

New Jersey Shore BMW Riders

CLUB NEWS - March - April 1996

Important!

Our meeting for April will be on the 3rd Weds - April 17th. Prez Don will be away on our normal meeting date (the 2nd Weds). PLEASE mark your calendars!

Topics for our April Meeting!

Our next meeting currently does not have a tech session scheduled (although this is subject to change). I'd like to suggest that we discuss and FINALIZE the following topics (some of which have dragged on WAY too long - some are new):

1. **Club logo and patch** - we have been waffling on this for over a year - and it's time for someone to make a commitment and get it done! We need one person to volunteer to do it from beginning to end - no ifs, ands or buts.. we have funds in the treasury to pay for the initial run of patches, so someone - lets make this happen!

2. **Club funds** - as mentioned above - we now have enough money in the treasury to make some things happen. People have proposed the following to me, and I'd like a consensus on the ideas, so we can move forwards:

RA Membership - we probably have the needed number of members - we should move forwards on having NJS-BMW-R chartered as an RA club. This will offer us exposure to additional people who may not be MOA members. Dennis Swanson has offered to pursue this for us.

Club Tools - what special tools should the club purchase for members use? I can think of two items that are sort of expensive to buy and infrequently used - but will save you a lot of \$\$\$\$\$. For R-bikes - the exhaust wrench - a \$30 item. For K bikes - the valve adjusting tool and a set of shims. In the latest MOA news a set was offered for \$75 - I think at this price it would be worthwhile for the club to purchase it (if it is still available). Suggestions of other tools we could purchase would be welcome! (Vacuum carb sticks? Good torque wrench?). PLEASE offer your input on this!

3. **Rally Coordinators** for both the MOA and RA nationals. There is a lot of interest in the club for both rallies, and we should have one person for each rally who is interested in coordinating (as best as possible) our club participation. This could include keeping an up-to-date list of who is going, to planning a group ride to/from the rally for anyone interested. If you are headed to one or both of the rallies - please consider volunteering for this position - it could be a lot of fun!

If we can complete our discussion on the above items in a reasonable time - I would suggest we close the meeting early and head off for coffee in a nearby coffee house (near the now burned out Manasquan Railroad Station).

Club News!

We've once again increased our membership - we average 2 new members per month. The word on our club is slowing getting out, and our membership now stands at about 40 dues paying members! Thanks to Rich Reigler - we have an outstanding club World Wide Web (Internet) home page - that is referenced around the world on other home pages. If you are Internet connected, I suggest that you visit our page!

Sunday Rides are alive and well! The last two Sundays were a welcome relief from our weather this winter, and we have had some nice Sunday rides! One was a trip through New Hope PA to lunch at Meil's at Stockton NJ, the last was a mindless amble (Prez Don was leading it) which visited Monmouth Shore Points Motorcycle Club's flea-market in Bricktown, and ended up at the New Egypt flea market. We had a late lunch at Johnny D's at the intersection of Rt. 537/524 (a lot less expensive than Meil's).

If you're interested in Nice Sunday Rides - our list (which has grown yet again) is in this issue. Cut it out and hang it on the refrigerator!

New Bikes - George Franz - congrats on the new R1100GS!

Filler - Not in this case!

Normally, when I run out of things to say in a newsletter (a rarity - I tend to run on at the keyboard), I'll look for something I've found interesting to read and fill it in - so it's called "Filler".

This issue - I have something very special and rare - much too good to be called Filler! Bob Higdon - an Iron Butt alumni, rider of 48 states, four-corners, author of numerous great motorcycling articles published in real magazines, has offered to allow us to publish some excerpts from a daily chronicle he submitted to the Internet BMW Riders EMail list. These daily messages told of his travels more or less across the country by motorcycle during one of the worst winters on record.

I personally consider any of Bob's chronicles to be the finest writing on motorcycles and motorcyclists and the adventures of both that I've ever read. I suspect you'll agree!

A note on this text - it is as I snipped it from the digest I receive (frequently more than one a day) from the BMW

riders email list run on the Internet by Joe Senner and various volunteers. The text was cut and pasted into a simple ASCII file, and saved on a daily basis. Each section is one submission by Bob - and was meant to be read as a single message.

Bob pecks these out on a tiny obsolete laptop computer and submits them to the IBMWR list every night via phone link. More will follow in future issues!

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- **2.11.96 Roanoke VA**

[This should have gone out last night. It didn't. Don't ask.]

This bike business never seems to get any easier. Maybe if I'd quit trying to do long rides in February, I wouldn't feel so blasted all the time. Maybe if I had a full-time psychiatrist following me around . . .

Well, that's another story.

The long-range forecast a week ago said today would be in the mid- to high 50s. I know that these guys can't predict the future, but I needed a date certain to leave. Sunday would be it. So I left DC late this morning, running full-bore electrics all the way. The wind-chill must have been at least -1,548 below zero. Head- and crosswinds all the way, blowing like hell. I landed in Roanoke and another in the endless string of Patel motels that dot the known galaxy --- the Apple Valley Sutra, just off the Blue Ridge Parkway, with HBO and a phone I can use. Who needs more? It's snowing to the north and west along the VA-WVa border.

When I did the Four Corners in January a few years ago, I averaged better than 500 miles a day through a lot worse weather than I saw today. It was all I could do to manage half that today and I was grateful that I'd gotten as far as I did. I think I'm getting soft. I know I'm getting fat. All the weight I'd lost in Central America --- ten or more pounds --- is back with a bunch of interest and penalties. Even my feet felt fat today. Maybe it's just hypothermic edema. I doubt it.

Another problem is that I just cannot ride fast enough to get out of my own way any longer. On a 65 mph interstate I'm lucky to be hitting 55. I'd have done the back roads but my reaction time, after two months of sitting in front of a computer, is measured in tenths of hours. Not quite cat-like, but maybe it'll get better. I'll do some of the Blue Ridge tomorrow and hope I can average better than 25 mph. Jeff Brody and I have been talking about hooking up later this month in southern California to ride back to Daytona for Bike Hell. The downside to that plan is that JB likes to ride at Warp + a bundle. It might work if he'd give me a three-day head start.

Tomorrow: Asheville, NC, a heady 250 miles. If I leave here at 0400, I'm nearly certain I can arrive before the sun goes down. One thing's clear: It will be

colder. You can almost see the cold front closing in. At least I escaped the snow.

Bob Higdon

- **2.12.96 - Asheville NC**

My rating system for determining just how awful a day's ride has been, soon to be revealed to the world in an upcoming issue of OTL, tells me that as ugly as Sunday's jaunt was, today's was worse. Paradoxically, the farther south I go, the colder it becomes. I think I've been beamed to Australia. Two days ago it was 68F here; tonight it's going down to a single digit. The bike's battery is marginal. These days I look for motels near full-service gas stations.

Today was basically five hours of running straight into the teeth of a 35 mph chainsaw with sub-zero wind chills. The parkway was barricaded, probably because of ice, so I came down to Winston-Salem on local roads. I picked up I-40 west, stopped for lunch, ducked behind Ricky Rudd's transport truck for a windbreak, then ran into swirling snow in the mountains east of Asheville. It wasn't sticking.

The Motel 6 sign appeared at 1515. Enough. I've made 503 miles in two days. The Iron Butt Association is meeting in emergency session to expel me.

I called Dean Klein (BMW Loco). We'll have breakfast tomorrow. Then I picked up mail from the BMW list. Someone was reporting about the Krystal rally campout in Norway. I don't even want to know what that is like. I suppose it puts my own little tribulations in perspective.

Still, in the morning I put on expedition-weight thermals (top and bottom), sweatpants, electric vest and gloves, fleece jacket, Darien pants and coat, balaclava, wind triangle, arctic socks, BMW Goretex boots, and a full-face helmet. If it weren't for Andy Goldfine's clothes and Pat Widder's electrics, my riding season would be about four days a year.

I am of the opinion that the grease in the steering head bearings has frozen. Below 20 mph I'm not riding the bike; I'm aiming it. There's a micro leak in the final drive's drain plug. The tires will never make it to California. I wonder why the bike runs at all. It's an '81, a G/S, which makes it about 105 in dog-years.

I hope I don't leak any worse than it does when I reach that age.

Bob Higdon

P.S. No weather goon anywhere had predicted these snow flurries. By late Monday night the "flurries" had closed public schools in the Asheville area for Tuesday, had accumulated as much as six inches in some places, and had closed parts of I-40 and I-26 --- they meet near the Motel 6.

- **2.14.96 - Anniston AL**

Wild West Honda-BMW, west of Houston, is 1,400 miles from my house but I consider it to be my local dealer. In the last two years more than 90% of the

work on my various bikes, excluding my own bleeding knuckle maintenance since I became a master wrench, has been undertaken by Dan Drom and Dave Krogman at that dealership. When I get into trouble, which is often, I find myself limping toward Texas.

The winter's ride so far is taking a toll on rider and ridee. I have reverted to my former ways and look for motels adjacent to carry-out beerstores. The bike has cancer. It isn't clear if we can make it to the Wild West Sloan-Kettering Clinic before a DO NOT RESUSCITATE order is given, but we're trying.

Ten months ago I flew to St. Louis on a one-way ticket with my gym bag, two shock cords, and checkbook. I intended to buy an '81 R80G/S that was described in the ad as "cherry." That is a code word for "French whore." It looks good, but it's riddled with pox. I'd never seen a cleaner bike. I paid four large, well above the going rate for even low-mileage whores, and rode it home. I stuck it on the centerstand when I came home and essentially forgot about it.

Four days ago, each of us prepped for combat, the hooker and I took off. She began to leak oil. Rick Jones, a/k/a Motorrad Elektrik and the best guy in that eerie business, whom I visited today for some esoteric upgrades, diagnosed the problem as a blown rear main seal. That calls for major surgery. I remind my gentle readers that major surgery is what happens to my bike; minor surgery is what happens to yours. Other issues have arisen and demanded to be recognized.

The master brake cylinder piston has begun to do the herky-jerk. Worse, the brake system has been slimed with DOT 5 brake fluid which is just peachy unless you want to use your brakes with confidence. Someone spilled some of that crap once near Zanesville, OH and the whole town not only needed to be repainted but was declared to be a toxic waste site list for six years.

A plastic connector in the speedometer unit has gone to heaven; when the bike is at rest, the speedo registers 55 mph. I can make 85 mph in first gear, a record for this model of BMW.

At sub-freezing temperature, the steering head bearing grease turns into Super Glue. Turns are executed with the assistance of a sharp rap on the end of the handlebar with an eight-pound sledge. Body steering helps, but at lower speeds your best hope is that there are no video cameras around to record the result.

The rear tire has succumbed to consumption. I would like to take it to Phoenix for The Cure, but I'll be lucky to make it to Houston before the cords expose themselves. It is a pig Sahara. It will be replaced by an Avon Gripster, the only tire that a G/S truly can bond with meaningfully.

So I called Dan Drom late this afternoon to schedule an operating room for next Tuesday. He

asked how I was doing. I reminded him that I never called unless I was in incipient cardiac arrest. He understood. He knows me.

The weather has warmed up. I actually turned off the electric clothes when I left Guru Jones' house this afternoon. The wind continues unabated. Given some fairly severe speed today to get to Rick's house, accompanied by the usual hammering headwind, my gas mileage was worse than dismal --- low 30s on a bike that is tuned to C sharp. I might not be on speaking terms with big metal things like steering heads and crankshafts, but I can make an R bike sound like Meg Ryan in a restaurant.

Tomorrow: Brookhaven MS, my ancestral watering hole.

Bob Higdon

- **2.15.96 Brookhaven MS**

Everything changes.

The weather improved so much yesterday afternoon I began to think I was on a different but related planet. The sun was out today. I didn't recognize it for a while. The wind wasn't dissin' me so much. For about a half-hour it was almost a tailwind.

The bike seemed not to be so angry today. Heat had apparently loosened up some of the steering head bearing glue. The gas mileage was up on one tank this afternoon by 55% over a few days ago.

My mood improved. A lot. My blood pressure, low to begin with (oddly enough), always drops another 20 points when I come into Mississippi. It's the ancient homeland and I like it here. I like the slow roads and the quiet farms and the old pine forests. It relaxes me. It's a pretty place.

For at least ten generations Higdon's have been begetting themselves here. I was the first kid in the paternal line born outside the deepest, darkest south in 270 years, and even then I was still announced below the Mason-Dixon line, though barely.

My grandfather used to deliver babies in this little town. When the Depression hit, the proud parents would pay the bill with chickens or corn. My father was born here in a house at 306 S. Jackson Street. One of my fraternity brothers at Ole Miss years ago was Robert Higdon Bolling. My grandfather delivered his father.

When my father was in the army, having left Brookhaven for the bright lights, we would periodically come back here to visit his uncle, my great-uncle, who lived at 515 S. Jackson Street. Being army people, we had no actual home, so we used 515 S. Jackson as our legal residence. I used it when I turned 18 and registered for the draft. I never was called. Years later I realized that my draft board had probably rounded up every black kid in Lincoln county before thinking about calling any white boys,

especially one whose great-uncle was the president of the Brookhaven Bank & Trust Company.

I have left footprints all over this town, visible only in the fourth dimension. One summer when we were here I'd just finished reading *Beau Geste*. By blind luck I discovered that the movie was playing at the Haven. I had to see it. But no, said the old man. I'd mouthed off or something and was grounded. It took me about three years to get over that one.

My footprints are hard to find now. Everything has changed. Uncle Charles is in the graveyard and workmen are climbing all over the roof of his house, erecting an ugly garret. A lawyer's office is infecting my father's house. The Haven is a beauty salon. The bank was bought by a chain. It says "Trustmark" but it's not a mark I'd trust. I-55 screams by to the west, in an awful hurry to get to New Orleans, and a strip of wall-to-wall franchises leads into the sleepy old Brookhaven downtown area of about four square blocks.

Heraclitus said that you can't step in the same river twice. I keep trying because he was just some old Greek dude and you never know. Tomorrow I'll run down Route 51 to McComb and pass Dixie Springs where I learned how to hate fishing.

Dixie Springs will still be there, I bet. And I still hate fishing.

Bob Higdon

- 2.16.96 - Galveston TX

To go from Brookhaven MS to Galveston TX follow this simple algorithm:

Go four miles west, then one mile south. Repeat until your gums begin to bleed or until your trip odometer says 401.

So I did that, sort of. At 80 miles, when I crossed into Louisiana south of Woodville, I couldn't feel my toes any longer. Then I took a ferry across the Mississippi at St. Francisville --- it says it's a free ferry on the map, but it's really a buck --- at which point I couldn't feel anything below my ears.

It wasn't just the cold, although that was part of it. It was about 35F when I left Brookhaven at 0645. Mostly it was the wind, straight out of the north like a bullet, a wind such that it put to shame all the other miserable little zephyrs that have been whacking at me since Hour #1 on this ride. I don't remember a trip so utterly cross-threaded.

It was 400 miles of that, 80% of it in my ear and the pathetic remainder hacking at the back of my neck, except that I couldn't feel the tailwind because I was too numb. I took a second ferry across Galveston harbor in mid-afternoon. The wind was blowing so hard that the boat's flag was actually billowing in the direction we were heading. In the fifth grade I made a drawing of a boat with a flag that waved like that and Miss Simpson told me that my little pennant was

violating at least six fundamental laws of aerodynamics. She was wrong.

I avoided the I-slabs as much as possible. The Ten and I are old enemies and treat each other warily. Louisiana is best observed from little roads anyway. It is there that you reach a true sense of just how scary the state really is. There is nowhere else quite like it. If I didn't already have a healthy respect for ghosts, Louisiana would make a believer out of me in no time.

It seems to be a land that time forgot and doesn't want to be reminded about anyway. Everything is old, mossy, and crumbling, especially the back roads. The ubiquitous ante-bellum mansions are all owned by relatives of Norman Bates. The Addams family lives here, in a hooded shack around every bend. Avoid spending the night in any motel in the state. At 0300 you'll hear someone staggering through the hall and mumbling, "Give up your dead."

If any corpses are pitched out, they are buried above ground because the water table is about 1/3" below the earth's boggy surface.

I defy anyone to ride any distance through the Atchafalaya swamp and not have their skin crawling within two minutes. You just know that there are creatures living in that misty place that have not been seen except by Cro-Magnons, things that don't even have names. What else can you expect from a place where the state bird is a pterodactyl and the state flower is a hybrid of black orchid and Venus fly trap? If Blanche DuBois found comfort in Louisiana, how stable can it really be?

Well, enough for me, because I love it. I particularly like the idea that you can pull into a gas station and buy enough hard liquor to last through Lent. That's important these days because Mardi Gras is on the horizon. The tawdry French Quarter will soon be 14 degrees off the vertical in its seasonal debauch. The secret, eerie krewes have taken wing and God help us all.

Bob Higdon

NOTE - I want to personally thank Bob Higdon for the use of these chronicles - which were named "On the Road" when posted to the IBMWR list. I've added Bob as a guest member of NJS-BMW-R.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

DATE	WHEN	WHAT
April 14th	9AM	New Sweden BMW Riders Flea Market, RK BMW, meet at Allenwood General Store at 9AM sharp! NJS-BMW-R ride coordinator - Dennis Swanson 908-899-7652
April 17th	8:00 PM	Next Meeting , 8PM Sun Cycle Manasquan, Coffee after!
April 21st	9:30AM	New Sweden Spring Poker Run, call Hans 609-728-9535 for info, NJS-BMW-R coordinator, George Franz - 908-223-5091
May 10-12		Dutch Country Rally, Lewisberry PA. Interested? Contact Prez Don - he may be going - 908-449-1533
July 5-7th		Udder Nonsense Rally, Round Top NY. Interested - contact Prez Don - it's on his list!
July 11-14th		BMW-MOA national rally - Morgantown, NC
July 18-21		BMW-RA national rally - Quebec City, Canada
Sept. 27-29		New Sweden BMW Riders Last Chance Rally - a MUST go! Mays Landing NJ

SUN CYCLE

Please support Sun Cycle!

Frank has been very gracious with his support of our club, and we owe him some support in return. He offers very competitive prices on accessories (tires, suspension components, etc.) and has a 'home town touch" - he has been here whenever we've needed him!

Many of our members have been impressed with his fair prices and excellent service for items such as tires and suspension! And - we've never heard a complaint!

Next time for tires or any accessory - give Frank a call!

For Sale

While at the Monmouth Shore Points flea market, a chap heard us discussing BMW's - and came over to tell us about one he wanted to sell. Haven't seen it, don't know anything about it, but here is the info:

1985 K100RS, Lava Red, asking \$4,000 - 609-424-1462, ask for Alan.

If you have anything to sell or that you want, get it to Prez Don, and it will be in the next issue!

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Klaus Huenecke
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