

September 2018

# Apex

*Looking Through The Curve*

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



Pete Galskis in June 1985



At Friches in '85 or '86

# Flashback

By Jeff Crabb

The Bluegrass Beemers have been doing our “thing” since the mid-70’s. Our “thing”, partly, being meeting for breakfast at Frisch’s on Harrodsburg Road.

The cover photos are from the mid-80’s. It’s before the Pizza Hut was torn down to expand the parking lot and the bikes were parked in front of Frisch’s. The one thing I noticed was there appears to be a fence behind the bikes. I don’t remember that when I joined the

breakfast club in the late ’80’s.

If you have any “vintage” photos of the club or it’s members, please scan them in and send them my way.

This month, we the second part of John and Jay’s adventure on their XT 250’s.

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

## Upcoming Events

9/14-16/18, [9th Annual Ride the Blue Ridge](#), Morganton, North Carolina

9/21-23/18, [Hoosier Beemer Rally](#), North Vernon, Indiana

9/28-30/18, [2018 RAMS Rally](#), Parker Crossroads, Tennessee

10/5-7/18, [Barber Vintage Festival](#), Leeds, Alabama

10/12-14/18, [43rd Falling Leaf Rally](#), Potosi, Missouri

10/12-13/18, [Forkland Heritage Festival and Revue](#), Gravel Switch, KY

10/18-21/2018, [2018 Adventure Ribfest](#), Centerville, Tennessee

**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**







#### **1944 James ML-125**

James (Birmingham, England) were prolific bicycle and motorcycle manufacturers from 1897 to 1966  
“ML” stands for “Military Lightweight”; 300 were used on D-Day by British and Canadian forces  
ML’s were known to soldiers as the “Clockwork Mouse”

#### **1959 AJS Model 31**

Built by Associated Motorcycles in Plumstead, London

Produced from 1958 to 1966

646 cc, air-cooled twin-cylinder engine, Four-speed gearbox to chain final drive





# MID ATLANTIC BACKROAD DISCOVERY ROUTE (or “Geezers Into the Breach”)

## Part II

By John Rice

*(Our Back Road Discovery riders have abandoned the woods and headed for the Parkway)*

We arrived at Front Royal near suppertime and were lucky enough to snag a room at the Quality Inn across the street from the Pavemint, a former gas station now repurposed as a brewpub with about 30 separate taps. We’ve visited there before, but not on a Saturday night after 6. The music was cranked up for the younger crowd as we took the only table remaining. The waiter had some difficulty hearing our orders, but quickly provided us with good food and better beer from the wide selection. Not sure if the volume of sound was lowered or if our ears just gave up the louder notes, but somehow conversation became easier as the evening progressed.

Later we stopped by the

gas station/convenience store next to the motel for some supplies and encountered Captain Gary and his shiny red Vespa. A former police captain from Alabama, he retired many years ago and has made it a point to keep traveling on his scooter. He has been all over the US and a fair bit of Canada on his 250cc machine, pulling a small trailer for his necessities. On this trip he had been headed for the Maritimes, but the same rains we had been fighting con-



Captain Gary

vinced him to rethink his route. So now he was going south, destination not entirely clear, but said he would see us at the Barber Vintage Festival where he would be displaying his Tuk-Tuk collection. His age wasn't immediately apparent, but from his stories of being a police officer in the civil rights demonstrations in the 1960's I'm guessing he's a bit older than us.

In the morning we started south in the bright sunshine that would quickly dispel the cold damp air. At the Skyline entrance we were joined by a club of Dodge Hemi owners, headed up to the ridge line to display their machines. They roared off (literally) leaving a wake of burned gasoline and excess testosterone roiling the air. On our quarter-liter bikes, we passed them many times as they stopped at overlooks for photo ops, the Tortoise and the Hare coming to mind.

The Skyline climbs steadily for many miles as it reaches for the tops of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Our stalwart XTs soldiered up, passing many bicyclists also out here to enjoy the challenge and the scenery. I marvel at their tenacity and strength as they (apparently) easily ascend the continuous slope. I have brief fantasies of becoming such an athlete, but reality intrudes quickly. Ain't gonna happen. And anyway, I'd look ridiculous in Spandex.

Thirty five is the speed limit for most of the 109 miles of the Skyline as it wends through Shenandoah National Park on the ridgeline. We keep our pace at an indicated 45 which accounts for our over-optimistic speedometers and what we think the officials will tolerate. This allows us to swing the bends without changing speed, with no drama, as the stunning scenery unrolls before us like motorcycle nirvana. In past trips we have encountered bears and deer up here, but today the largest

fauna are squirrels who seem to enjoy playing chicken with our wheels. No animals of any



**An excellent place for Breakfast  
when in Front Royal, VA**

species were harmed in the making of this journey.

At the Skyland Lodge we stop for a pie break, only to find that we have arrived just as the dining room is closing from breakfast, not to reopen for another hour for lunch. I tell the waitress who is hooking the chain on the entrance that we had hoped to have some of their marvelous apple pie and she replies "Let me see what I can do". A few minutes later she appears with two pieces in "to go" boxes and refuses any payment. She tells me that the manager said if we came this far for pie, he'd



make sure we got it. We eat our pastry in the lobby on one of the tables set up for Appalachian Trail hikers to charge their phones and check emails and Jay gets in a long discussion with one of them about his adventures.

Rockfish Gap Marks the end of the Skyline Drive and, without an interruption, the beginning of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Together they form a single ribbon of smooth curving pavement traversing 578 miles of mountain ridges not requiring a stop except as desired for overlooks and scenery.

We cruised on south, in and out of rain, until we left the Parkway at Buena Vista and found our way to Natural Bridge where a Virginia state park and an old historic hotel offered us lodging. Jay had been here as a child when his family lived in Virginia and had returned a time or two to enjoy the ambiance. After spreading our wet gear over every surface in the small room, we went to the tavern adjacent to the restaurant and had our meal at the bar. There we met a lady, roughly our age, who

undertaking some remodeling work at their home. Her best option, she figured, was to be gone while that was happening and she was taking a circuitous route to her destination just for the experience of travel. A kindred spirit.

Back on the Parkway, we make it a few miles before the rain begins anew. Still, even in the wet, the perfect pavement and scenery of the Blue Ridge makes it enjoyable. At a short detour for gas near Mabry Mill we run into Brian and Mark, two guys from the northeast riding cruisers. They had a room near ours in Front Royal and we had passed each other several times at overlooks. We went together into Floyd for lunch at the local diner where we learned that Brian was from New York City, not exactly prime motorcycling territory, and Mark hails from nearby Delaware, better, but still not anything like the mountains here. They, like us, are on an indeterminate trip with destination and time frame yet to be revealed. We parted after lunch, them heading south and us going to the nearby Dollar Store in search of another layer for the cold. We had brought



Natural Bridge Hotel

was traveling south, accompanied by her dog, to visit her daughter in Memphis. She told us that her husband had retired recently and was

gear for the hot dry weather the prognosticators had predicted and the cold rain was beginning to get through our defenses.

Our plan, if one can call it that, was to stop for the night at the little burg of Laurel Springs where Freeborne's complex of two motels and restaurants is located. It is a motorcycle friendly place with lodging and a great menu....altogether a desirable place to get out of the rain, if only it had been open. We learned that this early in the season, it is open for business only on weekends and this was Monday. So, back onto the Parkway to head south. Somehow getting back on the road in the rain after you thought you were ending the day warm and dry in a nice room makes the downpour seem harder and colder than ever.

Fifty or so miles further, we went down into Blowing Rock where we found the last available room at the Hillwind Motel and made our way up the street to the first open place, the local brewpub for dinner.

We both were wearing the rain jackets we had for the bikes and our waitress said she had seen us going down to the motel. She had just acquired a 250cc motorcycle and gone through a training program and was eager to discuss the prospects for traveling on two wheels. She had noticed that our bikes were small, not big cruisers, so we were exactly the people she needed to hear from. We assured her that she could go anywhere in the world on a 250 and referred her to the collected works of Lois Pryce for inspiration. (Two months later, Brenda and I stopped in at the same restaurant and noticed that she wasn't there. I hope she is off traveling the world.)

On Tuesday the Parkway was cold with episodic fog and rain. Perhaps that kept away the traffic as we had it mostly to ourselves, with the XT's doing their thing so well on the damp curves. The light weight of the bikes and the water shedding ability of the knobby

tires made keeping up a decent pace quite easy. Little Switzerland, a favorite stopping place, came up too early for us to pause our rhythm, so we passed it by with a silent promise to catch it next time. Just down the road a ways we had to make the trek up to the top of Mt. Mitchell, the highest point in the eastern US, to show that the 250's were undaunted by the challenge. Peach pie a la mode served as an early lunch in the cafe dining room a short distance down from the summit. In the parking area we met two groups of fellow travelers, one set of guys about our age heading north on Japanese heavy cruisers and another set of Harley riders heading south. One of the HD riders looked and sounded so much like the actor John Goodman that we began to wonder if we had stumbled into a Cohen Brothers movie. Often in those films the Goodman character's companions don't fare too well.

At the French Broad River crossing south of Asheville, the road construction began with a thick coating of fine gravel over the pavement. Later they would add a tar combination and pack it all down, but for now the XT's were back in off-pavement mode, skittering around on the loose surface. The skies were looking more threatening and that drove us into the restaurant at the Pisgah Inn for more pie while waiting out the coming storm. And come it did. The glass walls of the cafe gave us an excellent viewing of the lashing rain and lightning as it swept over the valley and shook the building. Several patrons came by our table to commiserate, assuming that our motorcycle trip was now over because of the storm.

When we assured them that we were going on as soon as the worst of the assault was past, they shook their heads as one does when dealing with folks too dim to understand the predicament they are in.



An alternative to traveling by XT 250



Twenty more miles of wet gravel later, the road was clear and relatively dry and the last section of the Parkway was its usual marvelous self. We swung through the bends as if we were in some sort of bike commercial where the weather is amazing, the pavement flawless and the riders are handsome young folks holding perfect lines in the curves...well, ok, maybe not those last couple of bits. But still, it was as good as it gets for us.

By late afternoon we had made it through Cherokee, NC without gambling at a casino or buying any bear-themed souvenirs and settled up in Waynesboro at the Oak Park Inn, our go-to place in this area. Dinner was at the Frog's Leap, a short walk from the motel and turned out to be one of the best restaurant meals I can recall. Local trout, sweet potato hash and broccolini, all in a perfect sauce that left me wondering where this sort of food had been all my life.

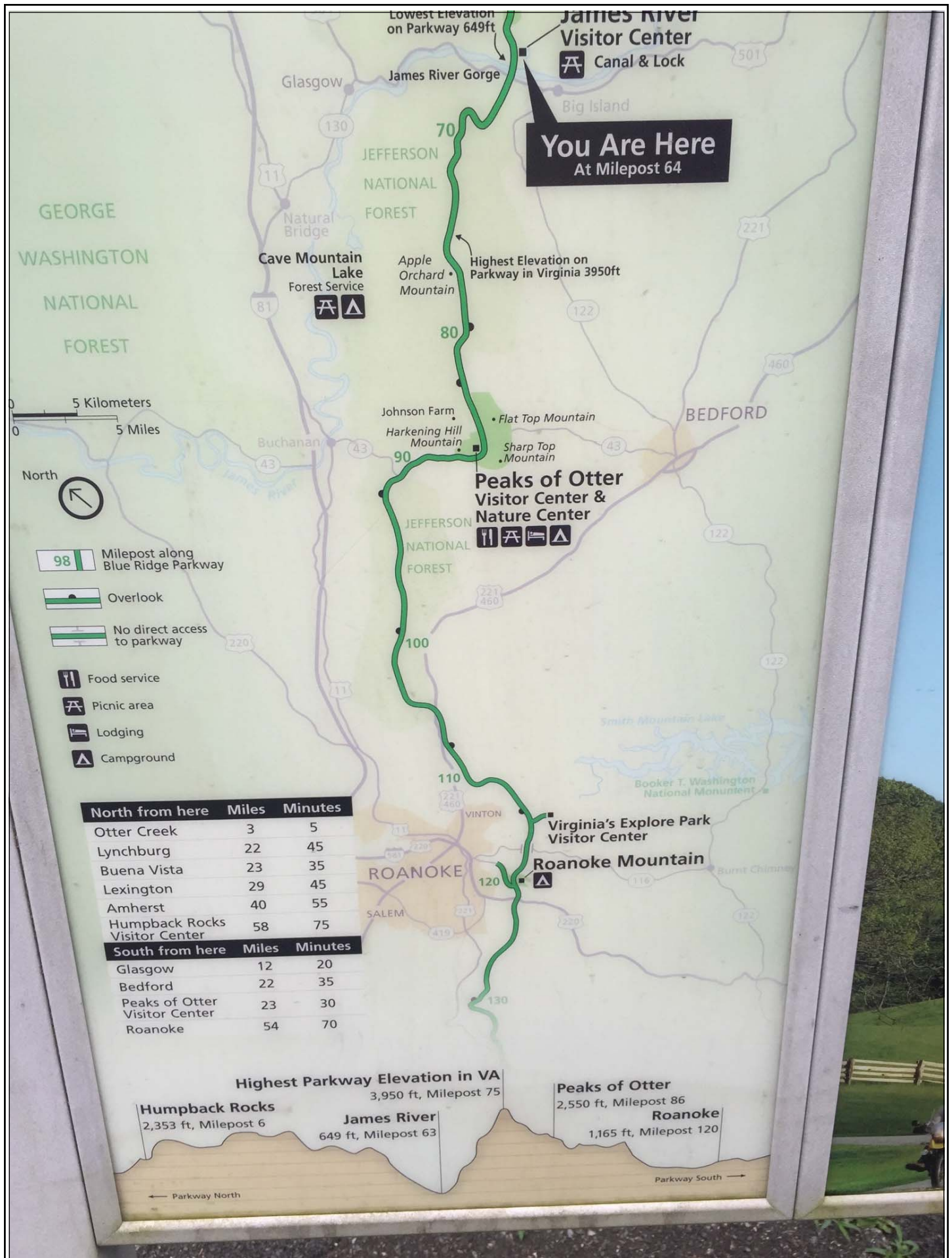
In the morning we left in 68 degrees, recalling that when we were here last November, it was 28 on our departure. Up route 209 to Hot Springs, noting that the Parkway Elves who must come out each night to sweep the Blue Ridge pavement completely clean for us, don't work outside the park. 209 has a plethora of mountain curves, but one must watch carefully for gravel and other debris. At Hot Springs the rain caught us again and stayed with us all the way home, leaving the familiar scenery blurred

by wet face shields. Vinegar pie at Clinch Mountain, and then we were home by late afternoon to spread out our wet stuff all over our respective garages and get ready for the next time.

For the better part of two weeks the little XT 250's served us well as dual sport touring machines. At no point in our journey on and off road would we have been going significantly faster if we had been on bikes with larger engines and an abundance of horsepower. Our "stuff" stayed dry in our duffle bags on the seats, not requiring mega-bucks special luggage. As we told the young lady in Blowing Rock, it is feasible and quite enjoyable to tour anywhere on these diminutive motorcycles that have "heart" far in excess of their size. As we get older and our usual touring machines get inexplicably heavier, these are becoming more often the preferred conveyance. The fact that they are just as happy off road as on makes them even more desirable adventure companions. We will do this again.



Clinch Mountain Vinegar Pie







John and his trusty steed on top of Mt. Mitchell.





THE AIR IS SOFT, THE MOON IS BRIGHT,  
IT'S LATE SEPTEMBER BUT IT DOESN'T SEEM RIGHT,  
THE RIDE TO BANANAS WAS PURELY PLEASURE,  
BOMBARDING THE SENSES BEYOND ALL MEASURE...

JB JB

Here's the group for today:

- \* 1). Chris Warner
- \* 2). Josh Warner
- \* 3). Paul Elwyn
- \* 4). Robbie Carter
- \* 5). Ryan King
- \* 6). Ron Adkins
- \* 7). Tim Brandon
- \* 8). Dave McCork
- \* 9). Boone Sutherland
- \* 10). John Rice
- 11). Pete Galitsis
- \* 12). Ben Pruitt
- \* 13). Steve Bishop
- \* 14). Tim Koway
- 15). Darlene Huffman
- 16). Gary Huffman
- \* 17). Drex Neal
- \* 18). Sean Quinn
- 19). Harry Millard

*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