

June 2023

# Apex

*Looking Through The Curve*

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

Lots & Lots of Red Dirt





# The 2023 Southern Expedition (an “Out of Knives” mystery, without all those actors)

By John Rice

I have always thought February was the longest month, at least 6 or 8 or 10 weeks of miserable cold, snowy weather in Kentucky (is it really a southern state?) and each year I long to be somewhere else...anywhere else... as long as it isn't below freezing. In times past I have even ventured below the Equator in search of respite. This year I proposed in the fall that Jay and I load up the XT250's on his trailer in February and head south to somewhere that we could ride without electric vests and Hippo Hands and absent the shivering and chattering of teeth.

So the plans were made to leave in the last weeks of the awful month, heading south on snow-covered highways, destination to be determined.

Then Kentucky had the mildest February in recent memory.

Undeterred by Nature's sense of humor, we set out on the 18th, with southern Andalusia, Alabama as the place we could reach in one day and offering the Conecuh National Forest to ride around in and Florida's Blackwater

State Forest contiguous, separated only by the imaginary state line.

I bought a Florida DeLorme map book just in case we got down below that line, and of course left it at the house in the final loading process.

We arrived at the motel in Andalusia, that had been booked ahead, a Quality Inn near some restaurants, with the intention of staying there several days. This motel chain has always been a reliable budget-priced alternative, still “old school” with the outside entrances we prefer on bike trips. Jay had been very specific on the phone with the manager that we wanted a non-smoking (as in never smoked in) room. The stale tobacco reek turned out to be the least of its problems.

In our 50's and 60's, after we mostly gave up camping, we have stayed in some really dodgy places, then opting for the cheapest possible alternatives, and accepted the smoke residue and lack of any amenities as par for the course. We have stayed in places that required accessing our bike's tool kits to get the shower

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**Lexington, Kentucky MOA #146 RA #49**  
Jeff Crabb, *Editor* jdcraab@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, 8-9:00 a.m.**

**BMW Club**  
**Bluegrass Beemers**



to work, and places where “The Floor is Lava” game took on a more realistic aspect since one could not tell for sure just what that suspicious looking stain was from or what other noxious things might be there.

Now in our 70’s, we have become a bit more picky and the prevalence of non-smoking accommodations has made us more sensitive to the stink, though we still look for the less costly, outside entrance options.

But having the previous occupant’s trash on the carpet, leftover toiletries in the shower and finding a tub with the floor so buckled that the fiberglass was cracked and standing on it was more like walking on Legos, was a bit much even for us.

We moved on to the local Holiday Inn Express for the remainder of our stay.

Monday, 45 degrees in the morning, approximately the same as back in Kentucky, we walked to breakfast at the Huddle House across the parking lot from the motel. As is common in such places, the traditional breakfast offerings were

good and plentiful, excellent preparation for working folks to get through a full day of labor, or for old geezers with pretensions of still being dirt riders to last a few hours on the trails.

With temperatures still hovering in the high forty’s at 8 AM, we rode south out of town to get to the trails. Not the single track cow paths as back home, these are a combination of forest service access roads and meandering trails used by hunters in (and sometimes out of) season. There’s not much elevation change, a good thing at this geriatric stage of our trail riding. The surface is mostly a sandy mix, but except for the occasional wheel-wandering stretch of deeper stuff, pretty stable. Some mud makes an appearance here and there and just enough deep pools of water to require some technical riding to get around, keeping our interest up.



In the Pines



All around us are the tall, straight pine trees that keep the trails shaded. Large portions of the forest here have had “controlled burns” to keep down the undergrowth and we can see new green shoots popping up through the ashes. Squirrels and the occasional deer run from our approach, indicating that the critters have begun to return to the area after the human-caused insult to their home.

We went up to the lookout tower at Open Pond, but were unable to climb it, the Forest



Open Pond Tower

Service having wisely blocked the tall stairs from access by the curious.

By noonish, we are in Florida, having passed through the highest point in that state, 345 feet above sea level, near the imaginatively named town of “Floral” bridging the border of the two states. We are looking for the all-dirt road our map tells us will take us from near the panhandle shore all the way back to Alabama. At lunch in an Irish pub near Panama City, (no Guinness on a riding day) we spread maps on the table and finally figured out that the road 1) does exist, and 2) it is inside the Eglin Air Force Base and therefore probably off limits to wandering motorcycle tourists.

Once upon a time, these beach roads were a scenic route, open to the bay on one side, with sand blowing from the seashore onto the pavement. Now it is essentially impossible to see the ocean from the road without renting a room in one of the high-rise buildings that are shoulder to shoulder for miles. The only time we can see water is on the causeway over an inlet.

Our route back on pavement took us through the Eglin Air Force Base complex with large fences and restricted notices on both sides. There were some dirt roads that appeared to be available until we saw “Open Range” signs. Not wanting to become target practice, we demurred. In need of a brief tree inspection, we ventured down one dirt road that did not restrict us until we got about 200 yards in and then reached a locked gate, marked “human foot traffic only”, presumably to bar access to Bigfoot and extra-terrestrials.

On a two lane stretch, coming to one of the few, gentle curves in this part of the country, an oncoming lumber truck decided that even such a mild diversion was too much trouble





and came over into our lane, sending both of us to the edge of the blacktop at 60 mph. That should suffice for our aerobic heart rate increase today.

Dinner that night was at the “good” Mexican restaurant, (as opposed to the other one, 50 yards away) which apparently has been here only a short time. Our apologetic waitress tells us that this is a dry county on Sundays so no beer available. Nonetheless, the food was excellent and far too much. The waitress comped our drinks, Jay’s,

Diet Coke, and my water, a nice gesture if mostly symbolic.

By Tuesday the temperatures had climbed into the 70’s, flirting with the low 80’s by noon and our cold weather gear remained in the room for the rest of the trip.



Camp 31

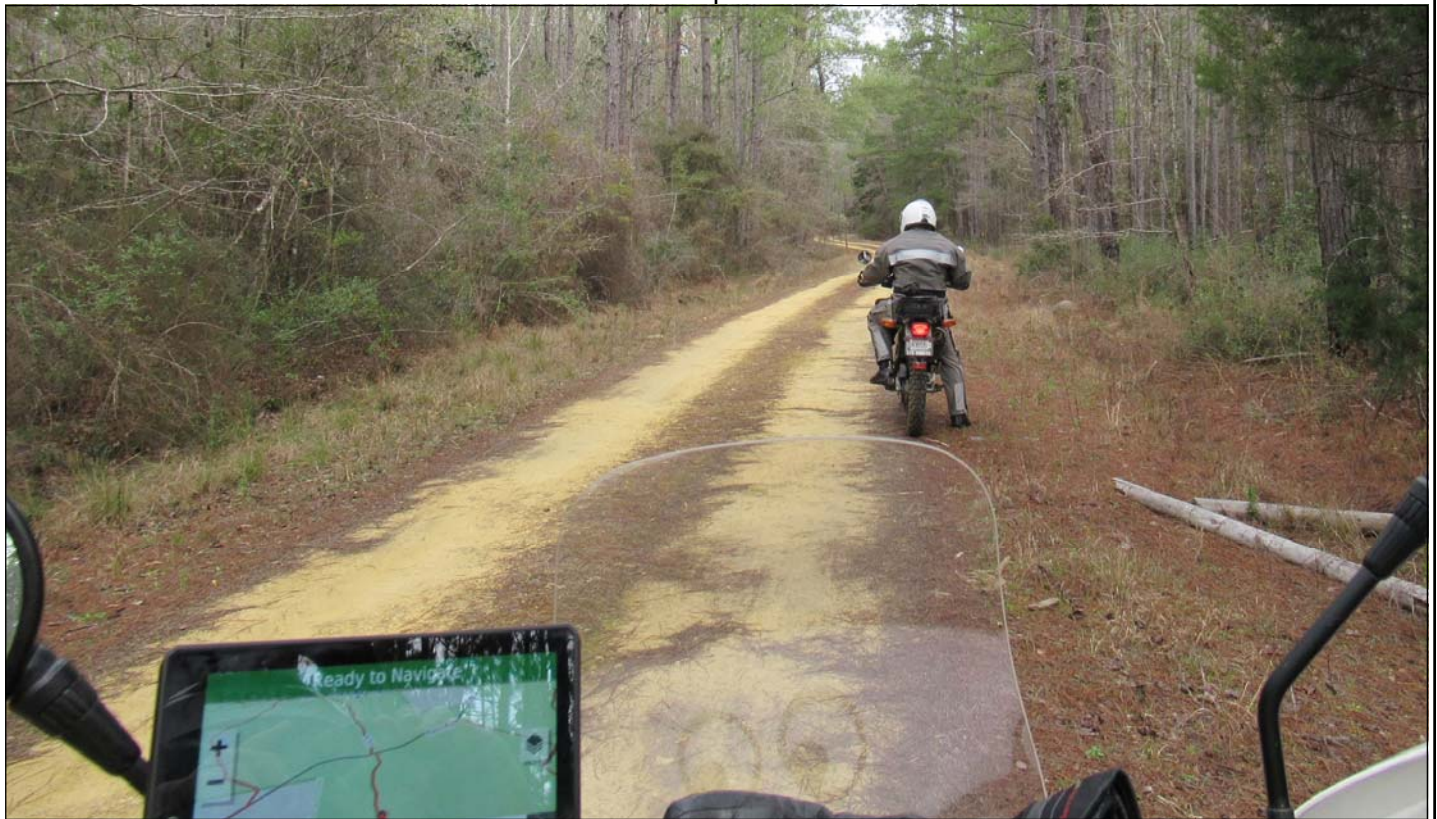


We wandered around sand roads in the Conecuh and Blackwater forests (briefly passing through the tiny community of Dixie, which meant that for a short moment we really were “deep in the heart of Dixie”). The numbers on the dirt forest roads didn’t match the map and the Garmin got occasionally confused, leading to some wandering around until we finally reached Sweetwater Creek, which was in full flow, blocking our way. We backtracked and tried a couple of dead ends that also terminated at the torrent before finding our way out to the highway. We still managed to make one shallow water crossing but no XT 250s or riders were harmed in the making of this adven-

would not be out of place in a much larger town.

The theme here seems to be “Too much food”. I ordered an appetizer, “pork BBQ and Fries,” thinking it would be just enough for a light lunch, but instead it would have been sufficient for at least four more people to share. Not having those, I did the best I could.

By this time in our sojourn in the south we had noticed a curious phenomenon...none of the restaurants where we had eaten in Alabama ever provided a knife, not sharp or butter, nor of any description. In Florida, Tennessee, no problem, but Alabama, none to be had.



ture.

We then asked Mr. Garmin to take us to some food and 20 miles later we found ourselves in East Brewton, Alabama at Camp 31, a nice place sort of hidden in what had been a warehouse by the railroad tracks. Inside it is rustic but not shabby, sort of warehouse-chic, that

On the way back into the forests we looked for and finally again found the elusive “State Line Road” that we had stumbled upon yesterday, taking us to the unpaved portion that wanders back and forth between the two states. It terminates at “Mountain City Road”, still unpaved, leaving us to wonder just where





Gator Cafe



in this flat country is a mountain to deserve that name.

We had crossed Sand Hill, elevation 245 feet, earlier, but I doubt that is the one.

Wednesday morning, back down to State Line Road and Mountain City Road then into the Blackwater forest with some initial difficulty finding decent trails, but then we found them in abundance. What were mapped as “roads” were in fact trails that became essentially single track with deep sand and deep ruts with water crossings, large mud holes, and a creek or two. At one trail we found our way around a water crossing on what turned out to be a very nice trail, then saw at the end where it re-joined the main trail there was a “road closed” sign that had not been present at the beginning. Oops.

By lunchtime, we had worked our way down to Baker Florida for lunch at the Gator Café, where salads left us enough guilt free for me to have a fried apple pie and ice cream. We found our way down County Road 189 to get back into the deeper parts of the Blackwater forest, and more trails, some single track, that wore us out.





These would not have been terribly technical trails, 10 years ago, but the people we are now were exhausted, knees and joints complaining, by the time we got to the end of what we could stand for the day. We came back to town on mostly paved roads.

Dinner was at Dave's catfish house back in Andalusia which inexplicably serves no beer though the catfish was excellent. We asked the waitress about the knife situation and she looked at us as if we were idiots (not an uncommon reaction to our questions in a variety of circumstances) and said that one would come with our meals. It didn't. And when we then asked for knives, she gave us the "look" again and went back to the kitchen...and brought us one such implement to share.



Inside Dave's Catfish House





Sara's Cafe

Thursday out before 8 and headed south. Into the park, on familiar trails at first, then branching off as openings appeared, with the Garmin assuring us that we were still in the park by its green shade on the screen, but not naming any of the brown lines we were following. No matter, since every trail is here for the purpose of getting to somewhere someone thought worth going to, so we will find out what that was. Some were blocked by high water, creeks swollen with last weeks' rain, requiring some backtracking to avoid testing our XT's submarine capabilities.

By lunchtime we were again near Florala, where Sara's Cafe offered an old style lunch buffet, with fried chicken so thickly coated in batter that it should have come with a defibrillator on the side, some sort of vegetables cooked almost into being unrecognizable and



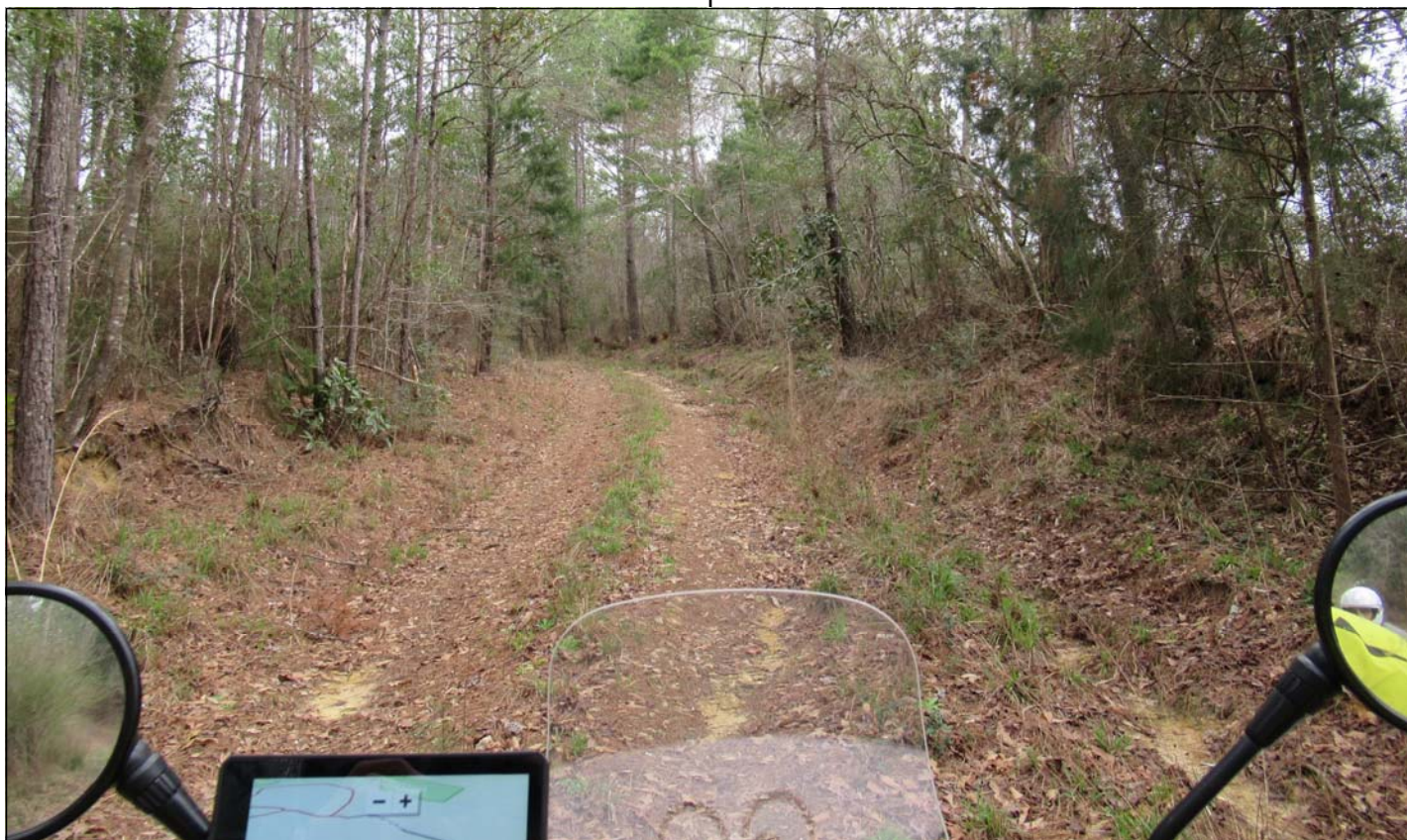
for dessert, Ambrosia and Heavenly Hash, two staples of church picnics and family reunions, that neither of us had experienced in a lot of years. The lady who runs the place, presumably Sara, appears to be older than us and says she has "been here 34 years".

Outside as we are suiting up to leave, a fellow comes over to talk. As is increasingly common these days, he tells us that he has big bikes, naming two Harley models by their alphabetic designations, but recently has acquired a smaller motorcycle. He tells us that the new little one is "more fun than he's had in



years”, but makes a point of saying that it is just for local excursions, not suitable for real biking. The paradigm shift hasn’t taken fully yet.

vacy of breeding turkeys. About a quarter-mile in, when the Garmin had us off the map, out in empty green space, we ran into a flock of about 10 turkeys, several males with their tail-



Back into the forest, we find a trail with a large sign detailing a lot of regulations for hunting use, but not specific enough to resolve our confusion on whether the trail regulations for hunters also applied to us who just wanted to be in the woods without killing anything. We decided we would go in, and if stopped by a ranger, look surprised at the revelation that we apparently had forgotten our guns.

Friday, our last day, we took Rt. 17 south from Andalusia into the forest and this time took the west side. 17 took us quickly to a dirt road that was not on the Garmin but promising. It turned out to be a Goldilocks find, a nice fairly easy path with not too many ruts, not too many mud holes and just enough sand to keep us focused. This trail is closed starting March 15 for the summer to protect the pri-

feathers spread in traditional Thanksgiving-turkey-picture fashion, running, not flying, off into the forest, presumably to think about the mating delights that soon awaited them in season.

After some initial confusion because the route marker post numbers didn’t match the numbers Garmin was giving us and some trail numbers seemed to go in all four directions at intersections, with the GPS telling us that some paths weren’t there where we sat and others were present when they weren’t, we found our way into some that we could knit together. Gonna have to have a discussion with Mr. Garmin someday about his accuracy.

When a trail came back to Rt. 137, we figured that it was nearing lunchtime, there were-



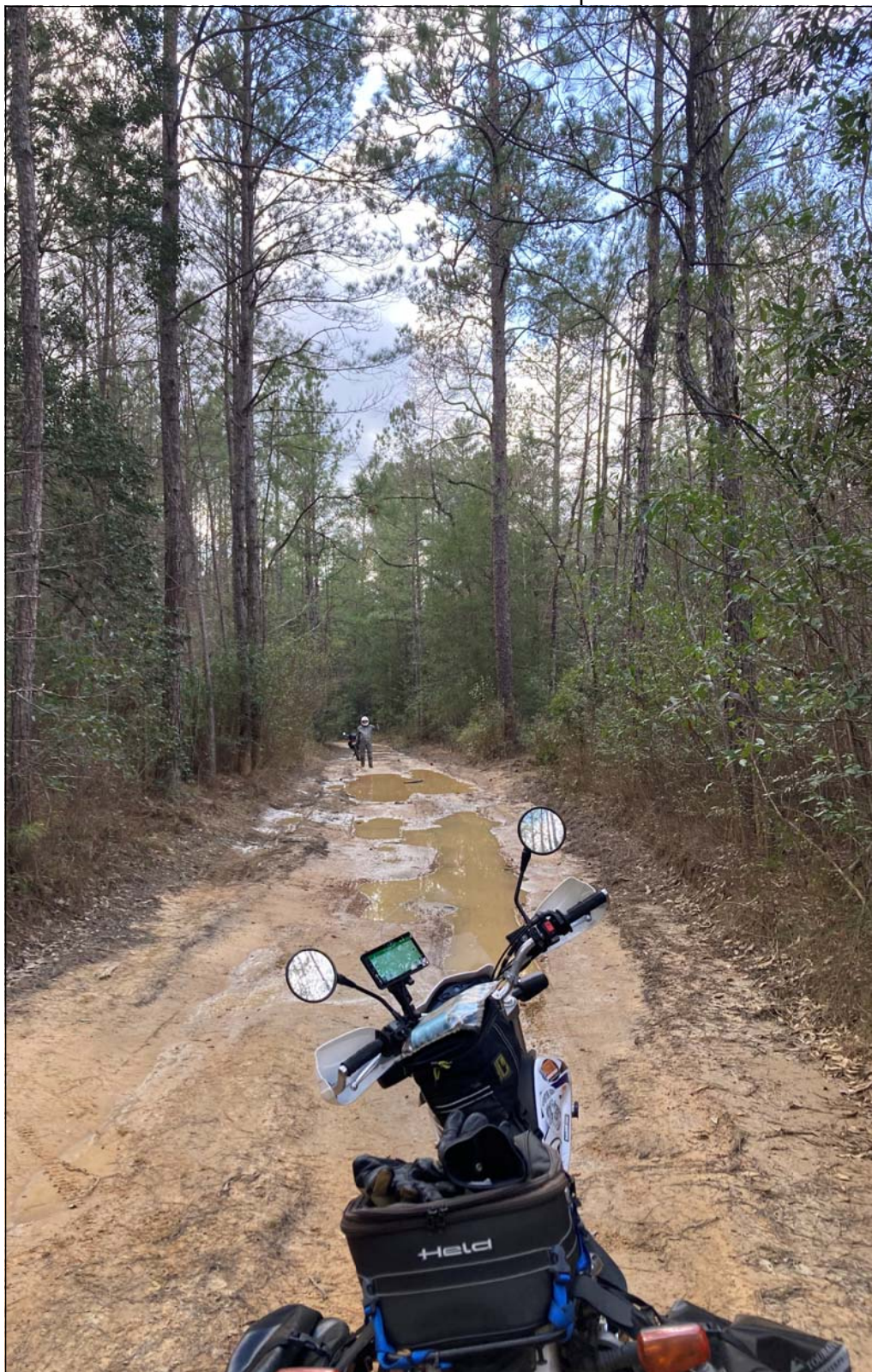
n't any other towns nearby except the one we had been staying in, so trekked back the 13 miles or so on pavement to Andalusia for lunch. For convenience, we went to Dave's again where the catfish was still excellent, cutting devices still absent. Then back to the

woods, stopping for our last fill-up at the tiny Citgo station that had alcohol-free gas.

Diving into the tangle of brown lines the GPS depicted on the west side of the forest, we found lots of dirt roads but little in the way of actual trails. Most of the ones on this side

were relatively level and some had stretches of deep sand, leading me to wallow a time or two almost to the point of going down. We took Forest Service Road 305 all the way across the forest park to the far western edge and then worked our way back north to pavement for a little bit and then up Alabama Rt. 25, a dirt road, north until we got back to Route 42, taking us, exhausted, back to town. The tired gets cumulative after several days.

Dinner was at "Big Mike's Steakhouse", a nice place in an historic downtown building harkening back to the city's better days. Neither of us is a beef fan, so both got seafood. The grouper dinner was large enough for even the biggest of Mikes to be satisfied. We didn't order the steaks, which might





have brought a knife, but the fish came with none.

So, a week away from Kentucky in February, 5 days exploring in the woods of two states, way too much good food eaten (though not cut with sharp implements), geriatric joints thoroughly abused and two old guys exhausted but happy. Still no answer to the knife conundrum, nor why here in NASCAR land these straight nearly curve-less back roads have 45 hour speed limits.

We made an overnight out of the return journey to give ourselves some slack in the morning with the loading up process, finding a vacant room just south of Nashville. The Mere Bulles restaurant, less than 100 yards from our motel, offered the best meal of the trip, excellent salmon on corn cakes with roasted Brussels sprouts and a marvelous crème brûlée for dessert. If ever you are in the area, stop in there. They have knives.

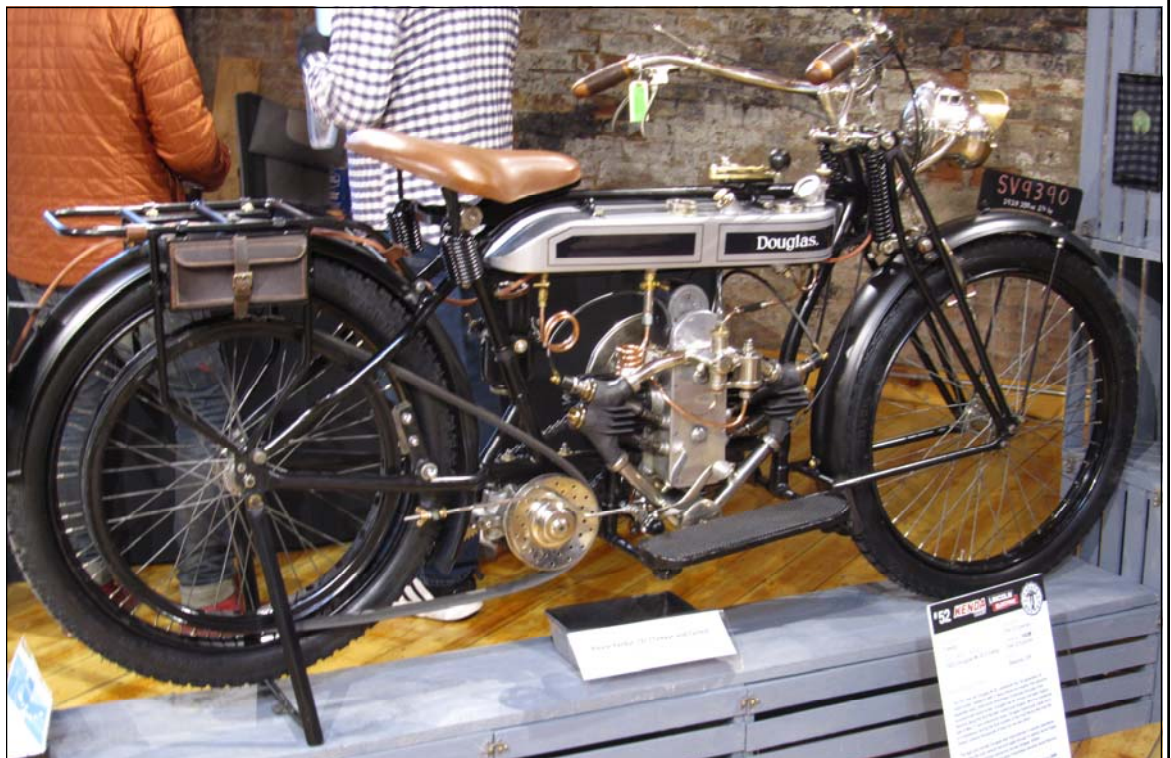




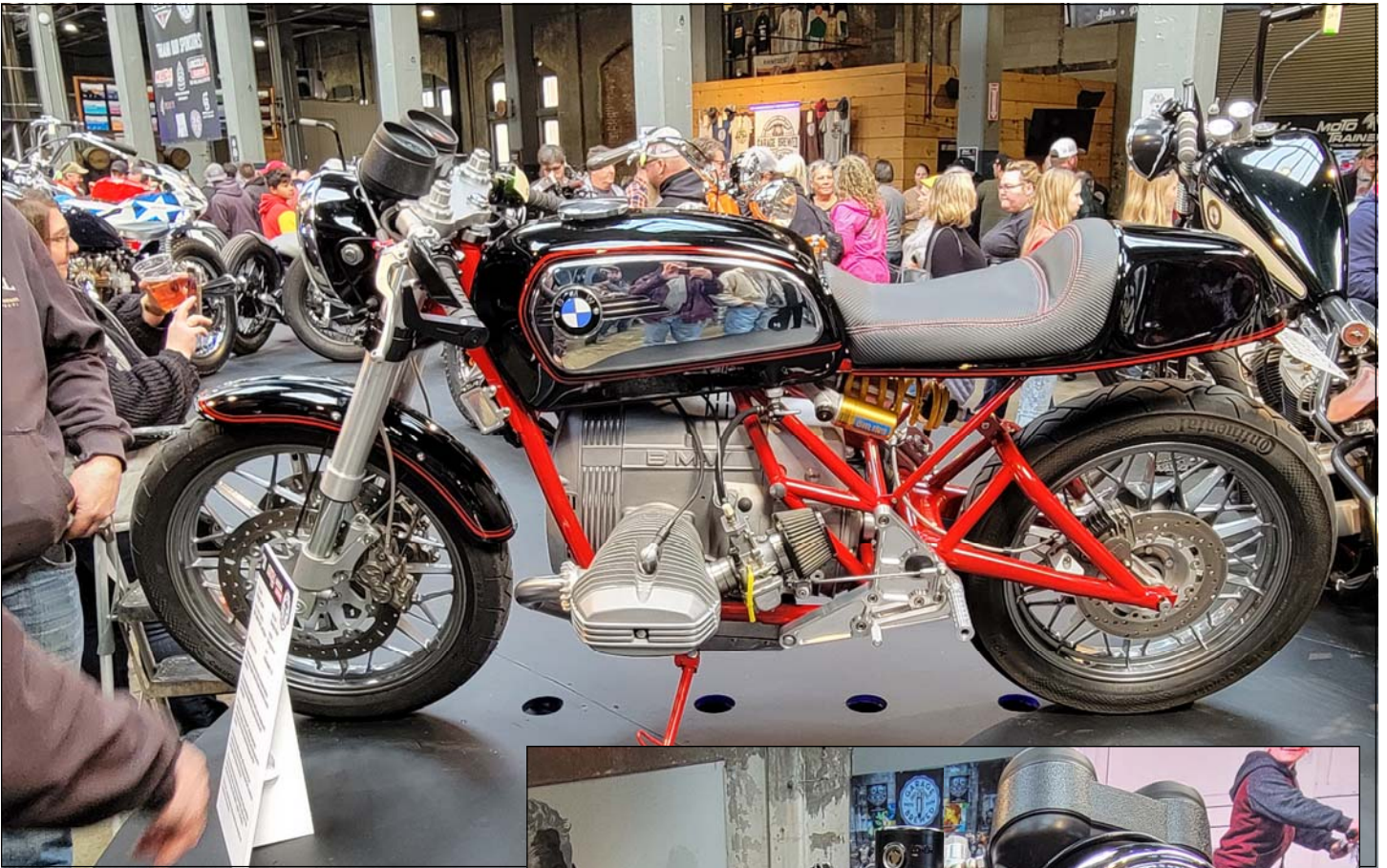


## 2023 Garage Brewed Moto Show

1920  
Douglas  
W-20 2-3/4 hp





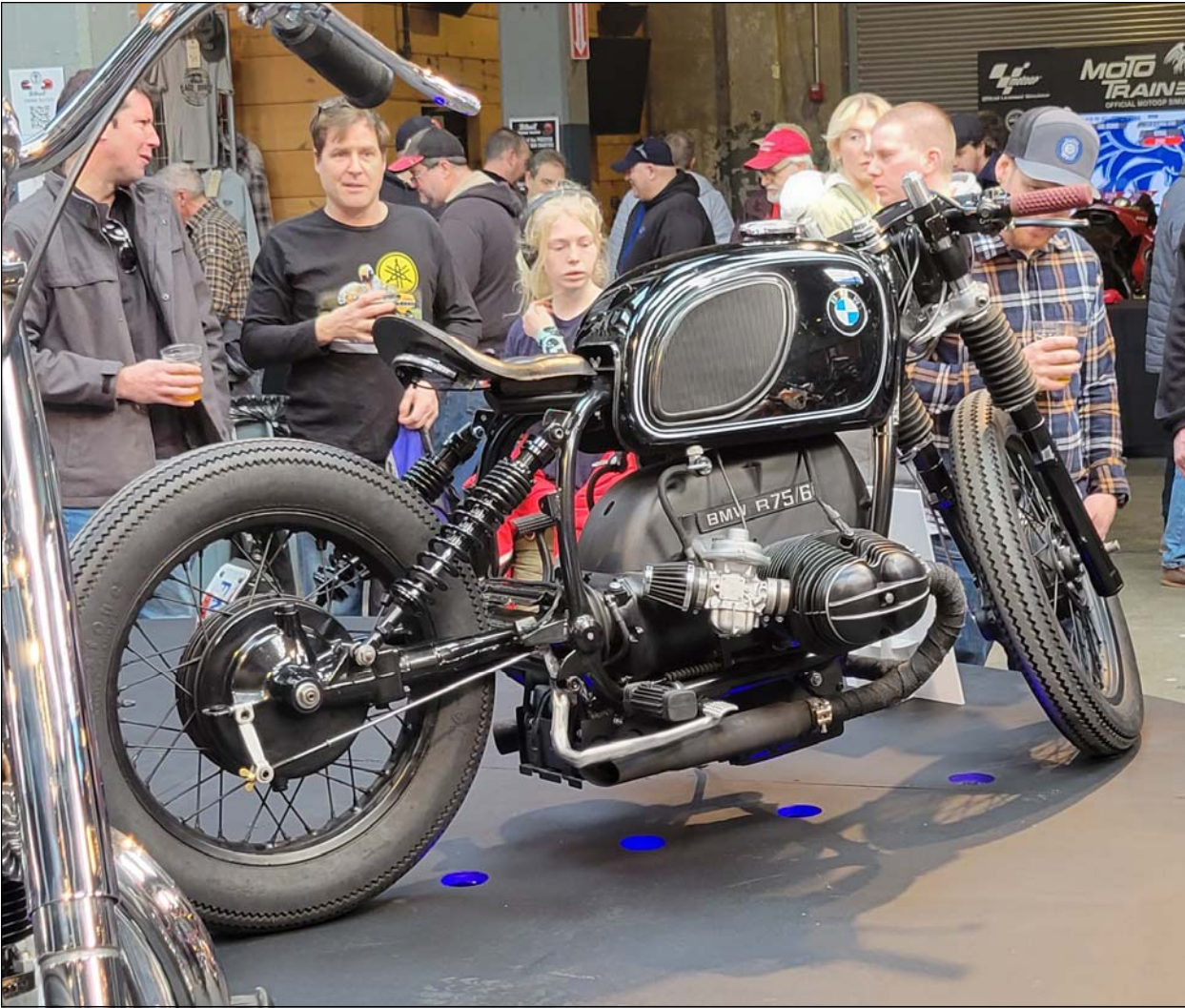


1981  
BMW R100  
Café Racer

Engine rebuilt with  
Siebenrock high  
compression pis-  
tons, Alpha elec-  
tronic ignition.



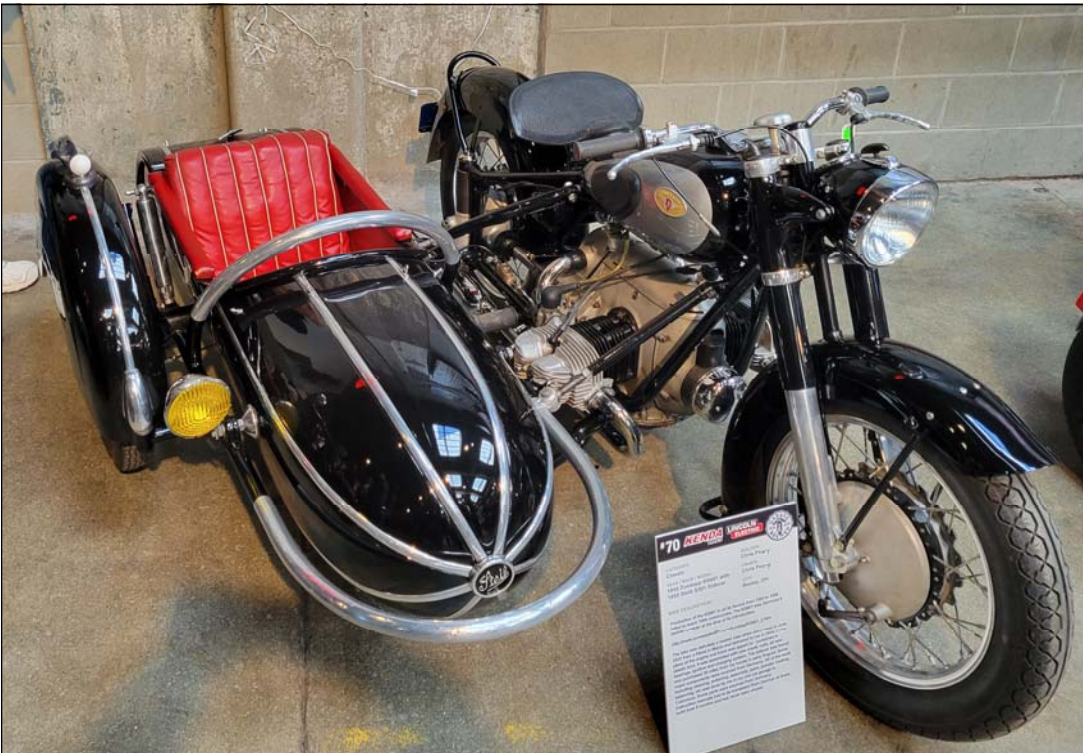




1974 BMW R75/6 Updates include a 1000cc kit, electronic ignition, LED indicator lights built into triple tree, battery relocation, subframe delete and updated front and rear suspension.







1955  
Zundapp KS601

1955  
Steib S501  
Sidecar

Rebuilt in 2022







1965 Honda S90 Trials Conversion



1972 Honda CB350 with cargo sidecar





1961 BSA C15 S Starfire



2002 HD Soft Tail Deuce with Texas Sidecar





## One of our Friends is a Friend of the Marque

Jeff Crabb

I have to apologize for the length of time between Apex newsletters. I've been needing to write this article since December 2022, but having a hard time putting into words what happen at the Bluegrass Beemer's "Christmas Party". I've been a member of the Bluegrass Beemers for over thirty-four years. To my recollection, we had never had a Christmas Party and I didn't know what to expect upon my arrival. There was an announcement in the December edition of the Apex of a party to be held at Smyles Motorcycle Museum on Eastland Drive on Saturday morning. On arrival, it seemed like a normal gathering of Bluegrass Beemer club members, some I hadn't seen since COVID put a temporary stop to our Saturday morning breakfast meetings. My wife and I were greeting everyone we knew and admiring the motorcycle collection that Steve Pieratt has amassed when all of a sudden our attention was called for an announcement.

That announcement was to tell everyone in attendance that John Rice had been awarded

the BMW Friend of the Marque award. To be honest, I had never heard of the award and never expected to know anyone that would be bestowed the honor of being considered a BMW Friend of the Marque. The award is given by the BMW Clubs International Council to those individuals whose commitment to the brand goes way beyond average. To say John was surprised would be an understatement.

The nomination came from the BMW Motorcycle Owners of America with, I'm sure, a lot of support from two of our own local club members that were serving on the BMWMOA board at the time, Jonathan and Kelly Kurtz. Below is the nomination that was sent to the BMW Clubs International Council by the BMWMOA as provided by Jonathan and Kelly:



## **Friend of the Marque**

**Name of Nominator: Jonathan K. Kurtz**

**Street: 1788 Farmview Drive**

**Zip Code: Lexington, KY 40515**

**Country: USA**

**Name of Nominee: John G. Rice**

**Street: 1795 Ecton Road**

**Zip Code: Winchester, KY 40391**

**Country: USA**

### **Justification:**

The BMW Motorcycle Owners of America is excited to nominate John G. Rice of Winchester, Kentucky, for consideration as Friend of the Marque. John's infectious passion for motorcycles, particularly the BMW Boxer, has inspired many people to ride, and ride BMW. John's tireless advocacy for motorcyclists both professionally, as an MOA member, and as an officer in his local club is more than deserving of recognition as a true friend of the Marque.

John began his love affair with motorcycles at 11 years old, when he was taken for a ride on a British 500cc single by his brother. John, like so many of us, was instantly hooked. John purchased his first motorcycle, a 50cc Puch, at 14. Fast forward to today, and John has logged over half a million miles in the saddle, owned over 30 bikes (many of them BMWs), ridden through 47 states, sixteen foreign countries, and over both hemispheres. John has competed and raced in street, drag, motocross, and observed trials competitions throughout his 60 year motorcycling adventure.

John has owned every iteration of the BMW GS, with the exception of the 1150. He has logged nearly 200,000 miles on BMWs all across the US and abroad. John began riding BMWs in the early 1980s with the purchase of a 1975 R90/6, which is still "in the family" and ridden by his grandson today. John was instantly struck by the stalwart reliability and performance of the Brand. John was one of the charter members of the Lexington, Kentucky BMW MOA and BMW RA charter clubs known as the "Bluegrass Beemers." This group of riders has been meeting faithfully every Saturday since 1975, and chartered since 1985 with John Rice listed as one of ten charter members. Through the club, John has hosted and organized many of the club's yearly rallies, held officer positions, including president, and has managed and contributed to the club's magazine "Apex". Through the club, John has introduced uncountable riders to BMWs, the MOA, and to the joys of long-distance motorcycle touring. John also hosted many café rides and events through the club and his law office for MOA members and the general public, a focus of which was to educate the public on motorcycling and issues important to motorcyclists. John has one of the best attendance records of any local club member, and still



rides to the meetings rain, snow, or shine.

John has also been an ambassador of BMW in the niche sidecar enthusiast world, purchasing his first sidecar rig, a F650GS, in 2006, and also purchasing an R1200GS sidecar rig. John is a frequent speaker at club meetings on sidecars and is a contributor to “Sidecarist” magazine, where he shares his extensive knowledge of travel, sidecars, and BMW motorcycles to the riding community.

As an attorney, John was a tireless advocate for motorcycles in Kentucky, fighting for the rights of injured motorcyclists in the Courts of the Commonwealth. John has hosted numerous lectures and presentations for local motorcycle clubs regarding legal and safety issues which pertain particularly to the motorcycling community. John is a prolific writer, and has contributed many articles to the BMW MOA Owner’s News, including a recent article called “40 years on a GS” which can be found in the October 2020 edition and online.

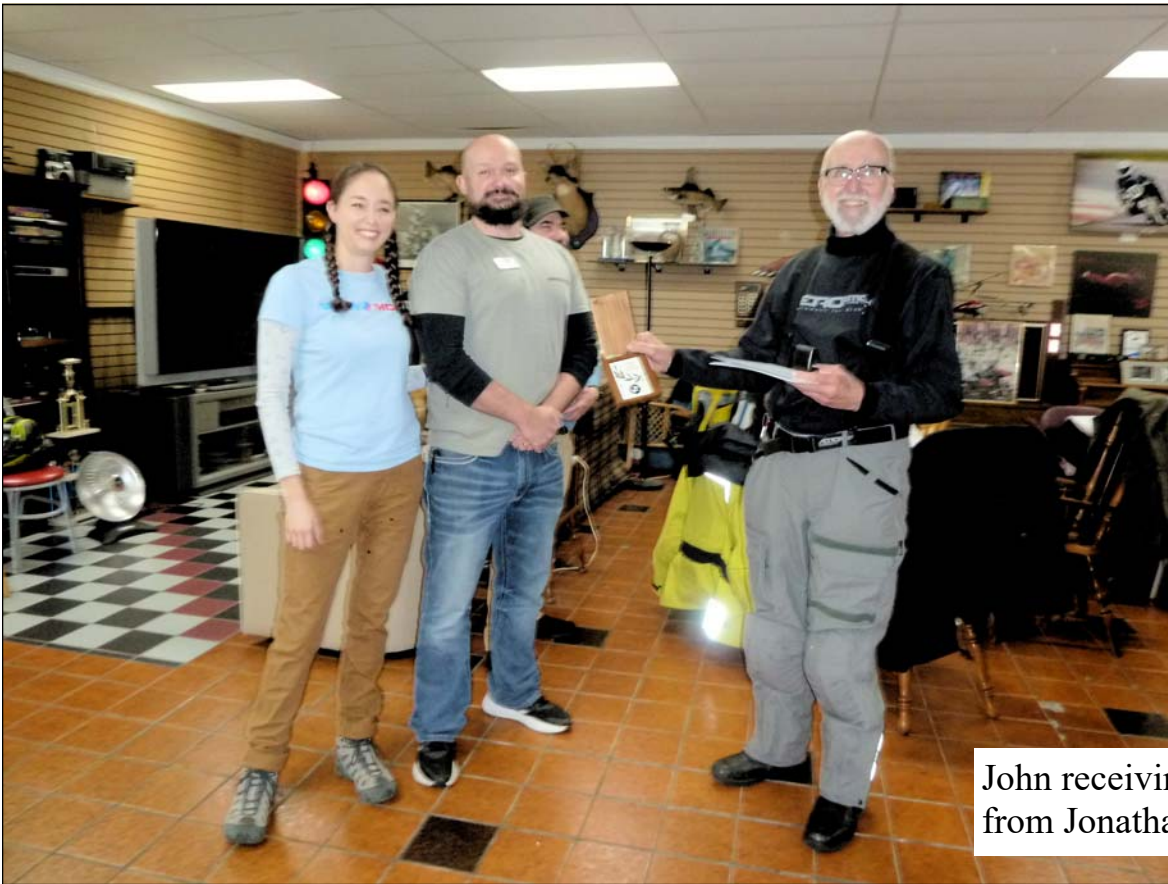
John has mentored countless new riders as they began their journey into motorcycling, BMW ownership, or both. John maintains a large library of motorcycle related books, which he lends for free to anyone who is interested, or needs a little coaching on their riding. John has also been an advocate and mentor for many of the club’s female riders.

John embodies the adventurousness, selflessness, willingness to help others, and sense of camaraderie that is the heartbeat of the BMW riding community. His example is a beacon of inspiration for not only the local BMW clubs and MOA, but for the riding community at large. It is for those reasons that we respectfully request that his lifetime of achievements and dedication be recognized with the Friend of the Marque Award.

If anyone that I knew deserved this award, it would be John. He introduced me to the brand and local club. Since then, I’ve owned and ridden only BMW motorcycles.

Congratulations John! Well deserved!





John receiving his Honor  
from Jonathan & Kelly



Members of the Bluegrass Beemers that  
showed up for the “Christmas Party”

Photos provided by  
Kim Schäfermeyer



**VOTE! USCA 2017 BALLOT**

page 31

Volume 41 Number 3

May/June 2017

# SIDECARIST

The Magazine of the United Sidecar Association



**GET  
READY  
TO RIDE**

page 6

**SIDECARS**

AND THE MEANING OF

**LIFE**

AS WE KNOW IT

page 8

This is a trained Professional  
Do not attempt at home or  
anywhere else





Rain, Rain!!!!

57°F

6/7/97

RAINS AND RAINS, LIKE SLOW MOVING TRAINS,  
 GIVE US PAINS WHEN THE BIKE STRAINS TO RIDE,  
 BUT CLOUDS LOW AND DARK KEEP OUR SCOOTERS ALL PARKED,  
 EVEN DUCKS DRIVE THEIR TRUCKS, OR THEY HIDE ...

Here's the group for today:

- \*1). Jim Brendon
- \*2). Chris Warner
- 3). Chester Martin
- 4). Paul Elwyn
- \*5). Joe Bark
- 6). Hubert Burton
- 7). Danny Phillips
- 8). Mike Gill
- 9). Boone Sutherland
- 10). Pete Galskis
- 11). Phillip Baugh
- \*12). Mitch Butler
- 13). Tom Sutherland
- 14). Drey Neal
- 15). Randy Scott
- 16). Tom Keller

*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