

April 2017

# Apex

*Looking Through The Curve*

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





# Where are my portrait photos....

By Jeff Crabb

This is the sidecar edition of the Apex, I suspect there will be a few more. The cover photo is from the 2012 Mid-Ohio Vintage Days. If you've never seen a sidecar race, you need to take the first opportunity to do so. The passenger (called the "Monkey") is always on the

move trying to counter-balance. They definitely aren't there just to enjoy the ride, they are constantly working.

This month we have a sidecar story from John Rice. (No monkeys were harmed in the writing of his story.)

Please enjoy John's story and

pictures and please keep sending in your stories and pictures.

Please send all of your contributions to  
[apex@bluegrassbeemers.org](mailto:apex@bluegrassbeemers.org).

Thanks



Spotted at the 2011 Mid-Ohio Vintage Days.

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

**Lexington, Kentucky MOA #146 RA #49**

Jeff Crabb, Editor [jdcraabb@hotmail.com](mailto:jdcraabb@hotmail.com)

**Deadline for submissions is the last day of the month.**

Back issues of Apex can be accessed on our website

**Join us at Frisch's on Harrodsburg Rd.**

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

**BMW Club**  
**Bluegrass Beemers**



## SIDECARS AND THE MEANING OF LIFE AS WE KNOW IT

By John Rice

Well, ok, maybe not quite that serious....

I have a long history with sidecars, though the first half-century of it was pretty much in my head. Something about them has drawn my gaze since my earliest motorcycle experience, at age 10 and more so after I began actually riding motorcycles at 14.

When I was in my early 30's, Peter Galskis attended our breakfast meetings on a gorgeous black Slash 2 with a Steib sidecar. One morning I asked for a ride in the car and he obliged. It was a short run, but left a large impression of fun mixed with brief periods of panic as I experienced for the first time the strange sensations of being less than a foot off the pavement and not in control of the ride. A plan began percolating to obtain one of these marvelous machines, but as so often happens, life gets in the way with all that pesky "working for a living" bother and the other stuff that goes with it. I made lots of trips on two wheels, but the sidecar thing kind of receded into the "someday" category. Still, I couldn't help but look whenever one went by.

There is something about the look of them, the asymmetry, the "other-ness" of the concept that just fascinates me.

Over the years I have seen many iterations of the "what can we do with this", including my personal favorite, the British theater group that built a stage (complete with "balcony" for Juliet) into a sidecar and went touring with shortened versions of Shakespeare's plays done entirely from the three-wheeled platform. Many years ago, when I was a competitive rider in Observed Trials events, there was a guy in Indiana who would show up with his

trials bike on a custom-built sidecar. There was a fellow in Tennessee who constructed two sidecar trials bikes, a definite anomaly here in the states, though somewhat more common overseas. Readers of this newsletter can no doubt add endless other variations on the theme seen all over the world. The addition of the extra wheel opens up the imagination like a catalyst opens up a chemical reaction to unknown developments.

Trikes and Trailers just don't interest me. I know they work for some folks, but they leave me completely cold, not striking a single chord in my soul. I'm sure that sidecars have that same lack of effect on someone else out there (though I've personally never met such an individual). There's no accounting for what or who one loves, no way to objectively quantify it in such a fashion that it makes logical sense to someone else. Shakespeare's sonnets tried to do it, ("shall I compare thee to a summer's day?") but it still comes back to "beauty is in the eye of the beholder".

What I do know about sidecars as an objective fact is that they make me smile, every time. I feel good driving my rig, even when the weather is bad, the wind distracting, even when endless tight curves make my arms and knees ache with effort, (I know, just slow down....I'm still learning) no matter what, I love it.

When I first saw this rig at the MOA rally in St. Paul MN in July of 2014, it was one of those "eyes locked across a crowded room" moments straight out of a Hollywood rom-com. It was in the busy exhibit hall, hoards of people milling about, and I'm told, other sidecar rigs there for display. I saw none of it



The old rig at the 2014 MOA Rally—passenger not included

Standing there, dumb-struck, I made a plan to sell the bike I was on at the time and buy this wondrous contraption that held me spell-bound.

However, as often happens, other things got in the way of that plan for that day, a series of stories for another time and place. But I couldn't get the rig out of my mind. I returned home from that trip two weeks

later, on a dif-

ferent bike than I had left home with...one of those stories... and tried to tell myself that it had been a passing attraction, something that would fade with the return to daily life. But it didn't. By now I had retired from my profession and I realized that "someday" was here. I called DMC in December and asked if the rig that they had displayed at the MOA rally was still for sale. I was told that it was and given a price north of \$40,000, which set me back on my heels a bit. Turns out though that he thought I meant the ultra-trick R1200GS rig, with every option, bell, whistle and farkle that the company offered, which was still a bargain even at that lofty price tag. Apparently that one was there, in the same display, and despite its awesome presence, I never no-

other than this machine, sitting there in its red finery, waiting it seemed, just for me. I wandered around it like a pilgrim having arrived at the shrine, taking in the details as best I could. (We all know that when struck by love, first impressions are a bit rose-colored and all imperfections filtered out). I could see that it was a BMW 650 single, a configuration that always appealed to me (one of my bikes at home was a DR650), with a traditional looking sidecar (I've heard it described as a "Dutch Shoe" style and I like that idea) not too big, not too small, but just right. It was, for me, the perfect color. It had, in my eyes on that day, just exactly enough of everything I wanted for it to have and nothing I didn't.

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The old rig at our rally



revealed just a bit of a limitation. In the mountains, the 650 single is quite capable of pulling both of us and our gear up the steep sides, but it requires a lower gear and a bit of patience to get it accomplished. While we seldom use four lane highways, and the rig is capable of

ticed it. But no, I meant the little one, the no frills, no glamour rig, the only one I remembered. It was for sale and I told them I would be there in March to pick it up.

Past readers will be familiar with the saga of the Novice who flew out to Washington from Kentucky and learned how to drive the rig on the way home. I took the long way around, occupying two wonderful weeks.

Since bringing it home, the little red rig has had numerous adventures, transported me, my grandson and my wife at various times to various places. It has endured my mechanical efforts and even a complete swap of the "tug" motorcycle. While it has been a joy this entire time, I have decided that another sidecar combination is in my future.

Brenda has taken to the sidecar life more than either of us had ever anticipated. On our several excursions with a little red rig, it has

easily holding a steady 60 mph, it does seem from Brenda's spot in the sidecar that it is working harder than she would like.

We decided together that the sidecar life probably would be the entirety of our motorcycle touring together in the not too distant future. With that in mind, it seems reasonable to pull out the stops and go for a rig that would suffice for all of the long distance mountain and endless desert trips we hope to be able to take.

I am having DMC build me another rig, this time based on my BMW R 1200 GS. This one will have more bells and whistles and will be, I hope, a more robust traveling outfit for Brenda and me in the future. I know I will have lost the intimacy of the smaller combination and it will not be as "basket of puppies" cute as the 650. I feel a bit guilty, as if I am being disloyal to a trusted friend. I know that





At our son's house on Mother's Day. (He took the picture and when he saw it later he said "My mother is the Stig!")



The old rig goes shopping Simon is reluctant to share space





The new rig. "Some Assembly Required".

bought it. Though I tried to convince him of the merits of a "fly and ride" trip, he will have it trucked there to begin its new life in familiar surroundings. I hope that he enjoys it as much as I have.

If all goes according to plan, I will fly out from Kentucky on April 11 and pick up the new rig, driving it home by a route yet to be determined. The weather in that uncertain early spring period will dictate how far south I have to go to make back home unfrozen. I'll keep you posted.

the 650 rig could take us on these planned journeys, but the new rig with its larger tug will be "happier" in the kind of use we will make of it and more comfortable for all concerned. At our advanced age, happier and more comfortable are important considerations.

Now the red 650 rig has been sold to a man who lives in Washington, oddly enough about 100 miles from where I



The old rig on its way to its new home.

**Riding the Tunnel of Trees**  
**2017 BMWRA International Rally**  
**July 6 – 9 Petoskey, Michigan**

We've got a great location for the 2017 RA Rally in Petoskey, Michigan. Petoskey is located in Northwest corner of Michigan's Lower Peninsula, about 50 miles below the "Big Mac" bridge.

The Emmet County fairground sits on a beautiful location above Lake Michigan's Little Traverse Bay on the outskirts of Petoskey and will be our rally home base. Downtown Petoskey is about a mile and a half away and is full of small specialty shops, restaurants, and "watering holes". <http://www.petoskeydowntown.com/>

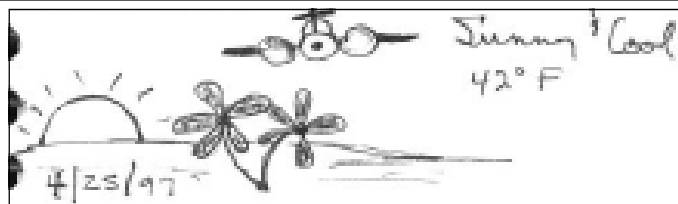
The fairground's has a number of large updated buildings for our activities along with grandstands and "dirt area" where we are looking into "GS" activities. Yes, there is plenty of nice grass for our "Green Eureka Timberlines" and a number of full service hook-ups for the "Cushy" RVs.

More information is available on the BMWRA website; <http://bmwra.org/news/national-rally> and pre-registration is now open. <http://bmwra.org/ra-national-rally-registration>


With Pre-registration you will save \$15.00. You can also order Friday & Saturday meals and T-shirts. You will save \$4.00 per shirt by pre-order. Ladies shirts and long sleeves will only be available on pre-order.

It will be a great rally at a great location- Bob Alexander/Rally  
Chair





COMES THE SUN, COMES THE FUN,  
 COME THE SCOOTERS THAT RUN,  
 THEY EMERGE, WITH AN URGE, FROM THE SHED,  
 WITH A RIP AND A ROAR, THEY BURST OUT THE DOOR,  
 SOME SAY "THEY COULD RAISE THE DEAD" ...



Here is the group for today: 21. \* Chris Adkins

- \* 1. Chester Martin 22.
- \* 2. Joe Bark
- 3. John Rice
- \* 4. Boone Sutherland
- \* 5. Mike Gill
- \* 6. Roger Treat
- \* 7. Mary Beard
- \* 8. Chris Warner
- 9. Randy Scott
- \* 10. Phillip Baugh
- \* 11. Bill Rigby (Zengerli intruder)
- 12. Jim Kony
- \* 13. Bill Vass
- \* 14. ~~John~~ Bill Witt
- 15. Drexel Neal
- \* 16. Ben Pruitt
- \* 17. GARY HUFFMAN
- 18. Darylene HUFFMAN
- \* 19. Tom Keller
- \* 20. DANNY Phillips

*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