

November 2022

Apex

Looking Through The Curve

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



Pie stop at the Overlook Cafe

THE SPRINGFIELD MISSOURI MOA RALLY

By John Rice

My first BMWMOA rally was in 1982, at Shreve, Ohio, the 15th such gathering, I believe. Tom Sutherland took me there, the “new kid” in the Bluegrass Beemer world, riding my green R90 I had acquired the year before. Since then, I have made it to several such rallies in far-flung locations and on many different iterations of the German brand, including the one in St. Paul, MN when I started the trip on one BMW and came home on another.

For the 49th National, celebrating 50 years of the MOA (pesky COVID messed up the numbering) my brother in law Jay Smythe and I, both now in our 70's, would be heading west to Springfield, MO on our smallest Beemers yet, the G310's.

Days of unusual heat convinced us to start early, leaving Jay's house in Lexington, Kentucky just after sunrise. At Lawrenceburg, we took RT 62, Jay leading, since he is a joy to watch handling those curves. As we turned onto the old road, a young rabbit jumped out of the bushes and ran at his bike, such that I thought surely the little guy would be shredded

in the spokes. But the bunny stopped short, spun around and ran beside the motorcycle, right next to the rear wheel at more than 30 mph, before turning sharply away, spinning around again, and running across in front of me. I braked and missed him, then watched his cottontail disappear into the bushes. An amazing athletic feat, worthy of 10's from all the judges. I wonder briefly if this was an adolescent male rabbit and his buddies were on the other side, egging him on.

At Hopkinsville we cruised around downtown for a likely place to have lunch. As we dismounted on a side street to explore, an older fellow stopped to talk with us. He is a woodworker who has a shop a few doors down for restoring antique furniture. He said the diner across the road was a good spot, and he was right. Inside the tiny hamburger place the tile interior is sparkling white, the smell is of hamburger grease and fried potatoes and, as the t-shirts say, the place has been here since 1929. We got a breakfast meal, diner-style, made right in front of us while we sat at the small counter. The cook, who doubles as a server, bantered with the other customers who

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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, 8-9:00 a.m.

**BMW Club
Bluegrass Beemers**





Hopkinsville Lunch Spot

wandered in, reminding me of the Jennifer Warnes' song, "Invitation to the Blues".

By late afternoon we are in the Land Between the Lakes region and the heat is demanding that we seek AC and pie. We pick Cindy's Restaurant, on a boat docked at the lakeside, but must settle for ice cream as they are temporarily pie-deprived.

We donned our evaporative "cooling vests" which help somewhat but dry out quickly in these temperatures. Mother Nature can be

staved off for a bit, but she always wins in the end.

In the evening we pulled into a motel in Dexter, MO, which had both a breakfast diner and a Mexican restaurant in the same parking lot, perfect for our needs.

We are sharing this motel with a construction crew, heavy duty trucks lined up in a row with impressive equipment for something big being built elsewhere. In the morning, before daylight, I hear a pounding on the door across the hall and plaintive exhortations for the occu-

pant of that room to please get up and go. Apparently at least one crew member didn't get the starting time memo.

The diner is one of those shiny faux-railroad car deals that replicate inside the 60's era with posters taken from old photos and music on the jukebox that was vintage when the server's parents were children. Still, the ambiance is pleasing to us oldsters and the breakfast is pretty good. We top up our cholesterol counts and head out just after daylight. By Poplar Bluff, the thunderstorm which had been looking for us has zeroed in on our location and

roughly our age, also headed for the rally. They are leaving and offer us their table.

The afternoon's ride is hot, but very satisfying with curve after curve and not much in the way. I had changed the G310GS's tires shortly before our departure, removing the 50/50 Metzlers it came with and spooning on some Pirelli Scorpion Trail 90/10's. It has taken me until now to get more confident with the bike and these new tires, letting me trust its front end when pushing the edges.

We made it to Springfield late in the afternoon and checked in to our motel near the rally site. As we were parking under the motel awning, we met a fellow on a V-Strom who told us he was in his 70's, but still rides dirt bikes with his son when he gets the chance. Looking around at the others coming in for the night on Beemers, I'm seeing the pattern. We are an aging group!



Rainsuit Drill

gives us its best shot with a drenching down-pour and impressive lightning bolts. It's moving east, though and we're going west so our acquaintance is fairly brief, but memorable.

Missouri Rt. 160 draws a wiggly line across the southern border, in and out of the hills, making curves just perfect for motorcycles to enjoy with relatively few towns to interrupt the flow.

At the picturesque little town of Ava, we stop in a deli for lunch and meet up with two guys,



Typical hotel Boot dryer

We opted to skip what the motel deemed “breakfast” and went down the street to Ziggy’s, an excellent spot with just the kind of stuff one wants a bike trip breakfast, the sort of eggs and rich pastry selections that would ensure an early death if done every day. In the

vendor tents and ignored the sweat dripping off our faces while we perused the various goodies on offer. Fortunately for us and our wallets, the accessory offerings here for the 310’s were sparse, being dwarfed by the plethora of farkles aimed at the big bikes which

have more room to bolt, screw and glue stuff on to their enormous bodies. I was intrigued by the Shad saddlebags, which are light weight and have an elegant mounting system, but for now these only come in small, the 23 liter, similar to the ones I already have, and huge, the 36 liter which add width far beyond my acceptable limits. A Goldilocks problem, I guess.



Ziggy's

parking lot, we met Mr. Hannigan, of Hannigan Sidecars and Trikes from Murray, Kentucky. This day he is piloting an elaborate trike, but has brought quite a selection of sidecar rigs to the rally. He tells us that even though he is known for these 3-wheelers, he still rides his two-wheeled BMW's every day he can.

It's only a short five minute ride to the rally site at the fairgrounds and as always, no directions would have been needed. BMW's of every description are funneling into the entrance, the stream getting thicker as we near the venue.

Inside the rally site we found a sort of shaded parking spot for the 310's and wandered over to the huge building...only to learn that we were a bit early and couldn't get in to the air-conditioned vendor area quite yet. Outside, the heat was already becoming oppressive, but we quickly got “rally fever” in the rows of

Jay found some new rain pants to keep him dry. We both purchased new bike covers to



Getting new foot pegs installed

replace the travel-worn collection of loose threads and stains we had been using.

Over at the Altrider kiosk, I spotted a pair of wide foot pegs that looked like they might fit the G310GS, solving my problem of too-narrow pegs under a damaged foot. The fellow at the counter said they were actually for a 1200, but offered me the option of having them try them out on my bike without cost if they wouldn't work. Hard to turn that down. Later in the day I brought my 310GS to their spot and his crew got to work efficiently and in short order had done the few modifications to the peg that allowed them to fit perfectly. To show me that the folding feature was adequate, his young men gently leaned my bike over on its side, all the way to the ground and then back up, proving that, 1) the pegs would not be a problem in turns, and 2) young men can easily do things like that which would have me in traction for a week.

Back inside the building, with its blessed AC, we found the vendors

open for business, a mall of booths and kiosks offering everything one could need for riding and many things for which the need had not yet occurred to us.

We perused helmets, the new Schuberths and Shoeis, boots (none on offer wide enough for me, though the Italian lady at the Stylemartin booth did her best to find something) the



Triumph Rocket 3
@ Hannigan Booth



Inside the Rally

Aerostitch booth where they told me the pants I had ordered in April still were not available (supply chain problems on the special fabric they use), and a gazillion other gadgets for which we pondered the parameters of the need vs want equation. We visit Mr. Hannigan's large display, where he has among others, a sidecar attached to a Triumph Rocket 3, that enormous triple that looks like a tractor engine with

torque to match. I sent a photo to Brenda, who opines that she will stick with the rig we have at home, thanks.

We continued to wander the aisles, inside and out, until by 4 pm we were rallied out, foot-sore and exhausted. With my new wider pegs, we headed back to the motel and next door for dinner, a beer or two and debriefing of what we had seen and experienced.

Sunday morning, the motel is alive with BMW riders packing up and moving out, most going home by whatever direct or circuitous route their schedules permitted. In my early days of attending these things, it seemed most of us were working and had to be on the job Monday or soon thereafter. Now the number of workers seems much reduced and the helmets are covering mostly gray hair.

Jay and I enjoyed another over-large breakfast at Ziggy's, then stuffed and caffeinated, we went south to meet the Bull Shoals Ferry over to Arkansas.

At the ferry dock, we fell in line behind several BMW's from the Rally. One guy from North Carolina on a new-ish GS was walking up the line, asking if anyone had some spare oil. Seems he had topped up his level that morning and forgot to put the filler cap on top of the cylinder head back on. Oil spraying up from the opening had soaked his pant leg, boot and now was slathered over the engine back to his rear tire. How that had escaped his notice for the couple of hours getting here might seem hard to imagine, but refer back to that gray hair I mentioned earlier. It could be any of us now. Jay gave him his quart of BMW oil, but that wasn't enough to show in the sight glass. Not gonna be a dealership open anywhere until Tuesday for a new cap and then, unless he's lucky enough to have an old-school dealer, it will be, "I'll order that for you, it'll be here in two weeks". Among the guys waiting in the line, some duct tape and plastic were cobbled together to staunch the outward flow and he rode cautiously off the ferry on the Arkansas side, pondering his options.



Bull Shoals Ferry

This northwestern quadrant of the state has excellent motorcycling roads just about anywhere one chooses to point a front wheel. We rode through Harrison (where we had attended an RA rally a few years ago) and picked up RT 7 down to Jasper where the Cliff House provided us with a two-pieces-of-pie lunch. With pie this good on offer, there was no point in wasting calorie intake on mere nutrition. I went for the superb apple pie, Jay had peach cobbler and then we topped that off with "Company's

Comin''' pie, the Official State Pie of Arkansas, originated right here at this place.

bits scuffed off the edges. The 310's are in their element in this place with few straight



Cliff House Inn

stretches connecting the seemingly endless sweeping curves that usually have a good sight line all the way through

unlike our

typical eastern Kentucky blind entries. One could go faster than our 60-65 mph pace here, but I'm not sure it would be worth missing the scenery.

We got to our motel, worn out and contented, early enough to grab the shuttle down into



Cliff House Inn Pie

Outside we ran into a group of airhead BMW riders, some on immaculate bikes that had been in the show at the rally. I hope we had left enough pie inside for them to sample.

Down 7, then over to 16 and 21, just meandering around the winding asphalt that finds its way through the hills. I was beginning to trust my new tires and managed to get the last



Cliff House Inn View

town for a quick tour of historic Eureka Springs. The old-style trolley bus takes us all around this place incongruously built along the hillsides of a valley with allegedly “healing waters”, with ornate houses and impressive hotels stuck precariously on the slopes. Given the construction techniques and materials available in the 19th century, it’s an amazing example of determination and ingenuity.

Bright and early....well, early, anyway...we went to the “Pig Trail”, one of the named routes going south from our lodgings. Gentle turns, mostly out in the open, slow cars sight-seeing until we got into the Ozark forest, where the tree canopy shaded narrow asphalt

kayakers, motorcyclists, etc, are on windows, tables, nearly everything. Jay left one from the rally on the gas pump. Inside, there is a very enthusiastic young lady working the counter, and a guy who could be her brother, seeming to be in charge of the place, both bantering with everyone. Into the lot comes an old guy in a rusted pickup nearly his age, skidding to a stop in the gravel. He jumps out, looking like Santa Claus after a 3-month post-Christmas fast, hands waving over his head, hollering “it’s milkshake time!”.

The apple crumble pie, served in a paper plate is among the best I have ever experienced. Some might say there’s not enough added sugar, maybe too much cinnamon, a bit

too much crumble, but all that is exactly what makes it perfect for me.

A few hundred yards from the store, RT 215 turns to an unpaved farm road. On other excursions, that would be fine, but this isn’t that trip. Jay’s tires aren’t really meant for gravel and nei-



Oark Cafe

paths with lots of bends to keep things interesting while looking out for critters. We took tiny 215 along a creek over to Oark to visit the country store and cafe.

A rider we met at a gas station had told us to come here for the “best piece of pie I’ve ever had”. He was not wrong. The place looks its age, established in 1890, inside and out. Stickers from various people, hikers,



Inside the Oark Cafe

ther of us today is up for miles of washboard chatter, so we backtrack down to Clarksville, then up 21. More excellent curves, wide sweepers that you can see through, clean good surface with white pavement that almost hurts the eyes in the afternoon sun.

We finished up around 3, too hot and happily exhausted to go on safely, finding our way back to collapse in the air-conditioning of our room. Another fine dinner in the hotel restaurant and off to bed, ready to go again tomorrow.

Tuesday morning we talked with a film crew whose equipment lined the back row of the parking lot. Seems they were there to film an Arkansas tourism commercial and would be following a group of “typical motorcycle riders” along a series of the backroads we had just been riding. One of their vehicles was an SUV with an elaborate camera crane mounted to the top, able to stretch far above and off to the side. Two crew members sit in the back seat, one controlling the crane and the other operating the camera, while the car driver follows their subjects. A state police car was here to clear the roads ahead for them as the camera car often would be in the oncoming lane for the best angle. We watched as the typical motorcyclists, two young guys in jeans, t-shirts, fingerless gloves, leather vests and half-helmets, mounted their large loud V-twin cruisers and left the lot trailed by an entourage of vehicles. This will all result in a 60 second spot on your TV, so be appreciative of the effort it entailed.

We non-typical motorcycle riders set out for the final leg of our journey shortly thereafter, unaccompanied and undocumented by any

media. We made our way back up to Route 160 in Missouri where Jay took the lead and I did my best to keep him in sight. Lunch came at Alton, where the Corn Fed Rascal Restaurant had too good a name to resist. Located in an old store building on the square, it offered way too much food for a reasonable price and an assortment of local folks, presumably rascals raised on corn, to watch and listen to while we ate.

We fetched up for the evening at the Drury Inn at Poplar Bluff just in time for the 5:30 “Kickback” meal and drinks included with the room. There we swapped stories with a couple who had been at the rally, he on an



The Corn Fed Rascal Cafe

XR1000 Beemer and her on a Ducati Scrambler. They were from Toledo, retired fairly young from something vaguely unspecific, now on their way down to Kentucky and then headed for parts yet unplanned.

The last day of any trip is on familiar roads in familiar territory and though we never want the ride to end, it always must at some point. We made a stop at Grass Roots BMW in Cape

Girardeau MO to ogle the new BMW's and find stuff we didn't really need but looked like a neat thing to have. A lunch and pie stop at the Overlook high above the Ohio River left us sated and fully fueled for the getting-home ride to be completed, while thinking of the next time we can go.

beautiful sceneryin other words, doing exactly what motorcycles are meant to do... without a complaint. Their light weight and relative simplicity brings us back to the elemental nature of this wonderful thing we have been fortunate to do most of our lives and still can do with them even in our senior years. As

Kurt Vonnegut once wrote on the subject of gratitude, we often should remind ourselves when times are good, "If this isn't nice, what is?" And these bikes, these trips, certainly are.

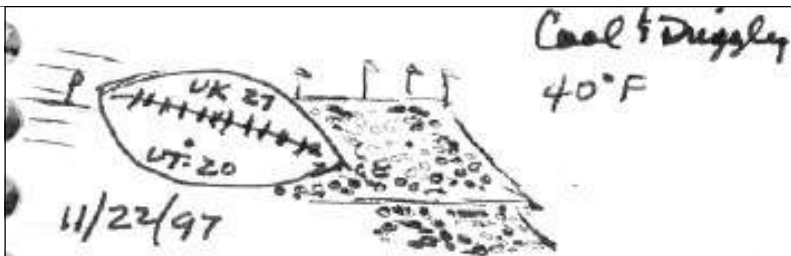


Pie Stop at the Overlook Cafe

Throughout the 1,800 mile trip the G310's sang along happily in the middle third of their RPM range, keeping us at a good, thoroughly enjoyable, pace on these two-lane twisties through



Somewhere in Arkansas



WE RELISH SATURDAY MORNINGS, OUR CLAN IS ALWAYS THERE,
THE CATS MUST HEED THE WARNINGS, KEEP THE BALL IN THE AIR,
IF NOT, THE BOYS FROM KNOXVILLE WILL HAVE AN EARLY FEAST,
BUT OVER AND OVER WE WANT TO HEAR "COUCH, COMPLETE TO YEAST"

Here's the group for today:

- 1). Chester Martin
- 2). Dave McCard
- 3). Boone Sutherland
- 4). Tom Sutherland
- * 5). Ryan King
- * 6). Robbie Carter
- 7). Paul Elwyn
- * 8). Hubert Burton
- 9). Mike Gill
- 10). Pete Galskie
- * 11). Mitch Butler
- 12). Phillip Baugh
- 13). Mary Beard
- 14). Darlene Huffman
- 15). Gary Huffman
- 16). Ben Pruitt

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