

January 2020

Apex

Looking Through The Curve

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



Along the Lakeshore in the Adirondacks
Photo: John Rice



Spotted at the 2019 BMW MOA Rally

1967 R60

Owner: Charles Noble, Tennessee

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Lexington, Kentucky MOA #146 RA #49**

Jeff Crabb, Editor 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**



Fleeing the Heat

By John Rice

For old retired folks, Brenda and I seem to have a hard time finding the free time to schedule a long trip, but we managed to jam this one into August, heading from hot, sticky Kentucky up to the cooler climes of Canada. With only three weeks to fit it in, we pointed the sidecar rig north and hurried across West Virginia, stopping for lunch at Lloyd's in Flatwoods, where a perky young waitress seemed ever so happy to be where she was, doing what she did, and on into Pennsylvania as quickly as was feasible.

We cut back on the afterburner and slowed down, picking up Rt 26, which meandered up through the hills of southern Pennsylvania, with perfect gentle curves and hills, just right

for the sidecar's preferred 45-55 mph speed, lined with well-kept farms and houses. The town of Confluence took our attention and required a drive around the court square and a promise to ourselves to come back on another trip. In New Lexington, Pa, we found Zambo's Country Cottage, a home style restaurant for a pie break around 10 AM. We were the only customers, except for four old men and one woman of similar age, gathered around a table. One of the men was holding forth, with volume set for a hard of hearing crowd, telling stories and jokes that I'm sure his companions had heard often. Actually, I've heard them often and I don't even know the guy. ("Know the difference between beer nuts and deer nuts? Beer nuts are \$2.99 and deer nuts are under a



Zambo's Country Cottage
New Lexington, PA

buck!” Raucous laughter ensues. He’s got a million of ‘em.) Still, the pies, fulsome fruit pastries typical of this Germanic area, were excellent. Strawberry rhubarb for Brenda and apple raisin for me.

A short time later, we stopped in at the Johnstown Flood Memorial. On May 31st, 1889, a poorly designed dam burst on Conamaugh Lake and two miles of backed up water emptied in 45 minutes, rolling like a crazed pinball down the valley below scouring several small villages out of existence on its way to destroy Johnstown. More than two thousand people and countless animals died in less than an hour. Like most such human-caused disasters, there were tales of greed and short sightedness before as well as courage and heroism during and after the tragedy. We had read books chronicling this event, but being there,

seeing where it happened, had a profound chilling effect.

In State College, Pa, we got the last room at a chain motel near a TGI Friday’s, not the sort of mom & pop place next to a hometown diner that we would like, but any port in a storm. The storm became literal when we went down the street for supper. We watched as water cascaded down the windows and turned the parking lot into a mini lake, then within 20 minutes, it was over and the waters receded, leaving only the petrichor scent to mark its passing.

Up the street the next morning, breakfast was excellent at the Waffle Shoppe (not, in any way, to be confused with Waffle House...the two are at opposite ends of the breakfast spectrum). This place was started by a Greek immigrant decades ago and has developed into a



full service nice restaurant offering waffles as culinary art. I can highly recommend it.

We endured the interstate for a few miles until we finally were able to part company with it as Rt 220 resumed the two lane meander I remembered from trips up here years ago. We found lunch in Dushore, at the Jolly Trolley, a restaurant and store run by a woman who came over to our table to discuss sidecars. Seems she and her husband have two, mounted on Harleys, among their stable of bikes. She and Brenda covered the finer points of passengering in these strange conveyances and commiserated in their common problem of husbands with Advanced Motorcycle Addiction. She told us that Dushore was populated by two groups, the “locals” who live here year round and the summer folk from the big cities like Philadelphia who have cabins up here in God’s Country to escape the rat race. She proudly pointed out the window at the stoplight on the corner, telling us that this was the only such device in the whole county. Up here, she said, a person really can “get away from it all”, or at least all but one stoplight. There is a local festival coming this weekend which will feature outhouse races and an auction of the painted and decorated toilet seats which she has displayed on the restaurant’s walls. “I’ve seen one go for \$500”, she informed us. Tempting as the thought of a \$500 painted toilet seat was, we left the restaurant satiated from lunch, but empty handed.

From Dushore, 220 behaves itself as a two lane mountain road, peregrinating through the hills in gentle bends. The pavement is rough, a battered surface from fighting the winter wars, but like a veteran boxer, it hasn’t given up. Motels, though, have migrated from the old two-lanes over to the interstates and cities, so we hopped briefly on the super slab and made our way into Binghamton where we

found a room across the street from a pub called “Food and Fire”, after the Ben Franklin quote “A house is not a home unless it contains food and fire for the mind as well as the body”. Ben would have liked both the barbecue and the beer, I think.

We refugees from southern heat found relief in the morning, sunshine, but overcast mid 60’s, just what we had been looking for. A few miles out of Binghamton “Old 17” offered the beginning of rural two lanes we could stay on the rest of the day, weaving in and out of the mountains and down by rivers. Lunch came in Cobleskill NY, a small college town, where a bakery had an impressive case of goodies and some salads to balance out my sweet tooth overload. I took some pastries for later. Shortly after, we entered the Adirondack State Park following the lakeshore up to Lake George and Lake Champlain. These roads are perfect for the sidecar rig, just flowing back and forth along the bends, letting the engine provide the power and the braking to swing the rig around.

While pulled over on a street in Ticonderoga to discuss where we might find lodging, a man walked up to us and asked about the sidecar. He introduced himself as Dale Rafferty, a local contractor, who had a Harley with a Freedom sidecar for his dog. He asked if I had heard of the United Sidecar Association and the ensuing conversation revealed that he had read all of my articles in the Sidecarist magazinethe only person, as far as I know, outside of my immediate family to have suffered so. He pointed us to a motel, owned by his cousin, with a restaurant, the “Hot Biscuit” right across the street offering both supper and breakfast. Perfect. We got a huge room for a modest price and the restaurant served us way too much good food with an exemplary warm apple crisp for dessert.



Dale & Molly



Fort Ticonderoga



Tailor Shop at
Fort Ticonderoga

Dale came by for a visit with his sidecar rig and his “new dog” Molly. His previous companion, “Jack” who had been featured in an issue of the Sidecarist, sadly perished in a house fire last year. Molly, a European red Doberman is 8 months old with all the adorable puppy exuberance that entails. Dale has her harnessed in the car when traveling and has removed the seat, replacing it with a dog bed for comfort. He tells me that this week he is picking up a new puppy, a half-brother to Jack, so there will be two in the car for future trips.

Brenda does 18th Century, pre and post Revolutionary War period frontier re-enacting at our local Fort Boonesboro and others in the surrounding area, and is a recognized expert on the construction and provenance of period clothing, so was interested in seeing Fort Ticonderoga, which has a varied history including that period. We toured the fort and met with re-enactors portraying the French who built and occupied it, including one young woman whose day was made by Brenda’s questions and answers regarding clothing. Brenda got good advice on shoes from an earnest young man who had given up on law school to go into re-enacting and now is teaching history. In the tailor shop, she talked serge and seams with a brilliantly uniformed young fellow who then strapped on his

sword and left us to go participate in a musket drill.

Leaving the fort in the afternoon, we took the small ferry across Lake Champlain and went up through the Vermont countryside on 73 (which was down to dirt for several miles, due to a re-paving strip job) and then up legendary Vermont 100 through the ski country and little tourist villages. Cool air, mountains, green everywhere, just what we wanted.

Stopping time came in Montpelier, the capitol, where the only rooms available were at the Capitol Plaza Hotel, a restored old hotel near the capitol, not budget-priced, but very nice. Valerie, the desk clerk, has the best personality for dealing with guests and a soft spot for motorcyclists. She instructs us to park under the covered area where the hotel’s owner keeps his car when in town. She smiles, “Just don’t



Ferry Dock

take his spot”. Downstairs is J. Morgan’s Steakhouse, with excellent food (though for me, a disappointing beer list...all over-hopped IPA’s for the 30-ish crowd, not a stout or porter to be had).

After supper we walked around Montpelier in a light rain, poking in the little shops that lined the Main Street. Brenda found a t-shirt that proclaimed “Read, Eat, Sleep”, her preferred motto, in fuchsia. As the shops were closing, we stopped for gelato and ate it as we strolled back to the hotel.

Threatening skies in the morning indicated the rain wasn’t done yet as we packed up to leave. Outside we met the couple from New Hampshire who had parked their 2016 BMW

R1200RS behind us as instructed by Valerie. They were a bit younger than us but still “senior”, and interested in the sidecar for a future plan when two up on a sport bike no longer fit the bill.

Out of Montpelier with some nice mountain roads for a while, but soon we were down in the lowlands and the rain hit in earnest. For a while the combination of curtain-like rain and high winds funneling through the valley made driving the rig somewhat precarious. I was happy to have that third wheel when the gusts blew the rig across the wet pavement, feeling the tires skittering beneath me. The storm stayed with us, moving east as we were so that I could see the end of it, blue skies, but they seemed to stay just about the same distance in



On the Ferry

front. Finally we turned a bit north and the storm stayed south, parting company though it would occasionally come back to visit until later in the afternoon.

We spent the night in Bangor, where Brenda was born, and then headed north beside the Penobscot River through Orono and Old Town. (Why is a place named “Old Town”? It wasn’t old when it was founded.) Rain returned before Lincoln and stayed with us most of the rest of the day. We entered Canada at Amherst where a pleasant young woman ranger at the border crossing looked briefly at our passports, questioned us about firearms and sent us on our way.

After the jarring, weather-beaten pavement in New England, the roads across Canada were in much better shape and I could almost hear the rig breathe a sigh of relief. We had a destination for this part of the trip, to meet up with a newly found relative of Brenda’s in Miramichi, New Brunswick.

This town, we are told, is the amalgam of several communities that developed and melded together on both sides of the Miramichi River over many years, with the names of the former towns now used as neighborhoods. We picked the Rodd Miramichi Inn for its proximity to the meeting place and for a good restaurant in the building. With the currency difference between Canada and the US, it was a bargain. The Miramichi River which seems the size of the Ohio is just a few feet from the dining room but the waitress tells us it never floods.



At the hotel on the Miramichi River

The hotel offers special rates for motorcycle tourists and snowmobiles. When I questioned the desk clerk about such things, she told me that when the river freezes solid for most of the winter, it becomes a highway and hardy travelers on snowmobiles can come right up to their rooms on their machines. She says that sometimes the town doesn’t even bother plowing the bridges that connect the two sides of the city, since people just cross the ice wherever they want. I really like this part of Canada and the town of Miramichi is truly charming, but the thought of living with such cold and snow means I probably won’t be moving here.

Out for a walk in the early daylight along the gravel path that follows the water outside our room, I pass behind houses that have docks built out over the boulders lining the river, with canoes and kayaks at the ready. Waterfowl along the shore do not like impertinent tourists disturbing their morning swim and they tell me so, loudly. Some crows, at their posts on top of power poles, let me know that I’m being watched. They fly off for reinforcements, in case I decide to create mischief in their territory.

In the dining room overlooking the water, Brenda breakfasts responsibly but I just have

to try the “special”, a large bowl of fried potatoes, onions, tofu and avocado, among other things. Interesting, pretty good, but not likely to become a staple item back home.

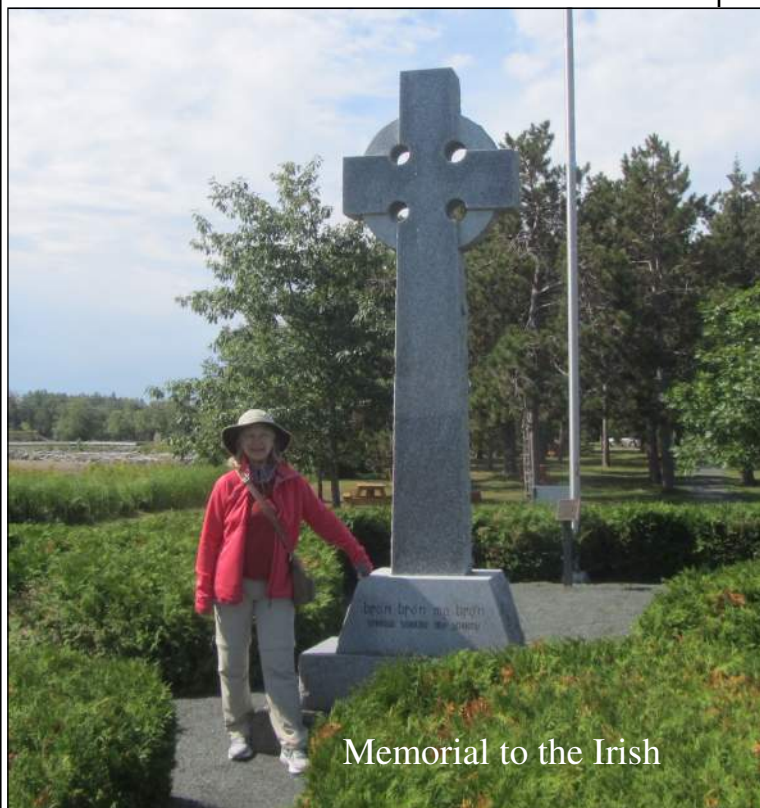
Bellies full, we drove the rig down to the Middle Island to see the Irish memorial. After the Potato Famine, thousands of Irish fled the hunger and headed to the Americas for survival. Unfortunately, many if not most didn't survive the trip over. One ship, the Looshtauk, bound for Quebec came into this river in 1847 and requested urgent assistance for the surviving immigrants who were afflicted with Typhus fever. After first refusing landing permission, the town leaders relented when the captain threatened to ground the ship, making it their problem whether they wanted it or not. “Well, Captain, since you put it that way....” A temporary quarantine site was set up with a makeshift hospital in an old shed. Many of the Irish who made it ashore alive still perished from their illness and are buried there in shallow, unmarked graves. The ones who did

pull through later spread out through the northern territories, establishing settlements and their descendants still are all over this area.

This was to be a “slow day” for Brenda to walk about in the town and me to nap and do laundry. The reason for our journey to this part of Canada was to rendezvous with Brenda's 3rd cousin whom she had never met, but found through a DNA site. Their family came to North America through this region, with Brenda's branch later settling in Maine. Suzanne turns out to be a delightful woman, a font of information regarding the family tree and the connections of Brenda's family to the area. We sat outside over dinner at the local Irish pub, talking until well after dark.

After another walk around the bay we reluctantly, packed up and left Miramichi, heading south toward Prince Edward Island, another spot for some family research. In the late afternoon, we cross the long bridge over to PEI in a hard downpour. As we near the end of the causeway, we can see from our high perch that the east side of the island is clearing while the west side is still in the storm. We decided to go east. Despite being here in tourist season we located a vacant room at the old-style Traveler's Inn in Summerside and drove down into town to find supper. After a tour of the options, we selected Sharkey's Seafood at the docks, eating out on the deck overlooking the water. I had “Loin of Cod” (I didn't know fish had those) which was quite tasty. At the next table was a black lab puppy who wasn't sure what to make of those strangely dressed sidecar people, but he knew that a good barking-at was required.

(To Be Continued)



Memorial to the Irish



Snow Coming
22° F.

CAN YOU TELL ME WHY A FULL GROWN CAT
WILL JUST LOUNGE ALL DAY AND SNOOZE,
AND THEN HEAD OUT AT SUNDOWN,
STAY OUT ALL NIGHT AND CRUISE,
HOW THEY CAN SILENTLY LEAP ON THE TABLE
AND NEVER RATTLE A DISH,
OR SOMEHOW KNOW FROM THREE BLOCKS AWAY
WHEN YOU OPEN THE TUNA FISH ...

Here's the group for today:

- * 1). John Rice
- 2). Chester Martin
- 3). Ron Atkins
- 4). Pete Galskis
- 5). Paul Elwyns
- 6). Jim Branson
- 7). Tim Kouns (paid 2000 dues today!)
- 8). Roy Roulett
- 9). Chris Warner
- 10). Eddie Roulett
- 11). Booe Sutherland
- 12). Joe Bark
- 13). Mary Beard
- 14). Bob Beard
- 15). Charlie Norton
- 16). James Street

* John Rice gets
a free breakfast
(FIRST OF THE
CENTURY) !!!

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