

# THE ALABAMA BEEMER



Newsletter of the BMW Motorcycle Owners of Alabama  
BMWMOA Chapter #5/ BMWRA Chapter #107



Volume XXXVII Issue 2

February 2008

## RETRACTION

An article in the January issue of *The Alabama Beemer* had a picture of Bob Steber and was titled TRAVEL DIRECTOR EXPOSED? As the title suggests, the article was intended as a satirical spoof to provide some comic relief for the possibly much too serious ABEES Challenge. However unintended, the article reportedly caused some embarrassment and humiliation to Bob and his family. I wish to offer an apology to Bob and especially to Bob's family for any emotional harm that was caused by publishing this parody. [Ed.]

## JANUARY MEETING PRODUCTIVE

The January meeting held at the Alabama Traffic Safety Center at the University of Montevallo proved to be very productive with the election of club officers and directors and the selection of meeting/campout locations for the remainder of the year.

Approximately 60 members were in attendance for pizza on Saturday night, followed by pastries and doughnuts with coffee Sunday morning. The meeting began on time at 9:00 am and concluded around 12:30 pm. A record number of folks stayed overnight Saturday in the recently renovated Ramsey Hall.

## CLUB OFFICIALS ELECTED FOR 2008

Your club officials that will be serving you in 2008 are as follows:

### Officers

|                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| President      | Connie Reaves   |
| Vice President | Vance Harrelson |
| Secretary      | Mari Harrelson  |
| CFO            | Marty Simpson   |
| Editor         | Jamie Jackson   |

### Directors

|             |                 |
|-------------|-----------------|
| Safety      | Jim Baker       |
| Travel      | Gary DuBois     |
| Photography | Malvene Jackson |
| Membership  | Jeannine Arnold |
| Technical   | Tommy Arnold    |

### Rally Co-Chairs

Vance Harrelson / Connie Reaves

## DON NORWOOD'S BRAZIL TOUR

Page 4 of this issue begins a series of articles that describe the motorcycle tour that our member Don Norwood took in Brazil. Don chose the Brazil tour because of ties to that country as you will see when you read the story.

## ANGIE DUBOIS WINS ABEES GRAND PRIZE



David Sanders, General Manager - Bogart's Motor Sports, was on hand to present the HI-VIZ Olympic riding jacket to Angie DuBois. Angie was a top contender for ABEES points and had a total of 15 tickets in the pot.

## EXTREME CHALLENGE FINISHERS RECOGNIZED



The four "Extreme Challenge" finishers were presented with engraved OLI-Camp stainless steel cups. Left to right is Steve Hebert, Jim Kalahan, Gail Thorne, and Paul Thorne.

## MEETING MINUTES

January 27, 2008 9:00 AM

Montevallo Traffic Safety Center

President Connie Reaves presiding

Connie opened the meeting with an announcement that Steve Irwin has been in the Gadsden Riverview Hospital since Jan. 17<sup>th</sup>. His kidneys are failing him and he may be going home soon and having to travel back and forth to undergo dialysis.

Happy birthday yesterday to Vern Headrick and today to Tim Flynn. A hearty welcome to 1<sup>st</sup> time members Pam and Brady Rogers and Ken and Andrea Pedigo and brand new members Ridge Marriott and Dudley Carver.

If you have not paid your dues you need to get them in immediately if you want to be listed in the book for this year.

Connie introduced all of the candidates that were present and ballots were passed out and returned and Darlene Massey counted all of the votes.

Vance introduced our special quests for the meeting, David Sanders from Bogart's and Don Irvin from Barber's Museum.

Don Irvin spoke first and gave us some very interesting history on Barbers Park and Museum. He introduced to us the new motorcycle tags that are now available just like the car tag. It will be an additional \$50.00 and you can have it customized for a \$3.00 fee. There was some confusion as to whether or not it is an additional \$50.00 per month to have them personalized.

David Sanders, the new General Manager from Bogart's then spoke to us on the major changes taking place. He explained that Bryson is phasing out of the daily operations and has given him the reins. He has a totally different outlook on business and expects, #1 a positive attitude, #2 excellence in performance, and #3 loyalty. To quote David "We are not going to be ordinary again". He has brought in new people to manage the service department and the parts department and assures us we will feel the difference when we walk in the door. They are not only restructuring the people, but also the parts and accessories so you will be able to find what you need. Less inventory of bikes and more inventory of parts and accessories, sizes, etc. He wants us to know that he has heard of our problems and wants another chance and being a place that we can come to just to hang out again.

The drawing was held for the jacket and it goes to Angie Dubois....you go girl!!!

Bob gave the awards for Abees participants  
Special Awards:

Gary Dubois - Highest Points 200

Travel Directors Award - Martin Benson

Extreme Challenge Awards- each received an Oli-camp cup with their names, all locations, the state outline and the BMW emblem, engraved on them.

Steve Hebert - Jim Kalahan - Gail Thorne - Paul Thorne

Bob talked about this year's challenge they are working on, initial maps were available, it is worth 10 tickets or 200 points. It is 1267 miles and must be done in less than 48 hours. It is going all around the state border not going into any of the bordering states, no interstates. They have an excel sheet with the roads mapped out as well as a map. Of course, this is after your initial 20 points is achieved. This sounds like a real challenge.

Other points can be gained for each covered bridge, water fall. Go to the web site and see all of the challenges he has in mind.

Bob is also challenging you to come up with rides to challenge us with to put on the forum.

Connie presented the President's award this year to Jamie Jackson for his excellent job with the newsletter.

Connie gave the treasurer's report and offered a peek to any one interested in looking at the details. The Coffee maker has arrived for the rally. She is looking into the insurance for the trailer from Ron Riggins. As always, Connie has decals and pins available for sale.

We displayed the award that we received from the Traffic Safety Center. Vance is going to talk to Bogart's about displaying our awards there.

David had mentioned he would like to trade a 10% discount on parts to all members in trade for a membership for his employees. We are putting this on the table for a later meeting vote. In the meantime we are suggesting that everybody give him the opportunity to show us what they have and stop by and see what you think. Feed back to the forum would be appreciated and help in this voting process.

We were recognized in the RA magazine yet again - Steve Hebert's Beer, Brats and Beemer's - That says it all!

Cont. next page

## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Bill Lynn
- 1 John Pearson
- 2 Larry Byrd
- 2 J. P. Thomas
- 3 Thomas Wool
- 4 Jeffrey Fikes
- 4 Rob Harrelson
- 4 Ray McAlevy
- 7 Walls Aaron
- 12 John Gregory
- 13 Gerald McCuistion
- 13 Greg Wright
- 14 Lucinda Bollinger
- 14 David Kilmer
- 14 Jared Pond
- 15 Rickie Bonner
- 16 Don Drasheff
- 18 Randy Myers
- 18 Mike Carter
- 19 Rhonda Allred
- 19 Lila Bonner
- 20 David Aiken
- 20 James Taylor
- 21 Tony Allison
- 21 Joe Rogers
- 23 Margaret Rogers
- 27 Paul Thorne
- 29 John Cockrell
- 29 Bill Stevens
- 30 Shep Brown
- 31 Stephen Gilbert

**party central**



## (Meeting Minutes) Cont from page 2

Vance makes a plea for volunteers for the rally. Too few are doing too much. Sabrina brought up that she never sees anything to sign up so Connie will make up a spread sheet and get it on the forum so you can sign up there, or by calling one of us and we will get you in a slot. Sabrina, lets see your name in one of those slots. You have to work at least 4 hours to get a cap and at least 8 hours to get a t-shirt and at least 12 to get both.

Vance also got on his band wagon about the tickets. You only have to sell 4 books to get in the rally free so let someone else pay your way. It is really not that hard to do. Connie will send Jamie the incentives for the newsletter and later post them on the forum.

## THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

Remember Mark (Stretch) Hendrix whose mother passed away January 30 after a long illness.

Remember Steve Irwin who has started dialysis due to failed kidneys, and is recovering from pneumonia. He was hospitalized from January 17 until February 1. Steve is now home but requires dialysis three times a week. He can be reached on his cell phone at 256 504 5434 Give him a call.

The club mourns the loss of long time member Bob Metzl. Bob slipped away peacefully during the night of January 31, 2008 as a result of a brain tumor. He was reported to have been in no pain and had no regrets.

## NEW MEMBERS

Dudley Carver      Ozark, AL      Sponsor: Jim Kalahan  
Ridge Marriott      Northport, AL      Sponsors: S. Irwin, Connie Reaves

### NEW SECONDARY MEMBER

Barbara Shanks with Bill Shanks - Montgomery

## FOR SALE

### 2004 BMW R1150RT - 42K Miles - \$10,500.00

One owner, purchased new in December 2004. Meticulously maintained. Serviced every 6K. Final drive resealed and new pivot bearings installed. Alternator belt changed at 36K. Metzeler Z6 Rubber is about 50% at present.

Will be happy to assist a fly and ride buyer or delivery is available for additional charge.

See Photos At:

<http://vanmar.smugmug.com/gallery/4246110/1/248512718>

### Options Include:

BMW Heated Grips, BMW Comfort Seat, BMW Side Bags, BMW Top Case W/Back Pad, ZTechnik V-Stream Windshield, Sirius Radio Mount & Antenna, Auxiliary Handlebar Mounted Mirrors, Bob's Wrist Rest & Matching Bar End Weight, Auxiliary Centek AP-1 Fuse Panel, Moto Lights, Elf Fold Away Highway Pegs, Additional LED Brake Light, Bob's Sidestand Plate, Kisan Signal Minder, Hyper-Light Turn Signals Mounted Beneath Mirrors, RCU Accessory Shelf.

Contact: Vance Harrelson (Cell) 205.915.5188 or 205.621.1682

[02]

## BRAZIL ADVENTURE 2007

Don G Norwood

### Why Brazil?

My trip to Brazil was more a personal choice, the main reason for my decision happened seven years ago. Our family hosted an exchange student from Brazil. I really did know very much about Brazil and the people, but that would change in the next few months after our little girl arrived. I was simply amazed that a 16-year-old girl would arrive by herself to live with a family she didn't know and from a city the size of New York City (Salvador) to a small rural Alabama town of 2000 folks. Culture shock on both side of that fence, she spoke broken English and we still talk about our experiences and her times with us. One of my favorite story was the time when she came home from school one day and ask my wife "mom, what is draws" Jeanette and I were confused and Jeanette ask her to use it in a sentence. Fernanda said she heard two girls talking in the gym and they said "girl! What color draws you got on"?

When she returned to Brazil was one of the saddest days of our lives, but with the internet, email we have keep in touch, she still calls us mom and dad and refers to our children as her brothers and sister. So when she finished Law School in March, It was the perfect occasion to visit Brazil.

### Finding the tour

I started to look at motorcycle tours available in Brazil as well to coincide with my trip to Brazil. There where only a few choices in fully escorted tours and most had fixed dates and times, therefore trying to squeeze the graduation and a tour together seemed impossible. While attending BMW MOA in Vermont I again checked out the offered tours and operators and came across Davis Bales, owner/operator of Brazil Motorcycle Adventures. He offered custom tours with custom dates. I would cross paths with Davis Bales again when he came to our Curve Cowboy Reunion 2006 at the Chateau Élan near Atlanta, to my surprise he had gave a custom tour as an silent auction item for our children's charity. I, along with many others bid on the tour, I won the trip with the high bid and it was a win-win situation for the selected children's charity and me.

### Who's Going?

When I won the tour, Davis told me that I could set the dates, the kind of tour suited for the riders and I could start asking others to join me on this tour. Davis wanted the tour to be less than 10 people, the reason was so that we could all be seated together at Dinners and most of the country resorts are

small and limited to a few rooms. So I began to ask friends and post on selected forums. A hometown friend, Tony Davis, retired school principal was the first to jump on board, then a couple from Georgia, I met a couple of years ago in North Carolina. Ron and Barbara just began riding 18 months before, his first bike was a K1200 LT, and therefore he was the newest rider with the fewer miles in the seat. Now I must admit that by the end of the tour they



where both seasoned riders and now experienced on and off road riders, as you will see as you read on about the tour. Two guys from Pennsylvania jointed the tour; Bob and Fred have several tours to their credit and have been riding friends for years. They where great guys and very enjoyable to be around and put up with my endless stories.

Ursula was from Pennsylvania also and learned of the tour while visiting Rio De Janeiro; she joined us for a couple of days at the beginning and then continues on her journey of South America. Claudia was from Rio de Janeiro, a very good rider and a "Brazilian Southern Belle" for sure. She joined and co-hosted our tour while in Rio de Janeiro and then joined us for a weekend ride to [Ouro Preto](#), a world heritage location.

Fernanda, my former exchange student, was able to join me for a couple of day riding during our ride to Ouro Preto. One picture she and I sharing the road with a horse and cart, a very common site.

### What type of tour?

The group came together, new riders, riders that had never ridden off-road, Harley only riders and experienced riders. So I made the decision that we would do a tour that consisted of all paved roads, very limited off-road like in packed gravel to the resort driveway or road. Davis was able to put together an eight-night tour that fit the bill except for

the ride into a couple of the resorts in the mountains. This turned into a challenge a couple of times. We all rode BMW bikes, Ron and Barbara (K1200LT owners) took a RT, Tony (Harley rider) rode a R1150R, Fred (Harley rider) 650 Dakar, Bob and I (both GS owners) rode the 1150GS. Claudia had 650GS. Davis Bales our tour leader rode a 1200GS. Our support vehicle carried an 1150GS; Ricardo our support vehicle driver was a great asset to our tour. On a couple of occasions, flat tire and fuel pump failure, the support vehicle and extra bike paid off. We carried enough gear on the bikes to have a change of clothes, swim wear and such in case the support vehicle was delayed for that day's destination.

### **Sky Marshall at Work**

I headed out to Brazil about two weeks before the rest of the group so I could attend the graduation in Salvador which is located up the Atlanta Coast about 900 miles from Rio De Janeiro. My overnight flight started in Atlanta International airport, the usually checks and visa inspections for the international flight. As we taxi to the runway the Captain come on and advises us of the flight data and wishes up a great flight to Brazil. Then some guy was unhappy with his seating arrangement so the attendants move him about two seats behind me, the captain again announces that we are "cleared for takeoff" and as we turn for the runway this guy jumps up and announces he not happy with that seat either, now the flight attendant and another man (Sky Marshall) escort him to the front of the plane.

I feel the de-acceleration of the jet engines as the captain announces " Ladies and Gentlemen we have a gentlemen that will not be going to Brazil with us, we are returning to the gate" At the gate, the Captain now announces that "the man has been turned over to Security and we don't want his baggage to go with us to Brazil". Well the baggage crew did a great job in finding his baggage with about 600 bags in the 767 belly and they too turned the baggage over to security.

Now a lady in front of me is nervous about the situation and ask the attendant if perhaps he might have left something on board, the attendant said that they figured she was trying for a first class comp seat that was vacant. Well after a two hour delay we are finally on the way, the rest of the flight was uneventful except for the lady sitting with me decide to do some type of yoga about 3 am and slapped me upside the head during her mediation arm swings, of course I could have been snoring too! With the two hours delay I missed my connection in Sao Paulo, well the start of a great tour.

### **Salvador, Brazil**

Brazil is about the size of the United States. With over three million folks in the city, [Salvador](#) is the third largest city in Brazil. This coastal city is located in the northern part of Brazil on the Atlanta Coast. Rich in history, miles and miles of beaches the city is a mix of high-rise apartments and lean-to shacks. There is a distinct contrast in the people, not by color, because there is a variety of skin colors, but you are either wealthy or poor...there seems to be nothing in the middle. If you cook or clean house or a driver or have a regular job, you are wealthy. With the average monthly salary of \$180 per month there is way too many street people at every street corner of folks selling everything. One practice that my Brazilian family does is with leftover food, after the help takes their part is to box up the food and you give it out along the way to work. My Brazilian family had maids for the house, cooks and drivers. The maids and cooks live within the house in their own apartments. They work 40 hours a week; they are paid above the national average and furnished with living quarters, food and cell phones and medical care. The help and nanny for the children become part of the family. Brazil does not have earthquakes, tornadoes or hurricanes, but they have rain the rainy season and landslides.



It is important to remember that you must share the road with horses and carts as farmers carry their goods to market. Small motorbikes and bicycles also use the roads. The countryside looks like a botanical garden.

**To Be Continued in the March Issue.**

## LOOKING BACK

Bob Steber

2007 was a fun year traveling and exploring the beautiful state of Alabama. During the year we enjoyed eight Club ABEES group rides and tours within each of the five regions.

Our first ABEES run was in February (The Great 07 Q Quest) to Ft. Toulouse where we learned it takes five Alabeemers to fix a flat tire on Bill Barnes' F650GS. On the way home from the meeting, Dan Thompson showed us around his area by pointing out many interesting places in Wetumpka and Prattville.

In mid-March, John Harper showed us his part of Alabama with a great ride along the Mt. Cheaha Skyway then to the one of a kind Berman Museum and the wonderful Church of St. Michaels and all Angles in Anniston; then Larry Camp showed us an Old Grist Mill converted into a home and the incredible Confederate memorial at the Janney Furnace in Ohatchee.

Later in March, Dan Thompson organized an incredible VIP tour of the Capital complex including a presentation by Morris Dees of the Civil Rights Memorial. After the tour, Marcella escorted us to Sinclair's, a great eatery in Montgomery.

In April, we made a fun filled run to Gulf Shores sampling ribs at Bama BBQ then stopping for a serious lunch at Uncle Redd's BBQ and Soul Food in Camden. From there we toured the historical buildings in Perdue Hill, visited William Weatherford's (Red Eagle) grave, Ft. Mimms, enjoyed a refreshing drink of cool spring water from the Red Hill Spring and then saw the beautiful Greek Orthodox Church with all of its beautiful mosaics in Malbis.

Mid-May found us going with Ron Riggins on a great historical ride and tour to the Horseshoe Bend Military Park. After a guided tour of the museum and viewing a great film, one of his friends, a Park Ranger, dressed in the uniform of an early 1800s soldier in Andy Jackson's army gave a demonstration of how life would have been as a trooper. From there, we rode to Ft. Jackson/Toulouse to see where the treaty was signed that ended the Creek Indian war and ceded most of the land that is now Alabama. On the way home, we stopped for a Coke break at the very eclectic Caperton's General Store and Pawn Shop in Weogufka, home to everything Confederate.

In June we rode on some of the best backroads in the Southeast in conjunction with our meeting at Sloppy Floyd. Half way though our ride we made a stop at Mamma N'em's farm for a home made lunch.

Our ride in October took us on the Great River Run to Little River Forest near Atmore. We visited Old Cahawba where the scenic Cahaba River flows into the Alabama and the site of the first State Capital. From there we toured the Quilt University at Gees Bend to see where the famous ladies of Gees Bend make some of the most beautiful hand made quilts known to man. After seeing the quilts and how they are made, we crossed the Alabama on the Gees Bend Ferry (wonderful 3-4 mile ferry ride up the river) and had lunch at Uncle Redd's Soul Food and BBQ in Camden. After lunch we headed to the Davis Ferry (side paddle wheeler from the 1930s) to cross the Alabama one more time on the way to our meeting at Little River Forest.

Last but not least, in November, Gary and Angie Dubois hosted dual sport riding Alabeemers to an off road tour in NW Alabama and SW Tennessee. Not only was the riding lots of fun, especially crossing the streams, they prepared two fantastic gourmet camp stove dinners for us on the banks of the Tennessee.

My thanks go out to everyone who participated and especially to John Harper, Larry Camp, Dan and Marcella Thompson, Morris Dees, Ron Riggins, Don Drasheff and Gary and Angie Dubois for planning and hosting our really great club ABEES rides and tours. Every one that rode with you had a wonderful time.

Paul and Gail Thorne did it again. Remember last year they rode to the 4 corners of Alabama in under 24 hours. This year, they completed the Extremely Alabama Challenge (4 corners, highest, lowest and middle points) in less than 36 hours, and after Steve Hebert and Jim Kalahan beat their time, they did the ride again and were able to ride 1,347 miles in 22 hours, 41 minutes. Steve and Jim rode 1,270 miles in 24 hours and 57 minutes. I am pleased to tell you that Steve completed the ride on his 31 year old /6. Congratulations to Paul and Gail, Steve and Jim for their amazing ability to ride that many miles over so many back roads and in such little time.

Additionally, during the year, Martin Benson, Gary and Angie Dubois and Phillip and Martha Warren showed us how much fun we can have by going to points of interest and good eateries that are recommended in our ABEES Travel Guide. Martin mixed business with pleasure by making sales calls on his RT while visiting ABEES locations along the way (check out his stories and photos on the club ABEES forum). Gary and Angie and Phillip and Martha enjoyed little mini vacations by plotting out destinations and favorite rides from their Travel Guide. I am looking forward to seeing you down the backroads in 2008.

## TRAVELING IN 2008

Gary DuBois

As the club's new travel director, I would like to let you know what to expect in 2008. One of our best resources of places to travel in Alabama is the *Alabama Beemers' Exploring & Epicurean Society (ABEES)* touring guide. This guide has a wealth of information on places to visit and eat as well as details on some fantastic rides. I encourage each member to pick up a copy for reference. I would like to see more competition for the jacket this year, but whether you compete or not use this booklet to find that special place you may not have visited before. In your travels if you find a place of interest that is not listed, please provide Bob Steber or myself a write up on the place and we will add it to the guide. Why Bob Steber? Bob has invested countless hours in developing this guide and maintaining its database, so I have asked Bob if he will continue to be the go-to guy on the ABEES stuff.

We will continue to have club rides. Some of those will be in conjunction with the monthly meetings and others will be between the meetings. I know Bob is planning a club ride in conjunction with the March meeting in Nauvoo. I have a club ride tentatively scheduled for the second weekend in April. I have asked Paul and Gail Thorne to plan a ride for the western part of the state. I am asking anyone else to step up and plan a ride in your part of the state. The ride should include some interesting roads, hopefully a couple of points of interest - historical or otherwise, and a place to eat. On past club rides, I have heard complaints that some of the riding is too aggressive or not aggressive enough.

Acknowledging that we have different skill levels or just plain old I like riding a certain style regardless of skill level, I plan to break the rides into two groups - aggressive and leisurely. We'll all get to the same place, just at different times. Hopefully this will cut back on some of the accidents we have had on past club rides.

I will ask different folks to give us a write up on club rides to be shared through the monthly newsletter. As I have proven in past you don't have to be professional writer to submit articles. I guarantee you how you view your riding experience will be interesting to all of us.

If you go on a great trip anywhere, club related or not, please do a write up and submit it to Jamie for publication.

We have made a few changes to the club website, [www.bmwmoal.org](http://www.bmwmoal.org), to add a couple of new menu items where you can download and post the GPS routes for great rides. This includes the files for this year's All-Around Alabama Challenge. This is a 1267-mile route around the periphery of the state on some of the best back roads out there. Check this out on the forum.

Maybe at a couple of the club meetings, we will have a seminar on items such as GPS usage, packing, camping and international travel.

I would appreciate any and all of your ideas on how to make this year a great year of motorcycling traveling.

See you down the road and ride safe.

### BMW MOTORCYCLE OWNERS OF ALABAMA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/2008

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

## CLASSIC/VINTAGE CORNER

### BMW's Leap of Faith - The /5

by Tim McGee

BMW's grasp on the touring market was being challenged like never before. They needed to do something to answer the gauntlet that was being laid down by the Japanese 750K model. Their answer was the /5. First manufactured in 1969 it was first imported to this country in 1970. It was made through 1973 in 3 engine sizes, the R50/5 (7,865 built), R60/5 (22,721 built), and the R75/5 (38,370 built). The R75/5 was the largest displacement motor cycle ever made by the German's. It was widely embraced by the foreign motor cycle press. It was called the "Wunder Bike" in Japan. In a lot of ways it was a major leap in technology for BMW.

#### **There were a number of firsts for BMW:**

First cam under the crankshaft design gave more ground clearance.

First 12 volt electrical system.

First high pressure oiling system.

First electric start engine.

First non sport model capable of a true 100 mph.

First BMW with fiberglass fenders.

#### **And a number of lasts for BMW:**

Last 4 speed BMW transmission

Last instruments in the head light.

The most unusual /5 was the "Toaster Tank" made in late 1972 and 1973. Considered ugly by the hard core BMW enthusiasts at the time, many owners traded their gas tanks for a touring tank, offered as an option from BMW. Dealers at the time said they can remember having many toaster tanks on the shelf that had been traded in by their owners. Today it is the most desirable /5 for the vintage nut. The tank had large chrome panels on both sides, thus the name "Toaster Tanks". They also had large chrome side covers or battery covers as they are sometimes referred to as. They were a site to behold in those days.

During its production run they made both SWB (short wheel base) and LWB (Long Wheel Base) models. A little history is in order here. In the early 70's some BMW's were suffering from a high speed wobble called a "Tank Slapper" by some. There are a number of different ideas as to what caused this problem. At the time folks were adding fairings for better wind protection. The bikes had not been designed for these add ons and if you weren't on top of steering head bearing maintenance, and swing arm bushing maintenance, the problem would sneak up on you and put you on the pavement if you weren't

careful. BMW found that a longer wheel base was much more forgiving to folks that wanted to add accessories to their bike. Thus the 1973 1/2 model as it was sometimes referred to, had 2 inches added to its wheel base. These models were made at the end of 1973 and were referred to as the 1973 1/2 LWB models. This was so successful at solving the problem that all air head BMW following the /5 series had the additional wheel base added.

Below is my 1973 1/2 R75/5 outfitted with a Wixom fairing, bags, and truck, referred to at the time as the "Wixom Setup". It also has a Teutonic "1,000 mile seat" fitted. These were popular accessories of the time, and a good example of items that were being added to bikes of those days. These bikes are very sought after today and their value has doubled in the last 2-3 years. These are the next great BMW collectibles in my feeling. The nice thing about them is they are capable machines that can be used for freeway riding and if properly cared for they are very dependable.



Popular upgrades are electronic ignitions, and alternator upgrades. These machines were not designed for a lot of electrical add ons. Their alternator was only capable of 180 watts, so electric vests and gloves were out of the question. There are alternator upgrades available to day that will bring the alternator output up to 400-450 watts. Everything you need to make these upgrades available through a variety of sources. One of the best is Motorrad Elektrik and our own Rick Jones. Rick can sell you everything you need and can even install it for you if you like.

New this motorcycle sold for around \$1,400. Today good examples of R75/5 can fetch over \$5,000. If you're looking for something to invest in, this would be a good model. They can still be had for a reasonable price, and you can still get parts through your local dealer.

## ALL AROUND ALABAMA - 2008

Bob Steber

The BMWMOAL & Bogart's "impossible" challenge for 2008 is to circumnavigate Alabama within 48 hours, staying inside the state boundaries while riding as close to the borders as possible. You can start at any waypoint along the route and must return to that starting waypoint within the allotted time. The challenge can be ridden either clockwise or counter clockwise

The calibrated route starts in Gulf Shores and travels clockwise. If you wish to start at a location other than Gulf Shores, you will have to recalculate your route to match your new starting point.

Along the way, you will ride through many interesting small to medium towns and cities, while avoiding as many heavily traveled major roads as possible. Most of the roads you ride are small scenic county roads (some are very twisty) and you will make 188 turns within 1,238 miles to complete the All Around Alabama challenge.

The 2008 challenge will test your endurance and navigational skills to a high degree, even when using a GPS. To help you with your navigation, a detailed route sheet showing turn by turn directions including total miles and leg miles is available for you to download at [BMWMOAL.org](http://BMWMOAL.org) (**additional info here**). You can also download the Garmin GPS route file from the website. If you do not have access to a computer and or can't download the route sheet, you may contact your Travel Director to have one can be mailed to you.

The route sheet and Garmin GPS route file should be considered only to give you approximate distances between turns, because no motorcycle has the same odometer calibration and GPS units may not produce the same distance calibration either. The 0 distance on the route sheet indicates that your next turn is between 0 ft and one mile, but in most instances, the turn will be within 1/2 mile. The arrow points to the direction of turn at each waypoint.

We are on the honor system, but your photographs and stories about interesting discoveries you make along the way will be greatly appreciated. Your fellow Alabeemers are looking forward to hearing all about your adventure, so please send your stories and photos to the Travel Director and or post them to our website forums. The newsletter editor would also like to receive some articles for the newsletter.

As you ride by ABEES points, be sure to count them

for qualification to win Bogart's Olympia AST Jacket. Riders who successfully complete the All Around Alabama challenge and also qualify to win the jacket by riding to twenty or more ABEES points, will receive 10 bonus tickets for a chance to win the Bogart's Olympia AST Jacket.

Good luck with riding the BMWMOAL & Bogart's All around Alabama - 2008 challenge. But, whatever you do, please do not override your endurance. If you feel tired, stop your ride and take a break.

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### PICTURES FROM THE MONTEVALLO MEETING



**As told to me by Andy the Armadillo at Camp GS Wilderness Waterloo, AL**

I was just minding my own business on a beautiful fall day when I was invaded by two wheeled motor vehicles, and two legged man creatures. I later learned that the two wheeled things were called motorcycles.

They all dismounted from the metal things and proceeded to start putting up what I heard them say were sleeping houses; tents, is what I think they called them. Don't they know that a hole in a tree or in the warm earth with some leaves pulled over is better than what looked to me like closely woven spider webs.

Anyway... Then they all jumped back on those two wheeled things and left. I started to investigate but decided I would take advantage of the warm days and finish my nap, after being so rudely awoken from it.

Later that afternoon they came back again and I heard one of them say something about some sort of bag he had forgotten. He said he needed it to sleep in; strange I thought, he could just burrow into some leaves and be quite comfortable. But his fellow travel mates all said "What a shame", and they all pulled something out of their funny looking sleeping things to give him.

It was starting to get dark now so the humans started a fire. You know we creatures of the woods do not like fire, but in this case it was cozy and I could make my way up closer to listen because they were all busy talking and eating; Oh the wonderful smells that came from those big pots. I hope they drop a few pieces.

The humans all sat down around the fire to eat and started talking at once, I was able to get a bit closer and heard interesting tales

that I will relate to you now....When they left they went to climb mountains and go across water on these two wheeled things. They all thought they had done something quite amazing. I don't understand that at all as we animals do that all the time and never say a word about it. Well on with my story. One of the humans was going through the water and decided he would play longer than the others. I remember the other humans all laughing and saying at least you "didn't lose it", or go down and get muddy. They all talked about how much fun it was to ride up the mountains and through the water. I do that all the time so I don't see the big deal, but it seemed to have made them all very happy. The fire started to die down and all the humans crawled into their moveable caves for the night. I found a nice spot near the food table and did a bit of cleaning up before I too snuggled into my leaves and went to sleep.

I was again rudely awakened the next morning when these humans started getting ready to leave again. I eagerly stuck my nose out hoping to catch a yummy smell, but none came. They just all took off. So I curled up and went back to sleep. They were gone all day this time and I got to really investigate things. They have some strange "tools" such as this thing that supports them off the ground. It is very difficult to get in and out of but quite comfortable if positioned just right. Lots of ropes and strings to hold down the strange sleeping caves. I guess they would float away without the strings. Oh I hear something; better head back to my hideout.

This time when they all came in they were all taking about one of them having lost some thing called sunglasses. I didn't know that humans keep sunshine in glasses. He was not happy about

having lost that glass. The same one was not happy about having wet feet either. I don't understand that either. Just lick them until they are dry and warm. But the human said something about having to put on wet boots the next morning. So they built another fire and tried to dry stuff out. One of the humans got his feet too close to the fire. He didn't know it but I did, I smelled something burning. Once he realized it he began a very funny dance which must have been a dance to the fire gods or something.

Again that night some amazing smells came from the big pots. This time there were lots of little pieces dropped and I was so happy I forgave them for interrupting my solitude.

The next day they all got up and put the spider web caves into bags and piled all kinds of stuff on the two wheeled vehicles and left. At last peace and quiet. I will admit that I will miss the easy snacking. Just as I had settled in for my mid morning, pre afternoon nap one of the humans came back and stirred up the fire. What's this I wondered. Had he become separated from the herd and lost? I felt sorry for him. No animal likes to be separated from its herd. Just then two more of the humans drove up and they started talking about dead things and flat things, I crawled a bit closer to make sure Aunt Sally had not wandered out without her hearing aide again and gotten run over. But just as I got close enough I saw one of the humans attach a hose to the round black thing and then all this noise started. When it stopped everyone was happy and they disconnected the hose and all left again.

I waited for a bit to see what would happen next but I guess the humans had enough fun in the woods for this trip.

Sincerely, Andy B. Armadillo

## AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

Red cloud

The bike runs effortlessly on the slight downhill run into a blind right hand corner as I pick my line...easy...easy...not too fast... aah, smooth. Now pop the bike upright and set up for the left hander ahead...look for the groove...that's it...add a little power and Wow, what a feeling. Don't get too complacent for there is another blind right hander just ahead. The road sign says "Caution: Congestion Ahead" but I ignore it as the tourist season has not yet set in and I know the locals do not walk or park in the road.

The road is a smooth ribbon of asphalt that wanders along with the river on one side and a black bluff on the other that drips moisture out of the mountain. The thought crosses my mind that this road was originally carved out of the wilderness so that someone could get his wares to market. The settlers that laboriously hacked out the road probably followed a trail that my ancestors had used for hundreds of years for the same purpose. Even this early in the Spring the bluff side is dusted with small blue flowers that are already blooming. As I gaze ahead down the road and drink in the sight of the road and river I realize that this is still America the Beautiful.

The old woman that is working in her tiny garden on the other side of the river stops to give me a glance and a wave. I wave back and set up for a quick ess curve that almost catches me off guard. Although it has been a while since I saw another vehicle I know how important it is to maintain lane discipline; all it takes is to swing wide on one curve and things could turn nasty. The road is smooth and the air is clean. All is well in my head.

Since I fueled up at the gap I have plenty of gas left; I have ample rations on board and a permit to camp anywhere on Federal Land so there is no pressure to arrive on time at any destination. With this new sense of freedom Raven and I charge on down the river road and pick up the pace a little just because it feels right, not because we must keep up with anyone nor do we have anything to prove, but because it feels right. My head is clear. For a moment there is no war in Iraq where my brothers are being killed, there is no economic recession, there is no racial stress, and there is no drug problem. All that exists for me at this very moment is America the Beautiful.

I become a little hungry so Raven and I pull into a roadside table for a short rest. I have some jerky in my bags and find a little spring of crystal clear water coming out of the mountain. Lunch is good and I reflect briefly how it may have been not so different a couple of hundred years ago as my great-grandfather could have passed through this very spot on horseback. I can feel the cold of the river as it rushes past, seeking its way toward larger and ever larger rivers before pouring into the ocean. I wonder if the river has always been here; is it eternal? It seems to never stop or slow but plods on with an unfaltering determination.

Back on the highway we leave the river for a little while and climb towards the mountain range ahead. As we climb the air becomes cooler and dryer. I can breathe really well. Although it is getting somewhat late in the day I think it would be better to seek a camp at less altitude. The road crests the mountain and it seems that I can see forever. The bike acts if it likes the altitude and makes good power as I exit the long sweeper that leads into the tunnel. Darn, I never do like the tunnels and this one is no different. Bright sunlight with contracted pupils and then **bang** into the darkness of the tunnel. Is that something ahead? A bicyclist? Or worse yet, a bear? Darn it, why don't they put better lights on BMW's.

Safely out of the tunnel we press on toward the valley below that I had spotted from the mountain top. I point Raven toward a series of curves ahead and let him kind of have his head, so to speak. The bike falls into a comfortable rhythm of downhill left then right then left then right turns. This continues for twenty or so miles before arriving onto the valley floor. My head is clear. I realize that I am smiling.

The road begins to follow another river and we settle into a comfortable gait along the slow sweepers as I enjoy the scenery of this calm valley contrasted against a background of steep mountains. I see a spot ahead just off the road that looks like a good place to camp and pull in for a better look. The ground is dry, there is plenty of spring water, and firewood is for the picking up. I set up my tent and gather enough firewood for the night. I have some dehydrated soup in my bag that is easily prepared and very warming. I settle into my sleeping bag and zip up the tent. For just a short while before falling asleep I have time to think...this truly is America the Beautiful.

# BMW Motorcycle Owners of Alabama

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**Dedicated to safe and enjoyable motorcycling**



**Please visit the BMWMOAL web site at [www.bmwmoal.org](http://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**

Feb 23 - 24. Blue Springs State Park Clio, AL  
Mar 29 - 30 Harbin Hotel & City Park Nauvoo, AL  
Apr 26 - 27 Moundville Park, Moundville, AL  
May 22 - 25 Great Chicken Rally Huntsville, AL  
Jun 28 - 29 High Valley Cmpgrnd, Suches , GA  
Jul 26 - 27 Guntersville Park, Guntersville, AL  
Aug 30 - 31 Blue Ridge MC Cmpgrnd Cruso, NC  
Sep 27 - 28 Shell Mound Campground  
Nickajack Dam, Jasper, TN  
Oct 25 - 26 Waggoners RibFest, Centerville, TN  
Dec 6 Christmas party (To be announced)

## **Other Events of Interest**

Jul 17 - 19 BMWMOA Int'nl Rally, Gillette WY  
Aug 28 - 30 Curve Cowboy Reunion Midway, Utah