

September 2009

Apex

Looking Through The Curve

Official newsletter of Bluegrass Beemers, Inc. Lexington, Kentucky
MOA #146 RA #4-49 <http://www.bluegrassbeemers.org>



Roy Rowlett's 1964 R69S rests next to a 1947 H-D Flathead bobber at the August 15th Antique Motorcycle Club of America meeting held at the Kickstand in Burgin.

Two-Thirds of the Earth is Water. Bummer.



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BIKES, BLUES & BBQ

THE KICKSTAND'S ANNIVERSARY PARTY

The **KICKSTAND**

500 East Main Street – Burgin, KY
at the intersection of highways 33 & 152

Saturday, September 19, 2009

09/11 MEMORIAL MOTORCYCLE RIDE

- Sponsored by the Mercer County & Harrodsburg Fire Departments
 - Leaves from the Mercer County Courthouse parking lot in Harrodsburg – across from the Fire Department – the old Gateway
- Registration & DJ from 9:00 – 12:30 → kickstands up at 12:30
 - Ride about 85 miles and visit 4 area fire stations
- Bring a toy to kick-off the Fire Department's Christmas Toy Drive
 - Optional \$5 per hand to participate in the poker run
 - The ride will end at **THE KICKSTAND**
- For more info on the ride, call Don Smith at 859-583-5730

VELVEETA JONES – in concert

- Voted 1 of the 10 best unsigned blues bands in 2008
 - www.VelveetaJones.com
- Bring a chair and join us at the old Trading Post Shell parking lot - just down from **THE KICKSTAND**
 - Free admission
 - 5:00 – 8:00

BBQ ALL DAY

FOR MORE INFO:

859-748-KICK (5425)

SeeYou@TheKickstandLLC.com

Sorting through issues on the road to recovery

The RT in the first 500 miles was a smooth running, comfortable ride, underscoring the basic goodness of the Airhead given that this one has emerged from years of daily commuting and years of outdoor neglect without the benefit of professional attention to its engine.

But it did have a drinking problem and is undergoing treatment with Mike Wells.

I didn't expect a "like new" machine from this process, however, and the RT certainly is not in that class, although even given the multiple paint issues, it looks dignified and clean in its current suit.

We all have read the classified ads of bikes that are many years old claimed to be "like new." A few years ago I borrowed a friend's truck and drove to Columbus, Ohio to

look at a "like new" 1995 GSPD with something like 10,000 miles.

I first talked with the owner who assured me this was a pristine bike, so Maureen and I headed north fully expecting to see, if not a "like new" bike, at least a very nice BMW that would look good and be reliable.

That PD may have had low miles, but in the metal it appeared to have been buried in a mud pit, left outside in the sun to bake, then cleaned *without water* using dry paper towels.

At least the bike felt good on the road, but any running Airhead generally feels good even when consuming a large quantity of oil.

I rode a 1990 GSPD at the Ohio MOA International rally that was in wretched cosmetic condition, yet it still ran well.



That bike, however, was priced to reflect its tortured appearance. I finally backed away from that bike because it appeared to be a money pit to restore to a condition that would suit me.

That bike, actually, wasn't in any worse condition than was the RT now parked in my garage when I first saw it in December.

Following seven months of TLC, this RT, whether at 80 mph (confirmed by the BMW following me) or swinging through the bends on 1295 back from Richmond, did a good job, considering its illness.

The bad news is that, according to Mike Wells, the cylinders, pistons and rings are out of spec. The good news is that valve guides and valves are well within spec.

The RT has shown spirit and a willingness to serve. All she needs is a little more attention and....more money.

This project, a romantic urge to save an Airhead from being parted out, hasn't made monetary sense from the beginning. I could have bought any number of running, presentable Airheads for what I have spent in parts alone for this bike. Let's not think about the labor.

So, something else is going on, here.

While the top end is being refurbished, I will replace the alternator brushes, figure out why the rear brake fluid reservoir puked brake fluid onto the rear fender and swingarm, repair the lower fairing panel I cracked when I lost my balance and fell into it while sitting down on the work stool, and repaint the side cover I dropped face down on the floor.

Meanwhile, a friend continues to send me ads of handsome Airheads ready to ride for less money than I have in this project.

—Paul Elwyn



Apex is the official newsletter of Bluegrass Beemers, Inc.
Lexington, Kentucky MOA #146 RA #4-49

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Deadline for submissions is the last day of the month.

Back issues of Apex can be accessed at
<http://www.bluegrassbeemers.org>

Haley wins National Champion title



Jim Haley (#625) and his inspiration, Tom Herlihy (#747), talk prior to Saturday's Vintage GP race at Mid-Ohio.

By Carol Haley

Dear Family and Friends,

It's been a week since Jim raced at Mid-Ohio, and I wanted to get the details out to everyone before it faded into another summer memory.

A special thanks to the brave souls who endured the horrible weather on Saturday! As part of the pit-crew and fan club, I learned a lot about this race, and would love to host a more organized event for all of you next year - let's hope for better weather!

The event was sponsored by the AMA (American Motorcycle Association) as part of Vintage Motorcycle Days. There

were lots of vendors, a motorcycle parts swap meet, demo rides, stunt demonstrations, and dirt bike trials in addition to the road racing. It's quite a big event - I had no idea going in. Here's an excerpt from the AMAs site:

"The AMA is pleased to announce that AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days, set for July 24-26 at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course in Lexington, Ohio, will feature the inaugural AMA Racing Vintage Grand Championships, which will honor the top riders in a variety of disciplines with championship titles and AMA Racing No. 1 plates.

"AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days is the country's premier event for vintage bike enthusi-

asts, and the world's largest celebration of motorcycling's heritage," said AMA President and CEO Rob Dingman. "It's only appropriate to recognize the top competitors at the event with AMA Racing National Championships. In addition, riders winning titles in the selected classes at this year's AMA Racing Vintage Grand Championships, and the No. 1 plates that go with those titles, will earn the right to run and defend their plates at the 2010 AMA Racing Vintage Grand Championships.

One of the new friends we met at this event took an excellent photo of Jim and his friend and inspiration Tom Herlihy at the beginning of the race on Saturday. I think it not only captures the camaraderie of the competitors, but the simplicity of the vintage bikes. I've attached it for you to view.

Jim went to the track on Thursday, with his friend Russ Hector as pit crew. They setup camp, and met a fellow motorcycle enthusiast named Darryl from North Carolina, who quickly joined the crew.

Jim and Tom practiced, with Jim trying to learn the layout of the track. He was excited about having friends and family on Saturday to see him race. I arrived late at the campground, surprised by the number of people already there. I was even more surprised at 6:00 am on Saturday morning, when we woke up to get ready for 8:00 practice. A really bad storm hit early, but we were all optimistic about clear skies for the race at 1:00.

However, the practice runs ended with Jim concerned about the race bike. It appeared

to be running on one cylinder. A few of the other competitors offered suggestions, and Jim thought he might have gotten it fixed. I abandoned the pits to find the various friends who were arriving. By the time we got everyone assembled at the S-curves, the warm-up lap for Jim's class, Vintage GP, was underway.



Jim Haley on the podium at Winner's Circle accepting his new title, "National Champion."

The eight competitors made a cautious run around the track as a light rain began falling. Jim waved at his "fans" as he went by. Funny, but I'm getting better at this, and could hear that the bike was struggling. It started to rain a little harder, and we could hear the racers coming for the first real lap.

The first three riders in the class that started before Jim's slid off the track into the sand pit at the S-curve, and the yellow flag came out. Then the red flag, and we all dove for cover as the rain came down in earnest. Eventually, the skies cleared and they restarted the race.

The rain actually gave Jim a bit of a break - the slippery track called for a slower pace, and even though he only had one cylinder - he came in second. But there was much more to celebrate, as his partner Tom put in a stellar performance and nabbed first place! Back to the pits for celebration, as this was his first track win!

Now the hard part began - getting the bike ready for Sunday. We took advantage of the entire peanut gallery, drafting them as mechanics and pit crew. The initial diagnosis was water in the gas, which required a bit of ingenuity and teamwork, with Jay getting his hands greasy and Kendra making a trip into Lexington Ohio to get some chemicals.

Then one of Jim's toughest competitors, Pete, and his friend Rick did some analysis of the sparks being generated by the spark plugs. Not enough spark, probably caused by something wrong with the ignition coil. These guys are amazing!

They set to work to tear apart the electrical system, and Russ and I braved the deep mud of the swap meet to try to find a spare ignition coil. (Pete and Rick told me exactly what to ask for, because I wouldn't know an ignition coil from a hand grenade).

We didn't have a lot of luck, because it was getting late and a lot of the traders had shut down for the evening. But when we got back to the bike, the guys had made some temporary repairs to the coil, and the bike was humming. We were exhausted, but looking forward to Sunday's race on a fully functioning bike.

6:00 am came early, but it was a good thing we didn't dally. The officials heeded the warnings about bad weather coming late in the afternoon, and shortened the morning practice and moved the racing schedule up a few hours. Instead of racing at 1:00, Jim's group went off at 10:00. We were all psyched, because when he came back from the practice, he said the track was dry and the bike was fast --- real fast.

The early race start made me the only member of the James Haley fan club there, but I had a good seat, just across the

track in the grandstands from where we had watched on Saturday.

Though Jim's class started after a group of about 10 bikes in the faster class, I could see how fast he was on the first lap, as he was up in front of the pack with the fast boys. I was nearby the PA system, and could hear the announcer asking who was this new rider James Haley in the novice class? It was very exciting.

He came in third overall across the line, including the guys in the faster class. His fastest lap was just a hair over 2:00 minutes. He was fast. We had to wait for the official results to be sure - he came in first in his class, by a full minute and a half! The racer who helped fix his bike, Pete, came in second, and his friend Tom came in third! Lots of reasons to celebrate.

The second picture of Jim is alone on the podium at the winners circle, accepting his new title of "National Champion". He has a new cap from AMA that proclaims his title, a new plaque for the garage wall, and the right to run with the #1 plate until he defends his title next year.

His victory really was a team effort - friends, family, competitors and other mechanics. Thanks to all of you, even those who were only there in spirit.

Our next race is in Alabama in October, though it will be with a different sanctioning body and so he'll have to be humble and wear his rookie shirt again. I wish I had taken more pictures of him in action at Mid-Ohio, but it was just too exciting live to get out my camera.

Let's hope he has another victory this fall! I'll send more pictures then.

—Carol

Then one of Jim's toughest competitors, Pete, and his friend Rick did some analysis of the sparks being generated by the spark plugs. Not enough spark, probably caused by something wrong with the ignition coil. These guys are amazing!

Bluegrass Chapter of Antique Motorcycle Club of America assembles at The Kickstand

Approximately 40 riders assembled on August 15th at The Kickstand in Burgin for a meeting of the new Bluegrass Chapter of the Antique Motorcycle Club of America.

A number of interested riders attended who do not own motorcycles 35 years old or older that would meet the AMCA standard.

President Brian Groff of Mt. Sterling and Secretary Tony Miller of Lexington rode in on their Indian Chiefs a '47 and a '48.

Treasurer Steve "Panman" Zahn rolled in on his 1948 H-D Flathead bobber.

Vice-President Bob Williams

of London is in the process of building an H-D bobber.

Members approved a logo design and officers reported on recent AMCA events, the treasury (said to be buried in someone's back yard), and the anticipated AMCA Davenport, Iowa meet where the Bluegrass charter will be approved by the Board of Directors.

Beyond the business, conducted in the back room of the Village Inn Restaurant in Burgin through arrangement by host Ray Montgomery of The Kickstand, the action was in the parking lot at The Kickstand where old and newer bikes and old bike enthusiasts gathered.



Tony Miller of Lexington deploys the stand on his 1948 Indian Chief with over 180,000 miles that has been in the family since 1957. Tony's grandfather bought the bike with 100,000 miles on it. Tony's father acquired the bike in 1968. The bike was restored in the '80's.



Don Carney (left) of Burgin talks with Tony Miller about the '48 Chief. Carney appeared on his vintage Vespa.



Brian Groff, President of the Bluegrass Chapter of Antique Motorcycles of America, stands with his 1947 Indian Chief that he has owned for 10 years. As with Tony's '48 Chief, the throttle is on the left, hand shift on the right, an Indian option to the conventional right throttle, left-hand shift.

Bluegrass Chapter of Antique Motorcycle Club of America assembles at The Kickstand



Kickstand owner and Bluegrass Beemers member Ray Montgomery shows the door prize created by Mike Welch for the AMCA meeting.



"Judge" Rineholt made an appearance on his BSA.



This 1949 Indian Scout is a vertical twin, an early American response to the British twins.

Antique on the wild side



Stereotypes don't hold up on close examination, whether they are aimed at people, clubs, or machines. Steve "Panman" Zahn's 1948 Harley-Davidson Flathead bobber certainly does not fit the stereotype of "antique."

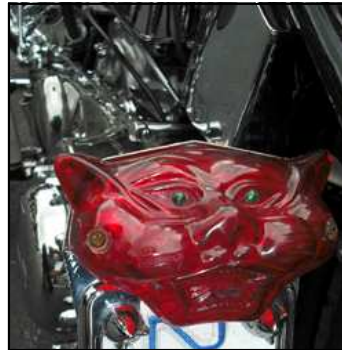
Flathead production ended in 1948 with displacement options of 45, 74, and 80 cubic inches. When Steve found this bike on ebay five years ago, it sported the original military front fender, frame, front end and tanks. A year later, the bike emerged as the bobber in these photos.

The UL engine began as a 74" but now is a 78" blue-printed and balanced, with milled and flowed heads to

KR specification fed by a vintage Rivera carburetor featuring a 1.75" bore. A Primo belt drive connects to a '61 Pan-head transmission featuring Andrews gears.

Vintage custom components are too numerous to mention, but the project began, according to Panman, as a way to appropriately put to work the rare, green-eyed cat tail light from the '70's sourced from Carl Price.

A 45-year-old SIE air cleaner, special order Colony acorn hardware, Paugho oil tank, stock springer and tanks with cat's eye instrument panel, a Bates solo seat, and paint by Kirby Stafford of Danville complete the look of the bike that is 95% Harley-Davidson.





Trials competitor **Temporarily suspending the laws of physics**

By John Rice

I began reading about "observed trials" in *Cycle World* magazine in about 1963.

Joe Parkhurst was a trials enthusiast and his descriptions of this strange bit of motorcycle sport intrigued a young man in eastern Kentucky in the early 60's where motorcycles were more of the Harley variety than any of the European brands he mentioned.

I liked the idea that it was an individual sport, where the rider competed against himself and the terrain with the winner not even known until after the cards were totaled.

Apparently anyone could buy a competitive trials bike from Bultaco or Montesa or Greeves right out of the box, meaning that "checkbook horsepower" didn't really enter into the equation.

It was several years of dirt riding and more reading before I got my first pukka trials bike, a 1974 Suzuki RL 250 (because we had a Suzuki dealer in Ashland) and competed at a place called Camden Ohio. I finished the event, but that's about all. Reading doesn't really prepare one for actual competition!

I kept at it however, soon trading the Suzuki in for a Montesa Cota 247, a more serious mount, and finally working my way out of the Novice class to the Junior (or Sportsman, depending on where one was competing) ranks.

I opened a dirt bike only shop, as a dealer for Montesa, in 1975. My mentors in trials were the McWilliams family, and our own Roy Rowlett, part of the Berea trials experts dynasty.

The McWilliams boys, John and Jim, were national class expert riders, sponsored to some extent by Bultaco. They taught me what a rider such as I could learn from them and in doing so, I became convinced that Bultacos were a far superior machine. The Bults had such a more "professional" look to them, the various bits on the bike having that quality Peter Egan described as "random elegance." I closed the Montesa shop and traded for a Bultaco Sherpa T and still have one today.

I made it up to the Senior class (expert in some regions) but had "Peter Principled" myself, rising to my level of incompetence. I was a pretty good Junior/Sportsman and a woefully inadequate expert.

I did manage to ride and complete two National level competitions, one in Kansas City and another in Huntsville, Alabama where I achieved my twin goals of finishing on time and not being last place.

I faded out of trials riding when I entered law school in 1982 and didn't rejoin the getting dirty set until about four years ago when I bought a 1975 Sherpa T and started competing in Vintage Trials, which is the "lite" version of what we used to do. In those ensuing 25 years, trials morphed into Modern Trials, a game in which the laws of physics are temporarily



The photo of John Rice in Trials competition appeared in this year's AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days program.

suspended for the duration of the event.

I've done five events, I think, three at vintage days and two at Barber, garnering a 12th., 7th 5th, a 3rd and a 2nd, though not exactly in that order.

I also have found new and imaginative ways to hurt parts of my body that have been otherwise uninjured since I gave it up as a much younger man.



*Guzzis &
Others in the
Blue Ridge
Cruso, N.C.
August 7-9*



Guzzis & Others in the Blue Ridge

By Paul Elwyn

Mark Tenney and Barbara Nowell each year stage a unique rally at the Blue Ridge Campground, a motorcycles only site located ten minutes down a squiggly 276 from the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Although Guzzis in the Blue Ridge officially is a Moto Guzzi rally, the event draws a diverse assembly of riders, mostly on European bikes, but because the rally is set in a campground open to any motorcyclist who pulls in, the rally blends with campground visitors who unexpectedly become a part of the Guzzi community.

This circumstance works well because the Guzzi rally is so laid back with no rally fee or sign-up tent, and the Guzzi community is so welcoming that riders at first don't realize they are in the middle of a Guzzi rally, although they are generally amazed to see so many Guzzis in the campground.

Mark registers riders for door prizes by walking through the campground writing down the names of riders on cards which are pulled for prizes.

But prizes and awards under the campground "dining room" shelter constitutes a small part of this event. The big draw is joining kindred souls in a beautiful campground setting in one of the best motorcycle environments in the country.

Mark's Saturday ride, typically to Hot Springs via 209, the remarkably well-prepared Italian cuisine evening meals prepared in the kitchen attached to the dining shelter, and the informal show of fascinating motorcycles and, of course, their riders make the event special.

Literally Shadetree Service

John Zibell set up his laptop to make adjustments to Barbara Nowell's Rosso Mandello LeMans (limited production bike). John explained, "The bike was stalling at stops. Idle was too low. What I did was set the idle by moving the throttle stops, synchronize the throttle bodies, then reset the TPS to factory specifications. This particular bike also has the Titanium upgrade which consists of different mufflers, and an updated ECU to handle the increased airflow through the engine. From Barb's report the bike ran fine after that. I used the laptop with VDSTS software to read the TPS value directly from the ECU. Without the software, it is more difficult to set the TPS as that requires hooking up a DVM to the TPS (not easy) to obtain the correct voltage reading, vs reading throttle angle through the ECU and software combination."

Guzzis & Others in the Blue Ridge



Guzzi's & Others in the Blue Ridge



*Guzzis, Guzzis,
Guzzis, Guzzis in the Blue Ridge*



Guzzis, and Others n the Blue Ridge



Saturday at Frisch's



Steve Little demonstrates manual starting of his 1958 R50. "It runs like a top," said Steve. Guenther Wuest rebuilt the bottom end, transmission and final drive. Randy Long restored the heads, and Bore Tech prepared the cylinders to bring the 25 hp boxer back to life. Steve recently added Wixom bags.



Lee Jarrard's new Ducati is an **1100S**, not a 1000S as reported in the August Apex. (It's hard to get good help these days.)

Right: Lee Thompson, Joe Bark, and Ben Prewitt stand around the '79 R100RT that once belonged to club members, Dave Sparkman, John Rice, and Chester Martin.



BMW has a new, *real* Super Sport Bike



Troy Corser (left) leaving the pits heading out for practice, and team mate Ruben Xuas at speed during practice.

By Bill Voss

At the end of May, the World Superbikes arrive at Miller Motorsports Park in Tooele, Utah for the US round of the series.

This year BMW has entered World Superbike for the first time with an all new in-line four-cylinder superbike, the S1000RR, that is very conventional in its engine layout, an in-line four with cylinders slanted forward 32 degrees, a double overhead cam, 16-valve displacing 999 cc with 13:0:1 compression.

The chassis is an aluminum beam frame with conventional forks in the front and conventional monoshock rear suspension.

A wonderful lady from BMW was explaining the bike to me, when an old BMW technical guy tried to tell me the ram air intake through the frame was a first in motorcycles. I re-

sponded that the 2000 Honda RC-51 has the same air intake through the frame which Aprilia has on their current Mille. I said, "It is a first for BMW" and went back to enjoying my conversation with the BMW lady.

The nice lady said the S1000RR has one big hole on the left side fairing so the air can go in and exit out the right side which has vents. She was so nice I went along with whatever she said. I was there with Shilpun Patel and we sat on it and looked over the two prototypes of the street versions on display.

My initial reaction was one of disappointment with the styling of the bike which lacked symmetry. In other words, the look of the bike didn't send me over the moon. This opinion was held by several BMW riders we spoke to, but some said that they thought the look of the

bike would grow on them.

Unfortunately, the BMW World Superbike team was having a terrible weekend with their two riders, Ruben Xuas and Troy Corser, very unhappy with their bike's performance. The German Team worked late every evening trying to find a way to solve their problems.

Both Troy Corser and Ruben Xuas were unable to ride competitively in the two US rounds of the World Superbike races at

Miller. Since this is their first year, it is hoped that the team will achieve better results before the year is out.

Typically, the BMW riders are finishing races outside the top ten, which is not what these two riders are used to. Aprilia, which has returned to World Superbike racing this year, has been enjoying good results with their new RSV4 which is beautiful.



Shilpun Patel tries on an S1000RR street prototype.



Aprilia held the North American introduction of their new RSV4, which is beautiful. With this bike Aprilia returns to World Superbike racing this year.



Above: The race bikes did look pretty good, although they lacked headlights and had additional accessories. The fact that there was a Fast Dates calendar photo shoot going on in the pit lane Friday night did provide an opportunity to see the bikes displayed properly.



Aprilia rider Nakano (above) and Max Biaggi have enjoyed decent results and both have been fighting up front. Max attained 203 MPH on the straightaway at Miller. A win for the Aprilia RSV4 is likely before the end of the year.

Shilpun and I found the new Aprilia offered plenty of room for the rider in spite of its small appearance.

There were other BMWs that were taking part in the regional support race that are of particular interest for all the oil heads reading this article.

The number 46 bike is a HP-2 Sport from San Jose BMW. It was developed by Chris Hodgson for Brian Parriott to race and is highly developed from the stock machine. Chris use to let me test ride BMWs all the





HP 2s were on display.



BMW had Euro stunt rider, Chris Pfeiffer performing on an F800.

time from his San Jose store, including one long test ride out to Santa Cruz, CA. they have a great shop.

I guess I covered all the BMWs that were noteworthy and then some. I even added words for those who may go beyond the photos to find out more, but some never got past

the photos.

The BMW team has excellent riders and engineers, so it is just a matter of time before they get good results on the race track.

World Superbike is very competitive and close racing. I am certain the BMW team is up for the challenge.



The two US rounds of the World Superbike races were won by our own Ben Spies from Texas on a Yamaha R1.



Ducati's Noriyuki Haga is currently leading the championship on his Xerox Ducati and Ben Spies is second in the championship and closing in.

Utah or Bust



We left home on July 23 and took I-75/I-64 out of Richmond toward Louisville, with a planned stop for Todd's Point, Kentucky to lay some flowers from Sue on Boone's grave, and to dedicate this trip in honor of Boone's memory.

By Dave and Rita McCord

When Rita and I sat down to plan a bike trip for 2009, we decided to incorporate parts of the trip Boone and I rode on our western trip in 2005.

We planned on going to Colorado and Utah to check out the diverse scenery in that area. We left home on July 23 and took I-75/I-64 out of Richmond toward Louisville, with a planned stop for Todd's Point, Kentucky to lay some flowers from Sue on Boone's grave, and to dedicate this trip in honor of Boone's memory. It is

still almost impossible to believe that he's gone from us, and I still think of him almost daily.

From Louisville we took I-65 north to Indianapolis where we picked up US 36 west. This allowed us a less hectic pace as we travelled on to Springfield, Illinois. The next morning we went to the Abraham Lincoln Museum and Presidential Library downtown. The museum was marvelous, but after a few hours we were anxious to get on the road and head westward as far as we could before nightfall.

We hoped to reach somewhere near Hiawatha, Kansas for the second night. Unfortunately, the area had a plethora of pipe fitters in the local ho-

tels. Looking ahead for a room was going to take us several more hours, so we backtracked a few miles and headed south on KS 7 to Atchison, Kansas.

The lush rolling hills along this route were a treat, and turned out to be some of the best views of the day. Victorian homes and farms dotted the landscape to town.

The next morning we got on the road and headed due west on US 36 arriving in Marysville, Kansas around 11:30 a.m. We found the Pony Express Museum in town easily enough. Kansas has the best signage for attractions and roadways of any of the states we passed through to date. This particular attraction was identified as eHome Station #1 f which also housed

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the museum. We spent an hour or so perusing the various exhibits, then walked a couple of blocks around town noting the original bricked streets lined with early 19th century historic buildings in town.

We took a nice deli lunch at the ePony Espresso Café on Main Street, walked back to the bike and returned to US 36 for our next destination.

Lebanon, Kansas is advertised as being the geographical center of the lower 48 United States, so how could we pass this up? A short ride north off route 36 took us to the spot marked with a concrete marker and flag next to a shelter guarded by a large white



rooster. The rooster was obviously the caretaker as he was quite tame and walked around with us.

Another chance to stretch our legs and we returned to US 36 for the final leg today. St. Francis, Kansas had a couple of motels and we were lucky enough to find a room at the 'Dusty Farmer Motel'; an old mid-century motor lodge that was clean and inexpensive. This by far was the best deal we came across in our first three nights of travelling.

The morning of the fourth day was looking to be another

nice travel day. The temperature was 68, but we expected the heat typical of this area before too long. Highs have been close to 100 degrees lately, and according to the locals, western Kansas is very much in need of rain for the crops. Even so we are glad for another day in avoiding the rain suits.

So far the route we have taken is exactly the one Boone and I traveled. It brings back good memories and I am glad I can share it with Rita.

On the morning of the 26th, we reached Colorado entering the Mountain Time zone about an hour out of St. Francis. We decided to avoid Denver altogether, so we headed directly south on US 385 toward Granada on US 50.

We usually like to avoid travelling in a direction contrary to our ultimate destination, but considering the alternative routes this made the best sense. After getting on US 50 we headed west toward Canon City planning to spend the night there.

While traveling through eastern Colorado we noted lots of towns, and even a county, named for Kit Carson, the Tate's Creek Road Madison County native.

As we were making our way to Canon City from Pueblo, a ferocious thunder storm was brewing directly in front of us. Colorado does not have the same great signage Kansas has and we made a wrong turn north toward Colorado City.

The threat of rain was getting stronger so we pulled off to don our rain suits and figure out the route back to US 50. Luckily we were only a few miles outside of Pueblo and made the correction with little time lost. The storm was getting darker



Laying Sue's flowers at Boone's grave



Abraham Lincoln Museum and Library, Springfield, IL



Pony Express Home Station #1, Marysville, KS

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and more ominous looking, but some of the anxiety was relieved knowing we were prepared for the worst.

Just as we were heading directly into the storm, the road miraculously jukeed to the right and spared us the brunt of the storm.

Of course, if John Rice had been riding with us the storm would have hit us full force. We made it to the hotel only experiencing a sprinkle.

Our restaurant that night afforded us a beautiful view of the mountains we had been teased in seeing parts of. When we were planning this trip, we expected to do a lot of sightseeing in lower Colorado and the new adventures were just beginning for us.

We traveled 1565 miles so far, so let the initiation begin. Rita felt it was time to break out her better Canon for pictures of the vistas.

The next morning we had sunny skies with temperatures on the cool side of 57 degrees. We started out with long-sleeved Tees under our jackets and headed toward the mountains.

Our first adventure was to experience the Royal Gorge Bridge over the Arkansas River. The route off US 50 to the Gorge Bridge is only about 6 miles up the mountain and at that time of morning it was not crowded. We saw lots of bikers so this site must be well worth the trip. This bridge is the world's highest suspension bridge spanning the Royal Gorge at 1053 feet above the river. I don't think we will be able to capture the grandness of the area with our cameras. Rita and I walked across the bridge taking in the numerous breathtaking views before continuing

the journey. Two hours later the temperature was about 75, so short sleeves for now. We returned to US 50 and headed west through the mountain passes toward Salida, Colorado for lunch at the 'The Eatery'. The scenery through the San Isabel National Forest was extraordinary with every turn of the highway. This road continued up through the mountains as we crossed over Monarch Pass at an altitude of 11,312 feet. We should have expected precipitation at this height, but we were surprised at the hail we ran into. There wasn't a lot of it thankfully, and we pulled over as soon as we could and geared up. Rita couldn't take any pictures over the pass, but later was able to as we approached Gunnison and the Black Canyon area. This was simply beautiful country with the gorges, and valleys along with ranches and farms spread throughout.

We arrived at the entrance to the Black Canyon National Park around 4:30 pm and hoped to see all we wanted to see before the park closed. The visitor center provided us with a plan and we carried it out at our own pace. The Black Gorge and surrounding mountains were amazing in their variety of formations, such as the volcanic lava flows causing striations in the rock walls. Every overlook we stopped at showed us a new view of the Canyon that we felt was better than the previous one. Every photo shot seemed to be better than the previous one. It took us 12 hours to travel only 225 miles today, and Rita refused to throw her leg over the bike any more, so it was time to find a room. We rode on to Montrose where we discovered our dinner choices



Kansas



San Isabel Mountains, Colorado



Bridge over Royal Gorge, Canon City, CO

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are routinely becoming those restaurants within walking distance after a long day in the saddle.

The sixth day of our trip was in great anticipation of our ride on US 550 from Montrose to Durango via Ouray and Silverton on the 'Million Dollar Highway'.

Ouray is a quaint, historic little town with many of the buildings on Main Street constructed in the 1880's, and listed on historic registers. We spent time taking in the sights and hiked a couple of blocks to the edge of town, up the mountain side trail to the lower 'Cascade Falls'. It was well worth the time. The water comes off of a cliff face 100 feet above the ground tumbling down the face and flowing into the creek down the mountain side. We took videos because still pictures just didn't thoroughly capture the whole experience.

The road from Ouray to Silverton, Colorado is called 'The Million Dollar Highway'. On most days it would be a motorcyclist's dream. On this day however, a slow, cold rain was falling as we headed for the first of many switchbacks that would take us over the Red Mountain Pass to Silverton.

Some of these switchbacks were extreme with 10-15 mph being as quick as could be comfortably negotiated. To make matters worse, a fuel tanker whose driver was obviously familiar with the road was breathing down our necks on our way to the top of the pass. Having witnessed in my rear view mirrors how the truck driver was passing other motorists, I wisely decided to pull over and let him by before we became road kill. He was easily

going 30 mph faster than anyone else on the road. Along with the rain slicked highway we didn't need any more obstacles on this road.

Upon reaching Silverton we decided it was time for a fuel up and a break from the nerve wracking views. Silverton looked like a similar town to Ouray with tourist oriented businesses present. One of the attractions was an antique, coal-burning locomotive offering tour rides between Durango and Silverton daily. On our ride toward Durango we saw one of these locomotives chugging along, belching thick, black smoke into the air. Quite a sight!

We found a small hotel on the main drag in Durango and signed in for the night. In our hotel common area we met a gentleman from Oklahoma riding a Honda ST 1300 on his way back home from a trip through the Colorado Mountains. We dined at the local Taqueria and had a very fine meal with our new acquaintance. He was quite the rider with a 20+ year history of solo rides over long distances. Mesa Verde National Park was our next sightseeing adventure.

After a trip to the visitor center, it was very apparent we wanted the self-guided tour allowing us more freedom to explore at our own pace.

This park is about the Anasazi and Pueblo Indian communities living in this area from 400 AD to 1300 AD. These cliff dwelling Indians were spread out over several mountain sides throughout this area. We spent an entire day visiting the various cliff dwelling overlooks and pueblos while admiring their amazing construction feats. At the end of our day, we



Tour train at the base of the Royal Gorge



Downtown Ouray, CO



Cascade Falls in Ouray, CO



Black Canyon Gorge National Park, Montrose, CO



Million Dollar Highway near Durango, CO

traveled out of the park and through Montezuma Valley into Cortez, Colorado about 60 miles north on US 491. Approaching Cortez we ran into stormy skies with high winds. I had to lean into the wind to avoid being toppled over while driving. I'm glad I didn't have to stop until I reached the hotel parking lot or it would be like revisiting the top of Clinch Mountain with Boone in 2004.

Our total trip mileage was 2000 miles that day, and we figured we had consumed about 40 Ibuprofen to stay in the saddle in order to reach that mileage. We felt a little soreness was a small price to pay for the adventures we sought.

On July 30th we continued our travels northwest out of Cortez on US 491. We crossed into Utah about an hour later and headed toward Monticello to pick up US 191. The temperature that morning started out at its usual chilly state of about 63 degrees, but remained cool on our ride to Monticello. So at midday we put rain jackets on over our motorcycle jackets and rode on toward the east entrance of Canyonlands National Park. The ride into the park took us 22 miles on this desolate two lane road into an area named the Needles Over-

look. There were other overlooks listed but this one didn't require a dual sport to get to.

Riding to the overlook across the desert the temperature rose about 30 degrees; therefore we didn't need our jackets any longer on this trek. With temperatures in the 100's and a humidity of 12%, we discovered it was a must to remain hydrated in this heat.

This series of overlooks had a panoramic view of wide canyons and valleys composed of conical shaped buttes called 'The Six Shooters', rugged crags and rock formations appearing as they were tipped on their side giving them a 'needles' appearance, with the Colorado River meandering through for another wonderful vista. This view was as far as the eye could see across the Utah desert.

Back on US 191 out of the Park we passed our first geological arch formation of the area called 'Wilson's Arch'. This is a smaller one in comparison to most, and located on the side of the road with only a sign posted. We were eager to see more.

We arrived in Moab, Utah around 3:00 pm that afternoon and stopped by the Information Center for updates on the Na-



Durango to Silverton train



The Needles Overlook at the east entrance to Canyonlands National Park in Utah

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Balanced Rock, Arches National Park, Moab, UT



Colorado River along the UT 279 loop, Moab, UT



North and South Windows, Arches NP, Moab, UT

tional Parks nearby. We decided to stay in Moab due to its central location to both the Arches and Canyonlands National Parks and Dead Horse Point State Park. We stayed at a very nice, rustic motel called the Redstone Inn located on US 191. We ended up staying there for three days and highly recommend it. We decided to explore the region with day trips and return to Moab each evening.

A few hours after our arrival in Moab, we went north out of town for a short jaunt on US 191, then took a left onto UT 279. This was a looped drive so there was no chance of getting

lost. This route followed the Colorado River into an area of spectacular red rock formations, petrified dinosaur tracks, and petroglyphs on the roadside cliff face.

The next morning we headed to Arches National Park and spent the entire day there. It was almost like being on Mars or some other red planet. Natural arches and unique rock formations abound everywhere out there, and we never got tired of seeing the sights.

Now I know where Boone got the inspiration for some of his log book drawings of the west. I can't begin to describe the scenery in all of its diverse



Mesa Arch, Canyonlands NP, Moab, UT

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Dead Horse Point, Dead Horse State Park, Moab, UT



Monarch Pass on the return trip to Salida, CO

beauty.

On August 1st more riding and sightseeing was planned for the Canyonlands National Park, and Dead Horse State Park. The 'Island in the Sky' portion of the Canyonlands Park had rock formations that reminded us of a huge chess set spread across the land. It is awe-inspiring to experience the immense grandeur of these parks.

While at Dead Horse Park we each tossed a newly found penny into the valley toward Dead Horse Point to honor Boone's love of the west and his never ending quest for finding coins on the ground. We felt he would have jumped at the chance to experience this

ride out west with us.

After three days in Moab and having travelled 2392 miles, it was time to turn the Road King around and head toward home. We had briefly thought of riding back the same route, but quickly decided against that because of the prevalence of rain all along the northern route for the next few days.

Rita plotted us a course to avoid the rain by going north of Moab taking I-70 east to Grand Junction, Colorado, and then drop to US 50. We stayed on US 50 and retraced our route from Montrose to Canon City. This time over Monarch Pass Rita was able to get some great pics of the mountains with only



Telephone poles affected by high winds in Kansas along US 50

a little rain and thunder out of Gunnison.

The stretch of US 50 between Montrose and Canon City is a marvelous stretch of road with great riding almost every step of the way. The Arkansas River flowing alongside the highway added to the great scenery and mountain views.

The next day found us continuing on US 50 heading east toward Kansas. About mid-morning we stopped at a local eatery in Rocky Ford, Colorado called the 'Gold Panner Café'. Besides being the best breakfast of the trip, it also featured an extremely friendly, albeit toothless, waitress adorned with tattoos who pulled up a chair and chatted with us during almost the entire breakfast. She provided fine service and we left

with a smile on our faces.

We continued east on US 50 to the Kansas border. Temperatures were in the 100 + degree range through these parts, but my trusty air-cooled steed never missed a beat in the heat, or had difficulty with anything else that was thrown at it. We made it to Dodge City, but there was a lot of road construction happening so we decided to go on to Pratt for the night.

This part of the trip retraced some of the route Boone and I took from the 2005 trip. Whereas Boone and I took US 54 to I-70 and St. Louis, Rita and I branched off of US 50 onto US 400 at Augusta Missouri. From there we made our way to US 60 via routes US 75, US 160, US 59, US 166, I-44,



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and US 360 until we reached Poplar Bluff, Missouri where we called it a day.

This was our longest one-day ride yet of 538 miles.

We successfully dodged the rain so far but feared it was not for long. We got the last room at the Super 8 and the skies opened up soon after arrival. Our luck had held out as far as getting wet was concerned.

Thanks Rita, you planned a great route!

We are up and going the next day, and still following US 60. We entered Kentucky by first crossing the Mississippi River at Cairo, Illinois, then crossing the Ohio River into the Bluegrass State all within one mile or two. From there it was on toward Paducah, Kentucky where we picked up I-24 for a short while, then took the Wendall Ford Parkway to Bardstown. From there we picked up US 150 to Danville, Route 52

to Lancaster, then Route 1295 back to Richmond.

Home at last.

The total mileage for the trip was 4081.1 miles. This was a great trip, and Rita and I both enjoyed it immensely. This is the longest trip that we have ever taken together, but it certainly won't be the last!

We can't wait for the next adventure. Maybe the Gaspe Peninsula and Nova Scotia!

Thanks for the memories, Boone! Wish you were here.



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Contact Roy Rowlett @ 859-223-5459 or kr4mo@yahoo.com
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