

The Mail Boxer

December 2006

BMW MOA #7



Secretary's Report

by Mary Klopp

November 06 Minutes: Madison BMW Club meeting 11/11/2006

The November 2006 meeting was held at the annual club banquet at the Bourbon Street Grille in Madison. Todd Herbst presided.

2007 MOA National Rally

- Todd Herbst toured the West Bend fairgrounds site of the next MOA National Rally. He said the grounds are very nice and spacious, although there are no trees on the grounds. There's a possibility of the club putting up a 20x40 courtesy tent.
- Sue Rihn-Mahnke needs volunteers for setup preceding the rally on Tuesday and Wednesday
- Todd Herbst has volunteered as Chair of the "Cleanliness" Committee. This includes calling the appropriate officials to handle trash can pick-up, toilet overflows, etc.
- The Beer Tent needs volunteers to cover shifts.

Nick's BMW – Green Bay

- Tom Van Horn reported on a variety of "Tech Days" sponsored by Nick's. Call ahead to confirm.
 - 11/18 – Airheads '70-'94
 - 12/05 – Lady's Day?
 - 1/20/07 – K-Bike Models
 - 2/10/07 – BMW GPS Navigation
 - 2/24/07 – F650 Tech Session
 - 4/07/07 – Apparel Show
 - 4/14/07 – Oilhead Tech Session

Charitable Contribution

- Dave Laufenberg reported that his niece's 6 month old daughter, Reja Von Klopp, has a serious liver illness and will need a liver transplant. The club voted to donate \$300 to the cause.

Prize Donations

- Madison Motorsports donated a large bag of goodies as door prizes for the banquet.
- Milwaukee BMW (a.k.a. Southeast Sales) also donated prizes.

2007 Club Officers:

- President – Todd Herbst
- Vice-President – Todd Erickson
- Treasurer – John Ong
- Secretary – Linda Low (NEW – Thanks Linda!)
- Membership – Derek Engelen
- Newsletter – Betty Herbst

Upcoming Events

Sunday Dec. 3—BMW Club breakfast & meeting at J.T. Whitney's at 9am.

Monday Jan. 1—Madison Motorcycle Club New Year's Day ride.

Sunday Jan. 7—BMW Club breakfast & meeting at J.T. Whitney's at 9am.

- Rally Czar – Roland Thompson
- Activities – Bert Hefty
- Webmaster – Markus Schumann

Member Accident

- Jim Keeney (909 Hillcrest Rd, Stoughton, 53589) broke both of his legs in a m/c accident returning from the 2006 MOA National

Membership Renewals

- To avoid problems, John Ong will require a completed form with each renewal. The form should be printed in this newsletter.

Club Directory

- All members must renew by February to have their name in the club directory.

Cherished but Insignificant Awards

- Tom Van Horn announced several awards for the membership. Among them were Shafty Character to Bert Hefty and the Club Medallion to Roland Thompson

Observations and Revelations of a First Year BMW Rider

By Jim Harms

It was time.

It was time for a change. So now I'm the proud owner of a 1997 BMW R1100 RT. For me, it is the right bike at the right time.

This is how I became a BMW rider and some of the things I've noticed over the past year. For you guys (and gals) who have been riding since I was knee high, I hope you can relate some of this to your first year, many eons ago.

Two Wheels Since 15

I'm 47 and except for a 10 year hiatus after college, I've been riding motorcycles all my adult life. Starting at age 15, with a Honda CB 125 from Stark's in Prairie Du Chien, I've straddled 4 Hondas, 1 Yamaha, and a Kawasaki.

Interestingly, I still get people saying "I wouldn't have pictured you as a motorcycle rider". I'm not sure what a motorcycle rider is supposed to look like. :)

The Seed Was Planted.

I've always liked to travel, but haven't done much beyond mini-adventure day trips on a cycle. Last summer I got a taste for touring after taking a 3-day, 1100 mile trip on my current ride, an old Wing. Following the Mississippi River up to the Headwaters was a great time and it gave me the itch to try even longer distances.

My Big 3

My 81'GL 1100 Gold Wing has served me well, but at 25 years old, I wasn't sure how many more years I would get out of her. Therefore, I had three main reasons for wanting a different bike.

1. Better brakes.
Wing's OK, but not great. Deer don't cross the road slower, based on the kind of bike they see you driving.

Madison BMW Club
P.O. Box 152
McFarland, WI 53558

President: Todd Herbst
(608)831-4439
president@madisonbmwclub.org

Vice President: Todd Erickson
(608)756-3822

Secretary: Mary Klopp
(608)877-0209

Treasurer: John Ong
(608) 222-6489

Newsletter Editor: Betty Herbst
editor@madisonbmwclub.org

Rally Chair: Roland Thompson
(608) 222-3758

Activities Directors: Bert Hefty
(608) 862-3671

2. Better night time driving.
It's often dark on my way home. The Wing's dims are very poor. I've blown fuses and wiring trying higher wattages.
3. More comfortable long distance touring.
Even with a backrest and beaded seat, it is still hard on the back and behind after a long day.

I figure I have at least 10 more good years of riding left in me (hopefully many more). If I got a newer bike now, I'd be set for another 10 years.

Slimy Crud Run - Fall 2005

At this point, I didn't really know what kind of ride I wanted. That changed, when I saw a loaded silver 1150RT in Pine Bluff, where the Slimy Crud Run starts. I said to myself "Wow!" That's what I'm looking for!

It became my background wallpaper at work and thus, began my quest.

Research Time

Before I buy any bigger items, I do a lot of research. Unfortunately Consumer Reports doesn't review motorcycles. Don't you think they should? So, being a computer programmer by trade, I naturally hit the Internet and Google Search Engine.

I found many magazine reviews and personal opinions on the bike. Besides my gut feel, I found it was highly rated as a sport touring bike. Articles with titles like this caught my eye.

"If GOD rode a motorcycle, it would be an RT!"
"The perfect sport touring motorcycle"
"BMW R 1100 RT - The almost perfect bike ever!"

Most of the negative comments I saw were pretty trivial. Minor surging at certain rpms, poor and expensive factory radio, military time clock, and a cancel signal that might be hard to get used to. I did realize that parts and dealer servicing would be more expensive than with the Honda.

Nail in My Coffin

Up until late October 2005, I had never actually ridden a BMW. So, I made a trip to Mischler's. After asking a lot of questions, I took a silver 2004 R1150 RT for a test drive. That became the Nail in My Coffin figuratively (hopefully never literally).

I kept checking their website for 1150's or 1100's, but nothing had come up yet that suited both my fancy and pocketbook.

Bike Found

Back in January 2006, I renewed my search. More or less, I was just browsing with the intent to buy in April or May. Lo and behold, the Internet BMW Riders classifieds had a 97' R1100 RT with everything on it that I wanted (and more). That included ABS brakes, Motolights, side and top panniers, Sargent seat, heated grips, and a GPS, etc.

Not only that, but the bike was in McFarland, less than 30

minutes from my house! Club member Jim Low was purchasing a new RT and so after several emails back and forth I came over in late January and took it for a spin. It was everything I expected.

Negotiation Time

My wife has never been fond of motorcycles. She reluctantly agreed when I purchased the Wing twelve years ago. I can count, on one hand, the number of times we've ridden two up together. So, I had to have a plan. It could be summed up as follows:

1. Present my case.
It will be much safer at night and for avoiding accidents. It's better and more reliable for the longer trips that I wanted to start taking.
2. Have a payment plan.
Sell the Wing and put it toward the new bike. Do monthly payments for a year. Pay off with a February bonus.
3. Make concessions.
Keep my 16 year old car for a couple of more years.

Again, my wife reluctantly agreed. It certainly didn't hurt that I ended up selling the Wing for \$100 less than I paid for it.

So the deal was made and the fun begins!

It's Fast

Same ~1100 cc displacement as my 81' Wing, but there is no comparison. I like to say that it is faster than I need, but I sure like to test it out once in a while! It reminds me of a country song with the lyrics something like ..." There's no such thing as being too lucky, a car too fast or a women too pretty."

Friends tell me I go faster than on my old bike. It really is hard to drive 'slow'. I'm constantly finding myself going 5 or 10 mph faster than the speed limit without trying.

It's Fun

I've always 'liked' twisty hills, but now I LOVE them! I just think about a turn, and the bike is already leaning that way. You had to push or steer the Wing through corners.

Do I have to stop?

Two reviewer comments really rang true for me:

1. When I get to where I'm going, I often just want to keep going!
2. When I finally get off, I still have energy to do something.
I could ride my old Wing 500 miles in a day, but when I was done, I was ready for bed.

Not a Beginner's Bike

I read this in a review before I bought the bike. Now I know what they meant. The 'limits' are much higher on this than a beginner would be able to safely handle. The throttle is very sensitive and clutch unforgiving if you don't shift it the right way. It also feels top heavy at very low speeds. It took me over 1,000 miles just to start feeling comfortable with the handling.

Relaxing?

The Wing was more 'relaxing' to drive. I find myself concentrating a lot more on the road ahead with the Beemer. It's relaxing, but in a more uptight way... if that makes any sense.

Color

The 'Glacier Green' color is different without being loud. I love the bike's external looks as well as knowing that underneath it has great engineering and reliability.

Speaking of color, a BMW rider made a passing comment that I hadn't really thought much about. She said most Harleys seem to be black or dark in color. Now I make it a point to find a bright colored Harley in a passing group. On the flip side, lots of sport bikes seem to be in bright colors.

Jacket

I already have several leather jackets, but nothing with padding. Then I found Tour Master 'Transition' at Madison Motorsports that works great! There are many zippered vents and a liner to boot. It is a bit smelly now after hours of sunny weather riding. I probably should wash it more than once a year. :)

Tank Bag

Jim Low set me up pretty good, but he kept his BMW tank bag. I've never had a bag before, just a map pocket. There never seemed to be a great need for one. That is, until I got sick of stopping, turning off the bike, opening the top case, etc.

With another Internet search, I found a bag that appears to be big with European BMW riders. I purchased the 'RevPak Junior' from a light hearted family operation in California. Now I keep my drink, map, digital camera, sun glasses, etc. all close by, with room to spare.

GPS

A GPS system was part of the deal, although at the time I figured it was more of a toy that I'd play with a while and then quit using. That certainly was not the case. I use it all the time now! The first hurdle was to quit constantly looking at it. Not a good thing in a car, much less on a cycle. Lots of neat things to play with, like route planners, average speed, etc. Here a few specific things I like about it.

Speedometer

My actual speed is a lot more accurate on the GPS when I'm going over 50 mph, so that is what I go by. No tickets yet.

Compass

To make it more of an adventure, I sometimes only use the compass part and not the map. For instance, I might want to head somewhere 'West' of home, choosing side roads that take me in that general direction.

Marking Waypoints

If I come across a great view, rock cliff, or interesting barn, I can reach down and with two pushes of a button, mark a waypoint for future reference. The harder part is later hooking the GPS up to my computer to rename the number to a name that makes

sense and store it.

More Road Time

Now, I don't have to pull over at an intersection to check my map. I'm covering a lot more ground. I still carry a State Map so I can see what's coming up 5 or 10 miles down the road. It is much easier and quicker than zooming out with the GPS.

Geocaching

This GPS can be removed and runs on batteries. So, I've started to geocache as a way to explore new hiking trails. It's a new craze where people hide an ammo box (or something similar) filled with trinkets, usually on state-owned land. They post the GPS coordinates and clues on a web-site. The goal is to locate the box, which is usually hidden under rocks, downed trees, etc). Good exercise and fun for both myself and our Golden Retriever, who often comes along.

Gravel Roads

The Wing has the RT beat on this one. If a road looked interesting, it didn't matter if it was gravel or not. Now, it's got to be a lot more interesting. Guess I have to get a GS!

I still hit a few gravel roads in the pursuit of a Motorcycle 'Rustic Roads' certificate from the DOT. As their website says: "Rustic Roads: A positive step backwards."

Miles and more miles

Over the last 12 years, I've consistently ridden 2 to 3K per year, with an abnormal 3.5 K last year. So, I figured 'maybe' double that this year (6K). Boy, was I wrong. The odometer is pushing 11K and the bike isn't put away for the winter yet.

I'm amazed, because I feel like I didn't ride as much as I could have. Finishing the basement for my wife's office, so the girls each have their own bedroom, has consumed most of my non-summer months. There were signs though. The golf clubs are getting dusty and the trout haven't had much to worry about.

I guess it all adds up. Starting with 175 miles in March, the day I brought the RT home, it's seen a lot of pavement time. Throw in a 3 day Missouri trip (1,300 miles), Packer Shareholder's meeting, Sturgeon Bay wedding, two days around Eau Claire, GR3 Rally, Wild Goose Run, trips along the Mississippi and Wisconsin rivers, slices of eastern Iowa and southern Minnesota, and the miles pile up. Tack on all the local roads taken on day trips or the long way back from work and I'm probably in that range.

Impressed with Travel

BMW riders I've met sure seem to know their way around the state. Many also know the best roads in Missouri, Kentucky, and beyond. I'm sure I'll be tapping them for information as I start taking longer trips.

I was doubly impressed when I saw a picture of one of my favorite remote gravel roads on the website for the upcoming 2007 BMW MOA Rally. It's the one with a big rock outcropping extending half way over the road. You'll find it in the Southwest

part of the state, about 3.5 miles long, great views and a name that matches the road. Enough hints? I'm sure some of you have been there. Check it out at:

www.bmwmoa.org/rally/rally07/rally07announce.htm

Clean Up

BMW's are often a bit dirty. Mine will have lots of bug bodies on the fairing, but it can be cleaned quickly. Bikes, like my Wing or a Harley, have lots of chrome and metal to polish. Bottom line: Less time cleaning = More time riding. I like that.

Helmet

I grew up wearing black open face (3/4) helmets on the back roads of Southwestern Wisconsin. Tried a full faced once, but it was hot and didn't fit well. I dropped the face shield too. All I remember is that they got scratched up very quickly and were hard to see out of.

So, I put up with the occasional bee to the cheek, gravel to the forehead, or pins of rain. The upside included, wind in your face and more of the good smells... like freshly cut hay.

When it came time to get a new helmet, cost and fit were the biggest two factors for me. Again, I found lots of opinions on the Web and decided to try an HJC or Nolan.

I ended up buying one an HJC CL-Max Flip-up at Mischler's BMW. The guy really knew how to fit helmets, but almost all the choices were white. To my surprise, he said that 18 out of every 20 sold to BMW riders were white, so that's mostly what they stocked. Safety and cooler temps in the summer were the biggest reasons for white.

Now that I'm paying attention to it, I do notice that I see a white helmet much sooner. My helmet fits greats, has good ventilation, and I can see through the shield!

Rain

According to former owner, Jim Low, the RT is very well acquainted with rain. I've never been very comfortable in this liquid snow (more like scared to death), that is, until now. Better handling, better fairing, and a full-faced helmet make it possible to keep riding if I need or want to.

A Good Day Ride has...

- Great weather.
- An early start.
- Lunch at a bar or restaurant in the boonies.
- Downing an excellent bar burger, fries, and Pepsi for lunch
- Meeting a character or two (often found at the bar!)
- Zero deer sightings
- And never seeing a vehicle in your rear view mirrors.

So, in closing, I found exactly the bike I was looking for and it's been a very enjoyable first year on my BMW. And remember, it's not so much WHAT you ride as THAT you ride! Stay Safe!

Book Review

by Betty Herbst

I recently read the book *The Rugged Road* by Theresa Wallach. Let me just say; amazing!

The book chronicles the first successful journey across Africa; lengthwise some 7000 miles from Algiers to Cape Town. There were several things that distinguished this trip; it was done using a motorcycle and sidecar rig and it was accomplished by two women at a time when women were mothers and homemakers, not adventurers or world travelers.

The motorcycle was provided by Phelon & Moore, a Panther Redwing Model 100.

Theresa and partner Florence were well prepared to deal with mechanical problems as they arose.

The thing that struck me most while reading this book was the courage the girls must have had. They embarked upon a monumental trip despite warnings from family and friends.

You can find this book at amazon.com or whitehorsepress.com although White Horse offers it for a significantly better price.

Happy winter reading!



Madison BMW Club -Membership form

First _____ Last _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Home _____ Work _____

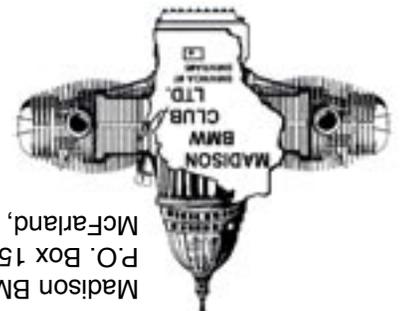
Email(s) _____

Current member New member

MOA # _____ RA# _____

Bikes you own _____

Interest in club Activities, Organization or Comments _____



Madison BMW Club, Ltd.
P.O. Box 152
McFarland, WI 53558-0152