

SEPTEMBER 2020

NORCAL NEWS



Ride to Camp

Camp to Ride



BMW Motorcycle Club of Northern California

Captain's Log

In a manner to be expected of the year 2020 (and what I'm now calling "The Lost Year") – we've jumped right into fire season. And with much of the Bay Area affected, as well as a lot of the rest of the State, we are faced with a lot of areas of poor air quality and a lot of temporary road closures. And we're seeing several of our favorite riding areas ravaged by fire, evidence we will surely see on our future rides. And of course, Covid is still a big factor for us, so no organized group riding or campouts in the immediate future for the Club. We are holding on to hope that a version of Oktoberfest will still happen at Liberty Glen,

which so far has been spared by the Walbridge Fire. The fire did come pretty close so we'll see.

There has been some great rides shared on the Club Facebook page, it's great to see folks getting out. Thanks for sharing and don't forget to share some of that with our crack newsletter Editor, John Ellis. He's always looking for great moto related content.

Stay safe folks! We'll get through the Covid closures and fire season and before you know it we'll be back to our regular format.

Nick Gloyd

BMW announce ZERO MAINTENANCE CHAIN

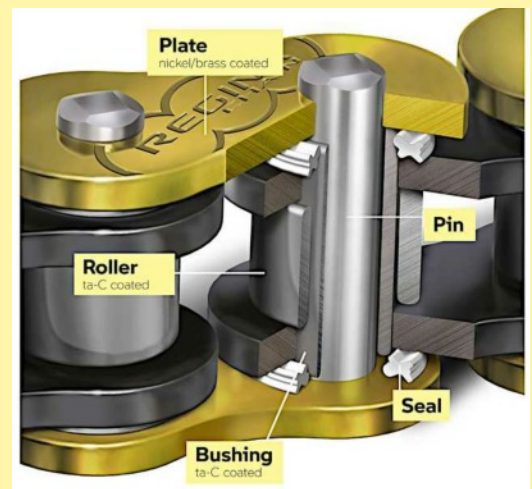
In a recent press release BMW Motorrad have announced the availability of a new chain the requires ZERO maintenance. They call this new chain X-ring design which has a "tetrahedrally amorphous carbon diamond like coating on the rollers and has actual diamond hardness"

BMW says its new M Endurance chains don't need maintenance—period.

Looking at the picture accompanying the press release it is clear that this new chain is made by Regina Chains. Looking at the current Regina web site there is no mention of the X-Ring but there is Z-Ring (available since 2003) so it seems logical that the next product will use the "X" designation.

The press release says the chain is available as an option in 525 pitch for both S1000RR and S1000XR, but it does not currently show up in the build a bike options on the BMW web site.

Speaking as one who as spent 50 years up to my elbows in chain grease, this looks like it could be a break through product. Check out press releases over the next few months to find out when this might be generally available.



Editors Corner

As I have mentioned previously, being newsletter editor when none of the usual club stuff is happening is a challenge. Even though I am saying it myself I have been very pleased with the last few newsletters due to members sending me old articles and content together with more recent adventures. By mid-August, last month, to be perfectly honest, the pages of the September issue were looking worryingly blank. Then out of the blue came something by Wynne Benti and September was saved. Wynne has written articles for the newsletter in the past, and she writes so well I knew we were all in for a real treat. This time the article is about Wynne's motorcycle trip though the Australian Outback. I have been editing this newsletter for 5 years now, but this is something quite different. I was shocked when I first read it. I won't say any more because I don't want to spoil it for you. The picture on the front cover this month is of Wynne crossing the Gregory River in Australia. Read and enjoy - tell your spouse and friends. Don't miss it.

In addition I would like to thank Ed Perry for a couple of contributions. The first related to a story he told when we

last visited the Junction Bar and Grill last month. I repeated it to my wife and she fell about laughing. I asked Ed to write it down so every could enjoy. With Covid, the fires and current politics I think we all deserve a good laugh. Ed also added an article about the rescue tape that he considers to be an essential part of any tool kit.

From the archives comes Alan Huntzinger's poem about the evil yellow bugs, and for something completely different I included my tribulations associated with getting my BMW car through the CA smog testing. Hope this might help others facing similar challenges with old cars.

I made it though September newsletter but I am going to be facing the same blank pages in two weeks time. Take pity on me. Send me stuff..

John Ellis

Breaking News - The Junction on Mines Rd survived the fire. Lost all inventory due to power outage.

An old fuel pump flange issue resurfaces - New Recall Notice

BMW of North America issued a recall on several 2005 to 2012 models due to a potentially faulty fuel pump.

According to the defect notice published by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), ten percent of a total of 16,926 motorcycles could present the issue. The following BMW models are involved:

2009-2011 BMW K 1300 S
2009-2011 BMW K 1300 GT
2010-2011 BMW S 1000 RR
2005-2011 BMW R 1200 GS
2005-2011 BMW R 1200 GS Adventure
2005-2011 BMW R 1200 R
2005-2011 BMW R 1200 RT
2006-2008 BMW R 1200 S
2005-2008 BMW R 1200 ST

2006 BMW HP2 Enduro
2007-2009 BMW HP2 Megamoto
2007-2010 BMW HP2 Sport
2005-2008 BMW K 1200 R
2005-2008 BMW K 1200 R Sport
2005-2008 BMW K 1200 S
2005-2008 BMW K 1200 GT
2012 BMW K 1600 GT
2012 BMW K 1600 GTL

This recall is directly related to 2013 recall number 13V-617 that detailed how excessive loads on the fuel pump flange could cause the plastic to crack and lead to a fuel leak. At the time, the fix involved the installation of a reinforcing ring, provided the cracks were minor enough not to prompt a replacement of the pump.

Some of the owners of the bikes that received the support ring in the 2013 recall have since had to return to their dealer for a fuel leak and ultimately had the fuel pump replaced. Owners who have not had their motorcycle fixed since are at risks of dealing with a fuel leak which, in the most extreme cases, could cause a fire.

Recall number 20V-471 is expected to begin on October 2, 2020 at which point owners of the affected models will be notified and invited to make an appointment at their BMW dealer to have the issue fixed. Owners who have paid to have the fuel pump replaced are eligible to a compensation.

Should they have any questions or concerns, owners of the models listed are welcome to reach out to the BMW customer service at 1-800-525-7417 to have their VIN verified. They can also contact the NHTSA's hotline service at 1-888-327-4236 or visit the www.safercar.gov for more information.

ODE TO THE YELLOW RUG BY ALAN HUNTZINGER



Yellow Bug...Yellow Bug, where ever we roam, We can count on you to screw up our chrome,

You "\$plat" on our windshield til we can't see the hiway Yellow Bug...Yellow Bug! Why do you treat us this way?

Now I've wiped off some red bug, some green and some blue, but mostly....It's You!

When jobs were handed out by the "BIG BUG" in the sky, We know you stood up and looked him right in the eye- and said in a voice that was so loud and so clear - "Hey there Big Bug, now you listen here."

The other bugs can have the cars, trucks and buses, but as for Us Yellow Bugs, "We'll take the Beemers"!!



Ah yes, Yellow Bug, we know that it's true, We'll clean and polish and then meet You! Our nice shiny Beemers, we ride them so proud; A smile on our face that stands out in the crowd.

When it's all freshly polished, it gives our heartstrings a tug and then "\$PLAT" ... there it is.... That Damned YELLOW BUG!



Australia! by Wynne Benti

For years, I eyed a deliciously described Compass Expeditions tour from Cairns to Broome, cross-country through Australia's outback. Finally, I paid for the trip and signed up for the ride. When the itinerary arrived with the full trip description, I realized that perhaps I was in over my head and called the tour operator, Jerry. He suggested doing the easier first half of the trip, from Cairns to Alice Springs, and adding a later trip to Tasmania. He said, "We'll take care of you Wynne," so with excited trepidation I said, "Okay!"

In preparation for the sand, I took the Rawhyde course in Castaic and felt fairly comfortable with the training I received. I packed my Sidi Adventure boots and on July 25, 2019, after a three-hour delay, my Virgin Australia flight left Los Angeles. Fifteen hours later, I flipped open my passport book in Sydney and *Australia!* was stamped inside.

From my hotel balcony at the Mantra Trilogy in Cairns, I watched huge clouds illuminated by moonlight float across the Pacific on the warm tropical breeze. This was heaven. Two large black shapes flew past a street lamp below. They turned towards my room and as they passed by in between the hotel buildings, I saw big ears flapping in the breeze. They weren't birds, but bats as big as hawks.

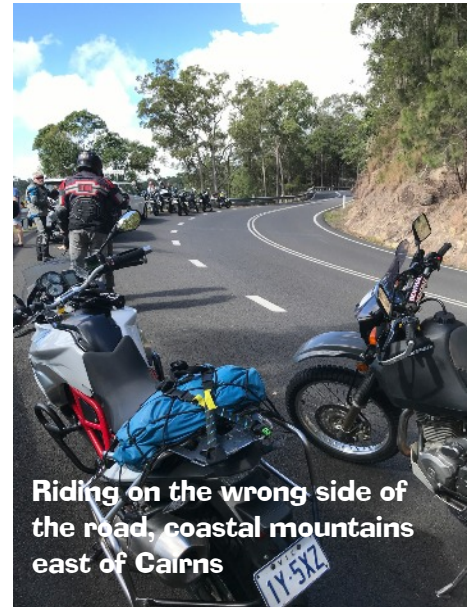
In the morning, I strolled along the beachside boardwalk. The sea was calm, a low tide exposing the mud flats with rays of sunlight breaking through the grey monsoon clouds. No one was swimming or walking on the sand. I stopped to read a bright yellow sign. "Warning," it said. "Crocodiles inhabit this area—attacks may cause injury or death."

Our tour group met at the hotel pool in the afternoon, over fresh fruit, drinks and liability waivers. There were twelve of us—two Americans; one rider from Great Britain; and seven Australians, four of those were two couples riding two-up on their own 1200GS's—and our tour leader Jerry with our support driver, Brendan. After dinner, we reconvened in the garage to examine the motorcycles. My name was taped to a white F 700GS. Mike Iseman, "Iceman," a Harley rider from Delray Beach was on a F 800GS. Two of the Australians were on Suzuki 650s and the rest were on 1200GS's.

We packed up and were off early, headed west through town, onto winding roads through lush coastal mountains. It was my first-time riding with a group and they rode just like American BMW riders—very fast—but on the opposite side of the road. West of the mountains, the landscape morphed into country farmland, then into red soil wildland-scrub and eucalyptus (gums) forests. Where there were eucalyptus trees, there were termite mounds, some over six feet in height. It was a full day's ride to Undara Volcanic National Park where we a night glamping amongst the gums and where I saw my first kangaroos in the wild. We took a tour down into deep dark volcanic tubes filled with ferns and ceilings covered with small bats.

Breakfast was cooked on an open campfire with a pot of delicious coffee. If a plate was left unattended, kookaburras swooped down from overhead perches, snatching up bacon and toast. Before leaving Undara, the Australians advised Iceman and I to be prepared for road trains, massive trucks, bigger than semis pulling two or more trailers used to haul cattle and goods across the country, and, wedge-tailed eagles, Australia's largest bird, that gather around dead carcasses and could knock a rider off his bike.

In Forsayth, a small cattle-ranching town out on the savannah, we stayed at Goldfield's Hotel, a European-style hotel with open-air dining. We rode out to Cobold Gorge, tackling our first dirt road and my first road train, which kicked up a blinding cloud of dust. I pulled over and waited for him to pass. We dodged



Riding on the wrong side of the road, coastal mountains east of Cairns



Group shot in Karumba (Wynne second from front)



Sunset from the tavern at Karumba

white, the closest thing I could get to an American coffee. After finally realizing that Australia was a nation of tea and beer drinkers, I learned how to order a cup of coffee—short or long black, a flat white, latte, cappuccino or espresso. The sun was just coming up as I finished brekkie, so I walked to the beach. Folks were out past the crocodile signs fishing from lawn chairs. I walked along the beach picking up seashells, keeping a wary eye out for salties. Before leaving town, we spent an hour at the Barramundi Discovery Center, learning about the town's history, its prawn industry and its indigenous people.

herds of Brahma range cattle that unexpectedly ran across the road in herds from the bush. At Cobold, we boarded a flat-bottomed boat and toured the inside of the deep gorge. Freshwater crocodiles, *freshies*, lounged along the shoreline, oblivious to the tourists.

Leaving Forsayth, we rode the Savannah Way to the beach town of Karumba, on a one lane paved road with wide dirt shoulders on either side. As vehicles approached each other head on in the paved section, at the last minute, each would pull off on either shoulder to pass. There were cattle and hairy black wild boar carcasses scattered along the road.

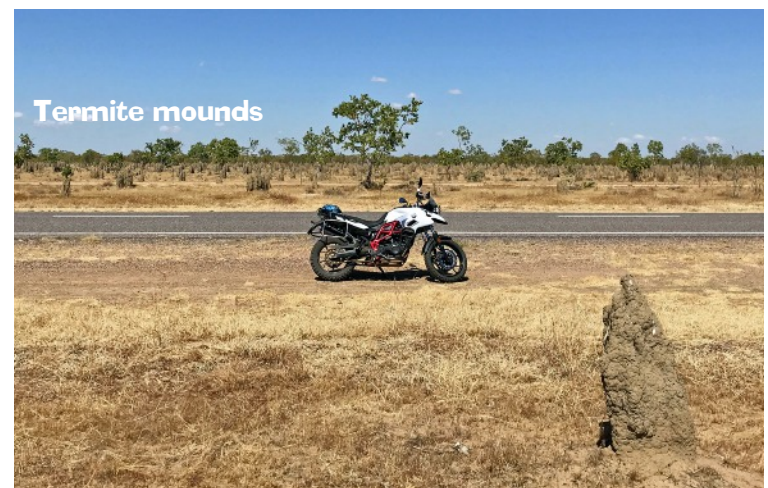
Sixty kilometers from Karumba, we stopped for a picnic lunch in Normanton where "A Town Called Alice" was filmed. Jerry and Brendan set out a fabulous spread beneath a covered picnic area and we filled our plates. When finished, I walked over to the trash bag to throw away two remaining orange peels. As my plate left my hand, the sunlight disappeared, and I felt the sweep of sandpaper across my face. I didn't know what hit me, then heard a communal, "Oh s--t!" as my head and cheek began to bleed. A group of black kites had gathered in a snagged tree above the picnic area, and one dive-bombed to grab the orange peels. Jerry bandaged my forehead and cheek. I said, "This is either the worst thing that will happen or an omen of what's to come."

Jerry warned us to watch for wallabies and kangaroos along the next stretch of road. Unscathed, we pulled into Karumba, a classic sixties-era beach town on the edge of the Gulf of Carpentaria, but eerily void of people.

We all checked into our rooms at Ash's Holiday Units. The group met for happy hour and dinner at the Sunset Tavern, a large open air café and pub at the water's edge, mangroves lining the shoreline to the east. I walked down to the beautiful, empty beach where that familiar yellow crocodile sign greeted me. It seemed an odd thing to live in beach towns where the beach was unusable. The tavern, however, was packed with people.

Up before sunrise, I walked to the Seabreeze, a small grocery store and café, and was the only person in the place. Like most everything else in Karumba, the store was for sale. The shopkeeper prepared a good omelet, fried potatoes and a flat

Leaving the coast, riders in the front of the pack were on top of each other. Kangaroos grazed alongside the road edge, so I backed off. If I slowed down to let them pass, they would carefully hop across the road. The rider in front of me, nailed a kangaroo. Poor thing got caught up in his front wheel, while its confused partner watched from the side of the road. We stopped so the rider could pick the kangaroo parts from his front wheel. We rode through miles of dark brown termite mounds on flat yellow grasslands, then back into the red soils of the bush. 'Feral Frank' so named because of his penchant for racing off into the bush, got a stick through the back tire of his Suzuki 650. While the rest of us rode on at our own pace, he stayed back with Brendan and Jerry to change the tire. By now we were in Outback Queensland.



We followed miles of washboard before turning down a narrow one lane road of deep sand that dropped into the Gregory River canyon. The weekend at Rawhyde, under the tutelage of Rob Day, prepared me well for sand. Passing fallen riders, I proudly made it through the deep sand and hairpin turns without mishap to our campsite for the night.

We set up tents beneath the gums, about fifty feet from the water. Jerry assured us we didn't have to worry about freshies. Jerry

and Brendan set up the kitchen and prepared an excellent dinner. I went to bed early, still dealing with jet lag. Hadn't thought to arrive a few days early. Through the netting on the ceiling, I watched the stars and listened to the campfire chat. As the night went on, one by one, riders stumbled back to their tents.

Before the others were awake, I walked through the eucalyptus forest and had my first wildlife encounter. A kangaroo stood up, perhaps eight feet away, chewing on leaves. She looked at me for a moment then hopped off.

On the way out, one rider dramatically careened through the sand and crashed, unhurt. The road turned to deep washboard one-track between deep loose gravel. There were several river crossings before arriving at our next stop—Riversleigh, a UNESCO World Heritage Area, known for its fossilized mammals. We parked, and walked the interpretive trail along rocky cliffs above a vast tableland. It was noon and hot when we got back to the motorcycles.

The road ahead was rugged—loose gravel with deep washboard



imbedded with rocks. For miles, I stood on my pegs then sat down for a moment to rest. The front end of the F700GS went into an immediate tank slap. Instead of powering out of it, I let up on the throttle and the wheel locked right and the bike bounced over rock and gravel to a violent halt, compressing me against the front wheel. I laid in the gravel looking up at the bright blue sky, limp, unable to move. The sky was so blue and clear, I wondered if I was still alive. My CamelBak popped open, soaking me. I hoped it wasn't blood. I heard a motorcycle engine stop and a voice crying, "Oh my God, oh my God." Through the dust, I saw Geoff bending down and Christine behind him, instructing me not to move. Klaus and Kerry arrived. They disentangled me from the F700GS and removed my helmet and pack.

Jerry and Frank were miles ahead with the only satellite phone. Mark, the best rider, who never fell once, rode off to get them. The group held a tarp over me as a shield from the sun. A couple in a car pulling a trailer stopped. She identified herself as a nurse and sat with me. An hour passed before Jerry returned and a call was made. First responders came from a mine several miles away and called for an air ambulance. They removed my boots and socks.

A big yellow RacQ Lifeflight helicopter arrived on scene with a pilot and two medics. Kerry whispered something about their good looks. One of the medics asked if I wanted the green whistle. Kerry looked over her aviator glasses and said, smiling, "You want the green whistle." Morphine always makes life more

pleasurable. The men loaded me onto a stretcher and into the helicopter. The pilot tackled seventy minutes of high winds to Mt. Isa Base Hospital, a two-day trip by motorcycle from the crash location and luckily, a planned stop on the trip ahead.

In the helicopter, through the morphine-induced haze, I asked the medic tending to me to put my socks in my pack. My socks were actually in my boots, back at the support vehicle. He smiled. I recall him saying something about having to cut my shirt off to check my chest, and replied, "Not the Aerostitch," which ended the conversation, if that conversation even existed. My favorite BMW Santiago jacket was also left behind.

I laid on a table in the emergency room at Mt. Isa Base, barefoot, in my gravel-filled BMW Comfort Shell pants. The emergency room doctor said I had a fractured C7 vertebrae. He pressed his forefinger and thumb together, holding them up and said, "You were that close to not making it." A nurse came over and said she was giving me a dose of morphine. I said, "That sounds like a lot. Can you just give me half?" She proceeded to put a hypodermic needle into my stomach. "What, no drip?" I was horrified. "We have better control over the pharmaceuticals this way," she said. When she came by a few hours later to check on me, and I asked if I could have the other half of the morphine, she said, "No."

Wearing a hard neck brace, I was moved to a room which I shared with an indigenous Australian name Del, a land agent for the Northern Territorial government. She helped indigenous people claim legal rights to their land in court. Between her stories about being a land agent, I told her that my socks never showed up, and that I thought the medic may have taken them. She smiled and said, "Maybe he just likes socks."

Dr. David Stoney, the hospital director, stopped by and said that my x-rays were in Townsend being examined by orthopedic experts to determine if I should continue with the group. "I have to go on with the group," I said. How would I get around Mt. Isa with no shoes and no socks? Three days later, when Jerry and Brendan came to the hospital to get me, I was in a soft neck brace, walking with a pair of crutches, my badly sprained right ankle wrapped in a long cloth bandage.

For the rest of the adventure, I rode with Brendan in the Toyota Ute pulling the trailer along relentless washboard. In vast empty flat scrublands, one of the trailer brakes began to smoke. We stopped so Brendan could remove the wheel and cut the burning brake. In the outback town of Boulia, along a dusty red curb outside our motel, he pulled off another wheel and removed a second brake.

We started out on the Donohue Highway, 250 miles of deep red sand to Tobermorey Station. Brendan and I followed, watching riders navigate through the deep sand, swerving on and off the road, falling. Paul, the oldest rider, crashed his Suzuki 650, shattering his wrist. His bike was put in the trailer with mine and he joined us in the cab, with his wrist wrapped in a bandage. Kerry also sat in the Ute, while Klaus rode his 1200GS. Fully-suited Christine clung to the side of the Ute while Geoff navigated his 1200GS through the sand. Richard, the solo rider from Great Britain crashed into the back of Jerry and they both went down. From our camp that night at Tobermorey, it was another 375 miles of deep red sand to Alice Springs.

In the morning, Klaus loaded his 1200GS in the back of the trailer with the two other bikes. Kerry, Klaus and Paul sat in the back seat of the Ute. I was in the front holding the fire extinguisher should a brake catch fire. Christine spent most of the day, standing on the Ute's running board. Iceman went down once, but got up, then went down again, and was done—bad ankle



Donohue Highway

reached the Stuart Highway and paved all the way to the Doubletree Hilton in Alice Springs. Where the Plenty and Stuart Highways converged, we stopped to look at the mileage sign: Jervois Station to QLD Border 4WD ONLY; QLD Border to Boulia 4WD ONLY.

I was so happy to lay down on crisp clean sheets at the Doubletree, to have a glass of wine, a shower and a good vegan meal in the restaurant. I got a moon boot for my right ankle at Alice Springs Hospital.

Most of the group continued on to Broome, another 1640 miles via a side-trip to Uluru, then back to Alice Springs and across the Tanami Desert to the Gibb River Road. Paul sat in the Ute the entire way with his arm in cast and sling.

They picked up four additional riders in Alice Springs. One was a French couple and she was on my bike. The

sprain. The side stand tore through his armored pants and ripped open his leg. Klaus moved to the other running board opposite Christine to make room for Iceman in the back seat. We left the F 800GS in the bush as there was no more room in the trailer.

It was dusk when we arrived at Jervois Station, a large cattle operation along the Marshall River, a big dry river bed surrounded by vast eucalyptus forest. It was our last camp before Alice Springs. Frank and Jerry unhitched the trailer and drove the Ute back to pick up the F800GS—a roundtrip of about six hours. I gave one of my crutches to Iceman. Brendan and those remaining, who could still stand, prepared a late dinner in darkness, drinking all of the remaining alcohol, chatting about the upcoming road conditions. The worst of the sand had yet to be traveled.

other new couple dropped out before finishing the return trip from Uluru to Alice Springs. Though I did not do the second half, when the trip ended, the chatter continued on WhatsApp, and this is what transpired.

All of the brakes on the trailer were replaced in Alice Springs. Christine and Geoff's 1200GS developed a mechanical issue. Jerry gave them his 1200GS and he rode Iceman's F 800GS. Christine and Geoff decided that it was safer to ride the pavement from Alice Springs to Broome, meeting up with the group when possible. Unfortunately, they hit a patch of sand and went down. Jerry's bike was all but totaled. Both were air-ambulanced to Kununurra. Christine had a few fractured ribs and Geoff's leg was shattered. Both of their cell phones went missing.

The support trailer lost two wheels and was abandoned on the Gibb River Road until Jerry and Brendan could get to the next town, 125 miles away, borrow a trailer then shuttle back to their trailer in the middle of the night, to get everyone's gear and supplies. After the trip was over, they procured new wheels and rescued the trailer which sat quietly on the side of the road waiting for their return.

I was two days getting back to Los Angeles, flying from Alice Springs to Adelaide, then to Sydney and on to Los Angeles. A prescription of Codalgin-Forte helped me survive Virgin Australia's economy seats on the fifteen-hour flight home. The 200-mile drive home was not without its challenges. I stopped at Costco to pick up a dog bed, then proceeded to back out of my parking spot into the side of a new Toyota Highlander. By the time I got home, I was in bed for a month, and in physical therapy for six.

In April 2020, I received an email from Jerry. Due to Australia's Covid-19 lockdown, Compass ceased operations and was refunding everyone's money for future trips.

It was quite an adventure though next time, going straight to the Doubletree Hilton in Alice Springs and spending a week sightseeing via tour bus, has a certain appeal.



Campsite at Tobermorey

The remaining 215-mile segment of our trip was on the Plenty Highway. Klaus rolled his 1200GS out of the trailer to make room for Iceman's F 800GS. Kerry, Paul and Iceman sat in back while I rode in front with Brendan. Christine jumped on and off the side of the Ute along the way. Eventually the sand turned to packed sand, and eventually pavement. It was late afternoon when we

Wynne Benti

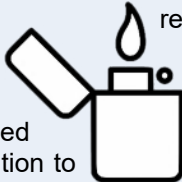
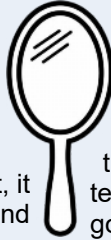
Motorcycle Touring and Haircuts

What do they have in common? Nothing. How are they connected? They aren't. But when John (our esteemed and under appreciated editor) heard of an experience I had in Turkey and relayed it to his wife, who found the story entertaining, I was pressed into service. So here's my attempt to make haircuts relevant to world motorcycle travel.

About ten years ago I had just completed a ride around the Back Sea and was regrouping and reorganizing in Istanbul before continuing on to India for a trip over the Himalayas on Royal Enfields (chronicled in this newsletter). I was in need of a haircut to maintain good grooming and to ensure proper helmet fitment (there's the connection!).

The shop I chose was no bigger than a large closet. In fact, it was only spacious enough for the single wooden chair and small cabinet under a little mirror. If there were a line, they'd have to wait outside. Fortunately there was none so I walked right in and sat down. Istanbul is hilly and from the chair, looking out the window all I could see were people's lower legs as they walked by.

I speak about as much Turkish as the barber spoke English—zero. No problem, I've been down this road before and was able to communicate sufficiently with gestures. I was pleased with the progress I witnessed in the mirror and the barber's seriousness and attention to



detail, but when he opened a little drawer in the cabinet I got concerned. The only things in it were a double-edged razor and butane lighter. He held the razor between his fingers and shaved my neck. I'd had this done before in this manner in another country so I was fine with it. When I first saw the lighter I was concerned he would warm up the razor for some reason. However, after he finished my neck, he took out the lighter and adjusted the flame to high. My anxiety level went high as well and I assumed a statuesque rigor and regulated my breathing to barely. He cupped my right ear with his hand and waved the lighter under it. I could hear the hairs singe and feel a little heat. He repeated the process on the left ear and put the lighter away. I was just relieved he didn't attempt the technique on my nose hairs. I paid him and left with a very good and inexpensive cut.

Several days later I was still in Istanbul and saw a guy crossing the street who looked rather familiar. He also seemed to be staring at me. At first I didn't recognize him because he was really decked out, but quickly realized it was the barber. I pointed to my hair and gave him thumbs up. He returned a smile that will stay with me—always.

Ed Perry

Self-fusing Silicone Tape

There are just a few things I care not to travel without as part of my motorcycle first aid kit:

- A tire repair kit and inflation source
- Baling/safety wire
- Duct tape
- Self-fusing silicone tape

Not necessarily in that order as all of these have kept me going at one time or another. Whereas the first three are well known and have been around forever, that last is relatively new and not nearly as well known. I first learned of it some years ago at a motorcycle show where a vendor was introducing it as "Rescue Tape." I was really impressed by the demonstration and bought several rolls in various colors. Though it's not something you use every day, in several cases I've found it to be the only product to get the job done. Also, the "shelf-life" of this stuff seems to be forever. As there's no adhesive, there's really nothing to break down.



Most recently I ruptured a high-pressure fuel line on a Vespa while half way across the city. I was able to use self-fusing silicone tape over all the wet gas to make a completely dry seal. Another recent application involved an electrical fitting for my Jeep's winch cable. The plastic fitting that goes into the winch broke at the base at a point that is stepped down in diameter. Glues wouldn't work. Heat shrink tubing wouldn't work because of the variance in diameter. I bought some WrapIt Repair (another brand of silicone tape) at Auto Zone and made quick work of the repair. Since it can stretch to 300%, has a tensile strength of 700PSI, withstands fuel, water, salt, oil, acids, and insulates to 400 volts per mil, I consider this a strong and permanent repair in this case. I did replace the fuel line in the Vespa.

A friend of mine used it to repair a leaky pipe at his house several years ago. He reports it is still water tight. Though in this case, as in the fuel line example, I would not consider it a permanent repair, it's nice to know it will last until you get around to replacing parts.

I give this product five out of five helmets. The day you need it you'll be glad you had it.





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Motool Slacker V4 Digital Suspension Tool

Measuring the sag on your front and rear suspension is the first step in determining whether the suspension is set up correctly for you. Sag determines if you have the correct spring preload, or even if you need to replace a spring.

In the past I have measured sag by sitting statically on the bike and have my wife attempt to measure sag with a yard rule.

Looking though Cycle News I noticed an advertisement for the "Motool Slacker V4 Digital Suspension Tool" which allowed riders to take the measurement by themselves using Motool Slacker in conjunction with an app that runs on your smart phone. The interesting thing is that measurements can be taken while actually riding your bike

It looked interesting so I investigated further.

The device attaches to your bike's axle by means of a strong magnet, so if your bike does not have an axle (like R series GSs and others) then you are out of luck. There is no real magic in determining how the sag measurement works, as the device uses a cord with the adhesive patch on one end which is attached to the frame. As the axle goes up and down the device measures the change in cord length.

The video on their web site shows dirt bikes making jumps etc, but I am not sure if the magnet attached device is attached at this point. However if you ride the bike on a reasonably flat surface the device will calculate the sag when the bike is in motion which is actually something new. The sag will take account of the loaded state of the rider and the bike.

If you have a bike with Dynamic ESA then this is probably not for you, but I am sure there are many dual-purpose, and bikes with relatively simple suspensions that could benefit from a properly set up suspension. Getting the correct sag (and the right spring) is the place you need to start.



If you have questions about suspension set up either look at the Q and A session with Ted Porter of the BeemerShop in the February 2018 NorCal Newsletter, or just give Ted a call at 831-438-1100. As far as I know Ted Porter neither uses or sells Motool Slacker.

Wunderlich Leather Key Case for BMW Keyless Ride



Wunderlich has a case to protect the key associated by the BMW key less ride system and is available for a variety of different models dating back to 2010. It is important to note only happy, bell carrying, European cows donate their hides to be used in this way. If you are like me and carry a bunch of junk, pen knife, folding tools etc in your motorcycle jacket pocket this might be the perfect thing for preventing the key from being damaged.



Passing the California SMOG TEST

OK I realize this isn't about bikes, but with the lack of newsletter material I thought I would provide an insight into what I have been doing this month. Although its not about bikes, it is about BMWs, in this case a 2000 BMW Z3. Both my wife and myself love this car and we have owned it since new. It currently has 140,000 miles and earlier this year a leaking radiator morphed into a cylinder head leak, which resulted in me replacing the engine with a low mileage one purchased on Ebay. Since the engine was out I had the clutch and gear change along with the entire cooling system replaced.

The whole job was performed by a skilled mechanic located in Pleasanton, and I am extremely pleased with the result. Runs really sweet. Contact me if you want details of mechanic.

However, this saga involves getting the car to pass the California Smog test. If you own a car made after 1997/8 then it comes equipped with an OBD II port. This allows external access to the on-car diagnostics system and using the information provided by on-car diagnostics determines whether your car will pass or fail. For this generation of car, the test stations no longer stick probes on the exhaust to monitor emissions.

If you take your car to the test station and it fails, then all you will know is that one of the engine monitoring systems that monitor the emission tests has indicated failure. It is important to understand that such a failure may show up even though there is NO ENGINE WARNING light on your dash. The systems that monitor engine emission test will reset to *failed mode* after the car battery is disconnected. Usually if the cars emissions systems are good, just driving the car for 50 miles or so should reset these test monitors. If any of the 8 or so emission tests fail then you don't get a certificate.

In my case the emission monitors associated with the catalytic convertor did not reset, which would result in a test failure for my

Z3. If you look on-line there is a pre-prescribed driving cycle to be followed which is supposed to reset the failed condition. This didn't work for me although I tried it multiple times.

I should add here that last time (two years ago) I had a similar problem and I drove the car for 800 miles and the failure condition would not go away. Because there is no fault indication on the car's dash, I took it back to the test center probably half a dozen times to re-check the state. In the end I found an Autel AutoLink AL319 OBD2 Scanner Automotive Engine Fault Code Reader CAN Scan Tool on Amazon for only \$36. This is a great tool and will display component fault codes as well as the current status of the emission monitor. This way you will know if you are going to pass before taking the car to the test station. If an engine warning light shows up on your you can also find out what's wrong before taking it into the dealers. I can definitely recommend this tool.

Last time in desperation I took it to the BMW dealership, who after two attempts and me spending \$400 managed to reset the catalytic emissions monitor (by a method which was not explained).

This time I was pretty desperate, knowing new catalytic convertors would result in a \$3K bill, so I figured I would try replacing the downstream oxygen sensors. (I had replaced the upstream sensors previously – if your car has done 100,000 miles, I would strongly advise you to do the same. Pretty easy to do although you will need a special O2 sensor socket. I learnt the hard way and burnt out the catalytic convertor on another car).

I was going to book it into the same shop that replaced the engine (as the downstream oxygen sensors are hard to get to), but the mechanics there advised me against replacing them. They suggested that perhaps the catalytic was crudded up by the old engine with the leaking head gasket. What they suggested was to try and clear out the whole systems, by putting the engine under load for an extended period and treating the engine with a dose of catalytic cleaner. I had never heard of a catalytic cleaner before so I went directly to AutoZone and purchased Cataclean 120007 Complete Engine, Fuel and Exhaust System Cleaner (\$24).

Next day I set out for the on the I680 and 80 towards the Sierras. I was running at the same speed as the rest of the traffic and this means mostly 70-80 mph. After about 140 miles I stopped and tested again, and thankfully the emission test passed. Next day I went to the test station and got a certificate. Good for another two years.

Hope this might help others facing similar problems.

John Ellis





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	Dave Harris	5
August	Bruce Buxton	40
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