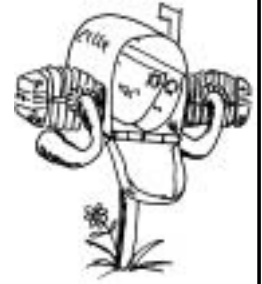


# The Mail Boxer

November 2003

BMW MOA #7



## The Prez says...

by Steve Huber

Over the past five years I've witnessed the club grow and move forward. We successfully transitioned to a new meeting place without internal battles, we have a club web site to help get the word out, we've found a great location for the GR3, the club has begun contributing to local charity, and we've gained many new members who contribute their energy.

It's the club members and your participation that have made my tenure a great experience. After all, it's only a motorcycle; it's the people who make a difference. I realize I harp on this, but it's the members who make or break a club. I've heard too many stories lately of clubs essentially dissolving because no one wanted to help. One of my peeves is people (ok, club members) who say "you guys should be doing... (fill in the blank here)". As I like to remind people, "you guys" is "us guys", the club membership.

Don't hesitate to come up with ideas and bring them up for discussion. Not every

idea is a great one (most, some say all, of my ideas aren't), but bring things up at a meeting for discussion. You never know, it could be one of those ideas where everyone wonders why they didn't think of it. Oh, and help the club implement those great ideas too.

So, please help out the new Prez by participating and give him (or her) the courtesy you gave me. You're a great bunch of folk.

Hey, just one more thing. Remember: It's supposed to be Fun.

### Club Stuff

- \* Gratuity to Maple Tree wait staff
- \* Elections

Well, I'm heading out to the garage to do a local ride; I'm trying to squeeze in as many "last rides" as possible before yet another winter closes in on me. Stay safe out there, and I'll see you all at the next club breakfast.

## Upcoming Events

11/8: Club banquet at JT Whitney's.

11/9: 10:00am Popeye's Chicken Parking Lot. Last ride of the season (weather permitting) through scenic Southwestern Wisconsin. For more information call Bert Hefty.

12/7: 9:00am Club breakfast at the Maple Tree Restaurant in McFarland.

1/1/04: Madison Motorcycle Club New Year's Day Ride. For more information call John Troya at 271-0582.

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## Treasurer's Report

by John Ong

At the Sunday Oct. 5th breakfast we had 38 people. Bert Hefty was the 50/50 winner. We had 99 members for 2003, and have 19 renewals already for 2004.

20 people have signed up for the banquet on November 8th so far. George Minkel has free breakfast for Sunday December 7th.

The new club address is:  
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McFarland, WI 53558-0152

## V.P.'s Report by Tom Van Horn

As I write this, we're having a weekend with temps in the 60s. Tomorrow, it's supposed to push 80 degrees. After that? Well, uh, hmmm... We're getting into the Electric Vest, Black Ice and Careful On Those Bridges period. Riding's not over, but I think we're on the down slope for Season 2003. How was your season??

I hope that you've sent me your club mileage form, AND I hope you registered for the Cherished-But-Totally-Insignificant-Awards banquet on the 8th. J.T. Whitney's was very good to us last year, and I've no doubt that they will be again. Come and find out who rode the most, where they rode, and with whom they rode. Who will be the '04 club officers? Who had one of those Singular Experiences? Who's the One True Shafty Character? Who is your choice for Distinguished Service to the club for '03? Ya just gotta be there, hey.

Remember, there's no November b'fast, due to the banquet.

## Review: Tour Master Clothing

By Edwin Burington

I like many riders, I started out my riding days on the cheap. I bought a cheap department store helmet and if I was really riding "safe" I put on hiking boots, jeans and a denim jacket. A few muffler burns, flying gravel and June bug hits and I was educated to the value of wearing jeans and even gloves at an early age. The rest of my clothing evolution was a much slower process. Over the years I became more conscientious about wearing protective clothing. Not only for the possible mishap but also for the general protection from sun, wind and flying debris. My jacket closet became a multi-climate wardrobe for biking ranging from your basic denim jacket to a heavy goat skin leather jacket that was great in cold weather but too heavy and hot to ride for any long tour.

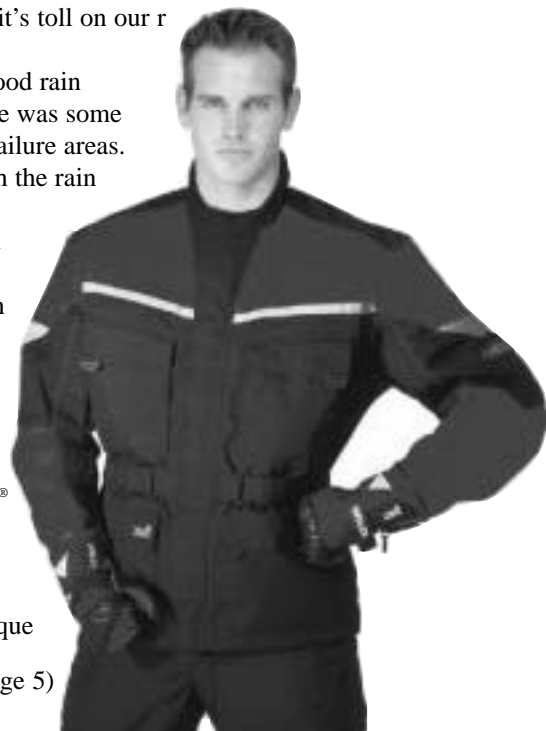
After giving it serious thought, weighing our options and hearing stories of biker stalking semis, Karen and I decided in the fall of 2001 to buy matching sets of Tour Master riding clothing. We opted for the Cortech series and took advantage of the 20% off fall sale at Mischler's. I purchased the full jacket and pants. Karen chose the jacket and pants. The longer full jacket offers a little more protection from the wind and rain and includes a roomy utility zip up pouch area across the tail. Both jackets included a zip out cool weather full liner. The jackets have exit air vents in the back at both shoulder blades. Air comes in through the sleeves at the wrist and bicep area and through the high chest area vents. All "air" openings zip or Velcro shut for cooler weather. Our experience is the passenger gets plenty of air to stay cool. The driver, behind an RT fairing has to be a little creative to get vents into the air path. Both the jackets and pants have two way zippers so you can make adjustments. The pants are very difficult to wear in hot weather. I have not come up with a cooling solution that is satisfactory for the pants. The overall big gottcha with this clothing choice is if stuck in slow moving traffic on a hot day, you will simmer inside these suits.

Karen and I had an opportunity to do a thorough test of our suits when we took the RT to Key West, Florida in October

of 2002. Temperatures ranged from 35 to 95 degrees on this trip. We also experienced broiling sunshine and blowing rain. We were determined to stay in our suits the entire trip. We kept the jackets zipped up through all temperatures. The light perspiration that came in the warmer temperatures became part of the cooling system as the air was forced through the vents of our jackets. Even though we rode in shorts and opened up the zippers on the pants to the maximum safe position, the suit pants were far to hot to be comfortable in Florida's 90+ degree temperatures. We met another couple in Daytona Beach who rode their Goldwing the 430 miles to Key West with us. They were dressed in shorts and t-shirts for the trip. After the 430 mile, 90+ degree day, Karen and I were certainly in no worse shape and I would say we more quickly recovered because we had not been exposed to the broiling sun all day. Even with good sun block, a day of exposure like that took it's toll on our riding partners.

The suits gave good rain protection overall. There was some dampness but no total failure areas. I was very satisfied with the rain protection I received. A silicone spray treatment before a long trip is always a good idea with this type of multi-purpose clothing.

A quote from Tour Master's WEB site:  
"Tour Master's Cortech® Series is our top rung, the best we do. A little extra touch, an added detail, and so many unique



(Continued on page 5)

# Kentucky or Bust

by Tanya Erickson

It was one of those kind of weeks. You all know the kind I'm talking about; one step forward, three steps back. Aargh! Betty and I had decided to attend the Beemers in the Bluegrass rally in Frankfort, Kentucky in mid-September. We were planning on leaving Thursday morning from my house in Janesville at 5:30 am and arriving at the rally mid afternoon.

Well, a little bike maintenance was in order before the big departure. On the Sunday before, Todd had put new sprockets on my bike. After re-attaching the rear wheel, we quickly realized that, yes indeed, a new chain is a must. Aargh! So, not to be deterred, I ordered a new chain Monday morning. I had specified that it needed to be overnighted to me. Well, the company sent it elsewhere. So, we are nervously expecting the chain on Wednesday afternoon (nail-biting had ensued). The plan is, of course, for Todd to put the new chain on with my full assistance. "Honey, do you need another beer?"

The chain arrives. We unwrap it. Oh, #@#!. It's the wrong size! The chain is too long. Todd carefully counts the links and decides to cut some off. Yes, we cut off one too many. It's now 9 pm Wednesday night and I call Betty in tears and leave a mournful message on the machine. I mope around the house; my luggage, adult beverages, riding clothes, and especially the Kentucky map are mocking me.

She calls just in time. We hatch a plan. I will meet her there if I can find a chain and actually put it on. I went to Foxy's in Janesville. I walked up to the counter and said, "Can you make me a happy woman?" The gentleman working looked as if he would try. So, he asked me what I needed. I had the chain by 3 that afternoon.

Todd helps me put the chain on before he leaves for work. I'm left with adjusting the tension and tightening the rear



A commemorative statue at the Kentucky Horse Park

wheel. Yikes! I hit the road by 6 o'clock. Once I hit the state line, I knew I had finally out-run that black cloud that had been hovering all week. As I rode, I watched the sun set and a full moon rise (maybe the moon explains it?).

After a couple hundred miles, I stopped and grabbed a hotel. I was so excited, I couldn't sleep. This trip would be the longest distance I had ever ridden all by myself.

I made it to the rally around 12:30 the next day (Friday). The security at the gate noticed the rabbit ears on my helmet, and pointed out Betty's tent. She was out riding and touring horse farms. All in all, it was a great trip and I'm glad I went.

P.S. I'm very sure my next bike will be shaft drive.

## ALLEN WRENCHES, MULTI-PURPOSE TOOL?

by Tanya Erickson, Betty Bruun and countless others at Beemers in the Bluegrass

We thought it was great that Tanya should win a set of allen wrenches at Beemers in the Bluegrass after all the trouble she went through to get there. As Tanya walked through the crowd to claim her prize the rudest male pig, who happened to be seated behind me, comments to his friend, "She probably doesn't have a clue what to do with those." So the girls at the rally came up with a list to prove all the male pigs out there wrong! Here's what to do with allen wrenches:

- knitting-needles
- Chinese hair sticks
- back-scratcher
- chopsticks
- use short end for tombstone etchings
- rabbit ears for T.V.
- tent stakes
- wind chimes
- toothpick
- replacement shift lever  
(some assembly required)
- window prop
- corkscrew
- swizzle stick
- mailbox flag  
(please attach red duct tape)
- witching sticks
- fishing sinkers
- q-tips
- replacement kickstand
- use 2 wrenches to form croquet hoops
- spear for martini olives
- leather punch
- replacement ear stem for eye glasses  
(some assembly required)
- drift pin
- shish-kabob skewers
- book-mark
- ear piercing device (or anything else  
a person would desire to pierce)
- rob a convenience store
- as a tool to fix your bike

# The RA National Rally (part 1)

by Betty Bruun

The RA National rally was held at the Barber Motorsports Track outside of Birmingham Alabama. Todd really wanted to go to see the track, I just wanted to put a lot of miles on my bike. We took extra time off work to get there via the scenic route which took us through Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and finally to Alabama. The total trip mileage was just over 3000 by far my longest trip.

## Day 1:

We left early on Saturday morning to what turned out to be a beautiful sunny day, although cold and windy. After a brief time on the interstate we took back roads for the remainder of the trip which was occasionally a blessing and occasionally not. As we entered Missouri the wind picked up and the clouds overtook the sun. We stopped in Herman, Missouri an area known for its 7 or 8 wineries. We of course stopped at the first one we found to purchase our evenings supply. And of course, since I am tired and cold it has to have a long gravel driveway. (In case you didn't know, I am terrified of gravel.) Not only did we select several bottles of delectable wine I also picked up a new rally hat which I felt was most appropriate. As we packed up our purchases it began to rain and we opted for the nearest campground which happened to be the city park. Although a little noisy, the facilities were nice, and the other campers were very friendly. We barely got off the bikes when the sky opened up and sheets of driving rain required that we pitch the tent in a hurried frenzy.

## Day 2:

We awoke to a brisk 35° morning. I lingered in my down sleeping bag until nature and last nights wine made necessary to get up. We packed up and dressed warm for riding through the Ozark mountains. Again it is sunny but cold and windy. I rode slowly as some of those hills made my stomach leap into my throat. The tight corners have limited visibility. At one point I come around a corner and narrowly miss a cat. I wonder how my bike would react to the bump at such a lean angle. After nearly 8 hours of twisty mountainous

roads and cold wind I am tired and ready to stop for the night. But we still have a ways to go to get to our campsite.

We have a ferry to cross at the Arkansas border. I was nervous about getting my bike on and off the ferry. Will the waves cause the ramp to move? Will the metal be slippery? Fortunately I had no problem. The ferry ride took about 20 minutes during which we talked to the family in the truck near us which was packed with animals recently purchased at an animal swap meet. Their kittens wrestled, and the piglets think Todd is their lost mother when he snorts. (Todd can snort better than anyone I know.) Overhead we see a bald eagle. This has given me enough time to relax and rejuvenate a bit.

We finally stop at the Buffalo River National Waterway, the campsites are beautiful each having electrical, water, and a hook to hang food or garbage out of reach of animals. Todd and I walked down to the river and talked about some of the neat things we'd seen that day. As we talked Todd casually asked me to marry him! So casually in fact that I thought he was kidding. I'm sure you've probably guessed that I said yes.

It was a clear night and the star gazing fantastic at our campsite. As we looked at stars through Todd's binoculars I heard something near the tent a mere 10 feet away. As I looked closer I saw 3 skunks shopping through our belongings for food. I yelled at Todd that there's skunks as I ran the other direction. Todd calmly got his flashlight which he turned on. He then used the beam to herd the skunks away without us ever smelling them!

## Day 3:

This time we woke up to even colder 32° temperatures. We take our time packing up in hopes that things will dry out a bit after a very heavy dew. This time I felt good on my bike. You know how some days riding is easy and feels good and other days it takes more effort? Well this day was one of those good days. Good thing because we had more mountains to go through. Even though it's a good motorcycle day Todd is still a much faster



Me modeling my new rally hat and some delicious local wines from Herman, Missouri.

rider. Sometimes he would ride ahead then stop to wait for me. One of these times was on a seemingly deserted road, I came across Todd stopped in the middle of the road with a puppy at his side. He was a very friendly puppy who did not loose interest in us. Being a dog lover I am unwilling to leave the puppy beside the road to get hit by a car. We lead the puppy down the road to the nearest house to see if they are missing a puppy. The old man at the door says "Not my dog, take him back where you found him and leave him there." I was unwilling to do that and puppy had no dog tags. Not knowing what else to do I set the puppy on my lap with paws on the tank bag and started riding at a very slow pace. The puppy didn't move a muscle (except those ears which were flapping in the breeze) and really seemed to enjoy his ride. We decide to leave Opus, Todd had named him by then, in a nearby cemetery with a ham sandwich thinking that it was fenced and a caretaker would be likely to find him soon. Opus would have none of it and was shortly chasing us down the road howling. Fortunately it was't long before we came to a gas station. I began to ask

(Continued on page 5)

features you'd think it was made for James Bond."

While James might consider the high visibility reflective materials too much of a give away, I think it is stylish and functional. Reflective fabric goes a long way to protect the rider both on and off the bike after dark. I really like the Velcro closing roomy pocket designs. I can even find my key with my gloves on. Features James would appreciate are the ample armor padding at all joints and covering the spine plus the scuff resistant outer shell fabric.

**Positives:**

- Since the 2001 models the clothing doubles as rain gear.
- High visibility fabric.
- Light weight and very comfortable
- Good fit and movement of armor and joints in different positions.
- Great cold weather zip in insert.

**Negatives:**

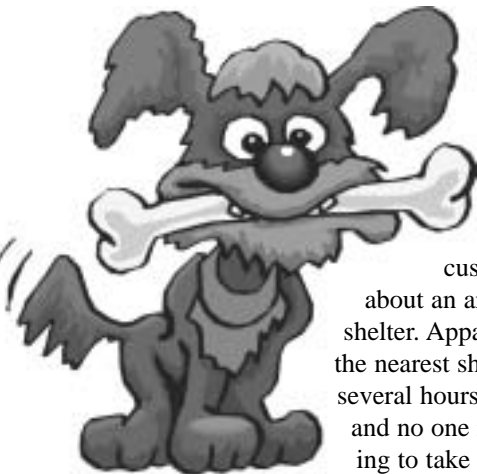
- In hot weather the pants become saunas.

**Buy recommendation:**

The jacket, yes definitely. I think the jacket is a good value and useable in all but the hottest of conditions. Without the liner the jacket is comfortable even at higher temperatures, as long as you are moving air through the jacket.

Suggested retail for the jackets: \$240-\$280

The pants, maybe. They are wonderful in cold or wet weather. Very uncomfortable in warm or muggy weather. Since I do like fall and spring riding the pants have been a value for me. If you don't get the bike out until the temperature reach the mid 70s, save your money. Suggested Retail is \$200.



**(The RA National Rally Part 1 continued from page 4)**

the customers about an animal shelter. Apparently the nearest shelter is several hours away and no one is willing to take Opus home. Unable to carry Opus on my bike for any distance or at a reasonable speed to get anywhere, we leave Opus chasing a little boy around the gas station hoping that someone will not be able to resist his cuteness. For the next several miles I cried in my helmet wanting to turn back but unable to think of any way to strap a puppy to my already loaded down bike.

Once again we decide to stop at a local winery to purchase our evenings beverages. In Arkansas near the Oklahoma border is area with several wineries. Todd wants to stop at the first one we come to which happens to have a gravel driveway. But having a great riding day I feel confident that I can handle it. As we progress down the driveway, which is rather loose with large stones, the gravel keeps getting deeper and looser and the bike harder and harder to control. At one point certain that I am going to fall down I stop the bike, breathing hard

from adrenaline I walk/ride the bike onto the grass alongside the driveway. Huh, the going is much easier over here. I continued down the grass to the business office where I stopped and turned the bike off. I don't see Todd anywhere but I won't go any farther on that gravel! Todd walked around the corner and says "There you are. I thought you might have fallen down, I nearly did." Knowing that driveway was challenging for an experienced rider—I was very proud of myself for not falling.

We continued on into Oklahoma. After 2 nights camping in bitter cold weather and 2 mornings of cold showers we started looking for a hotel near the Texas border.

**Day 4:**

It was 55° that morning when we woke up. But who cares, we were cozy in our hotel room.

After checking out we were on the road again. Within a few miles we reached the Texas border where we stopped and took each other's picture with the sunrising behind the "Welcome to Texas" sign. We didn't see much of Texas, just enough to say we'd been there.

Louisiana was not quite what I expected. We saw a lot of cotton fields and it was harvest time. We stopped so that I

could get a closer look. To my surprise it was just like cotton balls but attached to bushes. Todd really wanted to see a cypress swamp but the few places we stopped just looked like normal lakes with a few tree stumps to me. Louisiana was a little more remote than expected. We anticipated a short riding day. We selected a campground on the Mississippi/Louisiana border; according to the map it was a State recreation area. After traveling some horrendously rough roads, going through some really rough road construction, and another gravel road we get to the recreation area. All that remains is the remnants of a campground. There is still a sign but the grass is waist deep and the picnic tables are all in pieces. Back down the gravel road, through the rough road construction. We take aim next for a campground on the southern edge of the Natchez Trace in Mississippi.

We got to a mostly empty campground, it was a Tuesday after all. But before long it filled up—odd for during the week. We soon found out why, it was a free campground.

This night camping reminded me of a rally. The other campers were friendly several joined us at our campfire for dinner, conversation, and drinks. It was a long and pleasant evening

(To be continued...)

# Whoa Hans!

by Betty Bruun

For those of you who don't know—Hans is the name of my 2002 R1150R which happens to have those fancy new integrated ABS brakes. The bike has an ABS warning light that flashes when the bike is started and normally stops flashing once the bike is moving (unless something is wrong.) The brakes also make a little whirring noise when applied.

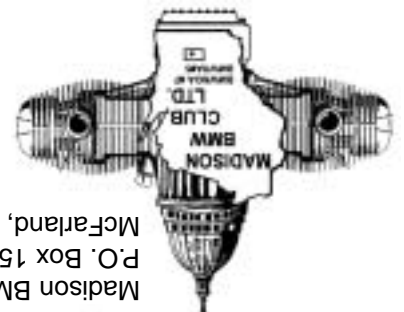
I left work on a cool fall day the bike is functioning normally and I concentrate on my brief ride from the office to the bank. (Where I bump into Steve Huber and say "Hello Steve".) After leaving the bank I get bank on Hans and notice that once underway the ABS warning light has not stopped flashing. HHmmm...

The whirring noise does not sound quite like it usually does but the brakes are still working. I decide to ride the few short miles home then call the dealer. I did change my route to go down Milwaukee Street which has a slower speed limit than either East Washington or Highway 30 which are my typical routes home.

On Milwaukee Street I give Chuck Rabideaux a nod as I see him on his F650GS. I continue on my way and the warning light continues to flash. At Fair Oaks and Milwaukee St. I stop for a red light—no problem. A few blocks later I slow down for a pedestrian—no problem.

The light at East Washington and Milwaukee is red. I down shift into first using my engine to reduce speed. I apply the brakes to come to a stop but I do not stop! I have no brakes, and no resistance on the brake lever! I keep the clutch in and after some panicking roll to a stop without hitting the city bus in front of me. I carefully maneuvered the bike into the Marathon gas station. Shaking like a leaf I called Todd at work but he had left for the day. Wondering what to do I turned the bike on again and the whirring noise sounded normal. I decided to do a nice slow U-turn in the parking lot to see if the warning stopped flashing. Low and behold the warning light stopped and so did the bike. I rode the rest of the way home uneventfully.

I don't yet know what happened to Hans's brakes. He will be going to the dealership to be checked out before getting ridden again. But the moral of the story here is how to stop a motorcycle with no brakes. Try pumping the brakes. Pull onto the shoulder if necessary to get out of traffic. Down shift—utilizing your engine to slow the bike. Pull the clutch in and coast to a stop. It really is quite simple—the hard part is not forgetting it when you first pull that brake lever and nothing happens.



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