

July 2014

# Apex

*Looking Through The Curve*

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



View from Chatuge Lodge in Hiawassee, Georgia

Photo by John Rice

## Bluegrass Beemers members provide home motorcycle service to longtime BMW rally host Blake Ohsol

By Erskine Clinton  
with a message from Mary Ann Ohsol

**W**hat follows is an email sent by Mary Ann Ohsol describing Blake's plight and Roy's humanitarian effort.

Briefly, Blake asked Roy to order a shorter brake line for his bike months ago and was going to ride up to Lexington to have Roy put it on, but he forgot it was here. I met with Blake and Mary Ann for lunch during his last trip to the Lexington VA for treatment and reminded him that he had that part at Roy's. He said he still wanted to put it on his bike, but could not ride it up for the fix. I told Roy about it and the rest is Bluegrass Beemers history.

—**Erskine Clinton**

**Blake Ohsol**, longtime BMW rider and former host to several Airhead Rallies in Lebanon, KY, was diagnosed October 24 with stage IV metastasized aggressive melanoma. Tumors are in every organ, many bones, and every system. Doctors said he would expire in six months.

With all the prayers from the many folks who love him, he is still going strong even though the tumors are growing and increasing at a rapid pace. Our family is devastated by the impending loss of my husband,



**Erskine Clinton, Blake Ohsol, and Roy Rowlett on June 20th at the Ohsol house**

our dad, and or wonderful grandfather.

Several riders/friends have come by to help Blake with his bike tinkering. He is always inventing and adding new things, including a coffee pot/cup to his muffler with different baffles, etc, to force more air in and make it go faster. I am the wifey, but he can tell you all the technical stuff.

**Special thanks** to **Ray Melosh** from Michigan, **Bill Denzer** from Campbellsville, **Erskine Clinton** from Lexington, and especially to **Roy Rowlett** from Lexington.

Erskine and Roy rode down on June 20th and did brake stuff to Blake's bike. We were

both so thrilled and very appreciative!

We are so grateful for all the love and help and prayers of everyone. We will sell this bike, '99 R1100GS, as Blake is now too weak to ride, and the

money will go to our grandson to get a bike of his choice. No hurry, though. But if you are interested, come visit us.

—**Mary Ann Ohsol**



**Mary Ann and Blake Ohsol**

**Apex is the official newsletter of Bluegrass Beemers, Inc.**

**Lexington, Kentucky MOA #146 RA #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.**

**in Lexington, Kentucky on any Saturday, 7-9:00 a.m.**

**BMW Club  
Bluegrass Beemers**



# Books available on loan

The following books are available on loan. Email me when you want to borrow one, and I will bring it to breakfast (or whatever other arrangements need to be made...I can deliver within reason) and I'll put your name beside it on my list.

I don't mind if people keep them a while (it takes me forever to read a book now....I keep falling asleep and then have to re-read the last 10 pages or so) but I don't want to give them away for good. At least not yet.

John Rice  
Rickey@aol.com



**Bahnstormer** By LJK Setwright  
**Streetwise** By Malcolm Newell  
**The Bart Markel Story** By Joe Scalzo  
**Mann of his Time** By Ed Youngblood  
**Yesterday's Motorcycles** By Karolevitz  
**The Scottish** By Tommy Sandham  
**This Old Harley** By Michael Dregni  
**Racer: the story of Gary Nixon** By Joe Scalzo  
**All But My Life: Bio of Stirling Moss** By Ken Purdy (OK, not a motorcycle book, but who doesn't like and respect Stirling Moss?)  
**Investment Biker** By Jim Rogers  
**Obsessions Die Hard** By Ed Culbertson  
**BMW Twins & Singles** By Roy Bacon  
**Bitten by the Bullet** By Steve Krzystyniak & Karen Goa  
**Cafe Racers of the 1960's** By Mick Walker  
**More Proficient Motorcycling** By David Hough  
**Tales of Triumph Motorcycles & the Meriden Factory:**  
By Hancox  
**Sport Riding Techniques** By Nick Ienatasch

**Total Control** By Lee Parks  
**Smooth Riding** By Reg Pridmore.  
**A Twist of The Wrist ( Vol 1 & 2)** By Keith Code  
**Triumph Tiger 100 and Daytona** By J. R. Nelson  
**This Old Harley (anthology)** By Dregni  
**Side Glances** By Peter Egan  
**Mondo Enduro** By Austin Vince  
**Big Sid's Vincati** By Matthew Bieberman  
**101 Road Tales** By Clement Salvadori  
**Riding with Rilke** By Ted Bishop  
**Legendary Motorcycles** By Luigi Corbetta  
**Lois on the Loose** By Lois Pryce  
**Red Tape and White Knuckles** By Lois Pryce  
**A Man Called Mike** By Hilton (bio of Mike Hailwood)  
**The Perfect Vehicle** By Melissa Pierson  
**One Man Caravan** By Robert Fulton (first known circumnavigation of the world by motorcycle)  
**Monkey Butt** By Rick Sieman  
**Ariel: The postwar models** By Roy Bacon  
**Short Way Up** By Steve Wilson  
**Endless Horizon** By Dan Walsh  
**Leanings (1 & 2)** By Peter Egan  
**Into the Heart of Africa** By Jerry Smith  
**The Last Hurrah** By Des Molloy  
(Autographed copy, with DVD of the trip)  
**Whatever Happened to the British Motorcycle Industry**  
By Bert Hopwood  
**Down the Road** By Steve Wilson  
**Motorcycling Excellence**  
By Motorcycle Safety Foundation





# A short rally, a Georgia town, and some other stuff

By John Rice



**G**oogle says that it's 295 miles from my house to the Georgia Mountain Rally in Hiawassee, GA, or 590 to go both ways. Somehow, Jay Smythe and I managed to make that round trip into well over 800 miles.

I've been to the GMR twice before, so when the e-mail came telling me that it was happening again, it seemed like a good idea. I'm not much of a rally-goer, but the location and timing of this one made it seem irresistible. As it happened, Jay's retirement (one of several, but his last one, we hope) would occur two days before, and he had a new bike that needed some road time.

We left from Winchester on Friday morning with a vague plan of going down Rt. 15 to Slade and from there, wherever we felt like going. Rt. 66, the Kentucky version, not the western one, was introduced to me by Jeff Crabb and Lee Thompson years ago and has become a favorite, going through the



Jay at the top of Old Smokey

Redbird forest (where some really nice off road trails can be found) and ending up in Pineville, by the "new" flood-wall

that keeps the river out of the town.

From there we headed up over Clinch Mountain, with the mandatory stop for vinegar pie at the Lookout Restaurant on top, and down into the combination of roads that can avoid the Knoxville megalopolis.

Evening found us, unexpectedly, near Sevierville, TN, far too close to Gatlinburg for our tastes. Nonetheless, about the only room to be found was right in downtown Sevierville, at the Riverview Inn, a pleasant little old-fashioned place with rooms that opened to the parking lot on the front and the river on the back, allowing us to sip beer and watch while ducks and geese established a literal pecking order on the banks.

In the morning we backtracked just a bit to find a back way down into Gatlinburg that skirts around the Pigeon Forge nonsense, and from there to head over the Smokies. We stopped at a roadside place, the only one open at our early departure hour, for breakfast. There we met a young man, a restaurant employee, standing outside as we were getting off the bikes. He told us that he too had a motorcycle, then apologized that it was only a "small one, a 750". We assured him that such a machine was capable of doing anything he could conceivably need to do in the touring realm and that he should just enjoy it to the fullest. He then said something about riding in the rain, a subject with which we are some-



Vinegar pie stop at Lookout Restaurant  
at the top of Clinch Mountain.

# A short rally, a Georgia town, and some other stuff

By John Rice



**View from Chatuge Lodge in Hiawassee, Georgia. The world's problems solved here. All it takes is a beer or two and the rest of the world accepting our advice.**

what familiar, and we advised him to get good raingear and then just go for it. I don't know if he will take our advice, but he seemed pleased that we thought his "small" bike could be a legitimate motorcycle, sufficient for entry into the ranks of real riders.

The road through the Smoky Mountain National Park is a favorite, if not choked by motor home tourists, and includes one of the few 360 degree curves I've seen. No bears or other large fauna on this trip, but the rising mountains overhung with mist, the perfect blacktop and the creek rushing over the boulders bordering the road were sufficiently entertaining. We were early enough to miss most of the rolling roadblocks and

had much of the road to ourselves as we headed down into North Carolina.

South of Cherokee, we found Rt. 92 and then Rt 28 out of Bryson City, a surprising combination of perfect motorcycle roads. The curves were continuous, smooth and incorporated nearly constant elevation changes as they worked their way around, up and down the mountains to follow a stubbornly determined north-south path across the east-west wrinkles in the earth's crust. The perversity of humans who wanted to go in a direction that nature discouraged worked to our motorcycling advantage. Even on the PD, which does such curves reluctantly, I managed to scrub off the last re-

maining bits of tread on the skinny front tire and wore out what's left of my neck trying to swivel my head from one apex

to the next. I often felt that I was about two swivels behind where I should have been. Jay, on the new F650 GS, was in his element, swinging from bend to bend, on the edges of his tires, with never a bobble.

Hiawassee, Georgia is one of those pretty little towns that just suddenly appears, nestled in the mountains as if someone dropped it in there from above. We cruised into the village, past the fairground entrance and checked in at the nearby motel, where Jay encountered a rider on an F650 GS set up very much like his own. After swapping tips and suggestions about the water-cooled twins, we dropped our stuff in the room and made our way over to the rally vendor area.

On our previous excursions here over the last 5 years or so, nearly every vendor stall was filled and we had plenty of farkles, gimcracks and "who the heck thought of that" to look at. This time, there were very few, and those had little to offer. I did manage to find a camp chair, to fulfill that part of my fantasy that I actually will camp again on one of these trips.

( **MINOR RANT:** One thing I did notice was the number of gloves for sale without any sign



**"Che" Smythe at the Georgia Mountain Rally registration**



# A short rally, a Georgia town, and some other stuff

By John Rice



**Hofer's Restaurant, Helen, Georgia, where one can take in a year's worth of calories in one glorious morning**

of padding, armor or provision for retention. Brief cautionary tale here... during both of my careers, in vocational rehabilitation and personal injury law, I had occasion to see a lot of hand injuries, from minor to catastrophic, and to learn just how fragile can be that collection of bones and joints that make up the signature feature of our species. Please folks, get gloves with some kind of armor or at least padding over the knuckles and thumb joints ! And some sort of velcro or elastic to hold them on your wrist. When I was a teenager, I was once rear-ended by another bike and when I picked myself up off the ground, I found my leather garden-gloves on the

road behind me, lying there side by side as if I'd laid them there for later use. The road rash on the heels of my hands indicated that their departure had happened before I left the machine.)

Without goodies to peruse, the rally held little attraction for us (though Jay did manage to win some chain lube in the door prize drawings) so we wandered off into the countryside and ended up back at the Chatuge Lodge restaurant for a patio dinner and then porch-sitting to solve all the world's problems as the sun went down over the lake behind our room.

Sunday, we headed down 17 for breakfast in Helen GA, a

favorite stop for over 30 years. Neither of us had been there in quite a while and we were astonished by the changes.

Legend has it that in the 70's, a group of the town citizens met at a local diner to discuss the declining fortunes of what had been a logging area. Supposedly one of the men had been recently to Germany and noted the similarity of the mountainous region to the Bavarian countryside and sketched on a napkin an idea for converting the town's buildings to faux German facades, and making the place into a tourist attraction. By the time I first went there, in the early 80's, the town was a combination of the original plywood add-ons and

some newer constructions/renovations that really did give the flavor, if not the actual essence, of a Bavarian village. Flavor was the right term, for much of the conversion had focused around German and similar restaurants and food kiosks with many Central European nationals coming to the area to set up shop. I recall on one trip in 1994 (Jay and I on the way back from Daytona) having breakfast at a Dutch restaurant where the heavily accented proprietress informed us that her crepes were better than others because she spoke to them in Dutch as they were cooking. I can't say for sure that linguistics have a direct

# A short rally, a Georgia town, and some other stuff

By John Rice



View from Chatuge Lodge in Hiawassee, Georgia

effect on frying batter, but they certainly were delicious.

In those days, up through the mid 90's, the town still was small, extending only from Hofer's restaurant at one end about a quarter mile to the German-castle-themed small motel at the other end where the river went under the road.

(Somewhere I have a photo of Brenda, leaning Rapunzel-like out of the window of the corner turret.)

There were only a couple of streets on either side of the main road. Beyond the river crossing, there was only farmland and the occasional house.

When we arrived on this morning in 2014, it was to a town that had more than tripled in area, now extending far beyond those traditional boundaries. It's current form includes major chain motels, a huge community hall (where presumably they have something resembling Oktoberfest) and new streets and campgrounds along the river as it wends its

way through what had been pasture enjoyed only by cows who presumably were unimpressed by things Germanic.

Some things have remained as we remembered, though, and Hofers was one of those. The restaurant features quite authentic German meals and includes a market section where one can pick up the real McCoy (or I guess, the real Hans) to take home. Brenda favors a particular brand of German mustard ("Senf") and they have it there, so a jar had to go into my tankbag. In addition to the fine meals and ingredients, there is a bakery reminiscent of those on the streets of small Alpine villages, featuring exotic pastries ....which has always been high on the list of my many, many weaknesses.

(I do recall being here many years ago when a family of tourists came in for breakfast. They were in a German themed town, walking in to an establishment that proudly advertises itself as a German eatery, with

wait staff all dressed in Bavarian garb, but after perusing the menu, they announced their displeasure loudly for everyone to hear: "Can't you get any American food here?")

After a breakfast of potato pancakes with applesauce, I tried to eat as much of the flaky and creamy baked goodies as I could while we were there and got a couple more to go. Is it any wonder that my bike needs heavy-duty shocks ?

Full, but not completely sated (as Mae West reportedly said, "Too much of a good thing is wonderful") we made our way north again on 17, to 180 past Brasstown Bald and on up 129 back into Tennessee. Rt. 294 is a pleasantly twisty connector that cuts off the short side of a triangle leading us back to Rt. 68 headed home. There aren't many good ways to get around Knoxville, heading back into central Kentucky, without getting mired in the sprawl of that large city, but Rt. 68 is one that will take you on a curvy route

through the hills and on up to Tellico Plains. As is our habit, we couldn't stay on a single route however and ended up wandering off into the mountains on a path that eventually made a full circle back to where we had entered. It was a nice two hour diversion, but even now I have no idea where the heck we were. From the Kentucky line back home Rt. 25 makes a nice alternative to the interstate and offers the chance for a cobbler-stop at Renfro Valley to break up the drone on in to Lexington.

**Here is the takeaway from our journey.** Eight hundred miles, three days, many pastries and good meals behind us and already thinking about where to go next. Go to Helen for the ambiance and the food and the roads there and back. Actually, go anywhere. Just go on a motorcycle. And wear good gloves.

—JR



# The motorcycle is real (The woman is *not* real)

By Paul Elwyn



**Y**es, the woman in the above photo is fetching, but she is not real, and we are, after all, gathered here to talk motorcycles.

The woman is merely a marketing image, as are motorcycles until they are transformed by owners through modifications and/or time on the road. The old Guzzi above has made the transition and captures something special.

The bike is a modified 850 Moto Guzzi, likely a T or T3 from the 70's, but that really doesn't matter, that it's a Guzzi. What matters is the simplicity, the purposeful, sporting nature of this elemental machine with its only instrument a tachometer mounted dead center. (*We don't need no stinking speedometer!*) The clip-ons, alloy tank and tail piece underscore the retro café nature of the machine rebuilt to be as light and uncomplicated as possible. This thing also would be about as comfortable as a 2X4 for rides

over 30 minutes, but let's not muddy matters with practicality.

This machine features no compromises, and the dented bodywork, the patina that comes from long days and nights of hard running, reinforces the message; this is no garage queen, no dealer-serviced casual-use side interest, but the subject of a not-so-casual rider who has created his version of a sporting twin.

The modified Guzzi likely makes little more than 80 hp, but the thing weighs maybe only 425 pounds. Measured performance is vintage by today's sport standards but that's okay, because this ride has risen to another level of performance that transports the rider to the essence of motorcycling, a reality that is difficult to measure. (*Third glass of wine kicking in.*)

Although the modified Guzzi appears to be real, likely created by a seasoned rider (*geezer with high pain threshold*), the "rider" in this image is a model hired to advertise a Davida helmet. Davida understands the niche market for their helmets, and they also understand the intangibles implied by the modified Guzzi.

Several manufacturers, BMW included with the R NineT and the many GS models, cash in on the adventurist/romantic notions we associate with these bikes that mess with our brains, leading us to spend gobs of money to get the right setup. Maybe \$16,000 for the R NineT or \$23,000 for a GS is a



**Moto Guzzi V7 Racer**



**Triumph Thruxton**



**BMW R NineT**



**Norton 961**



**Royal Enfield Continental GT**

reasonable start for many people. After all, it's hard to put a price on something that is special, even harder to put a price on something mechanical that excites the mind and transports us away from the mundane. That the R NineT exists at all is cool, and an owner through personal mods and miles can create a modern version of the old Guzzi in the Davida image.

Some cool new bikes, ranging in price from \$6,000 to \$19,000, include the Royal Enfield Continental GT, Moto Guzzi V7 Racer, Triumph Thruxton, and the Norton 961.

A \$3,500 Guzzi, BMW R or Triumph New Bonneville would be more palatable to this rider of modest means. Cubic dollars could go toward the bike, but to capture the rest requires more than deep pockets, elements no manufacturer or dealer can provide. Cheap box wine, however, could really move this quest along.

Any motorcycle with rider input and miles can become special, because the motorcycles are real. But we must remain focused. I'm fairly certain that the....woman.... is not real.

**The next two pages** of special twins, *Real* motorcycles leaning to the café/ race lobe of the brain, illustrate what's possible.

—Paul Elwyn

# Real motorcycles



# *Real* motorcycles





# *Real* motorcycles



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**Norton**





# Odds and Ends



From John Rice



From Tom Weber



# Odds and Ends



**Even  
butterflies like  
motorcycles.**

Photo by John Rice

**You never  
know when  
you might  
need a decoy  
for a hungry  
bear.**

Photo by Tom Weber

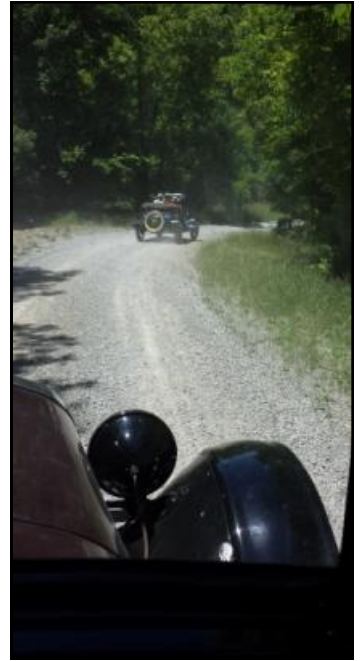




# Odds and Ends



John and Jeanne Zibell were in Kentucky the first weekend of June touring in the 1926 Model T Ford that John restored. Looks show quality to me!





# Odds and Ends



Ben Prewitt stands with his 1964 Austin Healey following a qualifying race on June 28th at Mid-Ohio Raceway during the SVRA Vintage Grand Prix. One of 700 early MK III cars built, the Healey 3000 has served faithfully on track since 1999. "Crewing" for Ben were Jim Brandon (background), Paul and Maureen Elwyn. (Below left): The Healey always draws a crowd of admirers. (Below right): The Steve McQueen pose





# Odds and Ends





# For Sale



## 1998 BMW R1200C

- Cream color, blue seat hard bags
- Windscreen
- Under 17,000 miles
- New front tire
- New battery
- 60% on rear tire
- Never been down, no scratches or dents.

**\$5000.00**

**Brady Ratliff**  
859-619-5493  
brady.ratliff@icloud.com





# For Sale

## 1999 Honda Ace Tourer 23,000 miles

Fine condition with Corbin leather seat with driver and passenger backrest, Cobra floorboards front and back, driving lights, fresh tires, windshield, new gel battery, and leather covers for the crash bars that keep the cold air off of your legs. No problems that I know of. My wife and I have not ridden it as much as we thought we would.

**\$4000 OBO**

## 1981 Honda CM200 Twinstar

Great campground bike, kickstart, two tanks and a few other pieces. Vintage plate.

**\$800**

**Tim Riddell**

**Lexington**

**859-806-8466**





# For Sale 2003 R1100S Boxer Cup Replica



**22,356 miles**

- BMW system cases
- Suburban handlebar risers
- tank bag
- fresh Metzeler

I purchased this lease bike in 2007 from Louisville BMW with only 3,500 miles registered.

This bike is always maintained according to book, garaged kept, in excellent condition and ready to ride.

**Price Reduced!**

~~\$7,900~~

**\$6,900**

**Lee Thompson**

leetlex92@gmail.com

**859-475-7029**





# For Sale 2008 BMW K1200S



- This bike has just over 7400 miles on the odometer.
- Tires have less than 1000 miles on them.
- Bike is in immaculate condition, always kept inside.

**\$10,000** or reasonable offer.

**Roger Perry**  
**859-489-6232**

For Sale: 2009 R1200GS ESA. Approx 16,000 miles, heated grips, vario topcase  
Contact Saloman Levy at [salomon.levy@gmail.com](mailto:salomon.levy@gmail.com) or phone 786-218-7071.

For Sale: R1100RT 1996 Contact John Harter at 859-684-8217

## FREE leathers to good home

Two sets of leathers, state of the art in 1980, made by Lou's Leather's.  
One set fit male, approx 6'3 200 pounds,  
one set fit woman, approx size 14.  
I've finally admitted that I'm not going to fit into mine again.

**John Rice**  
**859-229-4546**  
**859-737-5316**





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Happy 4th of July!

