Blue Skies Over The Blue Ridge

Vance Harrelson

Ahhh...what else can you say about the facility and the hospitality of Phillip, Leslie and J Johnson and the Blue Ridge Motorcycle Campground! We had a great turnout for the annual Alabeemer meeting there. Several folks got a head start on the rest of us and went up on Thursday while another wave came in on Friday. Sam Peacock even rode up from Evergreen on Saturday showing just how much he really wanted to go!

We had pizza on Friday night and a good ole hamburger and hot dog cookout on Saturday night. A special thanks to Tim Flynn and Mike Greenwood for being our "grill masters"!

A suggestion was made that we conduct the monthly business meeting on Saturday night instead of the usual Sunday morning. A quick poll of those in attendance indicated everyone was in favor. So after the cookout we held the meeting while seated around the campfire. I want to congratulate once again Bob Steber as the recipient of the Russ Simpson award for 2010. Thanks Bob for all you do and your terrific support of the club!

Thanks to Martin Benson who led a small group of us on a somewhat spirited ride of over 200 miles of the nearby countryside. The roads and scenery are endless up there and a real treat indeed! Thanks to Ian Schmeisser for joining us and helping with the sometimes confusing navigation through the hills and hollers of western North Carolina. And welcome to the club Ian!

Although we had the typical summertime mountain showers a couple times, the weather was cool and a welcome change from the central AL heat of the summer. With a great campground surrounded by great friends and great roads it was another great time in the mountains!
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Vance opened the meeting by thanking Phillip for once again showing us a great time at one of the most relaxing places on earth. We sure miss Leslie and her great cooking though Tim did a great job with the burgers and dogs.

Vance welcomed 1st time attendees Steven Cooper and his guest Carol, Dan Thompson’s granddaughter Jessica, Roger Williamson’s daughter Jessica and Jim Kalahan’s guest Carol.

The opportunity finally presented itself for Vance to present “The Russ Simpson Award” to Mr. Bob Steber. Bob was very appreciative and humbled by the presentation of the award.

This year’s Christmas party will be held in Leeds, AL at The Livery Event Center on Saturday December 4. Hotel accommodations, special events etc. have been arranged for a great time and Darlene has been conned into coordinated again this year. More details are in this newsletter.

Connie gave us an update on the Rally fund. The winner of the bike purchased a new 2009 bike with a net cost $7670 so the raffle fund ended up with a profit of $1652.50 and the rally had a profit of $392.00. Also the winner of the 50/50 at the rally returned $500.00 for the Head Injury Foundation so she will be preparing the checks for the charities right away.

Vance brought up the club challenge for the National Rally and Tim Flynn made a motion that the club donates $200 and it received a unanimous vote. He asked that if anyone wanted to donate they could just drop it off and we would take with us to rally.

Next months meeting will be in Columbus, GA and Roger Williamson told us about some of the great museums and eateries he has planned for us to visit. He passed out brochures for Lake Pines Campgrounds and RV Park. The address is 6404 Garrett Road Columbus, GA. 706-561-9675. www.lakepines.net for further information. It looks like a real nice facility with a Swimming pool, fishing, and walking trail.

Vance gave a big welcome to our newest member Ian Schmeisser, fellow MOA Ambassador and frequent contributor to the MOA Owners News.

50/50 was won by Darlene Massey….$81.00…(Jim Kalahan missed by 2 digits)

Until Next Time…RIDE SAFE AND BE HAPPY….Mari Harrelson
New Member:

Tommy Zeringue       Labdieville, LA. 70372    Sponsor: Mike Scott

Ian Schmeisser       Lawrenceville, GA    Sponsor – Dan Thompson

Re-Instated Members:

Mike Carter       Atlanta, GA. 30313

P. Harding Leach     Gadsden, AL. 35902

Christmas Party Announced!

Yes even though it is in the 90’s outside...we are planning for a great Christmas party! The party will be held December 4 (Saturday Night) at the Livery Event Center located at 8334 Thornton Avenue in Leeds, AL. N33 32.636  W86 32.315

We have a block of rooms (15 King & 10 Double) reserved at the brand new Hampton Inn in Leeds located immediately adjacent to both Barber’s and the Bass Pro Shop. N33 32.225  W86 35.476
Rooms are $85 each + tax (King or Double Beds) and may be booked directly with the hotel or online at www.birminghamleeds.hamptoninn.com by using the Group/Convention code BMW. PLEASE NOTE: Rooms must be booked by November 13, 2010 to receive this special rate!

We have also arranged with the Barber Motorsports Museum a 20% discounted admission rate off the regular $15.00 admission price for our members this weekend. This will be a great time to visit this world class facility if you haven’t been in a while! And of course the Bass Pro Shops will be open and ready for all the Christmas shopping that will be necessary.

Also be aware that this will also be the weekend for the annual Eldridge Children’s Home ride / event. There will be a group of us heading up to that on Saturday morning and returning to Leeds in time for the party!

Saturday evening we will gather at the historic Livery Event Center for a traditional “pot luck” style meal. The club will furnish the meat. Darlene Massey has volunteered to coordinate the other dishes...more on this a little later. Thank You Darlene!
Newsletter Update

Many of you have seen the Newsletter Poll I posted on the forums. The issue at hand is the cost of and time required to produce and process our monthly newsletter. A second issue is content...

As a result of the comments received from this discussion, we are proceeding as follows;

**Content** – The newsletter is currently printed as 12 pages. That is fine as long as we have good content (meaning articles and pictures) to fill those 12 pages. Past editors tell me that getting enough good content each month is frequently an issue. So……please give some consideration to writing a ride report or other article of interest to your fellow club members and submitting it for publishing. Once submitted the editor will assemble, review and publish these articles based on available space, layout etc. I know we have many members with great stories to tell. Write them down and share them with us!

**Newsletter Delivery** - The recent discussion indicates there are some folks who would in fact rather receive the newsletter electronically. If this is you, please send me an email to president@bmwmoal.org indicating your desire to stop receiving the newsletter in print. We will remove your name from that list. Then each month, just visit the website www.bmwmoal.org and click on the newsletter tab. Here you will find the latest newsletter along with about two years issues archived there. Read it there online or print your copy.

The balance of the newsletters will remain printed and mailed to you via US Mail. Many thanks to Jack and Susan Goertz for agreeing to process label and mail the newsletters by using their bulk rate mail permit and software program. This bulk rate will now mail the newsletters as 3rd class so there may be a couple days delay in the actual delivery from first class especially the further out from Birmingham you go (Actual mailing will be at the Birmingham post office). The rate reduction afforded by the use of the permit will offset the additional printing charges to properly prepare the pieces for mailing at the printer.

Again, thanks to all those involved in the newsletter editing, production and processing. A lot goes on behind the scenes to produce it and we are all grateful for your dedication to the process!
BMW MOTORCYCLE OWNERS OF ALABAMA
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

Date: ________/_________/2010

NEW_____RENEW_____UPDATE_____    Sponsored by _________________________________________

Primary Member:___________________________________________________________________________ DOB:_____________________________
Secondary Member:_________________________________________________________________________ DOB:____________________________
Address:_____________________________________________________________________________________ Apt#____________________________
City:________________________________________________________ State:__________________________ Zip:_____________________________
Home Phone:_____________________________ Work Phone:______________________________ Cell Phone:______________________________
E-Mail: _______________________________________________________________ FAX: __________________________________________________

Year / Model BMW(s) : ________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Circle those that apply:      MOA Member       RA Member       Airheads Member       Oilheads Member        AMA Member

Dues are $20.00 per year for primary and $3.00 per year for secondary members. Make check payable to:
BMW M/C Owners of Alabama.    Mail application with check to: Marty Simpson, 10010 Torino Drive, Huntsville, AL 35803

Real Gaskets Tennessee
2 Bing Carb Float Bowl Gasgets and Tail Light Seal
4 BMW Turn Signal Lens Seals
BMW Oil Pan Gasget 1955 – 1969
BMW Oil Pan Gasget 1970 – 1994 R Series
BMW Boxer Twin Valve Cover Gasgets R69 & R69S ONLY
4- magazines and t-shirt packages w free year
1 Digital tire guage, 1 talking digital tire guage
6 sets Pack straps, 4 sets stretch straps
2 sets Lite Blazer, 3-20% discount on Hyperpro,2 ball caps
4 YSS Racing t-shirts
$100 Towards a new Day-Long Saddle (Min Purchase $500)
12 crampbuster throttle assists
50% off Products or Custom Services
Cool Vest
Gift Certificate for one set of Carbonite Lorraine Brake Pads
Cameleon Invis Armor slie pant, and Jacket, Sealsavers bootsavers
Scorpion EXO Klaw Gloves, 2-VAVA Vroom shirts, set of tie downs
Tourmaster Cortech Accelerator Jacket
MC Journeys through Amer South, Ride Guide to America (books)
Georgia Mountain Rally T-Shirt
The Econo Club
2- Motorcycle Trip logs, Slicks helmet liner, Riders club Rainsuit
T-Shirt
2- free admissions to Hoosier Beemers Rally
Free Admission to the Wis Dells BMW Rally
3 Clymer Repair manuals
$250 Sponsorship Check

Road Runner Magazine
4- magazines and t-shirt packages w free year
RoadGear, Inc.
1 Digital tire guage, 1 talking digital tire guage
OK Straps USA, LLC
6 sets Pack straps, 4 sets stretch straps
un-N-Lites/Wilbers USA/EPM Performance Imports
2 sets Lite Blazer, 3-20% discount on Hyperpro,2 ball caps
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4 YSS Racing t-shirts
Russell Support Suspension Sys
BMW Motorrad
12 crampbuster throttle assists

Grand Prizes

Whitehorse Press

Moto-Bikini
bernard Victor
Choice of Free Tent
nt and Barbara Little
1 Week Free Stay in 3 Br, 2 Ba A-Frame Mountain House
MW Motorrad
Sling bag with 14 varied Women's riding gear items

BMW MOTORCYCLE OWNERS OF ALABAMA
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

Date: ________/_________/2010

NEW_____RENEW_____UPDATE_____    Sponsored by _________________________________________

Primary Member:___________________________________________________________________________ DOB:_____________________________
Secondary Member:_________________________________________________________________________ DOB:____________________________
Address:_____________________________________________________________________________________ Apt#____________________________
City:________________________________________________________ State:__________________________ Zip:_____________________________
Home Phone:_____________________________ Work Phone:______________________________ Cell Phone:______________________________
E-Mail: _______________________________________________________________ FAX: __________________________________________________

Year / Model BMW(s) : ________________________________________________________________________________________________________

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BMW M/C Owners of Alabama.    Mail application with check to: Marty Simpson, 10010 Torino Drive, Huntsville, AL 35803
Left blank on purpose nothing to put here.
Diary – Wednesday, 10th June

We awake about 7:00 am. The Police and the Tourist Police are already in the compound waiting for us. I must first go with the Tourist Police to their office. They demand the missing passports. We go to retrieve them from Immigration. We are ordered to pay them $30.00. I won’t pay. I am very angry – ready to start punching! The Tourist Policeman takes me back to their office. After a couple of hours waiting I walk off. They call after me, but I am determined so they send the same policeman to take me home on his bicycle. Since eight am it has rained. I am most discouraged. The priest ‘sold us to the dump’ for his own advantage. At one o’clock Emy and I decide to go to the Immigration and take the passports, by force if necessary.

About every town we stop in the officials try to extract at least a tenner from each of us. It is extortion and though I can sympathize with their situation we also have a situation. The Tourist Police and the Police are just waiting to milk us for similar sums, maybe more if they can invent some permits we require.

We are racing the wet season. It is pouring and after months in the jungle my legs and arms are infected with tropical ulcers from being ripped by the bamboo or burnt from the hot exhaust or from the engine when we dig and push. Exhaustion is by now acute and with our facing ever increasing uncertainty I’m (rightly or wrongly) about ready to donnybrook.

Join Us For The 5th Annual Alabeemer Blue Water Cruise!

Back by popular demand, the 5th annual Alabeemer Blue Water Cruise will take place March 7-12, 2011. We will again sail from the port of Mobile aboard the Carnival Elation for 5 days of fun!

We will sail to Calica and Cozumel. Some will remember Calica is the port just south of Playa del Carmen. Ask Jamie Jackson or Don Little about how much fun one can have in Playa while your wives are off shopping!

We have reserved 50 ocean view cabins and 15 inside to make sure we have enough room for everyone. Pricing is $517.41 per person double occupancy for inside cabins and $557.41 per person for ocean view cabins. Remember this price includes all taxes, fees and gratuities. Second deposit of $150 per person is due Nov 1, 2010 and the final payment is due December 23. Now won’t this make a great Christmas present?

Please book your cruise through Vanessa Gamble at AAA Alabama in Birmingham to get this pricing and to be listed with our group. This will insure our group is all together for meals, etc. Got questions? Call Vanessa at 800.521.8124 Ext 3115 and get that deposit in today, we need your help to rock the boat!
I have been writing these last months about Africa and in doing so may have talked you out of ever going there.

Presently, we are not being like other countries. Last night, we were awoken by hooligans making disturbance. However, our sleep was already uneasy due to the fact that late evening a car had pulled up to our gate and the occupants had stolen our little dog. I could write interesting stories of the persecution and cruelty or just basic bigotry we have faced here... in the neighborhood, in the workplace and in the church. I could write of threats against us and of actual physical attacks... of stands I eventually took with my fists and even once with a firearm. I could elaborate about the stalking and the phone calls and of my wife being assaulted. Twice she has been assaulted. Why?

How many gunfights have happened around us these last few years? How many times have we nearly been killed on Florida’s roads? We’ve been stolen from. Local police appear to leave a lot to be desired. New laws mean I can be arrested and held indefinitely without legal recourse. What about all the unfavorable stamps in our passports?

It’s starting to sound like Africa... well, Africa without the mud, perhaps. This is West Palm Beach. It is another type of jungle, so don’t be too taken aback by Africa.

I just can’t find the energy to do my work this morning. What sort of society is it which preaches war from its pulpits and where a thousand people will gather to mourn a dead cat (Bobo), but care nothing about the hundreds of thousands of dead Iraqi men, women, and children... a society where the family pet is snatched as bait for the barbarity of dog fighting? This is not a complete picture of America, of course, but it’s what is in my face this morning.

(Post script 27th June, 2010 – Bobo was a tiger that escaped and officers eventually shot it dead. This created a ruckus in the media. That night I rode out to a meeting of Kairos, which is a volunteer group that visited certain prisons. To the middle and upper class Christians there I was just the butt of their self righteous comments, and attitudes. I left more discouraged that I’d been all day, really questioning where we’d ended up. Turning onto 95 I was knocked off our little R75/5 and left on the side of the road. The day just wasn’t getting any better. Some ribs were broken. I gathered back my wind, came to terms with the pain and limped the bike several miles home. That was six years ago. I never saw a doctor. Days like today the ribs, still cause discomfort. I suppose, it’s all part of the grand adventure!)

Diary – Monday, 8th June, 1998 – Bumba
Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire)
I awake early and walk to the port while Emy packs. Another boat was supposed to arrive, but hasn’t. We decide to drive. Actually the rain has done us a favour as the road turns out to be very sandy and this is easier wet than dry.

After 70 km (42 mi) there is a check-point – very strict, very difficult. The search of the bike wastes two hours. There is no point going on as we can’t reach Aketi today.

We are given a vacant room are the Catholic mission at Ekama. The people there tell us that the next 80 km (48 mi) to Aketi will take eight hours. I adjusted the tappets and checked the timing and tightened a few bolts. By nightfall I am finished – very tired.

While Emy cooks our tea (dinner) a small poisonous snake is crawling down the wall behind her. Mattea raises the alarm. I kill it as there is not much else I can do in the darkness and we shouldn’t sleep with it in the room.

The people at this place seem very decent.

The mission’s once stately driveway lined with palms is shabby now. Black and yellow weaver birds have laboriously fabricated intricate nests which dangle down in the shade of the palm fronds like some odd species of fruit, or perhaps, like little sacks hung in the trees for safekeeping.

We are greeted kindly there in that empty, looted shell of a once prosperous well-cared-for establishment.
Diary – Tuesday, 9th June

Got away by 6:50 am. The road to Bundoki is good – no petrol there. We continue for 15 km (9 mi). The route is almost impossible from erosion. We must dig. One nice man walked 3 km to push us along.

Let me speak briefly about this African. He was walking towards us with a Bible under his arm, not a terribly young man, but perhaps not that old either. He began to assist without being requested to. For three kilometers, back the way he had already travelled, he pushed us until we reached a steep and tricky climb. Emy, Mattea, and our host then pushed and shoved the machine up the slope until there was momentum with the tyre’s traction alone and I was able to pick my way, trials style, up to the crest of the ridge.

The worst seemed to be over. My mind was trying to figure out just what I needed to pay this man… what we could afford but also what he would appreciate. I turned on the pegs and looked back down the slope. Emy and Mattea were trudging up the uneven ground. He just stood, then waved and turning away headed back in the direction he needed to be heading.

I can’t picture his face. Memories dim. Occasionally though, my thoughts do go back to the many, many selfless people who aided us in a small and great ways on our journeys. I suppose, the joy of helping others is reward enough. When we do all meet up again one day memories shan’t be so dim and I shall recognize each and everyone very clearly.

We have on occasion met individuals who were travelling on bikes, sponsored by wealthy entities. I wondered at their luck (for want of a better word). What did they present that we couldn’t present? Should we consider some jealousy against them? Well, jealousy is not amongst our vices and it seems like a lot of hard work. We had sponsors also… a bike mechanic in Thailand; the bank accountant in Calcutta; the Rajput woman who taught Emy Rajistani cooking; all those Pakistanis who paid for our meals; the little workshops in Pakistan who wouldn’t charge for their services; the Iranians who bought us ice cream; the Turkish soldiers who gave us a tent for the night; the Gypsies, the new age travelers, the working people, the gentry, the poor and the not so poor who took us in or showed us some kindness. Yes, we were richly sponsored and for three kilometers of a ten year journey we had met another of our patrons but hardly exchanged a couple of dozen words and that in French, not my strong suit.

Diary (continued)

... about 30 km (18 mi) from Aketi is a very difficult section. We spend two hours digging out a path, as the erosion is so bad. This is along a ledge and we hack out the bank on the hillside. (We have a machete which can double as a pick and a small homemade aluminum shovel. Bamboo was ubiquitous. I’d hack off a thin cane and then use it to measure the width of the outfit. The excess was lopped off and we then had a measuring stick so as to know how wide to dig our detour.)

Villagers turn up. I pay them 250,000 Francs for their help. After all the work is complete I am very lightheaded and most exhausted. (It is very hot. Meals are frugal.) I must stop after 10 km or so as I am beginning to pass out.

I collapse on by back in a small hamlet of forest-built structures. This is an occasion for the villagers but I am half oblivious to them. Oh! To lie on the ground is joy untold, so peaceful so relaxing. Yet, something is wrong and I can’t succumb to this unconsciousness which draws me. Looking up, there is a sea of black faces peering down. I am suddenly... well, overcome... at least, as overcome as one can be... with amusement. One gentleman leaning over me sports a Harley-Davidson t-shirt. (Bales of second hand clothing shipped from America are sold in the cities and eventually make their way, even to the remote villages.) This is a long way from Milwaukee, buddy!

The villagers help me into a thatched roofed communal shelter where I rest on the cool sandy floor for half an hour. Politeness, wants me to talk with these curious black faces. Mild delirium mostly intervenes.

We must continue. The crowd waves as we head off, up the track, towards Aketi.

Diary (continued)

... there are a couple more bad bridges. We arrive at the mission (Aketi). The priest is an old man in his sixties. I am exhausted – totally? Today was the worst road so far. I am pleased to have made it. We all are. (There is an exclamation on the margin of the journal – “Lots of Bamboo – Dangerous!” This would tear strips off you as you passed by and was always threatening to rip off your eyes.)

I quickly fell asleep on the grass in the mission compound and was awoken by the Immigration officials. My wits were dull and when they demanded our passports I foolishly allowed them possessions.

Continued on page 8
TOURING TIP: PROTECTING YOUR HEARING

Motorcycle riders experience three main sources of noise: tires, engine and wind. At speeds in excess of around 40 mph, wind noise usually exceeds that of the other two sources. The level of wind noise, as measured in decibels (abbreviated dB), increases exponentially as the rate of speed increases. Any sound above 85 dB can cause hearing loss, depending on its level and duration. If you have to raise your voice to be heard by someone else, then you're listening to at least 85 dB of sound. Eight hours of 90 dB of sound can cause damage, and any exposure to 140 dB or higher usually causes immediate structural damage to the ear's hearing mechanism and actual pain.

Read the complete touring tip article and additional related ones at www.roadrunner.travel/vb/showthread.php?p=14332

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What you want to read about want to talk about? Here’s space for your comments.
Please visit the BMWMOAL web site at www.bmwmoal.org and register. Log on and see what members are saying about club activities. The site is user friendly and the newsletter is in color.

**Club Sponsored Events With Meetings**

- July 24-25 FDR State Park, Columbus, Ga
- Aug. 27-29 Kinderfest @ Kalahan’s
- Sept. 25-26 Shellmound, Jasper, Tenn.
- Oct 30-31 Blue Springs
- December 4th in Leeds

**Other Events of Interest**

- MOA Rally Redmond, OR July 15th—18th
- RA Rally July 29th—Aug 1
- October 23—24 Rib Fest
- December 4th, Eldridge Children’s’ Home