

October 2017

# Apex

*Looking Through The Curve*

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



In Tucumcari, NM, there is pie

# Getting the Rig Home, 2017 (part IV)

By John Rice

(We left our geriatric three-wheel operator in Socorro, NM, still sated on pie from Pie Town.)

On the road in the morning, as soon as I can, from the motel in Socorro, after partaking of what they termed "breakfast". There is, I think, a special factory that makes the slow toasters for motels. I picture people in lab coats with timers, saying "No, that's still too quick. They might be able to get out of here before checkout time, back to the drawing board". Those scientists are in close collaboration with the ones who have, after years of effort, devised a completely tasteless bagel, the consistency of a Styrofoam cooler. It is

Soon I'm on Rt. 60 where I was 33 years ago, headed toward Mountainaire, the Abo ruins and Gran Quivara. Brenda and I toured these places on the Green Bike (1975 BMW R90/6, in "Nürburg Green", a color not found in nature) when I was working in Albuquerque and she came out to visit me for the long 4th of July weekend in 1984. Now I'm back, alone, and cruising up these same deserted roads on a very different machine, one I could not have imagined then. Its quiet this morning here, the wind hasn't started up yet this early before the heat builds. I stop to take a photo of the soft outlines of the hills, covered in low vegetation that looks almost like velvet. One must, or at least I must, always imagine what it felt like to



Near Mountainaire, NM

hard to make baked goods unappetizing, but with enough determination and ingenuity, it can be done.

be out here in the 1800's, on a horse or even on foot, traveling without roads or any guidance but dead reckoning, the sun, the moon and the stars.



While I'm on one knee taking the photo, a group of riders, two on new BMW's and one on a Can-Am trike, sail by. The horseman I'm imagining couldn't have pictured that.

I pass by the Abo ruins, but I don't need to go in and see them again. I still have them in my

mind's eye from that previous trip in 1984. I see Brenda as the young woman that I still view her as being, walking among the relics, smiling at the strangeness of being there.

Before long, I'm in Mountainaire, NM and standing in front of the Shaffer Hotel. It is a



strange building, in two distinct structures joined together. The one on the left, built in 1923, has the decorative "swastikas" that were Native American symbols long before the Third Reich adopted a different version as its logo. The building on the right is the hotel and next to it is a courtyard bordered by a fence that is unique...the only description I can come up with in a single word. It is one person's vision, Pop Shaffer, of what a decorative fence should be and for that, it is perfect.

In 1984, Brenda and I sat in the right hand

ries of the history of Mountainaire, which was in its heyday the "Pinto Bean Capital of the World". The whole area was taken up with farming, based on the abundant moisture from both rains and the heavy snows that soaked the soil. Pop showed us the windows about 10 feet off the floor on one side of the building and said that in the winter, the snow would be drifted up to meet them.

Then the weather changed and the water stopped coming. As he put it, "We starved out in '34" from the farming and had to try to



Brenda and I sat here in 1984, having pie with Mr. Shaffer

building, a restaurant of sorts then, at a small table and had pie with Pop Shaffer, or at least that's who he told us he was, who was then in his late 80's I would imagine. He told us sto-

make a go of it with only the hotel and restaurant. But people slowly moved away, houses and farms were abandoned, and Mountainaire is but a faded husk of what it once was.



I guess this is a comment on the “points of interest”. Note that the highway is behind the sign, in the line of fire.



I think there was alcohol and a long winter involved in building this rig

Standing there today, the building closed up, I could still see the table inside where Brenda and I sat listening to an old man's stories. A fellow in a pickup truck saw me peering in the windows and stopped to ask me if I was with the new owners. He told me that the permits have been granted and the town has been told that the hotel and restaurant will soon be opened again to serve the tourists, like me, that still come here to see the Native American artworks, the ruins and stunning geology of the countryside. I hope I can come back and again have pie with Brenda at that table.

Leaving there, the wind has picked up and now follows me, but I know that won't continue. The winds here have a mind of their own and it seems a wicked sense of humor. I turn north and now the wind is across me, coming from the right with a ferocity that demands respect. It is difficult to keep the rig pointed straight as I pass through low hills that temporarily block the blasts and then resume

the pummeling as soon as I clear the brief windbreak. I notice that my pack has shifted on the rack, pull over to correct it and have considerable difficulty standing upright against the blast.

Finally I turn again and the wind is behind me, the quiet is amazing. I sail on toward Tucumcari where I will get lunch at Kix's Restaurant and if I'm lucky, a room at the Blue Swallow. It is early in the afternoon, but I'm tired from battling Mother Nature and I know She always wins anyway, so I'm going to call it a day.

The Blue Swallow is one of my favorite places with its carefully preserved and attended ambiance of the busy times on Rt. 66 when auto travel was new and an adventure. The rooms are small, by "modern" standards, but as big as they need to be for a weary traveler to stop, lay down his stuff and get a good night's sleep. Most rooms have an adjoining





garage to keep the wanderer's transport out of the weather.

Later, in the wee hours after midnight, in the Blue Swallow Motel on old Rt. 66, I hear wailing horn of a far off train, rolling somewhere. Paul Simon said it best, "Everybody likes the sound of a train in the distance, eve-

once in Rhinebeck, NY who had done that. She was on an old Airhead BMW, as was I, so she stopped to talk a bit. She told me that she was originally from New Orleans, but had come to a wedding up in New England for one of her friends. On the way home, the train had stopped briefly in this town and she got off to walk around.

She liked what she saw and just stayed.

In the early morning, just after dawn, I had a nice long conversation with Cameron, the son of owners Kevin & Nancy, at the Swallow while drinking the free coffee in the office and



rybody thinks it's true". We all have our moments when it seems attractive to just leave, just hop that train or on your bike, and leave it all behind for somewhere new. Maybe become someone new where no one knew the old you. I met a young woman



petting Obie, the Golden Retriever. We talked about children (his is two months, mine 47) and motorcycles (he has a VTX upon which he has built a box for Obie) and sidecars. Then it was time for him to feed the daughter and his wife came to handle the desk and continue talking to me. She is from Georgetown, KY, and still considers that 'home'. She misses the greenery and the hills. I understand. The desert is fascinating in its own way, but it isn't for everyone. She is still overwhelmed by the process of new parenthood, but thinks she'll get the hang of it.

making it a crosswind for me going northeast. Rt. 54 proves to be straight, mostly flat and windswept and with a 65 mph speed limit, about all I want to do at this point. At Guymon, OK I turn east onto Rt. 412 and expect the crosswind to now be behind me. In the strange physics of the west, it is still a crosswind and often a headwind as well. Oklahoma 412 is a good alternative to Kansas, being nearly deserted, flat, and straight as the proverbial arrow and with a 70 mph speed limit. There are a lot of big trucks, and here and there, feedlots which make their olfactory



I walked down to KIX for breakfast, where Isabel made sure that my breakfast tostada was fixed perfectly. Spicy and buttery and crispy, it was excellent. Back at the Swallow, I got the rig ready and headed out at about 9, later than I'd intended but the conversations were worth it. It is cold, about 43 degrees, and there is a strong wind blowing from the west,

presence known way in advance. I have to use the spare gas can once because stations are so far apart. A second time, I'm counting down to 12 miles range when suddenly "Slapout" appears. It is a gas station/restaurant/ convenience store with a sign proclaiming it to be "Slapout, OK, population 8". The friendly lady who runs the store says it is more like 4



now (she lives elsewhere) and points out the houses to me where the 4 inhabitants live. This place once was called "Nye", but the current town name she says came from a saying of the previous storekeeper when it was an

I stop at the Radio Shack and buy yet another multimeter (that makes 3, two of which were purchased on bike trips) and some tape to diagnose and, I hope, fix, the vest. I talk with a guy from New Jersey who is leaving the store



older building on this site. When he didn't have the thing you requested, he would respond "we're slap out of those" and the name just stuck.

By the time I reach Woodward, I'm ready to call it a day. I've lost an hour to the time change and the temperature has seldom climbed out of the low 50's all day. My electric vest has died, so I'm freezing and tired of the wind battle.

and getting on a new Triumph 1200 dual sport. Seems he and his wife rode from New Jersey to the west coast last fall and then left the bike there to fly home. He has now flown back out and is riding it home. I like his style.

I pick a motel for tonight, the Northwest Inn, because its billboards and Google info say it has a restaurant and bar on premises. After I check in, and inquire about dinner at the restaurant, the desk clerk says, "Oh, that's only open Monday through Thursday, closed on the

weekend." I stand there for a moment with severe cognitive dissonance. Who closes a bar and restaurant on weekends, keeping it open only on the four deadest days of the week?

I do the repair on the vest with a Swiss Army Knife and electrical tape. It isn't pretty, but it works again.

There are several people staying here for a Moose lodge meeting. They offered to get me into the meeting tonight, assuring me that there would be drinks served, but I politely declined.

There is a couple in the room next to me, part of the group, with the husband about 6' tall and his wife, as she tells me, is 4'10". In the morning, they come out to watch me pack up the rig. She tells me that her driving instructor when she was 16 (I'd guess that was nearly 50

years ago) told her to "grow up" because she was "too short to drive". Her husband tells me that he started riding motorcycles in 1966, but gave it up in 2006 due to the frailties of age. By 2010 he was back on a Gold Wing trike, but his wife doesn't like to ride on it with him. He was hoping I could convince her to try the sidecar life, but she seems not to be that interested, even after I remove the tonneau and show her the nice seat DMC has provided. Then they got in their truck and drove from their room next to mine to the breakfast area in the lobby, less than 50 yards away.

Not sure where I'll end up tonight. The West gets pretty flat, straight and windy from here.

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

**Back issues of Apex can be accessed on our website**

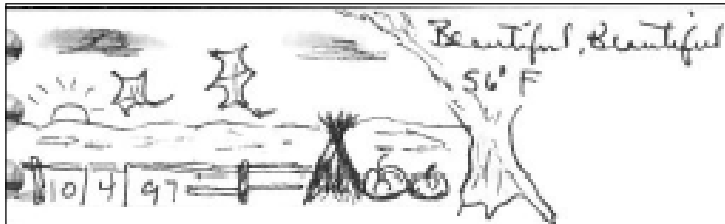
**Join us at Frisch's on Harrodsburg Rd.**

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

**BMW Club  
Bluegrass Beemers**







"TIME FOR TEA", WHAT COULD BE DULLER,  
 FOLLOW THE ROYAL CLAN,  
 CLIMB ON YOUR SCOOT, SEARCH FOR SOME COLOR,  
 RIDE THROUGH THE "MEADOWS OF DAN"...



Here's the group for today:

- \* 1). James Street
- \* 2). Dave McClard
- \* 3). Ron Atkins
- \* 4). Boone Sutherland
- \* 5). John Rice
- \* 6). Hubert Burton
- \* 7). Pete Galskin
- \* 8). Paul Elwyn
- \* 9). Jim Korum
- \* 10). Danny Phillips
- \* 11). Phillip Baugh
- \* 12). Robert L. "Red" McClelland
- \* 13). Randy Scott
- \* 14). Charlie Duke
- \* 15). Chris Warner
- \* 16). Ben Bennett
- \* 17). Danny Sipe
- \* 18). Jeff Flaych
- \* 19). Bill Vass (p.l.o.)
- \* 20). Drey Neal (p.l.o.)

*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