

September 2014

# Apex

*Looking Through The Curve*

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

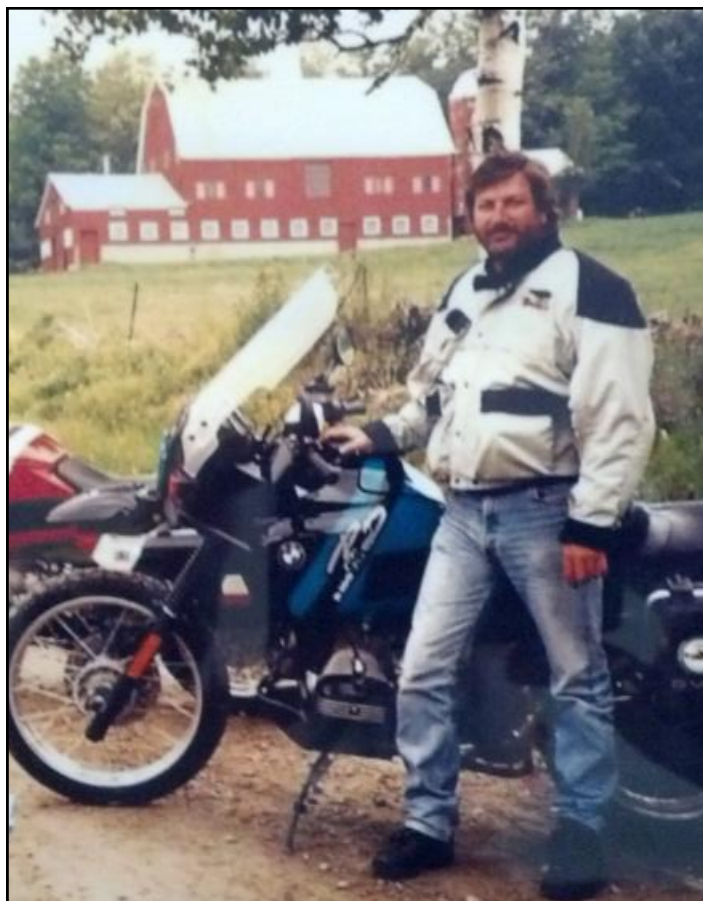


Photo by Jay Smythe

## Gary Huffman, Bluegrass Beemer #94, dead at 64



**Gary and Darlene Huffman  
in Monument Valley, Utah, 1995**



**Gary on tour in Vermont, 1994**

HUFFMAN Gary G., 64, of Lexington, husband of Darlene Collett Huffman, died Sunday, August 3, 2014.

He was the son of the late Woodrow and Ethel Henson Huffman.

The owner of Security Concepts, Inc., a bank security consulting firm which serves central and southeastern Kentucky, Gary was an avid motorcycle enthusiast. He loved horse racing, was a huge U.K. basketball fan, and he had many other

hobbies including photography, painting and cooking.

Besides his wife, survivors include one daughter, Shannon (Bill) Kersey; step mother, Edith Wingfield Huffman; three brothers, Jerry Huffman, David (Teresa) Huffman and Tommy

(Donetta) Huffman; one sister, Janie Richardson; one granddaughter, Malarie Kersey along with several nieces and nephews.

**Apex is the official newsletter of Bluegrass Beemers, Inc.  
Lexington, Kentucky MOA #146 RA #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.  
in Lexington, Kentucky on any Saturday, 7-9:00 a.m.**

**BMW Club  
Bluegrass Beemers**





# Going North

By John Rice



**W**hen BMWMOA decided to hold its 2014 National rally in St. Paul Minnesota, the plan dovetailed nicely with Jay's long solo "retirement" trip. We'd ride up to the rally and then Jay would split off headed west and I would return to everyday life back here in the big city of Winchester. Or at least that was how it was supposed to go.

We left Lexington early Wednesday morning, me on my 1993 R100R and Jay on his well-loaded 2012 F650, taking 421 out of Frankfort to head up into Indiana. Breakfast was at Horst's Little Bakery Haus in Madison. It's an interesting establishment, with a "no tipping" sign on the door. One of the servers answered my inquiry, telling me that Horst insisted on paying them an adequate wage rather than the tip wage. Any money left on the tables is given to charity. I applaud his ethics, and his pretzel-bun breakfast sandwich.

Not far above Madison, the choices of roads become not much different, mostly straight and flat. And, of course, it began to rain. We droned along, damp as usual, through what seemed like endless fields of corn and not much else to distract the eye. It seemed to us that northern Indiana is essentially a greener Kansas.

By nightfall, we were looking for a cheap motel, but perhaps not as cheap as the one we eventually found. We have always sought out the roadside motels, the old style with outside entrances that now are fading in favor of the modern

lobby setups. The cheaper the better, as long as they are relatively clean. After all, we're only going to sleep and shower there, not take up residence. Years ago, on the Lap of Kentucky Run, Jay and I stayed in a fleabag motel in Paducah which became our bottom edge marker for how far down the lodging chain we would go. That was then, now the euphemistically named "Niles Michigan Motel and Conference Center" has taken the last notch down one step. It was a former Econo-Lodge, long past its sell-by date, now fallen on hard times and eking out its last days as a refuge for folks who had no where else to stay on this particular night. Like us, for example. The other patrons had

all backed in their cars, to avoid detection of the license plates and we required the use of our bike tool kits to get the shower to work. The threadbare carpet floor in the room probably held the mixture of bacteria necessary for some new disease, just waiting for an opening to develop. There were patches, badly done, on the walls telling of former altercations among guests that resulted in broken drywall.

We did the mandatory bedbug check and found no trace....then we realized that even bedbugs had higher standards for lodging than we did.

Next morning, we started up the east coast of Lake Michigan, headed for Luddington

where we would meet the cross-lake ferry, the SS Badger.

The coastal road, the A-2, does follow the shore, but views of the lake are few and far between with large homes and trees shielding the lake from prying eyes of tourists. Still, it was two-lane and not so straight as to be the endless horizon of the interstates, and it served our meandering purpose.

Lunch was in the quaint town of Grand Haven, a coast guard station, at a sidewalk cafe by the canal, where our young waitress told us that she had been riding since she was a small child and had raced motocross for several years. She's a college student now, but plans to get another motorcycle soon. We advised her not to listen to



Our sidewalk café in Grand Haven, Michigan

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her friends who were telling her she needed to get a "big bike", but to find something she was comfortable with and then just go where it took her.

We made it into Luddington by late afternoon and I was surprised how little of it I remembered from 34 years ago when we debarked here coming from the Manitowoc Wisconsin side on our first long bike trip adventure. On that occasion, we were young men, Jay 29 and me 32,, riding a Suzuki 500 two-stroke (me) and a 60's era Harley Sportster (Jay) with our gear stuffed into Glad bags and bungied on the seats. We were camping in those days and found a secluded spot up a dirt side road to pitch our tent (no regular campgrounds for us back then) where we survived, barely, the Attack of the Killer Mosquitos. Then it started to rain. It was a night I cannot forget, no matter how much I try.

Things have changed a bit over three decades. This time we found a clean pleasant room at the Ventura motel and walked back into town to find sustenance. We stopped in the

Mitten Bar since it advertised that it served all local beers. I can recommend the nitrogen-charged Oatmeal Stout. Dinner was on the rooftop deck of a restaurant overlooking the town, which seemed to have a

lot of life in it for a population no larger than Winchester. If only my little town could somehow acquire a Great Lake....

Early the next morning we gathered with the others waiting for the ferry at the dock. The line of cars, motorhomes and trailers stretched off into the distance, making one wonder just how many this ship could hold. (The answer it turns out is 180 cars, depending upon how many tractor-trailers are on board, and 620 passengers. In its earlier days, it also carried railroad cars and remnants of the old tracks still can be seen in the floor.) The Badger was commissioned in 1953, which makes it younger than either Jay or myself, and like us, it seems to belong to another era. It is the last coal-fired ferry still operating on the

Great Lakes, granted a reprieve from extinction by new technology that increases efficiency of combustion, reducing the pollution from the stacks. There were at least twenty motorcycles in line (a dockworker told me that the day before there had been over one hundred, presumably heading for the rally) including a Harley piloted by a rather large young man in "biker" garb, who would figure in my later activities.

The dock hands made short work of the loading, getting their workout in the process. Unlike 34 years ago, one can no longer drive on the ship but must leave it to the employees. They drive each vehicle on board, park it and run at full speed back to the dock for another. One man was backing



At the mouth of the Badger, waiting to board the ferry.





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**Jay and I working hard on the S.S. Badger crossing Lake Michigan on the way to the MOA rally**

the motorhomes and trailers on board, reversing the huge vehicles at a speed that I would have been uncomfortable with in such close quarters, even going forward. All in a day's work for him. Fortunately they still allow we motorcyclists to ride on board ourselves, where we strapped down the machines to a steel floor on the side of the ship, under the stairs. We then had to leave again, going back to the dock to await the boarding order.

Three blasts of the incredibly loud horn announced our departure and the big ferry slowly pulled out of the harbor, past newly built brick houses that lined the shore. Many of these had large picture windows facing the water, the better to see the rolling in of the massive storms that these waters can produce in the winter. (Cue "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald" by Gordon Lightfoot.) No such worries today. The sky was overcast, with some clearing in spots, the wind "bracing" and the waters

calm enough not to ruffle the passage of this good ship.

On deck, the wind was constant and the sun bright, a perfect morning for a cruise.

As we lounged in the deck chairs, we met Tom, an enthusiastic young man who was piloting a new Triumph 1200 Explorer on an extended trip and who had a DR 650 like mine at home. He was able to enlighten me on some suspension options for my DR that I will implement, if I can just recall what it was that he said. Later, as we strolled around the perimeter of the ship, we met Nier Rodriguez, a woman about our age who told us that she had an F800 and a G650 at home (well, one of her homes, in different cities) but preferred the 650 for general riding. Dr. Rodriguez is a pharmaceutical researcher, specializing in crystal structures, who often functions as an expert witness in legal matters involving patent disputes over such things. She enjoyed long solo trips

on her bikes and had followed the adventures of one of my motorcycling heroes, Lois Pryce, actually meeting Lois at one point in her travels. I was impressed !

The Badger steamed slowly into the harbor at Manitowoc, easily maneuvering its huge bulk into the small space reserved for its docking. As we were unstrapping the bikes, I noticed that the large young man on the Harley was leaving quickly and did not return my wave. Then I looked at my bike and saw that the right side mirror was torn off its stalk, with a bit of cloth hanging on the broken stub. My guess is that the fellow had snagged it on his vest in the tight quarters as he tried to bend down to release his bike straps and broke it with his bulk. No matter now, the damage was done and the putative culprit departed. I hadn't realized just how often I used the right mirror (since I no longer can turn my head enough to see behind) until it wasn't there.

Once on solid ground in Wisconsin, we had a long way to go to St. Paul and a short time to get there. We opted for Rt. 29, a relatively direct way across the state, though mostly four-lane. That afternoon, as we droned along, we came across a motorcycle stopped on the side of the road with a rather agitated young man standing beside it. We pulled in to see if we could help. He was a tall, skinny fellow, no more than 20, with long dirty blonde hair and what eventually might be a beard if given enough time and encouragement. T-shirt, jeans, no helmet, no gloves, no boots. He hopped from one foot to the other, like a grade-schooler who had to pee, and began talking rapid-fire as soon as we stopped. "It just quit, stopped running and it won't start and I don't know what's wrong and I have to get off the highway, I just bought it two days ago and I don't have a license", on and on and... The machine was, I think, a Kawasaki 250 Ninja of

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indeterminate age, that had suffered greatly in its life before finding itself here. The chain was rusty and slack, the paint flat and random body panels were missing. The tires were faded gray, cracked and bald. We asked if he had fuel and he looked at us as if that had never occurred to him. We turned the tap to reserve and the bike started. He took off quickly while we were putting our helmets back on, only to stop again about a half mile down the road. This time when we pulled over he already had his cell phone out and had contacted a friend who would come and get him. He seemed very, very interested in not being found on the highway by the police. (The only things that

keep me from thinking that the bike was stolen is that 1) it wasn't worth stealing, and 2) he seemed just the sort of young man who would have spent scarce money to buy such a machine).

We motored on to Chippewa Falls where it was time to find a room. As we pulled off into the town, on our right was the old-style Indian Head Motel with a vacancy sign and across the parking lot, the Rumor Mill restaurant advertising "18 craft beers on Tap". We looked no further.

Saturday morning, we thought we had just an hour to go to get to the MOA rally and then a day of perusing the vendors and the variety of motorcycles of the Bavarian persua-

sion lining the lanes at the site. Fate, as they say, had other plans.

We stopped for breakfast in Hudson Wisconsin at a Perkins Pancake House. As we were leaving, Jay dropped his wallet change purse and cell phone in the lot, unnoticed. A following motorist alerted him that he had left them behind in the lot, but when he returned, not five minutes after leaving, only the phone and change purse were there. The wallet had been stolen. The wallet containing not only some cash, but his drivers license, military ID, credit cards, etc.

We spent the next hour combing the sides of the road, looking in trash cans and sewer grates, in case the thief had

taken the cash and discarded the wallet, to no avail. Then another hour or two at the Hudson Police Department making a report and getting documentation that the items had been stolen, so Jay could use this to convince any other officers he may encounter on the trip that he did, in fact, have a license. We went on to the rally, where we could use the venue as a quiet space to make the necessary calls to cancel cards, arrange for new ones, etc.

At the fairgrounds in St. Paul, Jay went to the MOA building to make his calls and I went down the lanes and to the vendor building, in search of a right hand mirror. There was only one used parts vendor that I saw there, a fellow who had



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**Jay contemplates life as a passenger.**

set up a lawn chair and a few boxes of odds and ends, without any useable mirrors in the lot. Quite a change from national rallies in the past. Inside the vendor building, there were lots of booths with goodies, but only one guy with a mirror, at Adventure Designs. That one would work, but only with a particular RAM mount, which of course, he didn't have. Another search through the vendors located the missing part. (Then later, we discovered that the bolts supplied wouldn't work either, sending us off on a search for an 8mm bolt at various hardware stores along our way.)

There was, however, a Spidi clothing booth that was giving away free brand-logo wallets, solving at least one of Jay's problems.

The rally was huge, spread over the vast fairground plot, with hundreds, if not thousands, of BMW's and the occasional

off brand, lining the intersecting streets. There were vendor tents for farkles of all sorts, but very few had much of anything in stock to sell. Most were just displaying some limited inventory, with the encouragement to visit their website for a full selection and order the thing online. This does allow a lot more vendors to come to such rallies, since they don't have to pack up much or bring large numbers of employees to handle it, but it also means that one can't "shop" at rallies like we used to do. If it comes to visiting a website and ordering online, I don't need to ride a thousand miles (usually in the rain) to do that. Perhaps one day rallies will become virtual with all of us sitting in front of our computer screens, signed in to a conference call app, talking to ourselves and others, displaying photos of our bikes, over the internet. We could still dress the part, sitting in our

computer chairs in full riding regalia. I could even soak my outfit first, just to make it authentic.

By now Jay had made his arrangements. His wife Mari-mac would overnight the new cards to him as soon as they had been overnighed to her, which meant that we needed a fixed place to be to receive them by Tuesday.

Never ones to let such travails get in the way of a bike trip, we decided to use the intervening three days to go up to Aerostitch in Duluth (which was open on Sunday as an accommodation to MOA Rally attendees) and on up the north shore of Lake Superior. We then could turn south and be in Preston, MN by Tuesday night, a convenient place for us to part on our respective journeys. I had stayed one night in Preston on my long trip two years before and knew of a motel we could use there, so we called and made a reservation for Tuesday night. The lady at the desk said she remembered me. Not sure if that's a good thing or not, but she did take the reservation.

We finally found a motel about 40 miles north of St. Paul, after learning to our chagrin that the casino culture in this area had almost everything booked on a Saturday night. Sunday morning, we headed for Duluth as it started to rain.

Duluth Minnesota, on an early, rainy Sunday morning looks like an industrial town that has seen better days. The clearing of some of the old buildings by urban renewal suggests that those better days are coming back. We quickly found the old candy factory building that houses Aerostitch,

but we were about an hour before opening time.

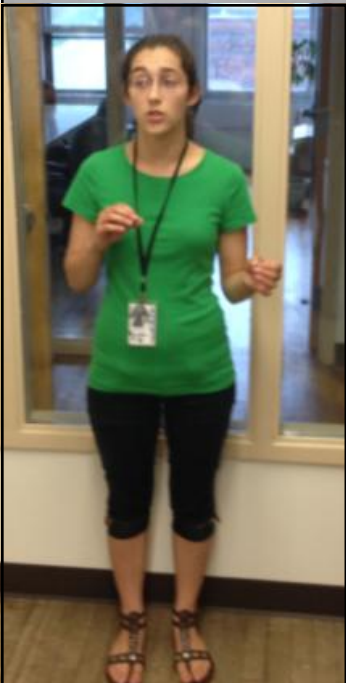
We cruised down Superior Street, what once had been a thriving area, now home to run down bars, closed storefronts and vacant lots. Breakfast was at yet another Perkins (the only place open on a Sunday morning) where Jay found a waitress who, like him, believes that tea drinkers deserve as much service as the ubiquitous coffee fanciers.

When we went back to Aerostitch, the crowd of BMW riders had already arrived. When I was here in 2012, the entire retail "store" was in one room, (now the lunch room) and the first floor area was occupied by racks of suits in the making and employees rushing about to fill orders. Now that whole floor has been turned into retail space (still with a working-factory-floor vibe) with racks of the company's various items strewn about for perusal by dripping Aerostitch-wearing Beemer riders. Still present is the mock-up motorcycle, mounted on a gimbal, that allows a customer to try on a garment and actually sit in a riding position, lean angle and all, to see how it will work in the real world.

Lydia, an employee of 10 months, was our tour guide for the morning. She may have been working here for less than a year, but the 21 year old has a long product history. She told us that an Aerostitch Road-crafter had saved her before she was even born, when her pregnant mother (on a BMW, of course) had crashed her bike at 80mph, got up uninjured, rode the damaged machine home to swap it for another bike, and

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Lydia, our tour guide

## The Aerostitch factory, Duluth, MN

continued her journey. Savvy person that she is, Lydia wore her dad's 28 year old Road-crafter jacket to her job interview with Andy Goldfine, the company owner.

Lydia, with her encyclopedic knowledge of all things Aerostitch, showed us the new state-of-the-art cutting machines where all the wearable products are first cut out of whole cloth (everything once was cut by hand) and the racks where the company keeps some fabric for everything they've sold, in case repairs are necessary. We were

told that, although Aerostitch did offer a few imported garments for a while, the quality control wasn't up to their standards and everything is being returned to in-house production. According to Lydia, every single garment that leaves the factory is hand inspected, not the 1 in 10 or more schedule that other companies may use. It takes years for sewers to move up in the production chain, gaining experience, and typically a sewer works only on one type of garment, so that they know it's characteristics

intimately. On the first floor, where the garage is located, is the "crash rack" with suits that have been sent in for evaluation and possible repair, with the damage being used as research for improvement. Having crashed in Aerostitch gear myself, I can attest to the efficacy of its protection.

The company started on the third floor of this old building and gradually expanded to the others as the business grew and other tenant's leases expired. Andy Goldfine's original office, where this icon of modern mo-

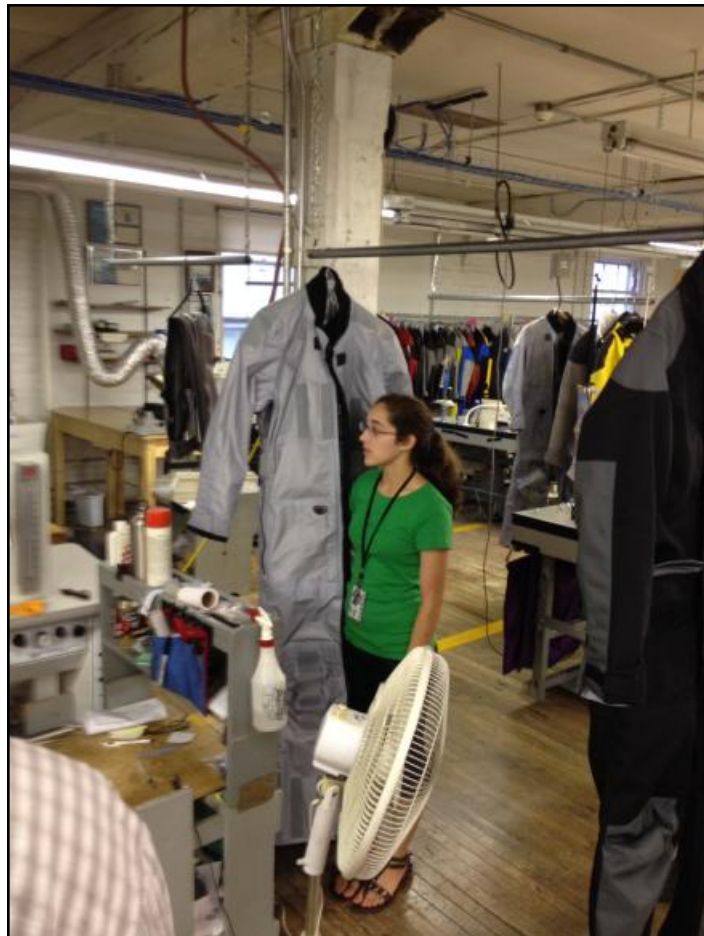


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**Crash rack at Aerostitch displays shredded suits**



**Lydia explains the Gore-Tex liner of the Aerostitch suit.**



**This broom closet on the third floor was Andy Goldfine's original office when he started Aerostitch.**

torcycling was born, is now used as a broom closet. Lydia informed us that unlike most companies, almost everything they do is performed in-house, including the making of the catalog (it is printed elsewhere) and the design and maintenance of the website. The company can react quickly to make changes in any aspect of the business, because it is all handled right here by a small cadre of people.

The Sunday hours ended at 1PM, so we moved on up the North Shore of Lake Superior to see what we could see. Highway 61, of Bob Dylan

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**The sewing room at Aerostitch. Each sewer learns a particular garment and works only on that style.**

fame, heads north along the water's edge, but gets a bit confusing as its name changes along the way. There is the North Shore Scenic Drive (new 61) and the Scenic drive (old 61) and they often merge and separate without much indication. Old 61 is the better motorcycle choice, being a two lane that hugs the shore with the vast expanse of the water almost constantly in view. Frequent pullouts with parking areas allow one to stop and

gaze meaningfully out at the water (and for old men to run off into the bushes, as needed) for a bit, then move on. Superior is, as its name implies, the largest of the Great Lakes with a surface area of almost 32,000 square miles and a maximum depth of nearly 1,300 feet. For those of you keeping score, it holds about three quadrillion gallons of water (about 10% of the world's surface fresh water) at an average water temperature of around 40 degrees F. So,

just a bit more water and slightly warmer than what seems to run down the back of the neck of your rainsuit when riding in a downpour. To circumnavigate the lake takes about 1,300 miles and the fastest time to do so was accomplished by a motorcycle in about 21 hours.

No such feats of glory for us, though, we were more interested in the scenery. From the road, one can see no end to the lake to the east and if told it

was an ocean, would have no reason to doubt. To the west and north there are forests and the promise of distant hills, that might, we hoped, contain a curve.

Near the charmingly named community of Castle Danger, we happened across Gooseberry Falls State Park, a landmark that had been recommended to us by another rider at Aerostitch. Even on this cool damp day, there were tourists, presumably local, who were



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**Jay at Goosberry Falls State Park**

playing in the water and enjoying the rocks. I found the warning signs refreshing...swimming was not prohibited outright, merely "not recommended". A lot of children were enjoying the un-recommended activity, watched over by indulgent parents.

Our loose plan was to find Highway One, the northernmost road before hitting Canada, and head west for a bit until we turned south for our rendezvous in Preston on Tuesday. By late afternoon, we decided to find a room along the shore so that we could hit the western route first thing in the morning. The map suggested, and we later confirmed, that there was precious little accom-

modation once the shore had been left behind.

The community of Beaver Bay advertised itself as having only a few hundred residents, so we passed the motels and restaurants there in favor of Silver Bay, a town of over 1,800 souls just three miles up the road. But Silver Bay seemed to have only a factory and a gas station, with none of those aforementioned souls anywhere in evidence, and certainly no place for them (or us) to eat or sleep. We turned around and went back to Beaver Bay and found an interesting room at the rustic Camp 61 lodge and restaurant. Our accommodation was a two bed room, with one bed on the ground floor (actually, slightly

below ground level....the parking lot surface was level with the windowsill) and the second one up a flight of stairs in a loft that overlooked the other side of the lot. The bathroom was larger than some apartments I've lived in and had not only a shower, but a bathtub out in the middle of the room, as if it had been there all along and the rest of the space had been built around it.

The restaurant and bar at Camp 61 are eclectic, a combination of old-style drinking establishment, roadside eatery and north-woods resort from the 50's. We were pleasantly surprised when we sat down on the high stools and learned from our barmaid, who seemed barely old enough to be serving

alcohol, that the beer list was extensive and serious in its contents. Not the "We have BOTH kinds of beer, Bud AND Bud Lite" that one often finds in small rural towns, particularly in our home neck of the woods. She knew her inventory, able to discuss the characteristics and qualities of each item on the list. Age enforced discretion meant that we could only sample a very limited selection, to go with our surprisingly good meals. We remain impressed.

Next morning we made it quickly up to Rt. One and turned westward away from the lakeshore. From the open expanse of water to the dense trees and hills in one turn, we were now on frost damaged pavement meandering through the forests.

But at least here were some curves in the road, long bumpy sweepers that disappeared around the vanishing point into the woods, with Bambi and his cousins, along with the rest of the forest fauna, waiting just on the other side to keep our enthusiasm in check.

It is easy to see up here that the economy (much like that of Kentucky) once depended upon extraction, the taking of timber, minerals and animals, to support a widely scattered population. Now much of that taking of what was here is done and the area relies more upon luring other folks here to spend their money on "adventure tourism", camping, hiking, hunting, fishing and snowmobiling, as well as the ubiquitous casinos, a different kind of extraction. Spaced out along highway one are "wide spots in the road" with town names, now consist-

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**At the "lodge" at Camp 61, Beaver Bay, MN**

ing typically of a gas/service station and usually a bar. Even more sporadic are population centers, small cities, that once were the matrix that held the population's services back in the day. Ely Minnesota, where we stopped for lunch and some supplies from a hardware store, is one such. From the buildings in town, we could see that this place once was an autonomous city, with a car dealer, several hardware stores and groceries. Now it has two hardwares, several convenience stores and a wide variety of day-tourist restaurants serving food that big city dwellers would expect after they've made the trek north. We stopped in one for lunch and enjoyed sandwiches that the inhabitants of this area back in its heyday probably would

have considered a bit too effete for a proper working man's lunch. Being neither proper, nor working, we thought they were quite good.

After Ely, we turned south to make our way back down through the state, headed for Preston where we hoped Jay's cards would soon be arriving.

Summer is a relatively short season in the North and the cold-damaged pavement must be repaired while the weather permits. In the South, we're used to blockages, where one lane of a road is closed while the road crews repair the other side. Here, apparently, they close the whole thing and detour traffic around the blockade on alternate routes. Usually those don't amount to much....we were just wandering

around anyway....except when one is on reserve and depending on a gas station in the town 10 miles down the road from the barrier and the detour goes an unknown number of miles out into unpopulated territory. I was counting down the miles from reserve, anxiously scanning the horizon for signs of a gas station, when we finally made it back to Rt. 2 and "civilization"....well, as much as a Shell station is civilized. I think I had about a pint left. Jay's fuel-sipping F650 hadn't even illuminated its reserve light yet.

Though it was a Monday night, near Duluth, motels were in scarce supply. We found lodging for the night at Captain Barker's Inn and Resort, built on a spit of land jutting out into

the lake, which despite its name and imposing facade, was no more expensive than an ordinary motel. A restaurant was on site, with a patio for al fresco dining, making this an unexpectedly pleasant find. Saturday morning, we set out southward through Wisconsin to make our run to link up with Jay's overnight package.

Twenty minutes south of the big city, we were in rural Wisconsin on a two lane road.

A bald eagle had happened upon a deer carcass by the side of the road and was busily feeding on the trove of meat when we passed by. Though we pulled over not far from his dining, the National Symbol refused to leave it, continuing to tear off strips as we stood there watching. Only when I reached for my camera did the publicity shy bird take flight (no doubt not wanting this unseemly scavenging to show up on his Facebook news feed).

As we watched the majestic bird lift slowly off and flap toward the nearby trees, I was reminded that Ben Franklin allegedly objected to making this animal our national emblem for this very reason. He thought it inappropriate to have a scavenger (even if that isn't its normal mode) as our symbol. Franklin instead recommended the Turkey, finding it in his opinion to be a more noble creature, and more representative of the characteristics he admired. I certainly don't know enough about either bird to second guess Benjamin, but I will say his choice would have made Thanksgiving dinner a very different kind of experience.

A bit further, we came upon a black bear dead beside the road,



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not small enough to be a new cub, but not "camping nightmare in your tent" big either. He seemed to be sleeping peacefully on the shoulder, showing no obvious sign of the trauma that ended his young bear's life. I'm sure that the vehicle that hit him didn't look quite so well. I thought of the few times I've had a black bear cross the road in front of my motorcycle, wondering what would be the outcome of a collision between us. I used to joke that I hoped such an event would kill one of the two, not wanting to be down on a crashed bike in the near vicinity of a ticked-off bear.

At Osceola, Rt. 35 finally touched upon the Mississippi and increasing urbanization began to appear, until we passed again through Hudson (still no sign of Jay's wallet) and found county road F which, according to the map, would hug the shore for a while. It did, but the cornfields had the best view and we were relegated to watching them instead of the water. A brief foray down to a "beach park" gave us assurance that there was, in fact, a river there and people were allowed to enjoy it. We picked up Rt. 35 again at Prescott and the once-shy river began to make its flamboyant appearances as we proceeded down through what Garrison Keillor calls "the high, high bluffs of the Mississippi". On the left are cliffs that one supposes are the leftovers of glacial push bringing down material from a long ways north, with the river on the right where it has cut down the path over millennia of patient flow



**A stop along Rt. 35 on the Wisconsin side of the Mississippi River along the Great River Road**

through the gap it found, as water always does. Just above the river is the railroad track, like those found anywhere in the world that the water made a level way through the woods and hills, and above that, on a man-made shelf, is the paved road we ride. Three forms of transportation, from vastly different eras in human development, all taking advantage of the persistent, inevitable triumph of moving water over whatever stands in its way. We pass through towns, small and medium, Maiden Rock, Pepin, Alma...all names that Mark Twain and other river-dwelling denizens of the 1800's would have known well as the river-

boats they rode plied the water for commerce. The curves are long and gentle, hardly requiring a steering input for the motorcycle and, one would presume, not much for a riverboat pilot who knew his path.

At Winona, we crossed over to the Minnesota side, hitting this moderate sized city right at 5 o'clock rush hour. Because of the traffic, we opted not to stop at the gas station on the other side of a busy four-lane road, thinking that of course there'd be another just down the way a bit. And there would have, too, if we hadn't hit yet another detour. By the map we were only about 30 miles or so from Preston, our destination, where

there would be gas and food and a room waiting for us, and, we hoped, Jay's documents. But the Minnesota Highway Department had other intentions for us, sending us again off to explore many alternate roads, nice ones with some decent curves and pleasant scenery, but utterly devoid of fuel. Perhaps the same entities that make sure we always get rained on also have a soft spot in their hearts for us as well, sending us a local brand gas station just as I was waiting for the tell-tale engine stumble that would precede a long push.

Re-fueled and breathing easily again, we made our way into Preston, got our room and

# Going North

By John Rice

picked up Jay's precious envelope which had arrived there that morning. Problems solved. There was a nice steakhouse on the hill overlooking the motel and all was right with the world again. Bike trips usually work out that way.

Jay and I parted the next morning with him heading on west toward the Black Hills and me going south to follow the Mississippi on down to Ky. He would be following the essential American dream, riding into the sunset with destination unknown, and I would be taking the well-worn route of our American ancestors, meandering along the banks of the main artery of the midwest. I would continue along the Great River Road, a route comprised of several different road numbers, marked with a sunburst emblem, on both sides of the river as far south as I could get until my time to get home ran out.

I crossed again over to Wisconsin at LaCrosse and picked up Route 35 along the riverbank. From here on down is known as the Driftless Area, which as I understand it, refers to the part of the state where the glaciers stopped, leaving hills and bluffs intact for roads to wander through for the benefit of motorcyclists. Or at least it seems that way. Unlike the flattened areas we'd been traversing, these routes follow ridge tops along the river, sometimes giving an aerial view of the whole Mississippi valley spread out below, with the mighty river seeming just a silver thread outlining the picture. I had read in the MOA rally book that some folks compared this route to the famous coastal route 1 through Big Sur in



**In the Driftless area, a stop along the ridge top overlooking the Mississippi valley**

California. OK, it isn't *that* good, but it is very nice.

I crossed back and forth as bridges appeared, trying to get the view from both sides. At Cassville, I opted for the ferry, since I'm a sucker for those wherever I go. This one doesn't make a straight run across the river, but instead goes about five miles or so north then over to the Iowa side, dumping its passengers out on a two mile dirt road to get back to the highway.

At one point, the River Road signs disappeared, due to some construction, and as I stopped to peruse the map, a fellow in an SUV stopped to help. He was a motorcyclist and had sussed out my confusion, having done it himself before, and gave me directions to get back

to the shoreline roads. He asked whether I wanted the "long way or the "short way", then added, "most of you BMW guys opt for the long one". I said I would do the same. His directions lead me to a small town along the waterside, where a tiny restaurant awaited, advertising "fresh peach pie and ice cream".

In Muscatine Iowa, my R100R died in traffic and the battery was too weak to re-start. Using the emergency battery pack that Mitch Butler had made available to us (Thanks Mitch !) I managed to get the bike going again and over to Reeves Battery Store, where testing showed the battery to be discharged, not defective. Obviously, I had another charging problem. Can't be the rotor this

time (of course not....I was carrying a spare one of those.) We put a meter on it after it was charged on the stationary charger, with the bike running, and found that it was charging weakly, about 12.5 volts, at 4,000 RPM. By now it was mid-afternoon and if I headed south from here, there was nothing much on the map but empty territory along the river. Though I could have just bought a spare battery and continued on, I disconnected the headlight and headed 40 miles west to Iowa City where the nearest BMW dealer and some motels could be found.

What happened next was either serendipitous good fortune or a horrible mistake. Only time will tell.

**To be continued**



# Going West

Photography by Jay Smythe



# Going West

Photography by Jay Smythe



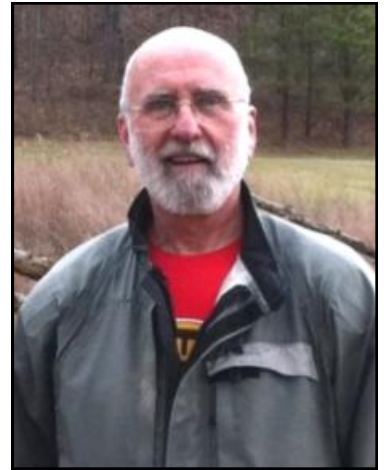


# Books available on loan

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



# Odds & Ends

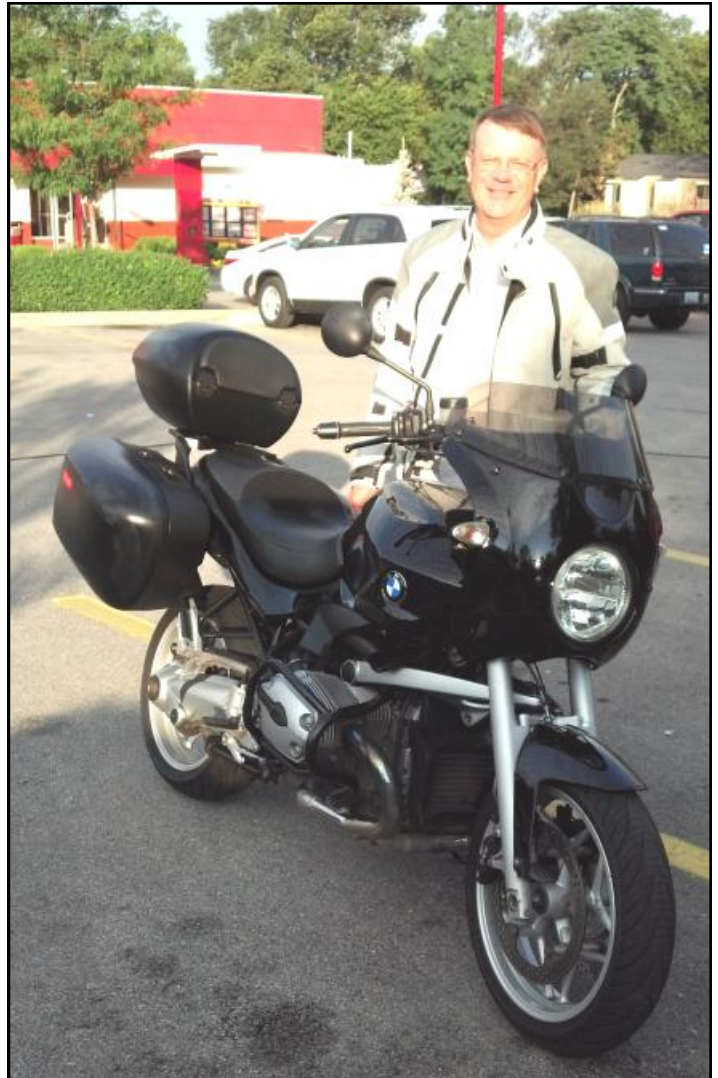


**“Even though I  
was hungry,  
I didn’t stop  
here.”**

*—John Rice*



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



John Rice (left) stands with his new F700GS, which replaces his 1993 R100R, and Lee McKeown poses with his 2010 R1200R, which replaces his FJR1300.

We gather every Saturday at 7:00 a.m. at Frisch's on Harrodsburg Rd in Lexington. Following breakfast we kick tires until about 9:00 a.m.





## Plans taking shape for Orlando Ace Cafe



Publish Date:  
Aug 19, 2014

ORLANDO, Fla. – Rockers are getting a taste of what is to come as owners seek approval for the first phase of the world's third Ace Café.

Ace Café plans to open an entertainment and retail complex, including a restaurant and bar, retail gift shop and a motorcycle dealership, in two renovated buildings in the central business district of downtown Orlando. Details are starting to trickle out, including renderings submitted to the city. The project is due to go before the Municipal Planning Board on Sept. 16.

The 2.94-acre retail and entertainment complex includes 18,000 sq. ft. of retail space and 14,000 sq. ft. of restaurant plus amenities. The complex is expected to employ 200 people when it is up and running. The London Ace Café draws thousands of people to more than 400 events each year, and the Orlando complex will be larger. Ace is also wants to build a motorcycle museum and repair shop in the future.

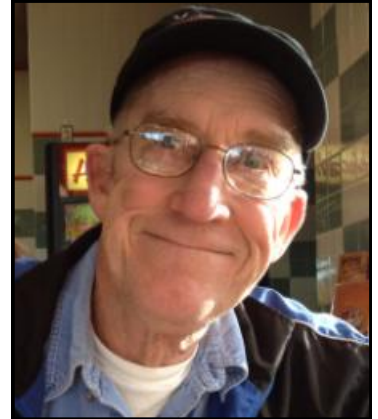
The company plans to renovate one building with about 6,000 sq. ft. of retail on the ground floor and offices on the second floor. The 18,000 sq. ft. warehouse building would be converted into a two-story restaurant with an outdoor bar area.

The plan also includes a courtyard event area with a removable stage, a large, glass block display/exhibit/parking area in the center of the property, and additional vehicle show areas. The parent company is keeping fans apprised of the progress on its Facebook page and website.



## 1999 R1100GS For Sale

## Blake Ohlsol, dead at 70



### Richard Blake Ohlsol,

70, husband of Mary Ann Ohlsol, died on August 15th.

A Vietnam veteran, Blake was a long-time BMW rider who was well-known among riders. He hosted Airhead events in the Lebanon area.

## 1999 R1100GS \$6000

40,300 miles. Hard bags, trunk with rack, two owners. First owner put 10,000 miles on the bike. Service history, well cared for GS with OEM side bags, extra driving lights, extra spoiler, aftermarket windshield. Front upper fender "beak" and hand protectors included. Heated grips and ABS. This was a special bike, and it worked great.

[25bsw-4627451106@sale.craigslist.org](mailto:25bsw-4627451106@sale.craigslist.org)

# 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

**1975 Bultaco Sherpa T  
trials bike, Model 151**

**\$250 OBO**

(No, it doesn't look quite this  
good now, but it still runs.)

**John Rice**  
**Riceky@AOL.com**  
**859-229-4546**



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**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**

**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**



# **BEEMERS** in the **BLUEGRASS** **RALLY**

**September 12-14**

**Still Waters Campground  
8 miles north of Frankfort  
on U.S. 127**

**\$25 provides 2 nights camping,  
breakfast and dinner on Saturday,**

**Lunch Ride on Saturday**

**New BMW display**

**by BMW Motorcycles of Louisville**

**Unlimited coffee and tire kicking!**

**Questions? Call Paul @ 859-583-0205**



# *The KICKSTAND's* 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Bikes, Blues & BBQ



## **WHEN**

**Saturday, Sept 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

## **WHERE**

*The* KICKSTAND

500 East Main Street

Burgin, KY

intersection of highways 33 & 152

## **FOR INFO**

859.748.5425

SeeYou@TheKickstandLLC.com

## **Poker Run**

- Registration 10:00 – 12:30
- Group ride leaves at 1:00
- \$15 rider / \$5 passenger / \$5 each additional hand
- All proceeds to benefit the Mercer County Firefighters' Christmas Toy Drive
- Feel free to bring a toy to kick-off the season's drive

## **Trophies**

- Trophies for Poker Run's 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> Places & Worst Hand, Club with Most in Attendance, Long Distance Rider, Oldest Rider, Youngest Rider, Newest Rider, Bike with Highest Mileage, Oldest Bike, Bike with Fewest CCs

## **Door Prizes**

**50/50**

**Event T-Shirts  
& More!**

five below band plays 10:00 – 1:00

BBQ served all day at the Village Inn Restaurant

# BMW MOTORRAD 3ASY RIDE

A FINANCE SOLUTION FROM BMW FINANCIAL SERVICES.



Beemers in the Bluegrass Rally attendees on September 13th can meet our new Vehicle Sales Representative/Manager Mitchell Lanham.

Mitch will be on hand with one of the new BMW motorcycles for rally attendees to see and will be available to answer questions about any of the BMW motorcycles or about 3EASY RIDE.

Don't miss out on getting one of the 2014 Models before the 2015's arrive!

## 3ASY Ride Offers Affordable Financing

BMW Financial Services presents BMW Motorrad "3asy Ride", motor biking at an affordable monthly rate.

BMW Motorrad "3asy Ride" as the name suggests is the most efficient and affordable way to realize your BMW motorbike dreams.

The only three key elements of BMW Motorrad "3asy Ride" are:

- 1) A single 3asy down payment.
- 2) Fixed and affordable 3asy monthly financing rates.
- 3) The 3asy end of term options:

- 3asy follow-up financing and affordable monthly rates.
- 3asy purchase arrangements of your BMW motorcycle with your final payment.
- 3asy return of your BMW motorcycle with the option of a brand new BMW motorcycle.

BMW Motorrad  
USA

Authorized Dealer



The Ultimate  
Riding Machine®

# BMW MOTORCYCLES OF LOUISVILLE

1700 ARTHUR ST, LOUISVILLE, KY 40208-2778 502-634-1340

[www.bmwloouisville.com](http://www.bmwloouisville.com)

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