

June 2016

Apex

Looking Through The Curve

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



ATGATT....
Photo: Joe Bark

And now for something completely different...

By Jeff Crabb

Hopefully, most of you will recognize that line from Monty Python's Flying Circus. It would come at a time in the TV show that you thought they had gone as far as they could go in a skit and you didn't know how they were going to get out of it. They'd abruptly go to a totally differently skit with the above being the introduction of the about face. You may see a little of that in this month's edition.

This month we have three great stories. Two on motorcycles and one on a sailboat. John Rice continues his story of this year's first sidecar trip, Bill Denzer finally gets to the MOA National Rally in Billings and James Street takes us on a leisurely sail from western Kentucky to the Gulf of Mexico.

We also have pictures sent to us from Joe Bark as he and his brother-n-law, Steve Shoemaker are traveling

around the state of Utah. It is supposed to be a "Utah Trip", but I doubt they'll have no problem crossing state lines, if the mood strikes them.

Please enjoy the stories and the pictures and please keep sending in your stories and pictures.

Please send all of your contributions to
apex@bluegrassbeemers.org.

Thanks

2016 BMW MOA International Rally 7/14/2016 - 7/17/2016

Location: Hamburg, New York

**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.

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Join us at Frisch's on Harrodsburg Rd.

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

BMW Club
Bluegrass Beemers



An Airhead Ventures West (Twice In a Week)

Part V

By Bill Denzer aka Will E. Fienly



...leaving off from the last month's installment that concluded with "The Show-down at the Gas Pump", I departed from the "One Gas Pump Island Town" of Lame Deer Mt. of which the community is named after the Miniconjou Lakota Chief Lame Deer who was killed by the U.S. Army in 1877 under a flag of truce south of the it, it would not

be long before I'd make Billings.

The temps elevated and the skies darkened heading towards the destination goal, too hot to don the Road Toadz rainsuit yet, as I speculated to not be riding into the cusp of the blackness for some miles ahead opting for conserving every precious second to be making time toward I90 and en-

joying the last of the prairies' desert terrain. The General Custer Battlefield approached, I recalled visiting it sometime in the past so did not stop in this time yet I had wondered in the past and again in the present how the "Master Tactician" could not have seen the situation coming, per my judging the scrubbed terrain and less than lofting contours of the

flattened hills making little obstruction to any recognition? Perhaps he did have Jack Crabbe with him to serve as his personal “Reverse Contrarian” as in the movie “Little Big Man”?

Not more than 20mi. from Billings now, the massive but narrow Thunder Squaw was imminent and it was time to take a roadside rest stop pause to put on the Road Toadz! Only 20mi. from The National and only rain I’d had to encounter as of yet! I’ll give some kudos to the much improved Toadz over their predecessor Frogg Toggs, as the Toadz had all the necessary snaps/cuffs and closures to “Baton Down the Hatches” snugly including a nice hood to wear under the helmet keeping those trickles from running down onto the nape of the neck! Torrential down-pour for approx. 2mi. then out of it and one only needed to follow the BMWs to the fairgrounds entryway being completely dry when I arrived!

A call on my cell from the reception area was made to Boxer Bruce who had his personal Clubcar, he led me to the Blacksheep encampment as I scoured the tent city concourses for recog-

nizable bikes of friends and acquaintances along the way. You never know who you may spot but there are some of them you expect to be around and if not then you wonder “what happened, why they aren’t here, are they sick, in trouble or worse, did they get married”? Settling in the “Sheep Pen Area” I greeted and metted this year’s crop when suddenly the big hand of Mr. Booker rested on top of my shoulder from behind, one hand is all he has to spare usually as the other was clutching his latest read, hence Mr. Booker! Now, for the MOA National, it was time to halt, shift into neutral and enjoy some social “Proceedous Interruptous”!

Assuming my role in the hierarchy within the Blacksheep and Coyotes “Great Circle of Liars” one must filter through the general discussions and sharpen one’s timing for seizing a moment to offer something humorous or oft-humor or perhaps a simply relevant antidotal account to the group’s at times highly opinionated palate for politics or the current state of BMW’s offerings. We’ve (you and I reader) all have been thru’ these type “Mensa of Di-

verse Opinions” every national or smaller convergences, which likely includes old warriors and old hippies and so it is true that throughout one’s life experiences “Every Drop of Water Shapes a Stone”, tolerances for personal points of view in all matters are tolerated well and if necessary they are ignored when a mouse tries to roar!

Next day, gingerly crawling out of the tent, the ravages of the past 3 days set in thus it takes me awhile to complete an erection! No hurry to tour the fairgrounds, I set up my single burner Optimus and boiled some grounds, subsequently I looked for Mr. Booker who was apparently latent to rouse out of his tent on the “First of 3 Mornings After”!

Mr. Booker and I have shared a many of a misadventure together such as attracting bears into our camping area, displacing all our cargo over turning a canoe, fractured vertebrate and alternately place the blame for them for association with each other, so at times when we plan a common trip we plan it apart yet eventually merge courses such as this trip! For the indirect route back to Kentucky/Indiana

the economics of splitting cost of cabins and motel rooms serves to lessen pain

and remiss of any airhead 'ectomies to observe and perhaps learn, much differ-

ears perked up by the noise sourcing during my entrance on the bike. Almost pushing



in the wallet. By the time Mr. Booker returns to his home of Vincennes In. he'll have logged 5K riding his K1200RS, inclusive of "Layovers" with an occasional Femme' Fatale' but never is he one to "Kiss n Tell"!

The Airhead tent pavilion was located farside of the racetrack in an area devoid of shade other than the generous canvas shelter, the area was dry as a bone, not much stirring other than dust

ent than last year's Minnesota gathering at the ABC pavilion when there were several airhead bikes in need of repairs or being serviced, one of which was my R75/5 which spun a rear wheel hub bearing, detected not until I had entered that fairgrounds venue and heard it, oh if that had happened during the more desolate parts of that trip!! The Airheads are a membership not to ignore another riders plight as they came rushing towards me,

me to the side (my reputation as a wrencher at play?) the rear wheel was removed and the spun bearing race exposed, there were two options discussed to "Git me home"! One was to create shims out of aluminum cans and a dab of J.B. Weld or else source out a replacement wheel and hub! As good fortune would have it, I found a vendor of airhead parts at that national with a good Slash 6 wheel and hub, he sold it to me on credit

and the wheel was promptly installed! At this now current national in Billings I was not to offer up any specimen for rescue but what better place to be when in need?

Departing Airheads Central walking back to the encampment I flagged Mr. Booker and we decided to explore the Metro-Billings area about lunch time, we noted a scenic overlook looming above the fairgrounds basin and headed up to the overlook for a look-see. There

we were introduced to “Yellowstone Kelly” via a memorial plaque pictured in this article. Yellowstone’s mantra essentially describes why we do the rides that we do and hedge against potential alternate outcomes!

The National is what it is and I.M.H.O. if you’ve seen one then you’ve seen them all thus I will not take you through the next 2 days! Next up on departure day it is The Chief Joseph Highway and The Beartooth

Pass, as Mr. Booker and I make our way towards Colorado for some white water rafting dismissing potential disaster as a pair together, we agree that we’re both old enough we have to die of something! I’m also looking towards some ultimate Mexican Cuisine at a little cantina near Buena Vista I recall from a past trip, hope it’s still in business!?



Billings Overlook

No More SPARKLY BITS (or the F650GS Saga, Part One)

Article & Photos by John Rice

(We last left our three-wheeled protagonist on Sunday night, exhausted but happy, with the motorcycle swap completed on the rig)

Monday morning, bright sunshine but chilly here in a Kentucky spring, we headed south, with the "new" rig untested except for a jaunt around the block. Optimism is one of the first requirements of motorcycle touring.

Down Rt. 15, taking the curves slowly but without drama. Last year we had started this way on another jaunt, but with the worn out rear shock, on the 06, every bend caused the bike to hobby-horse from front to back and we gave in to the four-lane. Now with the new suspender in the back of the 07 and actual oil-containing forks in the front, it tracked level and true, with no

discernible pulling to either side and we could stay awhile on the crooked road, enjoying the scenery.

At Pikeville, we changed plans, opting to head toward Abingdon, VA instead of taking 52 to Bluefield as we had been our loose itinerary. It is nice to give ourselves the option of instant redirection. We paused for lunch in Jenkins, KY at the combination pharmacy and cafe on Main Street, where we were the topic of conversation for the regulars who had to stop by our table and find out why such oddly dressed strangers were in their midst.

Over many years we have visited Abingdon to bicycle the Virginia Creeper Trail, to see plays at the Barter Theater and just as a way-station on trips to the Blue Ridge and other points south. It is a bucolic southern town and a

tourist destination widely known for the seriously upscale Martha Washington Inn (now advertising itself as just "The Martha") but since the website says the "senior citizen's rate" for a room there is \$239 per night, we opted for our usual place, the Alpine Motel (rate \$59) on the outskirts. Too far to walk, we boarded our rig again and motored slowly into town to see what had changed since last we were here.

Our favorite restaurant on past visits here was "The Hardware Store", a nice place in, oddly enough, a converted hardware store on Main Street. It has been closed for a few years, but now has reopened as "The Bone Fire Grill at the Hardware", a barbecue place that retained some of the interior appointments of the old spot, but not the same feel.

Beemers in the Bluegrass Mini Rally

September 9th—11th

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The 'que is good, the service fairly quick and it serves the purpose.

The rest of the downtown is showing its age, with some empty storefronts where not long ago were businesses, but it's just a phase, one common to small towns these days. In a few years it will be bustling again.

In the morning, we motored down Route 58 to Damascus, a wonderful little place flourishing

opportunities afforded by the juxtaposition of the Appalachian Trail and the Virginia Creeper Trail. 58 is a superb motorcycle road going on over the mountains from there, but our agenda was calling us south. We turned right onto 91, following the twisty creek down to Blowing Rock, one of our favorite haunts in this part of the country. One can always find a memorable lunch at the Storie Street restau-

(where I again bought hats, a particular weakness of mine) and then off to Elkin for a visit with some of Brenda's New England relatives who had recently relocated to a place where the snow doesn't last 6 months every year. Terry and Inge have an 8 acre place in the hills, where roams Annie the dog who looks like a wolf, seems to have the power of speech and can open doors to let herself in and out at will.

Brenda in her preferred element. In the sidecar, on the Blue Ridge Parkway



because of the recreational opportunities, poke into some shops

On Wednesday morning we bade farewell to our hosts and the marvelous Annie and motored up Route 21 to get back to the Blue Ridge Parkway. The last few miles climb tortuously up a series of switchbacks to gain elevation and then suddenly there it is, the magic road.

Fans of science fiction are familiar with the phenomenon of slipping from one world into another, to a place where the conventions of ordinary life are suspended and the new place, though it may look similar to the old one, has a different feel, a softer light, air that is perfectly breathable but yet not quite the same. The Parkway does that for me, every time. Though I've been coming to it for renewal for more than 30 years, since Tom Sutherland introduced me to it in the early 80's, the feeling never dims, never disappoints. I've seen this road in three seasons (it's mostly closed in the winter) and they are all wonderful up here.

On this day, the road is nearly empty on a mid-week morning in the off-season for tourists. The foliage is just now coming back from its winter's sleep with most trees just barely dressed enough for polite company. The pavement has succumbed in several places to the inexorable power of nature, slow and steady ice easily over matching man's arrogant asphalt. There are crews out doing the patching that will hold for the coming tourists until they can repave it in the warmer weather. Still, nothing, not a few rough patches here and

there, can take away the magic of this place.

We find a pace, often at the speed limit of 45 mph, where the rig just sails along as if on the proverbial rails. With the 650 single working hard at our fully loaded touring status, I often have to downshift into second to keep the RPM in the sweet spot for the long curvy climbs, taking us down to 35 or so, but there's no one up here to impede and we're in no hurry. Heaven knows I've spent time on the two-wheeler following slow motorhomes up these inclines during high season, so I feel not a bit of guilt. At this leisurely rate we can see more than at our usual two-wheeled, "lean the curves" pace. A good friend who travels mainly by bicycle told me once that he felt sorry for the people in cars that passed him quickly on his slow ascent of the steep mountains in the Canadian Rockies. He said that they only got to see those spectacular peaks for a few seconds as they hurried by, while he got to study the grandeur for hours. I understand exactly what he meant, even though we're still going a bit more rapidly.

There is no commercial traffic up here, no billboards or neon signs or gravel parking lots with worn out cars along the edges. Just trees, valleys that go on forever to the next peak, huge salad bowls of trees that are mottled gray and green now, soon will be a brilliant flourishing verdant tangle and then in fall will be the largest cereal bowl of Trix the world has ever seen.

For now we motor serenely along on our Gryphon-like machine, part motorcycle, part sedan chair, neither fish nor fowl but something else entirely, perfect for this time and place. Brenda smiles as she slowly turns her helmeted head from side to side, taking it all in from her comfortable capsule. She says she still has a nagging memory of the old silent films, where the sidecar suddenly goes independent and careers off into the scenery on its own errand, but by now she's relatively confident in the attachment, even though she knows it was me who tightened the bolts.

The rain starts just as we are within reach of Blowing Rock again, and it's about time for a stop anyway, so we cruise into town as the sky opens up and dumps its contents on us. We find the old-style Hemlock Inn, right in the center of town and get a room with our rig parked in front of the door so we can unload without getting too wet. Later the downpour has exhausted itself and we can walk the streets, find an excellent dinner at the Storie Street Grille and soon are tucked up in our bed for the night.

In the morning, the sun is shining with that clarity that only comes after a storm has washed the sky clean, but everything is still wet, so we opt for a leisurely breakfast at Kojay's and a stroll of the waking-up streets of Blowing Rock while our gear dries out. We are back up on the Parkway by 10, rising into the cool damp air. Folks who re-

main sealed inside cars never know that feeling of the changing temperature, the texture of the air as one rises from the valleys to the peaks. There are deer delicately picking their steps as they navigate the damp asphalt crossing the road. We stop in at the Moses Cone visitor's center, a craft shop and history repository made in the former mansion of Mr. Cone, a 19th century textile entrepreneur. It is said that his hobby, after making his millions, was road building. I picture him in those days, pushing back from the supper table and

telling the family that he's just going to pave a few miles before bedtime. Back soon.

It is a perfect day on the Parkway, a road that Mr. Cone would no doubt admire for its beauty, its quiet and its ambition to stay up here on the ridges. There still is no traffic to speak of, though I have to admit to myself that it may in part be due to the fact that, unlike our two-wheeled ventures here, we are now keeping a pace that makes us incapable of catching up to anything that might be an impediment. We are rising and falling in alti-

tude as the Parkway wends its way along the mountainsides, noting that the trees and roadside foliage change their clothing in keeping with the height. There is, for us, a required stop at Switzerland, another of our "must see" places here, where one can peruse the little shops in the parking area at the hotel. While Brenda wandered through the offerings, I got into conversation with the older gentleman running one shop that sold, among other things, Swiss Army Knives. It has long been a custom of mine to buy one of these knives on

At the Moses Cone Center. One of Mr. Cone's roads in the background



significant tours as a souvenir. Rather than something to gather dust on a shelf, these are carried and used on a daily basis and I can remember when and where in the world I was when I bought it. The helpful folks who make them keep coming up with new variations to prevent me from duplication. This fellow knew his knives and was able to show me the different ones he had on

offer and illuminate their multiple uses. Seeing my garb and the helmet I carried, he asked what I was riding and that sparked our conversation about bikes. He started riding in 1948, the year I was born, and over his career had Harleys, BMW's, old Meridan Triumphs and now has a "new" Hinkley Bonneville. Sadly his wife who rode with him died two years

ago and now he's not riding much. Still, he walked out of the shop to see the sidecar rig and I could tell that his interest in it was more than just being polite to a customer.

Just down the road a few hundred yards from the Switzerland Inn is the Little Switzerland store and cafe, another mandatory stop. When Jay and I first visited here back in the 80's, this



was a tiny store (run by a guy from Prestonsburg, KY) that offered a few items for campers and hikers and maybe a deli-style sandwich. Over the decades it has morphed into a large cafe, with the store attached, serving full meals and wonderful desserts. I opted for the kale salad for virtue and the apple pie for decadence. There is a row of other shops, including a good bookstore, now marching down the hill from the cafe, affording the traveler opportunities for a pleasant afternoon of browsing, making Little Switzerland now a

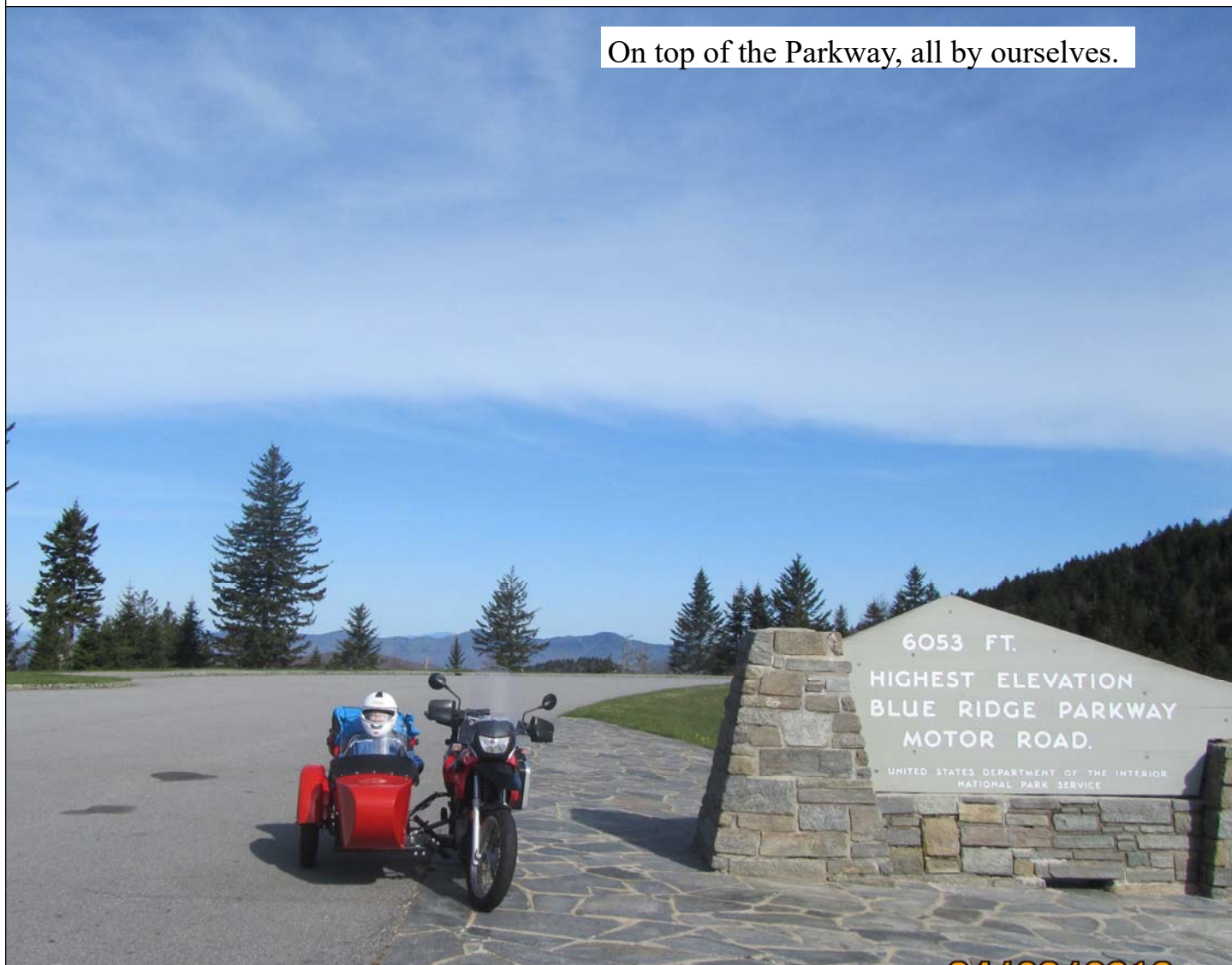
destination rather than a stop on the way.

We spent so long at Switzerland that the day's end was creeping up on us faster than expected, leading us to stop for the night at the Pisgah Inn, just south of Asheville. This Inn sits perched on the top of Mt. Pisgah, overlooking the valley that contains Asheville and the forest that once was Mr. Vanderbilt's backyard when he constructed the Biltmore House. Rooms here are nearly impossible to get without long-advance reservations during tourist season, but today we are able to walk right

in. In addition to its amazing location, the hotel offers a marvelous restaurant with huge windows taking in the view over the valley. We lucked into a window seat for dinner and enjoyed our meal as the sun slowly retreated from the treetops below.

As we leave the Pisgah Inn in the morning, we are heading south-ish, with the sun casting uneven light on the valleys off to our side. The parkway meanders along the ridge top, with the chasm below changing sides, sometimes Brenda gets the view and me the rock wall and then the other way around. We're at

On top of the Parkway, all by ourselves.



about 5,000 feet, going down to less than 2,000 at the terminus near Cherokee, but first we have to climb up to the highest point on the Parkway, just over 6,000 feet above sea level. To make these changes, the road goes up and down in dramatic fashion, plunging into the gaps and, for us on the loaded rig, crawling slowly up the other side. Once the high point is reached, the direction is steadily downward, though there are a few climbs left just for spice. Rhododendrons are beginning to bloom at the lower altitude and the trees are fully fledged, unlike their higher located relations. The rig is running beautifully, singing along at about 5,000 RPM, not seeming to strain much, tracking straight and true with only a bit of weight-transfer antics in the turns required from its age-stiffened driver. Leaning in or out, as the occasion demands, does seem to ease the machine's progress through the turns, as felt through the resistance on the bars. Like any machine, there is a rhythm that it wants to fall into and if the operator can find and accommodate it, everyone gets along much better.

After the twenty-plus mile downhill run to the southern end of the Parkway, the feeling is still the same after all these years when it ends at US 441, a bitter-sweet sadness that one must return to "real life" with all its 21st Century aggravations, the rubbing up against other people and their requirements, all of which seem absent up on the Parkway.

A left turn and shortly we are in the town of Cherokee, NC, the home of the Cherokee Nation's Eastern Band and also the locus of an awful lot of tourist magnets. One can find here everything possibly desired to gather dust on one's mantle for years to come. But we've come to learn a bit about the tribe, so we pull into the Museum of the Cherokee Nation where, before we even get inside, we find craftsmen in traditional garb making things the old way in the courtyard. One young man shows us a strap made by "finger weaving", a process in which the threads are suspended from a convenient tree branch and all of the warp and weft is done without a loom, just using dexterous fingers. Brenda makes beautiful woven objects on her loom at home and these are every bit the equal, done with no technology at all. Another man is repairing moccasins, using the process taught to him by his mother and to her by hers, down the line to the old days. He describes for us the "smoke and brain" tanning method which produces a superior leather for these uses. The moccasins he's repairing are more than 30 years old and still beautiful, with the look that only well-cared-for leather can have.

Inside, the exhibits are extremely well done, presenting a balanced sort of view of the interaction between the European "settlers" and the Native Americans they encountered. There were great men and women on both sides, with different agendas, but it still must be under-

stood that one group invaded another's homeland and pushed them out by force. In one form or another, it has always happened, throughout history, everywhere in the world where there are humans of every stripe, but it is not a pretty picture, no matter from which side one views it.

We left the museum, intending to come back to the Oconoluftee Village after lunch. We found sustenance at an old-style restaurant, one with a tree growing through the roof of the outside deck, and after having rested our old bones and over-eaten, we decided to just go on into Waynesville to get a room for the night. The old road from here to there winds up over a mountain and is lined by the remnants of the days before the four-lanes bypassed it all, the shells of old motels, places with signs that just said "EAT" and roadside stands where once "native curiosities" were displayed for the tourists who swayed along this highway in their overlarge, under-sprung American land yachts, windows rolled down in those pre-airconditioned days.

In Waynesville, we return to the Oak Park Inn, a 50's style motel with the rooms arranged around a courtyard. It is definitely motorcycle friendly and has just the right ambiance for a bike trip. We can walk downtown from here and it is a real downtown, with shops and restaurants on the main street. We've come here before on many Blue Ridge trips and it is always a good time. A perusal of the Mast General Store finds

things we didn't know we needed yet and an excellent dinner awaited us at the Sweet Onion just down one block from there. We stroll back to our room as the sun goes down behind the mountains and soon are fast asleep.

Saturday morning we have

where there are lots of them around and folks who know more about them than me (which wouldn't be a high bar to reach) to talk to about life with one on the side.

But, my timing is off. As we approach the rally site, we see a long line of rigs coming the

with an outfit very similar to ours and manage to extract some information from them that is reassuring. We meet the Millers, a couple from Florida, who have two rigs: hers is a beautiful EML based around an 82 BMW RS and his a late model R1100 GS with a Ural car. They pull a



At the Oak Park Inn

planned to attend the Sidecars in the Smokies rally at the Iron Horse Motorcycle Lodge near Robbinsville NC. I've never been to a sidecar rally and indeed, have never seen more than the occasional sidecar rig besides my own. I want to be in a place

other way, obviously heading out on some sort of group excursion elsewhere. When we arrive at the Lodge in Stecoah, there are only a few rigs in evidence and they seem to be unattended. Over in the campground, I do find a couple from Tennessee

large camping trailer with his, having all the comforts of home at their disposal. We talked for a long while about rigs and other things, with me, a Kentucky boy, getting schooled in expert fashion about our native Bourbon

whiskey by a Floridian. No tasting...can't do that and ride !

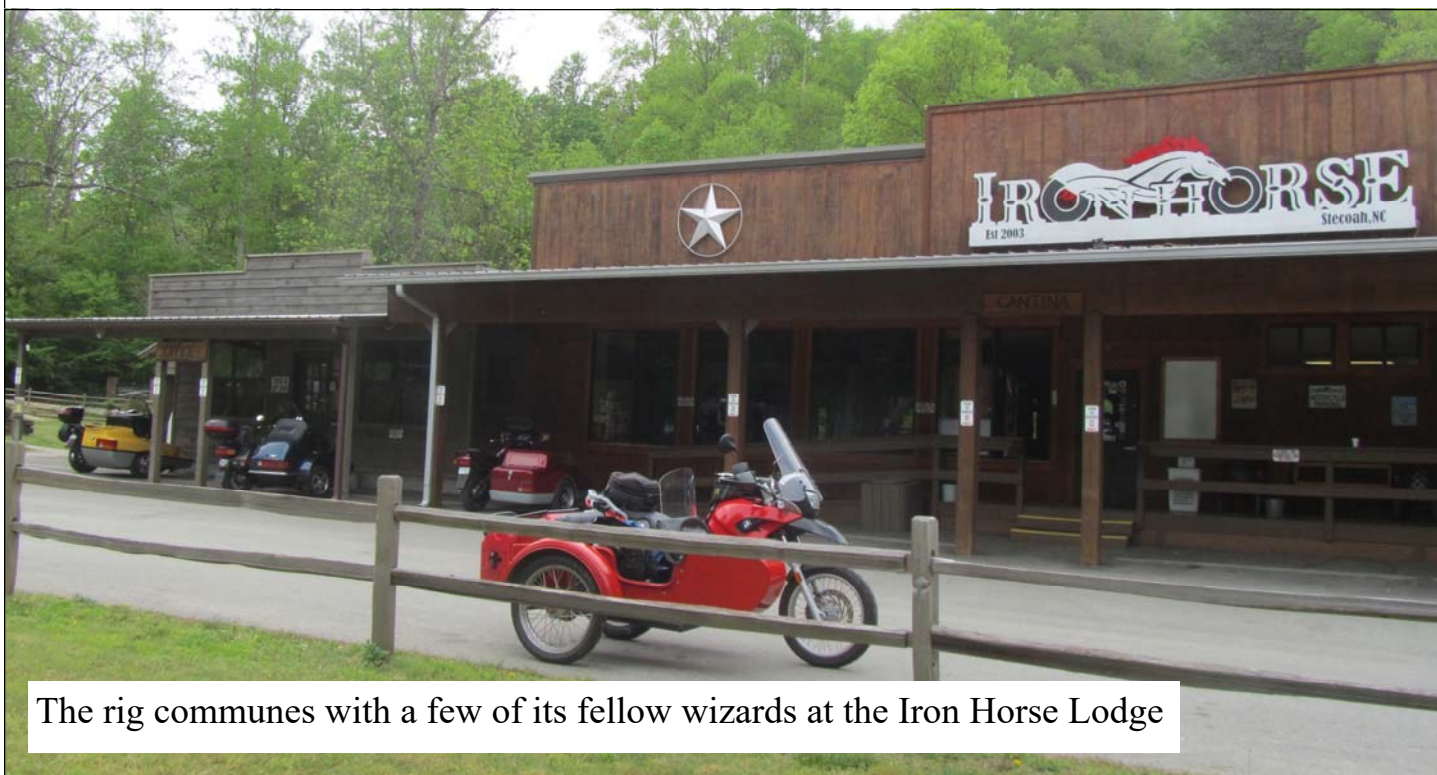
Iron Horse Resort has a restaurant, but doesn't serve lunch ("everybody's always out riding then", they told us, quite correctly), so we went on up the twisty NC 28 to Fontana Village for lunch, on their deck, always a good choice. Another stop back at the campground failed to turn up any returnees from the group ride. We saw them on our way back to Waynesville, at about the same point we had seen them on the way in. Our timing, bad as it may be, is impeccable.

Back at our room, we walked

once-in-a-lifetime finery were all helping each other adjust the dresses, trying to keep all the decorative bits, and their own bits, in place. Shining young faces elegantly made up and hopeful for the perfection they wanted from this night. We, well down the other side of the slope they were just beginning to ascend, made an early end to the evening.

Waynesville has an excellent bakery, just a couple of blocks from the Oak Park Inn, which serves breakfast in nearly any form one could desire and presents a pastry case that weakens

packed up for the long trek back to their routines, where they would again be workers and family members, no longer motorcyclists on an adventure. At a gas stop we ran into Hubert, a German ex-pat now living in northern Ohio, who was piloting an EML sidecar outfit, based upon an airhead R100GS/PD. He hadn't known of either rally, the GMR or the Sidecars, but just happened to be passing through when someone pulled him into the GMR orbit, where he won the "Long Distance Sidecar" award. His rig was, for me, instant Moto-Lust, with its low,



The rig communes with a few of its fellow wizards at the Iron Horse Lodge

around Waynesville looking for supper. On this Saturday night, all restaurants we tried were booked solid until 8:30, too late for us old folks. We lucked into a spot at the Sweet Onion again, even though prom night revelers were there. As Brenda pointed out, the girls arriving in their

the strongest resolve. Well fortified, we motored down Rt. 23, headed for Helen, GA. There had been rain all night, but this morning was dry and cool as we passed through Hiawassee, site of the Georgia Mountain Rally this same weekend. Many BMWs were headed north, riders

well braced sturdy looking custom built frame for sidecar use, the wide solid wheels with tubeless car-type tires on interchangeable rims so that only one spare covered them all and, of course, an engine I can actually understand. Alas, it is an unrequited lust, since EML no longer

brings its products to the USA. There are some used ones around, but the owners do not part with them without good reason.

Rain caught us at Helen while we were enjoying a German lunch at the Hofbrauhaus. This is the most authentic reproduction of a roadside Gasthaus that I've seen on this side of the pond, including the arrangement of the bar, the draft beers available, the way the tables are set up and the numbered rooms upstairs. The wurst is the best and the strudel, flown in from Ger-

many, is worth the trip all by itself. After overeating, we checked in at the Heidi Motel across the street, with its enormous windmill and slightly overdone faux Teutonic/Dutch facade. Kitsch aside, it's a good place to stay and quite convenient to Helen's downtown and restaurants.

After breakfast at Hofer's restaurant, another requirement for a Helen visit, its back across the mountains to Cherokee. We wanted to complete our tour of the Oconoluftee Indian Village, a place I had last seen as an

eleven year old Boy Scout. It's up on the hill above the town of Cherokee and one of the first things we learn is that the native people wouldn't have been living up here in the past time it depicts. Their preferred lodgings were down by the river, but up here is where the theater was built in the 50's for presenting the historical play "Unto These Hills" and over time, it just made logistical sense to put the village up here for the tourists. Pragmatic. We walked the paths from one exhibition site to another, learning of various Native





The Heidi Motel, Helen GA

American ways and crafts. Along the way we picked up that "She-Oh" is "hello" or its equivalent in the Cherokee language and "Ski" is an approximation of "thank you". (Those terms and "where's the bathroom" are about the extent of my fluency in several foreign languages.). The village includes examples of homes made by the Cherokee at various points in their long history, from simple earthen or hide-based structures to cabins constructed of hewn logs. We learned of their governmental system, based on a clan system, which routinely included women in important decision making roles long before such ideas were considered in European-type cultures. (In the museum we had read an account

by a colonist who lived for a while with the Cherokee, in which he asked a chief "why do you give your women such power?" The Cherokee replied, apparently puzzled by the question, "they have always had it."). Late in the tour, after Brenda had participated in native dances with the presenters, the sky opened up, dumping an amazing amount of water in a very short time, ensuring that we were soaked before we could get to the parking area to don our rain gear and get off the mountain. Opting for the "any port in a storm" strategy, we pulled into the nearest motel and got a room for the night.

A mile or two from our night's lodging is the entrance to the Blue Ridge and soon we are on

that long, long climb back into the other reality that is found up here on the ridges. To enhance the feeling of transition, there is mist down at the bottom which clears as we ascend, like the special effects in old movies. At the top, there is no traffic and the rig is running wonderfully, sipping the cool dense air and gliding through the curves smoothly as if wanting to show off its suitability for this place. There are banks of clouds, leftovers from the storm, that are moving above us, competing with the morning sun for dominance over the view below. Their shadows sweep across the valleys creating a chiaroscuro painting that, if one saw it in a museum, would think it too perfectly beautiful to be real. The brilliant sunlight



Native Dancers (we didn't know it was a rain dance)

washes out the light green of the new growth and then the cloud provides the necessary shading to bring it back and then they move on to the next valley to do it over again.

We stopped for a bit at the Water Rock Knob visitor's center and talked for a while with the ranger running the tiny store. This man's "office" is the top of a mountain, surrounded by national forest and his commute to work is the Parkway. Sort of makes the idea of a carpet-covered cubicle in an urban high-rise almost obscene.

To complete Brenda's trifecta of perfect places to stay on a Blue Ridge trip, we stopped for the night at the Switzerland Inn. At dinner we learned that we were sharing the hotel with a high school reunion class of folks about our age. However, since they weren't traveling on motorcycles, they looked much older than us, in our opinion.

Up for a cold damp morning at Switzerland, wandering around the place to enjoy the misty view and talked for a while with Joe, the night watchman, who had been checking out the rig in the lot. I opened up the tonneau and

showed him how the sidecar seat and windshield worked and we discussed for a bit the motorcycle groups that often found lodging here on their visits to the Parkway. Employees like Joe are often unseen by the guests, but they take in everything that happens.

After breakfast, we pointed the rig north again, with soft morning sunlight filtering down through the green canopy, everything looks new, just as it does every morning in this surreal place. Like yesterday, I feel "in the zone", taking the curves smoothly, fitting together all the

pieces of speed, RPM, the up and down and around of the bends, while looking out for the critters waking up and getting about their business. Brenda is scanning the valleys, smiling in her helmet, gloved hands resting comfortably in her lap. It is cold and damp up here at this early hour, but as always, it's hard to feel anything but the sheer joy of this place. Though we were just here, going south, a few days ago, it seems new, timeless and

perfect. I don't know how many times one would have to ride this road until it got boring, I only know I haven't come close to that number after more than 30 years.

All too soon it ends for us on this trip as we reach the furthest point on the northbound Parkway we can go and still make it back at the appointed time to pick up Simon. While we are retired and have no other obligations, it is the adopted furball

who now runs our schedule. We head north, again into rain and after a night in Middlesboro, arrive home in time to retrieve the dog from his second home with the pet sitter. He is, after all, worth it, but we will leave him there again soon to go back on the road. This sidecar thing has become addictive and the successful swap for a more reliable machine has only increased the craving. We have no interest in a cure.



Up on the Parkway, after the storm

Cruising 101

Article & Photos by James Street

"I wrote this article for the Commonwealth Yacht Club publication "Nauti News" that has been published. It's a bit lengthy but provides some evidence of how I ended up in this mess...

History-

In 1979 I was laid off from a seasonal construction job and immediately began conniving to spend most of the winter in the Florida Keys, and the principal motivation was to chase the ethos created by Jimmy Buffett in his "Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes" release of a year earlier. With co-conspirators otherwise known as friends I made the trip south and spent the winter partying incessantly, drinking lots of cheap beer, and most importantly I got my first taste of blue water sailing. Once home in Kentucky and back to gainful employment I spent countless hours dreaming of sailing to Buffett's banana republics and escaping the drudgery of a life punctuated by responsibilities. My lust for water adventure was semi-sated by piddling around on local lakes in a small sailing dinghy that

ended up beaten into disintegration through constant abuse, and occasionally I was able to scheme a sailing charter that only served to incite the lust for open water and serve as the fodder for constant daydreaming that didn't endear me to various employers.

Through marriage, kids and career the dream stayed alive even if it didn't manifest itself in actually getting out on the water. In countless conversations my wife and I would talk about retiring to live on our imagined sailboat and plying seas and oceans. After years of ideas, dreams and schemes, my significant other looked at me and said, "If you really want to do this we need to get a boat. I've never sailed." So we did, and fifteen years and three boats later we have spent the last six months cruising the west coast of Florida after having brought the boat down the Tennessee and Tennessee-Tombigbee River system.

Departure-

Glass Slipper, our Beneteau 331, departed Lighthouse Landing on October 12, 2015, with the specific and well

thought out plan of "getting to Mobile Bay and turning left" and continuing to a latitude where warmth would be guaranteed. Some fourteen hundred miles, 28 marinas, innumerable gales, beautiful sunsets, new friends, hundreds of dolphin encounters, a few repairs, a couple of good days of sailing, and hours of droning along on the engine, we are now poised to begin the return to our home base.

Each part of this adventure has been unique: We found the Kentucky Lake and Tennessee River system to be a leisurely cruise with ample locations for fuel and dockage. Similarly, the Tombigbee system remains in relative civilization with the occasional harbor or town where fuel and provisions can be obtained; however, once into the Mobile river south of Bobby's Fish Camp the waterway descends into a wilderness serving as a reminder of how large and undeveloped some portions of this country remain. While the river system isn't conducive to sailing, there's a subtle beauty in travelling at a fast walking pace through country that hasn't substantially changed since



Glass Slipper under sail in the Gulf.

the time of Lewis and Clark or the writings of Mark Twain. The wildlife and remote unmolested forest were only interrupted by the drumming of a small diesel engine as the bow of Glass Slipper gracefully sliced through muddy water. A few times each day a towboat appeared ahead of us, moving her load of wood chips, crushed stone or coal to another part of the country, and those meetings were punctuated by radio conversations about which side to pass: "You want me to pass on your one or on your two?" Another aspect of river travel that hasn't changed appreciably for decades is the lock and dam system. Thirteen locks separate Kentucky Lake from the Gulf and those became a repetitive routine of contacting the lockmaster, waiting for the gates to open, slowly entering the chamber, tying off, and then waiting for the chamber to fill or drain (fill once; drain twelve times), and then waiting to leave until the lockmaster signaled that all was well to exit. It was a trip back in time that required very little imagination to get into the aura of an era when shanty boats and pole pushed barges made the same trip. Mobile Bay brought us into the realm of waterway commerce where we were delayed by a large container ship that required the entire channel to

turn into her berth, and it was at that time that an officer from the Mobile Police harbor patrol engaged us in a friendly conversation where he obtained all of our pertinent information—origin of trip, destination, time on water, and so on—in a nonthreatening way. His tact could be used for training officers in how to conduct themselves when interacting with their constituents.

The Panhandle-

Serving as the segue from river to sea, Mobile Bay connects into the gulf coast Intra-coastal Waterway system (ICW), and begins the transition from brown to blue water while at the same time transiting from an expression of the writings of Twain to the music of Buffett. We spent our first night of getting into the mood of the ocean by dining at Lulu's, Jimmy Buffett's sister's restaurant, but neither Jimmy nor Lulu made an appearance while we were there. After several days of moving east and nights at various marinas, we reached Port St. Joe, and we celebrated Thanksgiving with other cruisers at a local couple's home where they served dinner for 42 people with all of the trimmings. The unknown and dread of spending what is traditionally a family holiday with strangers quickly dis-

pelled and the day turned into one which I will long recall as being one of the most memorable of my life.

Crossing-

Port St. Joe was to serve as our point of departure for crossing the Gulf to Tarpon Springs. As the only open water crossing required to get to the southern portion of Florida, some thirty hours of sailing/motoring separate the Port St. Joe portion of the Gulf from the deep water access afforded by Tarpon Springs and points south. Our crossing was delicious. I hadn't been on an overnight ocean trip for decades, but the original trip was an incredible experience and the most recent was exhilarating. There's a feeling of humility, insignificance and vulnerability that accompanies and permeates me when out of sight of land. That feeling also engenders a closeness and link to nature that is only found in grand places: mountains, canyons, waterfalls, and of course the ocean. Night only serves to amplify those feelings, as the overhead pallet of sky and stars adds to the magnificence of the universe as experienced by sailing. Sunrise brought warmth, comfort and the first sight of land, and the next several hours were spent dodging acres of crab pots as we wove our way into the Anclote River

and into Tarpon Springs.

Florida-

Tarpon Springs captivated us. The Greek culture, active sponge boats, cafes, and friendly folks made us feel as if we'd found a home in a village on the Adriatic coast. What was originally planned to be a couple of days stay turned into two weeks, and we immersed ourselves in the culture: we visited the Greek Orthodox cathedral and ended up getting a couple of hours of guided tour by the knowledgeable caretaker, and

ultimately we went back to a service (the liturgy was sung in Greek). We ate Greek food at the various restaurants and thoroughly enjoyed all of it, and we made several friends whom we have remained in contact with.

After Tarpon Springs we moved south to Clearwater Beach where we spent a month enjoying the manicured beaches and friendly atmosphere. During this time our daughter came to spend a week with us, and we celebrated Christmas on the boat. Once more had a holi-

day dinner with new friends on the deck of an adjacent boat, and again this is a Christmas memory that I will cherish.

Clearwater gave way to Ft. Myers, where we went with the intention of escaping the unseasonably and unusual cold that had enveloped the Clearwater area. On the way we were stopped by a drawbridge that had mechanical difficulties, and we looked for a temporary mooring for Glass Slipper to sit out an evening where severe weather was forecast. Madeira Beach Mu-



Clearwater Beach, FL

municipal Marina offered refuge, and we tied up on the back side of their fuel dock to await the evening's storms. Those storms turned into tornados that destroyed homes, beached boats and generally wreaked havoc on the immediate area around us. At about four in the morning the winds had

began exploding from debris that was flying through the air (72 knot winds were recorded where we were). The green hue permeating the horizontal rain as the explosions occurred provided a surreal other-worldly aura to the evening as we leaned into the wind wondering if we were going to be

turned into two weeks, as we were taken in by the quaint and funky community of Gulfport. Additionally, the easy access to St. Petersburg and its cultural offerings-the Dali Museum-and restaurants made it difficult to leave. Again, folks met at the marina turned into friends, and our two



Clearwater Beach, FL

climbed to the point that Glass Slipper had heeled enough that the fenders protecting her from the floating dock had gone beneath the dock's rail, and Stacey and I had to shove the boat off between gusts to pull fenders up. While we both hung on to keep from being blown off the dock, transformers within a stone's throw

picked up and transported to Kansas. We were lucky. Glass Slipper had no damage, but as we left the marina we passed a half dozen boats that were blown off their moorings and were sickeningly beached on their sides. Stopping at Gulfport, near St. Petersburg, was supposed to last a couple of days but

weeks there were filled with dinners, drinks, and good times.

A month at Legacy Harbour in Ft. Myers afforded us time to drive down to the Keys, visit the Edison and Ford estates, attend several festivals, catch up with old friends who'd relocated there, and again meet and make new friends.

Now we are back in Clearwater looking for a weather window to cross the Gulf so we can get back to another anticipated summer on Kentucky Lake. While we've been here a waterspout came on shore a half mile away that turned into a tornado that damaged homes, and that has served as a healthy reminder that cold

fronts can turn into nasty and destructive weather events. So we await a period of good weather that will allow us to safely return.

The Summary-

We didn't make it to any banana republics and Jimmy Buffett would likely be bored with our adventure, but this has been a travel odyssey that

we will definitely repeat. From the highs of meeting and socializing with people to the lows of dealing with violent and nasty weather, we have enjoyed cruising immensely. As happened in that winter so long ago, I know that I will go home changed... I want more of this cruising life."

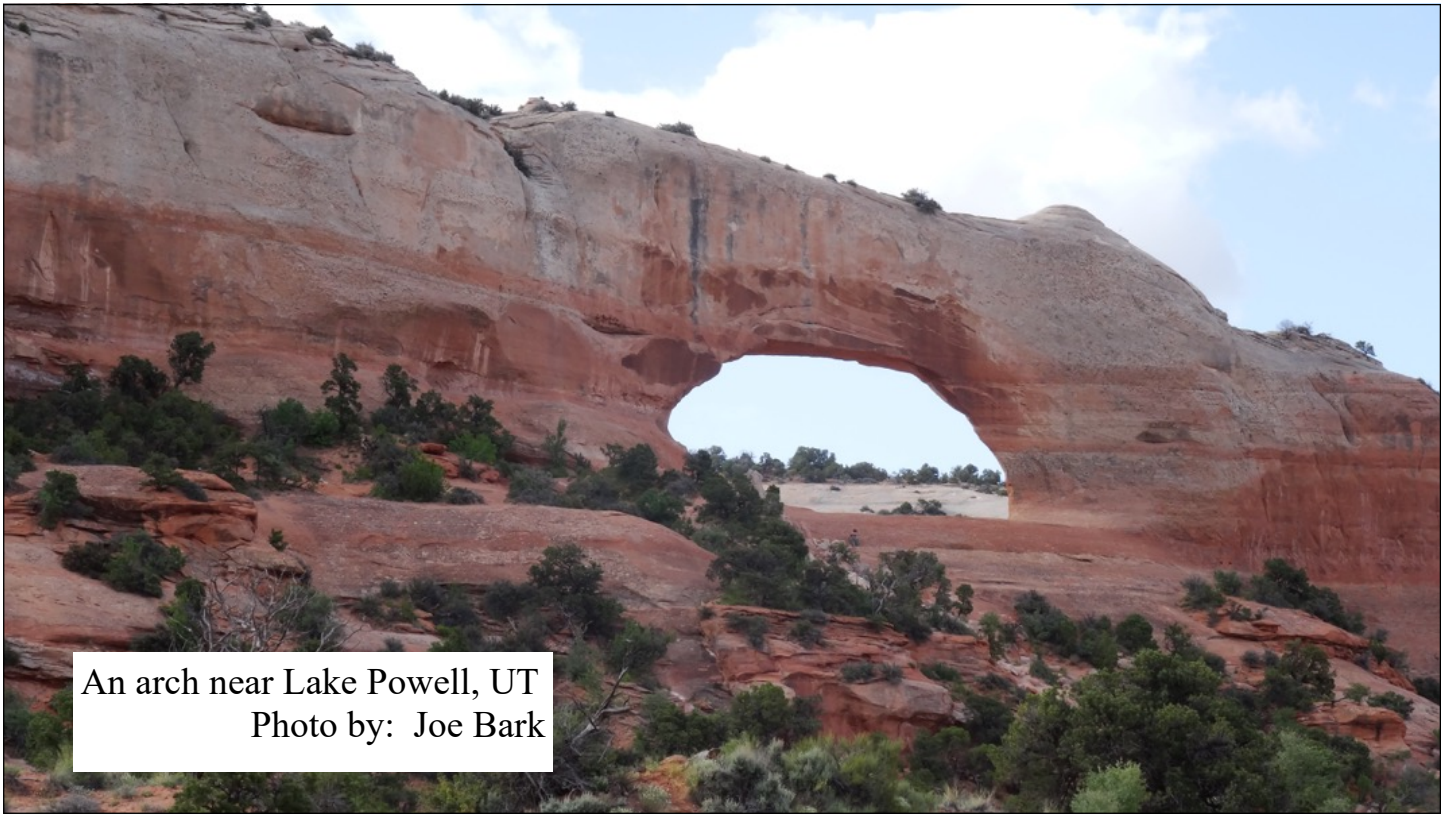
BMW of Louisville Open House June 18th, 2016 from 9am to 5pm

Remaining 2015 models will have special pricing along with all used bikes.

I am going to plan a route or place/s for people to ride for something else to do in the afternoon. Nothing official for the ride, I will look for some places and if you have any suggestions let me know. Nothing over a 2 hours please unless you have specific plans with a group of people.

Come over and hang out with us for a good time by all.

- Free Food and drinks
- All in stock BMW clothing will be have special pricing. Already marked clearance items will be marked down.
- Schuberth clearance helmets take another 10% off.
- Non clearance Schuberth helmets will be 10%- 15% off.
- Special ordered BMW clothing will get same pricing.
- Raffle prizes, must be present to enter. I will mail to you if you win and have left already.
 - BMW jacket credit of \$200, good towards purchase of any new BMW jacket.
 - \$100 gift card
 - \$50 gift card
 - BMW Motorcycles of Louisville T-shirts





We were incredulous that these relatively RECENT tar snakes were a STILL traction problem, even at temps in the 50's! We were made believers quickly, though; in corners, avoiding them was sometimes a challenge! Please remember this!!

Photo by: Joe Bark



Twin Rocks in Bluff, UT

Photo by: Joe Bark



FOR THOSE WHO MAY THINK OLD MAN WINTER WINS,
IN LESS THAN A WEEK, SUMMER BEGINS,
THE AIR IS SOFT, THE GROUP IS MELLOW,
IT'S TIME FOR A RIDE AND SOME QUIBBLYNG JELLO...



Here's the group for today:

- * 1). Chris Warner
- * 2). Joe Bark
- * 3). Steve Shoemaker & Chris ^{ON JOE'S OLD KIDNET} (Joe's Brother-in-law)
- * 4). Chester Martin
- * 5). Paul Elwyn
- * 6). Jim Brendon
- * 7). Hubert Burton
- * 8). Phillip Baugh
- * 9). Boone Sutherland
- * 10). Ron Adkins
- * 11). John Rice
- * 12). Pete Galskis
- * 13). Bill Voss
- * 14). Mike Gregory
- * 15). Steve Bishop
- * 16). Randy Scott
- * 17). Darlene Huffman
- * 18). Gary Huffman
- * 19). Bob Riley
- * 20). Ben Brewitt
- * 21). Steve Rahlfig
- * 22). Jeff Crebt
- * 23). Russell Travis

Boone

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
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
Leanings 3 By Peter Egan
Ghost Rider By Neal Peart

