck, in order to avoid an interstate. It takes me up through the Logan Canyon in the Wasatch-Cache range, following the curves of the Logan River that made it, winding between high cliffs of stone.

The Soshoni Indians and their ancestors have lived in this area



**Cache Valley, Utah, formerly known as Willow Valley**



## Go west Old Man, Redux

for perhaps ten or twelve thousand years. When the Europeans arrived, the newcomers renamed this "Willow Valley" for "the only wood to be found was willow". Later, when the fur trade became popular in the early 1800's, trappers found this area a good place to cache furs until the yearly rendezvous when they could be sold. They would dig underground vaults, lined with rocks at the bottom and covered by a sod door and in these they would store their year's haul of furs for later pickup.

When fashions changed later in the 1800's, the trappers' business dried up suddenly, but by then they had nearly destroyed the beaver population for hundreds of miles along the Rockies. From their use of the area, it became known as Cache Valley. The shelf-like appearance of the valley walls is thought to represent the various levels of Lake Bonneville, the glacial "lake" or inland sea that once covered nearly all of what is now Utah from about 16,000 to 10,000 years ago. The walls of the Logan Canyon begin to soften into rounded hills as the road climbs to the summit overlooking Idaho. For reasons known only to DOT engineers, they have again covered a section several miles long with fine gravel, leaving large piles of the stuff in various pull-offs, just in case they need more. I need to pull over into one of the areas to let the cars I've just passed go by, so I'm not holding them up now with the dodgy traction to be had.

The bike is running marvelously, better than I can ever recall it. Perhaps having bro-

ken my trust, it's doing its best to prove to me that it is worthy again. OK, maybe I'll take you back. I realize that I've overreacted to its glitch, something that could and does happen with any modern machine depending on electronics, and that is the way of the new world. I've got to readjust my thinking for the current century.

At the top of Logan Canyon there is an information station with an overlook that allows a view down into Bear Lake, a large body of water that occupies most of the next valley's floor. While I'm standing there a man approaches and asks me in halting English if I speak French. Unfortunately, I don't but we manage a sort of conversation anyway, in which he tells me that he has a BMW motor-bike back home in France, along with a few assorted Japanese machines. He likes the Beemer best. He's been here about a month, traveling from Tennessee (where I think I gathered that his son lives) to Seattle and now back down to here. Most European countries routinely give employees a month vacation and many of them use it to travel. We really could learn a thing or two from our European neighbors! Before he left, he came back over to take my photo. Somewhere in France, the GS and I will be in his holiday album.

Once down in the valley by Bear Lake, the road stays out of the hills and meekly goes straight and flat down the valley floor. I make a stop in Paris, Idaho to mail some books I've acquired back home to Brenda and the postmistress advises me to go back a few blocks to the Paris Café. I take her advice and am rewarded with an excellent salad in a pleasant spot.

Not far up the road from Paris is Montpelier (yes, many of the trappers who settled here were

French) where highway 89 intersects with 30, the road that for a while follows the old Oregon Trail. There is an Oregon Trail Museum and Information center there, with a large drawing of Sasquatch at the end of the sign. Curious as to what connection there may be, I stop in. The whole upper floor of the center is devoted to Bigfoot lore, including the famous few seconds of movie film allegedly portraying the creature walking away and looking back at the camera. Apparently this area, along the Trail, is the hairy one's home territory and there are anecdotes along the walls telling of the Trail inhabitants various contacts and sightings. (I've since read that a certain portion of believers now search for the man-beast here in Kentucky.) Sorry, I'm still not convinced.

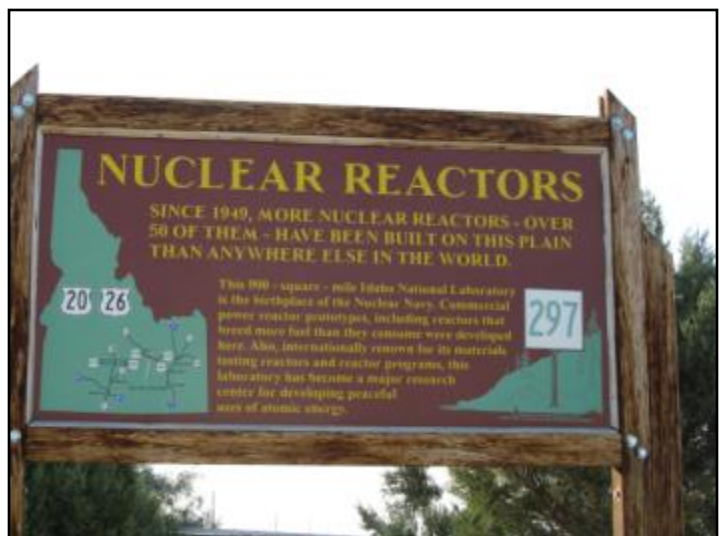
Route 30 soon intersects with the dreaded Interstate on which I must drone to Pocatello, Idaho where I find a cheap Motel 6 room for the night. There's a surprisingly good Mexican restaurant within walking distance, and across the street from that, an ice cream shop. All that and no sightings of Sasquatch, so life is pretty good.

Friday morning, I hit the highway just before the sun clears the hills and I watch it come up behind me in my mirror as I head northwest. My

route takes me across the Fort Hill Indian Reservation into the town of Blackfoot, home of the Idaho Potato Museum. Unfortunately, I'm here way too early for it to be open. A photo of the giant spud out front will have to do. I emailed the photo to a friend who replied, "Do they have couches there?" From there to Arco takes me across one of the most deserted roads I can recall. It's straight, flat and nothing but open plains as far as I can see, with no more than three or four other vehicles in the 53 miles. It's cold, 57 degrees, down from the 97 showing when I parked last night.

Breakfast in Arco is at Pickle's Place, a small green building with a smiling Mr. Pickle on the sign. There is a meeting of local motorcyclists, all on Harleys, in the back room. Though the whole place is smaller than the front room at Frisch's, there is Wi-Fi which allows me to read the Lexington paper from the internet and the smiling lady who runs the show brings me an excellent meal.

Arco's claim to fame (other than Pickle's Place) is that it is the first town to have its electric power supplied from atomic energy, beginning in 1955. The area around Arco was the place where many nuclear reactors were developed and produced. I kept a close





## Go west Old Man, Redux

eye out for mutant animals (Sasquatch? A product of radiation? Maybe....) but didn't spot any.

Not long after Arco is the Craters of the Moon National Monument, a preserved lava field from ancient eruptions through the Great Rift. I'd seen another lava field once in New Mexico and was quite impressed. This one is much larger and has the advantage of a park office with information. The park covers about 25 square miles (since President Clinton expanded the protected area) but the total lava flow covers more than 600 square miles. As I understand it, the initial eruption happened about 16 million years ago when magma forced its way through a rift in the earth (a rift volcano, as opposed to the more familiar cone-mountain), filling in the valley that is now the Snake River Plain. The magma flow from the inner layers of the earth is stationary, but the crust, the "solid ground" we live on, actually moves west at about

two inches per year (roughly the same rate as fingernails grow). As the crust slides over the magma fountain, the hot rock eventually finds another weak spot and pours through again. Thus the calderas, the areas of eruption, keep moving, relative to the land as we know it. The same process produces archipelago island chains, like Hawaii. Imagine punching a series of holes in a cardboard strip and then holding a toothpaste tube under it, squeezing the tube as you move the strip across it. We humans live on the strip.

Subsequent eruptions occurred about 10 million years ago, then again and again in no predictable pattern, with eight major flows within the last 15,000 years. The lava is, in places, as much as 4,000 feet deep. This last flow happened about 2000 years ago, meaning that there could have been humans in this area to see it. There may in fact be some humans under it. The caldera's march across the landscape has created the Snake River Plain, described as a great arc (like a giant grin) breaking up the otherwise mountainous terrain of Idaho. The current location of the hot spot (more accurately, the crust over it) is Yellowstone National Park. Some scientists



**In the Sawtooth Range, above Ketcham, Idaho**

predict that it will blow again sometime in the next 100,000 years.

Could be that long, or tomorrow. Plan your visit now. This flow here in the park is black, brittle rock that shows every characteristic of the flowing liquid it once was, the twists and roils presenting a frozen moment in time. It coils and piles on itself, exactly as you would expect if you slowly poured melted chocolate out of a pan onto a cool cookie sheet, letting it flow over itself as the first layers cool. I can only imagine what the early settlers in their wagons thought when they came across this obstacle in their path. In several places there are "spatter cones" which look like miniature volcanoes, 40 feet high instead of 4000. These are the last gasp of the lava flows, when the pressure is almost dissipated and the final bits of molten rock and gas are being ejected, sort of like a sputtering firework.

Leaving the park, I still follow for miles the lava fields on both sides of the highway, until I veer north to go up through the Sawtooth Mountains. I had thought from the map that this road would be a curvy hillside-hugger, but instead it is a straight shot through a valley

with mountains rising high on both sides. I arrive at the town of Ketcham, where Ernest Hemmingway lived and died, with its companion Sun Valley next door. This is a tourist town for well-heeled travelers, with lots of folks who look like models in clothing advertisements crowding the sidewalks and automobiles that are way out of my price range filling the streets. It's late lunchtime, so I find an outdoor cafe away from the center of town and have a Thai salad. The helpful young waitress tells me I must visit Stanley, about 60 miles north, because it's her favorite place on Earth and there are plenty of rooms available. It's a nice ride up to Stanley, with the road now beginning to get its curves on and rising steadily into the mountains. Off in the distance I can see an orange haze of smoke from one of the large fires we've read about in the papers.

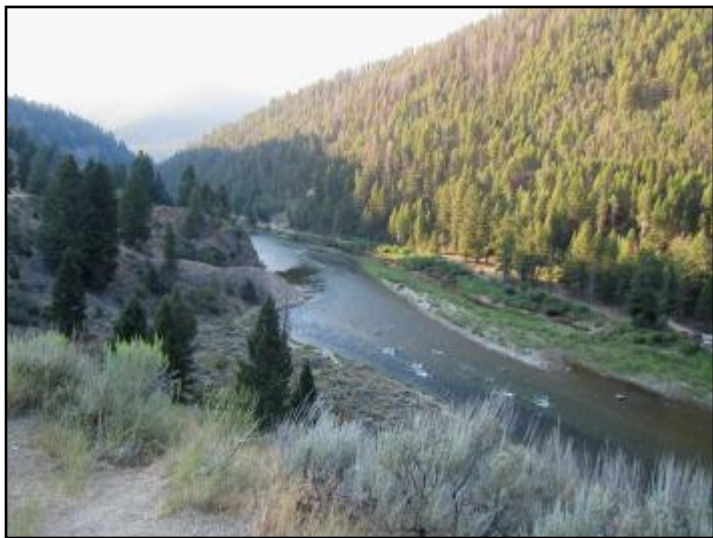
When I get to the little town, I can see why it's a favorite with the old-style buildings, the dirt side streets and everywhere around, the beautiful mountains. The second part of her advice wasn't quite as accurate. There are no, repeat no rooms to be had anywhere in Stanley. The fire crews have taken what little the tourists have left unoc-



**Lava flow: Fortunately, it has cooled a bit in 2000 years.**



# Go west Old Man, Redux



**The Salmon River Valley**

cupied. A young man at the tourist information office gives me a sheet with phone numbers to try. No luck, until I reach the Pioneer Inn in Challis, 60 miles away in the opposite direction from where I'd been planning to go. I told them I'd take it.

The Salmon River Canyon, coming down from Stanley, turns out to be one of the more spectacular rides I've had on this trip. There's fire in the next valley, leaving a reddish haze over everything and the smell of smoke in the air, but the river looks like one from a postcard or tourist brochure; it's hard to believe that an actual stream could be this perfect. The water is clean and clear, rushing over just the right amount of rocks to give it a sparkling froth in all the right places. Route 75 faithfully follows the river's curves for about 50 miles, between high walls of rock. I can't get any good photos due to the haze and anyway, I really don't want to pull over and pause this ride.

All too soon, I'm in Challis Idaho for the night. My room

is a kitchenette and bedroom at the Pioneer Motel, run by Bob, Donna and Lady the Dog. They are all three extremely friendly and treat me like a valued guest. My room is one that was canceled by another group of motorcyclists who called to tell Donna that they'd been pulled over by the Highway Patrol and wouldn't be making to her motel tonight.

Though a very small town, Challis has two restaurants, one of which Donna recommends and the other she tells me she hasn't tried, because "we don't go to that sort of place". From outside, neither looks that much different from the other, but I follow Donna's advice. The food is uninspired, but more than adequate for the evening, with a decent local beer on tap. It's 40 degrees on Saturday morning as I pack up to leave. I wait until daylight to get on the road, figuring there are lots of critters of various sizes out there in the canyon at this hour. (I'd stopped last night to let a flock of sheep go across) and I don't want to meet them in the dark. Going up the canyon with the sun ascending behind

me, the moon out in front, is marvelous. My poor vocabulary is entirely inadequate to describe what this river valley is like. The rising sun struggles to get above the mountains, so pours light in the places it can reach and leaves the others in darkness, making the ride rather like going in and out of doors on a bright summer's day. What Sol is putting into light apparently is at the expense of heat, since the temperature doesn't seem to be going up much at all. I'm freezing, even though I did think to bring my electric vest. The ventilated jacket and pants, which didn't seem to be flowing much air at all when it was 97, now have full pass-through for these cold drafts.

When I make it to Stanley, my fingers are numb, despite winter gloves and heated grips. I'm shivering and realize that I'm not riding very well at all. Although it is a tourist town, there's not much selection for breakfast. I pick the Mountain Lodge, which wasn't, I hope, the best choice. The bored young lady behind the counter takes my order from a limited selection and soon delivers it on a burned styrofoam plate. It reminds me a lot of what they used to serve at Boy Scout Camp, when we were too young to complain. Nonetheless, I linger at the table until my fingers are working again, then go next door to the Mercantile and buy another layer of fleece. Although I left my room at 7 AM, it's now three hours later and I'm in exactly the same place I was yesterday evening.

I have to remind myself that this is a trip without an agenda and I really don't have any schedule to keep. It's surprising how difficult that is to get through my head, after nearly a half century of traveling while watching the clock and the calendar.

I start down the mountain from Stanley, to the Payette River on a downhill run that takes me until after noon. The road begins in a straight shot across the top of the mountain, past the huge fire camps where the workers are already busy marshaling another assault on the enormous blaze that has doubled in size since I've arrived.

One man tells me that they may just have to try to contain it and let the winter snows finally kill it. As soon as the pavement starts its downward bend, it begins curving back and forth, following the sides of the mountain and the creeks flowing down to the Payette.

The center of the road is in bad shape, crumbled and rough which makes it difficult sometimes to keep a good line with my recent paranoia about surface irregularities. It dawns on me that this must be where the center of the snow plows grab the pavement while they're clearing these roads in winter. The reflective snow poles to guide the plows line the sides and they are higher than my head.

Eventually the downward slope evens out and as I approach the big city of Boise, I detour off to follow Rt. 52 on the advice of the lady at the Mercantile who told me I'd find another river valley here. It is both a river and a canal, then a lake full of water skiers on this day which has now become hot here at the bottom of the mountain.

Too soon the valley stops meandering and becomes just another straight road between fields and then spits me onto I-84 to take me into Oregon. As soon as possible I escape the four lane and head out onto Rt 26 that will lead to the town of John Day.

This is one of my favorite areas in Oregon, the high plains that have been eroded down



## Go west Old Man, Redux



**In the John Day Canyon**

into canyons following rivers, past or present, seemingly made for motorcycles. I've been here twice before and just had to make this part of the trip. The John Day Fossil Beds are world renowned for the access to such a wide variety of relics of the past. The sheer volume of information is overwhelming. Here in this valley, which has been both sea floor and mountain following the geologic upheavals through millions of years, one can see the processes that shaped it and by implication, the rest of the west. The layers of sediment reveal that the ground level we're standing on today here in this valley is in places three miles or more above the "floor" in ancient times. What we see around us as low hills are actually the tops of mountains much higher than those we marvel at today. To illustrate the idea, imagine placing a series of tall cones in a large bucket and then begin pouring sand in around them. When nearly all of the cones are covered, tilt the bucket slightly and pour some water through the sand, letting the rivulets make grooves as it

flows. What you have would look remarkably like this area seen from the air. The continental collisions raised the mountains, the volcanoes filled in the valleys periodically with enormous lava and ash flows, and sediment from erosion and wind born dust and dirt filled in the rest, with water then cutting the canyons through it. Through all of this process, plants and animals thrived, receded and thrived again as new species took successive advantage of the changes. It's a place of immense scientific importance, great natural beauty...and it just happens that water-cut canyons are nearly perfect for riding motorcycles.

John Day's name is everywhere in this area, since the river that bears his name wends its way all over the valley providing sustenance and a means of location for this whole section of Oregon.

The irony is that he probably never visited the area where the town is named after him, nor would he have had particularly good memories of the river. There are many stories about him, but a combination of them

using the bits that most have in common goes something like this.

He was a hunter and scout and trapper from Virginia who in the early 1820's was part of an expedition to the eastern Oregon territory. Somehow he and a companion got separated from their group and ended up getting into a skirmish with some local Indians along the river, who left the two men beaten and stripped naked in the high desert. (Remember, this was before the invention of sunscreen). After several days, or weeks, they managed to find their way to a settlement where, one would assume, two naked guys walking into town wasn't an everyday occurrence and thereafter the river where it happened was referred to by calling it "that place where John Day got attacked". Eventually it became (to the non-native folks there anyway) the John Day River and the association became widespread. I'm sure John Day himself would just as soon have had everyone forget all about it.

From the John Day basin, I went through Sisters Oregon, down the long winding McKenzie Pass through another huge lava field (from the three volcanoes known as the Three

Sisters) down to Eugene, where my friends Gary Griffin and Stephanie Midkiff live. Stephanie was off on an adventure at Mt. Ranier, but Gary put me up in the spare bedroom.

I spent Monday with Gary and then, not wanting to wear out my welcome, on Tuesday, I left Gary's at 6 AM, headed south to Crater Lake national park for a day trip. I'd been there years ago, in spring, and recalled the beauty of the place...and the high walls of plowed snow, reaching perhaps 10 to 15 feet high along the roads inside the park. It was cold when I left Eugene, about 50, and the electric vest was soon placed in service. Route 58 follows the Willamette River in gentle curves bordered by high pine forests not yet fallen to the pine beetle. The road climbs to a bit over 5,000 feet at Salt Creek pass, where ongoing road construction slowed things down considerably. From there, things flatten out a bit on the high plateau leading to the park. The snow-capped mountains begin to appear in the distance, with the highest one showing the particular truncated profile of a volcano that's blown its top. This one, Mount Mazama, is one of a long line of volcanos



**Mt. Mazama, on the way up to Crater Lake**



## Go west Old Man, Redux



Crater Lake as seen from the lodge

stretching from British Columbia into northern California, following a fault line of continental collision. About seven million years ago, (I was very young then) the Cascade Mountains began to rise where the molten rock from deep in the earth surfaced as volcanic vents.

We've seen recent eruptions in our time at Mt. Lassen and famously at Mt. St. Helens and the process will continue. Mt. Mazama built itself up to about 12,000 feet through lava flows over about 400,000 years, then the most recent eruption, about 7,700 years ago blew the top off, leaving a huge pit, or caldera, in the top. Centuries of rain and snowfall filled the lake, which has no stream feed and therefore not much sedi-

ment. Precipitation, balances with evaporation and seepage to keep the level constant, at least for the brief period of geologic time that we humans have been around to notice. It's about 2,000 feet deep.

A marker tells us that it was "discovered" (meaning when Euro-centric people found it) when a prospector's mule pulled up short one day just a few feet from the rim. I, of course, thought that this prospector probably wasn't the first to see it, just the first whose mule had the sense to stop. The others are still down there at the bottom. The volcano is just sleeping and may blow again sometime in the future, which will really put a cramp in the tourist business at the lodge.



One of the Three Sisters volcanoes

Never wanting to go back the same way I came, I took another set of roads to lead me back to Eugene, following the Umpqua River to the town of Wilbur along more twisting canyon roads, arriving just as Stephanie got back from Ranier.

I left Eugene on Wednesday, 8/8, headed for the coast on Route 126. Once out of Eugene, it is pleasantly curvy, rising and falling with the hills that will protect that city from the tsunami when it comes. The highway ends in Florence, where I found a road down to the Pacific and promptly took a nap on a convenient picnic table.

Highway 101 (most of you are too young to remember the motorcycle song from the 50's

drinking locally brewed beer. I knew I couldn't recreate that evening, but just being there would be good. The lodge across the street from the Pelican wanted \$302 per night for their rooms, so I found another for less than 1/3 of that 1.3 miles away and walked back. While having dinner I talked with the waitress, a young woman from India, who said she alternated working there six months of the year, then taking six months to travel the world. She had been to a lot of places, but thought that the Oregon coast was one of the best she had seen. I had to agree with her.

I had planned to leave with the sunrise the next morning, but got a telephone call from our own Randy Scott, just



Along the Oregon coast

featuring that number) follows the coastline and is, in my humble opinion, one of the prettiest rides anywhere.

By this point, I had a destination in mind, Pacific City. Brenda and I had visited there years ago with Gary & Stephanie and had a wonderful afternoon exploring the tidal pools, climbing the sandstone cliffs and sand banks, then a superb meal on the outdoor patio of the beachside Pelican Pub watching the sun go down in the water,

checking on me and my progress. It soon became apparent that Randy had been everywhere I'd been, multiple times, and everywhere I was going. I like to ride and think that I cover a decent patch every year, but I can't hold a candle to Randy!

I followed the coast road out of Pacific City, hugging the seashore, instead of returning to 101. Breakfast was at a quaint coffee shop in the little village of Oceanside where the morn-



## Go west Old Man, Redux



**Natasha's Café, Camus, Oregon**



**Breakfast by the sea, Ocean City, Oregon:  
Dungenesse crab scramble**

ing special was Dungeness Crab Scramble, something pretty rare on a Winchester Ky menu, so I had to try it. I recommend it highly.

I continued on around the "thumb" of the cape and then on to Rt. 6, the route to Portland. I wasn't expecting this road to a major city to be this good. It follows the Wilson River through a lovely set of hills, bordered by so-far-beetle-less pine trees, rising and falling with wide sweeping curves.

All too soon though, it devolves into Rt. 26, a four lane, that funnels everyone into the maw of Portland and its traffic.

I endured that mess until it crossed the wide Columbia River and I could exit on to Rt. 14 that follows that river east.

I got off into the town of Camas and found a charming cafe, "Natasha's" in the historic old town of Camas, where I could dine out on the sidewalk.

*(to be continued)*



# Mark and Toby's *EXCELLENT* Alpine Adventure

By Mark Rense

*To be continued in November*

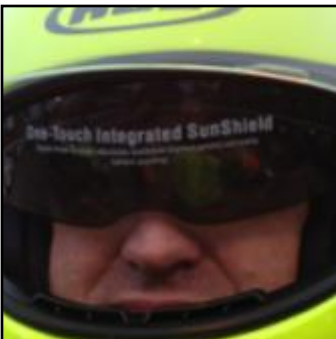


## *Saturday* @ Frisch's 7-9 am



"I can see where I'm going unless my sun visor drops down." —Jeff Crabb

*(Submitted by Joe Bark)*



Ray Brooks with his new 2012 Rallye Edition R1200GS. "New steel under an old rider," says Joe Bark.  
*Photo by Joe Bark*



Check the date stamp on this photo of Hubert Burton with his '82 R100 (RS conversion to S).

*Photo by Joe Bark*



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