

February 2013

Apex

Looking Through The Curve

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



Officer Rayburn

By John Rice

The local paper had an obituary from my hometown recently, noting the passing of a 77 year old man. It was a name I had not heard in almost 50 years.

Officer Rayburn was 13 years older than me, a gap that seemed enormous then, but not so much now. He was a young Ashland police officer, sworn to uphold the law when I was a younger miscreant, determined to ride my Puch moped without the driver's license I would not be eligible to have for another two years.

Our paths often crossed on the back streets of that small eastern Kentucky town as I, with the sense of entitlement to my desires that the confidence and arrogance of youth supports, rode blissfully outside the law.

Officer Rayburn stopped me again and again, usually making me walk the bike home from wherever he

found me, with him following close behind in the idling cruiser. I think he gave me a ticket once or twice, but usually just the long walk back to the house.

At the time, I cast myself as the wronged youth, held down by the unreasonable restrictions of "The Man" and found some delicious thrill in eluding him by my wits.

Looking back on it now, from the distance of a half-century, I see that he was a compassionate young man, frustrated by my recalcitrance and doing his best, within the parameters of a small town in those more innocent times, to keep me safe from my own enthusiasm.

He could have handled it much differently, as did some of his fellow officers with heavier hands, but he didn't.

I survived and, apparently so did he.

Godspeed, Officer Rayburn.



**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.**

The Graham Star

Part of Cherohala Skyway collapses near Tennessee line

Scenic road will likely remain closed for several months

By James Budd
editor@grahamstar Thursday,
January 17, 2013 3:50 PM CST

North Carolina transportation officials say it may be several months before the Cherohala Skyway can be reopened after part of the westbound pavement collapsed 1,000 feet into a ravine in Graham County Thursday, Jan. 17.

The collapsed roadway is located about one-tenth of a mile west of the Stratton Meadow Bridge, approximately a mile from the Tennessee state line.

The slide is about 150 feet wide and 1,000 feet deep. On Thursday, the sound of falling boulders could still be heard cascading below, as the slide continued. Muddy rivulets descended into the chasm.

Graham County has been pounded by 9 inches of rain during a three-day period, according to Tom Ward, an official National Weather Service observer in the county.

Joel Setzer, district engineer with NCDOT in Sylva, said there have been 22 slides in Graham County, the most in the region.

Setzer said Thursday he expects the Skyway will be closed for at least two months.

The engineer described the



slide as a "fill dirt slide," which destroys pavement and knocks out roads for longer periods of time than "cut slides." In cut slides boulders and debris fall on the roadway from high "cuts," the engineer said.

"You just clean them up," Setzer said.

Fill-dirt slides are more expensive and complex.

The Newfound Gap slide in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park is also a fill slide, Setzer said.

NCDOT officials installed directional and detour signs in Robbinsville and at the Skyway.



Thanks to John Zibell for providing this information.

MUD

By John rice



MUD

Ifit's true that what you do on New Year's Day, you will do all year, then 2013 for me, grandson Ian and nephew Paul will be a muddy mess.

As is our tradition, we met on January 1st at Ashland for a trail ride to break in the new year. This year, several weeks of snow and rain had made the trails sloppy and our "ride" more of a "slide".

Mud is a great leveler of skills and a provider of humility. All the horsepower that modern technology can pack into a small internal combustion engine matters very little when the coefficient of friction is approaching zero. Add some snow cover and a thick layer of dead leaves and twigs, and the

idea of steering becomes a theoretical construct more than a feature of the real world.

Regular readers of these pages know of my fondness for the little Yamaha XT 250, the do-everything dual sport, but my mount for today's follies was the 1976 Bultaco Alpina. While the XT is a superior machine, benefitting from more than three decades of technological sophistication, the Alpina is its spiritual grandfather and the old guys do know a thing or two about being in the muddy woods. What it lacks in power and technology, the Alpina makes up for in focus of purpose.

Old Señor Bulto knew how to make a motorcycle handle in bad conditions.

Paul rode one of his immaculate Alpinas, starting the day on what appeared to be a brand-new machine and ending it on a vaguely motorcycle-shaped collection of brown glop.



Ian Rice heading up the trail



Paul and Ian Rice, thumbs up in tribute to Señor Bulto



MUD

Ian had the hardest ride of all of us, a Yamaha TTR-90 with a 12 inch rear tire, a 14-inch front and about 5 inches of ground clearance. Youth will prevail, however, and he had less trouble in the goop than either of his seniors.

We started out at the usual clearing, heading up into the woods. The first few hundred yards of the trail is a sandy mix on a well-travelled path, so traction wasn't too bad. There was snow on the leaves throughout the forest, giving it that winter calm look that I love.

Very soon however the sandy surface turned to traditional old Kentucky wet yellow clay, which might make an excellent

substitute for axle grease. As we proceeded down off the ridges into the deep woods trails, the surface became a mix of nearly liquid brown mud, snow and wet leaves. Throw in a layer of sticks and stones under the snow and life becomes an endless series of surprises. In several spots, the four-wheelers that also ply these woods had left enormous mud-holes, sometimes with no way around so that the only course is to charge through and hope there's a bottom somewhere in the range of your ground clearance.

Ian handled all of these challenges with aplomb, only occasionally needing a taller person to extract him from mud deeper than the little 90 could fathom.

While Paul and I shivered, Ian, with the metabolism of youth, waited patiently for the



Paul Rice and Alpina in the natural habitat for both.

old guys to get going again. We came out here to ride, not stand around blowing on our hands !

Though we have been to this venue several times, we still find trails that are new to us, or at least that we don't remember clearly from the last time. This time it was a muddy course around a pond with interconnecting trails and steep hills that sometimes required a dead-engine, wheels locked descent. As always, the criteria for going down is the possible ability to get back up if the bottom turns out to be a dead end. Sometimes we get it right, sometimes we don't. Even so, there's seldom any such thing as a bad day in the woods if everyone rides back out on the bike they came in on and there isn't much blood in evidence.

Ian, as always, finished the day with energy left over and



looking forward to the next time.

I hope the New Year's Day ride is a tradition that I can keep for many more years and that the next generation will continue as long as there are muddy woods and bikes to ride in them.



Young mud rider showing the old geezer how it's done.

BMW F800GT and R1200GS models on display at Cleveland Motorcycle Expo

By Mark Rense

Went to the Cleveland Motorcycle Expo which was crowded mostly because they reduced the floor space as there were notably fewer vendors.

At least BMW and Triumph were here this year. Lots of vendors selling imported leathers emblazoned with conchos.

Had Gina take a picture of me on the new F800GT for perspective. It is a small bike but not as cramped as I thought. It is really light, I can imagine this as a great two-lane or Alps tool. Don't know if it is viable as an all-day mount when defending itself against diesel duallys on I-75. We'll see. I think they want \$13,600 for the F800GT without bags.

The new Wasser Boxer is interesting, whole new engine with integrated transmission and wet clutch. Claimed wet weight is 525 lbs. so it did not gain much with the radiators and such. Feels just like the R1200GS next to it.

Very little new in the Japanese lines, still mostly have infinite varieties of Harley-clones, each one heavier and more ponderous than the last. The flat-black Goldwing Bagger was in interesting take on a new theme.

The new Triumph Trophy is very nice but it's \$20 large, deep into BMW price territory.

Nothing new in the Duc booth.





The KICKSTAND's ANNUAL POLAR BEAR RUN

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2013

(if snow or ice on that date, ride is rescheduled for Saturday, March 2, 2013)

REGISTRATION 10:30 – 11:45

RIDE LEAVES AT NOON

**The group ride will leave
from the store, located at
500 E Main St in Burgin.**

The route/distance will
be dependent upon
group size and
weather conditions.
We'll end the ride with
warm chili and drinks.

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(covers cost of food & drink)

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