



The Apex

Sept 2006

2006 Rally is a big success:

Hey everyone:

We did it again and this year was one of our best ever. The weather held up for us all weekend, No accidents to report and everyone had a great time.

Gary Huffman and Charlie made a wonderful film documentary of their 2004 Alaskan 45 day adventure and showed that for us on Friday night. Everyone was amazed and delighted with this presentation.

The poker run was a great success with 31 entrants.

We weren't sure after last years dismal turnout and our loss of funds in the rally treasury if we would be able to pull off this year's rally or not. Thanks to the pledges of several of our members for funds if we bombed, we tried one more time and made it work.

I want to personally thank everyone who came out to support our rally. Some of the folks worked real hard all weekend to help put this thing together and make sure it ran as smoothly as possible. I'm sure I'll miss someone, but I'd like to thank the following folks for their hard work. Joe Stewart and his wife PJ, Jim Kouns, Phillip Baugh and his wife Mary and Hubert Burton. Without their help, I couldn't have put this thing on.

We had lots of other folks who helped us set up the canopy and tables on Thursday, and lots more to help us take it all down on Sunday . Muchas Gracias to everyone

This year was possibly the best and smoothest I've ever seen this all come together. The final tally was 128 in attendance, including full signups, day passess and visitors. Once again, thanks for everyone's help and support
Roy Rowlett

Rally Financial Breakdown

Income:

Beginning balance	\$237.00
Rally entry fees	\$2150.00
Poker run	\$87.00
50/50	\$77.00
Total	\$2551.00

Expenses

Coffee:	\$7.00
Paper Etc	\$20.00
Insurance	\$250.00
Patches	\$256.00
Meals	\$862.00
Camping	\$300.00
Potties	\$500.00
Total	\$2195.00

Balance: \$356.00



**Seems almost
everyone was enjoying
the good food**





A beautiful day for riding



The Cajun Kitchen



Signup table



A Foggy Morning in camp



Sitting round the campfire

MOTORCYCLE TRIP AROUND THE RIVER BOUNDARY OF KENTUCKY

By Doug Searcy

My motivation for this trip was prompted by growing up in the river community of Carrollton, KY, where the Ohio and Kentucky River valleys converge. Seeing the beauty of the river boundaries of KY from the seat of my 1984 Honda Aspencade seemed like the perfect adventure. Studying the map revealed that the most eastern river boundary was the Tug Fork of the Big Sandy and the most western was the Mississippi where it creates a peninsula of land separate from the mainland of Kentucky 25 miles west of Hickman, KY. Reaching this peninsula requires traveling from Hickman to Tiptonville, TN, and back up HWY 22 to Kentucky. The whole loop from Lexington to Lexington was 1466 miles which was planned to be ridden in four and one half days. My new beemer friend, Ron Blackburn, with his 1987 Moto Guzzi bought into the trip and we decided to do primitive camping in state parks the four nights. We both completed the trip as planned with the Aspencade getting 43 MPG and the Guzzi about the same. Mileage covered per day was: one half day Sunday, 185; the next three days averaged 282; Thursday return home, 435. Gasoline prices ranged from \$2.95 in Catlettsburg next door to the Marathon refinery to \$2.62 in Winchester to \$2.75 in Hickman. Total gas cost for the Aspencade was \$94.18. It was a very enjoyable trip requiring a steady pace but with time enough to visit a few friends, family, and points of interest along the way.

I would like to share with you now in a brief way the flavor of the motorcycling adventure as it unfolded for Ron and me. We each left our homes around 1 PM Sunday, June 4th, mine in Lexington and Ron's near Cynthiana, and met at the Paris intersection off I-64 in Winchester. We rode the Mountain Parkway and other scenic routes to Pikeville without incident except for dodging a few thunder storms around Pikeville. We first took cover in a gas station which was closed on Sunday and tripped some sort of alarm which sounded loudly for the twenty minutes we were there. We expected the police to show up any minute but they never did. Near Elkhorn City we again gained cover in the drive through area of a bank which was closed but no alarm. In eastern KY gasoline must be more valuable than money. We made the Breaks Interstate Park without getting wet, paid our \$18 for the camp site, and set up our tents. The site was in the tall trees and the ground was wet but sandy so not too bad. Rain threatened as we pondered our next meal. Now my idea of eating on this trip was to enjoy the delicate taste of fast food but Ron volunteered to bring some supplies and suggested that he might cook a little. As hunger was now upon us Ron asked me if I would mind if he cooked since it would be faster than hunting for a restaurant being out in the woods and all. Not knowing the quality of Ron's cooking I hesitated but then said, "If you can eat it, I can eat it so let's get cooking." He opened the side bags on the Guzzi and I couldn't believe it. One bag contained the stove, cooking pots, plastic ware, and collapsible water jug, and the other was a well stocked pantry with condiments to include a bottle of wine and glasses. This guy was better equipped than a chuck wagon on the Oregon Trail! Ron unpacked this neat gasoline stove that was 1950 U.S. Army issue to infantry troops and ran on regular gasoline. "But Ron, where are we going to get gasoline?" I asked. "Not to worry", he replied. He then went to the Guzzi and showed me this tee tap with valve that he had installed in the gas line. No sweat! He filled the stove, pumped up the pressure, and proceeded to light it off. It was sitting on the top of a picnic table

and he turned to on valve and said that I might want to stand back a little since lighting this stove could be a bit dangerous. Gas spewed out, he touched the match to it, and flame shot out about two feet but quickly settled back into a lazy glowing posture. Soon the flame had turned into a gas burner unit ready or cooking. Ron explained that through the ingenuity of the U.S. infantry soldier these stoves had been very successful in their time. I really wondered about our safety then, since he had been an officer in the Air National Guard. I collected a jug of water while he measured out the rice and dinner was soon under way. Ron went to his cooler and come out with a half head of cabbage and broke it up for cooking into a steamer device that would fit into the pot with the rice. We dumped a can of chicken into the pot when the rice was about done and put the cabbage in to steam. The rice was soon cooked and we set it aside to cool while heating some water for coffee. Dinner was served; rice and chicken with cabbage on the side and coffee. It was very good and cookies were dessert. It was starting to drizzle so we hurriedly washed the pot and went into the tents. The temperature was right for sleeping but the light rain on the trees caused large drops of water to fall onto the tents for most of the night. We were sleeping to a soft bongo drum symphony. We were tired. Sleeping was good.

On Monday our day started with the flaming stove lighting procedure and Ron cooked Scottish oats for breakfast. A large bowl of oatmeal garnished with raisins, granola, and honey was delicious. Ron's wife did a great job of stocking the Guzzi pantry. Ron did a fine job of cooking. I enjoyed his food so much that I told him that I might propose marriage. He said he might accept but we would have to still sleep in separate tents.

We had survived one night in the wild. With our soggy tents packed on the bikes we descended the Breaks Mountain to Elkhorn City for the trip to Phelps. The roads were dry and twisty since we were riding the hollows of eastern Kentucky in the heart of coal country. We passed under several conveyor systems bringing coal from the mine sites to the tipples. Coal tipples were in full production loading both trains and trucks shipping this black energy to power plants in Kentucky and on the east coast. Truck traffic was moderate and respected as we rode the narrow two lane roads to Phelps. After refueling in Phelps we crossed the Tug River to Edgerton, WV and proceeded along the river through Matewan to Williamson, WV. At this point we crossed the Tug again back into Kentucky where we saw a historic marker telling of the Hatfield and McCoy feud which had raged near the Tug River for two generations. On our way to Louisa we were detoured from our intended route and went through Pigeon Roost to Inez to Louis. We were in the heart of the mountains now on roads that were narrow and congested and second and third gear was normal riding for 50 miles. As we approached Louisa we left HWY 3 taking 23 along the Big Sandy River to Ashland and the Ohio River. The country was opening up now with much better roads making fifth gear possible for short periods. We gassed up at a Marathon station just outside the Marathon refinery in Catlettsburg and paid \$2.95 per gallon, the highest on the trip. It was on through downtown Ashland, past the old Armco Steel works, west along the Ohio River to South Shore where a new suspension bridge is under construction. I stopped on the edge of the road to take pictures. Upon starting the bike I rotated it to the right to withdraw the kick stand. My right foot was on loose gravel, slipped out, and over the Gold Wing went. Ron helped me lift it upright. The only damage was to my deflated ego. We decided to leave the river and take the AA highway to Augusta since we were running bhind. The AA highway is a fabulous ride

through scenic rolling, green Kentucky. And Augusta is a charming river town with a historic river drive and a real ferry boat crossing to Ohio. We rested here feeling peaceful watching the ferry on the serene Ohio River.

The final ride for the day to Kincaid Lake State Park was tough. The roads to Falmouth were back country, curvy, and narrow two lanes running across the ridge tops through general farming country. We encountered farm tractors, farmers mowing with bush hogs throwing green grass on the road, cow manure, dead animals, pickup trucks, and gravel trucks spilling loose gravel on the road. We crossed two gravel spills, one in the middle of a curve. Ron was riding lead and was out of sight due to the curves. I assumed he made it through this spill since he was not lying on the side of the road. I saw it, aimed for the thinnest gravel spot, felt the front wheel slip to the right then hold, and was thankful. I am a cautious rider on such roads and go slower. I made it to Falmouth and caught up with Ron. We had dinner at the Burger King and went to the park.

No trip is complete without controversy. Ours had arrived! Upon asking the fee for a primitive camp site we were told that they did not rent sites rather charged for each tent and that the fee would be \$24 since we had two tents. Since we had spent the night before in a park that did rent sites for \$18 on which two tents could be placed, this was not good news. A rather heated discussion began about camping policy in all parks in Kentucky being consistent and if one would rent a camp site this one should too. The young lady said she was just following orders from the park manager and that the fee was \$12 per tent. While this discussion was going on a park ranger came up and stood beside the young lady. He was a sharp young trooper dressed in full uniform, shiny boots, and a smoky the bear hat, and sported a 9 mm automatic in a very shiny holster. He verified everything the lady said by nodding his head in agreement as she made her points. Ron was upset saying he knew people in Frankfort and was going to discuss this with them. He asked for the park manager's name and number and recorded it in writing. He then whipped out his camera and took a picture of the fee schedule posted on a billboard by the attendant's station. The dialog continued with her suggesting that an RV spot could be had for \$20 per night and that it would easily hold two tents and that it had water and electrical hookups. Knowing we were losing to uniformed authority this seemed like a good idea so we paid the \$20 and chose a nice RV site with lots of grass and a large shade tree. It was nice to have electricity and water. The campground was well kept with a great shower and facilities.

It was a peaceful night. Ron lit our flame thrower stove without incident; we had a good meal and slept well. Rested and feeling confident we ate breakfast, packed, and were about to fire up cycles when Ron suggested we call the park manager. He did, the manager was in and invited us to stop by. We explained our concern about not being able to rent a primitive camp site and he explained that they had changed their policy since people were abusing the area by renting a site and setting up too many tents on it with too many people. So they started charging per tent. We could see his point but thought that some concession for two tired motorcyclist should have been made. Ron then asks him about every discount category we could qualify for, senior citizens, retired military, and AARP. He laughed and said, "OK. I give up." Would you be satisfied with a charge of \$12 for one site with a 10% senior citizen discount making the total \$10.80 for the night? Your refund will be \$9.20. We genuinely thanked him accepted the money, and were out

the door. Ron remarked that we had just made \$4.60 each in 15 minutes which equated to \$18.40 per hour. This soothed our soul as we mounted up for another day of Kentucky riding.

Our destination for today was the Ft Knox area via a circuitous route taking us through Rabbit Hash, Carrollton, Madison, IN, and Louisville. Leaving Kincaid Lake State Park we took BACR's (bad ass country roads) over to I-75 in the vicinity of Walton, I-75 to the Union exit, and KY 356 to Rabbit Hash. This is a classic old country store, over 100 years old, right on the bank of the Ohio River across from Rising Sun, IN. Cyclists stop here often to relax and gaze at the river. The store is covered with old advertising signs one particularly catching my eye. It spoke of Froman Farms Country Hams of Ghent, KY my hometown. This farm existed for several generations producing these delicious hams of which I was a consumer. The farm gave way to progress, however, when Kentucky Utilities bought the land and built the Ghent power plant. Relaxing in Rabbit Hash is also the habit of a couple of native hound dogs who greeted us and then proceeded to lie down in the middle of the road for a nap. They must have sensed that traffic was very light on Tuesdays! Feeling rested we rode out of the parking lot, around the dogs, and down the river to our next stop the Big Bone Lick State Park. This is a prehistoric site where huge woolly mammoths called mastodons would come for salt from the sulfur spring that still runs out of the ground today. The area around the spring was marsh and many got stuck in the mud and died. Their fossils began being discovered in 1739 and a museum exhibiting these bones and telling their story has been created. It is an interesting place to stop and browse.

Back on the road we take HWY 42 down the Ohio River to Carrollton. On this very scenic route we appreciate grand views of the valley. This is nostalgic for me having grown up here in the 40's and 50's and remembering the beautiful farm land of this river bottom. Industrial development has changed much of it now and we ride by the KU power plant, North American Stainless Steel, a huge drywall plant, Dow Chemical, and another chemical plant. I am consoled by recognizing that much good employment is offered by them which has caused the area to prosper. The sites seem neat and well maintained and there is still some open space along the river. In Carrollton we stopped at Point Park and observed the Kentucky and Ohio River joining forces, a mass expanse of open water. Leaving the park we immediately cross the Kentucky River Bridge which has just been repainted and is the brightest UK blue color you can imagine. I wonder if all Kentucky bridges are being painted this color. We cross another marvelous old steel truss bridge over the Ohio River built in 1929 as we enter historic Madison, IN. My mother, 94 years young, and sister live here so we stopped by for a visit and continued on to Louisville via Indiana routes to cross back into Kentucky joining HWY 31W to Ft Knox. Traffic was heavy in West Louisville, it was hot, and we were getting tired. We stopped for gas at a BP station and decided that since we both were retired service men, Ron from the Michigan Air National Guard and me from the Kentucky Army National Guard, and tired after being out three days that we would stay overnight in the visitors quarters at Ft Knox rather than camp. It had been twenty years since I had stayed on this army post and I was curious about changes.

The main gate at Ft Knox was closed. We were routed to the Gold Vault Road entrance which took us past the Federal Reserve Bank's gold depository for the U. S. government. It is a strong looking white granite building surrounded by a tall iron fence. This brought to mind the James

Bond movie “Goldfinger” parts of which were filmed here and one scene in particular when Bond met this beautiful lady aviator. He asked her name and she replied, “My name is Pussy Galore”. He smiled and replied, “I must be dreaming”. You know the story. It seems like these thoughts always come to mind as you approach the gate to a military reservation. Access to the post was easy which surprised us and all we did was show our retired ID cards. Our quarters costing \$44 were very motel like with a partial kitchen, a queen sized bed, and a pull out couch. No double rooms were available. Of course, the question was who got the big bed. Being gamblers we tossed a coin and Ron lost. The bed was mine! The couch was not bad, however, and we both slept soundly. We were loading to leave the next morning when we noticed this sign “Breakfast Room”. Behind this door was a great continental breakfast just like the Holiday Inn! This is something we never expected coming with army quarters. As we ate we talked with several sharp young troopers, one being a major in the Afghanistan army over here for training in the armor school. He spoke good English and mentioned his twenty years of service. We wondered how he had lasted twenty years considering the turbulence there. The U. S. troops were wearing the new camouflage pattern on fatigues and were also TDY to the armor school for training. It was a pleasure to be in the company of these young men who were valiantly serving our country. Before leaving the post we rode around noting that all the old WWII buildings were gone. New large brick structures were in place and further apart leaving much open green space between them. Also new to me was the presence of several fast food franchises, Burger King, Pizza Hut, etc. There seems to be more choice in the military now at least for eating.

As we rode around the post Ron mentioned that his Guzzi was beginning to idle roughly and took throttle movement to keep it running at stops. Not giving this too much thought we found HWY 60 and headed west. We were into the fourth day now and feeling confident. The morning was cool and the rolling farm land scenic as we traveled toward Owensboro. We fueled at another BP station prior to Owensboro and noted how the land had flattened and the farming was changing from hay and livestock to specialized grain farming, corn and soybeans. We arrived in Owensboro too early for lunch so missed a meal at the “Moonlight Barbecue” and went on to Henderson. The Guzzi was still being contrary at idle and low speeds now and Ron wondered out loud if he was going to be able to make it. He began to talk about bad BP gas as a probable cause and wanted our next gas to be Chevron with its miracle cleaning additives. Riding in Henderson now we wanted to cross the Ohio River from Kentucky into Kentucky just to say we had one it. This is the only place along the Ohio River boundary where KY owns any land north of the river. It seems that the course of the river has changed since the 1792 boundary was established making this possible. After riding a mile north of the river and passing Ellis Park race track a sign says, “Welcome to Indiana”. With our mission accomplished we turned around and crossed the river back into Henderson. Fuel was low so we needed a Chevron gas station. When you need it you can’t find one. As we approached the edge of town we stopped and asked and were directed back a few blocks to a Chevron station. We filled up with this gas with the magic additive and Ron was confident that the Guzzi would run much better. It must be noted here that the Guzzi was getting slightly better mileage than the Gold Wing and I accused Ron of having the Guzzi leaned out so much that it wouldn’t run. So we are back on the road with a fresh tank of Chevron gas headed for Marion, KY, and lunch with my college roommate from UK. It was a delightful lunch and visit with my friend and his friends in a quaint café in downtown Marion. One of our future

future destinations was Monkey's Eyebrow and we inquired about it during lunch. It seems that this is duck hunting territory in Ballard County with nothing much there but an old store where an old guy will clean ducks for hunters in the back room during hunting season.

Comfortable after lunch we return to HWY 60 for the ride to Paducah. The Guzzi is still running rough. Ron thinks the bad BP gas theory was a faulty hypothesis. He now turns his attention to questionable spark plugs stating that at camp tonight he will check the plugs. I have a little fun by changing the name of his bike from Moto Guzzi to Moto Guessy since we can only guess if it will complete the trip. We rode around Paducah and took the side road to Monkey's Eyebrow. After several intersections we saw Monkey's Eyebrow Road. Several miles later we are at another intersection in a low land area. Ron thought we had passed it so we returned to ask a farmer where it was. We spotted a metal building with a sign that said, CAJUN CORNERS, 1196 Monkey's Eyebrow, KY. A man was mowing with a Ford tractor and bush hog nearby. He stopped to talk telling us that Monkey's Eyebrow was somewhere in front of his farm and nothing more than a name on a road sign. It seems that the county would put up a sign sometime around duck hunting season but the sign would never be there long before being stolen for a souvenir by either a duck hunter or some wandering motorcyclist. He allowed that we had been through town once and would go through it again on the way out. This friendly fellow was really up here for the summer from his home in Grand Isle, Louisiana, where he owned a general store. He had met a Kentuckian from Monkey's Eyebrow years ago, became a fishing buddy with him, and came to visit in Kentucky. He bought this farm and now spends time here with his grandkids while his own kids run the store. Being a Cajun he named his farm "Cajun Corners". We talked about hurricane Katrina. His store was severely damaged but he was back in business. I mentioned that our church had sent a mission team to Grand Isle earlier to help rebuild. He asked me to offer his thanks to the church. What a pleasant experience! You never know who you will meet riding through open country on a Gold Wing and a Moto Guessy.

Winding our way south we continue to Columbus and Columbus-Belmont State Park arriving an hour before dark. This park is perched upon top of 200 foot cliffs overlooking the Mississippi River making for magnificent views. It is noted for the giant iron chain the Confederate army in this defensive position stretched across the Mississippi River to impede Union army traffic. The position was defeated by General Grant in one of his first battles as a commander. The campground was quite nice. This was our last night out and we were doing it in style. Ron had good food and had a bottle of wine with glasses. We needed to cook. The flame thrower stove would not pressurize due to a failed pump. I could taste a McDonald's burger already. But Ron being a mechanical engineer and never willing to be defeated by simple devices went to his Guzzi and brought out another stove that he had brought along for spare parts. The plunger was soon replaced and he was cooking. We enjoyed the wine through dinner. I cleaned up while he turned his attention to the Guzzi spark plugs. He spoke with admiration of the good tool kits Moto Guzzi places with their bikes and thought they would include a gap gauge. The plugs were out but no gauge was there. I stated that Honda also had pretty good tool kits with Gold Wings and opened my kit. There was a single gauge with the size stated in millimeters. Ron made the conversion in his head and determined it to be .026 inches. He needed .028 inches so this was close

enough. One of the plug gaps was much too wide. This was corrected; the plugs replaced, and tomorrow would be the test. We slept.

Up early and packed we departed for our run through Hickman to Tiptonville, Tennessee, and back into the western most tip of Kentucky. At the end of the last road in Kentucky was a sign that read "No Trespassing". We could see a farmstead with grain bins beyond but it was a private road. Turning around we retraced our route for 5 miles to the Tennessee line and on to Tiptonville. We passed Reel Foot Lake enroute to Union City, TN and intercepted the Julian Carroll parkway and blasted toward home via the interstate. The Moto Guzzi was now running fine but as we approached Kentucky Dam the riders were getting tired and sleepy. We stopped at the Kentucky Dam Marina and selected a napping spot overlooking the lake and the boats. One and one half hours later (we really zonked out) we aimed for Lexington and Cynthiana. The trip was safely conducted with us arriving home a little before dark.

It was a fabulous trip. Riding across Kentucky and back in four and a half days required steady effort but was not an iron butt event. Comparing the various regions and roads across our state was unique. It was enhanced for me by my riding partner, Ron Blackburn, introducing me to the total camping experience. It was fun. Thanks, Ron!





Thanks to Doug for a good story and good pictures.

July Birthday wishes to:

Roy Rowlett, Joe Stewart, Jim Brandon and Jerry Obrien

August Birthday wishes to:

Terry Findlay, Lowell Roark, Roberto Munoz, Gary Dehner and Matt Gaffney

September Birthday wishes to:

John Rice, Eddie Layton, Allan Walthers and Bob Beard

October Birthday wishes to:

Jeff Crabb and Tom Keller

How about some more submissions, articles, pictures or classified ads for the next Apex??

Send em in to Roy.

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