



November 2017

Apex

Looking Through The Curve

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

From Skyline Drive

A thousand Words....

By Jeff Crabb

We've all heard that a picture is worth a thousand words. John Rice sent along the cover photo with nothing more than from where it had been taken. It's not the clearest picture, but it doesn't have to be. It's not a professionally staged picture, it doesn't have to be.

The picture has everything that a motorcyclist needs for it to be understood. In one glance, you can get lost in it. From the sound dampening fog, to the rustling of the leaves as they fall from the trees, to the purr of a motor whisking you by.

road in almost an instant, but the photo captured it so we can all feel we were there.

Or maybe I'm seeing more than what's to see.

This month we have the conclusion of John Rice's trip home on his new hack. Of course, there's pie...

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

Thanks

John was by this point in the

A Bultaco spotted at Barber a few years ago.



**Apex is the official newsletter of Bluegrass Beemers, Inc.
Lexington, Kentucky MOA #146 RA #49**

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Deadline for submissions is the last day of the month.

Back issues of Apex can be accessed 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**



Getting the Rig Home, 2017 (part V)

By John Rice

(We left our directionally challenged Sidecarist in Oklahoma, pondering how to go home the longest way.)

In the cold morning light, I depart from Woodward OK, still headed east. After the big storms that rolled through here a day or so before I arrived, the rivers are a long way out of their banks and the fields are soaked, with standing water as far as the eye can see. The post-storm skies though are cloudless blue and now in the morning with the cool air, there isn't nearly as much wind. I can cruise along serenely at 70 mph, the speed limit here on this two lane road, and the big GS isn't straining at all. The countryside, varied by low hills, is much more pleasant than the Kansas cornfields, in my opinion.

Between Woodward OK and Tulsa, there are mesas. I trundled along through thousands of acres of rolling grassland, nearly featureless to the uneducated like me, and then suddenly as if the scene had changed in a movie, I was in red rock mesa country, as much as any in Utah or New Mexico or Arizona. Admittedly not as frequent or as high, but the same structures nonetheless. This went on for many miles and then the scene changed again and I was back in the low rolling hills and grass as if the previous features had been imagined. I guess Hollywood could use these if the Utah sets get filled up with cowboys waiting their turn to shoot at each other from behind the rocks.

Jay had departed Lexington with the intention of meeting up with me for the ride home

and we had set a tentative meeting spot at Eureka Springs, Arkansas. We stayed there after the RA rally a year or so ago and enjoyed the place as a base for riding the marvelous motorcycle roads to be found in that part of the state. I arrived in the late afternoon and cruised through the motel strip above the town. Several of the places that had been there on our last visit were now closed and sported "For Sale" signs. The Italian restaurant, a family owned place with a varied menu and a good wine list, was gone. I settled on a motel with its own restaurant just at the point where the road began to dip down into town. Jay had texted me to say that he was calling it a day still east of Harrison, so I was on my own for the evening.

As I was leaving the motel office with my room key in hand, I found a local guy on an 1150 GS checking out the rig. He had spotted it on his way home and had to pull in to see who had brought this strange thing to his patch. He tells me he started riding BMW's in Europe while he was in the service and gave up all his other motorcycles upon his return home. Since he's local, I ask him about Jerry, the Arkansas Adventure Rider store guy that Jay and I had met here the last time. I had noticed the store was closed. Jerry was the "real deal", an adventure rider with decades of experience, who walked the walk. The fellow tells me that Jerry got tired of the touristy hubbub in Eureka Springs and reopened the store in Jasper, a smaller town a few miles down the road. Glad to hear that he's still in it. There aren't many like him, the old school adventure

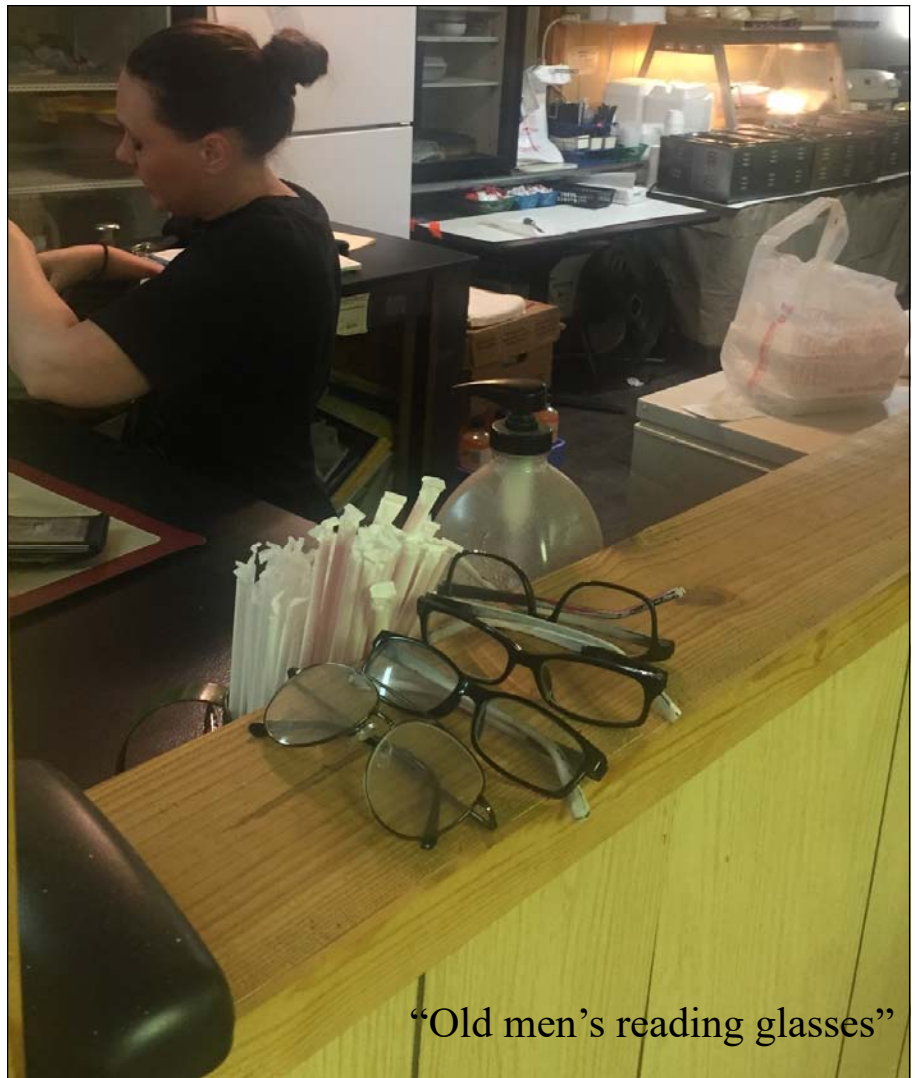
riders from the days long ago when specialty bikes didn't exist and one had to make it up as needed from what could be modified and adapted to the purpose.

I met up with Jay in Harrison the next morning. We had breakfast at the cafe on the court square across from the tiny park where during the rally we had talked with the "little old lady" (not pejorative...she was all three in fact) who had worn out two F700GS's on her travels around the world. She was there in Harrison on her third 700, planning after the rally to head to South America for a few months of travel down there. Her white hair and small stature (she could barely tiptoe the ground from the seat) belied an obvious toughness and adventurous spirit that put many of the macho men at the rally to shame. No such encounters today, though, just quite good pancakes and a perusal of the map to select a way home.

In Missouri, we made our mandatory afternoon pie stop at a small cafe where the waitress gave us her recommendations for the pastries of the day. Coconut cream and butterscotch carried the day. Later, as we threaded our way between flooded fields in the lowlands, a yellow crop duster type plane, the pilot obviously having a bit of sport messing with me, flew right at me across a fence, rising at the last minute as I was considering how to ditch the bike. I felt a little like Cary Grant in North by Northwest...actually the only time I've ever had any-

thing in common with Cary Grant. As we rode on, there were more flooded fields, some with houses standing in the water with just the tops of the first floor windows visible. As the saying goes, it's the commonality of Time, Money and Water...the problem is not the supply, it's the distribution.

We crossed back into Kentucky near Madrid, once the scene of the largest earthquake in the eastern US, but found it quiet today. Breakfast came at a tiny roadside cafe near Wycliffe. Inside there was a shelf near the counter where several pairs of glasses were lined up. The waitress explained that the old men who meet



"Old men's reading glasses"

there every morning leave them there so they can read the newspaper.

At Columbus Belmont state park, a bit off our chosen route, we can see a display of a piece of the huge chain that Confederate Gen-

eral Leonidas Polk placed across the river during the Civil War to control traffic. The original was over a mile long, with each link weighing over 20 pounds. Once welded together, each link inextricably joined to others, it left the blacksmith dealing with a mile of



General Polk's chain



General Polk's chain

Anchor and Chain

"The rebels have a chain across the river about one mile above Columbus. It is sustained by flats, at intervals, chain passing through steeples placed about the water's edge, the chain passing under the boats."

- Report from Union spy to General Ulysses S. Grant
January 1862



Confederate General Leonidas Polk stretched this mile-long chain across the Mississippi River from Fort DeRussy, on the Iron Banks Bluff north of Columbus, to a capstan on the Belmont, Missouri shore. Polk hoped that any Union ships coming down the river would be stopped by the chain long enough for cannon fire to sink them. Most of the chain was removed after the Union occupation of Columbus in March 1862. The effort obviously failed.

In December 1925 a landslide at the edge of the bluff exposed a section of the chain. Each link weighs 20 pounds 5 ounces. Digging at the end of the chain revealed an anchor measuring 15 feet 9 1/2 inches long, with flukes 9 feet from tip to tip. The anchor had been buried 11 feet deep with the flukes in a vertical position and fixed in place with 12-foot oak logs. It is estimated to weigh anywhere from 2 to 6 tons.



Jay ponders the site of the chaining of a river

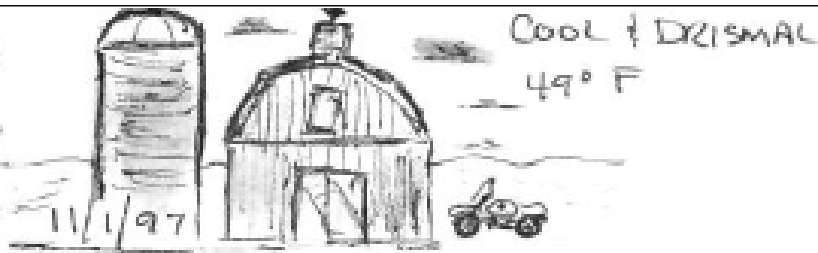
chain, several tons of iron. I tried to picture in my mind the session when General Polk told the village smithy what he wanted. I'm sure the smith's reply was something like, "No, really, what is it you need? Shoe your horses, mend your sword, what is it really? ". You can't be serious about a "chain". Despite the grand plan and all the work to put it in place, the chain was temporary and largely ineffective. And the blacksmith probably got paid in Confederate money.

One last pie stop at Anna's Cupcakes in Hopkinsville, a new business in an old department store downtown and then the horse-to-the-barn bit begins on familiar roads.

This is my second sidecar rig retrieval trip from the west coast in two years and I think I like it. There are no immediate plans to do it again, but surely something similar can be arranged. This one covered just a tiny bit shy of

4,000 miles and took 15 days. (Google maps says I could have made it in 2,158, and 46 hours, but they are spoilsports). I found new places I hadn't seen, checked off a few bucket list items, and returned to some familiar places from my youthful travels. The rig performed flawlessly. It isn't as "cute" as the little red one and doesn't seem to inspire the same kind of puppy-like admiration in onlookers, but it is more suited to long distance travel. And I plan to put that capacity to use.





DON'T TRICK OR TREAT WITH DIRTY FEET,
OR RIDE A GRUNGY BEEMER,
WIPES YOUR SHOES, READ ALL THE NEWS,
NEVER USE POWDERED CREAMER ... !



Here is the group for today:

- * 1). Jim Brandon
- 2). Chester Martin
- 3). Pete Galskis
- 4). Roy Rowlett
- 5). Chris Warner
- * 6). Phillip Baugh
- 7). Boone Sutherland
- 8). Paul Elwyn
- 9). Hubert Burton
- 10). Gary Huffman
- 11). Darlene Huffman
- 12). Bill Vass
- 13). Duff Neal
- 14). Danny Phillips
- 15). Jim Kouny

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



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