



The Apex

July 2004

Happy Birthday to the following folks:

JUNE: William Ahlborn, Joe Earwood, Gary Huffman, Tom Sutherland, Russel Travis, Tery Mclorg, and Fran Root.

JULY: Jim Brandon, Ron Hampton, Joe Stewart, Roy Rowlett and Jerry O'Brien

August: Terry Findlay, David Jarboe, John Koerner, Chester Martin, Roberto Muñoz, Lowell Roark, Gary Dehner and Matt Gaffney

My Trip to Oklahoma.

I left out on Saturday June 6 at around 11:00 am for a 1000 mile ride to Norman, Oklahoma for 2 week training courses for my job at the Post Office.

I won't bore you with the details of the trip out there, what can you say about 2 days riding on the interstates. It was the interesting rides and events after I got there that I'm here to tell you about. After a long week of classes, I was looking forward to some weekend riding. I got up early on Saturday morning and by 7 am I was on my way south on I35, headed towards Dallas, TX. Dallas wasn't my ultimate destination, I had 2 other objectives in mind.

The first was a little town, that actually turned out to be a suburb of North Dallas. Who says you cant go home, (see picture)



I had found out about this place in my search for my family history. It was settled by one of my ancestors, Dr. Daniel Rowlett, a long time ago

The ride down I35 was sort of uneventful. If you've ever ridden out west you know the type, long straight boring stretches of highway. The good old LT just ate up the miles and made it much easier. Just north of the Texas border I rode through the Arbuckle Mountains. Oklahoma's version of the Appalachian range. It was pretty nice to see some rise and fall and curves in the road after riding for 2 hours in a straight line.

My second destination was a BMW dealership in North Dallas. I had searched the internet for dealers in the area I intended to be riding in. Well it was only 10 miles from Rowlett, TX, so I stopped in on the way back. The folks there were very nice and cordial. I picked up a t-shirt with their logo on it and got ready to head out. A young soldier, home on leave from the war in Iraq, was there looking for some Velcro for a tank bag he had just bought for his R1100. The dealer listed the items in his parts fiche, but would have to order them and they ran about \$7.00. He told the young soldier he could probably pick some up at a hardware store. He only needed the self adhesive halves that stuck to the bike and lo and behold, I had 2 in the tank bag. I had purchased the bag from Raymond Montgomery, and when I went to install it, I saw that the previous owner must have had one on there already, cause the tabs were already on my bike, so I put the new velcro in the bag. Made the young mans day, and made me feel proud to help out a soldier. See the picture on the following page. That's my LT and the young soldiers Oilhead sitting next to it.



After swapping emails and club patches with some of the guys I had to leave.

My next ride was to the BMW dealer in Oklahoma City. Another great bunch of folks. If your ever in the area drop in on them. 2 more t-shirts. It's a pretty new facility on the west side of the city.



My next adventure came on the following Wednesday. One of the staff at the housing facility I was in, saw my BMW t-shirt and started a conversation. Turns out he rides a Beemer also. He mentioned the Oklahoma City Beemer Riders club, and said they had a Wednesday supper once a month. It was this very day, and at 6:00 pm, with his directions I rode up to Oklahoma City, to the Oklahoma Station Bar-B-Que.

What a great bunch of guys. The strangest part was when they started introducing themselves. One, named Toby Muller, saw my Bluegrass Beemers Shirt started smiling and asked me if I knew Mark Rense. This took me by surprise, but not as much as what he said next. Mark is Toby's brother, actually a half brother by marriage. After the meal was through, Mike Truel, the club coordinator made introductions all around. I spoke of our rally and invited them to attend. They then had a 50/50 drawing, and would you believe it I won it. A whole \$16.00. The first time I've ever won anything like that. Go figure.

This picture is the parking area for the guys at the restaurant.

Notice the rear end of the LT again. The tall guy in the blue shirt is Toby.



The guys at the supper meeting told me of a nice ride to the west to a state park. It is called Red Rock Canyon, and is a box canyon about 5 miles south of I 40, 49 miles west of Oklahoma City. Kind of a relaxing Sunday ride and really cool and shady in the canyon.



There is an area in south Oklahoma City, called Bricktown. Nice refurbished older area that has all brick buildings and most of the roads are also brick or cobblestone.

The first Sunday I was in Oklahoma I rode into the city to just sight see and take a nice quiet ride.

I was riding into Bricktown, minding my own business, just tooling along in 3'rd when I saw a guy directing me into a side street between 2 traffic barriers. I was confused, but I figured he looked official enough that I probably should follow his directions.

I couldn't figure out if I had done something wrong or what, then I look up and, WOW, motorcycles everywhere. I had stumbled into an annual event called Bikes Over Bricktown. Took a few snaps of the bikes, found another BMW rider, strolled around the vendors tents, then left. I didn't realize how big this event was till I got back to the housing facility and mentioned it to some other guys who had ridden there from Georgia. They actually had a drawing for a West Coast Chopper.



I took a bus from the housing facility to the airport at the end of the second week, home for a weekend and then back for two more weeks. I struck up a conversation with the guy driving and turns out he's a rider, not a Beemer rider, but a rider none the less. He asked me if I'd ever heard of Sparks America. I said no, and he proceeded to tell me about this great bike run, (we'd call it a rally) that took place the next weekend. It was about 50 miles northeast of Oklahoma city and was suppose to be big. I figured, what the heck, give me some directions. He left driving directions and a flyer in my mailbox at the housing facility for me.

Man oh man, 10,000 plus. This was Sturgis magnitude. Tents and vendors as far as you could see. I had ridden there from Norman with a guy I met who was riding a Goldwing. We both had a large time and only stayed about 3 hours.





I had planned a nice, backroads ride home from Oklahoma, and to ride US 60 from Missouri through the Ozark mountains to home, but it turned out to be only partly backroads. I took Highway 9 east from Norman about 100 miles to US 69 north. This turned out to be an almost interstate highway. US 60 is now almost the same. It had grown from the old road I remember from about 16 years ago. It is now almost interstate like also. I made good time, but the next time I'll investigate the roads a bit better.

A couple of more pictures from the memorial.

This is just a couple of the MANY pictures I have from the event. Most of them are R rated, but there were lots of nice bikes there too, burn out pit, barrel races, and the whole bit.

My next trip would be back up to Oklahoma City to visit the National memorial. I was in Oklahoma City shortly after the actual bombing took place, and got to see the front of the blasted out building. I'll never forget that sight. The folks of Oklahoma City have made a beautiful memorial site there and the old chain link fence that kept people from the rubble of the bombing has been re-erected, complete with all the souvenirs that well wishers and loved ones have left on it over the years.



This picture shows the memorial park and part of the old chain link fence. There is also a memorial museum to the left. It has pictures, video's and even a tape recording of a meeting that was being held when the bomb went off.

SmarTire Tire Tips

By John Bolegoh, Technical Services Manager,
SmarTire Systems Inc.

Article One This article is the first of a four part series that looks at tires and the importance of tire pressure on motorcycle safety and performance.

Some Basics Every year, thousands of accidents are caused by under-inflated and neglected tires. Whether it's poor handling from a low tire or a serious accident resulting from a sudden blowout, we have all either experienced personally or have had friends who have suffered the consequences of a tire related problem. Most riders are well aware of the recent Ford Explorer/Firestone situation that caused hundreds of deaths and resulted in the recall of thousands of vehicles and tires. But not many people are aware of the root cause of these accidents. Under-inflated tires. This tragic incident prompted the US government to create legislation requiring low pressure warning systems on all new passenger cars, vans and light trucks. In fact, the legislation is expected to expand to include commercial trucks, buses, recreational vehicles, and importantly, motorcycles. Other countries around the world are looking at similar legislation. In this first Tire Tips installment, we'll look at the importance of maintaining proper tire pressures. How often do you check your tires? Proper tire pressure is critical for both rider safety and motorcycle performance. As maintenance studies and any mechanic will confirm, almost 50% of all motorcycle tires are under-inflated, often to dangerous levels.

Yes, that's right, almost 50%. It's almost a certainty that right now, at least one of your tires is under-inflated. How often do you check your tires? Once a week... once a month... or just before a big ride? Or are you like most riders and wait until your bike starts handling strange? If you're not checking your tires pretty well every time you get on the bike, then it's simply not enough. I've spoken with mechanics who talk about customers bringing in their bikes for a servicing because the handlin is bad, only to find one or both tires are severely under-inflated. Believe me, they love these customers because all they do is inflate the tires and charge big money for the servicing. But I can tell by looking! A very dangerous practice is to judge tire pressure by visually gauging the tire's

sidewall deflection (how flat the tire looks). However, with the stiff sidewalls of today's tires, you just can't tell by looking. For example, the rear tire of touring bike is likely to appear fully inflated with only 20 PSI (1.4 bar) of tire pressure versus the required 38 PSI (2.2 bar).

Why check while it's cold? Because recommended tire pressures are always given as cold inflation values, it is always necessary to check tire pressures when the tires are cold. The pressure inside a tire naturally increases as temperature increases so checking a tire when its cold is

the only way to get an accurate reading that you can compare to the recommended inflation pressure. Motorcycle tires heat up quickly so even a short ride to the service station can heat the tires enough to give an improper cold inflation reading. It's always best to check the tires before you ride and to note each tire's pressure and how many psi or bars the tire is under-inflated.

When you get to the service station, add the corresponding amount air pressure to the tires. Consult the owner's manual or the placard for your particular model's recommended cold inflation pressure settings. In next month's installment, we'll look at some of the consequences of riding on under (and over!) inflated tires. John Bolegoh is SmarTire's Technical Services Manager with over 30 cumulative years experience in the tire and tire monitoring industries. To contact John with a question, email tiretips@smartire.com SmarTire offers the world's first active tire pressure monitoring system for motorcycles.

www.smartire.com

Article Two

The Problem with Under-inflation

Last month, we looked at the effects of tire pressure on motorcycle safety and performance. In this installment, we'll dig a little deeper on the performance side of things and look at some of the consequences on riding on under-inflated (and over-inflated) tires.

Riding on Under-Inflated Tires

Riding on under-inflated tires is extremely dangerous with a number of serious (or even fatal!) consequences.

Too Much Heat = Trouble

Under-inflation causes excessive flexing of the sidewall which results in heat build-up in the tire. Heat is the number one enemy of tires. Higher temperatures expose

the body of the tire to greater damage from normal road impacts, cause accelerated tread wear and can cause hidden interior separations that can result in premature tire failure.

Riding on under-inflated tires for prolonged periods greatly increases the chance of suffering a blow out. And as any rider knows, a blowout can cause a total loss of control and result in a serious accident.

Resistance to Road Hazards – Pothole Alert

Under-inflation lowers a tire's ability to handle various road hazards. For example, hitting a pothole with an under-inflated tire can cause the tire to buckle over the rim flange, causing extensive internal tire damage and eventual failure. In some cases, hitting a pot hole with an under-inflated tire will instantly cause the tire to rupture.

Hydroplaning – Slip Sliding Away

Low tire pressure reduces the speed at which a tire maintains full contact with a water covered road. This situation is commonly referred to as hydroplaning and is one of the main hazards of riding on wet roads. The reason that an under-inflated tire hydroplanes is that the larger footprint area results in a lower ground contact pressure reducing the tire's ability to push the water away from the contact area. Motorcycle tires are designed to provide their optimal wet weather traction when they are properly inflated.

Adverse Handling – I Didn't Want To Do That!

Riding on under-inflated tires can significantly affect the handling of a motorcycle. A bike that feels stable while riding in a straight line may react unpredictably when cornering with an under-inflated tire.

As a general rule, cornering with an under-inflated rear tire will cause the bike to over-steer (turn more sharply than anticipated), whereas cornering with an under-inflated front tire will cause the bike to under-steer (turn less sharply than anticipated). Either situation is extremely dangerous for a rider not expecting this change in handling.

As soon as you feel your bike handling a little strangely, it's a very good idea to stop and check the tire pressures. Even though the tire may not look like it has lost air (today's stiff sidewalls often don't show much deflection) make sure to check with a good qual-

ity gauge. If you were using an active tire pressure monitoring system, you would have received a low pressure warning and would have pulled over to check out the situation.

Reduced Tire Life & Increased Fuel Consumption – Ouch!

Riding on under-inflated tires can dramatically shorten the life of a tire. 20% under-inflation can reduce tire life by up to one third. For some bikes, this can mean tire life dropping from 10,000 miles to 7,000 miles. As well, a motorcycle running on under-inflated tires consumes more fuel and increases the level of exhaust emissions that are released into the atmosphere.

All Tires Lose Air - Naturally

It is important to realize that air loss occurs naturally through the sidewall of virtually every tire, regardless of brand, price, or quality.

This air pressure loss can be between 2-4 psi (0.14 - 0.27 bar) per month. Because the loss happens gradually over time, it often goes unnoticed until the tire becomes dangerously low.

Since most riders check their tire pressures infrequently, this normal loss of air can have disastrous consequences. If a tire loses more than 2 psi per month, the tire, valve or wheel may be damaged so make sure to take your bike in to a service center for a complete tire and wheel inspection.

Tire Over-Inflation – Too Much of a Good Thing

Riding on over-inflated tires can also be dangerous. Over-inflated tires reduce riding comfort and stability, and are more susceptible to cuts, punctures or damage by a sudden impact. Over-inflation can also result in uneven tire wear and a reduction of a tire's contact area with the road, resulting in reduced grip while cornering.

I'm Going To Tell You One More Time

At the very least, invest in a good quality tire pressure gauge and check your tires before every ride (make sure your tires are cold when you check them). Or better yet, install an active tire pressure monitoring system. Motorcycle tires only work properly when they are inflated properly – just a

few PSI (or kilopascals) can make a huge difference.

Send Us Your Flat Tire Stories!

If you have an interesting story related to a tire problem while riding, we'd love to hear it. Send us your best flat tire story, and I'll compile them into document for future distribution. If we publish it, we'll send you a SmarTire gift and we'll put your name in a draw for a free SmarTire for Motorcycles, Active Tire Pressure Monitoring System. Send your stories to: tiretips@smartire.com.

In next month's installment, we'll look at the importance of tire pressure in relation to load (both passengers and gear) as well as discuss some practical tire care tips.

PARTING SHOT:

I hope I don't bore you folks with our newsletter's content. Please feel free to submit any pictures and riding tales and stories you would like to see here.

BLUEGRASS BEEMERS DINNER RIDE SCHEDULE

Rides start at 6:30 pm. If you need more info contact Gary Dehner at g.dehner@insightbb.com

July 14, Buffalo Crossing in Bagdad, meet at McDonalds in Palomar;

August 11, River House in Irvine, meet at Lowell's;

September 8, Freddie's in Danville, meet at McDonalds in Palomar;

October 13, Kaintuck in Winchester, meet at Lowell's

Skill and Safety

This food for thought when riding alone or in groups came to me via the HSTA mail list and I thought it was worth sharing because the perspective is insightful.

Perhaps it depends on how one defines "skill" but I believe it is a mistake to equate riding skills with safety. To me skill means the ability to maintain control of the vehicle under whatever conditions might arise.

Safety is more about combining those technical skills with road "smarts" and good judgment to avoid injury to persons or property. Certainly a skilled rider is more likely to be able to avoid a potentially hazardous situation than one without those skills. However, I expect every one of us has seen and probably knows some highly "skilled" riders who routinely push it "to the limit" on public roads. Good skills and good judgment (i.e. safety) are not the same.

That being said, I would expect that HSTA members have a better safety record than the motorcycling community at large since as a group we encourage rider training, use of protective gear, riding sober and probably do get more road experience than average. On the other hand, at many (I was tempted to say most) of the HSTA and STOC events I have attended there have been one or more crashes due to "riding too fast for conditions". I think a review of the statistics collected by the HSTA team investigating accidents at our events (sorry, I've forgotten the current acronym) would bear this out. Frankly, I've come to expect it.

Let's be skillful AND careful out there.

Gary Dehner

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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