

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



Always an added bonus.... Pie!

By Jeff Crabb

If you've been reading the Apex over the years, you know that John Rice's trips always include the added bonus of where you can get the best pie, wherever the road takes you. I have taken John's advice on occasion and have enjoyed a ride's bonus myself. When the opportunity arises, I suggest you give it try.

Doug Searcy sent me the below poem that his grandson recited at Thanksgiving Dinner that reminded Doug of John's trips. Doug's theory, "I think John really goes to the West coast to get those sidecar rigs just so he can

ride back across country satisfying his pie addiction at all of the small town eateries along the way." John—I think Doug has you figured out!

This month we have John Rice's trip to Fort Bragg in early November. Of course, there's pie...

Please enjoy and remember, send all of your contributions to apex@bluegrassbeemers.org.

Thanks

Pie Problem

If I eat one more piece of pie, I'll die!
If I can't have one more piece of pie, I'll die!
So since it's all decided I must die,
I might as well have one more piece of pie.
MMMM—OOOH—MY!
Chomp—Gulp—'Bye.



Composer, Shel Silverstein

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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**



COLD MOUNTAIN

(no, not the one with Nicole Kidman and Renee Zellweger, the one with two old guys in electric vests)

By John Rice

Two words escaped into my helmet, familiar if not very pleasant words, as I realized that what was now under my wheels was ice, not pavement. Slowly, carefully, the bike came to a halt with both of my feet on the uncertain surface as I hoped that Jay was doing better behind me. How did we get here, doing this?

In early November Jay said he was going to Ft. Bragg, NC in the middle of the month for a ceremony. One of the young officers he had mentored in his Army career was getting promoted again and had invited Jay to attend. Sounds like a good start to an early-winter bike trip.

We left early on a Wednesday for the Friday event, heading southeast in the 40 degree air. Down Rt. 15, a generally nice bike road, to Whitesburg for lunch at the Pine Mountain Grille. Inside, the regular patrons tried not to stare as the two old guys in multiple layers of clothes, wires hanging out of the sleeves and zippers, made their way to a table and began disrobing. I think I may start taking a recording of Gypsy Rose Lee's theme, "The Stripper" to play during our next such performance.

By late afternoon we had progressed to Abington, VA, always a favorite spot, but it was too early to stop for the night. On to Damascus, a tiny town with 5 full time bicycle shops, and down 91 to Boone. Rt. 91 follows a calendar-perfect creek for miles, matching the water curve for curve, with little traffic to

disturb our fun. When it ended at Boone, we cruised through town looking for the little mom & pop motels we remembered from our trips down here 20 years ago, but found that "progress" had conquered bucolic. Now the little restaurants are chock-a-block with new college buildings everywhere and the old-style motels are gone, replaced by high-rise modern hotels with lobbies not user friendly to motorcycle travelers. A short run across the mountain brought us to Blowing Rock, just as the light was starting to fade behind the ridges. We found suitable lodging at the Ridgeway Inn, just a short walk from the Six Pence Pub where a decent draft pint can be had along with Bangers & Mash. On the way back to the room, the little deli offered bourbon pecan pie and we accepted the invitation.

In the morning, the sun not fully spread over the valley below, we ascended the ridge out of Blowing Rock, past houses that would each be a cover photo for "House Envy" magazine, if such existed. There is a long, long, curving downhill to get back to Average People land where we found a local restaurant, "The Coffee House" for breakfast. Inside, a tiny waitress of about our own age, wearing a hairnet I remembered from my 60's era school cafeteria, took our orders. When I changed my mind, after hearing the specials, she opined with a smile, "It's not too late to change orders until it's in your belly". Later she gave us the

“Senior Citizen Discount” asking only afterward, to be polite, if were in fact over 60.

We passed a road sign designating “Dead Man’s Curve Road”, but were not tempted to challenge it, recalling Jan and Dean’s admonition from the 60’s that “you won’t come back from Dead Man’s Curve”. I guess everyplace has one of those, by reputation, but this was the first time I’d seen it as an official name. (And that darn song stayed stuck in my head for days afterward, again causing me to wonder why I can recall all the words to a dumb record from my youth, but not what I went into the kitchen for.)

Nearing Fayetteville, Jay noted that the small towns he recalled from his time here in the service were now bustling suburbs, traffic choked and crowded with the usual fast-food and chains this and that like everywhere else. I recall a quote from Ogden Nash, “Progress was all right once, but it went on too long.”

We found our way to the Ambassador Motel in the southern end of Fayetteville, on the road that would lead us to the Fort in the morning. The motel was once a grand affair, set up for golfing tourists, but now just a bit faded around the edges. Perfect for our needs though, with parking right in front of our door. We had dinner with a friend of Jay’s from his military days, allowing him to catch up on the adventures of those still in uniform.

The clerk at the motel had recommended JK’s for breakfast, a locally famous Greek restaurant still run by the heavily accented woman whose family started it decades ago. The feta and spinach omelet there will serve as the benchmark for all such meals in the future. The eggs were perfectly cooked, the feta cheese had just the right tang, the garlic kept me safe from vampire attacks for days and the spinach still had just enough crunch. Not sure how they managed all that, but I think they’ve done it before, a time or two.

Not far up the All American Avenue is the entrance to the Fort, familiar territory for Jay but new ground for me. We had to go through the visitor’s center where Colonel Jay of course was passed through easily. I had to fill out forms, present my bike’s registration and insurance and sit for a bit while they ran a criminal background check on me. Fortunately, that incident in junior high school where I helped a friend TP his girlfriend’s house didn’t come up, so I was allowed through.

Once inside, the enormity of the fort becomes apparent. The four lane highway continues on through a forest, with side roads branching off everywhere and huge buildings peek out from behind the trees, the distance belying their size. We finally located the hospital complex where the ceremony was to be held, got out of our riding gear in the parking lot and sat on a bench to wait for the starting time. People came and went in a steady stream and if not for the uniforms, one could believe we were on a major city hospital campus anywhere, not inside a military installation.

The ceremony was nice, a young man (by our standards, at least) moving up in his career, saying nice things about the people who had helped him along the way. As one of the presenters said, “The Army got it right”.

We left the complex, emerging back into the other world of civilian traffic, and headed northwest, quickly getting out of the urban sprawl and into the two-lane roads we like. In this part of North Carolina, the roads are mostly straight, with a few gentle curves and hills, but often canopied over with trees still hanging on to their deeply colored leaves. As we progressed northward, the leaves were fewer, the hills and curves became more frequent.

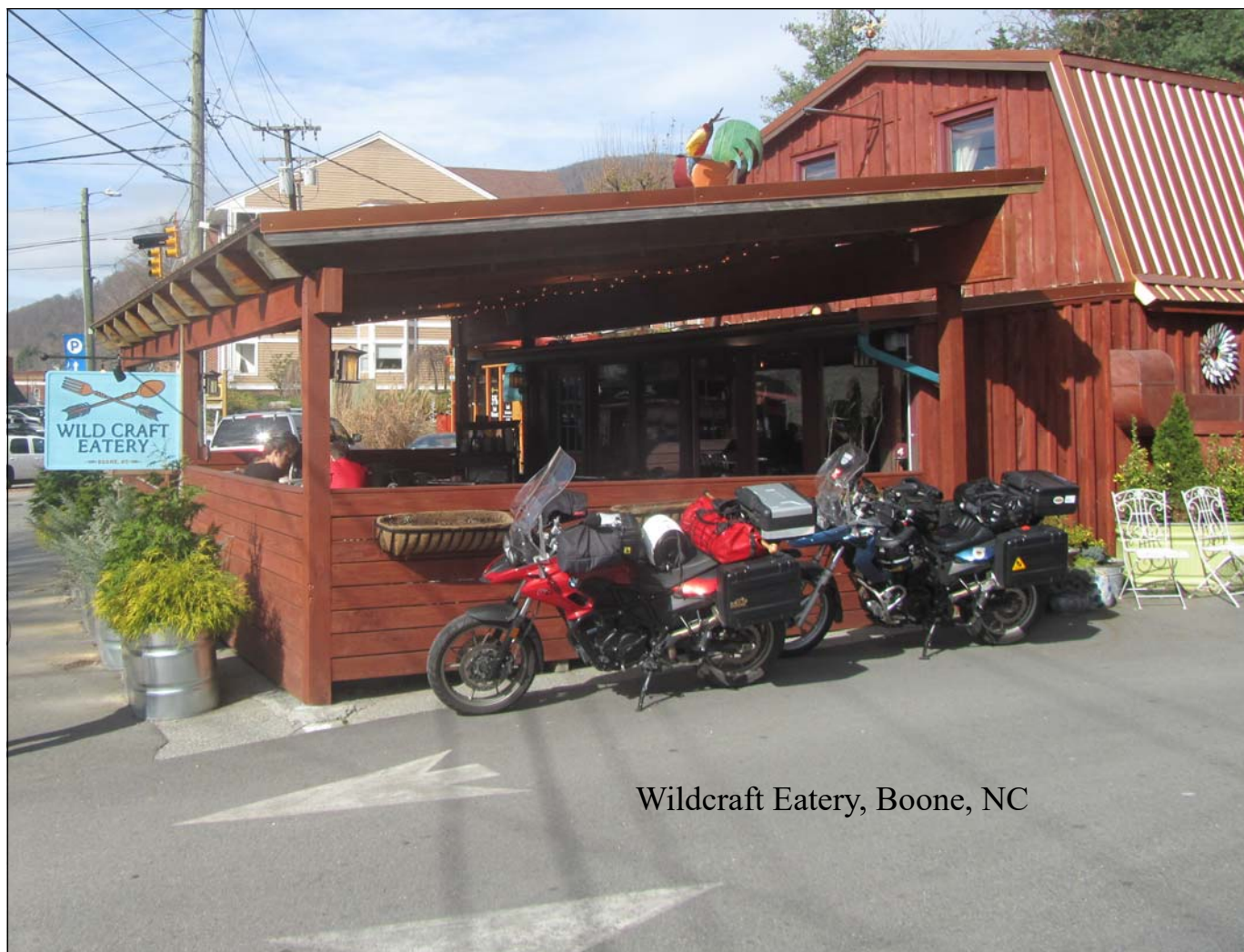
Jay has a real knack for picking out obscure twisty roads on a map, with changes possible at each gas stop, so our progress was far more enjoyable than efficient. By evening we had had covered a lot of miles, but not much distance toward home. We found lodging near Lexington, NC, a clean room with food and drink a reasonable walk away. Though in the South, the weather still felt more Union than Confederate.

Soon after daylight we were on the road, frosty breath fogging our face shields and glasses. We found breakfast, of a sort, at a tiny coffee shop in Mocksville, run by two enthusiastic young women who knew a lot about coffee, but not much about bagels or eggs. Fortunately, they still have plenty of time to learn.

Or maybe it's just us, out of touch with the millennial appetite.

Up 601 through Yadkinsville, in Yadkin County, where every business and nearly everything else had some form of "Yadkin" in the name. It reminded me of the town in "Blazing Saddles" where everyone was named Johnson. Having decided not to change our names in order to stay here, we moved on toward Elkin. Rt.87 ends rather abruptly at a chasm where a bridge has been replaced and while the thought was briefly tempting, an Evil Knievel imitation wasn't going to work. A helpful fellow nearby directed us back onto the new road through Elkin and on up to Rt. 21 toward the Parkway.

At last back on the Blue Ridge, our spiritual home, the world seems to make sense again.



Wildcraft Eatery, Boone, NC

Up here, there is only the winding ribbon of pavement beneath the now-denuded trees and the quiet that seems to still the soul. At this relatively early hour, late in the season, we are alone. I had expected that the road would be littered with fallen leaves, but as if the Parkway has its own sense of order, it was clean, inviting us to proceed with our chosen pace, the smooth curves melding one into another with the dream-like quality that only this place can provide. Eventually the needs of technology prevailed upon us to seek fuel, sending us down into Boone where we found gasoline and lunch. The Wildcraft Eatery, on Boone's Main Street, is a tiny place with an outdoor

deck suitable for motorcyclists to eat still in their layers, without undressing inside. I doubt that was the owner's intention, but it worked for us. With us out there in the cold wind were young people, college students, lightly dressed as befits people who still possess a working metabolism. One magazine-ad worthy couple had just adopted a rescue Greyhound and brought him here to introduce him to the crowd. A beautiful animal, completely fitting their image. This place specializes in unusual eclectic cuisine, and I highly recommend the pork curry bowl, one of the most interesting things I've eaten in quite a while. I can't identify much of the list of ingredients in



Inside Big Lynn: Jay takes a reading break in the library

it, but it was delicious. The Greyhound, nose working industriously to discern the source of such unusual odors, may not have agreed.

By 3 o'clock, fatigue was beginning to set in and we elected to stop early at the Big Lynn Lodge, in Little Switzerland. This is an old-style lodge, rustic, here since the 30's I think, consisting of a main building containing the dining room and a lounge area, and a series of cabins and room blocks dating from various eras. In the lounge there is a "library" of various books ranging from the classics, various contemporary novels, a selection of Readers

Outside the office are the two stone pillars that, back in the very early days of settlement, comprised the "Switzerland Toll Gate" where travelers would have to pay up for the privilege of passing through. Big Lynn is set up for tourists to come and stay for a while, venturing out to hike and explore the mountains after a hearty breakfast and returning in the evening to relax in the comforting atmosphere of the heavy pine paneling and inviting chairs and couches spread around the lounge and dining room.

A storm passed through overnight and in the



Ice formed under the cover overnight

Digest Condensed and at least one copy of "Living with your Hamster". Dinner and breakfast are included in the room price, making it a bargain for lodging up on the Parkway.

morning our bikes were ice-covered. When we started south on the parkway, we were threading our way through debris ranging from leaves and small branches to whole tree



At Big Lynn Lodge





The View from Big Lynn Lodge



limbs big enough to stop a truck. The temperature hovered around the freezing mark, but we knew we were heading up a lot higher with the highest point on the Parkway, at over 6,000 feet, between us and the terminus at Cherokee.

Near Black Gap, at just over 5,000 feet, we found the ice we had feared. I headed into a shady spot and too late realized that the different cast of the road color was caused by white swirls denoting the thin skim of ice between my tires and the pavement. I pulled in the clutch, feet down, and coasted to a stop hoping that Jay was doing the same behind me. He was, and now the two of us sat there, tenuously seated on motorcycles that weren't going anywhere under their own power. Thankful that no one was present to upload a YouTube video of our progress, we crab-walked the two machines backwards in little steps and then around in a half circle to face back the way we came. We outriggered our way down to dry pavement and then sat there for a bit to catch our breath, knowing we had somehow managed to dodge a very large bullet.

Retracing our path down to Rt. 80, we headed down the mountain to Marion where the temperature was now in the mid-40's, practically balmy by comparison. At a pull-over, we met a trio of young folks, a man on a Honda 500 twin sportbike and a couple of similar age following in a rental car. They all were from Nepal, the fellow on the bike working in some tech firm in Charlotte and his brother who worked in a similar capacity in Detroit, visiting with his girlfriend, and the three of them sharing time on the bike and rental car for a tour around North Carolina. They talked to us about trips they had taken in Asia and the Middle East and plans to ride the highest road in the world, in nearby (to Nepal, anyway) Pakistan. Being from the land of The

Himalayas, the cold weather and Blue Ridge Mountains weren't at all intimidating to them.

The roads through the tourist areas of Lake Lure and Chimney Rock are tight and twisty, lots of curves to enjoy, though we still had a bit of caution for leaves and debris, if not ice. We headed up 215, crossing under the Parkway with snow on the roadside and down to Waynesville for the night, staying at an old favorite, the Oak Park Inn. Nighttime temperatures plunged into the 20's so we opted for a short walk down the hill to Mad Anthony's where the whitefish special was excellent and the beer selection far exceeded our minimal needs.

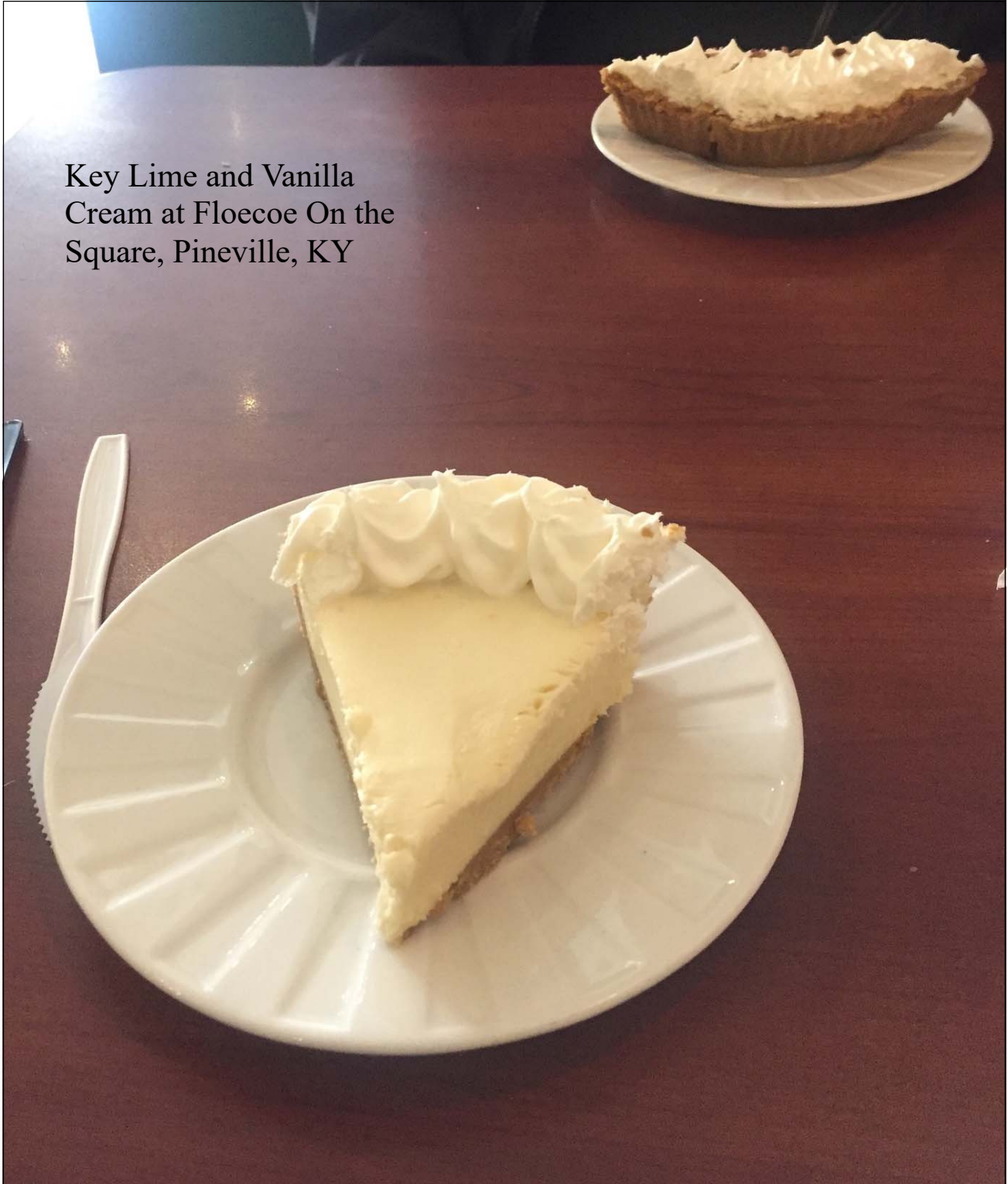
In the morning, we departed with the bike's thermometers showing 26 degrees, but our electric jackets and gloves kept us quite comfortable as long as we stayed on the motorcycles. Up 209 toward Hot Springs, we had the curvy road all to ourselves on this Monday morning. At the summit of the mountain, snow thickly covered the roadside, but the pavement was clear. No photos, because I didn't want to get far enough away from the bike's warmth to take a picture! Though no ice was evident, we kept the pace down on the tight bits, not wishing to tempt fate again. Route 25E from Hot Springs used to be a pleasantly curvy two lane most of the way to Harrogate, but the decades have seen a steady encroachment of the dreaded Four Lane Syndrome which eventually will overtake the entire stretch. The Clinch Mountain overlook restaurant was closed, on seasonal hours, so no vinegar pie this time. I can't recall another crossing of that mountain without the unusual taste of that unique pastry as accompaniment. We had to make do with pie at Floecoe on the Square in Pineville, Key Lime for me and Vanilla Cream for Jay, which was under the circumstances a quite acceptable option.

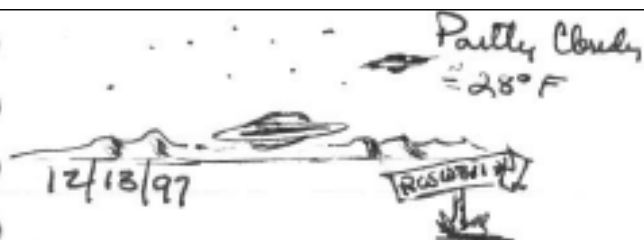
Jay and I have always ridden throughout the year and have taken other cold-weather long trips. Fortunately for us, as our tolerance for cold has diminished with age, the quality of electrically heated gear has improved, leaving us in a quite comfortable stasis. If only we

could get the Laser Road Heating Option that BMW has somehow not yet offered, there would be no end to the “season”.

Winter touring does have its drawbacks, certainly, but “the only thing worse than riding in bad weather is not riding”.

Key Lime and Vanilla
Cream at Floecoe On the
Square, Pineville, KY





THE SEASON IS HERE, TIMES OF CHEER
 TIMES OF FUN AND SHOPPING,
 MARK OFF YOUR LIST, YOU COULD GET KISSED,
 IF YOU DON'T WATCH WHERE YOU'RE STOPPING...



Here's the group for today:

- * 1). Boone Sutherland
- 2). Mike Gill
- 3). Tom Sutherland
- 4). Chester Martin
- 5). Ron Adkins
- 6). Roy Rowlett
- 7). Chris Warner
- * 8). Ryan King
- * 9). Robbie Carter
- * 10). John Rice
- 11). Pete Galbraith
- 12). Mary Beard
- * 13). Paul Clump
- 14). Danny Phillips
- 15). Ben Pruitt
- * 16). Joe Bark
- 17). Rocky Scott
- 18). Russell Traves
- 19). Jim Brandon

Boone

* Saw Bernie Hartung & Kendra

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



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
Revolutionary Ride By Lois Pryce
How to Drive a Sidecar Rig by David Hough