

Apex

March 2016

Looking Through The Curve

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



Photo: John Rice

Is Spring here yet?

By Jeff Crabb

First of all, yes I know we are a BMW club, but the Bul-taco made a perfect cover photo. It had worked hard on the first day of a new year and was resting, but ready to go further, if needed.

Mother Nature is teasing us, each time we think the weather is turning warmer, she'll whip out a brisk couple of days to remind us that, yes, it is still Winter. I have been amazed on how many motorcycles I've seen out on these

warmer days. Even with the occasional reality check from Mother Nature, Spring is on it's way.

This month, we have a continuation of Bill Denzer's story and a story about a New Year's day tradition that John Rice is trying to maintain. (Rumors are, Hallmark is in the process of creating a card to celebrate the first day of motorcycle riding each year...)

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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An Airhead Travels West (Twice in a Week)

Part III

By Bill Denzer aka Will E. Fienly



that ran a course out of Western Kentucky for friends in New Mexico/ Southern California/ Seattle and then finally to Whitefish, Montana, a trip lasting over 6 weeks and approx. 5K miles (on a budget of \$500)! Patricia's homesickness created a lot of stress between the two on that big trip (I suspected there was something deeper at root) and at times I almost left those two to bicker their way back to Kentucky but I toughed it. Adding to the stress

.....and she anointed my R100RS over with a Spliff of rolled Sage, performing a Native Cherokee Shaman Ritual from her Ancestral Recipe Book and she casted out Road Demons that evening as I was staged to take back to the road the next morning approx. 1 week delayed to, begin heading N/W towards first night lodging Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

I had not crossed through Iowa since the mid-70's whilst making way back from a visit to Montana friends early Aug. of the particular year, traveling on the most maintenance free and forgiving of lack of maintenance bike I have ever

owned, you know beg that motorcycling decade it had be a CB 750 I was sitting on top of! At that point in my early riding years I didn't know where the valves were much less servicing them, kept tire pressure, the chain lubed and properly adjusted then just road! Crossing into Iowa at that time, I was returning back to my home in Evansville Ind. Traveling along side of me literally (I did that those days) was a friend totting his young wife age 19 whom had never been anywhere out of the State of Ky. rural region she was from. She had become very homesick during this huge trip

was that my friends '75 Z1 900 burnt an exhaust valve and was impaired to make time. I was certain when returning home they would divorce and I was almost P.O.'d that a week later they were holding hands and smiling after all that tension that was added to the journey!

For that leg of this years ago trip, we entered Iowa late at night. Nearing the outskirts of Sioux City on the hot mid-summer night an incredible hatch of the Mayflies was occurring, it was Biblical in the proportions, the swarm apparently coming off the wetlands bordering the Missouri River.

The danger level on the road were off the scale traveling on the interstate, our view through the open faced helmets wearing only partial face shields quickly became occluded by bug squish, the roads had become squishy as well, I could feel the tires begin to squirm, not a good time to attempt any sudden braking, we had to swing into a truckers pavilion where an attendant was using a shop broom to push massive carpet layers of dying Mayflies into piles like snow. Clearing our face shields we returned to the interstate, I cannot recall where we were heading for the night? Quickly again the face shields goo'd up, we were riding blind as I hunkered as low over the handlebars as possible for miles making many stops to clear the face shield till we steered clear of the swarm! That was my last experience in Iowa; it formed a lasting impression in my mind about the state being a good state to get thru a.s.a.p.! That six week trip at that early age, was very much everything that it should be and then some and

since the first taste of "Red Dirt" I have ever since been compelled to return to have more of that!

To the present trip now, with a grin on my face and an ache in my butt I came into Cedar Rapids my first nights lodging where I had reserved a room. The sun was getting low, there was an attractive riverfront area with the usual Au Fresca dining for wine and merriment, neither was in my plans, a cold beer and pursuing my "U.S.A. Tour Across America" for The Best Huevos Rancheros and Chile Rellanos served, was what I had in my sites. I queried the motel clerk for suggestions of Mexican restaurants in the area; I could tell she made no distinctions between any. It is challenging to locate a truly independent Mexican Restaurant apart from the ubiquitous syndicated ones that permeate all towns large or small, it requires an acute sense to avoid, they go by different names but as soon as you look at their menus you know you are once again going to partake of Mexican Culinary Mediocrity,

aye carrumba! On the other hand it has been said the Mexican food and sex can be compared, when it's good it's great and when bad it's still "pretty good", comprende, no? I wound up in one of those types once again but "The Crack Was Good" inside as my friend Helmet attracts a lot of conversation with patrons.

Departing at the crack of dawn next morning out of Cedar Rapids my next scheduled stop was Wall S.D., I chose the town(?) as my destination for the ending a very long day of "Burnin-it" across the Prairie Winds heading into the sun to boot. Rifling into Central Iowa, it was time to get off the interstate and direct my route west along arrow straight Rt. 20. The semblance of populated areas began to dissipate ahead and behind and encompassing horizon panorama reminded of an observance of a "Mid-Western Sky" according to the author Ian Frasier, "The Sky Began to Yawn and Never Stopped"! Freedom to take eyes off the pavement ahead for longer than would be passable to an

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astutely proficient lecturer of motorcycle safety training was the order of the day for the next 200mi. As I fixated with reduced speed on what seemed to be hundreds of wind turbines staggered across piles of miles giving relief to the pancake terrain and then from a shrinking distance I could watch the acrobatics of the Crop duster blanketing parched brown dormant fields to what benefit I could not realize.

Fort Dodge was my next gas-up and fluid transfer Way Station. As I directed towards the small community's handful of vendors there were dozens maybe a few hundred of some of the healthiest people of varying ages running/ bicycling and hydrating all around me! Pulling into the pump island pavilion of the convenient store there were several RV's filling their voluminous gas tanks so I had to wait some time hoping they would not drain the supply. Granola and "Power Nutrients/Energy Charging/ Replenishing Drinks" were the big sellers and suddenly my Dr. Pepper looked shameful to be holding. Striking up then a conversation with a fellow pumping a few dozen gallons into his RV. I asked about all the bicyclers and was informed that this week was the annual "Ride between the Rivers" Marathon and the RV's

were support vehicles. Parked next to the service island my BMW was irrelevant as some of the upper echelon bicycles likely cost as much as a good used airhead! As I am a bicyclist myself, I felt grossly inadequate to undertake a ride encompassing the breath of distance between the two major waterways defining west/east Iowa borders, the Missouri and the Mississippi Rivers! Departing Fort Dodge onto U.S. 20W I passed under overpasses along which perhaps a thousand riders were within my sight far as I could see towards either horizon and wondered on such an excursion how out in the prairies they could take refuge in event of a severe storm that can suddenly brew up, violently pummeling the riders or worse a Tornado were to arise that Iowa is famous for?

It may have been approx. 3:00 local time crossing into S.D, several hundred miles behind was where I had departed early at the crack of dawn and the visage straight facing down I-80W into the now Western Sky sailing across in an ever increasing cross wind, how fast is safe was not yet determined and moving along a bit above street legal highway statutes I was encouraged to not see any RV laying on their side off the road any-

ways, I was in a braced posture for a long way to Wall. The billboards of Wall's "Oasis in the High Prairies" periodically announcing ever decreasing mileage gave some encouragement to my back/neck and Shoulders otherwise I had no allure to its offerings of shopping and souvenir pleasures. After checking into the \$100/night Super 8, I took my haggard self to the nearest thing I could find to a place where "The Locals" wash down the dust. Entering The Red Dog (or something like that) I saddled up to the bar and became acquainted with some other patrons asking what their preferences on the menus would be and talked a lot about a hard days ride and to indicate to the locals. The bartender, missing one half of his right ear, eventually interacted with me as he broke conversation with a few regulars, then as one not to be trifled with I ordered a PBR, belched ordered 2 after that! My body soaked the fluid intake like a dry barrel helping to wash down the "Big Buffalo Burger n Fries". I returned to my Super Priced Super 8 and nestled in for the next morning's early rise.

New Year's Day 2016

By John Rice

In some culture's tradition, one should do on New Year's Day what one intends to do the rest of the year. I don't know actually what culture that is, specifically, because I made it up and it's worked for me for many years. I make it a point to ride motorcycles on that First Day of the year. Given the weather usually available, on that day, the ride often is in the woods.

In recent years, my nephews Paul and Doug Rice, and then grandson Ian Rice have joined in the madness. Some years have been pleasant rides in the woods with reasonable temperatures and just-enough-moisture to be sticky trails. Others have been bitterly cold and/or sloppy muddy messes that left us frost-bit and covered in muck. This year was a bit of both.

I was watching the weather information for the last two weeks of the year, seeing it go from predictions of 50 degrees and sunny, steadily downhill until New Year's Eve when the Weather Channel app promised partial sun and a high of 32 for the eastern Kentucky region. Still, better than some

we've had and anyway, a day spent riding in the woods in any kind of weather is still better than a day in front of a screen.

Riding areas are becoming more scarce with each passing season as more land is closed off or developed. Paul Rice has a connection to a man who knows a man who has a farm near Hitchins in Carter County where we could go. We met, Paul, Doug, Ian and I, in a field off Route 1, where we were joined by Paul's contact and the property owner. The owner enjoys a bit of four-wheel off road

action and has roads and trails on his property that we could utilize. In fact, we learned, he and some friends wanted to go with us, to show us around, resulting in a "convoy" style ride for part of the day.

The ground was saturated by the previous week's rains, but fortunately there was little of the nasty yellow clay that turns to a greasy muck and then hardens into concrete when it gets in the crevices of a motorcycle. This was just ordinary, sloppy mud.



Ian started out on the TTR 125, the bike that had served him well last year on several outings and which he had ridden in my field just a week or two before. As often happens with teenagers, however, he had outgrown the thing in a very short period of time. Suddenly today, out on actual trails,

it was obvious that the bike was too small. Not power, for the 125 will pull astonishingly hard, but the overall size of the machine, which now gave the "circus bear on a bicycle" look. Anticipating that Ian might want a change of pace, we had brought the Bultaco Sherpa trials bike that Paul

had passed down to Ian last year. Then, Ian could not quite touch ground with both feet and kickstarting the 350cc single was exceedingly difficult for his not-yet-matured legs. Today, the bike fit him perfectly and he starts it like the seasoned veteran rider he is becoming.

On the convoy reconnaissance loop, we pass by the owner's deer stand on top of a hill. Not a platform clamped to a tree

trunk, it's a full-fledged tree house, larger and better constructed than my college apartments. This fellow is a man of means and knows how to use his assets. Since he and his friends are in "side by side" 4WD vehicles (including a

hilltop where we learn they have planned a cookout for us. They circle the wagons, start a bonfire, break out hotdogs and soft drinks from the cavernous storage of their vehicles. While the fire is building, we four motorcyclists go off for a bit of



Toyota pickup truck, with full roll cage and conversion to propane, so it will run upside down), we stick mainly to routes wide enough to accommodate those. They are able to easily run up rutted muddy tracks that require more work on our part, but then, they have many times more area of knobby rubber on the ground and four times the number of driven wheels per vehicle. Eventually they come to the

single-track exploring.

It's been about a year or more since I've been deep in sloppy mud and it's apparent to me that my skills and stamina have slipped noticeably in that time, and equally apparent that Ian's have increased. We come to a long rutted hill with a curved approach that saps momentum. Paul makes it halfway up on his Alpina, I get stopped at the bottom and Ian motors up past both of us like there was noth-

ing in his way. Later he tells me that he thought he was in too high a gear, not having seen the steepness of the hill soon enough, but he just screwed the throttle to the stop, stood on the pegs, looked ahead at where he wanted to be and went on up. He's learning fast.

We make our way back up to the top of the nearby hill where the fire is now blazing and the hotdogs ready for impaling on

sticks cut from the nearby trees. Several are properly incinerated and eaten, followed by Little Debbie snack cakes, the fuel of many an outdoor adventure.

Standing around the fire, talking, it is apparent that represented here are two very different views of the off road experience. We are the minimalists, here on two-wheeled machines, half of which are over 40 years old. We're dressed for

cold and mud, our red noses, white fingers, and brown splattered clothing and boots all showing we've experienced both to the fullest. Our hosts are more modern, here in four-wheeled devices, semi or completely enclosed, and with little chance of actually getting stuck or having to deal directly with the weather or terrain other than by conscious choice. There's no right or wrong in this dichotomy, just different. Still, I'm inordinately proud of Ian when he tells me that he prefers the more challenging way, on his decades-old Bultaco.

We make another pass around the farm, convoy-style, with a brief stop while the propane system in the Toyota gets sorted out and then slowly make our way back to the field where the trucks are parked.

The sun is descending and the air getting colder around 4 o'clock and we're about 100 miles from home, so we start the loading up process. Ian reminds me that unlike some of our previous rides, he doesn't have school tomorrow and so could stay a bit later. I have to remind him that Grandpa is old and tired and can't drive all that well in the dark, so it's best that we start back now. As my 90 year old stepmother once told me, "Getting old isn't a disgrace, it's just



darned inconvenient." On our past rides like this, the young Ian was asleep before we'd reached blacktop on the way back, but today, the growing-up-fast Ian is wide awake all the way back to Winchester, where he helps me unload the muddy bikes and gear into the garage. Ten years ago I would have washed them tonight and put

them away clean. Now, they can sit until tomorrow. Time flies they say, and in one direction only. A new generation comes to take the place of us old-timers, who once were that new generation, etc, etc, back into history. I hope that Ian will remember these rides, and hope that perhaps he will continue them, but that is for him

to decide. One day he may be seeing his grandchildren making this same ascent into adulthood (though I suspect that by then, the Anti-Gravity technology will have made mud-riding a somewhat different experience.)





3/1/86

A crisp, (frigid even) morning in the Bluegrass. The Cruel February has retreated but has left traces of its icy fingers upon us.

Here's the group for today:

- ①. Ben Parker
- ②. Tom Sutherland
- ③. John Rice
- ④. Nico Rice
- ⑤. Chester Martin
- * ⑥. Doelan Anderson
- * ⑦. Boone Sutherland
- ⑧. Chuck Griffer
- ⑨. Paul Elwyn
- ⑩. Dick Huston
- ⑪. John Leonard
- ⑫. Paul Wells
- ⑬. Ron Russell

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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



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\$450 plus shipping

Large unpainted Slash 5 fuel tank, \$425 plus shipping

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\$425 plus shipping

Bill Denzer
airhead@windstream.net

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