

The Apex

April 2004

Happy Birthday to the following folks:

March: Phil Baugh, Pete Galskis, Paul Heflin, Chery Jarboe and Ron Russel

APRIL: Sean Quinn, Joe Walls, Tom Wolfe, Jon Passmore and Jeff Floyd

MAY: David Elkow, Charles Norton, Doug Swiggett, Ian Rowbery and John Keeling.

John Keeling and his son Joe, both from Frankfort, just joined our group. Welcome

Another little TRUE story from Paul Rice:

Size Matters?

Motorcyclists have an image problem! Now I fear that I am at least partly to blame. I never really thought much about it until I read an article on the subject, posted on the Bluegrass Beemers website. Then on Saturday, March 13th I witnessed an event that changed even my view of motorcycling. The crime scene was a rural area in Winchester, KY. Just after noon I saw, an otherwise up-standing man in his mid 50's, put on a black leather jacket and fire up a borrowed, questionably "road legal" bike. He then proceeded to gun the engine, obviously not equipped with any kind of muffler, almost as if he enjoyed revving the engine and popping the clutch, the tire spinning, he leaned it over sliding the rear around in tight circles, like a dirt tracker. It was quite a display, the machine straining for all it could do, the rider barely maintaining control!

I would have tried to stop him, but in reality I am, at least somewhat to blame. See, just the Saturday before, John and I stopped by Roy Rowlett's, to pick up a few filters and admire his collection of machines.

After looking at several very nice BMW's we came upon one bike that seemed just a bit out of place with the rest, inquiring as to what it needed, Roy replied, "just a new home"!?! What!?! I'll take it!....

Didn't really think much more about it (or tried not to) until John called me the next evening, and informed me that he had picked up my new bike. I told him I'd get over there sooner or later to pick it up. Pacing the floor, still not even knowing what I had just became the owner of, got the best of me, within an hour I was on the road. Arriving at John's, I discovered the bike to be a yellow, 1970 Suzuki TS-90. A "used to be street legal", 90cc two stroke, dual purpose, this is a small bike, but it's all here. Roy said it ran great, just before he parked it...8 years ago! Where do I start? I've never owned a two stroke, never owned anything with a kickstarter, never had a bike given to me either, so I'm going to learn.

A bit of cleaning was in order, and what better way to get to know a machine? That's about all I got done the first evening. The second evening I decided to focus on the basics, air, fuel and fire, that's all any engine really needs, right? Some how there's always more to it than that! Opening the seat revealed an original battery that was dry and had split into pieces, so much for fire! Wait a minute, this thing has a magneto, the battery is just for lights, I'm learning. Also, under the tank is a new spark plug, things are looking up, I hear gas in the tank. I pull off the fuel line and open the petcock.... nothing. Remove the petcock.... still nothing.... this is bad. I remove the one and a half gallon tank and turn it upside down, what came out was a gallon of mud and rust, the problem was getting out the other half gallon that was still in there. Put in a few nuts and bolts and a bit of kerosene, shake, drain, repeat.

Not a fun way to spend your evening, but effective. While I was tank cleaning, the oil tank received a bit of scrubbing as well.

The next evening I mounted the tank with a new fuel filter and installed that new spark plug, this is when you think all you have to do is put in gas and it should run, right? Yeah, me too, so that's what I had to do, just to show myself how wrong I was, and figure out what to do next. Guess what? One kick and it is running... wide open... Two things come to mind... I don't know where the kill switch is, and remember that oil tank? It's still clean... no oil! This is bad, there is no kill switch, but eventually I find the key. A bit scary, but very promising, for the next attempt I filled the oil tank, but now gas is pouring out of the carb, time for a closer look. The carb had a little junk in the bowl and jets and the floats were stuck, just clean and reinstall. Now it's running enough for a test ride, but still very rich and a little gas is still leaking, so I seek the advice of a mechanic. He opens it up and discovers a crack in one of the floats, it was full of gas, drained and soldered back, I reinstalled it, again. It's running much better now, and therefore requires many more test rides, and a lot of laughs. Apparently a "test ride" is what you call it when you walk behind it, holding the bars straight up because it wheeled out from under you.

The following evening I adjusted the chain, then changed the tranny fluid and the fork oil, now it's good as new, or at least as good as it's going to be. Which is pretty darn good, considering my total investment so far is \$1.99, for the fuel filter.

Proud of my newfound treasure, I took it to John's for some expert advice and some more laughs, I got both. The laughs came from the incident described in the first paragraph, I must have forgotten to mention that we were riding in the dirt, and the "normally upstanding" man was John. The "questionably road legal" bike was the TS-90, and it certainly changed my views on motorcycling. A 55-year-old man, dirt tracking on a 9 horsepower bike in a sandpit will do that to you.

Image problem? Oh, it was quite an image! Problems; we just couldn't stop laughing. It's not about the size of the ma-

chine, it's the size of the fun that matters, and if you were in Clark county that Saturday you'd know that fun doesn't come any bigger than that.

* If you would like to make a donation to either the RHUMAN (Rice Home for Under appreciated Motorcycles, Abused and Neglected) or the PCAUAB (Paul Could Always Use Another Bike) Fund, please contact, well, me. RHUMAN & PCAUAB are both obviously non-profit organizations, generally perpetuating me as a non-profit individual. Donations are not tax-deductible, but will make me happy. RHUMAN & PCAUAB do not discriminate based on piston displacement, number of cylinders, overall condition, or country of origin. (Unless you have a '76 Sportster that caught on fire, I wouldn't take one of those on a bet!)

Join the ever-growing list of donors!

1) Roy Rowlett, 1970 Suzuki TS-90

2) ???

From John Rice:

I grew up in America in the 60's, in the era of the muscle cars when horsepower was king. But I didn't care much for the idea of sheer overwhelming strength in a straight line, preferring the smaller sporty cars (a three-speed Corvair and later a somewhat ratty MGA) and motorcycles that emphasized handling over brute force. I've always been more impressed by the ability to make use of potential rather than just the availability of massive force that came from a parts book, or off the showroom floor.

My heroes were the ones who hung onto the bucking weaving 60's bikes and cars on road courses or dirt tracks, making the relatively low-powered beasts go round corners faster than their frames and suspensions wanted to go. I went to a drag race one afternoon way back in 1965 or so with some friends and was convinced to enter my Ducati 250 in the "graveyard ponies" competition (as motorcycles were known at that strip)...divided then into just two classes, "big" and "little". My final opponent that day was a Honda 305 Super Hawk, a quick machine but no match for the smaller and lighter but higher revving Italian bike.

The Honda got away in the lead, but the little Duck ate him alive in 2nd and 3rd gears and I had my first-ever trophy to take home (and hide from my parents, who wouldn't have approved of drag-racing).

But I didn't feel victorious. As I told one of my congratulating buddies, a somewhat-trained chimp could've accomplished the same feat ...it was the motor that beat the Honda, not me. I know that at higher levels of drag racing, much more skill is involved, but not where I was then. Some years later, in the early 70's, I got involved in observed trials. At that time, the sport was dominated by Spanish two-strokes and nearly everyone rode virtually identical Bultacos or Montesas with an occasional smattering of Ossas for seasoning. Suzuki, Yamaha and Honda were in the game, but not much of a force in those early years. What I liked about it was that all the bikes were essentially the same. The individual tweaks we came up with didn't amount to a hill of beans (which we would have tried to ride over, if given the chance) and weren't much if any improvement over the bikes as they came from the showroom. If I won or lost (and I did both about equally) it was down to me, not an advantage of my bike or someone else's.

Modern motorcycles are in the same kind of absurd, escalating horsepower race as were cars in the 60's. Each new magazine I receive touts ever-faster street models which also handle better than the pukka race bikes of the previous season. All of the current crop of 1000cc-plus sports bikes will easily break any US speed limit in first gear and get the rider into a felony conviction in second with 3 or 4 more gears yet to go. Road test comparisons usually show that 600's and 750's will turn faster lap times than their bigger siblings, largely because few if any riders who aren't being paid large amounts for their racing skills can put that much extra horsepower down on the pavement. On the street, in the real world, I can't imagine a rider making use of even a small percentage of the power and handling available from his or her machine. On a typical gnarly backroad, a mega-power sportbike is like a hand grenade in a fistfight....what it offers as a solution to the problem will get you killed. All this brings me back to why I'm regressing farther and farther as time goes along. I freely admit to being a geezer and having reaction time better measured with a calendar rather than a stopwatch. My eyesight, never good, is getting worse. I can't see far enough ahead to stay even a few seconds beyond the speed ob-

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All this brings me back to why I'm regressing farther and farther as time goes along. I freely admit to being a geezer and having reaction time better measured with a calendar rather than a stopwatch. My eyesight, never good, is getting worse. I can't see far enough ahead to stay even a few seconds beyond the speed obtainable almost instantly by a modern sportbike. But, astride my 50's and 60's era Brit-bikes and air-head Boxer BMW's, I can get back some of the old feeling that I recall, that sensation of partnering with the bike at speed, making it work at somewhere in the vicinity of its overall ability and having every sense focused on the task at hand, while still traveling at a rate that probably won't mean immediate extinction if I miscalculate or jail time if I'm caught. Down my favorite twisty country road I can swoop through corners, perhaps once in a while even dragging the odd peg or two, feel the forks working, the frame flexing and the tires squirming on the pavement...fully engaged in the practice of ridingbut seldom exceed 65 or 75 mph. To get to a speed that would generate the same level of use of the resources available, the sensation of involvement, on any of the big four's top sportbikes, I'd have to be Colin Edwards or Troy Bayliss and even then the random hazards of traffic, animals, a tractor with a bale spear, etc, would almost certainly kill me in the first few miles. I don't need to harbor a lot of horsepower and potential I'm never going to be able to use....sort of like keeping a fire hose handy to fill a wa-

handy to fill a water glass. Classic bikes offer enough performance to be interesting and allow me to use much more of what they have to offer, closer to an equal partner in the endeavor. They are pleasantly satisfying on every ride, only terrifying when I ask for it and then at levels I can (usually) handle.

www.johnricelaw.com

BARBER MOTORSPORTS PARK

If you take Interstate 20 East out of Birmingham, Alabama you will see signs for the Barber Motorsports Park within fifteen miles of the city. When the facility opened last year, it was most noteworthy for its world class racing circuit designed by Alan Wilson. George Barber's dream race circuit was constructed with the Barber Motorsports Museum at the heart of the 56 million dollar facility. This is without a doubt the world's greatest motorcycle museum, with over 400 motorcycles on display and approximately 200 additional motorcycles being added as they complete additional displays and prepares the first floor to be open to the public.

It is not the quantity, but the quality of the motorcycles that Barber started restoring back in the late 1980s that makes his collection so significant. For example, when you walk out into the museum from the entrance you have the MV 500 four cylinders that John Surtees won the 1960 GP title with next to a MV500 three cylinder, which was raced by Phil Reed. Then there are three more red MV three cylinder GP machines lined up next to a 1989 GSX1100 Team Suzuki which won the WERA endurance title and Dave Sadowski's GSXR Formula USA racer. Then you see a custom framed Surtees with a Matchless 500cc single engine that John and an engineer designed back in the early 60s, but his contract with MV disallowed him from racing. Within twenty feet you have two Daytona winning machines, Dale Singleton's Yamaha TZ750 and Dave Sandusky's Yamaha OWO1, Freddy Spencer's Honda RC30, Bimota Tesi, Mondial 125 GP, two AJ's 500 cc Singles, three Harley-Davidson KR road races, a Harley-Davidson VR1000, Norton Manx 500, Triumph Matesse, Matchless Matesse, Triumph 750 Trident Road racer, and more. I think you get the idea.

place than can be imagined. Since this is a Beemer newsletter, I'll concentrate on the BMWs in the Barber collection. If you'd like me to review other marques in future newsletters, let Roy know. The following are just some of the excellent BMWs on display.

Photo 1, This R17 was produced from 1935 – 1937 and has a 750 cc Overhead valve engine.

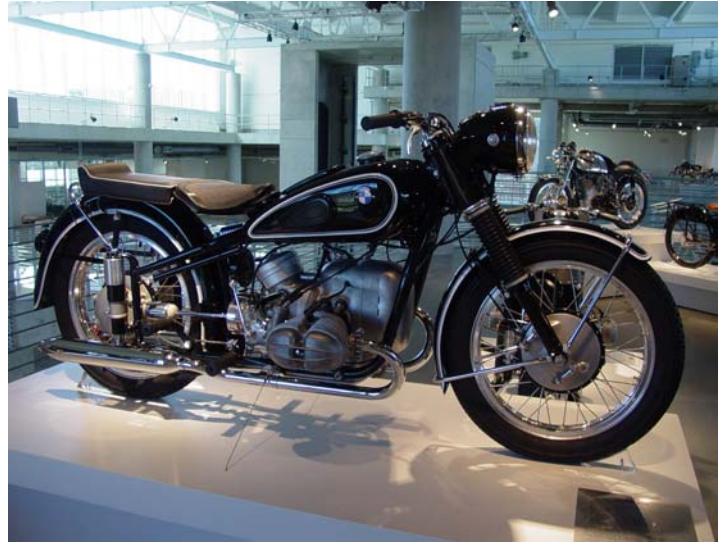


Photo 2. This R 75 military outfit was in perfect condition right down to the machine gun. When the German military released their specifications for a military motorcycle in with a sidecar in 1938, BMW and Zundapp competed for the contract. BMW production of the R75 began in 1941 and continued until 1944.



The collection has more significant motorcycles in one

Photo 3, This BMW R 50 is a 1960 model. The R 50 was produced from 1955 until 1960 and its engine displaced 494 cc and had a top speed of 87 mph.



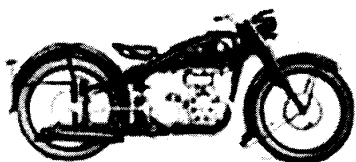
A couple of BMW's factory race bikes.

Thanks to Bill Voss for the story and pics. He assures us that there's more to come.

Photo 4, A BMW R 68 from 1954 which differed from earlier R68s by having more powerful, larger brakes in cast-alloy drums, and by having alloy rims and the new style larger headlight with cover key slides. This 600 cc engine was the same bore and stroke and electrics as its softer stablemate, the R67, but the compression ratio was raised to 7:7:1 and larger 26 MM Bing carburetors were fitted. This is a rare bike, for when the R 68 was replaced by the R69 in 1955, just 1,452 examples were made.



Pure Stodge Touring Association's
28th Iowa Rally



June 10-13, 2004

Windmill Ridge Campground
140th St., Kalona, IA
N41°27.518'W91°43.903'

INCLUDED EVENTS:

Chili Supper-Friday Night
Pork Roast-Saturday Night
Breakfast Available-on Site
Awards Ceremony-Saturday
Door Prizes-Thurs.,Fri.,&Saturday
Poker Run-Field Events-Saturday
Bands*-Fri. & Saturday evenings

* Arranged by Keith & Pam Dempster

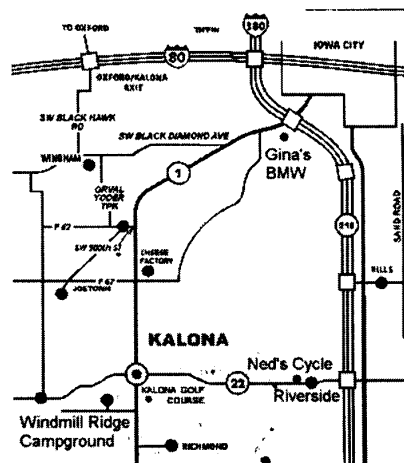
Traditional Iowa Rally Beverages courtesy of the
Pure Stodge Touring Association

For more information visit our website at:

<http://soli.inav.net/~directpd>

Or contact the Rally Chair

r.elthon@att.net 319 354-2027 Ray



The rally fee includes camping on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night. If you wish to camp prior to or after the Rally, you will need to pay the campground fee. Limited space is available for RV camping. Electrical hookups are available but not included in the Rally fee. Rally pin and cup courtesy of the Pure Stodge. There is a concession stand on the Rally grounds serving local Iowa favorites. Twenty acres of camping with modern restrooms, shower facilities, and vender area. Experience the Kalona Country charm. No pets please.

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TROPHIES TO BE AWARDED:

Oldest BMW motorcycle ridden to the Rally•Oldest Male & Female Drivers•Youngest Licensed Male & Female Drivers•Long Distance Single Cylinder•Long Distance BMW Sidecar•Long Distance two-up•Long Distance Male and Female Solo•BMWMOA Chartered Club-Most Members Present•Chartered Club with Most Bikes Present (A Hack=1½ Bikes) and The Ralph & Gertrude Connell Memorial Trophy will be awarded for the oldest combined ages of Rider, Passenger and BMW motorcycle ridden to the Rally

Pre-Registration (by 6-1-04) \$25 adult/\$13 child (under 12)

At the gate: \$30 adult/\$15 child(under 12)

Mail to: PSTA, P.O. Box 2143, Iowa City, IA 52244

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IOWA RALLY PRE-REGISTRATION FORM

This is a Preliminary Registration Form. The Official Registration Form will be at the Registration Booth upon your arrival at the Iowa Rally site.

Please List All Names

_____ **ADULTS @ \$25** _____

_____ **CHILDREN @ \$13** _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

NAME _____ **ADDRESS** _____

CITY _____ **STATE** _____ **ZIP** _____

PLEASE
DO NOT SEND
CASH!

Here's the pre-registration form for the Iowa rally. All the folks I've spoken to that have been to this rally have raved about how good it is. Give it a try if you have the time off.

Roy

And now, a word from our sponsors: These are some of the business who we've used in the past and who help support or club and rally. Keep em in mind when you need parts or service.

For you "Do It Yourselfers", check out www.EUBMW.com. I recently purchased a cable set from them for my R69S. Then have cables for almost all BMW's and lots of other goodies too.

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