

Comparing Apples to Oranges

By Betty Bruun

In the last newsletter I promised a comparison of my 2001 Yamaha FZ1 to my 2002 R1150R. This isn't easy to do as the two bikes are as different as night and day, but here goes...

In general the Yamaha is quicker—quicker throttle response, quicker handling, and to my surprise quicker braking. Yep, quicker braking—the Yamaha sports standard braided steel cables, no ABS, no integrated front and rear servo-assisted, prone-to-failure fancy braking system and it does stop quickly and consistently. And to make this feature even more attractive it can be maintained and repaired by human beings without expensive computer systems.

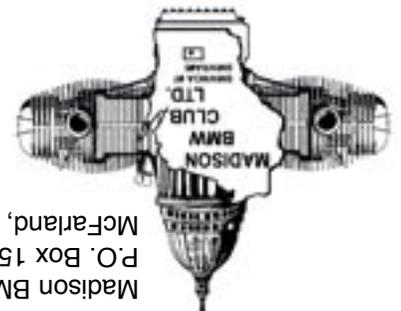
With the quickness there comes one important sacrifice—stability. The BMW suspension is rock steady under the most demanding of circumstances. Any little rider or passenger move on the Yamaha and the entire bike moves; thus I am still extremely cautious when cornering on this bike.

Chain maintenance although not difficult is a new and a bit inconvenient thing for me. Another minor mechanical difference—the Yamaha is carburated. (As Todd excels at

carburetor maintenance this is a good thing.) The Yamaha is also about 100 lbs lighter than the BMW; enough to be noticeable while riding particularly when stopping and starting but still heavy enough to ride comfortably on windy days.

Surprisingly the seating position of both bikes is quite similar. Despite the sporty look of the Yamaha the handlebars are back farther enabling the rider to sit in a more upright position. The leg room on the other hand is a bit tighter than on the BMW.

The quickness of the Yamaha makes it a fun ride; particularly on the beltline. But that same quickness is a big factor in determining which bike I ride each day. At this time the Yamaha requires a lot of my concentration so as not to wheelie away from stop signs or let it out-ride me in corners so I won't ride it while I'm tired. Additionally with smaller tail-lights and no luggage or extra reflectors I do not ride the Yamaha on school nights when I expect to be riding after dark.

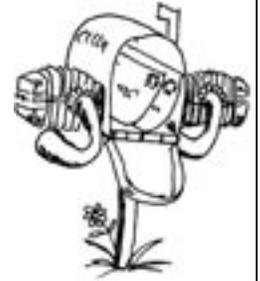


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The Mail Boxer

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Dan Stecker Update

As many of you may have heard, fellow rider and former club member Dan Stecker hit a deer on his R90S on the interstate returning from the Hiawatha rally. Seeing something at the side of the road, Dan glanced over to ensure that it wasn't a deer going to leap into his path. When he refocused on the road in front of him it was too late to miss a deer that actually had leaped in front of him. Dan hit the deer at 72 miles per hour, the impact launching both him and the bike into tall weeds in the ditch. With passing motorists unable to see him and injuries extensive enough to prevent him from moving much, Dan's saving grace was having his cell phone in his jacket pocket.

Despite a total of 17 fractures in one arm and both legs, Dan is doing well. Now bolted together, he has been moved from LaCrosse to a hospital in Milwaukee to begin an expected 8 months of therapy.

With riding and rallies out of the picture for this year Dan is using his free time to plan his bike reconstruction and his rally schedule for next year.

Dan wishes to thank everyone for the thoughts, prayers, cards and phone calls that has thus far kept boredom at bay.

Secretary's Report

By J. Wagner

Probably 20 people attended the June picnic/meeting. Club business taken care of: Marcus Schumann is now the new Web Master, the club will donate \$100.00 dollars to the chosen charity at the BMW MOA national rally, and there will be no breakfast in July as the first Sunday is July 4th.

I'm probably forgetting something but I can't remember what it is that I forgot... I think. See you at the August breakfast.

Upcoming Events

7/9-7/10: 2004 Thunder Run benefit for Diabetes. For more information visit www.fourlakeshog.com.

7/31: American Players Theater ride. Meet at Todd & Betty's new abode (The Trail head; 4593 Rocky Dell Rd., Cross Plains) at noon for snacks with a 1pm departure for 3pm showing of London Assurance. (Purchase your own theater tickets.) For more info call (608)345-3562.

8/8: Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation's Ride for Kids. 5-6 volunteers needed. Contact John Schroeder at (608)325-4621. Additional information at www.rideforkids.com.

9/19: Cheese Day Ride leaving at 9am from Kwik Trip at 138 and MM in Oregon. For more information contact John Schroeder at (608)325-4621.

11/6: 5:30pm Club banquet at the Imperial Garden-West. Family style dinner served at 6:30pm. Cost to be determined. For more information contact Ben Cimino at (608)831-6714.

7 Years Later

By Ed Burington



I'm heading southeast to Tok, Alaska and thinking a motel room sounds pretty good tonight. It's late in the day and the weather is cool. Three moose catch my eye as I ride by a stream. A shelf of ice is still visible in mid-stream where a small island exists and the water is shaded. One of the moose raises its gigantic antlered head to watch me glide by just 20 meters away. It's about 9:30 on a late June evening. There is still plenty of light in the land of the midnight sun and except for the occasional wildlife, Highway 2 is mine alone. I roll into Tok a little after 10 PM and find a reasonably clean looking motel that hasn't turned off its vacancy sign for the night. Minutes later I'm stretched out horizontal across a bed thinking just how wonderful an innovation is this modern mattress. It has been a long, enjoyable day. Hey, I've come to appreciate any day without rain. This has been one of the few travel days that I haven't splashed through the puddles somewhere during the ride.

Lying on the bed I mentally chart my progress. I'm doing well on my schedule. I should be able to get nearly a full day free time in Haines before catching the Alaskan Ferry for the 33 hour float to Prince Rupert. After this ten minute glorious, horizontal stretch I sit up and rescue my travel diary out of my tank bag. As I read over the last entries I realize I have some catching up to do. My last notes are from a laundromat in Anchorage and a lot has happened since then.

I left Madison on June 13th with 8 days to cover the 3,600 miles to the Anchorage airport where my daughter Jen would be arriving at 11 PM. I rode into Anchorage on my 20 year old BMW twin a little after noon on the 20th. My Luftmeister fairing was held together by hose clamps since two of the three welds had broken on the trip through the Yukon. The windshield was cracked, not from flying debris but from a bounce through a cavernous pot hole a few hundred miles back. When the potholes are filled with rain water and as numerous as they can be on the upper ALCAN it's anybody's guess which hole to ride through. That time my instincts were wrong. My exhaust cross over pipe had been crushed crawling through a section of washed out road and the tread on my rear tire had all but disappeared. First item of business in Anchorage, locate the BMW shop. They were very accommodating at the shop. They gave me a place to work on the bike. I got to work pulling the rear wheel for a new tire, changing out the fluids, filters and plugs. One of the owners pulled an arc welder over and spotted up the Luftmeister. I was back on the road in a couple of hours including a pleasant chat with one of the owners who escaped to Alaska from Rockford, Illinois.

Next stop—the laundromat. All the clothing I had with me now seemed to smell of damp cycle exhaust. I used the laundromat pay phone to make several calls letting my friends know I was still alive. I finished at the laundromat and still had time to kill. I decide to visit downtown Anchorage. It was a downtown unlike any other city of this size I could think of in the lower 48. It was more like a Mexican resort town full of tourists traps crowded around the base of tall, more established businesses. I had been delighted to find a river running through a concrete channel just a few blocks from downtown Anchorage. About 30 locals were pole fishing for salmon. I sat for a while, relaxing and watching them fish within eyesight of the hub of the city. Taking a stroll to stretch my legs I laughed out loud at the city sign that gave direction to “switch to the opposite side of the street when encountering moose on the sidewalk.”

The time came to ride to the airport for Jenny's arrival. Now I feel obligated to explain here that Jen worked a full shift in Madison, hopped a quick flight out to Minneapolis, then boarded the plane for a very long ride to Anchorage. Jen, it turns out, is not one to sleep on airplanes. She arrived at 11 PM Anchorage time (3 AM Midwest time) one very tired 19 year old young woman. I, on the other hand, had 8 days to time shift. In fact, it hadn't taken me long to realize the ALCAN is far less congested after 6 PM. Since I hadn't seen a night dark enough for stars since (Continued on page 3)

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K1200GT—The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

By Dave Jenneke

About a year ago I visited Mischler's and first saw the GT. I really liked the way it looked, but that two toned introductory color turned me off. Then I sat on it and the reach to the bars was in the next zip code. How could BMW say that this was a sit up more relaxed riding position then the RS. The designer had to be about 5'10" with a 6'4" reach in order to be relaxed.

As the summer wore on, I saw a few more of the bikes at different dealers. Finally I saw one of the blue ones and really liked it. BMW has always had problems with bar reach and I figured some enterprising after market guys would design and make a set of bar backs. With that assessment, I took the plunge last August, sold my R100RT and bought the GT.

I was primarily looking for a horsepower gain. To me the old RT was pretty anemic. For those of you who ask me why I want horsepower when I don't often use it, I say, it's nice to have it if you want or ever need it. The RT did not have it.

I also wanted something with pretty good protection and after driving Art nuts with at least three test rides, I decided that the protection was at least comparable to the RT. For those who doubt this, subsequent cold weather riding (down to 22 degrees) has born this out for me.

The bike now has 7000 miles on it. What's right and what's wrong with it. Well, from day one, the bars were wrong. I knew this going in. This spring I had a set of riser / bar backs from Pirate's Lair installed at Mischler's. The cost was about \$146 for the product and 2.25 hours of labor. I think the total, after a discount for buying the bike there, was near \$260. Most of the labor is for re-routing the control cables.

Since this installation, the bike has been much more comfortable for me. I'd still like the bars back another half inch, but that's nothing major, it's just me. What are some other observations?

The bike has plenty of power and the engine is as smooth as glass except at about 4000 RPM where you go through about 200 RPM's of a slight buzz. Kind of interesting, you can wind out the gears,

feel the buzz, and make your upshift, unless you're out to haul ass. Then obviously 4000 RPM would be an early shift. This engine accelerates all the way to red line with a pretty flat torque curve. It does not matter what gear you're in, just rev it up and go.

On the negative side, this is one heavy bike. It's about 40# heavier then the old RT and during slow speed maneuvers and pushing it around the garage it feels like it. Also, I don't use the center stand as often as I did with the RT or any of the other BMW's I've owned.

On the plus side, at least for me, BMW finally got a seat right. I have never felt the need to replace this seat. Haven't ridden it for a whole day yet, but for 3 hours, it was just fine. Also have not needed the heated option either.

In my opinion, the gas mileage sucks. It only got about 40 MPG. That's easily the worst of any of my BMW's. Maybe when the engine is broken in a little more, it will do a little better. The RT went from 42 to 44-45 after about 20K. To compound this problem, the tank is only 5.3 gallons. Riding tank to tank is not going to be a big issue here, good seat, small tank.

The transmission is really smooth and light. I've become so used to clunky BMW trannies that this was a real surprise. There are two glitches. First, the shifter is not adjustable. To bad, it's quite a reach down to the shifter. Second glitch is a result of the handle bar change. Now that I'm sitting more upright, the reach to the lever is really down there. Someone needs to make an adjustable shifter for this bike. Pirate's Lair would be the obvious choice. They would probably sell a new shifter with every set of risers.

Other interesting things would include the following. The left rear turn signal clouds up from the exhaust and turns black. So does the side reflector near your license plate. Every now and then, you have to take the turn signal lens off and clean it. Check with Todd at Mischler's for the cleaning product to use. I can't remember what he told me.

The bike has had 3 manufacturing

glitches. First off, a cable tie near the rear wheel was installed too tightly at the factory and cut the wires. The net result was an instrument cluster full of warning lights, one of them being the ABS light. Well, it acted like a bad battery, but when Mischler's picked it up and looked it over, they found the severed problem.

There has been one recall. A fuel line clamp, on some bikes, evidently was not installed correctly. That was a 2.5 hour warranty fix. I had it done with my 6000 mile check. Also, at that time I was experiencing bad throttle control. I thought it was me. Evidently some vacuum hoses had come off. Todd was at a loss to explain that. Said it was the first time he had seen it. They were reinstalled and the throttle is now back to being smooth. Another gain here was about 2 MPG in fuel mileage. Now we're getting somewhere on that issue.

In general the bike is pretty nice. My main complaint is weight. It performs well. It's almost like riding on air as it's smooth, quiet, and can get you through traffic as any speed with a minimum of fuss, down shifting is optional. My secondary complaint is the small gas tank. How they can call this a tourer at 42 MPG and 5.3 gallons, I can't understand. You probably won't be seeing too many Iron Butt riders using this bike.

If any of you are considering buying one and want to talk about it, let me know. My home phone is 608-838-0638.

Calgary, I had been riding noon to midnight before stopping to make camp at night. I was excited to see my daughter and determined to take her away from the city and to places where she was more likely to see large mammals. Hey, maybe we could even make the south end of Denali before we made camp!

Jen emerged from the jet-way looking exhausted. Her cycle helmet hung limp from the end of her left arm and a bag was slung from her right shoulder. She managed a smile when she first saw me. We had both made it to Alaska! As we walked to the parking lot we exchanged tidbits of our trip details. She waited impatiently while I strapped her things onto the bike in the airport parking lot. It was becoming very clear we were not going far tonight. About a half hour out of the city she poked me in the back a couple of times and said, "We need to make camp." She must have been pushing close to 23 hours since she last slept. We pulled into a picturesque campground where Highways 1 and 3 come together near Palmer and set up camp about 1 AM that morning.

...To be continued.

Treasurer's Report

By John Ong

The expenses of the GR3 rally totaled \$3,253.54. Estimated income was \$2,300. This made for a net loss of \$953.54.

The expenses of the picnic totaled \$520.20. We only had 24 attend at \$5.00 each for \$120. This made for a net loss of \$400.20. (We planned for 40 people, down from 50 of previous years.) And \$100 was sent to the BMW MOA annual charity.

We have \$3755.44 in the checking account and \$239.50 in the cash box for a grand total of \$3994.94.

No July meeting. We will meet again at the Maple Tree in McFarland on Sunday August 1st at 9AM.

Some of you probably remember the Enfield Bullet with the cozy sidecar that showed up at a breakfast meeting about 3 months ago. It is for sale for \$5450 at the used car lot down the street with only \$100 miles on it.

Family Fly Day at Poplar Grove Airport

By P.J. Francis

The Poplar Grove Vintage Wings and Wheels Museum is located on the State Route 76 in Boone County, Illinois between Belvedere and Rt. 173.

On Saturday, July 10th the public are invited and encouraged to attend the "Family Fly Day" at the museum. The grounds open at 10:30am and the event ends at 3pm.

Owners of vintage and classic automobiles are invited to drive in and display their cares. There will be no admission fee for show cars.

Food will be available for purchase. Free fire truck rides and photos will be available for kids that would like to dress up and pose in front of a vintage airplane. A \$5.00 fee will be charge for photos and building a model rocket.

Admission for the public will be \$5.00 per car and the museum will be open throughout the day. The goal of the museum staff is to get the public excited about vintage cars and airplanes, acquaint them with the museum and to have a fun day.

Volunteers are needed to help with the day's activities. Anyone interested with aircraft parking, auto parking, helping with scheduled activities, shuttling pilots to and from their planes or other chores should contact Dennis Blunt at (815) 398-4274. This is a wonderful opportunity for interested individuals to get an up-close involvement. The telephone number for the museum office is (815)547-3115.

The Poplar Grove Vintage Wings and Wheels Museum is open on Saturdays 9am-noon from April 1 to October 31. It attempts to be a family friendly facility. The items on display are constantly changing.

The Poplar Grove Airport is building 58 new hangars just east of the museum complex. They are being built in a style and colors that will blend well with the museum buildings. A restaurant is also planned. A large number of vintage aircraft will be moving to the new hangars.

There are other interesting events planned for the summer at the museum. On July 11th the over 100 British cars will be on display at the Boots and Bonnets Car Club's drive-in. The 32nd annual pancake breakfast will be held on August 22. The "Introduction to Flight" event will take place on September 18th.

The Poplar Grove Aviation Education Association, Inc., PO Box 236, Poplar Grove, IL 61065 encourages vintage aviation and automotive groups to use the museum facility for fly-ins, drive-ins, tour stops and other events. Call (815)547-3115 for information.

Smartire Tire Tips

By John Bolegoh, Technical Services Manager, Smartire Systems Inc.

The Problem with Under-inflation

Last month, we looked at the effects of tire pressure on motorcycle safety and performance. (Unfortunately, the editor did not receive the previous article but this one's great so I've included it) In this installment, we'll dig a little deeper on the performance side of things and look at some of the consequences on riding on under-inflated (and over-inflated) tires. Riding on under-inflated tires is extremely dangerous with a number of serious (or even fatal!) Consequences.

Too Much Heat = Trouble

Under-inflation causes excessive flexing of the sidewall which results in heat build-up in the tire. Heat is the number one enemy of tires. Higher temperatures expose the body of the tire to greater damage from normal road impacts, cause accelerated tread wear and can cause hidden interior separations that can result in premature tire failure. Riding on under-inflated tires for prolonged periods greatly increases the chance of suffering a blow out. And as any rider knows, a blowout can cause a total loss of control and result in a serious accident.

Resistance to Road Hazards – Pothole Alert

Under-inflation lowers a tire's ability to handle various road hazards. For example, hitting a pothole with an under-inflated tire can cause the tire to buckle over the rim flange, causing extensive internal tire damage and eventual failure. In some cases, hitting a pot hole with an under-inflated tire will instantly cause the tire to rupture.

Hydroplaning – Slip Sliding Away

Low tire pressure reduces the speed at which a tire maintains full contact with a water covered road. This situation is commonly referred to as hydroplaning and is one of the main hazards of riding on wet roads. The reason that an under-inflated tire hydroplanes is that the larger footprint area results in a lower ground contact pressure reducing the tire's ability to push the water away from the contact area. Motorcycle tires are designed to provide their optimal wet weather traction when they are properly inflated.

Adverse Handling – I Didn't Want To Do That!

Riding on under-inflated tires can significantly affect the handling of a motorcycle. A bike that feels stable while riding in a straight line may react unpredictably when cornering with an under-inflated tire. As a general rule, cornering with an under-inflated rear tire will cause the bike to over-steer (turn more sharply than anticipated), whereas cornering with an under-inflated front tire will cause the bike to under-steer (turn less sharply than anticipated). Either situation is extremely dangerous for a rider not expecting this change in handling.

As soon as you feel your bike handling a little strangely, it's a very good idea to stop and check the tire pressures. Even though the tire may not look like it has lost air (today's stiff

sidewalls often don't show much deflection) make sure to check with a good quality gauge. If you were using an active tire pressure monitoring system, you would have received a low pressure warning and would have pulled over to check out the situation.

Reduced Tire Life & Increased Fuel Consumption – Ouch!

Riding on under-inflated tires can dramatically shorten the life of a tire. 20% under-inflation can reduce tire life by up to one third. For some bikes, this can mean tire life dropping from 10,000 miles to 7,000 miles. As well, a motorcycle running on under-inflated tires consumes more fuel and increases the level of exhaust emissions that are released into the atmosphere.

All Tires Lose Air - Naturally

It is important to realize that air loss occurs naturally through the sidewall of virtually every tire, regardless of brand, price, or quality. This air pressure loss can be between 2–4 psi (0.14 - 0.27 bar) per month. Because the loss happens gradually over time, it often goes unnoticed until the tire becomes dangerously low. Since most riders check their tire pressures infrequently, this normal loss of air can have disastrous consequences. If a tire loses more than 2 psi per month, the tire, valve or wheel may be damaged so make sure to take your bike in to a service center for a complete tire and wheel inspection.

Tire Over-Inflation – Too Much of a Good Thing

Riding on over-inflated tires can also be dangerous. Over-inflated tires reduce riding comfort and stability, and are more susceptible to cuts, punctures or damage by a sudden impact. Over-inflation can also result in uneven tire wear and a reduction of a tire's contact area with the road, resulting in reduced grip while cornering. I'm Going To Tell You One More Time—At the very least, invest in a good quality tire pressure gauge and check your tires before every ride (make sure your tires are cold when you check them). Or better yet, install an active tire pressure monitoring system. Motorcycle tires only work properly when they are inflated properly – just a few PSI (or kilopascals) can make a huge difference.

Send Us Your Flat Tire Stories!

If you have an interesting story related to a tire problem while riding, we'd love to hear it. Send us your best flat tire story, and I'll compile them into document for future distribution. If we publish it, we'll send you a Smartire gift and we'll put your name in a draw for a free Smartire for Motorcycles, Active Tire Pressure Monitoring System. Send your stories to: tiretips@smartire.com.

John Bolegoh is Smartire's Technical Services Manager with over 30 cumulative years experience in the tire and tire monitoring industries. To contact John with a question, email tiretips@smartire.com Smartire offers the world's first active tire pressure monitoring system for motorcycles. www.smartire.com