

THE BEEMER

BMW Hotline 595-6203

December 2003

President: Steve Stratz – 242-1567
Vice President: Terry Elliott – 776-2626
Secretary: Chad Hargis – 833-9669

Treasurer: David Sparkman – 292-6041
Newsletter Editor: Polly Wright – 794-4280
Activities Dir: Mark King 790-8038

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Mark King

Swan Song

As I write this I can almost hear the fat lady singing.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve the club as President for two years. One of the best parts of the job has been getting to know all of you better. In a Will Rogers sort of way I can honestly say that I have found something in each of you that I like - even in Art.

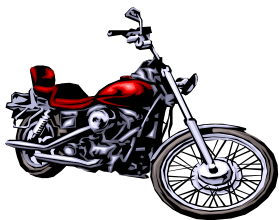
The truth is that this club would be nothing without our beloved Den Mother, Polly. She is the energy that makes the club go no matter who is President. With all due respect to those who went before me and those who will follow, in order of importance our Den Mother ranks much, much higher than any President. I want to take this opportunity to thank her for all she has done to help me over these two years.

These two years have certainly passed faster than I perhaps would have liked and I hope that the club has done something to make your love of motorcycling more enjoyable.

Now its time to pledge our support to the new President, Steve Stratz. We can do two simple things to help him and make our club better: 1) tell him what's on your mind and 2) roll up your sleeves and be willing to help.

Ride safe,

MOK



Our Rally will be coming up on the 15, 16 and 17th of May, this year. If you would like to be a part of it, please contact Rick Mathis or John Menefee and I'm sure they will put you to work. Rick at 791-0650 John at 390-0950.

CHRISTMAS PARTY VANDERBILT HOLIDAY INN NASHVILLE, TN

DECEMBER 2, 2003
6:30 PM

**THIS IS THE SAME PLACE WE
HELD IT LAST YEAR**

**I WILL HAVE TO LET THEM KNOW
HOW MANY WILL BE THERE, BY
November 28th,
SO PLEASE EMAIL AT
pw630@aol.com
OR CALL ME AT 794-4280 AND
LEAVE A MESSAGE IF I DON'T
ANSWER**

TID BITS

It is hard to understand how a cemetery raised its burial cost and blamed it on the cost of living.

It is said that if you line up all the cars in the world end to end, someone would be stupid enough to try and pass them.

A fine is a tax for doing wrong. A tax is a fine for doing well.

Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.



WEBSITES

OUR BMW WEB ADDRESS

NOTICE: OUR NEW WEB ADDRESS IS:

BMWCON.ORG

YOU CAN DOWNLOAD A MEMBER APPLICATION
AND FIND OUT ALL SORTS OF GOOD THINGS.
CHECK IT OUT.

BMW email: {pw630@aol.com}

<http://nashlinks.com/remember.htm>

[www.bmwmoa.org/features/080502openhous
e.htm](http://www.bmwmoa.org/features/080502openhous
e.htm)

Alabama Club: {www.merrill.org/bmwmoa }
Barbers museum information: { [www.barber
museum.org](http://www.barber
museum.org)

{ www.bmwmoa.org }

www.bmwra.com

{ www.bmwriders.com/ }

www.cycleshows.com/index.html

**Bloodworth Motorsports: bloodmotor.com
Knoxville**

<http://tailofthedragon.com>

<http://www.sportbikeshop.com/index.htm>

<http://www.sportbikeshop.com/weblinks.html>

NEW: {www.mcriders@motorcycleworld.com}

Iberian Moto Tours – { www.imt-bike.com }

www.AmericanMotor.com

www.midsouthswapmeet.com

<http://www.miamimotorcycle.com>

Newsdesk@AmericanMotor.com

www.classickawasakiclub.com

Newsdesk@AmericanMotor.com

GLOBEBUSTERS www.globebusters.com

CLUB MEETINGS & EVENTS

BMW CHRISTMAS PARTY, DEC. 2, 6:30 PM

US Desmo Club (Ducati's) is having a Rally in
Greenville, TN

Later this year.

go to their website for more info.

www.usdesmo.com/events.html

Colonial Virginia Motorcycle Rally website:

www.bmwchr.org

Annual Gathering of Friends –

BMW Club of Houston – Fredericksburg, TX

www.bmwclub.org

Don't I Know That Guy?

Who's The New Sales Manager at Bloodsworths

Many of you may know me from my previous
motorcycle sales job with Sloans in Murfreesboro. I'm
that closet BMW owner that spoke to many of you
from time to time. In August I started working at
Bloodsworths after leaving Sloans where I had been
employed since 1995.

My passion for BMW Motorcycles dates back to 1985
when I purchased a 1977 R100/7. I have been an
active member of the BMWMOA for 18 years #40701
and the BMWRA for 12 years #16362. I have
attended many rallies all over the country and toured
extensively across the US. My current BMW makes
number 13 that I have owned. The mix of models
dates back over 40 years. From a 1963 R69s to my
current bike a 2002 R1150GS.

I have owned and toured on Airheads, Oilheads and
even a few K models. Needless to say my blood runs
BMW. I look forward to meeting each and everyone
of you as my BMW motorcycle journey continues
here at Bloodworth Motorsports.

Glenn Hawkins



Letter from the Editor

Polly Wright

This next meeting will be our Christmas Party. I've told you in a couple of places in this newsletter, where it will be held. You need to know that we are planning to do the gift exchange again this year. You can spend around \$10. You also need to bring a gift for a man if you are a man, and one for the ladies if you are a female.

I really need to know how many of you will be at the meeting. Call me or email me and let me know how many will be there. email: pw630@aol.com or 794-4280.

For those of you who were not at the meeting, our new officers for next year are:

Steve Stratz, President,
Terry Elliott, Vice President,
Chad Hargis, Secretary, and
David Sparkman, Treasurer.

Steve and Mark King will work together on the activities and rides.

I would like to thank Mark for all his good work last year. He made it easier for me with all his efforts as President. The articles about his trips, made us all want to ride more. Thanks Mark. A job well done! I also want to thank all the other Officers. They did a great job this past two years. Thanks Guys!

AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND FIJI

by Hack Tidman

Last month in October, I had the pleasure of taking my wife to these three countries. We were gone for the whole month and had a barrel of fun.

We flew American to St. Louis, and then on to Los Angeles. These days when you fly for several hours on American, they have a large container in the walkway between the gate and the plane. You can grab a bistro bag as you go by to eat on the plane. The contents are like a sub sandwich, plus a cookie and a bag of small carrots. The only problem is the cookie and carrots are bagged up. Trying to open the bags is something else and can be quite a challenge. You might be able to pierce it with a ballpoint pen, or do what I do. That is to tear it open with your canine tooth. If you had a penknife that would help, but these aren't allowed on the planes anymore. The bistro bags keep the flight attendants from having to bring you food or a meal on the plane.

We flew Quantas from L.A. to Melbourne on a big 747-400. This is a new large plane. The L.A. to Melbourne flight is supposed to be the longest non-stop commercial flight there is. It's fifteen and a half-hours, about 8,000 miles. That's about the diameter of the earth. By the way, I have always heard that if you dig straight down, you will come out in China. I was looking at a globe, and if you dig down in Nashville, you will come out just east of South Africa.

Anyway, the plane was very large, but the seats were not. There are 10 seats across in economy class. It is a set of three-four-three seats with two aisles. I had a window seat, so every time I needed to get up, I had to disturb two people between the aisle and me. They had to get up first, in other words. This new 747 did have something innovative however. On the back of each seat was a computer screen about 5 x 7 inches in size. The keypad was in your armrest and you

could pull it out and put in on your lap. It didn't have keys, but you could do some things with it, such as choosing a movie to watch. Maybe a choice of four or five movies. You could play games with a joystick fashioned out of the arrow keys. I saw some people playing solitaire. You could watch the progress of your flight that would tell you certain info, such as we were flying at 40,000 ft, outside temperature was minus 72 degrees, ground speed was 537 MPH and total distance was 7,978 miles. You could see how far you had gone and how far you had to go. The first eleven hours were in the dark, because we took off at night and were flying in a southwest direction. We also had two great meals.

We stayed in Melbourne for four days and did some sightseeing. Then went to the airport and flew to Alice Springs. As you know, Australia is as large as the United States. So moving from city to city usually takes airplanes. We noticed a couple of things when we got to Alice Springs. One, were the arid conditions of the Outback. The second was a couple of "road trains". These are made up of three trailers, plus a half trailer, pulled by a tractor. Instead of eighteen wheelers, they have something like eighty-six wheelers. I also noticed the lack of motorcycles. On a Sunday in Melbourne I saw quite a few, but during the week, there were none to be seen. This is true in Australia, New Zealand and the Fiji Islands.

In Alice Springs, Annette and I got up at 4:00 a.m. one morning to go hot-air ballooning, and to see the sun come up. But unfortunately, the wind was too high and they had to cancel the flight. In Australia, the balloons are unusually large. The baskets hold sixteen people.

We took a tour bus to Ayers Rock, a day's trip, and spent two nights there. Ayers Rock is a rock, five miles around the base and 1,100 feet high. People climb this rock, which you can do if you are in good condition. Many people also fall off while climbing. It is sort of like Stone Mountain outside Atlanta. If you slip and begin to fall, that's all she wrote. There is no stopping you until you get to the bottom.

Then we flew to Cairns, on the East Coast. This is where the Great Barrier Reef is located. We took a boat out to the reef. The boat company has a sort of like "Pontoon Island" there. You can snorkel, scuba, or take a glass bottom boat to see the colorful fish and the Reef.

On the way to the airport in Cairns to fly to Sydney, we stopped at the headquarters of the Royal Flying Doctors Service. Since there are so few people living inland in Australia, and the distances so great, those having medical problems are treated by radio/telephone. If a doctor is needed, it works like "Life flight" does at Vanderbilt. Only they use airplanes instead of helicopters, because the distance is so great.

We flew to Sydney staying four days. It is a fun city. A few of us got up real early one morning, and headed for the Sydney Bridge. They allow you to walk across the top of this bridge, just for kicks. Imagine the Shelby Bridge in Nashville, but make it four times as high and six times as long. To walk the top to the Sydney Bridge, you are really getting up high. You have to put special coveralls on and are linked up with eleven other people, like mountain climbers. It takes between two and three hours to make the walk, which takes place in all types of weather.

Of course we toured the Opera House, and of course Annette wanted to attend an opera, so she could say she did. So we got tickets for the "Pearlfishers". We also took the harbor tour and went up to the top of the Skytower called the "Needle". We came down those 915 feet in less than 45 seconds, and that leaves the pressure in your ears a problem to deal with. They also have a 3-D movie in the Needle (travelogue) complete with moving seats that sort of jerk you around.

From Sydney, we flew to Christchurch, New Zealand. We'll continue next month.



FOR SALE

R1100RT

1997 Blue RT with under 40 on the clock. Ohlins front and rear. Less than 2k on Bridgestone tires. System cases with truck. Corbin saddle w/back rest pad on the truck. Stock seat included. Bike includes BMW saddle bag liners and tank bag. Heated grips and ABS. BMW alarm w/remote E-mail me for pictures.

Price: \$7000 neg

Contact Tom Lees at

tom.lees@thompsonpower.com Telephone 615 251 8642

Lorenzo Hill has a '78 R/7 1000 Forrest Green & Gold, 8 ½ gal tank, just painted, Lufmeister bags and inserts, Mag wheels, extra seat, with other extras. He wants \$1300. and you can contact him at **615-860-5089**. He needs to sell the bike, so give him a call.

FOR SALE - BMW K1200LT - 1999 - Champagne Color w/ 2 matching helmets New BMW intercom system and new tires. Lowered heated seat. Lambswool seat covers. Passenger arm rests. Luggage Rack. BMW Bike Cover. 15,000 miles. \$14,000 Call (615)773-2677 or email Jim at jwdeakins@direcway.com Jim is sick and will not be able to ride again, at least for a long time and they could use the money to help defray the medical expenses.

This is a stock 2001 BMW R1150GS with 31,000 miles. Bike includes the BMW system cases but is otherwise stock. It is in excellent condition and recently serviced and all fluids changed (brake, clutch, oil, transmission, differential). New tires. It has the remainder of the factory 3 year/36,000 mile warranty so buy with confidence! This is one of the strongest running GS's around. \$9,500 - Call Bill at 615-792-5296

Two items for sale.

1. Factory BMW K 1100 LT system case liners - new and unused. Still have the packing paper inside. I have all three - left, right and top case. Blue and gray with leather trim - very handsome. Appear to be waterproof, but I'm not sure about that. New the side cases liners are \$186 each and the top case liner is \$224. Total new is \$596 plus tax. I'll sell the set for \$300. Call Steve Page 373-8689 home.

2. Staintune exhaust system complete for R1100 RT/RS and R1150 RT/RS. Model 117E3. All clamps, removable baffle and oxygen sensor plug and original shipping box included. Used about six months. Like new, no dents or scratches. Some heat discoloration (normal). New \$975 list. Available at RL Motorcycles Inc. (www.cyclesaddles.com) for \$901.87 plus shipping. My price -- \$650. Call Steve Page 373-8689.

1999 BMW R1100SA only 11,300 miles, new back tire, ABS brakes, heated handgrips, soft bags, & shaft drive. Must sale new baby \$10,000.00. PH. 615-883-1468

I have a friend who is about to adopt his grandson, and motorcycling is very important part of his life...he is trying to locate someone selling a sidecar rig so he can continue riding with his wife and grandson.....If you know of any for sale, or could get this out to the membership and other clubs, I would be very grateful! Jake Steven "Jake" Jacobs
Assistant Executive Director
The Arc of Tennessee
44 Vantage Way, Suite 550
Nashville, Tennessee 37228
615 248-5878
615 248-5879 Fax
sjacobsarc@aol.com
sjacobs@thearcctn.org

Big Ride 2003 YELLOWSTONE, DEAD INDIAN PASS and BEAR TOOTH PASS

By Mark King

It was about 5:51 a.m. on Friday, August 15, 2003. I was anxiously waiting for Bruce and Neil on the entrance ramp to I-65 northbound on Concord Lane in Brentwood, TN. Without thinking, I was pacing on the side of the road as I waited. We had been planning this trip for months and it was finally about to begin. We were all so anxious to start that I doubt if any of us slept well that night.

Neil had come in the day before from North Carolina on his Valkyrie. He made the trip from Asheboro, NC in only a few hours having left just after lunch. He got to Bruce's house about 6 p.m. We were all meeting at Bruce's house that evening to celebrate the start of the 'Big Ride 2003.'

Originally the 2003 Big Ride was to be to the Northeast – all the way to Maine. But that had been scheduled for a spring (May) trip that had to be delayed due to some work issues. As we talked about rescheduling that ride, something just wasn't coming into place. Somehow it just didn't still have our imaginations captured. Neil mentioned that he and two friends had been thinking about riding to Yellowstone National Park. Almost instantly the sound of Yellowstone rolling off our tongues and around in our heads had our imaginations in handcuffs and there was no doubt as to our destination.

Ron and I took on the task of routing our trip and finding motels along the way. Before long, we had our itinerary roughed out and passed it by the group. Neil said that he had heard of a place called Bear Tooth Pass we should include, so we worked that into the route before we even clearly knew what it was. It must have been fate.

Just before we left, I found some pictures on-line that a fellow biker had posted of Dead Indian pass on the Chief Joseph Highway. We would ride that highway on the way to US212 to get to Bear Tooth Pass. After seeing this picture, none of us was good for anything except getting there to see it for ourselves. We even decided to leave a day earlier – on Friday morning instead of Saturday. Even so, the last few days at work I can attest that my body was there, but my spirit had already gone west. At this point we had no idea that not only would Dead Indian Pass surpass our wildest dreams of fantasy bike rides, but so also would Bear Tooth. In fact, I think it was Neil who upon looking out over the view of the descent into Red Lodge, MT from Bear Tooth Pass said, "Just call momma and tell her to send my stuff !"

The Thursday that Neil arrived we all met at Bruce's house for dinner and a time to talk before the big ride. Bruce's wife, Ruth, was a real 'peach' to allow us bikers to party at her house. Corky's bar-b-que and a swim in the Munns' pool was just the thing to get our pumps primed even more. Ron had a great surprise for us that evening: t-shirts that had 'Big Ride 2003' printed on the front with a buffalo, an elk, Old Faithful, and all the states we would cross on the way there and back. What a great surprise! It was a wonderful evening as we talked about the adventure that was about to begin.

Sally, Bruce's daughter, had put together a wonderful scrapbook of 2002's Big Ride out old Route 66 to Colorado and back. We got great enjoyment out of reliving that ride looking through the pages that she had so carefully created. Of course, we expect her to take on the challenge of documenting our 2003 Big Ride in the same fashion!

Back on the entrance ramp to I-65, Bruce and Neil finally rounded the curve and after a brief stop for the customary start of the trip photo we were on our way to meet Ron at I-24 and Old Hickory Boulevard. The weather was just a bit foggy and the temperature was

already about 75 degrees. But none of that really mattered as we zipped down the road to meet Ron.

As we pulled off the interstate Ron was waiting there for us camera in hand. Again we stopped to shoot a couple of pictures and then we were on our way.



This day would eventually take us 719 miles, all ridden on the interstate except for a few miles around Kansas City later that day. We don't especially like to 'pound the slab' but to get to Yellowstone and back you have to make some time and miles on the way so that you can enjoy the two-lanes after you get there. We had an average speed today of 70 mph with actual saddle time of 10 hours and 15 minutes.

We stopped for breakfast at a little place called Momma Libby's in Paducah, KY. It was a great little home town spot that we opted for instead of the Burger King down the road. Our waitress was nice and we managed to conjure up those stares that you get from all the home town folks. You know, those stares that say "What are YOU doing in our restaurant?" and "Just some more crazy bikers!" It was a good stop all the same. The truth is we love to get those looks.



We forged on to St. Louis for lunch where we just ate quickly at a Subway. We had calculated by this time that fuel stops needed to be every 110 miles. Neil's six cylinders were very thirsty and had to be refreshed on this schedule or Neil would wind up walking.

In Kansas City we stopped for dinner and met Neil's son Matt and Anna, his new bride, who have settled there. We ate at

a great place named Jack's Stax in the south part of town. After dinner Ron, Bruce and I headed north on I-29 to Mound City, MO where we would spend our first night. Neil stayed on to visit with Matt and Anna a while longer.

The Audrey Motel is a small motel with what Ron and I would call 'character.' These are great little motels that provide a welcome alternative to the big chain motels. Many of these are even owned and operated by Americans although the Audrey Motel turned out to be one of many now run by folks of Indian (east Indian that is) descent. Even so, this fellow was very nice and allowed us to park our bikes overnight under the office drive-through awning.

While Bruce was showering and settling in, Ron and I set the trap for the first practical joke of the trip. I had procured from Aerostitch one of those great little fake oil leak puddles. Actually I had been saving it since May for use on this year's Big Ride. We positioned it just right so that Bruce would come out later to join us and see it from the chair we had situated ever so carefully. Then Ron and I enjoyed a cigar as we sat out by the bikes and waited for our victim. After Bruce came out, it didn't take long for him to notice the puddle. "I see a problem," he said with a grim tone that signaled the aggravation of dealing with a major problem. He laid down beside the bike and began to feel for where the 'oil' was coming from. We were making comments like "touch it and see if it hot" and "taste it to see if its really oil" referring to the puddle so that he would touch it and see it was fake but as hard as we tried we couldn't get him to touch it. He got up and moved to the other side of the bike where he kept searching for the source of the leak. He was zeroing in on the oil filter not being installed properly when the bike was serviced last. And he was clearly getting peeved with Ron and me because we were not taking this as seriously as we should. When Ron snapped a picture of him lying on the ground he growled something about this not being appropriate material for trip pictures. Finally, I laid down on the other side of the bike and said, "Hey, Bruce look at this!" as I picked up the puddle. He belted out a laugh that was as much filled with relief as it was from knowing that we had gotten him good! We laughed together for a few minutes but pledged to keep this quiet so that we could pull it on Neil later in the trip.

Neil rolled in a little later while we were still outside enjoying the end of the first day. The four of us knew that the next day would be long and we agreed to get up early and cover some miles in the cooler morning air.

Saturday, August 16

We pulled out of the Audrey Motel at about 6 a.m. We were on our way through Iowa on I-29 where we would cut over to Lincoln, NE on highway 2 from Nebraska City.

We stopped for gas and breakfast in Lincoln. The breakfast stop was at a place recommended by the guy at the gas station called the Hi-Way Diner. It was just down the road so we had a short ride to the parking lot. Now for a safety tip:

Big Ride Safety Tip #1: Before you get off a bike, always make sure that your side stand is fully deployed. If you don't, the bike will fall over. This is embarrassing and can be expensive.

My RT seemed to roll over in slow motion as I leaned it over on what I thought would be the side stand. About the time I realized the stand was not fully down it was too late – the bike was past the balance point where any one human could muscle it back up. Luckily, except for a little scratch on the left mirror of the R1150RT, it was fine. My pride was a little damaged, but it was nothing that any of us would let affect our enjoyment of the Big Ride. Later when we were talking about stopping for breakfast Bruce sarcastically reminded me that I didn't exactly stop, but sort of 'fell' into the stop at the Hi-Way Diner.

The Hi-Way Diner was great. Complete with the cute waitress we called the Pancake Nazi. She was cute, but all business. You had to go up to her counter to order, but if you went up there without knowing exactly what you wanted to order and couldn't shout it out immediately at her command she had no patience at all with you. She

did lighten up a little when she realized that we were southern idiots, not the normal Nebraska idiots that she had to put up with all the time. Later, when she brought us some water, I think I actually saw her smile, but I could be mistaken about that. The pancakes they served were so big that they lapped over the edge of the plate. As Bruce said, "When was the last time you couldn't finish a short stack?" From this point on the size of the pancakes became the measure by which we judged the quality of our breakfast stops.

From Lincoln we left highway 2 and got on I-80 for about 90 miles and then took off across Nebraska heading west again on highway 2. We stopped along this stretch to take a picture next to a corn field. Believe me; it wasn't hard to find one! Ron looked over at Neil who was off his bike taking his jacket off. This didn't seem out of place as it was beginning to warm up. But Neil didn't stop with the jacket. With his pants down around his ankles he gave us some story about a huge bug that we down his back and then somehow into his pants that he had to release. Personally, I think he just has a little exhibitionist blood in him. And I have decided not to comment at all about the 'big bug' in his pants.

The next major stop was to be Carhenge and it was almost 350 miles away. This ride across Nebraska on 2 was a nice break from all the slab we had ridden up to that point. Along this two-lane highway there were several trucks that required a passing maneuver to keep up our pace. Bruce gets credit for the next Big Ride Safety Tip.

Big Ride Safety Tip #2: Always make sure you have plenty of room to pass a truck and get back on your own side of the road before you become a hood ornament on oncoming traffic. Unless you have a death wish.

I passed the truck first and was in the lead. Neil and Ron were behind Bruce and they were the ones who said Bruce cut this one pretty close. Bruce said that it was a good thing that he had all 1800 of those cc's to get him past the truck he was passing when he realized the 'urgency' of the situation. He said he went through that sequence of talking to yourself when you first say that you're gonna die and then when it looks like that won't happen you start figuring how you can get out of the jamb without looking stupid. It probably looked closer to Ron and Neil than it really was.

We went through some great little Nebraska towns: Broken Bow, Thedford and Hyannis.

We stopped for lunch at a place called Stubs in Thedford, NE. Choosing the restaurant wasn't hard – it was the only one in town. The food was OK, but the waitress was so impervious to conversation that we thought she must be in some sort of trance. The subject of gas mileage was discussed over lunch and we figured that Neil's Buick back home gets better mileage than his Valkyrie.

Then we went on to an interesting attraction in Alliance, NE on US385 about 2 miles north of town. Carhenge is the artistic creation of Jim Reinders, an Alliance farmer, and was constructed with the help of his family in the summer of 1987 as a memorial to his father. Appropriately enough, it was dedicated in a ceremony during the Summer Solstice. Thirty-eight automobiles, all covered in gray spray paint, were placed in a circle measuring approximately 96 feet in diameter. The structure has the same proportions as Stonehenge. Some of the cars are held upright in five foot deep pits, trunk end down, and the autos which form the arches are welded in place. The "Heel Stone" is a 1962 Cadillac. In June of this year during the Summer Solstice Jim Reinders was on hand at Carhenge for a special ceremony to install a plaque and bury a "Carpusule," a play on words for an old car used as a time capsule. The car was buried, and will be dug up again in 50 years.

From Carhenge we headed south to get back to I-80 and go into Wyoming near Cheyenne. On the way we took in one more sight in Nebraska. This ride south on 385 from Alliance was very scenic and reminded us of the 'Black Hills' type scenery you see around Rapid City. Chimney Rock is a National Historic Monument in Bayard, NE. We probably wouldn't have even gone by Chimney Rock except for Ron's childhood memory of a children's book he had on the Oregon Trail and the early pioneers that described this natural road sign. It was a significant landmark on one of the four major western routes that pioneers used in crossing the plains. These routes are now designated as National Historic Trails. They are the Mormon Pioneer Trail, the California Trail, the Oregon Trail, and the Pony Express Trail.

Chimney Rock is on the California Trail. But all the trails came through this general area of southwest Nebraska. As pioneers came slowly up the North Platte River, they must have watched eagerly ahead for their first view of Chimney Rock, the most famous of all the landmarks on the "Great Platte River Road."

This prominent column of clay and sandstone, resembling a tall factory chimney, was mentioned in more emigrant diaries than any other landmark on the Oregon-California Trail. Visible for miles, Chimney Rock was more than a wonder of nature. As a milepost on a journey noted for its monotony, the column was a significant landmark in measuring the emigrants' progress west.

From Chimney Rock we completed our return to I-80 and rode into Cheyenne, WY. Riding across the prairie, whether you're crossing the high plains or the southwest is always challenging due the high cross-winds. This 60 mile stretch was no different.

As we approached Cheyenne, the sky had begun to darken as we ran into a cool front that was also threatening rain. In this Big Sky Country even the storm fronts are quite magnificent. The picture probably doesn't do the actual scene justice, but the front was absolutely gorgeous as bright rays of sunshine pierced the clouds and illuminated specific spots on the hills around Cheyenne. It was as if God was saying, "Hey, look at this!" So we looked and it was one of the most beautiful sites I have ever seen. After the hot ride across Nebraska, the cool air was a welcome relief even with the moisture.

Our destination for the day was Centennial, WY which was now just 50 or 60 more miles. But not before we stopped to apply rain gear and warmer clothes. At Laramie we got off the slab and onto highway 130 which we took into Centennial. The road is a very scenic road, but rain and a setting sun kept us from enjoying it too much on the short distance into town. Centennial is a ski town and can only boast a population of 100 of its own citizens. We stayed at the Old Corral which is owned by a man that Ron and I met this summer. He is an entrepreneur who has several businesses of which the hotel is only one. We met him at the Southern Baptist Convention when he was displaying gigantic crosses that many churches are putting up these days. Richard rides a Harley and we swapped several bike tales that lead up to the invitation to visit the Old Corral. We didn't see Richard there, but the folks who run it for him said we just missed his wife, Gina, who had been there for a few days buying for their gift shop.

We had dinner at the Old Corral's restaurant which was pretty nice. Our waitress was a little 14 year old girl who was helping her mom out this evening. She had to go ask momma what the 'catch of the day' was for us. Someone wanted a buffalo steak so we asked her if they had any buffalo and she replied, "Sure, we have buffalo wings!" My joke about 'cutting the cheese' on my hamburger went right over her head. Her name was Megan and she was cute as a button. And it turned out that she was one of the better waitresses that we had the whole trip.

The total mileage for Saturday, August 16 was 730 miles.

Sunday, August 17

We woke up in Centennial to the cool temperatures brought in by the front and we snapped a few pictures around the Old Corral as we bundled up to leave. We stayed on highway 130 for a very scenic ride through some mountains on our way over to US287 for the ride heading northwest through Wyoming. 130 is a national scenic byway named the Snowy Range Road. It was a wagon road when it was originally cut in 1870. The highest peak we crossed reached 10,830 feet.

Along this stretch we saw several deer near the side of the road and kept our speed down as we traversed 130 for the obvious reason. None of us wanted to mount antlers on the front of our bike 'the hard way.'

A few miles into the ride we hit some rain and stopped to add rain gear to our ride apparel for the day. The rain was intermittent and brought out a beautiful rainbow and I'm sorry to say we didn't get a good picture of it.

We stopped for breakfast in Saratoga, WY at a little restaurant named Mom's Kitchen. As far as we could tell Mom was actually a big burley 300 pound guy who seemed to run the place. Mom's was great and most of the rain blew over while we were inside enjoying hot coffee and more of the biggest pancakes I have ever seen. A nice guy at Mom's warned us of a little road construction on US287, but since it was Sunday we hoped that any delay would be short so we didn't change course.

Before breakfast we passed a guy on a BMW K1200LT, the big touring bike similar to Honda's Gold Wing. We all thought he was a little odd because he was wearing leathers – not too many BMW riders succumb to this Harley-ish type of behavior. We wondered if he had rented the bike. While we were stopped at Mom's having breakfast he passed us. We would see him again later.

As 130 turned north and intersected with I-80, we got back on the slab for about 25 miles to US287. We passed a huge monument to Abraham Lincoln on I-80. It is in a rest area but previously sat along Highway 30 (The Lincoln Highway) until the completion of I-80. In 1912, construction began on the Lincoln Highway, the first transcontinental highway in the US, it is named in honor of Abraham Lincoln. The bust is the only monument to Abraham Lincoln along the "Lincoln Highway" and is the largest bronze head in the U.S.

We hit the construction on 287 that the guy at Mom's warned us about. As we pulled up to the first place where cars were stopped we noticed that we had caught the guy on the BMW. We struggled through a series of detours where both sides of the road were reduced to dirt and severely torn up. This stretch would have made a great motocross track complete with jumps!

US287 took us through Lamont and Muddy Gap on our way to Lander where we stopped for lunch at the Gannett Grill. This was a great little place that had a patio where we ate outside and enjoyed what had turned out to be a beautifully clear day. They had clever little names for all the menu items. I remember having a 'cluck boob' sandwich. Much more creative than your

average grilled chicken menu item. I'm glad to report that it was 'natural' and not a silicone implant!

Leaving Lander we had our first Jackalope sighting. It was big and pink and sat outside some sort of business. But we thought it was kind of gay looking so we didn't want a picture with it.

Lander to the Tetons was approximately another 150 miles. 287 follows the Wind River into the Rockies with scenic peaks on either side of the road. Interesting colors including reds and deep purples intensified the views along the road. At Dubois we entered the Bridger-Teton National Forest. Clouds had again gathered although it never actually rained. But the combination of the clouds and smoke from the forest fires in Yellowstone and Montana had begun to limit our view of the beautiful mountains.

We forged on to the intersection of US287 and US26 that goes down into Jackson Hole. Our original plan was to ride through Grand Teton National Park and then to West Yellowstone this day. Since our view of the Tetons was so limited, we decided to go on to Jackson and spend the night and ride by the Tetons again the next day hoping the view would be better.

We knew spending the night in Jackson might be a little pricey, but the first motel we stopped at wanted \$250 to accommodate the four of us. We thought we might be able to do better so we rode on in to town and spotted the rustic Kudar Motel. The guy at the desk said he was out of regular rooms but had the back portion of a house that would accommodate all four of us that he would rent to us for \$95. We looked it over and while it wasn't the Hilton it had all the necessities so we booked it.

We could walk to the square and the main downtown area from the Kudar. The Jackson square has a huge elk antler arch on each of its four corners. Elk shed their antlers every spring and local Boy Scouts gather them up and sell them at an auction in the square every May. As we explored Jackson a little, we picked up a few souvenirs and scouted out a place for dinner. Several locals recommended Bubba's so we walked over and got our name on the seating list. It didn't take long and we were enjoying some great bar-b-que at moderate prices (for Jackson). After dinner we strolled back and sat on the deck of our little house and reflected on the day's ride and enjoyed some cigars. Oh ya, don't let me forget those great oatmeal raisin cookies that Anna, Neil's daughter-in-law, baked for us - they were delicious!!!!

The mileage total for the day was 376 miles.



Monday, August 18

Monday morning greeted us with beautiful sunshine and a cool 'fallish' temperature. It was bright and clear around Jackson which gave us great hope that the Tetons would be much more visible than the day before.

We had breakfast at the Village Inn in Jackson before we made the short ride up to the entrance to Grand Teton National Park. We stopped in at the Moose visitor's center to get a calendar for Kit, my secretary, back home in that other world we call work.

Our second look at the Tetons was much better than the first. The weather was clear and even though some smoke remained the view was much better than the day before.

We stopped at several of the vantage points along the park road that leads eventually back to US89 and up to Yellowstone. At one outlook a lady who did not speak English snapped a picture of all four of us. I think she might have been German, but I'm not sure.

Perhaps our favorite vantage point, as it is with so many visitors to the park, was the outlook over Jenny Lake. We walked down to the waters' edge and I'm sorry to say Ron contaminated this pure mountain lake. He said he was just marking his territory so that he could find his way back someday.

The National Park Service web site gives the following overview of Grand Teton National Park: The Teton Range towers more than a mile above the valley of Jackson Hole, the peak of Grand Teton rises to 13,770 feet. There are twelve Teton peaks that reach above 12,000 feet and support a dozen mountain glaciers. The Teton Range is the youngest range in the Rockies. The birth of present-day Grand Teton National Park involved controversy and a struggle that lasted several decades. Animosity toward expanding governmental control and a perceived loss of individual freedoms fueled anti-park sentiments in Jackson Hole that nearly derailed establishment of the park. By contrast, Yellowstone National Park benefited from an expedient and near universal agreement for its creation in 1872. The world's first national park took only two years from idea to reality; however Grand Teton National Park evolved through a burdensome process requiring three separate governmental acts and a series of compromises.

The original Grand Teton National Park, set aside by an act of Congress in 1929, included only the Teton Range and six glacial lakes at the base of the mountains.

The Jackson Hole National Monument, decreed by Franklin Delano Roosevelt through presidential proclamation in 1943, combined Teton National Forest acreage, other federal properties including Jackson Lake and a generous 35,000-acre donation by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. The Rockefeller lands continued to be privately held until December 16, 1949 when impasse for addition to the national park was resolved.

On September 14, 1950, the original 1929 Park and the 1943 National Monument (including Rockefeller's donation) were united into a "New" Grand Teton National Park, creating present-day boundaries. Today the park encompasses nearly 310,000 acres and protects the Teton Range, Jackson Hole (mountain valley), a 50-mile portion of the Snake River, seven morainal lakes, over 100 backcountry and alpine lakes, and a wide range of wildlife and plant species. About 4 million visitors enjoy the park each year, most visit between Memorial Day Weekend and Labor Day.

As we exited the park at the north gate we parked the bikes next to the park sign for the traditional photo. While we were in the process, a nice lady got out of a car and sort of limped over. She must have had some sort of severe and crippling arthritis that caused her great difficulty in walking. She told us she wanted a picture of herself and the sign and asked one of us to snap it for her. Of course we were most happy to do so and offered to move those nasty old motorcycles. To our surprise, she replied, "Oh

no, I want the bikes in the picture, too!" Then we offered to let her sit on one of the bikes for the picture and she was elated. She picked the best looking bike for the picture (the Beemer) and we proceeded to help her onto the saddle. We snapped the shot with her camera and I'm sorry to say didn't get the same shot with one of our own cameras. Well, at least we know that we are in somebody else's vacation picture album.

As we waved goodbye to her we mounted up and rode on to Yellowstone. From this point we were about 50 miles to Yellowstone's south entrance gate.

At the park sign we stopped for another of those Kodak moments. We had to wait our turn and the folks ahead of us were a large Jewish family, evidenced by the Yarmulkes. Turns out they were from Boston and when the oldest son couldn't figure out the timer on the camera we snapped the picture for them. It was funny because the mom was standing on the sign which clearly carries a notice that you are NOT supposed to stand on it. Instead of stepping down like most folks would she proceeded to yell at her kids for climbing on it while she was perched up there claiming that it was OK for her because she got up there before she read the warning. Now that they had read it, she wasn't letting the rest of the family climb up but she wasn't getting down. Now tell me those kids weren't getting some kind of mixed up message!!

The official National Park Service web site carries this description of Yellowstone:

Yellowstone National Park was established on March 1, 1872, and is the first and oldest national park in the world. Preserved within Yellowstone are Old Faithful Geyser and some 10,000 hot springs and geysers, the majority of the planet's total. These geothermal wonders are evidence of one of the world's largest active volcanoes; its last eruption created a crater or caldera that spans almost half of the park.

It is an outstanding mountain wilderness with clean water and air. Yellowstone is home of the grizzly bear and wolf, and free-ranging herds of bison and elk. The park encompasses 2,219,791 acres and boasts 2,969,868 visitors each year.

We decided to ride north on the eastern edge of the park first. We pulled into Grant Village for gas and a rest stop. While we were discussing the route for the day we met Smitty from Bakersfield, CA. He is a retired gentleman (I'm giving him the benefit of the doubt) who was working at the park this season. He has done so several times from when the park opens in May to the end of September when it closes for the winter. He was the first to tell us that the east gate (the most direct route to Cody) was closed due to the forest fire at Fishing Bridge.

This required another adjustment to our plans as we had planned to exit out that gate and go on to Cody the next day. Now the only way to get to Cody was to go out the park's northeast gate and take US212 to the Chief Joseph Highway and go over Dead Indian Pass into Cody. This would add another 120 miles to our ride the next day so we opted to cut our plan to ride out the west gate today and cross the state line into Idaho. Instead, we would spend the rest of the day just touring the southern part of Yellowstone with our final destination for the day being the Inn at Old Faithful where we had rooms reserved.

From Grant Village we headed toward Yellowstone Lake. We spotted our first buffalo on this leg and of course took several pictures.

By this time we were feeling the need for lunch so we made our way to the Lake Lodge where we ate in the cafeteria with hundreds of Japanese tourists who were on bus tours. It's really funny to feel out of place in your own country because you don't speak Japanese. From the Lake Lodge the forest fires were only a couple miles away. The east gate road was closed at an area of the park called Fishing Bridge.

As we left the lodge after lunch we saw five or six older men all sporting white shirts, white shorts, and white socks with what looked like exactly the same white tennis shoes. Obviously, they had been to the same 'white' sale. We all feared that someday we would look like that (NOT!). We

continued north along the park road which runs right beside the Yellowstone River. We stopped at the Mud Volcano area and viewed exactly that – mud that bubbles up at boiling temperatures. We continued into the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone area and stopped at a vantage point called Artist Point. This was a great spot to see the beauty of the canyon and the Yellowstone River that runs through it. From here you can see both the Upper and Lower Falls.

As we rode around the park we noted significant burned out areas from forest fires over recent years. In some places the trees are only just now starting to grow back.

From Upper and Lower Falls we headed west across the park on the road that connects the Canyon Village area to the Norris Geyser Basin. From Norris we headed south again through Madison and then eventually around to Old Faithful.

We stopped at Gibbon Falls for a picture and then at the Lower Geyser Basin. Along this route we came across a pan-handling coyote that managed to stop traffic and get a scrap or two of food from passing motorists. He obviously had no fear of humans and seemed to be experienced in getting hand-outs even without a sign that said 'Will howl for food.'

We pulled into the Inn at Old Faithful somewhere between three and four o'clock. By this point in the trip we had reached that magical zone where we did not know for sure what day it was and the only meaning time had was how much sun you had left during the day to see the scenery.



Old Faithful was on time as advertised although we never saw that guy slipping it a dose of Metamucil. We got to watch it erupt right after we arrived and checked in. Bruce headed off for a shower and a nap while Neil, Ron, and I walked around the various hot pools and geysers that are included in the Old Faithful area. These geothermal wonders fascinated us as we strolled and snapped pictures. One Japanese guy offered to get us all in a picture so Neil had to show him how to operate his Nikon camera. We thought it was funny that Neil had to show the Japanese guy how to work the Japanese camera. We checked the dining hall and could get a reservation at 5:30 so we decided to go ahead and take it. You have to have a reservation to eat in the grand dining hall at the Inn. Our waitress was a college student from one of the Adriatic countries although I do not remember which one. Her name was Vanya and she spoke perfect English with only a very slight accent. The meal and discussion around the dinner table was the beginning of a perfect end to a perfect day. Although our day's ride was only 180 miles – those were some of the most scenic miles we will likely ever ride.

The evening concluded with a cigar on the deck overlooking Old Faithful. I probably offended at least a half dozen folks with the stogie, but before I lit up I verified that smoking was permitted. I think Teddy Roosevelt would have been proud of me.

HIGHLIGHTS

Presidents Corner: Mark King
Articles by: Mark King, HACK
TIDMAN, GLENN HAWKINS
Classifieds
Websites
Next Meeting

CHRISTMAS PARTY

DECEMBER 2, 2003

6:30 PM

VANDERBILT HOLIDAY INN
WEST END AVE
NASHVILLE, TN

PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF
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THEM A NUMBER BY THE
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